Evaluating the Appropriateness of English Textbook Used for Teaching English for Specific Purposes

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Abstract

One of the steps in creating a course that delivers validity and relevance for all course design activities is analyzing the needs of the students. Need analysis helps teachers to identify students' needs in learning English based on their daily needs and future needs. This study intends to evaluate the English textbook appropriateness for students and the school's needs in ESP in the office administration program at SMK Setiabudhi Semarang. Hutchison and Waters (1987) proposed the theory that was employed in this research. The theory elaborates on the concept of need analysis in ESP that should contribute to the target and learning needs. Target needs are linked to what the students need to accomplish in the target situation, while learning needs refer to what the students need to do to learn effectively. This study applied a descriptive qualitative research approach to analyze the information gained via student surveys, teacher interviews, and document observations. The study's findings demonstrate that the English textbook used was deemed appropriate for meeting both the students and the school's needs. The degree of appropriateness revealed that, on average, the textbook satisfied 77% of school needs and 87% of student needs. The result is expected to give a contribution to both teachers and students to evaluate their English materials in the textbook used in learning ESP.
INTRODUCTION

Learning English in vocational high schools is categorized as English for a specific purpose (ESP) because it provides the material for students who learn English with a specific purpose and in a specific field. Hopefully, by learning ESP in vocational high schools, students can use it appropriately based on their fieldwork. Therefore, the teacher in vocational high schools needs to understand the appropriate material that students need to learn to achieve the students’ specific goals in learning English based on their specific program. Regarding the issue, doing a need analysis can help students in learning English based on their needs (Richards, 2001).

In ESP, three points must be undertaken in doing a need analysis; necessity, lack, and want (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987). First, students must know necessity to achieve the target situation or their goal in learning English. Second, lack is what students did not know which may use in their future works. Students’ lack is the gap between the learning target that needs to be suited to the students’ material. The last, want is what students wish to get in the lesson. After getting the data about students’ needs, we can do a crosscheck with the existing material used by the teacher so that the teachers can evaluate the existing materials with the current students’ needs. Then the result will be also a consideration for stakeholders in designing courses.

Designing a course according to Hutchinson and Waters (1987) is essentially interviewing to obtain a plausible basis for the next process of writing a syllabus design, materials, classroom teaching, and evaluation. We need to draw some outline questions that we need to know before conducting teaching in a classroom.

In teaching ESP to the students, it is expected that the materials used will meet the demands of the students in each major because English is used in every skill differently depending on the situation (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987). Moreover, according to Richards (2001), needs analysis can be used to address the needs of students in learning English in a particular field. This analysis was used to create the objectives and contents. The evaluation of current programs can also benefit from needs analysis (Nunan, 1988).

Unfortunately, some companies still need to facilitate their employees for English private courses because of the limitations of their officers’ English mastery, especially in business terms. Here, the writer wants to know if there is a gap between the materials in the textbook and the student’s needs in studying ESP at the office administration in SMK Setiabudhi Semarang. The office administration program is the selected program and also the novelty in this research. With the growth of the industrial sector in Indonesia as more office administration graduates are needed. These graduates may work in various areas of industries that require admin staff, receptionists, or personnel staff. Table manners and foreign languages especially English are additional materials that will be imparted to students so that hopefully they will be ready if they meet foreign partners.

Evaluating ESP materials to the students’ needs has become a concern for researchers these past years. Some studies were conducted by Sari and Fatimah (2020), Rashidi and Kehtarfar (2014), Azizifar and Baghelani (2014), Syaifulloh (2014), Anjaneyulu (2014), Nimasari (2016), Failussufi (2017), Susandari (2022), Rohimajaya (2022) and Suhirman (2018). They assumed that textbooks are the main resource in achieving aims and objectives in the learning process so a textbook should have appropriate to the students' needs. They did a need analysis to identify and evaluate their students’ needs in learning English in a specific field. Most used qualitative approaches such as survey and descriptive evaluative research. The result of the research mostly stated that the textbooks or the materials had been appropriate enough to achieve the student’s needs and interests. But, the textbooks had not fully covered all language skills so the teachers still should complement them by using other resources.

Meanwhile, different from the previous studies, some research from Latif (2015), Nafisatin (2015), Heriati (2017), and Kurniawati
(2016) were interested in investigating the appropriateness of an English textbook with the criteria synthesized from BSNP and current curriculum. They considered that by following the criteria, the textbook would be deemed a good textbook. But, in creating a guidebook, doing a need analysis of the student’s needs should also be involved in the process to meet the goals of learning.

The importance of doing students’ need analysis has been done by some researchers through their analysis. Hamlan and Baniabdelahman (2015), Biddle (2014), and Li (2014) conducted a need analysis to develop syllabi and curriculum design. The findings showed that their speaking and listening skills were at a lower level than their writing, reading, grammar, and vocabulary skills. They need to learn more speaking skills so that they can communicate with others fluently.

Rashidi and Kehtarfard (2014), Demir (2015), Sonmez (2018), Jeong and Kim (2012), Chaiaipo (2017), Wilkes (2014), and Andi and Arafah (2017) conducted studies that focused on analyzing, evaluating, and developing the English materials for teaching. The result of the studies used to evaluate the teachers’ materials, strategies, and methods to construct a more effective learning process. These studies underline the significance of need analysis in language education and the importance of developing appropriate teaching materials tailored to the specific needs of learners. By considering the needs of both teachers and students, educators can create more effective and targeted instructional resources to support learners’ progress and achievement in the language classroom.

Besides, some research related to the need for analysis to develop materials was also considered in this study, especially in certain skills. Ulum (2015), Cahyo (2019), Cai (2013), Margareta (2017), Fatimah (2018), and Moiinvaziri (2014). They were doing a need analysis to develop the specified skills such as Ulum focused on speaking skills, Cahyo and Margareta focused on reading skills, Fatimah on writing skills, and Moiinvaziri's result which focused on vocabulary and grammatical knowledge needed by the learners based on their programs.

Therefore, this research aims to assess the appropriateness of the English textbook to the student’s needs and the school’s need in learning English for a specific purpose at SMK Setiabudhi Semarang. This research also investigated the school’s needs to consider the quality of graduates that meet the job market.

Hopefully, this research can help English teachers in identifying their students’ needs based on knowing their necessities, wants, and lacks. Then, the latest data on the student’s needs can be used by the teachers to find out the appropriate material in their teaching-learning process dealing with the major so that they can be more motivated in learning English.

METHOD

This research applied a descriptive qualitative method to understand the data in depth. This research used four types of instruments, they are semi-close-ended questionnaires, class observation, documentation observation, and in-depth interviews.

The data were obtained by spreading the questionnaires to the 20 students of tenth grade in the office administration program. Additionally, the semi-close-ended questionnaire was chosen to cover the entire students’ answers related to their target and learning needs. Then, the researchers did a class observation to find out the use of the English textbook used by the teacher, and the fulfillment of the students’ and school’s needs in teaching ESP. Observing the syllabus and lesson plan used by the teacher is also required to find out the guidelines used. After that, some interviews were done with the English teacher, five representatives of the office administration students, and three representatives of graduate students who have worked in linear and non-linear jobs in the program were conducted to obtain and complete the lack of data in depth.

After collecting the data, the data analysis process involved three steps based on Huberman and Miles's theory: (1) data reduction, (2) data display, and (3) drawing a conclusion. In
reducing the data, the important data were chosen after calculating the percentage of the student’s answers and the school’s needs. The high percentage was deemed as important data. Then the data were analyzed and checked to the textbook used by the teacher titled “Get Along English” published by Erlangga to find out the appropriateness. In displaying data, the percentage result was classified based on the category and then displayed in the diagram form. Lastly, the conclusions focused on describing the students’ target and learning needs in English, identifying gaps and appropriateness between the textbook used by the teacher and the students, and the school’s needs in learning ESP.

To validate the findings and interpretation, the researchers applied triangulation. Based on Creswell’s (2012) explanation of types of triangulations, the researchers triangulated the result using the method of collection. Then, these findings were submitted to the expert and investigated to find out if there is a misinterpretation of the analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This part is supposed to answer the research questions of the appropriateness of the English textbook used to the student’s needs and the school’s need in learning ESP at the office administration program and it focuses on the result of the analysis.

The Appropriateness of the English Textbook with the Students’ Needs

The needs of the students in this program should be taken into account when designing an English textbook for office administration students. The textbook ought to offer functional vocabularies and language abilities that apply to the workplace in an office context (Harmer (2007) and Hutchison & Waters (1987)). Hutchison and Waters (1987) added that two terms should be input in analyzing the students’ needs, target needs, and learning needs. In obtaining the data, a questionnaire and interview were included in this step. Below is the diagram result of the students’ needs.

![Figure 1. The result of The Students’ Necessities](image-url)

The diagram and table above show that 65% of students’ purposes in learning ESP was to be able to communicate in English well or to improve their English ability. Another 25% of students indicates that the student’s goal related to the sake of their future career than their daily life. Also, 20% of students tend to practice the speaking skill or conversation practices more than other skills especially focusing on the material programs. Then, it also can be showed that 25% students want to learn pronunciation more than another knowledge. Therefore, the guidebook’s material should be prepared to support their necessities in their future career especially in speaking practices in order to improve their speaking skill.

In another hand, 45% of students state that now they only learn English in a class only. This makes students unable to be active in using English. Even though, learning language should be practiced every day. Here, the English teacher is able to add fun exercises at home in order to students able to practice English in daily life, too.
Moreover, 90% students wanted to learn English in order to comprehend materials about office administration terms to ease their future career. In terms of presentation of the learning process, the 35% of students prefer to choose English material with many practices especially in speaking skill because it is very important in the office administration program.

The rest, 15% of students were in difficulties in speaking and 5% of reading. It relates to the students’ wants which stated that they prefer to choose English material with many practices especially in speaking skill. It proves that they do realize that their most difficulties to comprehend the spoken words by the speakers.

In listening skill, 45% students believed that they had difficulties in understanding the speaker’s words. While the rest, 25% of the students had difficulties in understanding the meaning of the spoken words by the speakers and 15% of students thought that understanding the content of the topic is the most difficult.

In speaking skill, 35% of students considered that pronouncing English words or expressions was being their difficulties in learning English. Whereas another 30% was applying the grammar and 30% was mastering the vocabularies.

In reading skill, half of the students supposed that understanding the meaning of the sentences was being a problem for them. The rest of 25% was pronouncing the words or sentences and 20% of mastering English vocabularies.

In writing skill, 40% of students have difficulties in choosing the appropriate words or vocabularies. The second place was applying the grammar or the appropriate structures (35%) and the third was expressing the ideas (15%).

From the result above it can be seen that 40% of students preferred monologue and dialogue with simple topics in listening material. The rest, 30% of students preferred to learn from authentic materials such as broadcast radio and
news, film, and song, 15% of students wish to learn with a native speaker, and 15% others chose to join a private class. Therefore, in speaking, 35% of students chose to learn monolog or dialogue texts which are practiced and 35% of students also wish to learn speaking through a native speaker while 25% others chose games or discussion to practice a dialog. The last, 5% of student chose to join a private class.

In reading, the highest percentage is 70% of students preferred to learn using simple texts related to their department and also can be found in daily activities. The second highest option was 15% of students chose complex texts followed by learning various texts through games and discussion. In writing, on the table above shows that the preferred option is learning through arranging words into good sentences or paragraph (80%). While 10% students tended to choose completing missing paragraphs, followed by 5% of writing a type of text in learning writing skill.

Table above also shows the input for teacher’s performance in teaching English. The first relates to the teacher’s technique, 55% students stated that the teacher’s technique in teaching is interesting and 10% stated it is very interesting. In other hand, 20% and 15% of students stated that it is not really interesting and not interesting at all. The second, the students’ opinion about the teacher’s explanation in their class, 65% of students believed that it is not really clear but still understandable and 20% believed that it is clear and understandable, while the rest of 15% stated that it is not really clear and hard to be understood.

Next, the teacher’s main source, 75% of students clarified that the teacher used English textbook as the material source, 20% comes from the teacher and 5% from the internet. While, according to some of students the English material used and the target area are related (50%) and 30% declared that it is extremely related. The rest stated that it is not really related (15%) and unrelated (5%). Besides, table above also indicated that the English material delivered by English teacher is easy to master (80%), followed by 35% who said that it is hard to master, 20% were could not master, and only 5% students who said that it is very easy to master.

The table also indicated about the students’ opinion about their English class is effective who said by 75% of students, followed by 15% of students who said it is very effective and 10% believed that it is really not effective. The next question is the students’ feeling during English learning process is 50% students feel enjoy as the highest percentage and 25% not really enjoy as the second highest percentage. 10% of students feel really enjoy and 15% others feel hard to enjoy.

From the table above it also can be seen that 40% students said that the English teacher always let them to respond in learning process, 35% of sometimes, 25% of often, and 5% said never let the students to respond in learning process. While, 40% of students also said that they are often respond to the teacher’s explanation, 35% of sometimes, 20% of always, and 5% never respond to the teacher’s explanation. The kind of respond are; students try to listen and understand the teacher’s explanation (75%), students always ask the teacher about the material (20%), and students never respond or are just silent in their learning process (5%).

![Figure 5. The Result of The Students' Input](image-url)
and translating texts (50%) and in writing skill is writing sentence/paragraph using correct structures, vocabularies, punctuations and spelling (50%).

Figure 6. The Result of The Students’ Setting

Based on the table above, students tend to learn English in pairs (35%) and in a group (35%), the rest are 3% tend to learn by individual and others 15%. While, one of students wished to learn English in class and outside of the class.

Figure 7. The Result of The Students’ Role

The diagram clearly shows that 35% of students recognized that during the teaching and learning process, the students prefer to listen to the teacher’s explanation. The same percentage of 35% students admit that they just do assignment. The rest percentage of 10% preferred can be active in a discussion rather than just listen the teacher’s explanation and do assignment.

In teaching and learning process, 60% students realized that students should listen to the teacher’s explanation when the teacher is teaching in front of the class. The rest of 35% students considered that they need to be active and participating in the learning activities. The last question about students’ role, more than half students preferred to actively discuss/ask/interact with friends or teachers in the teaching and learning process (80%). The rest of 15% students chose to be active in answering the teacher’s questions and 5% others said that they want to be active in doing their assignment.

Figure 8. The Result of The Students’ Setting

From the diagram above, it can be found that 65% of students would prefer if the teacher ask students to be active in responding the teacher’s explanation and questions. The second percentage is 15% of students considered that a teacher should ask the students to have a discussion about the material and the third percentage is 10% students wish the teacher can ask students to be active in doing assignments.

The second statement in the questionnaire shows that 45% of students assumed that a teacher should motivate their students in learning English. The other students regarded that a teacher should explain the material clearer (25%) and always guide their students in every task (20%).

Related to the third question, half of students regarded that their teacher in doing English tasks in a classroom, students would prefer if the teacher guide them to do the tasks. The other percentage of 25% students reckoned that the students preferred to have a small group discussion to discuss the tasks. The rest of20% students wish to listen the explanation through a game.

Besides the result of the questionnaire, the researchers also did a depth interview to five students in order to get the data about the
fulfillment of the students’ need in teaching ESP. The conclusion of the depth interview are teachers are doing well so far in teaching English by always inviting students to speak English. The teacher often to make students into groups to practice conversations and always guide them in doing their assignments. On the other hand, some students argue that their teacher only teach in the class and never invite them into the language lab to listen from the authentic sources. Then, the students also feel that their teacher never motivate them in learning English. Moreover, the students wanted to learn English more especially things related to their major through joining an English extracurricular. But, the school answered that the extracurricular is still off since the pandemic until now.

Based on the diagram above, there are 46 statements’ result of students’ need in learning ESP. They are 20 statements of target needs consists of 6 statements of students’ necessities, 5 statements of students’ want, and 9 statements of lacks. The rest is 26 statements of students’ learning needs. They are 6 statements of students’ input, 9 statements of students’ procedures, 3 statements of students’ setting, 3 statements of students’ role, and 5 statements of teacher’s role.

It shows that 40 students’ statements were appropriate and 6 statements were not appropriate with the textbook. In the target needs result, 19 statements have been included in the textbook but the researchers observes that there are two things that should be added to the textbook. They are the additional materials about administrative documents and expressions that can be used to interact with foreign relations. While in learning needs, there are 5 indicators and 26 statements. There are 14 statements of input, 5 statements of procedures, 1 statement of setting, 3 statements of students’ role, and 3 statements of teacher’s role.

From 26 statements of learning needs, there are 5 statements that showed that it does not appropriate to the textbook. In the input, 3 statements had not been appropriate with the textbook, there are no instructions for listening to authentic materials such as news, songs, etc., the recorded audio from native speakers, and also the book does not provide instruction to arrange sentences into a good paragraph in writing skill. There is only one monolog about introducing ourselves. Listening from authentic materials should be inserted through the lesson plans. Practice with native speakers also should be inserted through the lesson plans. Arranging words into a good paragraph can be included in the writing exercises.

In procedure terms, there is 1 statement that was not appropriate with the textbook. There are no instructions for translating a text and arranging the jumbled words/sentences into a good paragraph. While, in the setting term, the teacher never invites the students to learn outside of class. Unless, the teacher should let the students learn English in the language laboratory, especially in learning listening skills. In the teacher’s role, there is 1 statement that had not appropriate to the student’s statement that is never motivating the students about learning English. Moreover, the teacher’s task is not only delivering the material but also guiding and motivating students. The teachers should give motivation to their students in each their meeting in order to get their passion in learning English and the students can aware that English is important for their future.

In conclusion, the appropriateness of the English textbook to the students’ needs was classified into the appropriate level. It can be seen from the points obtained at 40 points that about 87% of indicators of the student’s needs were covered in the English textbook used. The English textbook has covered more than half indicators of the student’s needs. It contains many practicing skills with various instructions for listening, speaking, reading, and writing exercises. So, it can help students in practicing the desired skills and learning model by
following the instructions of the book. Moreover, the book has been designed with simple instructions and materials which can be found in daily activities in order to be understood by students.

In contrast to the previous studies, the book still does not include some students' needs. There is the minimum material for office administration that addresses only three materials of memos, schedules, and invitations. Then, it does not give authentic materials in the listening exercises such as listening from songs, broadcasts, etc. It also lacks the example of dialogue to speak with a foreign partner but it just covers the daily conversations for students.

The lack of exercises for arranging sentences into effective paragraphs, particularly in writing skills, is another issue with the book that isn't addressed by the illustrations for students. According to the findings of the student interviews, writing is the ability that the teacher teaches the most frequently. However, merely responding to inquiries and composing paragraphs or letters. The students' responses to some input questions in the questionnaire helped to indicate the outcome. They want to practice discovering coherence when learning writing abilities, thus they want to learn it by organizing paragraphs into an effective composition.

Understanding the student's needs in learning a subject, can help the teacher to get the students' interest during the learning process so that they can achieve the goal and the objectives of learning the materials easily. Identifying the student's needs can be done by evaluating the book which used by the teacher and students. This approach correlates with the research done by Fatimah (2020), Rashidi and Kehtafar (2014), Azizifar and Baghelani (2014), Saparova and Nolan (2016), and Suhirman (2018). They argued that a need analysis can be done by evaluating the book used in the learning process because textbooks are the main resource in achieving aims and objectives in the learning process.

Similarly, the findings of Sari and Fatimah's research indicate that the teaching materials have been enough appropriate for the students but there is still the implementation of the four skills of the material which has not been appropriately applied yet. The same result was found in the Suhirman (2018) research which evaluate an English textbook for an Islamic college. He concluded that the textbook has met the students’ needs including the contents, presentations, strategies, and students' needs and interests.

Contrary to the result of the research from Azizifar and Baghelani (2014) who evaluated a textbook that is well developed to meet the student's needs and interests. The result identified that the textbook still did not satisfy the learner participant enough about the material although it has satisfied the teachers' expectations regarding its appearance, illustrations, objective, and practice which is supposed to build the students’ critical thinking. Besides, the research about evaluating the learning resources done by Saparova and Nolan (2016) also showed that the three resources from the electronic information in the learning process should be put together and could not be used alone because it would be less appropriate in covering all of the materials. In short, the use of need analysis as the approach of this research helped a lot in analyzing the appropriateness of a book with the needs.

The Appropriateness of the English Textbook with the School's Need

A teacher should examine the school's needs while selecting a textbook in order to select a book that meets both the demands of the students and the school regulations. Textbooks are an important tool for teachers and students since they give learning a clear structure. Yet, not all textbooks are made equal, and some can be more suited for a specific school or program than others.

Moreover, the requirements of the school are a key consideration when choosing which textbooks to utilize. This entails taking into account the program's precise learning objectives, the student's academic level and needs, the teachers' methods of instruction, and the resources the school has at its disposal. For instance, the school's requirements for an office administration degree may call for the usage of an
English textbook that includes the material of writing letters, memo, or schedules. Below is the result of the appropriateness of the English textbook with the school’s needs;

![Figure 9. The Appropriateness of the Textbook with the Syllabus and Lesson Plan](image)

The data point out that the textbook has been appropriate to the curriculum used in the teacher’s opinion. But the syllabus and lesson plan evaluation indicated that there are 7 materials that are not covered in the textbook. So, the gap should be considered for the teacher to work out the solution.

Based on the interview result to the teacher, it can be concluded that about 80% of graduate students work in the linear program with the administration program. It proves that there is a significant correlation between the graduate students and the linear program that the school offered. The fact that about 80% of graduate students work in the linear program indicates that it will be a popular choice among the students. The program likely offers benefits, such as relevant coursework, research opportunities, or career prospects, that attract a majority of students.

In conclusion, the result of the appropriateness of the textbook with the curriculum gained 10 of 10 points, graduates’ quantities for about 8 points and the syllabus and lesson plan 4.6 points. The last result for the appropriateness of the textbook with the school’s need gained 23 points and it means 77% appropriate to the textbook.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the English textbook that the office administration program’s English teacher used was deemed suitable for both the needs of the students and the needs of the school. The degree of appropriateness indicated that, on average, the textbook met 87% of the needs of the students and 77% of those of the school. In the appropriateness of the English textbook with the students’ needs, the evaluation found that the English textbook fulfilled a significant portion of the students’ target needs, with 80% of the content being relevant. However, there were some areas within the learning needs that required improvement, particularly in terms of input coverage and setting considerations. Furthermore, the graduates’ qualities and opinions were taken into account as they reflect
the skills and attributes required by the job market. The evaluation indicated that approximately 80% of graduates possessed the necessary qualifications to work in the linear programs, implying a positive correlation between the textbook’s content and the skills demanded by employers. However, it is essential to regularly analyze and fill in any gaps to make sure that graduates are ready for the constantly changing job market. The result of this study hopefully will encourage some teachers to do need analysis to their students routinely because it can help both students and teachers to find out the appropriate material in their teaching-learning process dealing with the major so that they can be more motivated in learning English. Besides, it can help the English teacher to identify the lack of their students in learning ESP so that they can solve the problems and achieve the goal of learning especially in their future jobs.

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