

FOREIGN LANGUAGES AND VIETNAMESE

**AN EVALUATION OF THE PRE-INTERMEDIATE
MARKET LEADER, THIRD EDITION, COURSE BOOK
USED FOR BUSINESS ENGLISH STUDENTS
AT A UNIVERSITY IN HO CHI MINH CITY
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ABSTRACT: The Pre-intermediate Market Leader, Third Edition Coursebook was evaluated in this research for students majoring in business English at the Faculty of Foreign Languages at the Ho Chi Minh City University of Food Industry. The current study's content was evaluated for suitability with the course objectives, the needs of the students, and the current teaching and learning method. Seven lecturers were requested to participate in surveys, and 100 students who are utilizing this coursebook were asked to complete surveys using Google Form. The findings showed that lecturers had highly positive opinions of the course book. Additionally, they demonstrated that the coursebook mostly satisfied the course objectives, adapted to the needs of the students, and was in line with the most recent teaching and learning techniques. Overall, this result will facilitate lecturers' and students' continued use of this material more effectively.

KEY WORDS: Coursebook; evaluation; material; material evaluation; business English.

RECEIVED: OCTOBER, 6th, 2022.

EDITED: NOVEMBER, 10th, 2022.

1. Introduction

In general, textbooks are regarded as the essential components and "the visual heart of any ELT curriculum" (Sheldon, 1998). They serve a variety of crucial roles in ELT, including as a resource for learning and teaching activities with systematic and standard knowledge of grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation, as a tool for learners' independent study, as a syllabus designed to meet specific learning objectives, and as a support for inexperienced teachers (Cunningsworth, 1984). In addition to framing the language-content framework and offering language models and practice exercises for teachers and students to use in class, course books also aid in standardizing instruction. However, they can have certain limitations because they are typically produced and created for the general market, making it impossible for them to be used in all teaching and learning environments with potentially inappropriate cultural and social contents. Due to the abundance of published English course books available on the market, choosing an appropriate course book for a particular teaching course can be difficult. Additionally, it has a special significance because the course book selected will influence how students are taught and how well the educational institution is run. Therefore, it is equally important to evaluate coursebooks since doing so enables decision-makers to pinpoint the materials' advantages and disadvantages and decide whether to continue using them or modify them in order to better meet the needs of students and educational goals.

2. Literature review

2.1. Text book, coursebook and material

2.1.1. Definitions

A textbook is defined as "any resource used to assist instructors in teaching students" (Tomlinson, 2011). According to Hutchinson and Torres (1994), a textbook is a guide for teachers to use while teaching and for students to use when reviewing information. It is also regarded as a record for measuring what teachers have taught. Textbooks help instructors create lesson plans and guarantee a stress-free teaching and learning environment. Any language teaching curriculum must include instructional resources. Researchers have defined this idea in a variety of ways, but they all agree that

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materials can be anything that makes language teaching and learning easier (Littlejohn, 1998), (Tomlinson, 1998), and (McGrath, 2013). According to Littlejohn (1998) and Tomlinson (2011), resources could be in a variety of formats, including student books, workbooks, teacher's instructions, videos, CDs, and DVDs, lesson plans, and online games. McGrath (2013) offered a similar broad definition of materials, explaining that they could be "realia" (actual items) or presentations (drawings or photographs). The textbook is regarded as the official content and "the visible core of any ELT curriculum" among these formats (Sheldon, 1998). Coursebooks serve as the essential readings for a language-learning class, of which both the teacher and each student have a copy (Tomlinson, 2011). It can be seen from the preceding definitions of "textbook," "course book," and "materials" that these terms can all be used interchangeably in ELT teaching and learning contexts because text books and course books are types of materials.

2.1.2. Roles of materials in ELT classrooms

Richards & Rodgers (2001) (cited in Kayapinar, 2009) claim that course books are essential to the curriculum since they outline the material and outline how certain syllabus elements will be covered. They serve a variety of crucial roles in ELT, including as a resource for learning and teaching activities that are based on systematic and standard knowledge of grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, etc., as well as a syllabus that is in line with predetermined learning objectives and support for inexperienced teachers (Cunningsworth, 1995). Coursebooks also contribute to the standardization of education, frame the language content, and offer examples of language usage and practice exercises for teachers and students to use in class (Ur, 1996). In addition, educational materials give students the chance to utilize the target language in class before applying it in authentic contexts. Coursebooks as preplanned instructional resources, however, may have significant drawbacks. In conclusion, coursebooks show to be very useful for school administrations, language teachers, and students because they have syllabi available and already created texts and exercises that are acceptable for a big majority of language learners.

2.2. Coursebook evaluation

2.2.1. Definitions

The evaluation of coursebooks is very important since it helps determine whether to alter existing materials or adopt new ones by highlighting the books' strengths and weaknesses. It is vital to comprehend the evaluation process in order to evaluate a coursebook effectively. Researchers have offered a variety of definitions of evaluation. Tomlinson (2011) claims that coursebook evaluation aims to gauge the prospective worth of the books. It entails making decisions about how coursebooks affect various actors, including students, teachers, and administrators, based on the books' trustworthiness, validity, adaptability, etc. Rea-Dickins (1994) added the definition "the means by which we can obtain a better knowledge of what is effective, what is less effective, and what looks to be of no benefit at all" to the definition of coursebook evaluation. The right questions must be asked, and the answers must be understood, for an evaluation to be effective (Cunningsworth, 1995).

2.2.2. Approaches to coursebook evaluation

Material evaluation is "a dynamic process which is fundamentally a subjective, rule-of-thumb activity" where "no neat formula, grid, or system will ever provide a definitive yardstick" (Sheldon, 1998). Depending on the ELT contexts, many coursebook evaluation methods and standards exist. Taking into account the various teaching and learning situations, administrators and instructors should select the most appropriate criteria for evaluating coursebooks.

Ellis's approach (1997): According to Ellis (1997), predictive evaluation and retrospective evaluation are the two primary categories of coursebook evaluation. A retrospective review may be carried out after the book has been used to determine whether the material matches the needs of the learners and the present teaching approach. A predictive evaluation is intended to assist teachers in choosing which course books to employ. Retrospective evaluations can be done in two different ways: impressionistic and empirical. While the empirical review focuses on "gathering data in a more systematic manner," the impressionistic evaluation is based on observation of learners' involvement and excitement in activities and the book's contents.

Tomlinson's approach (2003): Tomlinson (2003) suggests a different method of evaluating coursebooks, one that involves three stages: pre-use, during-use, and post-use evaluations. The pre-use evaluation stage is "impressionistic and consists of a teacher quickly skimming through a book to acquire a brief impression of its potential worth." The second step, a while-use evaluation, is evaluating items as they are being used. The majority of evaluators often look for responses to questions like: What influence does the course book have on students during the final step of evaluation in this technique, post-use evaluation? What effect does it have on teachers? What effect does it have on administrators, too? According to Tomlinson (2003), this stage of the evaluation process is perhaps the most important because it entails assessing how the materials have affected consumers after they have used the course book. Additionally, Cunningsworth (1995) notes that post-use evaluation is helpful in determining whether to utilize a coursebook again in the future.

Littlejohn's approach (1998 & 2011): Littlejohn (1998 & 2011) suggests the third major method for evaluating course books. A three-level evaluation checklist that he suggested contains the following questions: (1) What is there? (2) What is required of users? (3) What is implied?

The physical characteristics of the coursebook are the subject of questions at the entry level. At the level 2, it concentrates on the language learning objectives and activities in the coursebook to determine what teachers and students utilizing the coursebooks must undertake. It then delves a little more deeply into an examination of what is thought to be the core component of coursebooks. The strategy, philosophy, and goals of the coursebook are discussed in questions at the third level. Littlejohn emphasizes that his levels of evaluation shift from more objective to less objective criteria. The third level is the least objective, while the first level is.

McGrath's approach (2002): McGrath (2002) proposes the fourth approach for coursebook evaluation. In a two-stage process of systematic materials evaluation, he highlights the areas that need to be evaluated. They are "in-depth" evaluation and "first-glance" evaluation. A set of criteria are used to evaluate the coursebook at each level. There are four steps in the evaluation at first glance. Step 1: It evaluates elements including availability, price, and the levels of the book that are offered. Step 2: It supports for teaching and learning-if these are deemed satisfactory. The teacher's book and how effectively it connects to the student book are among the features evaluated at this stage (e.g. cassette recordings, photocopiable worksheets, etc.). Step 3: It determines whether the coursebook is appropriate in terms of its objectives, syllabus, duration, and suitability for learners of different competence levels, ages, and backgrounds. Step 4: This step entails taking into account the book's attraction to readers. This mostly has to do with how the book looks. The first sub-step is where the evaluation begins. The procedure moves on to the following phase if a coursebook satisfies all of the essential requirements for that step. According to McGrath (2002), the thorough evaluation often addresses the following issues of the aims and content, the learners' and teachers' requirements, the function as a classroom resource, learner needs and interests, learner approaches to language learning and the teaching-learning approach in the teacher's own classroom.

McDonough and Shaw's approach (1993 & 2003): McDonough, J. & Shaw, C. (1993 & 2003) suggested three-stage approach to coursebook evaluation comprising external evaluation, internal evaluation, and overall evaluation is another significant method. Given that evaluation criteria can be changed to suit various teaching and learning contexts, it implies that evaluation is ongoing and never static.

As previously mentioned, each approach to coursebook evaluation generally includes strengths and weaknesses. As such, evaluators should select or even develop a strategy that is the most guiding, systematic, and appropriate for their setting. According to the study, it is crucial for evaluators to blend different approaches in order to make up for a particular approach's shortcomings with the advantages of others. The current study employs a hybrid methodology that is mostly based on Ellis's framework (Ellis, 1997) but has been updated to include evaluation standards from other authors.

2.2.3. Coursebook evaluation criteria

There are several approaches to evaluating course books, as well as various sets of criteria for doing so.

Hutchinson and Water (1987): A checklist of material evaluation was presented by Hutchinson and Water (1987) and included criteria for both subjective and objective evaluation of the book, including audience, aim, content, methodology, price, and availability.

Cunningsworth (1995): The following criteria were provided by Cunningsworth (1995) as a basic quick-reference checklist for evaluation and selection of the materials: aims and approaches, design and organization, linguistic content, skills, topic, methodology, teacher's books, and practical concerns.

Wong Pak Wing Lawrence (2011): Curriculum fitness can be evaluated using the methodology established by Lawrence (2011) using following criteria such as the use of task-based learning and teaching approaches, integrated skills and language arts teaching.

In a word, the criteria developed for a thorough and unbiased review of teaching materials by both experienced material evaluators like Hutchinson & Water (1987), Cunningsworth (1995), and novice research scholars like Lawrence (2011). They have some fundamental similarities, but the criteria they give might not necessarily work in a particular situation. As a result, a new one or adapted existing ones that can "cover all areas of evaluation" must be prepared (Cunningsworth, 1995). In this study, a set of criteria for an evaluation of the textbook "Market Leader Third Edition Pre-intermediate Course book" for students majoring in English at HUFU was developed using concepts from these checklists, modified by the author.

2.3. Needs analysis

Needs analysis, or needs assessment, is a crucial step in developing and implementing any language program, and many academics and authors have recognized its significance. According to Tarone, E. & Yule, G. (2000) "needs analysis" is the process of gathering and assessing data in order to respond to the question: "What characteristics of the language does some specific set of learners need to know?" According to Mountford (1981), the definition of "needs" is "what the user institution or society at large regards as necessary or desirable to be learned from a program of language instruction." Alternatively, "needs" can be defined as what students should be able to do at the conclusion of their language course. The term "needs" can also relate to wants, wishes, requests, expectations, motivations, lacks, limitations, and requirements, according to Brindley (1984). It is clear that when creating a course, course designers may take students' demands into account. According to John (1991) conducting a needs analysis is the initial stage in course design since it gives all future course design activities meaning and relevance. In order to address the needs of the learners who are learning a second language, many needs analysis methodologies are used.

2.4. Previous studies on course book evaluation

Numerous research on the evaluation of coursebooks have been conducted up to this moment. A study by (Kayapinar, 2009) revealed the teachers' opinions on the quality of foreign coursebook packages. The study chooses popular (best-selling) coursebooks with the same sub-domains for teacher evaluation. The same year, Azadeh Nemati conducted research to evaluate the general criteria and vocabulary instruction in the Indian state of Karnataka's English Pre-University textbook.

In order to determine whether the English for Information Technology textbook is appropriate for second-year students at a university in Thai Nguyen in terms of content, format, and technique, Tran Minh Thanh (2014) conducted a study for them with the purpose of learning more about how both students and teachers felt about the book, survey questions and semi-structured interviews were used. The outcome shows that, with minor modifications and adaptations, the coursebook may still be utilized by university second-year students and is generally relevant to their needs.

For first-year students at a university in Hanoi, Tran Thi Thuy evaluated the textbook "New English File - Elementary" in 2015. The study's objective was to evaluate the material to see if it satisfies the course's standards in terms of audience, content, goals, and methodology. Hutchinson & Water (1987)'s criteria are chosen, along with document analysis and survey questionnaires as the two data gathering tools.

The English File Beginner Student's Book, third edition, was evaluated in 2018 by Vu Thi Hong Luyen for non-English major students at a preparatory school in Viet Tri in terms of its compatibility to the course objectives, students' needs, and the current teaching and learning method.

Le To Huong conducted an evaluation of the textbook for A Text-based ESP Course for Pharmacy Students in 2019. Just now, the evaluation has been on how well the book fits the objectives and teaching method of the course as well as the needs of the students. This outcome demonstrated the value and reliability for both teachers and students.

3. Research methodology

The setting, the participants, the data collecting instruments, and the data gathering procedure are all separate aspects of the research technique that was employed in the study. To determine if the course book fits with the methods, objectives, and needs of the students, the data were statistically and qualitatively analyzed. Depending on which Zalo group they belonged to, the majority of second- and third-year students got surveys through Google Form after the final business English lecture. When the survey was done, all of the completed questionnaires were collected. 96 people in total (out of 100) responded to the poll.

4. Findings and discussion

The survey has been done of the students who have completed the business course with the use of this material and teachers who have used this coursebook for students of business English.

4.1. The suitability of the coursebook to the objectives of the course

Students' evaluation of the objectives of the coursebook

Table 4.1. *The content of the coursebook is consistent with the course objective*

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Completely inappropriate	0	0.0
	Inappropriate	0	0.0
	Not sure	8	8.3
	Appropriate	64	66.7
	Completely appropriate	24	25.0
	Total	96	100.0

With a rating of 66.7%, the majority of students believed that the coursebook's material was "appropriate" and in accordance with the course objective. Some respondents (25%) regarded it as "completely appropriate." Very few (8.3%) selected "not sure." Zero percent of the students voted "completely inappropriate" and "inappropriate," respectively.

Table 4.2. *The content with vocabulary and terminology fits the objectives of the business English course*

		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	Completely inappropriate	0	0.0
	Inappropriate	0	0.0
	Not sure	4	4.2
	Appropriate	58	60.4
	Completely appropriate	34	35.4
	Total	96	100.0

With a rating of 60.4%, the majority of students thought the vocabulary and terminology used in the material matched the course's objectives for business English. Some (35.4%) participants evaluated it as "completely appropriate." Very few (4.2%) chose to answer "not sure." 0% of the students chose "completely inappropriate" and "inappropriate," correspondingly.

Table 4.3. *The topics are suitable for the objectives of the course*

		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	Completely inappropriate	0	0.0
	Inappropriate	0	0.0
	Not sure	10	10.4
	Appropriate	59	61.5
	Completely appropriate	27	28.1
	Total	96	100.0

With a grade of 61.5%, the majority of students thought that the topics were "appropriate" for the course's objectives. Some (28.1%) thought it was "completely appropriate." A few respondents (10.4%) answered "not sure." 0% of the students chose "completely inappropriate" and "inappropriate," respectively.

Table 4.4. *In the coursebook, there are four skills*

		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	Completely inappropriate	0	0.0
	Inappropriate	0	0.0
	Not sure	10	10.4
	Appropriate	56	58.3
	Completely appropriate	30	31.3
	Total	96	100.0

With a grade of 58.3%, more than half thought the integration of four skills in the coursebook was "appropriate." 31.3% of the participants regarded it as "completely appropriate." A few participants (10.4%) answered "not sure." None of the students (0%) chose "completely inappropriate" or "inappropriate" as their voting options.

Teachers' evaluation of the objectives of the coursebook

Table 4.5. *The content is consistent with the course objective*

		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	Completely inappropriate	0	0.0
	Inappropriate	0	0.0
	Not sure	0	0.0
	Appropriate	5	71.4
	Completely appropriate	2	28.6
	Total	7	100.0

Table 4.6. *The content with vocabulary and terminology fits the objectives of the business English course*

		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	Completely inappropriate	0	0.0
	Inappropriate	0	0.0
	Not sure	0	0.0
	Appropriate	5	71.4
	Completely appropriate	2	28.6
	Total	7	100.0

Table 4.7.1 The topics are suitable for the objectives of the course				Table 4.8. In the coursebook, there are four skills			
		Frequency	Valid Percent			Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	Completely inappropriate	0	0.0	Valid	Completely inappropriate	0	0.0
	Inappropriate	0	0.0		Inappropriate	0	0.0
	Not sure	0	0.0		Not sure	0	0.0
	Appropriate	5	71.4		Appropriate	5	71.4
	Completely appropriate	2	28.6		Completely appropriate	2	28.6
	Total	7	100.0		Total	7	100.0

Most teachers' comments in Tables 4.5 to 4.8 were similar. They all agreed that the coursebook, which received a rating of 71.4%, is "appropriate" and in line with the course's goals. Some (28.6%) were evaluated as "completely appropriate." Very few (28.6%) found it to be "completely appropriate". None of them had a vote for "completely inappropriate," "inappropriate," or "not sure," totaling 0.0%.

4.2. The suitability of the coursebook to students' needs

Table 4.9. Students' and teachers' evaluation of the topics of the coursebook

		Frequency	Percent			Frequency	Percent
Valid	Very boring	0	0.0	Valid	Very boring	0	0.0
	Boring	4	4.2		Boring	0	0.0
	Normal	34	35.4		Normal	3	42.9
	Exciting	45	46.9		Exciting	4	57.1
	Very exciting	13	13.5		Very exciting	0	0.0
	Total	96	100.0		Total	7	100.0

It may be stated that both teachers and students evaluate the coursebook's topics similarly. The topics weren't considered to be "boring," "very boring," or "very exciting" by any of the teachers. Few students (4.2%) believed the topics were "boring" in the meanwhile. The teachers (57.1%) and the students (46.9%) both thought it was "exciting." Additionally, although some (35.4%–42.9%) thought the themes were "normal," others (13.5%) thought they were "very exciting." Therefore, it can be said that the subjects of each unit in this material seem to fascinate both the students and the teachers.

4.3. The suitability of the coursebook to the current teaching and learning methods

Table 4.11. Effectiveness of the learning and teaching interactions used with the coursebook

1: Very ineffective 2: Ineffective 3: Normal 4: Effective 5: Very effective

Elements	Students (%)					Teachers (%)				
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Pair work	0.0	2.1	18.8	57.3	21.9	0.0	0.0	28.6	71.4	0.0
Group work	0.0	0.0	12.5	56.3	31.3	0.0	0.0	28.6	57.1	14.3
Individual work	1.0	4.2	26.0	46.9	21.9	0.0	0.0	14.3	85.7	0.0
Student presenta	0.0	2.1	11.5	57.3	29.2	0.0	0.0	28.6	42.9	28.6

tion										
Teacher presentation	1.0	2.1	8.3	56.3	32.3	0.0	42.9	42.9	0.0	14.3
Whole class work	0.0	3.1	19.8	53.1	24.0	0.0	0.0	28.6	57.1	14.3

Both teachers and students rated the majority of the interactions as "effective.". The most successful types of work, according to both teachers and students, were pairwork, individual work, groups, teacher presentations, and individual work. These six aspects of interaction were not rated as "very ineffective" or "ineffective" by any teachers or students, despite the opinions of some teachers and students. This outcome is consistent with the analysis conducted above about the effectiveness of student learning and teacher interactions.

Table 4.12. Students' and teachers' evaluation on the methodology of the coursebook
1: Poorly 2: Not very well 3: Neutrally 4: Well 5: Very well

Elements	Students (%)					Teachers (%)				
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
The material provides a good balance of four-skill practice, pronunciation, vocabulary and grammar reinforcement.	0.0	1.0	15.6	62.5	20.8	0.0	0.0	28.6	71.4	0.0
The material provide tasks and activities to practice language and integrated skills in meaningful communication.	0.0	2.1	11.5	62.5	24.0	0.0	0.0	28.6	57.1	14.3

No teachers or students believed that the coursebook "poorly" satisfied the requirements, as shown in the tables above. Only a small percentage of students (1.0% and 2.1%) thought the requirements were "not very well" met. The majority of teachers (26.0%) were "neutrally" minded. Meanwhile, the majority of students (62.5%) gave the same rating of "well." There was a difference between the first element that performed "good" (74.4%) and the second element that did not (57.1%) among teachers. Some students claimed that the coursebook's (24.0%) "very good" agreement with the two requirements. The coursebook generally satisfies the course requirements.

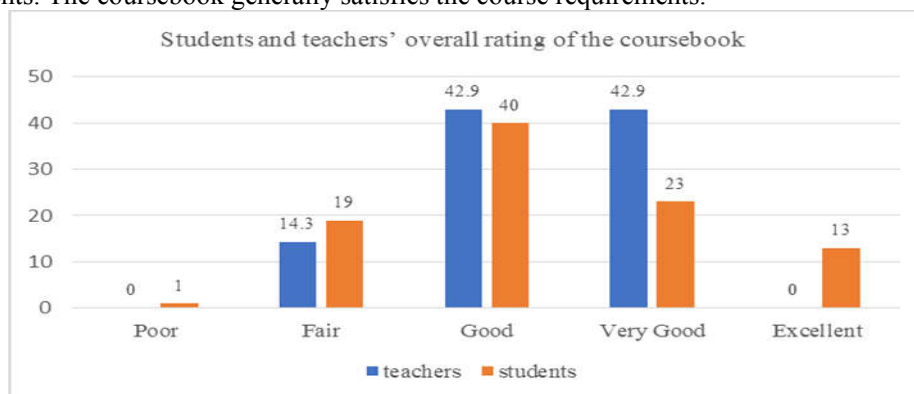


Chart 4.1. Students' and teachers' overall rating of the coursebook

Both the students and the teachers gave the same rating of "good" (40.0% and 42.9% respectively). No teacher thought the coursebook had a "poor" or "excellent" with a rating of 0%. In the meanwhile, some students received "poor" ratings (1.0%), but more received "excellent" evaluations (13.0%). The majority of teachers (42.9%) agreed that it was "very good" and "good" at the same time. 19% of the students rated their performance as "fair," and 23% as "very excellent." Overall, this coursebook is regarded as acceptable to very good, and students and instructors should continue to use it.

5. Conclusion

In the field of teaching English as a foreign language, materials evaluation has long been seen as a vital professional obligations for all EFL teachers. By discussing the content and methodology of the materials via the evaluation process, teachers may help students keep up with changes in the EFL field. The results of the materials evaluation help to determine the advantages and disadvantages of the materials, which may lead to recommendations for improvement or to the rejection of the materials. The course book is evaluated to see if it meets the criteria for the course in terms of the objectives the needs of the students, and the methodology. The findings of the research also included comments from students and teachers who had used the textbook. The results of the study demonstrate whether or not the materials are suitable in view of the course requirements.

Finally, the coursebook seemed to be a good fit for both the needs of the students and the current teaching and learning method utilized at HUFİ, as it basically met the course's objectives. The findings lead to the conclusion that the current coursebook may be used once again for HUFİ business English students, however certain modifications need be made to better meet the course requirements and students' levels.

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Đánh giá giáo trình Pre-intermediate Market Leader, tái bản lần 3 dùng cho sinh viên ngành tiếng Anh Thương mại tại Trường Đại học ở thành phố Hồ Chí Minh

Tóm tắt: Cuốn giáo trình *Pre-intermediate Market Leader*, tái bản lần thứ ba được đánh giá trong nghiên cứu này dành cho sinh viên chuyên ngành tiếng Anh thương mại tại Khoa Ngoại ngữ, Trường Đại học Công nghiệp Thực phẩm Thành phố Hồ Chí Minh. Nội dung nghiên cứu nhằm đánh giá xem tính phù hợp của giáo trình với mục tiêu khóa học, nhu cầu của sinh viên và phương pháp giảng dạy và học hiện tại. Bảy giảng viên đã được yêu cầu tham gia vào các cuộc khảo sát và 100 sinh viên đang sử dụng tài liệu trong khóa học này đã được yêu cầu hoàn thành các cuộc khảo sát bằng Biểu mẫu Google. Kết quả cho thấy các giảng viên có ý kiến đánh giá tích cực về cuốn giáo trình *Pre-intermediate Market Leader*, tái bản lần thứ ba này. Ngoài ra, kết quả cũng chỉ ra rằng tài liệu này hầu hết đáp ứng các mục tiêu của khóa học, phù hợp với nhu cầu của sinh viên và phù hợp với các kỹ thuật dạy và học gần đây nhất. Nhìn chung, kết quả này sẽ tạo điều kiện cho giảng viên và sinh viên tiếp tục sử dụng tài liệu này một cách hiệu quả hơn.

Từ khóa: giáo trình; tài liệu; đánh giá; đánh giá giáo trình; tiếng Anh thương mại.