

**HAIPHONG PRIVATE UNIVERSITY**  
**DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES**



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SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH

**EVALUATING AND EDITING THE CURRENTLY USED  
TEXTBOOK “*ENGLISH OF CIVIL ENGINEERING*” FOR THE  
FOURTH-YEAR STUDENTS OF CONSTRUCTION AT  
HAIPHONG PRIVATE UNIVERSITY**

(Đánh giá và chỉnh sửa giáo trình “*English of Civil Engineering*” cho sinh viên ngành Xây dựng năm thứ tư của trường Đại học Dân lập Hải Phòng)

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*Haiphong, December 2010*

**Nguyen Thi Phuong Thu**

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## **1. Rationale**

The world has witnessed the increasing development of English teaching and learning for many years since the global integration, especially since English was used as the common language worldwide. The trend to communicate in English has a great effect on many countries including Vietnam because it has become a fact that being fluent in English greatly contributes to one's success in applying for a good job.

Like at many other universities nationwide, at Haiphong Private University learning general English for several terms has been regarded compulsory for all the non-major students right after they enter school. In addition, when these students begin their last-year study they have to attend a course of English for Specific Purpose (ESP) in which the learning time is equivalent to 60 periods of forty-five minutes. This is the next step which they have to take to be successful in their job hunting later.

Having been experienced in teaching English for the students of Construction Department at HPU for over the past many years, the author of this research has realized that the ESP textbook, which is currently used, has both advantages and disadvantages. In particular, when being asked for ideas on its quality in general, both teacher and student expressed different opinions in which the positive ones towards the current textbook did not outnumber the negative ones. From this fact, she feels it is the very current textbook which needs evaluating then editing. Hopefully, the new book will partly make a positive change in the ESP learning of the students of Construction at HPU in the future to come.

## **2. Objectives of the study**

The study is carried out with the aims at:

- looking into the students' English background
- finding out the difficulties met by the students when learning with the current materials
- evaluating the currently-adopted textbook *English of Civil Engineering* from the viewpoints of both ESP teachers of Department of Foreign Languages and last-year students of Construction at Haiphong Private University.
- setting criteria for editing the book
- editing the current textbook.
- assessing the newly-edited book



### **3. Methodologies**

To successfully complete the study, the following methods are employed:

- Survey questionnaires designed for both ESP teachers and last-year students of Construction at Haiphong Private University who have experienced in using the book.
- Formal interviews with those teachers and students regarding their experience in teaching and learning the textbook.
- Direct class observations.

Among the above methods, survey questionnaire is the major instrument for data collection whereas the interviews and direct class observation serve as supplementary techniques with a view to getting more information for any further confirmation of the evaluation findings.

## Chapter one

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 1.1 Textbook, course book and materials

The commonly used terms in English Language Teaching are *textbook*, *course book* and *materials* which are defined differently by different authors.

Generally, *textbook* is defined as a teaching tool which presents the subject matter set by the curriculum. A university textbook is required to contain the complete overview of the subject, including the theories, as well as to be of a more permanent character. Therefore, a textbook is closely related to the fixed curriculum and it functions as the basis in the teaching and learning process.

According to Tomlinson (1998, p.xi), *materials* is understood in a broad sense because it covers both textbook and course book, “*materials is anything which is used to help teach language learners*”. It can be “*in the form of a textbook, a workbook, a cassette, a CD-Rom, a video, a photocopied handout, a newspaper: anything which presents or informs about the language being learned.*”

The term “*course book*” can be understood as “*a textbook which provides the core materials for a course.*” A course book is specifically selected by a teacher to suit the teaching and learning purposes in a certain teaching context, in other words, a particular course. A course book may be accompanied by other supplementary materials.

However, the three terms *textbook*, *course book* and *materials* can be used interchangeably; therefore, in the study, “*English of Civil Engineering*” can be referred to as the above mentioned terms.

#### 1.2. The roles of materials in a language program

When discussing the roles of materials in a language classrooms, different authors express different attitudes, either positive or negative. Particularly, Littlejohn (in Hutchinson & Torres, 1994, p.316), a representative for the group of authors who have negative attitudes towards the role of textbooks in a language program, claims that textbooks “*reduce the teacher’s role to one of managing or overseeing preplanned events*”. However, there are still quite a number of scholars recognizing the importance of textbooks. A textbook can serve different purposes for teachers: as a core resource, a source of supplementary materials, an inspiration for classroom activities and even the curriculum itself (Garinger, 2002). Richards and Rodgers (cited

in Nunan, 1991) view instructional materials as detailed specifications of content, and guidance to teachers on both the intensity of coverage and the amount of attention demanded by particular content or pedagogical tasks. Richards (2001, p.66) explains that materials provide a basis for the content of the lesson, the appropriate proportion of skills taught, and the type of language practice students take part in. Besides, useful teaching materials provide great assistance to inexperienced teachers or poorly trained teachers (Nunan, 1991, in McGrath, 2002, p.11). It is obvious that in many cases, teachers and students rely much on textbooks and the textbooks control the content, method as well as procedure of learning and teaching. Therefore, to some extent, materials are the center of instruction and one of the most important factors influencing what happens in the classrooms.

### **1.3 Materials evaluation**

#### **1.3.1 Definition of materials evaluation**

In his overview, Hutchinson (1987, p.96) claims that “*evaluation is a matter of judging the fitness of something for a particular purpose*”. And by extension, materials evaluation is a matter of judging the fitness of materials against specific teaching and learning goals.

More specifically, Tomlinson. (1998, p.xi) defines materials evaluation as “*the systemic appraisal of the value of materials in relation to their objectives and to the objectives of the learners using them*”. The focus of materials evaluation in this point of view is put on measuring the value of materials in a systemic approach to work out whether or not the language points of the materials are potentially suitable to the learners and whether the materials can meet the demands of learners. Obviously, with his learner-centered approach, the learners’ opinion plays an important part in the process of evaluating the materials.

Additionally, St. John (1998, p.28) states that “*evaluation is a whole process which begins with determining what information to gather and ends with bringing about the change in current activities or influencing future ones*”. From many opinions of different researchers regarding the definition of materials evaluation, it is viewed as a process of deciding whether the materials is suitable to the teaching and learning objectives based on collected data and suggesting actions to make changes.

#### **1.3.2 Types of materials evaluation**

In the viewpoint of Tomlinson (1998, p.xi), evaluation can be “*pre – use*” and focused on “*prediction of potential value*”, it can be “*whist – use*” and focused on awareness and description of what the learners are actually doing whilst the materials

are being used”, and it can be “*post – use*” and focused on analysis of what happened as a result of using the materials.

McGrath (2002, p.14) defines classifying materials evaluation as a cyclical process including *pre-use*, *in-use* and *post-use* evaluation. According to him, pre-use evaluation establishes potential suits, in-use evaluation gathers data on planning decisions, implementation and response and this may stimulate preliminary reconsiderations and post-use evaluation, considered “the most reliable when it draws on the experiences of several teachers and several groups of learners” by McGrath (2002, p.15), uses data on in-course use and data on effects to assess the suitability of selection.

This study focuses on post – use evaluation to find out the value of the currently used materials “English of Civil Engineering” by basing on the teaching and learning experience of ESP teachers and last-year students of Construction at Haiphong Private University.

### **1.3.3 Criteria of materials evaluation**

There are two types of criteria including *general* (i.e. the essential features of any good teaching – learning material) and *specific* (or context-related) criteria (1996, in McGrath, 2002, p.31).

More specifically, Tomlinson (1999, in McGrath, 2002, p.32) suggests the four categories including *media – specific* criteria which relate to the particular means used, *content – specific* criteria which relate to the nature of the materials, *age – specific* criteria, or in other words, the suitability of the materials and lastly *local* criteria which means the appropriateness of the materials for the particular environment in which it is to be used.

Hutchinson (1987, p.99-104) suggests a very detailed evaluation checklist with five main criteria regarding *audience*, *aims*, *content*, *methodology* and *other criteria*. According to Hutchinson (1987), the criterion of *audience* refers to the target learners’ background including ages, gender, nationality, major, interests, etc., *aims* refer to the purpose of learners’ course and materials, *content* refers to language points, proportion of work on each macro and micro-skill, text-types and the subject matters, *methodology* is concerned with learners’ expectations from the course, kinds of tasks, teaching techniques and the aids available for use, and *other criteria* include price range and the possibly available quantities of the materials. The evaluation checklist in the study is mainly based on the above five criteria with some suitable adjustments so as to fit the research setting.

## **1.4 Materials adaptation**

Probably the most expected activity after materials evaluation is adaptation in order to make the materials more appropriate to the circumstances in which it is being used. McDonough and Shaw (1993, p.85, in McGrath, 2002, p.64) put it “*to maximize the appropriacy of teaching materials in context*” and to supplement for the inappropriateness of the materials such as “*lack of authenticity, out-of-datedness, linguistics inaccuracies, etc.*” (Madsen & Bowen, 1978, in McGrath, 2002, p.64).

Tomlinson (1998, p. xi) defines materials adaptation as an act of “*making changes to materials in order to improve them or to make them more suitable for a particular type of learner. Adaptation can include reducing, adding, omitting, modifying and supplementing. Most teachers adapt materials every time they use a textbook in order to maximize the value of the book for their particular learners*”.

When evaluating materials various techniques can be adopted such as “*supplementing, editing, expanding, personalizing, simplifying, modernizing, localizing or modifying cultural/ situational content*” (Madsen and Bowen, 1978, in McGrath, 2002, p.64) or “*retaining, rejecting, re-ordering and modification*”. (Ellis,1986, p.47, in McGrath, 2002, p. 64)

## Chapter two

# AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE SITUATION OF THE CURRENT TEACHING AND LEARNING ENGLISH OF CONSTRUCTION AT HAIPHONG PRIVATE UNIVERSITY

To succeed in assessing and editing the currently used textbook for the last-year students of Construction, it is best to have a clear understanding of the current teaching and learning situation at HPU, especially the current teaching and learning of English of Construction first. Below will be some brief information about the students' background in English, the materials used, and the materials evaluation in general.

### **2.1 An overview of the teaching staff and the teaching of ESP at HPU**

After nearly fifteen years since the foundation in 1997, Haiphong Private University now has more than three hundred well-qualified teachers for more than ten departments. Of the Department of Foreign languages, the group of teachers of English is the greatest in which we are divided into two subgroups: English for the major students and non-major ones. Generally speaking, we were all experienced teachers who always make greatest effort to update the teaching methods so as to meet the needs of teaching and learning here, and more importantly meet the requirements of society.

### **2.2 An overview of the current students of Construction at HPU**

Like other students learning at HPU, every student of Construction Department has four years' time learning before he or she graduates. Among the different compulsory subjects during their study time, English of General English takes up three first terms with the English of Construction in the term following. This English lasts for 60 periods of forty five minutes. The objective is to develop their communication skills in which reading and writing are put most emphasis on.

### **2.3 Materials currently used for the ESP course and general evaluation**

English of Construction is learnt by the students of Construction Department when they begin their last-year study. The currently-used textbook which was compiled by Mrs. Nguyen Thi Phi Nga, M.A. is "*English of Civil Engineering*". The lessons used to be extracted from different textbooks by prestigious authors of both foreign countries and Vietnam like James Cumming, Vu Trong Cau, etc., and especially the book was compiled by a quite experienced teacher who used to teach such group of

students for many years. For those reasons, the textbook can be said quite reliable. However, beside all the advantages that the book brings to the teaching and learning at HPU, it cannot avoid some short-comings. First, in terms of design, the book is said to be not effective in arousing the students' interest. Second, in terms of content, the book lacks grammatical explanations, vocabulary explanations, and most importantly, practicing exercises. Last but not least, the language used in each lesson is believed to be rather difficult by the students at Haiphong Private University.

## Chapter three

# DATA COLLECTION, FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

This chapter will be dedicated to introducing the methods the author used to carry out the study, namely survey questionnaire and interview. Afterwards, what has been found from the data will be analyzed and this will take up most of the section.

### **3.1 Data collection**

Data for the research will be collected from some main sources such as surveys designed for the ESP teachers and students, and formal interviews and observations conducted right in the classroom.

The process of doing this research is composed of various steps like determining the purpose of the study, raising research questions, defining participants, collecting data, analyzing the data.

#### ***3.1.1 Defining target students***

The second step in the study is to define a population. Which group will form a population and how many participants there will be depends on the purpose of the study. Since the subject matter is the English for Construction students at HPU, 436 survey questionnaires were given to 210 last-year Construction students of K10, 210 last-year Construction students of K11 and 8 ESP teachers at Haiphong Private University after they had finished the first term of the school year 2009-2010. The 8 teachers are those who have been experienced in teaching ESP for a certain number of years. In particular, they have all completed master courses. Though being young at age, the teachers have been adequately qualified to teach and evaluate the materials; therefore, their answers to the questionnaires are reasonably reliable.

The 420 students directly received the survey questionnaires from the author and it was the very author who explained their questions in the questionnaires. They are the last-year students of Construction who were to study English of Construction after they had accomplished three terms of General English in their first and second school years. All of the students invited to take part in the survey come from classes XD1001, XD1002, XD1003, CD1001, XD1101, XD1102, XD,1103, and CD1101.



### ***3.1.1.2 Questionnaire***

Being the first tool to collect data for this research, survey questionnaires were designed separately for the ESP teachers and Construction students of Haiphong Private University. The first questionnaire for 210 Construction students of K10 included eight sections in which questions were about the students' background in English, their attitude towards the ESP lessons at HPU, their attitude towards the current textbook (both its design and content), what they really expected from an ESP course, and how they proposed changes for the book. The second questionnaire was for the 8 invited teachers who expressed their own ideas on some similar questions about the learning of the students and the materials used at the university. The third and fourth questionnaires were delivered to the next 210 Construction students of K11 and the same 8 teachers of ESP. They answered the questions on the newly-edited textbook.

### **3.1.2 Formal interviews and class observation**

Survey questionnaire has been known to be cost-effective and time-saving. Furthermore, it serves as the key research method for data collection; however, to get firm conclusion from the questionnaire results, the author observed the classrooms and conducted formal interviews with the teachers and the students of classes XD1001, XD1002, XD1003, CD1001, XD1101, XD1102, XD1103, CD1101. These supplementary techniques could help to make sure that what had been found was of great reliability.

## **3.2 Preliminary results and analysis.**

Right after the surveys were conducted, the data were also collected to be analyzed. Below will be the analysis of the findings.

### **3.2.1 Analysis of the survey questionnaires for the students**

All the questions for the surveys were carefully designed so that the teacher could have a better understanding of their ability in English, their attitudes towards the current textbook, their results after they learnt with the book and their expectation from an ESP course.

### 3.2.1.1 The students' evaluation on their study of General English

The first section of the questionnaire for the students was to investigate how they could use general English. It is clearly shown in the table below:

Option Question	a	b	c	d
1	10%	25%	47%	12%
2	63%	15%	22%	0%
3	11%	29%	23%	37%
4	31%	16%	39%	14%
5	13%	25%	37%	25%

**Table 1:** Students' evaluation on their study of general English

By looking at the table, it can be understood that the majority of the student (63%) found learning English very challenging. This is because of several reasons in which their late starting point of learning could partly account for. 47% of the students when being asked said that they started learning English quite late, some (about 12%) started only when they entered university. To answer the question "What has been your biggest difficulty in learning English", 30% confessed that due to so many grammatical rules of English, they had trouble in learning the subject, 23% and 37% found speaking and listening the most difficult respectively. For those reasons, most of the students, more than 60% assessed their English as of low level. Therefore, they expected to improve their English after the first three terms of general English: 31% expected to improve their grammar understanding, 16% reading skill, 39% communication skill (speaking and listening) in everyday conversations, and just only 14% writing skill.

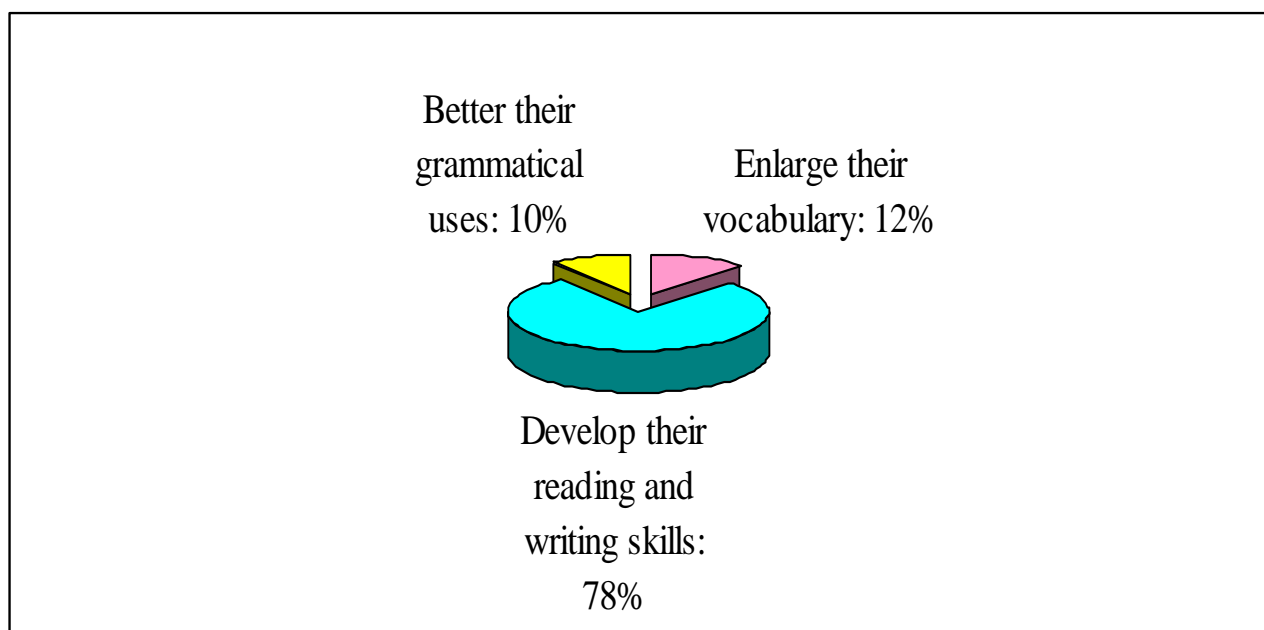
### 3.2.1.2 The students' evaluation on their study of ESP

Option Question	a	b	c	d
1	57%	26%	14%	3%
2	75%	19%	24%	2%
3	31%	29%	13%	19%
4	5%	23%	53%	27%
5	26%	52%	18%	4%
6	11%	29%	47%	13%
7	4%	33%	44%	17%

**Table 2:** The students' evaluation on their study of English for Specific Purposes

The collected data from Table 2 demonstrate that most students (83%) realized the importance of attending an ESP course after some courses of general English. They agreed that it is either very important or of certain degree of importance. A very small number of the students (3%) denied this and it might be explained by their fear of the learning difficulty or their reluctance to learn such a difficult subject. Though important they encountered great difficulties in the classroom, 158 (75%) students had great difficulties to get improvement in their English whereas 2% took this subject easy. Thus, after the ESP course, most of them were still not very confident with what they had been taught. 27 % of them complained that their basic grammar understanding and vocabulary using were of low level. Accordingly, the proportions of the students who could not deny that their abilities to read or write a simple text of Construction English were very not good, 47% and 44% respectively.

### 3.2.1.3 The students' expectation from an ESP course



**Chart 1:** *The students' expectation from an ESP course*

When the question “*What do you expect from an ESP course?*” was addressed to the students, 78% hoped the course would help them develop their reading and writing skills. This means they wished to be able to work with simple texts of the subject matter after graduation. The number of those who wanted to enlarge their vocabulary is small, just only 12%, and better their grammatical uses 10%. This reflects most students’ understanding of the objectives of the course.

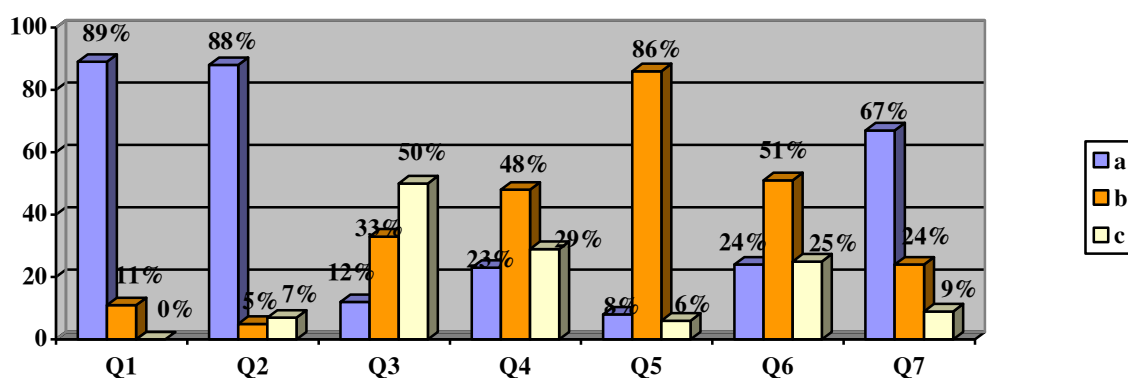
### 3.2.1.4 The students' evaluation on the teacher's teaching methods

Option Question	a	b	c	d
1	40%	48%	9%	3%
2	59%	32%	8%	1%

**Table 3:** The students' evaluation on the teacher's teaching methods

The author got different ideas from the answers by the students about the teacher's teaching methods. Honestly, most of the students (88%) liked or rather liked the way the teacher began every lesson. In addition, they emphasized the importance of their teacher's job. Just a small percentage of them (3%) stated that they didn't like it at all. This can be deduced that the teacher's teaching methods were mostly accepted in the English classroom and as a result, her teaching was reasonably effective in making nearly all of her students understand the purpose of each lesson. Only 2 students (1%) said they didn't understand it at all.

### 3.2.1.5 The students' evaluation on content and methodology of current textbook



**Chart 2:** The students' evaluation on content and methodology of current textbook

The summary of data about the content and methodologies of the currently-used text book have signaled that most of the students liked the topics and thought the topics in the book are of great importance. The percentages of those who highly appreciated the book through the two questions "How can rate the topics of the lessons in the book?" and "Are the topics important for the learning of English of Construction?" are almost equal, 89% and 88%. However, when being questioned about the methodology of the book, 50% of the participants said the skills allocation is not reasonable, and 51%

agreed that in terms of methodology, the book discouraged them from learning, just 24% asserted the book really motivated them, 25% said they have no idea about this. With the fifth question on the exercises, a very high percentage of the students (86%) blamed their failure in learning for the difficulty of their tasks, only a small number of them said these exercises are interesting but still difficult for them to learn. With the language aspect, two third of the surveyed students (67%) believed it is difficult, too.

### 3.2.1.6 The students' evaluation on the design of the current textbook

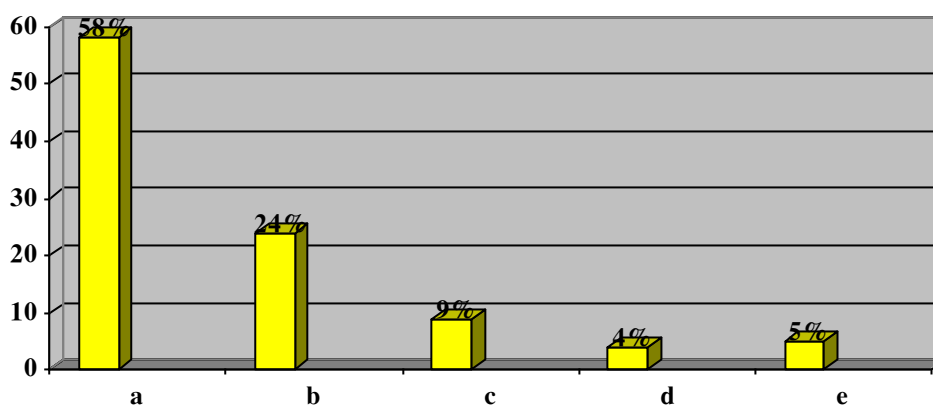
Option Question	a	b	c
1	0%	37%	63%
2	0%	29%	71%

**Table 4:** The students' evaluation on the design of the current textbook

The figures from the table above reveal that the percentage of those who approved the overall design of the book as well as the design of each particular lesson is low. To everyone's surprise, no student said he or she was very satisfied with that. On the contrary, 63% and 71% of the questionnaire recipients insisted that the book and each lesson in it need redesigning so that they could be more interested in learning such a challenging subject.

Concerning the students' interest, the question "What do you think interests you most about the current book?" was designed to find out what they like most about the book.

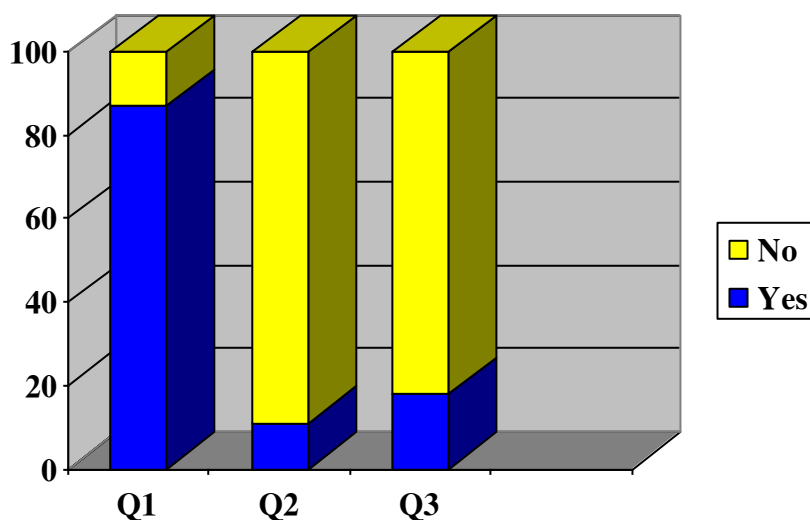
Here is the result:



**Chart 3:** What the student like most about the current text book

9% and 4% of the students liked the vocabulary explanations and grammar explanations respectively, it is clearly shown in Chart 3. Once again, this has led the author to a thought that all the basic grammar rules and the vocabulary should have been be fully explained so as to help the students learn Construction English better. 76% hoped the language used in the book ought to be simplified so that it would not be a hindrance to their learning (just 24% say the language is OK).

### ***3.2.1.7 The students' evaluation on the timetable and the effectiveness of the textbook***



Q1: Do you find the timetable for your ESP learning reasonable?

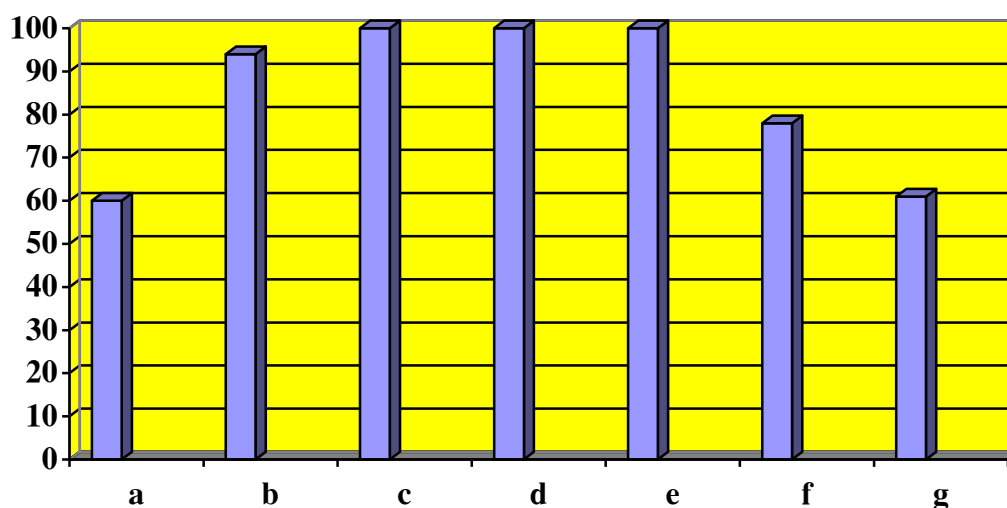
Q2: Do you think that the course book is effective in helping you learn the Specific English?

Q3: Do you support the current textbook?

**Chart 4:** *The students' evaluation on the timetable and the effectiveness of the current textbook*

It can be inferred from the chart that most of the students (87%) assessed their timetable as reasonable, in their opinion 60 periods in one term is sufficient for them to study the subject, and about 6 periods a week is just OK. Nevertheless, when answering the second and third questions, only few (11%) argued that the book is really effective in helping them learn, consequently 18% supported the current book while 82% said no. As for this group, so many things in the book were not satisfactorily explained and as a result they made them confused, which led to their poor understanding of the lesson.

### 3.2.1.8 The students' proposed changes to the current textbook



- a. Rearranging the topics
- b. Simplifying the language
- c. Adding more word explanations
- d. Adding more grammar explanations
- e. Adding more illustrations like drawings, pictures,...
- f. Adding more practicing exercises
- g. Categorizing exercises (vocabulary exercises, grammar exercises, comprehension exercises,...)

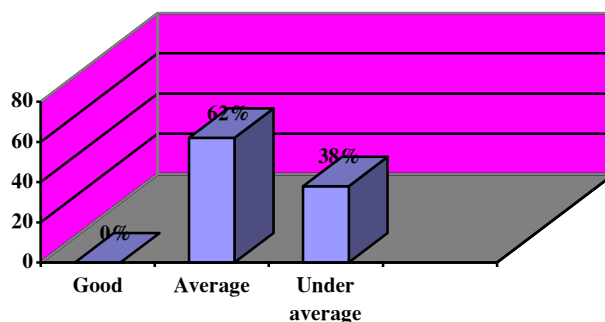
**Chart 5:** *The students' proposed changes to the current textbook*

For those reasons previously explained, more than fifty percent of the students taking part in the survey drew out a conclusion that they would highly appreciate the book if those changes were made to it. 69% expected the topics to be rearranged, 94% wanted the language to be simplified, 100% said they were longing for more word and grammar explanations and more illustrations like drawings, pictures,... 78% of them wished to do more practicing exercises and 61% wanted that these exercises be put into different categories so that it would ease their learning process.

### 3.2.2 Analysis of the survey questionnaire for the ESP teachers

ESP teachers' ideas are great contribution to the success of the research. Therefore, in order to come to any firmer conclusion, beside the questionnaire designed for the students, another questionnaire was also designed in order to get to know how the ESP teachers judge the book. It is composed of 6 sections and is on the following:

### 3.2.2.1 The teachers' evaluation on the students' general English level



**Chart 6:** *The teachers' evaluation on the students' general English level*

Due to so many challenges that their students confronted during the English learning time, almost all the teachers felt not very optimistic and they expressed a little worry before teaching an ESP course. 5 (62%) out of the 8 surveyed teachers thought their students' English level was average. Even 38% of them said it was under average rate. No teacher dare to say that level is high. Needless to say, the students' English background in general was not very good.

### 3.2.2.2 The teachers' ideas on the students' biggest challenge in their ESP course

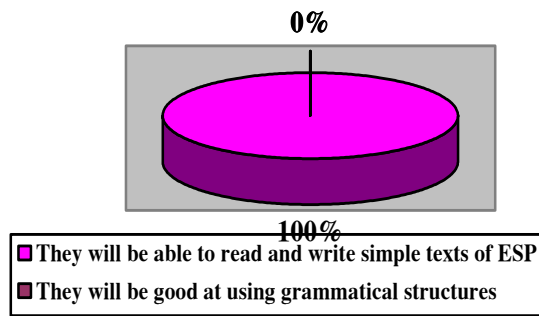
Biggest challenge	Percentage
Lack of vocabulary	50%
Poor understanding of grammatical structures	25%
Bad reading skill	12,5%
Difficulties in writing simple texts in English	0%
Bad pronunciation	12,5%

**Table 5:** *The teachers' ideas on the students' biggest challenge in their ESP course*

Finding out the cause of the students' learning difficulties is considered the key to solve their problems. When being interviewed, both groups revealed that they really had a hard time teaching and learning with the difficult subject. The greatest challenge they coped with was the students' lack of vocabulary (50% teachers assumed that). The percentages of the teachers who thought the bad reading and writing skills were the main reasons are equal (12,5%). Others (25%) affirmed that their poor understanding of grammatical structures was the main cause. Thanks to these findings, the teacher will be able to adjust her teaching by balancing everything that she is teaching in the classroom, for example, vocabulary enlargement and grammar consolidation will be put more focus on.



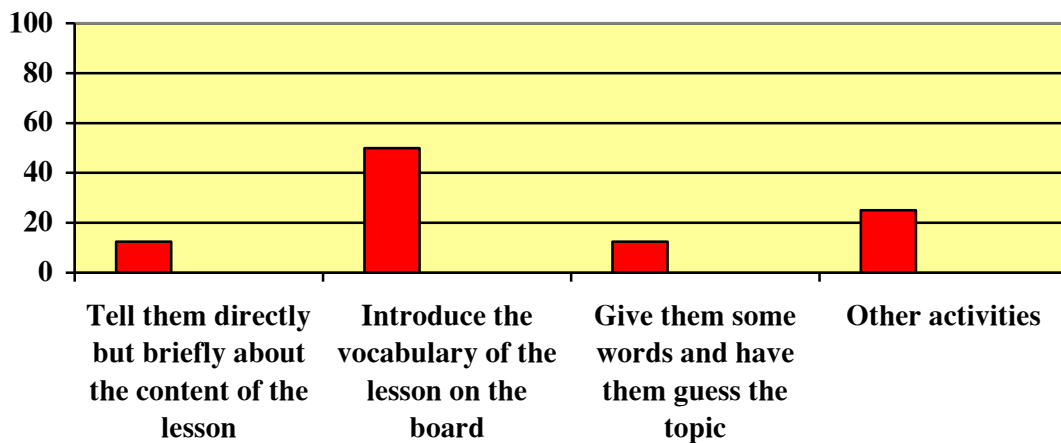
### 3.2.2.3 The teachers' expectation from the students after the ESP course



**Chart 7:** *The teachers' expectation from the students after the ESP course*

The data from the chart have revealed what the teachers expected from their students after the ESP learning time. Being aware of the fact that course objectives is to develop the students' communication skills, however, within a limited timeframe (60 periods in one term), 100% of them agreed that the students' good ability to read and write common texts of ESP, not their ability to use grammatical structures, would be the indication of their success.

### 3.2.2.4 The teachers' method to make the students interested before a lesson



**Chart 8:** *The teachers' method to make the students interested before a lesson*

As shown in the chart above, the proportion (49%) of the teachers who introduced vocabulary before every lesson is of everyone's notice. It is high in comparison with those for other activities. This can be easily understood by the factuality that since words and structures are usually the main barrier to the students' understanding of a

text, they were put most emphasis on before a lesson. This also reflects the teachers' awareness of their duty in the classroom, they felt the step is needed to help their students have good reading comprehension. However, 13% would like to begin a lesson by directly telling them about the topic, 13% chose to give them some words and had them guess the topic. The rest of the teachers (25%) commenced a lesson by doing other activities. Actually, from the author's teaching experience these different activities should be used interchangeably to avoid creating boredom for the students in a classroom before every lesson.

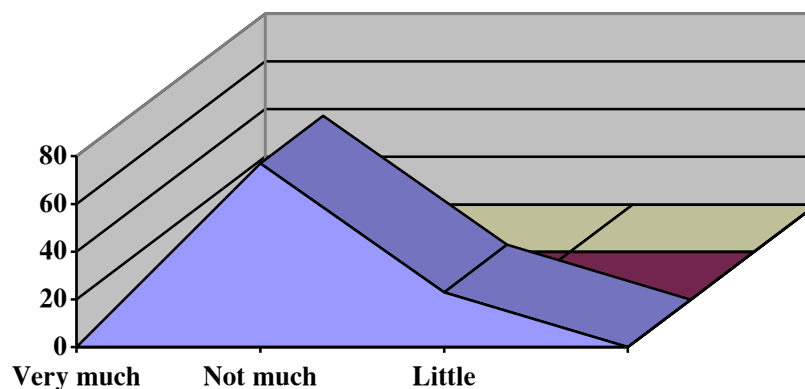
### 3.2.2.5 The teachers' evaluation on the design of the course book

	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Not satisfied
The overall design of the course book	0%	0%	100%
The design of each lesson	0%	23%	77%

**Table 6:** The teachers' evaluation on the design of the course book

The breakdown from Table 6 has demonstrated that the author get the same result from the teachers as from the students for the first choice "Very satisfied" when asking them to give ideas on the design of the book. 100% repeated that they didn't like the ways the book was designed at all, 77% expressed their complete dissatisfaction with the layout of each lesson. And also in the interview, they mentioned outright that the current book needed making more convincing in order to improve the quality of teaching and learning the subject at HPU.

### 3.2.2.6 The teachers' evaluation on the effectiveness of the current textbook



**Chart 9:** The teachers' evaluation on the effectiveness of the current textbook

The data in the chart indicates the teachers' evaluation on the effectiveness of the current textbook. None of them thought the book was very good at bringing great results to the students' ESP study. On the contrary, a majority of them assessed this as of rather low level, which means this book still needs further adaptation so that it could be considered a reliable teaching tool at HPU.

### **3.3 Summary**

No one can deny that English for Specific Purposes plays an important role in the students' success in applying for a good job. Mastering it, though, requires the rational combination of good memory for vocabulary, fluent grammatical structure using, decent translation skill,... . The Construction students of K10 agreed that the textbook they used to learn with was partly effective in sharpen some of those skills, of course with the help of their teacher, too. The teacher herself always tried to create activities to attract them before, during, as well as after each lesson. This did get them involved in the lesson, they made great effort to learn. To some extent, this has led to some good results.

However, the author of this study who has been much experienced in teaching them also realizes from the surveys that the current book was of not much help. In order to further improve her students' English, she had to use many other supplementary materials to enlarge their vocabulary and enrich the lessons as well. For these and other reasons, she thinks that the current book needs editing to meet the requirements of teaching and learning the subject at Haiphong Private University.

## Chapter four

# AN ANALYSIS ON THE NEWLY-EDITED TEXTBOOK

### 4.1 Need analysis

From the ESP teachers' and the Construction students' evaluations on the book in different aspects, the original has shown some short-comings such as it was not attractively designed, the topics were not reasonably arranged, the grammar regulations were not fully explained, ect. In short, it has been proved to be not very effective in motivating the students in their ESP study as well as in improving their language ability.

Always bearing in mind that the book would be for the sake of the students, the author edited the current book with the following points clearly in focus:

- Students' vocabulary enrichment
- Grammatical consolidation
- Reading and writing skills reinforcement
- Translation skill sharpening

After gathering ideas, she decided to make some small changes so that the book were so adjusted to reach the course objectives: developing the students' communication skills through reading and writing. Those changes are:

- \* The topics were kept unchanged but in a different order.
- \* The language of each reaching text was simplified, lengthy and complicated structure were shortened.
- \* More interpretations of grammar phenomena were attached to the end of every lesson.
- \* More pictures and drawings were added to each lesson as illustrations.
- \* More consolidating exercises were created and put into different categories.
- \* A glossary, which supplies the meaning and parts of speech, was attached to the end of the book .

The following section will be the presentation of the outline of the new book.

### 4.2 The outline of the newly-edited textbook

#### Unit 1: SKELETON CONSTRUCTION

##### Structure study

The Present Simple

The Passive of the Present Simple

##### Exercises

Comprehension check  
Grammar check  
Vocabulary check  
Translation

**Unit 2: STRUCTURES**

**Structure study**

Modal verbs

**Exercises**

Comprehension check  
Grammar check  
Vocabulary check  
Translation

**Unit 3: LOCATION**

**Reading**

**Structure study**

**Exercises**

Comprehension check  
Vocabulary check  
Translation

**Unit 4: MATERIALS AND PROPERTIES**

**Vocabulary on materials and properties**

**Exercises**

Comprehension check  
Vocabulary check

**Reading**

Comprehension check  
Grammar check

**Unit 5: CONCRETE, REINFORCED CONCRETE, PRE-STRESSED  
CONCRETE**

**Word study**

**Structure study**

The Present Perfect

1. Form
2. Uses

**Exercises**

Comprehension check

Vocabulary check

Grammar check

Translation

**Unit 6: CONVEYING, PLACING, COMPACTING, CURING**

**Reading**

**Word study**

**Structure study**

**The Past Perfect**

**Conditional Sentences Type 1**

**Exercises**

Comprehension check

Vocabulary check

Grammar check

Translation

**Unit 7: CONCRETE AND STRENGTH TEST**

**Sizes of aggregates**

**Strength test**

**REVISION**

**GLOSSARY**

**English-Vietnamese glossary**

**Vietnamese-English glossary**

Within the time allowed, the above seven units are for the teaching and learning in the classroom. The last eight units are for reference. Thanks to the detailed explanations of grammar and vocabulary available in the textbook, students will find it less difficult to read and do extra exercises at home. Here are the topics of those eight units:

**Unit 8: Architectural composition**

**Unit 9: Ultimate carrying capacity and factor of safety**

**Unit 10: Pre-cast products**

**Unit 11: Breakwaters**

**Unit 12: Asphalt concrete**

**Unit 13: Arch and arch-beam bridges**

**Unit 14: Shear forces and bending moments in beams**

**Unit 15: Matrix methods in the calculation of structure**

## Chapter five

# AN EVALUATION ON THE NEWLY-EDITED TEXTBOOK

### 5.1 Questionnaires

To elicit the feedback toward the new book, once again, the same group of teachers were invited for surveys. The first set of questions was for the 210 Construction students of K11 who have experienced learning the book. They gave their ideas by answering the following questions:

Question 1: *How much do you like the new book?*

Question 2: *What do you like in the new book?*

Question 3: *How much does the new book interest you to learn?*

Question 4: *How much effective is the book in helping you learn the subject?*

The second set of questions was designed to call for the ESP teachers' idea concerning:

\* *How much they like the new book*

\* *What they like about the new book*

\* *How much effective is the book in helping the students learn the subject*

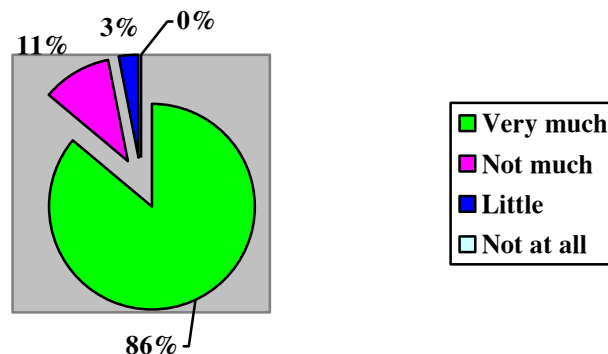
\* *What to be done to better the new book*

The second section of this chapter will be the analysis of the findings from the surveys.

### 5.2 An analysis of the findings

#### 5.21. Students' ideas on the new textbook

*Question 1: How much do you like the new book?*

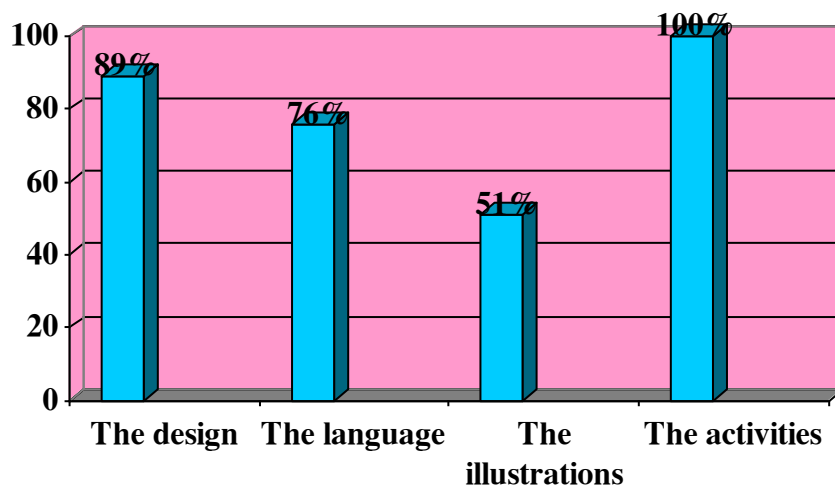


**Chart 10:** *How much the students like the new textbook*

As shown in Chart 10, 84% of the surveyed students welcome the new book with positive attitude. More exactly, they said they really liked it since it helped them much

in their study. None of the recipients stated she or she disliked the book. The proportion of those who not very much liked the book is 14% in total. This good result is the evidence of the author's great effort as well as her little success in adapting the materials. Thanks to this adaptation and through classroom observation, most of the students were seen to be more eager to learn, which had never happened before.

**Question 2:** *What do you like in the new book?*



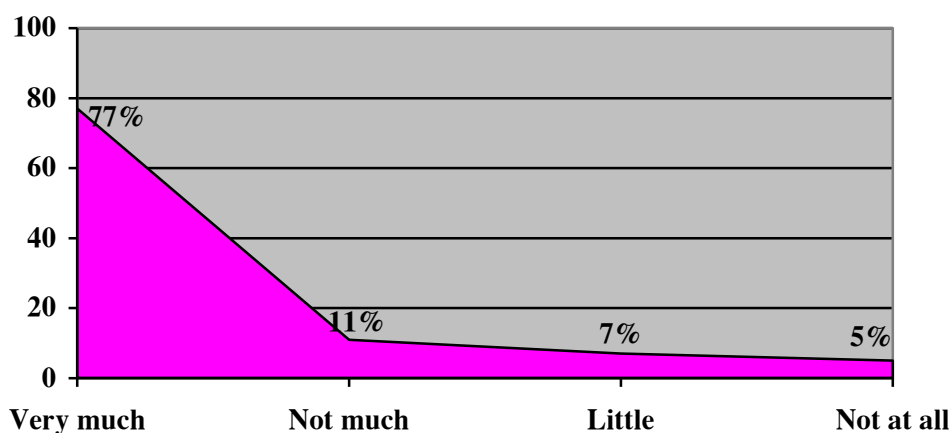
**Chart 11:** *What the students like about the new book*

Regarding what the students liked about the new book, the design, the language, the illustrations, the activities were brought in for survey. The number of the students who were for the new textbook in terms of activities was remarkably high, 100%. The design ranked the second with 89%. When being questioned, 76% of the participants stated that they completely supported the language after it had been simplified a bit while as for 23% of them reading to understand a text was still a thorny problem. This might not have been because the language used was still so complicated but could be explained by their low English level or other factors like their attitude towards the subject or the like.

The illustrations were believed to be OK by 51% whereas the rest (49%) asked for more eye-catching but useful and practical pictures or drawings, because as for them learning through observing a drawing is also effective. Generally speaking, however, after those positive changes, the new textbook has gained attention from most of the students



**Question 3:** *How much does the new book interest you to learn?*



**Chart 12:** *How much the new book interests students to learn*

There is a great discrepancy between the number of the students who thought the book interested them and the number of those who thought it did not. In the formal interview, 77% in total insisted it was nearly everything in the book that first made them curious, then attracted them to learn. More organized and fascinating activities like word search, crosswords, or other games and the various illustrations in the book caught their eyes, more importantly they greatly helped in lowering the difficulties level in their English learning process. For those reasons, they confessed they were encouraged to learn so they liked the book very much. However, a small number of them didn't approve the book very much (11%), 7% liked it a little and 5% didn't like it at all.

**Question 4:** *How much effective is the new textbook in helping you learn the subject?*

Very much	Not much	Little	Not at all
72%	16%	5%	7%

**Table 7:** *How much effective the new textbook is in helping students learn the subject*

152 out of the 210 surveyed participants, which is equivalent to 72%, regarded the book as of very high effectiveness. This could be easily explained by the results of the previous sections. When the students felt that they could do something in the book, they learnt. When they saw few or no obstacles, their English improved gradually.

## 5.2.2 Teachers' ideas on the new textbook

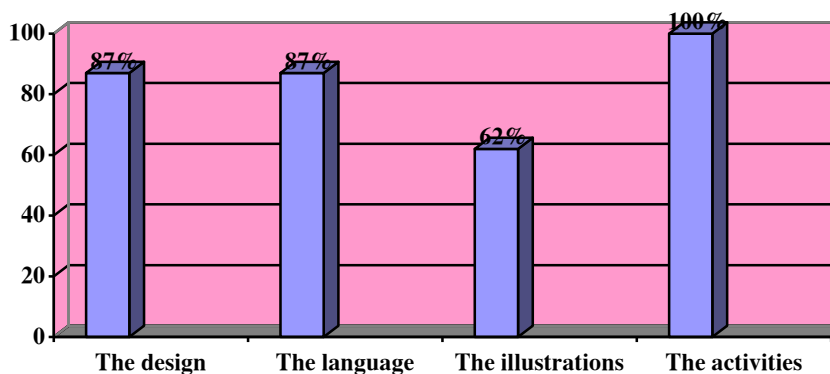
*Question 1: How much do you like the new book?*

Very much	Not much	Little	Not at all
88%	12%	0%	0%

**Table 8:** *How much the teachers like the new book*

The figures from the table fully reflects what the questioned teachers' ideas were on the newly-edited book. Most of them (88%) highly appreciated the new edition for the previous textbook and in the interview they said that the presence of the new book were of great help to the teacher's as well as the students' teaching and learning. At least it lessened the difficulties that both groups encountered and created chances for the students to practice in the classroom. Just 1 teacher (12%) didn't like the material very much. As for her, the book still needs bettering by further adaptation in the near future.

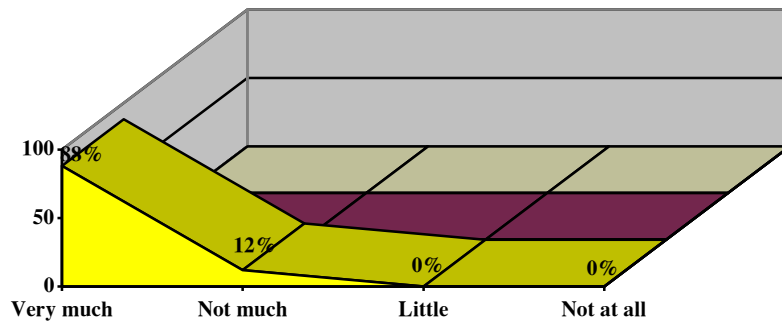
*Question 2: What do you like about the new textbook?*



**Chart 13:** *What the teachers like about the new textbook*

The percentages of the teachers who liked the design, the language, the illustration, and the activities in the new book were noticeably high (87%, 87%, 62%, and 100% respectively), which means that in their opinion, the author has been most successful in creating more activities for the students to practice. They also revealed their optimistic expectation from the students' learning results after the course.

*Question 3: How much effective is the new textbook in helping the students learn the subject?*



**Chart 14:** *How much effective the new textbook is in helping the students learn the subject*

The book received the same scores as with the first question in terms of effectiveness. The collected data demonstrates that 7 (88%) out of the 8 interviewed teachers thought the effectiveness level of the new book was high, which means the book were of great assistance to the students in their ESP study. None of them said it was little effective or not effective at all.

**Question 4:** *What are your ideas to better the new book?*

This question was raised in a formal interview to call for suggestions for further bettering the book. According to the questioned teachers, the newly-edited materials is an evidence of the author’s small success, yet, it is by no means without shortcomings. They, then proposed that more types of activities like exercises on grammar, vocabulary or games should be added, some of the very difficult exercises should be cut down on or spent for reference with really good students. To explain for it, they argued that the language used in English for Specific purposes in general does not often contain so many difficult grammatical structures but just simple ones like some simple tenses, the use of articles or of modals, and while the time learning in class is limited so the teacher should clarify what ought to be focused to enable her students to reach their goals.

**5.3 Summary**

Through the analysis on the collected data from the surveys, interviews on the old and the new textbooks, and classroom observation it has become apparent that the new one overcame some disadvantages that the old one has and more importantly, it was warmly welcomed by most of the Construction students and the ESP teachers. Exactly, the two groups of participants highly appreciated both the design and the content of the new book. They mostly agreed that the more concrete illustrations (both by words and by pictures) at least helped reduce the burden of learning Construction English that the students may have felt when they first looked through the book, like they really did

with the old one. Also, the addition of more groups of exercises created more chances for the students to practice the language. This, hence, inspired them to learn and undoubtedly led to great results at last.

To conclude, the newly-edited book has shown some strong points, such as its positive effects on the students' attitude towards the learning of the subject matter, its effectiveness in improving the students' communication ability. For these reasons, it is recommended that it be used as official materials in the classroom for the students of Construction Department from the next term.

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## APPENDIX 1

### **SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE**

(For students of Construction Department-K10)

The following is the questionnaire carefully designed for the research “**Evaluating and Editing the Textbook “*English of Civil Engineering*”** by Nguyen Thi Phuong Thu, M.A. The author would be grateful for your kindness in answering the questions below.

**Thanks in advance for your cooperation!**

**PLEASE TICK THE ANSWER(S) THAT YOU CHOOSE**

**Section 1: The students’ evaluation on their study of general English**

1. When did you first learn English?

- a. At primary school
- b. At secondary school
- c. At high school
- d. At university

2. How is your difficulty in learning General English ?

- a. very great
- b. great
- c. not very great
- d. not great at all

3. What has/ have been your biggest difficulty in learning English?

- a. Vocabulary
- b. Grammatical structures
- c. Speaking
- d. Listening

4. What do you expect to do after the first three terms’ earning general English at university?

- a. Improve your grammar understanding
- b. Improve your reading skill
- c. Improve your communication skill in everyday conversations
- d. Improve your writing skill

5. How can you assess your current general English learning?

- a. Good
- b. Normal
- c. Bad

d. Very bad

**Section 2: The students' evaluation on their study of English for Specific Purposes**

1. What do you think about the learning English of Construction after three years' learning General English?

- a. very important
- b. important
- c. not very important
- d. not important

2. How are your difficulties in learning English of Construction?

- a. very great
- b. great
- c. not very great
- d. not great at all

3. What is the biggest difficulty when you learn English of Construction?

- a. vocabulary
- b. grammar
- c. structure
- d. pronunciation of words

4. How is your understanding of the basic grammar after the course?

- a. Excellent
- b. Good
- c. Normal
- d. Bad

5. How is your vocabulary on Construction English currently?

- a. Very rich
- b. Rich
- c. Poor
- d. Very poor

6. How do you read a text in English of Construction now?

- a. Very well
- b. Well
- c. Not very well
- d. Badly

7. How can you write a simple text in English of Construction now?

- a. Very well
- b. Well



- c. Not very well
- d. Badly

**Section 3: The students' expectation from an ESP course**

What do you expect to do from an ESP course?

- a. Enlarge your vocabulary
- b. Develop your reading and writing skills
- c. Better your basic grammatical uses

**Section 4: The students' evaluation on the teacher's teaching methods**

1. How much do you like the way your teacher began every lesson?
  - a. Very much
  - b. Rather
  - c. A little
  - d. Not at all
2. How successfully did your teacher make you understand the purpose of each lesson?
  - a. Very much
  - b. Rather
  - c. A little
  - d. Not at all

**Section 5: The students' evaluation on the content and methodology of current textbook**

1. How can you rate the topics of the lessons in the book?
  - a. Update
  - b. Not update
  - c. Backward
2. Are the topics important for the learning of English of Construction?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
  - c. No idea
3. How do you rate the skills allocation in the book?
  - a. Reasonable
  - b. Neutral
  - c. Not reasonable
4. What did the book supply you with?
  - a. Many explanations of grammatical rules, structures, vocabulary

- b. Not many explanations of grammatical rules, structures, vocabulary
  - c. Few explanations of grammatical rules, structures, vocabulary
5. How do you assess the exercises included in the course book?
- a. Difficult but interesting
  - b. Difficult and not interesting
  - c. Easy and interesting
6. How do you think about the language used in the book?
- a. Difficult to understand
  - b. Not very difficult to understand
  - c. Easy to understand
7. How can you assess the book in terms of methodology?
- a. The book really motivates your learning
  - b. The book discourages you from learning
  - c. No idea

**Section 6: The students' evaluation on the design of the current textbook**

1. What are your ideas about the overall design of the book?
- a. Very satisfied
  - b. Satisfied
  - c. Not satisfied
2. What do you think about the design of each lesson?
- a. Very satisfied
  - b. Satisfied
  - c. Not satisfied
3. What do you think interests you most about the currently used text book?
- a. The topics
  - b. The language
  - c. The vocabulary explanations
  - d. The grammar explanations
  - e. The design

**Section 7: The students' evaluation on the timetable and the effectiveness of the current textbook**

1. Do you find the timetable for your ESP learning reasonable?

- a. Yes
  - b. No
2. Do you think that the course book is effective in helping you learn the Specific English?
- a. Yes
  - b. No
3. Do you support the current textbook?
- a. Yes
  - b. No

**Section 8: The students' proposed changes to the current textbook**

What of the following changes should be made to the current text book? (Please tick all the changes that you think are necessary)

- 1. Rearranging the topics
- 2. Simplifying the language
- 3. Adding more word explanations
- 4. Adding more grammar explanations
- 5. Adding more illustrations like drawings, pictures
- 6. Adding more practicing exercises
- 7. Categorizing exercises (vocabulary exercises, grammar exercises, vocabulary exercises, translation exercises)

- The End -

**Thank you once again!**

## APPENDIX 2

### **SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE**

(For ESP teachers)

The following is the questionnaire carefully designed for the research “**Evaluating and Editing the Textbook “English of Civil Engineering”**” by Nguyen Thi Phuong Thu, M.A. The author would be grateful for your kindness in answering the questions below.

**Thanks in advance for your cooperation!**

#### **PLEASE TICK THE ANSWER(S) THAT YOU CHOOSE**

##### **Section 1: The teachers’ evaluation on the students’ general English level**

How do you think about your students’ English when starting the course?

- a. Good
- b. Average
- c. Bad

##### **Section 2: The teachers’ evaluation on the students’ biggest challenge in their ESP course**

What is the biggest challenge do your students often meet during an ESP course?

- a. Lack of vocabulary
- b. Poor understanding in grammatical structures
- c. Bad reading skills
- d. Difficulties in writing simple texts in English
- e. Bad pronunciation

##### **Section 3: The teachers’ expectation from the students after the ESP course**

What do you expect from your students after the course?

- a. They will be able to read and write simple texts of ESP
- b. They will be good at using basic grammar structures

##### **Section 4: The teachers’ method to make the students interested before a lesson**

What do you often do to arouse the students’ interest before every lesson?

- a. Tell them briefly and directly about the content of the lesson
- b. Introduce the vocabulary of the lesson on the board
- c. Give them some words then have them guess the topic of the lesson
- d. Other activities

##### **Section 5: The teachers’ evaluation on the design of the course book**

1. What do you think about the design of each lesson in particular?

- a. Very satisfied
  - b. Satisfied
  - c. Not satisfied
2. What are your ideas about the design of the book in general?
- a. Very satisfied
  - b. Satisfied
  - c. Not satisfied

***Section 6: The teachers' evaluation on the effectiveness of the textbook***

How do you think that the course book is effective in helping your students learn the English?

- a. Very much
- b. Not very much
- c. Little

- The End -

**Thank you once again!**

## APPENDIX 3

### SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

(For Construction students-K11)

The following is the questionnaire carefully designed for the research “**Evaluating and Editing the Textbook “English of Civil Engineering”**” by Nguyen Thi Phuong Thu, M.A. The author would be grateful for your kindness in answering the questions below.

**Thanks in advance for your cooperation!**

PLEASE TICK THE ANSWER(S) THAT YOU CHOOSE

**The students’ evaluation on the newly edited textbook**

1. How much do you like the new textbook?

- a. Very much
- b. Not much
- c. Little
- d. Not at all

2. Do you like the following of the new textbook?

	Yes	No
The design		
The language		
The illustrations		
The activities		

3. How much effective is the new textbook in helping you learn the subject?

- a. Very much
- b. Not much
- c. Little
- d. Not at all

4. What are your ideas to better the new textbook?

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- The End -

Thank you once again!

## APPENDIX 4

### SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

(For ESP teachers)

The following is the questionnaire carefully designed for the research “**Evaluating and Editing the Textbook** *“English of Civil Engineering”* by Nguyen Thi Phuong Thu, M.A.

The author would be grateful for your kindness in answering the questions below.

**Thanks in advance for your cooperation!**

#### PLEASE TICK THE ANSWER(S) THAT YOU CHOOSE

##### The teachers’ evaluation on the newly edited textbook

1. How much do you like the new textbook?

- a. Very much
- b. Not much
- c. Little
- d. Not at all

2. Do you like the following about the new textbook?

	Yes	No
The design		
The language		
The illustration		
The activities		

3. How much effective is the textbook in helping the students learn the subject?

- a. Very much
- b. Not much
- c. Little
- d. Not at all

4. What are your ideas to better the new textbook?

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- The End -

**Thank you once again!**