

# Nhận thức của giảng viên tiếng Anh về giáo trình *Voices* (trình độ Pre-Intermediate)

## ABSTRACT

Trong nhiều chương trình giảng dạy tiếng Anh (ELT), sách giáo khoa đóng vai trò then chốt. Vì vậy, việc đánh giá sách giáo khoa là một phần thiết yếu trong quá trình dạy và học. Trong nghiên cứu này, chúng tôi khảo sát ý kiến của giảng viên về những điểm mạnh, hạn chế và mức độ phù hợp của giáo trình *Voices* (trình độ Pre-Intermediate) nhằm làm xác định tính hiệu quả của việc sử dụng giáo trình này với các khóa học tiếng Anh dành cho sinh viên không chuyên tại Trường Đại học Quy Nhơn. Khảo sát được thực hiện với sự tham gia của 24 giảng viên tiếng Anh thuộc Khoa Ngoại ngữ, Trường Đại học Quy Nhơn. Dữ liệu được thu thập thông qua bảng câu hỏi mở được triển khai bằng Google Forms. Kết quả nghiên cứu cho thấy, mặc dù giáo trình còn tồn tại một số hạn chế nhưng nhìn chung vẫn phù hợp với mục tiêu đào tạo và bối cảnh dạy - học tại Trường Đại học Quy Nhơn. Bên cạnh đó, nghiên cứu này cũng là nguồn tài liệu tham khảo hữu ích cho những ai quan tâm đến việc sử dụng giáo trình này trong các bối cảnh tương tự.

**Keywords:** *giáo trình, Voices (Pre-Intermediate), sinh viên không chuyên, nhận thức của giảng viên, đánh giá*

# Perceptions of English Teachers of the Textbook Voices (Pre-Intermediate)

## ABSTRACT

In many English language teaching (ELT) programmes, textbooks play a crucial role, so textbook evaluation is an essential part in the process of teaching and learning. In this study, we investigate teachers' views on the strengths, limitations, and overall suitability of the textbook *Voices (Pre-Intermediate)* in order to shed some light on whether the use of the textbook is suitable for English courses of non-English majors at Quy Nhon University. 24 English lecturers from Foreign Languages Department at Quy Nhon University took part in the survey. Data were collected through an open-ended questionnaire administered via Google Forms, allowing for rich, descriptive responses. The findings reveal that although there are some weaknesses, the textbook is essentially relevant to the training objectives and the teaching-learning context at Quy Nhon University. In addition, this study is also useful source of reference for those who are interested in using this textbook with similar contexts.

**Keywords:** *Textbooks, Voices (Pre-Intermediate), non-English majors, teachers' perceptions, evaluation*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

In many English language teaching (ELT) programmes, textbooks and instructional materials play an important role because they often act as the main source of syllabus design, language input, and classroom practice.<sup>1,2</sup> According to Mukundan et al.,<sup>3</sup> the materials selected can significantly influence the quality of teaching and learning, and whether the course achieves its intended goals. However, no single textbook can fully meet the needs of every teaching context.<sup>4,5</sup> Therefore, the evaluation and adaption of a coursebook are must-do tasks to ensure the teaching and learning quality. The real value of a coursebook often lies in how it is viewed and used by teachers and learners because they can reveal how well the textbook works in practice and whether any changes or adaptations are necessary.

The textbook *Voices (Pre-Intermediate)*, published by National Geographic Learning, has been used at Quy Nhon University for English 1 and English 2 courses of non-English majors since the academic year 2022-2023. According to the publisher, the coursebook aims to "help students find their own voice in English" by promoting intercultural awareness and meaningful communication. It integrates the four skills through real-world topics, audio-visual input, and task-

based learning activities. However, since the adoption of the new coursebook, there is no formal research carried out to evaluate its relevance to training objectives. Therefore, by examining teachers' views on the strengths, limitations, and overall suitability of the textbook, this study aimed to shed some light on whether the use of *Voices Pre-intermediate* is suitable for English courses of non-English majors at Quy Nhon University.

## 2. MAIN CONTENT

### 2.1. Literature review

Tomlinson claimed,<sup>6</sup> "a coursebook is a textbook including work on grammar, vocabulary, functions, and the skills of reading, writing, listening and speaking which provides the core materials for a course". The term "coursebook" is sometimes associated with text materials as it has been specially selected and exploited for teaching purposes by teachers, particularly in the local setting. Therefore, the terms 'textbook', 'coursebook', and 'materials' are frequently used interchangeably. Owing to their crucial role in language teaching and learning, the selection of a textbook usually involves a textbook evaluation process.<sup>7,8</sup> In addition, Ellis points out two reasons for carrying out textbook evaluation:<sup>9</sup> the need of choosing the most suitable material for a particular situation, and the need of evaluating materials to

determine whether or not the materials work effectively in teaching and learning process.

With surging demand for learning English worldwide, there also has been a growing interest in ELT textbook evaluation in various EFL contexts. For instance, Alemi and Mesbah conducted a study to examine the pedagogical value and suitability of the textbook *Top Notch* used in some of the Iranian English language institutions. The results showed that both teachers and students felt that the textbook was a useful teaching and learning tool that met students' needs, but the textbook did have shortcomings such as lack of vocabulary glossary and ineffective grammar presentation.<sup>10</sup> Gutiérrez-Bermúdez evaluated *New English File: Elementary* and identified strengths such as clear structure and engaging activities but also weaknesses in authenticity.<sup>11</sup> Gedik-Bal assessed *New Language Leader* through an intercultural lens, finding appreciation for topic diversity but noting limited depth of cultural awareness.<sup>12</sup> Yazici and Setiawan similarly reported that while commercial series often excel in design and skill coverage, they may require significant teacher adaptation to meet local learners' needs and proficiency.<sup>13,14</sup> The findings of these international studies indicated that many global ELT series are well-designed pedagogically but that they rarely fit local contexts perfectly without teacher mediation.

In the Vietnamese higher-education context, scholars have started assessing how well international coursebooks suit non-English major students. Nguyen carried out an evaluation of *Market Leader*, used for students at Hai Phong University. The researcher found that there were some dissatisfactions in using the textbook meanwhile she proposed some suggestions for further study.<sup>15</sup> According to Nguyen,<sup>16</sup> students found it difficult to communicate with foreign cultural allusions and a large vocabulary despite the communicative objectives provided by international series like *Cutting Edge*. Le observed frequent teacher adaptations of global textbooks to align with local syllabuses and student levels.<sup>17</sup> Pham highlighted the direct relationship between students' perceptions of materials and their motivation.<sup>18</sup> students' positive perceptions were correlated with higher engagement. However, most Vietnamese studies have targeted a small set of popular series (e.g., *Cutting Edge*, *Life*, *New*

*English File*), leaving other recently adopted books understudied.

In order to evaluate the quality and effectiveness of English language teaching (ELT) materials, scholars have proposed different frameworks. Grant emphasized the importance of conducting evaluation both prior to textbook adoption (*pre-use evaluation*) and during classroom implementation (*in-use evaluation*). Therefore, he argued that a good coursebook should be Practical, Realistic, Appropriate, and Tried and tested (PRAT), thereby focusing on real classroom applicability and relevance to learners' needs.<sup>19</sup> In *Choosing Your Coursebook*, Cunningsworth proposed a framework focused on the balance of the four skills, the appropriacy of content to learners' age and objectives, the methodological validity of the approaches promoted by the textbook, and the adaptability of the materials to different teaching contexts.<sup>1</sup>

Later, Demir and Ersöz proposed a framework for textbook evaluation in the light of communicative language teaching (CLT). They placed emphasis on the authenticity of materials, the promotion of communicative competence, and the representation of culture. By doing so, they underscored the importance of textbooks in preparing learners for real-life communication and intercultural interaction rather than focusing solely on linguistic form.<sup>5</sup>

Expanding the scope of textbook evaluation further, Tomlinson argued that effective materials must also consider psychological and affective dimensions of learning. He proposed that good textbooks should engage learners emotionally, foster curiosity and motivation, promote meaningful communication, and adopt a learner-centered orientation. Importantly, Tomlinson emphasized the distinction between *language learning* and *language acquisition*, contending that well-designed materials should provide opportunities for natural language uptake rather than only mechanical practice.<sup>4,20</sup>

To investigate teachers' perceptions of the *Voices* (Pre-Intermediate) textbook used in teaching English 1 and English 2 to non-English majors at Quy Nhon University, this study uses a framework taken together from those of Grant, Cunningsworth, Demir and Ersöz.<sup>1,5,19</sup> These frameworks provide a valuable basis for analysis. They allow for a comprehensive exploration of the

textbook's strengths and limitations in terms of content, methodology, communicative orientation, cultural representation, and motivational impact within the Vietnamese tertiary context.

## 2.2. Methodology

This study was conducted at Quy Nhon University, Vietnam in May, 2025. In Quy Nhon University's curriculum, English subject accounts for 07 credits, which are distributed into two courses namely English 1 and English 2. The objectives of the courses are: by the end of these courses, students are expected to achieve the English language proficiency standard of B1 according to the Common European Framework for Reference (CEFR).

24 participants, comprising 03 males (12.5%) and 21 females (87.5%), were English lecturers from Foreign Languages Department at Quy Nhon University. All participants had obtained a master's degree in either ELT or applied linguistics. Their teaching experience ranged from 4 to 24 years. On average, the participants have taught English using *Voices (Pre-Intermediate)* textbook for 6 semesters. Purposive sampling was applied to ensure that only teachers with direct teaching experience of the textbook were included.

This investigation adopted a mixed-methods design combining Likert-scale measures with open-ended responses to investigate English teachers' perceptions of the *Voices (Pre-Intermediate)* textbook because they capture both the breadth (quantitative patterns) and depth (qualitative insights) of perceptions.

A questionnaire was employed to investigate English teachers' perceptions of the *Voices (Pre-Intermediate)* textbook used in English 1 and 2 courses for non-English major students at Quy Nhon University. It consisted of three parts: (1) Personal Information (demographic and professional background), (2) Perceptions of the Textbook (25 Likert-scale items covering six domains: content and relevance, language skills, methodology and feasibility, culture, motivation and engagement, and learning outcomes), and (3) Overall Perceptions and Suggestions (two Likert-scale items and three open-ended questions on strengths, weaknesses, and improvements). The

checklist ends up with open-ended questions to allow the participants to express their views and elaborate on different issues in the survey if they like. The questionnaire was deemed to have high reliability as previous studies which also adapted the questionnaire reported Cronbach Alpha Coefficients 0.82. This combination of quantitative and qualitative items allowed for both statistical analysis and richer insights into teachers' views of the textbook.

Data were collected in June, 2025. The questionnaire was administered online (via Google Forms) to accommodate participants' preferences. Questionnaire responses were processed using SPSS version 26.0. Descriptive statistics such as means, standard deviations, and frequencies were used to summarize teachers' perceptions. Additionally, Cronbach's Alpha was used to assess the internal consistency and reliability of the questionnaire. Meanwhile, qualitative responses from open-ended questions were analyzed using thematic analysis to highlight teachers' perceived strengths, weaknesses, and recommendations regarding the *Voices (Pre-Intermediate)* textbook.

## 2.3. Findings and discussion

The relevance and appropriateness of content play a decisive role in the quality of the teaching-learning process and in achieving desired learning outcomes. (Mukundan,2011). The first part of the survey questionnaire aims to get teachers' perceptions on the *Content and Relevance* dimension (Q1–Q4) of the textbook.

### 2.3.1. Teachers' perceptions on Content and Relevance

**Table 1.** Teachers' perceptions on Content and Relevance

Item statistic
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Criteria	Mean	SD	N
1.The content of the textbook matches the objectives of English 1 and 2 courses.	4.42	0.50	24
2.The topics are practical and relevant to non-English major students.	4.08	0.65	24
3.Vocabulary and grammar structures are appropriate for the students' level.	4.17	0.56	24
4.The textbook reflects real-life communicative situations students may encounter.	4.63	0.49	24

It can be seen in Table 1 that the participants generally perceived the textbook positively. The mean scores ranged from 4.08 to 4.63, demonstrating strong agreement across the four items. They particularly strongly agreed ( $M = 4.63$ ) that the textbook accurately depicts real-life communication situations, underscoring its validity and usefulness. Additionally, they thought the material was in line with the goals of the English 1 and 2 courses ( $M = 4.42$ ), which are to give students a strong foundation in language proficiency and cultural understanding at the pre-intermediate level. They also agreed and strongly agreed that the

vocabulary and grammar are appropriate for their students' proficiency level ( $M = 4.17$ ). This is supported by the textbook's systematic presentation of grammar and vocabulary within meaningful contexts. The themes' practicality and relevance, however, had the lowest mean ( $M = 4.08$ ), suggesting that although participants thought the topics were generally helpful, minor improvements could be made to further enhance topic relevance.

### 2.3.2. Teachers' perceptions on the Language Skills

**Table 2.** Teachers' perceptions on the Language Skills

Item statistic			
Criteria	Mean	SD	N
5. The textbook provides a balanced coverage of the four skills (listening, speaking, reading, writing).	4.25	0.68	24
6. The listening materials are at an appropriate level of difficulty.	3.75	0.68	24
7. Speaking activities create opportunities for meaningful communication.	4.50	0.51	24
8. The reading texts are varied in topics and useful for knowledge expansion.	4.42	0.50	24
9. The writing tasks are scaffolded and help students improve writing skills.	4.17	0.82	24
10.Pronunciation practice is integrated into the lessons, helping students develop accuracy and intelligibility.	4.50	0.51	24

Similar to their evaluation of Content and Relevance, overall, the teachers responded relatively favorably to the 6 items concerning Language skills of the textbook, as summarized in Table 2. The mean scores ranged from 3.75 to 4.50, indicating that most items were rated highly. More specifically, speaking activities ( $M = 4.50$ ) and pronunciation practice ( $M = 4.50$ ) received the strongest agreement, with teachers agreed or strongly agreed with the fact that the textbook provides meaningful opportunities for oral communication and helps improve pronunciation accuracy. Furthermore, the participants gave

reading materials a positive rating ( $M = 4.42$ ), believing that they enhanced their students' knowledge and covered a variety of topics. The responses to writing exercises were more varied even though they received a favorable score ( $M = 4.17$ ), suggesting that while many teachers believed the scaffolding was helpful, others argued that their students would have major challenges in developing their writing abilities.

### 2.3.3. Teachers' perceptions on the Methodology & Feasibility

**Table 3.** Teachers' perceptions on the Methodology & Feasibility

Item statistic
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Criteria	Mean	SD	N
11. The teaching methodology suggested in the textbook is feasible in my teaching context.	3.83	0.56	24
12. Classroom activities are manageable within the given lesson time.	4.08	0.58	24
13. I can easily adapt or supplement the textbook to fit my students' needs.	4.17	0.48	24
14. The textbook supports individual, pair, and group work effectively.	4.04	0.55	24

As summarized in Table 3, among the four items evaluating Methodology & Feasibility in the textbook, Items 13, 12 and 14 had a mean score of 4.17, 4.08, and 4.04 respectively, which shows a very high distribution of the teachers choosing agree or strongly agree rating options. These indicated that nearly all the teachers thought that the activities in the textbook were appropriate and feasible in terms of time allocation, students' learning needs and a variety of interaction patterns

in the classroom. The lowest rating was for Item 11 ("The teaching methodology suggested in the textbook is feasible in my teaching context"), whose the mean score was 3.83 (SD = 0.56), showing that most teachers considered the methodology applicable, though some expressed reservations.

#### 2.3.4. Teachers' perceptions on Culture & Intercultural Awareness

**Table 4.** Teachers' perceptions on Culture & Intercultural Awareness

Item statistic			
Criteria	Mean	SD	N
15. The textbook introduces a variety of cultural aspects.	4.50	0.51	24
16. The cultural content is understandable for Vietnamese students.	4.21	0.59	24
17. The textbook encourages students to compare Vietnamese and international cultures	3.88	0.68	24

The findings for the next three items regarding the textbook's cultural content were presented in Table 4. The majority of participants in this study found that the textbook introduces a variety of cultural aspects (M = 4.50). They also found the cultural content understandable for Vietnamese learners (M = 4.21), suggesting that the material is accessible and relevant to their context. However, Question 17, which assesses whether the textbook

encourages students to compare Vietnamese and international cultures, had a slightly lower average of 3.88, suggesting that while the textbook introduces cultural comparisons, they may not be consistently explicit or sufficiently developed.

#### 2.3.5. Teachers' perceptions on Motivation & Engagement

**Table 5.** Teachers' perceptions on Motivation & Engagement

Item statistic			
Criteria	Mean	SD	N
18. The textbook is engaging and keeps students' interest.	4.17	0.64	24
19. The content and activities motivate students to learn English.	4.13	0.54	24
20. Students show enthusiasm when participating in textbook-based activities.	4.29	0.46	24
21. The lessons contribute to creating a positive classroom learning environment	4.13	0.68	24

As summarized in Table 5, among the four items evaluating Motivation & Engagement in the textbook, items 20 and 18 had a mean score of 4.29 and 4.17, indicating that a very high distribution of

the teachers chose agree or strongly agree rating options. Respondents agreed that the textbook is particularly effective in capturing their students' interest and engaging. Additionally, item 19 and 21

had the same mean score of 4.13. The results highlight that the content and activities in the textbook motivate them to learn English and that lessons contribute positively to the classroom learning environment.

### 2.3.6. Teachers' perceptions on Development & Learning Outcomes

**Table 6.** Teachers' perceptions on Development & Learning Outcomes

Item statistic			
Criteria	Mean	SD	N
22.The textbook helps students develop communicative competence.	4.42	0.65	24
23.The textbook encourages students to study independently outside class.	4.08	0.51	24
24.The activities promote students' critical thinking.	4.33	0.56	24
25.The textbook increases students' confidence in using English.	4.13	0.54	24

Similar to their evaluation of above criteria, the teachers responded favorably to the 4 items concerning Skill Development & Learning Outcomes, as summarized in Table 6.

The 4 items evaluated had mean rating scores of above 4.0, indicating that most teachers had a rather positive evaluation of this aspect of Voices Pre-intermediate. Most of them either agreed or strongly agreed that the textbook makes a meaningful contribution to students' skill development and learning outcomes, particularly in developing communicative competence ( $M = 4.42$ ) and critical thinking ( $M = 4.33$ ). Respondents also reported that the textbook increases their students' confidence in using English ( $M = 4.13$ ) and encourages them both independent learning ( $M = 4.08$ ). These items received a low score within the group, suggesting that confidence-building and independent learning may not be as strongly reinforced as other skills.

### 2.3.7. Overall Perceptions

The overall evaluation reflects a generally positive perception of *Voices (Pre-Intermediate)*. They expressed high satisfaction with the textbook ( $M = 4.08$ ), with responses showing strong consistency and most also recommended its continued use in future courses for non-English majors ( $M = 4.11$ ).

### 2.3.8. Teachers' perceptions of strengths, weaknesses, and improvements of Voices (Pre-Intermediate)

Not all participants identified both the strengths and weaknesses of the textbook. The strengths and weaknesses of *Voices (Pre-Intermediate)* were presented in Tables 7 and 8 below. The strongest points, with the highest percentages, are balancing four skills and promoting critical thinking (75%). The most highly valued aspects are its balanced coverage of the four skills, its promotion of critical thinking. Additionally, following a logical progression in a lesson and coming with digital resources (66.7%) are the second strongest ones. However, no textbook is perfect and can be used in all language education circumstances. On the basis of perception of teachers, this book has some disadvantages. The findings reveal several drawbacks in using *Voices – Pre-intermediate* with non-English majors at Quy Nhon University. The listening tasks delivered at authentic speed (75.5%) and the brevity of grammar explanations (70.8%) are the most frequently mentioned issues because they may cause difficulties for lower-proficiency learners. They also found that the limited depth of intercultural comparisons (50.0%), the difficulty of implementing pair and group work in large classes (45.8%), and the relatively less developed writing tasks compared to other skills (41.7%) are challenges to the learners.

**Table 7.** Teachers' perceptions of strengths of Voices (Pre-Intermediate)

Items	Number	Frequency
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1.Focusing on real-world communication and developing students' voice in English.	13	54.2
2.Balancing coverage of the four skills (listening, speaking, reading, writing).	18	75.0
3.Offering a variety of individual, pair, and group activities, supported by digital resources (interactive eBook, audio, video)	11	45.8
4. Providing variety in text genres (articles, interviews, stories, blogs, dialogues) exposing students to authentic language.	15	62.5
5.Promoting critical thinking by encouraging learners to form and express opinions on real-world topics.	18	75.0
6.Integrating functional language (e.g., making suggestions, giving advice, agreeing/disagreeing) useful for real-life communication.	8	33.3
7. Using authentic or semi-authentic input in Listening activities, helping students get used to natural speed and accents.	7	29.2
8.Focusing on communicative Speaking tasks, often involving role-plays, debates, or problem-solving.	14	58.3
9. Following a logical progression (Lead-in → Input → Practice → Production), supporting classroom management.	16	66.7
10.Coming with digital resources (interactive eBook, audio, video, online practice).	16	66.7

**Table 8.** Teachers' perceptions of weaknesses of Voices (Pre-Intermediate)

Items	Number	Frequency
1.Some topics may feel too general or culturally distant for Vietnamese (or non-Western) students, reducing engagement.	7	29.2
2. While promoting intercultural awareness, the book does not always provide in-depth comparisons between local and global cultures.	12	50.0
3. The book is less suitable for very large classes, as pair/group work may become hard to monitor.	11	45.8
4. Listening tasks use authentic speed, which is beneficial, but can be difficult for lower-proficiency learners without enough scaffolding	18	75.5
5.Grammar explanations are brief and may require teachers to provide further clarification.	17	70.8
6. Writing tasks, though scaffolded, are sometimes less developed compared to reading and speaking.	10	41.7

As summarized in Table 9, the respondents suggested several improvements which could further enhance its effectiveness of the textbook in contexts of Quy Nhon university. Most of the teachers (75.5%) believed that the listening and writing components could be strengthened by offering more pre-listening scaffolding and more genre-based models and step-by-step guidance. 62.5% of the participants agreed that more grammar explanations, additional controlled

practice activities, and systematic vocabulary recycling should be provided to support lower-proficiency learners. They also recommended adapting activities for large-class settings by including more whole-class strategies and monitoring tips (33.3%), more activities to compare local and global cultures (33.3%) and incorporating more local and regional cultural content alongside international topics to make lessons more relatable for Vietnamese students (29.2%).

**Table 9.** Teachers' perceptions improvements of Voices (Pre-Intermediate)



Items	Number	Frequency
1. Incorporate more local and regional cultural content alongside international topics to make lessons more relatable for Vietnamese students.	7	29.2
2. Provide more activities to compare local and global cultures.	8	33.3
3. Adapt activities for large-class settings by including more whole-class strategies and monitoring tips.	8	33.3
4. Provide pre-listening scaffolding (e.g., key words, guiding questions) to reduce the difficulty of authentic-speed recordings.	18	75.5
5. Expand grammar explanations with clearer rules and more guided examples to support lower-level learners	15	62.5
6. Strengthen the writing component with more genre-based models, sample texts, and step-by-step support.	18	75.5

### 3. CONCLUSION

This study examined English teachers' perceptions of the textbook *Voices Pre-intermediate* used in English courses for non-English major students at Quy Nhon University. The results showed that the teachers generally had a positive evaluation of the textbook used to teach non-English majors in terms of content and relevance, language skills, methodology and feasibility, culture, motivation and engagement, and learning outcomes. These domains with positive aspects appear to meet the requirements of the English language courses for undergraduate students who do not major in English-specialized degrees. However, a few aspects of the textbook, including local and regional cultural content, activities for large-class settings, grammar explanations, listening and writing activities could be improved. The results also suggest that the textbook should be used in teaching English to non-English major students in the future courses.

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