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Piotr Romanowski: Business English course books – why and how to evaluate them?

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Business English course books – why and how to evaluate them?

The aim of the present paper is to propose a specially designed ESP course book evaluation sheet as well as discuss the need for and usefulness of ESP course book evaluation. The specifically devised checklist for Business English materials will take into consideration various aspects of course design, content and methodology as well as general attributes referred to by such renowned materials' evaluators as Cunningsworth, Ellis and Johnson, McDonough *et al.* to name only a few. Throughout the paper the author will also assert the specificity of ESP courses as more demanding and more focused on the expectations and requirements of the learners. Hence, appropriate evaluation of any new course book proves necessary because the needs of the students and how they are prioritized will affect their eventual success.

1. ESP courses and their character

As students seem to remain in the focus of any teaching and learning process these days, we need to bear in mind their needs related to the choice of course books and supplementary materials we are using. On numerous occasions it occurs that course books published commercially do not address the aspirations of the learners in question. Therefore, it is essential that careful selection be made and the selected materials closely reflect the aims, methods, and values of the teaching programme as well as the expectations of those who will use them (Cunningsworth, 1995:7). This is basically of particular importance when we are involved in the teaching of ESP courses, which includes Business English. The reader might wonder why? However, it has to be stated clearly that Business English shares all of the important elements typical of ESP, such as: needs analysis, syllabus design and course design, as well as selection and development of materials – and they are common to all fields of work in English for Specific Purposes. As it is the case with all varieties of ESP, Business English implies the existence of a specific language corpus and emphasizes particular kinds of communication in a specific context (Ellis and Johnson, 1994: 3). Dudley-Evans and St John (1998) see the needs analysis as more fundamental in Business English than in any other types of ESP, because learners' needs are often much more varied and the spectrum of language and skills appears less predictable. The approach to needs analysis depends mainly on the situation and context. A language audit, which defines language skills and activities as well as the participants' proficiency to be evaluated, is particularly

relevant to the so-called in-company courses, which Business English courses are often labelled as.

At this point it should also be acknowledged that there is one fundamental difference to be enunciated when comparing the methodologies of EGP and ESP. The teacher is not 'the primary knower' of the carrier content anymore. The students may in many cases be more knowledgeable about the content than the teacher, especially where the course is specifically oriented towards the work they are engaged in. Besides, in the case of ESP courses the teacher usually designs the framework of the course before the participants' arrival and tries to determine the specific needs when learners are on-site. What also distinguishes ESP from EGP is not the existence of the needs as such, but rather an awareness of the needs (Hutchinson and Waters, 1987: 53). Having that in mind, needs analysis has to be perceived as the corner stone of ESP, which leads to a very focused course (Dudley-Evans and St John, 1998: 122).

Because the purpose of this article is to focus on the evaluation of ESP course books, it should be stressed that conducting means analysis is advisable in addition to needs analysis. Means analysis looks at the environment in which a course will be run. We often analyse what is available in terms of equipment, facilities, time and materials, and what is not. Sobkowiak (2008: 61) notices that the needs and how they are prioritized, ordered and met differ significantly depending on the conditions in which students are learning and the resources available so that specific ends the learner hopes to achieve are all reached.

2. What constitutes effective evaluation?

However intricate the process of evaluation might seem, it should be indicated that the procedure itself is widely used in the field of applied linguistics. Lynch (1996: 2) perceives evaluation as a systematic attempt to gather information so as to make judgments or decisions. Rea-Dickins and Germaine (1994: 4) posit that evaluation is an intrinsic part of teaching and learning. It plays a key role in education and it is vital for teachers since it normally provides valuable information for classroom practice, planning courses, and management of learning tasks. Moreover, evaluation constitutes an essential part of the educational process, especially for the use of instructional materials such as course books, for they can serve as a syllabus and a self-study source for learners. Rea-Dickens and Germaine (1994: 28) notice rightly that there is a need to evaluate language teaching materials and their effectiveness, as well as how they are presented to learners, the types of learning tasks used, and the way the courses are designed. All these elements constitute the core of curriculum and are constantly used both prior to and during the implementation of a learning programme. Hence they must be thoroughly evaluated if we expect gathered information to be relevant and applicable.

With this framework in mind, we may clearly state that evaluation is the means by which we can gain a better understanding of what is effective in our

course, what is less effective and what appears to be of no use at all. Furthermore, it proves to be particularly supportive for teachers at the beginning of their career as through careful evaluation of teaching materials and needs, they will inevitably gain in confidence.

Hutchinson (1987) argues that any course book has a very important and positive part to play in teaching and learning English. Its role is to provide the necessary input into classroom lessons through different activities, readings and explanations. Besides, Richards (2001) states that course books act as a key component in most language programmes. Their quality is so important that it surely determines the success or failure of any course and its participants. Accordingly teaching materials do play a significant role in the process of learning. Taking a similar line of reasoning, Nunan (1998: 98) considers them to be an essential element within the curriculum and, at their best, as a component providing concrete models to desirable classroom practice. Therefore, course book evaluation not only helps teachers to develop themselves but also allows them invariably to gain good and useful insights into the nature of materials. (McGrath 2002; Tomlinson 2008). By the same token, most course book authors provide a clear description of their intended subjects, which is particularly helpful in teaching ESP students who expect good materials and course books to help them both in dealing with their future workplace commitments and in providing them with a profound insightfulness regarding their knowledge, leading them to subsequent independence in studying a foreign language (Cunningsworth 1995).

As observed by Hutchinson and Torres (1994) evaluation not only serves the immediate practical aim of selecting teaching materials but also plays a critical role in developing teacher's awareness of certain existing possibilities and assists them with the analysis of their own presuppositions about the nature of language and learning, forcing them into setting their prerequisites and helping them understand materials in terms of essential elements of the whole teaching/learning situation. As a result teachers and material developers will be obliged to make a more systematic and thorough examination of potential course books. Decisions related to course book selection will eventually enhance a multitude of outcomes for learners, instructors, and administrators.

3. Various approaches to evaluating ESP course books

Among different evaluation tools, checklists play an important role in assessing course books especially in ESP courses. At different stages of the course teachers might want to decide if a course book is still suitable, whether its use should be discontinued and another course book should be adopted, as well as if the existing course book requires modifications and how much and often it needs to be supplemented with additional materials.

One major advantage of using the checklist approach is that it can provide a very economic and systematic way to ensure that all relevant items are

considered for evaluation (Cunningworth, 1995; McGrath, 2002). Checklists constitute a good channel for making the evaluators' opinions explicit. When opinions are understandably shown and based on checklists, they can allow for easy comparisons of different sets of course books, and thereby facilitate decision making (McGrath, 2002). Following a quick impressionistic evaluation, detailed checklists can be constructed to perform an in-depth evaluation in order to enable proper examination of their appropriateness in serving the demands of the syllabus and the educational needs of students (Cunningworth, 1995).

Probably the most appropriate way to approach the selection of course books is by looking at the context in which they are going to be used, i.e. analyzing the aims and objectives of the teaching programme as well as the teaching/learning situation, simultaneously bearing in mind the outcomes of the needs analysis carried out beforehand. This will result in a list of requirements to be met by the materials (Cunningworth, 1995: 5). Richards (2001) proposes the following three aspects to be considered, when analysing the context:

1/ The role of course book in the programme

- a) Is there a well-developed curriculum which describes the objectives, syllabus and content of the programme, or will this be determined by the course book?
- b) Will the course book series provide the core of the programme, or is it one of several different books to be used?
- c) Will it be used with small classes or large ones?
- d) Will the learners be expected to buy a workbook as well, or should the course book provide all the practice to meet the students' needs?

2/ The teachers in the programme

- a) How experienced are the teachers in the programme and what is their level of training?
- b) Are they native speakers of English? If not, how well do they speak English?
- c) Do teachers tend to follow the course book closely, or do they use it simply as a resource?
- d) Do teachers play a part in selecting the course books they teach from?
- e) Are teachers free to adapt and supplement the course book?

3/ The learners in the programme:

- a) Is each student required to buy a course book?
- b) What do learners typically expect from a course book?
- c) Will they use the course book in class and at home?
- d) How will they use the course book in class? Is it the primary source of classroom activities?
- e) How much are they prepared to pay for it?

The next stage, as proposed by Cunningsworth (1995: 5), should consist in preparing a list of course books subject to evaluation. This could be achieved by an impressionistic evaluation based on the colleagues' opinions, information from publishers or the teacher's own experience. The resulting shortlist should consist of three to five titles, which will subsequently undergo an in-depth evaluation process using the criteria most relevant to the teacher and learners in question. In the majority of cases these will be the criteria set out in the literature supplemented by those specially devised for a particular purpose, i.e. Business English.

4. Evaluation criteria

Various authors have proposed different sets of criteria to be taken into consideration during the process of extensive course book evaluation. McDonough *et al.* (2003) outline four general statements regarding the process of evaluation, which reveal what a perfect course book should be like:

- 1/ A course book should correspond to a learner's needs and match the aims and objectives of the learning programme.
- 2/ It should reflect the uses (present or future) which learners will make of the language. Hence, it should be chosen in such a way that it helps students use the language effectively for their own purposes.
- 3/ It needs to take account of students' needs as learners and facilitate their learning processes, without dogmatically imposing a rigid "method".
- 4/ It should have a clear role offering support for learning; just like teachers, it mediates between the target language and the learner.

An individual evaluator should take these aspects into consideration and look for their representation in a given course book. In order to obtain information about whether a certain course book fulfils the aforementioned points a systematic set of criteria must be developed or adapted from those already available in the literature.

Effective evaluation relies on asking appropriate questions and interpreting the answers to them. The problem with setting the appropriate criteria is that in most cases course book assessment is a subjective, rule-of-thumb activity, and no neat formula, grid, or system will ever provide a definite yardstick (Sheldon, 1998: 245). Moreover, we cannot be absolutely certain as to what criteria and constraints are actually operational in the ELT context worldwide. Some teachers might even argue that course book selection criteria are often very local (McDonough *et al.* 2003: 66). Hence, Richards (2001:4) states that every evaluator should use a checklist uncritically without any adaptation, and therefore he proposes to formulate questions of course book evaluation around the main issues involved, such as:

- a) programme factors – questions relating to concerns of the programme,
- b) teacher factors – questions relating to teacher concerns,
- c) learner factors – questions relating to learner concerns,
- d) content factors – questions relating to the content and material organization,
- e) pedagogical factors – questions relating to the principles underlying the materials and pedagogical design of materials, including the choice of activities and types of exercises.

Sheldon (1988) asserts that the criteria taken into account when establishing a list of questions or features, the so-called evaluation checklist, should pertain, among other things, to the physical aspect, the course book's methodology, content areas such as language functions, grammar and skills as well as the representation of cultural and gender sensitiveness. On the other hand, McDonough *et al.* (2003: 66) propose an innovative alternative of dividing the evaluation criteria into two stages: an external evaluation which offers a brief 'overview' of the materials from the outside: cover, introduction, and table of contents, which is then followed by a closer and more detailed internal evaluation.

There have also been attempts to summarize the evaluative criteria applied by various authors. Mukundan *et al.* (2011) devised a scheme based on the analysis of a number of checklists available.

Table 1. Course book Evaluation Criteria

General Attributes	Learning-teaching Content	
1. Relation to syllabus and curriculum	1. General	6. Vocabulary
2. Methodology	2. Listening	7. Grammar
3. Suitability to learners	3. Speaking	8. Pronunciation
4. Physical and utilitarian attributes	4. Reading	9. Exercises
5. Supplementary materials	5. Writing	

5. The process of evaluation through checklists

A checklist is a useful tool that helps practitioners in English Language Teaching to evaluate language teaching materials, such as course books, supplementary materials, etc. It allows for a more sophisticated course book evaluation in reference to a set of generalizable evaluative criteria. Checklists may be quantitative or qualitative. Quantitative scales have the merit of allowing

for an objective evaluation of a given course book through some rating scales (Ur 1999). Qualitative checklists, on the other hand, often use open-ended questions to elicit subjective information on the quality of course books (McDonough *et al.* 2003). Most checklists range in number from 25 to as many as 60 questions or relevant statements.

5.1 Quick-reference checklists for evaluation and selection

Cunningsworth (1995: 3-4) provides teachers and evaluators with useful advice and ready-made checklists. There is a quick-reference checklist for evaluation and selection as well as a checklist for specifying aims and analysing a teaching/learning situation, which can be used at a pre-evaluation phase. The author indicates that it is an individual matter how and what we evaluate, and that is why it is very important for the checklists to be suitably adapted. The quick-reference checklist by Cunningsworth contains *yes/no* questions concerning such areas as: aims and approaches, design and organization, language content, skills, topic, methodology, teacher's books, and practical considerations. Each category includes from four to seven questions which gives the total of 45 questions. The checklist seems to be easy to use as an evaluator is asked just to tick the appropriate answer to each question, and then count or analyse the results. Sample questions from the quick-reference checklist have been presented below:

1/ Aims and approaches

- a) Is the course book suited for the learning/teaching situation?
- b) Is the course book flexible? Does it allow for different teaching and learning styles?

2/ Design and organization

- a) What components make up the total course package?
- b) How is the content sequenced (e.g. on the basis of complexity and/or 'learnability')?
- c) Is there adequate recycling and revision?

3/ Language content

- a) Does the book cover the main grammar items appropriate for the level, taking learners' needs into account?
- b) Does the course book include material for pronunciation work? If so, what is covered: individual sounds, word stress, sentence stress, intonation?

4/ Skills

- a) Are all four skills adequately covered, bearing in mind the course aims and syllabus requirements?
- b) Is there material for integrated skills work?

c) Is material for spoken English (role-plays, dialogues, etc.) well-designed to equip students for real-life situations?

5/ Topic

- a) Is there sufficient material of genuine interest to learners?
- b) Will the topics help expand students' awareness and enrich their experience?

6/ Methodology

- a) Does the material include any advice/help to students on study skills and learning strategies?
- b) Are students expected to take a degree of responsibility for their own learning?

7/ Teachers' books

- a) Is there adequate guidance for the teachers who will be using the course book and its supporting materials?
- b) Are keys to exercises given?

8/ Practical considerations

- a) How much does the whole package cost? Does this represent good value for money?
- b) Are the books strong and long-lasting? Are they attractive in appearance?

5.2 Subjective and objective analysis in ESP

Hutchinson and Waters (1987) propose a checklist for ESP course book evaluation which consists of two basic parts, i.e. subjective analysis and objective analysis. The subjective analysis is concerned with answering the question: 'What realizations of the criteria do you want in your course?' whereas the objective analysis seeks the answer to: 'How does the material being evaluated realize the criteria?'. After answering the two questions a matching stage should take place, i.e. a comparison of what is desired and what is realized in a given course book. The checklist consists of 21 questions divided into section A (for subjective analysis) and section B (for objective analysis). All this results in a total of 42 open-ended questions concerning 5 areas: audience, aims, content, methodology and other criteria. The table below gives a picture of the proposed layout.

Table 2. Adapted from Hutchinson and Waters' checklist

Subjective analysis	Objective analysis
Content	
1A What kind of language description do you require? Should it be structural, notional, functional, discourse-based?	1B What type(s) of linguistic description is/are used in the materials?
2A What language points should be covered?	2B What language points do the materials cover?
3A What proportion of work on each macro-skill is desired? Should there be skills-integrated work?	3B What is the proportion of work on each skill? Is there skills-integrated work?
4A What micro-skills are needed?	4B What micro-skills are covered in the material?
5A What text types should be included, e.g. manuals, reports, dialogues,?	5B What kinds of texts are there in the materials?

The authors propose a series of steps to be followed in using the checklist: answering A questions, answering B questions, comparing A and B findings – impressionistically or by awarding points (0 – it does not match the desired feature, 1 – it partly matches the desired feature, 2 – it closely matches the desired feature, etc.) and totalling the scores, which is then followed by an analysis, a making of the choice and a preparation of documentation, as needs be.

In the course of analysing the outcomes one should remember that not only the total number is important but also the rating of the factors according to their importance, as some negative points of a particular course book may be easier to remedy than the others (Hutchinson and Waters, 1987: 97-105).

5.3 Checklists devised for the selection of Business English materials

Ellis and Johnson (1994: 125-130) propose an open-ended checklist for evaluating Business English course books and materials. They suggest looking at the learners who will make use of the book and address the following questions:

- 1/ Are the learners job-experienced or pre-experienced?
- 2/ What sector do the learners work in?
- 3/ What is their level of advancement in language learning?
- 4/ What is their cultural background?
- 5/ What are the course objectives?
- 6/ What is the choice of materials?

7/ What methodology will be most appropriate in their case?

8/ What is the course length?

Another checklist including a more detailed analysis of the teaching situation might look in the following way:

1/ What kind of learners is the material aimed at?

- a) work area
- b) work experience
- c) language level
- d) cultural background
- e) educational background
- f) age
- g) learning style.

2/ What are the main language objectives?

- a) skills
- b) functions
- c) structures
- d) vocabulary

3/ What are the main topic areas covered?

- a) does the material introduce the subject?
- b) does it use the topic as contextual background?
- c) is the coverage of the topic content high in credibility?

4/ What is the main methodological approach?

- a) demonstration of language in context through text, audio or video
- b) explanations of grammatical rules
- c) presentation of functional language
- d) presentation of vocabulary
- e) controlled practice of language
- f) open practice of language
- g) skills development

5/ What is the role of the material?

- a) to present language
- b) to practise language

- c) to provide a resource for the learner
- d) to check or test knowledge

6/ Is the material attractive?

- a) clear layout
- b) good use of space
- c) useful, clear pictures and diagrams
- d) interesting context and tasks.

5.4 External and internal evaluation

As has already been mentioned, McDonough *et al.* (2003: 66) propose to approach the evaluation of course books from two perspectives: external and internal. An evaluator should start with the external evaluation, i.e. the observation of the materials organization in the book using the list of the statements provided below:

- a) the intended audience;
- b) the proficiency level;
- c) the context in which the materials are to be used;
- d) how the language has been presented and organized into teachable units/lessons;
- e) the author's views and methodology and the relationship between the language, the learning process and the learner.

The other issues they consider are whether:

- a) the materials are to be used as the main 'core' course or to be supplementary to it;
- b) a teacher's book is available in print and locally;
- c) a vocabulary list/index is included;
- d) the book contains any visual materials (photographs, charts, diagrams);
- e) the layout and presentation are clear;
- f) the material is culturally biased or specific;
- g) the materials represent a 'balanced' picture of a particular country/society;
- h) audio/video material is included;
- i) tests in the teaching materials (diagnostic, progress, achievement) are offered by the publishing house.

On the other hand, the internal evaluation involves an in-depth assessment of the material, the extent to which the aforementioned factors in the external evaluation stage match up with the internal consistency and organization of the materials as stated by the author/publisher (McDonough *et al.*, 2003: 75).

Teachers should bear in mind the following factors constituting a part of the internal evaluation: the presentation of skills in the materials, their grading and sequencing. In order to analyze these factors, McDonough *et al.* (2003) propose the subsequent questions to be addressed:

- 1/ Where reading skills are involved, is there much in the way of appropriate text beyond the sentence?
- 2/ Where listening skills are involved, are recordings ‘authentic’ or ‘artificial’?
- 3/ Do speaking materials incorporate what we know about the nature of real interaction, or are artificial dialogues offered instead?
- 4/ The relationship of tests and exercises to (a) learner needs, and (b) what is taught by the course materials.
- 5/ Do you feel that the material is suitable for different learning styles? Is a claim and provision made for self-study and is such a claim justified?
- 6/ Are the materials sufficiently ‘transparent’ to motivate both students and teachers alike, or would you foresee a student/teacher mismatch?

These questions seek answers regarding the presentation of the materials, which further helps in their sequencing and grading as per the established psychological principles of learning and teaching.

In addition to the external and internal evaluation, McDonough *et al.* (2003) also propose an overall evaluation of the course book in the light of the factors of usability, generalisability, adaptability, and flexibility.

6. An evaluation sheet proposed for Business English course books

The evaluation of course books is done from the point of view of their use in prospective Business English courses, for both pre-experienced and job-experienced students. Each time a new title is selected it is of great importance that the book be comprehensive and accompanied by guidance in the teacher’s book. Another crucial quality is a clear and interesting layout with good organization of language and skills practice.

In the pre-evaluation phase a detailed checklist needs to be prepared as mentioned earlier by Hutchinson and Waters (1987), Cunningsworth (1995), Richards (2001), McGrath (2002) and McDonough and Shaw (2003). The remarks provided by them reflect the needs of a teacher and prospective learners; therefore they need to be taken into account. The resulting checklist, presented below, was devised in the course of combining the checklists already existing and discussed. Some of the author’s own ideas were also incorporated.

The open-ended question formula was applied to conduct a detailed analysis of a selected course book. Ten main topics were recognized as essential in the evaluation model proposed for Business English materials. Obviously the list may be further expanded in order to meet the expectations and requirements of a

particular course, target groups and teachers. The topics regarded as fundamental by the author are as follows:

- A. General attributes – where the aims of particular course books are addressed, as well as their components, and target groups are indicated;
- B. Design and organization – where the visuals used in the course book are evaluated, as well as the unit organization and layout;
- C. Language content, i.e. how grammar and vocabulary are practised;
- D. Skills and tasks – where a balance between the four skills and types of featured exercises are addressed;
- E. Culture themes and intercultural communication indispensable in business negotiations;
- F. Other relevant topics covered in the course book and related to the professional life of the students;
- G. Methodology – where the methodological approach is discussed;
- H. Teacher's book – how useful it might be and what sort of support it offers;
- I. Practical considerations – where the cost, durability and availability of course books are addressed.
- J. Overall/summary evaluation, which encompasses questions pertaining to the aspects such as: teaching and learning styles a course book allows for, whether it is suitable for self-study, etc.

On the basis of the devised list of covered themes a more elaborated and specific version of checklist in question has been proposed. The total number of questions is 56; however, this might be either extended or reduced depending on the evaluated Business English course book. The questions reflect a compilation of issues addressed by numerous methodologists whose names and works have been cited in the present paper. They are to be used in the order provided below, or any other sequence according to the evaluator's needs and beliefs.

A. General attributes

- 1/ What kind of learners is the course book aimed at: pre-experienced or job-experienced students?
- 2/ Is it meant for a specific working area?
- 3/ Is the course book suited for a group or individual learning situation?
- 4/ What components make up the total course package? Is it necessary for students/teachers to purchase them all?
- 5/ Is a teacher's book in print and locally available?

B. Design and organization

- 1/ Is a vocabulary list/index included?

- 2/ Are there reference sections for grammar etc.?
- 3/ How is the content sequenced (e.g. on the basis of complexity, 'learnability', usefulness)?
- 4/ What visual materials does the book contain (photographs, charts, diagrams)?
- 5/ Are the layout and presentation clear?
- 6/ Are the tests included in the teaching materials (diagnostic, progress, achievement)?
- 7/ Is there adequate recycling and revision?
- 8/ Is it well-organized and can it be used intuitively?

C. Language content

- 1/ Does the course book cover the main grammar items appropriate for the level, taking learners' needs into account?
- 2/ Is the material for vocabulary teaching adequate in quantity and range?
- 3/ Is the Business English vocabulary clearly introduced?
- 4/ Is vocabulary practice sufficient for the students?
- 5/ Is there any material for pronunciation work included?
- 6/ Does the course book deal with structuring and conventions of language use above sentence level (are tips given on how to structure conversations or various genres of writing)?
- 7/ Are style and appropriacy considered? Is language matched to a social situation?

D. Skills and tasks

- 1/ Are all four skills adequately covered?
- 2/ Is there material for integrated skills work?
- 3/ Is material for spoken English (role-plays, dialogues, etc.) well-designed to equip students for real-life situations?
- 4/ Are the speaking activities developed to initiate meaningful communication?
- 5/ Are the speaking activities balanced between individual response, pair work and group work?
- 6/ Are the speaking activities adequate for business people?
- 7/ Are the readings suitable for students at the proper level?
- 8/ Are the readings interesting and authentic?
- 9/ Is the listening material of good quality, authentic, accompanied by background information and various tasks?
- 10/ Do the writing tasks have achievable goals and take learners' abilities into consideration?
- 11/ Are all genres of writing present in business context well-practised?
- 12/ Are the task instructions clear?

E. Culture themes and intercultural communication

- 1/ Is there cultural content added in the texts/activities?
- 2/ Do the activities raise cultural awareness of students?
- 3/ Are the exercises, texts and recordings adequate in terms of developing learners' intercultural communicative competence?
- 4/ Do the activities and exercises offer sufficient practice for business-related environment?

F. Other relevant topics

- 1/ Is there sufficient material of interest to learners?
- 2/ Are all the main topic areas covered?
- 3/ Are the presented topics relevant to the professional life of the students?
- 4/ Will the topics help expand students' awareness and enrich their experience?

G. Methodology

- 1/ Can the activities be exploited fully? Do they embrace a variety of methodologies in ELT?
- 2/ Does the material include any advice to students on study skills and learning strategies?
- 3/ Are students expected to take a degree of responsibility for their own learning?

H. Teacher's book

- 1/ Is there adequate guidance for teachers who will be using the course book and its supporting materials?
- 2/ Are keys to exercises given?
- 3/ Are there any additional photocopiable activities/exercises included?
- 4/ Are tests incorporated into the teacher's book?

I. Practical considerations

- 1/ What do the book and supplementary material cost? Does this represent good value for money?
- 2/ Are the books strong and long-lasting?
- 3/ Are they attractive in appearance?

J. Overall evaluation

- 1/ Is the course book comprehensive enough to make up the syllabus of a

course?

2/ Can the materials be used as core or supplementary?

3/ Is the book a sufficient resource for learners and teachers?

4/ Is the course book flexible? Is it possible to omit some units or use them in a different order?

5/ Does the course book allow for different teaching and learning styles?

6/ Is some of the material suitable for self-study?

7. Concluding remarks

ESP is designed for a particular group of people in a specific context. The materials used are related to the learners' specialized field of study. One of the factors which is of utmost importance in language learning in general and ESP in particular is to see whether course books and other materials are useful for the purpose of the course or not. The aim of the paper was to offer a comprehensive list of issues to be addressed when selecting a Business English course book. On the basis of the produced list of questions a thorough analysis of available materials can be conducted. It should be stressed that there might still be some aspects pertaining to the course book evaluation process, which have not yet been touched upon in the present article. Very interesting conclusions could probably be drawn on the basis of the in-use or post-use evaluation stage as they would offer an interesting dimension of the practical application of course books in question. The author's main aim was to highlight that Business English course books used at any level of advancement vary with regard to their content upon which evaluation sheets or checklists should be structured and produced. This indicates that their evaluation is a crucial component of planning and designing a successful Business English course. One must understand that evaluation is basically a matching process, which concerns matching learners' needs to available solutions. Through analysis and assessment of ESP course books, a much more promising and desirable approach to a theory of ESP is addressed.

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