English Language Needs

**An In-depth Study on
Dhaka University Students**

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Cover Design
Md. Shahjahan Kazi

This book is dedicated to
the two most special people in my life:

My Mother, Late Chand Sultana Chaudhury Polly
My Mother-in-law, Late Sultana Jamil Renu

Foreword

This study is an exhaustive one and the first all-inclusive one carried out based on the needs of Bangladeshi students. It aimed to provide ESP content for students at Dhaka University, but language practitioners all over Bangladesh as well as fast developing countries such as Malaysia and Singapore will benefit from this work

The research has been carried out with total professionalism and the description and analysis of the data is clear, coherent and meticulous. The ensuing explanations are explicit so that non-expert readers will be able to respond to the arguments. Most language experts will find the findings and the rationalizing extremely appealing.

My opinion is that this study has something useful to contribute to the language education field, especially in providing well founded courses for enhancing language acquisition to handle professional tasks.

Dr. Subramaniam Govindasamy
International Islamic University Malaysia

Preface

This research study was carried out to study the needs, lacks and wants of freshmen students at twelve departments: Marketing, Management, Finance, History, Philosophy, Linguistics, Physics, Psychology, Bio-Chemistry, International Relations, Women and Gender Studies and Mass Communication and Journalism from the four main faculties Commerce, Humanities, Science, and Social Science at Dhaka University (DU). Compulsory EAP courses are taught at various departments at DU since 1996. But the EAP courses are not based on any systemic Needs Analysis nor have they been subjected to any evaluation or research-informed modification since their inception. A Needs Analysis was conducted to identify the needs of freshmen students and capture the perspectives of the subject teachers, language teachers, curriculum experts and employers perceptions regarding the students' competencies and abilities. Hutchinson and Waters' (1987) Learning-centred approach, Holliday and Cooke's (1982) Ecological Approach and Nunan's (1988) Needs Analysis description for conducting the Needs Analysis were used. A quantitative cum qualitative research methodology was adopted with questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, classroom observation and document study. Reading, Writing, Listening and Speaking and corresponding sub-skills required by freshmen students of these four faculties were identified along with the types of materials and teaching methods preferred. This process took into account the needs of the various stakeholders involved: course designers, subject and language teachers and prospective employers to develop meaningful, useful and beneficial, common core EAP program for these twelve departments that would be more effective in fulfilling the present academic needs and future career needs of the students.

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Content

<center>Chapter One</center>

Introduction

1.1 Introduction to the Study

English Language teaching and learning has been widely recognized as a global problem. In many developing countries this problem constitutes a serious obstacle to development and modernization. Globalization and development factors have made English the language of power, opportunity, status and prestige. English is flourishing internationally as the language of communication, trade and economic advancement, and has gained worldwide prominence since technological and scientific developments have become more widespread in the English speaking world. To catch up with the momentum of such developments, most third world countries are putting their best efforts in learning the English language in order to penetrate the world of science and technology. In Bangladesh, a monolingual nation state which does not need a second language for internal communication, English is now in much demand (Choudhury, 2001).

Bangladesh's fervent nationalism led to a de-emphasis on English in its education policies after its independence in 1971. The banning of English medium schools in 1972, the de-emphasis on the teaching of English in government schools coupled with the 1987 Bengali Language Implementa-tion Act contributed to a serious decline in the standard and status of English in Bangladesh which ironically corresponded to the global spread of English world-wide. However, in what appears to be a reversal of attitude, this nation is now expending a considerable proportion of its limited resources to improve the teaching of English. Educational institutes are re-introducing English as a compulsory subject. English has made a comeback (Khan, 2000). Now most educational institutes are re-introducing English as a compulsory subject so that young Bangladeshis can be more proficient in the language and participate in global activities (Choudhury, 2001). The duality in the Bangladeshi situation of a zealous protectiveness of the mother tongue and of the avid promotion of English education is typical of post-colonial responses to English. This ambivalence is manifest in the double vision of English simultaneously being "enriching and inevitable, even necessary" and "imperialistic and damaging"

(Canagarajah, 1993:624). Bangladesh's ultra-nationalist rejection of English in the early 1970s was a reaction to the collective memory of linguicism under British rule as well as West Pakistani hegemony.

The contemporary labor market in Bangladesh, particularly the corporate world, needs a work force that is competent in English:

> Within the country, employment in any organization looks for proficiency in English. Entry into government jobs requires being selected through a competitive examination where English is a subject, while any non-government office that has dealings outside the national border looks particularly for people with English proficiency. Since the pay structure of such NGO's is better than other jobs, people are interested to be employed there, and want to learn English. (Qader, 1999:187)

Given such a demand for English at the workplace, public universities have to comply with the demands of the industry if they want their graduates to be employable. Thousands of graduates are being churned out annually from public universities, but without English communication skills and other abilities deemed necessary in the industry, they will not be employable (see Chapter 9). Universities are held responsible for educating and equipping their graduates with marketable skills. Since English is directly or indirectly considered to be a basic survival skill, all graduates are expected to be equipped with this skill.

Though in tertiary education, English has an optional, non-statutory status, university education has traditionally been English-medium in the sense that to some extent teaching at the university level is in English as "bilingual lectures and switching back and forth between Bengali and English" is a common form of classroom communication (Banu & Sussex 2001b; Khan, 2000). Moreover, books and journals are available mostly in English (Banu & Sussex 2001b). As a result, students who wish to succeed academically need to be adequately proficient in English. English is the medium through which information is channeled especially via the electronic media. In order for Bangladeshi tertiary students to be on par with their counterparts in other parts of the world and to succeed in academia, English is essential.

The government also realized the urgent need to improve the level of proficiency in English amongst local graduates. In 1992 the government passed legislation that reintroduced English at the tertiary level. The

objective was to better equip graduates for the job market and raise academic standards to higher levels. English has begun to make its presence felt again (Khan, 2004). The Ministry of Education advised the University Grants Commission (UGC) to implement ESP courses at the tertiary level in all the public universities from the 1994-95 academic sessions. In the past few years, most Bangladeshi universities have reintroduced English as a compulsory subject in the freshman year.

At Dhaka University, the premier university of the nation, several compulsory English language courses tailored to meet the work-related needs or academic objectives of homogenously similar groups of students have been implemented since 1998. The courses were designed to meet the language learning needs of specific groups of learners, so there are currently language courses for students of Physics, for students of History, Economics; so on and so forth. These courses can be classified as English for Specific Purposes (ESP) courses or more precisely English for Academic Purposes (EAP) courses.

The syllabus is an expression of opinion on the nature of language and learning: it acts as a guide for both the teacher and learner by providing some goals to be attained. Hutchinson and Waters (1987:80) defined the syllabus as follows:

> At its simplest level a syllabus can be described as a statement of what is to be learnt. It reflects language and linguistic performance.

This is a traditional interpretation, of the syllabus focusing on outcomes rather than processes; however it can also be seen as "a summary of the content to which learners will be exposed" (Yalden, 1987:87).

In considering syllabus design several questions must be posed. Should the syllabus be a product or process oriented? Will the course be teacher-led, learner-led or learning-led? What are the goals of the program and the needs of the students? This leads to an examination of the degree to which the various elements will be integrated, which is of great significance to White (1988:92) who observed that:

> A complete syllabus specification will include all five aspects: structure, function, situation, topic, skills. The difference between syllabuses will lie in the priority given to each of these topics.

Clearly when considering syllabus design, there is a vast amount of material to disseminate. Similarly there are numerous approaches to

course design that offer valuable insights into creating a language program.

When critically reviewing a syllabus, other points that need to be considered are the objectives of the course and the needs of the learners. Ultimately, and perhaps ideally, a hybrid syllabus will come about purely due to pragmatic reasons; in this regard Hutchinson and Waters (1987:51) suggest that:

> It is wise to take an eclectic approach, taking what is useful from each theory and trusting also in the evidence of your own experience as a teacher.

This study proposes the use of Hutchinson and Waters' (1986:74) alternative syllabus model for syllabus design. Their learning-centered process to course design is illustrated below:

Figure 1- Framework for syllabus design by Hutchinson and Waters (1986:74)
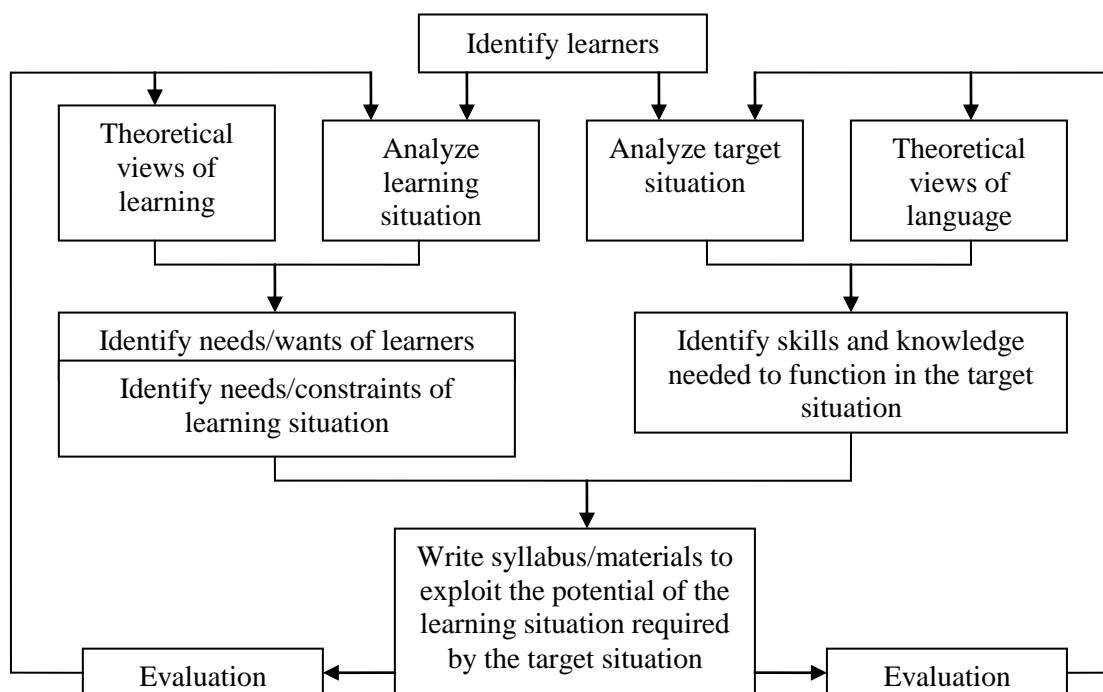
The process begins with the identification of the learners and then goes on to describe the target situation. Hutchinson and Waters (1986:59) provided the following Target Situation Analysis Framework:

- Why is the language needed?
- How will the language be used?
- What will the content areas be?
- Whom will the learner use language with?

- Where will the language be used?
- When will the language be used?

This list of questions helps in generating information that is helpful in identifying the skills and knowledge the learners need, in order to function in the target situation.

Hutchinson and Waters (1986:62-63) recommended that, keeping in mind the theories of learning in mind, the following framework can be used to analyze and discover the learners' learning needs, wants and lacks:

- Why are the learners taking the course?
- How do the learners learn?
- What resources are available?
- Who are the learners?
- Where will the ESP course take place?
- When will the ESP course take place?

Armed with the knowledge of what the target situation is, and what the learning needs of the learners are, the design of the course and specification of course content can begin.

This study deals with EAP (English for Academic Purposes), one of the main branches of (ESP) English for Specific Purposes. The selection and presentation of EAP instructional materials are in keeping with the learners' language and learning needs and are also based on an analysis of the register and/or genre of the language used in the target situation.

Evaluation is an important part of Hutchinson and Waters' (1986) framework and it is a natural carryover from content specification. But this will be carried out at a later stage (not at this dissertation stage). For the purposes of this study only the present English courses and course materials have been evaluated.

This brings us to the important subject of Needs Assessment (also called Needs Analysis) which refers to the activities involved in the gathering of information that serves as the basis for developing a curriculum that will meet the learning needs of a particular group of students. In the case of language programs, those needs will be language related. Once identified, *needs* can be stated in terms of *goals* and *objectives* which, in turn, can serve as the basis for Content Specification, that is, developing tests, materials, teaching activities, and

evaluation strategies, as well as for re-evaluating the precision and accuracy of the original needs assessment.

In formal terms, needs assessment is defined as:

> The process of determining the needs for which a learner or group of learners requires a language and arranging the needs according to priorities. Needs assessment makes use of both subjective and objective information. Subjective refers to the cognitive and affective needs of the learner in the learning situation, derivable from information about affective and cognitive factors such as personality, confidence, attitudes, learner's wants and expectations with regard to the learning of English and their individual cognitive style and learning strategies (DeMarco 1986:2)

Berwick, Brindley, Mountford and Widdowson described needs as objectives, students' study or job requirements, or what they have to be able to do at the end of the course (cited in Hutchinson & Waters, 1986). Widdowson (1981) described it as what the learner needs to do to acquire language. John and Dudley Evans (1991) categorized needs as identifiable elements of students' target English situations (cited in Flowerdew & Peacock, 2001). Berwick (1989) suggested that it is what the students would like to gain or their wants, desires and expectations (cited in Hutchinson & Waters, 1986); it can also be described as what is lacking. Flowerdew & Peacock (2001) recommended that needs analysis refers to the collection of data, the identification of needs and wants and the application of it and is the 'defining feature' of designing any EAP course.

Thus, needs analysis is an integral part of systematic curriculum development. When a curriculum is being built from scratch for a completely new language program, the best place to start is with needs assessment.

This study focuses on identifying the specific English language needs of the students and the teachers of the different departments of the different Faculties of Dhaka University; it also evaluates the effectiveness of the present English courses with respect to fulfilling these specific language learning needs; and makes recommendations for more learning effective courses; and finally specifies course content on the basis of the needs analysis findings.

1.2 Historical Background of the English language in Bangladesh.

Bangladesh has a population of 144.5 million, of which 45% are living below the poverty level (Orbis fact file on Bangladesh August 2006). The urban population is only 23% and the literacy rate is 45.3%; the per capita expenditure on education is USD 6.98 (Statistical Yearbook of Bangladesh 2005). Today the Bengali language is used by 95% of the entire population (BANBEIS Report 2003). Bangladesh's geo-political history stretches back through 600 years of Muslim rule before the British colonized Bengal, (the historical name of the region[1]) along with the rest of the Indian sub-continent. Thus the English language legacy in the region corresponds with the colonial history of India under the British Raj till 1947.

1.2.1 Views of Language Policy and Planning

Till recently it was assumed that language could be 'managed' i.e. a government or education authority could attempt to manipulate the linguistic situation in a desired direction through conscious acts of language planning (Rubin & Jernudd 1971). This linear view of language planning has changed over the past decade; as various related factors often presented problems which were not always satisfactorily resolved despite efforts. Spolsky (2004) questioned whether language could at all be managed by explicitly articulated policies because of the influence of implicit factors. He stated that:

> Language policy functions in a complex ecological relationship among a wide range of linguistic and non-linguistic elements variables and factors (Spolsky 2004:40)

1.2.2 The arrival of English in the Indian sub-continent (1757-1947)

With the advent of the East India Company in 1757, the British came to Bengal[1]. At that point in time Persian was the official court language, the official language for government, the law courts and the educated nobility, while Portuguese (in a pidginized form) was used as a lingua franca between the Europeans and the local people (Ferguson 1996). In schools, Persian, Arabic or Sanskrit was used but the mother tongue of the overwhelming majority, Bengali,[2] was not preferred. However, a section of the literate classes soon began to realize the need to cultivate

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[1] Historically, Bengal included present day Bangladesh as well as West Bengal in India. During British rule Bengal and Assam together made up one province.

[2] The Bengali Language traces its origin to a twelfth century form of Prakrit, a derivative of Sanskrit and has an ancient written script and a long literary tradition.

the new knowledge and ideas of the West and Raja Ram Mohan Roy made a formal plea to the colonizers (Ahmad 1997:109; Raja Ram Mohan Roy's address to William Pitt cited in Aggarwal, 1993). This can be considered as the first formal plea for English from the local community on grounds of 'instrumental motivation; (Gardner & Lambert,[3] 1972). Kachru (1988) called this a 'credo of creativity'. Mazumdar (1960:23) noted that "English education was introduced into Bangladesh not by the British government but in spite of them". In this regard Canagarajah (1999:60) commented that the emergence of English in the periphery (colonized countries) may be seen as interplay of the "white man's burden versus brown man's tact" Two historic government measures in the 30s and 40s – the replacement of Persian by English and the vernacular as the language of the courts and offices, and the decision to give preference while recruiting employees for government service to English educated persons – powerfully reinforced the demand for higher education. These two policies in operation meant that western education through the medium of English finally acquired its Midas quality – the golden touch. By the early nineteenth century, English had become the dominant language of higher education in Calcutta (though Bengali was still used in some government offices, the lower courts, in primary education and by the media). So much so that in 1853 Lord Ellenborough told the Parliamentary Select Committee in India that 'English means rupees' (Ahmad 1997:110). However, English was officially institutionalized in 1835 through the much discussed Minutes of Lord Macauley which led to the foundation of British policy on education in India (1835 cited in Aggarwal (1993:54). English was thus part of the nation's colonial heritage and stirred ambiguous reactions. As Pennycook (1994), Graddol (1997), and Crystal (1997) have demonstrated, English emerged in the Indian sub-continent with the advent of colonial enterprise. Even the current pre-eminence of English as a global or international language is a consequence of the Empire's territorial expansion. Macauley in his very influential and well known Minutes of 1835 said that:

> "We must do our best to form a class, who may be interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern- a class of persons Indian in blood and color, but English in taste, opinions and in morals."

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[3] Gardner and Lambert (1972) define instrumental motivation as the force that encourages the exploitation of the target language as a tool for gaining access to material benefits or opportunities which cannot normally be obtained through the use of the first language

He spoke of the likely usefulness to the natives of education given through the medium of English. But the two objectives he mentions were clearly designed to serve the interest of the masters rather than the subjects. The first was to create through this education a class of natives who, despite their color and blood would be English in culture and be able to serve as interpreters between the rulers and the millions the English were destined to rule. The second was to create a demand for European institutions. Years before Macauley, in 1792, another employee of the East India Company, Charles Grant, had propagated the idea that:

> "By planting our language, our knowledge, our opinions and our religion in Asiatic territories we shall put our great work beyond the reach of contingencies."

The intention behind the proposal was to make the empire everlasting. Significantly in his list, language precedes everything else. Charles Wood, the President of the Board of Control of the East India Company wrote in his 1854 dispatch that the purpose of English education for the Indians would be:

> "to secure to us a large and more certain supply of many articles necessary for our manufacture... as well as an almost inexhaustible demand for the produce of British labour" (cited in Aggarwal 1993:54).

The supremacy of English was further reinforced in 1837 when English replaced Persian as the official language of law courts. English education was made compulsory for applying to government posts (Philipson, 1992:110). The resulting effect was

> "English became the sole medium of education, administration, trade and commerce, in short all formal domains of a society's functioning. Proficiency in English became the gateway to all social and material benefits." (Misra, quoted by Phillipson, 1992:110).

The identification of language with access to material benefits forced the colonized subjects to embrace English in order to enter the colonial discourse in terms of power and knowledge.

   English was introduced in secondary schools alongside the vernaculars all over the region by the early twentieth century. However from West's (1926) comments on bilingualism in Bengal and the teaching of English in 'difficult situations,' it seems that even then

English teaching was not a success. Language use in colonial Indian education set the pattern that is generally followed in most post-colonial societies today– vernacular for mass education, a mix of vernacular and English for secondary education and only English at the tertiary level. The British started another trend in India which has had a lasting impact on the socio-economic scenario, establishing "the private English medium school– an imitation of the British public school – the exclusive nature of these schools may have created the class stratification of access to English evident today" (Rahman, 2007:209). Preceding independence, English was used as a tool of resistance to voice the legitimate claims of the oppressed in a language that the oppressor used and understood. Ironically, most of the nationalistic leaders were products of the English-medium school system.

1.2.3 English in the East Pakistan Period (1947-1971)

The question of language had loomed large in 1947 with the creation of the two nation states of India and Pakistan. India had opted for Hindi and Pakistan arbitrarily attempted to make Urdu, the 'Muslim language' the state language of Pakistan. In the face of violent opposition from East Pakistan[4] culminating in the tragic "Language Movement" of 21st February 1952, both Urdu and Bengali were made the state languages of Pakistan. English remained the *de-facto* official language. The constitution was written in English as most West Pakistani leaders were English-educated and could not operate well in their mother tongue. English continued to be the language of administration, the legal profession, higher education and social mobility.

English was retained as a subject in the school curriculum from class 3 to 10 in

Bengali medium schools. At the higher secondary level (class 11-12) the medium switched to English. At the tertiary level the medium was completely English. The Commission on National Education provided their view of the place of English at the secondary school level:

> The foremost reason for such a position its association with the history of this subcontinent for about 200 years. It was through English that different parts of India could join the struggle for independence. In the Pakistan period it had been used as a medium

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[4] At its inception Pakistan was made up of two geographical parts East Pakistan, formerly Bengal and present day Bangladesh and West Pakistan presently Pakistan.

of communication between two wings of the country. It is a store house of the knowledge incorporating every year the results of the latest advances in thought in all subjects. Our youth should acquire knowledge from all sources and contribute their share to its expansion and development. In the attainment of this objective, the study of English is bound to play an important part. (Govt. of East Bengal 1951:296)

The Commission recommended English as a compulsory subject from class 6 to 12 and at the graduate level. English became a compulsory second language. Though the leading newspapers and magazines used English there were still many newspapers and cultural activities in Bengali. Before 1971, English was the common language of communication between East and West Pakistan– just as in India, where English and not Hindi, is the common language of communication between the peoples of different states. East Pakistan was monolingual, Bengali-speaking and did not need Urdu or English as a lingua franca and resented West Pakistan's impositions on their language rights. The Bengalis vehemently demanded that Bengali should be the state language alongside Urdu. In 1956 Bengali became a medium of instruction (Ahmad, 1997).

The language issue remained controversial throughout the East Pakistan period. According to Rahman (2007:210) "the establishment in West Pakistan viewed the Bengali language with suspicion as it was seen as assimilating and spreading harmful influences from India and Hinduism." There were several state-led unsuccessful corpus planning attempts to 'Islamize' Bengali vocabulary and 'Arabize' the Bengali script (Tariq Rahman, 2002). It was a case of what Kramsch (1998) described as the 'totemization' of one language and a 'stigmatization' of the other. Things culminated in the tragic Language Movement of 1952 which spear-headed the Freedom Movement that led to the Liberation War and the final secession from Pakistan and emergence of Bangladesh in 1971.

1.2.4 English in Bangladesh (1971 onwards)

In a wave of patriotism and nationalistic fervor, both Urdu and English were officially removed from their public roles resulting in Bengali taking precedence at all levels of bureaucracy, education, administration and later, the judiciary (Moniruzzaman 1979). Due to its monolingual nature, Bangladesh is the only post-colonial nation where English is not a lingua franca. The face-off is directly between English as an

established language of administration and the national language, Bengali, supported by policy lines favoring the latter's introduction in all spheres of life (Banu & Sussex 2001b).

Bangladesh declared the mother tongue to be the state language in the 1972 Constitution. The most important document of the nation the *Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh* clearly states "The state language of the Republic is [Bangla]" (1996:6 Article Three). The substitution of the word 'Bengali' by 'Bangla' through an amendment in 1988 is notable. 'There is an authentic text of the Constitution in Bengali; and an authentic text of its authorized translation in English; but in the event of conflict between the two texts, the Bengali text shall prevail' (Preface to the 1996 Constitution). This clearly accentuates the superiority of the Bangla language over the English language in all official matters.

In the early years of the new government of Bangladesh, there was an anomalous linguistic situation: the officials of the government generally preferred English – the bureaucrats who held key positions had been trained earlier in English (Banu & Sussex 2001b). Thus many of the English-trained elite group continued to use English, often with some embarrassment (Daily Star 3 November 1997). Permission was given for the use of English, and for a decade after independence a dual language policy was *de facto* in practice (Banu & Sussex 2001b).The use of Bengali and English overlapped a great deal. English continued to be prevalent in government handbooks, administrative functions manuals, book of rules and other publications.

Repeated orders and directives, verbal and written, were issued by the government to ensure the use of Bengali in official matters. Eventually the *Bangla Procholon Ain (*Bengali Language Implementation Act) 1987 was passed which clearly stated that Bengali was to be used at all spheres and all levels for government purposes and thus prevented the use of the historically-used English language. The implementation was problematic as time was needed to de-anglicise the administrative documentation procedures and practices and phase in the new structures in Bengali. The introduction of Bengali has been both protracted and incomplete (Choudhury 2001). The frustrating reality is that in Bangladesh, Bengali has failed to be an adequate medium for higher education, particularly because almost 95% of the necessary text and reference books happen to be in English. Liberation had lighted the

hope, and the rationale to be hopeful, that we would be able to make Bengali a fit medium for higher education through the writing and translation of books. The failure and the consequent rise in the necessity of giving time, attention and energy to the learning of English is among the mirrors in which we can see the level and nature of the development the country has been able to achieve. The image reflected is far from flattering.

1.2.5 Language Policy in Education

English was abolished from the primary level and withdrawn from the tertiary level in 1972; it remained a subject in the secondary school curriculum. The medium of instruction at all schools became Bengali and English-medium schools were abolished by government order overnight in 1972. Correspondingly English was removed from all public service and departmental examinations in pursuance of the policy of the "Bengalisation" of the administration. Banning English overnight was not possible at the tertiary level, so English was allowed to continue in parallel with Bengali as the language of both instruction and examinations. The language policies relegated English from the status of a second language (ESL) to that of a foreign language (EFL).[5]

The banning of English medium schools in 1972; the de-emphasis on the teaching of English in government schools coupled with the 1987 Bengali Language Implementation Act contributed to a serious decline in the standard and status of English in Bangladesh, which ironically corresponded to the global spread of English world-wide and the growth of English medium schools and private universities and coaching centers in Bangladesh. Periodically, voices of alarm have been sounded in the columns of the national dailies. In 1992, the government passed legislation and reintroduced English at the tertiary level. The objective was to better equip graduates for the job market and raise academic standards to higher levels. English has begun to make its presence felt again (Khan, 2004).

1.2.6 Educational planning concerning English

Since its independence in 1971, Bangladesh has never had a consistent policy on language in schools (Hossain & Tollefson, 2007). The policy can be interpreted from the government's educational decrees, reports

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[5] Greenbaum (1996:241) appears to put the ESL/EFL notions into perspective by stating that the neatness of the division into first, second and foreign languages "mask the untidiness in the real world."

and memoranda. The significant educational planning directives related to teaching English are listed below. Interestingly the initial curtailing of the role English was replaced by a more escalating role in education within the last two decades:

- 1972: Bengali established as the medium of instruction at primary and secondary levels in all schools (with no mention of English)

- 1972: English dropped from the 2 year BA course in state university colleges

- 1974: English as a compulsory subject to be introduced in year 6 and continue till year 12 (secondary level)

- 1976: English to be introduced from year 3 (primary level) and continue till year 12

- 1986: English to be introduced from year 1 (elementary level) and continue till year 12

- 1992: The Private University Act (passed by Parliament) which resulted in a proliferation of private universities modeled on the US system of education, teaching through the English medium – attracting large numbers of affluent students who had earlier opted to go abroad for higher education.

- 1994: English which was dropped from the 2 year BA course in state university colleges re-instated in the same course

- 1996: Compulsory English language foundation course to be introduced in state university undergraduate classes. (Universities were using a mix of English and Bengali or in some cases just English as their medium of instruction)

- 1996: The retirement of government English teachers increased by 3 years to meet the increased demand for English teachers.

- 1996: Introduction of one-year English foundation courses at undergraduate level at public universities (Based on Rahman, 2007:214).

The various Education Ministry document and reports which are related to English teaching and which outline the needs, objectives, problems, prospects and curriculum directives for English teaching in the state system are summarized below:

1974: Report of the National Commission on Education

1976: Report of the English teaching Task Force

1978: Report of the National Curriculum and Syllabus Formulation Committee

1985: Report of the National Curriculum Syllabus Committee

1993: Ministry of Education Memo

1995: Ministry of Education Memo

Surprisingly there was no mechanism or arrangement for the planning, development, experimenting and evaluation of curricula till 1983. Ad-hoc commissions and committees were set up (to update and develop curricula) and dissolved since 1972. The National Curriculum Syllabus Committee (NCSC) operated and submitted a few reports from 1976 till its dissolution in 1983 when the National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB), a permanent committee, was finally set up. To date the NCTB is responsible for primary and secondary education and therefore, English language education in Bangladesh.

The National Commission for Education (1974) reported on the importance of English as the medium of international communication and recommended it be taught more effectively from year 6 to 12 with a focus on language rather than literature (Report of the National Commission on Education 1974:14). Consequently the English Language Teaching Task Force was formed in 1975 to assess the ELT situation in Bangladesh to suggest improvement. It reported that the proficiency of year 1 students "was at least four years below the standard assumed in their textbooks" (Report of the English teaching Task Force, 1976:1). The recommendation was that "an appropriate graded syllabus should be introduced at each level and text books related to the needs and abilities of the students should be prepared" (Report of the English teaching Task Force, 1976:3). As a result, English was introduced from class 3 in 1976. Moreover, a high-powered ELT workshop in 1976 identified social, occupational and academic needs for the Bangladeshi learners and identified the academic need as the most significant need affecting the student population (Harrison 1976:1). Furthermore, it noted that the current course was unsuitable in meeting these demands and was entirely literary in character and did not match the students' actual level of ability. It suggested a new textbook with reading material graded according to linguistic difficulty, with practice materials in reading and writing development and being less literary in character (Kerr 1976:2). Later the National Curriculum and Text Book Board (NCTB) included English as a compulsory subject

from class 3 so that people had a good grounding in English (Government of Bangladesh, 1977). But a number of schools taught English from the beginners' class of primary school. Khatun (1992:93) suggests a probable reason:

> "the pressure of public opinion was behind the unofficial policy of teaching English from the first class of the primary stage of education in Bangladesh". (Khatun, 1992 : 93)

Since 1991 English has been taught from class 1 as a compulsory subject. The 1997 Commission recommended English be taught from class 3. Perceiving the increasing demand of English as an international language, NCTB has recommended it to be taught and learnt as a communicative skill.

The NCSC made similar recommendations and textbooks were written on the basis of these criteria in 1978. Under the NCTB, new textbooks from years 3 to 12 were introduced in 1986. The year English was introduced in primary school new course books were introduced at all levels. Since 1990 there have been two similar curriculum revisions and new textbook introductions.

In spite of the implementation of these policies, and the emphasis on English in the curriculum and in the society, standards of English are extremely poor (Rahman, 2007:217). It has been noted that since Independence, the mean of English in the two public exams of S.S.C. (Secondary School Certificate Exam) and H.S.C. (Higher Secondary School Certificate Exam) is amongst the lowest scores. Among the students who fail, about 90% fail in English (Statistical Yearbook of Bangladesh 2005). The Report of the English Teaching Task Force (1976), The Rahman McGinley and McGinley Study (1981), the University Grants Commission Report (1988), and the Baseline Survey of Secondary School English Teaching and Learning (1990) have all shown similar depressing findings regarding the proficiency levels of students.

The Report of the English Teaching Task Force (1976) found students at Class 9 were two years behind the level assumed in the textbook and at Class 12 they were four years behind. The Rahman McGinley and McGinley Study (1981) found a four year lag in English proficiency among students entering tertiary education. The University Grants Commission Report (1988) found a wide gap between the proficiency actually achieved at the end of higher secondary stage and the proficiency needed to successfully perform at the tertiary level. The

1990 Baseline Survey found that despite the implementa-tion of compulsory English from primary level since 1976, the proficiency figures were highly distressing. Shrubsall (1993) stated that the majority of the students going through the secondary cycle do not go beyond the absolute beginner's level in English. It appears that serious injustice had been done to ELT immediately after Independence, and Bangladesh can no longer be considered as a genuine ESL situation nor does it qualify as a purely EFL one. Bowers (1986), in his study of ELT in Bangladesh, described the present status of English in Bangladesh as "ESL lapsing into EFL" (Bowers 1986:23).

The University of Dhaka (DU), the premier institution for tertiary education and higher education was established in July 1921. At that time there were 3 faculties, 12 Departments, 60 teachers and 847 students. Today there are 10 Faculties, 48 Departments. 9 Institutes, 26 Research Centres, 1345 teachers and 25000 students (Banglapaedia, 2003). At its inception, the medium of instruction was English but after partition in 1972, the medium became Bengali. According to Dr. Alam (2001), Professor in the Department of English at the University of Dhaka:

> "My colleagues and I had come to realize that something had gone drastically wrong with the English being taught in our schools and colleges; the majority of the students coming into the department from these institutions were unable to read, write or speak English with any fluency anymore. In fact throughout the eighties and the early nineties , it was becoming clear that a rot had been setting into our education system .By the nineties every admission test given by us for first year students demonstrated that even the best students of the country were without the basic skills in Bengali as well as English… not only were the incoming students getting worse and worse by the year , students who had taken the first year language course were showing no improvement after taking the course ...The 1994 syllabus reform committee would therefore aim to make language learning more intensive" (Alam,2001:8-9)

With the situation being so critical at the English Department of the University, one can imagine the declining standards of English at the other departments at the University. Alam (2001) continues that:

> "...with the introduction of the four-year honors program in 1998 there was pressure for change from the University itself; in view of

declining standards in English and Bengali. The Faculty of Humanities had already specified that a first year student of the faculty would have to take compulsory introductory courses called "Foundation English" and "Bangla Bhasha"

In an attempt to upgrade the prevailing poor standards of English proficiency of incoming university students, "The Foundation Course In English" was introduced in 1998 and made compulsory for all freshmen of the Faculty of Humanities.

The last few years have seen the addition of 56 state-approved English medium private universities in addition to the 17 state-approved ones (which used to function in Bengali but are now gradually switching to English). This is a significant development in terms of the status of the English language and its impact in education. The introduction of one-year English foundation courses at undergraduate level at public universities in 1996 has created an enormous pressure on almost non-existent resources and it is gravely testing the will, capacity and the resources of the tertiary administration. The three absolute necessities of language-based learning– small class size, appropriate materials, and qualified ELT practitioners- make the whole issue a mind-boggling enterprise. Raynor (1995) estimated that it entailed creating 7000 new posts for English teachers to cater for a student body of 300,000 each year. Needless to say, this proposal has not been pursued. Khan (2000) evaluated the English foundation course at Dhaka University as being non-effective with very large classes, and with only two hours of contact time per week and a lecture-style teaching methodology (cited in Rahman, 2007:220).

The whole process of ELT reform in Bangladesh has been an emphasis sadly on quantity rather than quality – the expansion of English teaching provision through out the school system and even up to the tertiary level. The result has been the lengthening of the duration for learning English (12 years) (Rahman, 2007:219). The expansionist decisions have occasionally been tactics of crises management. ELT curricula reform has been until recently a case of treating the symptoms but ignoring the disease i.e. working without a clear co-ordinated understanding of the entire situation– the language competencies required of learners, the backwash effect of the examinations, the constraints on resources, the adequate management of change, among other things (Rahman, 2007:221).

It is of course useful to acquire knowledge of a second language, but should the entire nation of 120 million be made bilingual? Bilingualism was forced upon the people in the past because of foreign rule, but to allow that to continue can hardly be an ideal situation. Apart from the impracticability of the task, there is the primary question of desirability.

Ideally bilingualism should be voluntary rather than obligatory. But there is a socio-economic problem involved in it. The acquisition of English happens to be an instrument for gaining both power and prestige and to limit its knowledge to a section of society would be to deprive others of a right. By virtue of being a door to a privileged position within the international arena, English is sustained as an instrument of power. In this sense English is "enriching" for the access it provides. While English can open doors to wealth, prestige and success, it is also "a gate keeping mechanism" that is, it provides access to information and high-tech communication to a limited few who have access to English education. In Bangladesh only a small percentage of the population can afford private English education but it gives this elite group an advantage over the rest who receive inadequate or no English language teaching in the state educational system. English education continues to be the domain of the elite in post colonial or independent former colonies. In his investigations of English on a global level Graddol has found that

> "in many countries English has become implicated in social and economic mechanisms which structure in equality" (1997:38).

Just as the British Raj used English education as a selective process for government employment, Bangladesh, like other former colonies, replicates this policy in using proficiency in English as a screening mechanism in university admission tests and civil service entrance examinations. The mushrooming of English language coaching centers all over Dhaka city attests to the power of the language.

The present day attitude towards English is one of 'Pragmatic Liberalism' (Rahman, 2007);" this modernizing positive stance towards English sees it as non-threatening to the national language or culture. "English has enabled us and can still enable us to be ourselves" (Chowdhury, 2005). At the moment, the conviction is that English is of key importance to national development. In Bangladesh the attitude towards English has stabilized on the scale of acceptance, perhaps a

little grudgingly, as English often not within easy reach of the multitude, is seen as the most potent instrument of social and economic advancement (Rahman, 2007:223).

It is apparent there is a concern at the highest levels of the government machinery and the private sector that after 35 years of independence and an alarming drop in English language standards, Bangladesh fears marginaliza-tion and is faced with the grim reality of lagging behind neighboring countries who are forging ahead in terms of access to the world market. This has been documented in the frantic efforts of an incremental investment in English teaching and learning within the education sector, with the English language having been clearly accepted as a modern-day asset.

This brief history of English education in Bangladesh is offered to provide a clearer understanding of the present situation and problems related to ELT in Bangladesh.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

In Bangladesh, the English Department of Dhaka University bears the main responsibility of producing English Language experts and designing English Language courses for both the private and public sectors. Time and again the teachers construct and mould new course outlines tailored to meet the diverse language learning needs of their learners. Often they are pressed for time and have to prepare and introduce these courses within specified deadlines. Because of this, very often there is not enough time to do proper needs analysis before designing and implementing these courses. Once they are implemented, the courses are hardly ever evaluated by the authorities concerned. However, unofficially changes are implemented, according to the needs of the concerned course teachers. Constraints, problems, limitations of students and teachers have never been acknowledged or explored. Not surprisingly in spite of compulsory English teaching for a whole academic year, the general standard and levels of proficiency in the students' English have not improved much and leave much to be desired. Therefore there is an urgent need to identify the specific English language needs of the students and the teachers at Dhaka University and based on these needs, specify the content of the English courses.

1.4 Research objectives:

The objectives of the present study are to:
- Explore the present English Language teaching learning activities of the different Faculties at the University of Dhaka (DU)

- Determine the needs and wants of the teachers and students from these courses
- Identify the methods and techniques of the activities and identify their strengths and constraints/limitations
- Make comparisons of the English learning and teaching activities of the different modules being used by the different Faculties at DU
- Investigate if English language teaching at the freshman level adequately prepares students for study at the tertiary level
- Identify areas to improve the English language teaching courses based on these findings

1.5 Research Questions

The Research Questions for this study are:

1. What are the specific English language needs of the students of the four Faculties at DU?
2. Is there a mismatch between the expectations and needs of the students?
3. What do the teachers expect these English language courses to enable their students to be able to do?
4. Do language courses offered by the various departments reflect the expectations and needs of the teachers?
5. What are the strengths and shortcomings of the present language courses?
6. What improvements can be made to these courses?

1.6 Significance of the Study

This study is the first of its kind to be done at Dhaka University as there has never been any formal assessment of students' language learning needs. The University authorities and the respective Faculties have never formally evaluated the courses that are being taught. Therefore a lot remains to be explored and discovered about the nature, effectiveness, and objectives of these language courses. A few informal studies have been done previously, on obtaining students' feedback about some courses and evaluating these courses. Since most of the previous studies have been informal in nature and they have been done on the personal initiative of some concerned course teachers, they have not been officially acknowledged nor have their findings had any constructive impact on the courses. Moreover none of these informal

evaluations have taken the related variables into consideration. Khan, (2000) in her evaluation of the English foundation course for the Humanities Faculty pointed out that:

> "the syllabus needs to be revised and developed— the *content of the syllabus needs to be outlined clearly*— the current syllabus does not specify course objectives— the *contents of the syllabus need to be rewritten keeping in mind the needs and demands of the students. —*before revising the syllabus *a needs analysis could also be carried out to determine student needs*." (Khan, 2000: 106-7)

Along the same lines Haque & Zaman (1994) stated that:

> "Hence it may be recommended that the *EFL course should aim at academic purposes and learner needs/wants* as— the *learners' needs and wants tremendously control the whole package of teaching materials,* aids and equipment, and the application of teaching techniques and strategies, the employment of classroom activities and, most importantly, the method of teaching and the *construction of the syllabus*." Haque & Zaman (1994:79)

More recently Rahman (2007) has voiced the view that:

- We need to learn from past mistakes in our attempts at curricular change and build on what has already been achieved instead of re-inventing the wheel

- Most importantly on-going research and investigative studies need to constantly inform educational planning (Rahman, 2007:226).

This study has awareness raising objectives as it has the potential to bring to light and provide information to teachers, curriculum experts, and decision makers about what has happened during the courses. The findings of this study pertaining to students' language learning needs, lacks and wants; problems and difficulties, and preferences of classroom teaching style as well as the employment sectors' needs and perception about students' language skills are real eye openers and they have implications for future curriculum development. It is important to remember that evaluation is an intrinsic part of teaching and learning; evaluation is necessary and it is very useful because it provides specific pointers and guidelines to curriculum developers and practitioners for future development of planning and development of courses and for management and implementation of classroom tasks and activities. This

study has implications for future EAP courses and may serve as a springboard for discussion of the major areas highlighted in the study and the information provided in this study is important for the decision makers and all others involved.

1.7 Scope and Limitations of the Study

The subjects of this study are the new second year students since the new first year students had not yet begun classes. The subjects are from twelve departments of four faculties of the university therefore the results can be generalized to this population only. In the case of the semi-structured interviews with curriculum experts many requested that the interview not be recorded in accordance with their wishes the researcher took notes of the salient points in the interview. Similarly some employers also requested that the interview not be recorded in such cases the researcher complied with their request. Many departments did not have an official course outline in such cases the researcher had to make do with hand written summaries of the course obtained from course teachers.

1.8 Organization of the Thesis

This study comprising10 chapters has been presented in the following manner:

Chapter ONE will present the Introduction, Statement of the Problem, Research Questions, Significance of the Study and Conceptual Definitions and the Historical Background of the English language in Bangladesh.

Chapter TWO will provide the Literature Review related to Syllabus design, Evaluation, needs Assessment and it elucidates the results of previous primary and secondary studies that are related to this research.

Chapter THREE will explain the Research Design theoretical considerations, the sampling, instrumentation, pilot study and data collection and analysis.

Chapter FOUR will illustrate the Questionnaire based Needs Assessment Findings pertaining to the Commerce Faculty and discuss them in detail

Chapter FIVE will illustrate the Questionnaire based Needs Assessment Findings pertaining to the Humanities Faculty and discuss them in detail

Chapter SIX will illustrate the Questionnaire based Needs Assessment Findings pertaining to the Science Faculty and discuss them in detail

Chapter SEVEN will illustrate the Questionnaire based Needs Assessment Findings pertaining to the Social Science Faculty and discuss them in detail

Chapter EIGHT will illustrate the Questionnaire based Needs Assessment Findings pertaining to the Subject and Course Teachers and discuss them in detail and it will also illustrate the Classroom Observation Findings and discuss them in detail

Chapter NINE will illustrate the Semi-structured Interview based Needs Assessment Findings pertaining to the Employers' perceptions and discuss them in detail and it will illustrate the Semi-structured Interview based Findings pertaining to the Curriculum Experts' perceptions and discuss them in detail

Chapter TEN will Summarize and conclude the discussion on the Research Findings and present the Conclusion, Recommendations and indications for Further Research.

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Chapter Two

Literature Review

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2.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to discuss some pertinent areas related to the present study. It begins with the discussion of the scope of English for Specific Purposes (referred to as ESP thereafter) and English for Academic Purposes (referred to as EAP thereafter). The discussion provides a clear idea of what EAP is all about and the definition adopted in the present study. The next area of discussion is Syllabus design this is followed by the types and approaches to Needs Analysis, before finally reviewing some related research.

2.2 English for specific purposes (ESP)

When the expression first evolved in the mid 60s it was popularly known as English for special purposes. Mackay and Mountford (1978) use the term 'language for special purposes' to refer to "the teaching of English for a clearly utilitarian purpose" (Mackay and Mountford, 1978:2). They distinguish the utilitarian purpose with reference to three categories:

a. Occupational requirements, for example for international telephone operators, civil airline pilots;

b. Vocational training program, for example for hotel and catering staff and technical trades.

c. Academic and professional study, for example, engineering, medicine, law and so on (Mackay and Mountford, 1978:2).

Strevens (1977) suggested that all special purpose language teaching courses are either occupational or educational in nature. However over the years the expression ESP has experienced a transition from its original English for special purposes to English for specific purposes for various reasons. Robinson (1980) declared that 'English for special purposes is thought to suggest special language, i.e. restricted language, which for many people is only a small part of ESP, whereas English for specific purposes focuses attention on the purpose of the learner and refers to the whole range of language resources' (Robinson 1980:5).

Hutchinson and Waters (1987) stated the following three key reasons to support the transition of the expression:

1. The rise of English as an international language of commerce, science and technology and the subsequent world demand for an instrumental knowledge of the language

2. The development in the field of sociolinguistics with its emphasis on language variations

3. Recent development in educational psychology in which the needs of learners are paramount (Hutchinson and Waters 1987:6-8).

Robinson (1980) and Mackay and Mountford (1979) stressed that the teaching of English is not an end in itself but an essential means to a specific goal. English becomes the medium needed to achieve a purpose which is usually defined with reference to various occupational requirements. From this discussion it appears that ESP courses are meant for learners who required specialized needs, may it be for English for Occupational Purposes (EOP) or English for Academic Purposes (EAP). Kennedy and Bolitho (1981) provided a thorough understanding of two major divisions, EOP an EAP which help to distinguish ESP. They stated that EOP is taught in an institution in which learners need to use English as part of their work or profession whereas EAP is 'taught generally within educational institutions to students needing English in their studies' (Kennedy and Bolitho 1981:4). Crandall (1979) highlighted that the emphasis is on 'specific' structures and discourse styles required of a given profession. Robinson (1991) focused on the term 'specific' which is defined as attention on the purpose of the learner and refers to the complete range of language resources and noted that 'quintessential ESP, if we can pinpoint it is perhaps materials produced for use once only by one group of students in any one place at any one time. Given the variety of ESP courses world-wide today, what ESP practitioners should be concerned with is 'not so much ESP but teaching English to specific people' (Robinson, 1991). Mackay and Mountford (1979) add that the essence of ESP is concerned with the particular situation in which learners need to apply the language. Thus it may be said that the purpose for which the learner is learning the language is emphasized upon and not the language that he is learning. Hutchinson and Waters (1987) defined ESP as an approach rather than a product and stated that ESP is an 'approach to language learning which is based on learner need' (Hutchinson and Waters, 1987:21). Thus ESP does not involve a particular kind of language teaching material or

methodology. They stress upon the importance of needs. This concept has been accepted as a universal underlying element in ESP by most practitioners. Hutchinson and Waters clarify that the awareness of and not the existence of a need differentiates ESP from General English (GE). They divide needs into 'target needs' what the learners need to do in the target situation and 'learning needs' what the learners need to do in order to learn. In order to fulfill both needs, an ESP practitioner should be aware of what is necessary and lacking as well as what the learners want to learn.

2.3 English for Academic Purposes (EAP)

EAP is one of the branches of ESP (English for Specific Purposes). It is similar in nature to the other branches of ESP which is EOP (English for Occupational Purposes). The basic difference between EAP and EOP is in their goals and objectives. The goal of EAP is to help learners with their studies. Dudley-Evans & St. John (1998) stated that EAP refers to any English teaching course that relates to a study purpose; students whose first language is not English may need help with both the language of academic disciplines and the specific study skills required of them during their academic course (Dudley-Evans & St. John, 1998:34). The key determinant of what an EAP course should contain is whether or not the subject course is taught in English. There have been different focuses in such courses: in Nigeria and Kenya they have concentrated on developing 'common core' study skills courses for students from a mixture of disciplines (Chukwuma et al. 1991; Monsi et al. 1993; Obah, 1993); in South Africa more specific and subject-related courses have succeeded in motivating students and meeting their needs (Starfield, 1994); in South East Asia the focus of EAP has been Communication Skills courses focusing on preparing students for communication tasks they will have to carry out in work situations once they have finished their academic course (Cheung & Wong 1988:93). Examples of EAP courses would include English for Law, English for Psychology and English for History and so on. Flowerdew and Peacock (2001) listed these characteristics of EAP:

- The goal is to meet specific needs of learners
- It is related in terms of content to the particular activity
- It requires the use of appropriate syntax, lexis, discourse and semantics
- It differs from general English

- It may be restricted to specific language skills
- It is not taught according to any methodology
- It often uses authentic texts
- It is often task-based
- It often involves adult learners
- It is purposeful

2.4 Syllabus design

There is some confusion about the terms "curriculum" and "syllabus", because the terms have been used interchangeably, along with the terms, "course of study" or "program" (Stern, 1984). However a syllabus differs from the curriculum, as a curriculum is "a very general concept, involving philosophical, social, administrative factors which contribute to the planning of an educational program."(Allen 1984:61) A syllabus is a "sub point of a curriculum concerned with specifications of what units will be taught."(Allen 1984:61) Brumfit (1984) describes the syllabus as an administrative device for public planning, related to a broader curriculum. It should begin and end at an appropriate point, have goals and a sequence and it should be negotiable during use. Yalden (1984) defines "syllabus" as "a public document, a record, a contract or an instrument which represents negotiation among all the parties involved" (Yalden 1984:13); and adds that it is the result of the negotiation between the needs and the aims of the learners, the activities in the classroom and the constraints and a necessity for producing pragmatic and pedagogical efficiencies (the effective management of resources such as time, money and the teaching process). The syllabus should be more explicit for the teacher rather than the learner as it should detail what should be taught rather than what should be learnt, though a range of outcomes is expected. Syllabus should have specification, sequencing and continuity of content. Yalden explained that how a syllabus organization depends on how one views language learning, acquisition and usage.

A syllabus on language learning is usually based on the structure of the language. If it is based on language acquisition, the content may not have fixed form of organization. The focus is on providing a conducive environment for natural language practice and growth which implies knowing the learners' interests and characteristics. Finally if the syllabus is based on developing language usage, there may be no particular organizing principle, only situations created for the use of the

target language. Lawton and Barnes, (1976) questioned-Who determines the content of the syllabus? According to Candlin (1984) it should be decided by the objectives, which is derived from the needs assessment of the learners. Traditionally, the syllabus states ends, prescribes means, is centralized, management oriented and predictive. In real life, the organization may vary, depending on the learners. Stenhouse (1975) called the syllabus a dynamic, negotiated concept, rather than static and imposed, which means it involves continuous needs analysis. Breen (1984) supported the concept of the flexible syllabus as it is up to the teacher to interpret and reconstruct while the lessons progress; and conceded that a good pre-designed syllabus should be open to different interpretations and reconstructions though negotiations in the classroom. McDevitt (2004) believed the teacher's ideologies and methodologies shouldn't be forced on the learners but efforts to create a learning friendly situation should be encouraged.

Kumaravadivelu (2006) considers the *'syllabus'* and *'curriculum'*, which specifies the *'what'* or the content of language learning and teaching, essential components of any language teaching program. Though the two terms are often used interchangeably, they may indicate a hierarchical relationship where "curriculum refers broadly to all aspects of language policy, language planning, teaching methods, and evaluation measures, whereas the syllabus narrowly relates to the specification of content, the sequencing of what is to be taught" (Kumaravadivelu, 2006:75).

The discussion in this section is limited to the syllabus as a content-specifier.

A well designed language teaching syllabus mainly:

a. clarifies the aims and objectives of learning and teaching and

b. indicates the classroom procedures the teacher may wish to follow.

Any syllabus according to Breen (2001:151) should ideally provide:

- A clear framework of knowledge and capabilities selected to be appropriate to overall aims;
- continuity and a sense of classroom work for teacher and students;
- a record for other teachers of what has been covered in the course
- a basis for evaluating students' progress;
- a basis for evaluating the appropriateness of the course in relation to overall aims and students' needs, identified both before and during the course;

- content appropriate to the broader language curriculum, the particular class of learners, the educational institution and wider society in which the course is located..

The assumption behind this ideal list of syllabus objectives is that they will enable teaching to become more organized and effective thus a syllabus is more a *teaching* organizer than a *learning* indicator and a well constructed syllabus is supposed to relate as closely as possible to learning processes (Kumaravadivelu, 2006:76). Corder (1967) offers the notion of a 'built-in syllabus" that learners themselves construct based on the language content presented to them and in conjunction with intake factors and processes since learners appear to learn several items simultaneously rather than sequentially retaining some rejecting others and reframing certain others.

Mackey (1965) identified three major criteria for selection of linguistic structures: *frequency, range* and *availability*. Frequency refers to the items that occur most often in the linguistic input learners are likely to encounter therefore it is tied in to the learners' linguistic needs and wants. Range is the spread of an item across texts and contexts so an item found and used in several communicative contexts is more important. Availability relates to the degree to which an item is necessary and appropriate and corresponds to the readiness with which it remembered and used (Kumaravadivelu, 2006:78).

Wilkins (1976) proposed two broad classifications of syllabus: synthetic syllabus and analytic syllabus. The *synthetic syllabus* assumes that a language system can be:

a. analyzed into its smaller units of grammatical structures, lexical items or functional categories

b. classified in some manageable useful way and

c. presented to the learners one by one for their understanding and assimilation.

The learners are expected to synthesize all the separate elements in order to get the totality of the language. Because the synthesis is done by the learners it is dubbed synthetic. *Language-centered* and *Learner-centered* methods follow the synthetic syllabus pattern. Language-centered pedagogists devise suitable classroom procedures for teachers to present and help learners synthesize discrete items of grammar and vocabulary, while learner-centered pedagogists do the same adding notional and functional categories to the linguistic items. In the *analytic*

syllabus language input is presented to the learner not piece by piece but in fairly large chunks. These chunks do not have any linguistic focus; they draw the learners' attention to the communicative features of the language; connected texts in the form of stories, games problems and tasks. The learners are expected to analyze the connected texts into its smaller constituent elements. *Learning-centered* methods adhere to the analytic approach.

Antony (1963) proposed a three-way distinction: *approach, method, and technique*. He defined *approach* as a 'set of correlative assumptions' dealing with the nature of language teaching and learning which describes the nature of the subject matter to be taught; 'states a point of view, a philosophy, an article of faith'. The *method* is an 'overall plan for the orderly presentation of language material, no part of which contradicts and all of which is based upon, the selected approach -- an approach is axiomatic a method is procedural'. The *technique* is a 'particular trick, stratagem, or contrivance used to accomplish an immediate objective' (Antony, 1963:63-66). This framework was perceived by many as flawed in many ways.

Richards and Rodgers (1982) retained Antony's concept of a*pproach* but stated that d*esign* deals with 'assumptions about the content and context for teaching and learning' (Richards and Rodgers 1982:158); it includes specifications of a) the content of instruction i.e. the syllabus; b) learner roles; c) teacher roles; d) instructional materials and their types and functions. The p*rocedure* is concerned with issues such as 'the types of teaching learning techniques, exercises and practice activities, resources, time, space, equipment' needed to implement recommended activities.

According to Kumaravadivelu (2006) *principles* can be operationally defined as 'a set of insights' derived from theoretical and applied linguistics, cognitive psychology and allied disciplines that provide the theoretical basis for the study of language learning, language planning and language teaching which govern 'syllabus design, materials production, and evaluation measures'. He defines *procedures* as 'a set of teaching strategies' adopted/adapted by the teacher in order to accomplish 'the stated and unstated, short-term and long-term goals of language learning and teaching' in the classroom; thus classroom events, activities or techniques covered under procedures.

The decision on which syllabus type to use will depend on the students' needs and the objectives of the course and it may reflect the

approach to teaching English that is current in the country or in its education system. A combination of various approaches to syllabus design in an eclectic manner may bring about positive results (Dubin and Olshtain, 1986 cited in Saud,2001). The three main types of syllabuses are:

Structural syllabuses: The syllabus was selected and graded according to grammatical notions of simplicity and complexity, focusing on one aspect of language-formal grammar.

Functional-notional syllabus: Communicative skills became the focus of the syllabus.

Procedural and task-based syllabus: This focuses on and emphasizes classroom activities that stimulate internal learning processes. This syllabus type specifies the tasks, activities, and problems engaged in the classroom which will be carried out in the real world.

The focus has shifted in foreign language teaching, from instruction and explanation aimed at acquiring knowledge and skills, to processes through which knowledge and skills are gained.

The evolution of the different approaches to language teaching resulted in the development of corresponding approaches to EAP syllabus design. Hill and Crabbe (1994) cited in Flowerdew and Peacock (2001) lists the history of approaches to the EAP syllabus. The Lexico-grammatical approach – this 60's and 70's approach was based on teaching structure and vocabulary of a language. The Functional-notional approach – this 70's approach was based on teaching functions and notions of a language. The Discourse-based approach – emphasizes cohesion and coherence of different types of texts such as the narrative, expository, comparison-contrast and so on. The Genre approach – tries to promote an awareness of the different rules, regulations and procedures of different genres. The materials used are authentic texts. The Skills-based approach– focus is on developing specific skills such as report writing, reading or giving presentations. The Content-based approach– can be divided into three types: theme-based- syllabus is topical in nature. Sheltered– language course is the subject specialist. Adjunct– language course and content course run concurrently. The Communicative approach– The communicative approach focuses on the need for students to express meanings that are important to them and their lives. This approach assumes that language teaching can utilize both inductive and deductive learning, based on what is known from analysis of natural discourse about semantics and pragmatics, to meet

the particular needs of the target learners. What students need may be reading, writing, listening or speaking skills each of which may be approached from a communicative perspective Brown (2001). In the early stages of the communicative movement in language teaching in Europe, objective needs were the focus of needs analysis, since language learning was seen as a means to an end: effective communication in the learners' current or future domain of language use. As theories of adult learning indicated that adults learn better when program content is geared to their immediate concerns, language teaching tended to concentrate on the end product: the actual language which learners had to use (Johnson, 1989). Syllabuses built on such premises are a major step forward in language teaching methodology as they cater to the learner's relevant needs as they focus on "…precise area of language required, skills needed and range of functions to which language is to be put" (Mackay and Mountford, 1978:4). The Ecological approach (EA)— The Ecological Approach resulted from the communicative curriculum, is a process model where an ESP course is seen as a dynamic mesh of negotiated purposes, methods and evaluation produced by, and interacting with, a milieu of attitudes and expectations of all the parties involved (students, teachers, materials writers, course planners, syllabus designers, curriculum researchers, employers and so on). Holliday and Cooke (1982) suggested the 'ecological approach' in order to the address the cultural mismatch between ESP models. They explained that ESP ecosystem is made up of the relevant characteristics of local institutional management and infrastructure to enable it to co-exist with the classroom culture. They cautioned 'we consider it to be a cardinal mistake on the part of the ESP practitioner to make decisions concerning all these issues in a vacuum before having considerable contact with, and insight into, the ecosystem' (Holliday and Cooke, 1982:140). There is a need to accord right of co-existence to all the competing but interdependent elements of the system, and to work with the system (Holliday and Cooke, 1982). The EA has as its inputs not only the learner and his target situation but also findings of means analysis. It negotiates the various factors in the aspiration for learner and learning-centredness.

2.5 Learning goal

The term "goal refers to the general purposes for which a language program is being taught or learnt." Learning goals can be derived from a number of sources, including task analysis, learner data, education specifications etc. Goals can refer to cognitive and affective aspects of

learner's development, what the teacher hopes to achieve in the classroom, what the teacher hopes the learners will achieve in the classroom, the real -world communicative tasks that the learner should be able to perform.

Product oriented goals can be derived from the learners by asking them why they are learning the language. Course designers can also derive them through the process of introspection on the sort of communicative purposes for which the language is used.

While considering learners' needs and goals, we should keep in mind that the teachers' syllabus and the learners' syllabus or 'agenda' might differ. Through subjective needs analysis, learners and teachers may exchange information so that these agendas may be more closely aligned.

This can happen in two ways. Firstly, information provided by learners can be used to guide selection of content and learning activities. Secondly by providing learners with detailed information about goals, objectives and learning activities, learners may have a greater appreciation and acceptance of the learning experience they are undertaking or about to undertake (Nunan, 1988). Yalden (1987) mentioned that a sociolinguistic theory suggests that second language teaching programs should be approached from the starting point of language needs and the kinds of meanings we can express through language rather than that of a prior analysis of the target language.

Effective language teaching and learning can only be achieved when teachers are aware of their learners' needs, capabilities, potentials, and preferences in meeting these needs.

2.6 Needs Analysis

There seems to be a general consensus that needs analysis - the collection of data, the identification of needs, wants and the application of it- is the defining feature of designing any language course. (Flowerdew and Peacock, 2001) Graves (2000) shares the same view in her framework of developing a course. Along with needs assessment the process of formulating goals and objectives, developing materials, designing an assessment plan, organizing the course and conceptualizing the content are equally important. Clark (1997) cited in Graves (2000) says it's a circulatory process where you can begin anywhere and each step is interrelated with the others.

Berwick, Brindley, Mountford and Widdowson (1981) cited in Hutchinson and Waters (1986) defined needs as objectives, students' study or job requirements, or what they have to do at the end of the course. Widdowson (1981) in Hutchinson and Waters (1986) said it is what the learner needs to do to acquire language. Berwick, in Hutchinson and Waters (1986) said it is what students would like to gain or their wants, desires and expectations. Desires or wants can be divided into the subjective– students' wants and the objective- teacher's want. It can be described as what is lacking. John and Dudley Evans (1991) cited in Flowerdew and Peacock (2001) defined it as identifiable elements of students' target English situations.

At first it was simple exercise of collecting feedback from the learners after the course.

Later Munby (1978) came up with Communication Needs Processor. Hutchinson and Waters (1986) criticized it as it considered the target needs only and not what the learners lack or want; in their opinion the framework showed the 'sterility' of a language-centered approach to needs analysis. Hutchinson and Waters (1986) believe there is a difference between target needs and learning needs and target needs do not take into account what the student wants.

2.7.1 Needs

As mentioned earlier what distinguishes ESP is from General English is the awareness of need. The term needs is perceived as an umbrella term which gives several interpretations. Dudley-Evans & St John look at objective needs as object perceived and product oriented needs. Nunan (1990) distinguished between Brindley's (1984) 'objective and subjective needs' as used for Needs Analysis purposes as follows:

> The 'objective' needs are those which can be diagnosed by a teacher on the basis of the analysis of personal data about learners along with information about their own language proficiency and patterns of language use (using a guide to their personal experiences and knowledge perhaps supplemented by Munby-type specification of micro-skills),whereas the subjective needs (which are often 'wants', 'desire', 'expectations' and other psychological manifestations of a lack) cannot be diagnosed as easily, or in many cases even stated by the learners themselves. (Brindley 1984:31 as quoted in Nunan, 1990:18)

Hutchinson and Waters (1987) referred to needs as 'necessities' and classified them as the type of need determined by the demands of the target situation that is what learners have to know in order to function effectively in the target situation. They differentiated between target needs and learning needs. Target needs establish the learner's language requirements in the target situation, be it academic or occupational. Learning needs answer fundamental questions like why learners are taking the course and reveal 'how people learn to do what they do with language' (Hutchinson and Waters, 1987:63). This also encompasses learners' preferred learning strategies i.e. how does the learner get to the desired destination from the starting point. The main focus of this study was to investigate the 'necessities' of first year students of the faculties of Commerce, Humanities Science and Social Science at Dhaka University. In order to do so it is necessary to know the conditions surrounding the learning situation, learners' knowledge, skills and strategies and learners' motivation.

2.7.2 Lacks

In order to decide the 'lacks,' a curriculum designer needs to know what the learners already know. Therefore it is vital to decide upon the target proficiency and match it against the existing proficiency of the learners; the gap between these two proficiencies is referred to as the learners' 'lacks'. Information on the learners' 'lacks' helps in determining what sort of syllabus should be designed to 'bridge the gap'.

Ideally a pre-course placement or diagnostic test should be done to determine what the students' 'lacks' are but in reality due to time and constraints it is not implemented in most teaching situations; this is applicable for Dhaka University too.

2.7.3 Wants

When learners are aware of what the necessities of the target situation are and their own 'lacks,' they will form a view regarding their 'wants': what learners want or feel they want. These are seen as personal subjective needs, 'which cannot be said to be general... are quite unforeseeable and therefore undefinable' (Richterich, 1983:32). Hutchinson and Waters (1987) feel that 'wants' are easier to investigate since it can be determined empirically.

Thus to design an effective course, a needs analysis should be carried out to identify the starting point of learners (lacks), their destination

(necessities) and what that destination should be (wants) (Hutchinson and Waters 1987).

2.7.4 Needs Analysis: A Definition

The ESP field developed in tandem with the concern for learners' needs, which are an important factor in deciding course objective. The method of identifying learners' needs is termed Needs Analysis. NA is a prominent feature and vital element in designing any ESP syllabus (Munby, 1978; McDonough, 1984; Robinson, 1991). NA serves as the tool for identification and justification for an ESP course. NA helps identify the specific language needs that can be addressed in developing goals, objectives, and content for a specific language program. According to Hutchinson and Waters (1987), NA is the irreducible minimum of an ESP approach to course design'. The primary goal is to determine the content for an appropriate English language course where all decisions as to content and methodology are based on learners' reasons for learning. Therefore a NA to identify the specific needs of the target learners should be conducted before determining the outline and syllabus content of an ESP course. Gardner and Winslow (1983) affirm that the need to conduct a NA is "to produce information which acted upon makes a course better adapted to students' needs" (Gardner and Winslow cited in Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998:121). Dudley-Evans & St John (1998) summarized NA simply as the process of establishing the '*what*' and '*how*' of a course. This definition is extremely brief and does not provide a better insight into what exactly is involved in the 'process' and aspects of 'what' and the 'how'. Brindley (1984) however provided a clearer explanation by identifying NA as a set of tools, techniques and procedures for determining the language content and learning process for specified groups of students. Nunan consolidated these two definitions by classifying NA into two processes: 1) *content needs*: included linguistic/lexical/discourse selection and sequencing of topics, grammar, functions, notions and vocabulary 2) *process needs*: referred to the selection and sequencing of learning tasks, experiences and strategies to be used by students and teachers.

In the local scenario several Bangladeshi researchers and curriculum experts lamented the lack of any comprehensive and tangible data on the needs of Bangladeshi, tertiary level learners. All fourteen Bangadeshi curriculum experts, who were interviewed in this study, strongly emphasized the establishing of the language learning 'needs', 'wants'

and 'lacks' of Bangladeshi tertiary level learners (see Chapter 9). In this regard some researchers strongly recommended that a Needs Analysis be conducted at Dhaka University and elsewhere at other Bangladeshi universities. Khan (2000) evaluated the English Foundation Course being used at the Humanities faculty of Dhaka University and concluded that

> "the syllabus needs to be revised and developed— the *content of the syllabus needs to be outlined clearly*— the current syllabus does not specify course objectives— the *contents of the syllabus need to be rewritten keeping in mind the needs and demands of the students. —*before revising the syllabus *a needs analysis could also be carried out to determine student needs"* (Khan, 2000:106-7).

Similarly Haque & Zaman (1994) recommended a Needs Analysis on the basis of their investigations into the language learning motivation, and anxiety of Bangladeshi tertiary level learners learning English. Haque & Zaman (1994) declared that

> "the *EFL course should aim at academic purposes and learner needs/wants* as— the *learners' needs and wants tremendously control the whole package of teaching materials,* aids and equipment, and the application of teaching techniques and strategies, the employment of classroom activities and, most importantly, the method of teaching and the *construction of the syllab*us" (Haque & Zaman 1994:79).

Despite the importance of conducting a NA to ensure that specific language needs are addressed, Widdowson (1984) criticized NA as an attempt to atomize teachers' series of discrete skills, leading to limited communicative repertoire. Nunan (1999:155) agrees with Widdowson and elucidates that NA: 1) develops generalized capacities in learners; 2) achievement would depend more on methodology (how instructions are done) than syllabus design (specification of content); 3) does not often cater for learners ability or inability to transfer skills learnt in the classroom to other situations and solve the unpredictable real communication problem outside the classroom.

Thus NA should be treated as a guide and not as a blue print in providing direction towards the recommendations of a course design. NA is not a be-all end-all activity rather it is a continuing process in

which conclusions drawn are constantly checked and reviewed as Dudley-Evans & St John (1998:127) rightly put it "we need information that will help us select and prioritize" during the NA stage and when meeting with the target learners.

Flowerdew and Peacock (2001) suggested data be collected from the people responsible for the course, i.e. language teachers, the subject matter expert, the learners, the administrators and the institution. This ensures a balanced view of the course.

Jordan (1997) in Flowerdew and Peacock (2001) suggested 14 methods of data collection: 1. Advance documentation; 2. Language tests at home; 3. Language tests on entry; 4. Self-assessment; 5. Observation and monitoring; 6. Class progress test; 7. Surveys; 8. Structured interviews; 9. Learner diaries; 10. Case studies; 11. Final tests; 12. Evaluation or feedback; 13. Follow-up investigation; 14. Previous research.

Robinson (1991) recommended questionnaires, interviews, observations, case studies, test and authentic tests. Flowerdew and Peacock (2001) added learners' diaries and teachers' notes to the list.

Evaluation is a necessary part of NA; Weir and Roberts (1994) observed that–

> Evaluation is a part of the whole educational process, specially, in ELT that seeks to improve the educational quality of language program or project normally while it is in progress (Weir and Robets, 1994:4)

Evaluation provides the means for determining whether any program is meeting its goals; that is, whether, the measured outcomes for a given set of instructional inputs match the intended or pre-specified outcomes i.e. evaluation is carried out to see whether the stated objectives have been achieved. Similarly Tuckman (1985:3) opined that:

> How successfully the language program innovations are being implemented can only be observed by a systematic evaluation procedure

So Evaluation is integral to professional practice; research conducted on various ELT programs or projects have shown how systematic evaluation generates relevant data and information about the program's

innovation or whether changes need to be made in the course outline and the selected materials and how far it can be continued or whether it is transferable etc. The whole educational process that is the refining an ELT program cannot be completed without a methodical evaluation procedure

The main purposes of evaluation in language education projects and programs are for accountability or developmental purposes, or closely linked to the concept of awareness raising (Rea-Dickins and Germaine, 1998). According to Weir and Roberts (1994:4) accountability is "the answerability of staff to others for the quality of their work" So accountability-oriented evaluation is often conducted for the benefit of others, for an external audience or decision maker, and generally funded by them. It usually examines the results or effects of a program at significant end points of an educational cycle or at the closing stage usually in the case of a project, this is summative in nature. Norris (1990 as referred to in Ellis, 1998) identified two broad purposes for program evaluation. The evaluation may be based on an "objectives model" i.e. evaluation carried out to see how far objectives have been met; or a "developmental model"- evaluation done for developmental purposes, to identify strengths and weaknesses of the design and methodological procedures or both (Norris,1990). One of the objectives may be to arouse awareness for "professional development" among individuals involved with the responsibility for the educational program (Rea-Dickins and Germaine, 1998). So evaluation concerns managers and key staff members for gathering valuable information and knowledge to inform them in decision making and taking steps for making various developments within the curriculum. Whatever the purpose of the evaluation is, the "judgmental dimension" remains (Rea-Dickins and Germaine, 1998).

Content refers to "choosing what to evaluate" and this "determines how the evaluation is to be carried out" indicating the methods to be used to collect data.(Ellis, 1998) Ellis has suggested three basic types of evaluation depending on the contents of the evaluation, Student-based evaluation, response-based evaluation, learning-based evaluation. In a Student-based evaluation study, the students' attitudes and opinions regarding the contents is the main concern. Data can be collected through the distribution of questionnaires and collecting students' comments on the program in their journals.

In the past, some evaluators employed any one paradigm of evaluation procedure, either positivistic and quantitative research methodology or the naturalistic and qualitative research methodology (Weir and Roberts 1994; Lynch,1996; Rea-Dickins and Germaine, 1998). This has been a major topic of debate in the arena of education and psychology (Weir and Roberts 1994; Lynch,1996; Rea-Dickins and Germaine, 1998). Recently the terms have been relabeled as post-positivism and constructivism by Guba Lincoln.(1989, cited in Lynch, 1996). As "positivism is linked to the empirical science" (Crotty, 1998:27) positivists believe that experimental designs and quasi-experimental methodology generates statistical data which is more assessable for an evaluation study. Brown (1988) emphasizes the usefulness of statistical data. However this approach was criticized for being too controlled, objective or utilizing inappropriate test instruments so the constructivist approach was adopted by a lot of researchers and evaluators.

Constructivists feel that an "emergent, variable design" should be used for evaluation. This allows change to take place in the evaluation procedure according to the "demands of the context and its participants" based on "new information and insights" as the study proceeds (Lynch, 1996; Rea-Dickins and Germaine, 1998). Ethnographic procedures are used frequently in this study. Constructivists use in-depth interviews, classroom or participant observation and analysis of journal entries and questionnaires. According to Lynch (1996:14)

> "The emphasis is on observing, describing, interpreting, and understanding how events take place in the real world rather than in a controlled, laboratory-like setting"

Taylor and Bogdan, (1998) support this view and reiterate that in qualitative research, the researcher is concerned with meanings people attach to phenomena that occur around them. A researcher has a holistic view of the setting and its participants and is concerned with how the participants of a setting think and act in their everyday life: data from all perspectives are considered. The research inquiry is inductive i.e. it discovers concepts ideas and theories that emerge from data and it emphasizes validity rather than reliability and replicability. Dooley, (2001) adds that such research data are analysed without statistics.

Balnaves and Caputi, (2001) say that quantitative research deals with data that is observable, testable, quantifiable, recordable and measu-

rable: and offers a detached outsiders' perspective. It uses three main methods of data collection–core studies, surveys and experiments and employs instrumenta-tion like questionnaires, interviews, content analysis and observation.

It is commonly believed that evaluation methodology should be adopted to yield relevant information and results needed for analysis according to the appropriateness of the study. Weir and Roberts assert that:

> "Methods should therefore be chosen according to the information required by different evaluation purposes, and also according to the realities of logistics and the characteristics of informants." (1994:132)

Research shows that nowadays mixed data collection methods i.e. both qualitative and quantitative methods and both formative and summative approaches are being used in language program evaluations, which is accepted by many applied linguists (Weir and Roberts, 1994; Lynch, 1996; Nunan, 1988; Gronlund, 1981 reported in Nunan, 1988). A close survey reveals that multiple criteria for judging programs have become the norm nowadays, depending on the aims and objectives of the evaluation (Alkin, 1992). Since both these methods have positive points therefore a combination of both methods will be employed for this study.

2.7 Language Skills

Reading and writing are the more recent counterparts of the much older processes of listening and speaking (Aulls, 2003; Perry et al, 2003). Because communication involves the transmission of ideas and feeling from one individual to another, a complete model of the process as it relates to literacy must begin in the mind of the writer and end in that of the reader. The process starts with the thoughts a writer may wish to convey. These intentions tend to be somewhat fluid and independent of language until they are given linguistic form. This process, whether oral or written, is sometimes described as *encoding* because the language itself is made up of arbitrary cipher like symbols. Because the reader cannot directly access the writer's thoughts, the written product must be used in an effort to reconstruct those thoughts. The success of this effort depends on the reader's ability to *decode* the printed symbols. The degree to which the ideas the writer initially intended to convey were

eventually reconstructed in the reader's mind is the degree to which communication was successful.

The purpose of informing the reader is the chief reason writers write in content subjects and the chief reason their writing is assigned to students.

It should be noted that fluent mature reading is the last of several stages through which learners pass as their ability develops (Stanovich, 2000, Kucer & Tuten 2003, Perfetti, 2003). A student with significant decoding problems will have grave difficulties with content area reading assignments. The following capsule description of the sub-processes underlying reading based on the conclusions that reading researchers have reached.

- Reading is an interactive process in which a readers' prior knowledge of the subject and purpose for reading operate to influence what is learned from text

- The visual structure of printed words and the system by which letters represent the sound s of speech together define sub-processes used to identify words.

- The word identification processes are applied rapidly by fluent readers, but they may hamper readers with problems of our memory known as

- As visual word forms are associated with word meanings, a mental reconstruction of overall textual meaning is created. This reconstruction is subject to continual change and expansion as the reader progresses

- In the end the nearer the reconstructed meaning is to the writer's originally intended meaning the more successful the act of communication will be.

- The reader's purpose may deliberately limit the scope of the reconstruction however as when one reads an article for its main points or consults an encyclopedia for a specific fact.

Based on this the process reading may be defined as *the reconstruction in the mind of meaning encoded in print.* In order to facilitate a student's attempts to use the reading process to learn from written materials, the teacher should focus on two factors 1) the prior knowledge of the students 2) the purposes for which students will read.

The underlying knowledge needed to comprehend what we read is stored in interconnected categories within our memory known as schema or schemata (plural). Schemata are not stored in isolation but are connected by intricate networks of associations (Fuhler, 2003; Hefferman, 2003). As you read various schemata are 'activated' and those portions of your prior knowledge are brought to bear on the task of bringing meaning to the print before you. Connections among schemata are also activated as you attempt to reconstruct the author's expressed meaning. Comprehending what we read is therefore highly dependent on prior knowledge. Gunning (2004) describes 'comprehension as a constructive interactive process involving three factors– the reader, the text, and the context in which the text is read' (Gunning 2004:266). When a student's existing knowledge of the content to be covered by a reading assignment is scant, comprehension is poor. As the reader progresses through print, schemata for the concepts discussed by the writer will be changed in one or more of three basic ways: new schemata may be formed, or existing schemata may be expanded, or fundamentally altered.

Reading is always purposeful. In the course of reading the reader's purpose causes appropriate schemata to come into play, usually this is an unconscious process. Even though the reader is likely to have processed every letter of every word (Adams 1990). A reader's purposes for reading helped determine what information he/she eventually considered, interpreted and remembered (Ivey 1999; Linderholm & van den Broek 2002).

In the opinions of most experts (Tickoo, 2003, Harmer, 2001, Brown, 2001) there are two empirical perspectives on the nature of reading, the 'bottom-up' and the 'top-down' views. The 'bottom-up' approach is the basis of the majority of reading schemes. The notion is that reading is basically a matter of decoding a series of written symbols into their aural equivalents. The 'top-down' or psycholinguistic approach emphasizes the reconstruction of meaning rather than the decoding of form. In general reading is an integration of both the processes.

To get maximum benefit from their reading, students need to be involved in both extensive and intensive reading. *Extensive reading* is done according to the students' choice and at the students' own pace. This is usually undertaken for pleasure but has the advantage of extending the students' background knowledge, vocabulary bank, and

word recognition skills and consequently improving the students' reading ability and fluency (Chitravelu, Sithamparam & Choon, 2005; Tickoo, 2003; Harmer, 2001). *Intensive reading* is usually teacher chosen and directed and designed to develop specific receptive skills. Teachers usually use *intensive reading* in-class to model reading strategies such as skimming, scanning, reading for gist and so on.

Just as reading is an active process of deciphering meaning writing is also a challenging skill to acquire. Writing is such a challenging task that it calls for effective training because real-life writing is purpose driven and it involves a highly complex set of processes. The writer begins with relatively general ideas about what he intends to convey through writing. This information does not exist in the form of complete sentences ready for transcription, rather the task is one of selecting, organizing and finally encoding the scrambled thoughts into coherent prose form. This can be a slow laborious process when it is done well. The benefits of writing justify the effort as the writer's thoughts are clarified, extended, and reorganized through this process.

Writing is a means by which one individual communicates with another; it is also a process by which writers communicate with themselves. Writers rely on their global intentions to help compose the first sentence of a paragraph and the ensuing sentence will also depend on the global intention with which the writer started and also on what has been expressed in the previous sentence. In this manner, global intentions help shape 'local' ones as each new sentence is written (Smith 2004). The writer's relationship with print is interactive. Intentions help formulate sentences but through the very process of their formulation changes in the writer's thinking is caused. Ideas become crystallized in print 'visible' in a sense encoded for close inspection not only by the reader but by the writer as well. The act of committing ideas to print tends to refine and revise one's own intentions in writing, thus while writing one's inner conceptualization of the content is altered with each new sentence. Because writing forces us to clarify and organize our own thinking before we can put it into words (encode it) for others. Writing is a slower and less fluent process than reading 'because its very slowness makes it more deliberately self-conscious, and enhances our sense of detail and choices' (Connoly 1989:10).

Writing like reading is a constructive process. Writing can be utilized as a means through which students can clarify analyze, and integrate

their own thoughts about and knowledge of subject matter (Myers, 1984).

There are two types: *transactional* writing, which targets a particular readership and is undertaken to inform, persuade, or instruct and *expressive* writing which amounts to 'thinking on paper' and is intended for the writer's own use. Both kind of writing are useful in content classes (McKenna & Robinson, 2006).

Current recommendations suggest more than a single step in the writing process (Moore, 2004). Various models differ in the number and nature of the steps but all include 1) planning activities carried out in advance of writing and 2) revising activities undertaken afterwards.

Students must be cautioned to be deliberate in their planning which when done properly actually tends to reduce the time spent 'writing'. The sense of readership needed for transactional writing is vital to good writing and often ignored by students.

Capable writers are rarely satisfied with first drafts. Revision represents a second chance to bring expressed meaning into closer alignment with the writer's intentions. When revising the writer becomes a reader, not in the ordinary sense but with the purpose of role playing the sort of reader eventually targeted.

There are various approaches to practicing the writing skills both in and out of class. The choice depends on the teacher and the demands of the particular context, thus choices can be made whether to implement the *process approach*, the *product approach*, the *genre approach, creative writing* or the encouragement of *cooperative* or individual writing activities.

The Process approach takes a top-down view of writing and emphasizes the composing process which writers' use: selecting a topic, generating ideas, organizing ideas, drafting, revising, editing and so on. The learner becomes as critical, creative and independent in this process (Chitravelu, Sithamparam & Choon, 2005).

The Product approach focuses on the aim of the task (the text) and the end product only (Harmer, 2001). Correct sentence structure is stressed on. The learner is usually engaged in imitating, copying, and transforming models of correct language till fluency and correct usage develops (Nunan, 1991).

In the Genre approach students study and extensively study and research, the genre they are going to be writing before they embark on their own writing (Harmer, 2001). This is particularly helpful and appropriate for EAP students. Pally (2000) points out that academic writing is usually reading based, transactional in nature and have to conform to fixed organizational patterns. Students at lower levels can produce written work they can be proud of.

Creative writing is usually expressive and 'imaginative' such as poetry, stories and so on. The end result of such writing is usual felt o be some kind of achievement and 'most people feel pride in their work and want it to be read' (Ur 1996:169). Creative writing is 'a journey of self-discovery and self-discovery promotes effective learning' (Gaffield-Vile 1998:31).

In the Cooperative writing approach writing can be made a group activity as it can greatly motivate students and provides scope for interaction, discussion, research, peer feedback and evaluation and group pride in a group accomplishment and boosts students' confidence since the responsibility is divided (Harmer, 2001; Tickoo, 2003).

While reading and writing are acquired skills, speaking comes more naturally in the first language. However, in acquiring a second/foreign language speaking can be considered the most difficult skill to acquire since it requires a command of both listening comprehension and speech production sub-skills (vocabulary, retrieval, pronunciation, choice of grammatical pattern and so forth.). Speech is produced *on-line* and it is prototypically reciprocal in nature. The reciprocity develops during the ongoing negotiation of meaning between the speaker and the listener, thus producing a joint construction of communication (Celce-Murcia & Olshtain, 2000:168). A successful act of speech communicates something to someone; it normally involves a speaker, one or more listeners and importantly a purpose for speaking. The act becomes real when what it says makes sense to the listener and produces the desired response. Part of our speaking proficiency depends upon our ability to speak differently depending upon our audience and upon the way we absorb their reaction and respond to it in some way or another. Any conversation between two people is a blend of listening and speaking; comprehension of what has been said is necessary for what the participant says next. Speaking also possesses these characteristics: *Interacting with others*: most speaking involves interaction with one or

more participants. This means effective speaking also involves a good deal of listening and understanding of how the participant are feeling and a knowledge of how linguistically to take turns or allow others to do so. *(On-the-spot) information processing*: quite apart from our response to others' feelings we also need to be able to process the information they tell us the moment we get it. The longer it takes for us to process the less effective we are as instant communicators (Harmer, 2001).

Effective speakers need to be able to process language in their own heads and put into coherent order so that it comes out in forms that are not only comprehensible but also convey the intended meanings. Language processing involves the retrieval of words and retrieval of words and phrases from memory and their assembly into syntactically and propositionally appropriate sequences. One of the main reasons for including speaking activities in language lessons is to help students develop habits of rapid language processing in English.

A person's language use is determined by a number of factors: the purpose of his/her communication, what he/she want to achieve, the form in which he/she wants to achieve that purpose, the setting, the channel a user is using to communicate by and the type of communication which he/she is involved with. Learning how to speak takes time and effort and is best done as part of a course which pays specific attention to the skills and strategies that constitute good oral interaction. A good communicator uses the best means to get his meaning across in order to bring about desired responses

We can view the various acts of speaking under two broad categories *interactional listening* and *transactional speaking*. Interactional speaking are those in which the primary purposes of communication are social. This kind of talk gives a lot more importance to the listener as a person than any other exchange of information, the main purpose is to maintain good social relationships (Chitravelu, Sithamparam & Choon, 2005). Transactional speaking focuses on conveying information and is therefore message-oriented. This category includes formal speeches, instructions, explanations, narratives and so on, the listener's s role is more passive and reduced and simply that of a recipient of the information content being conveyed by the speaker.

Training in speaking must produce skills and abilities that are needed for communicating successfully. Effective communication has to be the

sole aim of any speaking course. When students practice speaking in classrooms they have a chance to rehearse language in safety experimenting with different language genres that they will use on some future occasion away from the classroom. In many situations speaking can continue in combination with the practice of listening. Students are often not used to speaking spontaneously and thus need considerable help in cultivating this habit. Care should be taken to foster and maintain a careful balance between accuracy-building and fluency-building. Speaking activities and speaking practice in the classroom should enable students to gain experience and provide authentic opportunities for students to get individual meanings across and utilize every area of knowledge they have in the foreign language. They should have the opportunity and be encouraged to become flexible users of their knowledge, always keeping the communicative goal in mind.

While speaking is touted as a complex process, listening is no less an arduous task. Listening is the most frequently used language skill in everyday life: we listen twice as much as we speak, four times as much as we read, and five times as much as we write (Morley, 1991; Rivers, 1981). Yet it is also the most neglected skill (Nunan, 1999). No one really knows exactly what happens when we listen and comprehend. We constantly hear sounds but we do not pay attention to everything, we only 'listen' when we pay attention and make an effort to interpret them (Chitravelu, Sithamparam & Choon, 2005). When a listener listens he does not passively receive what the speaker says he actively constructs meaning, identifies main points, supporting details; distinguishes fact from opinion; guesses the meaning of unfamiliar words, these are the cognitive aspects of listening in addition there are affective and emotional aspects as well. A person is incapable of storing all that they hear verbatim, however, at the same time, he is capable of choice, selecting and focusing on what he finds important or relevant and ignoring and leaving out what he does not. Successful listening is not a passive act, it involves active processing, reformulation (re-composing) and revision (Tickoo, 2003:122). Poor listening skills can cause as many failures of communication as ineffective expression of ideas (Tickoo, 2003). They potentially cause greater problems because in real-life communication, the listeners have no control over what is said to them by different speakers or voices on the television or radio. In addition, there are external disturbance factors such as noise, accent, speed of

speech unfamiliar words and so on. Good listening skills lay the foundations of good speech and grow best through effective communication.

There are two models for the nature of processing listening the *'top-down'* and the *'bottom-up.'* In 'top-down' processing, when a listener hears something his previous knowledge is activated and on the basis of that he predicts the kind of information he is likely to hear. When a listener is able to relate what he is about to hear with what he already knows this helps him better understand what he hears. Therefore pre-listening activities are introduced in order to help students relate the listening text to what they already know. In 'bottom-up' processing, the listener has to slowly build up meaning block by block through understanding all the linguistic data he hears. This type of processing is slower and harder. Students should focus not on the 'building blocks': pronunciation, word knowledge and so on but on meaning. Thus by listening for meaning and using contextual clues they make sense of what is heard (Chitravelu, Sithamparam & Choon, 2005).

The very act of listening is purposive but the purposes for which people listen vary greatly. The demands made by each speaker and every act of speaking may vary in degree as in kind. We listen for different purposes the same way as we speak, read or write. We often listen a lot more than we speak. Listening to a lecture is normally different from listening to a lunch-table conversation.

We can view the various acts of listening under two broad categories: *interactional listening* and *transactional listening*. Interactional listening acts are those in which the primary purposes of communication are social whereas in transactional listening the purpose of the communication is to convey information, in other words, it is message-oriented.

Students can improve their listening skills and gain valuable language input through a combination of extensive and intensive listening procedures. Listening of both types is important since they provide both exposure and practice. *Extensive listening* is done according to the students' choice; this has the advantage of extending the students' background knowledge, vocabulary bank, grammar and word recognition skills and consequently improving not only the students' listening ability but reading too (Tickoo, 2003; Harmer, 2001). *Intensive listening* is usually teacher chosen and directed and designed to develop specific

receptive skills. Teachers usually use this *intensive listening* in the class to encourage the development and practice of listening strategies such as predicting, inferring, activating and relating to background information, listening for gist or specific information and so on. Usually this is live-listening such as a talk, interview, or a text being read aloud (Harmer, 2001).

Materials that offer opportunities to work with real-life language must be looked for. Tasks must be planned that make learners interact with one another. It is important to employ ways in which learners can work with texts in real ways. The development of listening strategies should be encouraged. Brown (2006:259) suggested these strategies:

- Looking for key words
- Looking for non-verbal cues to meaning
- Predicting the speaker's purpose from the context of the discourse
- Associating information with one's existing cognitive structure (activating background information)
- Guessing meanings
- Seeking clarification
- Listening for the general gist

Teaching grammar is one of the most controversial topics in language teaching (Tickoo, 2003). When grammar is given too much priority in teaching the result is predictable and well known. Course books become little more than grammar courses. Students do not learn English, they learn grammar at the expense of other things that matter much more. They know the main rules, can pass tests and have the illusion that they know the language well. However, when it comes to language in practice they discover that they lack vital elements like vocabulary and fluency. They can recite irregular verbs but cannot sustain a conversation (Richards & Renandya, 2002:151). The choices we make among the grammatical options open to us should be re-examined in terms of their contextual or pragmatic motivations once this is accomplished grammar teaching can be better integrated with the teaching of language skills and with the goal of teaching as communication. Knowledge of grammar should include not only sentence-level ordering rules and options but also awareness that phenomena such as word order choices, tense aspect choices and the use

of grammatical structures are discourse-level choices that writers and speakers make. Experts in the language teaching profession are beginning to acknowledge that teaching grammar to ESL/EFL learners should be carried out in a context with discourse or text providing the appropriate pedagogical frame (McCarthy, 1991, Widdowson, 1990). There is growing agreement that teaching grammar exclusively at the sentence level with decontextualized and unrelated sentences which has long been the traditional way to teach grammar is not likely to produce any real learning nor is it appropriate for assessment of learner proficiency level in grammar (Celce-Murcia & Olshtain, 2000:61). For language teaching purposes it is counterproductive to view grammar as an autonomous sentence-level system, yet this has been the perspective of traditional language teaching methods admittedly there will be certain local and fairly technical mechanical grammatical rules that learners need to practice -- such rules must be learnt and practiced at the sentence level and then extended to automatic use in discourse level contexts. However, most of the 'rules' that we traditionally refer to as the 'core' of 'grammar' should be taught as grammatical choices made at the level of discourse. This is the level at which learners can best process understand and apply the conventions of grammar in EFL (Celce-Murcia & Olshtain, 2000:68)

The teaching of grammar should be geared to match the proficiency level and learning needs of the learners. At the low-intermediate and intermediate level, learners need to develop their ability to process grammar and interpret discourse they hear or read. These students need to use English to read textbooks and listen to lectures, thus, they should be exposed to spoken or written discourse that trains them to recognize and comprehend the meaning and role of crucial structures (Celce-Murcia & Olshtain, 2000:65). At an advanced level, learners should be exposed to the inductive analytic approach to teaching grammar in discourse. The students are expected to give a brief presentation and also prepare a written version of the talk. Learners who carry out such activities can remember and apply grammar well since they have discovered grammar is a resource for telling a story or creating a text rather than simply existing as a set of abstract rules (Celce-Murcia & Olshtain, 2000:67).

Teaching should make use of authentic and diverse materials like stories, songs, poems and so on.

2.8 Review of related Literature

Many ESP practitioners have carried out studies in the field of needs analysis. The researcher has attempted to highlight some studies which are significant and relevant to the present research.

Khan (2000) in her paper "The English Foundation Course at Dhaka University: An Evaluation" reports on her evaluation of the English Foundation Course which had been implemented in 1998, and was being taught to students of thirteen departments at the Arts Faculty at Dhaka University. She used questionnaires, structured interviews and classroom observation to gather information from 167 (first year) students enrolled in different departments of the Arts faculty and nine teachers and four key administrators. Her major finding regarding the role and value of English were that:

> 'students realized that English has the status of an international language and believed that there was no alternative to English and hat is why the demand for English is increasing all over the world. They were also aware of the importance of English for the future and admitted that a) English is a pre-requisite for getting good jobs b) for being successful in competitive examinations (e.g. BCS (Bangladesh Civil Service Exams)) and c) for career development d) for accessing higher education books e) and, in general, indispensible for communicating with the outer world. English is essential to give access to academic texts and for communication' Khan, 2000:95).

Her findings on students' views on the course were that:

> 'the majority of the students think that the course was useful only to a certain extent because all their expectations were not fulfilled. Students expressed their disappointment that hardly any work on 'listening' and 'speaking' was done in class and as a result their 'speaking skills' have not improved– a few students stated their grammatical abilities had improved– they were not fully satisfied with their textbook– they want the duration of the course to be extended– they pointed out the need for more classes on 'speaking' and 'writing.' They also suggested smaller classes, individual attention, and separate course for 'speaking' in second year and different textbooks for different departments' (Khan, 2000:95-6).

The implications and suggestions for curriculum development made on the basis of the study were:

> 'the syllabus needs to be revised and developed— **the content of the syllabus needs to be outlined clearly**— appropriate methodology should also be specified. The **current syllabus does not specify course objectives** or methodology. **The contents of the syllabus need to be rewritten keeping in mind the needs and demands of the students**— **t**he emphasis on grammar in the current course may be reduced— the course needs to focus on the importance of the four skills— an integrated approach could be adopted— curriculum designers should understand discuss and outline the content of the syllabus— "b**efore revising the syllabus a needs analysis could also be carried out to determine student needs."** (Khan, 2000:106-7)

This study is very important because it is the only documented course evaluation done at Dhaka University. Since the present study also looks into the language learning needs of three departments of the Humanities Faculty and also attempts to evaluate and specify the content for their EAP courses this research is very useful and relevant.

Another important study in the EAP/ESP field in Bangladesh is Haque and Zaman's (1999) study entitled "Attitudinal and Motivational Impact on EFL proficiency of undergraduates: A further investigation." SPSS coded questionnaires were used to collect relevant data from 221 first year students studying at Dhaka University and Jahangir Nagar University in Bangladesh. To determine the subjects' attitudes in various forms and their motivational orientation, Haque and Zaman (1999) used a modified version of Gardner's (1985) Attitude/Motivation Test Battery. This study was important as it attempted to look into what was taking place in the EAP classrooms in relation to students' attitudes and motivation. Based on their findings they observed and recommended: 1) EFL educationalists and teachers should be aware of and sensitive to individual differences in motivational influences, and consider the types of motivation that activate the learner; 2) EFL teachers could develop motivational intensity and desire in the learners to learn EFL by using appropriate resources and incentives,; 3) Teachers may exploit individualized instruction and/or group learning situations to provide learners with an optimally challenging task; 4) Classroom anxiety functions as a powerful hindrance to acquiring proficiency in

EFL; 5) Class teacher has to identify the causes of learner's anxiety and adopt techniques and exploit materials for reducing it; 6) Learner should be involved in the classroom interaction and learning process;7) Teacher has to function as a facilitator of learning and as a democratic leader of the class to achieve the end of the program; 8) Negative attachment of both integrative and instrumental orientation to the subjects' EFL proficiency is probably indicative of their indifference to the EFL course resulting from teacher domination and mechanical learning of grammar rules and writing compositions; 9) Thus it may be recommended that the EFL course should aim at academic purposes and learner needs/wants (Haque & Zaman 1999:79). They also pointed out that "the learners' needs and wants control the whole package of teaching materials, aids and equipment, and the application of teaching techniques and strategies, the employment of classroom activities and, most importantly, the method of teaching and the construction of the syllabus" (Haque & Zaman 1999:85). They finally recommended that "an integrated course EFL teaching has to consider the materials such as grammatical structures, vocabulary items, composition topics, reading passages, and so forth which are closely related to the students' main subject – Library and Information Science, Islamic studies, Business Administration, and Bengali being the main disciplines of the present informants. In addition the teaching methods as well as the classroom activities, have to ensure that the learner finds the EFL course interesting, receives optimal and adequate input, and in turn produces substantial output" (Haque & Zaman 1999:85). The study clearly presented the students' attitudes towards the course content as well as to the teaching methodology and also provided useful insights for the present research.

In another study Adamson (1990) carried out case studies in order to examine "The ESL students' use of academic skills in content courses." The subjects of this study were ten college students, and one intermediate school student, who were enrolled in content courses with a large number of native English speakers. The researcher interviewed teachers, analyzed notebooks, and quizzes and used participant observation. It was found that students used both effective and ineffective strategies for taking notes, reading, using dictionaries, speaking in class and personal organization. And they adopted coping strategies for completing assignments when they lacked background knowledge or academic skills. The findings suggest that academic skills

are best taught in connection with authentic content material, and an experimental course was set up in which ESL students were taught academic skills in connection with a regular university course. The findings confirmed that the use of appropriate authentic content materials may enhance student acquisition of important academic skills. The study probes content specification for an EAP course in use and recommends teaching academic skills in connection with authentic content material so Adamson's (1990) input is invaluable.

Another major study the Bangalore-Madras Communicative Teaching Project (Prabhu, 1987, also recounted in Lynch, 1996), stresses the need for a broader, more systematic approach to evaluation. The project was based on research carried out during a five-year (1979-1984) classroom experience in a number of primary and secondary schools in Southern India. Periods of time varied between one and five years in different schools; the purpose was to develop a methodology for teaching English, concentrating on meaning rather than form. A summative evaluation of the project was carried out, employing three types of achievement tests to obtain feedback from two groups of classes who were compared to each other; the project's classes were regarded as 'experimental', and the students receiving "normal instruction' were regarded as "structural" or "control" classes. Based on the quantitative data, the evaluators concluded that the results of the project, were positive, but they also mentioned a number of limitations of the evaluation procedure. They stressed that "no systematic effort was made to evaluate what was exactly taking place inside the classroom" (reported in Lynch, 1996:35). For a protracted study of this nature (one to three years), a broader systematic formative evaluation was needed for a more in-depth result for a wider audience.

This study is relevant as it was a pioneer project undertaken to teach adult learners communicative competence through relevant tasks. The socio-cultural conditions and constraints of the situation in Bangalore in India are similar to those of the present study in Bangladesh. The objectives and goals of the project are also similar. The language learning levels of the learners at DU are extremely varied and range between primary levels to lower-intermediate and advanced levels of English language proficiency similar to the levels in the project. Lastly as in the case of this project no systematic evaluation, has ever been carried out in DU either.

In another related study, Akin and Guceri (2001) carried out a "Macro Materials Evaluation" at Bilkent University, Turkey. New course outlines and materials for EAP/EOP task-based syllabus had been designed and produced on the basis of needs analysis carried out by the university. Qualitative data collecting methods, analysis and evaluation of the materials, evaluation tools such as: teacher questionnaires, student questionnaires, teacher interviews and observation, were used to get feedback on the effectiveness of the new materials were. It was found that the materials were not satisfactory because they were more lecture-based and too theoretical rather than task-based; also text selection had to be done carefully. On the basis of this materials evaluation study, improvement plans for producing more effective materials were adopted; and teachers became aware of their teaching strategies which led to greater self development.

Another important need assessment study was conducted at the Institute of Modern Languages (IML) of Dhaka University by Banu (1993). In her paper "A Comparative Needs Analysis: Bangladeshi Students at IML and one Japanese student at Georgetown University" she described the needs of twenty Bangladeshi students at the Institute of modern languages (IML) at Dhaka University (DU) and a Japanese student at Georgetown University. The analysis was based upon a questionnaire, interview and informal discussions. All the subjects were Dhaka University (DU) students from the Humanities and Sciences, and spoke Bangla as their mother tongue and had had at least 12 years of prior English teaching. They were asked questions from the eight parameters suggested by Munby (1978). The students expressed the desire to learn to speak English more fluently, and improve reading and writing skills. The emphasis on speaking English fluently was surprising as spoken English is not required at DU. They referred to the importance of spoken English in job situations at home and for higher studies abroad. Students stressed on both academic and professional learning goals but the majority stressed on the importance of English for their future careers. A gap was perceived between IML's objectives and the students' projected needs. The researcher also looked at the needs profile of a Japanese student, studying in the USA. The IML students wanted an ESL course in an EFL situation. The course had a lack of motivation and high drop-out rate. Moreover not much could be done within a short six month period with three-hour instruction each week and a huge gap existed between the students' language competence at

the time of admission and what they wanted to learn in the IML language course. The study suggested that conversational English and overall communicative competence should be emphasized; reading, writing skills are to be developed simultaneously; competencies or task oriented goals should be emphasized; diverse instructional materials should be used. This study also provided some insights about needs analysis to the present researcher. This needs analysis study was conducted in the same institution so it is important for the present research. The findings of this small-scale study can be tested, and the analyses criteria and instruments used will be very helpful. The areas covered in the needs analyses will serve as useful "signposts" in the present research.

Dooey (2006) conducted a needs analysis to identify the listening and speaking needs of international students at Curtin University which she recounts in her paper "Identifying the listening and speaking needs of international students." In this study a four part survey was administered to a class of 18 students from diverse disciplines, studying in the English Language Bridging Course at Curtin University to ascertain their perceived listening and speaking needs. Seven ESL instructors were included in the study to provide their impressions of the perceived needs of the students. The research project was guided by the following questions: 1) What are the perceived needs and difficulties of English language bridging Course students in terms of their speaking and listening skills? 2) What are the perceived needs and difficulties of these students from their lecturer's point of view? 3) To what extent do these perceptions concur?

The perceptions of students and instructors generally differed but they agreed on the importance of listening for academic success. The findings indicated that both students and lecturers attributed importance to general listening skills in lectures, tutorial and group assignments and agreed on the importance of listening for academic success. *Teaching specific listening* and *speaking skills*, *dealing with large lectures* and *unfamiliar terminology* were identified as difficult areas by the students; *unclear articulation* and *use of unfamiliar references* and *terminology* were identified as areas that lecturers could be careful about to aid listening comprehension.

This study can be considered, an effective needs analysis, as it gave a balanced view and provided useful input for planning intensive English language courses for students preparing for mainstream studies.

Another important related needs analysis is the one described by Basturkmen and Al-Huneidi (1996) in their paper "The language needs analysis project at the college of petroleum engineering Kuwait University". The researchers gave their account of a needs analysis conducted to study the English language needs and attitudes of students and faculty in Kuwait University's college of Petroleum and engineering. The objective was to create a basis for assessing the relevance of the institutions current English second language program. Data was gathered through 1) interviews with faculty, teaching assistants, and students to determine English language task types and perceptions of the relative importance of skills, sub-skills, and language deficiencies; 2) observation of classes for information on note-taking, question patterns, Arabic use and other classroom language issues; 3) analysis of student projects class handouts, lab instructions and assignments to determine common text and task types; and 4) administration of questionnaires concerning language demands, language needs, and attitudes toward language instruction among faculty, teaching assistants and students. Questionnaires were given to students and a counter-part questionnaire was administered to faculty and teaching assistants, in addition, a number of classes were observed.

The results indicated differing perceptions between students and faculty on the relative importance of reading. Faculty saw reading and listening as equally important whereas students perceived listening as more important. Ten tasks were identified by faculty and students as important for study: 1) reading textbooks; 2) writing up lab reports/ assignments; 3) following lectures; 4) reading instructions for labs and assignments ; 5) listening to instructions for labs and assignments; 6) reading course and lecture handouts; 7) note-taking in lectures; 8) listening to presentations and participating in the discussion; 9) preparing projects; 10) preparing answers to questions from textbooks. There was clear divergence between faculty and students' views on students' language problem areas. Most faculty members perceived students skills as inadequate and students are unaware of the expected proficiency level. Information about study in the college, language needs, perceptions, expectations for English courses, was generated and this will be used as a resource primarily for curriculum design.

This study is almost identical in several ways to the present research; moreover, the findings of this study were mirrored to some extent in this research, therefore this study offers valuable insight into aspects of EAP course design in a similar situation.

Another important study is recounted by So-mui and Mead (2000) in their paper "An analysis of English in the workplace: The communication needs of textile and clothing merchandisers". So-mui & Mead (2000) conducted an analysis of the workplace communications needs of textile and clothing merchandisers in Hong Kong. A multi-faceted needs analysis was conducted to obtain up-to-date information on the types of communication required by personnel in the textile and clothing merchandisers in Hong Kong. Two independent but complementary questionnaire surveys were conducted on 300 Hong Kong Polytechnic University (Poly U) and 60 Kwun Tong Technical Institute (KTTI) graduates. The questionnaires focused on information on these areas: the extent of English usage; the countries with which business is conducted; the most common channels of communication; he most preferred channels of communication; the main purposes of written communication; and the use of abbreviations in written messages

Telephone interviews were conducted with graduates and work place supervisors and authentic samples of correspondence were collected.

The findings indicated that more written English was used than spoken; many countries were communicated with; fax and telephone conversations were the most common modes of communication and there was e-mail. In terms of preference, fax, e-mail, telephone and face-to-face communication were preferred.

The present research also undertook in the exploration of the employment sector's needs, this study provided valuable first hand information regarding a specific employment sector's English language needs.

In another study Edwards (2000) reports a practical ESP case study on how an effective needs assessment was used to design the syllabus and prepare the materials for a highly specialized business English course. This case study involved German bankers in Frankfurt. A brief rudimentary needs analysis was conducted based on which a multi-layered syllabus was designed with three complementary, closely interwoven strands of functions, topics and vocabulary. Ready-made materials were selectively supplemented and exploited to save time. A "top-down" approach was adopted. The use of authentic current material motivated the students. The course was evaluated according to four of the five criteria listed in Hutchinson and Waters (1987). Test results,

discussions, interviews and informal means were used to assess the course. Thus an effective and flexible ESP course design can be derived from the teacher's own practical experiential knowledge and from the students themselves.

This study is helpful as the teacher designed a flexible ESP course using current authentic materials which is of particular importance as DU students in this needs analysis have strongly emphasized that they want authentic, topic relevant materials. The teacher advocated the selective use of ready-made materials which again is a useful and helpful observation.

Maclean (2000) in his study "The evolution of an ESP program in Cuba" documented a large-scale ESP teacher-training and curriculum development program that has been underway in Cuba during the last 15 years. The developments have been supported and encouraged by the Ministry of Public Health and have wrought enormous changes in the medical undergraduate English language curriculum, in English courses for doctors and in English language teacher education. The paper describes how the Ministry of public Health approached the problem of delivering effective training in English to the fast growing number of doctors, while working with almost no resources. The activities are complex, some arising from long term planning and some in immediate response to urgent demands. The program developed in response to emerging needs in spurts, lulls, occasional false starts and occasional highlights, but the growth has been remarkably steady and coherent. In spite of the difficult economic circumstances in Cuba, this ESP program is alive with professional activity and commitment and looks as if it will continue to evolve flexibly, responding to constraints of circumstance and partly following the directions, taken by individual teachers with energy and enthusiasm.

The situation at DU is also fraught with severe resource constraints, so valuable input can be drawn from this study on how to overcome overwhelming constraints through perseverance, innovation, improvisa-tion and commitment on the part of teachers, learners and the administration.

Pritchard and Nasr (2004) in their paper "Improving Reading performance among Egyptian engineering students: Principles and Practice" describe the needs analysis they conducted to establish what the students and their teachers perceived as the major skills in which

they were deficient. The study concluded that basing ESP materials on authentic texts helped to produce an effective program; but the study also pointed out that the use of these materials was a challenge to students of low linguistic competence who could not follow the teacher and did not demonstrate effective participation in the class, which implied that at least some measure of linguistic competence is needed for purposes of developing reading skills. The program was considered to be successful in addressing the gap between simplified and non-simplified (authentic) materials. This study emphasized the importance of using authentic materials, conducting needs analysis and training students in reading skills.

Since the use of authentic materials and training in the use reading strategies are issues that the present study also looks into this study may be considered relevant input.

In another related study Abdul Aziz (2004) conducted a needs analysis of the needs and attitudes of Malaysian higher national diploma students. A detailed account of his study is provided in his unpublished MA thesis entitled "Needs analysis of Malaysian higher national diploma students." In his study Abdul Aziz (2004) found that there was very little classroom teaching of listening activities. He recommended adding activities like listening to explanations, lectures, discussions, dialogues, listening to follow instructions, in addition to job interviews and presentations. The provision of more opportunities to practice speaking such as presenting proposals, reports, conducting interviews, meetings, generating discussions and the exchange of ideas and opinions and practice of language forms and functions was recommended. Exposing students to more practice in reading was recommended along with the incorporation of technical materials, taken or adapted from technical textbooks, magazines, journals, so that students are exposed to technical vocabulary and content. He recommended that students should be taught how to read and understand lab or computer materials and information on internet websites as these tasks were perceived as important by students. He suggested the integration of reading tasks into the writing assignment such as proposal, report writing, making it compulsory to cite references from technical magazines, journals internet websites. The following writing content was specified: writing lab reports, instructions manuals, applying format taught in subject courses for writing reports in addition to writing summaries, letters, memos, proposals, minutes of meetings, resumes, application letters,

research reports. Teaching grammar structures, transitional words, cohesive devices to improve writing skills, were recommended along with vocabulary enrichment sessions in every class. In course design, he suggested adding variety to materials by using subject related material, the use of teaching aids, varying class activities, use of games, field trips, discussions, public speaking, project and assignments were recommended too. This study is important for the comprehensive content specification it provides on the basis of the needs assessment.

Kavaliauskiene & Uzpaliene (2003) summarized their needs analysis findings in their paper "Ongoing needs analysis as a factor to successful language learning." They conducted a two stage NA at the initial and middle stage of the ESP course currently being used at Lithuania Law University to investigate the learners' needs, lacks and wants. The results for the course-initial and course-middle NA showed some difference in terms of students' needs, wants and lacks. This difference in students' perceptions of needs meant that the students' needs changed as they progressed from the initial phase of the course to the middle phase of the course. Based on their findings they suggested that thorough ongoing NA of outgoing students' needs, wants, lacks should be conducted in order to adjust the ESP syllabus according to students' changing demands. This study reinforces the need for ongoing NA to inform ESP course design.

Zhu & Flaitz (2005) in their paper "Using Focus group methodology to understand International students' academic needs: a comparison of perspectives" give a detailed account of their NA of International students' academic language needs at a public university in Southeast of the United States. In their focus group discussions they included international students, faculty members, administrative directors and administrative staff. From their results it was found that undergraduates faced difficulties with listening to long lectures, simultaneously juggling listening and note-taking, understanding special terminology, idiomatic expressions, as well as multi-participant conversations. In reading, they were frustrated with extensive reading, comprehension of information, application of reading strategies, the amount of reading assigned, having to simultaneously read and listen, and the slow reading pace. They were daunted by the need to produce academically acceptable writing and needed time and help in writing academically, as the register, vocabulary, length of assignments, organization, following proper format were extremely difficult for them. Similarly in speaking they

found it hard to participate in discussions, interact in and out of class, needed time to process questions and respond; feared making grammatical mistakes while speaking, or asking wrong questions, present orally; or express themselves spontaneously. Faculty perceived that the students faced difficulty and were weak in speaking and writing mainly but average in listening and reading and consequently needed to improve writing and speaking.

This study provided interesting input on the perceptions of needs from the perspective of teachers, administrators, administrative staff and students. As the perspective of teachers and students is investigated it is particularly relevant to the present study.

Buitkiene (2002) conducted a NA at Vilnius university, Lithuania using the questionnaire as the main instrument, to obtain information on the wants, lacks necessities and learning strategies of 207 students. The results showed that the students' least known and most incomprehensible area was reading and understanding their specialist texts. The students' long term necessity was that they wanted to use English for everyday communication along with their present professional and study purposes. Areas in which the students faced difficulty such as understanding professional texts, oral communication, writing and understanding native speakers were also identified. This reveals important information about students' perceptions of difficulty and needs.

Kriukova & Patyaeva (2002) in their study" English language in radio-physics-needs analysis as a basis for identifying course strategy" provide an account of the two pronged NA which they conducted at the Architectural and Civil engineering university of Nizhni, Novgorod. Questionnaires were administered to students and university department heads. They found that students needed to learn English to operate within the business environment in their future professional life; for doing negotiations, writing business correspondence and reading texts in their specialized subject. They recommended that the new English course should not be restricted to business language only; rather, the course should be a sensible balance between general, business and specialized language.

Menon (2000) summarizes the findings of her needs analysis of the English language needs of staff at a hospital in her unpublished MA thesis titled "English language needs of frontline staff in a private

hospital: a needs analysis." In her investigations, she found that workers in the service sector do not require equal proficiency in all the four skills to be able to communicate. Her findings indicated that her subjects needed emphasis on listening and speaking skills and sub-skills. Grammar was important as it helped in effective, correct communication; however, since the observations of interaction proved that despite flaws communication was possible, only certain grammar rules which were needed in order to get messages across more clearly were recommended. Writing was minimally used as everything was online and written materials like leaflets were available so communication was easier. Basic reading to accomplish certain reading tasks such as: notes and messages left by person for some technical routine matters; the use of job specific material from authentic sources was recommended.

The study gives valuable input since almost half the labor force comprises workers in the service sector and so there seems to be an urgent need to investigate the expected requirements of the workers in terms of skills in the service sector. It is quite crucial that these workers are able to communicate effectively to satisfy the customers and employers.

Similarly Thompson (2001) gives an account of her needs analysis findings in her unpublished MSc thesis titled "The important entry-level employability skills that employers of the Chippewa Valley seek in entry-level job applicants." She used survey questionnaires to gather data from human resource personnel employed at various service and industry sectors in the Chippewa Valley area. Her investigation of important entry-level employability skills that employers of the Chippewa Valley seek in entry-level job applicants, revealed that 'new employees entering the work force – do not possess the 'critical skills' that today's employers deem necessary' (Thompson, 2001:2). Moreover "job applicants who were tested for basic skills – defined as functional workplace literacy— the ability to read instructions, write reports – at an adequate level– were categorized as deficient" (Thompson, 2001:2). Employers felt that 'barely half of the new employees entering the work force possess the critical skills of listening and speaking' (Thompson, 2001:9). This study provides an insight into the needs and perceptions of employers; this study too looked at the employers' perceptions and found similar results (see Chapter Nine).

Mansoor (2007) in her paper "Language and Identity: A study of Pakistani Graduate Professionals" outlines the findings of her

investigation of employers' and employees' perceptions of language needs in Pakistan. In this large scale study survey questionnaires were distributed to employees and employers from different organizations from all the capital cities of Pakistan. In-depth interviews were conducted and documentary analysis was also undertaken. From the results, it was found that English is needed for entry into employment and for upward mobility; the language proficiency of graduate employees is seen as below the required levels of competency; English courses are provided by human resource development in most institutions; almost all the written work and documentation is conducted in English; more use of English is required in senior management posts; the current trend shows a rise of the use of English in the workplace. This study provides important insight into employers' perceptions in a neighboring country, Pakistan.

To sum up all the studies carried out on NA and course design they have one feature in common most were ambitious in designing more appropriate courses for the clients. Their findings gave useful insights to the development of the present study in various ways.

Khan's (2000) course evaluation is extremely important as it is the only study of its kind ever undertaken at this institution and also the only documented course evaluation at DU. Moreover the study provided findings regarding the teaching learning situation at the Arts faculty and the students attitudes; as the present study also investigated the needs of the students from three departments of the Humanities Faculty this is very relevant. Haque and Zaman's (1999) study is valuable for the findings it provides regarding the teaching-learning situation, the classroom methodology and students attitudes and motivation regarding learning English. Furthermore a lot of their findings appeared to be corroborated by the findings of this research. Adamson's (1990) investigation offers important pointers regarding needs based content specification for EAP courses as well as the usefulness of using authentic course materials. Since listening comprehension has been identified by both students, teachers and employers in this research as an important academic skill that needs to be improved this study is important. The findings of the evaluation of Prabhu's (1987) CTP project offer useful ideas about implementing task-based learning to help adult learners achieve their communicative needs. As the students at DU are all adults this is useful in teaching them communicative skills. Mitchell's (1992) research provides insight about the use and role of

bilingualism in the language classroom. Akin and Guceri (2001) evaluation of course materials gave relevant input regarding the importance of the selection and use of appropriate of course materials in fulfilling learning objectives. This study also evaluates the success and appropriacy of the course materials being used. Similarly Edwards' (2000) study offered helpful hints to designing a flexible needs based ESP course that used authentic materials. Maclean's (2000) findings offered interesting ideas on how to overcome constraints through innovation and improvisation; which is necessary in the constraints fraught teaching-learning situation at DU. Pritchard and Nasr (2004) in their research offered helpful guidelines to teaching reading strategies and using authentic material. Kavaliauskiene & Uzpaliene's (2003) study reinforces the need for ongoing NA to form the basis for ESP course design. Banu's (1993) small-scale needs analysis gave valuable information regarding students' learning needs at the same institution. This is relevant previous research. The areas covered in the needs analyses served as useful "signposts" in the present research. Dooey (2006) in her needs analysis offered valuable findings regarding the identification of the aural-oral needs of students at a tertiary institution which helped this research, morever the study provided useful input for planning short intensive courses. Similarly Basturkmen and Al-Huneidi's (1996) research which used almost identical instrumentation provided valuable input regarding using needs analysis findings as the basis for specifying suitable course content. Abdul Aziz's (2004) research is important for the comprehensive content specification it provides on the basis of an equally extensive needs assessment. Buitkiene's (2002) research reveals important information about students' perceptions of difficulty and needs. Kriukova & Patyaeva's (2002) study gives information regarding the differing perceptions of needs from the faculty and students' points of view. Zhu & Flaitz 's (2005) investigation provided interesting input on the different perceptions of needs from the perspective of teachers, administrators, administrative staff and students. As the perspective of teachers and students is investigated it is particularly relevant to the present study. So-mui and Mead's (2000) study into the needs of clothing merchandisers in Hong Kong, Menon's (2000) investigation of the needs of frontline hospital staff in Malaysia, Thompson's (2001) study of the needs of the employers at Chippewa valley and Mansoor's (2007) investigation of employers' needs in Pakistan provide important insight

into employers' perceptions of employees' needs and proficiency. Since almost half the labor force comprises workers in the service sector and trade sector there seems to be an urgent need to investigate the expected requirements of the workers in terms of skills needed so these findings are helpful. Since this study undertook a similar investigation this is extremely relevant input.

2.9 Conclusion

It is crucial that the various approaches discussed in this chapter are given due consideration to ensure that the NA designed will probe into all the interweaving factors that surround the learning environment. Hutchinson and Waters' (1987) Learning-centred approach has been adopted in this study to account for the learners' reasons for learning to enable the proper specification of content for the present courses. Holliday and Cooke's (1982) Ecological Approach is also considered as the various interdependent factors, elements and stakeholders also need to be considered. Nunan's (1988) comprehensive and concretized NA description which is in line with the research objectives of this study has also been used along with several other concepts, methods and approaches touched upon in this chapter. In conclusion the literature review discussed suggests that Needs Analysis, Course Evaluation and Content Specification are all ongoing processes that need to be properly negotiated and reconciled in order to guarantee effective English Language Teaching and Learning in any given context.

<p style="text-align:center">Chapter Three</p>

Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the research approach and design, the sampling, the instrumentation and procedures involved in collecting and analyzing data for the purpose of finding out information to fulfill the objectives of this research. This chapter also discusses and explains in detail the selection of the participants in this research

A quantitative cum qualitative methodology was adopted; questionnaires and interviews were the main data-gathering tools. The latter enabled the researcher to capture insights and details that were not accessible through quantitative means alone. However this type of research is strongly supported by means of statistical procedures i.e. via the quantitative research methodology.

3.2 Research Methodology

Both qualitative and quantitative research methodologies were used in this study as the strengths of one method offset the other. Mason (2002:190) encouraged researchers to approach research questions from different angles to explore their intellectual problems in a more rounded, multi-faceted way; this comprehensive approach allowed new light to be shed on topics and allowed different aspects of the problems to be investigated. Data triangulation was attempted through matching common themes in questions and emergent themes from other data collection points, this results in a better research design (Cresswell, 2003). Interview sessions were conducted as a triangulation process to validate ambiguous and contradicting responses obtained from the questionnaire. Additionally interview sessions ensured that answers given were consistent with the data elicited via the questionnaire. Creswell (2003) recommended that qualitative research is emergent rather than tightly prefigured; researchers must be flexible and adapt to changes. In this study, interview questions were prepared and refined based upon answers given during semi-structured interview sessions, thus both types of data collection were merged to provide balanced

results. The Concurrent Triangulation Strategy which uses quantitative and qualitative methods to cross validate and corroborate findings was adopted as information and rationale for answers was obtained through the interview sessions and classroom observations.

This study was both exploratory and descriptive and the main characteristics of the research design were:

1. A triangulation of source and method: data was collected from a variety of informants through a variety of instruments (question-naires, interviews, observations and document study).

2. Most instruments provided information on perceptions but classroom observations were used to corroborate findings.

3.2.1 Research Design

The research was primarily designed to ascertain the specific English language needs of the students, and teachers of the various departments at four Faculties of Dhaka University. In addition the effectiveness of the existing compulsory ELT courses in fulfilling students' needs was also reviewed. It was hoped that this research would provide useful information to identify areas that required improvement or change.

Both quantitative and qualitative methods were used. Quantitative research involves the systematic elicitation of data, usually from a large number of respondents, and data presentation in numerical forms. Examples of quantitative research include surveys, structured interviews and non-participant observation. According to Scanlon (2000) 'one of the important features of quantitative research is that it is highly structured and produces data which are amenable to statistical analysis' (Scanlon, 2000, cited in Kean, 2006:49). She cites the example of structured questionnaires where respondents 'tick the appropriate box' to answer questions by agreeing or disagreeing with given statements; thus respondents do not have to respond in their own words; this provides some structure and meaning that must be coded via some form of coding procedures (Wilkinson, 2000). Questionnaires were distributed; semi-structured interviews were taken and classroom observations were donel. The research design is shown in the following table:

Table 3.1 Research design

Respondents	Questionnaires	Interviews	Document Study	Classroom Observation
2nd year students of Dhaka University from the faculties of: Humanities Social Sciences Science Business Studies	240	—	√	√ (22 hours)
Teachers	30	30	—	—
Experts	—	25	—	—
Employers	—	30	—	—
Total	270	85	—	22

3.2.2 Target Population:

The target population of this research was the first year students (3800) of four Faculties of the University of Dhaka in Bangladesh who attended compulsory English courses. Additionally teachers who teach these courses and the teachers who teach the Honors subject courses were included in the research. Employers from both the private and government sectors were interviewed as they are important stakeholders and therefore provided useful information and insights. Finally educational policy makers, noted educationists and leading language experts were interviewed for their valuable evaluation, insight and analyses. Documents relevant to the study were also perused.

3.2.3 Sampling Procedure

A breakdown of how the various representative samples of the target population were selected for this study is given as follows:

Table 3.2 Target population selection and instrumentation

Respondents	Instrument	Number
1st year students of Dhaka University From: Faculty of Humanities Faculty of Social Sciences	Survey Questionnaire 1	 60 60

Respondents	Instrument	Number
Faculty of Science		60
Faculty of Business Studies		60
Subtotal		240
Teachers of Dhaka University from Various faculties:	Questionnaire 2	
Course teachers		10
Subject teachers		20
Subtotal		30
Experts:	Interviews	
Bangladeshi:		14
Other countries:		11
Cumulative Number		25
Employers:	Interviews	
Private sector		20
Government sector		10
Cumulative Number		30
Teachers of Dhaka University from Various faculties:	Interviews	
Course teachers		6
Subject teachers		24
Cumulative Number		30
EAP classrooms	Observation	22 hours

In addition to information gained from students and teachers, interviews carried out with employers and curriculum experts provided substantial data. Each group is discussed in detail in the next section

Students

Multi-stage random sampling method was used to obtain representative samples of students from each of the four faculties. Three representative departments were chosen from each faculty on the basis of lottery and then a representative sample of 60 students from the representative departments was selected. The final distribution is shown in Table 3.3.

Table 3.3 (a) The distribution of respondents (students)

	Faculty:	Departments selected:	N
1	Humanities	History	20
	(13 Departments)	Philosophy	20
	(N = 60)	Linguistics	20
2	Social Sciences	Mass communications & Journalism	20
	(11 Departments)	Women & Gender Studies	20
	(N = 60)	International Relations	20
3	Science	Bio-Chemistry	20
	(9 Departments)	Physics	20
	(N = 60)	Psychology	20
4	Commerce	Management	20
	(5 Departments)	Marketing	20
	(N = 60)	Finance	20
	Total		240

Teachers

A representative sample of 30 teachers from the four Faculties of Dhaka University was selected using the convenience sampling method. In some cases, the same teachers taught ELT courses at various faculties and departments of the University so the representative sample of teachers was selected corresponding to the representative students' samples and according to the courses they taught.

Table 3.3 (b) The distribution of respondents (teachers)

Faculty	N
Commerce	7
Humanities	7
Science	8
Social Sciences	8
Total	30

Language Experts and Others

About 30 policy-makers, noted educationists and language experts were chosen from Bangladesh, Malaysia and other countries. This selection was based on the convenience sampling method. The Bangladeshi sample of curriculum experts was chosen according to the various courses they had designed and their involvement in policy making and implementation in Bangladesh.

Similarly the experts from the other countries were chosen on the basis of their area of expertise as well as their contribution to and involvement in ELT.

Employers from the private and government sectors were chosen from the alumni records of the selected twelve departments on the following criteria: the number of graduates that were employed by the agency; their reputation; and, rating in the current scenario as employers. Based on these criteria, the researcher selected and interviewed 20 private sector and 10 public sector employers.

3.3 Data Collection

Primary data collection involved distributing questionnaires to new second year students (the new first year students had not yet started classes and the new second year had very recently been promoted to the second year) of the twelve selected departments. In this section, both the data collection procedures via questionnaires, interviews, classroom observations as well as detailed description of the participants involved in the research will be discussed. There were no formal interview sessions with the students or teachers. Both students and teachers were interviewed indirectly via an informal chat to clarify grey areas.

3.3.1 Participants in the Research

In order to ensure that the data collected represented the English language needs of students who have completed their first year of education at the four faculties, the following participants in this research were selected. The participants identified were:

3.3.1.1 Freshmen Students

The students were very important as the needs analysis was focused on ascertaining their specific learning needs, lacks and wants. The most valuable input was based on their feedback on their perceptions about the present ELT courses and the specific sub-skills and tasks that they most frequently engaged in, changes they wished to implement in the present ELT courses. 240 new second year students from twelve departments of the four chosen faculties at DU, who had recently completed their first year of education at DU, participated in this study.

3.3.1.2. English Language Course Teachers

Their input was collected to identify the specific English Language needs which the students require in order to help them cope with their

academic subject. Notably all academic staff were well qualified; four teachers had masters' degrees in either ELT or English Literature and five of them had doctorates in Finance, Marketing, Mass Communication & Journalism, Women & Gender Studies and Linguistics. It was believed that all the teachers would be able to provide feedback on the English Language needs and problems faced by students

3.3.1.3 Subject Teachers

They were chosen to participate in this study because they possess the knowledge on the types of skill that the students are likely to encounter in their respective field. Moreover, they were also directly involved with the students in the learning and teaching of the subject courses. As such, they would be able to provide information concerning the specific English Language needs required by students in studying the subject courses.

3.3.1.4 Bangladeshi curriculum experts and policy makers

They were chosen to participate in this research as they possessed practical knowledge about the process of curriculum design in Bangladesh. All thirteen experts had designed and implemented EAP courses for most of the diverse disciplines at the tertiary level. Moreover, all of them were closely involved in policy planning and textbook writing for the Education Ministry. All the subjects hold doctorate degrees in English Language or Literature from abroad and each one of them has more than 20 years of expertise as teachers and curriculum experts.

3.3.1.5 Curriculum Experts from other countries

They were chosen as they could provide unbiased, constructive criticism regarding the syllabuses and content of the courses at DU. They provided in-depth analyses and relevant suggestions regarding the courses. All of them are well respected experts in their fields. All eleven experts have been designing and implementing and evaluating EAP courses in their respective countries for decades. All eleven experts are PHD holders and have years of experience in curriculum design and teaching.

3.3.1.6 Bangladeshi Employers

They were chosen as they were the best resource to provide first hand information about the recruitment policies of the employment sector

including those on the nature of skills that employers seek from prospective employees; the nature of in-house language training and administrative support provided for new recruits and a wealth of other relevant information. All thirty employers are major players in the Bangladeshi business and corporate sector.

3.3.2 Research Instruments

The data collection was carried out by means of the following instruments:

- Questionnaire administered to students, English language teachers and the respective subject teachers
- Interviews administered to Bangladeshi curriculum experts and policy makers, curriculum experts from other countries and Bangladeshi employers.
- Classroom observations of English language classes

A variety of procedures were used to gather information about the needs of the students, the opinions of the teachers and to evaluate the current courses. The following three data gathering procedures were used:

1. Questionnaires
2. Semi-structured interviews
3. Classroom observations

Questionnaires

The primary instrument used in this research to collect quantitative data from the students and the teachers were survey questionnaires. The questionnaire is the most effective tool for obtaining instant feedback, and to test the validity and productivity of the research. Questionnaires are a popular means of collecting data as the researcher is able to collect data in field settings, and the data is more amenable to quantification than discursive data (Nunan, 1992). As students are the main target audience for whom the language courses are intended, obtaining their feedback is essential. Questionnaires are well suited for obtaining information from large numbers of subjects, and it is relatively easy to tabulate and analyze the information obtained. Moreover information can be elicited about a wide range of issues, such as language use, communication difficulties, attitudes and beliefs. Questionnaires are considered cost and time effective, and they allow subjects time to analyze, think about, discuss with peers and answer questions more effectively. Questionnaires can be structured or unstructured; as

structured items are easier to analyze they are more preferred (Richards, 2001). According to Schmidt (1981), questionnaire can be used as a technique in assessing which language skills and sub-skills are most important for students and also establish their order of difficulty. Thus two sets of questionnaires were developed for the various participants: freshmen students, ELT teachers and subject teachers.

3.3.2.1 Questionnaire for students

This questionnaire using the five point Likert scale was adapted and composed from a questionnaire developed and tested by Govindasamy (2005). The questionnaire was designed to elicit information about students' needs, and perceptions about learning skills and the ELT courses. The questionnaires were distributed to 240 new second year students from four faculties of DU. There was 40 questions in this instrument. Questions 1-7 elicited students' background information; Questions 8-11 elicited information about learners' perceptions about the importance and uses of the four language skills. Questions 12-15 elicited specific information about Reading sub-skills use, difficulties faced and the perceived importance of Reading sub-skills, and ability. Questions 16-19 elicited specific information about Writing sub-skills use, difficulties faced and the perceived importance of Writing sub-skills, and ability. Questions 20-23 elicited specific information about Listening sub-skills use, difficulties faced and the perceived importance of Listening sub-skills, and ability. Questions 24-27 elicited specific information about Speaking sub-skills use, difficulties faced and the perceived importance of Speaking sub-skills, and ability. Questions 28-34 elicited specific information about course usefulness and difficulty and suggestions for improving the course.

This questionnaire employed the following scales: Ordinal scale; Frequency Ordinal Measurement and Preference Ordinal Measurement. Five categories were used in each scale. The questionnaire is divided into six parts: A. Preliminary, B. Reading Skills, C. Writing Skills, D. Listening Skills, E. Speaking Skills and F. Grammar. The information obtained included: situations in which English is frequently used; difficulties are encountered; importance of skills; ability in skills; preferences for different kinds of teaching activities and improvement suggestions.

3.3.2.2 Questionnaire for Teachers

This questionnaire was adapted from a questionnaire developed and tested by Govindasamy (2005) and designed to elicit information about

teachers, perceptions of students' needs, about learning skills and the current courses. The questionnaire were distributed to 30 teachers from various faculties of DU. There was 18 questions in this instrument. Questions 1-3 elicited information about the teachers' perceptions of the importance of English for their students. Questions 4-11 elicited information about teachers' perceptions of the situations where students may need to use the four language skills the frequencies of usage and the degree of difficulty faced in using these skills. Questions 12-17 elicited information about teachers' perceptions of the effectiveness and usefulness of the courses and any suggestions they may have about improving the courses. The information in the questionnaires concerned teachers' perception about role and importance of English for their students as well as their perception of their students' language proficiency. This questionnaire also employed scales similar to those used in the students' questionnaire.

Interviews

Mackay (1978) pointed out that interview sessions provide opportunity to clarify and extend elaboration. Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998) reiterated that interview sessions are extremely useful in Needs Analysis as they provide opportunity to seek clarification and more details. Interviews can be structured, unstructured or semi-structured. According to Nunan (1995), an unstructured interview is guided by the responses of the interviewees. Interviews can be conducted face to face or over the telephone, as they are an oral exchange between the interviewer and an individual or groups of individuals (Fraenkel and Wallen, 2003). Interviews ensure and clarify the consistency of the data obtained from questionnaires and allow more in-depth exploration of issues, though they are feasible for smaller groups and take much longer to administer. Thus semi-structured interviews were conducted privately and confidentially in order to obtain more information and comprehensive data from the various stakeholders.

Semi-structured interview sessions were conducted with: fourteen Bangladeshi language experts and policy-makers, eleven language experts from Malaysia and other countries and thirty Bangladeshi employers from both the private and government sectors. The data obtained were triangulated with findings obtained from the question-naires. A list of interview questions for each group of participants is attached. The semi-structured interview sessions provided avenues to

clarify ambiguities and seek clarification for doubts or inconsistency of information.

3.3.2.3 Interview sessions with Bangladeshi language experts and policy-makers,

Semi-structured interview sessions were conducted with fourteen Bangladeshi language experts and policy-makers. They provided a lot of information regarding the processes and practices of curriculum design in Bangladesh. A list of interview questions for each group of participants is attached.

3.3.2.4 Interview sessions with language experts from other countries

Semi-structured interview sessions were conducted with eleven language experts from Malaysia and other countries. They were shown the syllabuses and course outlines of the present courses at Dhaka University along with the needs analysis findings. Based on the input they were requested give feedback. A list of interview questions for each group of participants is attached.

3.3.2.5 Interview sessions with Bangladeshi employers

Semi-structured interview sessions were conducted with thirty Bangladeshi employers from both the private and government sectors. They were asked to express their perception of the language proficiency of fresh graduates from Dhaka University as well as their present employees. They were also asked to provide details of their organizations' recruitment and employee selection procedures. A list of interview questions for each group of participants is attached.

3.3.3 Use of Research Instruments

In this sub-section the data collection procedures used for each of the research instruments mentioned earlier are discussed.

3.3.3.1 Questionnaires

Questionnaires were administered formally to the twelve groups of student participants after obtaining the necessary approval from the authorities concerned. Verbal permission was taken from the concerned Department Heads and the Faculty Deans Time is an important factor when administering questionnaires. Fortunately the concerned Heads of Departments and subject teachers allowed the researcher a time slot of the students' usual class time to administer the questionnaires to them and as such the administration of the questionnaire went smoothly.

However, when it came to administering the questionnaires to the Subject teachers and English Language course teachers some problems were encountered. With perseverance, patience and a good working relationship with some of the participants, the researcher was able to get back all the completed questionnaires from the Subject teachers. However the Language teachers were extremely reluctant to complete and return the questionnaires. Some of them categorically refused to complete and return the questionnaires on the grounds that they did not want their classes to be observed or wish their class materials and notes to be scrutinized. Maintaining a good working relationship with the colleagues in the English Department as well as the other departments was an important factor. All of them gave their full cooperation without which it would not have been possible to gather such insightful and valuable information.

Interview sessions with Bangladeshi and other language experts and policy- makers, and Bangladeshi employers

Timing was of utmost importance nonetheless the researcher attempted to schedule interviews with as many of the Bangladeshi language experts as was possible within the available time. Most of the language experts had extremely busy schedules nevertheless thirteen experts were kind enough to spare some time from their very busy schedules and grant the researcher interviews. Many of the language experts were also policy-makers, only one policymaker who was not involved in curriculum design was interviewed.

Similarly interviews were scheduled with as many of the employers as was possible within the available time. Almost all the employers approached were kind and considerate enough to adjust their busy schedules in order to grant the researcher interviews at such short notice. Thus it was possible for the researcher to satisfactorily interview all thirty of the employers chosen.

3.3.3.3 Classroom observation

Weir and Roberts (1994:164) asserted that "observation is the only way to get direct information on classroom events, on the reality of program implementation." Thus classroom observation, an effective tool in ethnography was used in order to examine how the courses are being implemented in the real setting, how students are responding to them and thus their effectiveness will be revealed. Observation of learner's behavior in a target situation was another way of assessing their needs for instance the researcher observed classes while learners were

performing in classroom in order to identify both quality and quantity of language use this enabled the observer to arrive at certain conclusions about their language needs.

In order to observe lesson clarity in the classroom a checklist originally developed by Borich's (1994) was adapted. Additionally the researcher observed the occurrence of certain instruction patterns recommended by Good, T. & Brophy, J. (1990).

The main focus of the observations was to ascertain how effectively the course was being taught and for this classroom interaction and students' level of motivation was also noted, note-taking and mechanical devices to record classroom activity may be used, however in this case only notes were taken as the teachers had categorically forbidden the use of any recording devices in their classes. Non-participant observation was used in this study which meant the researcher simply observed and recorded what happened as things occurred casually the researcher recorded in the field scribbles concerning the activities observed. Since the teachers were unwilling to allow the researcher to observe their classes, the researcher had to seek the help of the departmental heads in gaining access to the classes. Originally, the researcher had intended to observe 16 hours of class, however, later on due to the longer duration of certain classes as well as some classes turning out to be lengthy make-up classes the researcher ended up observing 22 hours of classes.

3.4 The Pilot Study

A Pilot study for reliability was done using a random sample of 30 Bangladeshi students from different departments of the International Islamic University Malaysia. Based on this study the questionnaires were further improved upon and refined, to eliminate areas of probable confusion and make the instruments as user friendly and effective as possible.

3.5 Data Analysis

For an effective outcome, both qualitative and quantitative data analyses procedures were used to answer the objectives of this needs analysis and course evaluation study. The questionnaires were structured to be analyzed quantitatively using SPSS software and the data was summarized and organized into tables. The responses were tabulated using frequency counts and or percentages to facilitate statistical interpretation and calculation. Interview transcripts, course outlines and

teachers' class notes served as supporting documents when discussing findings from the Questionnaires, Interviews and Classroom observations. The raw data from interviews and classroom observations were analyzed in-depth.

3.6 Conclusion

The process of designing and administering appropriate research instruments was challenging yet rewarding. The pilot run allowed for advance identification of weaknesses and improvement of questions before the final distribution and administration of questionnaires. Though trying to secure interviews with participants was at times frustrating the experience taught the researcher to plan ahead, be flexible and adapt to changes, as cancellations and postponements are inevitable.

In conclusion, it was hoped that the pertinent data collected would help in identifying the needs, wants and lacks of the freshmen students from the perceptions of the most important stakeholders, the subject teachers, ELT teachers, language experts, policy makers, employers, and most importantly, the students of the various faculties. This valuable input from the various stakeholders would help in specifying future ELT course content.

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Chapter Four

Summary of the Findings and Discussion for the Faculty of Commerce

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4.1 Introduction

This chapter will present and discuss in detail the findings gathered through questionnaires administered to new second year students of the Commerce Faculty. The departments investigated from this faculty are the departments of Marketing, Management and Finance. For the purpose of data analysis, frequency counts and percentages are to describe the findings. The data is presented in table form for easy reference

4.2 Overview of skills needed and difficulties encountered

This section presents the findings regarding the students' perceptions about the four language skills in general such as, the frequency of language skills the participants expected to use in their course of study; the level of difficulty students encountered in each language skill; the importance that the students assigned to the skills in relation to success in the academic setting and students' perceptions of what language skills they believe they would need after graduation.

4.2.1 Frequency of use of the language skills

Figure 4.1 The frequency that the students are expected to use the language skills in their course of study

The researcher wished to find out how often students were expected to use the four language skills in their course of study. The findings are presented in Figure 4.1

Figure 4.1 shows that students 85% students "often-very often" read; 78.4% respondents "often-very often" wrote; 65% respondents "often-very often" listened; surprisingly only 20% respondents "very often" spoke. As English is the medium of
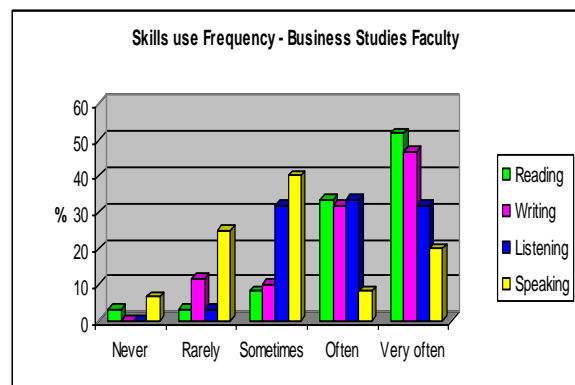
instruction in this faculty the extremely low speaking frequency is unusual as the students are expected to use English all the time. The findings suggest the prevalence and importance of all the English language skills in the academic setting.

4.2.2 Difficulty faced in the language skills

The degree of difficulty students perceived while using the language skills was ascertained. Figure 4.2 illustrates the findings:

Figure 4.2 The frequency of difficulty faced by students in using the English language skills

Significant findings from Figure 4.2 about the Science students are that:

- 76.1% students "often-sometimes" faced speaking difficulty
- 43.3% students "often-sometimes" faced writing difficulty
- 35% students "often-sometimes" had reading difficulty
- 53.3% students "sometimes" faced listening difficulty
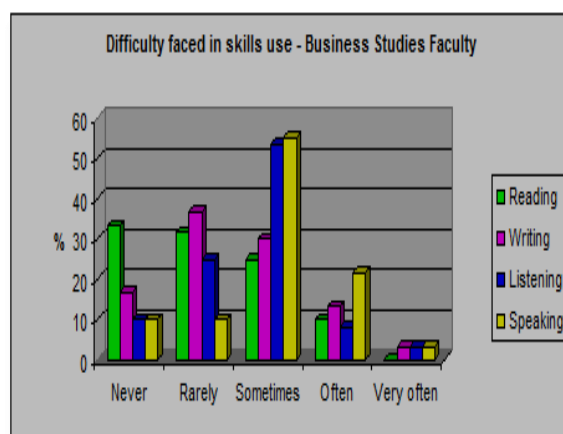
Reading, writing and listening do not appear to be very difficult; but since reading and listening are not formally evaluated or tested perhaps they are unable to perceive the difficulty. Thus Speaking seems to be most difficult for the students. However, as many students (35-53.3%) "often-sometimes" faced difficulty in all the skills, this needs further investigation.

4.2.3 Perceived importance of the skills for academic success

The commerce students' perception of the importance of the language skills for their academic success was assessed next. Figure 4.3 presents the findings:

Figure 4.3 Students' perception of the importance of the skills in relation to academic success

From Figure 4.3 it is seen that the majority of the students (93.3%-
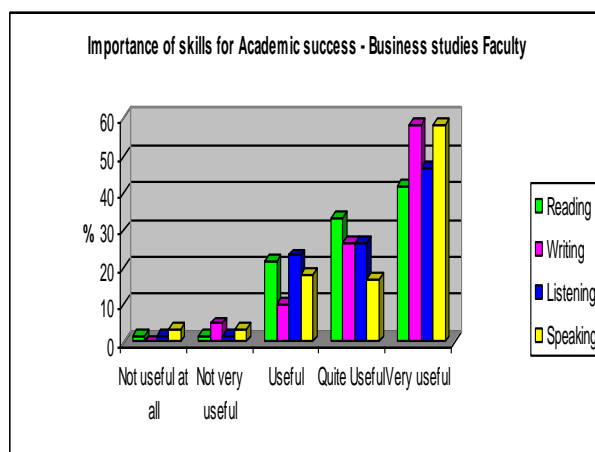
96.6%) felt that all the skills were "useful-very useful" for their academic success. The findings reveal that students attach a lot of importance to all the skills in relation to their academic success, particularly since the medium of instruction in this faculty is English, in addition all hand-outs, texts, examinations and lectures are in English.

4.2.4 Perceived importance of the skills after graduation

The students' perception of the importance of the English language skills after their graduation was explored next. Figure 4.4 presents the findings:

Figure 4.4 The students' perception of the importance of the language skills after their graduation

According to Figure 4.4, the majority of the students (83.3%-100%) felt that all the skills were "useful-very useful" for them after their graduation. The findings indicate that the students believe that all the skills will be very important for them after their graduation.
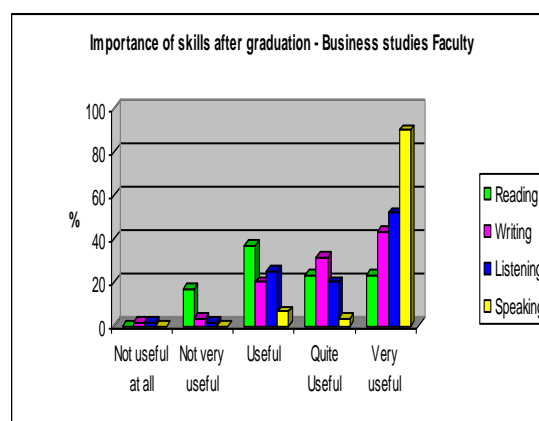
4.3 Overview of frequency of use of the language sub-skills

This section presents the findings regarding the language sub-skills that the first year students of Commerce most frequently need to use in the course of their studies. This is related to the first research question - What are the specific English language needs of first year students at DU? The findings are presented in the following sub-sections. The participants were asked to rate the frequencies of use of each sub-skill according to a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Never) to 5 (Always); however the data has been presented on a three-point scale in the table form for easy reference.

4.3.1 Frequency of the different types of reading materials students are expected to read

The types of reading materials the students were normally expected to read and how often they were expected to read these materials was looked into next. The results are displayed in Table 4.1:

Table 4.1 Frequency of the different types of reading materials students that are expected to read

	Never	**Sometimes**	**Often-Always**
Newspapers	2 (3.3)	7 (11.7)	51 (85)
Magazines	3 (5)	15 (25)	42 (70)
Novels/storybooks	5 (8.3)	25 (41.7)	30 (50)
Reference books/Journals	3 (5)	17 (28.3)	40 (66.7)
Textbooks	1 (1.7)	3 (5)	56 (93.3)
Selected chapters of books	2 (3.3)	8 (13.3)	50 (83.3)
Photocopied notes	4 (6.7)	10 (16.7)	46 (76.7)
Reports/proposals	2 (3.3)	16 (26.7)	42 (70)
Workbook/Lab instructions	15 (25)	18 (30)	27 (45)
Online/internet materials	1 (1.7)	12 (20)	47 (78.3)

All figures within parentheses are in percentages

As seen from Table 4.1, most students "often-always" read:

- textbooks 93.3%
- magazines 70%
- newspapers 85%
- reports or proposals 70%
- selected chapters of books 83.3
- reference books or journals 66.7%
- online or internet materials 78.3%
- photocopied notes 76.7%

It appears that the students have to read a very wide range of reading materials. These findings are important for future course and materials design.

4.3.2 Frequency of the different types of writing tasks students are expected to write

Next the types of writing tasks the students were usually expected to write frequently were investigated. Table 4.2 presents the findings:

Table 4.2 Frequency of the different types of writing tasks students that are expected to write

	Never	Sometimes	Often-Always
Taking lecture notes	1 (1.7)	1 (1.7)	58 (96.7)
Writing tutorial assignments/term papers	0	6 (10)	54 (90)
Writing exams/in-course essays	0	6 (10)	54 (90)
Summarizing		13 (21.7)	47 (78.3)
Paraphrasing	4 (6.7)	18 (30)	38 (63.3)
Editing/proof-reading/revising	10 (16.7)	13 (21.7)	37 (61.7)
Translating	7 (11.7)	17 (28.3)	36 (60)
Writing proposals/project papers	3 (5)	14 (23.3)	43 (71.6)
Writing research papers	16 (2.7)	14 (23.3)	30 (50)
Writing reports/lab reports	3 (5)	11 (18.3)	46 (76.7)
Preparing flow-charts/tables	2 (3.3)	20 (33.3)	38 (63.3)
Writing case studies	4 (6.7)	19 (31.7)	37 (61.7)
Writing business letters	16 (26.7)	19 (31.7)	25 (41.7)
Writing resumes	9 (15)	25 (41.7)	26 (43.3)
Writing references	12 (20)	22 (36.7)	26 (43.3)
Writing introductions	5 (8.3)	21 (35)	34 (56.7)
Writing commentaries	15 (25)	17 (28.3)	28 (46.7)
Writing news article/features	19 (31.7)	18 (30)	23 (38.3)
Writing e-mails	7(11.7)	13 (21.7)	40 (66.7)
Creative writing	7 (11.7)	20 (33.3)	33 (55)
Essay writing	6 (10)	24 (40)	30 (50)

All figures within parentheses are in percentages

According to Table 4.2, most students "often-always":

- take lecture notes 96.7%
- write tutorial assignments or term papers 90%
- exams or in-course essays 90%
- summarize 78.3%
- write reports or lab reports 76.7%
- write proposals or project papers71.6%
- write e-mails 66.7%

- paraphrase 63.3%
- prepare flow-charts or tables 63.3%
- edit or proof-read or revise61.7%
- write case studies 61.7%
- translate 60%
- write introductions 56.7%
- write creatively 55%

It can be seen that the students engage in a diverse range of writing tasks. The writing tasks frequently engaged in should be considered when designing future courses.

4.3.3 Frequency of the different types of listening tasks students are expected to perform

The different types of listening skills that the students were frequently expected to use was ascertained next. Table 4.3 illustrates the findings:

Table 4.3 Frequency of the different types of listening tasks students are expected to perform

	Never	**Sometimes**	**Often-Always**
Listen to & understand lectures & notes	1 (1.7)	3 (5)	56 (93.3)
Listen to & carry out instructions/directions	5 (8.3)	5 (8.3)	50 (83.3)
Listen to & understand class/tutorial discussions	0	3 (5)	57 (95)
Listen to & understand questions/points raised during class/tutorials	0	4 (6.7)	56 (93.3)
Listen to & answer questions in class/tutorials	3 (5)	9 (15)	48 (80)
Listen to & understand seminars & talks	5 (8.3)	13 (21.7)	42 (70)
Listen to & understand television programs		6 (10)	54 (90)
Listen to & understand radio programs	20 (33.3)	17 (28.3)	23 (38.3)
Listen to & understand different English accents	3 (5)	19 (31.7)	38 (63.3)

All figures within parentheses are in percentages

From Table 4.3 it can be seen that, the majority of the students "often-always"

- listen to and understand:
- class or tutorial discussions 95%
- television programs 90%
- listen to and carry out instructions or directions 83.3%

- questions or points raised during class or tutorials 93.3%
- lectures and notes 93.3%
- seminars and talks 70%.
- listen to and answer questions in class or tutorials 80%;

Notably students listen to and understand class or tutorial discussions, lectures and notes, questions or points raised during class or tutorials and television programs the most.

4.3.4 Frequency of the different types of speaking tasks students are expected to perform

Finally the types of speaking tasks the students frequently engaged in were explored. Table 4.4 displays the results

Table 4.4 Frequency of the different types of speaking tasks students are expected to perform

	Never	Sometimes	Often-Always
Asking questions	4 (6.7)	18 (30)	38 (63.3)
Answering questions	4 (6.7)	12 (20)	44 (73.3)
Expressing opinions/objections	4 (6.7)	17 (28.3)	39 (65)
Delivering oral presentations/reports		6 (10)	54 (90)
Explaining processes/procedures	1 (1.7)	16 (26.7)	43 (71.6)
Brainstorming	1 (1.7)	19 (31.7)	40 (66.6)
Taking part in class/tutorial/group discussions		17 (28.3)	43 (71.6)
Taking part in social conversations	4 (6.7)	15 (25)	41 (68.3)
Speaking with other fluent speakers of English	3 (5)	25 (41.7)	32 (53.3)

All figures within parentheses are in percentages

From the Table 4.4 it appears that the majority of the students "often-always":

- deliver oral presentations or reports 90%
- answer questions 73.3%
- take part in class or tutorial or group discussions 71.6%
- explain processes or procedures 71.6%
- take part in social conversations 68.3%
- brainstorm 66.6%
- express opinions or objections 65%
- ask questions 63.3%

Notably students deliver oral presentations or reports the most.

4.4 Perception of English language sub-skills difficulties

The researcher sought to establish the level of difficulty students' encountered in the language sub-skills next. The findings are presented in the following sub-sections. The participants were asked to rate the difficulty encountered according to a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Very Difficult) to 5 (Very Easy); however the data has been presented on a three-point scale in the table forms for easy reference.

4.4.1 Perception of reading sub-skills difficulties

Firstly the researcher investigated the degree of difficulty that the students faced in reading various types of reading materials. The results are given in Table 4.5:

Table 4.5 Students' perception of the reading sub-skills difficulties

	Very difficult	Sometimes difficult	Not so difficult-Very easy
Newspapers	1 (1.7)	12 (20)	47 (78.3)
Magazines		13 (21.7)	47 (78.3)
Novels/storybooks	4 (6.7)	19 (31.7)	37 (61.6)
Reference books/Journals	2 (3.3)	24 (40)	34 (56.7)
Textbooks	2 (3.3)	10 (16.7)	48 (80)
Selected chapters of books	2 (3.3)	12 (20)	46 (76.6)
Photocopied notes		5 (8.3)	55 (91.6)
Reports/proposals	3 (5)	15 (25)	42 (70)
Workbook/Lab instructions	5 (8.3)	23 (38.3)	32 (53.3)
Online/internet materials	1 (1.7)	11 (18.3)	48 (80)

All figures within parentheses are in percentages

From Table 4.5 it is seen that the majority (53.3-91.6%) of the students perceived the reading sub-skills as "not so difficult-very easy". However, many students faced difficulty in reading:

- reference books or journals 40%
- workbook or lab instructions 38.3%
- novels or storybooks 31.7%
- reports or proposals 25%
- magazines 21.7%
- newspapers 20%
- selected chapters of books 20%
- online or internet materials 18.3%
- textbooks 16.7%

Based on these findings it may be said that the reading sub-skills are to some extent difficult for students.

4.4.2 Perception of writing sub-skills difficulties

Next the difficulty perceived by students, in the writing sub-skills was carefully examined. Table 4.6 presents the findings:

Table 4.6 Students' perception of the writing sub-skills difficulties

	Very difficult	Sometimes difficult	Not so difficult-very easy
Taking lecture notes	1 (1.7)	5 (8.3)	54 (90)
Writing tutorial assignments/term papers	1 (1.7)	11 (18.3)	48 (80)
Writing exams/in-course essays		8 (13.3)	52 (86.6)
Summarizing		12 (20)	48 (80)
Paraphrasing	2 (3.3)	15 (25)	43 (71.6)
Editing/proof-reading/revising	3 (5)	15 (25)	42 (70)
Translating	1 (1.7)	12 (20)	47 (78.3)
Writing proposals/project papers	1 (1.7)	18 (30)	41 (68.3)
Writing research papers	11 (18.3)	23 (38.3)	26 (43.3)
Writing reports/lab reports		22 (36.7)	38 (63.3)

	Very difficult	Sometimes difficult	Not so difficult-very easy
Preparing flow-charts/tables	2 (3.3)	18 (30)	40 (66.7)
Writing case studies	5 (8.3)	14 (23.3)	41 (68.3)
Writing business letters	2 (3.3)	11 (18.3)	47 (78.3)
Writing resumes		17 (28.3)	43 (71.6)
Writing references	1 (1.7)	10 (16.7)	49 (81.6)
Writing introductions	1 (1.7)	12 (20)	47 (78.3)
Writing commentaries	5 (8.3)	15 (25)	40 (66.7)
Writing news article/features	6 (10)	21 (35)	33 (55)
Writing e-mails	2 (3.3)	4 (6.7)	54 (90)
Creative writing	6 (10)	16 (26.7)	38 (63.3)
Essay writing	1 (1.7)	13 (21.7)	46 (76.6)

All figures within parentheses are in percentages

As observed from Table 4.6, the majority (63.3-90%) of the students do not encounter difficulty with the writing sub-skills. But a considerable number of students have problems with:

‒ writing research papers 38.3%   ‒ reports or lab reports 36.7%

‒ news article or features 35%   ‒ proposals or project papers 30%

‒ preparing flow-charts or tables 30%   ‒ writing resumes 28.3%

‒ creative writing 26.7%   ‒ editing or proof-reading or revising 25%

‒ commentaries 25%   ‒ case studies 23.3%

‒ essay writing 21.7%   ‒ introductions 20%

‒ translating 20%   ‒ summarizing 20%

Perhaps if the English courses provided students with adequate practice and guidance in these writing tasks they will find them to be less difficult.

4.4.3 Perception of listening sub-skills difficulties

The students' perception of difficulty faced in the listening sub-skills was probed next. Table 4.7 summarizes the results:

Table 4.7 Students' perception of the listening sub-skills difficulties

	Very difficult	**Sometimes difficult**	**Not so difficult-very easy**
Listen to & understand lectures & notes	3 (5)	5 (8.3)	52 (86.6)
Listen to & carry out instructions/directions	2 (3.3)	5 (8.3)	53 (88.3)
Listen to & understand class/tutorial discussions	2 (3.3)	2 (3.3)	56 (93.3)
Listen to & understand questions/points raised during class /tutorials	2 (3.3)	7 (11.7)	51 (85)
Listen to & answer questions in class/tutorials	1 (1.7)	18 (30)	41 (68.3)
Listen to & understand seminars & talks	2 (3.3)	18 (30)	40 (66.7)
Listen to & understand television programs	1 (1.7)	11 (18.3)	48 (80)
Listen to & understand radio programs	4 (6.7)	9 (15)	47 (78.3)
Listen to & understand different English accents	6 (10)	23 (38.3)	31 (51.7)

All figures within parentheses are in percentages

According to Table 4.7, the majority of the students (51.7-93.3%) perceived the listening sub-skills as "not so difficult-very easy". But a number of students "sometimes" faced difficulty in core sub-skills like, listening to and understanding different English accents 38.3%; seminars and talks 30%; listening to and answering questions in class or tutorials 30%.

4.4.4 Perception of speaking sub-skills difficulties

Finally the students' perception of difficulty faced in the speaking sub-skills was explored. Table 4.8 illustrates the results:

Table 4.8 Students' perception of the speaking sub-skills difficulties

	Very difficult	Sometimes difficult	Not so difficult-very easy
Asking questions	4 (6.7)	13 (21.7)	43 (71.6)
Answering questions	3 (5)	15 (25)	42 (70)
Expressing opinions /objections	1 (1.7)	13 (21.7)	46 (76.6)
Delivering oral presentations/reports		7 (11.7)	53 (88.3)
Explaining processes /procedures		13 (21.7)	47 (78.3)
Brainstorming	1 (1.7)	18 (30)	41 (68.3)
Taking part in class/tutorial/group discussions		12 (20)	48 (80)
Taking part in social conversations	1 (1.7)	15 (25)	44 (73.3)
Speaking with other fluent speakers of English	2 (3.3)	23 (38.3)	35 (58.3)

All figures within parentheses are in percentages

As seen from Table 4.8 the majority of the students (58.3-88.3%) perceived the speaking sub-skills as "not so difficult-very easy". But a significant number of students "sometimes" faced difficulty in:

- speaking with other fluent speakers of English 38.3%
- brainstorming 30%
- answering questions 25% taking part in social conversations 25%
- asking questions 21.7%
- expressing opinions or objections 21.7%
- explaining processes or procedures 21.7%
- taking part in class or tutorial or group discussions 20%.

These findings indicate that speaking is difficult to some extent.

4.5 Overview of the students' perception of their ability in the language sub-skills

Next the researcher examined the students' perception of their own ability in the sub-skills. The findings are presented in the following sub-

sections. The participants were asked to rate their own ability according to a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Very Weak) to 5 (Very Good); however the data has been presented on a three-point scale in the table forms for easy reference.

4.5.1 Perceived Reading Ability of Freshmen Commerce Students

The students' ability in the reading sub-skills was investigated first, the results are presented in Table 4.9:

Table 4.9 Perceived Ability in reading sub-skills

	Very weak-Weak	Average	Good-Very good
Reading a text quickly to get a general idea of its content	6 (10)	26 (43.3)	28 (46.7)
Looking through a text quickly to find specific information	5 (8.3)	23 (38.3)	32 (53.3)
Guessing the meanings of unknown words from their context	7 (11.7)	24 (40)	29 (48.3)
Understanding the main points of a text	2 (3.3)	17 (28.3)	41 (68.3)
Reading a text slowly & carefully to understand the details of the text	6 (10)	13 (21.7)	41 (68.3)
Reading to respond critically	15 (25)	25 (41.7)	20 (33.3)
Understanding a writer's attitude & purpose	12 (20)	29 (48.3)	19 (31.7)
Understand & interpret charts, graphs, tables	6 (10)	21 (35)	33 (55)
General comprehension	3 (5)	18 (30)	39 (65)

All figures within parentheses are in percentages

From Table 4.9 it is seen that the majority of the students assessed their abilities in the reading sub-skills as "average" and "good-very good". However significant numbers of students assessed themselves as "very weak-weak" in reading to respond critically (25%); understanding a writer's attitude and purpose (20%). These findings are very useful for future reference.

4.5.2 Perceived Writing Ability of Freshmen Commerce Students

Next the students' ability in the writing sub-skills was established. The results are displayed in Table 4.10:

Table 4.10 Perceived Ability in writing sub-skills

	Very weak-Weak	Average	Good-Very good
Using correct punctuation & spelling	5 (8.3)	16 (26.7)	39 (65)
Structuring sentences	3 (5)	17 (28.3)	40 (66.6)
Using appropriate vocabulary	4 (6.7)	26 (43.3)	30 (50)
Organizing paragraphs	6 (10)	21 (35)	33 (55)
Organizing the overall assignment	1 (1.7)	23 (38.3)	36 (60)
Expressing ideas appropriately	5 (8.3)	18 (30)	37 (61.7)
Developing ideas	6 (10)	25 (41.7)	29 (48.3)
Expressing what you want to say clearly	1 (1.7)	25 (41.5)	34 (56.6)
Addressing the topic	3 (5)	24 (40)	33 (55)
Adopting appropriate tone & style	9 (15)	28 (46.7)	23 (38.3)
Following instructions & directions	2 (3.3)	22 (36.7)	36 (60)
Evaluating & revising your writing	7 (11.7)	24 (40)	29 (48.3)
Overall writing ability	3 (5)	24 (40)	33 (55)
Completing written tasks	6 (10)	19 (31.7)	35 (58.3)

All figures within parentheses are in percentages

From Table 4.10 it appears that the majority of the students assessed themselves as "average" and "good-very good" in the writing sub-skills.

4.5.3 Perceived Listening Ability of Freshmen Commerce Students

The students' ability in the listening sub-skills was explored next. Table 4.11 presents the results:

Table 4.11 Perceived Ability in listening sub-skills

	Very weak-Weak	**Average**	**Good-Very good.**
Listen to & understand lectures & notes	4 (6.7)	13 (21.7)	43 (71.6)
Listen to & carry out instructions/directions	2 (3.3)	19 (31.7)	39 (65)
Listen to & understand class/tutorial discussions	5 (8.3)	9 (15)	46 (76.6)
Listen to & understand questions/points raised during class /tutorials	5 (8.3)	18 (30)	37 (61.6)
Listen to & answer questions in class/tutorials	5 (8.3)	27 (45)	28 (46.6)
Listen to & understand seminars & talks	12 (20)	29 (48.3)	19 (31.6)
Listen to & understand television programs	7 (11.7)	18 (30)	35 (58.3)
Listen to & understand radio programs	11 (18.3)	24 (40)	25 (41.6)
Listen to & understand different English accents	19 (31.7)	21 (35)	20 (33.3)

All figures within parentheses are in percentages

From Table 4.11 it is observed that the majority of the students rated themselves "average-good-very good" in listening sub-skills. But some rated themselves as "very weak-weak" at listening to and understanding different English accents (31.7%); seminars and talks (20%), these issues need to be addressed in future.

4.5.4 Perceived Speaking Ability of Freshmen Commerce Students

Finally the students' ability in the speaking sub-skills was gauged. Table 4.12 illustrates the findings:

Table 4.12 Perceived Ability in speaking sub-skills

	Very weak-Weak	Average	Good-Very good
Asking questions	11 (18.3)	18 (30)	31 (51.7)
Answering questions	8 (13.3)	24 (40)	28 (43.3)
Expressing opinions/objections	5 (8.3)	26 (43.3)	29 (48.3)
Delivering oral presentations/reports	6 (10)	17 (28.3)	37 (61.6)
Explaining processes/procedures	9 (15)	25 (41.7)	26 (43.3)
Brainstorming	10 (16.7)	26 (43.3)	24 (40)
Taking part in class/tutorial/group discussions	8 (13.3)	22 (36.7)	30 (50)
Taking part in social conversations	3 (5)	27 (45)	30 (50)
Speaking with other fluent speakers of English	10 (16.7)	23 (38.3)	27 (45)

All figures within parentheses are in percentages

Referring to Table 4.12 it is seen that the majority of the students think that their abilities are "average - very good" in the speaking sub-skills..

4.5.5 Discrepancy between Perceived ability and Difficulty encountered in the sub-skills

Comparison of the students' perception of difficulty and ability in the listening and speaking sub-skills the following discrepancies were noticed in listening to and understanding:

- questions in class/tutorials– difficulty (>65%), ability (>90%) discrepancy (>25%);
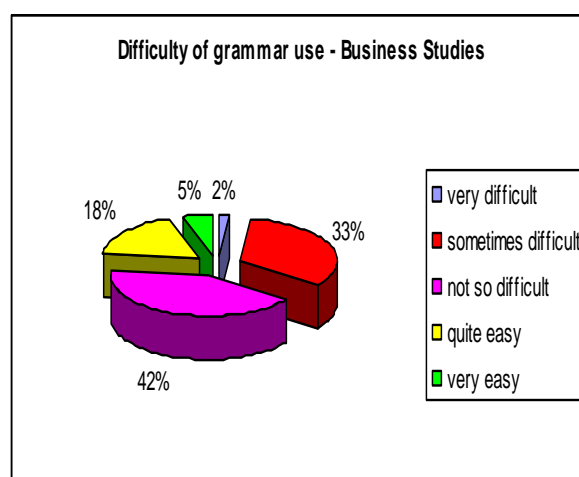
- seminars and talks- difficulty (>65%), ability (90%), discrepancy (>25%);

- different English- difficulty (50%), ability (>65%), discrepancy (>15%).

- asking questions- difficulty (>70%), ability (>80%), discrepancy (10%);

- answering questions- difficulty (>70%), ability (>85%), discrepancy (>15%);

- expressing opinions/objections- difficulty (75%), ability (>90%), discrepancy (>15%);

- brainstorming - difficulty (>65%), ability (>80%), discrepancy (>25%);

- speaking with other fluent speakers of English - difficulty (>55%), ability (>80%), discrepancy (>25%).

From this it can be inferred that perhaps the students overrate their ability in these sub-skills or they are unable to assess the difficulty.

4.6 Overview of the students' perceptions about Grammar

How often students had to do grammar based tasks was looked into next. Figure 4.5 illustrates the results:

Figure 4.5 Frequency of doing grammar based tasks

It is noticeable from Figure 4.5 that most students (75%) frequently have to do grammar based tasks and some (25%) do not do them so often.

Frequency of doing Grammar tasks - Business Studies

12% 3% 22%
36% 27%

never
sometimes
often
very often
always
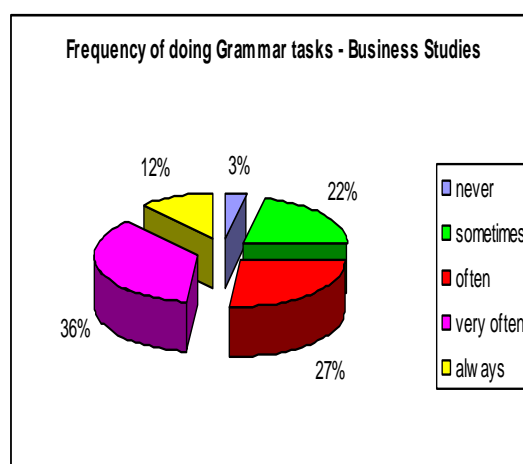
Next the students' perception of the difficulty of grammar based tasks was looked into. Figure 4.6 presents the results:

Figure 4.6 Difficulty faced by students in doing grammar-based tasks

From Figure 4.6 it is seen that 35% of the students face difficulty with grammar based tasks whereas 65% of the students apparently do not face much difficulty.

Next students' perception of the importance of learning grammar was assessed. Figure 4.7 presents the findings:

Figure 4.7 Students' perception of the importance of learning grammar

From the Figure 4.7 it is seen that the majority (85%) of the students attach a great deal of importance to learning grammar, but some (15%) do not.
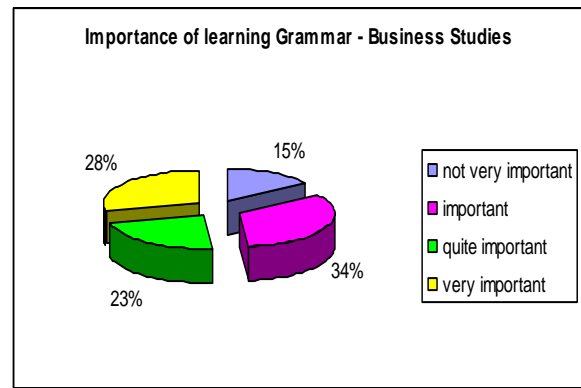
The students' perception of their ability in grammar was measured. Figure 4.8 displays the findings:

Figure 4.8 Students' ability in handling grammar based tasks

From Figure 4.8 it is seen that over half (63%) the students perceive their ability as satisfactory but a considerable number (37%) perceive their ability as not up to the mark.
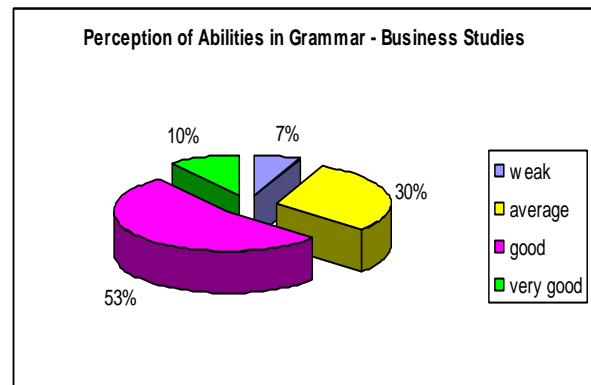
It may be inferred that the students do a lot of grammar based tasks and attach a lot of importance to learning grammar. They also perceive themselves as quite capable in handling grammar based tasks.

4.7 Overview of course usefulness and learning

The degree of usefulness of the present course in preparing students for their studies was examined next. The results are displayed in Table 4.13:

Table 4.13 Usefulness of the course

	%
Strongly disagree	5
Disagree	6.7
Not sure	23.3
Agree	23.3
Strongly agree	41.7

From Table 4.13 it appears that the majority (65%) of the students felt that the course was useful but since 23% of the students were "unsure" about the usefulness and 12% felt it was "not helpful"; perhaps, some students' requirements are not being addressed.

The learning and usefulness of the course was investigated next. Table 4.14 presents the results:

Table 4.14 Learning & usefulness of course

	Never	Sometimes	Often	Very often	Always
I learned a lot about English language usage from using the course materials	3.3	18.3	43.3	23.3	11.7
My English has improved as a result of the activities done in class	1.7	13.3	31.7	41.7	11.7
The course will be useful for my studies		8.3	21.7	38.3	31.7
The course will be useful for my future career		6.7	11.7	33.3	48.3
I feel more confident about using English in my studies		8.3	25	25	41.7
I feel confident about using English for my career purposes		10	20	31.7	38.3

Note: Data is presented in percentages (%)

According to Table 4.14 the majority (78.3-93.3%) of the students "often-always" felt that the course helped teach them all of the above.

In the next section the effectiveness of the course in terms of whether there was any noticeable improvement in the students' frequency of use of the four skills before and during the course was investigated.

Table 4.15 Distribution of skills use frequencies before and after the course

	Reading		Writing		Listening		Speaking	
	Pre C	Post C	Pre C	Post C	Pre C	Post C	Pre C	Post C
Never	1.7	1.7	35	5	6.6	0	11.6	1.6
Sometimes	36.7	3.3	0	0	30	5	46.6	10
Often	26.7	11.7	28.3	15	36.6	13.3	28.3	35
very often	25	33.3	23.3	13.3	16.6	31.6	8.3	38.3
Always	10	50	11.7	66.7	10	50	5	15

Note: Data is presented in percentages (%)

Table 4.15 shows an increase in the frequency of students who "always" read from 10% to 50%; and the frequency of students who "often" read slightly increased from 25% to 33.3%. This implies that students started to read more frequently after doing the course.

The Table shows a very steep increase in the frequency of students who "always" wrote from 11.7% to 66.7%. So it appears that students started to write more frequently after having completed the course.

The frequency of students who "always" did listening tasks, steeply increased from 10% to 50% and the frequency for students who "very often" did listening tasks, almost doubled from 16.6% to 31.6%. So the students' listening tasks frequency number increased remarkably after the course.

The Table shows a steep increase in the frequency of students who "very often" spoke from 8.3% to 38%; the frequency of students who "always" spoke trebled from 5% to 15%. This indicates an increase in the students' speaking frequency after completing the course.

These findings can be taken to mean that the course does help quite extensively in improving the students' abilities in handling the four skills..

4.8 Overview of course difficulty

The researcher then analyzed the level of difficulty of the students in following the course in class. Table 4.16 presents the findings:

Table 4.16 Difficulty faced by students in following the course in class

	Never %	Sometimes %	Often %	Very often %	Always %
The discussions in class were difficult for me	23.3	45	21.7	6.7	3.3
The language of the course book/handout /materials were difficult for me	11.7	53.3	25	6.7	3.3
The tasks and activities were difficult for me to do	18.3	41.7	31.7	5	3.3
I had difficulty in completing the given work on time in class	18.3	50	16.7	8	1.7

Note: Data is presented in percentages (%)

From Table 4.16 it is evident that: the discussions in class; the language of the course book or handout or materials; and the tasks and activities of the course are very difficult and students frequently find it difficult to complete the given work on time in class since many students "sometimes" (40%-50%) and "often-always" (>30%) face difficulty, in all four of the above mentioned. This needs to be amended.

4.9 Overview of the prevalent teaching styles and the teaching styles preferred by students.

The frequency of the different classroom teaching styles being used was examined next. Table 4.17 illustrates the findings:

Table 4.17 Frequency of the different teaching styles being used

	Never.. N %	Rarely... N %	Sometimes N %	Often... N %	Very often ... N %
Lecturing	2 (3.3)	1 (1.7)	13 (21.7)	12 (20)	32 (53.3)
Teacher asking questions & students answering	2 (3.3)	7 (11.7)	21 (35)	23 (38.3)	7 (11.7)
Group discussions with teacher as facilitator		8 (13.3)	21 (35)	20 (33.3)	11 (18.3)
Students given work & working independently out of class		2 (3.3)	13 (21.7)	30 (50)	15 (25)
Student presentations	8 (13.3)	19 (31.7)	17 (28.3)	14 (23.3)	2 (3.3)
Students silently doing written work in class	23 (38.3)	12 (20)	14 (23.3)	7 (11.7)	4 (6.7)
Using drama music role plays games	6 (10)	16 (26.7)	16 (26.7)	15 (25)	7 (11.7)
Group or pair work	6 (10)	10 (16.7)	20 (33.3)	14 (23.3)	10 (16.7)

From Table 4.17 it is seen that the most frequently used teaching styles are:

lecturing and students given work and working independently out of class (>70%); group discussions with the teacher as a facilitator and the teacher asking questions and students answering (>50%).

The students' preferences about classroom teaching styles were determined next. Table 4.18 displays the results:

Table 4.18 Students' preferences of teaching styles

	Not at all helpful N %	Not very helpful. N %	A bit helpful.. N %	Quite helpful.. N %	Very helpful.. N %
Lecturing	2 (3.3)	3 (5)	10 (16.7)	23 (38.3)	22 (36.7)
Teacher asking questions & students answering		4 (6.7)	10 (16.7)	18 (30)	28 (46.7)
Group discussions with teacher as facilitator		3 (5)	7 (11.7)	21 (35)	29 (48.3)
Students given work & working independently out of class	2 (3.3)	3 (5)	10 (16.7)	22 (36.7)	23 (38.3)
Student presentations		2 (3.3)	4 (6.7)	25 (41.7)	29 (48.3)
Students silently doing written work in class	4 (6.7)	14 (23.3)	17 (28.3)	21 (35)	4 (6.7)
Using drama music role plays games	4 (6.7)	2 (3.3)	18 (30)	25 (41.7)	11 (18.3)
Group or pair work	1 (1.7)	3 (5)	8 (13.3)	26 (43.3)	22 (36.7)
Students doing practical fieldwork	2 (3.3)	3 (5)	5 (8.3)	26 (43.3)	2 4 (40)

Note: Data in parentheses is presented in percentage (%)

Table 4.18 shows that, in the students' opinion the most preferred teaching styles were:

student presentations (90%), group discussions with the teacher as a facilitator, group or pair work and students doing practical fieldwork (>80%); lecturing; teacher asking questions and students answering; students given work and working independently out of class (>70%). Students silently doing written work in class (>40%) is the least preferred by the students.

Thus a mismatch is seen between the students' preferences and the actual classroom teaching styles. Perhaps students would benefit more if their preferences were considered.

4.10 Students' suggestions for improving the present course

The changes the students would like to implement in their present courses were probed next. The findings are summarized in Table 4.19:

Table 4.19 Students' suggestions – Commerce

	Management N=20	Marketing N=20	Finance N=20
Increased time allocation for Listening	11	13	4
Increased time allocation for Speaking	19	19	16
Increased time allocation for Reading	7	2	4
Increased time allocation for Writing	7	5	10
Increased time allocation for Grammar	4	3	4
Increased time allocation for Vocabulary	4	2	7
Introduction of practical subject related materials	16	10	14
Introduction of Fieldwork	11	17	13
Introduction of movie/drama/music/debate	10	13	14
Increased time allocation for Presentations	11	16	14
Reduced time allocation for Grammar	-	-	-

Note: Data is presented in percentages (%

Students of all three departments of the Commerce Faculty want to incorporate these changes to the present course:

- additional listening (28%); speaking (54%); reading (13%); and writing (22%);
- use of more practical or practical world materials (40%); presentations (41%);
- introduction of fieldwork (41%); movie, drama, debate (37%).

These useful suggestions and changes which may be considered in future course design.

4.11 Commerce Faculty Findings and Discussion: Recapitulation

Preliminary findings revealed that:

- majority of the students (>65-85%) "often-very often" read, write & listen; but very few students (20%) speak
- many students "sometimes-very often" had difficulty reading (35%), & writing (46.6%) skills, and most students "sometimes-very often" had difficulty listening (65%) & speaking (80%)
- most students felt the skills were "useful-very useful" for academic success (>80-100%) & future careers (80-100%)

Exploration of sub-skills use revealed:

- students (65-93.3%) "often-always" read textbooks, newspapers, selected chapters of books, online or internet materials, photocopied notes, magazines, reports or proposals & reference books or journals
- students (60-96.7%) "often-always" take lecture notes, write tutorial assignments or term papers, write exams or in-course essays, summarize, write reports or lab reports, write proposals or project papers
- students (60-95%) "often-always" listen to and understand class or tutorial discussion; lectures & notes; questions or points raised during class or tutorials; television programs; listen to & carry out instructions or directions; listen to and answer questions in class or tutorials
- students (60-90%) "often-always" deliver oral presentations or reports; answer questions; explain processes or procedures; take part in class or tutorial or group discussions

It was also found that:

- most students (78.3-93.3%) felt the course "often-always" fulfilled learning & usefulness objectives
- a tangible increase in students who "always-often" engaged in the skills after doing the course
- the course & course materials may be considered as quite difficult for students
- a mismatch was found between students' preferences and actual classroom teaching styles

4.12 Findings in relation to research questions

These findings about the Commerce Faculty students' needs and perceptions answer the first, second, fifth and sixth research questions: 1) What are the specific English language needs of the students of the four Faculties at DU? 2) Is there a mismatch between the expectations and needs of the students? 5) What are the strengths and shortcomings of the present language courses? and 6) What improvements can be made to these courses?

The Commerce students' perceptions of their needs have been identified, their perceptions about the present English course have been

established, areas in which improvement is necessary have been identified, and students have made suggestions regarding course improvement. These findings about the Commerce Faculty students' needs and perceptions will be very useful in determining the design and specifying the content of future courses. These findings have been taken into consideration in this study whilst specifying the common-core English course content (please see chapter 10).

Chapter Five

Summary of the Findings and Discussion for the Faculty of Humanities

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents and discusses the findings gathered through questionnaires administered to new second year students of the Humanities Faculty, as has been done in the case of the Faculty of Commerce. The Departments covered by this study under the Faculty of Humanities comprise the Departments of History, Philosophy and Linguistics. The study intended to identify the language needs, wants and lacks of the freshmen Humanities students in order to provide course designers with the necessary basis for designing an adequate EAP course that meets the learners' needs.

The data has been presented in table form for easy reference and frequency counts and percentages have been used to describe the findings and data analyses.

5.2 Overview of skills needed and difficulties encountered

The students' perceptions regarding the four language skills, how frequently they would have to use the language skills during their studies; the degree of difficulty they faced in using the skills; the importance of the skills for their academic success as well as future career needs, are presented in this section.

5.2.1 Frequency of use of the language skills

Firstly the frequency of use of the four skills was established. The findings are presented in Figure 5.1

Figure 5.1 The frequency that the participants are expected to use the language skills in their course of study

Significant findings from Figure 5.1 are that:
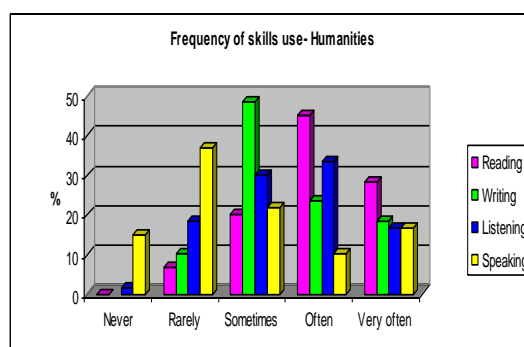
– 50% students "rarely" or "never" speak

– 50% students "often" or "very often" listen

– >70% "often" or "very often" read

– 40%) "often" or "very often"

write The low frequencies obtained for speaking and writing may be attributed to the fact that the medium of instruction at the Humanities Faculty is predominantly Bangla so the students do not need to speak or write in English. However most texts are in English and most lecturers frequently code switch which may explain the higher reading and listening frequencies.

5.2.2 Difficulty faced in the language skills

The difficulty that students faced whilst using the language skills was explored next. Figure 5.2 summarizes the findings:

Figure 5.2 The frequency of difficulty faced by students in using the English language skills

From Figure 5.2 it is seen that: 40% students "rarely-never" faced difficulty in reading but 45% "sometimes" did; >40% "rarely-never" had difficulty in writing but 38.4% "often-very often" had difficulty; and 38.3% "sometimes" did; 36.7% students "rarely-never" had difficulty in listening but 36.7% "often-very often" and 26.7% "sometimes" had difficulty; lastly many students (55%) "often-very often" faced difficulty in speaking, compared to 25% who "never-rarely" faced difficulty. The findings on the whole indicate that all the skills are difficult for Humanities students.
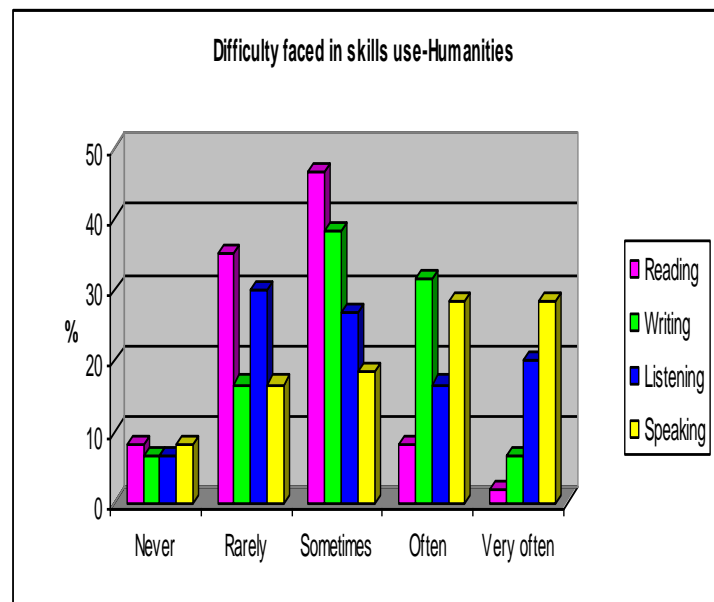
5.2.3 Perceived importance of the skills for academic success

Next the students' opinion of the importance of the English language skills for their academic success was established. Figure 5.3 discloses the findings:

Figure 5.3 Students' perception of the importance of the skills in relation to academic success

It is noticeable from Figure 5.3 that the majority (66.7-96.6%) perceived all the skills to be "important" for their academic success, but 33.4% felt speaking was "not important"; and 15% felt listening was "not important". The medium of instruction in this Faculty is mainly Bangla with some intermittent English phrases and probably

Importance of skills for academic success-Humanities

students do not have to speak much so some students perceive listening and speaking as not important for their academic success.
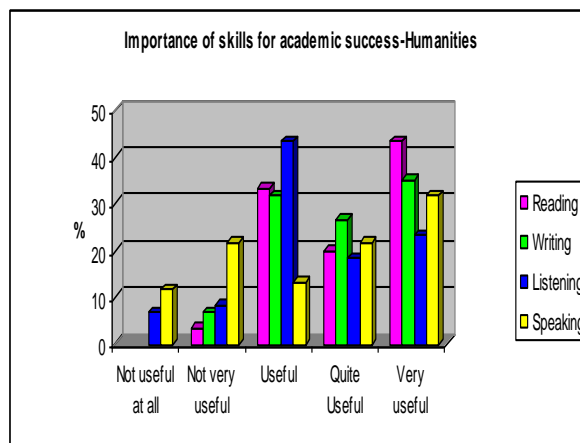
5.2.4 Perceived importance of the skills after graduation

The students' perception of the importance of the English language skills after their graduation was examined. Figure 5.4 presents the findings:

Figure 5.4 The students' perception of the importance of the language skills after their graduation

Figure 5.4 demonstrates that the undisputed majority (95-100%) perceived all the skills to be "useful" for their future careers, this is in agreement with the trend noticed earlier in the case of the Business Studies Faculty.

Importance of skills after graduation-Humanities
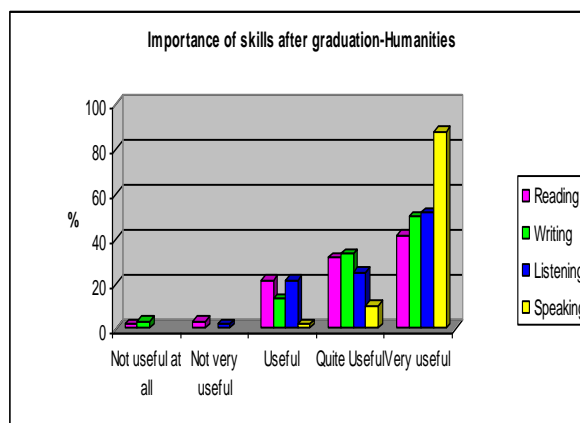
5.3 Overview of frequency of use of the language sub-skills

The findings vis-à-vis the language sub-skills that the freshmen Humanities students most frequently need to use during their studies is presented in the following sub-sections.

5.3.1 Frequency of the different types of reading materials students are expected to read

Information was elicited about the types of reading materials the students were expected to frequently read. Table 5.1 displays the results:

Table 5.1 Frequency of the different types of reading materials students are expected to read

	Never **N (%)**	**Sometimes** **N %**	**Often – Always** **N %**
Newspapers	1 (1.7)	4 (6.7)	55 (91.7)
Magazines	2 (3.3)	13 (21.7)	45 (75)
Novels/storybooks	7 (11.7)	31 (51.7)	22 (36.7)
Reference books/Journals	3 (5)	7 (11.7)	50 (83.3)
Textbooks	1 (1.7)	5 (8.3)	54 (90)
Selected chapters of books	3 (5)	9 (15)	48 (80)
Photocopied notes	5 (8.3)	18 (30)	37 (61.7)
Reports/proposals	8 (13.3)	25 (41.7)	27 (45)
Workbook/Lab instructions	15 (25)	25 (41.7)	20 (33.3)
Online/internet materials	6 (10)	13 (21.7)	41 (68.3)

All figures within parentheses are in percentages

As observed from Table 5.1 most students "often-always" read:

- newspapers (>90%)   - textbooks (90%)
- reference books or journals (>80%)   - selected chapters of books (80%)
- magazines (75%)   - photocopied notes (61.7%)
- internet materials (68.3%)

5.3.2 Frequency of the different types of writing tasks students are expected to write

The types of writing tasks the students are expected to frequently write was investigated. The findings are presented in Table 5.2:

Table 5.2 Frequency of the different types of writing tasks students are expected to write

	Never N %	Sometimes N %	Often-Always N %
Taking lecture notes	4 (6.7)	15 (25)	41 (68.3)
Writing tutorial assignments/term papers	3 (5)	22 (36.7)	35 (58.3)
Writing exams/in-course essays	11 (18.3)	18 (30)	31 (51.7)
Summarizing	7 (11.7)	22 (36.7)	31 (51.7)
Paraphrasing	10 (16.7)	23 (38.3)	27 (45)
Editing/proof-reading/revising	17 (28.3)	18 (30)	25 (41.7)
Translating	3 (5)	17 (28.3)	40 (66.6)
Writing proposals/project papers	15 (25)	17 (28.3)	22 (36.7)
Writing research papers	17 (28.3)	17 (28.3)	26 (43.3)
Writing reports/lab reports	22 (36.7)	18 (30)	20 (33.3)
Preparing flow-charts/tables	20 (33.3)	19 (31.7)	21 (35)
Writing case studies	24 (40)	15 (25)	21 (35)
Writing business letters	11 (18.3)	24 (40)	25 (41.7)
Writing resumes	1 (1.7)	17 (28.3)	42 (70)
Writing references	3 (5)	15 (25)	42 (70)
Writing introductions	3 (5)	19 (31.7)	38 (63.3)
Writing commentaries	10 (16.7)	20 (33.3)	30 (50)
Writing news article/features	17 (28.3)	18 (30)	25 (41.7)
Writing e-mails	13 (21.7)	7 (11.7)	40 (66.6)
Creative writing	8 (13.3)	22 (36.7)	30 (50)
Essay writing	5 (8.3)	23 (38.3)	32 (53.3)

All figures within parentheses are in percentages

As seen from Table 5.2 the students "often-always" write:

references	(70%)	resumes	(70%)
lecture notes	(68.4%)	translations	(66.7%)
e-mails	(66.6%)	introductions	(63.3%)
tutorial assignments and term papers	(58.3%)	essays	(53.4%)
exams or in-course essays	(51.7%)	summaries	(51.6%)

Writing resumes, essays, references, introductions and creative writing, are part of their compulsory ELT courses. Unlike the Business students or Science students Humanities students usually write in their mother tongue as the medium of instruction for this Faculty is Bangla and students, who write in English, do so only by choice.

5.3.3 Frequency of the different types of listening tasks students are expected to perform

Next the types of listening tasks that the students frequently engaged in were probed into. Table 5.3 depicts the findings:

Table 5.3 Frequency of the different types of listening tasks students are expected to perform

	Never N %	Sometimes N %	Often-always N %
Listen to & understand lectures & notes	1 (1.7)	18 (30)	41 (68.3)
Listen to & carry out instructions/directions	3 (5)	11 (18.3)	46 (76.7)
Listen to & understand class/tutorial discussions	3 (5)	12 (20)	45 (75)
Listen to & understand questions/points raised during class/tutorials	3 (5)	9 (15)	48 (80)
Listen to & answer questions in class/tutorials	4 (6.7)	17 (28.3)	39 (65)
Listen to & understand seminars & talks	6 (10)	19 (31.7)	35 (58.3)
Listen to & understand television programs	2 (3.3)	20 (33.3)	38 (63.3)
Listen to & understand radio programs	2 (3.3)	21 (35)	37 (61.7)
Listen to & understand different English accents	10 (16.7)	19 (31.7)	31 (51.7)

All figures within parentheses are in percentages

As observed from Table 5.3 students "often" listen to and:

- carry out instructions or directions
- understand questions or points raised during class or tutorials
- understand lectures and notes
- understand television programs
- understand class or tutorial discussions
- (75-80%)
- answer questions in class or tutorials
- understand radio programs - (61.7-68.3%)

It must be noted that lectures are mostly in Bangla interspersed with English phrases and technical terms.

5.3.4 Frequency of the different types of speaking tasks students are expected to Perform

Lastly the types of speaking tasks that students engaged in and the frequency of these tasks was explored. Table 5.4 illustrates the results:

Table 5.4 Frequency of the different types of speaking tasks students are expected to perform

	Never N %	Sometimes N %	Often-always N %
Asking questions	3 (5%)	25 (41.7%)	32 (53.3)
Answering questions	4 (6.7%)	21 (35%)	35 (58.3)
Expressing opinions /objections	6 (10%)	21 (35%)	33 (55)
Delivering oral presentations /reports	9 (15%)	23 (38.3%)	28 (46.7)
Explaining processes /procedures	14 (23.3%)	25 (41.7%)	21 (35)
Brainstorming	10 (16.7%)	21 (35%)	29 (48.3)
Taking part in class/tutorial /group discussions	3 (5%)	27 (45%)	30 (50)
Taking part in social conversations	8 (13.3%)	21 (35%)	31 (51.7)
Speaking with other fluent speakers of English	10 (16.7%)	22 (36.7%)	28 (46.7)

*All figures within parentheses are in percentages

As observed from Table 5.4 the majority of the students "often-always":

− answer questions (58.3%)   − express opinions or objections (55%)

− ask questions (53.3%)   − take part in social conversations (51.6%)

− take part in class or tutorial or group discussions (50%)

Moreover considerable numbers (35-41.7%) "sometimes", engage in all of these tasks.

5.4 Perception of English language sub-skills difficulties

The findings for degree of difficulty that students encountered while using the sub-skills are presented in the following sub-sections.

5.4.1 Perception of reading sub-skills difficulties

The difficulty faced in reading was explored first. The results are shown in Table 5.5:

Table 5.5 Students' perception of the reading sub-skills difficulties

	Very difficult N %	Sometimes difficult N %	Not so difficult-very easy N %
Newspapers	4 (6.7)	28 (46.7)	28 (46.7)
Magazines	3 (5)	30 (50)	27 (45)
Novels/storybooks	9 (15)	23 (38.3)	28 (46.7)
Reference books/Journals	4 (6.7)	26 (43.3)	30 (50)
Textbooks	6 (10)	15 (25)	39 (65)
Selected chapters of books	4 (6.7)	20 (33.3)	36 (60)
Photocopied notes	6 (10)	13 (21.7)	41 (68.3)
Reports/proposals	9 (15)	24 (40)	27 (45)
Workbook/Lab instructions	16 (26.7)	21 (355)	23 (38.3)
Online/internet materials	11 (18.3)	21 (35)	28 (46.7)

All figures within parentheses are in percentages

As observed from Table 5.5, the majority (38.3-68.3%) do not face difficulty with most of the reading sub-skills. But a considerable number (21.7-50%) of students "sometimes" face difficulty with all the sub-

skills, which can be interpreted to mean that the reading sub-skills pose some level of difficulty to students.

5.4.2 Perception of writing sub-skills difficulties

Next the difficulty faced in writing was examined. Table 5.6 provides an account of the findings:

Table 5.6 Students' perception of the writing sub-skills difficulties

	Very difficult N %	Sometimes difficult N %	Not so difficult-very eas N %
Taking lecture notes	4 (6.7)	24 (40)	32 (53.3)
Writing tutorial assignments/term papers	3 (5)	21 (35)	36 (60)
Writing exams/in-course essays	7 (11.7)	18 (30)	35 (58.3)
Summarizing	8 (13.3)	24 (40)	28 (46.7)
Paraphrasing	10 (16.7)	26 (43.3)	24 (40)
Editing/proof-reading/revising	15 (25)	22 (36.7)	23 (38.3)
Translating	3 (5)	25 (41.7)	32 (53.3)
Writing proposals/project papers	17 (28.3)	22 (36.7)	21 (35)
Writing research papers	21 (35)	26 (43.3)	13 (21.7)
Writing reports/lab reports	22 (36.7)	19 (31.7)	19 (31.7)
Preparing flow-charts/tables	19 (31.7)	19 (31.7)	22 (36.7)
Writing case studies	21 (35)	18 (30)	21 (35)
Writing business letters	7 (11.7)	19 (31.7)	34 (56.7)
Writing resumes	3 (5)	13 (21.7)	44 (73.3)
Writing references	2 (3.3)	15 (25)	43 (71.7)
Writing introductions	6 (10)	16 (26.7)	38 (63.3)
Writing commentaries	17 (28.3)	21 (35)	22 (36.7)
Writing news article/features	12 (20)	21 (35)	27 (45)
Writing e-mails	7 (11.7)	9 (15)	44 (73.3)
Creative writing	14 (23.3)	15 (25)	31 (51.7)
Essay writing	4 (6.7)	18 (30)	38 (63.3)

All figures within parentheses are in percentages

Although the majority (35-73.3%) did not face difficulty with the sub-skills, a number of students (15-43.3%) "sometimes" faced difficulty in the writing sub-skills and some students (10-36.7%) perceived some writing sub-skills as "very difficult", thus it may be deduced from these findings that writing sub-skills are to some degree difficult for students of this faculty. However it must be kept in mind that the students of this faculty do not have to frequently write in English.

5.4.3 Perception of listening sub-skills difficulties

A summary of the results of difficulty encountered in listening is presented in Table 5.7:

Table 5.7 Students' perception of the listening sub-skills difficulties

	Very difficult N %	Sometimes difficult N %	Not so difficult-very easy N %
Listen to & understand lectures & notes	4 (6.7)	24 (40)	32 (53.3)
Listen to & carry out instructions/directions	6 (10)	21 (35)	33 (55)
Listen to & understand class/tutorial discussions	2 (3.3)	17 (28.3)	41 (68.3)
Listen to & understand questions/points raised during class /tutorials	5 (8.3)	19 (31.7)	36 (60)
Listen to & answer questions in class/tutorials	7 (11.7)	19 (31.7)	34 (56.7)
Listen to & understand seminars & talks	4 (6.7)	25 (41.7)	31 (51.7)
Listen to & understand television programs	1 (1.7)	26 (43.3)	33 (55)
Listen to & understand radio programs	5 (8.3)	26 (43.3)	21 (35)
Listen to & understand different English accents	14 (23.3)	27 (45)	19 (31.7)

All figures within parentheses are in percentages

From Table 5.7 it is noted that most students (51.7-68.3%) find the listening sub-skills "quite easy". However as many students (28.3-45%) "sometimes" find the sub-skills difficult these sub-skills may be considered somewhat difficult.

5.4.4 Perception of speaking sub-skills difficulties

Table (5.8) illustrates the results for the difficulty faced in speaking:

Table 5.8 Students' perception of the speaking sub-skills difficulties

	Very difficult… N %	Sometimes difficult N %	Not so difficult-very easy N %
Asking questions	3 (5%)	21 (35%)	36 (60)
Answering questions	3 (5%)	20 (33.3%)	37 (61.7)
Expressing opinions /objections	4 (6.7%)	27 (45%)	28 (46.7)
Delivering oral presentations /reports	12 (20%)	25 (41.7%)	23 (38.3)
Explaining processes /procedures	11 (18.3%)	29 (48.3%)	20 (33.3)
Brainstorming	4 (6.7%)	36 (60%)	20 (33.3)
Taking part in class/tutorial /group discussions	3 (5%)	24 (40%)	33 (55)
Taking part in social conversations	5 (8.3%)	26 (43.3%)	29 (48.3)
Speaking with other fluent speakers of English	9 (15%)	30 (50%)	21 (35)

All figures within parentheses are in percentages

From Table 5.8 it seems on the whole that many students (46.7-61.7%) perceived the speaking sub-skills as "quite easy", however a number of students (15-20%) perceived the sub-skills as "very difficult" and a lot of students (33.3-60%) perceived them as "sometimes difficult" so it may be surmised that the speaking sub-skills are generally difficult.

5.5 Overview of the students' perception of their ability in the language sub-Skills

The findings for the students' perception of their own ability in handling the sub-skills are discussed in detail in the following sub-sections.

5.5.1 Perceived Reading Ability of Freshmen Humanities Students

Table 5.9 displays the findings for the students' perceived ability in the reading sub-skills:

Table 5.9 Ability in reading sub-skills

	Very weak-Weak N %	Average N %	Good-very good N %
Reading a text quickly to get a general idea of its content	7 (11.7)	31 (51.7)	22 (36.7)
Looking through a text quickly to find specific information	12 (20)	26 (43.3)	22 (36.7)
Guessing the meanings of unknown words from their context	12 (20)	38 (63.3)	10 (16.7)
Understanding the main points of a text	10 (16.7)	23 (38.3)	27 (45)
Reading a text slowly & carefully to understand the details of the text	5 (8.3)	20 (33.3)	35 (58.3)
Reading to respond critically	26 (43.3)	29 (48.3)	5 (8.3)
Understanding a writer's attitude & purpose	17 (28.3)	32 (53.3)	11 (18.3)
Understand & interpret charts, graphs, tables	14 (23.3)	25 (41.7)	21 (35)
General comprehension	8 (13.3)	31 (51.7)	21 (35)

All figures within parentheses are in percentages

From Table 5.9 it is seen that, the majority (56.6-91.7%) claim to be "average-very good" at the reading sub-skills. But some students are "weak" at: looking through a text quickly to find specific information (20%); guessing the meanings of unknown words from their context (20%); reading to respond critically (43.3%); understanding a writer's attitude and purpose (28.4%); and understanding and interpreting charts, graphs, tables (23.4%); thus indicating some weakness in reading.

5.5.2 Perceived Writing Ability of Freshmen Humanities Students

Table 5.10 illustrates the findings for the students' ability in the writing sub-skills:

Table 5.10 Ability in writing sub-skills

	Weak-very weak N %	Average… N %	Good-very good. N %
Using correct punctuation & spelling	7 (11.6)	38 (63.3%)	15 (25)
Structuring sentences	13 (21.7)	32 (53.3%)	15 (25)
Using appropriate vocabulary	19 (31.7)	29 (48.3%)	12 (20)
Organizing paragraphs	20 (33.3)	26 (43.3%)	14 (23.3)
Organizing the overall assignment	19 (31.7)	33 (55%)	8 (13.3)
Expressing ideas appropriately	18 (30)	24 (40%)	18 (30)
Developing ideas	17 (28.3)	25 (41.7%)	18 (30)
Expressing what you want to say clearly	12 (20)	28 (46.7%)	20 (33.3)
Addressing the topic	16 (26.7)	27 (45%)	17 (28.3)
Adopting appropriate tone & style	25 (41.7)	24 (40%)	11 (18.3)
Following instructions & directions	19 (31.7)	23 (38.3%)	18 (30)
Evaluating & revising your writing	13 (21.7)	27 (45%)	20 (33.3)
Overall writing ability	11 (18.3)	27 (45%)	22 (36.7)
Completing written tasks	16 (26.7)	25 (41.7%)	19 (31.7)

All figures within parentheses are in percentages

From Table 5.10 it is seen that, the majority (58.4-88.3%) claim to be "average –very good" however many students claim to be "weak" at using appropriate vocabulary (31.7%); organizing paragraphs (33.3%); organizing the overall assignment (31.7%); expressing ideas appropriately (30.4%); adopting appropriate tone and style (41.6%); and following instructions & directions (31.6%) thus indicating some weakness in the writing sub-skills.

5.5.3 Perceived Listening Ability of Freshmen Humanities Students

Table 5.11 presents the results for the students' ability in the listening sub-skills:

Table 5.11 Ability in listening sub-skills

	Weak-very weak N %	Average.. N %	Good-very good N %
Listen to & understand lectures & notes	5 (8.3)	36 (60)	19 (--)
Listen to & carry out instructions/directions	15 (25)	29 (48.3)	16 (26.7)
Listen to & understand class/tutorial discussions	7 (11.7)	29 (48.3)	24 (40)
Listen to & understand questions/points raised during class /tutorials	10 (16.7)	30 (50)	20 (33.3)
Listen to & answer questions in class/tutorials	10 (16.7)	32 (53.3)	18 (30)
Listen to & understand seminars & talks	16 (26.7)	32 (53.3)	12 (20)
Listen to & understand television programs	9 (15)	33 (55)	18 (30)
Listen to & understand radio programs	12 (20)	26 (43.3)	22 (36.7)
Listen to & understand different English accents	17 (28.3)	33 (55)	10 (16.7)

All figures within parentheses are in percentages

From Table 5.11 it appears that, though the majority (71.6-91.7%), claim to be "average-very good" there are many who are "weak" at: listening to and carrying out instructions or directions (25%); listening to and understanding seminars and talks (26.6%); listening to and understanding radio programs (20%); and listening to and understanding different English accents (28.4%); indicating some weakness in listening sub-skills.

5.5.4 Perceived Speaking Ability of Freshmen Humanities Students

Finally the researcher gauged the students' ability in the speaking sub-skills. Table 5.12 depicts the findings:

Table 5.12 Ability in speaking sub-skills

	Weak-very weak N %	Average.. N %	Good-very good N %
Asking questions	12 (20)	33 (55)	15 (25)
Answering questions	13 (21.7)	33 (55)	14 (23.3)
Expressing opinions/objections	10 (16.7)	37 (61.7)	13 (21.7)
Delivering oral presentations/reports	21 (35)	30 (50)	9 (15)
Explaining processes/procedures	26 (43.3)	26 (43.3)	8 (13.3)
Brainstorming	22 (36.7)	31 (51.7)	7 (11.7)
Taking part in class/tutorial/group discussions	15 (25)	28 (46.7)	17 (28.3)
Taking part in social conversations	17 (28.3)	24 (40)	19 (--)
Speaking with other fluent speakers of English	23 (38.3)	25 (41.7)	12 (20)

All figures within parentheses are in percentages

Though the majority (56.7-83.3%) rated themselves as "average-very good", many students claimed to be "weak" at: delivering oral presentations or reports (35%); explaining processes or procedures (43.3%); brainstorming (36.7%); taking part in class or tutorial or group discussions (25%); taking part in social conversations (28.3%); and speaking with other fluent speakers of English (38.3%), thus suggesting weakness in the speaking sub-skills.

5.5.5 Discrepancy between Perceived ability and Difficulty encountered in the sub-skills

Comparison of the students' perceptions of ability and difficulty faced in the sub-skills revealed the following discrepancies:

- Reading - Difficulty - (10-26.7%); Ability - (20-43.3%);
- Writing - Difficulty - (10-36.7%); Ability - (30.4 - 41.6%);
- Listening - Difficulty - (10-23.3%); Ability - (20-28.4%);
- Speaking - Difficulty - (15-20%); Ability - (25-43.3%).

Thus it can be said that students are unable to accurately assess their ability and the degree of difficulty.

5.6 Overview of the students' perceptions about Grammar

Figure 5.5 shows the results for how often the students did grammar based tasks:

Figure 5.5 Frequency of doing grammar based tasks

It is seen from Figure 5.5 that most students (90%) frequently do grammar tasks as the English courses include remedial grammar.
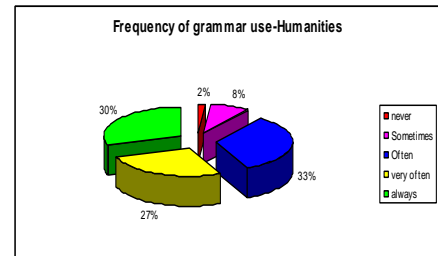
Figure 5.6 presents the results for the difficulty students faced in doing grammar tasks:

Figure 5.6 Difficulty faced by students in doing grammar-based tasks

From Figure 5.6 it is seen that mainly students (57%) find grammar tasks "difficult" but a number of students (43%) find it easy.
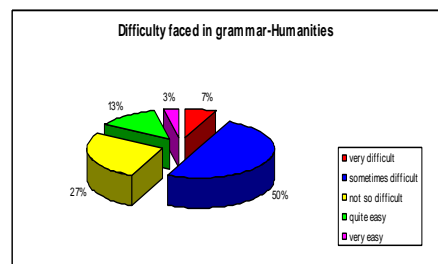
The degree of importance students attach to learning grammar is shown in Figure 5.7:

Figure 5.7 Students' perception of the importance of learning grammar

It is seen that the majority of student (98%) felt learning grammar is important; perhaps because they equate doing grammar with learning English.
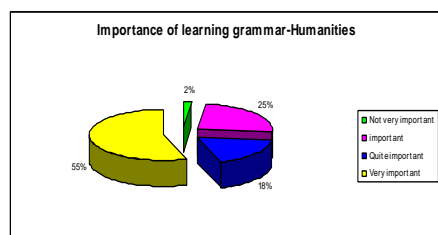
Figure 5.8 displays the findings for students' assessment of their own ability in handling grammar tasks:

Figure 5.8 Students' ability in handling grammar based tasks

It is seen that 93% students feel they are "average-very good" in grammar. Thus a big discrepancy is found as 57% student found grammar "difficult" whereas 93% felt they are "average-very good" in grammar.
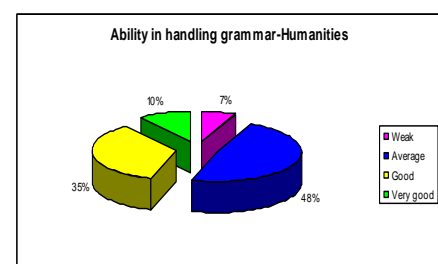
5.7 Overview of course usefulness and learning

Table 5.13 illustrates the results for the usefulness of the course in helping students prepare for their studies:

Table 5.13 Usefulness of the course

	%
Disagree	1.7
not sure	6.7
Agree	40
Strongly agree	51.7

Note: Data is presented in percentages (%)

Notably, the majority of students (91.7%) felt the course helped them prepare for their studies.

Table 5.14 illustrates the results for the learning and usefulness of the course:

Table 5.14 Learning & usefulness of course

	Never	**Sometimes**	**Often**
I learned a lot about English language usage from using the course materials	1.7	40	58.3
My English has improved as a result of the activities done in class		26.7	73.3
The course will be useful for my studies		15	85
The course will be useful for my future career		10	90
I feel more confident about using English in my studies		20	80
I feel confident about using English for my career purposes		16.7	83.3

Note: Data is presented in percentages (%)

It is observed that the majority of the students felt that the course had helped them in all of the above mentioned.

Table 5.15 presents the findings for the effectiveness of the course in terms of whether there was any noticeable change in the students' use of the skills before and after doing the course

Table 5.15 Distribution of skills use frequencies before and after the course

	Reading		Writing		Listening		Speaking	
	Pre C	**Post C**	**Pre C**	**Post C**	**Pre C**	**Post C**	**Pre C**	**Post C**
Never	5.0	1.7	10.0	1.7	5.0	0	6.7	3.3
Sometimes	36.7	15.0	45.0	28.3	36.7	26.7	41.7	30.0
Often	25.0	36.7	23.3	43.3	33.3	30.0	30.0	31.7
very often	16.7	26.7	13.3	18.3	18.3	28.3	18.3	21.7
Always	16.7	20.0	8.3	8.3	6.7	15.0	3.3	13.3

Note: Data is presented in percentages (%)

The following changes were observed from Table 5.15:

- increase from 58.4% to 83.4% for students who "often-always" read
- increase from 36.6% to 61.6% for students who "often-always" write
- increase from 25% to 43.3% for students who "often-always" listen
- increase from 51.6% to 66.7% for students who "often-always" speak

Based on these findings it may be concluded that the course has helped students improve in all the skills.

5.8 Overview of course difficulty

Table 5.16 presents the findings for the difficulty the students faced in following the course in class:

Table 5.16 Difficulty faced by students in following the course in class

	Never	**Sometimes**	**Often**
The discussions in class were difficult for me	8.3	56.7	35
The language of the course book/handout/materials were difficult for me	6.7	53.3	40
The tasks and activities were difficult for me to do	6.7	53.3	40
I had difficulty in completing the given work on time in class	8.3	65	35

Note: Data is presented in percentages (%)

From Table 5.16 it is seen that It is noteworthy that the majority (53.3-65%) of the students "sometimes" faced difficulty and many students (35-40%) "often" faced difficulty with all of the above. Thus it maybe surmised that the course; course materials and tasks are difficult for the students. This is a matter that needs to be addressed in future course design.

5.9 Overview of the prevalent teaching styles and the teaching styles preferred by students

The findings for the classroom teaching styles being used, and the frequency of use of the different teaching styles are illustrated in Table 5.17:

Table 5.17 Frequency of the different classroom teaching styles being used

	Never.. N %	Sometimes N %	Often… N %
Lecturing	1 (1.7)	23 (38.3)	36 (60)
Teacher asking questions & students answering	3 (5)	30 (50)	27 (45)
Group discussions with teacher as facilitator	4 (6.7)	28 (46.7)	28 (46.7)
Students given work & working independently out of class	5 (8.3)	32 (53.3)	23 (38.3)
Student presentations	8 (13.3)	38 (63.3)	14 (23.3)
Students silently doing written work in class	9 (15)	36 (60)	15 (25)
Using drama music role plays games	5 (8.3)	37 (61.7)	18 (30)
Group or pair work	13 (21.7)	29 (48.3)	18 (30)

All figures within parentheses are in percentages

From Table 5.17 it is seen that the most frequently used teaching style is: lecturing (60%).

The results for the students' opinions regarding which classroom teaching styles were more helpful are illustrated in Table 5.18:

Table 5.18 Students' preferences of teaching styles

	Not very helpful. **N %**	**A bit helpful..** **N %**	**Quite helpful..** **N %**
Lecturing	4 (6.7)	11 (18.3)	45 (75)
Teacher asking questions & students answering	2 (3.3)	5 (8.3)	53 (88.3)
Group discussions with teacher as facilitator	2 (3.3)	7 (11.7)	51 (85)
Students given work & working independently out of class	4 (6.7)	14 (23.3)	42 (70)
Student presentations	2 (3.3)	11 (18.3)	47 (78.3)
Students silently doing written work in class	17 (28.3)	13 (21.7)	30 (50)
Using drama music role plays games	8 (13.3)	13 (21.7)	39 (65)
Group or pair work	5 (8.3)	11 (18.3)	44 (73.3)
Students doing practical fieldwork	5 (8.3)	9 (15)	46 (76.7)

All figures within parentheses are in percentages

From Table 5.18 it appears that the students preferred the following teaching styles:

− teacher asking questions and students answering (88.3%)

− group discussions with teacher as facilitator (85%)

− student presentations (78.3%)

− group or pair work (73.3%)

− students doing practical fieldwork (76.7%)

− lecturing (75%)

− students given work and working independently out of class (70%)

− using drama, music, role plays, games (65%).

There appears to be a clear disagreement between the students' preferred teaching styles and the prevalent classroom teaching styles thus this matter needs to be addressed.

5.10 Students' suggestions for improving the present course

Table 5.19 illustrates the the suggestions students made for improving the courses:

Table 5.19 Students' suggestions – Humanities

	History N=20	Philosophy N=20	Linguistics N=20
Increased time allocation for Listening	6	18	7
Increased time allocation for Speaking	18	10	23
Increased time allocation for Reading	20	7	11
Increased time allocation for Writing	20	17	19
Increased time allocation for Grammar	6	7	11
Increased time allocation for Vocabulary	-	10	-
Introduction of TV, Internet, Newspaper	9	10	11
Introduction of more practical subject related materials	21	14	11
Introduction of group/pair work	-	7	7

Note: Data is presented in percentages (%)

Students of all three departments of the Humanities Faculty made the following suggestions regarding the present course:

- Increase listening (31%); speaking (51%); reading (38%); writing (56%); grammar (24%)
- Introduce the use of more practical or subject world materials (46%)
- Introduce the use of TV, Internet and newspaper (30%)

These suggestions offer an insight into what the students want from the courses and what they want these courses to be like.

5.11 Humanities Faculty Findings and Discussion Recapitulation

Preliminary findings revealed that:

- most students (70%) "often-very often" read; many students listen (50%) & write (40%) but very few students (25%) speak in English
- many students "sometimes-very often" had difficulty reading (>55%), writing (>75%), listening (>60%) & speaking (>75%).
- most students felt the skills were "useful-very useful" for academic success (66.7-96.6%) & future careers (95-100%).

Exploration of sub-skills use revealed:

- students (60-90%) "often-always" read - read newspapers, textbooks; reference books or journals; selected chapters of books
- students (50-70%) "often-always" wrote–references, resumes; lecture notes, translations, introductions, tutorial assignments & term papers, essays, exams or in-course essays
- students (60-80%) "often-always" listen to & understand questions/points raised during class/tutorials; carry out instructions/directions; class/tutorial discussions; lectures & notes
- students (50-55%) "often-always" answer questions, express opinions or objections, ask questions, take part in class or tutorial or group discussions

It was also found that:

- most students (58.3-90%) felt the course "often-always" fulfilled learning & usefulness objectives
- a tangible increase in students who "always-often" engaged in the skills after doing the course
- the course & course materials may be considered as difficult for students
- a mismatch was found between students' preferences and actual classroom teaching styles

5.12 Findings in relation to research questions

The Humanities students' perceptions of their specific needs were identified, their opinions about the present English course were ascertained, areas requiring improvement were discovered, and students suggested ways of course improvement. These findings will be helpful in future course design.

Chapter Six

Summary of the findings and Discussion for the faculty of Science

6.1 Introduction

The findings gathered through questionnaires administered to new second year students of the Science Faculty are presented and discussed in detail in this chapter. The Departments of Physics, Bio-chemistry and Psychology from the Science Faculty were investigated in order to classify the wants, needs and lacks of the students of the Science Faculty. This information would form the basis of the content specification for the EAP curriculum to be developed as a result of this study. For easy reference the data has been presented in table form and frequency counts and percentages have been used to describe the findings and data analyses.

6.2 Overview of skills needed and difficulties encountered

This section presents the findings for the students' perceptions regarding the four language skills, how frequently they used the language skills during their studies; the degree of difficulty they faced in using the skills; the importance of the skills for their academic success as well as future career needs.

6.2.1 Frequency of use of the language skills

The researcher attempted to establish how frequently the participants used the four language skills in the course of their studies. Figure 6.1 depicts the findings:

Figure 6.1 The frequency that the participants are expected to use the language skills
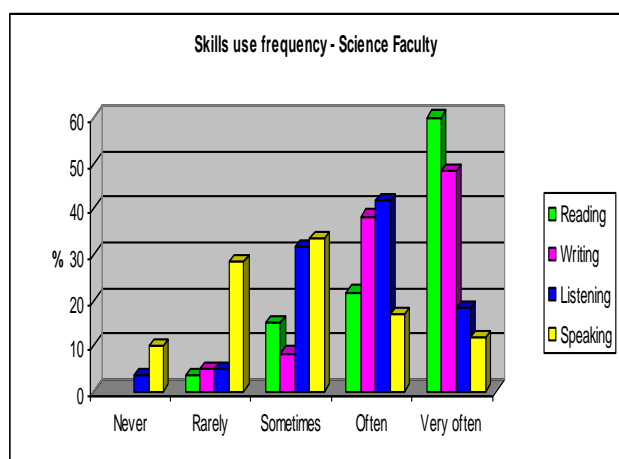
Significant findings from Figure 6.1 are that:

- 86.6% "often-very often" write   - 81.7% "often-very often" read
- 60% "often-very often" listen   - 28.4% "often-very often" speak

The high reading and writing frequencies may be because the medium of instruction at the Science Faculty is officially stated as English and all texts are in English. The slightly lower listening frequency is perhaps because the teachers code-switch. As students cannot be forced to speak in English compulsorily the speaking frequencies are strikingly low.

6.2.2 Difficulty faced in the language skills

The degree of difficulty faced in these skills is illustrated in Figure 6.2:

Figure 6.2 The frequency of difficulty faced by students in using the English language skills

Significant findings from Figure 6.2 are that:

25% "often-very often" faced difficulty in listening

30% "often-very often" faced difficulty writing

23.3% "often-very often" faced difficulty in reading

Moreover many students (23.3-46.7%) "sometimes" faced difficulty in all the skills. Thus apart from reading all the skills may be considered difficult for Science students.
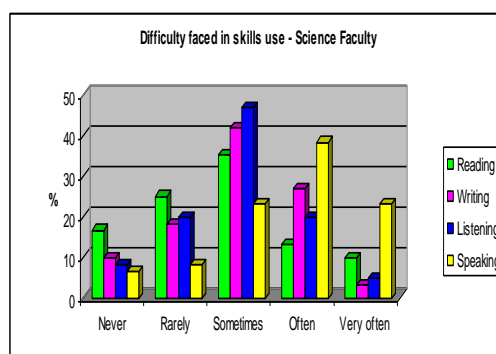
6.2.3 Perceived importance of the skills for academic success

Figure 6.3 presents the results for the perceived importance of the skills for the students' academic success:

Figure 6.3 Students' perception of the importance of the skills in relation to academic success

Significantly students mainly (91.7-100%) perceived all the skills to be "useful-very useful" for academic success. As English is the medium of instruction in this Faculty, and all texts are in English, thus students perceive all the skills as important for academic success.
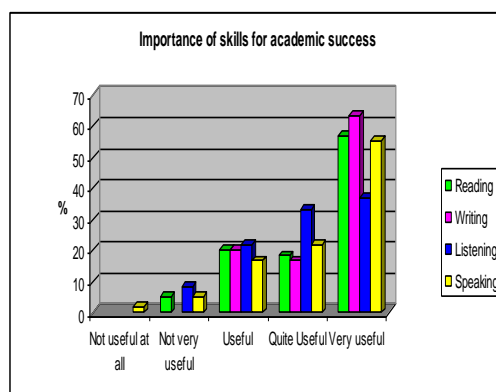
6.2.4 Perceived importance of the skills after graduation

The findings for the perceived importance of the skills for the students' success after their graduation are presented in Figure 6.4:

Figure 6.4 The students' perception of the importance of the language skills after their graduation
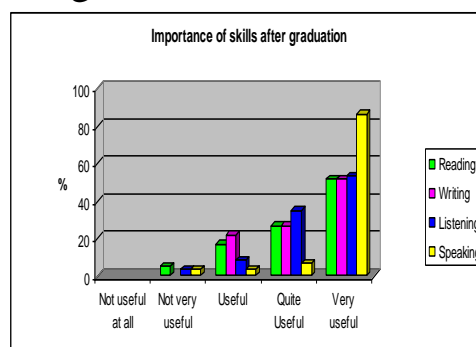
The overwhelming majority of students (95-100%) perceived all the skills to be "useful-very useful" for their future careers. This is in agreement with the trend observed earlier in the investigations of the Business Studies Faculty and the Humanities Faculty.

6.3 Overview of frequency of use of the language sub-skills

The findings for the language sub-skills that the freshmen Science students most frequently need to use during their studies is summarized in the following sub-sections.

6.3.1 Frequency of the different types of reading materials students are expected to read

The frequencies of the different types of reading materials being read by the students are presented in Table 6.1:

Table 6.1 Frequency of the different types of reading materials students are expected to read

	Never N (%)	Sometimes N %	Often-Always N %
Newspapers	3 (5)	12 (20)	45 (75)
Magazines	4 (6.7)	25 (41.7)	31 (51.7)
Novels/storybooks	7 (11.7)	20 (33.3)	33 (55)
Reference books/Journals	1 (1.7)	8 (13.3)	51 (85)
Textbooks	0	0	60 (100)
Selected chapters of books	2 (3.3)	1 (1.7)	57 (95)
Photocopied notes	2 (3.3)	7 (11.7)	51 (85)
Reports/proposals	4 (6.7)	15 (25)	41 (68.3)
Workbook/Lab instructions	2 (3.3)	9 (15)	49 (81.7)
Online/internet materials	5 (8.3)	12 (20)	43 (71.6)

All figures within parentheses are in percentages

As observed from Table 6.1 most students "often-always" read:

− textbooks (100%)   − selected chapters of books (95%)

−referencebooks/journals/photoco-   − workbook/lab instructions (81.7%)
  pied notes (85%)

− newspapers (75%)   − online or internet materials (71.6%)

− reports or proposals (68.3%)

Thus it is noted that Science Faculty students frequently read a variety of materials.

6.3.2 Frequency of the different types of writing tasks students are expected to write

Table 6.2 reveals the frequency of the various writing tasks engaged in by students

Table 6.2 Frequency of the different types of writing tasks students are expected to write

	Never	Sometimes	Often-Always
Taking lecture notes	0	5 (8.3)	55 (91.6)
Writing tutorial assignments/term papers	0	10 (16.7)	50 (83.3)
Writing exams/in-course essays	5 (8.3)	4 (6.7)	51 (85)
Summarizing	5 (8.3)	12 (20)	43 (71.6)
Paraphrasing	7 (11.7)	9 (15)	44 (73.3)
Editing/proof-reading/revising	6 (10)	12 (20)	42 (70)
Translating	3 (5)	19 (31.7)	38 (63.3)
Writing proposals/project papers	13 (21.7)	12 (20)	35 (58.3)
Writing research papers	17 (28.3)	11 (18.3)	32 (53.3)
Writing reports/lab reports	3 (5)	8 (13.3)	49 (81.6)
Preparing flow-charts/tables	9 (15)	6 (10)	45 (75)

	Never	Sometimes	Often-Always
Writing case studies	16 (26.7)	11 (18.3)	33 (55)
Writing business letters	28 (46.7)	11 (18.3)	21 (35)
Writing resumes	15 (25)	17 (28.3)	28 (46.6)
Writing references	9 (15)	20 (33.3)	31 (51.6)
Writing introductions	9 (15)	16 (26.7)	35 (58.3)
Writing commentaries	14 (23.3)	11 (18.3)	35 (58.3)
Writing news article/features	24 (40)	8 (13.3)	28 (46.7)
Writing e-mails	11 (18.3)	10 (16.7)	39 (65)
Creative writing	12 (20)	16 (26.7)	32 (53.3)
Essay writing	2 (3.3)	15 (25)	43 (71.6)

All figures within parentheses are in percentages

It appears from Table 6.3 shows that most of the students (46.7-91.6%) "often-always" engage in a variety of writing tasks but the most frequent ones are:

- lecture notes   - exams or in-course essays

- tutorial assignments or papers   - reports or lab reports

- flow-charts or tables

From the findings it may be said that the frequently engaged in writing tasks are those that are particularly required for the Science Faculty.

6.3.3 Frequency of the different types of listening tasks students are expected to perform

Table 6.3 presents the frequency of the various listening tasks engaged in:

Table 6.3 Frequency of the different types of listening tasks students are expected to perform

	Never	Sometimes	Often-Always
Listen to & understand lectures & notes	2 (3.3)	8 (13.3)	50 (83.3)
Listen to & carry out instructions/directions	1 (3.3)	5 (8.3)	54 (90)
Listen to & understand class/tutorial discussions		2 (3.3)	58 (96.6)
Listen to & understand questions/points raised during class/tutorials	2 (3.3)	8 (13.3)	50 (83.3)
Listen to & answer questions in class/tutorials	4 (6.7)	13 (21.7)	43 (71.6)
Listen to & understand seminars & talks	3 (5)	17 (28.3)	40 (66.6)
Listen to & understand television programs	3 (5)	9 (15)	48 (80)
Listen to & understand radio programs	13 (21.7)	16 (26.7)	31 (51.6)
Listen to & understand different English accents	5 (8.3)	23 (38.3)	32 (53.3)

All figures within parentheses are in percentages

It is seen that the majority of the students (51.6-96.6%) "often-always" engaged in all of the listening tasks. The most frequent listening tasks were listening to and understanding:

- questions or points raised during class or tutorials   - lectures and notes

- class or tutorial discussions   - television programs

- carrying out instructions or directions

6.3.4 Frequency of the different types of speaking tasks students are expected to perform

The findings for frequency of use of the speaking sub-skills are revealed in Table 6.4:

Table 6.4 Frequency of the different types of speaking tasks students are expected to perform

	Never	Sometimes	Often-Always
Asking questions	5 (8.3)	28 (46.7)	27 (45)
Answering questions	2 (3.3)	24 (40)	34 (56.6)
Expressing opinions/objections	7 (11.7)	19 (31.7)	34 (56.6)
Delivering oral presentations /reports	10 (16.7)	22 (36.7)	28 (46.6)
Explaining processes/procedures	6 (10)	23 (38.3)	31 (51.6)
Brainstorming	10 (16.7)	18 (30)	32 (53.3)
Taking part in class/tutorial/group discussions	4 (6.7)	18 (30)	38 (63.3)
Taking part in social conversations	8 (13.3)	13 (21.7)	39 (65)
Speaking with other fluent speakers of English	17 (28.3)	17 (28.3)	26 (43.3)

All figures within parentheses are in percentages

Table 6.4 demonstrates that the majority of the students (43.3-65%) "often-always", engaged in all the speaking tasks. Notably the most speaking tasks were:

- taking part in social conversations
- taking part in class or tutorial or group discussions
- expressing opinions or objections
- answering questions

Unusually low frequencies were found for tasks like:

- ask questions
- explain processes or procedures.
- deliver oral presentations or reports

It may be inferred that students did not always speak in English, or they spoke in Bangla or avoided speaking altogether; this was corroborated by classroom observations.

6.4 Perception of English language sub-skills difficulties

The findings for the difficulty encountered by students whilst engaging in the various sub-skills are presented in the following sub-sections.

6.4.1 Perception of reading sub-skills difficulties

The results for the difficulty faced in the reading sub-skills are presented in Table 6.5:

Table 6.5 Students' perception of the reading sub-skills difficulties

	Very difficult	Sometimes difficult	Not so difficult- Very easy
Newspapers	5 (8.3)	26 (43.3)	29 (48.3)
Magazines	4 (6.7)	24 (40)	32 (53.3)
Novels/storybooks	6 (10)	29 (48.3)	25 (41.6)
Reference books/Journals	4 (6.7)	18 (30)	38 (63.3)
Textbooks	1 (1.7)	12 (20)	47 (78.3)
Selected chapters of books	1 (1.7)	8 (13.3)	51 (85)
Photocopied notes	5 (8.3)	5 (8.3)	50 (83.3)
Reports/proposals	2 (3.3)	21 (35)	37 (61.6)
Workbook/Lab instructions	2 (3.3)	17 (28.3)	41 (68.3)
Online/internet materials	4 (6.7)	14 (23.3)	42 (70)

All figures within parentheses are in percentages

From Table 6.5 it is seen that the reading sub-skills are considered "not so difficult-very easy" by most students (41.6-85%). However some students (8.3-48.3%) considered the reading sub-skills as "sometimes difficult" which implies some difficulty in reading.

6.4.2 Perception of writing sub-skills difficulties

The results for the difficulty encountered in writing sub-skills are outlined in Table 6.6:

Table 6.6 Students' perception of the writing sub-skills difficulties

	Very difficult	Sometimes difficult	Not so difficult-very easy
Taking lecture notes	1 (1.7)	13 (21.7)	46 (76.6)
Writing tutorial assignments/term papers	1 (1.7)	12 (20)	47 (78.3)
Writing exams/in-course essays	3 (5)	8 (13.3)	49 (81.6)
Summarizing	5 (8.3)	11 (18.3)	44 (73.3)
Paraphrasing	10 (16.7)	16 (26.7)	34 (56.6)
Editing/proof-reading/revising	6 (10)	19 (31.7)	35 (58.3)
Translating	4 (6.7)	14 (23.3)	42 (70)
Writing proposals/project papers	9 (15)	17 (28.3)	34 (56.6)
Writing research papers	12 (20)	14 (23.3)	34 (56.6)
Writing reports/lab reports	2 (3.3)	12 (20)	46 (76.6)
Preparing flow-charts/tables	4 (6.7)	12 (20)	44 (73.3)
Writing case studies	12 (20)	13 (21.7)	35 (58.3)
Writing business letters	16 (26.7)	13 (21.7)	31 (51.6)
Writing resumes	14 (23.3)	11 (18.7)	35 (58.3)
Writing references	5 (8.3)	16 (26.7)	39 (65)
Writing introductions	9 (15)	15 (25)	36 (60)
Writing commentaries	7 (11.7)	15 (25)	38 (63.3)
Writing news article/features	10 (16.7)	19 (31.7)	31 (51.6)
Writing e-mails	8 (13.3)	8 (13.3)	44 (73.3)
Creative writing	7 (11.7)	21 (35)	32 (53.3)
Essay writing	2 (3.3)	13 (21.7)	45 (75)

All figures within parentheses are in percentages

It is seen that the majority of the students (51.6-81.6%) consider the writing tasks "not so difficult-very easy". Notably many students (13.3-31.7%) find core writing sub-skills "sometimes difficult" such as:

– taking lecture notes (21.7%)
– reports or lab reports (20%)
– preparing flow charts or tables (20%)
– exams or in-course essays (20%)
– tutorial assignments or term papers (20%)

This may be an indication that writing sub-skills are difficult for Science Faculty students and this is a point that needs to be addressed.

6.4.3 Perception of listening sub-skills difficulties

Table 6.7 presents the findings for the difficulty encountered in the listening sub-skills

Table 6.7 Students' perception of the listening sub-skills difficulties

	Very difficult	Sometimes difficult	Not so difficult
Listen to & understand lectures & notes	1 (1.7)	16 (26.7)	43 (71.6)
Listen to & carry out instructions/directions	2 (3.3)	13 (21.7)	45 (75)
Listen to & understand class/tutorial discussions	1 (1.7)	12 (20)	47 (78.3)
Listen to & understand questions/points raised during class/tutorials	2 (3.3)	13 (21.7)	45 (75)
Listen to & answer questions in class/tutorials	2 (3.3)	21 (35)	37 (61.6)
Listen to & understand seminars & talks	5 (8.3)	27 (45)	28 (46.6)
Listen to & understand television programs	4 (6.7)	15 (25)	41 (68.3)
Listen to & understand radio programs	7 (11.7)	13 (21.7)	40 (66.6)
Listen to & understand different English accents	8 (13.3)	22 (36.7)	30 (50)

All figures within parentheses are in percentages

It was found that most students (46.6-78.3%) considered the listening sub-skills as "not so difficult-very easy". However since many students (20-45%) faced difficulty in core listening sub-skills such as listening to and:

- answering questions in class or tutorials
- understanding lectures and notes
- questions or points raised during class or tutorials
- clss or tutorial discussions
- carrying out instructions or directions

Thus listening sub-skills are difficult and remedial measures need to be taken.

6.4.4 Perception of speaking sub-skills difficulties

Lastly the difficulties encountered, in the speaking are given in Table 6.8:

Table 6.8 Students' perception of the speaking sub-skills difficulties

	Very difficult	Sometimes difficult	Not so difficult
Asking questions	2 (3.3)	28 (46.7)	30 (50)
Answering questions	4 (6.7)	23 (38.3)	33 (55)
Expressing opinions /objections	4 (6.7)	25 (41.7)	31 (51.6)
Delivering oral presentations /reports	5 (8.3)	26 (43.3)	29 (48.3)
Explaining processes /procedures	5 (8.3)	21 (35)	34 (56.6)
Brainstorming	11 (18.3)	21 (35)	28 (46.6)
Taking part in class/tutorial/group discussions	2 (3.3)	17 (28.3)	41 (68.3)
Taking part in social conversations	6 (10)	22 (36.7)	32 (53.3)
Speaking with other fluent speakers of English	19 (31.7)	17 (28.3)	24 (40)

All figures within parentheses are in percentages

Table 6.8 demonstrates that the majority of the students perceived the speaking sub-skills as "not so difficult-very easy". But the following core listening sub-skills were considered "sometimes difficult-very difficult" by many students (28.3-46.7%):

- taking part in class or tutorial or group discussions

- asking questions   expressing opinions or objections

- answering questions   explaining processes or procedures

So it may be surmised that speaking sub-skills are difficult to a great extent and this is an issue that needs to be remedied.

6.5 Overview of the students' perception of their ability in the language sub-skills

The students' opinion regarding their ability in handling the various sub-skills are discussed in detail in the following sub-sections.

6.5.1 Perceived Reading Ability of Freshmen Science Students

Table 6.9 presents the findings for the students' perceived ability in the reading sub-skills:

Table 6.9 Ability in reading sub-skills

	Very weak-Weak	Average	Good-Very good
Reading a text quickly to get a general idea of its content	8 (13.3)	34 (56.7)	18 (30)
Looking through a text quickly to find specific information	9 (15)	32 (53.3)	19 (31.6)
Guessing the meanings of unknown words from their context	11 (18.3)	21 (35)	28 (46.6)
Understanding the main points of a text	4 (6.7)	27 (45)	29 (48.3)
Reading a text slowly & carefully to understand the details of the text	15 (25)	29 (48.3)	31 (51.6)
Reading to respond critically	13 (21.6)	32 (53.3)	15 (25)
Understanding a writer's attitude & purpose	12 (20)	28 (46.7)	20 (33.3)
Understand & interpret charts, graphs, tables	6 (10)	22 (36.7)	32 (53.3)
General comprehension	2 (3.3)	31 (51.7)	27 (45)

All figures within parentheses are in percentages

From Table 6.9 it is apparent that many students perceived themselves as "average" (35-56.7%) and "good-very good" (25-53.3%). But many students also considered themselves as "weak-very weak" in core reading sub-skills such as:

- reading a text slowly and carefully to understand the details of the text (25%)
- reading to respond critically (21.6%)
- understanding a writer's attitude and purpose (20%)
- guessing the meanings of unknown words from their context (18.3%)

This implies that the students need improvement in the reading sub-skills.

6.5.2 Perceived Writing Ability of Freshmen Science Students

The students' ability in the writing sub-skills are illustrated by Table 6.10:

Table 6.10 Ability in writing sub-skills

	Very weak-Weak	Average	Good-Very good
Using correct punctuation & spelling	5 (8.3)	30 (50)	25 (41.6)
Structuring sentences	5 (8.3)	33 (55)	22 (36.6)
Using appropriate vocabulary	13 (21.6)	28 (46.7)	19 (31.6)
Organizing paragraphs	5 (8.3)	34 (56.7)	21 (35)
Organizing the overall assignment	5 (8.3)	34 (56.7)	21 (35)
Expressing ideas appropriately	11 (18.3)	26 (43.3)	23 (38.3)
Developing ideas	8 (13.3)	28 (46.7)	24 (40)
Expressing what you want to say clearly	9 (15)	24 (40)	27 (45)
Addressing the topic	5 (8.3)	32 (53.3)	23 (38.3)
Adopting appropriate tone & style	16 (26.6)	31 (51.7)	13 (21.6)
Following instructions & directions	4 (6.6)	33 (55)	23 (38.3)
Evaluating & revising your writing	6 (10)	30 (50)	24 (40)
Overall writing ability	6 (10)	29 (48.3)	25 (41.6)
Completing written tasks	8 (13.3)	22 (36.7)	30 (50)

All figures within parentheses are in percentages

Table 6.10 demonstrates that most rated students rated themselves as "average" (36.7-56.7%) and "good-very good" (21.6-50%) in the writing sub-skills. But notably many students rated themselves as "very weak-weak" in core skills such as:

- adopting appropriate tone and style (26.6%)

- using appropriate vocabulary (21.6%)

- expressing ideas appropriately (18.3%)

- expressing what you want to say clearly (15%)

This supports earlier findings of writing sub-skills as "difficult" and implies that the writing sub-skills need improvement.

6.5.3 Perceived Listening Ability of Freshmen Science Students

The listening sub-skills were analyzed next. Table 6.11 illustrates the findings:

Table 6.11 Ability in listening sub-skills

	Very weak-Weak	Average	Good-Very good.
Listen to & understand lectures & notes	6 (10)	17 (28.3)	37 (61.6)
Listen to & carry out instructions/ directions	4 (6.7)	26 (43.3)	30 (50)
Listen to & understand class/tutorial discussions	2 (3.3)	30 (50)	28 (46.7)
Listen to & understand questions/points raised during class /tutorials	2 (3.3)	30 (50)	28 (46.7)
Listen to & answer questions in class/ tutorials	7 (11.6)	32 (53.3)	21 (35)
Listen to & understand seminars & talks	15 (25)	32 (53.3)	13 (21.6)
Listen to & understand television programs	7 (11.6)	27 (45)	26 (43.3)
Listen to & understand radio programs	11 (18.3)	28 (46.7)	21 (35)
Listen to & understand different English accents	21 (35)	20 (33.3)	19 (31.6)

All figures within parentheses are in percentages

From Table 6.11 it is seen that many students (28.3-53.3%) claimed to be "average" and "good-very good" in listening, but the percentages are very low.

Many students admitted to being "very weak-weak" in core sub-skills like listening to and understanding:
- seminars and talks (25%)   − lectures and notes (10%)
- listening to and answering questions in class or tutorials (11.6%)

These findings support earlier findings for listening difficulty and suggest that certain core listening sub-skills need to be improved.

6.5.4 Perceived Speaking Ability of Freshmen Commerce Students

Finally the students' ability in speaking was established. Table 6.12 illustrates the results:

Table 6.12 Ability in speaking sub-skills

	Very weak-Weak	Average	Good-Very good
Asking questions	14 (23.3)	27 (45)	19 (31.6)
Answering questions	9 (15)	38 (63.3)	13 (21.6)
Expressing opinions/objections	9 (15)	36 (60)	15 (25)
Delivering oral presentations/reports	15 (25)	29 (48.3)	16 (26.7)
Explaining processes/procedures	20 (33.3)	26 (43.3)	14 (23.3)
Brainstorming	26 (43.3)	26 (43.3)	8 (13.3)
Taking part in class/tutorial/group discussions	11 (18.3)	26 (43.3)	23 (38.3)
Taking part in social conversations	14 (23.3)	30 (50)	16 (26.7)
Speaking with other fluent speakers of English	17 (28.3)	29 (48.3)	14 (23.3)

All figures within parentheses are in percentages

From Table 6.12 it is apparent that though many students claimed to be "average" (43.3-63.3%) and "good-very good" (13.3-38.3%) in the speaking sub-skills, these percentages are low. Many students (15-43.3%) admitted being "very weak-weak" in the speaking sub-skills, the highest percentages being noted for core academic activities such as:

  - explaining processes and procedures (33.3)
  - delivering oral presentations and reports (25%)   - asking questions (23.3%)

These findings support previous findings for speaking sub-skills difficulty and therefore it can be concluded that the students need extensive improvement in the speaking sub-skills.

6.5.5 Discrepancy between Perceived ability and Difficulty encountered in the Sub-skills

Comparison of the students' perception of difficulty and ability in the reading sub-skills revealed some discrepancy: Difficulty - "sometimes difficult" (8.3-48.3%), ability - "weak-very weak" (10-25%).

6.6 Overview of the students' perceptions about Grammar

Figure 6.5 illustrates the results for how frequently students engaged in grammar tasks:

Figure 6.5 Frequency of doing grammar based tasks

From Figure 6.5 it is clear that the majority of the students (81%) frequently engaged in grammar tasks as most English courses include remedial grammar.
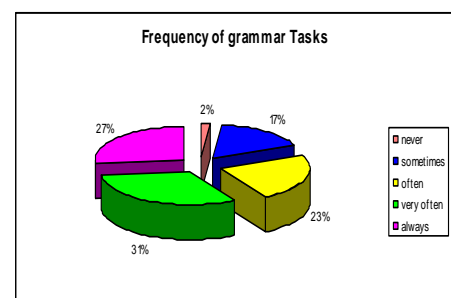
Figure 6.6 gives an account of the findings for the difficulty that the students encountered whilst doing grammar tasks:

Figure 6.6 Difficulty faced by students in doing grammar-based tasks

It is seen that most students (55%) found grammar "easy" but many students (45%) found them "difficult", clearly indicating this is difficult for students and needs to be addressed.
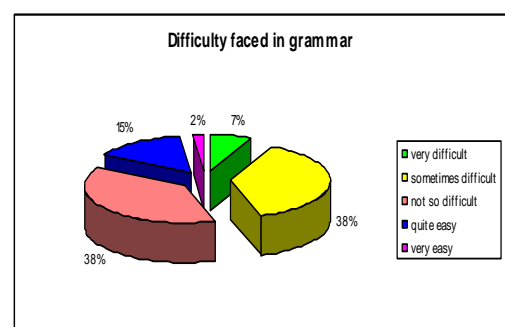
The students' perception of the importance of grammar tasks is displayed in Figure 6.7:

Figure 6.7 Students' perception of the importance of learning grammar

As seen in Figure 6.7 the majority (95%) of the students feel learning grammar is important as they feel learning grammatical rules equals learning English.
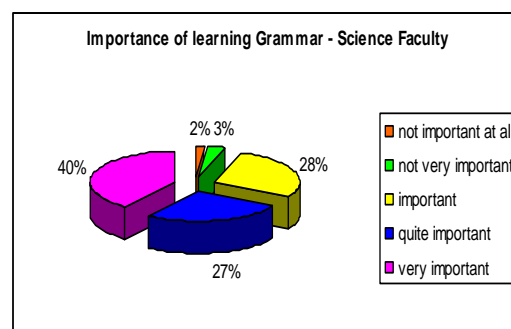
Figure 6.8 presents the results for the students' assessment of their ability in grammar:

Figure 6.8 Students' ability in handling grammar based tasks

According to Figure 6.8 the most students (93%) perceived themselves as "average-very good" in grammar. These findings are contradictory since 45% students faced difficulty yet only 7% admitted to being "weak" in grammar.
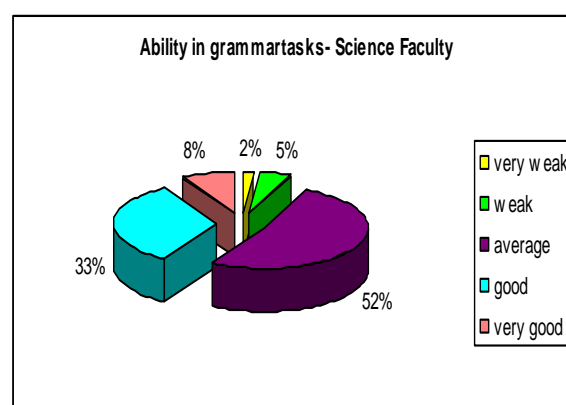
6.7 Overview of course usefulness & learning

Table 6.17 presents the findings for the course usefulness in helping students academically:

Table 6.17 Usefulness of the course

	%
strongly disagree	3.3
Disagree	8.3
not sure	16.7
Agree	36.7
strongly agree	35.0

Table 6.17 indicates that most students (71.7%) felt the course helped prepare them academically. But as several students (28.3%) felt the course was "not useful-unsure" it may be an indication that the course is unable to meet some students' needs.

Table 6.18 demonstrates the results for the course learning and usefulness:

Table 6.18 Learning & usefulness of course

	Never	**Sometimes**	**Often**	**Very often**	**Always**
I learned a lot about English language usage from using the course materials	10	41.7	31.7	8.3	8.3
My English has improved as a result of the activities done in class	8.3	30	33.3	20	8.3
The course will be useful for my studies	10	20	20	25	25
The course will be useful for my future career	8.3	23.3	16.7	10	41.7
I feel more confident about using English in my studies	6.7	21.7	26.7	20	25
I feel confident about using English for my career purposes	8.3	18.3	23.3	15	35

Note: Data is presented in percentages (%)

Table 6.18 shows that the most students (48.3-73.3%) "often" felt the course was helpful, but many students felt that the course was "sometimes helpful" (18.3-41.7%) or "never helpful" (6.7-15%), implying there is doubt about course learning and usefulness and this needs to be addressed in future course design.

Table 6.19 presents the results for the effectiveness of the course in terms of whether there was any change in the students' use of the skills prior to and after completing the course:

Table 6.19 Distribution of skills use frequencies before and after the course

	Reading		**Writing**		**Listening**		**Speaking**	
	Pre C	**Post C**	**Pre C**	**Post C**	**Pre C**	**Post C**	**Pre C**	**Post C**
Never		3.3	6.7	1.7	13.3	5	26.7	6.7
Sometimes	28.3	11.7	31.7	11.7	33.3	10	33.3	31.7
Often	41.7	28.3	33.3	25	31.7	26.7	16.7	25
very often	13.3	28.3	18.3	21.7	11.7	26.7	18.3	18.3
Always	16.7	28.3	10	40	10	31.7	5	18.3

Note: Data is presented in percentages (%)

The following changes were observed from Table 6.19:

- increase from 71.7% to 85% for students who "often-always" read
- increase from 61.6% to 86.7% for students who "often-always" write
- increase from 53.4% to 85% for students who "often-always" listen
- increase from 40% to 61.6% for students who "often-always" speak

From these findings it appears that the course helps students improve in skills to some extent.

6.8 Overview of course difficulty

The researcher explored the difficulty the students faced whilst doing the course in class. Table 6.20 displays the findings:

Table 6.20 Difficulty faced by students in following the course in class

	Never %	Sometimes %	Often %	Very often %	Always %
The discussions in class were difficult for me	6.7	53.3	18.3	16.7	5
The language of the course book/handout/materials were difficult for me	10	40	35	8.3	6.7
The tasks and activities were difficult for me to do	6.7	45	30	8.3	10
I had difficulty in completing the given work on time in class	6.7	53.3	21.7	10	8.3

Note: Data is presented in percentages (%)

It is noted that many students (40-50%) "often-always" faced difficulty with:

- language of the course book/handouts/materials   - tasks and activities
- completing class work timely   - class discussion

From these findings it maybe concluded that the course; course materials and tasks are difficult for the students and this matter needs to be addressed in future course design.

6.10 Overview of the prevalent teaching styles and the teaching styles preferred by students

Table 6.21 displays the findings for the classroom teaching styles being used, and the frequency of use of the various teaching styles:

Table 6.21 Frequency of the different classroom teaching styles being used

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very often
Lecturing	1 (1.7)	3 (5)	10 (16.7)	20 (33.3)	26 (43.3)
Teacher asking questions & students answering	3 (5)	16 (26.7)	14 (23.3)	19 (31.7)	8 (13.3)
Group discussions with teacher as facilitator	0	13 (21.7)	23 (38.3)	19 (31.7)	5 (8.4)
Students given work & working independently out of class	5 (8.3)	13 (21.7)	25 (41.7)	11 (18.3)	6 (10)
Student presentations	8 (13.3)	14 (23.3)	18 (30)	17 (28.3)	3 (5)
Students silently doing written work in class	19 (31.7)	9 (15)	23 (38.3)	9 (15)	0
Using drama music role plays games	20 (33.3)	11 (18.3)	22 (36.7)	5 (8.3)	2 (3.3)
Group or pair work	21 (35)	12 (20)	17 (28.3)	8 (13.3)	2 (3.3)

All figures within parentheses are in percentages

Table 6.21 reveals the most frequently used teaching styles to be:

- lecturing (73.6%)
- teacher asking questions and students answering (43.3%)
- student presentations (32%)
- group discussions with teacher as facilitator (38.4%)

The students' opinions regarding the helpfulness of classroom teaching styles is presented in Table 6.22:

Table 6.22 Students' preferences of teaching styles

	Not at all helpful	Not very helpful	A bit helpful	Quite helpful	Very helpful
Lecturing	2 (3.3)	9 (15)	13 (21.7)	18 (30)	18 (30)
Teacher asking questions & students answering	--		13 (21.7)	21 (35)	26 (43.3)
Group discussions with teacher as facilitator	--	1 (1.7)	12 (20)	17 (28.3)	30 (50)
Students given work & working independently out of class	1 (1.7)	4 (6.7)	9 (15)	21 (35)	25 (41.7)
Student presentations		3 (5)	18 (30)	19 (31.7)	20 (33.3)
Students silently doing written work in class	1 (1.7)	12 (20)	18 (30)	14 (23.3)	15 (25)
Using drama music role plays games	4 (6.7)	4 (6.7)	14 (23.3)	21 (35)	17 (28.3)
Group or pair work	1 (1.7)	3 (5)	8 (13.3)	17 (28.3)	31 (51.7)
Students doing practical fieldwork	2 (3.3)	5 (8.3)	7 (11.7)	15 (25)	31 (51.7)

All figures within parentheses are in percentages

From Table 6.22 it is noted that students' preferred helpful teaching styles are:
- group or pair work (80%)
- teacher asking questions and students answering (78.3%)
- group discussions with teacher as facilitator (78.3%)
- students given work and working independently out of class (76.7%)
- students doing practical fieldwork (76.7%)

Thus disagreement exists between the students' preferred teaching styles and classroom teaching styles, this matter needs to be reviewed.

6.9 Students' suggestions for improving the present course

Finally student' suggestions for improving the courses are illustrated in Table 6.23:

Table 6.23 Students' suggestions – Science

	Psychology N=20	Physics N=20	Bio-chemistry N=20
Increased time allocation for Listening	8	-	8
Increased time allocation for Speaking	22	36	18
Increased time allocation for Reading	8	11	12
Increased time allocation for Writing	26	8	12
Increased time allocation for Grammar	8	-	6
Increased time allocation for Vocabulary	-	8	6
Introduction of practical subject related materials	12	21	20
Introduction of Fieldwork	-	16	9
Introduction of movie/drama/music/debate	16	-	3
Introduction of Presentations	-	-	4
Reduced time allocation for Grammar	-	-	2

Note: Data is presented in percentages (%)

It is seen that Science Faculty students have offered the following suggestions:
- additional reading (31%)
- writing (46%)
- speaking (76%)
- introduction of practical subject related materials (53%)

This offers insights into what the students want from the English courses and what the courses ought to be like.

6.10 Science Faculty Findings and Discussion Recapitulation

Preliminary findings revealed that:

- most students ((>80%) "often-very often" read & wrote & (60%) listened

  but very few students (28.4%) "often-very often" spoke

- some students (20-30%) "often-very often" faced difficulty in reading, writing and listening but most students (61.6%) "often-very often" faced difficulty in speaking

- most students (90-100%) felt the skills were "useful-very useful" for academic success & professional success

Exploration of sub-skills use revealed:

- students (>65-95%) "often-always" read - read textbooks (100%), selected chapters of books, reference books or journals and photocopied notes, workbook or lab instructions

- students (70-90%) "often-always" wrote – lecture notes; exams or in-course essays; tutorial assignments or papers; reports or lab reports; flow-charts or tables

- students (>80-95%) "often-always" listened to & understood class or tutorial discussions; carried out instructions or directions; lectures and notes; questions or points raised during class or tutorials

- students (50-65%) "often-always" take part in class or tutorial or group discussions, answering questions, expressing opinions or objections

Exploration of sub-skills difficulty revealed:

- a few students (8.3-48.3%) perceived reading sub-skills as "sometimes difficult"

- a few students (13.3-31.7%) admitted the writing tasks were "sometimes difficult"

- some students (20-35%) perceived listening sub-skills as "sometimes difficult"

- many students (28.3-46.7%) perceived speaking sub-skills as "sometimes difficult."

Exploration of sub-skills ability revealed:

- some students (10-25%) were "weak-very weak" in, reading
- some students (10-26.6%) were "very weak-weak" in writing
- a number of students (10-35%) "very weak-weak" in listening
- some students (15-43.3%) were "very weak-weak" in speaking sub-skills

It was also found that:

- most students (48.3-73.3%) felt the course "often-always" fulfilled learning & usefulness objectives
- a tangible increase in students who "always-often" engaged in the skills after doing the course
- the course & course materials may be considered quite difficult for students
- a mismatch was found between students' preferences and actual classroom teaching styles

6.11 Findings in relation to research questions

The Science students' needs were identified, their views about the present English course were established, areas where improvement is needed were pointed out, and students' ideas for course improvement were taken. These findings will be useful in shaping the design of future courses.

Chapter Seven

Summary of the findings and Discussion for the Faculty of Social Science

7.1 Introduction

The findings gathered through questionnaires administered to new second year students of the Social Science Faculty are presented and discussed in detail in this chapter. The Departments of International Relations, Mass Communication and Journalism and Women and Gender Studies were investigated in order to identify the wants, needs and lacks of the Social Science students. This information has been presented in table form and frequency counts and percentages have been used to describe the findings and data analyses.

7.2 Overview of skills needed and difficulties encountered

The students' perceptions regarding the four language skills are presented in this section.

7.2.1 Frequency of use of the language skills

The findings for how frequently the students were expected to use the four language skills are presented in Figure 7.1:

Figure 7.1 The frequency that the participants are expected to use the language skills

Notably the majority of the students "often-very often"

- read (78.3%)   - writes (76.7%)
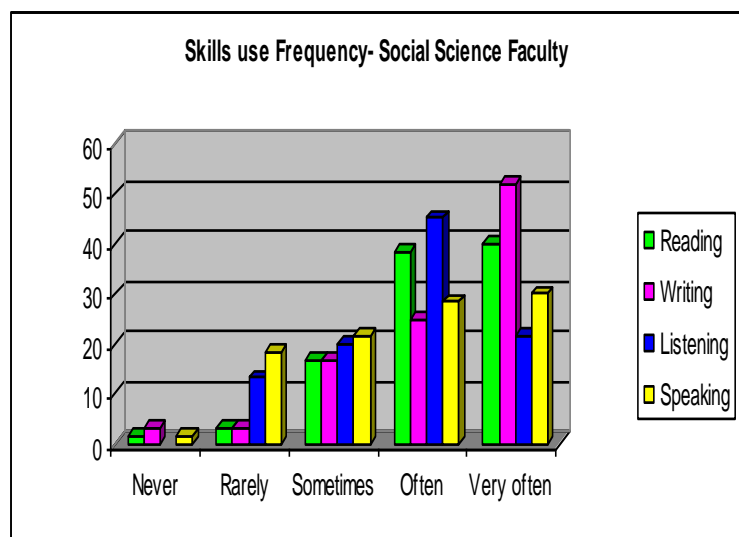
- listen (66.7%)   - speak (58.3%)

However a number of students (20%) "rarely-never" speak in English.

7.2.2 Difficulty faced in the language skills

Figure 7.2 summarizes the findings for the difficulty students faced in using the skills:

Figure 7.2: The frequency of difficulty faced by students in using the English language skills

Notably several Social Science students (30-45%) "sometimes" faced difficulty in all the skills and many students "often-very often" faced difficulty in speaking (58.4%) and writing (43.3%). Thus it can be   said that all the skills are to some extent difficult for the students, particularly speaking and writing.
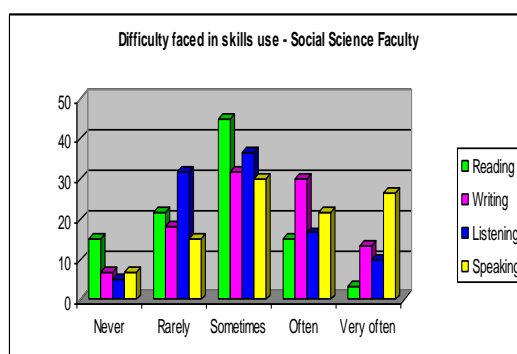
7.2.3 Perceived importance of the skills for academic success

The students' perception of the importance of the skills in relation to academic success is illustrated in Figure 7.3:

Figure 7.3 Students' perception of the importance of the skills in relation to academic success

It is seen that the majority of the students (90-96.7%) perceived the skills as "useful-quite useful-very useful". Thus the skills can be considered important for students' academic success.
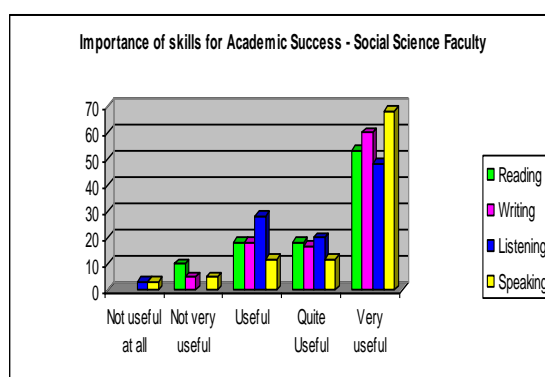
7.2.4 Perceived importance of the skills after graduation

Figure 7.4 presents the results for the students' perceptions about the importance of the skills for success after their graduation:

Figure 7.4 The students' perception of the importance of the language skills after their graduation

Markedly the majority of the students (90-98.3%) perceived the skills as "useful-quite useful-very useful" for their success after graduation. Thus the
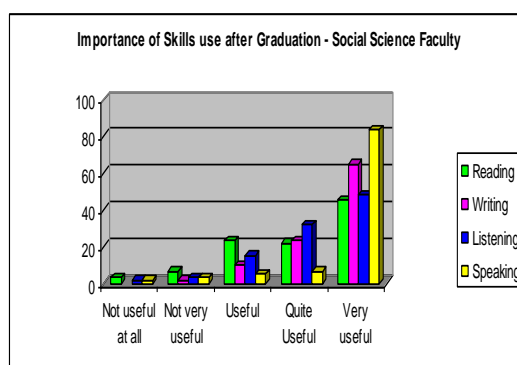
skills may be considered very important for students' success in the employment sector.

7.3 Overview of frequency of use of the language sub-skills

The findings for the language sub-skills that the freshmen Social Science students most frequently need to use academically is presented in the following sub-sections.

7.3.1 Frequency of the different types of reading materials students are expected to read

Table 7.1 reveals the results regarding the frequencies of the types of reading materials the students read:

Table 7.1 Frequency of the different types of reading materials students are expected to read

	Never	**Sometimes**	**Often-Always**
Newspapers		3 (5)	57 (95)
Magazines	1 (1.7)	12 (20)	47 (78.3)
Novels/storybooks	7 (11.7)	17 (28.3)	36 (60)
Reference books/Journals	4 (6.7)	11 (18.3)	45 (75)
Textbooks		3 (5)	57 (95)
Selected chapters of books	1 (1.7)	4 (6.7)	55 (91.6)
Photocopied notes	2 (3.3)	14 (23.3)	44 (73.3)
Reports/proposals	4 (6.7)	20 (33.3)	36 (60)
Workbook/Lab instructions	18 (30)	12 (20)	30 (50)
Online/internet materials	3 (5)	11 (18.3)	46 (76.6)

*All figures within parentheses are in percentages

Noticeably the students "often-always" read a variety of materials such as:

- newspapers (95%)   - textbooks (95%)

- selected chapters of books (91.6%)   - magazines (78.3%)

- online/internet materials (76.6%)   - reference/books/journals (75%)

- photocopied notes (73.3%)

7.3.2 Frequency of the different types of writing tasks students are expected to write

The findings for the frequency of the different types of writing tasks social Science students engaged in are displayed in Table 7.2:

Table 7.2 Frequency of the different types of writing tasks students are expected to write

	Never	Sometimes	Often-Always
Taking lecture notes	1 (1.7)	7 (11.7)	52 (83.2)
Writing tutorial assignments/term papers		3 (5)	57 (95)
Writing exams/in-course essays	2 (3.3)	6 (10)	52 (86.3)
Summarizing	1 (1.7)	6 (10)	53 (88.3)
Paraphrasing	6 (10)	17 (28.3)	37 (61.6)
Editing/proof-reading/revising	10 (16.7)	14 (23.3)	36 (60)
Translating	4 (6.7)	8 (13.3)	48 (80)
Writing proposals/project papers	9 (15)	15 (25)	36 (60)
Writing research papers	21 (35)	15 (25)	24 (40)
Writing reports/lab reports	15 (25)	17 (28.3)	28 (46.7)
Preparing flow-charts/tables	19 (31.7)	16 (26.7)	25 (41.6)

	Never	Sometimes	Often-Always
Writing case studies	22 (36.7)	7 (11.7)	31 (51.6)
Writing business letters	21 (35)	17 (28.3)	22 (36.7)
Writing resumes	17 (28.3)	15 (25)	28 (46.7)
Writing references	9 (15)	16 (26.7)	35 (58.3)
Writing introductions	6 (10)	15 (25)	39 (65)
Writing commentaries	15 (25)	12 (20)	33 (55)
Writing news article/features	13 (21.7)	16 (26.7)	31 (51.6)
Writing e-mails	7 (11.7)	19 (31.7)	34 (56.6)
Creative writing	5 (8.3)	13 (21.7)	42 (70)
Essay writing	1 (1.7)	15 (25)	44 (73.3)

All figures within parentheses are in percentages

It is seen that students "often-always" engage in a variety of writing tasks like:

- writing tutorial assignments/term papers (95%)
- writing exams/in-course essays (86.3%)
- translating (80%)
- creative writing (70%)
- summarizing (88.3%)
- taking lecture notes (83.2%)
- essay writing (73.3%)

7.3.3 Frequency of the different types of listening tasks students are expected to perform

The frequencies of the different types of listening tasks that students engaged in are depicted in Table 7.3:

Table 7.3 Frequency of the different types of listening tasks students are expected to perform

	Never	Sometimes	Often-Always
Listen to & understand lectures & notes		9 (15)	51 (85)
Listen to & carry out instructions/directions	1 (1.7)	11 (18.3)	48 (80)
Listen to & understand class/tutorial discussions		6 (10)	54 (90)
Listen to & understand questions/points raised during class/tutorials		7 (11.7)	53 (88.3)
Listen to & answer questions in class/tutorials	1 (1.7)	12 (20)	47 (78.3)
Listen to & understand seminars & talks	2 (3.3)	14 (23.3)	44 (73.3)
Listen to & understand television programs	3 (5)	7 (11.7)	50 (83.3)
Listen to & understand radio programs	10 (16.7)	15 (25)	35 (58.3)
Listen to & understand different English accents	4 (6.7)	19 (31.7)	37 (61.6)

All figures within parentheses are in percentages

Markedly students "often-always" engaged in a variety of listening tasks such as:

- listening to and understanding:

- class or tutorial discussions- lectures and notes- television programs

- listening to and carrying out instructions or directions

- listening to and answering questions in class or tutorials (75-90%)

It may be inferred that listening constitutes a major part of the students' learning.

7.3.4 Frequency of the different types of speaking tasks students are expected to Engage in

The frequency of use of the speaking sub-skills is given in Table 7.4:

Table 7.4 Frequency of the different types of speaking tasks students are expected to perform

	Never	Sometimes	Often-Always
Asking questions	6 (10)	23 (38.3)	31 (51.6)
Answering questions	3 (5)	21 (35)	36 (60)
Expressing opinions/objections	3 (5)	19 (31.7)	38 (63.3)
Delivering oral presentations/reports	7 (11.7)	18 (30)	35 (58.3)
Explaining processes/procedures	8 (13.3)	19 (31.7)	33 (55)
Brainstorming	7 (11.7)	22 (36.7)	31 (51.6)
Taking part in class/tutorial/group discussions	4 (6.7)	10 (16.7)	46 (76.6)
Taking part in social conversations	6 (10)	15 (25)	39 (65)
Speaking with other fluent speakers of English	5 (8.3)	19 (31.7)	36 (60)

All figures within parentheses are in percentages

It is observed that students "often-always" engaged in a range of speaking tasks like:

- taking part in class/tutorial/group discussions (76.6%)
- taking part in social conversations (65%)
- expressing opinions/objections (63.3%)
- speaking with other fluent speakers of English (60%)
- answering questions (60%)

It can be said that speaking tasks also constitute a major part of students' learning.

7.4 Perception of difficulties in using English language sub-skills

The findings for the difficulty that students faced whilst using the language skills are presented in the following sub-sections.

7.4.1 Perception of reading sub-skills difficulties

The findings for the difficulties faced in reading are presented in Table 7.5:

Table 7.5 Students' perception of the reading sub-skills difficulties

	Very difficult	**Sometimes difficult**	**Not so difficult-Very easy**
Newspapers	2 (3.3)	19 (31.7)	39 (65)
Magazines	3 (5)	19 (31.7)	38 (63.3)
Novels/storybooks	9 (15)	25 (41.7)	26 (43.3)
Reference books/Journals	7 (11.7)	18 (30)	35 (58.3)
Textbooks	2 (3.3)	16 (26.7)	42 (70)
Selected chapters of books	1 (1.7)	16 (26.7)	43 (71.6)
Photocopied notes	2 (3.3)	12 (20)	46 (76.6)
Reports/proposals	4 (6.7)	23 (38.3)	33 (55)
Workbook/Lab instructions	9 (15)	15 (25)	36 (60)
Online/internet materials	4 (6.7)	14 (23.3)	42 (70)

All figures within parentheses are in percentages

The majority of the students (43.3-76.7%) perceived the reading sub-skills as "not so difficult-very easy". But since many students (20-41.7%) "sometimes" encountered difficulty in the reading sub-skills it can be assumed that reading sub-skills are difficult to some extent and this needs to be addressed.

7.4.2 Perception of writing sub-skills difficulties

The results for difficulty encountered in the writing sub-skills are outlined in Table 7.6:

Table 7.6 Students' perception of the writing sub-skills difficulties

	Very difficult	Sometimes difficult	Not so difficult-very easy
Taking lecture notes	5 (8.3)	12 (20)	43 (71.6)
Writing tutorial assignments/term papers	4 (6.7)	18 (30)	38 (63.3)
Writing exams/in-course essays	4 (6.7)	18 (30)	38 (63.3)
Summarizing	5 (8.3)	14 (23.3)	41 (68.3)
Paraphrasing	6 (10)	20 (33.3)	34 (56.6)
Editing/proof-reading/revising	6 (10)	16 (26.7)	38 (63.3)
Translating	3 (5)	21 (35)	36 (60)
Writing proposals/project papers	4 (6.7)	20 (33.3)	36 (60)
Writing research papers	14 (23.3)	23 (38.3)	23 (38.3)
Writing reports/lab reports	12 (20)	17 (28.3)	31 (51.6)
Preparing flow-charts/tables	16 (26.7)	8 (13.3)	36 (60)
Writing case studies	11 (18.3)	16 (26.7)	33 (55)
Writing business letters	16 (26.7)	10 (16.7)	34 (56.6)
Writing resumes	8 (13.3)	16 (26.7)	36 (60)
Writing references	5 (8.3)	13 (21.7)	42 (70)
Writing introductions	4 (6.7)	21 (35)	35 (58.3)
Writing commentaries	9 (15)	21 (35)	30 (50)
Writing news article/features	5 (8.3)	18 (30)	37 (61.6)
Writing e-mails	7 (11.7)	13 (21.7)	40 (66.6)
Creative writing	4 (6.7)	17 (28.3)	39 (65)
Essay writing	3 (5)	13 (21.7)	44 (73.3)

All figures within parentheses are in percentages

Notably the most of the students (50-73.3%) perceived the writing sub-skills as "not so difficult-very easy". But as many students perceived writing as "very difficult" (10-26.7%) and "sometimes difficult" (13.3-38.3%); writing sub-skills may be considered difficult and future curriculum designers have to consider this.

7.4.3 Perception of listening sub-skills difficulties

The difficulty encountered in listening is presented in Table 7.7:

Table 7.7 Students' perception of the listening sub-skills difficulties

	Very difficult	**Sometimes difficult**	**Not so difficult**
Listen to & understand lectures & notes	3 (5)	14 (23.3)	43 (71.6)
Listen to & carry out instructions/directions	1 (1.7)	16 (26.7)	43 (71.6)
Listen to & understand class/tutorial discussions	2 (3.3)	8 (13.3)	50 (83.3)
Listen to & understand questions/points raised during class /tutorials		13 (21.7)	47 (78.3)
Listen to & answer questions in class/tutorials	1 (1.7)	13 (21.7)	46 (76.6)
Listen to & understand seminars & talks	1 (1.7)	20 (33.3)	39 (65)
Listen to & understand television programs	2 (3.3)	11 (18.3)	47 (78.3)
Listen to & understand radio programs	5 (8.3)	13 (21.7)	42 (70)
Listen to & understand different English accents	4 (6.7)	23 (38.3)	33 (55)

All figures within parentheses are in percentages

Notably most students (55-83.3%) perceived the listening sub-skills as "not so difficult-very easy". But, as some students (13.3-38.3%) perceived the sub-skills as "sometimes difficult", it can be said that listening sub-skills pose some difficulty and remedial measures are needed.

7.4.4 Perception of speaking sub-skills difficulties

The difficulties faced in the speaking sub-skills are presented in Table 7.8:

Table 7.8 Students' perception of the speaking sub-skills difficulties

	Very difficult	Sometimes difficult	Not so difficult
Asking questions	6 (10)	23 (38.3)	31 (51.6)
Answering questions	5 (8.3)	21 (35)	34 (56.6)
Expressing opinions /objections	7 (11.7)	19 (31.7)	34 (56.6)
Delivering oral presentations /reports	5 (10)	20 (33.3)	35 (58.3)
Explaining processes /procedures	8 (13.3)	21 (35)	31 (51.6)
Brainstorming	7 (11.7)	27 (45)	26 (43.3)
Taking part in class/tutorial /group discussions	3 (5)	16 (26.7)	41 (68.3)
Taking part in social conversations	3 (5)	24 (40)	33 (55)
Speaking with other fluent speakers of English	8 (13.3)	25 (41.7)	27 (45)

All figures within parentheses are in percentages

Although most students (45-68.3%) perceived speaking sub-skills as "not so difficult-very easy", many students (26.7-41.7%) perceived them as "sometimes difficult", thus it can be said that there is need for improvement in speaking as well.

7.5 Overview of the students' perception of their ability in the language sub-skills

The findings for students' perceptions of their abilities in engaging in the various sub-skills are discussed in detail in the following sub-sections.

7.5.1 Perceived Reading Ability of Freshmen Social Science Students

Table 7.9 displays the findings for the reading sub-skills:

Table 7.9 Ability in reading sub-skills

	Very weak-Weak	Average	Good-Very good
Reading a text quickly to get a general idea of its content	8 (13.3)	27 (45)	25 (41.6)
Looking through a text quickly to find specific information	8 (13.3)	29 (48.3)	23 (38.3)
Guessing the meanings of unknown words from their context	16 (26.7)	23 (38.3)	21 (35)
Understanding the main points of a text	3 (5)	19 (31.7)	38 (63.3)
Reading a text slowly & carefully to understand the details of the text	3 (5)	16 (26.7)	41 (68.3)
Reading to respond critically	19 (31.7)	23 (38.3)	18 (30)
Understanding a writer's attitude & purpose	17 (28.3)	22 (36.7)	21 (35)
Understand & interpret charts, graphs, tables	14 (23.3)	17 (28.3)	29 (48.3)
General comprehension	4 (6.7)	19 (31.7)	37 (61.6)

Noticeably the most students felt they were "average-good-very good". Many students (13.3-28.3%) felt they were "very weak-weak" at:

- reading to respond critically, understanding a writer's attitude and purpose

- guessing the meanings of unknown words from their context

- understanding and interpreting charts, graphs, tables

- looking through a text quickly to find specific information

- reading a text quickly to get a general idea of its content

This suggests that improvement is needed.

7.5.2 Perceived Writing Ability of Freshmen Social Science Students

The students' ability in the writing sub-skills are presented in Table 7.10:

Table 7.10 Ability in writing sub-skills

	Very weak-Weak	Average	Good-Very good
Using correct punctuation & spelling	10 (16.7)	27 (45)	23 (38.3)
Structuring sentences	8 (13.3)	25 (41.7)	27 (45)
Using appropriate vocabulary	8 (13.3)	26 (43.3)	26 (43.3)
Organizing paragraphs	13 (21.7)	21 (35)	26 (43.3)
Organizing the overall assignment	11 (18.3)	26 (43.3)	23 (38.3)
Expressing ideas appropriately	8 (13.3)	29 (48.3)	23 (38.3)
Developing ideas	7 (11.7)	31 (51.7)	22 (36.7)
Expressing what you want to say clearly	9 (15)	23 (38.3)	28 (46.7)
Addressing the topic	9 (15)	26 (43.3)	25 (41.6)
Adopting appropriate tone & style	13 (20)	22 (36.7)	25 (41.6)
Following instructions & directions	6 (10)	24 (40)	30 (50)
Evaluating & revising your writing	10 (16.7)	21 (35)	29 (48.3)
Overall writing ability	7 (11.7)	30 (50)	23 (38.3)
Completing written tasks	6 (10)	22 (36.7)	32 (53.3)

All figures within parentheses are in percentages

It appears that most students felt they were "average-good-very good" at writing but since some students (10-21.7%) felt they were "very weak-weak" at core writing sub-skills like:

- organizing paragraphs
- organizing the overall assignment
- evaluating and revising your writing
- expressing what you want to say clearly
- adopting appropriate tone and style
- using correct punctuation and spelling
- addressing the topic

This leads to the conclusion that there is much to be remedied in writing.

7.5.3 Perceived Listening Ability of Freshmen Social Science Students

Table 7.11 depicts the findings for the students' ability in the listening sub-skills:

Table 7.11 Ability in listening sub-skills

	Very weak-Weak	Average	Good-Very good.
Listen to & understand lectures & notes	6 (10)	22 (36.7)	32 (53.3)
Listen to & carry out instructions/ directions	5 (8.3)	29 (48.3)	26 (43.3)
Listen to & understand class/tutorial discussions	4 (6.7)	18 (30)	38 (63.3)
Listen to & understand questions/points raised during class /tutorials	4 (6.7)	30 (50)	26 (43.3)
Listen to & answer questions in class/tutorials	14 (23.3)	22 (36.7)	24 (40)
Listen to & understand seminars & talks	14 (23.3)	27 (45)	19 (31.6)
Listen to & understand television programs	10 (16.7)	24 (40)	26 (43.3)
Listen to & understand radio programs	19 (31.7)	23 (38.3)	18 (30)
Listen to & understand different English accents	14 (23.3)	33 (55)	13 (21.7)

All figures within parentheses are in percentages

It is seen that students mainly felt they were "average-good-very good" at listening but as several students (16.7-31.7%) felt they were "very weak-weak" in listening to and:

- answering questions in class or tutorials - understanding seminars and talks

- radio programs and television programs - different English accents

This implies that some improvement is needed in listening.

7.5.4 Perceived Speaking Ability of Freshmen Social Science Students

The students' perceptions of speaking ability are revealed in Table 7.12:

Table 7.12 Ability in speaking sub-skills

	Very weak-Weak	Average	Good-Very good
Asking questions	14 (23.3)	26 (43.3)	20 (33.3)
Answering questions	3 (5)	39 (65)	18 (30)
Expressing opinions/objections	6 (10)	25 (41.7)	29 (48.3)
Delivering oral presentations/reports	11 (18.3)	27 (45)	22 (36.7)
Explaining processes /procedures	17 (28.3)	28 (46.7)	15 (25)
Brainstorming	13 (21.7)	24 (40)	23 (38.3)
Taking part in class/tutorial/group discussions	14 (23.3)	21 (35)	25 (41.6)
Taking part in social conversations	17 (28.3)	24 (40)	19 (31.7)
Speaking with other fluent speakers of English	19 (31.7)	27 (45)	14 (23.3)

All figures within parentheses are in percentages

Notably most students (68-90%) felt they were "average-good-very good" in speaking but as many students (10-31.7%) felt they were "very weak-weak" in the speaking sub-skills thus suggesting that improvement is needed in speaking.

7.5.5 Discrepancy between Perceived ability and Difficulty encountered in the Sub-skills

Some mismatches were found in the students' perception of difficulty and ability in the sub-skills:

- Reading- Difficulty- (11.7-15%); Ability- (13.3-28.3%);
- Listening- Difficulty- (13.3-38.3%); Ability- (16.7-31.7%);
- Speaking- Difficulty- (10-13.3%); Ability- (10-31.7%)."

7.6 Overview of the students' perceptions about Grammar

The findings for how frequently students engaged in grammar are shown in figure 7.5:

Figure 7.5 Frequency of doing grammar based tasks

It is seen that most students (87%) "often-always" engage in grammar.

The findings for the difficulty students faced in grammar are displayed in Figure 7.6:

Figure 7.6 Difficulty faced by students in doing grammar-based tasks

Since many students (52%) found grammar tasks "sometimes-very difficult" this may be an area of difficulty for students.

The students' perception of the importance of grammar is outlined in Figure 7.7:

Figure 7.7 Students' perception of the importance of learning grammar

It seems that students mainly felt learning grammar is important as they equate it to learning good English.

The results for the students' perception of their ability in grammar are demonstrated in Figure 7.8

Figure 7.8 Students' ability in handling grammar based tasks

Notably students mainly (93%) felt they were "average-very good" in grammar. The findings are contradictory since 52% students faced difficulty yet only 7% perceived themselves as "weak" in grammar.

7.7 Overview of course usefulness & learning

Table 7.17 summarizes the findings for course usefulness in preparing students academically:
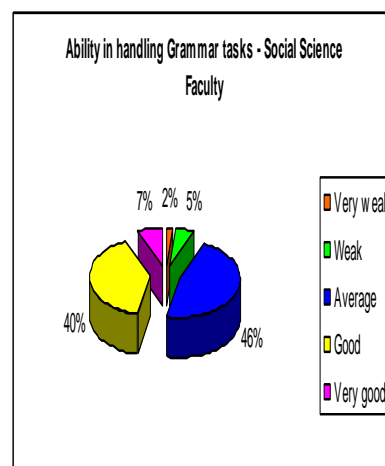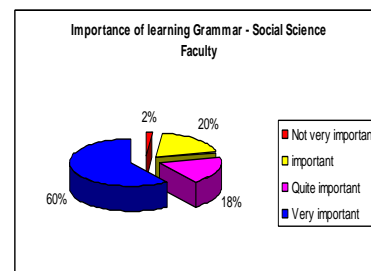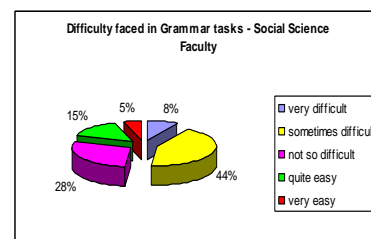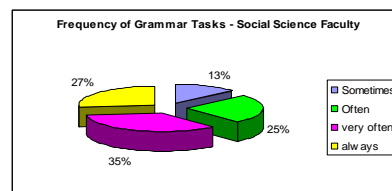
Table 7.17 Usefulness of the Course

	%
Strongly disagree	**1.7**
Disagree	**5**
Not sure	**13.3**
Agree	**26.7**
Strongly agree	53.3

It was found that most students (80%) felt the course helped prepare them academically. Table 7.18 presents the results for course learning and usefulness:

Table 7.18 Learning & usefulness of course

	Never	**Sometimes**	**Often**	**Very often**	**Always**
I learned a lot about English language usage from using the course materials	6.7	30	43.3	11.7	8.3
My English has improved as a result of the activities done in class	6.7	23.3	35	30	5
The course will be useful for my studies	3.3	5	31.7	21.7	38.3
The course will be useful for my future career	3.3	8.3	16.7	25	46.7
I feel more confident about using English in my studies	3.3	13.3	20	28.3	35
I feel confident about using English for my career purposes	5	11.7	20	28.3	35

Note: Data is presented in percentages (%)

Most students (62.3-91.7%) "often-always" felt the course was helped. them learn all of the above.

The findings for course effectiveness of the course in terms of if there was any change in the students' skills use before and after doing the course are given in Table 7.19:

Table 7.19 Students' skills use frequencies before and after the course

	Pre C Rdng	Post C Rdng	Pre C Wrtng	Post c Wrtng	Pre C Lstng	Post C Lstng	Pre C Spkng	Post C Spkng
Never	1.7	1.7	5	1.7	10	0	10	3.3
Sometimes	28.3	6.7	40	5	28.3	13.3	50	23.3
Often	20	21.7	30	33.3	28.3	23.3	20	30
very often	17	40	11.7	33.3	28.3	51.7	16.7	35
Always	5	30	13.3	26.7	5	11.7	3.3	8.3

Note: Data is presented in percentages (%)

The following changes were observed from Table 6.19:

- increase from 42% to 91.7% for students who "often-always" read
- increase from 55% to 93.3% for students who "often-always" write
- increase from 61.6% to 85.7% for students who "often-always" listen
- increase from 40% to 73.3% for students who "often-always" speak

From these findings it may be concluded that the course helped students improve a lot in all the skills.

7.8 Overview of course difficulty

Table 7.20 outlines the students' findings for course difficulty:

Table 7.20 Difficulty faced by students in following the course in class

	Never	Sometimes	Often	Very often	Always
The discussions in class were difficult for me	18.3	51.7	23.3	5	1.7
The language of the course book/handout/materials were difficult for me	8.3	45	35	10	1.7
The tasks and activities were difficult for me to do	13.3	46.7	23.3	15	1.7
I had difficulty in completing the given work on time in class	13.3	48.3	16.7	11.7	10

Note: Data is presented in percentages (%)

It appears that most students (30-46.7%) "often-always" found:

– language of the course book or handouts or materials difficult
– difficulty completing work on time in class
– tasks and activities difficult   – class discussions difficult

Most students (45-51.7%) "sometimes" faced difficulty with all of the above thus the course, course materials and tasks are difficult for the students.

7.9 Overview of the prevalent teaching styles and those styles preferred by students

The prevalent classroom teaching styles was investigated next. Table 7.21 gives an account of the findings:

Table 7.21 Frequency of the different classroom teaching styles being used

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very often
Lecturing	5	8.3	10	18.3	58.3
Teacher asking questions & students answering	3.3	13.3	25	31.7	26.7
Group discussions with teacher as facilitator	6.7	6.7	23.3	40	23.3
Students given work & working independently out of class	3.3	15	18.3	35	28.3
Student presentations	8.3	30	28.3	28.3	5
Students silently doing written work in class	26.7	23.3	26.7	15	8.3
Using drama music role plays games	15	6.7	35	31.7	11.7
Group or pair work	16.7	6.7	23.3	31.7	21.7

Note: Data is presented in percentages (%)

It is apparent that most frequently used teaching styles are

- lecturing (76.6%)

- group discussions with teacher as facilitator (63.3%)

- students given work and working independently out of class (63.3%)

- teacher asking questions and students answering (58.3%), group

The students' opinions regarding which classroom teaching styles are more helpful are presented in Table 7.22:

Table 7.22 Students' preferences of teaching styles

	Not at all helpful	Not very helpful	A bit helpful	Quite helpful	Very helpful
Lecturing	6.7	1.7	11.7	33.3	46.7
Teacher asking questions & students answering	1.7	6.7	6.7	35	50
Group discussions with teacher as facilitator	1.7	3.3	8.3	30	56.7
Students given work & working independently out of class	3.3		21.7	35	40
Student presentations	3.3	8.3	15	35	38.3
Students silently doing written work in class	8.3	11.7	16.7	36.7	26.7
Using drama music role plays games	3.3	18.3	15	43.3	20
Group or pair work	3.3	5	16.7	35	40
Students doing practical fieldwork	1.7		8.3	36.7	53.3

Note: Data in parentheses is presented in percentage (%)

It is seen that the students' preferred teaching styles are:
- students doing practical fieldwork (90%)
- student presentations (73.3%)
- group discussions with teacher as facilitator (86.7%)
- group or pair work (75%)
- teacher asking questions and students answering (85%)
- lecturing (80%)
- students given work and working independently out of class (75%)

Thus there is a clear mismatch between the students' preferred teaching styles and the styles being used in the classroom.

7.10 Students' suggestions for improving the present course

Finally the suggestions students made for improving the courses was explored. Table 7.23 illustrates the findings:

Table 7.23 Students' suggestions – Social Science

	Mass Communication & Journalism N=20	International Relations N=20	Women & Gender Studies N=20
Increased time allocation for Listening	7	14	14
Increased time allocation for Speaking	21	23	30
Increased time allocation for Reading	7	15	16
Increased time allocation for Writing	13	15	12
Increased time allocation for Grammar	9	-	-
Increased time allocation for Vocabulary	-	6	-
Introduction of practical subject related materials	9	12	10
Introduction of Fieldwork	14	-	8
Introduction of movie/drama/music/debate	11	9	4
Reduced time allocation for Grammar	-	6	-
Increased time allocation for Presentations	-	-	6

Note: Data is presented in percentage (%)

The students of all three departments of the Social Science Faculty wish to implement a lot of changes to the present courses. Many students want additional reading (38%), writing (40%) listening (35%) and speaking (74%). Some students (31%) want the use of more practical or practical world materials and movie, drama, music or debates (24%). These suggestions may be useful in future course design.

7.11 Social Science Faculty Findings and Discussion Recapitulation

Preliminary findings revealed that:

- most students (66-78%) "often-very often" read, wrote & listened; many students (58%) "often-very often" spoke

- many students "often-very often" faced difficulty in speaking (58.4%) & writing (43.3%)

- most students felt the skills were "useful-very useful" for academic success (90-96.7%) & and professional success (90-98.3%)

Exploration of sub-skills use revealed:

- students "often-always" read - newspapers (95%), textbooks (95%), selected chapters of books (91.6%)

- students "often-always" wrote - tutorial assignments or term papers (95%), summaries (88.3%), exams or in-course essays (86.3%), lecture notes (83.2%)

- students "often-always" (75-90%) listened to and understood class or tutorial discussions, lectures and notes

- students "often-always" take part in class/tutorial/group discussions (76.6%), take part in social conversations (65%), express opinions/ objections (63.3%)

Exploration of sub-skills difficulty revealed:

- a few students (11.7-15%) felt reading sub-skills were "very difficult"

- some students (10-26.7%) perceived writing sub-skills were "very difficult"

- a number of students (13.3-38.3%) felt listening sub-skills were "sometimes difficult"

- a few students (10-13.3%) perceived speaking sub-skills were "very difficult"

Exploration of sub-skills ability revealed:

- some students (13.3-28.3%) perceived their reading ability as "very weak-weak"

- some students (10-21.7%) perceived their writing ability as "very weak-weak"

- a number of students (16.7-31.7%) perceived their listening ability as "very weak-weak"

- quite a few students (10-31.7%) perceived their speaking ability as "very weak-weak"

It was also found that:

- most students (62.3-91.7%) felt the course "often-always" fulfilled learning & usefulness objectives

- a tangible increase in students who "always-often" engaged in the skills after doing the course

- the course & course materials may be considered quite difficult for students

- a mismatch was found between students' preferences and actual classroom teaching styles

These findings about the Social Science Faculty students' needs and perceptions will be very helpful in determining the design and specifying the content of future courses.

7.12 Findings in relation to research questions

These findings pertain to the Social Science Faculty students' needs and perceptions answer the first, second, fifth and sixth research questions. The Social Science students' perceptions of their needs were identified, their perceptions about the present English course were established, areas in which improvement was needed were marked, and students made suggestions related to course improvement. The findings concerning Social Science students' needs and perceptions will be helpful in designing future courses and specifying their content.

<p style="text-align:center">Chapter Eight</p>

Summary of the Findings and Discussion for the Teachers and Classroom Observations

8.1 Introduction

This chapter is divided into two sections, the first section presents the teachers' perspective, and the second section summarizes the classroom observation findings.

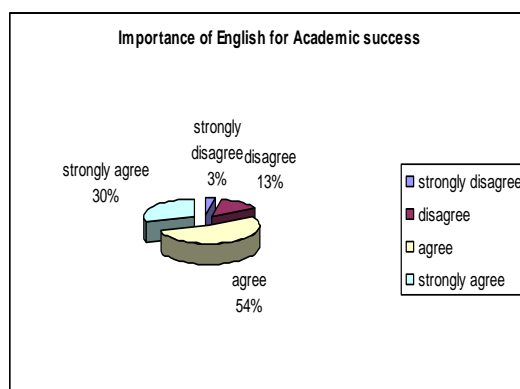## Section A: Summary of the findings and discussion for the Teachers

In this phase of the research, the specific language needs from the viewpoint of the teachers of the four faculties of DU was determined. A questionnaire was used, to determine the teachers' views of what they expected their students to know, to enhance their academic performance. A five-point measurement scale was used to assess teachers' responses to close-ended questions. The completed questionnaires were computer coded and analyzed using the SPSS software. The findings for this analysis are presented in the next section. For easy reference the data has been presented in table form and frequency counts and percentages have been used to describe the findings and data analyses.

8.2. Teachers' perception of the importance of English for academic success

Figure 8.1 presents the findings for the teachers' opinion about the importance of English for students' academic success:

Figure 8.1 Teachers' perception of the importance of English for academic success

It is seen that most teachers (>80%) "agree" that English is a deciding factor for their students' academic success; but a few teachers (>15%) "disagree".


Importance of English for Academic success

strongly disagree 3%
disagree 13%
strongly agree 30%
agree 54%

- strongly disagree
- disagree
- agree
- strongly agree

8.2.1 Teachers' perception of students' proficiency in the four skills

The findings for the teachers' perceptions of their students' proficiency in the four skills are presented in Figure 8.2:

Figure 8.2 Teachers' perception of students' proficiency in the four skills

Notably the following teachers' perceptions about their students' proficiency were obtained:
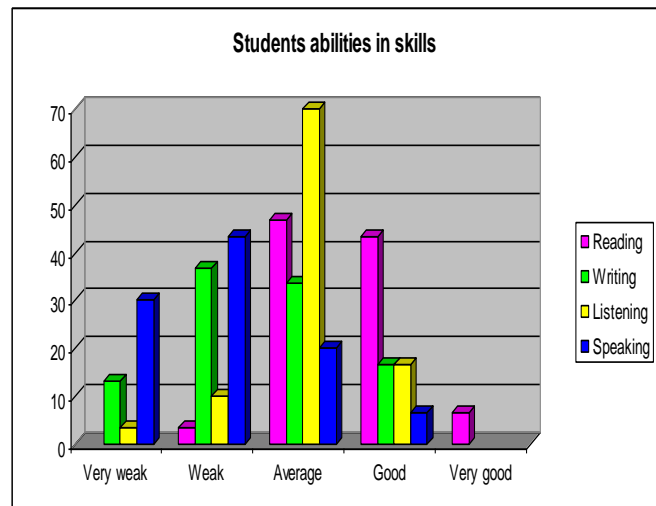
Reading - "average- good-very good" (95%)

Writing - "weak-very weak" (50%) and "average-good" (50%)

Listening - "average-good" (>85%)

Speaking - "weak-very weak" (>70%) and "average" (20%)

8.2.2 Teachers' perception of the importance of the language skills for their students' academic success

Figure 8.3 reveals the results for the teachers' perception of the importance of the four skills for students' academic success:

Figure 8.2.4 Teachers' perception of the importance of the language skills for their students' academic success

It is evident that the teachers unanimously perceived proficiency in all the language skills as "important" for students' academic success.
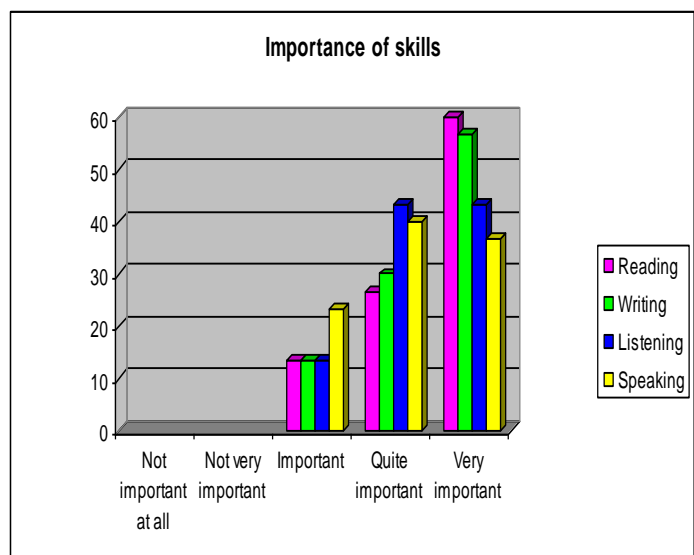
8.3. Teachers' perception of the importance of reading sub-skills for students' academic success

Table 8.1 summarizes the findings for the importance of the reading sub-skills for students' academic success:

Table 8.1 Teachers' perception of the importance of reading sub-skills for students' academic success

	Not important at all N %	Not very important N %	Important N %	Quite important N %	Very important N %
Reading a text quickly to get a general idea of its content	--		11 (36.7)	7 (23.3)	12 (40)
Looking through a text quickly to find specific information	--		7 (23.3)	16 (53.3)	7 (23.3)
Guessing the meanings of unknown words from their context	1 (3.3)	4 (13.3)	5 (16.7)	13 (43.3)	7 (23.3)
Understanding the main points of a text	--		5 (16.7)	7 (23.3)	18 (60)
Reading a text slowly & carefully to understand the details of the text	--	2 (6.7)	7 (23.3)	11 (36.7)	10 (33.3)
Reading to respond critically	1 (3.3)		8 (26.7)	11 (36.7)	10 (33.3)
Understanding a writer's attitude & purpose	--	6 (20)	6 (20)	11 (36.7)	7 (23.3)
Understand & interpret charts, graphs, tables	--	3 (10)	6 (20)	10 (33.3)	11 (36.7)
General comprehension	--	--	7 (23.3)	12 (40)	11 (36.7)

All figures within parentheses are in percentages

It is seen that most teachers (>80%) agreed, that the reading sub-skills are "important-very important".

8.3.1 Teachers' perception of the importance of writing sub-skills for students'academic success

Table 8.2 shows the results for the importance of the writing sub-skills:

Table 8.2 Teachers' perception of the importance of writing sub-skills for students' academic success

	Not important at all N %	Not very important N %	Important N %	Quite important N %	Very important N %
Using correct punctuation & spelling	--	1 (3.3)	7 (23.3)	11 (36.7)	11 (36.7)
Structuring sentences	--		2 (6.7)	13 (43.3)	15 (50)
Using appropriate vocabulary	--		3 (10)	18 (60)	9 (30)
Organizing paragraphs	--	1 (3.3)	5 (16.7)	11 (36.7)	13 (43.3)
Organizing the overall assignment	1 (3.3)	1 (3.3)	5 (16.7)	12 (40)	11 (36.7)
Expressing ideas appropriately	--	1 (3.3)	2 (6.7)	12 (40)	15 (50)
Developing ideas	--	--	6 (20)	14 (46.7)	10 (33.3)
Expressing what you want to say clearly	--	--	5 (16.7)	13 (43.3)	12 (40)
Addressing the topic	--	--	6 (20)	14 (46.7)	10 (33.3)
Adopting appropriate tone & style	1 (3.3)	3 (10)	11 (36.7)	9 (30)	6 (20)
Following instructions & directions	--	--	7 (23.3)	14 (46.7)	9 (30)
Evaluating & revising your writing	--	--	5 (16.7)	13 (43.3)	12 (40)
Overall writing ability	--	--	6 (20)	11 (36.7)	13 (43.3)
Completing written tasks	--	2 (6.7)	5 (16.7)	8 (26.7)	15 (50)

All figures within parentheses are in percentages

It was found that most teachers (>85%) felt that writing sub-skills are "important-very important".

8.3.2 Teachers' perception of the importance of listening sub-skills for students' academic success

The findings for the importance of the listening sub-skills are shown in Table 8.3:

Table 8.3 Teachers' perception of the importance of listening sub-skills for students' academic success

	Not important at all N %	Not very important N %	Important N %	Quite important N %	Very important N %
Listen to & understand lectures & notes	--	3 (10)	5 (16.7)	8 (26.7)	14 (46.7)
Listen to & carry out instructions/directions	--	2 (6.7)	8 (26.7)	10 (33.3)	10 (33.3)
Listen to & understand class/tutorial discussions	1 (3.3)	2 (6.7)	5 (16.7)	8 (26.7)	14 (46.7)
Listen to & understand questions/points raised during class /tutorials	--	3 (10)	5 (16.7)	8 (26.7)	14 (46.7)
Listen to & answer questions in class/tutorials	2 (6.7)	1 (3.3)	4 (13.3)	13 (43.3)	10 (33.3)
Listen to & understand seminars & talks	--	2 (6.7)	6 (20)	13 (43.3)	9 (30)
Listen to & understand television programs	--	3 (10)	8 (26.7)	12 (40)	7 (23.3)
Listen to & understand radio programs	2 (6.7)	4 (13.3)	10 (33.3)	6 (20)	8 (26.7)
Listen to & understand different English accents	2 (6.7)	3 (10)	6 (20)	12 (40)	7 (23.3)

All figures within parentheses are in percentages

It is seen that most teachers (>80%) agreed upon the importance of the listening sub-skills.

8.3.3 Teachers' perception of the importance of speaking sub-skills for students' academic success

The results for the importance of the speaking sub-skills are shown in Table 8.4:

Table 8.4 Teachers' perception of the importance of speaking sub-skills for students' academic success

	Not important at all N %	Not very important N %	Important N %	Quite important N %	Very important N %
Asking questions	--	2 (6.7)	5 (16.7)	8 (26.7)	15 (50)
Answering questions	1 (3.3)	2 (6.7)	4 (13.3)	8 (26.7)	15 (50)
Expressing opinions /objections	--	2 (6.7)	6 (20)	8 (26.7)	14 (46.7)
Delivering oral presentations /reports	2 (6.7)	1 (3.3)	2 (6.7)	11 (36.7)	14 (46.7)
Explaining processes /procedures	2 (6.7)	1 (3.3)	5 (16.7)	11 (36.7)	11 (36.7)
Brainstorming	1 (3.3)	1 (3.3)	9 (30)	9 (30)	10 (33.3)
Taking part in class/tutorial /group discussions	2 (6.7)	2 (6.7)	4 (13.3)	10 (33.3)	12 (40)
Taking part in social conversations	1 (3.3)	2 (6.7)	3 (10)	14 (46.7)	10 (33.3)
Speaking with other fluent speakers of English	--	2 (6.7)	6 (20)	14 (46.7)	8 (26.7)

All figures within parentheses are in percentages

It is seen that most teachers (>85%) felt speaking sub-skills were "important-very important".

8.4 Teachers' perception of the usefulness of the present English course in teaching students reading sub-skills

Table 8.5 presents the findings for the course's helpfulness in teaching the reading sub-skills:

Table 8.5 Teachers' perception of the usefulness of the present course in teaching students reading sub-skills

	Not at all helpful N %	Not very helpful N %	A bit helpful N %	Quite helpful N %	Very helpful N %
Reading a text quickly to get a general idea of its content	--	3 (10)	10 (33.3)	12 (40)	5 (16.7)
Looking through a text quickly to find specific information	--	3 (10)	12 (40)	12 (40)	3 (10)
Guessing the meanings of unknown words from their context	1 (3.3)	4 (13.3)	11 (36.7)	11 (36.7)	3 (10)
Understanding the main points of a text	1 (3.3)	2 (6.7)	10 (33.3)	10 (33.3)	7 (23.3)
Reading a text slowly & carefully to understand the details of the text	--	4 (13.3)	10 (33.3)	10 (33.3)	6 (20)
Reading to respond critically	2 (6.7)	5 (16.7)	7 (23.3)	13 (43.3)	3 (10)
Understanding a writer's attitude & purpose	3 (10)	5 (16.7)	13 (43.3)	5 (16.7)	4 (13.3)
Understand & interpret charts, graphs, tables	5 (16.7)	6 (20)	5 (16.7)	12 40)	2 (6.7)
General comprehension	1 (3.3)	2 (6.7)	10 (33.3)	11 (36.7)	6 (20)

All figures within parentheses are in percentages

It was found that most teachers (70-90%) felt that the course was useful in teaching the reading sub-skills. But some teachers felt the course did not help teach:

- guessing the meanings of unknown words from their context

- understanding and interpreting charts/graphs/tables

- reading to respond critically - understanding a writer's attitude and purpose

These points should be addressed in future courses.

8.4.1 Teachers' perception of the usefulness of the present course in teaching students writing sub-skills

The results for course's helpfulness in teaching the writing sub-skills are displayed in Table 8.6:

Table 8.6 Teachers' perception of the usefulness of the present course in teaching students writing sub-skills

	Not at all helpful N %	Not very helpful N %	A bit helpful N %	Quite helpful N %	Very helpful N %
Using correct punctuation & spelling	1 (3.3)	3 (10)	11 (36.7)	9 (30)	6 (20)
Structuring sentences	1 (3.3)	3 (10)	7 (23.3)	12 (40)	7 (23.3)
Using appropriate vocabulary	0	4 (13.3)	9 (30)	14 (46.7)	3 (10)
Organizing paragraphs	0	6 (20)	7 (23.3)	10 (33.3)	7 (23.3)
Organizing the overall assignment	2 (6.7)	1 (3.3)	10 (33.3)	10 (33.3)	7 (23.3)
Expressing ideas appropriately	0	5 (16.7)	9 (30)	9 (30)	7 (23.3)
Developing ideas	0	4 (13.3)	11 (36.7)	10 (33.3)	5 (16.7)
Expressing what you want to say clearly	1 (3.3)	3 (10)	10 (33.3)	12 (40)	4 (13.3)
Addressing the topic	1 (3.3)	4 (13.3)	8 (26.7)	14 (46.7)	3 (10)
Adopting appropriate tone & style	2 (6.7)	6 (20)	13 (43.3)	9 (30)	0
Following instructions & directions	1 (3.3)	2 (6.7)	12 (40)	12 (40)	3 (10)
Evaluating & revising your writing	1 (3.3)	2 (6.7)	9 (30)	12 (40)	6 (20)
Overall writing ability	0	5 (16.7)	7 (23.3)	11 (36.7)	7 (23.3)
Completing written tasks	0	5 (16.7)	13 (43.3)	8 (26.7)	4 (13.3)

All figures within parentheses are in percentages

It is seen that most teachers (73.3-90%) felt the course is helped teach the writing sub-skills. But a number of teachers (13.3-26.7%) felt the course did not help teach

- using correct punctuation and spelling   - structuring sentences

- using appropriate vocabulary   - organizing paragraphs

- expressing ideas appropriately   - developing ideas

- expressing what you want to say clearly   - addressing the topic

- adopting appropriate tone and style   - overall writing ability

These points need to be addressed in course design.

8.4.2 Teachers' perception of the usefulness of the present course in teaching students listening sub-skills

The results for course helpfulness in teaching listening sub-skills are given in Table 8.7:

Table 8.7 Teachers' perception of the usefulness of the present course in teaching students listening sub-skills

	Not at all helpful N %	Not very helpful N %	A bit helpful N %	Quite helpful N %	Very helpful N %
Listen to & understand lectures & notes	1 (3.3)	5 (16.7)	9 (30)	10 (33.3)	5 (16.7)
Listen to & carry out instructions/directions	0	5 (16.7)	7 (23.3)	13 (43.3)	5 (16.7)
Listen to & understand class/tutorial discussions	0	4 (13.3)	8 (26.7)	12 (40)	6 (20)
Listen to & understand questions/points raised during class /tutorials	0	2 (6.7)	11 (36.7)	13 (43.3)	4 (13.3)
Listen to & answer questions in class/tutorials	0	4 (13.3)	7 (23.3)	14 (46.70	5 (16.7)
Listen to & understand seminars & talks	1 (3.3)	6 (20)	9 (30)	9 (30)	5 (16.7)
Listen to & understand television programs	3 (10)	3 (10)	11 (36.7)	9 (30)	4 (13.3)
Listen to & understand radio programs	4 (13.3)	4 (13.3)	11 (36.7)	9 (30)	2 (6.7)
Listen to & understand different English accents	5 (16.7)	5 (16.7)	6 (20)	11 (36.7)	3 (10)

All figures within parentheses are in percentages

It is evident that most teachers (>65%) felt the course helped teach listening sub-skills. But many teachers (6.7-33.4%) felt the course did not teach listening to and understanding: - lectures and notes- seminars and talks

These issues need to be addressed in content specification.

8.4.3 Teachers' perception of the usefulness of the English course in teaching students speaking sub-skills

Table 8.8 illustrates the results for course helpfulness in teaching speaking sub-skills:

Table 8.8 Teachers' perception of the usefulness of the present course in teaching students speaking sub-skills

	Not at all helpful N %	Not very helpful N %	A bit helpful N %	Quite helpful N %	Very helpful N %
Asking questions	--	6 (20)	8 (26.7)	12 (40)	4 (13.3)
Answering questions	--	5 (16.7)	9 (30)	10 (33.3)	6 (20)
Expressing opinions /objections	3 (10)	6 (20)	7 (23.3)	8 (26.7)	6 (20)
Delivering oral presentations /reports	2 (6.7)	4 (13.3)	7 (23.3)	13 (43.3)	4 (13.3)
Explaining processes /procedures	3 (10)	5 (16.7)	8 (26.7)	9 (30)	5 (16.7)
Brainstorming	3 (10)	2 (6.7)	13 (43.3)	9 (30)	3 (10)
Taking part in class/tutorial /group discussions	1 (3.3)	3 (10)	11 (36.7)	12 (40)	3 (10)
Taking part in social conversations	3 (10)	5 (16.6)	7 (23.3)	14 (46.7)	1 (3.3)
Speaking with other fluent speakers of English	7 (23.3)	4 (13.3)	7 (23.3)	9 (30)	3 (10)

All figures within parentheses are in percentages

It was found that most teachers (63.4-86.3%) felt the course helped teach the speaking sub-skills. But some teachers (13.7-36.6%) felt the course did not help teach:

− speaking with other fluent speakers of   − asking questions
   English

− expressing opinions/objections   − delivering oral presentations/repo

− explaining processes/procedures   − taking part in social conversations

These matters have been addressed in future courses.

8.4.4 Teachers' opinion on the usefulness of the course for preparing students for their studies

Figure 8.4 illustrates the findings for the teachers' views on course effectiveness in preparing students for studies:

Figure 8.4 Teachers' opinion on the usefulness of the English course for preparing students for their studies
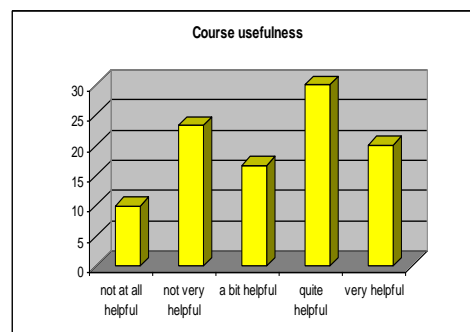
It is evident that most teachers (66.7%) felt the course helped prepare students for their studies, but many teachers (33.3%) felt the course did not help, indicating some things in the present course need to be rectified.

8.5 Teachers' perceptions of course difficulty

The results for course difficulty from the teachers' perspective are given in Table 8.9:

Table 8.9 Teachers' perceptions of course difficulty

	The discussions in class were difficult for your students to follow	The language of the course book/handout /materials were difficult for your students to follow	The tasks and activities were difficult for your students to do	Your students had difficulty in completing the given work on time in class
Strongly disagree	3 (10)	1 (3.3)	2 (6.7)	4 (13.3)
Disagree	9 (30)	11 (36.7)	15 (50)	8 (26.7)
Not sure	9 (30)	8 (26.7)	8 (26.7)	11 (36.7)
Agree	9 (30)	9 (30)	5 (16.7)	4 (13.3)
Strongly agree	--	1 (3.3)	--	3 (10)

All figures within parentheses are in percentages

It was found that some teachers (16.7-33.3%) felt the course was difficult and quite a number (26.7-36.7%) were "unsure". Thus it may be said the course is difficult and this needs to be looked into.

8.5.1 Teachers' perception of the learning & usefulness of course

Table 8.10 presents the results for teachers' opinions about course learning and usefulness:

Table 8.10 Teachers' perception of the learning & usefulness of course

	Your students learnt a lot about English language usage from using these materials	Your students' English has improved as a result of the activities done in class	The course will be useful for your students' studies	The course will be useful for your students' future career needs	Your students feel more confident about using English in their studies	Your students feel confident about using English for their career purposes
Strongly disagree	3 (10)		1 (3.3)	1 (3.3)	2 (6.7)	1 (3.3)
Disagree	6 (20)	6 (20)	4 (13.3)	5 (16.7)	7 (23.3)	6 (20)
Not sure	16 (53.3)	15 (50)	7 (23.3)	6 (20)	12 (40)	11 (36.7)
Agree	5 (16.7)	7 (23.3)	17 (56.7)	15 (50)	8 (26.7)	11 (36.7)
Strongly agree	--	2 (6.7)	1 (3.3)	3 (10)	1 (3.3)	1 (3.3)

All figures within parentheses are in percentages

Table 8.10 many teachers (36.7-53.3%) were "unsure" about course learning; many teachers (>20%) were unsure, and many teachers (>20%) disagreed about course usefulness, thus there is doubt about course learning and usefulness.

8.6 Overview of the prevalent classroom teaching styles

Table 8.11 displays the findings for the most frequently used teaching styles in class:

Table 8.11 Classroom teaching styles being used

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very often
Lecturing	--	3 (10)	5 (16.7)	5 (16.7)	17 (56.7)
Teacher asking questions & students answering	--	2 (6.7)	4 (13.3)	11 (36.7)	13 (43.3)
Group discussions with teacher as facilitator	1 (3.3)	6 (20)	8 (26.7)	5 (16.7)	10 (33.3)
Students given work & working independently out of class	1 (3.3)	1 (3.3)	9 (30)	13 (43.3)	6 (20)
Student presentations	1 (3.3)	6 (20)	6 (20)	11 (36.7)	6 (20)
Students silently doing written work in class	5 (16.7)	8 (26.7)	7 (23.3)	7 (23.3)	3 (10)
Using drama music role plays games	9 (30)	5 (16.7)	9 (30)	5 (16.7)	2 (6.7)
Group or pair work	--	9 (30)	10 (33.3)	5 (16.7)	6 (20)
Students doing practical fieldwork	4 (13.3)	8 (26.7)	9 (30)	8 (26.7)	1 (3.3)

All figures within parentheses are in percentages

It is seen that the frequently used teaching styles (75-90%) are:

- lecturing   - teacher asking questions and students answering

- students given work and working independently out of class

- group discussions with teacher as facilitator   - student presentations

The least used teaching styles (50-70%) are:

- students silently doing written work in class- using drama, music, role play, games

- group or pair work- students doing practical fieldwork.

It must be taken into account that students of all Faculties preferred:

- using drama, music, role plays, games- group or pair work –

- doing practical fieldwork

Thus some changes need to be made in teaching style for courses to be more effective.

8.7 Teachers' suggestions to improve the courses

Table 8.12 illustrates the findings for teachers' suggestions for course improvement:

Table 8.12 Teachers' suggestions to improve the courses

Suggestions	N=30
Modify courses to cater to the needs of students of various different abilities and levels	3
Focus more on all four skills	6
Focus more on reading and writing and overcoming fear	5
Focus more on listening and speaking and overcoming fear	6
Introduce assessment of listening and speaking	3
Focus more on sentence formation	6
Reduce grammar focus	5
Buildup subject specific vocabulary	5
Introduce/Increased use of English in assignments, lectures, classes	5
Introduce/Increased time allocation for formal report writing	5
Introduce/Increased time allocation for research writing	4
Introduce/Increased time allocation for multi-media presentations	5
Introduce/Increased time allocation for writing on specific/social/ practical issues	10
Introduce/Increased use or real magazines ,articles , materials	5
Increase course duration to 2-3 years	5

It is noted that teachers offered many constructive suggestions which may be considered in future course design.

Section B: Summary of the findings and discussion of the Classroom Observations

This section presents and discusses the findings gathered through classroom observations. Twenty-two hours of classes from the four Faculties being studied were observed. The *non-participant* method where the researcher chooses the role of *observer-as-participant* was used. Several checklists were used to observe the classes and additional notes were also taken. In order to overcome observer bias and maintain internal validity, six hours of classes were simultaneously observed by the researcher and two associates, using the same checklists and observation criteria. It was hoped that the data gathered would depict a clearer picture of what occurs in the classrooms as well as give a clearer conception of the language needs, wants and lacks of the freshmen students in order to provide course designers with the necessary basis for designing an adequate EAP course that meets the learners' needs.

8.8 Findings of Classroom Observation

The first checklist used for classroom observation was adapted from checklists developed and tested by Alam & Begum (2005) and Khan, R. (2002). The checklist was developed to elicit information about the teaching styles being used in the classroom, the various task types and teaching activities being used and the time allocation for these various activities in the course of a regular one hour class.

Table 8.13 Time allocation for activities in classrooms

Faculty	Commerce		Humanities		Science			Soc. Science	
Department	**Fnc**	**Mktng**	**Phil**	**Ling**	**Phys**	**B.chem**	**Psych.**	**Int. Rel.**	**Wmn. Std.**
Teaching Style									
Lecturing	5		7.5	5	5	3.3	10	5	
Question &Answer	7.5	3.3	7.5	6.5	10	6.5	5	5	3.3
Group Discussion	10	6.7		6.5		6.5	5		3.3
Independent work		3.3	5						3.3
Group/Pair-work	5	3.3		3.3		10	2.5		3.3
Activity/Task type									
Reading Comprehension		1.7	7.5	5	5				3.3
Writing	15	3.3	5	6.5	12.5	3.3	12.5	17.5	3.3

Faculty	Commerce		Humanities		Science			Soc. Science	
Department	Fnc	Mktng	Phil	Ling	Phys	B.chem	Psych.	Int. Rel.	Wmn. Std.
Listening to SS/T		10	5	6.5	17.5	5	7.5	10	10
Speaking		10	7.5	5	5			5	15
Presentations		13.3							6.5
Board work	5			5			5	5	
Instructions	5	1.7	5	3.3	2.5	5	5	5	3.3
Queries	2.5	1.7	5	3.3	2.5				
Feedback	5	1.7	5	3.3		5	7.5	7.5	5
Total time (mins)	60	60	60	60	60	60	60	60	60

Key: Fnc-Finance, Mktng-Marketing, Phil-Philosophy, Ling-Linguistics, B.Chem-Bio-Chemistry,

Phys- Physics, Psych- Psychology, Int.Rel-International Relations, Wmn Std-Women Studies

It appears that the learners engaged in a variety of tasks and activities and the teaching styles were quite varied as well. But incorporating varied teaching styles and varied tasks does not ensure lesson clarity or teaching success. Thus 'lesson clarity' and 'teaching success rate' need to be established.

8.8.1 Observations about Lesson Clarity

The researcher went on to attempt to ascertain the 'lesson clarity' of the classes observed.

According to Borich's (1994) guidelines the following checklist for observing lesson clarity was adapted from a checklist developed by Borich G.D. (1994:180).

Table 8.14 Observations based on Lesson Clarity

Faculty	Commerce		Humanities		Science			Soc. Science	
Department									
Effectiveness Indicators	Fnc	Mrktng	Phil.	Ling.	Phys.	Bio-chem	Psych.	Int. Rltn.	Wmn. Std.
Informs SS of skills or understandings expected at end of lesson	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓
Provides SS with an advanced	✓	✓							✓

Faculty	Commerce		Humanities		Science			Soc. Science	
Department **Effectiveness Indicators**	**Fnc**	**Mrktng**	**Phil.**	**Ling.**	**Phys.**	**Bio-chem**	**Psych.**	**Int. Rltn.**	**Wmn. Std.**
organizer that places lesson content in perspective									
Checks for task relevant prior learning. at start of lesson & re-teaches if necessary	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓		
Gives directives slowly & distinctly checks for understanding along the way	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Knows SS ability level & proceeds at or slightly above their current level of functioning	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
Uses examples, illustrations or demo's to explain and clarify content in text & workbook	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Provides review or summary	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓	

Key: *Fnc-Finance, Mktng-Marketing, Phil-Philosophy, Ling-Linguistics, B.Chem-Bio-Chemistry,*

Phys- Physics, Psych- Psychology, Int.Rel-International Relations, Wmn Std-Women Studies

It was found that though teachers varied in their clarity, most of the effectiveness indicators were met. Notably only three teachers provided students with an advanced organizer that placed the lesson content in perspective.

8.8.2 Observations about Success Rate of Teaching

The success rate of teaching in the various classrooms was probed. In order to achieve teaching success, a wide and complex range of factors has to be at play in precise co-ordination. The following checklist for observing the success rate of teaching was adapted from a checklist developed by Borich G.D. (1994:329)

Table 8.15 Findings of Checklist for Success Rate of Teaching

Faculty	Commerce		Humanities		Science			Soc. Science	
Department	Fnc	Mktng	Phil.	Ling.	Phys.	B.chem	Psych.	Int. Rel.	Wmn. Std.
Unit & lesson organization reflects task relevant prior learning	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	
Mediated feedback provided to extend & enhance SS learning	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Lesson divided into small easy pieces			✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
Planned transition to new content in small easy to grasp steps	✓	✓	✓			✓			✓
Varies momentum at which key/important information is presented	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓

Key: Fnc-Finance, Mktng-Marketing, Phil-Philosophy, Ling-Linguistics, B.Chem-Bio-Chemistry,

Phys- Physics, Psych- Psychology, Int.Rel-International Relations, Wmn Std-Women Studies

Notably most factors deemed important for teaching success were noted in the classrooms observed; but as the 'teaching-learning' process is a complex phenomenon just observing the presence of effectiveness indicators does not ensure proper learning.

8.9 Detailed Discussion of Classroom Observations

Certain related criteria based on several behaviors identified by Good and Brophy (1990) as conducive to "engaging students in the learning process" and "promoting performance outcomes and higher thought processes" were also observed. Additionally factors such as the physical condition of the classrooms; use of textbooks; student-teacher ratio; languages used in class; and the order, organization and focus of the lessons were observed.

8.9.1 Findings for the Business studies Faculty class observations

The Commerce faculty classes unlike typical university classrooms, were air-conditioned had movable chairs, attached desks, whiteboard, podium, OHP multi-media and other teaching aids. The student-teacher ratio in the classes was around 30:1. The teacher and students used only English in class.

The narrative essay structure was explained and discussed; sample essays were read out and analyzed; students' group brainstorming points was done on the whiteboard and assignments were completed with interspersed guidance from the teacher. Power point presentations on small-scale research topics were done; marketing gimmicks and sales pitches were performed and promotional samples of fictitious products were distributed. Other students judged the presentations along with comprehensive teacher feedback at the end. Commerce faculty classes were simultaneously taken by a subject teacher and a language teacher.

8.9.2 Findings for the Humanities Faculty class observations

The Humanities classrooms were typical university classrooms with fixed wooden benches, long desks, podium, and no teaching aids and a whiteboard and a regular chalk blackboard. The student-teacher ratio was nearly 55:1. The room was extremely congested with some restricted movement up and down a central aisle possible and the students spoke in both English and Bangla, however, the teacher spoke only in English. The students worked from a textbook. Reading comprehension was done; homework assignments were read, discussed and corrected; problems were discussed and done on the board. Oral

questions, textbook exercises and activities on the board were interspersed throughout the content presentation. Humanities Faculty classes were being taken by language teachers only.

8.9.3 Findings for the Science Faculty class observations

Science classrooms were typical university classrooms with fixed wooden benches, long desks, a chalk blackboard, podium, and no other teaching aids. The student-teacher ratio was around 55:1. One room was extremely large, damp, poorly lit and the board could not be seen clearly from the middle of the room nor was it possible to clearly hear what the teacher said. Another room was large and moderately-lit but extremely congested with hardly any movement possible; several huge pillars in the room obstructed the students' view of the teacher and blackboard in certain sections of the room. A third room had an extremely high podium which was difficult for the teacher to negotiate. Both the teacher and students frequently used both English and Bangla during the class. No text books were used. Reading comprehensions were done or corrected, dictations were done, some group discussions and presentations were done. Problems were done on the board and the topics for group discussion were written on the board along with additional points that would be helpful for students in their presentations. Oral questions, workbook exercises and board activities were done immediately at the end of the content presentation and at the end of the class separated by other activities. Science Faculty classes were taken by language teachers only

8.9.4 Findings for the Social Science Faculty class observations

One Social Science classroom unlike regular university classrooms had movable chairs with attached desks, whiteboard, podium, OHP, multi-media, projector and screen and other teaching aids. Another classroom was a regular university classroom with fixed wooden benches and long desks, a whiteboard, podium, and no other teaching aids; extremely congested with no movement possible at all. In some classes both teacher and students simultaneously used English and Bangla; in another the teacher and students used English only in class.

In some classes students posted homework assignments on a felt board; prepared well decorated, wall-newspapers on various contemporary topics; delivered group presentations using the power point. The teacher provided comprehensive feedback; other students

also marked the presentation. Reading comprehension was read, explained, discussed and done in class followed by vocabulary practice exercises. But students in one class got bored and frequently complained that the classes were uninteresting and too easy and wanted more challenging, engaging and up-to-date materials. (It should be noted here that on one occasion the researcher was unable to observe the class in question here as the disappointed students had walked out of class.) Some classes were simultaneously taken by a subject teacher as well as a language teacher; however one class was being taken by language teachers only.

8.10 Findings and Discussion Recapitulation

Teachers' Perceptions

The Teachers perceptions about their students English needs and abilities and the present ELT courses has been recapitulated as follows:

- most teachers (95%) felt students were "average-very good" in reading
- most teachers (86.7%) felt students were "average-very good" in listening
- most teachers (>70%) felt students were "weak-very weak" in speaking
- for writing teachers' opinions were divided in writing between "weak-very weak" (50%) & "average-good" (50%)

Classroom Observations

The observations of the Commerce Faculty classes are summarized as follows:

- teachers and students spoke mainly in English
- they asked each other lots of questions
- classes were highly interactive
- despite mistakes students and teachers spoke in English
- this is an English medium Faculty
- students highly prized by employers as good at English
- still scope for course improvement

The observations of the Humanities Faculty classes are summarized as follows:

- many students attempted to speak in English

- classes interactive to some extent but not lively
- classes mainly Bengali with some English terms
- most texts are in English
- students motivated to improve their English
- this is a Bengali medium Faculty
- student considered weak at writing and speaking

The observations of the Science Faculty classes are summarized as follows:

- classes & students not lively or engaged
- class environment & course materials uninteresting
- classes not very interactive
- students did not speak much to each other or to the teacher
- technically this is an English medium Faculty
- texts and assessments are in English
- classes are mainly in Bengali interspersed with English terms
- students communicate more in Bengali than in English in classes
- teacher repeatedly requested students to speak in English

The following two contrasting scenarios were found in the, Social Science Faculty observations:

- some classes highly interactive & lively
- students not very proficient in English
- continuously tried to speak English in class
- students asked each other & teacher questions
- students very engaged & lively & highly motivated to learn English
- other classes were unmotivated & non-interactive
- students did not want to do more grammar & comprehension passages were unappealing
- students hardly spoke to each other or teacher
- teacher repeatedly requested students to speak in English
- students expressed desire to improve English
- expressed their dissatisfaction with the present course

- their spoken & written English better than Science & Humanities Faculty students

8.11 Findings in relation to research questions

It was found that the current classroom and teaching environment leaves much to be desired and that there is plenty of scope for improvement in the present courses that are being taught at the various faculties. The teachers' feedback established that the students' abilities are below the proficiency level required, to academically succeed at the tertiary level. Teachers identified areas in which the English courses were not fulfilling their expectations and made suggestions for course improvement. These findings answer the third, fourth, fifth and sixth research questions. Future ELT courses will benefit greatly if these findings are kept in mind during course design.

Chapter Nine

Summary of the Findings and Discussion for the Employers' and the Curriculum experts' Perceptions

9.1 Introduction

This chapter presents and discusses the findings gathered through semi-structured interviews conducted with thirty employers and twenty five curriculum experts from Bangladesh and other countries. The chapter is divided into two sections, the first section presents the employers' perceptions about English language needs and their employee's proficiency, and the second section summarizes perceptions of curriculum development from the perspective of experts from Bangladesh and other countries.

9.2 Section A: Summary of the findings and Discussion for Assessment of the Employers Perspective of Language Needs and Their Perceptions of their Employees' Proficiency

The findings gathered through semi-structured interviews administered to thirty employers representing the various employment sectors which employed the graduates from the departments covered in this research are presented and discussed in the following section. It was hoped that the data collected would help in identifying the requirements and needs of the employment sector and the shortcomings and lacks of graduates. This would help course designers in designing appropriate courses to bridge the existing gap. The interview findings were tabulated and converted to numerical data to give a clearer view of the results. Some select excerpts from the interviews were also analyzed. The following sub-sections discuss the findings for the employment sector interviews in detail

9.2.1 Employers' opinions on impact of the lack of English on career prospects

The findings for whether a lack of English language skills hindered people from being employed are presented in Table 9.1:

Table 9.1 Employers' opinions on whether the lack of English affects career prospects

Opinion	N	%
Yes	28	93.3
No	2	6.7

NB N=30

It was found that most employers (93.3%) felt a lack of English language skills seriously affected job prospects. Only the Bangladesh civil services commission and the Garments industry employers felt someone professionally competent but lacking English competency would still be employed. Several employers stated that the company "head hunted" for people who were "good in English" as "the corporate world is competitive and globalized" and the "company image" is important, therefore most companies wanted employees who were "smart and English speaking". This stresses the importance of English proficiency in the corporate scenario in Bangladesh.

9.2.2 Forms of assessment in job interviews

The findings for assessment used in employee selection are presented in Table 9.2:

Table 9.2 The type of assessment taken in job interviews

Assessment Taken	N	%
Initial Assessment: writing	28	93.3
Second Assessment: speaking	29	96.6

NB N=30

Most employers (96.6%) assessed potential employees' speaking skills and many employers (93.3%) further assessed writing skills. This emphasizes that without adequate speaking and writing skills it is difficult to qualify in job selections.

9.2.3 Employers' perceptions about the Language skills

Table 9.3 displays the findings for employers' perceptions about various aspects of the language skills:

Table 9.3 Employers' perceptions about various aspect of Language skills

	Listening			Speaking			Reading			Writing		
	Yes	No	Not Req.	Yes	No	Not Req	Yes	No	Not Req	Yes	No	Not Req
What skills are needed by fresh graduates?	21		9	28		2	22		8	28		2
Are the skills of graduates satisfactory?	9	15	6	5	24	1	14	11	5	10	20	-
What skills are used in communication?	18			27			23			29		
What are crucial skills for the job?	20			20			15			23		
Are employees sufficiently proficient in these skills?	14	10		11	18		16	8		11	18	
Which skills need improvement?	16			27			12			22		

It was noted that employers expected graduates to have:

- productive skills speaking and writing (93.3%)

- receptive skills reading and listening (73.3%)

It was deduced that most employers (66.6%) expect proficiency in all four skills, as "depending on the context" any of the skills may be required.

9.2.4 Employers perceptions about graduates' proficiency

The employers' perception of the average proficiency of graduates who were job applicants found that employers perceived graduates to be not competent at:

- Listening (50%) - Speaking (80%)- Reading (36.6%)- Writing (66.6%)

Thus on the whole employers perceive the graduates as not competent in any of the skills except for reading. Employers noted that local graduates generally "are not up to the mark"; their English standards are "very poor". Some employers stated that "there has been an apparent

increase in literacy but these graduates are good for nothing" and "they are a liability not an asset as they are totally incompetent".

9.2.5 Skills employers expect graduates to be proficient in

An exploration of skills employers expected employees to use in English communications revealed that mostly employers expected written (96.6%), spoken (90%), reading (76.6%) and listening (60%). Thus most employers expected employees to use all four skills in their communications, thus employees are expected to be adequately competent in all four skills. One employer commented that nowadays, even local Bangladeshi clients "expect spoken and written English communications." Other employers said that "all communications nowadays are in English" and that "it is a growing need in the market today".

9.2.6 Employers' perspective of Crucial job skills

Crucial job skills from the employers' perception: writing (76.6%); listening (66.6%); speaking (66.6%) and reading (50%). Thus all four skills are more or less crucial for the employment sector.

9.2.7 Employees' proficiency from the Employers' perspective

The employers' perceptions about the proficiency of their employees in the four skills revealed that employers perceived their employees to be moderately proficient in reading (53.3%) and listening (46.6%); but they were not perceived as proficient in speaking (60%) and writing (60%). One employer commented that "they can write, but only wrong English with no sentence structure, grammar or anything". Another employer said that "everything they write has to be completely rewritten, not corrected". Yet another employer stated that "they have a lot of potential but cannot do anything because they are unable to communicate". Such comments give an impression that the "lacks" among employees pose genuine problems for employers.

9.2.8 Skills in need of improvement from the Employers'perspective

Skills in need of improvement from the employers' perspective were: speaking (90), writing (73.3%), (53.3%) and reading (40%).

Employers expressed concern that "English is not being given enough emphasis in education" and that "the education system is faulty" as graduates "can pass exams without studying, just by memorizing a few answers"; and admitted that they had to "regularly edit and double-

check" all written communications. They also commented that "the teachers themselves are poor and not proficient in English and are unable to teach their students as they themselves are products of this same faulty system; a complete change in methodology is needed."

9.2.9 On the job Skills Training

Table 9.4 presents the findings for employees being given on the job language training:

Table 9.4 Organizations with in-house English training

Training	No	Yes	
		Type of Training	
		In-House	British Council
	6	23	10

NB N=30

It was found that most employers have ongoing, tailor made, in-house courses to improve their employees' language skills and some employers avail of British Council's executive courses. This highlights the inadequacy of graduates' skills hence the need for implementing such courses.

9.2.10 On the job English Communication

The findings for the percentage of employees' English communication are displayed in Table 9.5:

Table9.5 Rate of use of English at workplace

	Rate of use of English at workplace	**Number of organizations**
High use of English	100%	7
	90%	2
	80%	2
	70%	2
	60%	2
	50%	7
Sub Total		**22**
Low use of English	40%	1
	30%	-
	20%	4
	10%	**3**
Sub Total		

NB N=30

It was found that a considerable percentage of employees have to communicate in English, this led to the next point of investigation

regarding the interlocutors with whom these communications take place since Bangladesh is a monolingual, predominantly Bangla speaking nation. The findings for this investigation are presented in Table 9.6:

Table 9.6 Nature of English Communication

Communication	N	%
International	27	90
Local	28	93.3

NB N=30

It was found that in an era of globalization, most communications whether local (93.3%) or international (90%) are in English, even in a non-English speaking nation like Bangladesh.

9.2.11 An approximation of the gap between actual skills proficiency and the required skills proficiency of graduates

The researcher next attempted to gain a clearer picture of the gap between the level of English language proficiency that employers expected their employees to have and the actual level of proficiency of their employees in their perception. The employers were asked to give approximate ratings on a scale of 1 to 10 for the levels of proficiency they expected and their perception of their employees' levels of proficiency. In order to clarify the picture of the existing gap, the standard deviation and the means of the values for the six major employment sectors were calculated on the basis of these approximate ratings.

Table 9.8

	Listening				Speaking				Reading				Writing			
	Required		Actual		Required		Actual		Required		Actual		Required		Actual	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Services	7.6	1.1	4.3	1.5	8.3	1.2	4.2	1.5	7.5	2.1	5	2.1	8	1.6	5.2	2.5
Trade	7.7	3.2	5.7	2.6	8	2	6.3	1.5	6.5	5.6	5.8	5.2	8.5	3	7	1.7
Education	8	2.8	5	0	8	0	4.7	.35	7	1.4	5	0	7.5	.71	4.5	0
Media	8	2.2	4.5	1.7	7.5	1.1	3.7	1.4	6.2	4.3	3.4	2.3	7.6	1.1	2.6	2
Travel	7.7	1.5	5.2	3.4	9	1	5.8	2.2	5.2	4.5	3.7	3.5	8.2	2	4.8	1
Industry	6.6	2.7	4.9	2.5	7.8	3.1	5.2	2.7	7	2	5.7	1.5	7.6	2	5.3	1.7

* M=Mean, SD=Standard Deviation

It is observed that wide gaps are evident in all the sectors and in all the skills. It is interesting to note that regardless of how high or low the

employers' expected levels of proficiency were, the employees' perceived proficiency levels were always lower, even in the organizations that had stringent recruitment procedures. In view of these findings the need for designing courses in order for future graduates to overcome these existing shortcomings appears urgent and imperative.

9.3 Section B: Perceptions and Feedback from Curriculum Experts

This section primarily deals with perceptions of curriculum development from the perspective of experts from Bangladesh and other countries. The first part deals with feedback from curriculum experts from Bangladesh. Part two assesses the feedback of curriculum experts from other countries. The final part of this chapter recapitulates the findings from both groups of experts. The researcher begins by interviewing thirteen leading Bangladeshi curriculum experts and one education policy maker, in order to gain a comprehensive perception about the ELT scenario in Bangladesh and the planning and designing processes behind the various ELT syllabuses being used at Dhaka University. In addition the researcher interviewed eleven curriculum experts from other countries to form an insight about their views regarding the existing curriculums and to identify probable ways in which the curriculums and the students' English language needs could be reconciled. The data has been presented in the form of various excerpts extracted from the interviews, eventually leading to an overview of general trends.

9.3.1 Feedback and comments of Bangladeshi Curriculum Experts

Thirteen leading curriculum experts and one education policy maker from Bangladesh were interviewed. These findings and discussions are presented in detail in the following sub-sections.

9.3.2 Theoretical basis for courses

From the interviews with the Bangladeshi curriculum experts it became apparent that there was no theoretical basis for any of the ELT courses currently being taught at Dhaka University. All the experts categorically stated that no formal Needs Analysis (the primary prerequisite for any course design) either formal or informal had ever been conducted. It also emerged that there was almost no precedence of any NA having ever been conducted at any of the educational levels in over three decades. According to Rahman (1996):

"students in Bangladesh have been suffering from a variety of problems in learning English. Very little research has been done to document the nature and extent --- of the problems ; --- it is unknown for students to be asked about students' needs, interests and difficulties in learning --" (Rahman, 1996:89)

There is a general consensus that needs analysis, the collection and application of information on learners' needs, is a defining feature of ESP, and within ESP, of EAP (Jordan, 1997; T. Johns & Dudley Evans,1991; Robinson, 1991: Strevens, 1988). It is well known that students are the motivating force of education. Nunan (1988:2) views the curriculum as "a collaborative effort between teachers and learners, since learners are closely involved in the decision making process regarding the content of the curriculum and how it is taught" and comments that "learners – have – more realistic idea of what can be achieved in a given course." Research shows that language students have definite opinions and perceptions about language learning (Horwitz, 1988), and their perceptions need to be documented and reviewed to develop language study (Kleinasser, 1989). Flowerdew and Peacock (2001) state that the goal of EAP is to meet the 'specific needs' of learners, and suggest that "data be collected" from the "people responsible" for the course, i.e. language teachers, the subject matter expert, the learners, the administrators and the institution; this ensures a balanced view of the course. However both Kachru (1994) and Sridhar (1994) echo similar sentiments that "there is very little research on the process of everyday language acquisition in periphery communities to take into account their integrated processes of language" (Kachru 1994 and Sridhar 1994, cited in Canagarajah 1999: 129).

9.3.3 Basis for course design

Primarily it appeared that the ELT courses had been designed based upon the designers' perceptions of the students' needs as the designers asserted that they had attempted to make assumptions about the students' needs; this is lucidly illustrated by the following extracts:

> *Decided by and based on, <u>the beliefs and intuitions</u> of the teachers and administration…* BD Respondent 2

> *Based on, <u>my teaching experiences</u> and knowledge of the sufferings and problems of my students and <u>discussions with faculty</u> members…* BD Respondent 8

> *I held informal <u>talks with the teachers</u> and reviewed the materials being used in their classes…* BD Respondent 7

> *I spoke to the teachers; read their books and tried to understand the kind of language they had to deal with... I took these as my markers...* BD Respondent 11

> *I held extensive discussions with the teachers about what the students needed to be able to do.... tried to figure out their requirements...*BD Respondent 12

> *The faculty decided that this is what they needed to learn...* BD Respondent 14

(Note: Each extract has a tag denoting the identity of the speaker, e.g. **BD Respondent 14** stands for Curriculum Expert **14** from **Bangladesh** and **OC Respondent 11** stands for Curriculum Expert **11** from **Other Countries**)

9.3.4 Theoretical framework of course design

Next it emerged that the experts did not follow any particular approach, proper guidelines or fixed framework to serve as the theoretical basis for the construction of any of the current courses; they worked upon their knowledge of the Bangladeshi education system; prior experiences; instincts; and followed general trends from similar courses being taught elsewhere; at home and abroad as is illuminated by these extracts:

> *Interventionist measures– bring about some improvement or development from the students' level at the start point to the end point of the program--Philosophy or principles taken from mainstream education, applied linguistics and psychology... We have fallen in to the trap that as we are educationists we know what they need...* BD Respondent 1

> *Followed the functional-notional-communicative syllabus --- this is what they lack - so they need this - no philosophy -- they are taught what we believe that they should learn and know – the guidelines of other university courses were also looked at...*BD. Respondent 2

> *No fixed approach was selected we had full freedom... students are perceived as weak in grammar and lacking in communicative skills... developed the courses according the skills. Took into account... local and foreign syllabuses, course outlines.. selected items that seemed appropriate, useful to our situation... pooled our resources...* BD Respondent 3

...should be <u>functional</u> ...they need lots of grammar and translation is necessary for our culture; the grammar-translation method is appropriate for our culture... BD Respondent 5

*...so that they can communicate in academic and work situations... focus on what they might need... writing, reading, listening and speaking.. curriculum was based on previous one, some modifications were made... <u>Communicative approach</u> is being followed...*BD Respondent 6

*...focus is on the <u>combination of skills</u> as communication involves all 4 skills in combination listening, speaking, presentation, body language, gestures etc everything is important...used a text on basic business communication as the core text...*BD Respondent 8

...<u>integrate 4 skills</u>... emphasis on reading and writing... Interchange... was used... had <u>integrative skills,</u> vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation etc. but additional materials were needed...cannot teach grammar in isolation... cannot give reading comprehension and expect answers without teaching reading skills...need to teach brainstorming planning, outlines and organization before teaching writing etc...need to lay the groundwork first... BD Respondent 9

...wanted students to have marketable skills... needed... enhanced communicative skills and definitely more listening speaking reading writing... BD Respondent 11

...decided upon a <u>task based integrated approach</u> and included lots of practice in all the skills... initially designed separate skills course... dealt with and taught each skill separately... Philosophy... was to make them read and understand and communicate... BD Respondent 12

...wanted to improve their writing and reading skills when expressing their knowledge about linguistics...know the grammar rules but can not apply them... do not... read properly; they just read each word they do not skim or scan... BD Respondent 13

...tried to teach <u>functional English</u>... service a number of needs and requirements with one course... <u>Integrative approach</u> we taught all 4 skills... used the <u>communicative approach</u>... personally I like the direct method... BD Respondent 14

It can be noted that nine respondents felt that the functional-notional or communicative or integrative or task based approaches were being followed in teaching English; though classroom observations failed to corroborate the use of these approaches. Most of the twenty two hours

of classroom observation revealed a predominance of the *Initiation-Response-Feedback structure* of *teacher-centered* classroom talk (Heller, 1995; Arthur 1995; cited in Canagarajah 1999:137). However, Canagarajah (1999:110) explained that since "periphery communities are impoverished" consequently the available "funds for education are limited" so most of the periphery "classrooms have few facilities;" furthermore the 'class size is large' so "students stand up –squeeze themselves uncomfortably" into the limited seats; and it is "difficult to rearrange the furniture." In Murphy's (1986) opinion this "*large-class culture*" can "pressurize teachers to adopt a teacher centered, oral didactic, deductive pedagogy" (Murphy, 1986 cited in Canagarajah, 1999:110).

9.3.5 Students' feedback

Rahman, (1996:7) opined that, Bangladeshi students are generally not asked about problems they encounter in studying English or whether the teaching is effective and appropriate. The interviews verified that none of the courses had been evaluated since their inception nor had any official feedback been taken. Furthermore no course modifications or changes had been officially implemented. The following extracts clarify these findings:

> *…students evaluate but <u>no feedback</u>, not done formally by teachers done informally out of personal curiosity…* BD Respondent 1

> *<u>No students' feedback</u> whatsoever is taken; they only fill up a teacher evaluation sheet… Modifications are made sometimes not drastic ones but conservative ones…* BD Respondent 2

> *…asked students to <u>give feedback informally</u>… <u>No official feedback or evaluation or modification</u> everything was done on a personal basis…Foundation course was modified every few year on teaching team's efforts not an administrative or official effort…* BD Respondent 3

> *…tried to get feedback and evaluate the course and talk to the teachers— it did not work out— <u>course is regularly being modified but not according to any feedback</u> it being done according to whim of who ever is in charge…*BD Respondent 7

> *— course is in the first semester— when I meet the same students later on— they have improved and I get a lot get feedback from colleagues too so I know that they are learning and improving...* BD Respondent 8

*Personally— made students write feedback and incorporated the suggestions and changes in next course… the placement test, showed students' level was low and very mixed abilities…*BD Respondent 9

9.3.6 Failure of English Language Teaching at primary and secondary levels

The Bangladeshi experts unanimously commented upon and lamented the fact that ELT at the primary and secondary levels of education failed to equip the students with the necessary English language skills for satisfactorily undertaking tertiary level education. In effect the ELT received by students for twelve years prior to coming for a university education could be considered a failure. This is supported by the following comments:

*We have made a mess of learning English at the primary and secondary level …the damage that has already been done to the students in primary and secondary education cannot be corrected by us at the tertiary level in spite of our best efforts…*BD Respondent 1

If the primary and secondary levels were effective…students would have been prepared…there would be no need for tertiary level English…It was found that the actual level of students was four years behind the expected level even after twelve years of English… BD Respondent 2

Class 1-12 compulsory English teaching and learning is inadequate… a policy which is failing the system is not effective… teaching method is also doubtful …They are not exposed to spoken English; they read the printed text and writing…too much choice is offered…they should encourage and develop the power of thinking and of communicating… BD Respondent 5

*It is not their fault that they are not prepared from the SSC and HSC level they are taught to depend on guide books they come from rural areas with no exposure to English this is unfair…*BD Respondent 7

Even after twelve years of English the students do not learn anything proper so we have to make them unlearn what they have

learnt…then introducing them to proper methods…most students do not know how to write or read properly- their type of writing is unacceptable academically… BD Respondent 8

…they are used to memorization and reproduction… can not produce anything on their own if it is not given to them in a guide book to memorize beforehand. They can get 100% in memorizing grammar rules but they can not write a single correct sentence using those rules… They practically have no practice in listening and speaking at all… BD Respondent 9

When they come for the Honors course they can not read or write anything completely in English. They have some knowledge they know some words and phrases and grammar rules but they can not write a single correct sentence they only write wrong sentences… BD Respondent 10

Our students learn English for 12 years but their level of proficiency is poor and the standard is unequal… BD Respondent 12

Even after 1600 contact hours their proficiency is so poor… BD Respondent 14

Thus the primary and secondary level education system is not successful in teaching students the English skills necessary for them to successfully negotiate tertiary level education; similar findings are reported by experts in Bangladesh and in other developing nations. (Alam, 2001; Rahman, 2007; Mohd Asraf, 2004; Mohd Noor, 2004; Pally, 2000; Mansoor, 2007)

9.3.7 Constraints of the ELT scenario in Bangladesh

The experts elaborated upon a wide range of constraints that are quite commonplace in the Bangladeshi ELT situation, which they themselves had frequently faced. Limited time to design courses and prepare materials, class hours constraint, course duration, large class size, mixed ability classes, lack of student motivation, lack of infrastructure, no computer, library, lack of teachers' training, inability to implement listening and speaking, frequent closure due to political situation are repeatedly voiced constraints that could be held responsible for undermining the success of the courses. Canagarajah's (1999) depiction of Sri Lankan classrooms mirrors a similar situation fraught by similar constraints; he observes that:

"periphery communities are impoverished, their funds for education are limited— classrooms often have few facilities— there is no blackboard, no chalk, and limited textbooks for students— class size is large because there are few classrooms and/or teachers available— students stand up or squeeze themselves uncomfortably in the few available seats— it is difficult in these classes to rearrange the furniture for collaborative work –or small group negotiation." Canagarajah (1999:108-9)

The following Bangladeshi experts' comments shed light upon the most commonly recurrent constraints:

> *Class hours constraints - needed to… get as many contact hours as possible …given only two hours weekly…University rules made it a mandatory one year course…a bad decision as short intensive courses work better…students lose motivation due to political situation and hartals (strikes) lots of students drop out…*BD Respondent 1

> *…given only few weeks to design course and prepare materials…never could implement listening…did try to speak but it was not easy…large class size…lack of infrastructure… time and other constraints… couldn't give extra remedial classes…mixed ability classes so it was difficult to cater to different levels…*BD Respondent 3

> *…there is a drawback or problem, English is not considered that important by many of the students at the tertiary level they don't take it seriously or give it importance…they feel their main subject is more important…unless it is a full credit course they do not take it seriously…* BD Respondent 7

> *Students come from mainly monolingual education background… used to just studying in Bangla but… classes… texts… exams are in English. It is a big shift for them…education system is not user friendly it encourages memorization and reproduction of content but now they have to internalize the content, comprehend things, justify, give causes, talk and write on their own…questions are not straightforward…they can not talk or write extemporarily…*BD Respondent 8

> *Teachers' training is needed very badly…We have a generation of teachers who can not teach well and this is affecting the scenario badly…* BD Respondent 9

The <u>class size</u> is a problem there are 100 students now…also have a lot of outside noise, disturbance…<u>no language lab</u> for practicing their listening…BD Respondent 11

Class size was a constraint; we could not divide the class into small groups …classrooms were not designed for small classes…rooms had <u>non-movable desks</u> and <u>chairs, blackboard, no OHP or cassette player</u> etc… BD Respondent 12

…met them two hours weekly and <u>barely seven months of classes were held though it was one year on paper</u>…a lot of things I wanted to do could not…no matter how well designed syllabuses are there are limitations you can not achieve what you wanted…Science, Arts, Business are all big classes of 50-60 students …there are <u>infrastructure problems no computer, library, time and class allocation</u>…they have their <u>own subject workload</u>… can not give them too much work.. BD Respondent 13

Environment at the university is different from what they are used to…have to speak and read in and out of class…classes are not traditional lecture mode but more interactive…teaching and learning is different…<u>come with other serious problems</u>…have <u>no exposure at all to English</u>…always interact in Bangla …<u>inhibited to interact in English</u>…if they speak in English at all…they are <u>shy reluctant and embarrassed</u>… no one allows any change in the form of testing… if tests are not changed nothing will be achieved.. BD Respondent 14

9.3.8 Resistance to English

Another frequent feature discovered was the occurrence of various forms of explicit and implicit resistance to learning English in Bangladesh which are examples of what Canagarajah (1999) termed as "ideological resistance." He interpreted this situation as:

"a tension students face between the threats of ideological domination experienced at an intuitive level and the presence of a socio-economic necessity acknowledged at a more conscious level — though they vaguely sense the impositions on their value system, identity, and community solidarity, periphery students do not ignore the fact that they need the English language and literacy to vie for social status and economic prospects. This predicament

helps us understand keenly the nature of the conflict facing periphery students in ELT— periphery communities are therefore compelled by virtue of their marginalized status and location— they will neither refuse to learn English nor acquire it unconditionally in the terms dictated." (Canagarajah, 1999:174-5)

The following revealing extracts endorse this further:

> ...a _lack of motivation to study English in some departments_... _some students resist but good... and weak ones are eager to learn... BD_ Respondent 3

> ..._lot of resistance to learning English_...the fear of the unknown it is very different from Bangla... _unconscious resistance -a post colonial residue effect– unknowingly it is seen as imperialism...the language of the colonizer, the non believers_ and now they are identified as the _aggressors against Islam_..._negative perception of English language learning and speakers_ is a clash of cultures and civilizations... BD Respondent 5

> ...they are _not prepared to participate_ in class activities..._they resist and actually mind_...like dealing with an iceberg trying to make them speak and talk...resist participating strongly...getting participation is a difficult task about _50% students are uninvolved and silent_... BD Respondent 8

> ...students _resisted talking_...They were used to and liked the lecture mode so they were _reluctant to change_ at first but they made an effort as there were presentations they had to participate they brought newspaper etc... BD Respondent 9

> _Resistance comes from the teachers_, particularly from the _senior ones_ they are used to traditional things and do not want to change...BD Respondent 10

> ...they realize they are incompetent so they _resist out of fear_... BD Respondent 13

> ...different types of resistance at various levels... ELT has faced a lot of resistance...anything new in education faces a lot of resistance..._strong resistance from the students they felt that they did not need it; want it; like it;_ they were used to passive learning...they just learn to memorize & bring it out in assessments ...they _resisted learning how to write_... they were not

used to it...positively challenged by students about why they should learn English...language of the masses was Bangla... English was the language of the colonizers...should be thrown out... very strong resistance because many...students who were...good in drawing failed in English...similar situation arose at Arts... some teachers who were powerful and vocal insisted that I should allow students to cheat in tests... BD Respondent 14

Thus in Bangladesh as in post-colonial ELT situations elsewhere, students opting to learn and use English have to make 'complex ideological and social choices,' since their perceptions of English is colored by the conflicts of the past, as in most periphery nations English has had 'a history of imposition for political and material reasons' (Canagarajah 1999:57) and therefore for most users and learners of English in these communities, the "language embodies its controversial history since colonial times." (Canagarajah, 1999:59) Canagarajah also (1999:195) urges that this "periphery resistance to English" needs to be taken into account in the "emergent post-method movement" to "construct pedagogies suitable to their respective contexts."

9.3.9 Perceptions about current ELT

Many experts felt the ELT courses at public universities were relatively successful, since some students improved in varying degrees. But this improvement could not be accurately recorded or measured since no correspondent records of entry level and exit level assessments were maintained. The following extracts give credence to this issue:

Entry and exit point difference is noticeable but... disappointing... they sit for exams get good marks... we see a difference as they come forward to speak and participate in class activities but we are not sure about actual learning. BD Respondent 1

...we are fulfilling our outcomes to a major extent although it can not be measured accurately...doing everything we outlined at the start of the course...students are performing too... BD Respondent 2

Partly met some objectives...some were not met at all...students did not progress at the same level...They do improve and learn a lot at this level... BD Respondent 3

Students improved overall by at least 20%...but the progress was not all at the same level perhaps the improvement was not so much at the lower levels. Some improved more than others... BD Respondent 4

Results show apparent improvement that is the only achievement marker...BD Respondent 7

...the outcomes were met...there was improvement gradually and a lot of improvement later on...BD Respondent 9

...tangible improvement as we are amazed at how well some of our students do later on in their courses...BD Respondent 12

However some experts argued that there was no improvement, as indicated by the following extracts:

We are not doing it well as there is a demand for improvement on the part of students... BD Respondent 2

Their performance in the exams is an indicator of their standard...their level is very poor... Judging on the basis of their results we do not see much improvement as they are failing the course...BD Respondent 10

Though the policy is not fulfilling its outcome at the moment... BD Respondent 5

Thus the experts are divided in their opinions regarding the success of these courses and in the absence of any records of the students' levels of English proficiency at the entry point and exit point, it is difficult to decide whether there is any tangible improvement.

9.3.10 Opinions about the policy of compulsory tertiary level English

Most experts asserted that the tertiary level ELT course policy was necessary and since globalization is a reality, there was no alternative to teaching English in order to equip students with academically necessary English language skills. The following extracts clarify this:

Disciplines like Social Science, Science, Business are geared to English; all the texts are in English...they can not function without English... now for all practical purposes state universities function in English... globalization is a reality.– it has become the most internationally important and indispensable language– it is needed as a basic survival skill...BD Respondent 1

...really great need for English...as the real medium is English the texts and everything is in English. To really study and learn students need a high ability in reading and writing in English. Students are interested in improving their English level...BD Respondent 2

...overall English language proficiency improvement is needed to be prepared for tertiary level education...they have to read all English texts...some lectures in English, 80% lectures are in Bangla but technical words vocabulary is in English BD Respondent 4

Policy of tertiary level English is good since students realize that there was no way out from learning English. Earlier teachers were giving marks based on inference as they could not make out what students were writing in English their English was so poor... BD Respondent 6

... no other option to tertiary level English as education at the school and college level is poor and not standardized so the students are of different levels in order to counteract this inequality... reach an average level they have to have this policy... BD Respondent 8

There has to be tertiary level English as the students are no where without it. They can not function without it... BD Respondent 9

A huge gap exists between teaching at the college and university level...that gap has to be breached we need English at the tertiary level for breaching that gap...can not have higher education without being able to access books and journals, without adequate English that is not possible... BD Respondent 12

Most experts strongly supported the compulsory tertiary level English policy but some experts expressed different views as intimated by these extracts:

English as a medium of instruction is not needed at the tertiary level as it will not upgrade the overall standard of English proficiency. Different department need different skills. English is necessary but not absolutely, the need differs depending on the subject... BD Respondent 5

Not that much scope to use English as Bangla is used everywhere constitutionally in the public sector but not in the private sector so English is not useful for everyone...should be optional as not

everyone needs it...pointless making English compulsory for everyone...many types of jobs do not need English either at least not in our context ...English is very necessary at the tertiary level...since all texts are in English and no books are being written in Bangla...perhaps the government should have a policy that English is not compulsory for everyone... but for those people who are interested in higher education and who eventually do come to tertiary education they should compulsorily take English...BD Respondent 7

Teaching English at the tertiary level is definitely a positive step as the students are not equipped to read texts or books this step of introducing ELT at tertiary level provides an access to books texts...at the tertiary level it should be optional not compulsory.. BD Respondent 10

The sentiments of these experts, according to Canagarajah (1999) seem to be expressions of:

"strong nationalistic sentiments--- expressed at the prospect of 'an alien language' hampering the employment prospects of local students ---such tensions in the policy and practice of the faculty and administration send local students confusing messages about the place of English." (Canagarajah, 1999:82-3)

However given the declining standards of ELT in Bangladesh and the importance of English for both academic and professional success, the compulsory tertiary level ELT policy seems to be the only option.

9.3.11 Eclectic nature of specification of course content

Thus it emerged that the course content specification was determined in an eclectic manner which is at times haphazard depending on the inclination and perceptions of the individual designer. No specific approach was followed and a lot of selections were based primarily on the availability of materials and in concession to the prevailing logistic constraints and limitations. Nunan (1988) remarks that "'Eclecticism' seems to have been elevated to the status of an educational movement" he observes that

'We have got eclecticism of learners in the class, eclecticism of methodologies and eclecticism of learning—so when I am faced with planning my course, I am faced with these bits and pieces.' (Nunan (1988:154)

Nunan (1988) adds that "a recurring theme" of complaint and worry amongst curriculum designers and planners was the "lack of a general framework---to conceptualize and integrate what they were doing" as endorsed by the following excerpts;

...Headway... used... integrated skills approach... developed own materials used newspaper journals cut outs and realia... used a lot of current issues and topics...focused more on speaking... paragraph writing...paragraph structure, coherence and focus... BD Respondent 1

...tend to give general courses ...Initially...separate skills course...that dealt with and taught each skill separately...focused on all 4 skills... integrative ...a bit of pronunciation... BD Respondent 2

Content specification depended on purpose... academic-Focus on what they might need...Writing reading listening speaking... Content organized... around four skills ...lecture note taking... study skills, dictionary use, summarizing, writing vital essays paragraphs compositions; reading comprehension listening for lectures, to get main idea or gist; speaking... communicative interaction depending on level... oral presentation for advanced learners... or role play for lower level learner... advanced topic etc... BD Respondent 3

*...write to meet academic and institutions' needs... Write... read... understand passages ...function in an academic setting...write report, paragraph, essay ...read journals articles... develop reading comprehension skills...find facts and figures...first used Kernel series later Headway... text defined the content... integrated skills course... had to adapt reading... not interesting... culturally suitable or relevant...added on... used realia... other current materials...*BD Respondent 4

*...should be functional... need lots of grammar and translation.... the grammar-translation method is appropriate for our culture... not exposed to spoken English... Not much speaking is required... they read the printed text and writing... Writing is most important... should encourage and develop the power of thinking and of communicating...later spoken skills could be developed depending on the profession they are likely to take...*BD Respondent 5

Teachers selected the content texts from... main subject course texts... had to develop own materials... cut and pasted relevant materials from... available books... BD Respondent 6

*... curriculum... takes into account what they will need now and later on when they get jobs... followed other... course outlines... Grammar... integrated... four skills... prescribe practice in the different skills: reading comprehension; writing practice: writing letters, applications, memos, posters, short notes, notices, paragraphs, writing précis some grammar and translation...*BD Respondent 7

...accessed materials on the internet... found... book used most frequently world wide... designed the course using text on basic business communication as the core text... focus is on the combination of skills as communication involves all 4 skills in combination listening, speaking, presentation, body language, gestures etc... BD Respondent 8

...Content was specified on basis of what they needed... started from the sentence level... sentence structure... simple, compound sentences... journal writing...integrated with the grammar they had learnt or developed into paragraphs... Basic writing components were done then moving on to paragraphs, essays and finally research papers... a lot of grammar components... integrate 4 skills with an emphasis on reading and writing....Interchange series... used... had integrative skills, vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation etc... additional materials... needed... BD Respondent 9

...improve their writing and reading skills... read each word they do not skim or scan... 4 skills were focused on...Reading writing became the priority as they can not write...-systematically... using... materials... available... in the market... more emphasis... given for listening and speaking... BD Respondent 11

The content was decided on basis of the teachers' collective experience...brought in... input of what they had been taught... initially went for widely available, cheap texts... later... a text was compiled...finally... own materials... BD Respondent 12

...task based integrated approach...Initially...separate skills...-materials from headway...other available books... compiled text materials...goal was to develop 4 skills and grammar... no

grammar in the syllabus initially… used Thompson and martinet as and when needed…Writing…the Structure of paragraphs… organization; topic sentences introduction conclusion…the <u>structure of writing</u>… <u>organization of writing</u> was a major focus… Reading comprehension… out of class assignments… supplemented… with… newspapers, journals, magazines etc… <u>Listening did not work out</u>…role play simulations speeches-speaking debates, extempore speeches etc…Each skill…looked into… concentrated upon…practiced…<u>no fixed content</u>…BD Respondent 13

EAP English… writing part… <u>different types of writing</u>… would… write in the course of… study… <u>crucial amalgamation of several writing skills</u> in…a research paper… lots of <u>reading comprehension</u>… used <u>available books</u>…least conflicting in culture… Writing reading… <u>grammar in context</u>… translate sometimes… use pictures to explain things…BD Respondent 14

Though experts mentioned many approaches such as Communicative, Functional, Integrated skills, Task based etc., classroom observations did not corroborate their use. Classroom observation revealed routine teaching and learning of grammar rules with little student-teacher interaction, and traditional comprehension lessons. The Commerce Faculty classrooms and a few of Social Science and Humanities classes used integrated skills and student-teacher interaction (see Chapter on Classroom observations). Rahman's (1996) evaluation of the ELT situation in Bangladesh seems quite appropriate:

"Curriculum specialists and teachers take it for granted that the present content and teaching methods are appropriate and suitable for students… there is a mismatch between learners' needs and expectations and teachers' teaching methods which hinders learners' achievement in language learning." (Rahman, 1996:89)

McDevitt (2004) notes that teacher's "ideologies and methodologies" should not be forced upon learners; efforts should be made to create a "learning friendly" situation.

9.3.12 Possible areas for improvement

The following excerpts point out areas that should be looked into in order to rectify the present situation as suggested by experts:

A <u>lot of research is needed</u>…we can not continue talking and deciding from gut feeling and instincts only. …gamut of ELT needs

rehashing…A lot of concerned people are undertaking separate projects…separate steps these must be coordinated and come together. Proper findings tangible evidence and proof will lead to proper understanding of the situation; proper long term policies and proper coordinated action…BD Respondent 1

University lacks integrated…systematic approach there should be a proper policy. Some departments take class in English, some in Bangla and some are a mixture… authorities should realize piece meal efforts will not make a change. A systematic, well-planned, coordinated, organized course is really necessary… a unified English language program that all students can avail of… not one course for everyone but…a series of courses catering to the different levels…BD Respondent 2

… the policy is not fulfilling its outcome at the moment…It should not be a one course fits all agenda, it should be individualized for every department…The present courses have been experimentally developed and they need to develop further… should be individualized, modified, adapted, evaluated; needs should be taken into accoun…BD Respondent 5

Not that much scope to use English as Bangla is used everywhere constitutionally in the public sector but not in the private sector so English is not useful for everyone…should be optional as not everyone needs it…pointless making English compulsory for everyone…many types of jobs do not need English either at least not in our context…The problem is we have no clear national policy that is why the standard is falling and is so poor; if we have a clear cut policy, then perhaps the situation will improve…BD Respondent 7

We should focus on subject and the level of English needed…can not compromise on that…should make changes to our university entrance level requirement …University education and learning is universal if you have no proper English skills you can not learn about the world so we must raise the entrance requirement level in order to maintain the quality. Then perhaps the secondary system will try to improve and upgrade its standards… BD Respondent 11

…students and professionals are not doing well because we lack adequate English skills…you will not be employed no matter how good your degree is in your own subject unless it is backed up by good English proficiency…Employers complain…can not get

skilled staff yet…<u>unemployment is high</u>…<u>literacy is supposedly rising</u>…<u>so called literate class is being produced who are unable to perform and</u>…<u>express themselves in English</u>…cannot give employers what they want-<u> it is a crisis situation they are being deprived from professional and economic advancement and benefits</u>…Only the <u>best are being chosen and selected</u>…if the right people were involved…<u>stakeholders</u>…<u>contributed to it so that it is properly implemented and sustained</u>… BD Respondent 14

Having established the background of tertiary level ELT curriculum design in Bangladesh, the opinions of several curriculum experts from other countries regarding the existing curriculums and ways in which the students' English language needs could be addressed in the Bangladeshi context, was sought.

9.3.13 Feedback and comments from Curriculum Experts of other countries

The curriculum experts from other countries were given the findings of the present Needs Analysis and were asked to comment upon and evaluate the official syllabuses (see Appendix) of the courses being taught at Dhaka University.

9.3.14 Current trends in ELT

The primary finding was that most of the ELT courses were considered to be not on par with the current, worldwide ELT trends and practices, by the experts from other countries. All the experts perceived the courses to be variations of the same course; a point also noted by some Bangladeshi experts. Furthermore the experts pointed out several anomalies and limitations in the syllabuses such as, the syllabuses being too sketchy and lacking details of implementation, assessment and evaluation; the lack of any stated aims and objectives in six of the nine courses; a lack of congruence between the stated aims and objectives and the course content and outlines in the four courses that did have aims and objectives; lack of emphasis on all four skills; lack of integration of the skills and so on. The following extracts shed light on this:

Departments are <u>offering traditional courses</u> with some <u>grammar reading and writing</u>… but they have to be <u>communicative</u> and <u>focus on all four skills</u>… BD Respondent 2

The <u>present courses </u>have been <u>experimentally developed</u>… need to develop further… should be <u>individualized, modified, adapted,</u>

evaluated; needs should be taken into account... Different department need different skills... the need differs depending on the subject... It should not be a one course fits all... should be individualized for every department... BD Respondent 5

Too much grammar and writing...hardly any listening and speaking... the syllabus... should be more detailed and comprehensive as it is the road map for the teacher... nothing on assessment, evaluation...OC Respondent 1

All the syllabuses are very similar they have a large grammar component... writing and reading are also somewhat focused on... listening and speaking have not been mentioned at all The syllabuses reflect a shift away from the trends of what the rest of the world is doing at present...they are doing some things that were being done at the start of the 20ᵗʰ century... They are stuck almost a decade back in time...archaic and obsolete... OC Respondent 2

...syllabuses are very similar and too simple and they have no breakdown or description or guidelines...everybody seems to have borrowed from somebody...too much of a focus on grammar...hardly any emphasis on the four skills... reading and writing are just touched upon...aural-oral is left out completely...There should be proper division of the different language skills...there is a mismatch between the text and subject content... OC Respondent 3

Syllabuses very similar...they are general English...could be for any subject not a specific one... they are backdated, obsolete almost 30 years behind what is going on at present elsewhere...OC Respondent 4

...Outcomes, goals, objectives are not stated in most of the syllabuses and even if they are they are not connected to or translated into the content and outline...the Content is more grammar focused... all of them are focusing on one aspect of the proficiency spectrum, grammar... Reading and writing should be integrated... there is a lack of congruence between content and objectives...OC Respondent 6

It is the same syllabus revamped... too much of grammar focus... OC Respondent 9

...Content is mostly grammar focused...Commerce syllabus focuses on writing... is communication written only?...the History syllabus should focus on the four skills that are outlined and not teach literature.. do not teach individual skills integrate them... Linguistics syllabus...there is too much...should be more focused... do what do they need to learn, do not try to do everything ... OC Respondent 10

9.3.15 Incorporation of Contextualized grammar teaching

All the experts suggested that grammar should be taught as and when needed; in a more situated and contextualized manner. They assumed that the students knew the rules but did not know their application. According to Thornbury (1999):

> "language is context-sensitive; which is to say that an utterance becomes fully intelligible only when it is placed in its context; --- context can contribute to the meaning of the text --- the implications of this context-sensitive view of language on grammar teaching are that: grammar is best taught and practiced in context—this means using whole texts as contexts for grammar teaching." (Thornbury, 1999:89-90)

In this respect Tickoo (2003) observed that:

> "grammar thus gets learnt in situations of use rather than through isolated examples. It is perhaps best learnt when pupils not only observe grammar in action but use it themselves to produce the changes that the application of rules demands" (Tickoo, 2003:169-70).

These extracts further illustrate this:

...go through their writing pick out what problems in it then discuss thus doing grammar and speaking in writing class...give constructive feedback...circle writing mistakes...ask them to identify what is wrong...ask them point out what is wrong...guided correction...   OC Respondent 1

Teach grammar in a situated way ....provide the context... bring the issue or context into a class... teach them to use the language as used in a real life situation...e.g. use of the passive... teach them to write emails and associated language and grammar... OC Respondent 2

Analyse a real passage…should be integrated teach from passages or materials not isolated grammar teaching…implicit grammar teaching... OC Respondent 3

Teach something only if they need it and make them see the connection then they'll learn… explicit grammar teaching is not viable they have learnt it all before… students will do it mindlessly will not learn anything… CE 4 OC Respondent 4

Based on their weaknesses only remedial grammar can be taught but no formal teaching... OC Respondent 5

Focus on acquisition not teaching jigsaw bits or piecemeal…don't teach grammar per se… grammar should be incidental…OC Respondent 8

Use content to highlight the grammar…featuring aspects of grammar…contextualize... OC Respondent 9

9.3.16 Implementation of series of separate skills courses

Several experts also suggested a series of separate courses for presenting the skills in a more appropriate and learner friendly manner: These extract highlight this:

…different courses giving them the opportunity to practice different skills…OC Respondent 2

Counterproductive to have one course…provide series of course to meet objectives... OC Respondent 5

Separate courses, at least two are more viable than one course with everything integrated… don't put too much in one course the focus is confused…could have separate courses geared to advance certain skills…OC Respondent 6

Series of courses are a better option –one shot deals don't work… OC Respondent 9

9.3.17 Suggestions for course improvement

All the experts made suggestions to make the courses more viable and geared to meet learning needs. Some suggestions are presented here:

…<u>syllabus should spell it out</u> how it should be done what should be done… clarify what teacher wants and what students can give... OC Respondent 1

...they don't have a language base... linguistic sensitivity lacking...different <u>communicative and linguistic abilities of students should be considered</u>... OC Respondent 2

They need academic and communicative skills...<u>don't teach them about the language teach the language</u>...there should be proper division of dif language skills... OC Respondent 3

<u>*Link what they are doing in class to real life*</u>*... take notes of their problems <u>give them purposeful teaching</u> based on observations... should help them with their content area... <u>content should reflect objectives and be connected</u>... integration and raising of awareness... what they need now and later on in the future then it becomes real, meaningful and interesting...then it will have transfer value... <u>try to make them independent learners</u>... take a risk can not cover or do everything... <u>change mind set of teachers</u>... let go... OC* Respondent 4

...teacher's agenda is tied to learners' interests and autonomy... <u>choose something closer to students' field of experience and interest</u>... <u>Problem Based Learning–learning based on real life application of what they are learning</u>... work on studies that engage them... interest drives learning... OC Respondent 8

...look at deficiencies and create a <u>course based on the needs analysis of students</u> and that of <u>employment sector needs</u>... <u>Holistic approach</u> too many skills cramped in will be ineffective in terms of achievement... In achieving aim have to<u> be realistic</u>... look at the bigger picture and <u>see if the course is designed to meet the outcomes</u>... move away from one course.... need diagnostic tests to place students at different levels to achieve certain minimum level... CE 6 OC Respondent 6

<u>*Involve students in their learning*</u>*... <u>Focus on productive skills</u>... have a committee or evaluator... from outside... OC* Respondent 11

Focus more on what's good for them...more <u>digestible and integrated approach</u>... <u>cater</u> to a<u> range of different students' abilities</u>... should have placement test... give students freedom of choice to do work independently... <u>only teaching doesn't work give students chance to learn English on their own... make them responsible for their own learning</u>

…should be <u>more focused</u>… don't try to do everything… focus on macro not micro-skills… <u>It's a beginning they continue own learning</u>… OC Respondent 10

9.3.18 Suggestions for integrating and incorporating the four skills

All the experts made innovative suggestions for appropriately incorporating all four skills in an integrated manner in the courses. The following extracts illuminate this:

…write experiment findings, lab reports, experiment description, case studies …associated to their own science base… make them watch ER or House and make them talk about it, write about it; e.g. do you agree with action of this doctor? etc… they will look forward to class… listen to discussion first… task or problem based learning…give them a task, let them talk and find a solution, do a write up, feedback is important have a wrap up discussion… integrated skills... OC Respondent 1

Incorporate practical work in Humanities…focus on areas students want to know more about e.g. History students want to know more about a local mosque…read up on it, do presentation…give them something worth looking at; motivate them; get them interested so they learn something for their subject…go through their writing pick out common problems then discuss… so integrate grammar, speaking and writing in class. Write a book report, research paper which is possible for any department or faculty: how to write a research paper, introduction, conclusion, bibliography. Allow students to speak on their own, let them speak, express opinions, objections, book review, report have an academic discussion, give them constructive feedback, circle writing mistakes, give them guided correction ask them point out what is wrong… OC Respondent 1

Content should be specified in a manner that they have no way out from practicing the skills… what kind of reading, writing, listening and speaking do they have to do? This can be worked upon… teach them to use the language as used in real life situation …something related to their interest that they can do…provide the context bring the issue or context into class e.g. a historical period, people's views, opinions on a situation or problem e.g. role or position of women at a certain time or bring a Bengali

text…input is Bengali but the out put is English…it is more interesting, engaging… OC Respondent 2

Listening n speaking skills can be developed… basic communicative skills should be taught… activities like games, simulations, role play, group discussion… integrate listening and speaking… face to face interaction… scripted initially then diminish guidance take away the script… give the situation, give one sample then give different situations… situational language teaching… content should be relevant to learner background… dictation, dicto-com, listening note taking from own topic area or related subject areas of sciences can be done… download articles from internet and use for reading, aural-oral activities… listening comprehension… have someone talk to them or read out excerpts of current news items, IELTS or TOEFL passage transcripts OC Respondent 3

Whatever they are doing they can apply in their real life…teach simple interview techniques enabling them to conduct interviews; give very simple topics to work on …questions should be given to the teacher to vet beforehand… interview someone in company, e.g. what they do there… report it, aural can be made into writing, speaking, reading that is related to listening… re-enactment of dialogues in pairs… get class feedback and participation…group discussions on pre-selected, relevant interesting topics given to them in advance… e.g. current news, TV programs… have a group discussion, brainstorming, then do a write up …one person can describe… others can do a write up…   OC Respondent 5

Role plays, simulations… create situations and practice language in class… miming… act out the situation with no talking... participation level, confidence will rise, others will learn to predict… e.g. what is a duck? Describe it, make them use vocabulary to define, describe things… contextual teaching… e.g. topic, how we speak over the phone …construct sense sentences – greetings, introduction… introduce grammar… number, agreement… one topic per day… analyze a story or news item read it out, then find out grammar topic for the day… create a platform for them to encode and decode, processing aural-oral input… create a forum situation, give group homework, assign a topic… they have to present the issues, they'll try to and have to

talk, rest of class will listen and must also ask questions, all group members have to listen and answer... choose interesting topics, war, injustice, politics... public speaking... make groups organize speeches of 4-5 minutes...debates are helpful... story or anecdote telling... must not give controlled or prescribed texts, students should be given choice to read what they want to read... prescribe texts they like... go and bring back article that you like... group reading... prescribe different texts ask them to create the questions then they will automatically answer and understand the content; make them do a presentation based on this; speaking practice... choose and give current topics e.g. war, injustice, politics...only later prescribe texts, teach skimming scanning... OC Respondent 7

Reading allowing students to voice their opinions...do you agree, articles, discussions, debates... give context and content...lab reports, read articles and present in class, justification, clarification, illustration... use TV programs, newspaper articles e.g. bio-fuel, genetic engineering, genetically modified crops etc. OC Respondent 9

Use practical stuff... develop the language for speaking to people: negotiation, persuasion, interviewing, role plays, debates, thinking skills and analytic skills... taught in any way. Use newspaper cuttings of international and interesting incidents etc. can do role plays, simulations on a variety of topics to cover main aspects of the contexts they'll use language in...Interview questioning. Develop investigative abilities... do a mini research; note taking; listen to recordings; answer questions based on it. Read articles talk about it, discuss it...listen to the news and report it... ask questions or write on it...listen to real life situations to radio and TV and discuss, present, write in class based on it. Writing is important they can write letters, memos and e-mail... Integrated approach, four skills in combination... It is a beginning they continue own learning... OC Respondent 10

The experts made the following diverse suggestions, keeping in mind the logistic constraints of the typical Bangladeshi public university classroom; which could be assimilated without incurring logistic difficulties: integration of reading and writing skills, interviewing people, project work, small scale research assignments, use of authentic materials and meaningful activities and so on.

9.3.19 Incorporation of core grammar component

Finally, some experts selected common grammatical items from the grammar components of the existing nine ELT courses and recommended that this selection of grammatical items make up a core grammar component for students of all faculties.

The experts' choice of grammatical items was validated by the recurrence of the selected items in the grammar component of all the present ELT courses. An examination of samples of the students' written work further justified their choice. The grammatical items emphasized upon are as follows: Parts of Speech, Countable and uncountable nouns, the use of articles, Prepositions, Tenses and sequences of tenses, Subject-verb agreement and Direct and reported speech. However the experts stipulated that the core grammar component be taught in an integrated and situated manner.

According to Tickoo (2003)

> "the teaching of grammar has become the most controversial subject in second/foreign language teaching. Opinions are divided between those who consider the time spent on grammar teaching as time wasted and those who advocate a full-scale teaching of grammar from early on in any organized course of teaching." Tickoo (2003:103)

Swain (1995) advocated that "essential grammar does not get learnt until it is taught consciously" (Swain, 1995 cited in Tickoo, 2003:166). In support of teaching essential grammar Delpit (1995) noted that when "student groups lack a knowledge of the very grammar and/or rules required to enter the mainstream, to postpone these— is to perpetuate their disadvantage;" similarly some African scholars have found evidence supporting this view in their universities (Delpit, 1995; Munchiri et al. 1995 cited in Canagarajah 1999:107).

9.4 Findings and Discussion Recapitulation

Employment Sector

The findings of the employers' perceptions investigation can be summarized as follows:

- Communication expected on the job was: written (96.6%); spoken (90%); reading (76.6%) & listening (60%)

- Perceived crucial skills were: writing (76.6%); listening and speaking (66.6%); reading (50%)

- Employees were perceived as proficient at: speaking and writing (36.6%); reading (53.3%) & listening (46.6%)

- Skills in need of improvement were: speaking (90%); writing (73.3%) listening (53.3%) & speaking (40%)

- Employers had compulsory in-house (76.6%) or British Council language development courses (33.3%)

- Most communications whether local or international are in English

- Irrespective of how high or low the employers' expected levels of proficiency were, employees' perceived proficiency levels were always lower.

Feedback from Curriculum Experts

The trends and patterns that emerged about the ELT courses that are presently being taught at Dhaka University from the interviews with the leading Bangladeshi curriculum experts can be condensed as follows:

- There was no precedence of any formal needs analysis and the courses had been designed on the designers' assumptions regarding students' needs

- Whilst designing the courses no fixed approach or theoretical framework was followed by the designers.

- There was no precedence of any formal course evaluation; gathering students' feedback and course modification

- The ELT at the primary and secondary levels were failing to prepare students with the English language skills necessary to undertake tertiary level education satisfactorily

- The Bangladeshi ELT scene is troubled by a range of constraints which hamper the success of the courses

- Resistance to learning English is prevalent both explicitly and implicitly in the Bangladeshi set up

- Some of the designers assume the current ELT courses to be more or less successful since they perceive some improvement in their students' proficiency however there is no tangible evidence to support this assumption

- In general the designers felt that the policy of tertiary level ELT is unavoidable under present circumstances

- The specification of content for the current courses has been random and haphazard
- Designers touched upon several key areas that needed to be seriously considered in order to bring about positive changes to the present circumstances

The main highlights of the interviews with the curriculum experts from other countries can be recapitulated as follows:

- The courses did not reflect the current trends in ELT
- The courses are variations of the same basic course - they all have a strong grammar focus with some focus on writing and reading and hardly any emphasis on the aural-oral skills
- Most of the courses lacked any stated outcomes and objectives and even if they happened to be stated they were not connected to or reflected in the course content or outlines
- Grammar should be taught in a situated, integrated manner keeping the context in mind
- A series of more focused courses would be more effective than a single course with too many things cramped into it
- Courses should be designed keeping students' needs and employment sectors' needs in mind
- Courses content should provide for enough practice in all four skills in an integrated, engaging manner
- Learners should be able to connect and transfer their classroom learning to their real life activities
- Real life materials and subject related materials should be incorporated in the course to make the courses more engaging and effective
- Course content, teaching and activities should integrate the skills as much as possible
- Many comprehensive suggestions were made by the experts to improve the courses

9.5 Findings in relation to research questions

The information gleaned from the interviews with the Bangladeshi experts helped to depict an in-depth picture of the present ELT scenario in Bangladesh and provided the background of the present ELT curriculums. Furthermore the interviews with the experts from other

countries helped to identify the mismatches between the students' English language needs and the present courses; and also generated many suggestions that could help in reconciling the students' needs and the courses. The needs and perceptions of the prospective employers helped to establish the extent to which the present English courses can be considered successful in terms of improving students' skills proficiency, and also helped in identifying the shortcomings and lacks of the courses. Thus these findings answer the fifth and sixth research questions. ELT courses will benefit greatly if the above mentioned needs, perceptions and suggestions of the prospective employers and curriculum experts are kept in mind whilst specifying the content and designing the courses. This study has specified the common-core English course content on the basis of these findings (please see chapter 10).

Chapter Ten

Conclusion

10.1 **Introduction**

This chapter attempts to specify the content for the ELT courses being used at Dhaka University on the basis of the Needs Analysis findings. The objective is to try to address the long-term and short-term needs of the various groups of stakeholders involved, as much as possible. In this case the syllabus content must attempt to reconcile the diverse needs of the students, teachers and employers. The first section provides a summary of the developments in ELT over the past few decades developing a framework for content specification. The second part presents the Teachers' perceptions of students' needs. The third part discusses the employment sectors' needs. Next, the perceptions of the curriculum experts are presented. Then the findings of the students' needs are summarized along with the findings for students' perceptions of difficulty in the various language sub-skills. The final part attempts to integrate the various stakeholders' needs and specify the content for these ELT courses.

10.2 An Emerging Framework for Content Specification

In forging an approach to content specification, one criterion that needs to be clearly spelt out are the defining features of a curriculum that best serves education in a developing country. Kumaravadivelu (2006:75-76) clarified that though the terms *syllabus* and *curriculum* are used interchangeably, they indicate "a hierarchical relationship", the curriculum broadly refers to "all aspects of language policy, language planning, teaching methods, and evaluation measures," and the syllabus narrowly relates to "the specification of content --sequencing of what is to be taught." He further elaborated that the syllabus is "a *teaching* organizer than a *learning* indicator" (Kumaravadivelu, 2006:75-76). Clark's (1985) conception of 'curriculum renewal' was "the creation of syllabuses in which educational, subject-specific and learner-oriented objectives (content and methodology) are reconciled." Any curriculum design, projects certain ends, which are to be reached through the specification of content and methodology. Breen (2001) proposed that a well designed language teaching syllabus should a) clarify the aims and objectives of learning and teaching, b) indicate the classroom

procedures the teacher may wish to follow. Kumaravadivelu, (1993b) categorized the established language teaching – learning methodologies into a) Language-centered methods b) Learner-centered methods c) Learning-centered methods, for the purpose of analysis and understanding. Wilkins (1976) classified syllabuses as: Synthetic and Analytic syllabuses. Language-centered and learner-centered methods follow the synthetic syllabus. Learning-centered methods follow the analytic approach. <u>Language-centered methods</u> focus on the linguistic form, practicing pre-selected, pre-sequenced, linguistic structures leads to grammatical accuracy and target language (TL) mastery. <u>Learner-centered methods</u> focus on learners' needs, wants and situations, practicing linguistic structures and communicative notions-functions in communicative context, replicating real-life language use leads to grammatical accuracy and communicative fluency. Language learning is an intentional, "linear additive process" that develops through "accumulated entities." (Rutherford 1987:4) <u>Learning-centered methods</u> focus on the cognitive processes of language learning, Linguistic and pragmatic knowledge or ability develops through engaging in open-ended, meaningful interaction through problem-solving tasks. Language development is an incidental non-linear process. However presently many experts believe that the method "can no longer be considered a valuable or viable construct in language learning and teaching" (Brown, 2002, Allwright, 1991, Mackey, 1965, Stern, 1985 cited in Kumaravadivelu 2005:168). Furthermore recent classroom oriented research has revealed that:

> "teachers seem to be convinced that no single theory of learning and no single method of teaching will help them confront the challenges of everyday teaching. They use their own intuitive ability and experiential knowledge to decide what works and what does not" (Kumaravadivelu, 1993a, Nunan, 1987, Swaffer, Arens & Morgan, 1982 cited in Kumaravadivelu, 2006:166,)

Kumaravadivelu explains that this "deep discontent with the concept of the method accumulating for a considerable length of time has finally resulted, in the emergence of the *postmethod* condition" (Kumaravadivelu, 2005:170). Canagarajah had called for a pedagogy in which periphery community members will "have the agency to think critically and work out ideological alternatives that favor their own environment" (Canagarajah, 1999:2). In this regard Kumaravadivelu observed that

> "a context-sensitive language education can emerge only from--- a critical awareness of local conditions of learning and teaching that policy makers and program administrators have to seriously consider in putting together an effective teaching agenda--- involves practicing teachers--- observing their teaching acts, evaluating their outcomes, identifying problems, finding solutions and trying them out to see once again what works and what doesn't. " (Kumaravadivelu, 2006:172)

On the whole the content has been specified in keeping with Hutchinson and Waters '(1986) Learning-centered framework, however the emerging eclectic '*postmethod*' ELT scenario has also been considered.

The pre-requisite of any curriculum/syllabus design is a needs assessment, the primary aim of this research was to ascertain and view the students' English language needs from various perspectives. The problem defined the methods used, different techniques were combined in a 'triangulation' approach which facilitated the cross checking of findings (Parlett and Hamilton, 1983:16-17). Another consideration was the intention of involving as many of the stakeholders involved in the program as possible, thus the students' needs were ascertained using SPSS coded questionnaires, likewise the teachers' perception of students' needs were obtained through questionnaires, and lastly semi-structured interviews involving the employers, curriculum experts and course designers also generated valuable data. The next section presents the findings for the teachers' needs analysis.

10.3 Teachers' Needs Analysis Findings:

These findings answered the third and fourth research questions respectively: namely 'What are the expectations of the teachers from these English language courses?' and 'Do language courses offered by the various departments reflect the expectations and needs of the teachers?' In the general needs analysis of teachers of all the faculties most teachers (95%) perceived students as "average-very good" in reading. For writing, opinions were divided between many teachers (50%) who considered students "weak-very weak" and many teachers (50%) who considered students "average-very good". In listening most teachers (86.7%0 considered students as "average-very good". Most teachers (70%) perceived students as "weak-very weak" in speaking (Chapter Eight). Thus it may be surmised that students are "weak" in varying degrees in all the language skills therefore students require

improvement in all the skills. Pally (2000) in her "exploration of student work in intermediate-advanced level classes" found "a gap between the skills taught in ESL programs and those needed by students headed for academic/professional settings" (Chitrapu, 1996, Kasper, 1995/1996, 1997, Leki & Carson, 1994, 1997, Smoke, 1998, cited in Pally, 2000:viii). The following section presents the employers' needs analysis findings

10.4 Findings of Employment Sector Needs Analysis:

An exploration of what language skills employers expected prospective employees to have revealed that all the skills were expected by most employers: speaking and writing (93%) and reading (73%) and listening (70%).. It may be mentioned that most employers (66%) expected proficiency in all four skills. Employers also commented that "depending on the context" proficiency in all four skills was more or less necessary. The investigation of the employers' perception of the English skills of fresh graduates revealed that most employers perceived them as not competent in listening (50%); speaking (80%) and writing (66.6%). Thus it may be said that except for reading, employers perceive graduates as not competent in the skills. Nearly all the employers lamented that students' English standards are "very poor" (see Chapter Nine). The findings support the teachers' needs analysis findings and it can be said that graduates lack adequate proficiency in all the language skills. Thus, students require improvement in all the skills particularly the productive skills as "employers expect entry-level employees to possess excellent communication skills" (Singh-Gupta &Troutt-Ervin, 1997). "The general picture presented by employers is that local graduates are not able to communicate their ideas clearly in English," (IBM, 2000:4) and "local graduates at interviews were not able to answer questions in English, similarly, at the workplace, they were not able to function in English." (IBM, 2000:4) Studies done elsewhere confirmed these findings (Salleh, 2003, David & Govindasamy 2003, Kirkpatrick, 2003, David, 2000, Jariah, 2003, Mohd. Asraf, 2004, Mohd. Noor, 2004 and Mansoor, 2007). The next section outlines the views of several curriculum designers and experts.

10.5 Comments and suggestions of Curriculum Experts:

All the Bangladeshi curriculum experts made certain common observations about the present ELT courses. Firstly the nine ELT courses currently being taught had been designed on the basis of the

designers' assumptions of students' needs without any needs analysis of the various stakeholders' involved. Also the content specification for the current courses had been decided upon randomly without adopting any fixed approach or theoretical framework. Lastly all the designers asserted that there is a need for a comprehensive policy on ELT at the tertiary level in Bangladesh, and they identified certain areas that needed to be attended to for improving the present ELT scenario.

All the curriculum experts from other countries made some common comments upon the said nine ELT courses. Firstly, all the courses could be considered variations of one course, as they all had a subjective grammar component with some reading and writing and hardly any listening and speaking. Six courses did not have stated objectives and outcomes and though four courses had stated objectives and outcomes, these were not reflected in the course content or outlines. All the foreign curriculum experts suggested some common features to make the ELT courses more feasible. Firstly the students' needs and the employment sectors' needs should be considered. Secondly, real life, subject related materials should be used to help students relate and connect to the everyday issues in the country such classroom learning has greater transfer value. Course content, teaching approaches and activities should integrate the four skills and provide substantial practice in all the skills and not just reading and writing. The experts also recommended that grammar be taught in a contextualized manner, woven into the situations and content. The isolated teaching of grammar rules was discouraged and considered ineffective. Finally some curriculum experts selected some grammatical items from the grammar components commonly present in the ELT courses to be taught as a core grammar component. These grammatical items are as follows: parts of speech, countable and uncountable nouns and the use of articles, prepositions, tenses and sequences of tenses, pragmatics of subject-verb agreement and direct and reported speech. These suggestions can serve as guidelines or markers that may help in specifying the content of future courses in a more effective manner. The students' needs analysis findings are summarized in the following section.

10.6 Students' Needs Analysis Findings:

These findings for the investigation of the language skills, sub-skills and activities that students of all four faculties of Dhaka University, most frequently engaged in. are presented in Table 10.1:

Table 10.1 Summary of the most frequently engaged in activities, skills and sub-skills for all four faculties

Skill	Common Activities in ELT context	Commerce Faculty	Humanities Faculty	Science Faculty	Social Science Faculty
Reading	- newspapers - textbooks - selected chapters of books - online/internet materials - reference books/ journals - photocopied notes.	- magazines - reports or proposals	- magazines	- reports or proposals - workbook or lab instructions	- magazines
Writing	- take lecture notes - tutorial assignments/term papers - exams or in-course essays, - summarize	- e-mails - proposals - project papers - case studies - reports or lab reports - paraphrase - translate - edit or proof-read or revise - prepare flow-charts or tables	- introductions - references - resumes - essays - e-mails - translate	- edit or proof read or revise - reports or lab reports - essays - prepare flow-charts or tables - paraphrase	- translate - write essays - creative writing
Listening	Listen to & understand - class or tutorial discussions - lectures and notes - carry out instructions or directions - answer questions during class or tutorials	Listen to & understand - questions or points raised during class or tutorials - television programs - different English accents - seminars and talks	Listen to & understand - questions or points raised during class or tutorials	Listen to & understand - questions or points raised during class or tutorials - television programs	Listen to & understand - television programs
Speaking	- take part in class or tutorial or group discussions - take part in social conversations - express opinions or objections - answer questions	- ask questions - explain processes or procedures - brainstorm - deliver oral presentations or reports	- ask questions	- explain processes or procedures - brainstorm	- speak with other fluent speakers of English

Based on Table 10.1 the following discussions on the language skills ensue.

10.6.1 Frequently engaged-in reading tasks

It was noted that most students (60-100%) from the four faculties "often-always" read: newspapers, textbooks, selected chapters of books, online or internet materials, reference books or journals and photocopied notes. Only Commerce and Science students read reports or proposals, and only Science students read workbook or lab instructions.

10.6.2 Frequently engaged-in writing tasks

It was noted from the students' needs analysis data of writing tasks that most students (55-95%) "often-always" took lecture notes, wrote tutorial assignments and term papers, wrote exams or in-course essays and wrote summaries.

10.6.3 Frequently engaged-in listening tasks

Analysis of students' needs analysis data of listening revealed that most students (60-95%) of all the faculties "often-always" listened to and understood class or tutorial discussions, listened to and understood lectures and notes, listened to and carried out instructions or directions, listened to and answered questions during class or tutorials.

10.6.4 Frequently engaged-in speaking tasks

Examination of students' needs analysis data of speaking revealed that most students (50-90%) of all the faculties "often-always" took part in class or tutorial or group discussions, took part in social conversations, expressed opinions or objections and answered questions.

10.6.5 Students' perceptions of difficulty in the various sub-skills

The findings students' perceptions for the difficulty faced in the reading sub-skills are outlined in Table 10.2

Table 10.2 Students' perception of the reading difficulties

Reading sub-skills	C	H	S	SS
Reading a text quickly to get a general idea of its content			✓	✓
Looking through a text quickly to find specific information		✓		✓
Guessing the meanings of unknown words from their context	✓	✓	✓	✓
Understanding the main points of a text				
Reading a text slowly and carefully to understand the details of the text			✓	
Reading to respond critically	✓	✓	✓	✓
Understanding a writer's attitude and purpose	✓	✓	✓	✓
Understand and interpret charts, graphs, tables, etc		✓	✓	✓
General comprehension				

✓ *sub-skill perceived as difficult*
C = Commerce, H = Humanities, S = Science, SS = Social Science

It was found that students of all four faculties found it difficult to guess the meanings of unknown words from their context, read to respond critically and understand a writer's attitude or purpose. These perceptions of difficulty in the reading sub-skills are supported by Zhu & Fleitz (2005:5) stated that students "felt challenged by the large amount of reading expected of them."

Next the findings for the difficulty faced in the writing sub-skills are outlined in table 10.3.

Table 10.3 Students' perception of difficulties in writing

Writing sub-skills	C	H	S	SS
Using correct punctuation and spelling				✓
Structuring sentences				
Using appropriate vocabulary		✓	✓	
Organizing paragraphs	✓	✓		✓
Organizing the overall assignment		✓		✓
Expressing ideas appropriately		✓	✓	
Developing ideas	✓		✓	
Expressing what you want to say clearly			✓	✓
Addressing the topic				✓
Adopting appropriate tone and style	✓	✓	✓	✓
Following instructions and directions		✓		
Evaluating and revising your writing	✓	✓	✓	✓
Overall writing ability			✓	
Completing written tasks	✓			

✓ *sub-skill perceived as difficult*
C = Commerce, H = Humanities, S = Science, SS = Social Science

It may be noted that students of all four faculties found it difficult to adopt appropriate tone and style and evaluate and revise writing. Leki and Carson (1994) findings that students felt the need to "supply relevant details in their written answers…organize writing...write clearly" and display "language proficiency" (Leki and Carson, 1994 cited in Pally, 2000:23) and Zhu & Fleitz's findings (2005:5) that students particularly "felt the strong need to produce acceptable academic written products" support these findings of writing difficulty.

The findings for the difficulty faced in the Listening sub-skills are outlined next in Table 10.4.

Table 10.4 Students' perception of difficulties in listening

Listening sub-skills	C	H	S	SS
Listen to and understand lectures and take notes	✓ **	**	✓ **	✓ **
Listen to and carry out instructions/ directions	✓ **	✓ **	**	✓ **
Listen to and understand class/ tutorial discussions	**	✓ **	**	✓ **
Listen to and understand questions/points raised during class/tutorials	✓ **	✓ **	**	
Listen to and answer questions in class/tutorials	✓ **	✓ **	✓ **	✓ **
.Listen to and understand seminars and talks	✓ **			
Listen to and understand television programs	✓ **		✓ **	✓ **
Listen to and understand radio programs				
Listen to and understand different English accents	✓ **			

*** core listening skills for four faculties*

✓ sub-skill perceived as difficult

C = Commerce, H = Humanities, S = Science, SS = Social Science

It can be noted that students of all four faculties found it difficult to listen to and answer questions in class or tutorials. Students of all faculties except Humanities found it difficult to listen to and understand lectures and notes and television programs. The findings of many researchers that "the processing required to understand lectures, take meaningful notes created problems for students (Mason, 1995, Mulligan & Kirkpatrick, 2000, Ferris, 1998:310 cited in Dooey, 2006:4) supports these findings of listening difficulty.

Lastly the findings for the difficulty faced in the Speaking sub-skills are outlined in Table 10.5

Table 10.5 Students' perception of difficulties in speaking

Speaking sub-skills	C	H	S	SS
Asking questions	✓ **	✓ **		
Answering questions	✓ **	✓ **	✓ **	✓ **
Expressing opinions/objections	✓ **	✓ **	✓ **	✓ **
Delivering oral presentations / reports	✓ **			
Explaining processes / procedures	✓ **		✓ **	
Brainstorming	✓ **		✓ **	
Taking part in class / tutorial / group discussions	✓ **	✓**	✓ **	✓ **
Taking part in social conversations	✓ **	✓ **	✓ **	✓ **
Speaking with other fluent speakers of English				✓ **

**core speaking skills for four faculties

✓ sub-skill perceived as difficult

C = Commerce, H = Humanities, S = Science, SS = Social Science

It is seen that students of all four faculties found it difficult to: answer questions, express opinions or objections, take part in class or tutorial or group discussions and take part in social conversations. Dooey's (2006:7) findings that students found it difficult to "participate effectively in class discussions, communicate effectively with lecturers, give presentations" and it seemed that "they were merely grappling with the need to understand and be understood" support these findings of speaking difficulty.

10.7 Specification of Content

Based on the above findings and discussion, content has been specified for the various Faculties. Tasks and activities that students frequently engaged in and faced difficulty in have not only been included but given added emphasis. These are outlined in the following section.

10.7.1 Commerce Faculty

Recommended reading materials

Students should be given adequate practice in reading newspapers, textbooks, selected chapters of books, online/internet materials, reference books/journals, magazines and reports or proposals.

Suggested reading activities

Students should be trained how to and be able to guess the meanings of unknown words from their context, read to respond critically and understand a writer's attitude and purpose.

Recommended writing tasks

Students should be given adequate practice in taking lecture notes, writing tutorial assignments and term papers, writing exams or in-course essays, summarizing, translating, editing or proof reading or revising, writing reports or lab reports, preparing flow-charts or tables and writing e-mails.

Suggested writing activities

Students should be able to organize paragraphs, develop ideas, adopt appropriate tone and style, evaluate and revise writing and complete written tasks.

Recommended listening tasks

Students should be given adequate practice in and be able to listen to and understand lectures and take notes, listen to and carry out instructions or directions, listen to and understand questions or points raised during class or tutorials, listen to and answer questions during class or tutorials, listen to and understand seminars and talks, listen to and understand television programs and listen to and understand different English accents.

Recommended speaking tasks

Students should be given adequate practice in and be able to ask questions, answer questions, express opinions or objections, deliver oral presentations or reports, explain processes or procedures, brainstorm, take part in class or tutorial or group discussions, and take part in social conversations.

10.7.2 Humanities Faculty

Recommended reading materials

Students should be given adequate practice in reading newspapers, textbooks, selected chapters of books, online/internet materials, reference books/journals and magazines.

Suggested reading activities

Students should be trained how to and be able to look through a text quickly to find specific information, guess the meanings of unknown words from their context, read to respond critically, understand a writer's attitude and purpose, understand and interpret charts, graphs and tables.

Recommended writing tasks

Students should be given adequate practice in taking lecture notes, tutorial assignments and term papers, writing exams or in-course essays, summarizing, translating, writing e-mails.

Suggested writing activities

Students should be able to use appropriate vocabulary, organize paragraphs, organize overall assignment, express ideas appropriately, adopt appropriate tone and style, follow instructions and directions, and evaluate and revise writing.

Recommended listening activities

Students should be given adequate practice in and be able to listen to and carry out instructions or directions, listen to and understand class or tutorial discussions, listen to and understand questions or points raised during class or tutorials, and listen to and answer questions during class or tutorials.

Recommended speaking activities

Students should be given adequate practice in and be able to ask questions, answer questions, express opinions or objections, take part in class or tutorial or group discussions, and take part in social conversations.

10.7.3 Science Faculty

Suggested reading materials

Students should be given adequate practice in reading newspapers, textbooks, selected chapters of books, online/internet materials, reference books/journals and workbook or lab instructions and reports or proposals.

Suggested reading activities

Students should be trained how to and be able to read a text quickly to get a general idea of its content, guess the meaning of unknown words from their context, read a text slowly and carefully to understand the

details of the text, read to respond critically, understand a writer's attitude and purpose, and understand and interpret charts, graphs, tables etc.

Suggested writing tasks

Students should be given adequate practice in taking lecture notes, tutorial assignments and term papers, writing exams or in-course essays, summarizing, essay writing, editing or proof reading or revising, writing reports or lab reports, and preparing flow-charts or tables.

Suggested writing activities

Students should be able to use appropriate vocabulary, express ideas appropriately, develop ideas, express what they want to say clearly, adopt appropriate tone and style, and evaluate and revise writing improve overall writing ability

Recommended listening activities

Students should be given adequate practice in and be able to listen to and understand lectures and take notes, listen to and answer questions during class or tutorials, and listen to and understand television programs.

Recommended speaking activities

Students should be given adequate practice in and be able to answer questions, express opinions or objections, explain processes or procedures, brainstorm, take part in class or tutorial or group discussions, and take part in social conversations.

10.7.4 Social Science Faculty

Recommended reading materials

Students should be given adequate practice in reading newspapers, textbooks, selected chapters of books, online/internet materials, and reference books/journals and magazines.

Suggested reading activities

Students should be trained how to and be able to read a text quickly to get a general idea of its content, look through a text quickly to find specific information, guess the meaning of unknown words from their context, read to respond critically, understand a writer's attitude and purpose, and understand and interpret charts, graphs, tables etc.

Recommended writing tasks

Students should be given adequate practice in taking lecture notes, tutorial assignments and term papers, writing exams or in-course essays, summarizing, translating, essay writing.

Suggested writing activities

Students should be able to use correct punctuation and spelling, organize paragraphs, organize the overall assignment, express what they want to say clearly, address the topic, adopt appropriate tone and style, and evaluate and revise writing.

Recommended listening activities

Students should be given adequate practice in and be able to listen to and understand lectures and take notes, listen to and carry out instructions or directions, listen to and understand class or tutorial discussions, listen to and answer questions during class or tutorials, and listen to and understand television programs.

Recommended speaking activities

Students should be given adequate practice in and be able to answer questions, express opinions or objections, take part in class or tutorial or group discussions, take part in social conversations and speak with other fluent speakers of English

10.7.5 Grammar component for all four Faculties

All four Faculties will have the same common core grammar component made up of: parts of speech, countable and uncountable nouns, the use of articles, the use of prepositions, tenses and sequences of tenses, subject-verb agreement, and direct and reported speech.

10.8 Implications and recommendations for further research

Examination of the learners' teachers' and employers' views of English language learning needs revealed some divergence in the learners' teachers' and employers' views of students' language proficiency. Students' language problem areas were found. It became clear that students' English language proficiency falls well below the language proficiency expectations of both teachers and employers and that students are unaware of the level of proficiency expected of them since most students did not perceive glaring difficulties in the skill areas. The language skills regarded as "very important" by each group of

participants reflected their setting, those language skills which students, subject teachers and employers perceived as students' needs wants or lacks need to be given priority and emphasis. A syllabus developed must include real world applications to be used as practice for all the four language skills.

This indicates that course designers should design courses that raise students' awareness of the levels of proficiency required of them as well as raise students' competence to the level which the faculty and employers find acceptable. This will involve the designers in collecting student samples perceived as adequate, good or poor by faculty and employers and design course content based on their examination of these samples. The goal of students should be the acquisition of acceptable proficiency in the skills; therefore, students must be made aware of this existing need through their lectures, classes, and exams.

The content should cover all the four skills though students considered speaking and writing as most important. Employers' interviews found that listening and reading are equally important. Students should be taught EAP with a focus on listening and speaking in many aspects of EAP settings such as listening to lectures participating in seminars, giving presentations, conference papers, followed by focusing on reading specialized, subject specific textbooks in English, and writing academic genres such as experimental report writing, writing research and so on. The English courses must be relevant and specific for the various disciplines.

All the stakeholders involved must build and maintain rapport with each other in order to ensure that the course design meets the needs wants and lacks of the students. Hence it would be fitting to urge that a well designed program manned by content and language teachers respectively is a pre-requisite to take the guesswork out of ESP (Roe 1993:10). There must be a consensus on what to focus on between the subject and language teachers, it must be a common journey (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987). Teachers should work together and complement each other i.e. cooperative or team teaching is recommended and encouraged Language teachers should share their responsibility of teaching learning with subject teachers. The courses should be reviewed from time to time to take into account the learners' needs therefore ongoing needs analysis must be carried out in order to clearly identify the different needs among the students. It is also crucial

for the needs analysis to consider the various levels of proficiency among the students.

The teaching methods should also focus on the areas of importance -- real life simulations should be provided. A learner and learning-centered approach should be adopted in the teaching-learning environment. Methodologies such as group work role play simulations should be incorporated so that a "learner autonomous environment is promoted". Teachers should play the role of facilitator and catalyst rather than that of fountain of knowledge, and students should be encouraged to take charge of their own learning thus creating an environment of learner autonomy.

Teaching materials must be authentic and relevant to the needs of the students.

Materials used should reflect a balance between those related to a variety of interests and those that are subject related i.e. materials preferred should not only be interesting and authentic they must also be useful relevant and closely related to the area of study. In the words of Haque & Zaman (1999) " an integrated course EFL teaching has to consider the materials such as grammatical structures, vocabulary items, composition topics, reading passages, and so forth which are closely related to the students main subject," in this case Management, Marketing, Finance, Philosophy, History, Linguistics, Bio-chemistry, Physics, Psychology, Women and Gender Studies, Mass Communication and Journalism and International Relations being the main disciplines of the present informants. Moreover "the teaching methods as well as the classroom activities have to ensure that the learner finds the EFL course interesting, receives optimal and adequate input, and in turn produces substantial output" (Haque & Zaman 1999:85).

Students' suggestions to improve the course should be studied in-depth because they are the main stakeholders and these represent the actual needs of the students -- students' input is crucial to determine the success of the course. Khan (2000) had discovered that students realized that a) English is a pre-requisite for getting good jobs b) for being successful in competitive examinations (e.g. BCS (Bangladesh Civil Service Exams) c) for career development d) for accessing higher education books e) and for communicating with the outer world. The findings reasserted her findings and found that students were aware that English is essential for their future as well as at present to give them access to academic texts and for communication.

10.9 Conclusion

The findings of this research clearly specified the language needs of students of the Commerce, Humanities, Science and Social Science Faculties of Dhaka University, and how these needs can be transferred into a framework from which EAP courses for the respective Faculties can be designed. Yalden (1987) noted that the production of a framework is the basic phase in the work of language specific courses as it constitutes the raw material from which the teachers and learners can work, the framework specifies the objectives, choice of language, techniques, tasks, important language forms and items. Setting the purpose and intended outcomes of the course provides a sense of direction to course design and provides the basis for selection of appropriate content and activities, in this case different frameworks can be prepared for each context.

No thorough research has ever been done before on identifying the actual academic, faculty and employment, English language needs of the students of Dhaka University. The study attempted to accurately and holistically describe the teaching / learning situation for students of the four faculties at Dhaka University and to specify their specific English language needs, and in the process yielded significant findings that can help improve the syllabi in meeting the needs of faculty and employers.

Stufflebeam (2003) noted that the key stakeholders should be actively involved at each stage in the evaluation process. This process is aimed at capturing the issues and concerns of stakeholders in a way that informs course designers and policymakers about the development of the EAP course. It is imperative that EAP curriculum developers and teachers know exactly what they are supposed to design and teach, and be aware of the course content that satisfies the needs of both the faculty and employment sector. Hopefully this research has provided invaluable insights into the most effective communication practices; essential for the development of the linguistic abilities that employers deem necessary for entry level workforce with tertiary qualifications and faculty's academic requirements

The data obtained was transferred into a comprehensive agenda that determined the language skills and sub-skills, the linguistic items, the subject matter area which need to be incorporated in the EAP courses. Though the information gathered is useful it has to be subjected to a lot of interpretation and ongoing evaluation before it can be applied in program planning.

Based on the expressed needs of the learners, perceptions of the various stakeholders future EAP courses must reflect the outcomes of the four language skills and the corresponding sub-skills which must be integrated with their subject course. This will make the courses interesting and achievable for students and prepare them for the real-world 'challenges' thus the objectives of the program will be more realistic and meaningful for learners and teachers; thus the products of such comprehensive programs will be more skilled and more employable.

Rahman, (2007) stressed that curricula revision needs to keep in mind mistakes made in past attempts at curricular change, and learn from them, and build on what has been achieved instead of re-inventing the wheel. All reform/revision attempts and educational planning need to be informed and guided on the basis of on-going research and investigative studies.

This study has raised awareness about pertinent issues and has provided first hand information to teachers, curriculum experts, decision-makers about what actually happens during courses. Issues most salient to decisions pertaining to the improvement and continuation of the EAP courses have been identified. This information is important and useful for decision makers and others involved and have implications for future curriculum development, as it provides specific pointers and guidelines to curriculum developers and practitioners for future EAP course development and planning. It was hoped that this comprehensive study will serve as a springboard for the discussion of areas highlighted in the study and as a useful background against which future studies can be more easily understood.

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Semi-structured Interview Questions for Employers

A Needs Assessment of the Employers' Perspective of the importance of English Language

1. What English language skills must a fresh graduate have when seeking employment?

Listening Speaking Reading Writing

2. Are you satisfied with the EL skills of graduates during interviews?

   Listening Speaking Reading Writing

3. How many of your employees actually need to communicate in English? (in %)

4. Do you have to communicate internationally and/or locally if so how?

5. What sort of communication skills do your employees use in their communication?

Listening Speaking Reading Writing

6. Does a lack of English language skills hinder people from getting jobs?

7. What EL skills do you consider to be important for your organization?

Listening Speaking Reading Writing

8. What skills are crucial for your line of work?

9. Are your employees sufficiently proficient? Listening Speaking Reading Writing

10. Which areas do you feel need improvement?

Listening Speaking Reading Writing

11. Do your employees have to undergo any English language training? If so is it in-house or otherwise?

12. Please rate the importance of the following skills on a scale of 1-10 (1-least important and 10-most important) Listening Speaking Reading Writing

13. What level of proficiency in the skills do you need from your employees for the optimum functioning of your organization on a scale of 1-10? (1-least important and 10-most important) Listening Speaking Reading Writing

14. What is your perception of the present level of proficiency of your employees on a scale of 1-10? (1-least important and 10-most important)

Listening Speaking Reading Writing

15. Any final thoughts?

Appendix B

Semi-structured Interview Questions for the Bangladeshi Curriculum Experts

These questions are regarding the English Language Curriculums you have designed for the tertiary level.

1. What was your starting point?

2. Did you follow any guidelines or have a framework?

3. Did you have a guiding philosophy or approach?

4. Did you conduct a needs analysis before beginning? If so what form of needs analysis was it?

5. Did you have any objectives / outcomes? What were they?

6. What skills were focused on?

7. How did you specify the content to be taught?

8. Did you design materials or use ready made ones?

9. What problems & constraints did you face?

10. Did you meet any resistance?

11. Do you feel the outcomes have been met?

12. Was there any evaluation or feedback?

13. Did you modify anything? If you could what would you modify?

14. Do you feel there was learning / improvement?

15. What is your opinion of the role and function of teaching English Language at the tertiary level?

16. Any final reflections or comments?

<div align="right">**Appendix C**</div>

Semi-structured Interview Questions for the Curriculum Experts from other countries

These questions are regarding the English Language Curriculums that are currently being used at Dhaka University which you have already been shown.

1. Do you think the stated aims and objectives are being met?
2. What is your opinion/evaluation of them?
3. How can these curriculums be made more feasible?
4. What sort of content would you specify for these courses given these learning needs?
5. How can the four skills be implemented in an integrated manner?
6. What about grammar teaching?
7. How can the listening and speaking skills be taught given the present constraints and lack of facilities?
8. Any final reflections or comments?