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## RESEARCH

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# Teachers' Evaluation of Primary English Textbooks for Vietnamese Schools Developed under the National Foreign Language 2020 Project: A Preliminary Internal<sup>1</sup> Survey

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**Abstract:** The aim of this survey research is to get evaluative feedback from the teachers who are using the primary English textbooks developed under the National Foreign Language 2020 Project to find out their strengths and weaknesses so that further corrections and revisions will be made to perfect the materials before putting them into use on a large scale. Overall, the results of the research have shown that teachers' evaluations of the textbooks are very positive. There are, however, some things that need to be done to improve the quality of the materials. The research consists of 4 parts. Part 1 provides a brief overview of *Tiếng Anh 3* and *Tiếng Anh 4* - the two English textbooks which are being piloted in 92 selected primary schools throughout Vietnam. Part 2 is concerned with the design of the research which consists of aim of the research, sites and subjects of the research, research instrument, the questionnaire, research procedure, and method of data analysis. Part 3 presents in some detail research findings and discussion of those findings. Part 4 provides a résumé of the strengths and weaknesses of the textbooks as seen from the point of view of the teachers' evaluations, points out some limitations of the research and makes some suggestions and recommendation for further study.

**Keywords:** Teachers' evaluation, preliminary internal survey, National Foreign Language 2020 Project, three pilot English curricula for Vietnamese schools.

## 1. Introduction

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<sup>1</sup> The adjective "internal" in the nominal group "a preliminary internal survey" needs some clarification. Normally, in the Vietnamese textbook development tradition, textbook evaluation is done by some external evaluation body appointed by MOET. But while waiting for this work to be done, it is found necessary to carry out an internal survey (i.e. a survey conducted by the publishers and the textbook authors) to get feedback from

In the National Foreign Language 2020 Project, English curriculum design and textbook development for Vietnamese schools have a legal and academic status. In implementing the Vietnamese Prime Minister's

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the teachers who are piloting the textbooks so that further improvements will be made to perfect the materials.

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Decision 1400/QĐ-TTg on the approval of the national project entitled "Teaching and learning a foreign language in the national education system, Period 2008-2020" [1], three pilot English curricula for Vietnamese schools were designed and promulgated by the Vietnamese Ministry of Education and Training (MOET): *Chương trình tiếng Anh thí điểm tiểu học* (Pilot English Curriculum for Vietnamese Primary Schools) [2], *Chương trình giáo dục phổ thông môn tiếng Anh thí điểm cấp trung học cơ sở* (Pilot English Curriculum for Vietnamese Lower Secondary Schools) [3], *Chương trình giáo dục phổ thông môn tiếng Anh thí điểm cấp trung học phổ thông* (Pilot English Curriculum for Vietnamese Upper Secondary Schools) [4] (for more details, please see Hoang Van Van, [5, 6, 7]). In late 2010, MOET assigned Vietnam Educational Publishing House (VEPH) with the task of organizing the development and production of the ten-year English textbook series for Vietnamese Schools (from grade 3 to grade 12) in collaboration with two world leading publishers – MacMillan Education and Pearson Education. To implement the task of textbook writing, MOET appointed a chief series author, chief grade authors, and authors for each grade. With regard to primary English textbooks, Vietnamese authors in collaboration with native English authors of MacMillan Education have completed writing *Tiếng Anh 3* (English 3) and *Tiếng Anh 4* (English 4) (each includes 2 Student's Books, a Teacher's Book, a Workbook, and 2 CDs). After the textbooks were written, MOET designated 92 primary schools which have qualified English teachers to try them out. After two years of trialling *Tiếng Anh 3* and one year of trialling *Tiếng Anh 4*, it was found necessary to conduct a survey research to get feedback from the teachers who

are using the textbooks so that further corrections and revisions will be made to improve the quality of the materials before putting them into use on a large scale.

This research consists of 4 parts. Part 1 provides a brief overview of *Tiếng Anh 3* and *Tiếng Anh 4*. Part 2 is concerned with the design of the research which consists of aim of the research, sites and subjects of the research, research instrument, contents of the questionnaire, research procedure, and method of data analysis. Part 3 presents in some detail research findings and discussion of those findings. Part 4 provides a résumé of the strengths and weaknesses of the textbooks as seen from the point of view of the teachers' evaluations, points out some limitations of the research and makes some suggestions and recommendations for further study.

## **2. An overview of *Tiếng Anh 3* and *Tiếng Anh 4***

It should be stressed that the development of *Tiếng Anh 3* and *Tiếng Anh 4* is curriculum-governed in terms of both contents and time allocation. According to MOET's *Pilot English Curriculum for Vietnamese Primary Schools*, the total time frame allocated for primary English is 420 periods, which is broken down into 140 periods for each grade. In terms of constituent parts, each set of the primary textbook for each grade consists of 2 Student's Books, a Teacher's book, a Workbook and 2 CDs. In terms of structure, each primary English textbook is organized into 20 units and 4 reviews; each unit includes three lessons (Lesson 1, Lesson 2, and Lesson 3); each lesson consists of 2 periods; and each period lasts for 35 minutes. In terms of content, a unit is

organized around five components: topic, competences, sentence patterns, vocabulary, and phonics. These components are integrated into the headings/sections of the three lessons such as *Look, listen and repeat*; *Point and say*; *Let's talk*; *Listen and number*; *Read and complete*; *Let's write*; *Listen and repeat*; *Listen and write*; *Let's chant*; *Read and match*; *Read and write*; and *Project*. Each section contains various communicative activities and preparatory communicative activities such as exercise, dialogue, song, chant, crosswords, etc., which require individual work, pair work, group work, and class discussion with various interactive patterns such as student ↔ student, student ↔ teacher, etc. (for more details, see Hoang Van Van, [7]).

### 3. Research design

#### 3.1. Aim of the research

As mentioned above, this survey aims to get evaluative feedback from primary English teachers who are piloting *Tiếng Anh 3* and *Tiếng Anh 4* so that further revisions and corrections will be made to improve the textbooks before putting them into use on a large scale. In addition, the teachers' information about the textbooks will be taken into consideration and will be used as a basis for the authors to write *Tiếng Anh 5*.

#### 3.2. Sites and subjects of the research

The intended research sites are 92 primary schools which are piloting *Tiếng Anh 3* and *Tiếng Anh 4*. These schools are located in different parts of Vietnam: Northern, Central, and Southern, of which 62 schools are in the North, 8 in the Central, and 22 in the South.

They are the primary schools which have met the requirements of a national level standard school: they have good physical and teaching and learning facilities such as standard classrooms, a standard library, sufficient CD players, computers, etc., the average number of students per class is 35; and, more importantly, all the English teachers have received Level 4 (equivalent to level CEFR B2) certificate.

The subjects of the survey are the teachers who are piloting *Tiếng Anh 3* and *Tiếng Anh 4* in these 92 primary schools.

#### 3.3. Research instrument

To accomplish the aim as set above, a questionnaire was developed as research instrument. The reason for choosing questionnaire is that of all the research instruments, questionnaire is the most commonly used format (cf. Trochin, [8]; Cohen, Manion & Morrison, [9]); it is the least expensive which can be sent to a large number of respondents and can allow easy and quick data collection (Robinson, [10]; Bargiela-Chiappini, Nickerson & Planken, [11]).

#### 3.4. The questionnaire

Different researchers have different views on textbook evaluation. There are researchers who focus on evaluating the physical features of the textbook such as layout, organizational, and logistical characteristics, the method, objective and approach of the author(s), the teachability and learnability of the textbook, and whether the textbook fits the needs of the students and the school (cf. Williams, [12]; Sheldon, [13]; Brown, [14]). There are researchers who propose to develop a set of criteria focusing on assessing the aim and objectives of the textbook, the themes/topics of

the textbook, the vocabulary and grammatical structures of the textbook, and the make-up of the textbook (cf. Skierso, [15]). There are researchers who suggest focusing on assessing the content areas of the textbook such as teaching goals, the depth and breadth of the textbook, and other supplementary components of the textbook (cf. Garinger, [16]). There are even researchers who tend to assess the textbook using as many categories as possible such as course package (including make-up of coursebook page and organization of coursebooks), language content (including language form and language use, grammar, vocabulary, phonology, discourse, style and appropriacy, varieties of English), syllabus base, skills (including listening, speaking, reading, and writing) topic, subject content and social values, methodology, teacher's book, and other practical considerations (cf. Cummingsworth, [17]).

As mentioned, for the purpose of this study, a questionnaire is developed to ask primary English teachers who are classroom practitioners; it is not intended to ask specialists or educational administrators. As with Cummingsworth [17], this questionnaire is developed to explore as many aspects of the two sets of textbooks as possible. It consists of 52 items (criteria) which fall into four major categories as follows:

**A. General Issues** consisting of 17 items asks teachers to evaluate the structure of the textbooks (item 1), the Project section and its usefulness (items 2, 3, 4), the Review unit and its usefulness, the story in each Review unit and its appropriateness (items 5, 6, 7, 8), the diversity and usefulness of the recycling some topics of *Tiếng Anh 3* in *Tiếng Anh 4* (items 9, 10), the combination of linguistic knowledge

and communicative skills and the ability to integrate the contents of other primary subjects into the English textbooks, the ability to promote the activity and creativity of the pupil (items 11, 12, 13), the extent to reflect in the textbooks the cultural values of Vietnam, of South-East Asian countries and of some English-speaking countries, and the teachability of the textbooks (items 14, 15), the appropriateness of the price of the Student's Book and Workbook to the average income of the pupils' parents and the appropriateness of the price of the Teacher's Book to the average income of the teachers (items 16, 17).

**B. Book Contents** consisting of 23 items asks teachers to evaluate the quality of the textbooks in two main areas: Language (phonics, vocabulary, grammar) and Skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing).

**Phonics** consisting of 4 items (18, 19, 20, 21) asks teachers to evaluate the appropriateness of the number of sounds introduced in each unit, the appropriateness of taking the sounds from the words and phrases of the unit for practice, the appropriateness of practicing the sounds in context, and the appropriateness of consolidating the pronunciation of the sounds through chants and songs.

**Vocabulary** consisting of 3 items (22, 23, 24) asks teachers to evaluate the appropriateness of introducing the number of new words in each unit of the textbooks, the appropriateness of practicing new words in context, and the appropriateness of consolidating the learning of the new words through chants and songs.

**Grammar** consisting of 4 items (25, 26, 27, 28) asks teachers to evaluate the appropriateness of the number of grammatical structures being introduced in each unit of the

textbooks, the appropriateness of practising grammatical structure in context, and the appropriateness of grammatical structures being consolidated through chants and songs.

**Listening** consisting of 3 items (29, 30, 31) asks teachers to evaluate the appropriateness of the listening texts, the diversity and relevance of the listening activities, and the appropriateness of the listening activities being practised in context.

**Speaking** consisting of 3 items (32, 33, 34) asks teachers to evaluate the appropriateness of the speaking topics, the logic of the speaking activities (from easy to difficult), and the diversification of the speaking activities in the textbooks.

**Reading** consisting of 3 items (35, 36, 37) asks teachers to evaluate the appropriateness of the reading texts to the units of the textbooks, the diversity and richness of the reading texts, and the length, difficulty, and complexity of the reading texts.

**Writing** consisting of 3 items (38, 39, 40) asks teachers to evaluate the appropriateness of the writing contents to the topic of the unit, the diversity of the writing text types and writing skills, and the ability of the textbooks to help pupils to use their knowledge and personal experience to write effectively.

**C. Physical Features of the Textbooks** consisting of 4 items (41, 42, 43, 44) asks teachers to evaluate physical features of the textbooks such as color, layout, font size, the Vocabulary section with Vietnamese equivalents at the end of the Student's Book, and printing quality of the textbooks.

**D. Components Accompanying Student's Book** consisting of 8 items asks teachers to evaluate the quality and usability of the audio CDs (items 45, 46), the quality and quantity of

flashcards and large-sized pictures (items 47, 48), the quality and suggesting abilities of Teacher's Book (items 49, 50), and the ability to consolidate, support and expand linguistic knowledge and communication skills of Workbooks (items 51, 52).

To facilitate the teachers' evaluation process, the questionnaire is presented in a Likert-type scale – in this case a five-point scale: **excellent, very good, good, not very good, not good**. The items are designed in an open way so that the respondents may perform the evaluation with ease. To ensure the reliability, the questionnaire was carefully pretested.

### 3.5. Survey procedure

Before sending the questionnaire to the schools, VEPH contacted the district departments of education where the schools are located to state the aim of the survey and ask for permission to carry out the survey. After receiving consent from those district departments of education, the survey team contacted the school principals (by phone or email) to ask for permission to proceed the survey.

Soft copies of the questionnaire were sent to the schools via email, and then hard copies were sent to them via post. During the evaluation process, the respondents could communicate directly with the survey team to receive detailed instructions to ensure that all the items in the questionnaire were fully and accurately evaluated.

The questionnaire was written in Vietnamese (in this report it is translated into English) to make sure that all the items in the questionnaire were equally understood. Also, to encourage more schools and teachers to take part in the survey and to return the

questionnaires on time, each respondent taking part in the survey was awarded a small gift.

### 3.6. Methods of data analysis

Data was quantitatively calculated using Microsoft Excel for statistics and was converted into percentages from overall average percentage of 52 items to average percentage of 4 main categories as described in Section 2.5, and to percentage of each item. For

convenience of presentation and observation, except for the overall evaluation and the evaluation of four main categories, the evaluation of each item in each column on the five-point scale was analyzed and presented following the order: the number of respondents and the percentage that number accounts for out of the total of 76 respondents participating in the survey (for more detail, see Appendix). For example:

		Excellent	Very good	Good	Not very good	Not good
5	The usefulness of Reviews in Student's Books.	35≈46.1%	27≈35.5%	13≈17.1%	0=0.0%	1≈1.3%

## 4. Findings and discussion

### 4.1. Overall rating

The questionnaires were sent to the schools in early May, 2015 and were returned to VEPH in late May, 2015. Of 92 schools under survey, 47 participated with 76 teachers returning the questionnaires. From the results obtained, it can be said that the teachers have a very positive view of the quality of *Tiếng Anh 3* and *Tiếng Anh 4*. This is can be seen in the fact that the overall evaluation of the teachers on 52 items at three scales excellent, very good, and good is very high: 97.7%, of which 36.3% rated as excellent, 43.5% rated as very good, and 18.2% rated as good; only 2.0% rated as not very good, 0% rated as not good.

### 4.2. Teachers' evaluation of the textbooks in each of the four categories

#### 4.2.1. Teachers' evaluation of the textbooks in the "general issues" category

The results obtained from the "General Issues" category show that the evaluation of the teachers on *Tiếng Anh 3* and *Tiếng Anh 4* is very positive. Overall, the average rating of the

teachers on 17 items at three levels excellent, very good, and good is very high: 96.8%, of which 34.4% rated as excellent, 44.6 % rated as very good, and 17.8% rated as good, only 2.5% rated as not very good, 0% rated as not good. Regarding the evaluation of particular items, six interesting points may be worth noting. First, with regard to the consistency of the structure of the textbooks (item 1), 36 teachers (47.4%) rated as excellent, 27 (35.5%) rated as very good, 12 (15.8%) rated as good, no teacher rated as not very good and not good. Secondly, concerning the occurrence of the Project section at the end of each unit – a new point of *Tiếng Anh 3* and *Tiếng Anh 4* – and the appropriateness of this section (item 2), 33 teachers (43.4%) rated as excellent, 20 (26.3%) rated as very good, 21 (27.6%) rated as good, only 2 teachers (2.6%) rated as not very good, no teacher rated as not good; many teachers confirmed that Project helps pupils to develop their communicative skills in authentic communicative environment (item 3): 22 teachers (28.9%) rated as excellent, 38 (50%) rated as very good, 14 (18.4%) rated as good, only 2 teachers (2.6%) rated as not very good, no teacher rated as not good; a similar large number of teachers thought that Project

promotes pupils' creativity (item 4): 27 teachers (35.5%) rated as excellent, 25 (32.9%) rated as very good, 15 (19.7%) rated as good, only 2 teachers (2.6%) rated as not very good, no teacher rated as not good. Thirdly, most of the teachers highly appreciate the usefulness of the Review written after every 5 units (item 5): 35 teachers (46.1%) rated as excellent, 27 (35.5%) rated as very good, 13 (17.1%) rated as good, no teacher rated as not very good, and, in particular, 1 teacher (1.3%) rated as not good; the closeness of the contents of the Review to the contents of the units (item 6) is also highly appreciated by the teachers: 33 teachers (43.4%) rated as excellent, 29 (38.2%) rated as very good, and 10 (13.2%) rated as good. Fourthly, when asked about the diversity and closeness of the topics to the primary pupil (item 9), the recycling (at a higher level) of some topics of *Tiếng Anh 3* in *Tiếng Anh 4* (item 10), and the harmony between linguistic knowledge and communication skills in the textbooks (item 11), most of the teachers responded to these items very positively: with item 9, 31 teachers (40.8%) rated as excellent, 33 (43.4%) rated as very good, 7 (9.2%) rated as good, only 1 teacher (1.3%) rated as not very good; with item 10, 28 teachers (36.8%) rated as excellent, 32 (42.1%) rated as very good, and 12 (15.8%) rated as good; and with item 11, 22 teachers (28.9%) rated as excellent, 38 teachers (50%) rated as very good, and 10 (13.2%) rated as good. Fifthly, when asked to evaluate the textbooks' ability to promote the activity and creativity of individual work, pair work and group work (item 13) and the teachability of the textbooks (item 15), many teachers gave these items high ratings: with item 13, 26 teachers (34.2%) rated as excellent, 30 teachers (39.5%) rated as very good, and 16 (21.1%) rated as good; and with item 15, 21 teachers (27.6%) rated as excellent, 35 (46.1%) rated as very

good, 15 (19.7) rated as good, only 1 teacher (1.3%) rated as not good.

There are, however, two things that should be taken into consideration. First, the number of teachers who rated the integration of the contents of other primary subjects into *Tiếng Anh 3* and *Tiếng Anh 4* as excellent and very good is modest (item 12): only 7 teachers (9.2%) rated as excellent and 30 (39.5%) rated as very good; there are still 31 teachers (40.8%) rating the item as good, and 4 (5.3%) rated as not very good. Secondly, although *Tiếng Anh 3 - Sách học sinh* (including Book 1 and Book 2 and 2 CDs) and *Tiếng Anh 4 - Sách học sinh* (including Book 1 and Book 2 and 2 CDs) each is sold at 74,000 dong (37,000 dong each) and Workbooks (including Book 1 and Book 2) are sold at 72,000 dong (36,000 dong each), in the opinion of some teachers, it seems high as compared to the average income of the pupils' parents (item 16): of 76 teachers participating in the survey, 6 (7.9%) still thought that the price is a bit too high, especially 1 teacher (1.3%) thought that the price is too high. A similar situation can be found in the price of Teacher's Book (item 17), although the current price fixed on the cover of Teacher's Book (integrated with Student's Book 1 and Book 2 and 2 CDs) is 150,000 dong, of 76 teachers taking part in the survey, 5 teachers (6.6%) thought that the price is high, especially 1 teacher (1.3%) maintained that the price is too high.

4.2.2. Teachers' evaluation of the textbooks in the "textbook contents" category

The results obtained from the teachers' evaluation of the "Textbook Contents" category indicate that teachers' evaluation is very positive. Overall, the average rating of 24 items by 76 teachers at three levels excellent, very good, and good accounts for 98.5%, of which 36.3% rated as excellent, 44.5% rated as very

good, 17.7% rated as good; only 1.3% rated at not very good, 0% rated as not good.

#### 4.2.2.1. Teachers' evaluation of the "language" section

Teachers' average rating of 11 items in the "Language" section (Phonics, Vocabulary, and Grammar) at three levels excellent, very good, and good accounts for 98.3%, of which 34.7% rated as excellent, 43.9% rated as very good, 19.7% rated as good; only 1.0% rated as not very good, 0% rated as not good. With regard to Phonics, the average rating of 4 items (18, 19, 20, 21) by 76 teachers at three levels excellent, very good, and good accounts for 97.7%, of which 41.8% rated as excellent, 43.1% rated as very good, and 12.8% rated as good; only 1.6% rated as not very good, 0% rated not good. With Vocabulary, the average rating of 3 items (22, 23, 24) by 76 teachers at three levels excellent, very good, and good makes up 99.2%, of which 32.5% rated as excellent, 46.1% rated as very good, and 20.6% rated as good; only 0.4% rated as not very good, 0% rated as not good. With Grammar, the average rating of 4 items (25, 26, 27, 28) by 76 teachers at three levels excellent, very good, and good makes up 98.7%, of which 29.9% rated as excellent, 43.1% rated as very good, and 25.7% rated as good; only 1.0% rated as not very good, 0% rated not good.

#### 4.2.2.2. Teachers' evaluation of the "skills" section

Teacher's average rating of 12 items in the "Skills" section (Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing) at three levels excellent, very good, and good accounts for 98.7%, of which 37.8% rated as excellent, 45.1% rated as very good, and 15.8% rated as good; only 1.2% rated as not very good, 0% rated as not good. As regard Listening, the average rating of 3 items (29, 30, 31) by 76 teachers at three levels excellent, very good, and good makes up 99.1%, of which 44.7% rated as excellent,

41.2% as very good, and 13.2% rated as good; only 0.9% rated as not very good, 0% rated not good. Concerning Speaking, the average rating of 3 items (32, 33, 34) by 76 teachers at three levels excellent, very good, and good accounts for 99.1%, of which 42.5% rated as excellent, 43.9% rated as very good, 12.7% rated as good; only 0.8% rated as not very good, 0% rated as not good. With Reading, the average rating of 3 items (35, 36, 37) by 76 teachers at three levels excellent, very good, and good makes up 97.3%, of which 30.7% rated as excellent, 49.1% rated as very good, and 17.5% rated as good; only 2.6% rated as not very good, 0% rated as not good. And with Writing, the average rating of 3 items (38, 39, 40) by 76 teachers at three levels excellent, very good, and good accounts for 98.7%, of which 34.3% rated as excellent, 46.5% rated as very good, and 17.9% rated as good; only 0.9% rated as not very good, 0% rated as not good.

#### 4.2.2.3. Teachers' evaluation of the "physical features of the textbooks" category

Teachers' average rating of 4 items (41, 42, 43, 44) relating to the "Physical Features of the Textbooks" category at three levels excellent, very good, and good makes up 98.7%, of which 47.4% rated as excellent, 38.8% rated as very good, and 13.5% rated as good; no teacher rated as not very good and not good. Detailed ratings of each of the four items is as follows: with item 41, 31 teachers (42.1%) believed that the appearance, color and presentation of the textbook covers reach excellent level, 36 teachers (47.4%) rated as very good, and 8 teachers (10.5%) rated as good; with item 42, 38 teachers (50%) rated the vocabulary section and the Vietnamese equivalents at the end of Student's Book as excellent, 28 (36.8%) rated as very good, 10 (13.2%) rated as good; as for the font size and layout of the textbooks (item 43), 39 teachers (51.3%) rated as excellent, 25



(32.9%) as very good, and 11 (14.5%) rated as good, only 1 teacher (1.3%) rated as not very good; and with regard to the quality of printing (item 44), 35 teachers (46.1%) rated as excellent, 29 (38.2%) rated as very good, 12 and (15.8%) rated as good, no teacher rated as not very good and not good.

4.2.2.4. Teacher's evaluation of the "components accompanying the textbooks" category

Teacher's average rating of 8 items in the "Components Accompanying the Textbooks" category (including audio CDs, flashcards, large-sized pictures, teaching aids, Teacher's Books, Workbooks) by 76 teachers at three levels excellent, very good, and good accounts for 92.2%, of which 26.8% rated as excellent, 41.6% rated as very good, 23.8% rated as good, and 6.9% rated as not very good. A detailed rating of each section is presented below:

With regard to audio CDs and teaching aids, teachers' average rating of 2 items (45, 46) at three levels excellent, very good and good accounts for 92.1%, of which 16.4% rated as excellent, 38.2% rated as very good, and 37.5% rated as good. Regarding the quality of the audio CDs (item 45), 14 teachers (18.4%) rated as excellent, 31 (40.8%) rated as very good, 26 (34.2 %) rated as good. And concerning the quality of the teaching aids (item 46), 11 teachers (14.5%) rated as excellent, 27 (35.5%) rated as very good, and 31 (40.8%) rated as good.

As for flashcards and large-sized pictures, teachers' average rating of 2 items (47, 48) at three levels excellent, very good, and good makes up 88.2%, of which 21.4% rated as excellent, 35.9% rated as very good, and 30.9% rated as good. Regarding the quality of flashcards and large-sized pictures (item 47), 16 teachers (21.1%) rated as excellent, 28 teachers (36.8%) rated as very good, and 24 teachers (31.6%) rated as good. As for the quantity of flashcards and large-sized pictures (item 48), 15

teachers (19.7%) rated as excellent, 25 teachers (32.9%) rated as very good, and 23 teachers (30.3%) rated as good.

Concerning Teacher's Book, teachers' average rating of 2 items (49, 50) at three levels excellent, very good, and good makes up 94.4%, of which 30.9% rated as excellent, 47.7% rated as very good, and 15.8% rated as good. Regarding the utility of the Introduction section in Teacher's Book (item 49), 23 teachers (30.3%) rated as excellent, 38 teachers (50.0%) rated as very good, and 11 teachers (14.5%) rated as good. And as for the guiding ability of Teacher's Book (item 50), 24 teachers (32.6%) rated as excellent, 33 teachers (43.4%) rated as very good, and 13 teachers (17.1%) rated as good. Concerning the usefulness of Workbooks (item 51), 32 teachers (42.1%) rated it as excellent, 35 teachers (46.1%) rated as very good, 8 teachers (10.5%) rated as good, no teacher rated as not very good and not good. And as for the utility of Workbooks in broadening linguistic knowledge and communicative skills of Student's Book, 28 teachers (36.8%) rated as excellent, 36 (47.4%) rated as very good, and 9 (11.8%) rated as good.

Nevertheless, it should be noted that of the four sections under the "Components Accompanying the Textbooks" category, "flashcards and large-sized pictures" is probably rated the lowest: 10.5% of the teachers still rated this section as not very good. As for the quality of flashcards and large-sized pictures (item 47), 5 teachers (6.6%) still rated as not very good; in particular, 11 teachers (14.5%) indicated that there is a shortage of flashcards and large-sized pictures (rated as not very good in this case) (item 48). Ranked second is the quality of the teaching aids (item 46): 7 teachers (9.2%) still rated as not very good. Ranked third is the quality of the audio CDs (item 45): 5 teachers (6.6%) still rated as

not very good. And ranked fourth is the quality of Teacher's Book (item 50): 5 teachers (6.6%) still rated its guiding ability as not very good.

## 5. Conclusion

### 5.1. Summary

As mentioned, the aim of this survey research is to get feedback from the teachers of English of 92 primary schools who are using *Tiếng Anh 3* and *Tiếng Anh 4* so that further corrections and revisions will be made to perfect the materials before putting them into use on a large scale. The research used a questionnaire of 52 items as research instrument. These 52 items were organized into four major categories: General Issues (17 items), Textbook contents (23 items), Physical features of the textbooks (4 items), and Components accompanying the textbooks (8 items). Research results have indicated that teachers' evaluation of *Tiếng Anh 3* and *Tiếng Anh 4* is very positive: their overall average rating of 52 items, their average rating of each of the 4 categories, and their rating of each of the 52 items at three levels excellent, very good, and good are very high. This allows the researcher to conclude that basically *Tiếng Anh 3* and *Tiếng Anh 4* are written with high quality, meeting most of the criteria for a modern foreign language textbook, and, in particular, meeting the requirements of MOET's *Chương trình tiếng Anh thí điểm tiểu học* (Pilot English Curriculum for Vietnamese Primary Schools).

Research results, however, have also suggested that there are still some minor drawbacks of the textbooks in the categories of "General Issues" and "Components Accompanying Student's Book" (specifically, items 12, 16, 17, 45, 46, 47, 48, 50) that need to

be improved to perfect the materials before putting them into use on a large scale.

### 5.2. Limitations

There are at least two limitations that should be pointed out here concerning this survey research. First, because the research has received feedback from only 76 teachers of 47 primary schools, the results cannot be said to fully reflect the overall picture of the quality of the textbooks. For this reason, our conclusion made in Section 4.1 on the high quality of the textbooks should be seen as preliminary rather than final. Secondly, this research has only used questionnaire for teachers as research instrument. If class observation, teachers' interview and questionnaire for pupils were used, the research would be more comprehensive, research results would help to arrive at more convincing conclusions, and the textbook authors would have more solid bases to improve and perfect the materials.

### 5.3. Suggestions and recommendations for further research

The following things should be done to overcome the limitations as mentioned above:

First, a survey that follows should be conducted to get evaluative feedback from all the rest of the English teachers who are using the *Tiếng Anh 3* and *Tiếng Anh 4* in 92 primary schools.

Secondly, in addition to research on teachers' feedback, research on pupils' feedback, classroom observation and interviews of teachers and pupils should be conducted to have a full picture of the quality of the textbooks and, in particular, to see more clearly the teachability and learnability of the materials.

Thirdly, direct contacts with the surveyed teachers should be made to ask them to explain or point out specific weaknesses in those items of the questionnaire (items 12, 16, 17, 45, 46, 47, 48, 50) which they rated as not very good and not good so as to correct and improve the materials.

Finally, as can be seen, conducting a preliminary survey using a questionnaire as research instrument like this one has already appeared to be a complex matter. Conducting a survey using a number of research instruments in order to have a comprehensive view of the quality of the textbooks may even be more

complex. This kind of research requires not only time, research skills and research expertise from the researcher but also a strong support in both human and financial resources from administrative agencies and organizations, especially from VEPH and the National Foreign Language 2020 Project. This is probably the most important recommendation for this research to achieve its final aim: to further improve the quality of the primary English textbooks so as to make a worthwhile contribution to improving the quality of teaching and learning English in the national education system of Vietnam.

Appendix: Questionnaire and findings

		Excellent	Very good	good	Not very good	Not good
	<b>OVERALL RATING (52 items)</b>	<b>36.3%</b>	<b>43.5%</b>	<b>18.2%</b>	<b>2.0%</b>	<b>0.0%</b>
<b>A</b>	<b>General Issues</b>	<b>34.4%</b>	<b>44.6%</b>	<b>17.8%</b>	<b>2.5%</b>	<b>0.0%</b>
1	The structure of the textbooks is designed in a consistent way (number of units, number of lessons in a unit, number of contents in a lesson).	36≈47.4%	27≈35.5%	12≈15.8%	0=0.0%	0=0.0%
2	At the end of each unit there is a Project component which is diversified in form and content and close to the topic of the unit.	33≈43.4%	20≈26.3%	21≈27.6%	2≈2.6%	0=0.0%
3	Projects help the pupil to develop pupils' skills in listening, speaking, reading and writing in authentic communication environment, and enhance their ability to cooperate while performing the tasks.	22≈28.9%	38≈50%	14≈18.4%	2≈2.6%	0=0.0%
4	Projects promote the pupil's creativities.	27≈35.5%	25≈32.9%	15≈19.7%	2≈2.6%	0=0.0%
5	The usefulness of Reviews in Student's Books.	35≈46.1%	27≈35.5%	13≈17.1%	0=0.0%	1≈1.3%
6	The Reviews stick to what has been previously taught and consolidate the pupil's knowledge and communication skills.	33≈43.4%	29≈38.2%	10≈13.2%	0=0.0%	0=0.0%
7	The stories in the Reviews are attractive and create interest to the pupil.	20≈26.3%	33≈43.4%	16≈21.1%	3≈3.9%	0=0.0%
8	The stories in the Reviews contribute to the development of the pupil's comprehension skills.	20≈26.3%	39≈51.3%	12≈15.8%	1≈1.3%	0=0.0%

9	The topics in the textbooks are diversified, close to real life, and are suitable to the age of the Vietnamese primary pupil.	31≈40.8%	33≈43.4%	7≈9.2%	1≈1.3%	0=0.0%
10	Some contents of <i>English 3</i> are repeated or recycled and expanded in <i>English 4</i> .	28≈36.8%	32≈42.1%	12≈15.8%	0=0%	0=0.0%
11	The contents of the units combine harmoniously language knowledge and communication skills, and one communication skill with the others.	22≈28.9%	38≈50.0%	10≈13.2%	2≈2.6%	0=0.0%
12	Some contents of other subjects (such as mathematics, geography, history, ...) are integrated into the contents of <i>English 3</i> and <i>English 4</i> .	7≈9.2%	30≈39.5%	31≈40.8%	4≈5.3%	0=0.0%
13	The activities in the textbooks promote activity and creativity of individuals and groups.	26≈34.2%	30≈39.5%	16≈21.1%	0=0%	0=0.0%
14	The textbooks reflect basic cultural values of Vietnam, some countries in South-East Asia and some main English-speaking countries.	21≈27.6%	29≈38.2%	19≈21.1%	3≈3.9%	0=0.0%
15	The textbooks can be exploited to teach effectively.	21≈27.6%	35≈46.1%	15≈19.7%	1≈1.3%	0=0.0%
16	The price of Student's Books and Workbooks suit the Vietnamese families of average income.	19≈25%	25≈32.0%	21≈27.6%	6≈7.9%	1≈1.3%
17	The price of Teacher's Books suits the primary teachers of average income.	17≈22.4%	32≈42.1%	17≈22.4%	5≈6.6%	1≈1.3%
<b>B</b>	<b>Textbook contents</b>	<b>36.3%</b>	<b>44.5%</b>	<b>17.7%</b>	<b>1.3%</b>	<b>0.0%</b>
<b>I</b>	<b>Language</b>	<b>34.7%</b>	<b>43.9%</b>	<b>19.7%</b>	<b>1.0%</b>	<b>0.0%</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>Phonics</b>	<b>41.8%</b>	<b>43.1%</b>	<b>12.8%</b>	<b>1.6%</b>	<b>0.0%</b>
18	The number of sounds introduced in each unit is adequate and appropriate.	33≈43.4%	31≈40.8%	9≈11.8%	2≈2.6%	0=0.0%
19	Sounds are taken for practice from words and phrases of each unit.	31≈40.8%	34≈44.7%	10≈13.2%	0=0.0%	0=0.0%
20	Sounds are practised in context (in words and sentences).	32≈42.1%	32≈42.1%	10≈13.2%	1≈1.3%	0=0.0%
21	The Phonics section is taught and consolidated through chants and songs.	31≈40.8%	32≈42.1%	10≈13.2%	2≈2.6%	0=0.0%
<b>2</b>	<b>Vocabulary</b>	<b>32.5%</b>	<b>46.1%</b>	<b>20.6%</b>	<b>0.4%</b>	<b>0.0%</b>
22	The number of new active words introduced in each unit is sufficient and appropriate (8-10 words).	27≈35.5%	32≈42.1%	17≈22.4%	0=0.0%	0=0.0%
23	New words are introduced in rich and diversified contexts (supported by images, explanations, ...).	23≈30.3%	36≈47.4%	17≈22.4%	0=0.0%	0=0.0%

24	New words are consolidated through chants and songs.	24≈31.6%	37≈48.7%	13≈17.1%	1≈1.3%	0=0.0%
<b>3</b>	<b>Grammar</b>	<b>29.9%</b>	<b>43.1%</b>	<b>25.7%</b>	<b>1.0%</b>	<b>0.0%</b>
25	The number of grammatical structures of each unit is sufficient and appropriate.	24≈31.6%	29≈38.2%	22≈28.9%	1≈1.3%	0=0.0%
26	Grammatical structures are introduced and practised in context (supported by images and sounds).	18≈23.7%	36≈47.4%	21≈27.6%	1≈1.3%	0=0.0%
27	Grammatical structures help the pupil to develop communicative competence specified in each unit.	25≈32.9%	37≈48.7%	13≈17.1%	0=0.0%	0=0.0%
28	Grammatical structures are consolidated through chants and songs.	24≈31.6%	29≈38.2%	22≈28.9%	1≈1.3%	0=0.0%
<b>II</b>	<b>Skills</b>	<b>37.8%</b>	<b>45.1%</b>	<b>15.8%</b>	<b>1.2%</b>	<b>0.0%</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>Listening</b>	<b>44.7%</b>	<b>41.2%</b>	<b>13.2%</b>	<b>0.9%</b>	<b>0.0%</b>
29	The listening contents are suitable to the topic of the unit and the age of the Vietnamese primary pupil.	36≈47.4%	29≈38.2%	11≈14.5%	0=0.0%	0=0.0%
30	The listening activities follow the order from easy to difficult (from <i>Listen and repeat</i> , to <i>Listen and identify information</i> , to <i>Listen and put information in order</i> , etc.) to help the pupil to develop listening skills.	35≈46.1%	31≈40.8%	8≈10.5%	2≈2.6%	0=0.0%
31	The listening activities are practiced in context (supported by images and word cues).	31≈40.8%	34≈44.7%	11≈14.5%	0=0.0%	0=0.0%
<b>2</b>	<b>Speaking</b>	<b>42.5%</b>	<b>43.9%</b>	<b>12.7%</b>	<b>0.8%</b>	<b>0.0%</b>
32	The speaking contents are suitable to the topic of the unit, closer to real life and suitable to the age of the Vietnamese primary pupil.	32≈42.1%	31≈40.8%	12≈15.8%	0=0.0%	0=0.0%
33	The speaking activities follow a logical sequence from easy to difficult (i.e., from <i>Listen and repeat</i> , to <i>Point and say</i> , and to <i>Let's talk</i> ).	36≈47.4%	33≈43.4%	7≈9.2%	0=0.0%	0=0.0%
34	The speaking activities in the textbooks are varied (from monologue to pair work, and to group discussion, ...).	29≈38.2%	36≈47.4%	10≈13.2%	1≈1.3%	0=0.0%
<b>3</b>	<b>Reading</b>	<b>30.7%</b>	<b>49.1%</b>	<b>17.5%</b>	<b>2.6%</b>	<b>0.0%</b>
35	The reading contents are suitable to the topic of the unit, close to the real life and suitable to the age of the Vietnamese primary pupil.	25≈32.9%	43≈56.6%	7≈9.2%	1≈1.3%	0=0.0%
36	The reading text types (monologue, dialogue, letter, email, ...) and reading comprehension activities (read and gap-fill, read and answer, read and	26≈34.2%	38≈50.0%	11≈14.5%	1≈1.3%	0=0.0%

	select an appropriate picture...) of the textbooks are rich and diversified.					
37	The length, difficulty, complexity of the reading texts are appropriate.	19~25.0%	31~40.8%	22~28.9%	4~5.3%	0=0.0%
<b>4</b>	<b>Writing</b>	<b>34.3%</b>	<b>46.5%</b>	<b>17.9%</b>	<b>0.9%</b>	<b>0.0%</b>
38	Writing contents are suitable to the topic of the unit, close to the real life and the age of the Vietnamese primary pupil.	28~36.8%	35~46.1%	12~15.8%	1~1.3%	0=0.0%
39	The writing text types (monologue, dialogue, letter, email, form, ...) and writing activities (gap-fill, look [at pictures] and write, answer questions, etc.) are rich and diversified.	25~32.9%	30~39.5%	21~27.6%	0=0.0%	0=0.0%
40	Pupils can use their knowledge and personal experience to write about themselves, their families and the world around them.	23~30.3%	40~52.6%	12~15.8%	1~1.3%	0=0.0%
<b>C</b>	<b>Physical features of the textbooks</b>	<b>47.4%</b>	<b>38.8%</b>	<b>13.5%</b>	<b>0.3%</b>	<b>0.0%</b>
41	The appearance, color and layout of the textbooks are suitable to the primary pupil.	31~42.1%	36~47.4%	8~10.5%	0=0.0%	0=0.0%
42	The vocabulary section and the Vietnamese equivalent at the end of Student's Books help the pupil to consult new words of each unit faster.	38~50.0%	28~36.8%	10~13.2%	0=0.0%	0=0.0%
43	The font size and layout of the textbooks.	39~51.3%	25~32.9%	11~14.5%	1~1.3%	0=0.0%
44	The printing quality of the textbooks.	35~46.1%	29~38.2%	12~15.8%	0=0.0%	0=0.0%
<b>D</b>	<b>Components accompanying the textbooks</b>	<b>26.8%</b>	<b>41.6%</b>	<b>23.8%</b>	<b>6.9%</b>	<b>0.0%</b>
<b>I</b>	<b>Audio CDs and teaching aids</b>	<b>16.4%</b>	<b>38.2%</b>	<b>37.5%</b>	<b>7.9%</b>	<b>0.0%</b>
45	The sound quality on the audio CDs.	14~18.4%	31~40.8%	26~34.2%	5~6.6%	0=0.0%
46	The quality of teaching aids accompanying the textbooks (flashcards, pictures, and other audiovisual aids, ...).	11~14.5%	27~35.5%	31~40.8%	7~9.2%	0=0.0%
<b>II</b>	<b>Flashcards and large-sized pictures</b>	<b>21.4%</b>	<b>35.9%</b>	<b>30.9%</b>	<b>10.5%</b>	<b>0.0%</b>
47	The quality of flashcards and large-sized pictures	16~21.1%	28~36.8%	24~31.6%	5~6.6%	0=0.0%
48	The quantity of flashcards and large-sized pictures	15~19.7%	25~32.9%	23~30.3%	11~14.5%	0=0.0%
<b>III</b>	<b>Teacher's Book</b>	<b>30.9%</b>	<b>46.7%</b>	<b>15.8%</b>	<b>5.3%</b>	<b>0.0%</b>
49	The Introduction section in Teacher's Books helps the teacher to develop techniques and methods of teaching in the classroom.	23~30.3%	38~50.0%	11~14.5%	3~3.9%	0=0.0%
50	Guidelines/Suggestions in Teacher's Books help the teacher to exploit Student's Books effectively.	24~31.6%	33~43.4%	13~17.1%	5~6.6%	0=0.0%

IV	Workbook	39.5%	47.7%	11.2%	1.3%	0.0%
51	Workbooks help the pupil to revise, consolidate and develop the contents (language knowledge and communication skills) in Student's Books.	32≈42.1%	35≈46.1%	8≈10.5%	0=0.0%	0=0.0%
52	Workbooks extend the contents (language knowledge and communication skills) of Student's Books appropriately.	28≈36.8%	36≈47.4%	9≈11.8%	2≈2.6%	0=0.0%

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