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Reassessing English for Specific Purposes in Technical Education: Linguistic and communicative needs of technical education learners in mezam division (Cameroon)

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ABSTRACT

This article reassesses English for Specific Purposes in Technical Education: Linguistic and Communicative Needs of Technical Education Learners in Mezam Division, Cameroon. It is guided by the following central research question: what are the linguistic and communicative needs of technical education students in Mezam Division? How well are these needs addressed by the Mastering English High School Students' Textbook? The main objective of this study is to evaluate the extent to which Mastering English High School Students' Textbook supports the development of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) competencies in Mezam Division. Using a combination of qualitative and quantitative research methods, including questionnaires and semi-structured interview group discussions, this study investigates how the linguistic and communicative needs of technical learners are addressed by the textbook. The analysis is guided by the Needs Analysis Theory (Dudley-Evans & St. John, 1998) to demonstrate how the target needs, learning needs, and present situation needs of students are identified within the context of ESP teaching principles and language teaching and learning in technical schools. The findings reveal that while the textbook provides a foundation in general English, it does not sufficiently meet the specific linguistic and communicative needs of technical education students in Mezam Division due to its limited coverage of technical contexts, specialized vocabulary, and authentic communicative tasks. This highlights the need for adaptation or supplementary materials aligned with ESP principles. This study contributes to a broad understanding of the relationship between textbook evaluation and English for Specific Purposes principles and language teaching in technical education contexts. It shows how the linguistic and communicative needs of technical learners can be met by selecting ESP-sensitive materials.

KEYWORDS: English For Specific Purposes, Linguistic And Communicative Needs, Mezam Division, Needs Analysis, Technical Education

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Introduction

Technical education students require effective language and communication skills to succeed in both academic and professional environments. In Mezam Division, English plays a vital role in the teaching of technical subjects, workplace interaction and access to professional opportunities. However, many students face challenges in understanding technical vocabulary, expressing ideas clearly and communicating confidently in practical settings. This article examines the linguistic and communicative needs of technical education students in Mezam Division. It highlights the importance of English for Specific Purposes in improving academic performance and professional competence. To address this question, the study is further structured around the following specific research questions:

- i. What is the current context of technical education in Mezam Division?
- ii. What are the target language needs of technical education students in Mezam Division?
- iii. What are the linguistic needs of technical education learners in Mezam Division?
- iv. What communicative skills are required for effective learning and professional practice in technical education?

Technical education in Mezam Division prepares students for practice and professional careers. Its effectiveness depends not only on technical skills but also on students' ability to use English in academic and workplace settings. These students have target language needs related to their specializations. They need English to understand instructions, technical documents, and workplace communication. The linguistic needs of these learners include technical vocabulary, grammar, reading and writing skills. These abilities help students understand and express technical information effectively. Communicative skills such as speaking, report writing, presentations, and professional interaction are essential in technical education. These skills support both academic success and workplace integration.

1. Literature Review

English for Specific Purposes (ESP) is a learner-centred approach that focuses on the language and communication skills required in specific academic and professional contexts. According to Anthony (2012), ESP seeks to equip learners with the linguistic competencies necessary for effective participation in particular disciplines and occupations.

Munby (1978) argues that language programmes should be designed on the basis of learners' target communicative needs and the situations in which they are expected to use the language. Tomlinson (2011) argues that language teaching materials should respond to learners' needs, interests, and communicative purposes. Materials that fail to reflect learners' academic and occupational realities may limit their engagement and learning outcomes.

A considerable body of scholarship has examined the role of textbooks in enhancing English for Specific Purposes (ESP) in technical education. Within African contexts in particular, English for Specific Purposes has been widely recognized as a teaching approach that bridges the gap between language teaching and the academic and communicative needs of technical learners.

In the Cameroonian context, several scholars have made important contributions to the role of textbooks in enhancing English learning in technical schools. Nkwetisama (2012) critically evaluates the Competency-Based Approach (CBA) to English language teaching. In Cameroon and identifies several challenges that hinder its effective implementation. These include insufficient learning resources and limited teacher preparedness. The study highlights the difficulty learners face in developing practical communicative competencies despite the objectives of the CBA. Similarly, Belibi (2018) examines the Francophone secondary education subsystem and reveals inconsistencies between the Cameroonian educational model and Western-oriented language teaching practices. The study shows that language instruction often fails to reflect the sociolinguistic realities and practical needs of learners.

In the same perspective, Agbor (2024) investigates the integration of linguistic diversity and local language into official language instruction in Cameroon. The findings indicate that limited teacher training and lack of relevant teaching materials negatively influence the implementation of English for Specific Purposes (ESP).

Although these studies provide valuable insights into language education in Cameroon, they do not specifically address the linguistic and communicative needs of technical education students in Mezam Division. Most previous works focus on general language policy, curriculum challenges or secondary education systems.

They do not examine the particular language skills required by technical learners. The present study therefore seeks to fill this gap by identifying the specific linguistic and communicative needs of technical education students in Mezam Division. This will help improve ESP teaching and learning in technical institutions.

More recent research has increasingly emphasized ESP and textbook evaluation. Sai and Sai (2017) provide a useful model for ESP textbook evaluation, emphasizing the need for teaching materials to reflect learners' professional and communicative needs. Penn (1970) examines the attitudes of Francophone Cameroonians towards English and shows how motivation and perceptions influence language learning. Similarly, Gyamera (2022) investigates the attitudes and motivations of Francophone students learning English in Ghana.

These studies are relevant to the present research, but they do not specifically examine the linguistic and communicative needs of technical education students in Mezam Division. The present study therefore seeks to fill this gap by focusing on the specific ESP needs of technical education learners in Mezam Division.

2. Method of Data Collection and Theoretical Framework

This study adopts a mixed-methods approach. It combines quantitative and qualitative techniques to provide a detailed analysis of enhancing the linguistic and communicative needs of technical education learners through the usage of the appropriate textbook. The quantitative dimension is central to the study and relies on students' questionnaires, while the qualitative aspect draws themes extracted from the semi-structured interview with the students and teachers.

2.1 Questionnaire to Students and Teachers

Questionnaires were used as the primary quantitative data collection instruments to investigate the linguistic and communicative needs of technical education students in Mezam Division, Cameroon. They comprised 19 items distributed across three sections: demographic information (5 items), language use and needs (9 items), and suggestions for improving technical English Instructions (5 items). The questionnaire comprised three sections. Section A gathered respondents' demographic information, including gender, age, institution, level of study, and field of specialization. Section B examined learners' use of English in technical contexts focusing on reading technical manuals, writing reports, speaking, listening to technical instructions, and preparing job application documents. Section C sought participant suggestions on instructional materials and tasks that could enhance the learning of technical English.

The content analysis checklist evaluated the Mastering English High School textbook based on ESP principles. The checklist assessed the relevance of content to technical fields, the integration of language skills, the use of authentic communicative tasks, the contextualization of grammar and vocabulary, and the suitability of the textbook for the technical education context. Its capacity to develop technical communication skills, and its alignment with the principles and objectives of English for Specific Purposes. The questionnaires were designed by the researcher with the help of her supervisor.

Data were collected from technical high school students offering professional English in the two selected schools in Mezam Division, Cameroon. Five English Language teachers from the same schools were also administered the questionnaire. The questionnaires were administered directly to participants, while the Mastering English High School textbook was analyzed using a structured checklist. The data collection process aimed to identify learners' linguistic and communicative needs and assess the extent to which the textbook addresses those needs.

2.2 Semi-structure Interview

In addition to the questionnaires administered to students and teachers, semi-structured interviews were employed as a qualitative data collection instrument to obtain in-depth insights into participants' perceptions and experiences regarding the Mastering English High School textbook. The use of semi-structured interviews allowed the researcher to explore issues that could not be fully captured through questionnaire responses. This provided participants with the flexibility to elaborate on their views.

The interviews were conducted with six groups of students drawn from two technical secondary schools in Mezam Division, namely Government Technical High School Kedom Ketinguh and GTHS Bamendankwe. Five groups from GTHS Bamendankwe consisted of eight students each, while one group from GTHS Kedom Ketinguh comprised seven students, giving a total of forty-seven (47) student participants.

The interview guide was organized around key themes related to learners' motivation and engagement with the textbook content; its perceived usefulness; its impact on learners' confidence in using technical English; the language skills most and least supported by the textbook; the difficulties encountered by learners; and suggestions for improving the textbook to better address the linguistic and communicative needs of technical education students.

Five English language teachers from the two technical high schools also participated in the interview session. The data obtained from the interviews complemented the questionnaire findings and provided a richer understanding of learners' perspectives on the textbook's suitability for English for Specific Purposes (ESP) instruction in technical education.

2.3 Theoretical Framework

This study is grounded in Needs Analysis Theory and Communicative Competence Theory to account for the relationship between English for Specific Purposes (ESP) and the linguistic and communicative needs of technical education learners in Mezam Division. First, the study draws on Needs Analysis Theory proposed by Hutchinson and Waters (1987). It explains that language teaching should address the specific needs of learners. It focuses on identifying the linguistic and communicative skills learners need in their academic or professional environments.

The theory emphasizes target needs, learning needs, and real-life communication tasks. In English for Specific Purposes, needs analysis guides the design of relevant and practical language instruction for learners. Second, Communicative Competence Theory, developed by Hymes (1972), stresses that language learning involves the ability to use language effectively in real-life situations. It goes beyond grammar to include appropriate communication in different social and professional contexts. The theory is relevant to ESP because it promotes the practical communication skills needed by technical education students.

This study combines Needs Analysis Theory and Communicative Competence Theory because they both emphasize practical language use. The theories help identify learners' language needs and their ability to communicate effectively in technical contexts. Flowerdrew (2002) argues that needs analysis provides a basis for identifying the linguistic and communicative competences required by learners in specific academic and occupational settings.

3. Sampling Procedure and Rationale

A purposive sampling technique was adopted for this study in order to select participants who were directly involved in the teaching and learning of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) in technical education. This approach was deemed appropriate because the study focused on learners' linguistic and communicative needs within a specific instructional context, as well as the evaluation of a prescribed English textbook. Purposive sampling therefore enabled the researcher to intentionally select respondents who possessed relevant experience with the Mastering English High School Student's Textbook and were best positioned to provide informed insights.

The target population comprised all students and English language teachers in the two selected technical high schools in Mezam Division. Government Technical High School Bamendankwe had a total student population of approximately 1,231 students, while Government Technical High School Kedjom Ketinguh had approximately 170 students, giving a combined student population of 1,401 students. The teacher population consisted of 6 English teachers at G.T.H.S Bamendankwe and 5 English teachers at G.T.H.S Kedjom Ketinguh, making a total of 11 teachers across the two schools.

From this population, a sample of 60 students was selected. This sample size was considered adequate and manageable for the study, given the mixed-methods design and the need for detailed analysis of both questionnaire data and contextual differences across trades and schools. It also allowed for meaningful comparison between a larger urban-based school and a smaller rural school affected by socio-political disruptions, while ensuring that all major technical trades were represented.

The sampling of students was purposive and stratified by trade to ensure representation of the different technical specializations, such as Electrical Engineering, Building Construction, Accounting, Woodwork, and others. In addition, all 6 English teachers available and actively teaching Professional English in the two schools

were purposively included in the study, ensuring that the teacher sample reflected those directly responsible for implementing the ESP curriculum.

This sampling strategy ensured that the study captured a diverse yet relevant group of participants whose experiences were central to understanding the alignment between English language instruction and the communicative demands of technical education in Mezam Division.

3.1. Findings

3.2. The Current Context of Technical Education in Mezam Division

Technical and vocational education in Mezam Division is designed to equip learners with practical skills and professional competencies required for employment and self-reliance in various technical fields. The major programmes offered in Government Technical High Schools in this division include areas such as Building construction, Electrical Installation, Mechanical Engineering, Automobile Technology, Wood Technology, Home Economics etc. These programmes combine theoretical instruction with hands-on training, thereby preparing students for both further education and the labor market.

Within this context, English serves as the principal medium for instruction, assessment and professional communication. Students are required to comprehend technical manuals, safety regulations, instructional guide lines and examination materials, as well as to participate in classroom discussions, practical demonstrations and work place interactions. Consequently, technical education places high linguistic demands on learners. This include areas such as technical vocabulary, procedural writing, report writing, oral presentations and interpersonal communication.

Furthermore, students are expected to develop communicative competence that enables them to function effectively in academic and occupational environments. This includes the ability to interpret reports, complete job-related documents and engage in problem-solving discussions. The language demands of technical disciplines therefore extend beyond general English proficiency to include specialized terminology, functional language and context-specific discourse.

Understanding this educational context is essential for identifying learners' ESP needs and for evaluating the relevance of the Mastering English High school textbook in supporting technical education in Mezam division. Within this educational setting, the next step is to determine the language competencies students require for effective performance in their future professional context.

3.3 Target Language Needs Of Technical Education Students in Mezam Division

In academic contexts, students are required to use English for understanding classroom instruction, participating in technical discussions, responding to examination questions, and producing written assignments, practical reports, and project work. Effective comprehension of examination items, technical descriptions, and instructional materials is essential for academic success. Technical students are expected to use English not only for everyday interaction but also for learning, reporting, explaining processes, and presenting information in structured academic formats. However, the textbook mainly emphasizes general comprehension and short answer responses rather than structured academic communication.

In addition, the textbook provides little guidance on organizing ideas logically using connectors like (first, then, therefore, as a result) or adopting formal and objective language appropriate for academic and professional contexts. Learners are therefore not adequately prepared to participate in classroom demonstration, project presentation, group discussion or assessment tasks required in the technical schools.

In workshop settings, learners use English to follow safety regulations, interpret operational guidelines, understand teachers demonstrations, and engage in collaborative problem-solving activities. Communication in these environments often involves giving and receiving instructions, reporting faults, requesting clarification, and documenting practical procedures. Therefore, accuracy, clarity, and functional language use are important in ensuring both learning efficiency and safety.

Furthermore, students are expected to interact with technical manuals, equipment guides, and maintenance instructions, which are predominantly written in English. These materials require learners to possess adequate reading skills, technical vocabulary and the ability to interpret procedural and descriptive

texts. Limited proficiency in these areas may hinder students ability to operate machinery correctly and to apply theoretical knowledge in practice.

Table 1: Target language needs of technical education students in Mezam Division

Activity	Never	Rarely	Neutral	Sometimes	Very often
Technical report writing	48.3%	43.1%	03.44%	01.72	03.44
writing job application	34.5%	06.9%	39.6%	13.8%	05.2%
oral presentation and demonstrations	42.9%	40.44%	03.36%	10.1%	03.2%
interpretation of technical documents	44.8%	34.5%	03.40%	12.1%	05.2%
Work place interaction and team communication	25.9%	25.9%	06.9%	32.7%	08.6%

Source: Conceived by Researcher, 2025

The data on table one shows that the use of English varies across different technical activities. A relatively high percentage of 48.3 respondents reported never using English when writing technical reports and writing job applications (34.5%). This indicate that the learners cannot use English effectively in this domain.

Still in the same light, activities like oral presentation and demonstration have (42.9%) and interpretation of technical documents (44.8%) respectively. Work place interaction and team communication has (25.9%). Overall, the data highlight that English is not most frequently employed in this domain.

Table 2: Teachers' Perceptions of the Target Language Needs of Technical Education Students in Mezam Division (N=5)

Target language needs	Never (%)	Rarely(%)	Neutral(%)	ST(%)	Very often(%)
Technical report writing	0(0%)	0(0%)	1(20%)	2(40%)	2(40%)
Writing job applications	0(0%)	0(0%)	1(20%)	1(20%)	2(40%)
Oral representation and demonstration	0(0%)	1(20%)	0(0%)	2(40%)	3(60%)
Interpretation of technical documents	0(0%)	0(0%)	1(20%)	1(20%)	3(60%)
Workplace interaction	0(0%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	1/20(%)	4/80(%)

Source: Conceived by Researcher, 2025

Table 2 shows that teachers perceive workplace interaction and team communication as the most important target language need of technical education students, with 80% indicating that learners very often require this skill. Oral presentations and demonstrations as well as the interpretation of technical documents were also highly rated, with 60% of teachers reporting that these skills are very often needed. Technical report writing and job application writing were similarly recognized as important language needs, although to a slightly lesser extent. Overall, the findings suggest that technical education students require English language competencies that support workplace communication, technical documentation, professional presentation, and career-related writing, highlighting the need for ESP-oriented instructional materials that address these specific communicative demands.

While teachers' responses highlight the target language needs of technical education students, the following section presents students' perspectives from the semi-structured interviews on their own linguistic and communicative needs.

3.4 Linguistic and communicative needs of technical education learners

One of the central linguistic needs identified in this research concerns the acquisition and use of technical vocabulary and domain-specific terminology. Mastering technical vocabulary is essential for reading manuals, interpreting diagrams, following safety instructions, and communicating procedures accurately.

Technical education students need grammar and structures relevant in technical discourse. These include adjectives or adverbs that describes procedural or operational descriptions of structures, some of the structures are passive constructions, imperative forms, conditionals for instruction-giving patterns, modal verbs, and

sequential connectors commonly used in technical discourse. The data from students questionnaires revealed that most of the grammar activities focus mainly on narrative tenses in literary texts dialogues and everyday contexts. The data from students questionnaire indicate that a majority of respondents identified that the ability to read technical documents is one of their most important language needs. Many students reported difficulties in understanding equipment manuals, safety guidelines, installation procedures and maintenance instructions written in English.

Lastly is the aspect of writing reports, procedures and instructions. The findings from the students indicated that technical writing skills are essential for their academic and professional development. Many students reported experiencing difficulties in writing maintenance reports, project summaries, accident reports, procedural guidelines, and operational instructions in English. The table below presents the linguistic needs of technical education learners.

Table 3: Linguistic Needs of Technical Education Learners (N=47)

Activity	Never	Rarely	Neutral	Sometimes	Very often
Technical vocabulary and Terminology	50%	23%	05%	12%	10%
Grammar and structure relevant to technical discourse	33.21%	37.21%	23.28%	02.84%	03.46%
Reading technical texts and manuals	48.23%	43.36%	03.44%	01.81%	03.25%
Writing reports, procedures and instructions	36%	42.6%	06.9%	08.6%	5.9%

Source: Conceived by Researchers, 2025

Table three above summarizes the linguistic and communicative needs of technical learners. It is noticed from the table that 73% of the respondents never or rarely use technical vocabulary and terminology respectively. 5% of the respondents were neutral while a significant respondents of 22% agreed using technical vocabulary and terminology. This suggests that the textbook is not completely void of this aspect. Similarly, a majority (70.42%) of the respondents do not use grammatical structures relevant to technical discourse. A significant number (23.28%) was neutral while 2.8 4% of the respondents used it sometimes or very often respectively.

For reading of technical texts and manuals, most respondents 48.23% never read them, and (43.36%) rarely read these documents. An insignificant number of 3.44% were neutral meanwhile 1.81% sometimes and 03.25% often read technical manuals or text.

Concerning writing reports procedures and instructions, 36% were never taught, 42.6% rarely used English for report writing. 06.9% were neutral using English for this aspect. 14.5% sometimes or very often used English for writing reports procedures and instructions.

Table 4: Summary of Semi-Structured Interview Findings from Students on Linguistic and Communicative Needs (N = 47 Students)

Theme	Key Findings from the 6 Student Groups
Motivation and engagement with textbook content	Students showed moderate motivation. They reported that some lessons are interesting, but many are too general and not linked to technical fields. Out of 20 lessons in the textbook, only 3 lessons are related to technical education.
Perceived usefulness of the textbook	The textbook is seen as useful for general English learning (grammar, vocabulary, reading). However, students feel it is only partially useful for technical education. It lacks sufficient technical content and workplace communication tasks.
Impact on confidence in using technical English	The textbook improves general English confidence. However, students still feel insecure when using technical English, especially in specialized discussions and workplace communication.

Skills most and least supported	Most supported: reading and grammar. Moderately supported: writing. Least supported: speaking and listening, especially in technical and workplace contexts.
Difficulties encountered	Students mentioned difficulties with lack of technical vocabulary, long and complex texts, and limited speaking and listening practice.
Suggested improvements	Students recommended inclusion of technical vocabulary, workplace communication tasks, and more speaking and listening activities related to their various trades.

Source: Conceived by the Researchers, 2025

The semi-structured interview findings on table four from the six student groups indicate that while the Mastering English High School textbook supports general English learning, it does not sufficiently meet the specific linguistic and communicative needs of technical education learners. The responses consistently highlight a gap between the textbook content and ESP requirements, particularly in relation to technical vocabulary, speaking and listening skills, and workplace communication. Students therefore expressed a strong need for more context-specific and profession-oriented language materials.

The next section presents the responses from teachers' questionnaires regarding the communicative skills required by technical education learners for effective academic and professional communication.

3.5 Communicative Skills Required in Technical Education

The analysis revealed that many learners lack confidence in spoken technical communication. They reported difficulty in explaining how machines operates, presenting projects to the class, giving step-by-step instructions and discussing problems during group work. Learners also indicated that they understand the practical work but cannot express it orally in English. Several respondents stated that they prefer to use pidgin during team work because it is faster and clearer in meaning.

Listening skills are equally important in technical education contexts. Students are required to comprehend teachers explanations, follow up step-by-step instructions, interpret safety guidelines and understand technical discussions. In workshops, accurate listening is particularly vital, as misunderstandings may lead to operational errors and safety hazards. Learners must therefore be able to process spoken technical information, identify key points and respond appropriately.

Data from student questionnaire reveal notable limitations in learners' abilities to use spoken English during demonstrations, oral presentations and collective tasks in technical classes. They face difficulties listening to tasks such as step by step direction from the teacher during practical work. It also includes understanding commands such as connect the circuit, switch off the main supply and identifying sequence markers such as that, next, again, then, finally.

Again, interactional and functional language needs of students also demand development. It enabled them to manage routine communication tasks effectively. These include asking for clarification, giving feedback, making suggestions, expressing agreement or disagreement, and responding to instructions. Functional language is also required for performing specific communicative acts such as requesting tools, reporting problems, giving warnings, and explaining procedures.

Table 5: Communicative Skills Required in Technical Education

Activity	Never	Rarely	Neutral	Sometimes	Very often
Speaking for demonstration	40.1%	40%	03.1%	08.1%	08.7%
listening for instructions	44.8%	34.5%	05.2%	12.1%	03.4%
Interactional and functional language needs	27.2%	31.4%	35.1%	10%	06.3%

Source: Conceived by the Researcher, 2025

The table above displays the communicative skills for technical education students. It is generally perceived that the textbook does not treat communicative skills required by technical education students. A majority of the respondents rated it as never (40.1%) or rarely (40%) in meeting students communicative needs. (03.1%) of the respondents were neutral. But a small portion (16.8%) found it sometimes or very often meeting up with the communicative needs of technical education students.

In essence, the communicative skills required in technical education encompass effective speaking for demonstration, presentation and team work. For listening skills, (44.8%) of the respondents never had accurate listening exposure for instructions and technical explanations. In the same light (34.5%) of the respondents rarely had such opportunities.

The development of interactional and functional language competence is therefore essential for facilitating meaningful communication and ensuring successful engagement in technical and vocational training. (27.2%) of respondents never had exposure to meaningful communicative skills, meanwhile (31.4%) of the respondents rarely had exposure to communicate effectively in real workshop situations.

Table 6: Teachers' Perceptions of the Communicative Needs of Technical Education Students in Mezam Division (N = 5)

Communicative Needs	Never (%)	Rarely (%)	Neutral (%)	Sometimes (%)	Very Often (%)
Speaking for demonstrations	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (20%)	1 (20%)	3 (60%)
Listening for instructions	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (40%)	3 (60%)
Interactional language needs (e.g. discussions, teamwork, asking and answering questions)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (20%)	1 (20%)	3 (60%)
Functional language needs (e.g. giving instructions, explaining procedures, requesting information)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (20%)	4 (80%)

Source: Conceived by Researcher, 2025

Table 6 shows that teachers regard all the communicative skills investigated as important for technical education students. Functional language needs received the highest rating, with 80% of teachers indicating that learners very often require skills such as giving instructions, listening for instructions, and requesting information. Interactional language needs were also highly valued, with 60% of teachers reporting that these skills are very often required.

These findings suggest that technical education learners need strong communicative competencies to participate effectively in classroom activities, practical workshops, and future workplaces. To complement the questionnaire findings, the section presents teachers' responses from the semi-structured interviews regarding the communicative needs of technical education students.

3.5.1 Teachers' Responses from the Semi-Structured Interviews on the Communicative Needs of Technical Education Students

The five teachers interviewed generally agreed that technical education students require communicative skills that are directly related to their academic and professional needs. Although the Mastering English High School textbook was considered useful for developing general English skills, teachers felt that it does not adequately address the communicative demands of technical education.

Four of the teachers identified reading and writing as the skills most supported by the textbook, while speaking and listening received less attention. They also highlighted challenges such as limited technical vocabulary and insufficient opportunities for workplace communication practice.

To better meet learners' communicative needs, teachers recommend the inclusion of more technical tasks, role play, and listening activities. Overall, they emphasized the need for a stronger ESP orientation to prepare students for effective communication in technical and professional environment.

4. Discussion

The analysis of the linguistic and communicative needs of technical education students confirms that these needs are resources through which technical education can be enhanced. This finding is consistent with earlier studies in African contexts, which have emphasized the role of textbooks and English for specific purposes in enhancing technical education.

This finding is consistent with Hutchinson and Waters (1987), who argue that ESP is fundamentally needs-based and should address learners' specific purposes. Similarly, Dudley-Evans and St John (1998) emphasize that instructional materials must reflect real-life professional language use. Supporting this perspective, Nur, Astid, and Kasmawati (2022) highlight the importance of aligning textbook content with learners' needs and educational objectives. The limited alignment observed in the Mastering English High School Students' textbook therefore suggests a gap in its ability to effectively support technical education learners.

Again, the findings revealed that communicative skills such as speaking and listening in technical contexts are insufficiently developed, with minimal activities related to presentations, workplace interaction, and trade-based communication. This contrasts with Littlewood (2004), who underscores the importance of communicative competence through meaningful and context-based interaction.

In addition, the textbook's limited focus on vocational content raises concerns about its alignment with prescribed educational standards. Rizki (2020) emphasizes the importance of ensuring that textbooks adhere to core and basic competencies outlined in national curricula. The findings of this study suggest that the textbook may not fully reflect such competencies, particularly those relevant to technical and vocational education.

Moreover, Sari and Sain (2017) provide a model for textbook evaluation within specific professional contexts, emphasizing the need for materials to be tailored to learners' future occupational demands. The present findings support this view, as the textbook does not adequately incorporate profession-oriented tasks that would prepare learners for real-world technical communication.

Finally, the broader sociolinguistic context cannot be overlooked. Penn (1970), in his study of Francophone Cameroonians' attitudes towards English, highlights the role of language relevance and motivation in language learning. In the context of Mezam Division, the limited vocational relevance of the textbook may reduce learners' motivation and engagement, thereby affecting their overall language acquisition. This mismatch between learners' needs and the textbook content may be attributed to its general-purpose design rather than a focus on technical education. Consequently, while the textbook contributes to general language development, it only partially addresses the specific linguistic and communicative needs of technical education learners.

5. Conclusion

This study Reassessed the role of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) in technical education by examining the linguistic and communicative needs of technical education learners in Mezam Division, Cameroon. The findings reveal that while English remains an important tool for academic success, workplace communication and professional development are also important. The present language situation of the textbook does not address the specific vocational and communicative needs of these learners. Learners expressed a need for practical language skills related to their trades, including technical vocabulary, oral communication, report writing, workplace interaction and the interpretation of technical documents.

The study further highlights the importance of aligning ESP curricular, teaching materials and instructional practices with the real-life communicative demands that learners are likely going to meet in their future professions. Based on these finding, it is recommended that curriculum developers, textbook writers, and language teachers collaborate to design learner-centred programmes.. These will reflect the diverse needs of technical students.

Author's Biography

Agatha Ngebih holds a Masters (MA) in Applied Linguistics in the University of Bamenda. She is also a holder of a Secondary School Teacher diploma II (or DIPLES II) at ENS (Ecole Normale Supérieure) Yaounde, Cameroon. She teaches English language in a Government Technical High School (GTHS) Kedjom ketinguh in Mezam Division, Cameroon. I am currently a PhD student in the Department of Linguistics and African Languages in the University of Bamenda.

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