

An Analytical Evaluation of ESP Textbook for Engineering Students in Sudanese Universities

A Case Study of Sudan International University SIU English Language Course, C

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Abstract

The current study is conducted to evaluate the English language textbook used for university students who specialized in engineering; the case study of this research is the textbook which is indorsed to teach English to the university students of engineering college at Sudan International University. The main objective of this evaluation is to analyze the textbook to recognize whether it suits the engineering students. The adopted method for this study was descriptive analytical method. The researcher used the questionnaire, (an Arabic version) for a sample of (90) engineering college students. The findings of the study have shown that an overwhelming majority of the students agreed that the layout of the textbook is perfect and its design is suitable. Besides, they acknowledged that textbook is quite satisfactory in terms of its activities. Based on the above findings, the researcher comes to the conclusion that the textbook which is taught in this university, with all these positive views is definitely a favorable and useful textbook for the engineering students and at Sudan International University.

Keywords: English for Specific Purposes, General English, SIU English Language Course, C Textbook

1. Introduction

The major task of universities is to prepare highly qualified specialists capable of competing in the labor market. In this era of globalization, it is well known that specialized people like Engineers from all parts of the world want to communicate on daily basis and in their work field without barriers. Since they need to exchange information, they need to have a common media of communication. The most suitable one is the English Language, which has become

one of the mostly widely used languages in the world. But it is not enough for Engineering Students to learn General English because it does not cover their technical knowledge needs. Consequently, there is an increasing demand for teaching English for Specific Purposes (ESP).

English for Specific Purposes (ESP) in engineering field is crucial in the university life since it improves the proficiency of the students in English Skills, which supports their needed attributes when they become engineers.

According to Hutchinson and Waters (1994: 16), ESP can be further subdivided into many types of ESP differentiated according to whether the learner requires English for academic study (English for Academic Purposes EAP) or for work/training (English for Occupational Purposes EOP/ English for vocational Purposes EVP/ Vocational English as a Second Language VESL).

Most of the English for Specific Purpose syllabuses are designed in a restricted manner containing topics, which are limited and relevant only to the subject of specialization of the learners. However, it is not always advisable to limit the needs of the learners to specific uses of the target language. Overall, the Engineering Students should not be constrained by restricted communication of this discipline; but should be equipped with an authentic communication of the general language (Morrow, 1977).

Accordingly, the researcher is going to analyze the English Language textbook of engineering students in Sudan International University. The aim is to see whether the syllabus fits the needs and demands of the students who specialize in engineering in Sudanese universities and to see if it could help them improve their proficiency to meet the minimum requirements of the market of labor.

The research problem arises from finding that the majority of the students of the engineering faculties lack of the basic skills which allow them to understand their subjects and to express themselves properly in the field. This could be due to the fact that they have not studied a textbook that contains the required dose of technical English words. Indeed, the materials in Sudanese universities always focus on the General English (GE) rather than focusing on English for Specific Purposes (ESP), which could help them in their studies and further in their work.

1.1 Questions of the Research

- 1) To what extent is English textbook “SIU English Language Course ‘C’” at Sudan International University (SIU), faculty of engineering effective to engineering students in terms of its layout and design?
- 2) To what extent is the textbook satisfactory in terms of its activities?

1.2 Literature Review

This part discusses the notions; concepts related to the evaluation of an English as Foreign Language (EFL), English as Second Language (ESL) and English for Specific Purpose (ESP) textbooks from different books and if needed it goes through number of researches and previous studies related to the present study. Grant, C. A. (1998). Mentions three stages to evaluate any textbook: The first one is the initial evaluation in which the designers have to

filter out the unsuitable materials. The materials have to be presented in an attractive and beautiful way and to be communicative. In this stage it is recommended to be sure that the textbook addresses straight forward, clear and achievable objectives and to be well organized and easy to use. The second stage is the detailed evaluation. After the designers decide that the textbook is suitable according to the above mentioned criteria, then they have to decide how well the textbook will do. Thirdly, the in use evaluation, it is the evaluation of the textbook while using it. Here the content areas have to be addressed and assessed continuously.

Some teachers assume that the most effective manner through which they can evaluate the text books is to examine the language and the objectives that they contained. Grainger, D. (2002) mentions three different content areas to be evaluated and assessed. Firstly, does the book meet the learners' needs? Secondly, are there sufficient materials engaged in the textbook. Finally, will the textbook need to be supplemented?

Cunningsworth (1995), On the other hand, says that there are two types to evaluating a textbook. The first type is the evaluation for potential, which means that a textbook could be evaluated without any predetermined use in mind to see what it might be good for and in what situations it could be expected to be successful. Secondly, the evaluation for suitability which involves matching the textbook against specific requirements including the learners objectives, the learners background, the recourses available.

According to Garinger (ibid) Sheldon's checklist is very expansive and attempts to assess all aspects of content including such diverse factors as graphics, and physical characteristics to authenticity and flexibility.

So teachers can create their own evaluation checklist to evaluate the textbooks they teach or design since they know the directions and the objectives around which they teach or design the textbook. But this eclectic approach has to be within the standard of the general frame of the standardized checklists.

Byrd, P (2001) sees that the evaluation of textbooks is a very complex process because this process goes through a system that involves input from supervisors and colleagues, and does not emphasize the individual teacher making a personal decision (yet few teachers use textbooks that they have themselves designed or selected through a process that has focused simply on their interests and the needs of the students.

“Developing of checklists built around numerous aspects of teaching and student-teacher interactions is the best way for evaluating a textbook. “Making a comprehensive yet reasonable checklist for evaluation of textbooks is a tough challenge that requires different lists for different types of courses in different settings” Byrd, P (2001: 416).

Cunningswords (1995) recommends that any evaluation checklist should be organized under the following criteria: Aims and approaches, design and organization, language content, skills, topics, methodology, teachers' books and practical considerations.

1.2.1 Textbook Evaluation Techniques

It necessary for the textbook evaluation is to look for the most appropriate methods to evaluate them and to clarify the criteria of the followed process of this evaluation. According to Litz, D. R. (2001), there are many criteria that should be appropriate to varied cases of

textbook evaluation that makes it necessary for researchers to find the most suitable evaluation techniques which fill their purpose best. In this respect, the evaluation checklists are commonly rated as one of the most effective techniques for measuring textbook features that may include some factors like, textbook practicality, simplicity, rationality, availability, lay out, and so on. These features are normally rated semantically for qualitative evaluation or on Likert scale (e.g. Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree) by the evaluators.

A checklist is a tool by which means a textbook is assessed against certain criteria (Cakit, 2006). Through the use of a checklist, it would be possible to make comparison among a wide set of materials (McGrath, 2002). In fact, by using a checklist, one can easily compare, identify, or even verify obtained information about a particular textbook. A checklist, therefore, specifies a set of qualities that are essential for any effective learning/ teaching materials. In this case, the evaluators can be the instructors, the researchers, or even the learners who can rate the quality of the given material according to the set criteria (Soori. et. al, 2011). A checklist, as a practical textbook evaluation tool, is not only systematic and comprehensive, but it is also cost and time effective and the results are easy to understand, easy to replicate and easy to compare (McGrath. 2002). Moreover, available checklists can be simply updated and modified to fit the requirements of each particular learning situation, (Umar, A., Elterji, 2018).

1.2.2 Previous Study

Ebadi (2015) Evaluation of EAP Textbooks: A Comparison between SAMT English for Medical Students and Oxford English for Career. This study is an attempt to evaluate a newly developed ESP textbook Oxford English for Careers: medicine and to find out whether or not it can be used instead of English for medical students published by SAMT based on students 'viewpoints. Using availability sampling, sixty- six students of medicine, who were taking English for Academic purposes (EAP) course at Alborz University of Medical Sciences, were recruited as participants. The researcher used a questionnaire which contained 55 specific items measuring six constructs of theoretical consideration, the organizational features and practical considerations, the content, the language skill, the vocabulary, the grammatical structure. Results indicated that Oxford English for Careers: medicine appeals to majority of the participants.

Findings also indicated that, regarding theoretical considerations, the participants who had covered SAMT textbook were significantly less satisfied with their textbook than the participants who had covered Oxford English for Careers: medicine. The findings have implications for ESP material developers and course designers.

2. Method

2.1 Method and Data Collection

A mixed of both quantitative and qualitative methods are adopted by the researcher to conduct this study. The research tools used to collect data for this study include a textbook evaluation through a questionnaire for students. This instrument will be designed to collect the data from the respondents to serve the objective and to answer the questions of the Study.

In order to collect the required data for this study, the following procedures were followed:

- 1). The data were collected from the responses of the sample of the study; the percentage of the collected data is (100%) because the data was collected electronically, so no responses were missed.
- 2) The data was prepared for computer analysis by coding the responses of the questionnaire.

2.2 Participant (Subject) of the Study

The study is conducted on representative samples of the students, who were randomly selected according to their online availability through their emails and WhatsApp numbers. The sample of the current study is consisted of (90) Male and Female students as 10% of the population. Regarding the students specialties, they represent all the sections of engineering college, Architecture, civil, electricity, biomedical engineering ...and so on.

2.3 The Instruments of the Study

The researcher distributed the translated 90 copies of students' questionnaire to the engineering students in Sudan International University, in the year 2020-2021 (see Appendix A), through WhatsApp, all students were responded.

The data for this study were collected during the second semester of academic year (2020-2021). The research instrument used to collect the data through the questionnaire.

The Method section describes in detail how the study was conducted, including conceptual and operational definitions of the variables used in the study, Different types of studies will rely on different methodologies; however, a complete description of the methods used enables the reader to evaluate the appropriateness of your methods and the reliability and the validity of your results, It also permits experienced investigators to replicate the study, If your manuscript is an update of an ongoing or earlier study and the method has been published in detail elsewhere, you may refer the reader to that source and simply give a brief synopsis of the method in this section.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Layout and Design in the Textbook "SIU English Language Course 'C'"

Layout and design of a textbook commonly refer to the outside and inside shape of the textbook and its organization and presentation of language items and activities. This may also include how the textbook looks or how it appears to its customers in general. The first question of this study, therefore, inquires about the effectiveness and suitability of SIU English Language Course 'C' in terms of its layout and design.

Table 1. The students' views towards the first item in textbooks' layout and design

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Strongly disagree	3	3.3%
Disagree	3	3.3%
Neutral	7	7.8%
Agree	43	47.8%
Strongly agree	34	37.8%
Total	90	100.0%

The responses to the first statement in Table 1 above indicate that an overwhelming majority of about (86%) of the students agree that the textbook “SIU English Language Course ‘C’” is well organized and helpful to engineering students, whereas in the opposite side there are (7%) disagree about the same point, while about (8%) of the respondents are neutral with regard to this point.

So, the responses of students in the above table in general show that the participants are largely satisfied with the first statement (the textbook layout and design are suitable, attractive and related to the engineering subjects) which deals with the layout and design of the textbook SIU English Language Course ‘C’.

Table 2. The students' views towards the second item in textbooks' layout and design

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Strongly disagree	1	1.1%
Disagree	6	6.7%
Neutral	9	10.0%
Agree	40	44.4%
Strongly agree	34	37.8%
Total	90	100.0%

Regarding the response to the second statement in Table 2, there are about (82 %) of the sample who acknowledge that the textbook is well organized and helpful to the engineering students, whereas from the other side there are only (08%) disagree about the same point, while about (10%) of the respondents are neutral with regard to this point.

So, the responses of students in the above table in general show that the participants are largely satisfied with the second statement (the textbook is well organized and helpful to engineering students) related to the layout and design of this textbook.

Table 3. The students' views towards the third item in textbooks' layout and design

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Strongly disagree	5	5.6%
Disagree	9	10.0%
Neutral	12	13.3%
Agree	39	43.3%
Strongly agree	25	27.8%
Total	90	100.0%

In the response to the third statement in Table 3, there are about (71%) of the participants point out that the textbook is well supported with picture, figures, mind- maps, and other e-learning materials related to the engineering subjects, whereas in the opposite side there are about (16%) disagree about the same point, while about (13%) of the respondents are neutral with regard to this point.

Therefore, the responses of students in the above table in general show that the participants are largely satisfied with the third statement (the textbook is well supported with picture, figures, mind- maps, and other e- learning materials related to the engineering subjects) that is concerned with layout and design of this textbook.

Table 4. The students' views towards the forth item in textbooks' layout and design

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Strongly disagree	2	2.2%
Disagree	5	5.6%
Neutral	13	14.4%
Agree	33	36.7%
Strongly agree	37	41.1%
Total	90	100.0%

The responses to the forth statement in Table 4, above indicate that an overwhelming majority of about (78%) of the participants agree that the objectives of lessons are clearly stated at the beginning of each lesson in the textbook and they support the engineering subjects, whereas in the opposite side there are about (8%) disagree about the same point, while about (14%) of the respondents are neutral with regard to this point.

Therefore, the responses of students in the above table in general show that the participants are largely satisfied with the forth statement (the objectives of lessons are clearly stated at the beginning of each lesson in the textbook and they support the engineering subjects) which is related to the layout and design of this textbook.

Table 5. The students' views towards the fifth item in textbooks' layout and design

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Strongly disagree	3	3.3%
Disagree	5	5.6%
Neutral	14	15.6%
Agree	34	37.8%
Strongly agree	34	37.8%
Total	90	100.0%

There are about (76 %) of students in Table 5, believe that the textbook has adequate review sections and exercises related to the engineering subjects, whereas in the opposite side there are about (9%) disagree about the same point, while about (16%) of the respondents are neutral with regard to this point.

Therefore, the responses of students in the above table in general show that the participants are largely satisfied with the fifth statement (the textbook has adequate review sections and exercises related to the engineering subjects) which is related to the layout and design of this textbook.

3.2 Activities in the Textbook

Table 6. The students' perceptions about the first item in textbooks' activities

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Strongly disagree	2	2.2%
Disagree	9	10.0%
Neutral	15	16.7%
Agree	40	44.4%
Strongly agree	24	26.7%
Total	90	100.0%

The responses to the first statement in Table 6 above indicate that an overwhelming majority of about (71%) of the participants agree that the textbook provides enough communicative, meaningful activities related to the engineering subjects, whereas on the other hand there are about (12%) disagree about the same point, while about (17%) of the respondents are neutral with regard to this point.

Therefore, the responses of students in the above table in general show that the participants are largely satisfied with the first statement (the textbook provides enough communicative, meaningful activities related to the engineering subjects) concerning the activities of this textbook.

Table 7. The students' perceptions about the second item in textbooks' activities

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Strongly disagree	4	4.4%
Disagree	5	5.6%
Neutral	14	15.6%
Agree	38	42.2%
Strongly agree	29	32.2%
Total	90	100.0%

The responses to the second statement in Table 7, above indicate that an overwhelming majority of about (74%) of the participants agree that the textbook incorporates individual, pair, and group work activities related to the engineering subjects, whereas on the other hand there are about (10%) disagree about the same point, while about (16%) of the respondents are neutral with regard to this point.

Therefore, the responses of students in the above table in general show that the participants are largely satisfied with the second statement (the textbook incorporates individual, pair, and group work activities related to the engineering subjects) which focuses on the activities of this textbook.

Table 8. The students' perceptions about the third item in textbooks' activities

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Strongly disagree	3	3.3%
Disagree	9	10.0%
Neutral	14	15.6%
Agree	31	34.4%
Strongly agree	33	36.7%
Total	90	100.0%

The responses to the eighth statement in Table 8 above indicate that an overwhelming majority of about (71%) of the participants agree that textbook introduces the grammar activities and vocabulary items in motivating and realistic engineering contexts, whereas in the other side there are about (13%) disagree about the same point, while about (16%) of the respondents are neutral with regard to this point. Therefore, the responses of students in the above table in general show that the participants are largely satisfied with the third statement (the textbook introduces the grammar activities and vocabulary items in motivating and realistic engineering contexts) regarding the activities of this textbook.

Table 9. The students' perceptions about the forth item in textbooks' activities

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Strongly disagree	3	3.3%
Disagree	7	7.8%
Neutral	17	18.9%
Agree	41	45.6%
Strongly agree	22	24.4%
Total	90	100.0%

The responses to the ninth statement in Table 9, above indicate that an overwhelming majority of about (70%) of the participants agree that the textbook provides a balanced set of activities, whereas in the other side there are about (11%) disagree about the same point, while about (19%) of the respondents are neutral with regard to this point.

Therefore, the responses of students in the above table in general show that the participants are largely satisfied with the forth statement (the textbook provides a balanced set of activities) regarding the activities of this textbook.

Table 10. The students' perceptions about the fifth item in textbooks' activities

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Strongly disagree	1	1.1%
Disagree	7	7.8%
Neutral	14	15.6%
Agree	36	40.0%
Strongly agree	32	35.6%
Total	90	100.0%

Regarding the response to the fifth statement in Table 10, about (76%) of the sample acknowledge that the activities can be modified or supplemented easily to fit different engineering contexts, whereas in the other side there are about (9%) disagree about the same point, while about (16%) of the respondents are neutral with regard to this point. Therefore, the responses of students in the above table in general show that the participants are largely satisfied with the fifth statement (the activities can be modified or supplemented easily to fit different engineering contexts) that relates to the activities of this textbook.

4. Conclusions and Recommendations

4.1 Conclusions

This section provides the findings of the study which aims to evaluate the level of effectiveness of the textbook “SIU English Language Course ‘C’”, from the perspectives of engineering students. This evaluation is carried out at a macro-level focusing on point of view of the sample about the two domains, they are, the layout and design and the activities in the textbook.

The detailed results of the study, percentages of the subject responses to each item in the survey are calculated to describe students points of view regarding the effectiveness of the above target textbook is discussed and analyzed. In addition, the percentages that relate to each evaluation criteria are presented in tables and explanations are provided accordingly and discussed. The findings that the study has come up with are:

4.1.1 Layout and Design in SIU English Language Course ‘C’

Firstly, regarding the layout and design, it is concluded from the above findings, that the layout and design of the textbook are quite effective since the majority of the students agree or even strongly agree with most of the statements in the above table.

4.1.2 Activities in the Textbook

Secondly, for the activities in the textbook, the above findings could be used to answer the second question of the study, which inquires about the suitability of activities for engineering students. It is concluded for most of students that this book is quite adequate in terms of activities.

4.2 Recommendations

Teachers of ESP should be maintained good training to teach ESP which boosts students learning not only in English Language, but even in their specialty.

Raising students’ awareness about the contents of their studies through English Language, (ESP) motivates them and improves their knowledge and competence in English Language and in their subjects. So, teachers should keep raising the students’ awareness about the benefits of learning English Language in general and ESP in particular.

Careful selection of the ESP materials enhances students’ abilities. Teachers and people in charge should make sure that they bring suitable ESP materials in English class.

ESP teachers should be encouraged to design their own ESP textbooks that cover all the aspects of the language and suits their students’ needs.

For further studies, the researchers are advised to compare and contrast the English for Specific Purpose (ESP) and the General English (GE) textbooks among different universities to see to what extent their outcomes are different.

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The Appendix

General information:

Name _____ age _____ Gender _____

Section _____ Qualification _____ Experience _____

No.	Item	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<i>A Layout and design</i>						
1	The textbook layout and design are suitable, attractive and related to the engineering subjects.					
2	The textbook is well organized and helpful to engineering students.					
3	The textbook is well supported with picture, figures, mind- maps, and other e- learning materials related to the engineering subjects.					
4	The objectives of lessons are clearly stated at the beginning of each lesson in the textbook and they support the engineering subjects.					
5	The textbook has adequate review sections and exercises related to the engineering subjects.					
<i>B Activities</i>						
1	The textbook provides enough communicative, meaningful activities related to the engineering subjects.					
2	The textbook incorporates individual, pair, and group work activities related to the engineering subjects.					
3	The textbook introduces the grammar activities and vocabulary items in motivating and realistic engineering contexts.					
4	The textbook provides a balanced set of activities.					
5	The activities can be modified or supplemented easily to fit different engineering contexts.					

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