

**A Critical Evaluation of English for Informatics ESP Textbook
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Abstract

Having foremost significance in any ESP classroom, course readings are known as one of the most visible parts of any ESP instructing program. Playing a vital part where English is used as an outside dialect, such reading material ought to have a few highlights on which the needs and targets of an ESP teaching program are met. Concerning such a significance, making use of McDonough and Shaw's (2003) model, this study evaluate fundamentally the current status of the ESP book used in English for informatics at UMNU Kebumen. The evaluation tries: 1) to show the significance of ESP materials development as well as evaluation; (2) to present the fundamental drawbacks in the book; and, (3) to show some practical recommendation and arrangements to handle the noteworthy issues and drawbacks of such ESP textbooks.

Key words: *evaluation, informatics, textbook*

Introduction

As an approach to English language teaching (ELT), English for specific purposes (ESP) aims to meet the needs of particular learners. It is now well established as an important and distinctive part of ELT. Dudley-Evans and St John (1998) explained that ESP is mostly known as a material-led movement 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 text book as one of the most unmistakable parts of any ESP educating program, particularly in a society where English is a remote dialect may become the most important source of English. It is to play a significant part in exposing learners to the target language. Similarly the Indonesian society as an EFL setting is not an special case to this rule. Today, the expanding development of ESP in Indonesian scholarly setting has driven to an expanding number of specialized

textbooks utilized in Indonesian universities.

Referring to the ESP text books created in these recent years, it appears that there are many to show extraordinary worldwide breakthroughs in the realm of ESP reading material improvement. However, some 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).

Knowing that English for informatics as the ESP textbook developed in Indonesian academic context, the necessity of evaluation of the textbook seems undeniable. Due to this importance, this study aims at highlighting the needs for evaluating English for Informatics textbooks through a scientific evaluation approach.

Dudley-Evans and St John's (1998) explains that 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" 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 Indonesian academic setting, a lot 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. It is in line with Lotfi (2005), 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, 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 (1998) see evaluation as a tool in recognizing the weaknesses and strengths of textbooks while Ellis (1997) argues that evaluation can be a form of professional empowerment and improvement.

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 Indonesian academic setting in general and English for informatics in particular. Undoubtedly, despite the increasing growth of ESP textbooks developed, it seems that the qualitative features as well as their systematic evaluation have not gained enough attention.

Thus, the purpose of this study is to describe on present directions of ESP textbooks developments done at UMNU Kebumen. To do so, firstly, a brief historical account of ESP in Indonesian academic setting in general and English for informatics 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 ESP textbook namely English for Informatics is critically evaluated. Finally, some

suggestions for modifications of these books are proposed.

Review of Related Theories

Materials selection, adaptation, or development is an important area in ESP, giving learners with materials that will prepare them with the information they will require in their future trade life. In Bernard and Zemach's (2003) terms, selecting suitable dialect, reacting to the needs and wishes of the students and paying consideration to compelling learning procedures are all the components which are crucially vital when preparing ESP materials. Agreeing to Dudley-Evans and St John (1998), selecting ESP materials includes making choices and choices and to make great choices, individuals require to have great criteria on which to base people's decisions. ESP reading material serve as the premise for much of the dialect input learners get and the dialect hone that takes place in the classroom; ESP course readings improvement as well as their assessment, particularly in social orders in which English is instructed as a outside dialect, ought to pick

up much consideration. In other words, as Lotfi (2005) states, one

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”.

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. The materials evaluation model to be used in this research is that initiated by McDonough and Shaw’s (2003). There are some stages in this evaluation:

- 1) 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.

- 2) 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.

Materials

Upon the researchers’ teaching experiences as well as the positions of the ESP textbook used, the ESP textbook to be evaluated is “English for Informatics Students”.

Procedures

There is one major book to use in the course namely English for Informatics Students. So this selected book to be evaluated:

1) Title: **English for Information Technology**

Author: Eric H. Glendinning and John MCEwan

Date of publishing: 1992

Imprint number: 0 19 457375 3

This book was chosen because it is known as the first ESP textbook to use in ESP class. It's been three years this book support the program.

- External Evaluation:

Looking at the claims made in the preface of the book reveals that the author aims at helping teachers with teacher's guide. there is clear objective. In the following, the external factors are checked:

Intended audience	Students of informatics department
Context	Indonesian
Presentation/organisation	25 units
Supplementary	-
Vocabulary list	included
Visual materials	included
layout	Not clear
Audio/video materials	included
Test	included

- Internal Evaluation:

a) The presentation of skill(s):

Reviewing the current textbook reveals specific skill has been supported. The book content is dominated by computer science and information technology. There is strong emphasis on informatics terms. But, as 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 it seems that the book shows author's attempt to teach students informatics not English.

b) The grading & sequencing:

As noted, since this book is a source of teaching informatics technology 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 other words, 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.

Conclusion

Reviewing the book, the conclusions are:

- 1) The book has low face validity;
- 2) The book is less materials updating and reviewing
- 3) The book contains inappropriate drills

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