The Design and Practice of an English Textbook for Restaurant

Mei-jung Wang and David Goodman

Abstract

Currently, most of the English language textbooks available for college students are oriented toward general English, and are intended to help students improve their communication skills for daily life. The contents are therefore focused on the language, and sometimes the cultures, which the learners are expected to encounter; they are often not designed for more specific needs, especially for preparatory training in different work fields. However, there is now an increasing demand for textbooks of English which take a more specific purpose (ESP) approach.

This paper takes the ESP-based textbook Restaurant English as its object of study, and the inquiry is divided into two sections. First, the authors investigated the design of the textbook by doing needs analyses and eliciting experts’ feedback on the contents. Second, instructors using the textbook in their classes were asked to evaluate the book by means of an evaluation form. In attempting a combination of multiple stakeholders’ perspectives, this study works toward a fuller understanding of the issues of design and practicality in ESP-based education.

Introduction

Since the early 1960s, English for specific purposes (ESP) has grown to become one of the most prominent areas of ELT teaching. For instance, in the past decades language instruction has been undergoing dramatic changes in the European Union due to increased attention on the learning of languages in general and English in particular (Fortanet-gomez & Raisanen, 2008).
The growth of ESP has also helped generate an increasing number of specialized textbooks (Ebrahim, 2009). Choosing an appropriate textbook is a major responsibility, insofar as the textbook has a significant influence on students’ meeting their language learning objectives and therefore can be said to affect both the process of learning and its outcomes. Hutchinson and Waters (1987) defined ESP as an approach to language teaching in which all decisions as to content and method are based on learners’ reasons for learning, and this perspective obviously has ramifications for the textbooks that are used.

Carter (1983) identified three characteristics of ESP courses: (1) authentic materials, (2) purposed-related orientation, and (3) self-direction. Thus, textbooks for ESP courses should be chosen with these traits in mind so as to better match student needs with course purposes.

Responding to the increasing demand for ESP textbooks, the researchers collaborated on a textbook, Restaurant English, which was published in 2008 by Live ABC, a publisher in Taiwan. The purpose was to provide an authentic model of language use for students entering restaurant service; as such, the researchers believed it to be worthwhile to evaluate their textbook in terms of the sought-after goals of authenticity and relevance to students’ needs. In order to better understand these concerns, this paper attempts to investigate the issues from two perspectives. First of all, the authors reflected on the design of the textbook via a consideration of needs analyses and expert feedback on the contents. Then, teachers using this book in their class were invited to evaluate the book by means of an evaluation form.

**Literature Review**

ESP is very often focused on English for the workplace, and as such is not compatible with a traditional emphasis on the de-contextualized practice of language.
skills. What an ESP based-approach does call for is due attention to be paid to English knowledge within a variety of fields, including medical English, marketing English, commercial English, accounting English, technology English, among others: such an approach is oriented toward making English learning more practical, specific and professional. Based on both theoretical and experiential approaches, the most efficient and effective way for English instruction to successfully attain its goals is to adopt needs analysis (e.g. Hyland, 2002; Vandermeeren, 2005). That is, before designing lesson plans, syllabi, teaching methods and class evaluation, it is important to find out what the students need the most, what the purposes are, what future applications might be, and only then to decide on which approach best meets the students’ needs. Once the students’ needs are ascertained, an appropriate approach can be utilized which can also have the effect of enhancing students’ motivation. The hope is that students will be more willing to learn the language, and so instruction will be more successful.

Key issues in ESP curriculum design need to take into account the following concerns: (a) the abilities required for successful communication in occupational settings; (b) content language acquisition versus general language acquisition; (c) heterogeneous versus homogenous learner groups; and (d) materials development (Gatehouse, 2001). Nunan (1987) recognizes that issues of time, skills and support are key for teachers faced with the very real task of developing curricula. The provision of such support cannot be removed, and must not be seen in isolation, from the curriculum itself. At the course design stage, teachers should prepare materials which address the learners’ needs. Indeed, the awareness of learners’ particular needs has been the defining characteristic of ESP. Hutchinson and Waters (1987) have suggested that ESP should include both target situation needs and learning needs. Moreover, as Robinson (1991) has pointed out, needs analysis should include both the present situation analysis and target situation
Much of the research on work/professional-related English language pedagogy makes use of the notion of ESP as a means of focusing on desired learning outcomes. ESP is dual-focused, interweaving language studies with other subjects such as mathematics, science and social studies (Crandall & Tucker, 1990; Coyle, Hood, & Marsh, 2000). ESP materials value authenticity, feasibility, and subject interests; therefore they can highly motivate students and teachers (Coyle, 2006). ESP emphasizes the creation of an English learning environment and offers an approach which is conducive to the development of professional courses: these are in turn intended to fulfill students’ needs and help them cultivate international perspectives, preparing them for their prospective careers (Tsao, 2011).

ESP courses link students directly to the professional English skills and proficiency needed for their future career field. Indeed, it is important to command both professional skills and linguistic skills, as the requirement for foreign language ability in the current job market is significantly higher than that in the past, and it is getting more and more difficult to get by with a job that requires no foreign language knowledge.

Textbooks are of paramount importance in the ESP classroom. However, most textbooks used in the ESP context are regarded as “in various ways deficient” (Robinson, 1980). The utility of ESP textbooks has been questioned by Ewer and Boys (1981) because issues of approach and methodology were overemphasized at the expense of more essential factors such as linguistic content validity, accuracy of the given examples and explanations, and coverage of the provided exercises. Such deficiencies were attributed to the textbooks’ being intended for use in “remedial” or “supplementary” courses (Ewer & Boys, 1981, p. 97) and also to the fact that they did not seem to provide sufficient coverage of skill area and practice materials (Swales, 1980). Considered from
an ELT perspective, textbooks can result in disappointment for teachers, owing to the design flaws and skepticism regarding theoretical premises of a number of textbooks (Sheldon, 1988). Burmfit (1980, p. 30) makes the point that, in publishing textbooks, “masses of rubbish is skillfully marketed”; others have alluded to “a course book credibility gap” (Greenall, 1984, p. 14) relating to such factors as the designers’ or creators’ agendas, the selection criteria resorted to, the real classroom implementation, and also the chasm between what was financially profitable and what was educationally sought-after (Apple, 1984; Jones, 1990; Gray, 2002). All of this would seem to question the utility of using textbooks and, especially in an ESP context, to call for a systematic use of in-house materials: considerable literature has been written on the genesis of ESP materials as well (Widdowson, 1981; Jordan, 1990; McDonogh, 1984; Swales, 1980).

Furthermore, even though many of the aforementioned criteria are equally applicable to English leaning for both general and specific purposes, it is nonetheless also true that the teaching of ESP had some distinctive features which merit special attention, especially regarding authenticity. Almagro & Vallejo (2002) offer a proposal for the evaluation of ESP textbooks at university level which reviews the proposals from the 1970s to the present time, but it is nonetheless insufficient as far as authenticity is concerned. Moreover, the communicative competence approach to language teaching—seen especially in the change of focus from sentence-level to that of integrative text—needs be given due emphasis as well, given that it is the text which provides an imitative model for the student. Nevertheless, for this to be feasible, following Morrow’s (1977, p. 13) analysis, it is first necessary to consider whether the four factors by which the language is determined—topic, function, channel, and audience (cf. Hymes, 1972)—are appropriate for the context in which the text is to be used in the teaching of ESP. Authenticity and relevance should be made correlative if possible, but this is a goal to work toward rather
than a matter that can be taken for granted: on the one hand, the authenticity of the material itself does not guarantee its relevance or pedagogical utility and, on the other hand, the use of less-than-fully-authentic material does not necessarily render it uninteresting or irrelevant (Robinson, 1980, p. 36).

According to Hutchinson and Waters (1987), evaluation is basically a matching process: that is, matching needs to available solutions. The most effective manner by which to evaluate textbooks is to examine the language objectives contained in them. Most often an evaluation of the content of the text is advocated, but given the broad leeway allowed for in this, it is essential to specify what must be included. Rea-Dickins and Germaine (2001) state that in evaluating materials it is necessary to examine the ways in which teaching and learning materials are sensitive to the language learning process. Evaluation criteria should relate not only to the aims and contents of language, but also to the procedures for working with texts and performing tasks in the classroom (p. 258). In addition, in the interests of providing for a more objective, triangulated program evaluation, it is essential to seek out the feedback offered by external as well as internal evaluators, wherein “an external evaluator is someone who is at least not on the project or the program’s staff” (Scriven, 1991, p. 159).

**Methodology**

**Participants**

The authors of the textbook first reflected on the process of writing the textbook. Then, five teachers who used this textbook in their classes participated in this study. They were invited to evaluate the textbook by means of an evaluation checklist, which the researchers feel to be a useful assessment tool for teacher in selecting textbooks or teaching materials. The evaluation checklist adapted in the present study is that
developed by Canado and Esteban (2005), and is provided in the Appendix.

Results and discussions

Part One: Reflections on the writing of the Live Restaurant English textbook

In the summer of 2006, the English instructors in the NKHC language training section (soon-to-be Applied Foreign Language Department) were given the task of writing a series of ESP textbooks, focused on hospitality areas, to be published by Live ABC. One of these textbooks—the one that the authors of this paper, as well as a third instructor (Lin), worked on—was to address the communicative needs of those working in the restaurant (food and beverage) industry.

The first task was to work out a tentative table of contents for the textbook, based on what were felt to be the essential components to be covered. This first draft listed nine units: Plan of a Restaurant; Restaurant Staff; Calling a Restaurant; Welcoming and Seating Guests; Taking Beverage Orders; Taking Food Orders; During the Meal; Dealing with Complaints; Presenting the Bills. Each unit had a number of subsections which attempted to treat each topic in sufficient depth.

During the winter break of 2007, the faculty of the Applied Foreign Language Department took part in a workshop at the Caesar Park Hotel in Kenting, sponsored by the Ministry of Education’s Teaching Excellence program. One of the major goals of this workshop was to elicit feedback from hospitality industry personnel regarding this table of contents. After listening to presentations and taking part in question-and-answer sessions, changes were made to the proposed content.

There were a number of areas where new content was felt to be necessary. These included the following areas:

(a) Emergency situations (such as power outages and earthquakes), added to the
chapter on complaints to form a more-inclusive “difficult situations” unit.

(b) Hosting banquets (such as weddings) and conferences (most likely business-related), where large groups of people need to be waited on. We had been assuming gatherings of fairly small groups initially.

(c) Local specialties and festival-specific foods, with some information about the festivals themselves.

(d) Showing concern for guests by asking preference questions, and taking into account allergies and religious/cultural prohibitions.

In addition, there were other matters which came up in the speeches and discussions which, while not necessarily constituting new content, could be said to aid us in thinking through material that needed emphasis, or that helped us in clarifying ambiguous areas and seeing matters in a broader perspective. These points are given more thorough treatment below:

In the unit on introducing colleagues, we needed to think more carefully about who the participants are. Since the focus is on English usage, a Chinese-speaking worker being introduced to another Chinese-speaking worker would likely not make a good context. Furthermore, it should not be narrowly focused on foreign workers only, but should also include foreign guests—especially frequently-visiting guests.

Insofar as English majors were to be one intended recipient group of this instruction, it was suggested to us that such students probably would not be focusing on basic wait-table jobs, but would instead be more likely to be involved in receptionist and host(ess) work. As such, the sections on welcoming and caring for guests’ needs should reflect this.

Many of the industry personnel felt it important and useful to place more focus on explaining food choices. Furthermore, breakfast was felt to be especially important for
inclusion, since it is often demoted in instructional materials relative to dinner content, despite the fact that breakfast is the meal that guests are most likely to eat in the hotel. As for beverage issues, wine recommendations—which wine goes with which dish—were also felt to be essential.

An interesting perspective provided by the industry staff at the Caesar Park regarded the importance for hospitality workers to see themselves as being "on stage" when they are working, and for workers to talk to guests and show concern for their well-being. Some examples of guest “small talk” that they mentioned included guests’ asking workers about their job, and seeking recommendations for dishes to try or places in the area to visit; workers also may ask guests about their hometowns and countries of origin. As for showing concern, they mentioned offering to help guests take pictures; helping small children climb stairs, or asking hotel guests if they enjoyed a good night’s rest. These kinds of topics and scenarios were in large part added to the units because of the kind of feedback we were receiving from the industry staff. As Met (2009) makes clear, selection of content also should be determined at least in part on the basis of the language objectives of the course or curriculum, so that it will serve as a pedagogically-sound source of language practice tasks and activities.

Once we had made changes to the table of contents and felt satisfied with the general direction that we would be heading in, the actual writing of the textbook could commence: the first draft of this writing took place during the summer of 2007. The main challenge in writing this textbook was to not only make restaurants be the setting for the dialogues, but to try to achieve a semblance of “authenticity.” In fact, we wanted more than just a semblance; we hoped that it would adequately model and reflect the types of language usage found in restaurant service. Fortunately, our team of textbook writers had one member (Lin) who actually had practical experience as a managerial staff member in the
food and beverage industry. This turned out to be of invaluable aid throughout the writing of the textbook, especially in the revisions for the specific dialogues. This reflected what Lucietto (2008) pointed out that at the organisational level, the model we were able to use was that of *Teaching Teams (T-Teams)*, i.e. content and language teachers working together in all phases of materials development: module planning, materials production, implementation (when possible), assessment, and module evaluation. The *T-Team* that we were able to assemble allowed us to utilize the dual nature of CLIL, as we were in a better position to pay careful attention to both professional and linguistic needs.

One such example is here culled from the writing of the unit titled “During the Meal.” I (Goodman) wrote the first draft for this unit, and passed it onto Lin for revisions, especially regarding authentic language usage. I also included some questions in italics and parentheses regarding areas that I felt to be in need of change. One such stretch of dialogue, along with a question, is provided here:

**Mr. Mahler:** I’ve heard that the poached salmon here is really something else.

**Mrs. Mahler:** I’m certainly looking forward to trying it!

**Wanda:** Excuse me, sir, here’s your order of leg of lamb.

(Will Wanda help them with their napkins at this point? If so, is there anything she should say while doing so?)

**Mr. Mahler:** Thank you.

**Wanda:** And ma’am, here’s your order of poached salmon.

**Mr. Mahler:** Oh, thanks.

**Wanda:** If there is anything at all that you’d like help with during your meal, please do not hesitate to let me know.

Note that my main concern here was something along the lines of a “stage direction,” and what would be appropriate dialogue to accompany the action under question. At the

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same time, I also looked forward to any other comments that could be offered to help in making the dialogue and interaction more aligned with what students should expect in a food and beverage service encounter.

I was pleased to receive Lin’s feedback about the unit: she not only responded to my specific inquiry, but also made changes that truly emphasized the importance of having knowledgeable parties involved in the writing of ESP textbooks (Lin’s comments are in boldface and italics).

Mr. Mahler: I’ve heard that the poached salmon here is really something else.
Mrs. Mahler: I’m certainly looking forward to trying it!

(Will Wanda help them with their napkins at this point? If so, is there anything she should say while doing so?)

(*Actually, the hostess should help the guests with their napkins as soon as they are seated, and simply say “Excuse me.”
** “Ladies first”--- A waitress should always serve food and drinks first to woman guests then to men. The same with everything else, such as when checking satisfaction or pouring wine. So I’ve changed the following sequence where the men were served first.)

Wanda: Excuse me, ma’am, here’s your order of poached salmon.
Mrs. Mahler: Oh, thanks.
Wanda: And sir, here’s your order of leg of lamb.
Mr. Mahler: Thank you.
Wanda: If there is anything at all that you’d like help with during your meal, please do not hesitate to let me know.

It had not occurred to me to pay attention to the sequence regarding who should be served first—which is exactly the reason why other, more knowledgeable parties need to be involved whenever possible. Similar errors and gaps in knowledge of mine were scattered throughout the dialogues I wrote, with Ms. Lin on hand to point out the needed changes.

In fact, by the time that the draft was passed onto the publisher for perusal and
editing, the main focus was largely a matter of level difficulty, since we had written our book with a certain intended audience in mind (i.e. the applied English major students), whereas the publishers wanted the book to be appropriate for students of a lower-language proficiency as well. This discrepancy was largely remedied by supplementing with additional dialogues of a simpler nature, and planning language practice sections/exercises. What did not crop up very often by that stage were those related to authenticity.

As a result of this collaborative textbook writing effort, I came to following conclusions:

1. ESP textbooks of this sort can, and should, be team-written.
2. As important as it may be to have writers involved with an excellent, even native, proficiency of the language, it is more important yet to have writers who are intimately/personally acquainted with the service settings that are being modeled in the dialogues and examples.
3. Patience and multiple rewritings are a must: for many of the units we worked on, there were four or five revisions before the units were eventually passed along to the publishers.

Part Two: Results of the questionnaire

A total of five instructors from various institutions provided feedback via questionnaire (see Appendix). The general tenor of the answers indicated that the teachers hold mostly positive views of the textbook. For instance, with regard to context and target situations, the five teachers agreed that the content can be usefully employed in the target situations which coincide with the students' professional contexts. Concerning the students’ use and reception of the material, the teachers agreed that the exercises and
tasks have a clear goal which is related to the students' target situations, and that these are adequately geared toward the students' level of communicative competence. Moreover, the textbook was felt to provide the learner with an authentic experience of language and to match the needs of the students' specialization.

However, the teachers were somewhat neutral regarding the degree to which they felt that students were able to clearly appreciate the utility of the textbook's objectives in real-life target situations. In addition, the teachers held slightly neutral attitudes regarding the feasibility of the textbook in helping to generate authentic interaction, communication, and responses from the learner, and in allowing the students to make use of their linguistic abilities and to put into practice their communicative competence.

In looking more specifically at instructor issues as related to the textbook, they agreed that the degree of authenticity of the textbooks matches their own preparation but they were neutral about the adaptability of the textbook in helping them to meet the needs of each of their own specific contexts.

### Table 1. Results of the questionnaire

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1. Context and Target Situation</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. The textbook's contents can be usefully employed in the target situation.</td>
<td>4.20</td>
<td>.837</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The target situation presented in the textbook coincides with the students' professional context.</td>
<td>4.20</td>
<td>1.304</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The purposes of the material are authentic.</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>1.225</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2. The Student</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. The student can clearly appreciate the utility of the textbook's objectives in real-life target situations.</td>
<td>3.80</td>
<td>1.095</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Its exercises and tasks have a clear goal related to the students' target situation.</td>
<td>4.40</td>
<td>.894</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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1. The textbook is adequate for the students' level of communicative competence. 4.00 0.707

2. It allows the students to make use of their linguistic abilities and to put into practice their communicative competence. 3.80 0.837

3. It prepares the learner for an authentic experience of language. 4.00 1.225

4. The textbook matches the needs of the students' specialization. 4.00 1.225

5. It generates authentic interaction, communication, and responses from the learner. 3.60 1.342

#### 3. The Teacher

1. The degree of authenticity of the textbook matches the teacher's preparation. 4.00 1.225

2. The textbook can be adapted by the teacher to meet the needs of his/her specific context. 3.80 1.304

#### 4. Contents

**4.1 Linguistic aspects**

1. The selection and range of linguistic aspects is presented adequate for the students' level of communicative competence. 3.60 0.548

2. It includes up-to-date and relevant grammatical structures and lexicon. 3.80 0.447

3. They include stretches of real language produced by real speakers or writers for a real audience and conveying a real message of some sort. 3.60 1.140

**4.2 Sociocultural Aspects**

1. The sociocultural aspects presented in the textbooks can be used for academic or occupational purposes rather than only for linguistic ones. 4.00 1.225

2. The textbook provides a cultural contextual support. 3.40 1.140

**4.3 Notional-functional Aspects**

1. The functions presented in the textbook are related to the students' target situation. 4.00 0.707

2. The presentation of functions is complemented with linguistic and communicative exercises. 4.00 0.707
4.4 Topics

1. The area of specialization of the textbooks and its selection of topics is of interest to the learner.  
   - Score: 4.00  - Percentage: 122.5%

2. The topics included in the textbook are valid from an occupational and/or academic point of view.  
   - Score: 4.40  - Percentage: 134.2%

3. The topics are adequate for the students' level of specialization.  
   - Score: 4.00  - Percentage: 70.7%

4. The units have a linguistic and communicative purpose.  
   - Score: 4.20  - Percentage: 83.7%

5. They include authentic material which matches students' learning needs.  
   - Score: 4.00  - Percentage: 122.5%

6. The variety of English presented in the textbook is in line with the teacher's preparation and the same as that which the student will need in a professional context.  
   - Score: 4.00  - Percentage: 122.5%

4.5 Organization

1. The textbook have a thematic unity.  
   - Score: 4.20  - Percentage: 130.4%

2. The lessons are built around content-based themes in the specific purpose area.  
   - Score: 3.80  - Percentage: 164.3%

4.6 Activities

1. The activities presented are useful in the educational context and in the target situation.  
   - Score: 3.20  - Percentage: 83.7%

Respondents were also asked to look at the contents in terms of the following aspects: linguistic aspects, sociocultural aspects, notional-functional aspects, topics, organization, and activities. Regarding the linguistic aspects, the teachers held neutral attitudes towards all the items in this subcategory, including whether the selection and range of linguistic aspects presented is adequate for the students' level of communicative competence, whether the textbook includes up-to-date and relevant grammatical structures and lexicon, or whether the language is authentic enough. Second, as to the sociocultural aspects, the teachers agree that the sociocultural aspects in the textbook can be used for academic or occupational purposes but they were neutral about if the textbook provides adequate cultural contextual support.
Third, the teachers agreed that the functions presented in the textbook are related to the students' target situations and the presentation of functions is complemented with linguistic and communicative exercises. Fourth, the teachers were positive about the topics: they agreed that the topics selected in the textbook are of interest to the learner, and also that the topics are valid from an occupational point of view and adequate for the students' level of specialization. Also, the units have a linguistic and communicative purpose and they are authentic to match students' learning needs. In addition, the variety of English presented in the textbook is consistent with the teacher's preparation and is essentially the same as that which the students will need in a professional context. Regarding organization, the teachers agreed that the textbook has a thematic unity, but they were neutral about whether the lessons are built around content-based themes in the specific purpose area. Finally, when it comes to the activities, the teachers held neutral attitudes about whether the activities presented are useful in the educational context and in the target situation.

Of the twenty-eight questionnaire items, the respondents provided positive responses (4.00 or higher) for eighteen items; for the remaining ten items, five of these were only slightly below the positive response rating (at 3.80). These data suggest that the teachers using this textbook hold predominantly positive views. Furthermore, it bears pointing out that the selection of textbook materials signals educational decisions with considerable professional, financial, and educational stakes involved (Sheldon, 1988). With respect to the responses of the teachers in this study to the linguistic aspects and authenticity of the textbook under consideration, one possible explanation is that all the teacher participants are non-native speakers of English, and thus they are more conservative in judging these aspects of the materials. As Sadeghi (2005) states that the ESP teacher should possess (a) English language knowledge, (b) thorough command of
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The course design, and (c) expert knowledge of the related field of science. EFL teachers (English as foreign language), as shown in this study, may need some support or training to teach CLIL or ESP courses.

The teachers also gave four write-in comments, provided here:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comment</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>According to my students’ feedback, the content is too much for a semester course (2 hours/week).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As a textbook, the teacher resource is limited.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It's a very useful reference.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>However, the content is much better than other textbooks.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The more critical comments provided here show that at least some instructors appreciate more instructional support, and that they have higher expectations for the teacher resource materials than what is actually provided to them. Furthermore, providing more content than can readily be covered in a school term is seen as a liability by one of the respondents; the authors acknowledge this, but feel that in these matters it is better for there to be too much material rather than too little. The other two comments are more positive, if somewhat vague. It is reasonable to infer that for the majority of these language teachers, they teach restaurant English based on their own experiences as customers, and tend to lack specific professional knowledge in the relevant hospitality fields—they do not, as it were, have the “insider’s perspective” that a restaurant industry staff would have. Consequently, in all likelihood they would appreciate it if the textbook could include more adequate resources in the teachers’ guide.

As Coyle, Hood, and Marsh (2000) and Hargreaves (2003) emphasize, professional communities are built up when people in the organization can work in a collective and innovative way. McGrath (2002) also emphasizes that the design of materials involves a continuous review process. A follow-up interview could be conducted to provide more
useful feedback, since the interviewer would be in a position to ask appropriate follow-up questions: for instance, it would be possible to ask what the respondent means by “reference,” or to elaborate on the ways in which this textbook represent an improvement over other textbooks that they have used. It is true that a survey of five respondents does not constitute a final, definitive verdict; nonetheless, it is a first step, and the researchers welcome the chance to receive more extensive feedback.

Conclusions

This paper takes the ESP-based textbook Restaurant English as its object of study, and the inquiry is divided into two sections. First, the authors investigated the design of the textbook by doing needs analyses and eliciting experts’ feedback on the contents. Second, instructors using the textbook in their classes were asked to evaluate the book by means of an evaluation form. In attempting a combination of multiple stakeholders’ perspectives, this study works toward a fuller understanding of the issues of design and practicality in ESP-based education.

The findings of this paper are summarized as follows. Regarding the design of the books, both of the contents and the level of language proficiency are under consideration. It is challenging to write the content authentically, therefore, after the table of contents was finished, experts from food and beverage were invited to give comments and suggestions. Relevant revisions were made to reveal the restaurant-specific language use. Next, one of the team members who had a practical experience on food and beverage industry ran through the textbook again, intending to assure that the dialogues matched the language used in the hospitality industry. As for the level, it was written for students from Department of Applied Foreign Language instead of meeting the public demands.
For the questionnaire feedback, the results are mainly positive. For example, the teachers regarded the contents authentic. The tasks and exercises provided can help students acquire target language competence. However, teachers are not sure about the support for the authentic interaction. Besides, they are neuter about whether the contents can meet their needs for some specific topics and whether the contents provided proper cultural contextual support.

The research presented in this study suggests ways in which curriculum and material designers can apply greater scrutiny in investigating the pre-writing (planning) stage, writing-in-progress stage and post-publication (textbook-in-use) stage. Failure to properly attend to any of these stages can lead to a number of problems at later stages and for a variety of stakeholders: if the planning stage is handled carelessly, this can lead to glaring oversights on the part of the textbook writers; if the writing-in-progress stage does not have built-in oversights from knowledgeable parties, this can seriously compromise the attempts at authenticity; if the textbook-in-use stage is not duly examined, textbook writers cannot know if the choices they made indeed helped to bring about a pedagogically-relevant product.

Regarding suggestions for EFL teachers, they do need some support and training to handle ESP courses confidently and successfully. The majority of these language teachers teach restaurant English based on their own experiences as customers, and tend to lack specific professional knowledge in the relevant hospitality fields; that is they do not have the “insider’s perspective” that a restaurant industry staff would have. They are advised to have team teaching with subject teachers, have certain internship as a staff in restaurants, or attend ESP workshops to enrich their professional knowledge and promote appropriate teaching strategies.

Finally, this is not to say that the present study elicits feedback from all relevant
stakeholders: one obvious omission here is the ultimate textbook user—the student. Also, it could be profitable to receive feedback from industry managerial personnel not only at the pre-writing stage, but also during the two later stages as well. Another potentially fruitful source for feedback would be in-service restaurant staff, in an attempt to add another source of triangulation. Still, the researchers believe that this study is a step in the right direction, and that textbook writers stand to benefit a great deal from applying a firmer research perspective to the endeavor of textbook writing. Finally, we-as-textbook writers welcome any comments or suggestions regarding the textbook in question.
References


12 January, 2011 from:

http://www.carla.umn.edu/cobaltt/modules/principles/decisions.html


Appendix

Evaluation checklist for the textbook, *Restaurant English*

Dear teachers,

Thanks for helping with this evaluation. Please fill out this evaluation for the researchers in order to help us better understand your responses to this textbook. Please feel comfortable to provide any additional comments or opinions as well.

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1. Context and Target Situation

1. The textbook’s contents can be usefully employed in the target situation.

   | Very Agree | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Very Disagree |
   | 5           | 4     | 3       | 2        | 1             |

2. The target situation presented in the textbook coincide with the students’ professional context.

   | Very Agree | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Very Disagree |
   | 5           | 4     | 3       | 2        | 1             |

3. The purposes of the material are authentic.

   | Very Agree | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Very Disagree |
   | 5           | 4     | 3       | 2        | 1             |

2. The Student

1. The student can clearly appreciate the utility of the textbook’s objectives in real-life target situations.

   | Very Agree | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Very Disagree |
   | 5           | 4     | 3       | 2        | 1             |

2. Its exercises and tasks have a clear goal related to the students’ target situation.

   | Very Agree | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Very Disagree |
   | 5           | 4     | 3       | 2        | 1             |

3. The textbook is adequate for the students’ level of communicative competence.

   | Very Agree | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Very Disagree |
   | 5           | 4     | 3       | 2        | 1             |

4. It allows the students to make use of their linguistic abilities and to put into practice their communicative competence.

   | Very Agree | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Very Disagree |
   | 5           | 4     | 3       | 2        | 1             |

5. It prepares the learner for an authentic experience

   | Very Agree | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Very Disagree |
   | 5           | 4     | 3       | 2        | 1             |
of language.

6. The textbook matches the needs of the students’ specialization. 5 4 3 2 1

7. It generates authentic interaction, communication, and responses from the learner. 5 4 3 2 1

3. The Teacher

1. The degree of authenticity of the textbooks matches the teacher’s preparation. 5 4 3 2 1

2. The textbook can be adapted by the teacher to meet the needs of his/her specific context. 5 4 3 2 1

4. Contents

4.1 Linguistic aspects

1. The selection and range of linguistic aspects is presented adequate for the students’ level of communicative competence. 5 4 3 2 1

2. It includes up-to-date and relevant grammatical structures and lexicon. 5 4 3 2 1

3. They include stretches of real language produced by real speakers or writers for a real audience and conveying a real message of some sort. 5 4 3 2 1

4.2 Sociocultural Aspects

1. The sociocultural aspects presented in the textbooks can be used for academic or occupational purposes rather than only for linguistic ones. 5 4 3 2 1

2. The textbook provides a cultural contextual support. 5 4 3 2 1

4.3 Notional-functional Aspects

1. The functions presented in the textbook are related to the students’ target situation. 5 4 3 2 1

2. The presentation of functions is complemented with linguistic and communicative exercises. 5 4 3 2 1

4.4 Topics

1. The area of specialization of the textbooks and its selection of topics is of interest to the learner. 5 4 3 2 1

2. The topics included in the textbook are valid from an occupational and/or academic point of view. 5 4 3 2 1
3. The topics are adequate for the students’ level of specialization.

4. The units have a linguistic and communicative purpose.

5. They include authentic material which matches students’ learning needs.

6. The variety of English presented in the textbook is in line with the teacher’s preparation and the same as that which the student will need in a professional context.

4.5 Organization

1. The textbook have a thematic unity.

2. The lessons are built around content-based themes in the specific purpose area.

4.6 Activities

1. The activities presented are useful in the educational context and in the target situation.

III. Open-ended questions:

1. Suggestions for the textbook: