Specialization Professors Perception on their Students Needs for ESP: PEH Students Case

Abuelgasim Sabah Elsaid Mohammed Ibrahim, English Language Institute, University of Khartoum, Sudan

abuelgasims@gmail.com

I am an assistant professor and the head of Postgraduate Unit at the ELI, U of K, Sudan. My interests include ESP, EAP, academic writing, syllabus and material design, course evaluation, research methods, and creative writing.

Abstract

Needs analysis (NA) is one of the most important elements in ESP. Although teachers are considered one source of information for NA, they are rarely consulted. The aim of this paper is to investigate the professors at the faculty of Public and Environmental Health (PEH), University of Khartoum perceptions on their students' needs for English language. A questionnaire and an interview were adopted for data collection. The study concluded that PEH students needed English for academic study and future job. The professors regarded their students as week in English language. Moreover, all the four skills were important for the students in addition to all the sub-skills in the questionnaire. The professors preferred that their students study an English foe Specific Academic Purposes (ESAP) course.

Keywords:

Needs analysis, ESP, target situation, present situation, Public and environmental health,

1. Introduction

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After the end of the Second World War, tremendous development happened in science, technology, and economics. This development was international, and consequently an international language was required. Due to the economic position of the United States, English language became that language (Hutchinson and Waters 1987). Accordingly, learning English has become purposeful, not only for pleasure, but because it is the language of technology and commerce (ibid). Learners of English have become more aware of the reason for which they were learning English language.

These learners can be classified into two groups. The first are those who study English for their jobs such as doctors or businessmen. The second are students at tertiary level who need to read the literature in their specialization, the majority of which is found in English language (Hutchinson and Waters, 1987 and Lynch and Hudson, 1991).

As a result, learning English is needed to fulfill two types of needs: immediate and future needs. The former, is the needs of students who require English to succeed in their academic study. The latter, is the needs related to job requirements, environment or workplace such as an engineer who needs to consult manuals in English, and a practicing doctor who needs to cope with the latest developments in his field (Hutchinson and Waters 1987).

In Sudan, Arabic was adopted as the language of instruction in universities (Nur and Mohammed, 2012). Consequently, English language became a subject taught as a university requirement t undergraduates. In University of Khartoum (U of K) English was taught over two

academic years under the supervision of the English Department, the Administration for University Requirements (AUR). Students study 90 hours divided into the first two academic years. In the first year (45 hours) they study General English, and the other 45 hours they study English for Specific Purposes (ESP) (Ibrahim, 2010 and Nur and Mohammed 2012). The ESP courses taught by the Department of English, AUR are not based on any kind of needs analysis. The material is selected by the instructors based on their perception. This case applies to the ESP course taught at the Faculty of Public and Environmental Health (PEH), U of K.

There are four departments at the Faculty of PEH: Environmental Health and Environmental Studies, Food Hygiene, Epidemiology, and Health Education. In addition, the Faculty awards the Degree of Master in Public Health (MPH). Postgraduate studies are conducted in English language.

Despite the importance of NA in ESP course design or material selection, the ESP courses taught at U of K were not preceded by any type of needs analysis despite the importance of NA. It seems that teaching ESP at U of K lacks solid base to provide effective courses. It is, therefore, the purpose of this study to analyze PEH students' needs for English language. Thus, the study attempts to answer the following questions:

1. What are the purposes for which PEH students need English language?

2. What is PEH students' present situation in English language?

3. What are the most important English language skills for PEH students?

4. What should an ESP course focus on?

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2. Literature Review

 of scholars such as Hutchinson and Waters (1987), Nunan (1988), Brindley (1989), Robinson (1991), Brown (1995), Seedhouse (1995), West (1997), Dudley-Evans and St. Johns (1998), Graves (2000), Richards (2001), Long (2005b), and Brown (2009) agree that needs analysis (NA) plays an important role in ESP or GE course design, and it must be the first step in the design process. To identify students' need, a number of approaches are identified. The first is target needs (TSA) which refers to what students need to do in the target situation. It includes necessities, lacks, and wants (Hutchinson and Waters, 1987). According to Hutchinson and Waters (1987), necessities mean what the students must know to perform well in the target situation. Lacks are used to refer to the gap between the students' present proficiency and the target situation (what students do not know). Wants represent what students feel they want to study which may conflict with necessities and lacks (Hutchinson and Waters, 1987).

The second approach to needs is present situation analysis. This approach seeks to identify students' present proficiency in English and their level in the language at the beginning of the course (Dudley-Evans and St. Johns, 1998 and Robinson, 1991). The third approach is learning needs which is used to refer to, "What the learner needs to do in order to learn" (Hutchinson and Waters, 1987, p. 54). For them, it is not acceptable to base an ESP course on objectives resulted from the TSA. To conduct a useful NA, the potential constraints of the route (the learning

situation) must be accounted for (Hutchinson and Waters, 1987). LNA caters for the skills students need, the learning process, students' motivation, and learners' individual differences (Dudley-Evans and St John, 1998). The fourth approach to NA is means analysis. According to Dudley- Evans and St John (1998) means analysis offers data about the surroundings in which the ESP course will be taught. It focuses on the classroom and the administration infrastructure, and culture.

There is a common agreement on the variety of the methods used to collect data in NA. For example, Basturkmen (2010), Brown (2009 and1995), Long (2005), Hyland (2006), Richards (2001), Graves (2000), Dudley-Evans and St John (1998), and West (1997) agree that NA can be conducted using questionnaires, observations, interviews, and analysis of authentic spoken and written texts.

Questionnaires are one of the instruments used to collect NA data. They are used to gather information on a larger scale (Brown, 1995; Dudley-Evans and St John, 1998, and Graves, 2000). They can cover questions, which interviews and meetings cannot. They also allow for a variety of questions such as bio-data, self-rating, and judgmental rating (Brown, 1995). Moreover, questionnaires are useful in collecting data from a large number of people. Dudley-Evans and St John (1998) state that composing questionnaires is difficult because the words must be experimented before actual use, and questionnaires should be statistically analyzed.

NA data collection can also be gathered through interviews. They are used to ask open-ended questions. They permit collecting private information from individuals. This can result in real opinions (Brown, 1995). They are time-consuming; therefore, they are used as follow up to another method such as questionnaires. There should be a time limit for the interview, and it should be recorded to enable the interviewer obtain suitable information (Dudley-Evans and St John, 1998).

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Brown (1995), Dudley-Evans and St John (1998), and Richards (2001) agree that NA information has a number of sources. Brown (1995) classifies these sources into four groups. The first is the target group, which includes students, teachers, and administrators. The second group is the audience. This refers to the people who are required to act upon the NA result. They include course managers, supervisors, or any ruling bodies above the language course. The third is the resource group. This means people who can provide relevant information such as parents, financial sponsors, future employers, or specialization professors. The fourth group is needs analysts. These are either consultants from outside the institution or members of the institution (Robinson, 1991).

 Triangulation refers to the use of more than one method of data collection as well as source of information (West, 1997; Richards, 2001; Nugraha, 2002; Long; 2005b; and Brown, 2009). This, according to Long (2005b, p. 28), increases "credibility of….interpretations of data".

Richards (2001) explains that the use of multiple sources of information can complement each other. This is because each method of data collection has strengths and weaknesses. For example, questionnaires have a low level of return, and when distributed, the questions cannot be altered. Moreover, they cannot investigate the participants' feelings in depth. Interviews,

however, can cover this weakness by providing completeness and deep coverage to the questions since the physical presence of the analyst.

Rossett (1982) and Brown (1995) agree that there are varieties of questions that must be asked in the NA. These include problems, priorities, abilities, attitudes, and solutions. Brown (1995) elaborates on these types of questions. He states that when asking questions about problems, the needs analysts try to identify the problems that the group under analysis are facing in learning the language. Priorities questions attempt focus on the themes, language uses, and skills the target group regards as most important to learn. Questions may cover the main skills: reading, writing, listening, and speaking, or grammar. In relation to these skills, questions about which of the sub-skills are considered most important can be asked.

Questions about abilities investigate students' current abilities before starting the programme. This information is essential for it constitutes the starting point of the course. In addition, it describes the students' current level. These two points are crucial for designing the starting level, focus, and sequence of the course. Attitudes questions define the target group's feelings and attitudes to the components of the course. Questions about solutions seek to identify opinions for solving the perceived problems.

Basturkmen (2010) explains that the NA process involves asking questions about five pints. First, it asks questions about the target situation to determine the tasks, activities, and skills for which English will be used. Second, it includes discourse analysis to describe the language used in the target situation. Third, NA asks about what students can currently do or cannot do in relation to the target situation. Fourth, it analyses the learner factor. It attempts to discover information about students' motivation, how they learn, and their perception of their needs. Finally, it includes context analysis, which refers to assessing factors related to the surrounding in which the course will be run.

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2.1. Empirical Studies

Mohammed (2016) investigated the needs of the students of the Faculty of Public and Environmental Health (PEH), University of Khartoum (U of K). He used a questionnaire, proficiency test, and an interview to collect data from the students and the professors at PEH faculty. The study revealed that the students needed English for academic study and future job. The students were found to be weak at English language. They needed to study the four skills with students preferring to focus on speaking and listening. It was also revealed that students regarded all the sub-skills as important to them.

Ali (2011) conducted a NA for the Sudan Naval Academy (SNA) cadets, PortSudan, Sudan, in order to design an ESP syllabus based on those needs. The subjects were 74 first and second year students who studied at SNA and four SNA teachers. Ali used two instruments to collect data. The first one was students' questionnaire. It asked questions about academic needs, occupational needs, and social needs. The second data collection tool was an interview with SNA teachers. It contained questions that focused on students' motivation, belief, and attitudes toward English, linguistic difficulties, which faced students, and students' preferences regarding the content of

the syllabus. The study revealed a number of findings. First, it showed that SNA students needed English language for both academic study and future professional life. Second, it discovered that students needed to develop the four language skills with greater emphasis on reading and writing. Third, students needed supportive classroom that encourages pair and group work. Fourth, they needed the teacher to be facilitator. Fifth, they preferred materials related to their field. Sixth, modern technology needed to be used in the English language teaching. Based on these findings, Ali (2011) proposed an ESP syllabus that he named "Maritime/Naval Course" (p. 210). The purpose of the course is to, "*Equip the SNA cadets with the essential English maritime/ naval knowledge. It also helps them pursue their current academic realm and prepare them for future career. The students who will take this course are naval cadets.*" (p. 214). The syllabus claims that it covers all the four skills, grammar, and maritime technical vocabulary. It is an integrated syllabus. It was divided into two levels: pre-intermediate for first year students and intermediate for second year students. Each of the two levels contains 14 units.

Bedri (2000) studied the English language use in professional setting in Sudan. To that end, she tried to discover the employees' needs for and attitudes toward English. The participants were 150, who were from nine institutions. They were divided into three groups: employees, directors, and heads of departments. Bedri used three questionnaires to collect data. The first was for the employees. It contained five sections that focused on personal data, subjects' English proficiency level and need for English, subjects' attitudes toward English, language skills needed for the job, and the difficulties that faced them in learning or using English. The second questionnaire was for the directors. It tried to elicit information about the establishment, staff, and English language use in the establishment. The third one was distributed to the heads of the departments. It concentrated on information about the department and the English language proficiency of the departments' employees. The study revealed that employees needed to use English in their profession. In addition, general and academic needs were considered of high priority to the subjects. Moreover, the subjects stated that they were not satisfied with their English language proficiency level. The participants also had positive attitude toward English. There was disagreement on the importance of the language skills and functions needed. This resulted from variations in the professions and tasks. Finally, it was found that good command of English language was helpful in the job. The study recommended that the institutions should organize English language courses to improve employees' English language proficiency. Oral skills should be the focus of these courses. Bedri's study did not investigate the nature of the English language courses taught to those participants during their university study. This could have justified the participants' dissatisfaction with their level of English.

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Alamin (1999) analyzed the needs of first year science students at the Faculty of Education, U of K. The purpose was to evaluate the textbook taught to those students. Fifty physics students and six physics teachers were the participants of the study. Alamin used a questionnaire and an interview to collect data for the study. The questionnaire was administered to the students. It contained three sections: general needs, academic needs, and job needs. The questionnaire

covered the four skills and some sub-skills. The interview was with the physics teachers. Two questions were discussed in the interview. The first tried to discover the skills needed by the students, and the second focused on the activities for which English was needed. The study had four findings. Firstly, all the subjects agreed on that all the skills were needed and important. Secondly, the textbook that the students studied did not meet their needs because it did not cover the required skills. Thirdly, the textbook focused only on academic needs and neglected general and professional needs. Fourthly, the textbook did not contain enough practice for the skills covered in it. There were some gaps in Alamin's study. In the beginning, it neglected the role of the EFL teachers as well as graduate students in the NA. Next, it paid attention only to the target needs. Present situation, learning needs, and means analysis were not catered for. Third, it did not provide any suggestions on how to meet the students' needs.

Ekici (2003) examined the English language needs of Tour Guidance students at the Faculty of Applied Sciences at Baskent University, Turkey. The aim of the study was to identify students' needs for English as perceived by students, EFL teachers, and curriculum coordinators. Forty-five Tour Guidance students, three EFL teachers, and two curriculum coordinators participated in the study. The study used four tools for collecting data. The first two were a questionnaire and attitude scale for students. The questionnaire had four parts. The first one was about personal information. The second contained 55 questions and it sought to collect data about the learning needs that focused on the four main skills and further divided into sub-skills. The third asked the subjects to rank the skills, translation, and specialized terms in order of importance to students. The last part focused on target needs. The attitude scale attempted to identify the relation between students' perceived learning needs and students' attitudes toward English language. In addition, another questionnaire was distributed to the EFL teachers and curriculum coordinators. It had three sections, which tried to elicit information about learning needs, target needs, and the importance of the skills. Moreover, an ESP programme identification form was used with curriculum coordinators to discover their perception of the ESP course. The study revealed that there was an agreement on the importance of English to Tour Guide students. This importance was because English is used in both students' study and future jobs. Speaking and listening skills were rated of high importance followed by reading and writing. In addition, specialist vocabulary was deemed necessary. The study recommended that a multi-layered approach should be adopted in syllabus design for Tour Guidance students. Moreover, speaking, listening, and specialist vocabulary must be emphasized in the syllabus. Materials used must be appealing to motivate students. Ekici's study used a comprehensive questionnaire, but it neglected two types of subjects. The first was graduate students or practicing tour guides who could have some information to provide. The second was the specialist subject teachers. They also would have informed the results of the study.

Lepetit and Cichocki (2002) studied the needs of students of the Public Health Sciences Department at the College of Helath, Education and Human Development, Clemont University, South California, the US. The subjects were 165 Public Health Sciences students. Lepetit and

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Cichocki used a questionnaire to collect data. It contained 30 close-ended questions. The questions attempted to gather information about the students and their needs for English language. The study revealed a number of results. First, it showed that students considered speaking and writing as the most important skills. Second, it emphasized the significance of teaching the target language culture. Third, it showed that students regarded speaking skills as their weakest skill. There are some problems in the study. It did not include neither subject teachers, language teachers, graduates, employees, nor employers. In addition, it only used a questionnaire to collect data. It triangulated neither the subjects nor the data collection methods. The NA focused only on the target situation and it neglected present situation and means analysis.

3. Methodology

3.1. Participants

The participants consisted of 25 PEH teachers. Table 1 summarizes the background information about this group.

Table (1): Staff Sex and Job Titles

		No	%
Sex	M	15	60.0
	F	10	40.0
	Total	25	100.0
Job Title	Professor	-	-
	Associate Prof.	3	12.0
	Assistant Prof	7	28.0
	Lecturer	12	48.0
	Teaching Assistant	3	12.0
Total		25	100.0

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It is clear from the table that of the 25 participants, 15 (60.0 %) were males and 10 (40.0%) were females. The majority of the staff was assistant professors and lecturers who were 19 representing 76% of the participants. Both the associate professors and teaching assistants account for six (24 %) of the sample.

As for the staff qualification and years of experience, it can be seen from table 2 below that 13 (52.0%) had a Master's Degree, 10 (40%) had a Ph.D., and only two (8%) had a BSc. The table

also shows that 20 (80%) of the participants had more than six years' experience, while only five (20%) of them had 1-5 years' experience.

Table (2): Staff Academic Qualification and Experience

	Qualification				Experience			
	BSc	Master	Ph. D	Total	1-5	6-10	More than11	Total
No	2	13	10	25	5	9	11	25
%	8.0	52.0	40.0	100	20.0	36.0	44.0	100.0

The participants were distributed to four departments. Nine (36.0%) of them were in the department of Environmental Health and Environmental Studies. In the department of Food Hygiene and Safety, 8 (32.0%) participated in the study. Eight participants (32.0%) were in the departments of Epidemiology and Health Education, 4 (16.0%) each, Table 3 below.

Table (3): PEH Staff Distribution to Departments

Department	No.	%
Environmental Health and Environmental Studies	9	36. 0
Food Hygiene and Safety	8	32.0
Epidemiology	4	16.0
Health Education	4	16.0
Total	25	100.%

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The participants were also asked about any administrative responsibilities that they had. 12 (48%) of them had administrative responsibilities. One was the Dean of the faculty. Another was the Deputy Dean and Head of the Examinations Committee. Four of them were head of the departments. Two were departments' secretaries and four are responsible for Self-Assessment and Quality Control Unit, University Requirements, Lab Supervision, and field training coordination.

The interview participants were two programme coordinators. Both of them were assistant professors and teaching staff at the Faculty of PEH. The first one was the coordinator of the Master's programme. His experience was more than 18 years. The second was the University Requirements coordinator. His experience was more than 11 years. He was responsible for all the University Requirements subjects including English language.

3.2. Instruments

The study adopted two data collection tools. The first was PEH staff questionnaire was adapted from the students' questionnaire. It sought to elicit the staff perception of their students' needs for English language. Specialization teaching staff is considered one of the sources of NA (Richards, 2001 and Brown, 1995). It was; consequently, necessary for this study to include the teaching staff in the survey.

The questionnaire contained six sections (Appendix 2 A and B). The first one elicited background information such as sex, job title, academic qualification, work experience and department. It consisted of items 1-6. The participants were asked to choose the relevant answer.

Section two covered items 7-11. It focused on the need for English and the purposes for needing it. It asked about whether the participants' students needed English or not. Additionally, it asked about the purposes for which the students mostly needed to use English. A Likert scale was used in answering this section. It included strongly agree, agree, do not know, disagree, and strongly disagree. Items 12-13 asked the staff about their use of English in teaching their lectures, and the frequency of asking students to refer to materials written in English, respectively. The participants were provided with four choices that included always, usually, sometimes, and never to answer these two questions.

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The third section of the questionnaire concentrated on staff perception about students' present situation in the macro skills. It asked the staff to rate their students' level in the skills. The participants were provided with a Likert scale that ranged from very good to very weak (items 14-21).

Section four, which focused on skills importance, contained two subsections. The first one focused on the importance of the four main skills in addition to general and scientific vocabulary, grammar, and correct pronunciation (items 22-29). A Likert scale was used in answering this section. It included very important, important, not very important, unimportant, and do not know. Items 30-60 tried to identify the staff perception of their students' academic needs and to discover the importance of some micro skills to the students from the staff point of view. The participants were asked to choose from a Likert scale including strongly agree, agree, do not know, disagree, and strongly disagree. Items 30-37 focused on some reading sub skills.

Writing sub skills were covered in questions 38- 49. Some of the speaking sub skills were introduced in items 50 -55, while items 56-60 contained listening sub skills. Items 37, 49, 55, and 60 asked the participants to list any other sub skills they think important. Items 61 asked about the number of semesters in which the English language course can be taught. The number of credit hours of the English language course was dealt with in item 62.

The last section of the questionnaire attempted to discover the staff opinion about the focus of a new ESP syllabus. It included questions 63-70, which named the four skills beside general and scientific vocabulary, correct pronunciation, and content relevant to students' field. To answer these questions, participants needed to choose from a Likert scale ranged between strongly agree to strongly disagree. Question 71 asked the participants to suggest topics that they think should be included in the syllabus. Item 72 sought to elicit staff suggestions for the new syllabus.

The second data collection instrument was an interview. It contained nine questions. Questions 1-4 asked about students' needs for English language, the purposes for which they needed English, the tasks they needed to do in English, the importance of skills for students as perceived by the participants. Items 5-6 focused on the participants' opinion on students' current 10 level of English and the problems they had in learning and using English. Questions 7-9 tried to identify the topics that can be covered in the new course, the suitability of the time given to the English course, and suggestions for meeting students' needs.

Dornyei (2003) contends that reliability is the measurement of the degree to which the scores on the data collection tool are free of errors. In this case, methods used to measure reliability are called *internal consistency*. It can be measured by the *Cronbach Alpha coefficient,* which ranges between zero and one. To have acceptable reliability, instruments need to score at least 0.60 (Dornyei 2003). To calculate the instruments reliability, SPSS version 21 was used to obtain the Cronbach Alpha. After that, the Square Root (Sqrt) of the value of Cronbach Alpha was found. The questionnaire reliability was 0.88 and, thus, it was reliable to be conducted to the staff. On 3/6/2013 the students' version was distributed to PHE staff. They received 40 copies of the questionnaire. The total of the returned copies was 25 (62.5%).

4. Results and Discussion

This section presents data analysis, results, and discussion. It is organised to cover the purposes for which students need English language, students' present situation in English language, the main four skills and sub skills importance, and ESP syllabus contents. These represent the research questions.

4.1. The Need for English and Purposes for Needing it

Question 7 in the questionnaire sought to determine the need for English language. The need for English is also covered by question 1 in the interview. Table 5 below summarizes the questionnaires results.
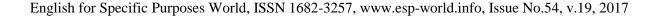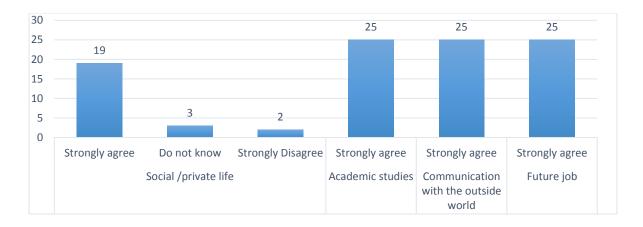
Table (5): PEH Students Needs for English Language as Perceived by the Staff

Response	No.	%
Yes	25	100
No		
Total	25	100

From the table above, it is obvious that all the staff 25 (100%) agreed that PEH students needed English language. Similarly, the two interviewees confirmed that their students needed English language. This implies that English is important to PEH students. This is because, according to Hutchinson and Waters (1987), English is an international language. This also indicates that PEH students and staff are aware of the needs for English language. This result is consistent with the findings of Mohammed (2016) and Ali (2011) who concluded that their participants indicated that they needed English language.

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The purposes for which PEH students need English language are covered in the questionnaires, the interview, and the participants' observation. Figure 1below show the results.

Figure (1): Purposes for Needing English Language as Perceived by the Staff

All the staff 25 (100%) stated that their students need English for three purposes: academic studies, future job, and communication with the outside world. It seems that the staff were fully aware of the importance of English for academic studies. They indicated that it is important for academic study despite that fact that it is not the official language of teaching at the Faculty of PEH in the undergraduate programme, but it is the teaching language in the postgraduate programmes. As for social private life, English was not needed because English is not used in everyday life in Sudan. This result connotes that students are aware of the importance of English language to both their academic study and future job. According to Hutchinson and Waters (1987), most of English language learners are mindful of the purpose for which they learn the language. These findings accord with what was revealed by a number of studies. First, Mohammed (2016) revealed that PEH students at U of K needed English for their academic study, future job and communication with the outside world. Second Ali (2011) concluded that English was need by students at Sudan Naval Academy for academic study and future job. Third, Ekici (2003) found difference between his students' perception and their lecturers' concerning the purposes for needing English. The students felt that they needed English for their future job because they study Tour Guidance at the Faculty of Applied Science, Baskent University, Turkey, and they deal with foreign tourists through English language. However, the staff at the faculty stated that their students needed English for both academic and professional purposes. Fourth, Badri (2000) found that her participants, who worked for a number of institutions in Sudan, needed English for their jobs. Fifth, Alamin (1999) revealed that their students needed English for academic purposes.

To check the importance of English language to both academic study and future job, the staff questionnaire contained two questions 12-13 that asked about staff use of English in their

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lectures and the frequency of referring their students to material written in English language, respectively. The results are summarised in the figures 2 – 3 below. It can be seen from figure 2 that all the staff used English language in their lectures, but with varying frequencies. Of 25, 13 (52.0%) stated that they *sometimes* used English, and 12 (48.0%) *usually and always* used it in their classes. This confirms the importance of English to students' academic study.
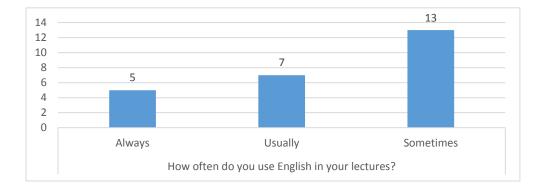
Figure (2): Staff Use of English Language in their Lectures

Concerning staff response to how often they refer their students to English written material, 24 (96%) of them stated that they referred students to material written in English language, figure 3. The results suggest that English language is important for students' study since the majority of literature in the students' specialization is published in English language.
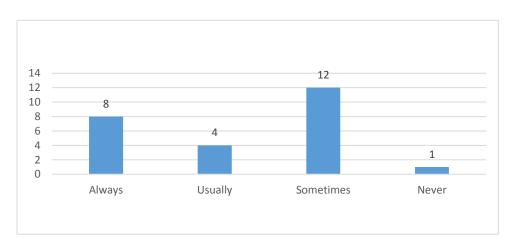
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Figure (3): Staff Frequency of Referring Students to English Written Material

These results indicate that English plays an integral role in the field of PEH as an academic and a professional area. This finding highlights the importance of equipping PEH students with the acceptable level of English to meet their needs. These results accord with that

of Lepetit and Cichocki (2002) revealed that their foreign subjects, who worked as nurses in the USA, used English in their work to communicate with patients. Badri (2000) concluded that her participants needed English for their jobs since it was frequently used in it.

Questions 2-3 in the interview covered the purposes for which students need English. The questions asked about the purposes for needing English and the tasks students need to do using English, respectively. For the second question, the two interviewees agreed that PEH students needed English for academic study. The AUR coordinator added that students needed English for future job as it enables them to get a good job. As for the third question, they agreed that students needed to read references written in English, write research, especially for 5th year and Master's students, and communicate with the outside world.

4.2. Students' Present Situation in English Language

PEH staff rated their students' level as *weak* in speaking skills 19 (76.0%), writing skills 17 (68.0%), grammar 16 (66.7%), scientific vocabulary 13 (54.2%), and listening skills 12 (48.0%), table 5 below. It is clear that the staff were not satisfied with their students' proficiency in English language. The results contradict with what Mohammed (2016) found. He found that according to the students' questionnaire results, PEH students were satisfied with their level of English language proficiency, but the proficiency test confirmed the PEH professors' dissatisfaction as it revealed that the students were weak in almost all the skills.

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Table (5): Staff Rating of their Students' Level of English

No.	Lang skills/ areas	Good		Average		Weak		Total	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
14	Reading skills	3	12.0	11	44.0	11	44.0	25	100
15	Writing skills	5	20.0	3	12.0	17	68.0	25	100
16	Speaking skills	2	8.0	4	16.0	19	76.0	25	100
17	Listening skills	3	12.0	10	40.0	12	48.0	25	100
18	General vocabulary	3	12.5	12	50.0	9	37.5	24	100
19	Scientific vocabulary	4	16.1	7	29.2	13	54.2	24	100
20	Grammar			8	33.3	16	66.7	24	100
21	Pronunciation	8	33.3	7	29.2	9	37.5	24	100

The interview contained a question that asked the interviewees about their perception of their students' standard in English language. The Master's programme coordinator stated that undergraduate students were weak at English language. He divided the Master's students into two groups. The first one was good to very good because the students studied in English in their undergraduate programme. The second group of students was weak at English language because they studied in Arabic language. The AUR coordinator considered the students as week at English language.

4.3. Skills Importance

As seen in table 6, PEH staff considered all the four skills very important. It is noticeable that all the staff 25 (100%) regarded reading, writing, and listening as very important. The staff placed speaking second in importance 24 (96.0%). These results are unlike what Mohammed (2016) found. He revealed that students regarded speaking and listening as priority in importance. Thus, there is a contradiction about the importance of the speaking skills. The staff prioritised reading and writing while students gave priority to speaking then reading and writing. It is normal to find difficulty in discovering students' needs when, theoretically, students need to read, but they may be interested in other skills "delayed needs rather than immediate needs" (Dudley-Evans and St. John, 1998:40). In addition, Robinson (1991:105) believes that many students think that speaking is a measurement to the mastery of the language. However, it can be generalized that the staff considered all the skills are important. These results are in line with what was found by Ali (2011), Ekici (2003), and Alamin (1999) who concluded that all the four skills are important to their students.

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Table (6): Skills Importance as Perceived by Staff

No.	Lang. area	V. Important		Unimportant		Do not know	Total	
		No.	%	No.	%	No. %	No.	%
14	Reading skills	25	100				25	100
15	Writing skills	25	100				25	100
16	Speaking skills	24	96.0	1	4.0		25	100
17	Listening skills	25	100				25	100

18	General vocabulary	24	96.0	1	4.0			25	100
19	Scientific vocabulary	25	100					25	100
20	Grammar	25	100					25	100
21	Pronunciation	25	100					25	100

Similarly, the staff questionnaire asked the participants about the importance of some sub skills. These sub skills are related to reading, writing, speaking, and listening. For reading sub skills table 7 below show that results.

Table (7): Sub skills Importance as Perceived by Staff: Reading

No	Item	Strongly agree		Do not Know		Strongly disagree		Total	
		No.	%	No.	%	No	%	No	%
30	Reading your specialisation textbooks and scientific articles	25	100					25	100
31	Reading to find specific information in a textbook	24	96.0			1	4.0	25	100
32	Reading course hand-outs	24	96.0	1	4.0			25	100
33	Reading texts from the internet	24	96.0	1	4.0			25	100
34	Reading extra references	25	100					25	100
35	Understanding vocabulary from the context	23	92.0	2	8.0			25	100
36	Understanding main points of text	25	100					25	100
37	Others								

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It is obvious that PEH staff considered reading specialisation textbooks and scientific articles as the most important reading sub skill 25 (100%). The staff rated reading extra references and understanding main points of a text among the most important sub skills 25 (100%). They were

followed by reading course hand-outs 24 (96.0%), reading to find specific information 42 (96.0), and reading texts from the internet 24 (96.0%). This indicates that the reading sub skills importance may be because reading is a means to an end. This could be attributed to the existence of the majority of students' specialisation reading material in English language. These findings accord with what was revealed by Mohammed (2016) that PEH students regarded all the reading sub-skills as important but with varying priorities.

Concerning writing sub skills, PEH staff, table 8 viewed writing correct sentences, writing well-structured paragraphs, writing research or term paper, using correct punctuation and spelling, using appropriate vocabulary, and using suitable style as the most important sub skills since all the staff 25 (100%) *strongly agreed* on that. They considered almost all the writing sub skills as important.

Table (8): Sub skills Importance as Perceived by Staff: Writing

No	Item	Strongly agree	Do not Know	Strongly disagree	Total
		No. %	No. %	No %	No %
38	Writing correct sentences	25 100			25 100
39	Writing well-structured paragraphs	25 100			25 100
40	Writing lab report	23 92.0		2 8.0	25 100
41	Writing research or term paper	25 100			25 100
42	Writing summary and paraphrasing	24 96.0		1 4.0	25 100
43	Organizing and planning writing	23 92.0	2 8.0		25 100
44	Developing ideas	22 88.0	3 12.0		25 100
45	Using correct punctuation and spelling	25 100			25 100
46	Using appropriate vocabulary	25 100			25 100
47	Using suitable style	25 100			25 100
48	Evaluating and revising writing	23 92.0	2 8.0		25 100

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This confirms, particularly, the importance of reading and writing to students' academic study. This indicates that students were aware of the English language macro and micro skills importance despite the fact that English is not formally used in teaching at the Faculty at the undergraduate level. These findings are similar to those revealed by Mohammed (2016), Ali (2011), and Alamin (1999).

As for speaking and listening, Tables 9 – 10 below show the staff response to the importance of speaking and listening sub skills. Table 4.36 shows that the staff believed that all the speaking sub skills were equally important because all of them 25 (100%) *strongly agreed* on that. Similarly, the staff considered all the listening sub skills as of the same importance since 24 -25 (96.0 -100 %) *strongly agreed* on that, table 9.

Table (9): Sub skills as Importance Perceived by Staff: Speaking

No	Item	Strongly agree		Do not Know	Strongly disagree		Total	
		No.	%	No. %	No	%	No	%
50	Pronouncing words correctly	25	100				25	100
51	Asking and answering questions	25	100				25	100
52	Asking for information	24	96.0	1 4.0			25	100
53	Participating in academic discussions	25	100				25	100
54	Giving presentations	25	100				25	100
55	Others							

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Table (10): Sub skills Importance as Perceived by Staff: Listening

No	Item	Strongly agree		Do not Know	Strongly disagree		Total	
		No.	%	No. %	No	%	No	%
56	Listening to lectures	25	100				25	100
57	Listening to conversations on general and/or specific topics	25	100				25	100
58	Listening to English media	24	96.0	1 4.0			25	100
59	Listening to get specific information	25	100					

It is noticeable that these sub skills contain product skills such as writing correct sentences and pronouncing words correctly, which are of great importance to both writing and speaking. It is

sometimes important to pay attention to product rather than process. All these sub skills were considered as important. This implies that the participants take the issue of English language skills seriously and they want to have a good level of proficiency.

In the interview, question four asked the interviewees about the importance of the skills to their students. The two participants indicated that all the four skills were important to students. The Master's coordinator emphasised that reading and writing were priorities followed by listening. The AUR coordinator stated that PEH students should master all the skills for their future. This result agrees with that of the three questionnaires. Moreover, it confirms the contradiction represented by students *"wants"* (priority to speaking) and staff's perception (priority to reading, writing, and listening). This implies that the proposed course must consider this contradiction by trying to meet both views. These findings support the third hypothesis that all the four skills are important for PEH students with reading and writing as priority.

4.4. Syllabus Contents

The syllabus content was covered in section 6 items 63-70 in the staff's questionnaire, and question 7 in the interview. Table 4.38 shows the staff perception of the course focus.

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Table (11): The Proposed Syllabus Focus as Perceived by Staff

No.	Skill	Strongly Agree		Do not know	Strongly Disagree	Total	
		No.	%	No. %	No. %	No.	%
63	Reading skills.	25	100			25	100
64	Writing skills.	25	100			25	100
65	Speaking skills.	25	100			25	100
66	Listening skills.	25	100			25	100
67	General vocabulary.	25	100			25	100
68	Scientific vocabulary.	25	100			25	100
69	Pronunciation.	25	100			25	100
70	Content related to students' specialisation.	25	100			25	100

All the staff 25 (100%) *strongly agreed* that the course should focus on the four skills and content related to students' field. It is clear from table 4.38 that the new course should focus on the four skills, scientific vocabulary, pronunciation, general vocabulary, and grammar. This means it should integrate the four skills in a content related to PEH. Therefore, in selecting the

course type, the one that allows for skills integration must be chosen. These findings are similar to what was revealed by Mohammed (2016) and Ali (2011) that a course focusing on all the skills and related students' field of study was preferred.

Question 7 in the interview also dealt with the course focus. It asked the interviewees about the proposed course content. The two coordinators agreed that the course should concentrate on subject matter that related to students' field of study and its terminology.

The questionnaires contained some open-ended questions that asked the participants about their suggestions for the new course. Item 71 that required suggestion of topics to include in the new course, 19 (76%) of the participants responded to it. All the 19 recommended that the course should contain topics related to PEH field. Five of them named some topics. For example, one recommended topics such as public health, ozone depletion, and infectious diseases. Two recommended topics like epidemics, and environmental health. The other two suggested topics like AIDS, environmental contaminants, pollution, food poisoning, and health education.

The staff were also asked to propose any ideas for the new course (item 72). Eleven (44%) of the participants answered this question. Of the 11, 9 (81.8%) suggested running English clubs to discuss PEH topics. Two of them recommended that the course should cover all the skills. One of the 11 suggested using audio-visual aids in teaching English to make it attractive, and another participant proposed focus on scientific writing and terminology. Staff agreed with the students in including English clubs, use of audio-visual aids, and covering all the skills. This implies that both students and staff were aware of the importance of improving students' level by integrating the four skills and introducing English clubs. They can be introduced as extra curricula activity. This can add more time to the English language course.

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5. Conclusion and Recommendations

This papers presented the results of investigating PEH professors' perceptions on their students' needs for English language. It revealed that the professors believed that their students need English for both academic study and future job. They pointed out that PEH students are weak in English language. All the four skills in addition to vocabulary, and grammar are regarded important to PEH students. The results showed that PEH professors favoured an ESP course that covers all the skills and it should be related to students' field of study.

Based on these results the study pose the following recommendations.

- PEH students' proficiency in English must be catered for by providing intensive general English courses.
- An ESAP course must be designed to meet students' needs.

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