

A Critical Evaluation of PNU ESP Textbooks

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Abstract—Having paramount importance in any ESP classroom, textbooks are known as one of the most visible parts of any ESP teaching program. Playing a crucial role, especially in societies where English is used as a foreign language, such textbooks should have some features on which the needs and objectives of an ESP teaching program are met. Concerning such an importance, making use of McDonough and Shaw's (2003) model, this research intends to critically evaluate the current status of the Iranian ESP textbooks developed and published by Payam Nour University (PNU), as the second ESP textbooks developer in Iranian academic setting. Obtaining such an end, it tries: (1) to present the importance of ESP materials development as well as evaluation; (2) to introduce the essential drawbacks which PNU textbooks suffer from; and (3) to present some practical suggestions and solutions to tackle the significant problems and drawbacks of such ESP textbooks.

Index Terms—materials development, ESP textbooks, PNU

I. INTRODUCTION

English for specific purposes (ESP), as an approach to English language teaching (ELT) which aims to meet the needs of particular learners, is now well established as an important and distinctive part of ELT. As a trend in the broader framework of ELT, ESP is mostly known as a material-led movement (Dudley-Evans and St John, 1998) which aims at providing and developing textbooks to satisfy the learners' needs and interests as well as the program's objectives (see Iranmehr, et al, 2010a).

ESP textbooks as one of the most visible parts of any ESP teaching program, especially in societies where English is a foreign language and consequently ESP classroom may be almost the only source of English, play a crucial role in exposing learners to the language and certainly the Iranian society as an EFL context is not an exception to this rule.

Today, the increasing growth of ESP in Iranian academic setting has led to an increasing number of specialized textbooks used in Iranian universities.

Referring to the ESP textbooks developed in these years shows that in spite of great global breakthroughs in the realm of ESP textbooks development, as one of the most characteristic features of ESP in practice (McDonough and Shaw, 2003), the locally developed ESP textbooks suffer from some notable drawbacks which has been documented more or less in some recently published works as Farhady (2006), Hashemi (2005), Iranmehr et al (2010b), Soleimani (2006), etc.

Given that PNU, as the largest university with more than 500 branches nationwide, is known as the second ESP textbooks development in Iranian academic context, the necessity of evaluation of its ESP textbooks seems undeniable. Due to this importance, this study aims at highlighting the needs for evaluating PNU's ESP textbooks through a scientific evaluation approach.

II. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

In Dudley-Evans and St John's (1998) words, materials evaluation is a key stage in ESP. According to Hutchinson and Waters (1987, p. 96) "evaluation is a matter of judging the fitness of something for a particular purpose". While as Tomlinson (2003) asserts that most of the literature on materials development has so far focused on materials evaluation and useful advice on conducting evaluations can be found in many works, referring to ESP position in Iranian academic setting reveals that ESP materials evaluation seems to be a missing link in this arena.

Since ESP textbooks serve as the basis for much of the language input learners receive and the language practice that takes place in the classroom, ESP textbooks development as well as their evaluation, especially in our society in which English is taught as a foreign language, should gain much attention. In other words, as Lotfi (2005) asserts, one of the aspects of successful language teaching is providing students with appropriate textbooks and they should be designed in a way that cause a match between what is taught and what is learned. Since, as Baleghizadeh and Rahimi (2011) note, one of the methods which can help us in achieving the goals in any ELT program is the evaluation process, Sheldon

(1988) introduces evaluation as a tool in recognizing the weaknesses and strengths of textbooks and Ellis (1997) argues that evaluation can be a form of professional empowerment and improvement.

Although, as noted, during the recent years some critical studies and evaluations have been conducted and published about SAMT ESP textbooks, lack of such evaluations about PNU ESP textbooks, as one of the most important sources of ESP profession in Iranian academic setting, is completely obvious.

Due to the strong role of ESP textbooks on the one hand, as well as the need to rethink and redesign the current ESP textbooks (see Farhady (2006), Iranmehr, et al (2010a) and Soleimani (2006)) on the other hand, ESP textbooks assessment on the basis of developing some criteria for such an evaluation can be a first but essential step in enhancing the position of ESP in Iranian academic setting in general and PNU in particular.

Undoubtedly, despite the increasing growth of ESP textbooks developed by PNU system, at the first glance, it seems that the qualitative features as well as their systematic evaluation have not gained enough attention.

Thus, the purpose of this research is to reflect on present directions of ESP textbooks developments in PNU. To do so, firstly, a brief historical account of ESP in Iranian academic setting in general and PNU in particular is provided. Second, the theoretical principles of ESP textbooks development and evaluation are introduced. Third, based on the new trends and approaches in textbooks evaluation, the current PNU ESP textbooks are critically evaluated. Finally, some suggestions for modifications of these books are proposed.

III. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Materials selection, adaptation, or development is an important area in ESP, providing learners with materials that will equip them with the knowledge they will need in their future business life.

In Bernard and Zemach's (2003) terms, selecting appropriate language, responding to the needs and wishes of the students and paying attention to effective learning strategies are all the elements which are vitally important when preparing ESP materials. According to Dudley-Evans and St John (1998), selecting ESP materials involves making choices and decisions and to make good choices, people need to have good criteria on which to base people's decisions. ESP textbooks serve as the basis for much of the language input learners receive and the language practice that takes place in the classroom; ESP textbooks development as well as their evaluation, especially in societies in which English is taught as a foreign language, should gain much attention. In other words, as Lotfi (2005) asserts, one of the aspects of successful language teaching is providing students with appropriate textbooks and they should be designed in a way that cause a match between what is taught and what is learned. Chosen from authentic texts and materials (Day, 2003), variety in texts in terms, topics and themes, enjoying, stimulating and motivating texts and activities (Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998), having appropriate and meaningful activities and tasks (Bernard & Zemach, 2003), and having an appropriate physical appearance and organization (Riazi, 2005) are only some important ESP textbook features which should be considered and applied in every ESP textbook development.

As Ellis and Johnson (1994, p.115) emphasize, the choice of materials has a major impact on what happens in the course. This impact is demonstrated on the following three levels:

- It "determines what kind of language the learners will be exposed to and, as a consequence, the substance of what they will learn in terms of vocabulary, structures, and functions";
- It "has implications for the methods and techniques by which the learners will learn";
- Last but not least, "the subject of or content of the materials is an essential component of the package from the point of view of relevance and motivation".

IV. MATERIALS EVALUATION

Materials evaluation is an important part of materials selection as well as the materials development process. In both cases, evaluation is primarily "concerned with relative merit. Brown (1989, p. 231) defines evaluation as "the systematic collection and analysis of all relevant information necessary to promote the improvement of a curriculum, and assess its effectiveness and efficiency, as well as the participants' attitudes within the context".

A. Tomlinson Model

In Tomlinson's (2003) words, materials evaluation is a procedure that involves measuring the value of a set of learning materials. In his words, there are many types of materials evaluation. He classifies the most important types of materials evaluation as follows:

a) Pre-use Evaluation

Pre-use evaluation involves making predictions about the potential value of materials for their users. It can be context-free. Often pre-use evaluation is impressionistic and consists of a teacher flicking through a book to gain a quick impression of its potential value.

b) Whilst-use Evaluation

This involves measuring the value of materials whilst using them or whilst observing them being used. It can be more objective and reliable than pre-use evaluations; it makes use of measurement rather than prediction. In his words, exactly what can be measured in a whilst-use evaluation is controversial, but it can be included the following:

- Clarity of instructions
- Clarity of layout
- Comprehensibility of texts
- Credibility of tasks
- Achievability of tasks
- Achievement of performance objectives
- Practicality of the materials
- Teachability of the materials
- Flexibility of the materials
- Appeal of the materials
- Motivating power of the materials
- Impact of the materials

c) Post-use Evaluation

Post-use evaluation as a valuable, but least administered type of evaluation tries to measure the actual effects of the materials on the users. It can measure the short-term effect as regards motivation, impact, achievability, instant learning, etc. and also it can measure the long term effect as regards durable learning and application. It can answer such questions as:

- What do the learners know which they did not know before starting to use the materials?
- What do the learners still not know despite using the materials?
- What can the learners do which they could not do before starting to use the materials?
- What can the learners still not do despite using the materials?
- To what extent have the materials prepared the learners for their examinations?
- To what extent have the materials prepared the learners for their post-course use of the target language?
- What effect have the materials had on the confidence of the learners?
- What effect have the materials had on the motivation of the learners?
- To what extent have the materials helped the learners to become independent learners?
- Did the teachers find the materials easy to use?
- Did the materials help the teachers to cover the syllabus?
- Did the administrators find the materials helped them to standardize the teaching in their situation?

In other words, it can measure the actual outcomes of the use of the materials and thus the data on which reliable decisions about the use, adaptation or replacement of the materials can be made.

B. Rea-dickens and Germaine Model

Rea-Dickens and Germaine (1992) believe that teaching materials should be defined in the following manner before they are evaluated:

1. What can materials mean to teachers?
 - a) Does the teacher confine herself/himself solely to the textbook or does the teacher refer to other sources like a teacher's guide, video, listening tapes, etc.?
 - b) Does the teacher distinguish between traditional materials meant for teaching/ learning purposes and authentic materials?
 - c) Does the teacher use materials created by teachers and learners?
2. The relation between materials and the social context:
 - a) What roles are the materials likely to play?
 - b) What goals and objectives are the materials likely to accomplish?
3. How are the materials to be used?
 - a) Are the materials the only resource for teaching?
 - b) Are they one of several other resources?

C. Candlin & Breen Model

Candlin and Breen (1979) divide materials evaluation into two stages or phases. The first phase focuses on the usefulness of materials. The second phase focuses on selection and use of materials in ways that are sensitive to the language classroom.

- Phase one

The three major concerns to evaluate the usefulness of materials are listed below:

1. What learners need to know should be matched with what learners will be able to do with the materials.
2. How language is best learnt should be matched with the kinds of learning actually offered by the materials.

The above questions open up the weak points of the materials with regard to teachers' freedom to adapt the materials. Moreover, this analysis can reveal whether the materials force the teacher to take inappropriate roles and isolate classroom activities in the materials.

3. The conditions to determine the usefulness of materials before evaluation are based on:

- a) The contribution of the teacher to classroom work

- b) The resources provided by the learners
- c) The contributions of the classroom.

- Phase two

Breen and Candlin (1987) propose the following questions to evaluate the usefulness of materials that are sensitive to language learning:

1. How the materials synchronize with the learners' perception of language needs?
2. Can learners perceive for themselves whether the materials can meet their language needs?
3. Do the materials relate to learners' values, attitudes and feelings?
4. Do the materials capture learners' attention?
5. Are the materials divided in a principled manner?
6. Are they continuous?
7. Can the learners impose their own sequencing and division on the materials according to their needs?
8. Are the materials flexible enough to accommodate teachers' and learners' preferences?

D. Robinson Model

Robinson (1991, cited in Baleghizadeh and Rahimi, 2011) distinguishes between three types of materials evaluation: a) preliminary (before an ESP course begins), b) summative (takes place at the end of the course), and c) formative (conducted while the course is ongoing). She states that evaluation can be carried out by both outsiders and insiders. A further distinction made by Robinson is between process and product evaluation. The former addresses teaching and learning processes, strategies, administrative and decision-making processes, while the latter is concerned with the students' product such as examination results, essays, etc. By insiders she means teachers, students, and course designers. Robinson lists a number of tools used to carry out evaluation: questionnaires, checklists, rating scales, interviews, observation, and records.

E. McDonough & Shaw Model

McDonough & Shaw (2003) examine the criteria of evaluation in two stages: an external evaluation that offers a brief "overview" of the materials from the outside (cover, introduction, table of contents), which is often followed by a closer and more detailed internal evaluation.

a) External evaluation

In a more precise word, they introduce the external evaluation in this way:

By external evaluation, the evaluator attempts to examine the organization of the materials as they stated explicitly by the author/publisher by looking at:

the blurb, or the claims made on the cover of the book the introduction and table of contents that should enable the evaluator to assess "what the books say about themselves". It is also useful to scan the table of content page I that it often represents a "bridge" between the external claim made for the materials and what will actually be presented "inside" the materials themselves. At this stage we need to consider why the materials have been produced.

According to McDonough & Shaw (2003, p. 63) the claims made for the materials by the author/publisher can be quite strong and will need critical evaluation in order to see if their claims can be justified. From the "blurb" and the "introduction" we can normally expect comments on some/all of the following:

The intended audience: We need to ascertain who the materials are targeted at, be it teenagers aged 13 and upwards or adults, for example. The topics that will motivate one audience will probably not be suitable for another.

The proficiency level: Most materials claim to aim at a particular level, such as false beginner or lower intermediate. This will obviously require investigation as it could very widely depending on the educational context.

The context in which the materials are to be used: We need to establish whether the materials are for teaching general learners or perhaps for teaching English for Specific Purposes (ESP). If the latter, what degree of specialist subject knowledge is assumed in the materials?

How the language be presented or organized into teachable units /lessons: The materials will contain a number of units / lessons and their respective lengths need to be borne in mind when deciding how and if they will fit into a given educational program.

The author's view on language and methodology and the relationship between the language, the learning process and the learner.

Are the materials to be used as the main "core" course or to be supplementary to it?

Is a vocabulary list/ index included?

What visual material does the book contain (photographs, charts, diagrams) and is it there for cosmetic value only or is it integrated into the text?

Is the layout and presentation clear or cluttered?

Is the material too culturally biased or specific?

Is it essential to possess the extra material (audio/visual) in order to use the textbook successfully?

The inclusion of tests in the teaching materials (diagnostic, progress, achievement); Would they be useful for the particular learners?

In this model, after completing this external evaluation or the “macro-evaluation”, we can continue with our internal or more detailed evaluation known as “micro-evaluation”.

b) Internal evaluation

In this stage of evaluation procedure, the essential issue is to analyze the extent to which the aforementioned factors in the external evaluation stage match up with the internal consistency and organization of the materials as stated by the author/publisher. In this stage, to perform an effective inspection of the materials, we need to examine at least two units (preferably more) of a book or set of materials to investigate the following factors:

The presentation of the skills in the materials.

The grading and sequencing of the material. This criterion is an important one and merits some investigation as it is not always patently clear what the principle is. Some materials are quite “steeply” graded while others claim to have no grading at all.

The relationship between tests and exercises to (a) learner needs, and (b) what is taught by the course material.

Do you feel that the material is suitable for different learning styles? Is a claim and provision made for self-study and is such a claim justified?

Are the materials sufficiently “transparent” to motivate both students and teachers alike, or would you foresee a student/teacher mismatch?

To sum up, as McDonough and Shaw (2003) write, in the internal evaluation stage we have suggested that as evaluators we need to examine the following criteria: the treatment and presentation of the skills, the sequencing and grading of the materials, the type of skills contained in the materials, appropriacy of tests and exercises, self-study provision and teacher-learner “balance” in the use of the materials.

V. PURPOSES OF MATERIALS EVALUATION

According to Tomlinson (1999), the objectives, the types and the instruments for the evaluation determine the reasons for evaluating materials. For instance, if the evaluation aims to improve materials then the evaluator will investigate learners’ problems through classroom observation sessions. Therefore, the instruments for evaluation depend on the objectives of the evaluation. Tomlinson (1999) lists the following reasons for evaluating materials:

1. To select a textbook for a course
2. To select materials to supplement a coursebook
3. To select materials from different sources in an eclectic manner.
4. As a basis for adaptation of materials in order to make them more suitable for a particular course.
5. As a basis for improving materials (trialling or piloting materials).
6. In order to edit materials produced by others.
7. In order to review proposed materials for a publisher.
8. In order to review published materials for a journal
9. In order to help teachers or trainee teachers develop their understanding of methodology and/or materials writing.
10. In order to recommend a coursebook for an institution or a ministry of education.
11. As part of a research experiment.

The classification of criteria is not uniform among evaluators, but still consistent within an evaluation. The classification of criteria helps the evaluator to group generalizations of a similar nature, and move on to specific issues within that category. This study has the following types of criteria:

a) Physical aspects: In this section, importance is given to the presentational aspects of the coursebook like layout, design, print quality etc.

b) Functional aspects: Here the focus is on learning objectives, whether importance is given to all the four skills, are the activities analytical or experiential.

Sheldon (1988, cited in Baleghizadeh and Rahimi, 2011) has suggested several reasons for textbook evaluation. He states that the selection of a textbook is indicator of an educational decision in which there is considerable professional, financial, and even political investment. Through evaluation, teachers will become familiar with the content of available textbooks and recognize the weaknesses and strengths of each.

One more reason for evaluation is suggested by Cunningsworth (1995) and Ellis (1997). They argue that evaluation can be considered as a means of conducting action research as well as a form of professional empowerment and improvement. It can also be a component of teacher training courses in which prospective teachers become aware of important features which they should search in textbooks.

VI. THE PRESENT STUDY

The model applied in this research was mostly McDonough & Shaw’s (2003). According to Baleghizadeh and Rahimi (2011), this model mostly involves two stages. First, external evaluation that examines the organization of materials stated by the author or the publisher including claims made on the cover page and information in introduction and table of contents. This kind of evaluation gives information about the intended audience, the proficiency level, the context of use, presentation and organization of materials, and authors’ opinion about language and methodology, use of

audio-visual materials, vocabulary list and index, cultural aspects, tests and exercises included in the book. Second, internal evaluation in which the following factors are examined: a) the presentation of the skills, b) the grading and sequence of the materials, c) authenticity or artificiality of the listening materials, d) authenticity or artificiality of the speaking materials, e) appropriateness of tests and materials, and f) appropriateness of the materials for different learning styles and claims made by the authors for self-study.

VII. MATERIALS

Upon the researchers' teaching experiences as well as the positions of some ESP textbooks, the PNU ESP textbooks to be evaluated are:

- Persian Literature (1)
- Psychology (1)
- Mathematics
- Social Sciences (2)

VIII. PROCEDURE

After selecting 4 ESP books, they were evaluated one by one. Following the selected model, first of all, each one was externally evaluated, then internally. The four books selected to be evaluated here one by one:

1) Title: **ESP (1) for the Students of Persian Literature**

Author: Nilipour, Reza

Date of publishing: 1992

Imprint number: 15

This book was chosen because it is known as the first ESP textbook developed and published in PNU. During the 18-year use, it has been reprinted many times and is known as one of the most usable books in PNU. Here this book is evaluated in the framework of the selected model:

- External Evaluation:

Looking at the claims made in the preface of the book reveals that the author aims at familiarizing the students with first-hand texts and researches written by foreign writers. In his claim, the students will be able to study and analyze the literary texts.

In his words, this book is divided to two parts. The first part includes ten passages which try to introduce some essential concepts, terminology and issues of language and literature.

In the following, the external factors are checked:

<i>Intended audience</i>	Students of Persian Language & Literature
<i>Context</i>	PNU
<i>Presenting & Organizing</i>	10Units / Two parts
<i>Core & Supplementary</i>	Core
<i>Vocabulary list/index</i>	Included but incomplete
<i>Visual materials</i>	Nothing
<i>Layout</i>	Cluttered
<i>Audio/video Materials</i>	Nothing
<i>Tests</i>	Nothing

- Internal Evaluation:

a) The presentation of skill(s):

While ESP in Iran in general and in PNU in particular is mostly based on reading skill, reviewing this book reveals that such a skill is not supported. Although the author claims that this book is to teach the students reading skill to enable them to use English to study their specific subject area, lack of any specific and efficient reading strategy is evident.

b) The grading & sequencing:

Reviewing the units shows that no specific and clear grading is seen. While the last unit is more difficult than the previous ones, there is no difference between the first nine ones. Thus, we can claim that there is no grading at all.

c) The type of material:

Studying the source of the passages reveals that the first nine ones have been selected from an old book entitled *The Educated Imagination* (1964). The book is a series of speeches of Northrope Frey, a Canadian writer. Although, Nilipour claims that the text introduces some basic concepts of literature, reviewing these cluttered passages shows that they are not related to language and literature especially Persian literature. Using some similar passages in the third part of "Translation of Simple Texts" a two-credit course for the PNU students majoring English translation by the same author and introducing them as simple not specialized ones is the best reason to reject the author's claim.

d) Tests and exercises:

Reviewing the exercises shows that they are outdated and inflexible.

Lack of many effective skills and strategies like scanning, skimming, guessing meaning from context, predicting, reading for main ideas, prior or background knowledge, etc. are clearly obvious.

e) Transparent enough to motivate both students & teachers:

In this case, Cunnigsworth (1995) maintains that such a book must take account of the students' needs and facilitate their learning processes. According to McDonough and Shaw (2003) such a book should be attractive for both teacher and learner. Reviewing this book as well as referring to the researchers' experiences indicates that this book cannot meet the learners' needs. Moreover, as noted its appearance and the exercises are not motivating and attractive at all.

2) Title: ESP (1) for the Students of Psychology

Author: Davood Kordestani & Hossein Zare

Date of publishing: 2010

Imprint number: 1

This book was chosen because it is known as one of the latest ESP textbooks developed and published in PNU. It is used by many students majoring psychology and educational sciences. Here this book is evaluated in the framework of the selected model:

- External Evaluation:

In the following, the external factors are checked:

<i>Intended audience</i>	Students of Psychology and Educational Sciences
<i>Context</i>	PNU
<i>Presenting & Organizing</i>	15 units
<i>Core & Supplementary</i>	Core
<i>Vocabulary list/index</i>	Included but incomplete
<i>Visual materials</i>	Nothing
<i>Layout</i>	Cluttered
<i>Audio/Video Materials</i>	Nothing
<i>Tests</i>	Nothing

- Internal Evaluation:

a) The presentation of skill(s):

Although the authors claim that this book is to teach the students reading skill to enable them to use English to study their specific subject area, lack of any specific and efficient reading strategy is evident. In fact, there is no specific strategy for reading. In each passage, they claim that the students can develop skimming and scanning but we cannot see any appropriate exercise to cover this claim. Certainly providing some multiple-choice questions cannot meet this expectation. Moreover, reading strategies are not limited to these strategies at all.

b) The grading & sequencing:

Reviewing the units shows that no specific and clear grading is seen. For example, the unit 8 is too long, consisting more than 50 new words, but for example unit 11 is shorter and easier than unit 3 or four.

c) Tests and exercises:

Reviewing the exercises shows that they are some fixed and inflexible ones. Lack of many effective skills and strategies like scanning, skimming, guessing meaning from context, predicting, reading for main ideas, prior or background knowledge, etc. are clearly obvious.

d) Transparent enough to motivate both students & teachers:

3) Title: Mathematical Passages in English

Author: Mohammad Hassan Bizhanzadeh

Date of publishing: 1992

Imprint number: 2 (with edition)

Here we evaluate a Basic sciences textbook which its format is different from most of the PNU ESP textbooks. Moreover it is one of the rare books in PNU which has been revised. It is used by all students majoring mathematics. Here this book is evaluated in the framework of the selected model:

- External Evaluation:

In the following, the external factors are checked:

<i>Intended audience</i>	Students of Mathematics
<i>Context</i>	PNU
<i>Presenting & Organizing</i>	18 units
<i>Core & Supplementary</i>	Core
<i>Vocabulary list/index</i>	Included
<i>Visual materials</i>	A few
<i>Layout</i>	Partially clear
<i>Audio/Video Materials</i>	Nothing
<i>Tests</i>	Nothing

- Internal Evaluation:

a) The presentation of skill(s):

Reviewing the current textbook reveals no specific skill has been supported. Its strong emphasis on word formation and etymology as well as translation has turned this book into a bilingual ESP textbook. While reading ESP books involves mastering reading strategies especially in such a context, this skill is not supported.

While ESP aim is familiarizing students with English learning strategies and skills to make them proficient while facing specialized texts, reading the preface of every unit except the first and tenth units show that the author attempts to teach students mathematics not English.

b) The grading & sequencing:

As noted, since this book is a source of teaching mathematics not English, any decision on its grading is difficult.

c) The type of material:

Misunderstanding of its author has turned this book into a one which its aim is the teaching of scientific subject matter in English. Unfortunately, as Farhady (2006) maintains, the idea of specific purpose has been mistaken for the subject matter area. Thus, it is strongly claimed that it is not an ESP textbook.

d) Tests and exercises:

Leafing through the book shows that only two types of exercise (multiple-choice & fill-in-the-blank) are integrated. Since there is no specific skill and strategy in this book, lack of any purposeful exercise is natural. In sum, its low quality in this section is really evident.

e) Transparent enough to motivate both students & teachers:

It is believed that it is not an ESP textbook and naturally dealing with this criterion is not reasonable.

1) Title: English in Social Sciences (2)

Author: Gholamreza Arjmandi, Abdulali Rahimi & Hassan Khalili

Date of publishing: 1387

Imprint number: 2

- External Evaluation:

In the following, the external factors are checked:

<i>Intended audience</i>	Students of Social Sciences
<i>Context</i>	PNU
<i>Presenting & Organizing</i>	10 units
<i>Core & Supplementary</i>	Core
<i>Vocabulary list/index</i>	Included but incomplete
<i>Visual materials</i>	Nothing
<i>Layout</i>	Partially clear
<i>Audio/Video Materials</i>	Nothing
<i>Tests</i>	Nothing

- Internal Evaluation:

a) The presentation of skill(s):

According to its authors' preface, this book like most of other ESP textbooks aims at developing reading and comprehension skills. While it is claimed that it is a book for developing reading comprehension, reviewing the book shows that it is a book of developing vocabulary rather than reading comprehension. The absence of any reading strategy including scanning, skimming, guessing meaning from context, predicting, reading for main ideas, prior or background knowledge, etc.

Is the best evidence for this claim. In addition, its emphasis on different vocabulary exercises enhances this assumption that there is no clear understanding of reading comprehension skill among the authors.

b) The grading & sequencing:

Regarding the size and the amount of new words, the units are more or less similar.

c) Tests and exercises:

As noted, in this book vocabulary learning is supported. Therefore, different kinds of vocabulary exercises are provided. The great deal of word formation practice seems disturbing.

d) Transparent enough to motivate both students & teachers:

Its low face validity, its clichéd and inflexible pattern of vocabulary exercises, inattention to reading skill and strategies and the great size of Vocabulary Help part might turn this book into a boring one. One of the researchers' experiences in teaching this book verifies this claim.

IX. CONCLUSIONS

In this paper, four ESP textbooks were chosen as a sample for ESP textbooks evaluation. Since most of the ESP textbooks developed in PNU especially the ones in humanities more or less are similar, it is believed that evaluating these ones can provide a clear picture of the general atmosphere of common ESP textbooks developed and taught in PNU.

Reviewing the findings of this research shows that the main shortcomings and drawbacks of the current ONU's ESP textbooks can be classified as following:

A. *Low Face Validity*

Visual features and aids of ELT textbooks and especially ESP ones are among the most important characteristics of such materials. Their importance has been discussed in many works. According to Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998), key graphic representations such as lists, columns, tables, matrices, tree diagrams, flow charts and mind maps can be very helpful in extracting and reorganizing the information in ESP textbooks. In Riazi's (2005) words, for a textbook to be of high quality, both the software, i.e. the content and organization, and hardware, i.e. the physical appearance, should be in order. In his terms, visual information including graphics, photos, charts, diagrams, etc. as well as clear layout and appropriate type face are necessary features of ESP textbooks. Krug (2002) also introduces illustrations as well as the physical appearance as important features of any ESP textbook.

Reviewing the current ESP textbooks developed in PNU shows that lack of any visual features including pictures and photos are evident. In addition, their design (layout, cover, color, binding) are far inferior to their counterpart commercially produced ones.

B. *Lack of Materials Reviewing and Updating*

Krug (2002) introduces being up-to-date as an important feature in any ESP textbook development. According to Riazi (2005), being up to date is one of the most significant features of ESP textbooks and achieving this feature involves the continuous revision of texts, exercises, as well as skills and strategies. Leafing through the books showed that the date of edition was a missing link!

C. *Ineffective and Traditional Exercises and Drills*

Reviewing the textbooks indicates that the majority of exercises and drills are text-based and structural. Rarely do these exercises involve students in developing language skills. Rarely do these exercises involve students in developing language skills or communicating ideas. The uniformity of one single pattern of organization in these books means imposing a strict and inflexible structure on learners to follow, no matter what the nature of the subject matter and discipline is and who the learners are.

Reviewing the textbooks shows that most of them follow the same cliché pattern involving word list, reading passages, comprehension questions and vocabulary practice.

Using such an inflexible strict pattern, tracing to the first PNU's ESP textbooks, is the most common pattern in the current ESP books. In other words, the diversity of exercises, activities, and tasks is one of the visible missing links in such textbooks. It means that these books are restricted to a linguistic object. In this regard, John and Davies (1983) write: "one of the most contributions to the approach to reading I ESP was the shift from Text as a Linguistic Object (TALO) to Text as a Vehicle of Information (TAVI).

In fact, the absence of skills and strategies like scanning, skimming, guessing meaning from context, predicting, inferring, reading for main ideas, prior or background knowledge, etc. are clearly obvious.

While Hutchinson and Waters (1987) insist that the materials should avoid the assembly line approach which makes each unit look the same, with the same type of text, the same kind of illusion, the same type ad number of exercises, such an "assembly line approach" compromises the current framework of Iranian ESP textbooks.

In sum, as Farhady (2006) writes, one cannot prescribe a particular method of teaching for a particular ESP class. The kind of materials, the objectives of the courses and the nature of the students are the factors that must be accounted in any ESP textbooks development.

D. *Misconception of ESP*

Reviewing the current ESP textbooks reveals that in most of them the authors do not have a true understanding of ESP textbook. As Farhady (2006, p. 27) writes:

The purpose of ESP is not to teach any scientific subject matter in English. We are language teachers, and ESP is teaching English. The idea of specific purpose should not be mistaken for subject matter areas. We are not supposed to teach physics, chemistry, or any science for that matter, in ESP classes. Our main objective is to serve the purpose for which the course is designed. If the objective is to improve reading ability of the students, we should teach them how to read, and how to read in their fields of specialty independently of scientific concepts. In fact we teach them how to read definitions, no matter what scientific concept is defined. We teach them how to read a particular genre, such as the introduction part of an article, no matter what the content is. This does not mean that the content is not important. Rather, the content receives the importance when it serves as a motivating factor.

Following such principles, the materials in the present books do not meet the needs of learners. In fact, we can conclude that a kind of misconception of the nature of ESP is dominant in PNU books.

To sum up, we can state that there is a mismatch between theory and practice. While as Soleimani (2006) writes that the materials developed for the reading-centered approach to ESP ought to be consistent with both reading theories, strategies and skills essential to the reading process, taking a look at the textbooks reveals that there is no consistency between theory and practice. According to their authors, reading is a text-based approach and success in reading depends upon the knowledge of the structures and vocabulary. Supposing that success in reading means learning a long list of words as much as possible, they have developed such inefficient ESP textbooks.

X. SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Here, some practical suggestions in the light of our findings are presented as follows:

1- A thorough and comprehensive needs analysis in order to come up with the objectives of ESP instruction in all majors is necessary. In fact, paying real attention to the learners' needs and interests must be the first step in preparing the ESP textbooks.

2- Revising and updating the books are essential. Providing texts and tasks with newer concepts and information is necessary. Such a revision must enhance and increase the learners' interests and motivations on the topic. When the materials are revised, methodology would follow.

3- New current approaches should be used in developing and preparing any new ESP textbooks. The current inadequate approaches as the basic ones in these textbooks do not have the capacity to meet our goals. In fact, a remodeling of the texts, exercises and activities is essential.

4- The visual appearance and layout of such books as well as their physical shape and appearance ought to be revisited. One such revision might be the use of important visual features including pictures, charts, tables, graphs, etc. which not only can be eye-catching and motivating, but can be informative as well.

5- In dealing with vocabulary, new vocabulary should be presented in meaningful and appropriate contexts. It should be recycled in subsequent lessons for reinforcement. But most of the new words in such textbooks are introduced out of context.

6- The authors of such books must be experts in ESP materials development. Again, it is insisted that the idea of specific purpose should not be mistaken for subject matter areas.

7- Last but not least, paying attention to the ESP teachers and instructors' experiences, observations and expectations is a must. In developing the new textbooks, their attitudes should be considered, too.

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