



MJAL10:1 Winter 2018

ISSN 0974-8741

A Critical Evaluation of Business Administration ESP Textbook in View of Iranian Language Learners' Needs by Samad Mirza Suzani

A Critical Evaluation of Business Administration ESP Textbook in View of Iranian Language Learners' Needs

Samad Mirza Suzani

Assistant Professor of TEFL,

Department of English, Marvdasht Branch, Islamic Azad University, Marvdasht, Iran

smirzasuzani@yahoo.com

smirzasuzani@miau.ac.ir

Samad Mirza Suzani is a teacher of EFL at English Department, Marvdasht Branch, Islamic Azad University, Marvdasht, Iran. He is interested in ESP, materials development and comparative literature. He has written a prolific number of articles and books on ESP, translation issues as well as English TEFL and literature and supervised over ninety theses. He enjoys working with translation issues as well as comparative literature.

E-mail: smirzasuzani@yahoo.com, smirzasuzani@miau.ac.ir .

Menu

Abstract

Introduction

Statement of the Problem

Literature Review

Theoretical Considerations

Aims and Scopes of ESP

Needs Analysis in ESP

Empirical Background

Methodology

Participants

Instrumentation

Needs Analysis Questionnaire



MJAL10:1 Winter 2018

ISSN 0974-8741

A Critical Evaluation of Business Administration ESP Textbook in View of Iranian Language Learners' Needs by Samad Mirza Suzani
Text Book Evaluation Questionnaire

Procedures

Findings

Response to the First Research Question

Response to the Second Research Question

Response to the Third Research Question

Discussion

Conclusion

Implications

References

Abstract

In the evaluation of any ESP textbook, the inclusion and incorporation of learners' needs is considered to be a vital part of every ESP syllabus. Accordingly, this study aimed to probe into *English for the Students of Business Administration* as the most widely used ESP textbook in the field taught in the Iranian higher education establishments and evaluate it based on the ESP learners' needs and impressions. To this end, two questionnaires on needs analysis and textbook evaluation were administrated to 100 undergraduate ESP students in Shiraz, Iran, to uncover their needs, (in)abilities of English language as well as their overall impression about their ESP textbook. Besides, the (in)compatibility of the content of the textbook with the learners' needs was discovered. Considering the result of evaluation, it was found that ESP textbook in business administration is hardly appropriate for the purpose of business English, and is barely compatible with the learner's needs and achievement. Also, findings indicated that learners had little satisfaction with most of the criteria the ESP textbooks should fulfill. In general, it was shown the book was in need of serious revision and modification to meet learners' needs and requirements.

Keywords: *Business administration, ESP textbooks, evaluation, Iranian higher education, needs analysis.*



MJAL10:1 Winter 2018

ISSN 0974-8741

A Critical Evaluation of Business Administration ESP Textbook in View of Iranian Language Learners' Needs by Samad Mirza Suzani

Introduction

In the post-modern globalized world, the teaching of ESP has become a major concern chiefly in the countries where English is taught as a foreign language. Hutchinson & Waters (1987) believe that the basic principle of ESP is to realize what learners need English for, and then teach the English that they need. On the other hand, evaluation of teaching materials is an important part of the teacher's work. Evaluation is basically a matching process, which concerns matching the learners' need to available solutions (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987).

Hutchinson and Torres (1994, p.315) suggest that "the textbook is an almost universal element of teaching. Millions of copies are sold every year, and numerous aid projects have been set up to produce them in countries.... No teaching-learning situation, it seems, is complete until it has its relevant textbook".

Tomlinson (2001) mentions two factors contributing to a change in attitude toward materials development which makes it an independent field of its own. One is the realization that one fruitful way to familiarize teachers with professional aspects of language teaching is through helping them to engage in the process of materials development and their evaluation. The other is the realization that no single textbook can possibly be ideal for all situations and learners, and hence teachers need to evaluate and adapt the materials they use in classroom and to evaluate the materials of their own in order to guarantee a match between the students' variables and the materials.

Sheldon (1988, p.237) suggests that textbooks not only "represent the visible heart of any ELT program" but also offer considerable advantages for both the student and the teacher when they are being used in the ESL/EFL classroom. In the same vein, Haycroft (1998) maintains that one of the primary advantages of using textbooks is that they are psychologically essential for students since their progress and achievement can be measured concretely when we use them. Sheldon (1988) points out, students often harbor expectations about using a textbook in their particular language classroom and program and believe that published materials have more



MJAL10:1 Winter 2018

ISSN 0974-8741

A Critical Evaluation of Business Administration ESP Textbook in View of Iranian Language Learners' Needs by Samad Mirza Suzani

credibility than teacher-generated or "in-house" materials. On the other hand, as O'Neill (1982) and Ur (1996) maintain, textbooks are generally sensitive to the students' needs and even if they are not designed specifically for them, they are efficient in terms of time and money and can and should allow for adaptation and improvisation. Likewise, textbooks can reduce the potential occupational overload and allow teachers the opportunity to spend their time undertaking more worthwhile pursuits (O'Neill, 1982; Sheldon, 1988). Still, another advantage identified by Cunningsworth (1995) is the potential that textbooks have for serving several additional roles in the ELT curriculum. He argues that textbooks are an effective resource for self-directed learning and for presentation material, a source of ideas and activities, a reference source for students, a syllabus where they reflect pre-determined learning objectives, and support for less experienced teachers who have yet to gain in confidence. Although some theorists have alluded to the inherent danger of the inexperienced teacher who may use a textbook as a pedagogic crutch, such an over-reliance may actually have the opposite effect of saving students from a teacher's deficiencies (Williams, 1983; Kitao & Kitao, 1997). Finally, Hutchinson and Torres (1994) point out that textbooks may play a pivotal role in innovation, suggesting that textbooks can support teachers through potentially disturbing and threatening change processes, demonstrate new and/or untried methodologies, introduce change gradually, and create scaffolding upon which teachers can build a more creative methodology of their own (cited in Razmjoo & Raissi, 2010).

Statement of the Problem

In order to make the best use of a textbook, it is necessary to investigate its different aspects, examine its strengths and weaknesses and compare it against an assessment tool. Also, based on the comments by instructors and experts, and feedbacks from learners and students evaluation and revision of the books should be done regularly in order to remove the potential flaws. According to Tomlinson (2001), the process of materials evaluation can be seen as a way of developing our understanding of the ways in which they work and, in doing so, of contributing to both acquisition theory and pedagogic practice.



MJAL10:1 Winter 2018

ISSN 0974-8741

A Critical Evaluation of Business Administration ESP Textbook in View of Iranian Language Learners' Needs by Samad Mirza Suzani

Nowadays, even though ESP courses have become more popular, and despite the growing demands for communication through English for Specific Purpose, it seems that ESP courses are still limited to learning specific lexicon, grammar points, and translating texts (Nikpour Ghanavati, 2008). Likewise, as maintained by Moshfeghi, & Fakher Ajabshir (2011), despite the importance of textbooks, there has been little research in terms of how and why textbooks are selected and it continues to be a contentious issue for many teachers and researchers. This approach which basically ignores the learners' needs and interests can often create low motivation in student's English study. In this vein, this study is basically trying to examine how the prescribed textbook used in ESP classrooms in business administration discipline provides the necessary tools in preparing learners for the transition of language skills across disciplines. More specifically, the study seeks to evaluate the pedagogical value and suitability of business administration students' ESP textbook from the students' viewpoints. Furthermore, there is an attempt to evaluate whether ESP textbook of business administration students meets the learners' needs or not. Accordingly, the following questions are addressed:

1. What are the most important language needs of business administration students?
2. What is the students' overall impression of the ESP textbook?
3. Does ESP textbook of business administration meet the learners' needs?

Literature Review

Theoretical Considerations

Aims and Scopes of ESP

Dudley-Evans (2001) maintains that the key definition feature of ESP is that its teaching and materials are founded on the result of needs analysis. Alternatively, ESP is known as ESL instruction for particular speech community, field, or workplace situation. Moreover, Dudley-Evans (2001) refers to Strevens' (1988) original explanation about ESP, as a syllabus which is designed to meet specified needs of the learner; related in content (themes and topics) to particular discipline, occupations and activities; and centered on the language appropriate to those activities in syntax, lexis, discourse, semantic and so on, and analysis of the discourse. On the other hand, in contrast with General English, ESP syllabus may be restricted as to the



MJAL10:1 Winter 2018

ISSN 0974-8741

A Critical Evaluation of Business Administration ESP Textbook in View of Iranian Language Learners' Needs by Samad Mirza Suzani

learning skills to be learned (for example reading only), and may be taught according to any pre-oriented methodology (Dudley-Evans, 2001).

According to Medlin (2009), the basis of ESP is the teaching of language, using content or subject matter. Also, based on Jarier Romo (2006), most definitions of ESP concur on three topics: the nature of language to be taught and used, the learners, and the setting in which the other two would occur. These three aspects of ESP are closely connected to each other, and can be combined to establish that ESP is the teaching of specific and unique English (specialized discourse) to learners (adults in their majority), who will use it in particular settings (laboratory, police station, etc.) in order to achieve a utilitarian goal or purpose (communicate linguistically correct), which in turn will fulfill additional personal goals (promotional, economical, etc.). What ESP specialists do not seem to agree on is what type of language should be taught (vocabulary, register, jargon, etc.) and how to teach it.

According to Wright (1992), not only the nature of linguistic items introduced but also the ways they are practiced are highly significant in ESP. Also, needs analysis is of vital importance since it enables them to determine their specific requirements. Furthermore, Wright (1992) confirms that ESP benefits are three folded: Firstly, ESP results in faster acquisition of the required linguistic items, which is due to the pattern of native speaker acquisition of language for specific purpose, in which speakers learn in authentic, content-based contexts. Secondly, there is learning efficiency in which trainees make the maximal use of their learning resources, all of which are brought to bear on acquiring specific, pre-identified linguistic items and skills. Thirdly, there is learning effectiveness. On completion of an ESP course, trainees are ready to use language appropriately and correctly in job-related tasks which have been identified prior to the course by means of a needs analysis. Thus, upon completion of the course, English is usable immediately in an employment context.

Stevens (1988, as cited in Dudley-Evans & St. John, 1988) summarizes the advantages of ESP in the following four points:



MJAL10:1 Winter 2018

ISSN 0974-8741

A Critical Evaluation of Business Administration ESP Textbook in View of Iranian Language Learners' Needs by Samad Mirza Suzani

1. Being focused on the learners' need, it wastes no time;
2. It is relevant to the learner;
3. It is successful in imparting learning; and
4. It is more cost-effective than General English.

Needs Analysis in ESP

Brindley (2004) defines needs analysis as the process of gathering and interpreting information on the uses to which language learners will put the target language following instruction, and what the learners need to do in the learning situation in order to learn the target language.

Hutchinson and Waters (1987) maintain that any course should be based on an analysis of learners' needs. First, they touch the question: what do we mean by "need"? Second, what kind of information should a needs- analysis tell us? They make a distinction between *target needs* and *learning needs*, the former referring to what the learner needs to do in the target situation, and the latter to what the learner needs to do in order to learn.

Another classification of needs, namely *subjective* versus *objective* needs, is explicated by Brindley (1989) who defines objective needs as derivable from different kinds of factual information about learners, their use of language in real-life communication situations as well as their current language proficiency and language difficulties. Subjective needs are, on the other hand, defined as the cognitive and affective needs of the learners in the learning situation, derivable from information about affective and cognitive factors such as personality, confidence, attitudes, wants and expectations with regard to the learning of English and their individual cognitive style and learning strategies.

Robinson (1980) states that ESP curricula needs to be developed based not on the requirements imposed by language institutions or work supervisors, but on the real needs of learners in the diverse realm of the sciences. Learners in ESP classes vary mostly in terms of age and motivation which are linked to each other in that most learners in ESP classes are highly



MJAL10:1 Winter 2018

ISSN 0974-8741

A Critical Evaluation of Business Administration ESP Textbook in View of Iranian Language Learners' Needs by Samad Mirza Suzani

motivated adults that usually have academic and professional goals they want to reach through improving their professional and language performance. Moreover, Robinson (1991) refers to adults as goal-oriented people who do not want to learn English because of interest, pleasure or cultural reasons, but because they need it as an instrument helping them reach their study and work goals, and advance professionally in terms of academic gain as well as finance. These considerations are important in the development of ESP curricula regardless of the setting and the type of register to be addressed.

Sifakis (2003) refers to ESP adult learners in terms of age, educational, professional, and social background. He characterized adulthood in terms of age, social status, and a number of values adults possess. In the same vein, Knowles (1990) interpreted adulthood in terms of maturity, ability to make appropriate judgments based on experience, and autonomy. The last characteristic is of particular interest as it prompts adults to make decisions responsibly, and drives their motivation as a key element in their acquisition of language. He also stated that adults are primarily workers and then learners whose knowledge has been acquired through experience. Besides, highly motivated adults in ESP classes are prone to be successful in learning specific language in specific settings because they are mature (as a sense of personal growth and full development) and have a great sense of perspective and the ability to judge based on experience. Adults are also autonomous, which is tightly linked to motivation as autonomy allows them to voluntarily participate in what would contribute to their educational, professional, and social development.

Empirical Background

As a whole, three categories of studies on textbook evaluation are distinguishable. The first group focus on determining the readability levels of curriculum materials. The readability studies demonstrate that content area textbooks such as social studies and sciences are written at the reading levels several years above the reading ability of the intended audience (Ford, 1972; Marshall, 1979). A second category of studies on textbook evaluation utilize Bloom's (1974) taxonomy of educational objectives as their criteria. Their purpose is to determine the level of



MJAL10:1 Winter 2018

ISSN 0974-8741

A Critical Evaluation of Business Administration ESP Textbook in View of Iranian Language Learners' Needs by Samad Mirza Suzani

thought processes emphasized in textbooks, and Nicholson (1977) reveals that the analyzed textbooks emphasize primarily the knowledge level of Bloom's taxonomy. A final area of textbook evaluation research deals with the teaching methods and suggestions provided in manuals or textbooks. These studies generally determine the kind of instruction providing the sequence of instruction and learning activities, and the amount of emphasis or page space devoted to instruction. These elements are then compared to the emphasis placed on assessment, assignment, theory and practice activities. Therefore, some of the relevant studies related to the last category are presented below.

Chadran and Essarey (1997) conducted a study about English textbooks used in Malaysian schools. The results showed that, in general, teachers prefer commercially produced materials available in the market over the prescribed textbooks developed by the Ministry; that they do not engage themselves in producing materials of their own; that they consider the textbooks outdated and dull, and that textbooks are not suitably graded in terms of difficulty.

Kim (2001) developed his own Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) criteria to study the 6th and 7th grade national Korean English curricula. The study revealed that despite the recent attempt to implement CLT-based elementary EFL, there are still deficiencies in the Korean elementary EFL curriculum and materials, such as the use of the Audio-lingual approach in teaching the 7th curriculum material set.

Shahedi (2001) analyzed one of the leading texts in Teaching Persian to Speakers of other Languages (TPSOL) and argued that in these series, not enough attention has been paid to the four skills of the language. Moreover, the manner and amount of the presentation of vocabulary and pronunciation are not in harmony with language learners' proficiency levels.

Ansary and Babaii (2002) analyzed a corpus of 10 EFL/ESL textbook reviews plus 10 EFL/ESL textbook evaluation checklists and outlined what is perceived to be the common core features of standard EFL/ESL textbooks. The major categories comprise approach, content presentation,



MJAL10:1 Winter 2018

ISSN 0974-8741

A Critical Evaluation of Business Administration ESP Textbook in View of Iranian Language Learners' Needs by Samad Mirza Suzani

physical make-up and concerns. Each set of major features of EFL/ESL textbooks consists of a number of subcategories. The researchers concluded that not all of these characteristics are dominant in all textbooks.

Yarmohmmadi (2002) evaluated the senior high school textbooks based on a revised version of Tuckers' model. He came to the conclusion that these textbooks suffer from a lot of shortcomings: 1. they are not authentic; 2. English and Persian names are used interchangeably; and 3. oral skills are ignored. Finally, suggestions were proposed to remedy the shortcomings.

Drawing on Ellis's (2003) model, Iraji (2007) made a careful analysis on New Interchange series based on the principles of communicative and task-based approach to investigate to what extent the principles of CLT and TBLT approaches have been regarded. Accordingly, the series was criticized because it did not follow the principles of communicative and task-based approaches as the author had claimed; it lacked the frequency of meta-pragmatic information; and the distributional pattern of communicative activities was random and without pattern.

Farnia in doing a pilot study (2005) concluded that ESP vocabulary learning on the internet was more effective than that by the traditional text-based approaches.

Farhady (2005) discussed a variety of parameters in ESP materials developed and sponsored by SAMT, namely needs, materials, method, learner, teacher, and context, and concluded by a series of suggestions to improve ESP in Iran such as carrying out thorough needs analyses, changing the designs concepts of materials, training qualified teachers, and reforming the testing procedures.

Razmjoo (2007) investigated the extent to which the Iranian high school and private institute textbooks represent the CLT principles. To this end, the textbooks of the Iranian high schools and private institutes were analyzed descriptively and inferentially. The analysis of the data



MJAL10:1 Winter 2018

ISSN 0974-8741

A Critical Evaluation of Business Administration ESP Textbook in View of Iranian Language Learners' Needs by Samad Mirza Suzani

indicated that while high school textbooks are not conducive to CLT implementation, private institute textbooks represent the CLT principles to a great extent.

Methodology

Participants

A total number of 100 students of Business Administration from Islamic Azad University of Shiraz who had passed general English and the ESP course were chosen based on the convenience sampling. Demographic information of the participants is shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Demographic information of the participants

Sex	Level of Education	Age		
	B.S	20-24	25-29	30-34
Female	62	40	14	6
Male	38	18	12	8

Instrumentation

The instruments used for collecting data were two questionnaires. The first one was a need analysis questionnaire developed by Shahini (1998), whose items were translated into Persian to minimize any language problems. The second was a textbook evaluation questionnaire to extract required data to find answer to the first question of the study.

Needs Analysis Questionnaire

The needs analysis questionnaire was adopted from that previously used by Shahini (1998), Yazdjerdi (2000) and Nikpour Ghanvati (2008). Taking into account that it should well be suitable for business administration students, some changes appropriate to their particular context were made. The questionnaire consisted of 53 questions in the form of Likert scale, designed to obtain information about the present status of English language instructions, as well as students' needs, shortages and motivation related to ESP. In addition, students had to answer several questions about the importance of English language, their abilities and difficulties to use it, and



MJAL10:1 Winter 2018

ISSN 0974-8741

A Critical Evaluation of Business Administration ESP Textbook in View of Iranian Language Learners' Needs by Samad Mirza Suzani

the availability of audio-visual aids. To answer the questions, they had five choices, and the scores ranged from 1 (little) to 5 (very much). The reliability of the need analysis questionnaire was checked by Nikpour Ghanvati (2008) and Razmjoo and Raisi (2010). To this end, 33 students were chosen to answer the adapted needs analysis two times with an interval of two weeks, and then a correlation was run. The result showed the reliability estimate of .861 which indicates the acceptability of the adapted needs analysis questionnaire.

Text Book Evaluation Questionnaire

A textbook evaluation questionnaire based on Littlejohns' (1998) scheme was used as the questionnaire for ESP materials. The questionnaire included physical aspects of the material such as the organizational features and practical considerations with respect to cover, size, or durability of the book which corresponded to the "publication" in Littlejohn's (1998) scheme while the other parts related to the underlying materials such as the theoretical considerations focusing on the methodological objectives of the textbook or the sequencing of the selected subjects, types of learning and teaching activities with respect to content, skills, vocabulary, and structure of the book which corresponded to the design of Littlejohn's (1998) scheme. As for the textbook evaluation questionnaire's reliability, Chronbach alpha was run and the obtained index was 0.92.

Procedures

The study was conducted in three distinct phases: data collection, data analysis and data interpretation. In the first phase, the two questionnaires were distributed among the students and data on their needs and viewpoints about their ESP textbook were collected. Next, the next step was to analyze it using appropriate statistics. Hence, both qualitative and quantitative analyses of



MJAL10:1 Winter 2018

ISSN 0974-8741

A Critical Evaluation of Business Administration ESP Textbook in View of Iranian Language Learners' Needs by Samad Mirza Suzani

data were carried out for the descriptive and inferential statistics, and then the findings were interpreted.

Findings

Based on the students' answers to the needs analysis and textbook evaluation questionnaires, the following results were attained.

Response to the First Research Question

After analyzing the needs analysis questionnaire, it was concluded that business administration students' needs are the same as their needs for general English course; actually, they need to communicate effectively in their every day encounter and develop all four skills.

Table 2. Data on the students' language of books

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	1	1	1.0	1.0	1.0
	2	75	75.0	75.0	76.0
Valid	3	10	10.0	10.0	86.0
	4	13	13.0	13.0	99.0
	5	1	1.0	1.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	



A Critical Evaluation of Business Administration ESP Textbook in View of Iranian Language Learners' Needs by Samad Mirza Suzani

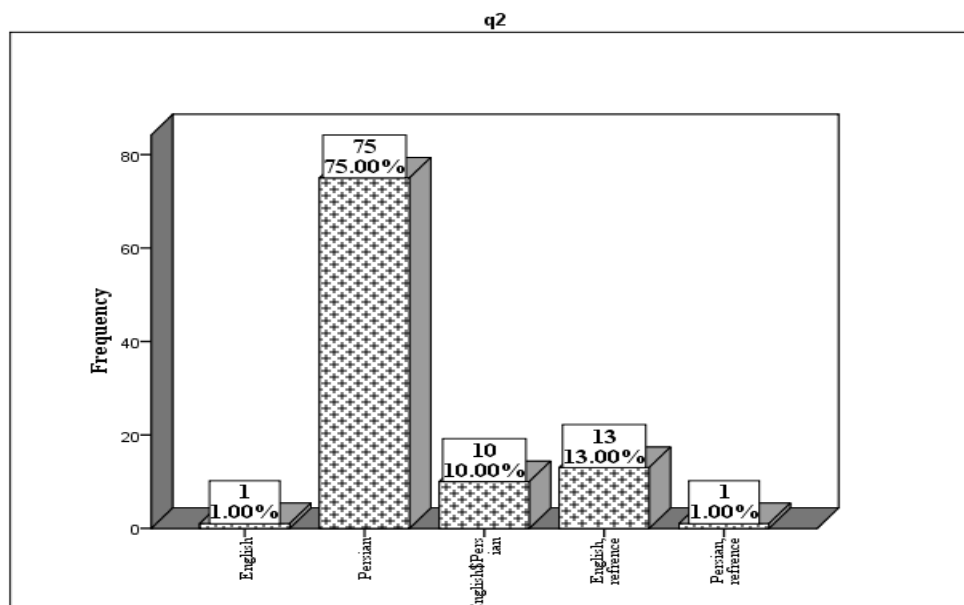


Figure 1. Data on the students' language of books

According to the students' answers, 75% of the textbooks are in Persian.

Table 3. Data on the frequency of students needs of English to improve their knowledge

Valid	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
So-So	23	23.0	23.0	23.0
Much	27	27.0	27.0	50.0
Very Much	50	50.0	50.0	100.0
Total	100	100.0	100.0	



MJAL10:1 Winter 2018

ISSN 0974-8741

A Critical Evaluation of Business Administration ESP Textbook in View of Iranian Language Learners' Needs by Samad Mirza Suzani

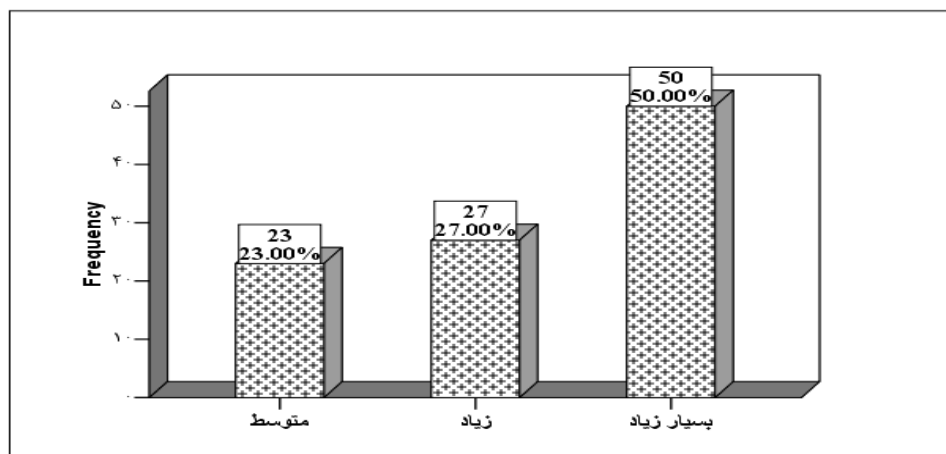


Figure 2. Data on the frequency of students needs of English to improve their knowledge

According to Figure 2, 50% of the students believed that they need to learn English to improve their knowledge very much, 27% of them needed much to learn English and 23% of them need to learn English in an average level.

In order to find out if test distribution is normal or not, one-sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was done; the results revealed a statistically significant result at a probability level of less than 0.05 for all variables, so the variables' distribution was not normal.

Table 4. One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test of Normality Distribution

		Q_4	Q_5	Q_6
N		100	100	100
Normal Parameters ^a	Mean	3.4183	2.9675	3.2858
	Std. Deviation	.31225	.45994	.56249
Most Extreme Differences	Absolute	.481	.165	.162
	Positive	.299	.165	.080
	Negative	-.481	-.100	-.162
Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z		4.814	1.647	1.620
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.009	.011



MJAL10:1 Winter 2018

ISSN 0974-8741

A Critical Evaluation of Business Administration ESP Textbook in View of Iranian Language Learners' Needs by Samad Mirza Suzani

		Q_4	Q_5	Q_6
N		100	100	100
Normal Parameters ^a	Mean	3.4183	2.9675	3.2858
	Std. Deviation	.31225	.45994	.56249
Most Extreme Differences	Absolute	.481	.165	.162
	Positive	.299	.165	.080
	Negative	-.481	-.100	-.162
Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z		4.814	1.647	1.620
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.009	.011

a. Test distribution is not Normal.

Binomial Test was performed to find out the response to the first question regarding the basic needs of business administration students' sameness as their needs for general English" is confirmed or not.

Table 5. Binomial Test for the First Research Question

	Category	N	Observed Prop.	Test Prop.	Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)
Group 1	<= 3	22	.22	.50	.000 ^a
Group 2	> 3	78	.78		
Total		100	1.00		

a. Based on Z Approximation.

To determine the significance of variables, as shown in the binomial test in Table 5, Jump points' amount is considered equal to the midpoint. This means that for all variables the mean score (3) is the middle score. So the amount equal to 3 and less than 3 is non-significant and the amount higher than 3 is assumed statistically significant. Based on Table 5, statistically significant results were indicated by "Asymptotic Significance" test with a probability of less than 0.05, and as the learners' language needs are statistically significant, so the hypothesis, "The basic needs of



A Critical Evaluation of Business Administration ESP Textbook in View of Iranian Language Learners' Needs by Samad Mirza Suzani

business administration students are more or less the same as their needs for general English" is confirmed.

Response to the Second Research Question

As shown in Figure 3, the mean score of textbook evaluation including theoretical considerations, organizational features as well as practical considerations, content, skills, vocabulary and structure was found to be less than 3.

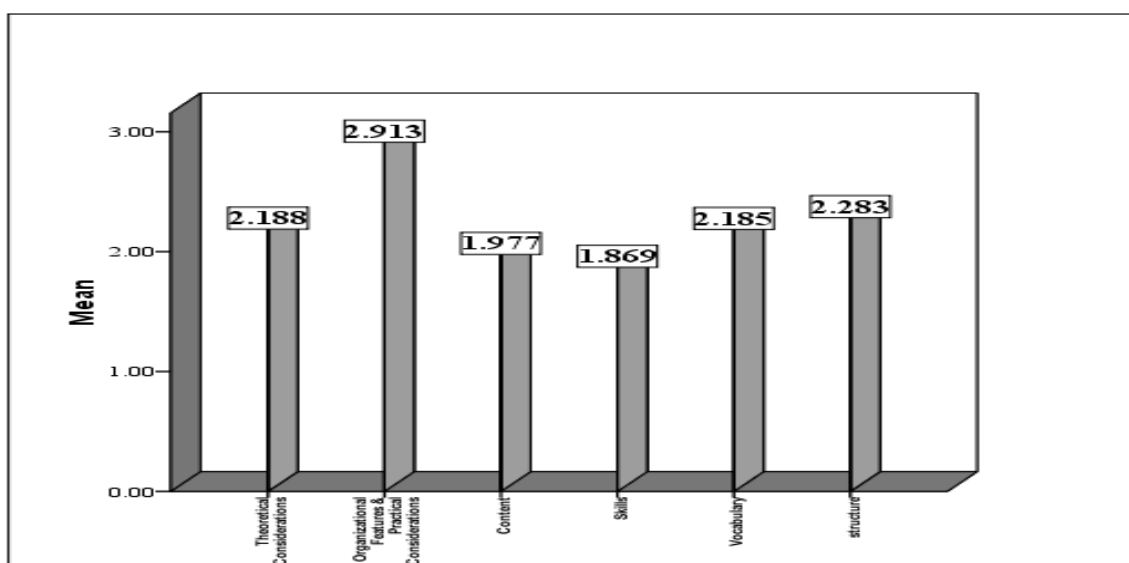


Figure 3. the Mean score of parameters of textbook evaluation

Based on Figure 3, it can be concluded that students were not satisfied with the theoretical considerations of ESP textbook; on the other hand, they found organizational features and practical considerations satisfactory. Also, the content, skills, vocabulary and structure of ESP textbook were not found to be satisfactory by students. Table 6 shows descriptive statistics of textbook evaluations' questions.

Table 6. Descriptive Statistics for overall impression

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum



MJAL10:1 Winter 2018

ISSN 0974-8741

A Critical Evaluation of Business Administration ESP Textbook in View of Iranian Language Learners' Needs by Samad Mirza Suzani

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Overall impression	100	2.2325	.27876	1.84	3.59

Binominal test was run to find out whether the second hypothesis. i.e. "Students are not satisfied with the ESP textbook for the students of Business Administration" is confirmed or not. Table 7 represents the results of binomial test for the learners' overall impression.

Table 7. Binomial test for the Second Research Question

	Category	N	Observed Prop.	Test Prop.	Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)
Group 1	<= 3	98	.98	.50	.000 ^a
Group 2	> 3	2	.02		
Total		100	1.00		

a. Based on Z Approximation.

According to Table 7, statistically significant results are indicated by "Asymptotic Significance" test with a probability of less than 0.05. It is revealed that learners' overall impressions' question about textbook evaluation (students' satisfaction) is statistically significant, and so it is confirmed that students are not satisfied with the ESP textbook for the students of Business Administration.

Based on the above findings, the following conclusions regarding the second research questions are achieved:

1. ESP textbook for business administration students in terms of theoretical considerations is not appropriate from the students' viewpoint.
2. The students were satisfied with the organizational features and practical considerations of the ESP textbooks.



MJAL10:1 Winter 2018

ISSN 0974-8741

A Critical Evaluation of Business Administration ESP Textbook in View of Iranian Language Learners' Needs by Samad Mirza Suzani

3. The students did not find the content of the book satisfactory.
4. From the students' viewpoint, the book does not cover the students' need in different skills.
5. The materials of this book do not cover appropriate vocabulary.
6. The book does not provide useful structures, from the students' viewpoint.

Response to the Third Research Question

Binominal test was run to find out whether ESP textbook of business administration students meets the learners' needs or not.

Table 8. Binomial Test for the Third Research Question

	Category	N	Observed Prop.	Test Prop.	Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)
Group 1	≤ 3	61	.61	.50	.035 ^a
Group 2	> 3	39	.39		
Total		100	1.00		
Group 1	≤ 3	33	.33	.50	.001 ^a
Group 2	> 3	67	.67		
Total		100	1.00		

a. Based on Z Approximation.

The result of Binomial Test shows that "Asymptotic Significance" test has a probability of less than 0.05, so variable of questions 3(learners' abilities and disabilities in English language) are statistically significant. So it is confirmed that the ESP textbook for the students of Business Administration does not meet the learners' needs.

Considering the students ideas, the book doesn't seem to have the interesting and authentic material, texts, topics and reports demanded by students, and as ESP textbooks play an important role in the success of language program, this is not possible unless the textbooks contain a variety of suitable texts and exercises considering the needs of the learners.

Discussion



MJAL10:1 Winter 2018

ISSN 0974-8741

A Critical Evaluation of Business Administration ESP Textbook in View of Iranian Language Learners' Needs by Samad Mirza Suzani

When teaching or designing a course in ESP, one goal is to strive to meet the learners' needs. In order to discover who the learners are, what they already know, and what they want from the class, it is important to conduct some type of needs analysis. The results of the study imply that the ESP course should be geared towards the needs of the students, and most of the students believe that they need all skills in English to improve their knowledge. Students mostly stated that they need the language areas of speaking, reading, translation from English to Persian and field-specific vocabulary in their fields of study. As far as their priorities in language areas were concerned, the majority chose reading skill and writing skill as their first priority, speaking and field-specific vocabulary knowledge as their second, and listening as their third priority.

According to the results, students regarded reading comprehension, technical vocabulary, speaking and writing as the needs. This finding partly supports the results of Bin-Tayeh's (1996) study on the language needs of medical students in Sana'a University. He found that reading and writing were mostly needed in both academic studies and professional commitments.

Nikuinezhad's (2008) investigation on the ranking of academic needs of undergraduate electrical engineering, Persian literature, and chemistry students at Kashan University also indicated that reading comprehension was the essential need of all of the participants. Her findings are in contrast with this study's results because it was revealed that all four skills need to be developed by business administration students. Various results of different studies of needs analysis in different contexts revealed the importance of conducting needs analysis in improving learning, as Brindley (1989) argued, according to theories of adult learning, adults learn better if the program content is geared to their immediate concerns.

According to Razmjoo and Raissi (2010) English language teaching textbooks in general and ESP ones in particular are considered as one of the most important elements in any educational system. Because of their role and contribution to second language acquisition, ELT texts have become the major concern of many research studies, including the ones done in an EFL context such as Iran. They tried to describe the present state of SAMT (The Center for Studying and



MJAL10:1 Winter 2018

ISSN 0974-8741

A Critical Evaluation of Business Administration ESP Textbook in View of Iranian Language Learners' Needs by Samad Mirza Suzani

Compiling University Books in Humanities) ESP textbooks used in the Iranian Universities of Medical Sciences from the viewpoints of students and instructors in order to provide a clear picture of the current status of those textbooks. The results indicated that instructors and students were not satisfied with most of the criteria which the SAMT ESP textbooks should fulfill. Razmjoo & Raissi's finding supports the results of this study which show that the students are unhappy with the representation of the skills that they felt deserved attention.

Moshfeghi & Fakher Ajabshir (2011) conducted a study on the evaluation of "English for the Students of Management". They held that from the participants' point of view the major deficiencies were in relation to the author's approach to language and methodology, lack of balance between language skills and insufficient inclusion of communicative activities. This implies a need to modify those parts of the textbook which have not received satisfactory ratings by the participant. Nikpour Ghanavati's investigation (2008) on the ranking of the ESP textbook of the nursing students in Fatemeh College of Nursing and Midwifery indicated that their ESP book is not appropriate for the purpose of medical English for Iranian nurses, but its advantages where the content and the students needs are compatible cannot be ignored.

Another study carried out in University of Tabriz by Zohrabi (2011) revealed that the ESP course is mostly text-based which barely prepares students for the multimodalities of modern workplace and various challenges of new literacies in academic contexts. In order to cater for students' needs, the ESP books should focus on all the language skills, develop students' communicative abilities, adopt a discipline-centered approach based on students' field, use communicative textbooks, promote group work and task-based activities, encourage language use and production, and provide teaching aid. Similar implications can be considered for the present study.

Conclusion

The task of textbook selection is more demanding with regard to ESP textbooks, for the number of ESP textbooks to choose from is fewer as compared with general ELT textbooks. So there is a



MJAL10:1 Winter 2018

ISSN 0974-8741

A Critical Evaluation of Business Administration ESP Textbook in View of Iranian Language Learners' Needs by Samad Mirza Suzani

need for regular evaluation of ESP textbooks in order to make some modifications and adapt them for particular needs and aims.

The participants' responses to the questions in this study revealed that the basic needs of business administration students are more or less the same as those for general English. Their responses shed light on the learners' strengths and weaknesses in foreign languages, and the students' abilities in none of the language skills were satisfactory.

Students' responses revealed that this study's hypothesis, i.e. "the basic needs of business administration students are more or less the same as their needs for general English" is confirmed because based on the results it can be concluded that all general skills are considered essential and utilized in their field. It was also revealed that the students have certain English language needs which are not thoroughly met in the ESP books that they study. Based on these results, it can be concluded that there is a real gap between the books' content and students' real needs. Actually the book does not integrate productive and receptive skills equally. It puts emphasis on reading and to less extent on writing. There is little or no emphasis on speaking or listening skills. Most of EFL students in Iran have spent years in learning grammar in schools; but after some years of study they cannot converse in English. Thus, they are subsequently preoccupied with the desire to make some conversations in English and they wish to focus on speaking and listening skills in the classrooms. However, in actual experience most of the class time is devoted to reading and writing. Moreover, with regard to sub-skills, there is no emphasis on speaking and listening sub skills and reading and writing sub-skills are rarely focused on. This is one of the weak points of the book.

With respect to prosodic skills, the results demonstrated that units contained no exercises devoted to the teaching of stress and intonation. The students' responses confirm the idea that the book was lacking in communicative and meaningful practice; most of students agreed that the grammatical points and lexical items are not introduced in a motivating way. This may be due to the fact that the organization, sequence and the nature of the activities and exercises of every unit



MJAL10:1 Winter 2018

ISSN 0974-8741

A Critical Evaluation of Business Administration ESP Textbook in View of Iranian Language Learners' Needs by Samad Mirza Suzani

are identical to the next unit. This tends to make the book seem redundant and boring after a few lessons. This may also reduce the creativity and originality of the responses produced by the students.

Considering the students' idea, the book doesn't seem to have interesting and authentic material, texts, topics and reports demanded by students; there is not an integrated balance of the skills. It puts emphasis on improving reading skills and to lesser extent writing skills, overlooking speaking and listening and their sub-skills. Actually, in the book speaking and listening skills are hardly taken into account.

With regard to the idea that one of the main needs of the learners might be to acquire an acceptable degree of mastery and skill in reading materials written in English, this allocation looks justified. However, the students' real need is more than reading and writing. An additional problem is that nowhere in the book there are any tasks where pronunciation is covered. Students' responses reveal that the second hypothesis related to this study, i.e. "Students are not satisfied with the ESP textbook for the students of Business Administration" is confirmed.

A language course and textbook should help students communicate effectively in their everyday encounter, develop all four skills, enhance their ability to solve problems, understand the general features of the language, discuss, ask and answer questions related to current topics, write and present summaries, and enhance their vocabulary. Hence, considering the students' needs, *'English for the Students of Business Administration'* is not an appropriate book for the purpose of business English because it doesn't meet the students' real needs, and there are mismatches between the respondents' ideas regarding the students' English language needs and the actual ESP practices. It can be concluded that the third hypothesis of this study, i.e. "The ESP textbook for the Students of Business Administration doesn't meet the learners' needs", is confirmed.

In sum, business administration students need to communicate effectively in their everyday encounter, develop all four skills, enhance their ability to solve problems, understand the general



MJAL10:1 Winter 2018

ISSN 0974-8741

A Critical Evaluation of Business Administration ESP Textbook in View of Iranian Language Learners' Needs by Samad Mirza Suzani

features of the language, discuss, ask and answer questions related to current topics, write and present summaries, enhance their vocabulary that is related to their jobs. According to the findings of the study, all four skills in their field, i.e. speaking, writing, reading, listening, are believed to be of great importance and special terms and expressions are the most needed aspect of language for business administration students. Furthermore, regarding the importance of English language knowledge in carrying out various general academic activities, the vast majority stated that they strongly need English knowledge for the suggested academic activities; they need to increase their language knowledge to communicate in an effective way.

Implications

The findings of this study would be beneficial to ESP materials developers, business administration students, as well as ESP instructors and publishers. ESP teachers are especially expected to benefit from needs analysis because when the needs are clarified, teachers will have an idea of the nature of students' language requirements, so they can prepare their lessons in such a way that the students' needs are really met. On the other hand, the current study concerns the language needs of business administration students in higher education system to shed light on their strengths and weaknesses in English as a foreign language. Also, the study can be helpful in highlighting the ESP textbooks' weak points and strengths. In this regard, curricula developers need to be aware of the fact that adult learners are almost always voluntarily engaged in the learning process; highly motivated both intrinsically and extrinsically; conscious of their progress; reflective on their own learning; and willing to establish a learning contract in which they commit themselves to giving their time and effort to learn. Curriculum designers will discover that these characteristics will make their curricula learner-centered and one of their very driving forces. Another thing that curricula developers need to be aware of is the fact that learning processes are voluntary and purposeful, so by actively involving the learners in the planning process, they would ultimately improve their motivation and commitment to fully participate in the course and improve their language proficiency.

References



MJAL10:1 Winter 2018

ISSN 0974-8741

A Critical Evaluation of Business Administration ESP Textbook in View of Iranian Language Learners' Needs by Samad Mirza Suzani

Ansary, H., & Babaei, E. (2002). Universal characteristics of EFL/ESL textbooks: A step towards systematic textbook evaluation. *The Internet TESL Journal*, 1-8.

Bin-Tayeh, N. (1996). An investigation of the language needs of the students of general medicine department, Faculty of Medicine, Sana'a University. Unpublished Master dissertation, Sana'a University.

Bloom, B. (1974). Reflections on the development and use of taxonomy. In L. Anderson, & L. Sosniak, (Eds.), *Bloom's taxonomy: A forty-Year retrospective* (pp. 1-8). Chicago: The National Society for the Study of Education.

Brindley, G. (2004). Needs analysis. In M. Byram (Ed.), *Routledge encyclopedia of language teaching and learning* (pp. 438-441). London: Routledge.

Brindley, G. (1989). The role of needs analysis in adult ESL program design. In R. Johnson, (Ed). *The second language curriculum* (pp. 63-78). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Chadran, J. & Essarey, G. (1997). Content-based instruction: An Indonesian example. In S. B. Stryker & B. L. Leaver (Eds.), *Content-based instruction in foreign language education* (pp. 219-235). Washington D.C.: Georgetown University.

Cunningsworth, A. (1995). Choosing your course book. Oxford: Heinemann.

Dudley-Evans, T. (2001). English for Specific Purposes. In R. Carter & D. Nunan (Eds.), *The Cambridge Guide to Teaching English to Speakers of other Languages* (pp.11 -36). Cambridge: CUP.

Dudley-Evans, T., & St John, M. J. (1998). Developments in English for Specific Purposes. Cambridge: CUP.

Ellis, R. (2003). Task based language learning & teaching. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Farhady, H. (2005). Reflections on and directions for ESP materials development. In G. R. Kiany & M. Khayamdar (Eds.), *Proceedings of the First National ESP/EAP Conference* (Vol.3, pp.2-32). Tehran: SAMT.

Farnia, M. (2005). The role of web resources in ESP courses. In the Proceedings of the first National ESP/EAP Conference, Tehran, Iran.



MJAL10:1 Winter 2018

ISSN 0974-8741

A Critical Evaluation of Business Administration ESP Textbook in View of Iranian Language Learners' Needs by Samad Mirza Suzani

Ford, L. (1972). A descriptive study of the readability grade level of the most frequently state adopted intermediate level social studies textbooks. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of McNeese State, United States.

Haycroft, J. (1998). An introduction to English language teaching. London: Longman.

Hutchinson, T., & Waters, A. (1987). English for specific purposes: A learning-centered approach. Cambridge: CUP.

Hutchinson, T. & E. Torres. (1994). The textbook as agent of change. *ELT Journal*, 48(4), 104-123.

Iraji, R. (2007). Does new interchange books reflect task-based or communicative approaches. *ILLI Language teaching Journal*, 4, 25-38.

JarierRomo, A. (2006). An English for specific purposes curriculum to prepare English learners to become nursing assistants. Unpublished M.A Thesis. Department of Linguistics and English Language, Brigham Young University.

Kim, H. J. (2001). A case study of curriculum and material evaluation: Elementary English as a foreign language in South Korea. Unpublished master's thesis, McGill University, Canada.

Kitao, K., & Kitao, S. K. (1997). Selecting and developing teaching/learning materials? *The Internet TESL Journal*, IV (4), Retrieved September 15, 2017 from <http://iteslj.org/Articles/Kitao-Materials.html>

Knowles, M. S. (1990). The Adult Learner: a neglected species (4th edition), Houston: Gulf Pub. Co., Book Division.

Littlejohn, A. (1998). The analysis of language teaching materials: Inside the Trojan Horse. In B. Tomlinson (Ed.), *Materials development in language teaching* (190-216). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Marshall, N. (1979). Readability and comprehensibility. *Journal of Reading*, 22(6), 542-544.

Medlin, L. (2009). English for specific purposes: Nursing in the U.S. Hospital Published M.A. Thesis .California State University, Chico.

Moshfeghi, F. & FakherAjabshir, Z. (2011). Evaluation of "English for the students of management". *The Iranian EFL Journal*, 7, 72-91.



MJAL10:1 Winter 2018

ISSN 0974-8741

A Critical Evaluation of Business Administration ESP Textbook in View of Iranian Language Learners' Needs by Samad Mirza Suzani

Nicholson, J. I. (1977). An analysis of the levels of comprehension required by questions in teachers' manuals of selected basic reading textbooks. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Mississippi State, United States.

Nikpour Ghanavati, A. (2008). An analysis of specific language needs of nursing students in Fatemeh College of Nursing and Midwifery and a critical evaluation of their ESP textbook. Unpublished master's thesis, Islamic Azad University of Shiraz, Shiraz. Iran.

NikuiNezhad, F. (2008). A Survey of academic needs of ESP students across three majors. First Regional Conference on English Language Teaching and Literature (ELTL 1). Iran: Roudehen.

Noordin, N. & Samad, A. (2003). Examining the importance of EST and ESL textbooks and materials: Objectives, content and form. *ESP World*, 1(4), A-9.

O'Neill, R. (1982). Why use textbooks? *ELT Journal*, 36(2), 206-223.

Razmjoo, S. A. (2007). High schools or private institutes textbooks? Which fulfill communicative language teaching principles in the Iranian context? *The Asian EFL Journal Quarterly*, 9(4), 125-139.

Razmjoo, S.A. & Raissi, R. (2010).Evaluation of SAMT ESP textbooks for the students of medical sciences. *Asian ESP Journal. Autumn Edition* 6, 2.

Robinson, P. (1991). ESP Today: A Practitioner's Guide. Hertfordshire Prentice Hall.

Robinson, P. (1980). ESP (English for Specific Purposes). New York: Pergamon.

Shahedi, S. (2001).Constructing an analytical framework for the analysis of Persian language texts for foreign learners. Unpublished master's thesis, Shiraz University, Shiraz. Iran.

Shahini, G. (1998). A needs assessment for ELT courses at Shiraz University. Unpublished M.A. Thesis. Shiraz University.

Sheldon, L. (1988). Evaluating ELT textbooks and materials. *ELT Journal*, 42(2),78-90.

Sifakis, N.C. (2003). Applying the adult education framework to ESP curriculum development: An integrative mode. *English for Specific Purposes*, 22, 195-211.

Tomlinson, B. (2001). Materials development. In R. Carter & D. Nunan (Eds.), *The Cambridge guide to teaching English to speakers of other languages* (pp. 66- 71).Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Ur, P. (1996). A course in language teaching: Practice and theory. Cambridge: University Press.



MJAL10:1 Winter 2018

ISSN 0974-8741

A Critical Evaluation of Business Administration ESP Textbook in View of Iranian Language Learners' Needs by Samad Mirza Suzani

Williams, D. (1983). Developing criteria for textbook evaluation. *ELT Journal*, 37(2), 251-255.

Wright, C. (1992). The benefits of ESP. Cambridge Language Consultations. Retrieved September 22, 2017 from <http://camlang.com/art001.htm>

Yarmohammadi, L. (2002). The evaluation of pre-university textbooks. *The Newsletter of the Iranian Academy of science*, 18, 70-87.

Yazdjerdi, K (2000). A summative evaluation of two ESP courses in engineering at the Islamic Azad University, Shiraz Branch. Unpublished M.A Thesis. Islamic Azad University. Shiraz branch.

Zohrabi, M. (2011). An evaluation of the needs analysis component in an academic setting. *The Asian ESP Journal*, (7) 4, 153-182.