# Investigating Teachers' Attitudes towards ESP Course Designed to First Year agriculture students at Sinnar University

Amal Abuidres Etrafi[1],Mohammed Alameen Elshingete[2]and Muntasir Hassan Mubarak

E-mail :amalabuidres@gmail.com – elshingeety55@gmail.com

- munmubarak73@gmail.com

**Abstract:**

This study aimed at investigating teachers' attitudes towards ESP course designed to first year agriculture students at Sinnar University. A questionnaire has been adopted as primary tool for collecting the data of the study. The sample of the questionnaire was consisted of 104 English language teachers. The researcher applied a chi-square test to analyze and verify the hypotheses. The results of the questionnaire showed that ESP syllabuses in Agriculture College need to be changed because it does not help the students comprehend and write a short agriculture situation using agriculture terms. The study recommended continues evaluation system that gives scope for improvement of ESP syllabus in Agriculture College.

**Key words: ESP syllabus, syllabus evaluation, ESP design, need analysis** ESP teaching.

**المستخلص:**

تهدف هده الدراسة الى تقصى توجهات المعلمين حول مقرر الانجليزية للاغراض الخاصة المصمم لطلاب السنة الاولى بكلية الزراعة بجامعة سنار. تم استخدام الاستبانة كوسيلة اساسية لجمع بيانات الدراسة. تتكون عينة الاستبانة من عدد 104 معلم. طبق الباحثون اختبار كاى لتحليل وتحقيق الفرضيات. اوضحت نتائج الاستبانة بان مقرر الانجليزية للاغراض الخاصة يحتاج الى تغيير لانه لا يساعد الطلاب فى استيعاب وكتابة فقرة قصيرة عن الزراعة مستخدما مصطلحات الزراعة. اوصت الدراسة بنظام التقويم المستمر لاعطاء فرصة لتحسين مقرر الانجليزية للاغراض الخاصة بكلية الزراعة

## Context of the Study:

On a daily basis, we as teachers, the materials that we teach must be evaluated, but this type of evaluation is not enough. We must conduct and perform systematic evaluations if our purpose is to maximize learning (Brown, 1995; Ellis, 1997; Richards, 2001). There are a large range of textbooks to choose from, but the process of selecting an appropriate textbook can be both time-consuming and expensive (McDonough & Shaw, 2001; Karimi, 2006).

Evaluation is a 'matching process that matched the needs to available solutions' (Hutchinson and Waters, 1987 cited in Sheldon 1988: 237). The emergence and spread and distribution of English as the language of international relationship, asserting of knowledge ideas, and culture is well attested. It is a fact that English language teaching is obviously subject to developmental trends, and of the main prominent trends of recent years has been that of English for Specific Purposes. English is by far the most important and acceptable language of scientific and scholarly conferences, workshops and debates. As a matter of fact, no one can deny the fact that for the past few decades there has been a growing need to use the English language for the expression of information within specific professional fields.

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**SUST Journal of Linguistic and Literary Studies (2021)** **Vol.22.No. 3 June (2021)**
e -ISSN (online): 1858-8565 ISSN (text): 1858 -828x

In response to this need, the teaching of ESP has become a major concern mainly in the countries that English is taught as a foreign language (Gatehouse, 2001). Definitions of ESP are numerous but they all reflect the emphasis on how ESP teaching develops appropriate procedures to learners whose main goal is learning English for a purpose other than just language learning. That purpose may be educational, or professional, and ESP seeks to justify how well it prepares learners to achieve the required goals.

In defining ESP, Hutchinson and Waters (1987, p.19) posit "ESP is an approach to language teaching in which all decisions as to content and method are based on the learner's reason for learning."Accordingly, ESP can be defined as English instruction based on actual and immediate needs of learners who have to successfully perform real-life tasks unrelated to merely passing an English course or exam (Smoak, 1996). So, the issue of focusing on learners' needs becomes equally paramount as the methods utilized to spread linguistic knowledge. Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998) believe that any language must be included as a defining feature of ESP but the main concerns of ESP are needs analysis, text analysis, and preparing learners to communicate in an effective way in any required situations.

Another thing which is of utmost importance is that the experts of curriculum design believe that the breaking down of curriculum into components and sub-processes is a vital issue, since it simplifies and organizes such a complex process as the curriculum design is one of these components. (Hutchinson and Waters, 1984, Nunan, 1991).The first component

in doing this is the needs assessment -- that is obtaining of data-- followed by a needs analysis.

Therefore, the first key point to elaborate on is the students' needs and ways of assessing and addressing them in an effective and efficient way. Observation and analysis are essential to find out what the real language needs are. Teachers nowadays are much more aware of the importance of needs analysis, and certainly materials developers think very carefully about the goals of learners at all stages of materials production. Although it is true that ESP is needs-based and task-oriented, it is not possible to determine and achieve all specific needs of learners in a general educational context; however, defining the main purposes based on a scientific needs analysis in terms of educational objectives is possible. Hutchinson and Waters (1987) believe that the basic principle of ESP is to realize what learners need English for, and then teach the English that they need. So teaching ESP is demanding and time consuming. In Iran, English is the language of a lot of academic textbooks, especially in medicine and engineering. This has led universities to include ESP work in their curriculum as a necessary course. Even though ESP courses have become popular recently, and despite the growing demand for communicating through English for Specific Purposes, ESP courses are still limited to learning specific lexicon, grammar points, and translating texts. This approach which basically ignores learners' personal interests and needs often creates low motivation in students' English studies and, in turn, leads to poor performance later when they use English in their profession.

Moreover, with the advent of globalization, it is essential that students be able to listen, to read and present information orally and in writing on science related matters in English. In many Iranian agricultural-related workplaces, academic and professional, a certain level of understanding of English is required of members.

Therefore, their ESP textbooks must fulfill some of their needs. Since the early 1960's when ESP became one of the most prestigious areas of EFL teaching, we have noticed the publication of a large number of ESP textbooks, but a few books are obviously the product of careful research and a clearly defined theoretical position. In fact, a number of them are general ELT courses (Robinson, 1980). It is so important that the evaluation of teaching materials is a major part of a teacher's work. Evaluation is basically a matching process, which concerns matching learners' needs to available solutions (Hutchinson and Waters, 1987).The evaluation process in ESP also should be carefully conducted to assure optimal results (Allwright, 1981; McGrath, 2002).Thus a much more promising approach to a theory of ESP comes from the analysis and evaluation of ESP textbooks. All ESP activities have to be linked to a view of text. A textbook serves as a useful map or plan of what is intended and expected. Crowford (1994, p.58) says that a textbook is very important because it allows for:

1-*Negotiation*: the textbook can supply something to negotiate about.

2-*Accountability*: the textbook shows all stakeholders what is being done in a classroom.

In today's classrooms, textbooks are a key component in most language program. According to Riazi (2003) after teachers, textbooks are considered to be the next important factor in second/foreign language classrooms.

It is further worth mentioning that, materials should meet and fulfill students' needs by the consideration of different learning styles. Also, according to Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998), in some situations where English is a foreign not a second language, the ESP classroom may be the only source of English. Materials then play a crucial role in exposing learners to the language, and the full range that learners require. To stimulate and motivate, materials need to be challenging yet achievable; to offer new ideas and information while being grounded in the learners' experience and knowledge; to encourage fun and creativity.

In Iran, textbooks have a major role for much of the language input that the learners receive and also they play an important role in the language practice that takes place in the classroom. For most teachers, textbooks provide the foundation for the content of lessons, the balance of the skills taught, as well as the kinds of language practice the students engage in during class activities. As a matter of fact, they shape the content and nature of teaching and learning.

On the other hand, a countless number of English textbooks are available on the market today. The eye can easily be deceived by colorful covers, a beautiful layout and attractive artwork. For an inexperienced teacher, it can be particularly difficult to know what to look for in an English textbook. So, due to this growth of materials in the ESL publishing industry, guidelines are necessary to raise teachers' awareness to various course book designs.

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**SUST Journal of Linguistic and Literary Studies (2021)        Vol.22.No. 3 June (2021)**
**e -ISSN (online): 1858-8565         ISSN (text): 1858 -828x**

**Sudan University of Science and Technology**
**Deanship of Scientific Research**
**Journal of Linguistic and Literary Studies**

The wealth of materials available makes the task of an ESP course-leader who decides to choose a published textbook particularly difficult. Rather than criticizing instructors who are handcuffed to a certain text, relevant evaluation criteria should instruct teachers how to best select course books that fit their specific needs (Wright, 1992).

Consequently, the selection of a textbook is one of the most important decisions of a teacher. Regarding these important choices, Nunan (1991) asserts that making the best use of materials evaluation in a systematic way can highly facilitate the selection process which guarantees that materials are consistent with the learners' needs and interests they are intended to serve, as well as being in harmony with institutional ideologies on the nature of language and learning. Hence, when designing an ESP course, the primary issue is the analysis of learners' specific needs. Analyzing the specific needs of a particular learner group determines the – what 'and - how' of an ESP course. In practice we have Kipling's six ―honest serving men (Hutchinson and Waters, 1987, p. 21) of What, Why, When, How, Where, and who to help us. Other issues addressed include: determination of realistic goals and objectives, choosing related materials, and assessment and evaluation.

Materials and textbooks serve as one of the main instruments for shaping knowledge, attitudes, and principles of the students (Nooreen&Arshad, 2010).While there are numerous proposals for the evaluation of teaching materials, these proposals are much less common in the field of ESP. Equally worthy of mention is that, according to Ansari and Babayi (2002), as teachers, many of us have had the responsibility of evaluating textbooks, so the evaluation of teaching materials is an important part of a teacher's work. Sheldon (1988) has offered several reasons for textbook evaluation. He suggests that the selection of a language textbook often signals an important administrative and educational decision.According to Tomlinson (2005), the process of materials evaluation can be seen as a way of developing our understanding of the ways in which they work and, in doing so, of contributing to both acquisition theory and pedagogic practice. It can also be seen as one way of carrying out action research.

The importance of textbook evaluation and teacher education as two mutually helpful aspects of professional development has been a major impetus in carrying out the present study. This study is on the whole trying to examine how far the prescribed textbooks used in ESP classrooms in agricultural extension and rural development discipline provide the necessary tools in preparing learners for the transition of language skills such as reading and writing across disciplines. Also, the current study concerns the language needs of agricultural extension and rural development students in Bu Ali Sina University, Iran, and attempts to shed light on their strengths and weaknesses in English.

**Statement of the problem:**

The present study came to evaluate the above mentioned ESP course in order to find whether it matches the standard criteria of ESP designing and to reveal to which extent the students of agriculture benefit from it.

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**SUST Journal of Linguistic and Literary Studies (2021)      Vol.22.No. 3 June (2021)**
**e -ISSN (online): 1858-8565         ISSN (text): 1858 -828x**

**Sudan University of Science and Technology**
**Deanship of Scientific Research**
**Journal of Linguistic and Literary Studies**

The problem of the study may be summarized as follows:

1. The real aim behind designing this course is neglected (agriculture communication). In other words, the consideration related to the agriculture usage as a means of agriculture communication is ignored.

2. The aspect and terms in this ESP course have nothing to do with the learners' specialization or learners' future career.

3. It does nothing with the ability of the students' agriculture communication

4. Learning the functions existed in this ESP course will not present in the minds of the students of agriculture to serve the career.

**Aims and scope of the study:**

This study aims at evaluating the current ESP course in the light of the students' need in this specialization. Investigating the teachers' perception about the real obstacles they face in teaching the current course and identify the students' needs in terms of the language skills. The scope of the study is limited to ESP teachers at different Sudanese Universities. The questionnaire sample is consisted of 104 teachers of English at University level.

**ESP Characteristics:**

ESP is a recognizable activity of English Language Teaching (ELT) with some specific characteristics. Dudley-Evans and St. Johns" tried (1998) to apply a series of characteristics, some absolute and some variable, to outline the major features of ESP.

Absolute Characteristics:

1. ESP is defined to meet specific needs of the learners.

2. ESP makes use of underlying methodology and activities of the discipline it serves.

3. ESP is centered on the language (grammar, lexis, and register), skills, discourse and genre appropriate to these activities.

**Variable Characteristics**:

1. ESP may be related to or designed for specific disciplines.

2. ESP may use, in specific teaching situations, a different methodology from that of
General English.

3. ESP is likely to be designed for adult learners, either at a tertiary level institution or in a professional work situation. It could, however, be for learners at secondary school level.

4. ESP is generally designed for intermediate or advanced students. Most ESP courses assume some basic knowledge of the language systems, but it can be used with beginners.(Dudley-Evans & St. John, 1998:4)

It is obvious that the absolute characteristics are specific to ESP because learners" needs are of central importance when designing language activities. Concerning the variable features. ESP courses can be designed for a specific group using definite teaching methodology; nevertheless, all learners" categories and disciplines can be concerned with ESP. For that reason ESP should be seen simply as an 'approach' to teaching, or what Dudley-Evans and St. John illustrate as an 'attitude of mind'. Similarly, Hutchinson and waters" (1987:19) stated that, "ESP should properly be seen not as any particular language product but as an approach to language teaching in which all decisions as to content and method are based on the learner's reason for learning".

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**SUST Journal of Linguistic and Literary Studies (2021)        Vol.22.No. 3 June (2021)**
**e -ISSN (online): 1858-8565        ISSN (text): 1858 -828x**

In the course of the statements suggested below great similitude is noticed between ESP and General English Purposes (EGP) as teaching approaches knowing that each methodology is set up to fulfill specific social requirements, So in what terms are they different?

**The Difference between ESP and EGP:**

Hutchinson and Waters (1987) stated that there is no difference between the two in theory; however, there is a great deal of difference in practice. ESP, like any other language teaching activity, stands on facts about language nature, learning, and teaching; it is, however, often contrasted with General English.

ESP teaching approach is known to be learner-centred where learners" needs and goals are of supreme value, whereas General English approach is language-centred, and focuses on learning language from a broad perception covering all the language skills and the cultural aspects of the English speaking community. Robinson (1980: 6) stated that "the general with whom we are contrasting the specific is that of General education for life, culture and literature oriented language course in which the language itself is the subject matter and the purpose of the course". However, In ESP after the identification and the analysis of specific learning needs, students learn "English en route to the acquisition of some quite different body of knowledge and set of skills" (ibid 1980: 6).Further distinction between General English courses and ESP is that, learners of the latter are mainly adult with a certain degree of awareness concerning their language needs (Hutchinson & Waters 1987). Whereas, General English courses are provided to

pupils as compulsory module at schools, their unique purpose is to succeed in the examinations.

Basturkmen (2006) maintains that General English Language teaching tends to set out from a definite point to an indeterminate one, whereas ESP aims to speed learners and direct them through to a known destination in order to reach specific objectives. "The emphasis in ESP on going from A to B in the most time- and energy-efficient manner can lead to the view that ESP is an essentially practical Endeavour" (Basturkmen, 2006: 9)

It is observed from the above distinctions that ESP and General English are different in the aims and objectives of the courses, the nature of the learners and the themes. The latter is also a point of disagreement between the linguists concerning ESP branches or the categorization of its subjects of practice.

**Objectives in Teaching ESP:**

The main aims of the teaching and learning process is to enable the learners to acquire information in its general sense. Concerning ESP Basturkmen (2006: 133) states the existence of five broad objectives, which are also applied to ELP, on which specific teaching process is based and should be reached:

-To reveal subject-specific language use.

-To develop target performance competencies.

-To teach underlying knowledge.

-To develop strategic competence

-To foster critical awareness.

The researcher shall examine these objectives one after the other. A-Reveal subject-specific language use: this objective aims to demonstrate to the learners how the language is used in the target setting.

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**e -ISSN (online): 1858-8565      ISSN (text): 1858 -828x**

- Develop target performance competencies: this objective is concerned with what learners do with language and the needed skills to be competent. "This orientation can be categorized as a proficiency objective, according to Stern's classification (1992)" (Basturkmen, 2006: 135).

-Teach underlying knowledge: the aim is to focus on developing students" knowledge of fields of study or work in addition to their language skills. "The objective of teaching underlying knowledge can be classified as a cultural knowledge objective, according to Stern"s categorization (1992)" (Basturkmen, 2006: 137).

-Develop strategic competence. "Strategic competence is the link between context of situation and language knowledge" (Basturkmen, 2006: 139) and enables successful and efficient communication.

- Foster critical awareness: "This objective can be linked to the cultural knowledge and affective objectives in Stern"s (1992) classification" (Basturkmen, 2006: 143) and aims at making students conscious and culturally aware of the target situation.It is evident that great similarity exists between the objectives established by Stern (1992) for language education and the ones stated by Basturkmen for ESP context. The teaching /learning process associated to appropriate methodology may result in mastery of language by correctly using it in the context.

**ESP Teaching and Learning Processes:**

The methodologies of ESP teaching conform to the same model of the language teaching process as does any other form of language teaching. That is to say, the basic teaching activities are these; shaping the input; Encouraging the learners" intention to learn; managing the learning strategies and Promoting practice and use.(Strevens, 1988: 44)

In ESP teaching, some basic elements have to be taken into consideration, the most important of which are the learner needs, goals and motivation. Furthermore learners" attitudes towards learning and learning strategies are emphasized and seen as fundamental to the ESP process. The ESP teacher in the classroom is"…a knowledge provider and a facilitator of students" learning and no more as a resourceful authority."(Kashani et al 2007:85).However, he/she is more concerned with designing suitable syllabi and courses for different learners with various needs and fields. "Thus, whereas course design plays a relatively minor part in the life of General English teacher, courses here usually being determined either by tradition, choice of textbook or ministerial decree, for the ESP teacher, course design is often a substantial and important part of the workload" (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987: 21).As the students are cited in the core of the learning process they have to be dynamic contributors in their learning either in the classroom or out of it. Students use the adequate and favorite learning strategies and put a rapid and durable learning rhythm to achieve the stated objectives. They are more intrinsically than extrinsically oriented. "Learning is more individualized than standardized and students are more open to new ideas. They take responsibility for their own actions and accept related consequences". (Kashani et al 2007: 87).ESP teaching/ learning processes necessarily go through different stages.

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**SUST Journal of Linguistic and Literary Studies (2021)**       **Vol.22.No. 3 June (2021)**
**e -ISSN (online): 1858-8565**       **ISSN (text): 1858 -828x**

**Stages in the ESP Teaching Process:**

Dudley-Evans and Johns (1998:121) maintain that "The key stages in ESP are needs analysis, course (and syllabus) design, materials selection (and production), teaching and learning, and evaluation." ESP course design is the product of a dynamic interaction between these elements which"… are not separated, linearly-related activities, rather, they represent phases which overlap and are interdependent". Dudley-Evans and St. Johns illustrate the theory and the reality of the stages in ESP process through these cyclical representations: Evaluation Needs Evaluation Needs

**Types of Needs:**

ESP specialists (Hutchinson & Waters 1987, Robinson 1980, 1991, West 1993), agree on the fact that the term needs is the learners" requirements aiming at communicating effectively in the target situation. "An ESP course will not only involve these requirements, but will also consider the different levels of language knowledge of the learners in order to specify the conditions of their learning situation" (Benyelles 2001:26).Accordingly, this entails that NIA taxonomy may be viewed differently, however two (02) types, i.e. „Target Needs" and „Learning Needs", are the main concepts used by the scholars in ESP literature and practices.

**Target Needs:**

Needs analysis is a complex process which has to take into account what Hutchinson and Waters (1987:54) define as "target needs", what learners need to do in the target situation. In other words, what are the linguistic elements needed to achieve specific communicative purposes. Robinson presents aspects of the target situation and students' educational backgrounds: "study or job requirements," "what the user-institution or society at large regards as necessary," "what the learner needs to do to actually acquire the language," "what the students themselves would like to gain from the language course," "what the students do not know or cannot do in English" (Robinson 1991pp. 7-8).In this respect, Hutchinson and Waters propose further subdivisions of target needs which are: Necessities, Lacks, and Wants.

**Necessities:**

Are the academic or occupational requirements of the target situation, that is, what the learner has to know in order to function effectively in the target situation. Accordingly, needs "are perhaps more appropriately described as objectives" (Robinson, 1991: 7) to be achieved.

**Lacks:**

Are what the learners are deficient in, i.e. what they ignore or cannot perform in English? Subsequently, lacks are the gaps between the initial or actual situation of the learners in terms of language proficiency or aptitudes, and the one which is required after the accomplishment of the language training.

**Wants:**

Are the learners" personal expectations and hopes towards acquiring English, i.e. what they would like to gain from the language course. In order to design the syllabus content, the ESP practitioners have to take into consideration the learners aims; however, in almost all cases, these contrast with the lacks identified by the teacher or the necessities of the target situation.

This divergence leads West (1993) to add „constraints‟ as fourth type of target needs. " It involves the non-pedagogic limits that control a course planning process such as the role of the national policy, and financial restrictions, which the analysts need to be aware of once they start the process of NIA"(Benyelles 2001:31).

**Learning Needs:**

According to Hutchinson and Waters a relevant needs analysis of the target situation can divulge and reveal "What the learners need to learn"; however, it is not sufficient, in ESP context the question "How will the learners learn" in order to learn, is of central importance to determine the content of the course. Hutchinson and Waters (1987:54) define learning needs as "what learners need to do in order to learn". In the same vein, Robinson (1991: 7) states that learning needs are"…what the learner needs to do to actually acquire the language." In this sense, learning needs look for data in relation to the learning situation which take into consideration learners‟ type, cultural awareness and proficiency level in English, the available materials, the existing resources and all the information that can help the teacher to provide the learners with the appropriate knowledge. All Wright (1982, quoted in West, 1994) states that "the investigation of learners‟ preferred learning styles and strategies give us a picture of the learners‟ conception of learning".

The findings of the gathered data will provide an overview regarding learners‟ feelings and positions to learn a foreign language in specific contexts. For language audit, it is generally used to establish the role assumed by this foreign language in business, industrial or public enterprise, accordingly ESP researchers

have to:- Determine the language skills needed to carry out specific jobs or studies (West: 1993).

- Evaluate the actual proficiency level of the target population in order to compare the different levels of achievement at the end of the course.

- Find out the necessary time volume needed for language instruction.

In sum and regardless of the various approaches recommended to identify students‟ needs, almost all the scholars mentioned above (West, Hutchinson and Waters, Robinson, AllWright) have the same opinion on the collection of the same type of information during the needs analysis stage. The information concerns:

**a- The target situation:** the role of ESP practitioner is to take into consideration the needs of the target situation through the enquiry of the variety, the language forms and the necessary level of performance required in the target language.

**b- Learners:** the researcher has to determine learners‟ language lacks, investigate their wants, and attitudes concerning language course, taking into consideration their current language ability.

**c- The learning situation:** it broadly reveals significant information regarding the learning environment and specifically the teaching situation, the nature of the setting, the available materials and the time volume.

After the identification and analysis of learners‟ needs the ESP teacher can go through the next phase which is syllabus design.

**Syllabus Design:**

It is not easy to separate the issues concerning syllabus design set up for specific purposes programs from general language                            teaching.

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Designing a syllabus to a specific group in a particular situation is not a simple task for the designers aiming at achieving learners requirements, since the existence of various concepts and basis dealing with syllabus. Thus, it seems of great importance to define „syllabus‟ in order to have a better understanding of what it actually meant by the term in education.

Hutchinson & Waters (1987: 80) define "Syllabus" as "... a document which says what will (or at least what should) be learnt". In the same vein, Robinson (1991: 34) states that syllabus is "a plan of work and is, thus, essential for the teacher, as a guideline and context of class content." The above assertions point out that the syllabus first concerns the teacher, and that it helps him/her plan courses.Basturkmen (2006:20) argues that "in order to specify what language will be taught, items are typically listed and referred to as the syllabus". She exemplifies the definition by giving a standard view of the syllabus through the figure below.

A syllabus:

1- Consists of a comprehensive list of- Content items (words, structures, topics)- Process items (tasks, methods)

2- Is ordered (easier, more essential items first)

3- Has explicit document

4- Is a public document

5- May indicate a time schedule

6- May indicate preferred methodology or approach

7- May recommend materials

**Conditions to Syllabus Design:**

Harmer (2001) establishes some rules that should be taken into consideration when designing a syllabus, and states that "every syllabus needs to be developed on the basis of certain criteria" (Harmer, 2001:295), which consist of: a- Learnability: the content should be organised in a gradual manner in order to be more efficient, i.e. from the easier themes to the more complex ones.

b- Frequency: integration of the most frequent items used in target language.

c- Coverage: incorporate the terminology and structures that have wider coverage in the use of the language.

d- Usefulness: set up language forms and skills that is socially useful for the learners.

These criteria are greatly influenced by some environmental factors surrounding the teaching learning situation as the existence of a number of social restrictions that have a great impact on its effectiveness. Benyelles (2009) selected the main constraints as follows:

-The language setting which concerns the role of the language in the community.

-The areas of language use in society (how and where it is used).

-The role of the language in the political life taking into account the country's economy and technology (Ashworth, 1985 a).

-The attitudes of groups and individuals towards the language. This is determined by the degree of their awareness of the language (Van Leir, 1995).

(Benyelles, 2009: 58-59)

To summarize, the designer will have to take into consideration the various parameters that can influence the technical and pedagogical criteria in designing appropriate and practical syllabus.

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**SUST Journal of Linguistic and Literary Studies (2021)      Vol.22.No. 3 June (2021)**
**e -ISSN (online): 1858-8565        ISSN (text): 1858 -828x**

**ESP Syllabus:**

Designing an ESP syllabus is not an easy task to perform because of its significant and complex role. However, it obviously satisfies a lot of needs since it has a multifunctional purpose. Thus, syllabus designers need to be aware of the different functions the syllabus fulfils so that it can be designed and used most appropriately.

For that reason, Munby (1978) introduced Communicative Needs Processor (CNP) as an approach to investigate specific communication needs of a particular group, according to socio-cultural and stylistic variables which act together to find out a profile of such needs.

That is to say that the target needs and target level performance are established by investigating the target situation. In the CNP, descriptions are taken from "the variables that affect communication needs by organizing them as parameters in a dynamic relationship to each other" (Munby, 1978: 32). This process will engender the nature of the content that will be selected and set up for ESP learners" program.

In ESP, the nature of the content is extracted from real life situations in which the syllabus designers have to select the most relevant language discourses that will supply for learners target requirements. However, "it is necessary to introduce what is known as common-core language (Miliani, 1994) selected according to students own needs" (Benyelles, 2009:64) in order to provide basics of language knowledge. Accordingly, "one might begin with grammar and pronunciation only, as one does in a structural approach, but introduce work in the language functions, and in discourse skills fairly early, and in time increase the component of the course" (Yalden,1987:94).ESP

rejects „synthetic" approaches to course design (Basturkmen 2006:103); so, it is important to present the language using an eclectic method by combining the required features of the language systematically and gradually according to the target objectives.

The syllabus is also an essential document in the teaching/learning process since it provides a set of principles for materials production, teaching, and testing; this is why, it should be flexible, open-ended, and subject to regular adjustment.

**Material Production:**

Do ESP textbooks really exist? This is a fundamental question Johns (1990) addresses. One of the core problems he presents is that "ESP teachers find themselves in a situation where they are expected to produce a course that exactly matches the needs of a group of learners, but are expected to do so with no, or very limited, preparation time" (Johns, 1990, p. 91)."In the real world, ESP developers are not provided with sufficient time for needs analysis, materials research and materials development" (Kristen Gatehouse, 1999). The notion of time in the teaching process is of paramount importance especially in ESP, because the analysis of the target situation and the research of the appropriate materials need adequate time.

Suitable materials in ESP are not generally easy to get "It is likely that a course tailored to the needs of specific group of learners will not be available," (Hutchinson &Waters 1987: 106). For that reason, the ESP teacher has to develop materials which present as clearly as possible useful area of the language so that learners can perceive the relation between the content of the course and their requirements.

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The production of such materials and suitable activities is not a simple task because the ESP teacher is neither a materials designer nor a subject specialist; besides, "few teachers have had any training in the skills and techniques of materials writing".(Hutchinson &Waters", 1987: 106)In order to assist and guide ESP teachers in producing adequate materials, Hutchinson & Waters (1987:106-108) identify some defining principles that should be stated as purposeful objectives in designing pedagogical materials:

a- good materials give a stimulus to learning; in other words, they do not teach but, encourage learners to learn, they will, therefore, contain:

-Interesting texts;

-Enjoyable activities which stimulate the learners" thinking capacities;

-Opportunities for learners to use their existing knowledge and skills;

-A content which both learner and teacher can cope with.

b- Adequate materials provide a comprehensible and rational unit structure which will conduct both the teacher and the learner through a range of activities in such a way as to maximize the chances of learning. Accordingly, "a materials model must be clear and systematic, but flexible enough to allow for creativity and variety". (Ibid, 1987:107)

C-Materials should represent a vision of the nature of language and learning, and reflect the teacher considerations and feelings about the learning process.

D-Materials should reveal the nature of learning tasks and should "create a balance outlook which both reflects the complexity of the task, yet makes it appear manageable." (Ibid, 1987:108)

E-Materials should introduce the teachers to the use of new and updated teaching techniques.

F-Materials should supply appropriate and correct representation of language use. In ESP, the analysis of the target situation provides the basic data that leads the material designer to establish the process through which the course will be presented. By the combination of the different outcomes related to the learners needs, the learning environment and the pedagogical approach, it will be possible to produce the needed ESP course with an appropriate content.Hutchinson and Waters (1987) designed a model for materials production aiming at providing a "coherent framework for the integration of the various aspects of learning, while at the same time, allowing enough room for creativity and variety to flourish" (Hutchinson and Waters, 1987: 108) .

**Objectives of the Study:**

1. To find out the perceptions of the teachers towards ESP course designed to first year agriculture students at Sinnar University.

2. To find out what materials do the teachers think are the most appropriate for learning English in Agriculture College.

**Questions of Study:**

1. What are the perceptions of the teachers towards the ESP course designed to first year agriculture students at Sinnar University?

2. What materials do teachers think are the most appropriate for learning English in Agriculture College?

**Significance of the Study:**

The significance of the study stems from the following factors:-

1. This study will provide language teachers with specific language teaching procedures and guidelines which they can use in their colleges.

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2. The research results shed light on the strengths and weakness of the existing English language curriculum and envisage a paradigm shift for preparing global agriculture in the context of fast emerging situation around the world.

3. The research results can be presented to teachers, learners and decision-makers in order to enhance agriculture performance in English language in their required professional fields.

4. This study will extract what both teachers and students think they need in English language at the College of Agriculture.

5. The results of this research may then present data for further research to be done to find out if the present materials are adequate or if new materials should be developed.

**Methodology:**

The researcher used the descriptive analytical method and the data of this study were collected through teachers' questionnaire. The population of the questionnaire is EFL teachers teaching English at different Sudanese universities. The subject who participated in this study, were drawn from Colleges of Agricultures at different Universities in Sudan. The sample of the questionnaire consisted of (104) English language teachers. The

researcher analyzed the questionnaire via chi-square test

**Materials and method:**

This study was carried out at Sudan University of Science and Technology with English language teachers at University level A purposive sample used for this study includes (104) teachers. This is a quantitative method research study design employing quantitative method.

The research bases inquiry on the assumption that collecting data from questionnaire best provides an understanding of research problems. This study used a quantitative research design comprising quantitative method and techniques during data collection analysis. The questionnaire was the instrument used in this study. Quantitatively, a questionnaire was administered to 104 teachers.

**Results and Discussion**

The researcher used the questionnaire as the main tool for collecting data related to this study. The researcher has designed the questionnaire to ESP teachers to find out their reflection and suggestion on the development of ESP teaching in Sudan.

The tables and the percentages below illustrate what has been stated above.

**The analysis of the questionnaire in relation to the study hypothesis**,

**Table No (4.1). The ESP syllabus in Agriculture College does not help students to comprehend and write short agriculture situation using agriculture terms**

| Answer | Number | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| Strongly Agree | 46 | 44.2% |
| Agree | 39 | 37.5% |
| Not sure | 3 | 2.9% |
| Disagree | 11 | 10.6% |
| Strongly Disagree | 5 | 4.8% |
| Total | 104 | 100% |

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It is clear from the above table (1) that there are (46) respondents in the study's sample with percentage (44.2%) strongly agree with" **The ESP syllabus in Agriculture College does not help students to comprehend and write short agriculture situation using** **agriculture terms"**. There are (39) respondents with percentage (37.5%) agree with that and (3) respondents with percentage (2.9 %) are not sure. and (11) respondents with percentage (10.6%) disagree, while (5) respondents with percentage (4.8%) strongly disagree.

**Table No (4.2). The ESP syllabus in Agriculture College does not include detailed overview of the function structures and vocabulary that will be taught in each unit**

| Answer | Number | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| Strongly Agree | 13 | 12.5% |
| Agree | 34 | 32.7% |
| Not sure | 19 | 18.3% |
| Disagree | 29 | 27.9% |
| Strongly Disagree | 9 | 8.7% |
| Total | 104 | 100% |

It is clear from the above table (2) that there are (13) respondents in the study's sample with percentage (12.5%) strongly agree with "The **ESP syllabus in Agriculture College does not include detailed overview of the function structures and vocabulary that will be** **taught in each unit"**. There are (34) respondents with percentage (32.7%) agree, and (19) persons with percentage (18.3%) are not sure, and (29) respondents with percentage (27.9%) disagree, while (9) respondents with percentage (8.7%) strongly disagree.

**Table No (4.3). Most examinees will never succeed unless they are trained on how to answer exam questions**

| Answer | Number | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| Strongly Agree | 35 | 33.7% |
| Agree | 52 | 50.0% |
| Not sure | 7 | 6.7% |
| Disagree | 10 | 9.6% |
| Strongly Disagree | 0 | 0.0% |
| Total | 104 | 100% |

It is clear from the above table (3) that there are (35) respondents in the study's sample with percentage (33.7%) strongly agree with "Most **examinees will never succeed unless they are trained on how to answer exam questions**."There are (52) respondents with percentage (50.0%) agree, and (7) respondents with percentage (6.7%) are not sure, and (10) respondents with percentage (9.6%) disagree.

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**Table No (4.4). The topics of the ESP syllabus in Agriculture College are not directly related to specific agriculture terms.**

| Valid | Frequency | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| Strongly Agree | 51 | 49.1% |
| Agree | 16 | 15.3% |
| Not sure | 2 | 1.9% |
| Disagree | 8 | 7.7% |
| Strongly Disagree | 27 | 26.0% |
| Total | 104 | 100% |

It is clear from the above table (4) that there are (50) respondents in the study's sample with percentage (48.1%) strongly agree with " **The topics of the ESP syllabus in Agriculture College are not directly related to specific agriculture terms**. "There are (17) respondents with percentage (16.3%) agreed, and (2) respondents with percentage (1.9%) are not sure, and (8) respondents with percentage (7.7%) disagree, while (27) respondents with percentage (26.0%) strongly disagree.

**Table No (4.5). The ESP syllabus in college of agriculture depends on teachers more than materials**

| Answer | Number | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| Strongly Agree | 52 | 50.0% |
| Agree | 18 | 17.3% |
| Not sure | 8 | 7.7% |
| Disagree | 6 | 5.8% |
| Strongly Disagree | 20 | 19.2% |
| Total | 104 | 100% |

It is clear from the above table (5) that there are (52 )respondents in the study's sample with percentage (50.0%) strongly agree with "The **ESP syllabus in college of agriculture depends on teachers more than materials** ". There are (18) respondents with percentage (17.3%) agree, and (8)respondents with percentage (7.7%) are not sure, and (6) respondents with percentage (5.8%) disagree, while (20) respondents with percentage (19.2%) strongly disagree.

**Table No (4.6). Most of the materials in Agriculture College are not up to date**

| Answer | Number | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| Strongly Agree | 51 | 49.0% |
| Agree | 32 | 30.8% |
| Not sure | 9 | 8.7% |
| Disagree | 4 | 3.8% |
| Strongly Disagree | 8 | 7.7% |
| Total | 104 | 100% |

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It is clear from table (6) that there are (51) respondents in the study's sample with percentage (49.0%) strongly agreed with "Most **of the materials in agriculture college are not up to date**". There are (32) persons with percentage (30.80%) agree with that and (9)respondents with percentage (8.7%) are not sure about that and (4) respondents with percentage (3.80%) disagree, while (8) respondents with percentage (7.7%) strongly disagree.

**Table No (4.7) The ESP syllabus in agriculture college is not appropriately graded**

| Answer | Number | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| Strongly Agree | 34 | 32.7% |
| Agree | 38 | 36.5% |
| Not sure | 4 | 3.8% |
| Disagree | 17 | 16.3% |
| Strongly Disagree | 11 | 10.6% |
| Total | 104 | 100% |

It is clear from the above table (7) that there are (34) respondents in the study's sample with percentage (32.7%) strongly agree with "**The ESP syllabus in agriculture college is not appropriately graded** "There are (38) respondents with percentage (36.5%) agree with that and (4) respondents with percentage (3.8%) are not sure. And (17) respondents with percentage (16.3%) disagree, while (11) respondents with percentage (10.6%) strongly disagree.

**Table No (4.8). The ESP textbook of Agriculture College doesn't follow the principles of syllabus design**

| Answer | Number | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| Strongly Agree | 33 | 31.7% |
| Agree | 38 | 36.5% |
| Not sure | 7 | 6.7% |
| Disagree | 10 | 9.6% |
| Strongly Disagree | 16 | 15.4% |
| Total | 104 | 100% |

It is clear from the above table (8) that there are (33) respondents in the study's sample with percentage (31.7%) strongly agree with "The **ESP textbook of Agriculture College doesn't follow the principles of syllabus design**". There are (38) respondents with percentage (36.5%) agree with that and (7) respondents with percentage (6.7%) are not sure. and (10) respondents with percentage (9.6%) disagree, while (16) respondents with percentage (15.4%) strongly disagree.

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**Table No (4.9). The ESP syllabus in Agriculture College is supposed to train students to read or write English related to agriculture extension**

| Answer | Number | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| Strongly Agree | 41 | 39.4% |
| Agree | 34 | 32.7% |
| Not sure | 8 | 7.7% |
| Disagree | 10 | 9.6% |
| Strongly Disagree | 11 | 10.6% |
| Total | 104 | 100% |

It is clear from the above table (9) that there are (41) respondents in the study's sample with percentage (39.4%) strongly agree with" **The ESP syllabus in agriculture college is supposed to train students to read or write English related to agriculture extension** "There are (34) respondents with percentage (32.7%) agree with that and (8) respondents with percentage (7.7%) are not sure. And (10) respondents with percentage (9.6%) disagree, while (11) respondents with percentage (10.6%) strongly disagree.

**Discussion:**

The data collected was analyzed in relation to the hypothesis of the study. The data was collected via questionnaire which had been administered to ESP teachers.

**Findings:**

Having analyzed and compare the results with the main hypothesis the results have shown that ESP syllabus in agriculture colleges does not help the students to comprehend and write a short agriculture situation using agriculture terms. The syllabus does not include detailed overview of the function structures and vocabulary that will be taught in each unit. The topics in the ESP syllabus in Agriculture College are not directly related to specific agriculture terms. The syllabus is not appropriately graded. The textbook does not follow the principle of syllabus design.

**Recommendations:**

The study recommended that the ESP syllabus in Agriculture College should include detailed overview of the function structures and vocabulary that will be taught in each unit. The syllabus should directly relate to specific agriculture terms. Materials should be updated. The textbook should follow the principles of syllabus design. This research recommended the ESP teachers to give ample practice to students in lab classes to give power point presentation, report writing, project report preparation etc. individually and in groups. The researcher recommended a continuous evaluation system that give scope for improvement.

**Suggestions for Further Studies:**

More linguistic researches must be done to both ESP teaching and bilingual instruction to attract attention of the national educational administration

**Conclusion:**

The study concluded that the findings of the study indicated that agriculture students need not only linguistic competence in English but also certain language skills and technical skills related to language learning that need to be included in the syllabus to handle real-life situations on completion of their agriculture course. The existing syllabus of Agriculture College fulfills the goals and objectives only partially and needed to be improved.

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