

---

## An Evaluation of English for Nursing Textbooks as Perceived by Teachers and Students at an Applied Medical College in Saudi Arabia

Eyad Ahmad AlMithqal

ESP instructor, AlGhad International Colleges for Applied Medical Sciences, KSA

Corresponding Author: Eyad Ahmad AlMithqal, E-mail: eyadmalaysia@yahoo.com

---

### ARTICLE INFO

Received: April 09, 2019

Accepted: May 02, 2019

Published: May 31, 2019

Volume: 1

Issue: 3

---

### KEYWORDS

*Learners' and teachers' perceptions, Learning English for Specific Purposes ESP, English for medical purposes EMP, evaluation, Saudi Arabia*

### ABSTRACT

Textbooks play an imperative role in transferring knowledge between teachers and students in educational practices all over the globe. Textbook evaluation is also considered as a great significance as it provides a better understanding of the specific nature in the teaching and learning environment. To this aim, the current study was an attempt to evaluate instructors and learners' perspectives of their EMP textbooks and also to investigate the weaknesses and strengths that they may have in the process of teaching these textbooks with some practical suggestions in improving the textbook as the medical schools in Saudi Arabia are considered as a traditional educational environment. To gather the necessary data, two research methods were employed (a questionnaire and an interview). 80 medical students (level 1 and 2) answered 29- items questionnaire to express their perceptions towards different aspects of their EMP textbook and 5 teachers participated in the interview to gain in-depth information about the strengths and shortcomings in the adopted textbook. The findings revealed that the students' responses to all questions indicated positive attitudes towards the content, suitability of the textbook for their levels and needs, the appropriateness of the size, durability, the authenticity of the textbook, sufficient variety in the topics and relevance to their medical studies. Activities included the development of higher-level thinking skills and the grammar and vocabulary points were presented with brief and easy examples and explanations. Most teachers considered the EMP textbooks (English for nursing series) are effective in terms of the layout and design, a variety of activities, promoting higher-level thinking skills and problem-solving, relevance to medical sciences, suitability of student abilities, interests, and learning styles, authenticity, and encouraging sufficient communicative and meaningful practice. Appropriate balance of language skills like reading, listening and speaking. However, the shortcomings were clear in terms of the loss of creativity, originality, and independence; the tasks were not interesting and the weight of technical writing was below expected like writing medical reports, graphs and presenting cases as the textbooks were not seen to support the writing tasks needed in a restricted setting including the health care industry. Some practical suggestions included containing extra activities focusing on multilevel of students. The book name also seems to be designed only for nursing specialists, not for other medical related specialists. Moreover, it would be better if the book provided an appropriate balance of the four skills as it seems that there were limited writing activities. The textbook should be provided with a digital version and the listening audio script should be removed from the book which becomes more reading than listening.

---

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Among various significant elements of educational environments, for example, instructors, students, and materials, course books are the most vital components that are utilized by instructors and students. Essentially, Hutchinson and Torres (1994) proposed that the textbook is an almost universal element of English language teaching and no teaching- learning situation can be complete without adopting an appropriate textbook. Textbooks serve as the crucial instrument in shaping knowledge, attitudes, and principles of the learners (Nooreen& Arshad, 2014). As

indicated by Richards and Renandya (2002) course books are imperative as they present a particular framework that both instructors and learners can follow.

Within the ESP paradigm, research on textbook evaluation is quite a new phenomenon and in EMP textbooks still appears to be newborn. EMP materials, in particular, (textbooks) play a very significant role in many language classrooms but in recent years there has been a lot of discussion throughout the ELT profession on the particular role of materials in teaching English as a Second/Foreign Language (Litz, 2005). The choice of language teaching materials can determine the quality of learning-teaching situation. Therefore, most attention must be paid to evaluate such materials based on valid and reliable instruments (Mukundan, Nimehchisalem & Hajimohammadi, 2011).

As far as choosing ESP materials is concerned, Cunningsworth (1995) stated that careful selection has to be made and the selected materials should reflect the main aims, teaching methods, the values of the teaching program and students needs. Vičič (2011) argued that ESP is principally student-centered, and accordingly students' consideration should be at the highest priority of the list of selected criteria. Moreover, the level of language knowledge that the students have already acquired and the target level they will need to communicate successfully in their jobs should be taken into account. Riazi (2003) argued that textbooks play a very vital role in the sphere of language teaching and learning and they are regarded as the next significant factors in the foreign and second language classroom after the teacher. McGrath (2002) stated that the main aim of writing books is to be relevant to a large number of students and also to the different range of teaching and learning contexts. According to him, no one book can be perfect for a particular institution, let alone a particular class within that institution or an individual within a class. Ellis (1997) believed that textbook evaluation provides teachers in acquiring a whole picture towards accurate, systematic, useful and contextual insights into the total nature of textbook materials, and it assists them moving towards vague assessments.

Since ESP textbooks play a crucial role, the necessity for rethinking and redesigning the existing ESP textbooks should be an indispensable step in enhancing the position of ESP in Saudi academic context. Despite the increasing growth of ESP textbooks, it does not seem that the systematic evaluation, as well as an assessment of their qualitative features, has gained enough attention. In other words, it seems that little research has made an effort to evaluate this particular ESP textbook for medical students, namely, English for nursing 1 and 2. Therefore, the present study is an attempt to investigate students' perceptions toward their EMP textbooks. This study is also aimed at finding out the strengths and weaknesses of the adopted textbook series and providing practical suggestions to enhance the effectiveness of the taught textbook at applied medical college.

### ***1.1 Significance of the study***

This study is undertaken for many different reasons. The first one, evaluation is considered as an increasingly recognized subject as the main part of the policy-making decision and the implementation of educational programs. The second reason is that Saudi Arabia has invested very large resources in improving English language programs at tertiary levels in recent years. Expectations have been very high but very little published information exists on the context of what expectations have been met. The third one is the shortage of research in the field of course evaluation with reference to Saudi Arabia has been conducted so far. I think that such an evaluation to the course may lead to the identification of the strengths and weaknesses of the English program in the college, fundamental for development, upgrading and decision - making purposes. The last one, as an English lecturer for more than 10 years, I am pretty aware of the biggest number of difficulties and problems allied with the attempt to improve students' levels in English language and the quality of teaching English in Medical Sciences colleges in Saudi Arabia. This research is considered as a new contribution to spotting light on the different problems encountered by the stakeholders in both the process of teaching and learning English language.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

One of the most significant issues that have to be taken into consideration in language learning in general and ESP, in particular, is to study and investigate if the textbooks are appropriate for the given course and for a specific group in a specific context or not. For this, knowing the learners and teachers' perspectives on their ESP textbooks can afford a foundation for material evaluation. English for Nursing 1 and 2 is one of the series that is widely used ESP textbooks in the medical field in Saudi academic field. Since this series was produced to meet the definite needs of British students of Medicine, it seems very important to investigate whether it is effective and useful from Saudi students and instructors' perspectives. Cunningsworth (1995) claimed that textbooks play an essential part in providing teachers with different activities to be practiced in communicative and integration practices and engaging

them in and out of the classroom language activities, being a source of inspiration and stimulation through self-access and self-learning of activities and working as a useful guide for teachers with less experience in managing the class and keeping it in the right track. Moreover, he adds that evaluation of textbooks not only helps teachers in developing themselves but also helps them in gaining useful and valuable insights into the nature of materials. Furthermore, it is valuable in recognizing the suitability of the textbooks for students.

### **2.1 Textbook evaluation in the global context**

A good example of such research comes from Litz (2005) in South Korea where he carried out a study in which he evaluated English firsthand 2 employed for all EFL classes (beginners level) in the tertiary context in one of Suwon universities. The main objective of the study was to investigate its suitability for the language program. Two research data were used from 8 teachers and 500 students by using two-course book evaluation questionnaire and one survey. The results revealed that the shortcomings of the textbook were few and overshadowed by a lot of advantages. The textbook is thought by Litz to be suitable for many English teachers and learners. It provided a great number of supplementary materials. The objectives in the textbooks were clear and concise and the textbook was communicative on the whole. The four skills were integrated in the textbook and the grammar and vocabulary items were offered on the basis of students levels.

In the Greek context, Koutouzi (2013) carried out a study under the title of "*Analysis and Evaluation of English 6th Grade textbook used in Greek public Schools*". The main objective was to examine the suitability of the taught textbook prepared for the primary 6th Grade English learners at Greek state schools. The findings found that the positive points in the textbook could be summarized in terms of organization, thematic content, and availability of all language skills. However, the negative areas can be identified in the authenticity, the nature of tasks, activities and the used materials for assessment.

In another study conducted in Iranian context carried out by Arani (2004), the requirements of language learning of medical students at the University of Kashan for medical sciences was investigated. The learners' perspectives about learning English as a university course was the objective of this study. The sample of this study was 45 medical students who attended the university in the first and second semester of the first year of study. For collecting the data, different questionnaires were used through different students at the beginning, in the middle and at the end of the medical English course. The outcomes indicated that most of the subjects had positive attitudes towards both learning and teaching English language. The results revealed that the majority of subjects in the medical textbook had positive feedback from both teachers and learners perspectives in terms of activities, layout and design, skills focus and authenticity.

In the same context, Atai (2008) evaluated English for Specific Academic Purposes of computer science. The participants were students in computer science engineering department. The findings revealed that the written skills and language items were in high value from the perspectives of students' side; however, there were some shortcomings with speaking, reading, listening, and writing skills

In the Pakistani context, Perveen (2011) evaluated the curriculum of English program at the primary level on the basis of the educational policies and plans in Pakistani institutions. The objectives of the curriculum were investigated and different educational policies and plans regarding the achievements of objectives were analyzed. The findings showed that the main objectives of the curriculum were not achievable and measurable and the implementation of plans and policies in regards to the curriculum stayed weak. In a different study, Aftab et al (2014), investigated and evaluated the textbook, namely, "Prose and Heroes". The findings revealed that teachers and students were satisfied with the textbook and was compatible with their expectations. The study was exploratory and descriptive and the main objective was to improve the English language program in Pakistani colleges.

### **2.2 Textbook evaluation in the Saudi context**

Studies in the context of Saudi Arabia were numerous in evaluating general English language textbooks. At a male Saudi context, for example, Al-Amri (2008) carried out a study in which he evaluated the Sixth Grade English language Textbook for Saudi boys' schools. Through using a survey questionnaire to investigate the perspectives of 93 English language teachers and 11 supervisors in Riyadh Educational Zone about the textbook in question, the results revealed that students were in favor of the textbook excluding the methods of teaching and some other items. In the same context, Al-Saif (2005) carried out a study under the title of "*an evaluation of the textbook of English for 6th grade in Saudi elementary schools*". The main objective of the study was to investigate the strengths and the weaknesses of the English textbook with specific emphasis on its suitability to teachers, social contexts and young

learners. The participants of the study were 144 males and 149 females' English teachers, supervisors, and trainers who participated in training English language teachers. A questionnaire was used with 93 specific criteria with different categories like objectives, language skills, grammar, teaching aids, methodology, content, rationales and etc. The findings revealed that the main distribution of date in the textbook was not conclusive and was only moderately adequate. Moreover, the results found that the textbook required constant and cyclical evaluation on the basis of the changing circumstances of the program.

In the ESP context, Habtoor (2012) carried out a study to evaluate English for tourism textbook taught to university students at the faculty of tourism and archaeology at King Saud University, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. The results revealed that the teachers' perspectives on the first class textbook on the basis of its practicality, the subject, its activities, the four main skills, and sub-skills (grammar and vocabulary). Moreover, it examined the suitability of the textbook in regards to students' levels and their needs. The findings showed that the textbook matched instructors' expectations about the progression of their students in learning English for tourism and also the results found that there was a positive feeling among teachers on the suitability of the textbook for the students' levels and needs.

Despite the thorough literature on such a topic about textbook evaluation in the Arab World (Saudi Arabia is a case in point), one can hardly ever find a research study with respect to the evaluation of ESP textbooks of applied health sciences majors. Therefore, it remains a challenge to select an appropriate ESP textbook in this case. Since this is the first study that is focused on the ESP textbook of medical science majors taught at AL-Ghad International Colleges for Applied Medical Sciences. This study seeks to uncover reality over the evaluation of English for nursing series (1 & 2) at AL-Ghad International College for Medical Applied Sciences. In this way, the study shifts focus from evaluating general English textbooks to students and teachers perceptions of EMP textbooks, a thing which has been rarely discussed and researched in ESP contexts, in general, and in Saudi Arabia, in particular. Consequently, the current study seeks to find out answers to the following questions:

1. **How do the ESP students at applied medical college called GC (for anonymity) perceive the effectiveness of English for nursing series (1&2)?**
2. **What are the strengths and weaknesses of EMP textbooks as perceived by ESP teachers at applied medical college in term of layout and design, subject and content, skills focus, practical considerations, and goals?**
3. **What are the suggestions for improving the EMP textbook as perceived by ESP teachers at applied medical college?**

### 3. METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 Context and Participants of the Study

The target population of this study was undergraduate students majoring in medical sciences at AL-Ghad International College for Applied Medical Sciences who study Radiology, Nursing, EMS, Medical Laboratory and Health Administration. The students were enrolled as level one and level two during the second semester of 2018/2019. They were supposed to study 36 credit hours (approximately 11 courses) during their first year of study at the foundation year department. Two English courses have to be taken in the first year, namely, *English for Medical Purposes 1/EMP101* and *English for Medical Purposes 2/ EMP102* offered at both Level 1 and Level 2, respectively. These two English courses were of 15 credit hours (8 hours for EMP101 and 7 hours for EMP102) and taught 20 hours and 14 hours per week for EMP101 and EMP102, respectively. Table 1 gives details about these English courses taught to Preparatory Year students at the college.

#### [Table 1: Information about the two English courses given at the College]

The respondents' age level approximately ranges between 18 and 24 years old. The selection of the students in question is based on the fact that they are exposed to L1 and L2 simultaneously at this level of education. All of them share similar characteristics including educational and cultural backgrounds, mother tongue (Arabic), and familiarity with the local educational system. Also, 5 teachers will be selected to participate in the study's interviewing protocol to investigate their perceptions of the weaknesses and strengths of the taught book. All of them are teaching English language in the department of Preparatory Year Department at AL-Ghad International College for Applied Medical Sciences.

The total number of students in both male and female college branches were approximately, 94 males (39%) and 148 females (61%). However, only males participated in this study as it is easier for the researcher to conduct the study among males. In contrast, the total number of the English instructors was 16 (6 males and 10 females), and

they were of different teaching experiences that ranged between 3 and 18 years of teaching English as a foreign language but with an experience average range of 5 years teaching ESP courses at the college. Only male teachers participated in the interview. They were of different nationalities including Jordan, Egypt, and Pakistan.

The samples of the study were selected randomly to include 90 students (98% of the students' population) and 5 instructors (100%) from the male branch. The instructors were of different nationalities including Jordan, Egypt, and Pakistan. Most of these teachers (4 teachers) were Arabic-English bilinguals, and only one teacher was non-Arabs from the above mentioned non-Arab countries (Pakistan).

The student participants included 80 males, and they were all distributed as 32 students (40.7%) in Level 1 and 48 students (59.3%) in Level 2. The instructor participants were selected from the male branch and all of them have more than 5 years experience in teaching the same textbook. Three of them had a master in Applied Linguistics and two had a Ph.D. degree in English language teaching.

### [Table 2: Instructors' experiences in teaching EFL and ESP]

### 3.2 Instruments and data collection

#### 3.2.1. Questionnaire

The main instrument, which is found appropriate for the purposes of the present research, is the questionnaire. It is a structured questionnaire to check students' perceptions of the EMP textbooks at AL-Ghad International College for Applied Medical Sciences. This questionnaire has been adapted from Salehi et al (2015) and modified by the researcher to suit the context of the study. The first part of the students and teachers' questionnaire was under the title of demographic information. The second part of the questionnaire included phrases to obtain some information about the different aspects of the Medical ESP textbook such as content and exercises, topics, skills and strategies, teaching and learning methodologies and there were some other items about their general attitudes towards the ESP book. All of the items in these parts were designed on a five-point Likert scale of frequency which ranges from strongly agree to strongly disagree. It was administered in English and Arabic to suit students' levels. It included 29 five-point Likert-scaled items where respondents were required to answer each question in a closed-ended format that ranged from 5 corresponding *Strongly Disagree* to 1 representing *Strongly Agree*. in which 1 = strong 1 = strongly agree, 2 = agree, 3 = undecided, 4 = disagree, and 5 = strongly disagree. These sections included 29 items. Moreover, the questionnaire was distributed among the students by the researchers themselves (as they were instructors at the same college) to be collected back the day after. 90 questionnaires returned back, but the researchers deemed to discard 10 questionnaires as they included incomplete answers which, if included in the analysis, might distort the results.

#### 3.2.2. Interview

The interview was structured to include two questions that would allow the instructors to state their perceptions as regards the weaknesses and strengths of English for Nursing 1 and 2 series and provide practical suggestions for the improvement of the textbook. The interviews were 15-minutes' long and were conducted in English at the instructors' available time and pace and according to a previously-agreed schedule. Structured interviews are said to be more appropriate in settings where participants have limited time to participate in research (Fraenkel & Wallen 2010; Sakaran 2003). As this applies to the research context where the instructors; besides other managerial duties, had to teach approximately 4 hours a day, the researchers thought structured interviews would save their time and effort.

### 3.3 Materials

English for Nursing 1 & 2 are the names of the textbooks this survey aims to evaluate and consider the perceptions of ESP instructors and learners towards the effectiveness of these textbooks. These courses were designed as specialized books for medical learners at AL-Ghad International Colleges for Applied Medical Sciences. This series was written by Ros Wright and Bethany Cagnol in 2012. English for nursing 1 is taught to students in the first semester as a communicative –oriented English language course (approximately 300 contact hours) which prepares students in the first year to successfully communicate in real- life situations, as well as in medical contexts. It aims to provide them with rich, high-frequency vocabulary and explicit grammar syllabus to achieve such goals. It also builds cultural awareness and develops proficiency level across the four skills from A1 to A2 via explicit presentation of grammar, vocabulary, reading texts, social exchange in conversations, listing activities related to both general and medical topics. English for nursing 2 is taught to students in the second semester as a communicative oriented course (210 contact hours) which prepares students to interact successfully in real medical

as well as in daily life situations. It aims to provide them with special medical vocabulary and terminology in addition to specific skills required to operate successfully in a medical setting such as a hospital or a lab. It also builds cultural awareness of the variety of English spoken by diverse speakers to create cultural fluency of the language, develops proficiency level across the four skills from A2 to B1 via explicit presentation of grammar, vocabulary and medical terms. (*Scheme of Work, English language centre, Riyadh- Saudi Arabia 2018-2019*).

### 3.4. Data analysis

As this study seeks to implement both qualitative and quantitative data collection methods and approaches, the raw data obtained will be differently analyzed depending on the nature of data. For example, quantitative data from questionnaires were analyzed by using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences Spearman (SPSS). These results were tabulated and decoded in terms of numbers, percentages, means, standard deviations, and other programmed statistical tests that serve validation and correlation purposes. Unlike quantitative data, qualitative data obtained by means of interviews. The statistical results including means were discussed according to a scale of three degrees (low, moderate and high) to show how negatively (high degree) or positively (low degree) the students perceptions toward the medical textbook namely English for nursing series. These degrees are used according to mean ranges as follows:

- Low (1- 2.33)
- Intermediate (2.34- 3.68)
- High (3.69- 5)

In relation to the objectives of this study, some ethical steps were taken during the research process. First, the respondents in this study were informed that their ethnicity and identity should not be revealed to ensure confidentiality. Second, their names were kept confidential and nobody has access to the data except the researcher. They were assured that the results of this study were for empirical investigation purposes only and their participation has no means of any negative implications on them.

## 4. RESULTS

### 4.1 Analysis of the questionnaire

This section states the general perceptions of the students. The first part starts with students responses to the questionnaire and then followed by teachers' perceptions toward the textbooks through using the interview.

The statistical results show that all students across their college level positively evaluated the textbook (English for nursing series). This was evident by the high total mean score (3.85) and standard deviation (0.95) across all of the survey questions. Table 3 gives reference to their total scores.

#### [Table 3: Total mean and standard deviation across all questions]

The students' responses to all questions indicated positive attitudes towards the content, suitability of the textbook for their levels and needs, the appropriateness of the size, durability, the authenticity of the textbook, sufficient variety in the topics and relevance to students' medical studies. Activities included guided questions that encourage the development of higher-level thinking skills. The grammar and vocabulary points were presented with brief and easy examples and explanations. This can be clearly seen from the findings represented by the means and standard deviation for each question in the given table below.

#### [Table 4: Means and Standard deviations of students' responses of all questions]

As described in Table 4, almost all of the questions scored high means ranging from 3.68 to 4.01 and with standard deviations ranging between 0.53 and 1.34. Only Question item number 29 scored a moderate degree with a mean score of 3.47.

### 4.2 Teachers' perspectives

EFL teachers provided some insightful views as regards their perceptions towards the effectiveness of EMP textbook, namely English for nursing (1 & 2).

The results of teachers' interview related to the activities part revealed that the majority of them agreed that the activities didn't promote creative, original, and independent responses and didn't match student abilities, interests

and their learning styles. Moreover, they didn't encourage the development of higher-level thinking skills. However, some of them agreed that the activities incorporated individual pair, and group work and the activities encouraged sufficient communicative and meaningful practice.

In terms of layout and design, the findings of the interview showed that the majority of the teachers were satisfied with the layout and design of the textbook series. The objectives in the textbooks were clear and concise as each unit is accompanied by main aims and four lessons. One shortcoming was clear from teachers responses was that no quizzes or testing suggestions are included so the result that the students will not have enough opportunity to evaluate themselves.

Regarding the subject and content, the majority of the participants thought that the content of the textbooks are relevant to students' medical studies and raises learners' interest in further English language study. Moreover, the textbooks indicated efficient use of visual aids (maps, graphs, and pictures) where they were accurate and well integrated into the texts. The respondents stated that there was sufficient variety in the topics of the textbooks. One shortcoming was about the topics as they didn't allow students to think critically.

In terms of integration of skills, it was clear from the respondents' answers that the textbooks provided an appropriate balance of language skills like reading, listening and speaking. One shortcoming was about the weight of technical writing as it was below expected like writing medical reports, graphs and presenting cases as the textbooks were not seen to support the writing tasks needed in a restricted setting including the health care industry.

Regarding the types of language, practical considerations and authenticity of the textbooks employed in the textbooks, the majority of teachers stated that the materials are realistic and authentic. The grammar and vocabulary items are appropriate for students' levels. The textbooks are accompanied by a CD which includes natural sounding tracks for American and British accents, listening tracks, vocabulary items, and teacher's manual and audio script. Examples of their responses in the interview are given as follows.

**[Table 5: Quotes representing teachers' perceptions towards the effectiveness of the EMP textbooks]**

## **5. DISCUSSION**

In the following, each research question is presented and discussed thoroughly.

### ***5.1 Students perceptions toward the effectiveness of English for nursing series***

In terms of content, activities, coverage of the four skills, durability, relevance to the medical field, students had an agreement with contextualizing language items in English for nursing series (1 &2). The findings regarding content from students' perspective were in line with the results of Al-Amri (2008) who evaluated the Sixth Grade English language Textbook for Saudi boys' schools. In his study, most of English language teachers and supervisors in Riyadh Educational Zone agreed that students were in favor of the textbook excluding the methods of teaching and some other items. Furthermore, the findings of this study were compatible with the study of Arani (2004) who investigated the requirements of language learning of medical students at the University of Kashan for medical sciences. The outcomes indicated that the majority of subjects in the medical textbook had positive feedback from both teachers and learners perspectives.

### ***5.2 Teachers' perceptions***

The findings of the interviews were employed in extracting the strengths and shortcomings of the EMP textbooks (English for Nursing 1 &2). In the case of English for nursing 1 and 2, the teachers expressed their satisfaction with approximately most parts of the textbook including content, grammar and vocabulary items, the suitability of textbook series for the students' levels and students' needs, integration of the four skills and visuals, methodology, encouraging higher level of thinking and problem solving skills, etc. On the other hand, some of them mentioned some demerits for the textbook regarding the loss of creativity, originality, and independence, the tasks are not interesting and the weight of technical writing is below expected and no supplementary materials and DVD were accompanied by the textbook series. The results of this study are in line with the findings of Habtoor (2012) who evaluated English for tourism textbook taught to university students at the faculty of tourism and archaeology at King Saud University, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. The results revealed that the teachers perspectives on the first class textbook on the basis of its practicality, the subject, its activities, the four main skills, and sub-skills (grammar and vocabulary) and the suitability of the textbook in regards to students' levels and their needs. The findings showed

that the textbook matched instructors' expectations about the progression of their students in learning English for tourism and also the results found that there was a positive feeling among teachers on the suitability of the textbook for the students' levels and needs. Moreover, such findings are consistent with Koutzi (2010) who evaluated "*English 6th Grade textbook used in Greek public Schools*". The findings found that the positive points in the textbook could be summarized in terms of organization, thematic content, and availability of all language skills. However, the negative areas can be identified in the authenticity, integrated skills, the nature of tasks, activities and the used materials for assessment.

### **5.3 Suggestions for improving the EMP textbook as perceived by ESP teachers.**

Some practical suggestions were presented by ESP teachers to improve the effectiveness of the textbook and tackle some problems and drawbacks. To do so, it was advisable to contain extra activities focusing on multilevel of students. The book name also seemed to be designed only for nursing specialists, not for other medical related specialists. Moreover, it would be better if the book provided an appropriate balance of the four skills as it seems that there were limited writing activities. The textbook should be provided with a digital version of the book and they should remove the listening audio script given at the end of the book which becomes more reading than listening. Therefore, students can easily get the answers without paying attention to listening as they get busy with them while they are listening or don't listen because they can get the answers from the scripts. Busy teachers with hectic schedules find it difficult to get handouts or worksheets related to the content of the books and consequently it will be very helpful to provide online activities and other evaluation materials. Furthermore, it was suggested to add a grammar booster as a good idea to be like a reference for the students. The course book lacked the media flavor; having it in an interactive version will definitely make it easy for teachers and students to follow and highlight what needs to be focused on for reinforcement. Practical considerations such as DVD including medically video- related sketches will help learning-teaching more effective. Interactive activities to strengthen all skills might be a good source for training and self - assessment. The book lacks the review part which allows students and teachers to revise content after each lesson or unit. It could also help students to assess their abilities with can-do statement. Finally, preview and review sections will be a great addition to the books to get the students involved and be able to wrap up each unit.

### **[Table6: Quotes representing teachers' suggestions towards the improvement of the EMP textbooks]**

## **6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Unlike previous research conducted on the same topic, this research took a different angle as this research shifts focus to gather perceptual data for the sake of evaluating the abovementioned textbook from those who are experiencing them who could better talk about them and provide suggestions for improving these textbooks. Therefore, the main aim was to examine teachers' and students' perceptions towards evaluating EMP textbooks, namely, English for nursing series 1 and 2 at AL-Ghad International College for applied medical Sciences in Saudi Arabia- Dammam boys branch during the academic year 2018/2019 specifically in the second semester. The study also investigated the weaknesses and strengths of the textbook series by the teachers and provided some practical suggestions in enhancing the textbooks. An ethnographic approach to data collection was employed by using a questionnaire and interviews to collect data and answer the research questions. The results revealed that the students' responses to all questions indicated positive attitudes towards the content, suitability of the textbook for their levels and needs, the appropriateness of the size, durability, the authenticity of the textbook, sufficient a variety in the topics and relevance to students' medical studies. The designed activities included guided questions that encouraged the development of higher-level thinking skills. The grammar and vocabulary points were introduced briefly and easy to understand examples and explanations. Most teachers considered the EMP textbooks (English for nursing series) are effective in terms of durability, a variety of activities, level of complexity, promoting higher-level thinking skills and problem, relevance to medical sciences, suitability of student abilities, interests, and learning styles, authenticity, appropriateness of the size, and encouraging sufficient communicative and meaningful practice. However, the shortcomings were clear in terms of the loss of creativity, originality, and independence; the tasks are not interesting and the weight of technical writing was below expected like writing medical reports, graphs and presenting cases as the textbooks were not seen to support the writing tasks needed in a restricted setting including the health care industry.

The study is restricted in terms of evaluating of EMP textbooks, namely, English for Nursing (1 & 2) and the perceptions of only students and teachers at AL-Ghad International Colleges of Applied Medical Sciences as they



are experiencing it and the closest part to it. Considering the attitudes of other participants (i.e. curriculum designers, EFL coordinators, teacher trainers, book editors, syllabus designers etc.) in perception-based research and using multiple data collection techniques such as checklist, focus groups, document analysis, rating scale, observation, teachers' blogs and written reflections, would add credit to data triangulation and reliability of the results.

Carrying out further research on Evaluating ESP textbooks, in general, or EMP, in particular, would play a crucial role in the success of learning any language course. Knowing teachers and students perceptions toward the textbook would give the chance of better understanding for course designers and syllabus designers to take into consideration what must be or not be included in the textbooks. Research might be promising when it shifts focus from textbook evaluation to program evaluation.

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We would like to express our gratitude to the editor, anonymous reviewers, and colleagues and students at AlGhad Colleges for Applied Medical Sciences, Dammam Branch, KSA, for their insightful comments and suggestions.

#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR)

**Eyad Ahmad AlMithqal:** An ESP instructor at AlGhad International Colleges for Applied Medical Sciences in Dammam, Saudi Arabia. His research interests are language learning, phonetics and phonology, textbook evaluation, translanguaging and classroom-based research.

#### REFERENCES

- [1] Aftab, A., Sheikh, A., & William, I. (2014). An Evaluation of English as a second language (ESL). In *Pakistani college textbook: Meeting the needs of Pakistani students*.
- [2] Al-Amri, Abdulrahman. (2008). An Evaluation of the Sixth Grade English language Textbook for Saudi Boys' Schools. Unpublished Master Thesis, College of Arts, Department of English, King Saud University, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.
- [3] Al-Saif, Abdullah. (2005). An evaluation of the TEFL textbook for the 6th Elementary Class in Saudi Arabia. Unpublished MA thesis, Essex University, UK.
- [4] Arani, J. (2004). Issues of learning EMP at university: An analysis of students' perspectives. *Karan's Linguistics Issues*.
- [5] Atai, M. R. (2008). Revisiting the status of CALL and ESAP in Iran: Potentials and obstacles. In *XVII Symposium on languages for specific purposes: Methods and aims*, University of Aarhus, Denmark.
- [6] Cunningsworth, A. (1995). *Choosing your course book*. Oxford: Heinemann
- [7] Dudley-Evans, T., & St. John, M.-J. (1998). *Developments in English for Specific Purposes: A multi-disciplinary approach*. Cambridge University Press.
- [8] Ellis, R. (1997). The empirical evaluation of language teaching materials. *ELT journal*, 51(1), 36-42.
- [9] Habtoor, H. A. (2012). English for specific purpose textbook in EFL milieu: An instructor's perspective evaluation. *International Journal of Linguistics*, 4(3), 44.
- [10] Hutchinson, T., & Waters, A. (1987). *English for specific purposes: A learning-centered approach*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- [11] Hutchinson, T., & Torres, E. (1994). The textbook as agent of change. *ELT Journal*, 48(4), 315- 327.
- [12] Koutzi, R. (2013). "Analysis and Evaluation of English 6th grade textbook used in Greek public Schools". University of Cyprus, Cyprus, Greek.

- [13] Litz, D. R. A. (2005). Textbook evaluation and ELT management: A South Korean case study. *Asian EFL Journal*.
- [14] McGrath, I. (2002). *Materials Evaluation and Design for Language Teaching Edinburgh Textbooks in Applied Linguistics*. Edinburgh University Press.
- [15] Mukundan, J., Hajimohammadi, R., & Nimehchisalem, V. (2011). Developing an English Language Textbook Evaluation Checklist. *Contemporary Issues in Education Research*, 4(6), 21-28.
- [16] Nooreen, N., & Arshad, A. S. (2014). Examining the importance of EST and ESL textbooks and materials: Objectives, content and form. *English for Specific Purposes World*, 9(4).
- [17] Riazi, A. M. (2003). What do textbook evaluation schemes tell us? A study of the textbook evaluation schemes of three decades. *Anthology Series-Seameo Regional Language Centre*, 52-69.
- [18] Richards, J. C. & W.A. Renandya. (Eds.). (2002). *Methodology in Language Teaching: An Anthology of Current Practice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- [19] Richards JC, Schmidt R. 2010. *Longman Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics (4th Edition)*. London: Longman.
- [20] Soozandehfar, S. M. A., & Sahragard, R. (2011). A textbook evaluation of speech acts and language functions in Top-Notch series. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 1(12), 1831-1838.
- [21] Symonds, M. S., Wright, R., & Cagnol, B. (2011). *English for Nursing: Vocational English Course Book*. Pearson/Longman.
- [22] Vičič, P. (2011). Preparing materials for ESP teaching. *Journal of Inter Alia*, 2, 107–120.

## LIST OF TABLES

**Table 1: Information about the two English courses**

Course name & code	Level given	Credit hours	Teaching hour/week
English for Medical Purposes 1/ EMP101	Level 1	8	20
English for Medical Purposes 2/ EMP102	Level 2	7	14
Total		15	34

**Table 2: Instructors' experiences in teaching EFL and ESP**

No	Instructor	Gender	General English teaching experience	Nationality	ESP college teaching experience	Level teaching in the college
1	Instructor A	Male	2 years	Jordanian	8 years	Level 1
2	Instructor B	Male	11 years	Jordanian	8 years	Level 2
3	Instructor C	Male	2 years	Jordanian	8 years	Level 2
4	Instructor D	Male	15 years	Egypt	5 years	Level 1
5	Instructor E	Male	1 year	Pakistani	10 year	Level 2

**Table 3: Total mean and standard deviation across all questions**

N	%	Mean	St. Dev.
81	100%	3.85	0.95

**Table 4: Means and Standard deviations of students' responses of all questions**

No	Item	Mean	St. Dev.
1	The subject and content of the textbook is relevant to learner needs as an English language learner.	4.0	0.9
2	The subject and content of the textbook is generally realistic	4.0	1.0
3	The subject and content of the materials are interesting, challenging and motivating.	4.0	1.0
4	It is compatible to your background knowledge and level.	4.0	1.0
5	Texts and dialogues include new vocabulary and Grammatical structures.	4.0	1.0
6	The selected topics are familiar to the students	4.0	1.0
7	It is compatible to your needs	3.8	0.8
8	The content meet your' felt needs for learning English or can it be adapted for this purpose.	4.0	0.9
9	The language used in the textbook is authentic - i.e. like real-life English.	3.9	1.0
10	The language used is at the right level for my current English ability.	3.9	0.9
11	The language functions exemplify English that learner will be likely to use in the future.	4.0	0.95
12	The grammar points were presented with brief and easy examples and explanations.	4.0	0.1
13	The grammar points and vocabulary items are introduced in motivating and realistic contexts.	3.9	0.9
14	The course book covers the main grammar items appropriate to students'	3.9	0.9

	level.		
15	The activities promote creative, original, and independent responses.	3.9	0.9
16	The contents are sequenced based on complexity.	4.0	0.1
17	The materials increase the motivation and the confidence of the learners.	4.06	0.85
18	Task objectives are achievable.	4.01	0.82
19	Activities include guiding questions which encourage the development of higher-level thinking skills.	4.0	1.0
20	Information and directions are clearly written and explained	4.0	0.9
21	Non-text content (maps, graphs, pictures) are accurate and well integrated into the text.	3.91	0.93
22	Activities apply to a diversity of student abilities, interests and learning styles	3.76	1.03
23	It covers a variety of topics from different fields	3.76	1.03
24	There is sufficient variety in the topics of the textbook	3.7	1.1
25	The topics of the course book are adequate in enabling a student to use them in his field of studies	3.68	1.09
26	The topics of the course book are difficult for the students to follow	3.98	0.53
27	The topics in course book are relevant to a student's medicine studies	4.0	1.0
28	The ordering of material by topics has been arranged in a logical fashion	3.76	1.03
29	Content of the course book should be revised to include more relevant topics	3.47	1.34
	Total means scores	<b>3.85</b>	<b>0.95</b>

**Table (5). Quotes representing teachers' perceptions towards the weaknesses and strengths of the EMP textbooks**

N	Criteria	Interview quoted Comment	
		Strengths	Weaknesses
1.	Layout and design	the textbook is clearly organized and attractive (Teacher A)	The name of the book seems to be for nursing specialists only (Teacher E)
1.	Skills focus	The four language skills are covered in the textbooks (Teacher B).  The textbook series cover the main grammar items appropriate to students 'level (Teacher A).	The weight of technical writing is below expected like writing medical reports, graphs and presenting cases as the textbooks were not seen to support the writing tasks needed in a restricted setting including the health care industry (Teacher B).
2.	Activities	The activities encourage sufficient communicative and meaningful practice. (Teacher B)  The activities incorporate individual, pair, and group work (Teacher D).	The activities don't promote creative, original, and independent responses and most of the tasks in the textbooks are not interesting (Teacher C).
3.	Subject and content	The textbook provided a variety of meaningful and mechanical exercises. The textbooks indicated efficient use of text and visuals (Teacher C).  The topics of the course book are adequate in enabling a student to use them in his field of studies. The topics in the course are relevant to students' medical studies. The topics help expand students' awareness and	There is only one edition and the content of the textbook should be revised to include more relevant topics (Teacher B).

		enrich their experience (Teacher D).	
4.	Practical considerations	The textbooks are accompanied by a CD which includes natural sounding tracks for American and British accents, listening tracks, vocabulary items, and teacher's manual and audio script (Teacher B).	No supplementary materials, DVD Interactive book (Teacher B).
5.	Goals	The objectives in the textbooks are clear and concise as each unit is accompanied by starts with main aims and four lessons (Teacher B)  The textbook has appropriate listening, reading, speaking skills with defined goals (Teacher A)	No well- defined related goals to writing tasks (Teacher A).

**Table (6). Quotes representing teachers' suggestions towards the improving of the EMP textbooks.**

Teachers code	Suggestions
Instructor A	It is suggested that it would be better if the book contains activities focusing on multilevel of students. The book name also seems to be designed only for nursing specialists, not for other medical related specialist.
Instructor B	It is advisable to have an interactive version, DVD with medically-related video sketches, interactive activities as a source for training and self assessment.
Instructor C	It is suggested to provide an appropriate balance of the four skills as it seems that there are limited writing activities so covering the four skills in a sufficient way will meet the learners' needs.
Instructor D	The audio scripts shouldn't be attached as students get busy with them while they are listening. Providing online activities and other evaluation materials will be very helpful for teachers as they are hectic with schedules and find it difficult to get handouts or worksheets related to the content of the book. Providing the textbook with grammar booster as a reference for students and preview and review sections will help the students to get involved and be able to wrap up each unit.
Instructor E	It is suggested that the textbook should be provided with a digital version of the book and they should remove the listening audio script given at the end of the book which become more reading than listening. Therefore, students can easily get the answers without paying attention to listening