UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA

A COMPOSITE FRAMEWORK FOR ESL TEXTBOOK EVALUATION

JAYAKARAN MUKUNDAN

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A COMPOSITE FRAMEWORK FOR ESL TEXTBOOK EVALUATION

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Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia, in Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

April 2004
Dedicated to my family who were with me all through this long and eventful journey
Abstract of thesis presented to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia in fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

A COMPOSITE FRAMEWORK FOR ESL TEXTBOOK EVALUATION

By

JAYAKARAN MUKUNDAN

April 2004

Chairperson: Associate Professor Shameem Rafik-Galea

Faculty: Modern Languages and Communication

Textbook evaluation practices have not been critically examined to determine effectiveness and value in learning-teaching environments and this is probably the main reason why the literature suggests that textbooks selected have been more of a hindrance than a benefit to teaching. The assumption made by the researcher is that since much of the criticism in selection processes of textbooks is directed towards the checklist, which at this moment seems to be the only instrument used in textbook evaluation practices, then there would be a need to re-evaluate the usefulness of the checklist, identify weak areas and then develop a composite framework where the checklist will be supported by complementary instruments, namely the concordance software and the reflective journal.
The researcher suggests a 4-phase procedure in the development of the composite framework. Phase 1 tests the Skierso Evaluation Checklist (SEC) for reliability and item difficulty. Phase 2 tests the capabilities of the concordance software (WordSmith Tools 3.0) to provide analysis of the patterns of presentation of vocabulary and structures in textbooks, to determine the extent to which the software will help discriminate between books in a selection process and to determine to what extent the analysis would provide greater illustration to responses required of by items in Section D of the SEC. Phase 3 tests the capabilities of the reflective journal in providing greater illustration to responses to items in Section E (Exercises and Activities) of the SEC. Finally, in Phase 4 the researcher will assemble aspects of the two complementary components into a framework which has the checklist as its main instrument. This framework will then be tested for reliability and item difficulty.

In Phase 1, the findings revealed that while the overall reliability of the SEC was high, the difficulty analysis of items showed Section D and E of the checklist as having the largest number of difficult items. Phase 2 of the study found that the concordance software is capable of many useful functions in textbook evaluation and is able to provide greater illustration, through computation, to 6 items in Section D of the SEC. Phase 3 of the investigation revealed that teacher reflections contributed to input that was beneficial to evaluation, especially the items in Section E of the SEC.

The composite framework was assembled and tested in Phase 4. It was then compared to the mono-instrument procedure (Phase 1) which consisted of the checklist (SEC).
The comparison of the two procedures showed the composite framework to be more reliable at 0.9324 reliability as compared to 0.7675 reliability for the SEC as a standalone instrument. The difficulty analysis of items also showed marked improvement when comparisons were made. Only 4 items were considered difficult within the composite framework as opposed to 14 when the SEC was tested as a standalone.

This study has provided an alternative to the checklist dominated procedure by proposing a framework which works on the combined effort of 3 distinct instruments, thus providing for much needed triangulation which is actually expected in an exercise as complex as textbook evaluation. The spin-offs to this research are the added value it provides by way of increased awareness of action research in textbook evaluation, to greater emphasis and attention to retrospective evaluation and adaptation. It has also led to the creation of the first Malaysian Corpus of the Language of Textbooks which has approximately 150,000 words. This corpus will expand when it accommodates the language of more textbooks within the school system.
Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk ijazah Doktor Falsafah

RANGKAKERJA KOMPOSIT BAGI PENILAIAN BUKU TEKS ESL

Oleh

JAYAKARAN MUKUNDAN

April 2004

Pengerusi: Profesor Madya Shameem Rafik-Galea
Fakulti: Bahasa Moden dan Komunikasi

Amalan penilaian buku teks tidak dinilai secara kritis untuk menentukan keberkesanan dan nilai dalam situasi pembelajaran-pengajaran dan ini mungkin sebab utama mengapa bahan rujukan mengenai buku teks banyak menyebut bahawa buku teks lebih menjadi penghalang dan pembawa krisis daripada membawa faedah dalam pengajaran. Oleh kerana kebanyakan kritikan terhadap proses pemilihan buku ditujukan kepada senarairujuk (checklist) akibat daripada menjadi instrument menilai buku teks yang tunggal, maka perlulah ada usaha kearah menilai semula keberkesanan senarairujuk, mengesan bahagian lemah dan seterusnya membentuk kerangka komposit (composite framework) dimana senarairujuk dibantu oleh instrument sampingan ia itu perisian konkordans (concordance software) dan jurnul refleksi (reflective journal).
Penyelidik mencadangkan prosedur 4 fasa dalam pembentukan kerangka komposit. Fasa 1 akan menguji senarai rujuk Penilaian Skierso (Skierso Evaluation Checklist – SEC) dari segi kebolehpercayaan dan kesukaran item (item difficulty). Fasa 2 akan menguji kebolehan perisian konkordans (WordSmith Tools 3.0) untuk menganalisa corak persembahan vokabulari dan struktur dalam buku teks untuk menentukan sejauh mana perisian ini boleh mendiskriminasi antara buku dalam proses penilaian dan juga untuk menentukan sejauh mana analisis dengan menggunakan perisian boleh memberi gambaran yang lebih mendalam pada respons yang diperlukan oleh item dalam Bahagian D di SEC.

Fasa 3 menguji kebolehan jurnal refleksi dalam keupayaan memberi gambaran lebih jelas kepada respon yang perlu dibuat oleh penilai bagi item dibahagian E ia itu Latihan dan aktiviti (Exercises and Activities). Akhir sekali, di Fasa 4 penyelidik akan mengumpul aspek dari dua komponen (Perisian dan Jurnal) dan membina kerangka komposit bersama-sama instrument utama, ia itu senarai rujuk SEC. Kerangka yang dibentuk itu akan diuji dari segi kebolehpercayaan dan kesukaran item.

Di Fasa 1, dapat menunjukkan bahawa kebolehpercayaan keseluruhan SEC adalah tinggi tetapi analisis kesukaran item pula menunjukkan bahawa Bahagian D dan E senarai rujuk mempunyai item sukar yang terbanyak. Fasa 2 kajian mendapati bahawa perisian konkordans boleh melakukan banyak fungsi dan berupaya memberi gambaran yang lebih jelas melalui komputasi pada 6 item di Bahagian D SEC. Fasa 3
menunjukkan bahawa refleksi menyumbangkan input yang berguna kepada penilaian terutamanya bagi Bahagian ESEC.

Kerangka komposit dibina dan diuji di Fasa 4 dan perbandingan dibuat antara kerangka komposit dan prosedur instrument mono (Fasa 1) yang hanya melibatkan penggunaan SEC. Hasil perbandingan menunjukkan bahawa kerangka komposit lebih tinggi kebolehpercayaannya dengan 0.9324 kebolehpercayaan berbanding dengan 0.7675 kebolehpercayaan bagi SEC semasa bersendirian. Perbandingan analisis kesukaran item juga menunjukkan peningkatan. Hanya 4 item masih sukar dalam kerangka komposit berbanding dengan 14 item di ujian Fasa 1 di mana SEC bersendirian.

Hasil kajian ini menawarkan alternative bagi prosedur penilaian yang sehingga ini dikuasai oleh senararujuk. Kerangka komposit mengabungkan 3 instrumen dan menyumbangkan kepada triangulasi.

Hasil sampingan kajian ini ialah keupayaannya memberi penekanan kepada penilaian retrospektif dan adaptasi. Kajian ini juga membentuk Korpus (Corpus) bagi Bahasa Buku Teks ESL di Malaysia yang mengandungi lebih kurang 150,000 perkataan. Korpus ini merupakan yang pertama dihasilkan diMalaysia.
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I certify that an Examination Committee met on 16th April 2004 to conduct the final examination of Jayakaran Mukundan on his Doctor of Philosophy thesis entitled “A Composite Framework for ESL Textbook Evaluation” in accordance with Universiti Pertanian Malaysia (Higher Degree) Act 1980 and Universiti Pertanian Malaysia (Higher Degree) Regulations 1981. The Committee recommends that the candidate be awarded the relevant degree. Members of the Examination Committee are as follows:

**Mohd. Faiz Abdullah, Ph.D.**
Associate Professor
Faculty of Modern Languages and Communication
Universiti Putra Malaysia
(Chairman)

**Wan Roselezam Wan Yahya, Ph.D.**
Lecturer
Faculty of Modern Languages and Communication
Universiti Putra Malaysia
(Member)

**Wong Bee Eng, Ph.D.**
Associate Professor
Faculty of Modern Languages and Communication
Universiti Putra Malaysia
(Member)

**Alan Maley**
Professor
IELE
Assumption University, Thailand
(Independent Examiner)

---

**MAD NASIR SHAMSUDIN, Ph.D.**
Professor/Deputy Dean
School of Graduate Studies
Universiti Putra Malaysia

Date: **14 JUN 2004**
This thesis submitted to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia and has been accepted as fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. The members of the Supervisory Committee are as follows:

**Shameem Rafik Galea, Ph.D.**
Associate Professor
Faculty of Modern Languages and Communication
Universiti Putra Malaysia
(Chairman)

**Chan Swee Heng, Ph.D.**
Associate Professor
Faculty of Modern Languages and Communication
Universiti Putra Malaysia
(Member)

**Rosli Talif, Ph.D.**
Associate Professor
Faculty of Modern Languages and Communication
Universiti Putra Malaysia
(Member)

\[signature\]

**AINI IDERIS, Ph.D.**
Professor/Dean
School of Graduate Studies
Universiti Putra Malaysia

Date: 09 JUL 2004
DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the thesis is based on my original work except for quotations and citations which have been duly acknowledged. I also declare that it has not been previously or concurrently submitted for any other degree at UPM or other institutions.

JAYAKARAN MUKUNDAN

Date: 28 April 2004
TABLE OF CONTENTS

DEDICATION ii
ABSTRACT iii
ABSTRAK vi
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS ix
APPROVAL xi
DECLARATION xiii
LIST OF TABLES xix
LIST OF FIGURES xxii
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS xxiii

CHAPTER

1 INTRODUCTION 1
1.1 The Background of the Study 3
1.1.1 The Background to State-Sponsored Material in Malaysian Schools 3
1.1.2 The Malaysian Textbook for English Language 3
1.2 The Role of the Textbook in Relation to the Richards and Rodgers (1987) Model for Methodology 6
1.2.1 Predictive and Retrospective Evaluation of Textbooks 8
1.3 The Statement of the Problem 12
1.4 The Objectives of the Study 14
1.5 The Research Questions 15
1.6 Limitations to the Research 16
1.7 Significance of the Research 18
1.8 Scope of the Study 20
1.9 Theoretical Framework 21
1.10 The Structure of the thesis 27
1.11 Definitions of Terms 29

2 THE REVIEW OF LITERATURE 35
2.0 Introduction 35
2.1 An Overview of Materials Development in ELT 36
2.2 The Role of the Textbook, the Controversies Surrounding it and the Implications of Evaluation 40
2.3 Perspectives in Materials Evaluation 49
2.4 An Overview of Common Materials Evaluation Practices 51
2.5 The Emerging and Rather Unfortunate Importance Placed on the Checklist as the Main Offering in Explicit Evaluation of Textbooks 53
2.6 The Issues Related to Aspects of Reliability and Validity in Use of Evaluation Checklists 64
2.7 The Use of Concordance Software in ELT 67
2.8 Teacher Reflection as an Essential Component of
Textbook Evaluation

2.9 The Case for the Development of the Composite Model for Textbook Evaluation 73
2.10 Summary 75

3 METHODOLOGY 77
3.1 Research Design 77
3.2 The Procedures in the Assembly of the Composite Model 81
3.3 The Main Instruments in the Study 82
3.3.1 The Selection of the Evaluation Checklist 84
3.3.2 The Selection of Concordance Software 85
3.3.3 Reflective Journals 92
3.4 The Pre-and Post Teaching Support Instruments for Preparation of Reflection 93
3.5 The Statistical Instruments 94
3.6 The Content for Evaluation: The Textbook 95
3.7 The Evaluators in the Checklist Selection Process 96
3.8 The Experts for Validation 97
3.9 Selection of Schools 97
3.10 Pilot Studies 98
3.11 The Procedures in Implementation of the Research 99
3.11.1 Phase 1: The Evaluation of the Checklist as the First Instrument in the Composite Framework 100
3.11.2 Phase 2: The Evaluation of the Concordance Software as the Second Instrument in the Composite Framework 101
3.11.3 Phase 3: The Evaluation of the Reflective Journal as the Third Instrument in the Composite Framework 101
3.11.4 Phase 4: Test of Newly Formed Framework 102
3.12 Data Collection and Analysis 102
3.12.1 Detailed Illustration of Procedures Used for Analysis of Data 103

4 PHASE 1: THE TEST AND ANALYSIS OF THE SEC 106
4.0 Introduction 106
4.0.1 The Evaluation Instrument 107
4.1 Test 1 on the SEC: The Reliability Test 107
4.1.1 The Reliability Test 107
4.1.2 The Results of the Reliability Test 108
4.1.3 Results on Reliability, Section by Section in the SEC 108
4.1.4 Implications of Results of Reliability Test 108
4.2 Test 2 on the SEC: A Difficulty Analysis of Items 111
4.2.1 Procedures for Difficulty Analysis of Items 111
4.2.2 The Results of the Difficulty Analysis of Items in SEC 112
4.2.3 The Analysis of the Difficulty Test 113
   4.2.3.1 Difficult Items in Section D 114
   4.2.3.2 Difficult Items in Section E 116
   4.2.3.3 Difficult Items in Section F 117
4.3 The Summary of Findings 118

5 PHASE 2: THE TEST AND ANALYSIS OF THE CONCORDANCE SOFTWARE 121
   5.0 Introduction 121
   5.1 The Instrument (WordSmith Tools 3.0) 122
   5.2 The Content (Textbook) for Analysis 123
      5.2.1 The Procedure for the Development of the Textbook Corpus 124
   5.3 Part 1 of Test: The Appraisal of the General Capabilities Of WordSmith Tools 3.0 124
      5.3.1 The Unfocused Exploration of the Capabilities of WordSmith Tools 3.0 125
         5.3.1.1 General Information about Words, Sentences and Paragraphs in the book 125
         5.3.1.2 The Analysis of the Function of Keyness 128
         5.3.1.3 The Analysis of the Capabilities of the Software to Illustrate Reintroduction/Recycling 129
         5.3.1.4 Other Aspects of the Exploration 134
         5.3.1.5 Features which do not Contribute Directly to this Research 135
      5.3.2 Directed Exploration of the Capabilities of WordSmith Tools 3.0 138
         5.3.2.1 Detailed Analysis of the Capabilities of the Concordance Software to Help Provide Greater Input to Responses Provided to the 6 Identified Items in the SEC 140
   5.4 Part 2 of Test: Determining the Ability of the Software to Discriminate Between 2 Textbooks 146
      5.4.1 Comparison of the Two Books in Terms of General Features 146
      5.4.2 Distribution of Vocabulary 150
      5.4.3 The Analysis of the Function of Keyness 151
      5.4.4 The Analysis of the Capabilities of the Software to Illustrate Distribution/Recycling 154
      5.4.5 Recycling of Structures: Sequence Connectors 155
   5.5 Part 2 of Test: Discrimination Between Books in Selection Using the SEC 157
      5.5.1 Vocabulary 158
      5.5.2 Vocabulary and Structures 160
5.6 Summary of Findings

6 PHASE 3: THE TEST AND ANALYSIS OF THE REFLECTIVE JOURNAL

6.0 Introduction 168
6.1 The Pilot Study 169
6.2 Procedures for Implementation of Reflective Journals during the Test Period 170
6.3 Analysis of Reflections According to Response Requirements of Sections/Items in the SEC 171
6.4 Detailed Analysis of Responses in Teacher Reflective Journals
   6.4.1 Detailed Analysis of Responses to Section A: Bibliographic Data
      6.4.1.1 Key Language Cues in Responses Relevant to SEC items 175
   6.4.2 Detailed Analysis of Responses to Section B: Aims and Goals
      6.4.2.1 Key Language Cues to Responses Relevant to SEC Items 176
   6.4.3 Detailed Analysis of Responses to Section C: Subject Matter
      6.4.3.1 Key Language Cues in Responses Relevant to SEC Items 179
   6.4.4 Detailed Analysis of Responses to Section D: Vocabulary and Structures: Grammar (DG)
      6.4.4.1 Key Language Cues in Responses Relevant to SEC Items 183
   6.4.5 Detailed Analysis of Responses to Section E: Exercises and Activities
      6.4.5.1 Key Language Cues in Responses Relevant to SEC Items 187
   6.4.6 Detailed Analysis of Responses to Section F: Layout and Physical Makeup
      6.4.6.1 Key Language Cues in Responses Relevant to SEC Items 191
6.5 Summary of Findings 194

7 PHASE 4: ASSEMBLY AND TEST OF THE COMPOSITE FRAMEWORK

7.0 Introduction 198
7.1 The Rationale for the Approach in the Assembly of the Composite Framework 198
7.2 A Summary of the Processes leading to the Assembly of the Composite Framework 200
7.3 The Assembly of the Composite Framework 201
7.3.1 Assembly of Data from Phase 2 which will support Section D (Vocabulary and Structures) of the SEC
7.3.2 Assembly of Data from Phase 3 which will support Section E (Exercises and Activities) of the SEC
7.4 Test of the Framework
7.5 Results of Difficulty Analysis of Items in Section D and E of the SEC
7.6 Summary of Findings

8 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS
8.0 Introduction
8.1 Discussion of Findings in Phase 1 of the Investigation: The Over-view
  8.1.1 Making Limited Generalizations
8.2 Discussion of Findings in Phase 2 of the Investigation: The Over-view
  8.2.1 Making Limited Generalizations
8.3 Discussion of Findings in Phase 3 of the Investigation: The Over-view
  8.3.1 Making Limited Generalizations
8.4 Discussion of Findings in Phase 4 of the Investigation: The Over-view
  8.4.1 Making Limited Generalizations
8.5 Summary of Findings

9 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS
9.0 Introduction
9.1 The Fate of the Evaluation Checklist
9.2 The Thinking Outside the Box – Developing the Idea of Conceptual Change
9.3 Implications of this Research
9.4 Recommendations

BIBLIOGRAPHY
APPENDICES
BIODATA OF THE AUTHOR
# LIST OF TABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Evaluation Summary Of Candidate Software</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Difficulty Analysis Of Items In The SEC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Illustration Of Responses: Grammar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Illustration Of Responses: Vocabulary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Illustration Of Responses: Vocabulary And Structures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Illustration Of Responses: Exercises And Activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Illustration Of Responses: Layout And Physical Makeup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Reliability Scores Of Skierso Evaluation Checklist (SEC)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Difficulty Analysis Of Sections Within SEC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Some Basic Information Provided By WordSmith</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Example of Keyness For Unit 13, Form 4 Textbook</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Distribution Of Words Based On The Number Of Units In The Form 4 Textbook</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Distribution Of Words Based On The Number Of Occurrences In Form 4 Textbook</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Distribution Of Sequence Connectors In The Form 4 Textbook</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>An Example Of Concordance Line That Shows Context Of Occurrence In The Target Structure (Form 4 Textbook)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Gender Bias In The Form 4 Textbook</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Number Of New Words In The Syllabus Introduced In Each Unit In The Textbook</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Words That Are Not Found In The Form 4 Textbook</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Recycling Of Items In The Form 4 Textbook</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### LIST OF FIGURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>The Richards And Rodgers Model For Methodology</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>The Variables In The Richards And Rodgers Model For Methodology</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>A Proposed Composite Framework For ESL Textbook Evaluation</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>A Diagrammatic Representation Of The Structures And Processes Of Tests</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>The Procedures In The Implementation Of The Research</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Number Of Tokens In The Form 4 Textbook</td>
<td>127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Number Of Types In The Form 4 Textbook</td>
<td>127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Average Sentence Length In The Form 4 Textbook</td>
<td>128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Number Of Sentences In The Form 4 Textbook</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>The Dispersion Plot For “Later” In The Form 4 Textbook</td>
<td>134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>The Text Density Ratio In The Form 4 Textbook</td>
<td>137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>The Text Consistency Ratio</td>
<td>137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>The Total Number Of Tokens In Textbook 1 (FB) And Textbook 2 (SM)</td>
<td>147</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>The Total Number Of Types In Textbook 1 (FB) And Textbook 2 (SM)</td>
<td>147</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>The Density Ratio Of All Units In Textbook 1 (FB) and Textbook 2 (SM)</td>
<td>149</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>The Consistency Ratio Of All Units In Textbook 1 (FB) And Textbook 2 (SM)</td>
<td>149</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Quantity Of Responses To Sections Within The SEC</td>
<td>195</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Quantity Of Responses Made By Evaluators</td>
<td>196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Page</td>
<td>Section</td>
<td>Page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Reliability Scores Of The SEC Operating Within The Composite Framework</td>
<td>210</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>The Difficulty Analysis Of Items In SEC (As It Stood Alone)</td>
<td>210</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>The Difficulty Analysis Of Items In SEC Within The Composite Framework</td>
<td>211</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ALM</td>
<td>Audio-Lingual Method</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EFL</td>
<td>English as Foreign Language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELT</td>
<td>English Language Teaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EMAS</td>
<td>English of Malaysian Schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESL</td>
<td>English as Second Language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FB</td>
<td>Fajar Bakti</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IRPA</td>
<td>Intensified Research in Priority Areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KBSM</td>
<td>Kurikulum Baru Sekolah Menengah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LSAT</td>
<td>Littlejohn’s Style Analysis Task Sheet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MATSDA</td>
<td>Materials Development Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MTLIC</td>
<td>Malaysian Textbook Language Corpus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OUP</td>
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