

## Evaluating Blue Skies 6 with Reference to Yemeni Students

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### Abstract

Evaluating a coursebook is an important task that should be carried out from time to time. The current study is a predictive evaluation of Blue Skies 6 aimed to decide whether it is suitable for Yemeni students in the primary grades or not. The researcher adopted a checklist to conduct the evaluation of the textbook in hand. The checklist is based on Cunningsworth (1995), Nunan (1991), Sheldon (1988), Williams (1983) and Harmer (2001). The researcher concluded that Blue Skies 6 being taught at AL-Nawras Private Schools, Adensuits our Yemeni students at this level. It provides an adequate language content in a suitable methodology. The balance of the basic skills in the units and the diversity of tasks and activities increase the value of this book. In addition, the variety of topics presented which; to great extent, is appropriate for our Yemeni situation in and out of the classroom, adds another advantage to the previous ones. Furthermore, the cultural aspects which are presented in the textbook in hand do not contradict our Islamic, Arabic, or Yemeni culture. However, this suitability does not mean that there is no need for adapting some points in this course book. Therefore, it is recommended to add more authentic materials to Blue Skies 6 during classroom teaching/learning, which should be selected with regard to the level, age and cultural background of the Yemeni learners.

**Key words:** Blue Skies 6, course book, evaluation; predictive; retrospective, textbook

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## 1. Introduction

Evaluation is very important in our life to adopt or adapt an idea or something. It becomes more important when we discuss the process of learning and teaching, since it concerns with mind; the responsible factor of human development in its various scopes.

In second language learning field, English Language Teaching (ELT hereafter) materials are of a very important position, because they aim at presenting the target language for those whose native language is not English. Therefore, ELT coursebooks must be prepared or selected carefully in order to achieve objectives and aims they are prepared or selected for. In other words, from time to time there should be an evaluation of the materials being taught to assure that the target language learning process is going on in an appropriate and acceptable manner. More precisely, an evaluation predictively or retrospectively or both is necessary for the coursebooks to test their appropriateness for the goals, objectives, learner's needs, time consuming ....etc.

For the sake of this task, the author is going to predicatively evaluate Blue Skies 6 which is being taught at AL-Nawras Schools in Aden, Yemen.

The researcher hopes this work will help improving learning and teaching process.

## 2. Theoretical Background: an overview

No one ignore the significance of the textbooks in classroom teaching/learning program, especially "in situations where there is a shortage of trained teachers" Williams (1983: 251). Textbooks help supplementing teachers' instruction by variety of learning resources. They also serve as a form of teacher training. In case of learners, textbooks provide the major source of contact through which the learner's ability of language can be developed. To be more clear, using coursebooks can help facilitating the learning/teaching process or serve teachers in applying the program. Cunningsworth (1984:1) pointed out that "published coursebooks are normally written by experienced or well qualified people or the material contained in them is usually carefully tested in pilot studies in actual teaching situations before publication. Teachers can therefore be assured that coursebooks from reputable publishers will serve them well if properly selected and used".

### 2.1 The Definition of Evaluation

In general, evaluation is defined by Richards et al (1992: 130) as " the systematic gathering of information for purposes of decision making". In the field of ELT, mainly materials, evaluation involves collecting information about the coursebook we are going to use. In this regard, evaluation includes the method used or the content focus of the coursebook.

### 2.2 Types of Evaluation

There are two main types of evaluation: predictive and retrospective. Predictive evaluation as explained by Ellis (1997: 39) is "designed to make a decision regarding what materials to use". This kind of evaluation can be carried out by expert reviewers or by teachers themselves through following guidelines or checklists available to help them. In this regard, the procedures will be the checklists or the available guidelines.

On the other hand, retrospective evaluation is "designed to examine materials that have actually been used", Ellis (1997: 36). It can be impressionistic or empirical. It helps

determining whether to use the materials again or not; whether the reaction of material is accepted or not; and if there is any need to adapt.

### ***2.3 Methodology and Evaluation Procedure***

As mentioned previously, a predictive evaluation will be carried out in this task. The procedure that helps to conduct this study is a checklist adopted by the researcher to evaluate the textbook in hand. The checklist is based on Cunningsworth (1995), Nunan (1991), Sheldon (1988), Williams (1983) and Harmer (2001). The adopted checklist is as follows:

- Factual details about the textbook
- Rationale of the textbook (syllabus, aims, needs and methodology)
- Layout and design
- Content
  - topics
  - language content (grammar and vocabulary)
  - language skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing)
  - text types
  - cultural appropriacy
  - authenticity
- Methodology
- Workbook

### ***2.4 The rationale of the evaluation***

The rationale behind evaluating a textbook is to adopt or adapt it. In this task, the rationale of evaluating Blue Skies 6 is an attempt to find out its appropriacy to be taught in Yemeni schools. The appropriacy in various directions such as the aims, approaches, technics, the age, level of the students, learner's needs as well as the available time.

## **3. An Analysis of the textbook**

### ***3.1 Factual Details about the Textbook***

Blue Skies is a seven-level English course and the book in hand is the six course in its series. It is written by Ron Holt with Anne Worrall and published by Pearson Education Limited in 1990. It provides a student's book, audio cassettes, workbook and teacher's book.

Blue Skies 6 has polished and colorful pages. The front cover of the book seems to show a variety of human activities through pictures with the name of the book above. The same can be seen on the back cover of the book but with written sentences that give headlines about the contents and the book targets.

The book contains 96 pages. Twenty units exist in Blue Skies 6 as any other textbook of the series. Each unit has one single theme which is introduced through different types of texts such as: rhymes, poems, songs, stories, cartoon, dialogues and practical tasks. Revision is continuous and is carried out in both the presentation and practice pages.

The students' book contains practice materials in each unit after each lesson. It also contains quizzes that provide an assessment activity covering every four units of study. The book is not expensive. Its cost is only 5 dollars. That means 1100 Y.R (Yemeni Rial). The four skills are covered in the units of the book. The students' book is prepared for young children. It is now being taught to the 8<sup>th</sup> primary class at AL\_Nawras Private Schools and some other private schools in Yemen. The researcher thinks there is compatibility between what the book is prepared for and what the book is used for actually. The publisher of the book provides the website to which one can refer i.e. [www.longman.com](http://www.longman.com). The availability of the information about the book series on the world wide web is a good point.

### ***3.2 The rationale of the textbook***

Clearly speaking, Blue Skies 6 as has been mentioned by the authors aims at providing all the important basic grammar and communicative activities needed to give young children a strong and successful start in English.

It is clear that the book is commercial; the learners needs of the Yemeni students are not reflected perfectly, but the textbook, to some extent, fits the Yemeni learners needs at this age. The book is attractive with its colorful and soft papers, illustrations and a variety of activities which touch the learner's interests and desires.

### ***3.3 Layout and Design***

#### ***3.3.1 Overall layout and design of the textbook***

It has been mentioned previously in the factual details in (3.1) that the it is divided into 20 units. Each unit presents language and activities relating to a single theme and it is introduced through different types of texts. It also contains revision in a continuous way which is carried out in both the presentation or practice pages. In addition, there are 5 quizzes in each unit, which provide continual assessment tests. For each 4 units, there is a quiz (see pp. 82-91). Each quiz contains 4 questions to test the students' understanding of vocabulary and grammar as well as their development in the skills, mainly the two skills reading and writing through various activities and tasks. Furthermore, Blue Skies 6 provides graphic language reference section which contains graphic representation to illustrate the language and grammatical points that have been studied (see pp. 92-96). In this regard, eleven topics have been presented with various themes.

#### ***3.3.2 Layout and design for each unit***

One of the important advantages of the textbooks is that they grade language items and balance the basic skills in a way that suits the level of the learners in terms of units. Regarding this point, the units of Blue Skies 6 contain different types of texts through which the four skills are presented. In all of these units the four skills are covered. Each unit seems to have listening, reading, speaking and writing activities. For example, in unit 1 "They used candles", the listening task is given at the beginning of the unit and the reading task follows (listen & read). The second lesson concerns with the speaking task i.e., 2 (Ask and answer). In addition to that, task 3 collects the 3 skills that are: listening, reading and speaking (see pp.2-3). In relation to that, the three coming activities i.e. 4, 5 and 6 all concentrate on testing learner's understanding through a

writing task even at the word level as in 4 and 5 or at the sentence level as in task 6 (see pp. 4-5).

Another example that clarifies this point can be found in unit 8: "the natural world". In this unit, a reading task comes at the beginning of the unit, which is followed by the speaking task in terms of asking and answering; then task 3 consists of two activities that serve the listening and reading skills and again the unit comes back to the speaking skill in terms of (ask and answer), see pp. 30-31 or (Appendix 2a and b). The writing skill exists directly even at the word level as in tasks 5 and 8 or at the sentence or paragraph level as in task 6 p. 32.

In all of these twenty units graphics play an important role to enhance the learner's desire to look at the units and also to enhance learner's understanding of both written and spoken texts.

### ***3.4 The Textbook contents***

In any coursebook, the content constitutes the core of that course. It gives a clear picture about what is being taught. The content of the coursebook reaches its success if the learners' needs and expectations have been taken into account. In this regard, evaluating the content components is a vital step in evaluating a textbook. These components include topics, language skills, language content, text types, cultural appropriacy and authenticity. These things will be checked in Blue Skies 6 in the following section.

#### ***3.4.1 Topics***

Blue Skies 6 contains various topics. Each unit in this book goes around one single theme. Thus, there are 20 different themes, but each topic has been talked about under 2 subtopics in 2 separate lessons. These topics are past customs, the weather, space, travel, shopping, health and sickness, health tips, music, nature, dreams, making things, past events, jobs, directions, scary stories, the planets, pets, stories, safety, vacations and presents respectively (see Appendix 1). For example, the topic of the first unit "past customs" is taken under 2 subtopics in 2 separate lessons, i.e. "They used candles and turn it on". The same can be said with the last topic "safety".

Blue Skies 6 seems to be good at presenting these various topics and I think its topics suit the Yemeni learners' situation.

#### ***3.4.2 Language content***

Academically speaking, language content is an important issue in evaluating any textbook. This importance is derived from the point that a careful selection of the language content builds the linguistic competence which is fundamental to achieve communicative competence if it is presented appropriately. The different texts, activities and tasks are considered as a vehicle to enable the learners to acquire the language content. Regarding this point, I will try to evaluate the grammatical and lexical items in Blue Skies 6.

##### ***3.4.2.1 Lexical Items***

In addition to what I have mentioned at introducing content evaluation, vocabulary cannot be neglected since that a "sustained communication is virtually impossible

without access to a relevant and fairly wide range of vocabulary" Cunningsworth (1995: 38). Therefore, evaluating lexical items included in coursebook is a vital work. In relation to that, Blue Skies 6 seems to provide students with familiar words used in their daily life. Furthermore, it provides them with unfamiliar words that they will inevitably meet. According to the criteria of frequency with regard to the lexical syllabus, the lexical items have been selected. The authors of the book seem to pay attention to the teaching of words, phrases, compounds, collocations and routines or fixed expressions. In other words, the lexical items seem to be presented through the texts.

A detailed discussion of this point will take place under the point of methodology.

#### 3.4.2.2 Grammar

Grammatical structures have a very important position in building any language content, so taking in to consideration the grammatical items in any textbook reflects its value. Therefore, evaluating grammatical components is an important issue. Regarding Blue Skies 6, the authors claim, as it stated by them on the back cover, that this book provides basic grammar to give young children a strong and successful start in English. The book contains various topics in grammar such as: present simple, past simple, imperatives, present perfect, comparatives, past continuous, adverbs of manner, indirect object, superlatives, negative imperatives, and many other grammatical structure which can be seen easily in the table of the content in the front inside cover of the book.

It also seems that the grammatical items are graded in all of the twenty units in a balanced way. The grammatical items have been graded with consideration of the complexity and simplicity. In other words, grammatical items that are considered simple come before those considered to be complex. For example, present simple and past simple tense in unit: 1, pp. 2 and 3 have been presented before present perfect which comes later in unit: 7, p. 26. The same can be said about the past continuous which comes in unit: 9, p.34. In addition to that, the comparatives are presented in unit: 6, p.22 and the superlatives come later in unit: 15, p.58.

Regarding the suitability, grammatical items, which are presented in Blue Skies 6, seem to be suitable for the Yemeni learners at this level, since they provide fundamental grammar patterns which help the learner to underlie upon them in the next levels.

#### 3.4.3 Language skills

Language contents usually comes in the framework of the four basic skills i.e. Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing. To put it in another way, language content even grammatical or lexical is mostly presented and practiced through the language skills. So, paying attention to the language skills in evaluating any textbook is important. This close relation between the language content and language skills is referred to by Cunningsworth (1995). He explains:

"the knowledge base of grammar, lexis, etc. and the skill base of listening, speaking etc. must go hand –in- hand and coursebook should develop student's skills in using English every bit as much as they help to

develop student's knowledge (explicit or not) of the system of English" (P.64).

In addition to that, the 4 basic skills even receptive skills (Reading & Listening) or the productive (Writing & Speaking) are necessary.

In the following sections, I am going to look at the language skills in Blue Skies 6.

#### *3.4.3.1 Listening*

In most of the coursebooks, there are 2 ways through which the listening skill is presented. The first way is as a part of an oral work such as dialogues and role-play. In other words, the listening skill occupies a secondary function or it supplies the reading comprehension of learners. In the second way, listening skill is represented in terms of listening passages for comprehension; for extraction of information or connected with reading texts.

Regarding this point, Blue skies 6 represented listening skill in the both cases. It is represented independently through a direct task in which the learner is asked to listen to a cassette then it is supplied by another reading text, see unit 1, lesson 1, p. 2 or unit 2, lesson 1, p. 6 (Appendices 3a & b). This case includes 12 tasks. On the other hand, it has been presented having a secondary function in 30 tasks. In other words, listening supports another task or activity such as checking a reading comprehension text (see unit: 7, lesson 1/3, pp.26-27. Another function is to provide correct pronunciation and intonation (see unit:15, lesson 5, p.61) or Appendix 3b.

All in all, listening in Blue Skies 6 takes place sufficiently and appropriately, because in this grade listening is very important to provide a correct start in English language pronunciation, stress and intonation.

#### *3.4.3.2 Reading*

Reading is a receptive skill, which involves the learner's activity. It is a demanding skill. Through different reading texts in courses, lexical and grammar items can be presented. Sometimes, especially in advanced levels, reading provides a model of writing and gives information or evokes and stimulates oral work. Nearly, in most of the coursebooks, reading skill is presented in three ways:

1. It may come in an isolated manner in which learners are asked to read a given text and answer questions for the purpose of comprehension.
2. It may be connected to a listening task, in which reading is a secondary task supplies the listening task.
3. It may come having a primary function supplied by a listening task for more comprehensible understanding.

Regarding these three cases, it seems that reading has been covered in all of the twenty units of Blue Skies 6 in two reading texts except three units i.e. 4,12 and 13, since unit 4 and 12 have three reading text each, while unit 13 has only one reading text. That means, Blue Skies 6 contains 61 reading texts.

Regarding the way in which the reading skill is presented, it seems that the book in hand covers the three ways. For example, in 10 lessons of the book the reading texts

supply the listening text (see unit 1, lesson 2, p.2); in forty-nine lessons the reading tasks come primarily and it is supplied by a listening task (see unit 20, lessons 1 and 2, pp.78-79) and it comes in an isolation of any listening task in only two lessons in terms of exercises (see unit 4, lesson 6, p.17).

It is also clear that different purposes are covered through the reading tasks in Blue Skies 6 such as presenting grammatical items (see unit 5, lesson 1, p.18), or vocabulary items (see unit 12, lesson 3, p.47); providing a model of writing (see unit 8, pp. 13-32) or stimulating an oral work (see unit 16, lesson 2, p.62).

In general, it seems that Blue Skies 6 presents the reading skill appropriately with a careful regard to the purposes behind them in a balanced way in all of the twenty units.

#### 3.4.3.3 Speaking

Speaking is a productive skill. To some extent, it reflects the learner's ability to produce the target language items orally. It is considered as a sign by which we can judge upon the learner's linguistic and communicative competence. Therefore, good coursebooks emphasize tasks and activities that help learners to talk providing them with the needed language content, an appropriate language model of pronunciation, stress and intonation and provide a suitable method that caters for the learners' age, level and aims of learning. Thus, in evaluating any textbook, speaking is a primary point.

In Blue Skies 6, speaking is contributed in all of the 20 units except unit 15 (see pp.58-59). In all of these units, speaking is practiced firstly through the language items, which are presented through a reading or listening texts. It seems that speaking activities come in a framework of a question (ask and answer) in all of the 20 units. In most of all these units, speaking tasks come to check learners' understanding of the previous text (see unit 1, lesson 2, p.2). Sometimes, it comes to practice new vocabulary items and to develop learners' ability of vocabulary memorization (see Appendix 5). In addition to that, it seems that the book in hand emphasizes the communicative practice mainly in pairs and groups (see unit 13.p53) or Appendix 5, too.

Generally, the way in which Blue Skies 6 deals with the speaking skill, it seems to be appropriate for Yemeni learners' situation.

#### 3.4.3.4 Writing

As a productive skill, writing is very important to be looked at in evaluating any coursebook, because writing, like speaking, is a sign of the learner's language capacity. In other words, writing enables the learner to appropriately formulate what s/he has learnt and helps the teacher to test the appropriacy of the methodology s/he applies. In addition, writing includes 2 types: at the sentence level and at the discourse level. In this regard, most of the coursebooks at the primary and intermediate levels aims at enabling the learner to write in the scope of the sentence level to the writing of a short composition.

In this regard, writing activities and tasks in Blue Skies 6 exist in all of the twenty units for different purposes. Sometimes, it comes with a focus on the word spelling ( see unit 2, lesson 5, p.8) or Appendix 6a; writing sentences (see unit 3, lesson 5, p.12) and short paragraph composition (see unit 19, p.76) or Appendix 6 b. Accordingly, it seems that most of the writing activities in Blue Skies 6 are preceded by a model of written text to be followed. This helps learners at this level to acquire a correct start in English writing especially in our Yemeni situations.

#### **3.4.4 Text Types**

The diversity of text types in any textbook makes teaching and learning classroom more interesting. Blue Skies 6 seems to contain different text types and different genres. The book contains argumentative texts which come in a framework of conversations that can be seen in most, if not all, of the units with different types of genre. For example, the argumentative text with social purpose in unit 1, p.2 and the instructional text type in unit 2, p.6. In addition, narrative texts in different genre exist. For example, unit 9, p.34 and unit 90, p.75. Furthermore, scientific and literary texts exist. Example of this can be seen in unit 15, pp.58-59.

Thus, Blue Skies 6 contains different types of texts and this makes it very useful and raises its linguistic value. However, it seems that there is no balance in the quantity of the text types. Precisely, conversational texts are used in a condensed way more than any other text types.

#### **3.4.5 Cultural Appropriacy**

Language means culture and culture builds identity. Thus, there is a crucial significance of the cultural aspects in any textbook. In the field of second language learning, avoiding the target language culture is inevitable. Therefore, in selecting a coursebook, sponsors should be aware of this point and try to select those courses which develop both the linguistic and communicative competence and have no contradiction with the target students' culture.

In relation to this, Blue Skies 6 as a commercial coursebook in the global market, prepared for children, seems to have the maximum acceptable standardized cultural norms. However, with regard to our heritage Islamic and Yemeni situations, there are some cultural aspects that seems to be inappropriate. All the people names are foreign. No single Arabic name. The way in which women and girls drown, in some situations, contradicts Yemeni customs and traditions. In addition, there are some pictures that seems to be un acceptable especially for those who are teenagers. Examples of this can be shown in unit 12, lesson 5, p.49 or lesson 8, p.65.

Blue Skies 6 seems to be suitable for the Yemeni situation, and those few things that in some others opinions regarded as inappropriate for teenagers, will be of the responsibility of the teacher of the course to point them out and explain their inappropriacy in an acceptable and polite way.

### 3.4.6 Authenticity

Authentic materials in any textbook even print, audio or video, help bringing reality into the classroom; provide natural language use and cultural information; enhance classroom interaction and increase motivation if the chooser of the authentic materials considers the needs and interests of the learners, the utility of the available information, the cultural knowledge, the level of language difficulty and the degree of the text organization. So, evaluating the authentic materials should not be avoided.

Regarding this point, Blue Skies 6, seems to use authentic materials rarely. Let us classify the authentic materials to what we have mentioned above i.e. print, audio and video. In case of the printed materials, there are some authentic pictures that are presented in various units. For example, the picture in unit 6, p.25, which is frequently used in unit 10, p.41; the picture in unit 15, pp. 58-59 and the messages in unit 19 p.75.

In case of the audio cassettes, Blue Skies 6 includes cassettes that present dialogues, poems, stories and songs that are found in the students' book providing an authentic model of pronunciation, stress and intonation which is recorded by native speakers. However, no video materials are used.

To some extent, I can say that the authentic materials in Blue Skies 6 are useful and acceptable but an emphasis should be given to the authentic printed materials such as: small newspapers' articles, greeting cards, letters, maps, telephone, stamps, school notices etc.; taking into consideration the level of the learners.

### 3.5 Methodology

In evaluating any textbook, it is not sufficient to look at "**What**" the coursebook contains i.e. the **Content**, but also "**How**", the **Methodology**. To put it in another way, evaluating how the lexical items, grammatical items and the language skills are dealt with and through what kind of activities and tasks they are presented is demanding. In addition to that, it is one of the functions of the textbook to present the language in a way that is learned quickly and efficiently as comprehensible as possible.

In this important section of evaluation, the researcher explained the approach adopted, techniques and tasks exploited.

A close look at Blue Skies 6 reveals that the approach adopted is the **Communicative Approach**. It is clear that language is learnt within a framework of students-centered themes. Students learn and use relevant language in a meaningful way making language learning stimulating, purposeful and communicative. To be more clear, students learn by building a known language, concepts and activities, so their language develops progressively.

In Blue Skies 6, both lexical and grammatical items are presented inductively. In other words, grammar and vocabulary are presented within a context through meaningful communicative activities.

Regarding presenting the vocabulary items, it seems that the lexical knowledge is attached to "functional language use" e.g. giving address in unit 13, lesson 2, p.51 or see Appendix 7 a; asking for names of things unit 14, lesson 5, p.57. In addition the lexical items are also attached to grammar which is clear from the section of language reference on page 92 (see lesson 10, p.96) or Appendix 7 b. Moreover, Blue Skies 6 includes a variety of task-based lessons that mainly intend to enhance the lexical knowledge of the learners. Examples of this kind can be seen in unit 8 or p.33, Appendix 7 c., unit 10, p.40 (see Appendix 7 d).

Regarding presenting the grammatical items, it seems that Blue Skies 6 presents them in context and practices them in an oral pair or group work (see unit 1, lesson 2, p.2), or through a writing task (see unit 2, lesson 4, p.7).

In all of the units, the Top-down approach is followed in teaching the language contents. In few cases, the opposite happens. That means the Bottom-up approach is followed especially in presenting vocabulary items such as in unit 2, tasks 5 and 6, p.89.

In the point of the methodology adopted in case of presenting language skills, it seems that the book in hand tends to focus on both accurate and fluent communication and the promotion of integrated language skills practice.

A more positive characteristic of the integrated syllabus within Blue skies 6 is the fact that the linguistic elements of the textbook are closely connected to the skill-based tasks and activities. This is clear in all of the units of Blue Skies 6.

A deep look at Blue Skies 6 reveals that variety of tasks and activities have been applied such as listening tasks (see unit 4, p.14); a crossword tasks to check spelling and develop thinking (see unit 3, p.13) or Appendix 7 e; filling gap tasks (se unit 20, p.80) or Appendix 7 f; game tasks (see p.53) or Appendix 5; and pair work speaking task in all of the units. In addition to that, it seems that the **ppp** (present, practice and produce) method is applied. Nearly, in all of the units in Blue Skies 6 the learners are given a reading text which is supplied by a listening tape (or vice versa), in which grammatical or vocabulary items are presented. Then, a pair work task is given through which these given items are practiced. Finally, learners are asked to produce a similar language items through different tasks such as filling gaps, playing a game or writing tasks at the sentence level or paragraph level.

Regarding the point of learning strategies, it seems that the book in hand supplies learners with different learning strategies according to the target skill. That can be seen from those shapes that have been drawn before each task or activity. For example, before each writing task there is a picture of a pen; a picture of a laughing and thinking man before each speaking task; a tape before each listening task; a book before each reading task and many other shapes according to some sup-skills.

Regarding the Yemeni situation, it seems that Blue Skies 6 deals with both the language content and the language skills in a way that suits our Yemeni students. The

researcher thinks, it will achieve what the authors of the book aim to fulfill if the tasks and activities are carefully and efficiently applied.

### 3.6 Workbook

The authors and the publisher of Blue Skies 6 provide a workbook, which is written by the same authors of the students' book i.e. Ron Holt and Worrall in 1999. It consists of 48 pages with uncolored polished papers, which have the same size of the students' book. It seems that the WB provides a range of optional additional exercises and activities, which reinforce learning of the target language. In addition, the WB can be used in the classroom, if there is time, and it may also be used for homework assignments and the former is the case in our Yemeni schools. Furthermore, in Blue Skies WB 6, there are language reference sections with additional exercises relating to the presentation of language structure. So, it seems that WB 6 supports the process of learning and teaching in and out of the classroom.

## 4. Conclusion and Recommendations

In conclusion, it seems that Blue Skies 6 provides an adequate language content, which is presented in a suitable methodology. The balance of the basic skills in the units and the diversity of tasks and activities increase the value of this book. In addition, the variety of topics presented which, most if not all, suit our Yemeni situation in and out of the classroom adds another advantage to the previous ones. Furthermore, the cultural aspects which are presented in the textbook in hand do not contradict our Islamic, Arabic, or Yemeni culture with small exceptions that do not limit the value of this commercial coursebook. Thus, the researcher concludes that Blue Skies 6 suits our Yemeni students at this primary level. However, this suitability does not mean that there is no need for adapting some points in this coursebook. Therefore, these few recommendations should be taken into consideration:

1. More authentic materials should be added to Blue Skies 6, but it should be selected with regard to the level, age and cultural background of the Yemeni learners.
2. Tasks and activities in Blue Skies 6 should be applied perfectly as possible as the teacher can.
3. The teacher should be aware of the textbook goals and aims and also the strategies adopted to achieve those aims and goals.

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