Research Paper

Analysis of an ESP book
(ESP for students of accounting written)

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Abstract

Field of ELT is growing nowadays and within this broad field ESP has been given increasing importance and new suggestions insist on the learning-centered approach toward ESP which is in contrast to traditional language-centered approach. This paper has analyzed the view point of some of the students of accounting field in one of the universities in southeastern part of Iran based on the questionnaire which has been carefully prepared and distributed among these students. This questionnaire inquired their opinion toward different aspect of the ESP book that they have passed during second and third semester, that is, *E*nglish for the students of accounting including translation techniques, dictionary and test exam, volume1 which has been written by Mr. Abdolreza Talaneh . The results of the analysis showed that fundamental changes needed to occur regarding content of the book, exercises, additional learning facilities, etc.in order to improve the efficacy of the book and instruction and also make students more motivated in studying English to fulfill their educational and real life needs. Of course all the weakness does not fall on the part of the author and wide ranging decision should be made from the side of other parties that are engaged in the matter of English education in Iran such as syllabus designers, materials developers, and top of all Ministry of Science, Research, and Technology. It is recommended to all of them to take need analysis more fully into account and in all stage of the preparation of the ESP books have both target needs and learning needs of the target students in their mind so that the final outcome be desirable and worth mentioning in the literature of ESP.

Keywords: ESP, students, author, view point, educational issues, experience.

Introduction

Field of ELT is growing nowadays, regarding the increasing importance that has been given to English as a language for international communication. Students in any field need to be familiarized with English in general to serve their requirement when searching in Internet, reading instruction for using an appliance or using software and in particular to come up with new developments win respect to their specialized field of study.

The importance of ESP is hidden to no one at present time. But different views are held regarding the content that ESP books should contain. Some believe that register analysis should constitute the basis for such books, some other believe discourse analysis or skills and strategies or analysis of target situation be the basic foundation for developing specialized English materials. The most recent developments in ESP field indicate that it should be concerned with learning and a learning-centered approach toward ESP is emphasized. In previous views ESP was language-centered and was primarily concerned with the question of "what people learn". But in recent learning-centered version of ESP question of "how people learn is gaining importance" (Basturkmen,2006).

ESP is taught in many different contexts and countries. In some of these contexts still old view is dominant like in Iran.in such contexts syllabus designers appear to be reluctant to change the already established and celebrated syllabuses.

Materials developers also do not tend to come up with new modifications regarding nature of ESP and continue using already developed materials. Even in new editions of ESP books at university

level little changes happen and ideology behind the developments of materials seems to remain intact. Teachers also seem to prefer dealing with such syllabuses and materials and they are either satisfied with current ESP books or are not inclined enough to put the practicality of such books under question.

Even we turn our attention to Iranian ESP students few amount of them seems to give importance to their English books and prefer to deal with other topics and subject matter areas. But in the situation when the world demands thirty for more learning-centered approach to ESP it is recommended that syllabus designer, materials developers, teachers and students take new views into account and adapt their attempt accordingly so that their efforts lead to something useful and worthy and outcome of educational system be comparable to educational system in developed countries.

Focus of Study

Much of the literature in ESP to date has focused on case by case description of individuals teaching or research projects. It has also focused on practical aspects such as course design and materials development. The purpose of this project is to examine some of the factors that are related to different aspects of an ESP book at university level and come to conclusion about (in)effectiveness of that book. Characteristics of the book are as follows:

Title: English for the students of accounting\volume 1, including translation techniques, dictionary and test exams
Writer: Abdolreza Talaneh fifteen edition: 2011 publisher: Kumars
Print and bookbinding: Armansa

Methodology

Participants

Those who have taken part in this study were nineteen junior students of accounting in Velayat Universities cited in southeastern part of Iran who have passed six units of ESP and studied this book for their ESP course. This sample includes both male and female. Data gathering

A questionnaire, after three stages of revision under guidance of a proficient nonnative speaker and one of the experienced English instructors, has been chosen and distributed among the sample and the results were analyzed for further discussion. Data analysis

Firstly questionnaire asked about type of need in learning ESP. Results showed that more than half of the students consider their need to be improving level of English knowledge. Secondly questionnaire inquired their reason for studying ESP. almost half of the students wanted to improve educationally, one fourth wanted to improve in their job and other wanted to be enabled to pass exam.

Next question searched the potential facilities that students prefer to access in order to pass this course. Computer and educational seminars were considered most important ones on the part of the students. Limitations of ESP course were both lack of specialized knowledge on the part of ESP teachers and lack of educational facilities and improper method of teaching respectively, in students' opinion. It shows that we should not put sharp end of arrow towards only author. Also we need expert teachers who are able to put their knowledge into practice in the course of actual teaching.

More than half of the students preferred to experience ESP classes in the evening or night. So it is recommended to schedule organizers to put ESP classes in the evening preferably. The students judged that time allotted to teaching ESP influences the effectiveness of the content of the book to some extent. It shows that most of them agree that more time is required to be allotted to ESP classes in order to improve its impact.

Their opinion regarding congruence between content of the book and main issues of their special field, that is, accounting, were highly positive for less than half of them and other considered contribution very little or to some extent. It reflects that greater attempt is needed on the part of the writer to consider main issues again and try to match them better than it is now. The present book contains related topics but more attention seems to be needed.

Almost all of them preferred to participate in ESP classes one or two sessions in a week. Their opinion for convenient number of ESP sessions match Iranian curriculum for ESP classes. ESP students in almost all fields experience ESP for one or two sessions every week. With respect to representation materials, 36%of students demanded explanation of related educational issues and equal percentage of them demanded detailed explanation of pertinent terms. Only 21% preferred to be provided with the explanation of abstract concepts. So it is suggested to the author to take these notions into account during edition of the book.

ESP content can be best presented by private institutions as far as students 'viewpoint is concerned. Most of them were not optimist about the role the universities and colleges in fulfilling this function. So more attention needs to be paid to this lesson in universities and colleges to improve quality of its representation.

Most of them requested that content of ESP books includes skills and strategies for application of educational issues that are provided in such books. So it is recommended that practical consideration

penetrates into the organization of ESP books. 63% of the opinions agreed that content of ESP books matches to the content of the other books that they have passed to some extent. Thus the author should notice other related topics and subject matters and include them in the book more efficiently.

The student want high or near high degree of specialization of their ESP book and it seems to be so in the book because topics all are pertinent to accounting field. 31%of the participants concord that there is no positive point in their ESP book other believed that careful consideration of the lessons and choice of vocabulary were positive points of this book.

Preference for order of representation of content for half of them was from more to less important issues. Almost equal number of them preferred simple to complex order of presentation, while it seems that sections are organized according to content, not according to their level of complexity. The optimal way of teaching ESP book in students' viewpoint for more than half of the sample was teaching with consideration of needs both in theoretical and practical aspects, while it seems that present book provide students just with theoretical knowledge and ignores to put this knowledge into practice.

They wanted educational software and to less extent power points to accompany their ESP book in order to improve effectiveness of the book. But unfortunately present book lacks accompanying software and power points. It is suggested such software included phonic files to improve students' listening as well. In most points of view of the students teacher's attitude toward presentation of the content of the book was that it improves learning process. It is good news for the teachers that students are not pessimistic about the teacher's attitude toward the book.

Their own attitudes toward content of ESP book were that it has no remarkable role in acquisition of four main skills, which are, listening, speaking, reading and writing. Only 21% of them believed that ESP book improve their reading and writing and 21% believed it improves their overall proficiency. It shows that different part of the book should be analyzed and improves to foster acquisition of the major four skills.

In order to improve this course most of them were inclined to apply personal learning strategies. Other preferred assignment as an effective way to make ESP course well. Unfortunately most of the students in Iran are not familiar with learning strategies and should be equipped with such strategies. Assignment need to be noticed with much attention to foster content that is dealt in each lesson.

More than half of the students considered articles on specialized issues as the best authentic materials to help them in learning. Others wanted to deal with authentic materials that they collect personally. It is desirable for the author to include some of the recently published articles in the book. 68% of the students preferred presentation of the ESP lessons via both computers and teachers in the class, while nowadays classes are held only by teachers. It shows their want is their classes to come up with new improvement in technology. It seems that the classes that are held in old version are not interesting to students anymore and they are bored to participate in such exhausting classes. More than half of the participants admitted that the most convenient way for their learning was to work in teams or in pairs. So it is recommended to the author of the book to include exercises in each lesson which are based on the cooperation between students in the form of pairs or teams. In line with learning ESP 52% of the students wanted to become proficient in computer skills. So it is duty on the part of the author to include sections with computer skills.

36% of them view one hour and half to be sufficient time to be allotted to ESP classes. It shows that the time which is currently allotted to ESP classes is enough to fulfill students' need regarding English for specific purposes. They mostly wanted to achieve medium level of specialized skills. With respect to achieving specialized skills it appears that this book was successful because it helps students to achieve almost medium level of knowledge.

Less than half of the students judged type of current representation is effective to some extent and others considered effectiveness little or almost not at all. It shows that the book strong edition in order to become effective enough in the type of presentation that serves students the best. Their expectations for next edition of the book rotated around application of the activities related to the realities of their life and help them to put their acquired knowledge into practice. They also demanded that organization of the content be in a way motives them toward learning of English for specific purposes. The other options, i.e., introduction of the concrete concepts in the way that improve learning devoted only 21% of the choices to themselves. Thus editors should take more practical view in the next edition to operationalize students' theoretical knowledge.

Their judgment regarding specialized words that have been used in the ESP book showed that to some extent words that are included meet their need. It is satisfactory response but greater attempt is required to contain in the book as much as possible to provide learners with more satisfactory level of vocabulary knowledge. It is

also recommended that the words be embedded in context to affect their better retention in part of the students.

Their view point regarding the role of the exercises which are devoted to each lesson in their better understanding of what each lesson contained was not positive. They regard its role to be a little or to some extent effective. So the exercises need to be revised carefully in order for them to lead to better comprehension of the content of each section.

Discussion

In my own four -year experience with ESP students I have found that most of the students are not satisfied with ESP books. Their dissatisfaction is rooted in their previous experience with English books at guidance schools or high schools. So they are not motivated to follow such course with enthusiasm at university level. The time is arriving when it is needed to step beyond present ESP books in general and this ESP book for accounting students in particular. Nowadays it is required to edit them fundamentally to both deals with new ideas that are penetrating increasingly into the field of ELT and meet the students' need.

It seems that most of the ESP books in Iran have been written according to intuition of the authors or their long-established experience as teachers of ESP. Unfortunately need analysis has been taken for granted in developing ESP materials in Iranian contexts. Some of the responsibility appears to fall on the part of Ministry of Science, Research, and Technology to make authors and teachers aware of the crucial role of need analysis in success or failure of any ESP program. They need to be informed that they should identify target needs of the students. In next step they should collect information about target needs.

Some of the ESP books at best have grown up to this stage but from this stage on Iranian ESP books lack attention to learning need and inserting such analysis into development of ESP materials. It appears that we have identified lacks and necessities, the starting point, and now there is a need to progress to the destination via whatever way that seems to be effective for us. But we should choose systematic and organized way for moving toward identified target needs. The need for national careful consideration of learners' actual needs is yelling at the present time. All of the people who have a portion in the process which results in the final outcome of the ESP books should reconsider the legitimacy of the books and reconsider whether ESP books achieve what they claim or not. If not, in my opinion, certainly not, we should cease using traditional ESP books and try to develop courses and materials that truly address so target need

References

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Appendix

It is a questionnaire that has been distributed between the students of accounting for the purpose of this study. It has been translated and the translation has been revised twice so that it becomes intelligible for the participants (be in their first language).

A NEEDS ANALYSIS QUESTIONNAIRE

As you probably know, we are conducting a research. We request your completion of this questionnaire to help us learn more about your needs and preferences. The information you and others provide will assist us work on our study better. Your answers will be handled in the strictest confidence.

Your answers will be tabulated with those of others to determine information needs and overall quality. Thank you for your time and assistance.

Demographics, Background and Experience Information
Name: _____
Gender: _____ female _____ male
Age Group: ___ 18-25 ___ 26-35 ___ 36-55 ___56-65 ___ over 65

1. What do you need to learn?
- - - How to use my knowledge in real life
- - - How to manage to pass tests
- - - How to improve my scientific knowledge

2. Why do you need to learn?
- - - For job promotion
- - - For examination
- - - For educational promotion
Other......................

3. What potentials would you expect the place of instruction provides you?
- - - computers
- - - the Internet
- - - training seminars

4. What limitations do you think the instruction imposes?
- - - poor method of teaching
- - - deficient instructors
- - - lack of educational facilities

5. When would you like your learning to take place?
- - - in the morning
- - - early in the afternoon
- - - in the evening

6. How much does the time of your learning influence the effectiveness of the course content?
- - - very much
- - - a little
- - - There's no correlation between them

7. How much is the course content relevant to your major of study?
- - - very much
- - - not very much
- - - a little

8. How much time would you like to allot to the instruction distributed with respect to the course content?
- - - 1 session a week for this course?
- - - 2 sessions a week
- - - 3 sessions a week

9. What type of content representation would you like to deal with in this course?

- - - clarification of the abstract notions only
- - - explanation of the real content in detail
- - - illustration of the materials
10. In your opinion, which institutions could represent this type of content best?

- - - schools
- - - private organizations
- - - colleges
11. What units would you like the course content to be composed of?

- - - skills and strategies for materials use
- - - definitions of abstract vocabularies
- - - controversial topics for class discussion
12. To what extent does the content of this course match the content of what you have learned in the other courses?

- - - very much
- - - to some extent
- - - not at all
13. How specific would you prefer the course to be?

- - - very much
- - - to some extent
14. What do you like about the content of this course?

- - - It is manageable enough to learn , even without the teacher's help
- - - It has had an impressive effect on choosing my future studies and researches
- - - It has been planned so cautiously that obviates the learners' needs
15. What type of sequencing do you regard the course content to follow?

- - - from easy to difficult
- - - from more useful to less useful
- - - from more important to less important
16. What type of instruction would you like to be employed?

- - - text-based (theoretical)
- - - task-based (practical)
- - - needs-based (both theoretical and practical)
17. What instructional aids do you like to accompany this course?

- - - CDs
- - - software
- - - overhead projectors
18. What do you think the teacher's attitude toward the content of the course is?

- - - It leads the learners to a particular state of knowledge disregarding learners' needs
- - - It facilitates the teaching procedure
- - - It meets learners' needs
19. What is your attitude toward the content of the course?

- - - It provides me with a great deal of proficiency
- - - it enables me to improve my reading and writing only
- - - it does not contribute to my overall proficiency
20. How could you like to improve your learning?

- - - by using my own learning strategies
- - - by creating tasks in the classroom
- - - by giving lectures
21. What kinds of authentic materials would you like to handle most?

- - - e-books
- - - articles
- - - my own materials
22. How would you prefer the format of the book to be?

- - - only online
- - - only in classes
- - - half online, half in classes
23. How comfortable are you to learn?

- - - individually
- - - in pairs
- - - in teams/groups
24. What kind of task accomplishment would you like to accompany your learning?

- - - home
- - - online
- - - class
25. How long your classes would you like to last?