

CRITICAL ANALYSIS AND EVALUATION OF ESP TEXTBOOKS: CHARTING PHYSICAL FEATURES AND AUTHORSHIP A CASE STUDY IN IRAN

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ABSTRACT

This piece of research is an attempt to analyse and evaluate the textbooks of English language for special purposes (ESP) published by the Iranian organization for researching and composing university textbooks in the humanities (SAMT). The analysis and evaluation is based on the textbooks physical features and their authors accounts. The aim the research is bound at is to check some randomly selected ESP textbooks to find out the merits and demerits of the books in the one hand and on the other hand to dig out the ways and means through which these books are designed and developed by professional authors to meet the especial needs of the ESP users in the Iranian academic context. Through the research, a short review of ESP history, its status in Iran and its dynamic developments through different periods of time to meet the learner's needs are sought in a survey method. The theoretical framework of the research is shaped by the hypothesis that evaluating the textbooks from different perspectives including their production macro and micro plans and authorship will hopefully open the way for a more secure and safer maturity. With this in mind the researchers examined some 75 of these textbooks in four major disciplines both externally and internally. The randomly selected ESP textbooks published by the SAMT organization since its start in 1987 up to the present day were checked for their physical features, content components and authors. Results gained reveal that serious need of revision on the part of skills and delivery format are urgent. In terms of the authors the research findings indicate that the trend is on the right track and support team authorship as a maxim well observed by the SAMT.

Keywords: *ESP, ESP Textbooks Analysis and Evaluation, ESP Authors, SAMT ESP, English Language*

INTRODUCTION

Parallel to the development of science and technology in different and vast branches, the need for a specified communicative means emerged and soon changed to be a must in various domains. English language as the most prevalent inter-cultural language initiated in the stages of international science and technology, arts, business, tourism and other areas of control, and as a result teaching English for especial purposes (ESP) gained more and more ground and forced itself to be on the focus of research and curriculum planners for different fields. In our country (Iran) as a developing country, English has been the main foreign language in the educational system over the past century and its teaching tried to keep pace with the global developments in the pedagogy. Since its introduction and adaptation, ESP as a major sub-set of ELT was also undergoing its evolution and with a bit fluctuation in some senses has continued to be considered as the need of time along with the mainstream of English as a foreign language education. The learning objectives of ESP in the world and in our country is almost the same and already quite clear, it is a targeted, highly practical way of teaching of English language to meet different professional needs (Fadavi and Ershadi, 2014). On the part of its emergence, and following the scientific eruption specially after WWII, linguists and researchers felt that general English (GE) as a means to express their professional mind or even to address their expert audience sounded insufficient and having a more brushed up and to the point language seemed to be inevitable in most sophisticated scientific fields. This assumption and many others on the emergence of ESP however, as Hutchinson and Waters (1987) put it was not reached on the basis of a preplanned research, but in terms of ESP means and materials including its textbooks and authorship for which the present research is bound for, the case is quite

Research Article

different. As a universal element of teaching in Hutchinson and Torres (1994) words textbooks in the one hand are usually preplanned and pre-decided materials to catch up with a specific subject domain, and on the other hand they can take the role for motivating and arising the interest of the learners through providing proper content and situation provided that their cut up into component pieces and rearrangements suit the learners needs, abilities and interest (Graves, 1996). Textbooks are road maps to guide the learners to arrive at a specific destination. The least to these road maps is that they can keep the travelers in the right direction and track. They are usually well-controlled, well laid-out within a limited subject borders with implicit specific target at heart. They are also supposed to cater and address the immediate needs of the learners to prepare them for going from A to B (Basturkmen, 2006). The authors in action are the engineers to plan and build up these maps in the hope that they will conduct their users where they aim for. They guide the readers through their mentality and content distribution. These all make them apt to be checked from different perspectives, to examine them for their merits and demerits and to inspect them closely to gain enough insights to judge if they are providing the right way and means to avoid any possible pitfalls in the first go and look for better new ways by examining their parts and parcels.

Through the present research it was the main idea to find out possible common features of the in-house ESP textbooks and their explicit and implicit orientation sketched by the authors in a specific field of ELT pedagogy. It is a consensus now that textbook by itself is a universal element with its indisputable role in any language pedagogy, but this universality cannot guarantee to follow universal principles in detail because the components of textbooks are put together by authors with specific mentality, local considerations, aims and strategies that can affect its entire entity and efficacy. To be able to develop a language textbook for a specific field of study through written or verbal technical text, a single author of ESP material should be a jack of at least two trades; a language teacher with the linguistic knowledge and a subject content informed person with adequate information about the content to select or develop authentic course materials. The rarity of such a collective mastery however opens the way for sharing authorship which is a blessing disguise indeed. TEFLs bring their linguistic knowledge and experiences to frame and form what the subject specialists bring up to match the learners' both linguistic needs and subject field. This being the current research common notion paved the way to seek for and find the relevant answers to the research questions posed in the study. In search for the answers the researchers hypothesized that there might be hints in such means as textbooks macro-micro plans and their authorship which can be exploited for the betterment of the current ESP pedagogy if and indeed they are analyzed and evaluated systematically. To come up with a handful understanding, a brief look at the what and why of ESP textbooks seems noteworthy.

Review of Literature

ESP Textbook

A dynamic educational program naturally needs different components brought together systematically with a healthy heart or central driving means to continue its life and growth. This central organ of teaching and learning is usually thought to be the textbook. A textbook is taken by Sheldon (1988) to be the visible heart of an ESP program in that it provides the fuel for the teaching and learning engine. Beside this, ELT world has always been accompanied by written sources and it has got along well enough with ESP textbooks now for many years as well. According to Swales (1980) there have been serious ESP textbooks since the publication of Herbert's "the structure of scientific English" in 1965. He elsewhere (1988) argues that Herbert's book was the first real ESP textbook with a precise aim and clear title to spot the starting point for formal emergence of ESP textbook in the pedagogy.

Robinson (1983) however, traces ESP textbook history back to the 1960s, by listing Kelly (1962) Hackin (1964), Herbert (1965), and Ewer and Lotorre (1969) as the frontiers in the field who all set the base stone for coming generation of ESP textbooks. In a timeline study Swales (1988) studied the road and direction taken by ESP textbooks from the beginning to up until 1981 within fifteen episodes to shed light on the major developments of ESP text book on its way of evolution. What is the common spirit in the discipline and its integrated components is that the whole trend was certainly stemmed from the needs felt in the

Research Article

fields of studies, in addition to this driving force there are, however some specific factors which have had their effective share in the way of ESP textbooks recognition and identification.

What is the Origin of ESP Textbook and Where does it Come From?

When you are bound to teach a specific subject matter you have to refer to and provide a specific relevant source in your teaching field. The specificity of teaching English for special purposes naturally forces its specific means and materials too. The origin for ESP textbook is then the needs to learn specific variety of English language which in turn necessitated the search for preparing specific and more narrowed down materials. This seems to have begun parallel to the emergence of ESP itself back in the 1960s (West, 1994). Having felt this need perhaps, Barber (1962), Bates and Dudley–Evans (1964), among others were encouraged to stand and line up to be the first who initiated and developed their books to meet the needs for scientific and technical reading text and learning materials in the early days of the ESP pedagogy.

Despite Hutchinson and Waters (1992) hypothesis that the origins of ESP is not a preplanned and coherent movement, this on the part of ESP textbooks development seems to be in sharp contrast with their view in that ESP textbooks tend to be the production of a precise and pre-set planning. It is in fact a phenomenon that grew out of a number of converging trends in a specific field to address and deal with specific needs.

These dynamic trends however, still continue as a new field of science and technology shows up and join to the train of man's steady progress towards new horizons.

Whatever the origin of a textbook may be, the mission embedded through it stems from the need to meet something specific of the language. To what extent this mission is achieved depends on the specificity and accountability of the textbook used and its right place and role in the program.

The Role of ESP Text Books

Flowerdew and Miller (2005) believe that textbooks are supposed to hold and present established bodies of knowledge to the community of learners to cater their needs in a specific field. The importance of textbooks as the visible hearts of ELT programs (Sheldon, 1988) and their undeniable roles in the educational systems and classroom instruction however do not only arise from the knowledge they carry, rather the way they mold and deliver the knowledge is also an essential factor which adds up to their importance that does not need any further supportive evidence. Nevertheless recalling some major roles textbooks play in the process of learning and teaching seems worthy.

According to Cunningsworth (1995) textbooks can play various roles such as:

1. Presenting a pre-set skill training in a well-framed format for a specific time and target.
2. Providing the learners with staged activities for practice and communicative interaction to enforce and fix learning in a specific concise way.
3. Providing the learners and teachers with different parts of speech to be taught and practiced.
4. Being a source of inspiration, stimulation and ideas for both learners and teachers, encourage them to engage in and out of the classroom language activities.
5. They can act as a guide for a novice teacher reflecting the predetermined learning objectives.
6. They can be used as a self-learning or self-access source for preparation in advance, compensation of missed sessions or follow up for learners.
7. A support for less experienced teachers to manage her/his class and keep it in the right track. In addition to the roles Cunningsworth envisioned, Richards (2001) pinpointed some other functions of the textbook for users. He stated that textbooks may provide a major source of contact with the language apart from inputs provided by the teachers. In his idea textbooks for inexperienced teachers, might serve as a form of teacher training program. They can provide ideas on how to plan and teach lessons as well as the formats and tasks that teachers can use. In the same line Hutchinson and Torres (1994) confirm that textbooks have a vital and positive role to play in the teaching and learning overall process. They can be the first tool for a teacher to manage a class and keep it on the right direction by observing its structure and sequencing indeed.

A final role of textbooks worth to mention here is what O'Neil (1982) calls as the typical apt to all textbooks in that they can predict the learning process of the learners.

Research Article

To sum up, for most teachers, textbooks provide the foundation for the content of lessons, the balance of the skills taught, as well as the kinds of language practice the students engage in during the class activities. In fact as Riazi (2003) argues, textbooks shape the content and nature of teaching and learning. Educators as well as learners spend a great deal of their preparation, class and time working with textbook materials because they are the primary sources that instructors and educators use throughout the world to guide them in teaching.

ESP Textbook Development in Iran

Textbooks publication in Iran like in any other part of the world is a narrow business for which publishers do not usually show much interest. The limited circle of textbooks clients has confined its publication in the academic or public domain around the world. This common status is seen in Iran as well. Although some academic centers and universities like PNU and SVU feeling the need initiated to provide their publications in ESP, but the main responsibility for catering ESP textbooks in Iran is with the organization for researching and composing university textbooks in the humanities (SAMT).

The instructional materials development for English courses in Iran started its local life at the universities where new ideas and findings flew in mostly English language medium. Historically speaking the first formal step to the extent of the present research gathering, towards preparing an ESP text book was taken in 1973 by a joint group of Iranian and English experts who developed a textbook for medical students in 1974 at university of Tehran. The same experience however was reported from Tabriz University where Bates and Dudley–Evans (1976) developed one of the most important ESP textbook as Swales (1988) stated in his “episodes in ESP”. The first full Iranian authored ESP textbook, however was developed by a group of university teachers (Birjandi, Moghareh, Nourouzi, and Mahmoudi) in as early as 1976 under the title of “English for especial purpose (ESP) for the students of humanities; literature and art as its sub-entry). Despite the long time distance, comparing some old and newly developed ESP textbooks reveals that the general format of the books except for the texts which are usually taken from original materials with some adaptations and modifications, the presentation of materials and content layout in most cases is quite traditional. Each book often includes several lessons (ranging from 16 to 20), and each lesson includes a couple of patched up passages followed by some grammar exercises, comprehension questions, words list, and translation into Persian language (Farhadi and Hedayati, 2009), with little or no room for speaking and listening.

SAMT and ESP Textbook Publication in Iran

A review of the literature for ESP textbook development in Iran indicates that it has had rather a slow move before the Islamic revolution in 1979. Regardless to some stagnation after the revolution, there was and still is a common agreement and acknowledgement on the importance of ELT as a major foreign language which is taught in secondary and tertiary level. The need to English language teaching and learning in the Iranian education system continues its demand up to the universities and changes its face gradually from GE to ESP. To address this ever-growing need Ministry of Science, Research and Technology (MSRT) initiated to establish a centre with specific mission of providing specialized course books among them ESP textbooks for university students.

According to Farhadi *et al.*, (2010) established in 1981, the responsibility of the SAMT is to prepare the instructional materials for the Iranian universities. One section of the organization is assigned to develop English textbooks for non-English majors. There is almost one specific textbook for every major in the university. The content of these books are closer to the original materials that students will face in studying the original materials in their major fields of study.

As to the organization publication list report (2015: c) SAMT began its formal work in Feb-March 1983 under the bill of the Higher Council of Cultural Revolution (HCCR). The organization started its research activities in the second half of the year 1984. Since then the organization has prepared and published more than 200 books and text books in English language teaching and learning most of them allegedly changed to be the only technical course materials for different disciplines in the country. The majority of these books have been authored by the outstanding experts of the country in the field of English language and literature.

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Statistically speaking the collection of English language materials published by the SAMT comprises of 228 English books and textbooks out of which 28 are about ELT, 16 books on English language and literature, 17 books on English language translation, 70 ESP textbooks on human sciences, 60 ESP textbooks on basic science and engineering, 32 ESP textbooks on medical science, and 8 ESP textbooks on arts, (ibid: 186-204). The department in this period was directed by five university faculties starting with the late Miss Saffarzade whose long term of management lasted for the first 12 years after the department establishment in 1983. The department is currently under the management of M.R. Atai a prolific researcher in ELT/ESP.

In spite of this rather huge development in quantity, ESP textbooks in Iran are still the demand of the time for two main reasons; firstly the available textbooks do not seem to meet the user's needs and expectation (Solaimany and Shafie, 2014), and secondly the world of science and technology is a world of steady progress with new findings and inventions to learn. To keep pace with the new present day scientific and technological rapid developments old textbooks should be revised and updated or even replaced by the new ones.

Revision or replacement of course books ask for evaluating and evaluation must be based on the reality indeed. The need for English now as the dominant language of science and technology world is by no means the same as it was 30 years ago. The cyber world today has changed many approaches and opened up new horizons among them in its dominant English language learning and teaching. We can remember well that the first pages of www in the Iranian universities as in the world were and still are, in most cases, accessible only in English. The advances of digital facilities, databases, internet and social nets (Orkut, Facebook, Tweeter, etc.) and direct communication tools (Viber, Wchat, Skype, etc.) penetrating into the private corner of experts and scholars life have once more revived and made the demand for learning English language in a narrower format like ESP inevitable. The facility of direct spoken or written forms internet and other communication media provided and brought the scholars closer together from all over the world, was a blessing disguise which pinched and forced them at least in the early steps, to be equipped with the old known new form of the language. A variety of language which is more specific and much familiar to a more special or professional community is the central demand of all these new and possible coming domains. To cope with this increasing demand and take any safe and secure step towards future language learning we need to analyze and evaluate the present status of the program parts and parcels among them textbooks. A compendious hint about the process of analysis and evaluation, their roles and requirements here seems helpful for further clarification of the current study aim.

What is meant by Analysis?

The processes of assessment and evaluation in institutional research as stated by Secolsky and Denison (2004) began at the end of World War II and are now staples in strategic planning for higher education. Analysis and evaluation are two separate terms with interwoven common points having different aims and approaches. In other words, they may seem similar in the process, but are very different in methods and targets.

With all this, the two terms may be confused in their loose use and meaning. To avoid this, a short comparison between the two terms seems necessary.

Merriam-Webster defines the term as “careful study of something to learn about its parts, what they do, and how they are related to each other (www.merriam-webster.com/2014). While analysis engages in the detailed examination of the constituent elements or structure of something (a book) through the process of separating and disassembling it into its parts ([oxford.dictionaries.com 2014](http://oxford.dictionaries.com/2014)), evaluation set its focus on the making a judgment about the amount, number, or value of something.

Measurement of strengths and weaknesses of given programs or its components like textbooks, teaching methods, worth, effectiveness and value are all gauged and catered through the process of evaluation. Analysis then can provide basis and criteria for evaluation and in such a case it seems to precede evaluation and acts as prerequisite for it.

Research Article

What is meant by Evaluation?

Evaluation by its simple meaning denotes to weighing something with a clear purpose in mind, but when you aim to dig out its hidden and deep layers in detail you most probably will face a very serious and challenging situation in which some factors among them the criterion through which you want to make up your judgment and base your plan on it to make up your judge and set the way into future, shows up. In Genesee's (2005) word accountability in such a process is one of the most pinching problem and a determining pivot. Definition of the term and procedure by some researchers may make it clearer.

Tomlinson (2003) defines evaluation as a procedure that involves measuring the value or potential value of a set of learning materials. In terms of textbooks it involves making judgments about the effect of the materials on the people using them and it tries to measure some specific aspects for which he suggested a long list. So drawing on from Tomlinson, an evaluation may focus on some aspects of the materials to make judgments about their effects, pitfalls, flaws and deficiencies. To borrow from Kiely (2009) it is the way of searching for the secret of effectiveness. Thus a successful evaluation will determine the match between intended outcomes and actual outcomes. To clear the differences between analysis and evaluation we may conclude that the former denotes to the recognition of the parts and parcels, while the latter refers to assessing the practical functions of the parts of something or its entire entity working and worth.

Why do we need Evaluation?

To go where you aim, you need to know where you are. To decide on and take the safest road into the future you should be aware of the past and present pitfalls, merits and demerits of the roads taken. Evaluation as such, helps us to achieve this prerequisite step in the process of maturation. It is a commonly agreed fact that taking any firm step towards future requires inspecting the past and present situation translated into analysis and evaluation. Different researchers have inspected the necessity of evaluation in teaching and learning context from various perspectives. Evaluation in Taba's word (1962) serves to check among other things the hypothesis on which a textbook is based, to uncover the effects to see if it serves its central purposes well. Kiely and Rea-Dinkins (2009) believe that it is used to identify factors inhibiting the effective performance or to determine the worth of a program and its components or, to produce findings that would influence what program and policymakers decided to do next, as Weiss (1988) puts in.

Thus the necessity of analysis and evaluation is the necessity of being aware of the present situation of something and preparing the requirements for the future steps. The more detailed the analysis and evaluation; the more precise result and judgment is expected. Evaluation in this regard seems to be an integrated part of an educational program. Weiss (1988) argues that evaluation provides us with the findings about program processes and program outcomes. Kiely and Rea-Dinkins (2009) take evaluation as a required activity at all levels of university contexts including its means and materials. McDonough and Shaw (2003) believe that evaluation is a regular activity that we do in our professional lives. Without carrying evaluation it is a blind leap which may end in a loop in which both the teacher and learners are entrapped and the way out of which sustain heavy pedagogical damages with hardship in recovery and repair. They (ibid:60) believe that another important factor which necessitate evaluation is that due to the professional and financial pressure in deciding on a textbook which is going to be used as the textbook for years and usually in extended national domain, they should be weighed and decided on as the core of a particular program. Byrd (2001) taking it as a selective means of textbooks divides the activity of evaluation into two separate kinds as; evaluation for selection and evaluation for implementation; both of these can be illustrative for any future change, revision and reform.

On the part of how to evaluate a textbook, there may be many different approaches and suggestions. First and for most, it depends on the purpose you evaluate the book for. Williams (1983) argues that textbooks should be used judiciously, since it cannot cater equally to the requirements of every classroom setting for all times.

Thus any part or components of a textbook can be a target for evaluation in as many ways as the number of the evaluators and their intentions for which there is or should be an accountable framework.

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Frameworks for Textbook Evaluation

Different aims for evaluation has lead to development of different frameworks mostly to seek and arrive at the desired results. As it was mentioned before there might be several criteria and frameworks to analyze and evaluate a work.

The quantity and quality of these criteria and frameworks are determined by the nature and target of the processes.

To decide on any proper model for ESP means and materials analysis and evaluation including its textbooks rests in the first place on its aims indeed.

In fact the first question in the process is to define the analysis and evaluation purpose and then accordingly choose the right perspective for inspection. Scholars' investigation into the question has resulted in piles of models and frameworks. Some well known models in the field examining various perspective of a textbook are that of Nunan (1991), Tomlinson (1998), Sheldon (1988), Rea-Dickins and Germaine (1992), Cunningsworth (1995), Ellis (1997), McDonough and Shaw (2003), Robinson (1991), and so many others.

Ellis (1997) distinguishes two types of materials evaluation both of which is selective in nature: a predictive evaluation which is usually designed to make a decision regarding what materials to use and a retrospective evaluation designed mostly to examine materials after they have actually been used through a course.

So here we can suggest an evaluation for specific purpose instead of using a more general term as evaluation. Our evaluation for specific purpose here falls roughly into the second type of Ellis' classification with a framework ascended from different models and narrowed down to cover the local or in-house materials features and to meet the purpose of the research i.e. textbooks physical features and their authorships.

How to Evaluate ESP Textbooks

The philosophy of evaluation rests behind the inevitable change of needs in the way of language learning and teaching developments in the one hand and the speed of progress in educational technology, mass media, and telecommunication facilities on the other hand.

Hence seeking for quality assurance, accountability and effectiveness of a textbook makes up the main rationale for its evaluation procedure which needs a well designed and appropriate framework in the first go. Such a qualified framework for textbook evaluation can be designed and used for:

- 1- Revising and reviewing the tasks and texts to catch up with the present changes, needs and requirements.
- 2- Identifying and locating the weak and strong points to pave the way to look before an inevitable leaping into future.

Analysis and evaluation of materials can be carried out from different perspectives on the basis of various models and methods suggested by the experts in the field and/or with a personal framework for specific purpose, or on the basis of the learners and teachers pre-found needs, or on the basis of a combination of all of these (Trochim, 2006).

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research Method and Instrumentation

Methodology

The research methodology used in this piece of study is a qualitative survey method gathering its required data by selecting and analyzing a number of the moderately large corpus of the SAMT ESP publications through some systematic criteria and steps.

Procedures

The researchers began the study by randomly selecting 75 books out of the ESP textbook corpus SAMT has published to the date in four different scientific broad branches i.e: human sciences, basic and engineering, medicine, and arts each of them with some sub-categories indeed.

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The main criteria to select the text books were their frequencies in impression, their field of subject, and their author status in developing such a textbook. The next step was to analyze and spot the main parts and tasks brought in each book to cover the four skills in English language teaching and learning. The rendered results of each book components then were checked against one another to deduce the common and different shared points in both presenting and dealing with the skills and tasks through the units or lessons.

A further step was taken to analyze and compare the books externally and internally. The final analysis was carried out by putting the authorship of the text books under investigation. This included locating the most prolific ESP writers, their professional identity and academic position. A further inspection across the four categorical textbooks was also conducted to reveal the most frequently reprinted books in each group and inter-groups.

The results gained from the process of the analysis were then used to evaluate the textbooks as a pre-set target for the research.

Instruments

The instruments used in the process of the current research data collection are as following:

- 1- A production data-based textbooks evaluation checklist encompassing the books physical features and authors' record.
- 2- The booklets of the SAMT publication list.
- 3- ESP textbooks (n=75) published by the SAMT

Research Questions

The research attempted to examine and find answer for the following research questions. 1) Have the ESP text books published by the SAMT a straightforward (macro-micro planning) basis; what are those considerations and possible constraints on the basis of standard norms? 2) What is the professional and practical status of the ESP textbooks authorship published by the SAMT? Are they qualified for such activities?

Hypothesis

The vast diversity of the textbooks published by the SAMT with different writers makes it difficult to decide if they are all developed on the basis of a firm and unique criterion or template. To analyze and disassemble some of these books may hypothetically yield in their production and authorship clear status.

Data Analysis

Macro - Micro-Layout and Design of the SAMT ESP Textbooks

Textbooks are a collection of unified subject-based texts brought together to fulfill a specific learning target within limited extent and time. To be so they require well-thought clear structure and smart content layout. These can be pinned down under Macro and micro layout and blue print of the textbooks. By the layout and design of a textbook, the research refers to its organization and presentation of language items and activities.

Evaluating macro or physical layout may help to spot the lacks and deficiencies hindering to meet the assigned mission for the textbooks partially. While in the macro level it focuses on digging out more structural features, the results of micro layout analysis could demonstrate the content and task distribution and appropriateness. In this term the results of the analysis revealed that, aside from a few shortcomings, structure and content framework for most of the SAMT books is almost the same with minor differences in the ways of content distribution and delivery. However, much difference on the amount of pages ranging from 88 to 560 pages is an obvious characteristic of the books. In these textbooks, the learning objectives are implicitly clear and a detailed overview of the topics, functions, structures/grammar, and skills within each unit can be found throughout each lesson. SAMT ESP course books components as expected are clearly organized around specific topics in the relevant field, while being conservative, special considerations such as cultural, ideological and socio-political issues are tightly observed. A sample table of the data sheet covering the SAMT ESP textbooks macro and micro layout and physical features is given below.

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Table 1: Sample Checklist of ESP Textbooks Macro-Micro Layout and Components

Title: English for the students of engineering										Total impression: 29					
By: Biddmehry, Fallahi Moghimi, Haghani, Maftoon										Total Units/credits: 16 / 2- BA					
No	Author/s		Sources		Publication History		Physical Features		Skills			Teachers book			
1	TEFLs *	SS*	TEF/SS	books	Jors	1st pub	Last pub	Total pages	Total units	Re	Sp	Wr	Li	yes	No
	+	+-	+-	+	+	1987	2014	252	15	+	-	+	-	-	+

*TEFL= teachers of English as a foreign language. *SS= subject specialist

Before setting to discuss the table, it should be mentioned that due to the space saving necessity and observing brevity, the research could not attach the entire table and its content here. Nevertheless it is endeavoured to choose a mode of all the 75 analyzed books to bring it here hoping that they represent the majority of the layouts. On the first eye contact with the outside of the SAMT ESP textbooks you will face an almost spiritless unattractive pale cover page with a badge of the organization in its up center or right part signaling that there are some special beams stringed in a specific field of study. Referring to the inside and individual unit components of the textbooks reveals that the breakdown and sequencing in most cases is demonstrative of the approach known as PPP (Presentation, Practice, and no more than a little Production). The books are mostly organized as following: 1. As the opening part of each lesson, a warm up reading task (either vocabularies or text) is the common token of the books which usually introduces the unit topic and prepares learners for more difficult reading challenges later on by activating their schemata of content, grammar, and vocabulary. 2. A second reading task follows to provide a more space for reading practice. 3. Sometimes a short, functional dialogue complete with an attached vocabulary box designed for the students to engage in matching and controlled reading practice alone. 4. There is almost no chance for practicing listening and speaking with little or no digital supplement such as podcasts or CD.

As we have already mentioned since its start the SAMT has published 170 ESP textbooks in four disciplines. In the analysis of the textbooks published by the SAMT the 75 books chosen randomly from the four main category i.e.” human science, basic science and engineering, medical science and arts” were dealt with their general content features and their authorship details. The cumulative data for this including categorical quantity, authorship, paging budget and frequency of impression- is brought in table 2 below.

Table 2: SAMT Categorical ESP Publications

No	Disciplinary Category	Total Books	Single Author	Team Author	Mm/Max pages	Pages mean	Max impression	Mean of impression
1	ESP for human Science	70	41	29 2=19 3= 8 4=2,5=1	88-544	x =220.30	23	x =8. 02
2	ESP for Basic S &Engineering	60	31	29 2=15 3= 10 4=5	144-560	x =237.39	29	x =7. 60
3	ESP for Medical Science	32	5	26 2=15 3= 6 4=4,5=1	128-520	x =232.43	26	x =5. 46
4	ESP for Arts	8	4	4 2=4	136-348	x =211.5	15	x =7.75
	Sum			Max Auth=5 Mm Auth=2		Mean of means for Pages x =225.40		Mean of means for Impressions x =7.32
	170							

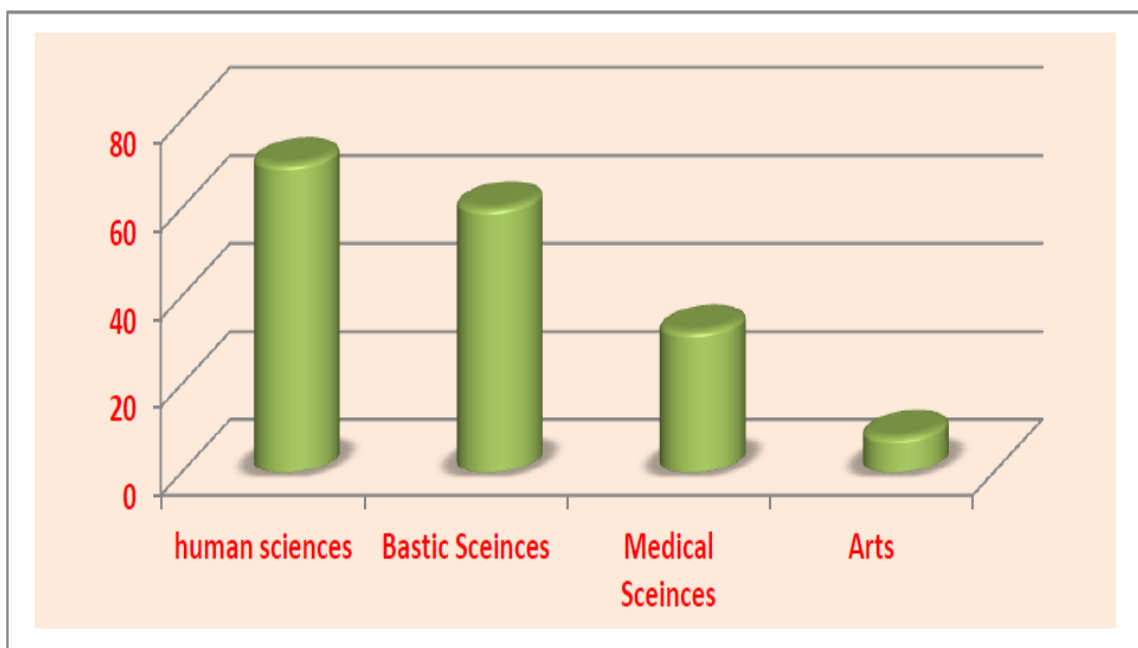
Research Article

As illustrated in the table above, Human science branch has the largest portion of all ESP publications of the SAMT in different scientific fields. SAMT has already published some 70 textbooks in different sub sets of this branch.

The most frequently reprinted book in this branch is the book: English for the students of social sciences (I) hitting its 23rd impression in 2014. The book was first published in 1987. The second rank in this category is taken by the textbook: English for the students of humanities (I) with 22 times of impression published for its first in 1988.

The latest in the category is; English for the students of educational planning and curriculum by Kusha published in 2014. To provide a vivid picture of the SAMT publications status in diverse disciplines, the collected data was put on the diagram below.

SAMT Categorical ESP Textbooks Publication Diagram



ESP for HS=70 ESP for B&E S=60 ESP for Md S= 32 ESP for Arts=8 Total=170

SAMT Categorical ESP Textbooks Impression

Impression is perhaps a good indication of demand and demands in turn may refer to success in the market of press clients.

This being partially a business fact has encouraged the researchers to examine the quantity and frequency of the SAMT ESP text books impression to weight their possible success. It is interesting to note that there is not a systematic observation and spotting needs for a textbook impression in the organization and this is confined in the request of the distributing agents who order the central office to provide them with new copies of a book claimed to be at demand.

Nevertheless there are some glimpses of hope that not all these impressions are based only on the mere business facts, but there might be some which are the real needs of the target population at university contexts.

This being the ideal reason for the impression quantity, the frequency of 5 top reprinted ESP textbooks in each category was investigated closely and the result of the data analysis is tabled and illustrated through diagram.

Noteworthy to mention is that in order to be brief, the researchers reduced the scope of dealing with impression frequency to only five top reprinted ESP textbooks in each group for their data analysis. The results of the survey investigation are collected and illustrated through the following tables.

Research Article

Table 3: Five Top Frequently Reprinted ESP textbooks in Basic science and engineering

The Textbooks	First print	Last print	Impression frequency	Author/s
ESP for the students of Engineering	1987	2014	29	SS+TEFL
ESP for the students of Agriculture (I)	1988	2014	22	SS+TEFL
ESP for the students of Basic science	1987	2013	21	SS+TEFL
ESP for the students of civil Engineering	1988	2014	18	SS
ESP for the students of industrial Engineering(III)	1995	2011	15	SS

In the field of Basic science and engineering SAMT has so far published 60 ESP textbooks. Out of these textbooks the book: English for the students of engineering” experienced its 29th impression in 2014 with the first publication being in 1987 that makes it the oldest in the group as well. This book holds the first rank among all the textbooks published by the SAMT in terms of frequent impression too. The second rank in this category is taken by the book: English for the students of agriculture (I). It is already reprinted for 22 times. It was first published in 1988. The latest book in this category was released in 2010 titling; “English for the students of electrical engineering: telecommunication.

On the part of the medical science SAMT has published a total of 32 textbooks in the field with the text book: English for the students of medicine (I) reprinted for 26 times in 2014. The book first published in 1988 stands on the second row in the inter-disciplinary classification. In the medical science the first textbook published by the SAMT was in 1988. The newest textbook in this category is; English for the students of laboratory published in 2012.

Table 4: Five Top Frequently Reprinted ESP Textbooks in Medical Science

The textbooks	First print	Last print	Impression frequency	Author/s
ESP for the students of Medicine (I)	1988	2014	26	SS+TEFL
ESP for the students of Medicine (II)	1992	2014	15	SS+TEFL
ESP for the students of Nursing	2000	2014	14	SS+TEFL
ESP for the students of Dentistry	1992	2014	11	SS+TEFL
ESP for the students of Pharmacy	1996	2014	10	SS+TEFL

Human science comes in the third row in terms of its textbooks impression frequency. Among the books in this category the book: English for the students of Social science (I) hit 23rd impression in 2014 with the first publication being in 1987. This book marks as the oldest in the category as well and stands in third step among all the textbooks published by the SAMT in terms of frequent impression too. The second rank in this category which is also shared by a book in the basic science is taken by the book: English for the students of Humanities (I). It is already reprinted for 22 times. Its first print was in 1988. The oldest book in the human sciences was also the first one in the category.

Research Article

Table 5: Five Top Frequently Reprinted ESP Textbooks in Humanities

The textbooks	First print	Last print	Impression frequency	Author/s
ESP for the students of Social science (I)	1987	2014	23	TEFL
ESP for the students of Humanities (I)	1988	2014	22	TEFLs
ESP for the students of Humanities (I I)	1989	2013	19	SS+TEFL
English for the students of Accounting (I)	1997	2014	18	SS+TEFL
ESP for the students of education	1995	2014	16	TEFL

On the part of art, SAMT has so far published 8 textbooks with the book: English for the students of visual arts, reprinted 14 times, it was first published in 1996. The oldest in the field, however are two books; English for the students of media arts I and II covering cinema, TV, and photography. The former was reprinted for its 8th edition in 2012. The latest one in the field is; English for the students of handicrafts published in 2006. This book was reprinted for the second time in 2013.

Table 6: Five Top Frequently Reprinted ESP Textbooks in Arts

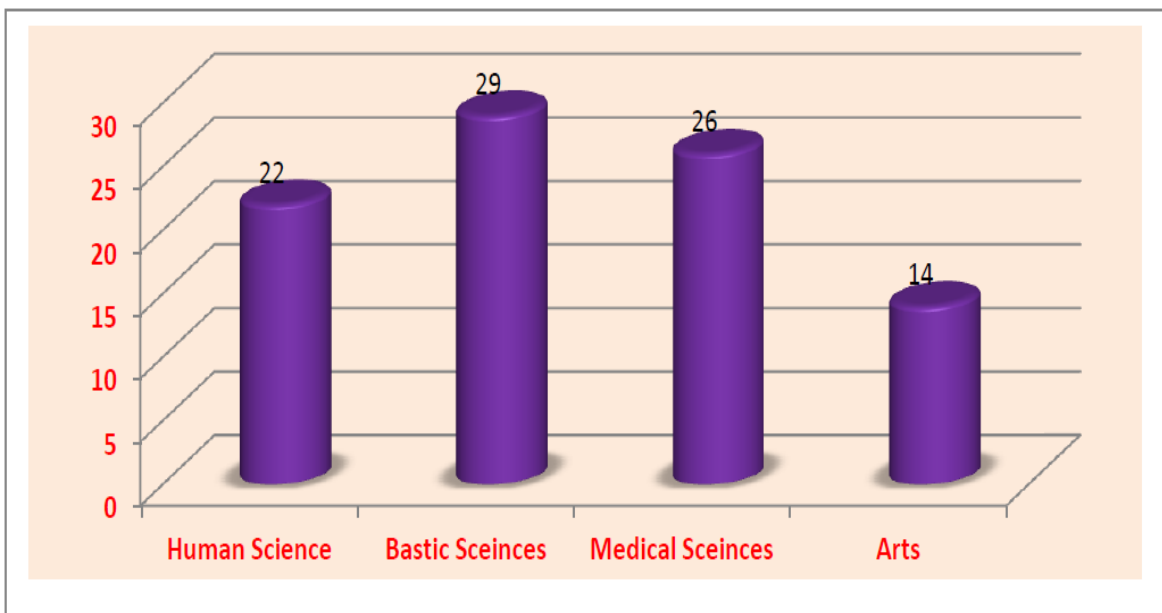
The textbooks	First print	Last print	Impression frequency	Author/s
ESP for the students of Visual Arts	1996	2013	14	SS+TEFL
ESP for the students of Architecture (I)	2002	2014	13	SS+
ESP for the students of Architecture	2004	2014	12	SS+TEFL
ESP for the students of Urban planning	2004	2014	10	TEFL
ESP for the students of Media Arts	1995	2012	8	TEFL

SAMT Categorical ESP Textbooks Impression

A comparison across the tables for frequency and impression of the SAMT ESP textbooks in different branches reveals that basic sciences and medical sciences have the highest rate of impression frequency which in turn may signify the books success and categorical demands for such sources. The diagram below illustrates the status of reprinted ESP textbooks by the SAMT over the past 28 years.

It is obvious in the diagram that the highest impression rate (N=29) is within the basic science and engineering category. The second position is taken by medical science. (N=26) Textbooks for humanities come in the third row while ESP for arts rests at the last step in the four category by experiencing 14th impression for the book” English for the students of visual arts. The total number of the SAMT reprinted books in the past 28 years rises to 1356 books.

Research Article



SAMT Inter-Categorical ESP Textbooks Impression Comparison

A simple comparison among the five tables' data can illustrate the inter-disciplinary impression position of each textbook of the SAMT and their category within the bulk of the textbooks impressions. The result of this comparison yielded in another table which is given below.

Table 7: SAMT Inter-Categorical ESP Textbooks Impression Comparison

No	Textbooks	Category	Impression frequency
1	ESP for the students of Engineering	Basic Science & engineering	29
2	ESP for the students of Medicine (I)	Medical Science	26
3	ESP for the students of Social science (I)	Humanities	23
4	ESP for the students of Agriculture (I)	Basic Science & engineering	22
5	ESP for the students of humanities	Humanities	22

As it is clear from the table above the most frequently reprinted book in the SAMT is the book; “English for the students of engineering” with 29 times of impression.

The next rank is hold by the book” English for the students of medicine with its 26th impression. The third in the row is taken by a book in humanities, while the two last positions are shared by basic science and humanities.

In sum SAMT has published more than 1356 impressions of the ESP textbooks during the last 28 years of its activity with a total mean of 7.32 for each volume.

Crosse Disciplinary Mean, Percentage and Categorical Comparison:

Comparing and contrasting the bulk of the SAMT published ESP textbooks in the four disciplines confirmed the previously attained results. Analysis and comparison across the four categories, means and standard deviation revealed the following results in table 8 below.

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Table 8: (Inter) Categorical Means, Percentage and Standard Deviation

No	Categories	Categorical impre means	Inter- categorical impression mean	Inter- categorical percentage	Standard deviation
1	ESP for Human sciences	Total=70 x =8. 02	Total impre=597 x =2.31	%41.17	Sd=24
2	ESP for Science and Engineering	Total=60 x =7. 60	Total impre=483 x =2.69	%37.08	Sd=20
3	ESP for Medical Science	Total=32 x =5. 46	Total impre=206 x =6.83	% 14.06	Sd= -29
4	ESP for the students of Arts	Total=8 x =7.75	Total impre=70 x =19.61	%5.09	Sd= - 53

As illustrated above, of all the SAMT ESP publications some %41.17 with an 8.2 impression frequency is devoted to human science category. The portion for basic science and engineering is %37.08 with 7.60 as its means.

Medical science with %14.06 and with a mean of 5.46 and art with %.5.09 and mean of 7.75 follows down the rank. Total impression of the SAMT ESP textbooks is 1356 with the relevant standard deviation brought in the table above.

SAMT Authors and Authorship Policy

Putting pen to paper for developing a textbook is a hard nut to crack. This becomes much harder when you are supposed to design and frame some specific pack of texts and tasks in a narrow field of subject while keeping in mind that the mission is to teach language-with all its present day requirements- not the scientific content through English. Laying the responsibility of preparing ESP textbooks on the experts and in most cases the most experienced ones in English language teaching seems to be a shining policy adopted by the SAMT. In terms of authorship, SAMT authors can be divided into two broad groups i.e. single and group authors; teachers of English as a foreign language (TEFL) and content or subject specialists (SS).

SAMT Categorical ESP Textbooks Authors

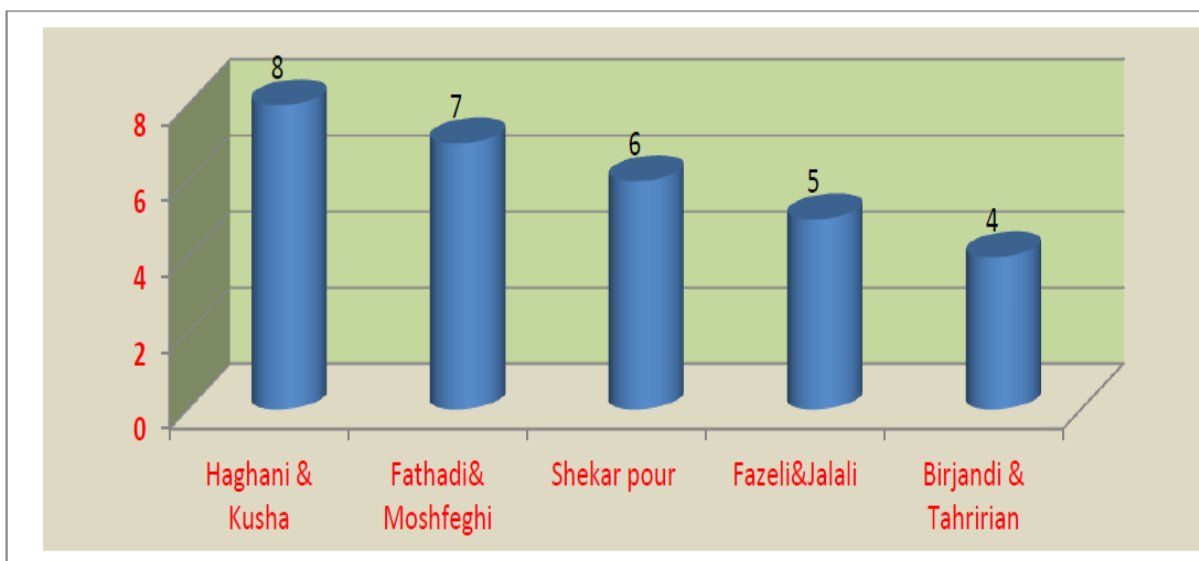
Since its inception to publish ESP textbook in 1987, (SAMT 2014) SAMT has hired more than 196 authors to work and develop some 170 ESP textbooks in Iran. Some of the authors however, have worked in different categories. The author population of the SAMT publications is comprised of mostly university faculty members with adequate teaching EFL or subject content proficiency and experience. The university rank among the faculty members hired ranges from assistant professor, associated professor to full professor.

During the past 28 years of its activity the organization English department has enjoyed a collection of 196 authors some of whom developing more than one ESP text books in different branches alone or in a joint group.

Among the authors of the SAMT some are seminal and prolific in the ESP material development out of them we may name: Haghani and Kusha with 8 books, Farhadi and Moshfeghi each with 7 books, and Shekarpour with 6 books who outraced other authors of the SAMT publication. All the authors are ELT experts with long experience of teaching English language in the Iranian universities. The diagram below illustrates the frequency.

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SAMT ESP Textbooks Prolific Authors Diagram



SAMT Team Authorship

A bold distinction of the SAMT ESP textbooks is its enjoyment of team authorship. SAMT policy towards hiring ESP authors seems fast and straightforward in that the organization seems to prefer team authoring mostly with those authors who were and are currently at work with teaching profession in university contexts both in ELT and subject content.

In addition to this, it seems that they are sensitive enough to lay the responsibility of selecting and presenting the text on those who are well- established in the academic environment with adequate qualification and rich teaching background. Though some cultural considerations are directly or implicitly reminded and expected to be observed, yet the texts used in the textbooks are in most cases preferably scientifically oriented.

The analysis of the authors’ data for which the following table was worked out indicates that of all the ESP publications of the SAMT only one book was authored by a team of 5 specialists. 13 textbooks were authored by a group of 4 authors, 22 books by a team of three authors and 50 ESP text books were developed by double authors. The remaining 84 ESP text books however were prepared by single authors who stand in the first rank of author’s general position, but the second in comparison to the whole status of the team authorship.

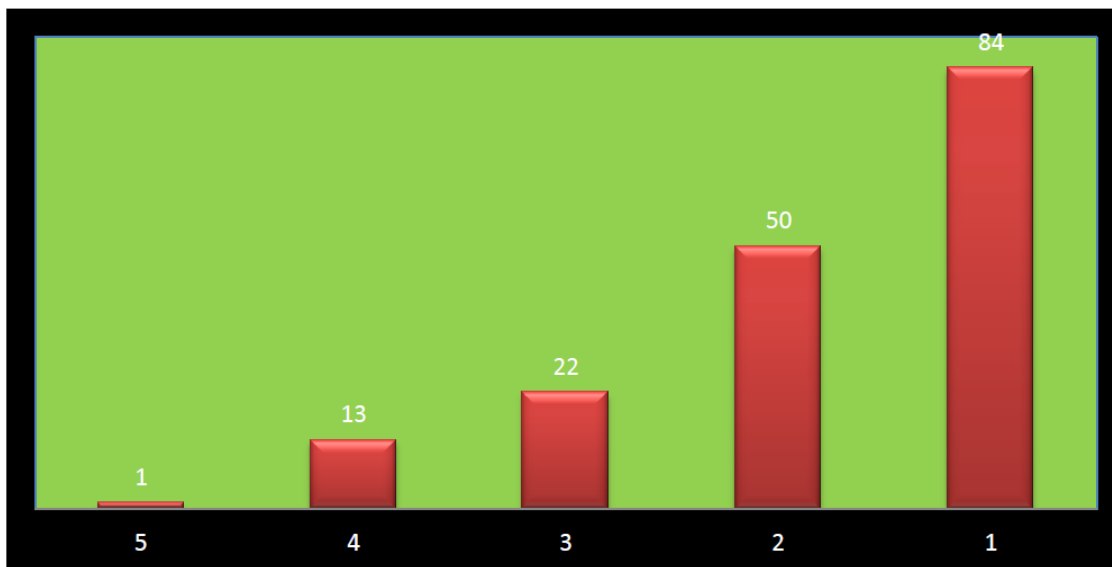
Table 9: SAMT ESP Textbooks Authorship Data

Authors	Disciplines				Total	Percentages
	B&En	MedS	HuS	Art		
Single	31	6	41	6	84	49:41
Two	16	14	18	2	50	29:41
Three	8	6	8	0	22	12:94
Four	5	5	3	0	13	7:64
Five	1	0	0	0	1	0:58

The analysis results is further illustrated through the following diagram

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SAMT ESP Textbooks Team Authorship Diagram



As it is seen above a cross-discipline comparison among the authors indicates that team authoring in medical science (MS) out races the whole textbooks authorship. Perhaps this is why medical science students' achievement in English is better than others.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Discussion and Findings

Through the analysis of the 75 ESP textbooks under the current study some issues and results came to surface. The issues originally stemming from the lack of a standard framework in preparing the books in the one hand and the authors related problems on the other hand make the discussion controversial. All in all, the investigation revealed and confirmed the previous research findings that reading comprehension as the main objective in the Iranian ESP pedagogy is the haunt for which every mean in the textbooks are devoted. Yet as the core target in almost all the evaluation, and general comparison among them the passages they provided for reading comprehension it was revealed that not all the books were successful in fulfilling such an activity sufficiently on the basis of general standards for reading comprehension (RC) texts.

Comparing and contrasting the textbooks components with each other the research looked for the books possible inclination and measures towards the four main skills in English language teaching and learning. In the first place what is quite obvious in almost all the books is that despite explicit and implicit acknowledgment for reading improvement as the main goal of ESP program and course in Iran (Atai and Tahririan, 2003), Farhadi *et al.*, (2010), and Vosoughi *et al.*, (2013) unfortunately little or no parts of the books are devoted to discuss or teach study skills and reading strategies which is a necessary prerequisite for successful reading comprehension. The second major problem with the SAMT textbooks in most cases is the inconsistency of the books size and units of the lessons with the time and curriculum of the ESP in the Iranian academic calendar which at most a course of 16 sessions for each semester.

Readers' related visual activities which usually stimulate and engage students in the text and encourage them to examine, reflect and think about what they have just read seems to be more at demand in the books. As a common maxim, texts having been presented through prompts would most probably be more successful as they are entertaining and curiosity activating. It is unfortunate to say that the books evaluated here suffer these criteria obviously and are weak in providing adequate, new and critical challenging ideas to the readers in the first contact.

Research Article

It is true that as the main, if not the only publisher of ESP textbooks in Iran, SAMT has managed to survive and continue its way from the past less digitally globalized world to the present modern era with all its communicative means and facilities, yet to ignore those realities mentioned above will threaten the SAMT reputation and solidarity. Moreover as the present survey data analysis revealed and confirmed through its findings there are some concerns in both ESP textbooks part and their authorship which strive for more attention particularly when taking new steps into future. While the result of the current inspection shows that the main stream of the textbooks development is in the line of the ESP program policy in Iran which is a reading based one, yet serious lack of attention to the skills other than reading comprehension is quite obvious that stands against most language learning theories and current approaches of ELT. Furthermore in examining the continuum line of the SAMT publication for the verification of the first research question, one can see and feel little if no differences in the approaches used to develop the books, whereas there was a tremendous innovation at least in terms of the educational technology in the last twenty years that SAMT seems to have neglected. More over as a driving force, SAMT does not seem to adhere to the current developments in preparing its textbooks, while as Tomlinson (2009:169) puts in; the publishers of textbooks should design and develop their productions according to the latest theories of effective teaching and learning. This seems to be the most pinching pitfall in the SAMT textbooks preparation policy and practice. In addition to this general flaw, there are some other drawbacks in the SAMT ESP publications spotted and listed by different researchers like Maleki (2008), Iranmehr (2010), Sherkatolabbassi *et al.*, (2012), Soleimani and Shafe, (2014), etc.

Main Drawbacks of the Iranian ESP Textbooks:

In spite of some strong points in the SAMT ESP textbook policies especially in its highly professional authorship, there are some weak points that deserve to receive more attention. Considering the qualitative status of these books Iranmehr (2010) concludes that they seriously suffer from some significant drawbacks of which the most important ones are:

- 1) Lack of needs analysis;
- 2) Mono-skill syllabus; RC being the main focus, leaves little or no room for other skills.
- 3) Inflexible and traditional cliché pattern; there is almost the least content and structure difference between a book first print and its 10th impression after say fifteen years.
- 4) Lack of materials revising and updating; less than a few books are reprinted with revision.
- 5) Insufficient visual aids and prompts making the books boring and spiritless.

To add a final one to the list is the low quality materials used in preparing and publishing the books which makes them unattractive and perhaps demotivating.

Furthermore and based on the research findings, it seems that there are enough theoretical supports for ESP textbooks to receive more attention and challenge the policymakers and the publisher (SAMT) to renew their views toward ESP textbook content presentation and language skills and try their best to keep abreast with the reality of current rapid multimodal developments in the global communication and globalization era of ELT.

On the part of the textbooks authorship we may argue that one of the most useful starting points in any textbook evaluation is an analysis of the authors and their professional profiles. As it was revealed in the data analysis the authors of the SAMT ranges from 1-5 in number with either TEFL, Subject Specialist (SS) qualifications, or a combination of the two.

Although enough information about the publishing organization can be found on the inside front cover of the books, but unfortunately very little or no information about the authors formal education or professional career and types of teaching, administration, and curriculum / syllabus and material development experience is given. This however, does not make it difficult to ascertain whether or not the authors have a recognized standing in the field or a reputation for producing materials, as they are usually selected from among well-educated, well-known figures in ELT and subject content, but to what extent they are free and can be innovative in developing an ESP textbook remains a big question.

A closer examination of 75 ESP textbooks reveals that the authors are seemingly allowed to give brief general information in the form of introduction about the book with no direct reference on how to use

Research Article

them. Through the limited space provided for them most authors claim to adhere to the “Communicative Approach”, but the textbooks feature a mono- skill curriculum in most cases and follow the traditional topical/functional format. As a final point, the researchers came to suggest that ignoring the present day technology and cognitive share and active mental involvements of the users in developing and choosing the proper materials and sticking on the traditional approach of ESP materials developing while not using new facilities to live up the sources will end to useless repetition. In fact the necessity or unnecessary of ESP in different fields is not so much the place of controversy now, but how it is catered and presented remains a problem.

Conclusion

The world of ESP text book is the world of ever changing science and technology. ESP text books since its first modern emergence in 1962 (with that of Barber's) has changed tremendously (Swales, 1984). The change in science and technology was and still is the necessity of time and textbooks as the knowledge inventories are the archive of the changes of their time. They carry the sketches for the road taken, have the approaches used, and are supposed to indicate the trend the discipline is taking on. Textbooks being the sincere narrator of a discipline historical developments and their proper teaching methodology always make up a good part of foreign language pedagogy. The evaluation of this almost inherent part of any systematic teaching and learning is essential if you want to keep abreast with the ever-changing rapid developments in science and technology. With this in mind the research set to chart the physical feature of the SAMT textbooks and their authorship status. As a result and based on the findings gained from the data analysis the researchers arrived at the conclusion that regardless to some drawbacks, the general process of developing and publishing ESP text books is on the right track by sticking on a straightforward policy and framework provided by the SAMT, but much of the macro and micro layout of the books strive for innovation and utilization of newly suggested successful approaches and facilities both in the production and delivery phases.

On the part of authorship the SAMT seems to be tight in terms of content quality by hiring most if not the most professional writers to develop the ESP textbooks. This merit however is generally shadowed by the low quality of the books physical features including material used, traditional layout and content design and presentation which requires a serious shaking.

Moreover SAMT is strongly persuaded to enjoy and encourage team authoring with a combination of TEFL and SS allowing more freedom for possible creativity instead of forcing them to stick on the same old tradition in textbook development.

The opening of any textbook and its introduction which naturally gives a very concise overview of the book, its components and targets has a determining role that we believe should not be taken for granted and receive more attention. Outlining the book parts and parcels briefly also might help the users to be more selective and precise in covering those activities which are most suitable for the learners needs as well as planning and providing the required means to be taught and learnt.

Finally, we are able to claim that the most important step in the process of developing a textbook is the classification of the specific purpose for which every means and materials are brought together. The purpose can no longer be decided on behind the closed doors of the policymakers and educational authorities' offices, rather it is highly required to be based on the needs analysis of the learners who are in most cases the captive users of the materials provided by the others. In this regard SAMT is strongly suggested that the needs and lacks covered in ESP textbooks should be determined through an ongoing process of design, content, implementation, evaluation and any revision, impression or new title should be based on the outcome of a systematic needs assessment in the specific settings and situations.

The researchers hope to have shown the status of the physical features and authorship of the ESP textbook published by the SAMT, the way they are designed and what the flaws in the textbooks are. However, by way of suggestion the research tried to remind the SAMT English language department that it is high time to consider and address the increasing needs of various skills in English language for scientists and engineers of the future generation who are going to be quite if not totally different in their English language needs and abilities compared with that of just some years ago.

Research Article

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