

Bridging the Gap Reflections on EAP Materials at Pharmacy Academy of Surabaya

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Bridging the Gap: Reflections on EAP Materials at Pharmacy Academy of Surabaya

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Abstract. This study aims to evaluate the course module used in EAP teaching at Akademi Farmasi Surabaya. The coursebook was evaluated in terms of its subject matter, structure and capability to meet students' need. Two instruments were employed to draw potential strengths and weaknesses of the coursebook. Firstly, an evaluation checklist adapted from several literatures was designed to serve teachers' perspective about the coursebook. Secondly, a set of questions was constructed to observe students' feedback. Surprisingly, the result of the study shows that eight chapters presented in the module are, considerably, more appropriate for EGAP class rather than ESAP class. Besides, it was found that each chapter is less-defined as every of them is organized differently. Furthermore, the whole aspects conclude that a lot of room remains for improvement for the materials in order to meet the students' need.

Keywords: material evaluation, EAP, subject matter, structure, students' need

1. Introduction

There is a growing body of literature that recognises the importance of learning material evaluation on EAP. McDonough, et al. [14] and Tomlinson [5] agreed that evaluating learning materials means to see both potential benefits and drawbacks of a set of learning materials and its effect on people using it. Correspondingly, McGrath [4] affirmed that to evaluate is more on to see if the materials suit the learning needs, rather than to build subjective judgement to see if it is intrinsically good or bad [4]. Thus, McGrath [4] proposes an idea that materials evaluation as a cyclical process, in which there are three stages, including pre-use, in-use, and post-use evaluation. In line, Charles and Pecorari [6] agreed that those two stages in the pre-use evaluation include brief evaluation, which McGrath [4] calls as first-glance evaluation, and in-depth evaluation. Brief evaluation or first-glance evaluation includes media-specific criteria, content-specific criteria, context-relevance, and students' appeal aspects [4], [7]. Meanwhile, in-depth evaluation ideally has a close analysis of the usefulness of the materials, especially in meeting the students' need and interest [4], [6]. Correspondingly, McDonough, Shaw and Masuhara [8] propose four aspects for the pre-use evaluation, including the context evaluation, external evaluation, internal evaluation and overall evaluation. However, this idea seems too general and does not go into some detail aspects compared to the idea initially proposed by Tomlinson [5] and McGrath [4]. Thus, combining both first-glance and in-depth evaluation, this study aims to evaluate EAP coursebook used at Akademi Farmasi Surabaya in terms of its subject matter, organization and its usefulness in meeting the students' need.

2. Methodology

2.1 Research Problem

Based on the background information of the study and the literature reviews, this research aims to investigate the following questions:

- What are materials provided in the EAP coursebook used at Akademi Farmasi Surabaya?
- How are the materials provided in the coursebook organized?
- Do the materials presented in the coursebook meet the need of the pharmacy students?

2.2 Research Design and Research Object

The research design applied in this study was descriptive research model. It attempts to cast light on the potential weakness and strength of EAP coursebook used at Akademi Farmasi Surabaya, which becomes the object of this research. The evaluation covers the subject matter, structure and capability to meet the students need. Two perspectives from both teacher and students were considered to obtain rich information about the book.

2.3 Instruments

There were two instruments employed in this research. The first instrument, which is material evaluation checklist [13], aims to perceive teachers' evaluation about the book. The second instrument, which is questionnaire, adapted from [10] was distributed to the students to see the students' feedback regarding the materials. Additionally, there were three teachers and 20 students participated in this research.

2.4 Data analysis

The material evaluation in this research particularly involves in-brief evaluation focusing on three categories: subject matter, organization and capability to meet the students' needs. Subject matter, focusing on the coursebook content, allows the evaluation regarding topics and context discussing the setting of which materials and tasks are presented, while organization focuses on the structure of every chapter on the book. Finally, the whole aspect involves every aspect of the book which supports the teaching and learning situation in meeting the students' need. Furthermore, the result of evaluation checklist and questionnaire will be scored, calculated and explained based on the rubric that has been set. The lowest score is 1 which represents a strong disagreement to statements, while 2 scores a fair disagreement or poor condition of the statements. Additionally, 3 shows a fair agreement or enough performance to the given statements. Finally, 4 reflects a good condition or a strong agreement to the statements.

3. Findings and Discussion

3.1 Coursebook Subject Matter

Table 1. Result of the Subject Matter Analysis

Description	1	2	3	4
The subject and content of the textbook is relevant to students' need as English language learners.		67%	33%	

The subject and content of the textbook is generally realistic	33%	67%
The subject and content of the textbook is interesting, challenging and motivating	33%	67%
There is sufficient variety in the subject and content of the textbook	67%	33%
	Average=2.25	SD=2.06

Table 1 indicates the result of the checklist evaluation in term of subject matter. Around 67% of the teachers believed that the subject and content presented in the coursebook is irrelevant to students' need. Contradictorily, 33% of the checklist respondents agreed that the materials, considerably, have relevancy to what students need. Concerning this relevancy aspects, further investigation was made. There are twelve chapters presented in the coursebook, including finding part of speech, introduction, filling medication records, explaining medication, writing formal letter and writing curriculum vitae. The data reported here appear to support the assumption that the subject matters are considered having low relevancy to the students' need. Only two chapters involve pharmacy-related theme and a very little pharmacy-related texts are employed in the coursebook. Meanwhile, it is agreed that the class involves students from the same discipline (ESAP) [2], [12], which in this case is pharmacy. Thus, it is expected that the students are offered specific subject-related materials rather than general materials that are usually offered in EGAP class. Taking this fact into account, the materials could, actually, put more focus on both language and content aspects. As argued by De Chazal [2], one advantage of ESAP class is that materials offered could be managed to reach understanding disciplinary knowledge and help students to comprehend language aspect. Furthermore, it could be a good chance for the students to be exposed more to pharmacy-related input through both genre and discourse analysis from the materials. Subject-related materials are considered as worthwhile investment that enables the students to gain a confidence in their competence as they are prepared by the materials they got from the course [5].

The second point, it is the checklist results show the material evaluation in terms of its practicality. What is striking about the result in table 1 is that the teachers agreed that the materials have low level of practicality. About 67% of the teachers agreed to score 2 which implies that the subject and content of the coursebook is generally unrealistic. Additionally, 33% of teachers strongly disagreed that the subject and content presented in the coursebook is realistic, which also implies its low level of practicality. A possible explanation for these results is the lack of adequate portion between the number of materials and the class duration. It is expected that one chapter needs to be covered in one meeting with an hour and forty minutes duration. Taking chapter two as an example, there are four types of tenses that need to be presented in one meeting: *simple present tense*, *present continuous tense*, *present perfect tense* and *present perfect continuous tense*. Explicitly, the students are likely to be forced to comprehend those four tenses in one meeting which is too ambitious and unrealistic. Inline, the fourth statement result shows that 67% of the teachers agreed that the book is lack of sufficient variety in subject and content. Even though there are six chapters presented in the coursebook, it is clearly seen that English tenses take almost all materials in every chapter presented. It seems that the book puts too much focus on the English tense and aspects and, considerably, little attention is given to communicative ability that is substantially needed by the students in the future. In short, too many materials given tend to ignore other aspects that are more important in learning process, such as enjoyment,

motivation, and students' comprehension level [5], [10]. As a result, a long-term acquisition as a parameter of a novel learning experience is nearly impossible to be achieved [5].

Regardless to points above, a good point is obtained by the book regarding the subject and content evaluation of the coursebook. As much as 67% of the teachers agreed that the subject matter of the coursebook is potentially demanding and able to rise students' interest and curiosity in learning process. Further, teachers argued that students were more motivated when they engage in activities involving their communication skills such as in role play. In this point, teachers' creativity in determining learning activity is demanded to make the materials more interesting and motivating, as stated by Tomlinson [5], "the teacher is responsible for the initial generation of energy in a lesson." In other words, how big the impact of materials depends on how the teachers manage them.

3.2 Coursebook Organization

The second research question "How are the materials provided in the coursebook organized?" was measured through 4 items checklists completed by the teachers. The results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Result of the Organization Analysis

Description	1	2	3	4
The materials provide an appropriate balance of the four skills	67%	33%		
The textbook pays attention to sub-skills. E.g. listening for gist, note-taking, skimming and scanning		67%	33%	
The tasks encourage sufficient communicative and meaningful practice		67%	33%	
The grammar points and vocabulary items are introduced in motivating and realistic contexts		67%		33%
	Rata2=2.1		SD=2.68	

It can be seen that 67% of the teachers responded that the materials in the coursebook do not provide balance portion for four skills of language teaching. Meanwhile, 33% of the teachers believed that the materials have poor balance in providing the four skills. The imbalance portion of the four skills provided in the coursebook is caused by high quantity of grammar points appearing in almost all of the six chapters presented in the book. Tragically, the tasks used to measure students understanding in grammar, tenses predominantly, are dominated by writing task. However, the examples and exercises given are pharmacy related topics. The use of Pharmacy topics employing the examples and exercises in this coursebook has relevancy to the students' field. This displays that the coursebook is slightly beneficial, yet enhancement is highly recommended in providing four skills at leveled division with consideration of students' disciplines.

According to 67% of the teachers, this coursebook pays poor attention to the sub-skills such as listening for gist, note-taking, skimming and scanning. In contrast, 33% of the teachers agreed that the coursebook has enough attention to the sub-skills. Based on this result, it can be concluded that the coursebook basically pays fairly a good attention to the sub-skills providing in each chapter. The so-called attention to the sub-skills is shown in the coursebook such as note-taking in *Noun* (topic 1 in chapter 1). The sub-skills related to listening and speaking skill are inadequately provided in this coursebook. As the four skills are not covered in leveled proportion, attention to the sub-skills, undeniably, has some limitations.

The following point of the checklists is whether the tasks encourage sufficient communicative and meaningful practice. Responding to this point, 33% of teachers claimed

that the tasks in the coursebook have encouraged the communicative and meaningful practice sufficiently. The rest of the teachers, which is 67%, implied that the book has a little number of tasks that encourages communicative and meaningful practice. It can be inferred by looking at the number of texts provided in this coursebook which is surprisingly insufficient. Regarding the low number of texts employed in the coursebook, the goal in achieving the communicative aspects is going to be an arduous job for the teachers if adapting this coursebook is mandatory.

Regarding this, Ellis [9] had proposed that "teaching grammar should be integrated in communicative activities". Unfortunately, this coursebook has small portion of communicative-based tasks proven by only 33% of the teachers believed that the grammar points and vocabulary items are introduced in motivating and realistic contexts. In contrast, 67% of the teachers believed that the grammar points and vocabulary items are poorly introduced in motivating and realistic contexts. Less number of integrated grammar tasks appearing in this coursebook may lead to major problem for the pharmacy students in understanding the real-life based grammar use. Additionally, the vocabulary tasks occupied in the coursebook are also presented in traditional way. By using this coursebook as a source of teaching vocabulary, it still has some possibility in acquiring numbers of vocabulary items but using them in realistic context requires an extra work.

Using this coursebook in teaching English for Specific Academic Purposes, which is pharmacy, as stated above, may require an extra work for the teachers to adapt. Considerable improvement is needed considering the imbalance portion of four skills presented in the coursebook as well as the integrated grammar and vocabulary teaching. Unarguably, the sub-skills must also follow the four skills coverage in this book. In addition, the students also need more meaningful and communicative practice to be encouraged. As the aim of EAP proposed by Hyland and Hamp-Lyons [1] stated that "EAP offers the possibility of making even greater contributions to understanding of the varied ways language is used in academic communities to provide even more strongly informed foundations for pedagogic materials". Thus, it can be concluded that this book, once again, unsuccessfully covers the communicative language teaching principal which is based on discourse.

3.3 Coursebook vs Students Needs

Most of the arguments about the Material Evaluation will eventually lead to the discussion if the materials meet the students' needs, which is to perform better English at their workplace in both spoken and written. Tomlinson [5] stated in one point of his theories that "the most important thing that learning materials have to do is to help the learner to connect the learning experience in the classroom to their own life outside the course." Thus, the use of coursebook is supposed to be helpful for the students understanding real-life context. In ESAP, the presence of coursebook is preferable considering its benefit to facilitate the students in giving the real pictures of applying their field-related English. In addition, Richards [10] holds the view that "in ESAP learner's needs are often described in terms of performance, that is, in terms of what the learner will be able to do with the language at the end of a course of the study."

To investigate the ability of this coursebook in meeting the students' needs, Table 3 shows the result of the checklist completed by the teachers related to whole aspects of the material evaluation. About 33% of the teachers believed that the coursebook is not appropriate for the language-learning aims of the institutions. Meanwhile, poor performance of the appropriateness of the coursebook for the language-learning aims is believed by 67% of the teachers. It reflects that most of the teachers are not satisfied enough with the

coursebook appropriateness in terms of language-learning aims of the institution. As known above that the book is directed to the pharmacy students, it merely emphasizes in the specific terms or specific-used vocabulary items. It ignores most of the principals of EAP materials which ought to assist students not only in the list of technical terms but also in the use of them in formal (and possibly informal) pharmacy-related communication. Low score given by the teachers to the coursebook in terms of providing balance portion of the four skills can strengthen the arguments that this coursebook ignores its main purpose to assist the students in achieving communicative ability in pharmacy-related situation.

It is commonly thought that the coursebook should possess the ability to bring enjoyment to the students in language learning. As stated by Richards [10] that “the materials should provide a pleasurable learning experience.” It is believed logically that enjoyment would raise the interest in achieving more. Meanwhile, this coursebook does not offer an adequate interest for the students in learning English language study. It can be seen from the Table 3 that 67% of the teachers believed that it raises the students’ interest in further English language study poorly. 33% of the teachers thought that there is inability of the book in raising the students’ interest. The rigid format of the book is presumably the reason why this book is fairly interesting for the students. On the other hand, the book is expected to increase the students’ motivation as they need to have pleasurable materials used.

Finally, 100% of the teachers disagreed to choose this book to teach as shown in Table 3. The main reason is believed that the book does not meet the students’ needs which expect that the books should cover the four skills in balance followed by the sub-skills. The book is also expected to be generally realistic in terms of using it in the classroom with the duration given. A probable explanation is that 2 x 50 minutes duration given in each meeting is nearly impossible to include all topics in one chapter. Moreover, it is strongly believed that the coursebook has lack of integrated grammar and vocabulary tasks in which some teachers believed that it can help the students to reach the communicative goal of the study. The language-learning aim of the institution which is pharmacy institution is partly achieved merely due to the presence of pharmacy-related vocabulary items. In contrary, the pharmacy-related English is absent in the topics about writing formal letter and curriculum vitae though empirical example is critically demanded by the students. The abundant presences of the explicit grammar topics have caused this coursebook appeared very rigid. The rigidness of the book can be justified by the students as uninteresting book and may lead to the students’ low motivation in study further as it is what they need.

Table 3. Result of the Whole Aspects Analysis

Description	1	2	3	4
The textbook is appropriate for the language-learning aims of the institution	33%	67%		
The textbook raises the students’ interest in further English language study	33%	67%		
I would choose this textbook to teach	100%			
	Rata=1.7		SD=1.50	

Regardless to weaknesses and strengths explained above, Table 4 below shows the result of the questionnaires distributed to the students to know students’ satisfaction toward the material offered. Around 83.3% of the students agreed that the materials offered have met what they need and help them to perform better in their job. In line, 55.6% of the students argued that they were satisfied with the materials given. However, 61.1% of students suggest additional material to be added to the course. Lastly, the forth question allows the students to

give more than one answer, resulting *Explaining Medication* as subject matter which contributes to their works the most. However, this result needs to be investigated further as it shows inconsistency in the answers as the second and third question show a contradictory result. Surprisingly, TOELF and IELTS appear to be two of many materials the students suggested. This inconsistency could be due to inability to describe what they want and what they need. As stated by Liu, et al. [3] that students possibly have different perception of needs, wants, and lacks. The perception of needs might differ from those perceived by teachers and students [11]. Therefore, further investigation is needed.

Table 4. Result of Questionnaires

Description	Yes	No
Have the materials offered met what you need for your work?	83.3%	16.7%
Are you satisfied enough with the material offered?	55.6%	44.4%
Is there any other materials you want to suggest to add?	61.1%	38.9%
What materials do contribute the most in your work?		
• Finding Part of Speech	16.7%	
• Introduction	33.3%	
• Filling Medication Records	61.1%	
• Explaining Medication	72.2%	
• Writing Formal Letter	38.9%	
• Writing CV	44.4%	

4. Conclusions

This study aims to investigate the potential strengths and weaknesses of EAP coursebook employed at Akademi Farmasi Surabaya. Three parameters for the coursebook evaluation were set to obtain the evaluation from both teachers' and students' perspectives. The result of data analysis revealed that so many rooms for improvement in its subjects and contents, organization, and the whole aspects in meeting the students' actual needs. In term of subject and content, the materials have offered considerably general academic English class rather than the specific one. Secondly, in term of organization, the coursebook is considered less-defined as the materials are organized differently in each chapter. In fact, the focus of the book is more on the grammatical aspect, especially on the English tenses. Surprisingly, less attention is also given to communication sub-skills, such as listening for gist, note taking, skimming and scanning. Lastly, considering the whole aspects of strength and weakness of the coursebook, it is concluded that the book hardly meet the students' need. Beside the imbalance portion of communication skills, there are some important aspects in learning process that are not found in the book, including number of materials and enjoyment activity. Also, the result of questionnaire completed by the students shows some inconsistency regarding their satisfaction about the materials offered in the book. Regardless to its weakness and strength, these findings have significant implications for the understanding of how EAP coursebook should be. Thus, further investigation concerning the students wants and needs is encouraged to build same perception about both aspects. Lastly, it is suggested that future researchers could dig and contribute more information and knowledge about this field.

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