

4.8 EGP, EAP or ESP? Some insights and implications on Malaysian ESP.

Apparently, the needs analysis in this study has also revealed that there is a place for more general language, namely in the areas of grammar and functions. The learner has mentioned his desire to be aware of rules and structures of those areas so that he could later apply them to his contexts. Thus, certain aspects of language are more towards the end of the continuum of EGP or EAP rather than ESP. This has some implications for Malaysia bilingual technical and vocational schools where Malay is the medium of instruction. The current English language courses in such schools seemed to reflect more EGP or EAP English rather than ESP. But now, is it actually necessary to move to the other end of the continuum [of ESP]? Similarly then, in the methodology, conversion and use of materials, ESP practitioners would be wise to consider towards which end of the continuum their learners are at so that the selection and adaptation of material content would be appropriate to meet the needs of the learners.

5 CONCLUSION

5.1 The Role of Textbooks and its implications on teaching, learning and designing of ESP - Business English Texts

Generally, there can be no model of an ideal textbook for an individual, whatmore for a group of learners. English for Business in particular, needs to be tailored to suit learner(s) needs. However, just as teachers do not fail because they can get on with one group of learner but not with another, neither is a textbook unsuccessful if style and content do not meet the needs of learner at the stated level.

As this study suggested, there could be suitable texts among published textbooks, but more probably to fulfil advisory and supplementary roles in the teaching and learning of ESP. There is no ONE textbook that appeal to all teachers and learners. And that does not mean textbooks are redundant nor to be thrown out in the teaching and learning of particularly, Business English. ESP practitioners must take into consideration the basic need for choice, variety of styles and approach of materials. In fact, generally, it is relatively easy in ESP not to employ any particular method or technique that already exists. One main reason is because ESP is young (younger than EGP) and not stifled or burdened with traditional or narrow orthodoxy (Streven, 1988).

Thus, the conclusion is similar to what Christopher Brumfit (1980 : 30). observed : "*There is no Which for textbooks*". ESP practitioners [that includes learners] are not to ask "*Which textbook is value for money?*" but "*Which textbook is the best value for money?*" And the answer basically depends on learner current needs. And ESP practitioners must realise that the *best* now might not the best in the immediate future. Texts at best provide the jumping-off point for practitioners. Authors and creators of textbooks should abandon any claim that their products are anything more than tools and instruments for spontaneous, creative interaction in the teaching and learning of ESP.

5.2 The Roles of Text Evaluation and Needs Analysis and their implications on teaching, learning and designing of ESP - Business English Texts.

Careful evaluation of such 'tools and instruments' (textbooks) though, helps save a lot of expenses and frustration of in-house materials. It saves a lot of duplication of effort by revealing existing materials that provided parts of materials needs. If it had been a choice of textbook as coursebook for the Company, it would mean large investment of money.

The evaluation has to be done in relation to the needs analysis of learners. Teachers and writers cannot assume prior knowledge of learner. For example, in describing a distance, the teacher exemplified from texts that said, "*about the distance between the wickets in a cricket pitch*". The text illustration will only make sense if learner has knowledge of the terms used. Teachers, writers and learners could use the results of needs and language analysis. They could build new information based on learner's previous knowledge to explain, exemplify and contextualise new information.

Needs in an individual are more predictable as they vary across situations in contrast to the more unpredictable diverse needs of a group of learners including diverse world experiences and learning strategies of the learners in the group. But it does not mean the study could not be replicated for a group of learners. As Brumfit (1977) put it, "*....the task is harder...but the principle is the same*". Anyway, I would agree with what Adrian Holiday (1995) mentioned in his research article. Language needs have to be set against wider institutional needs, curriculum implementational factors include resources, syllabus possibilities and even wider social factors. It would thus, be wise for course designers to also consider other factors that would affect the

implementation of a course. One of it is timing. Should the course be part or full-time, intensive or extensive? The pros and cons of the latter is discussed by Pilbeam (1983) and problems related to this factor by Johns (1981) and Skeldon and Swales (1983). The location, such as nature of 'classroom' and distance from learner's home could be a constraint on activities. And if teachers and time are limited, the nature of the course could be self-access materials.

Another implication in teaching and learning is that a learner's use of schema (Carrell, 1984 for readers) is important in the learning process. Books then, especially which focus on reading skills, should encourage top-down processing approach instead of linear, word-by-word, bottom-up processing through intrusive comprehension questioning (often in the margins) and arrow-drawing 'reference' exercises. This study then reaffirms the hallmark of ESP instruction - it attempts to appeal more directly to learner interest outside classroom than in traditional ESL / EFL instructions.

And in view of the differences in cultural and discourse conventions, teachers and writers must learn not to create the impression of the use language as a mono-functional system where words and gestures are as they mean. At the same time, it might be impossible to produce a universally applicable syllabus and texts for ESP. ESP is English for specific purpose implying that it is specific and appropriate in one part of the globe and not in another part. There are great varieties of contexts and ESP courses around the world. However, generally, ESP still stands distinguishable from EGP; as Richards (1989) notes, "*The concern of ESP with delicacy of contexts is something which distinguishes it from ELT in general*". At the same time, there is another side of

the argument. Specificity does not necessitate uniqueness. Thus even if this syllabus is drawn up for an individual target learner and the technical words might differ from subject to subject (O'Keeffe, 1983), the language skills and functions, events and activities to use the skills and functions are usually common to a large group of occupations. Take for instance, telephoning or greeting customers.

5.3 The future of textbooks and evaluation

In the future, one might speculate that with the expansion in desk-top publishing via microcomputers, the textbooks might eventually be "an artefact of the past" especially when prices tumble, but I doubt the issue of searching for the 'perfect' text would disappear. This is basically because the question would remain whether those 'published' computer materials would meet the learner's needs.

Furthermore, this study has focussed on immediate needs and current textbooks. Future needs and demands of texts would inevitably change and differ with widespread IT network to reach a level where as Johns & Qudley-Evans (1991) aptly entitled their research, "*English for Specific Purposes - International in scope, specific in purpose*".

And although there are now extensive use of word processing and computers in ESP - 'dynamic dictionary' to cater for vocabulary work, teaching of reading comprehension skills (Nyns (1988), etc. there is still room for pedagogical training and use to address the production skills of speaking, the predominant skill in Business

English. 'Talking computers' is yet to come our way. But as Phillips (1982-83, 1985) cautioned, *'Computer is the servant, not the master'*.

Thus whatever happens, textbook or text evaluation is still needed in day-to-day teaching situation. And there is also the need for more research into gender roles, the relationship between gender and syllabus design. Would the design be relevant if the target learner in this study had been a sales manageress, all factors remaining the same?

5.4 Study as reference for the 'real' consumers - teachers, learners and material writers

Finally, just as Sheldon's collection, this study is a start to the process of materials evaluation on the part of the real consumers. This investigation then hopefully would educate people to be more informed, more discerning and more influential consumers of ESP - Business English textbooks, in particular. Teachers, as Prabhu (1992) maintains, should become good theorists who understand not only how but also why something is done. Research into what they do with texts then could shed some light into the potential development of texts. Teachers should also abandon the generally hostile attitude towards textbooks. Instead, teacher training and development should include helping teachers to evaluate, select, exploit, adapt, supplement textbooks and use them to create a visible and workable framework within potential chaos, effectively. And when teachers are concerned about text[book] evaluation and materials adaptation, what would the criteria of selection and evaluation be? How are they formed? These are issues to be addressed in the training and development of ESP teachers.

Sheldon (1987) stated that most learners evaluate in a linear, cover -to -cover way. If you do not believe learners could be taught to take part in evaluating materials, then, the discussion of this study could perhaps change such perception. It is hoped that this study would act as a reference for teachers, material writers and learners to develop materials and methodology.

Last but not least, one final statement for analysis :

ESP : English for Specific Purposes or English for Specific People?