A critical review of literature on English language teaching textbook evaluation: What systemic functional linguistics can offer

Xiaodong Zhang
Beijing Foreign Studies University, China
zxdman588@bfsu.edu.cn

Abstract

This paper, from the perspective of language learning as a meaning-making process, presents a critical review of the existing research on how pre-use, in-use, and post-use evaluation has investigated the relationship between English language teaching textbooks' content and learners' academic literacy development. The paper shows that previous research on these three types of evaluation examined English language teaching textbooks' effect on English learners' academic literacy development in an unprincipled and macro way. The research gap identified in these previous studies calls for an improved textbook evaluation framework that integrates a principled learning theory while simultaneously emphasizing macro-constructs (e.g., context) and micro-linguistic features needed for academic literacy development. To this end, this paper proposes a framework informed by Systemic Functional Linguistics-related constructs (e.g., genre, register, meta-meanings, and lexico-grammar system) to optimize the evaluation of English language teaching textbook content.

Keywords: English language teaching textbooks, content evaluation, meaning making, Systemic functional linguistics

Introduction

English language teaching (ELT henceforth) textbooks have long been considered central to English language learning and teaching, as they are not only a source of knowledge that teachers rely on to prepare and deliver lessons but also are the main basis of language input for language learners apart from their teachers (Hutchinson & Torres, 1994; Richard, 2001). Given the importance of ELT textbooks in language classrooms, the emergence of research on ELT textbook evaluation that focuses on how textbook content helps achieve language learning/teaching purposes (e.g., learners' academic literacy development, curriculum implementation, or test preparation) comes as no surprise.

Among the many different ways of evaluating textbooks (see Ellis, 1998; McDonough & Shaw, 1993 for a review), ELT textbook evaluation can be categorized into three types on the basis of the different stages: pre-use, in-use and post-use evaluation (Ellis, 1997; Tomlinson, 2003). More specifically, pre-use evaluation evaluates the potential effects of ELT textbooks that are ready to be selected and used (Cunningsworth, 1995; Tomlinson, 2003). In-use evaluation evaluates the effects of ELT textbooks that are being used in the actual classroom (Ellis, 1997; Tomlinson 2003). Post-use evaluation evaluates the effects of ELT textbooks that have been used for short or long term (Tomlinson, 2003). Despite the different methodological foci of these three types of evaluation, they all evaluate ELT textbooks' effects on a particular purpose, such as the effect on learners' academic literacy development, curriculum implementation, or test preparation. Among the variety of pedagogical purposes of ELT evaluation, examining the effect of ELT textbooks on learners' academic literacy development has been widely researched and emphasized as the most important (e.g., Litz, 2005; Tomlinson, 2003; Williams, 1983; Summer, 2011) since learners, through learning with ELT textbooks, ultimately have to communicate with their audience (Litz, 2005; Masuhara & Tomlinson, 2013).

To systematically examine the effect of ELT textbooks on learners' academic literary, Tomlinson (2003) underscored that it is crucial to "derive from principles of language learning and provide the fundamental basis for any material evaluation" (p. 28), as linguistic and language theory can provide a clear lens for how language should be learned and taught and show the extent to which an ELT textbook impacts learners' academic literacy. However, researchers diverge in terms of the application of language learning theory in ELT textbook evaluation— that is, whether a particular theory or all possible theories should be used (Masuhara &Tomlinson, 2013; Swan, 2006 ; Tomlinson, 2011). As Cook (2008) cautioned, there is no language learning theory that has been proven to be perfect. In response to this, Summer (2011) suggested that the adoption of a language learning theory in ELT textbook evaluation should be based on those theories that have been shown to be effective. In other words, what matters is not whether researchers should take into account a particular language learning theory or multiple theories—rather, it is the relative efficacy of the language learning theory in its application to ELT textbook evaluation.

Regarding the efficacy of language learning theory, researchers (e.g., Fang & Schleppegrell, 2008, Locker, 1996; Schleppegrell, 2001) claimed that language learning is a meaning-making process in context. That is, first, second, or foreign language learners, in order to communicate effectively with other speakers or writers of the new language, have to learn grammar, vocabulary, and meanings in different contexts of social interaction. Indeed, students' knowledge of meaning

making (using contextually appropriate language form, such as grammar and vocabulary, to achieve meaning) has been empirically proven to be helpful for language learners' academic literacy development, such as reading, writing, speaking, and listening (e.g., Gibbons, 2002, 2006; Rose & Martin, 2012; Swami, 2008). In other words, when evaluating textbooks' impact on learners' academic literacy development (the most important evaluation purpose), textbook evaluation must give attention to how textbooks (or textbook-based teaching activities) link language meaning and contextually-appropriate linguistic resources (i.e., grammar and vocabulary). To this end, this paper is guided by the following two questions:

(1) How have the three types of evaluation investigated ELT textbooks' effect on learners' academic literacy?

(2) How can ELT textbook evaluation be optimized to better reveal the link between textbook content and students' academic literacy development, if at all?

Pre-use, In-use, and Post-use Textbook Evaluation Literature Review
Textbook evaluation vs. textbook analysis

Since this paper focuses on the three types of ELT textbook evaluation, the majority of this review is devoted to research that has been conducted on ELT textbook evaluation. However, for the purpose of clarification, this section first attempts to show the difference between the terms *textbook evaluation* and *textbook analysis,* both of which appear in literature.

Among the various definitions of textbook evaluation, the term's essence can be summarized as the judgment of a textbook's effect on a specific purpose (e.g., learners' academic literacy, curriculum implementation, or test preparation) by means of self-made or revised criteria (e.g., Hutchinson & Waters, 1987; Littlejohn, 2011; Tomlinson, 2003). Take Masuhara and Tomlinson's (2013) study, for example. They used language theories as criteria to evaluate the match between seven ELT textbooks and adult students' literacy development. Their criteria included "to what extent does the materials provide exposure to English in authentic use?", "to what extent is the exposure to English in use likely to be meaningful to the target learners?", and "to what extent do the activities provide opportunities for learners to make discoveries about how English is used?" (pp. 24-29). As illustrated by Masuhara and Tomlinson, textbook evaluation is a process of matching a textbook (i.e., its content) and a particular purpose (e.g., learners' academic literacy development) in relation to self-made or revised criteria (e.g., language learning theories).

While in previous research the term *textbook evaluation* was often used interchangeably with *textbook analysis*, Tomlinson (2003) cautioned that researchers should differentiate the two. Textbook analysis should be considered

a descriptive analysis that seeks to discover what is there (Tomlinson, 2003; Summer, 2011). Thus, textbook analysis is a relatively objective description that attempts to discover components of a textbook and may ask such questions as "what is included in the textbook?" For example, Ellis (2002) used three variables for ELT grammar textbook analysis: *explicit description*, *data*, and *operation*. Explicit description is used to describe whether grammar is supplied explicitly or needs to be discovered by students. Data deals with the size, source, and medium of the texts in a textbook. Operation is concerned with whether grammatical activities require students to produce grammar, perceive it, or make judgments about it. As shown by Ellis, textbook analysis only describes what is there in a textbook, which is different from textbook evaluation. Textbook evaluation, instead, focuses on the effect of an ELT textbook.

Despite the differences between textbook analysis and textbook evaluation shown above, a detailed textbook analysis serves "as a database for a subsequent evaluation of the materials" (Tomlinson, 1998, p. 16)—a point also echoed by Littlejohn (2011) who included textbook analysis as "a precursor to the evaluation or assessment of any set of materials" (p. 182). These authors suggest that textbook analysis is the basis for textbook evaluation and textbook evaluation can be regarded as a matching process between the results of a textbook analysis and a specific purpose, in relation to certain criteria (Littlejohn, 2011). This matching process, as mentioned earlier, has been approached in a three-staged evaluation (i.e., pre-use, in-use, and post-use evaluation), and all three types of evaluation are made in relation to a set of criteria that examines the effect of ELT textbooks on a specific purpose. In particular, the ELT textbooks' effect on learners' academic literacy development is a key purpose of ELT textbook evaluation that has received considerable attention in previous research (e.g., Litz, 2005; Masuhara & Tomlinson, 2013).

In the following sections, I will review pre-use, in-use, and post-use evaluation research, specifically focusing on how they evaluated the effect of ELT textbooks on learners' academic literacy from the perspective of language learning as a meaning-making process. Subsequently, I will demonstrate why and how SFL as a language learning and linguistic theory can be used to support ELT textbook evaluation for this particular purpose.

Pre-use ELT Textbook Evaluation

Much of the early literature on ELT textbook evaluation focused on pre-use evaluation for the purpose of textbook selection. Specifically, researchers (e.g., Byrd, 2001; Cunningsworth, 1984, 1995; McGrath, 2002; Sheldon, 1998; Ur, 1996; Williams, 1983; See also Mukundan & Ahour, 2010 for a review) mainly relied on existent or self-made checklists (i.e., criteria) to rate the match of a given textbook with a particular purpose (e.g., learners' academic literacy development). For

example, using a rating scale on a checklist (4, *to the greatest extent;* 3, *to a large extent;* 2, *to some extent;* 1, *just barely;* 0, *not at all),* Williams (1983) presented a pre-use textbook evaluation scheme that consisted of three categories mainly informed by a meaning-making perspective of language learning: (1) general considerations, which includes learners' and teachers' needs; (2) language, which includes the functional use of speech, grammar, vocabulary, reading, and writing; and (3) technical information, which covers content, coverage, illustration, authenticity of the language, and writing style. Williams suggested that his scheme aimed to help teachers choose ELT textbooks that favor developing learners' academic literacy through apprenticing their contextual knowledge of language use. Similarly, Guilloteaux (2013) developed a set of criteria and conducted a pre-use evaluation of five Middle School ELT textbooks that were published in 2009 and approved by the South Korean Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology. Guilloteaux's evaluation included such criteria as to what extent an ELT textbook develops learners' knowledge of forms and corresponding pragmatic meaning (i.e., what language forms convey in communication) and to what extent an ELT textbook engages learners with making contextually relevant meanings. Guilloteaux concluded that three of the five books were better in terms of their potential effect on learners' academic literacy and that pre-use evaluation, by relying on language theories to examine the potential impact of ELT textbook on learners' academic literacy, is helpful in selecting language materials. Similarly, in a pre-use evaluation, Mashura and Tomlinson (2013) proposed their own evaluation criteria and evaluated to what extent seven adult ELT textbooks used in the UK potentially impact learners' academic literacy. Parts of Mashura and Tomlinson's criteria are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: English textbooks and evaluation criteria

Criteria	1. To what extent do the materials provide exposure to English in authentic use?
	2. To what extent is the exposure to English in use likely to be meaningful to the target learners?
	3. To what extent do the activities provide opportunities for learners to make discoveries about how English is used?
	4. To what extent do the activities provide opportunities for meaningful use of English?
	5. To what extent do the materials help learners make use of an English-speaking environment outside the classroom?
	6. To what extent do the materials provide opportunities for developing learners' cultural awareness?

Adapted from Masuhara and Tomlinson (2013, pp. 24-30)

Based on textbook analysis and criteria informed by language theories, Mashura and Tomlinson concluded that none of the seven ELT textbooks were perfect in relation to their criteria and pre-use evaluation, and using language theories would help with textbook selection and also help publishers make commercially attractive textbooks.

As illustrated from these previous studies on pre-use evaluation, researchers have emphasized contextual use of language when evaluating how an ELT textbook potentially supports learners' academic literacy. By referencing self-made or adapted criteria, evaluators could quickly get an impression of the potential effect of an ELT textbook on learners' academic literacy (Tomlinson, 2003). Therefore, pre-use evaluation is good for ELT textbook selection (Guilloteaux, 2013; Mashura & Tomlinson, 2013).

However, pre-use evaluation is a preliminary process as it only allows the evaluator to make impressionistic judgments of the effect of a textbook (Guilloteaux, 2013; Tomlinson, 2003). For example, pre-use research (e.g., Guilloteaux, 2013; Williams, 1983; Mashura & Tomlinson, 2013) only gives a predication of how an ELT textbook potentially develops learners' contextual use of language that contributes to learners' academic literacy. Also, previous pre-use evaluation studies (e.g., Williams, 1983; Mashura & Tomlinson, 2013), focusing only on an overview of the contextual use of language, failed to factor in how an ELT textbook potentially impacts learners' awareness of the relationship among lexical choices, grammatical structures and contextual meanings—which are essential to learners' academic literacy development.

In-use ELT Textbook Evaluation

Different from pre-use evaluation, in-use evaluation measures the effect of an ELT textbook already in use by observing how it is actually being used in a classroom (McDough & Shaw, 1993; Tomlinson, 2003). This means that in-use evaluation is "more objective and reliable than pre-use evaluation as it makes use of measurement rather than predication" (Tomlinson, 2003, p. 24). In other words, in-use evaluation is able to provide a lens into the actual effect of how teachers use an ELT textbook on learners' academic literacy.

Indeed, ELT textbooks themselves may not differ markedly, but there is a marked difference in how they are used (Jakubiak & Harklau, 2010). Thus, the value of a textbook is contingent on a teacher's role in deconstructing textbook knowledge with students in class that might facilitate or constrain students' learning through textbook (Donato & McCormic, 1994; Newton, 1990). For example, Antón (1999) reported the impact of teachers' role on learners' language learning by comparing and analyzing a learner-centered and a traditional teacher-

centered language teaching class. In her study, Antón concluded that a teachers' role is crucial to learners' success as she found that L2 learners had more opportunities to make progress in language learning through a collaborative environment than through the teacher-centered teaching approach. In other words, a teacher's role is crucial to language learners' success in the textbook-based classroom. As Nunan (1991) further pointed out, the value of a textbook can be revealed "with reference to their actual use" (p. 211). Summer (2011) also noted that evaluating a textbook while teaching can help instructors "notice areas of neglect and supplement or modify the instructional options presented as to make EFL teaching more effective" (p. 89). This points to the importance of in-use evaluation that explores the triadic relationship between the teacher, student, and textbook.

Nonetheless, limited research has been conducted on the effect of in-use ELT textbook on learners' academic literacy (Santos, 2008; Sunderland et al, 2000; Tomlinson, 2003). In one of the very few studies in this area, Nahrkhalaji (2012) implemented an in-use evaluation of a textbook used in two EFL classrooms within the same school in Iran. Based on the observation of interactions of students and teachers in the two classrooms, Nahrkhalaji found that dialogues in the textbook enabled teachers to effectively encourage students' participation in classroom learning. At the same time, by using graphics from the textbook, teachers in one classroom helped students better understand the meaning of new words in the textbook. Nahrkhalaji concluded that in-use evaluation is helpful for ELT textbook adaptation and is also useful for teachers to change the way they use ELT textbooks and better facilitate learners' academic literacy. Similarly, Santos (2008) conducted a study of textbook use in an elementary school in Brazil. Through revealing interactions among teacher, student, and textbook Santos highlighted that the value of the textbook content is dynamically deconstructed, depending on the teacher's teaching style. Mantero (2002) also investigated a textbook-centered Spanish literature course in an American college with the purpose of revealing the triadic relationship between the teacher, textbook, and students' learning of Spanish as a foreign language. Based on nine full weeks of observation, Mantero, by means of conversational analysis (Drew & Heritage, 1992; see also Sacks, Schegloff, & Jefferson, 1974), analyzed and evaluated the textbook-centered classroom interactions and concluded that the instructor in this foreign language class initiated the most of the dialogues in the textbook-centered classroom and did not take full advantage of opportunities to help learners develop topic-based discourse, which was in the language textbook they were using. These in-use evaluation studies demonstrate that the content of the textbook and the teacher using the textbook affect learners' actual academic literacy development in the textbook-centered classroom. As also can be seen from these studies, in-use

evaluation, through analysis of student-teacher interaction, is thus able to reveal learners' academic literacy development by connecting the value of the textbook (what is embedded in a textbook) in relation to its users (i.e., the teacher and student), providing a dynamic and empirical evaluation of textbook content.

However, in-use evaluation is not without limitations. First, the dynamic nature of in-use evaluation also makes the evaluative process complex as it involves the interaction between students, teachers, and textbooks in a variety of forms, such as dialogue and task-based activities. As mentioned earlier, textbook analysis (i.e., textbook description) is the basis of textbook evaluation. In terms of in-use evaluation, this means it is necessary to describe textbook-based classroom practices before measuring the effect of a textbook on learners' understanding of contextually motivated knowledge. However, previous research either relies on pure observation, resulting in a lack of a empirical analysis of textbook-centered classroom practices before evaluation (e.g., Nahrkhalaji, 2012), or uses a conversational analysis that only can reveal such interactional features as "extensive use of display questions, form-focused feedback, corrective repair, and the use of scaffolding the interactional patterns of classroom discourse" (Sert & Seedhouse, 2011, p. 8). In other words, little attention is given to how a textbook and the teacher using the textbook develops learners' academic literacy though raising their awareness of the comprehensive relationship between vocabulary/grammar and contextual meaning, such as generic patterns, genre-specific linguistic resources, and meanings through texts of a textbook. Thus, an improved framework should be able to dynamically represent linguistic resources taught in a textbook-based classroom.

Post-use ELT Textbook Evaluation

Post- use evaluation measures the effect of an ELT textbook that has been used for a short or long term through methods such as interviews and questionnaires (McDonough & Shaw, 1993). Tomlinson (2003) regarded post-use evaluation as a stage that provides further information on a textbook's value and its adaption or supplementation. Similar to in-use evaluation, there have been few studies on post-use evaluation in recent years.

Litz (2005) evaluated an EFL textbook used in one of the English courses at a university in South Korea by means of surveys that focused on learners' contextually embedded academic literacy. Survey questions included how "the grammar points and vocabulary items introduced in motivating and realistic contexts" and "the activities encourage sufficient communicative and meaningful practice"(pp. 43-45). Based on teachers' and students' actual reflections on the effect of the EFL textbook that was used, Litz concluded that the long-term effect of the EFL textbook was compatible with the university's language-learning aim of

improving learners' writing and speaking skills. At the same time, Litz also suggested that post-use evaluation enabled teachers to make up for the relative weakness of the textbook through supplementing, modifying, and adapting problematic aspects of the book. Similarly, Lawrence (2011) examined the suitability of a series of secondary level EFL textbooks that were used to meet the requirements of developing learners' academic literacy by the local curriculum in Hong Kong. By means of language theory-based criteria to elicit teachers' responses, such as "Tasks can introduce students to a variety of different text-types (e.g., informational, persuasive); "Tasks can enhance learner's communicative competence through realistic contexts" (p. 70), Lawrence concluded that the series of textbooks did meet the local curriculum's demand of developing learners' academic literacy. He also pointed out that the post-use evaluation was reliable because teachers who use a textbook over a long period of time could provide useful information on their long-term effects on students. Nahrkhalaji's (2012) study also included an examination of long-term effects of EFL materials on learners' contextually embedded academic literacy in Iran. By testing students on what was covered by the materials and having teachers complete a questionnaire regarding the pros and the cons of using the material, Nahrkhalaji concluded that the EFL textbook helped the learners improve their academic written competency despite an over-emphasis on oral communication. As seen from these studies, using specifically designed post-use textbook evaluation devices (e.g., tests and interviews), the researchers were able to reveal the relationship between textbooks that have been used and their learners' academic literacy. In particular, using interviews and questionnaires in post-use evaluation can "deepen an understanding of what we observe in the classroom and sometimes helps to interpret observed activities from participants' perspective" (Dyson & Genishi, 2005, p. 76), which means post-use evaluation can further validate pre-use and in-use evaluations.

However, evaluation criteria (e.g., in the form of interview questions) regarding the outcome of ELT textbooks seemed to be too general to elicit well-rounded responses from textbook users. For example, Lawrence's (2011) study included the following two criteria: "Tasks can introduce students to a variety of different text-types (e.g., informational, persuasive); "Tasks can enhance learner's communicative competence through realistic contexts" (p. 70). While these two evaluation criteria seem promising in terms of their emphasis on the outcome of ELT textbook on learners' understanding of contextual use of knowledge, Lawrence did not provide any explanations for what specific aspects (e.g., linguistic choices in a text type) of learners' academic literacy development have improved as a result of using ELT textbooks. In other words, criteria adopted in previous studies on post-use evaluation are too general or subjective, even though

they emphasize the outcome of ELT textbook' role in developing learners' contextual use of language.

What Systemic Functional Linguistics Can Offer

On the one hand, it is evident these three types of evaluation have their strengths. For example, pre-use evaluation is able to produce a quick judgment of the value of an ELT textbook, while in-use and post-use evaluation are able to provide an in-depth judgment of the value of an ELT textbook. On the other hand, these three types of ELT textbook evaluations, while underscoring the contextual use of language an ELT textbook should provide to facilitate language learners' academic literacy, adopted too general criteria or failed to explore to what extent an ELT textbook fosters learners' awareness of the relationship between linguistic resources and their realization of different contextual meanings. In other words, while performing ELT textbook evaluation, it is imperative to have a powerful language theory that emphasizes the link between lexico-grammar and contextual meaning and apply all of its constructs to ELT textbook analysis and evaluation.

Systemic Functional Linguistics

Halliday (1994)'s Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL henceforth)—a theory grounded in a meaning-making perspective—meets all of the above-mentioned requirements as a powerful language learning theory that can be applied in the three types of ELT evaluation. SFL provides clear and categorized macro-constructs (e.g., context of situation/register, context of culture/genre) related to learners' academic literacy development and at the same time attends to what linguistic choices need to realize meanings in response to these macro-constructs. Indeed, teaching SFL-based resources has also been empirically proven to be effective for English language learners' academic literacy development (e.g., Achugar, Schleppegrell, & Oteʹıza, 2007; Gibbons, 2002; Harman, 2008;Schleppegrell, 2010; Rose & Martin, 2012).

In particular, SFL holds that language is shaped by two levels of context: *the context of situation* and *the context of culture* (Halliday, 1994; Rose & Martin, 2012). The context of situation includes three variables: (1) *field*, which describes what a discourse is about; (2) *tenor,* which identifies the interpersonal relationship and evaluative stance between discourse participants; and (3) *mode,* which is the channel of a discourse (Halliday, 1994). These three variables are known semantically as the register of a discourse. Depending on the three variables, language users, by making choices from socially and culturally endorsed vocabulary/grammar, simultaneously convey three meta-meanings: (1) ideational meaning, representing language users' inner experience and outside experience; (2) interpersonal meaning, enacting social relationships; and (3) textual meaning,

creating the texture of a discourse (Halliday, 1994). More specifically, SFL also explains how to select vocabulary and grammar to achieve the three meta-meanings through the system of transitivity (e.g., the choice of nominalization in academic discourse), mood (e.g., the choice of subject-verb-object order), and theme/rheme and cohesion (e.g., the choice of conjunction words). For instance, SFL highlighted the following lexical/grammatical differences between daily conversation and academic discourse that are crucial to language learners, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2 Contextually-endorsed linguistic features between spoken English and academic English		
	Spoken English (e.g., chatting)	Academic English (e.g., describing a physical phenomenon)
Lexical features	Everyday vocabulary	Technical words
Grammatical features	A greater regularity in the grammatical structure (e.g., subject-verb-object).	A greater variety of grammatical structures to pack more information into sentences (e.g., adverbial phrases, prepositional phrases and nominalization)
	Use of the conjunction *and* to convey connections between sentences.	A greater variety of conjunction words to make connection between sentences (e.g., however, nevertheless, and furthermore).

Adapted from Gebhard, Harman and Seger (2006)

As illustrated in Table 2, academic English(i.e,, school-based discourses) often have lexico-grammatical realizations (e.g., nominalization) that differ from our daily spoken English. This is because school-based discourses are made in response to specialized variables of its context of situation (e.g., field is about subjects, such as math or physics) and are intended to express more formal meta-meanings than daily English. By focusing on the constructs of register, three-metameanings and lexico-grmamtical resources, SFL offers a tool to understand and evaluate both language form and meaning represented in textbooks or textbook-based teaching.

Connecting to the context of situation is the context of culture, which is semantically represented as *genre*. Genre, as a semantic unit, is defined as "staged, goal-oriented social processes" (Rose & Martin, 2012, p. 6). These social processes are realized through a particular structure and lexico-grammatic resources in a register (Gibbons, 2002; Rose & Martin; 2012). In other words, genre, woven with register, recognizable patterns of structure, and language within discourses, achieves particular social purposes at the stratum of the context of culture. For example, Gibbons (2002) identified the following features for the genre of narrative, as shown by Table 3 below.

Table 3: Narrative and its features

Narrative	
Purpose	To entertain, to tell a story, or to teach
Organization	Orientation: tells who, where, and when
	Series of events: describes happenings preceding the complication
	Complication: introduces main problem/conflict
	Resolution: tells and shows problem resolved
Linguistic features	Adverbs of time
	Past tense action verbs
	Person and place describing words
	Dialogue or "saying" verbs

Adapted from Gibbons (2002, p. 58)

As Table 3 shows, the genre of narrative has specific features in terms of generic structure (i.e., how a text is organized) and lexical-grammatical features (e.g., use of saying verbs). Additionally, other genres that function in society have also been identified by the Sydney school (Sydney school refers to Systemic Functional Linguists, originating from Sydney, Australia), including their generic stages and their linguistic realizations (See also Gibbons, 2002, p. 58). For language users, to achieve academic success in a larger context (e.g., to write dissertation), this means that they have to develop the knowledge of genre through textbooks or textbook-based teaching (Gebhhard, Harman, & Seger, 2012; Gibbons, 2002). In particular, as researchers suggest (e.g., Rose & Martin, 2012; Gibbons, 2002), educators could take the following steps to develop students' knowledge of genre: (1) identification of social purpose as represented in generic structure; and (2) analysis of a text's register as represented in field, tenor, and mode, language meta-meanings and lexico-grammatical resources. In other words, the constructs of context of culture and genre in SFL also provide a gateway to describe an ELT

textbook and evaluate the extent to which it impacts students' skill in synthesizing genre-related resources for a particular social purpose.

In sum, SFL is an effective and powerful language theory for making criteria to evaluate the relationship between textbook content and learners' academic literacy. This is because SFL not only emphasizes the contextual meaning of language use but also demonstrates how to make meaning through lexico-grammar in response to the context of situational variables (i.e., field, tenor, and mode) and context of culture (i.e., genre), making it helpful language theory for analyzing and evaluating the relationship between textbooks and learners' academic literacy development. As Coffin and Donohue (2012) noted, using SFL constructs enables us to look at "meaning making that typifies representations of the discipline (e.g., as represented by textbooks) or on students' meaning making judged to be academically successful (according to disciplinary lectures' assessment and feedback)" (p. 66). In the following section, I will detail the findings of SFL-related empirical studies to further justify my argument that SFL is a powerful and effective language theory and should be used in ELT textbook evaluation.

SFL and Empirical Studies on Learners' Academic Literacy

Regarding the construct of genre, Swami (2008) reported that EFL students' improvement in academic writing in a Philippines's college writing course was a result of genre-based teaching and learning. Specifically, Swami's findings revealed in students' post-course writing that EFL students had improved in terms of textual organization and language features (e.g. verb tense, voice) in comparison to their writing before genre-based teaching and learning. The study demonstrated that genre-based instruction is crucial for improvement of students' proficiency level. Similarly, Rose and Martin (2012) demonstrated the efficiency of a genre-based approach in an ESL class in Austria. Through reading and the teachers' interaction with students, students gained a well-developed awareness of linguistic choices and generic structures in their academic writing. These genre-based studies also echo Hyland's (2007) claim: "By making explicit what is to be learnt, providing a coherent framework for studying both language and contexts, ensuring that course objectives are derived from students' needs, and creating the resources for students to understand and challenge valued discourses, genre approaches provide an effective writing pedagogy" (p. 149).

The empirical value of the construct of genre points to the importance of using it to make pre-use, in-use, and post-use ELT textbook evaluation by looking at to what extent a textbook raises learners' awareness of genre.

Regarding the constructs of register, three meta-meanings, and lexico-grammar, their empirical power in learners' academic literacy has also been

widely reported. For example, Schleppegrell (2003) demonstrated English learners' improved understanding of language use in the science register, such as the use of technical terms, by apprenticing them into making context-specific linguistic choices. Similarly, Gibbons (2006) also demonstrated the efficacy of developing English learners' academic literacy by apprenticing English learners into focusing on appropriate linguistic choices in the context of situation (i.e., academic discourse). In an earlier study of Gibbons (2002), she also demonstrated the power of using the construct of the three meta-meanings to facilitate English learners' writing, reading, listening, and speaking skills by using the variables of field, tenor, and mode. In other words, the constructs of register, meta-meanings, lexico-grammar are also helpful for supporting learners' academic literacy development. The importance of these constructs make them applicable for pre-use, in-use, and post-use ELT textbook analysis and evaluation by studying to what extent a textbook raises learners' awareness of register, meta-meanings, and lexico-grammatical realization, as well as their connection to the construct of genre as mentioned earlier.

As seen above, SFL-based empirical studies have further demonstrated that SFL does help English language learners develop knowledge on how language realizes discourse by drawing on the constructs of genre and register, three meta-meanings, and their lexico-grammatical realization, making them justifiable in analyzing and evaluating how ELT textbooks impacts learners' academic literacy.

SFL-based Textbook Analysis and Evaluation

Indeed, because of SFL's dual emphasis on language form and meaning, researchers have been using its core constructs to analyze and evaluate textbooks. However, this line of research is limited to textbook analysis. For example, Dimopoulos, Koulaidis, and Sklaveniti (2005) adopted a genre-based analysis of an English science textbook used in Greece and concluded that the prevailing characteristics of the science textbook at the primary level were found to be (a) an emphasis on the explanatory and expository, and (b) a highly-specialized genre-based feature (i.e., classification and formality). Similarly, Presnyakova (2011), by analyzing the ideational meaning realized in a language arts textbook used in an elementary school in America, concluded that lexical density and lexical variation across grade levels were not significant; the changes in the frequency of occurrence of clause complexes, as well as their lexico-grammatical complexity, were more prominent. McCabe (1999) compared upper-secondary/tertiary English and Spanish history textbooks by focusing on all three meta-meanings and concluded that these history textbooks shared overall cross-linguistic similarities with respect to text organization, choice of participants and circumstances, and impersonalization of subjects (e.g., both English and Spanish history textbooks

tended to use circumstances as theme). Summer (2011), using the construct of interpersonal meaning, evaluated the authenticity of texts in ELT textbooks used by German secondary schools and concluded that some spoken texts in these ELT textbooks resembled written language. Similarly, Meiristiani (2011) evaluated interpersonal meaning realized in a senior high school's ELT textbooks and concluded that the textbook should be improved in terms of the authenticity of the texts in relation to real conversational context, as the texts selected in the textbook did not have common lexico-grammatical features of spoken English.

In sum, despite the power of SFL as a language theory that has been empirically proven as effective, previous SFL-based research on ELT textbooks is limited to a rich analysis of the texts within a textbook with the purpose of revealing lexico-grammatical features of texts. In comparison, SFL-informed evaluation is still in its infancy, despite that few studies have used the construct of the interpersonal meaning to evaluate the impact of ELT textbooks on learners' spoken literacy.

Systemic Functional Linguistic-based ELT Textbook Analysis

In order to show how an SFL-based approach can be used to perform ELT textbook evaluation, I propose a detailed model in this and the following sections by drawing on SFL's constructs: genre (context of culture), register (context of situation), the three-meta meanings, and their lexico-grammatical realization. The proposed model includes two steps: SFL-based ELT textbook analysis and SFL-based ELT textbook evaluation.

The first step is an SFL-based ELT textbook analysis, as textbook evaluation is a matching process between the result of textbook analysis and a set of criteria (Littlejohn, 2001). Particularly, textbook analysis for in-use evaluation not only includes textbook analysis but also includes a description of the triadic relationship among the teacher, textbook, and students.

Informed by constructs of SFL and Ellis's (2002) frame that provides four variables—*explicit description* (what linguistic knowledge is explicitly provided), *data* (where the texts of an ELT textbook are from), and *operation* (what activities textbook users are expected to do)—I propose the following six categories for ELT textbook analysis (i.e., description of textbook or its classroom use) that could be used in any context. The six categories are illustrated in Table 4 below.

Table 4: Categories of textbook analysis: describing a textbook

1. **Background information of an ELT textbook**: this category aims to show information regarding publishers and users of an ELT textbook.
2. **Patterns in the textbook**: this category aims to show the internal structure of each unit in the textbook—that is, how the content in a textbook is organized (e.g., some ELT textbooks follow the structure of preview-text-task).

3. **Texts**:
   (1) text type: what are the types of texts in a textbook? (e.g., Is a text informative or argumentative?)
   (2) text features: what are the functional and lexico-grammatical features of the texts in a textbook? (e.g., Are there any use of conjunction words, nominalization in the text?)
   (3) source: where are the texts in an ELT textbook from? (e.g., Are the texts written by native/non-native speakers? Or are the texts excerpts from novels/authentic conversation between native speakers?)
4. **Skills**: what academic skills do the textbook include? (e.g., reading, listening, writing, translation, speaking, or grammar)
5. **Activities**:
   (1) discourse-semantics level: which activities in the textbook are related to learners' discourse competence? (e.g., Is the textbook activity focused on discourse cohesion, engaging audience, or discourse content?)
   (2) vocabulary-grammar level: what vocabulary-grammar activities are included in the textbook? (e.g., What words and grammar are presented through the textbook: context-specific or random presentation?)

Interaction in class: this category is particularly designed to describe what meaning-making resources are mediated among the teacher, students, and textbook in class.

As illustrated by Table 4, this proposed frame is designed to provide an objective description of an ELT textbook on the basis of genre, register, the three meta-meanings, and their lexico-grammatical realization. Since the above descriptive framework aims to describe universal features of ELT textbooks, it can be used to describe ELT textbooks in any teaching and learning context. In particular, when conducting description of classroom activities for in-use evaluation (i.e., category 6), researchers could use speech function analysis (Eggins & Slade, 1997; Harman & Zhang, 2015), focusing on what linguistics resources are taught for later evaluation, rather than just focusing on interactional patterns as identified in previous research (c.f., Mantero, 2002; Nahrkhalaji, 2012).

Systemic Functional Linguistic Based Evaluation
As mentioned in the introduction, ELT textbook evaluation is a process of matching the result of textbook analysis and a series of criteria. The second step of the proposed model is SFL-based textbook evaluation by referring to textbook analysis and evaluation criteria. In order to provide a simplified yet in-depth evaluation, I propose a set of ready-to-use evaluation criteria, as shown in Table 5 below. The evaluation criteria clusters at three levels: the level of context (i.e.,

context of culture and context of situation), the level of three meta-meanings (i.e., ideational, interpersonal, and textual meaning), and lexico-grammatical level. Among these three levels, the level of context and three meta-meanings were touched upon broadly in previous research (c.f., Masuhara &Tomlinson, 2013; Lawrence, 2011). Informed by SFL, the refreshed criteria in Table 5 below offers clear guidance in terms of what is needed for learners' literacy development and to evaluate to what extent an ELT textbook (or with a teacher – "*with a teacher*" in the bracket applies when performing an in-use or post evaluation) develops learners' academic literacy in terms of pre-use, in-use, and post-use evaluation. The lexico-grammatical level in Table 5 below, which has been ignored in previous research, examines to what extent an ELT textbook (or with a teacher) helps learners gain knowledge of how lexico-grammatical resources contribute to the realization of genre, register, and the three meta-meanings in pre-use, in-use, or post-use evaluation.

Table 5: An SFL-based Evaluation Criteria

Constructs	Rating scale				
	0. not at all	1. just barely	2. to some extent	3. to a large extent	4. to the greatest extent
Context of Culture (1) To what extent does the textbook (or with the teacher's help) foster students' awareness of a discourse type? This criterion is informed by the construct of genre. With this criterion and textbook analysis, evaluators can examine how an ELT textbook helps foster students' awareness of types of discourses.					
Context of Situation (2) To what extent does the ELT textbook (or with the teacher's help) foster learners' register awareness of a communication context (i.e., field, tenor, and mode)? Based on textbook					

analysis, evaluators can estimate the relation between textbook content and learners' context of situational awareness.				
Three Meta-meanings (3) To what extent does the ELT textbook (with the teacher's help) help the learner construct their own or deconstruct others' inner and outside experiences?				
(4) To what extent does the ELT textbook (with the teacher's help) help the learner interact with their audience?				
(5) To what extent does the textbook (or with the teacher's help,) help students construct or deconstruct coherent discourse?				
The criteria 3, 4, and 5 are informed by ideational, interpersonal, and textual meanings. With these criteria as well as textbook analysis, evaluators can examine how an ELT textbook and textbook-teaching help learners make contextually appropriate ideational, interpersonal, and textual meaning.				
Lexico-grammatical level (6) To what extent does the textbook (or with the teacher's help) help foster students' awareness of lexical/grammatical choices at the ideational level?				
(7) To what extent does the textbook (or with the teacher's help) help foster students' awareness of lexical/grammatical choices at the interpersonal level?				

(8) To what extent does the textbook (or with the teacher's help) help foster students' awareness of lexical/grammatical choices at the textual level?					
Based on textbook analysis, the criteria 6, 7, and 8 enable evaluators to investigate how a textbook and textbook-based teaching support learners' knowledge of the relationship between contextually-appropriate lexico-grammar and the three meta-meanings.					
(9) To what extent does the textbook help foster students' awareness of lexico-grammatical and structural features of a textbook type? Based on textbook analysis, the criterion helps evaluators evaluate the relationship among lexico-grammar, a textbook (or with the teacher) and genre.					

As shown in Table 5 above, the constructs of context of culture and context of situation (criteria 1 and 2) look at the general impact of an ELT textbook (or with the teacher) on learners' contextual knowledge. The discourse semantic level (criteria 3, 4, and 5) looks at the relationship between the textbook (or with the teacher) and the three meta-meanings (i.e., ideational, interpersonal, and textual meaning). Criteria 6, 7, 8, and 9 look at how the textbook supports learners using proper linguistic choices to achieve the three meta-meanings and a specific type of discourse. For all criteria, evaluation is made based on a ranking scale (Williams, 1983), from zero to four (4. to the greatest extent; 3. to a large extent; 2. to some extent; 1. just barely; 0. not at all). To enhance reliability, interrater reliability is recommended to be calculated.

By integrating textbook analysis with these ready-to-use criteria, evaluators can gather a quick picture of the potential effect of a textbook on students' academic literacy when conducting pre-use evaluation for the purpose of textbook selection. Similarly, by integrating these criteria with textbook analysis and classroom observation, evaluators will be able to gain an in-depth picture of how

the teacher and textbook co-affect the students' academic literacy. Finally, in order to enhance the outcomes of actual classroom observation, these SFL criteria can also be used to ground interview questions, questionnaires, or tests to elicit students' responses. In sum, SFL-based analysis and evaluation criteria are based on all components needed for learners' academic literacy development from the perspective of language as a meaning-making process, which means they can serve as complete and principled criteria for ELT textbook evaluation in any teaching and learning context.

Discussion and Implications

The current study reviewed major research on pre-use, in-use, and post-use evaluation from a perspective of language learning as a meaning-making process. The findings of the current study are as follows:

First, previous studies on textbook evaluation in general are limited to pre-use evaluation that can only enable evaluators to gain an impressionist judgment of the value of an ELT textbook (Tomlinson, 2003). Second, previous research on ELT textbook evaluation, even though it underscored the importance of exploring the relationship between textbooks and learners' academic literacy, did not delve into the link between academic knowledge and context-specific linguistic resources (i.e., lexical choices and grammatical structure) (c.f., Guilloteaux, 2013; Lawrence, 2011; Nahrkhalaji, 2012). In other words, from a perspective of language as a meaning-making process, previous research on ELT textbook evaluation is too general. Third, this paper contributes to the field of textbook research by proposing an SFL-based framework for evaluating ELT textbooks. Indeed, the constructs of SFL not only emphasizes the contextual meanings of language but also link them with corresponding lexico-grammatical forms that are empirically shown to be powerful for developing language learners' academic literacy (Gibbons, 2002. 2006; Rose & Martin, 2012). The proposed SFL-based framework is ready to use and provides principled analysis and evaluation in terms of ELT textbook's effect on learners' academic literacy through thoroughly representing and evaluating resources needed for academic literacy development at the macro-level (context of culture/genre), meso-level (context of situation/register, three meta-meanings), and macro-level (lexico-grammar). The framework fills gaps in previous research on the three types of evaluation that only generally included the importance of context at the macro-level (c.f., Litz, 2005; Masuhara & Tomlinson, 2013; Santos, 2008) or those SFL-related textbook evaluations that only focused on the interpersonal dimension (c.f., Meiristiani, 2011; Summer, 2011).

By using SFL-based descriptive categories and evaluation criteria, future textbook evaluation research could be conducted on the following three aspects. First, researchers could receive SFL-based professional training or consult experts

on SFL so as to perform SFL-based analysis and criteria and gain an impressionist value of an ELT textbook. In particular, SFL can be used to look at the dynamic value of the textbook in relation to the teacher's role, or to do post-use evaluation of a textbook by grounding interviews or tests in SFL to measure the outcome of an ELT textbook, thus validating what is predicted or what is observed in the classroom. Second, given the respective strength of the three types of textbook evaluation, it is recommendable that the SFL-based descriptive categories and evaluation criteria be used to conduct all three types of textbook evaluation. Based on the results, textbooks can be redesigned to better serve students, either by adaption, supplementation, or replacement for those contexts where teachers can select textbooks. In the meantime, in the educational context where textbooks are designated (e.g., China), SFL-based in-use and post-use evaluation would also be helpful in terms of providing suggestions on material supplementation.

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Contact
Xiaodong Zhang
School of English and International studies, Room 217
Beijing Foreign Studies University, China
zxdman588@bfsu.edu.cn