

## Identifying The Extent of the Four Skills Inclusion in the New Headway Textbooks from the University's Lecturers' Perspectives

Researcher. Sawsan Kamil Olwei

College of Basic Education\ University of Babylon

[bas301.sausn.kamil@student.uobabylon.edu.iq](mailto:bas301.sausn.kamil@student.uobabylon.edu.iq)

Prof. Dr. Wi'am Majeed Mohammed

College of Agriculture\ Al-Qasim Green University

[weamaljubawii81@agre.uoqasim.edu.iq](mailto:weamaljubawii81@agre.uoqasim.edu.iq)

تحديد مدى إدماج المهارات الأربع في كتب **Headway** الطبعة الجديدة

من وجهة نظر اساتذة الجامعة

الباحثة. سوسن كامل علوي

كلية التربية الأساسية/ جامعة بابل

أ.د. وئام مجيد محمد

كلية الزراعة/ جامعة القاسم الخضراء

### الملخص

هدف الدراسة هو تحديد مدى المهارات الأربع المدرجة في كتب **New Head Way** ولتحقيق هدف الدراسة، تم وضع السؤال التالي: "إلى أي مدى تُدرج المهارات الأربع في كتب **New Headway**؟"، كان المشاركون ١٠٠ من أساتذة الجامعات من الذكور والإناث من ثماني جامعات في العراق، استُخدم الاستبيان لجمع البيانات، تم التحقق من صدق الأداة وثباتها، أظهرت النتائج أن نسب مهارات اللغة المدرجة في كتب **Headway** هي: التحدث ٨٢٪، القراءة ٧٩٪، الاستماع ٧٥٪، والكتابة ٦٨٪، يمكن أن يُعزى تضمين هذه النسب المتفاوتة إلى المنهج التواصلي، الذي يركز على التواصل والطلاقة في التحدث، الغرض من تعلم الطلاب للغة الإنجليزية هو من أجل التواصل والتحدث، ويتم قياس مستويات الطلاب من خلال طاقاتهم في التحدث، بعد أن يتقن الطلاب مهارة التحدث تأتي مهارة القراءة، في حين كان الاستماع والكتابة أقل لأن الهدف الأساسي من سلسلة الكتب هو التواصل.

الكلمات المفتاحية: سلسلة هيدوي، كتب اللغة الانجليزية، اراء اساتذة الجامعة.

### Abstract

The aim of this study is to identify the extent of the four skills inclusion in the New Head Way Text books, To achieve the aim of the study, the following question was set "To what extent are the four skills was included in the New Headway Textbooks?" The participants were 100 male and female university teachers from eight

universities in Iraq, a questionnaire was used as for data collecting, The validity and the reliability of the questionnaire were verified, The results revealed that the percentages of language skills included in the New Headway textbooks are: speaking 82%, reading 79%, listening 75%, and writing 68%, The inclusion of these varying percentages can be attributed to the Communicative Language Approach, which focuses on communication and fluency in speaking, The purpose of students' learning is for communication and speaking, and students' levels are measured by their fluency in speaking, After students master the speaking skill comes the reading skill, while listening and writing were less since the primary objective of the book series is communication.

**Keywords:** New Headway, English textbook, Lecturers' Perspectives

## 1.Introduction

### 1.1Statement of the Problem and its Significance

Learning English in Iraq is considered learning a foreign language linguistic system differs significantly from that of Arabic (Al-Khayyat, 2021), To learn a foreign language, the Iraqi Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Higher Education significant efforts to promote foreign language learning across all levels of education, from primary school to postgraduate programs (Abdual Hussein, et al., 2024), At the university level, the students study English language by using New Headway Series, Reviewing the literature, the researchers found that the studies have investigated the impact of these textbooks on students' English language learning and they had significant effects on developing students' English language skills, For example, the studies by Rajab, 2018; Brahme & Gabriel, 2012; Al-Qatawneh & Altweissi, 2019; Bani Amer, 2021; Abedi & Sanchez, 2021; Abdallah, 2023; Alqahtani, 2024 found great importance in using the textbooks in developing students' linguistic ability, in addition to positive attitudes among university professors who teach English using the New Headway series of books for learning English as a foreign language, Given the importance of teaching English in Iraqi universities and the adoption of the Headway book series it is worth to investigate the extent of inclusion of the four skills activities in the student's textbook, The study's findings are significant because they stem from the perspective of university professors who teach the New Headway textbook, The results shed light on the level of language skills covered in the textbook series, University professors can benefit from the findings any gaps in a skill that the series may lack, They can design additional support materials to help students develop the skill that is under-represented, This will ensure that the skills are taught equally and that students acquire information effectively.

### 1.2The Aim of the study

This study aims to: "Identifying the extent of the four skills was inclusion in the New Head way text books".

### 1.3 The Question of the study

To achieve the aim of the study, the following question was set "To what extent are the four skills in the New Headway Textbooks?"

### 1.4 The Limits of the study

This study is limited to the following:

- 1. Participants:** The participants were 100 Iraqi EFL instructors randomly selected from eight Iraqi universities.
- 2. Location:** the study was conducted at the University of Babylon, Al-Mustansiriya University, University of Baghdad, University of Diyala, University of Tikrit, Al-Iraqiyah University, University of Maysan, and University of Karbala.
- 3. Duration:** The study was conducted during the second semester of the academic year 2023-2024.

## 2. Literature Review

Brown (2000) said that language textbooks are vital for the development of language skills, which are fundamental components of language learning, Language textbooks ought to incorporate exercises that encourage the growth of the four skills claims by giving them lots of chances to practice, well-written textbooks can help language learners improve their language proficiency.

language skill that should be covered in language textbooks is speaking, Speaking exercises that encourage students to have discussions or debates with their teachers or peers might be created to assist them improve their speaking skill.

Nunan (2023) said that the purpose of speaking exercises should be to assist students in improving their comprehension abilities.

Reading exercises should be interesting and give students the chance to practice comprehension techniques like summarizing, inferring, and predicting, Grabe and Stoller (2019) stated that "to help students improve their reading abilities, language textbooks should offer a range of reading materials, including literary and real text.

Learners can improve their writing abilities, including syntax, vocabulary, and grammar, by participating in writing exercises, Writing exercises should encourage creativity and critical thinking while also assisting students in honing their abilities to express themselves clearly, (Hedge, 2001).

### 2.1 Listening Activities in the Textbooks

Listening is the ability to identify and understand what others are saying, (Hui, et al. 2023), This entails comprehending the meaning of the speaker, their grammar and vocabulary, and their accent or pronunciation, According to Renukadevi (2014), listening is crucial for language learners to learn pronunciation, word stress, vocabulary, and syntax.

(Brown, 2001) said that listening is an essential skill for language learners since it enables them to acquire the linguistic information required for communication,

According to Hendrawaty (2019), listening is the first and most important skill that students must develop when learning a new language, Because it is a receptive talent, language learners pick up new words based on what they have heard or listened to.

As stated by Nabiyevev & Idiyev (2022), listening is crucial since it takes up a significant portion of the time one spend using the language for communication.

According to the literature study, instructors can help learners develop effective listening skills if they are aware of their learning difficulties, This can therefore result in the resolution of listening issues and help learners improve their listening comprehension skills.

### 2.2 Speaking Activities in the Textbooks

It is the main skill by which a language is acquired, and it is almost certainly so at the beginning level (Haliwanda ,2021) It is a dynamic process that allows making more constructive and effective communication, (Richards, 2008: 55), However, according to Chaney (1998) speaking is "the technique of creating and disseminating meaning in a range of circumstances by employing spoken or nonverbal symbols.

Speaking skill can be divided into two sub- skills: micro and macro, Micro skills are the ability to produce smaller language units, such as words, phonemes, morphemes, collocations, and phrasal units, The speaker's attention to broader elements, including fluency, discourse, function, style, coherence, and nonverbal communication, is implied by the macro skills (Brown, 2004, p.142), Speaking turns used for this purpose are typically lengthy, include some prior content organization, and employ language strategies to indicate the sort of organization of material to be presented (Hui, et al., 2023).

### 2.3 Reading Activities in the Textbooks

Freahat (2014: 11–12) said that reading is an activity that requires readers to describe the visual cues that constitute reading in a number of ways, for example, by associating letters with sounds, Reading is therefore a cognitive activity that may cause readers to infer meaning from texts.

People typically read for a variety of reasons, such as improving their knowledge, achieving academic achievement, making a living, or amusing themselves, According to Anderson, et al, (1985:137), "in real life, we read for a purpose, which influences the way we read," Grabe (2009: 18) said that "A proficient reader, whether or not they are enrolled in school, will be able to discern the goal of their reading, the amount of work required, and the proper pace", The effective reader adapts their style to suit their changing reading goals, The learner should therefore think about the significance of the many different reasons that learner reads.

In order to help learners, become proficient readers, they must understand that the type of writing they are reading and the reason they are reading it determine how quickly and carefully they should read it, "Purpose is a fundamental and inextricable part of the psychological process of reading," Freahat (2014) stated that learners

occasionally skim the content once and then read it again, in part or in whole, for the objectives specified by the comprehension questions.

Reading for learning: this has to do with education, The purpose of reading is to facilitate learning, In order to learn vocabulary, describe helpful groupings or structures, use a printed text as a model for writing, and practice pronunciation; readers must translate what they read, either literally or metaphorically, For instance, when reading material aloud, one should first examine it before doing actions that will help him comprehend what the author wants him to take away from it.

#### **2.4 Writing Activities in the Textbooks**

learners must, after all, find solutions to their challenges while writing, Unlike speaking, writing is not limited by time or location, Anywhere in the globe, a written text can be read, Hyland (2016:130–137) asserts that writing is easier to understand than speaking According to the definitions given above, it is not the same as speaking, The process of writing is intricate and involves several steps.

Writing is a productive and expressive language talent that can be learned, A skilled writer is imaginative and productive, Writing is a symbolic, visual form of representation.

Writing can be revised to correct spelling, grammar, and other types of errors before it is finalized or presented, Writing serves as a means of conveying a message to readers for specific objectives, (Siew-Rong, 2003:34), Self-expression, knowledge acquisition, persuasion, and creative writing are among the reasons people write, To put it succinctly, writing talent is the capacity to communicate ideas, feelings, and emotions to readers so they can comprehend what the writer is trying to say.

Writing is a basic language ability like listening, reading and, speaking, Learners need to be taught how to write letters, articles, essays, and studies, and how to follow writing conventions, Writing can be utilized as one of several strategies to assist students in bringing diversity and interest to the lesson, (Richards & Schmidt, 2013).

Additionally, the instructor can use writing to give feedback on what the pupils have acquired as a means of attestation, According to Abdallah (2023) , teaching writing should incorporate writing strategies, which are defined as a way of using a variety of pedagogical techniques to transmit the necessary understanding of written discourse rules and the foundation of grammar and syntax.

#### **2.5 Textbook of New Head way**

The number of educators who support the use of authentic texts in the classroom has sharply increased in recent years due to the need for more engaging, inspiring, and practical activities to improve the learning environment for their learners and give them a taste of the language's real world, It is still unclear, nevertheless, whether and to what extent we can introduce authentic texts, Learners would choose content that they could find enjoyable and that they could relate to and learn from, Although the language had to be understandable, the "new" language had to be present on the page, Tomlinson

(2014) in this regard, arrested that the activities in the new Headway course book include both authentic and specially created texts, The authors attempted to make the activities simpler to accommodate learners' skill levels and incorporate authentic language so that learners could experience the language in everyday situations.

### Previous Studies

#### Sahab & Abdulkadir (2022)

This study aims to examine the educators' perspectives toward "New Headway (Plus) Upper-Intermediate, Student's Book," The participants were 10 EFL teachers (male and female) for the academic year (2019/2020) from the College of Education for Humanities and College of Education for Pure Sciences at Tikrit University, The results obtained indicate that the teachers find the examined course book acceptable, and the language activities are useful to improve EFL university students' non-English language departs, The four skills are not existed in the same balance, and the activities concerning the writing skill are limited to less than 65%, But they are effective and can achieve the goal of developing students' writing skill.

#### 2.3.3 Ibrahim (2023)

This study investigated students' perspectives toward learning English language via the " New Headway Academic skills level 2 student's book", The participants were 49 postgraduate students from the College of Arts at the University of Anbar, A questionnaire was prepared to collect the data, The results revealed that there was a negative perspective toward learning English language via the " NewHeadway Academic skills level 2 student's book", and there was no significance difference due to gender and also sue to students' departments (specialization).

### 3.Methodology

This study is descriptive study, the researcher uses questionnaire adopted by Mickley (2005).

#### 3.1The Instrument of the Study

In order to fulfil the aims of the current study, the researcher has adopted Mickley (2005) questionnaire of four skills listening, speaking, reading and writing, each skill has five items.

#### 3.2Scoring Scheme of the Instrument

For the purpose of objectivity and reliability the researcher has adopted an analytical scoring scheme proposed by Mickley (2005) which is used for assessing four skills, The scoring scheme has allocated five scores for each item, :1. (strongly agree) five score, 2. (agree)four score, 3. (neutral) three score, 4. (disagree)two score, 5. (strongly disagree) one score, The scoring scheme has allocated five scores for each item.

#### 3.3The Validity

The researcher verified the face validity of the questionnaire by presenting the questionnaire to (15) specialized experts in the field of methods of teaching English

language and based on their opinions on the questionnaire in judging its suitability for the purpose for which it was developed, all the items of the questionnaire were approved by the experts and the questionnaire became characterized by face validity.

### 3.4 The Reliability

The reliability was derived from the sample scores of 100 individuals, and using the Cronbach equation the reliability coefficients were shown in Table 1.

**Table (1): Coefficient of reliability for each skill**

Language Skills	Reliability Coefficient
Listening Skill	0.87
Speaking Skill	0.90
Reading Skill	0.88
Writing Skill	0.87

## 4. The Results

### 4.1 Results Related to the Aim of the Study

The questionnaire includes four dimensions; each dimension consists of 5 items related to the language skills, After analyzing the data statistically, it was found that all items are included in the Textbook, and their arithmetic means ranged between (4.210) to (3.022), while their standard deviations ranged from (0.720) to (0.983), Table 2 shows the results.

**Table (2): Results of Language skill**

NO.	Skill	Skills sequence in the questionnaire	Arithmetic mean	Standard deviation	Rank	Percentages
1	Speaking	2	4.106	0.793	First	82%
2	Reading	3	3.937	0.802	Second	79%
3	Listening	1	3.738	0.824	Third	75%
4	Writing	2	3.409	0.907	Fourth	68%

Table 2 shows the following:

1. The Speaking skill came in first place with an arithmetic mean (4,106) and a standard deviation (0.793) and an inclusion rate of (82%).
2. The Reading skill came in second place with an arithmetic mean (3,937) and a standard deviation (0.802) with an inclusion rate of (79%).
3. The Listening skill came in third place with an arithmetic mean (3,738) and a standard deviation (0.824) and an inclusion rate of (75%).
4. The Writing skill came in fourth place with an arithmetic mean (3,409) and a standard deviation (0.907) and an inclusion rate of (68%).

### 4.2 Discussion of The Results

The results of the question of the study revealed that the percentages of language skills included in the Headway textbooks are as follows: speaking 82%, reading 79%, listening 75%, and writing 68% respectively.

The inclusion of these varying percentages of language skills in the textbook can be attributed to the fact that the design of the book series is based on the Communicative Language Approach, which focuses on communication and fluency in speaking, Therefore, 82% of the exercises and activities were allocated to the speaking skill, The instructors' responses to the questionnaire items indicated that the materials and tasks dedicated to the speaking skill are very important, they focus on their effectiveness, and they have positive opinions toward them, Also, the purpose of students' learning of the English language is for the purpose of communication and speaking, and students' levels are measured by their fluency in speaking, Likewise, the constructivist school emphasizes the gradual progression of students' knowledge, and here the results of the study proved that after students master the speaking skill, comes the reading skill, which requires mastering reading strategies to learn, The book series included reading passages with graded levels from the elementary level to the advanced level,

The inclusion of listening and writing skills in the book series was less than that of speaking and reading, Listening is essential for any learning process, yet the primary objective of the book series is communication, The results of this study are consistent with the results of Sahab & Abdulkadir (2022) who found that the four skills are not existed in the same balance, and the activities concerning the writing skill are limited to less than 65%, But they are effective and can achieve the goal of developing students' writing skill.

In addition, the result of this study is inconsistent with the study of Ibrahim (2023) who found that the EFL university professors have negative perspectives toward learning the English language via the Headway series, and the students' writing achievement was low due to learning via Headway textbook.

## 5. Conclusion

The results revealed that the percentages of language skills included in the New Headway textbooks are: speaking 82%, reading 79%, listening 75%, and writing 68%, The inclusion of these varying percentages can be attributed to the Communicative Language Approach, which focuses on communication and fluency in speaking, The purpose of students' learning is for communication and speaking, and students' levels are measured by their fluency in speaking, After students master the speaking skill comes the reading skill, while listening and writing were less since the primary objective of the book series is communication.

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