

schools for learning. Now that in many countries even an area-based curriculum is being considered in order to re-examine the relationship between schools and their local communities and their specific students, specifying textbooks in terms of the previous variables can open up the possibility of practical undertaking and offer opportunities for new educational resources for new forms of accountability and responsibility, and overcome the existing challenges in learning. Unquestionably, further quantitative and qualitative studies will present more obvious and accurate results.

References

- Aguilar, J. R. (1999). Sources, methods and triangulation in needs analysis: A critical perspective in a case study of Waikiki hotel maids. *English for Specific Purposes*, 18(1), 27-46.
- Atai, M. R. (2002). Iranian EAP programs in practice: A study of key methodological aspects. *Sheikhbahaee ELT Journal*, 1(2), 1-15.
- Atai, M. R., & Mazlum, F. (2013). English language teaching curriculum in Iran: Planning and practice. *The Curriculum Journal*, 24(3), 389-411.
- Basturkmen, H. (2003). Specificity and ESP course design. *RELC Journal*, 34(1), 48-63.
- Belcher, D. D. (2006). English for specific purposes: Teaching to perceived needs and imagined futures in worlds of works, study, and everyday life. *TESOL Quarterly*, 40(1), 134-156.
- Brindley, G.P. (1984) *Needs Analysis and Objective Setting in the Adult Migrant Education Program*. Sydney, Australia: N.S.W. Adult Migrant Education Service.
- Brown, A. (1995). The effect of rater variables in the development of an occupation-specific Language performance test. *Language Testing* 12(2), 1-15.
- Chambers, F. (1986). A re-evaluation of needs analysis in ESP. *English for Specific Purposes Journal*, 1(1), 25-45.
- Child, D. (2004). *Psychology and the Teacher*, 7th edition. Suffolk UK: Continuum.
- Chookhampaeng, C. (2003). *Curriculum Development*. Maha Sarakham: Maha Sarakham University Press.
- Clarke, L., & Winch, C. (2007). *Vocational education. International approaches, Development and Systems*. London: Routledge
- De Bruijn, E. (2012). Teaching in innovative vocational education in the Netherlands. *Teachers and Teaching: Theory and Practice*, 18(6), 637-653.
- Dudley-Evans, T. (1998). *English for specific purposes: A Multi-Disciplinary Approach*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Eslami-Rasekh, A., & Quiroz, B. (2007). Needs analysis of Iranian EAP students. *ESP Across Cultures*, 4, 21-37.
- Flowerdew, L. (2013). *Needs analysis and curriculum development in ESP*. In B. Paltridge, & S. Starfield (Eds.), *The handbook of English for specific purposes* (pp. 325-346). Malden, MA: John Wiley & Sons.
- Flowerdew, J. & Peacock, M. (2001). The EAP curriculum: Issues, methods, and challenges. In J. Flowerdew & M. Peacock (Eds.), *Research perspectives on English for academic purposes* (pp. 177-194). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Goodlad, J. I. & Su, Z. (1992). Organization and the Curriculum. In: Jackson, P.W. (Ed.), *Handbook of Research on Curriculum*. New York: Macmillan, 327-344
- Hamayer, U. (2008). Transforming domain knowledge: a systemic view at the school curriculum, *Curriculum Journal*, 18(4), 411-427.
- Hicks, D. (2004). The Global Dimension on the Curriculum, In: Stephen Ward (Ed) *Education Studies: a student's guide*. New York, USA: Routledge Falmer.
- Hutchinson, T. (1987). What's underneath? An interactive view of materials evaluation. *ELT Textbooks and Materials: Problems in Evaluation and Development*, 37-44.
- Hutchinson, T. & Waters, A. (1992). *English for Specific Purposes: A Learning-centered Approach*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Illeris, K. (2009). *International Perspectives on Competence Development: Developing Skills and Capabilities* (ed.). London/New York: Routledge.
- Jenkins, A. (2000). "The Relationship between Teaching and Research". *Journal of Geography in Higher Education*, 24(3), 325-351.
- Johns, A. M. (1988). The discourse communities' dilemma: Identifying transferable skills for the academic milieu. *English for Specific Purposes*, 7(1), 55-60.
- Jordan, R. R. (1997). *English for academic purposes: A guide and resource book for teachers*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Mulder, M. (2017). Competence Theory and Research: A Synthesis. In Molder (Ed) *Competence-Based Vocational and Professional Education: Bridging the Worlds of Work and Education*, 1071-1106. Singapore: Springer.
- Nunan, D. (1988). *The Learner-Centered Curriculum: A Study in Second Language Teaching*. Cambridge University Press.
- Ornstein, A., C. (1990). *Institutionalized Learning in America*. New Brunswick: Transaction Publications.
- Pishghadam, R., & Saboori, F. (2014). A socio-cultural study of language teacher status. *International Journal of Society, Culture & Language*, 2(1), 63-72.
- Purpura, J. & King, G. J. (2003). Investigating the Foreign Language: Needs of Professional School Students in International Affairs. *Working Papers in TESOL & Applied Linguistics*, 4(1), 1-33.
- Riazi, A., & Mosalanejad, N. (2010). Evaluation of learning objectives in Iranian high school and pre-university English textbooks using Bloom's taxonomy. *The Electronic Journal for English as a Second Language*, 13(4), 1-16.
- Richards, J. C. (2007). *Curriculum development in language teaching*. New York: Longman.
- Robinson, P. (1991). *ESP today: a practitioner's guide*. New York: Prentice Hall.
- Schmitt, N. (2000). *Vocabulary in language teaching*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Tomlinson, B. (2014). Teacher growth through materials development. *The European Journal of Applied Linguistics and TEFL*. (Special Issue), 3(2), 89-106.
- UNESCO (2018). *Taking a whole of government approach to skills development*. UNESCO.
- West, R. (1994). Needs analysis in language teaching. *Language Teaching*, 27(1), 1-10.
- Widdowson, H. G. (1981). English for specific purposes: Criteria for course design. In L. Selinker, E. Tarone & V. Hanzeli (Eds.), *English for academic and technical purposes: Studies in honor of Louis Trimble* (pp. 1-11). Cambridge, MA: Newbury House.
- Wiles, J. (2008). *Leading curriculum development*. New York: Prentice Hall.

of gathering and analyzing the essential information about the 'target language needs of the learners. This paves the way for learning with increased motivation, improves what they learned in specific context and facilitates the learning objectives. Hence, ESP textbooks bridge the gap between students' basic English proficiency and their mainstream programs and offer a holistic English learning program for all students (Dudley-Evans, 1998).

On the other hand, even though Hutchinson and Waters (1987) contend that a valid method to ESP should be in terms of the perception of the process of language learning, Belcher (2006) believes that the two most significant facets of current arguments on ESP are need analysis and authenticity in which the materials or course development can obtain better understanding of specific students' real needs and expectations in order to facilitate the course objectives. This issue is increasingly emphasized by Basturkmen (2003) in that he considers ESP course design more on a "wide-angled" design rather than a "narrow-angled" one in which in "wide-angled" design, the textbook is composed of a larger or comprehensive scope of work, professional, or academic environment. To this end, Johns (1988) pointed on authentic texts and activities in ESP materials which raise students' awareness of common linguistic patterns, so students will become acquainted with tasks which they will come across in the target situations.

Towards Competence-based Education (CBE) in Vocational and Technical Schools

Currently, researchers and policymakers

are increasingly paying heed to the use of CBE in many countries, particularly in vocational schools (Illeris, 2009). Vocational education and vocational schools, developed in collaboration with industry, can facilitate the transition from school to work while providing employers with trained workers. These schools can also enhance a vast range of work-based learning routes for some specific students (UNESCO, 2018); any form of competence is regarded as significant in this approach.

Likewise, De Brujin's research (2012) clarified four key characteristics and guidance facets of this approach; they were 1) powerful learning environments (adaptivity and expansion of tasks), 2) proven teaching methods and experiential ones in a new educational concept (flexible use), 3) professional identity learning (modelling, coaching) and 4) self-regulation (monitoring, guiding, scaffolding). He further added that the instructor's professional identity formation is of crucial importance relating to the background of the contents and the activities involved in the textbooks.

Conclusion

At the heart of the development and selection of English textbooks for students at each level or grade, there needs to be a theory of community and a theory of educational change in relation to that community with special proficiency, levels, talents, interests, wants, needs, objectives, values and future jobs. Although in Iran, students with various proficiency and needs are taught through same English textbooks at one grade, the adapting and adopting these books based on the aforementioned essential facets certainly represents books that increasingly motivate students of vocational/technical

the viewpoints of teachers, and graduates of those schools should be considered and emphasized (e.g. Aguilar, 1999). In addition, “need” is a cover term which encompasses a vast scope of desires, wants and lacks of something (Chambers, 1980).

On the other hand, needs assessment is an essential means of doing research in order to prioritize the needs of students before text developers decide and identify each lesson and its component parts for students of various schools (Jordan, 1997). Furthermore, Brown (1995) holds that needs assessment is a process of collecting data through diverse activities and from various groups of students to identify their special learning needs; this required process can develop and provide the first step of a suitable curriculum for the ESP courses. In the same line, Robinson (1991) maintains that a need analysis through needs assessment can direct and shape what explicitly and precisely learners need to do through the medium of English. Consequently, some researchers regard needs analysis as the heart of the EAP approach (Flowerdew, 2013). Also, he argues that needs assessment should be considered as the foundation and basis of ESP textbooks.

“Need” is a cover term which encompasses a vast scope of desires, wants and lacks of something (Chambers, 1980)

English for Specific Purposes (ESP)

Widdowson (1981) argued that through determining and specifying the language learning needs of specific groups, we can decide and specify what we should include in their textbooks so as to meet their needs and objectives. Therefore, there are some differences between general English and ESP courses based on the “awareness” of the students’ needs. In fact, this awareness will have an impact on the selection and inclusion of the reasonable content of the textbooks (Hutchinson and Waters, 1992).

In the same vein, Jordan (1997) contended the focus of ESP is on the use of language in context instead of mere teaching of grammatical structures or vocabulary. This is what Dudley-Evans (1998) held that makes ESP unique and in demand. Also, Purpura and King (2003) maintained that the needs analysis of ESP should be based on a procedure

Curriculum

A curriculum as the entirety of learner experiences in the education (Wiles, 2008) is composed of a number of components that covers the headings of content, learning experiences, goals and assessment (Child, 2004). And, the diagnosis of the learners' needs and formulation of the objectives are the first essential elements in a curriculum. Furthermore, Goodlad and Su (1992) dealt with the several dimensions of curriculum design, among them are scope, sequence, continuity, articulation, and balance. In their view, in 'scope' dimension, we consider the cognitive learning, affective learning as well as the depth and range of content, and different kinds of instructional experiences involving the students in their learning. Nonetheless, because the selection of such knowledge will influence the development of future knowledge, any issue in this case is highly political (Hamayer, 2008).

Not surprisingly, when the textbook or program should be what it is supposed to be, it should follow the dependent variables; it should be modified with the needs of the students involved in (Chookhampaeng, 2003). Therefore, in producing the course program, the materials developers should consider both the course descriptions and the outputs resulted from the courses based on students' ability, knowledge, and their needs; they should also recognize and understand the rationale for the course in context based on the objectives of the school (Ornstein, 1990). This kind of curriculum create a method and practice of teaching that supports emotive motivation in students and students have the chances to indicate and report on what they are learning and experiencing in the classroom (Jenkins, 2000).

Need Analysis

In any course or program, instructional goals and objectives are the basic components to be developed at the beginning. Obviously, they illuminate the language components for learning during the course (Brown, 1995). In the same line, West (1994) believes needs analysis specifies and elucidates what students should do using the foreign language in the target setting and how they may learn and become proficient in the target language during the instruction. Nowadays, "needs-based philosophy" is becoming the essential part of language instruction especially in the case of ESP and vocationally-oriented program design (Brindley, 1984).

The diagnosis of the learners' needs and formulation of the objectives are the first essential elements in a curriculum

Likewise, some researchers have paid much attention to need analysis in course design and development (e.g., Atai, 2002) but the real challenge in developing textbooks and specific-purpose curricula for different kinds of schools and students with diverse competence finally remains the same (Eslami-Rasekh, & Quiroz, 2007). Schmitt (2000) presumes that this analysis is the starting point in all processes of learning so as to identify the materials and resources. In the same vein, Flowerdew and Peacock (2001) maintain that this kind of analysis "fine tunes the curriculum to the specific needs of the learner" (p.178). Even some scholars hold that not merely the perceptions of students of their needs but the various perceptions of the learners' needs from

Introduction

Textbooks as a basic and vital component within the curriculum facilitate concrete models for learning and fulfill a teacher development role (Nunan, 1988). In Iran, all textbooks are designed and developed by Ministry of Education. Moreover, the same English textbooks are taught in all schools with students of various talents and competence in each grade. On the other hand, Richards (2007) takes for granted the analysis of learners' needs in this regard and argues that "a sound educational program should be based on an analysis of learner needs." (p.51). And, Robinson (1991) regards it as an indispensable criterion which is adopted and validated in English for Specific Purposes (ESP). Arguably, viewing language levels of students, their background knowledge, experiences, enthusiasm and incentive play a significant function in language learning (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987)). In addition, they pointed out that in developing ESP courses, the crucial presupposition is to associate an English course with students' needs so as to enhance their motivation and make learning easier and sooner.

What's more, as an instance of outcome-based program, competence-based curriculum is increasingly improving in vocational schools (Mulder, 2017). This kind of education, which is becoming increasingly dominant in European countries and Australia, involves the amalgamation of knowledge, and skills, as the intended result of learning (Clarke & Winch, 2007). In Vocational programs or technical education, students are prepared to be involved in as a technician or to get a job in a craft or trade (UNESCO, 2018). In Iran, vocational schools at high school level are called Work-Knowledge school,

Technical School, or School of Art.

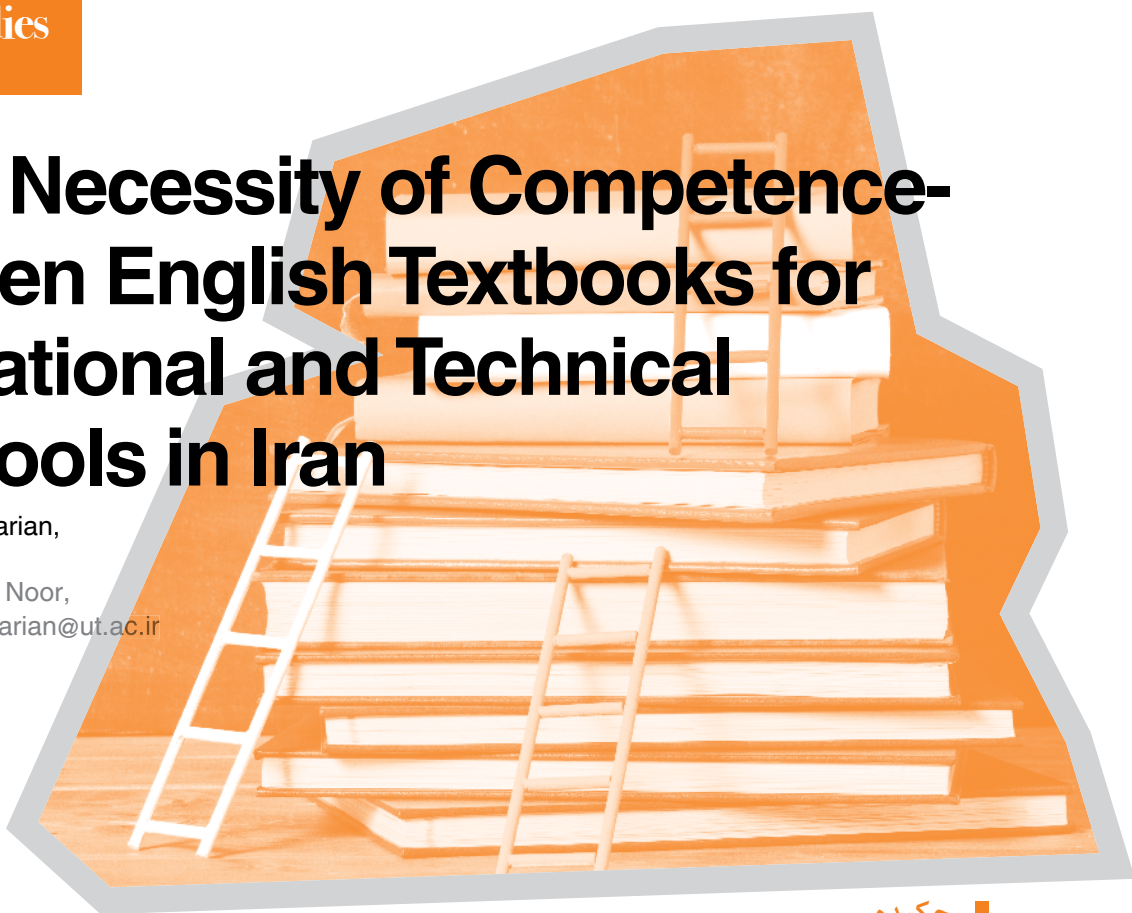
The purpose of this paper is to inspect and clarify the main features of English Textbooks in Vocational schools/ Technical schools in Iran based on competence-based education considering need analysis advantages and to extend our understanding of this form of education in operation. In other words, the author's emphasis is on the specificity of English textbooks for the technical/ vocational curriculum design.

Review of the Related Literature

In Iran, teaching/learning English formally starts from junior high schools to the students aged between 12 and 15 years. The whole system of education (both in non-profit and state schools) and its textbooks are designed and developed within the purview of the Ministry of Education. Moreover, the same English textbooks are provided for the students of all proficiencies whether they are in gifted/ special schools or in vocational/ technical/work-knowledge schools with students of low proficiency. Also, the English textbooks for high school consist of a reading section with a higher priority to scientific texts for these students of varying proficiency, talent and interest (Atai & Mazlum, 2013) and the same parts and components for writing, listening and speaking skills for all schools; that is, the textbooks have a academically-oriented framework in which cognitive development is emphasized. Therefore, students' needs for learning English are not met by these formal curriculum (Pishghadam & Saboori, 2014). More importantly, materials should expedite the learning of a language; they should be adapted and adopted for learning rather than for teaching (Tomlinson, 2014).

The Necessity of Competence-Driven English Textbooks for Vocational and Technical Schools in Iran

Hossein Salarian,
(PhD)TEFL
Education in Noor,
Hossein_salarian@ut.ac.ir



چکیده

بی‌شک، ترکیب و انسجام دانش زبانی با بافت خاص برای دانش‌آموزان خاص از اهمیت ویژه‌ای برای تدوین، انتخاب، توسعه و تولید کتاب‌های انگلیسی برخوردار است. همانند دیگر کتاب‌های درسی، کتاب‌های درسی زبان انگلیسی در مدرسه‌های فنی و هنرستان‌های ایران، به شکل دانشگاهی و با تأکید بر توسعه شناختی نوشته شده‌اند و به نیازها، توانمندی، علاقه‌مندی و پیشینه توانش زبانی دانش‌آموزان این مدرسه‌ها توجه کمتری دارند. این مقاله به‌طور مختصر به اسلوب، بخش‌ها و مؤلفه‌های دربرگیرنده کتاب‌های زبان هنرستان‌ها و دیگر دبیرستان‌ها می‌پردازد و بر ضرورت تهیه و تدوین کتاب درسی زبان براساس سطوح زبانی، توانش، نیازها و اهداف هنرستان فنی و حرفه‌ای و کار دانش تأکید می‌کند. اگر کتب زبان انگلیسی با توجه به فاکتورهای مواد درسی و دانش‌آموزان به خوبی تدوین و توسعه یابند، آن‌گاه دوره‌های درسی هنرستان، اساس خوبی برای یادگیری و آموزش زبان ارائه می‌دهند. این تحقیق برای بهبود این دوره‌های خاص یادگیری زبان، با در نظر گرفتن نیازهای دانش‌آموزان، توصیه‌ها و پیشنهادهایی ارائه کرده است.

کلیدواژه‌ها: برنامه درسی توانش‌محور، تحلیل نیاز، مدارس فنی و حرفه‌ای

Abstract

Undoubtedly, the close integration of language and the particular context for specific students is of prime importance for adapting and adopting English textbooks. Like other high school English textbooks, The existing textbooks for vocational and technical schools in Iran are academically-oriented with more emphasis on cognitive development and less consideration of students' needs, abilities, interests, potentials and developmental history. This paper briefly scrutinizes the framework and components of the existing English textbooks in high schools and vocational/ technical schools at the same level or grade and emphasizes the necessity of developing and producing English textbooks in terms of students' language levels, competence, needs, and the objectives of the program in these schools. If English textbooks are designed and developed well regarding materials and learners' factors, then vocational / technical curriculum will provide a good basis for learning and teaching. The study has recommendations and implications for improvement of ESP courses considering these students' needs.

Keywords: competence-driven curriculum, need analysis, vocational and technical schools.