Needs Analysis and English Curriculum Design for Students in Iraqi Universities

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Abstract

English language has become the language of scientific and academic fields. And we as university lecturers are mainly concerned with making our students acquire proficiency in English language. The present research basic aim is to shed light upon an area of research to which little attention has been paid in the Iraqi universities in general and Salahaddin University-Erbil in particular. Its main aim is to suggest designing English curricula for students at the university level according to a needs-analysis approach which is the core step towards designing ESP courses. Needs analysis approach works on fulfilling not only the learners' needs but the society needs also. The curriculum based on this approach adapts authentic curriculum content which is the key towards engaging Iraqi university students effectively in communicative situations. This approach focuses mainly on defining the learners' needs in the targeted language and then designing courses and curricula for them. Designing such curricula help to develop learners' skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) within their specialization and enhance their critical thinking and practical knowledge of their specialization and be efficient in receiving and conveying information and using them for professional purposes in the future. There is a need to identify the components of the targeted learners' needs and implement them in building up the (EAP/ESP) curricula. Incorporating goals, objectives, methodology, materials and activities within these curricula will lead to increase intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, and thus, students will be able to use English professionally with authenticity and meaning.

The research will contain three chapters: chapter one is a general introduction to the research as it is going to state its problems and importance, aims, hypotheses, limits, procedures, and basic term definitions. Chapter two is divided into two sections: the first is a theoretical background of the significant points related to research topic. Section two is an analytical background to the English curricula in the Iraqi universities and Salahaddin University-Erbil is the model for this research. Chapter three will state some significant conclusions in addition to the recommendations and suggestions.

Keywords: Needs Analysis Approach, ESP, Curriculum Design.

Chapter One
Introduction
Statement of the Problems

English language is the language taught in all Iraqi universities. It is the language which is taught in all Iraqi primary, secondary and tertiary levels. The main concern of the research is the university students in general and Salahaddin University students in particular. The English curricula that those students are studying are not designed according to needs analysis approach. This approach is very important in defining the English language learners' needs when designing English courses. The present research is trying to describe and analyze this approach.

The present English curricula which are generally designed for university students in Iraq follow one of the educational and instructional points of view:

1. Generally speaking, English curricula are designed to teach general English not academic English.

2. Even if the English curricula content focus on academic vocabularies and texts, they are not designed on the bases of a needs analysis approach.

3. They are designed with a little focus on authentic materials and activities.

4. They do not focus on developing all the students' skills. Most of these curricula try to develop reading and writing.

5. The activities and techniques are personally designed by university teachers if the course is designed by them.

6. Since the texts and materials are generally not authentic, they do not motivate students intrinsically and extrinsically.

7. They do not develop students' English language within their fields of study.

The textbook taught for first year students (General English for University Students) is also not designed according to needs analysis approach and according to the researcher's experience students are generally not motivated towards the content of this curriculum; therefore, it does not develop academic English related to the students' fields of study. These curricula will motivate students towards learning English language.

The Importance of the Research

The importance of the current research comes as a result of the researchers' pioneer suggestion to design English curricula for Iraqi university students in general and Salahaddin University-Erbil in specific according to needs analysis approach. Furthermore, the research will present a theoretical background to the theory as a basis for designing such courses. The research will also present some effective and incorporative suggestions and solutions that work together to make English curricula interesting and motivating for learners.

Research Aims

The research aims to achieve the following:

1. Suggesting English curricula designed according to Needs Analysis Approach for students in the Iraqi universities.

2. Describing Needs Analysis Approach, its principles, types, and other points related to designing courses.

Research Questions

1. What is the importance of Needs Analysis Approach in designing courses for the Iraqi university students in general and in Salahaddin University-Erbil in particular?

2. What are the problems related to the present English curricula taught in the Iraqi universities and in Salahaddin University-Erbil?

Research Hypotheses

1. English curricula taught at the Iraqi universities are not designed according to a needs analysis approach.

2. The curriculum taught for first year students at Salahaddin University-Erbil (General English for University Students) does not satisfy their needs in learning English language.

3. This curriculum content does not meet the students' cognitive-knowledge structures; therefore, they have little motivation towards learning the curriculum content.

Research Limits

1. The research adopts needs analysis approach for designing English curricula for university students.

2. It describes the English curricula taught generally in Iraqi Universities and the English curriculum (General English) taught for first year students at Salahaddin University-Erbil. The university has started teaching this textbook since 2012.

Research Procedures

The research follows descriptive and analytical procedures in dealing with the research problems.

Research Definitions

The following definitions are adopted by the researcher as the research procedural definitions:

1. Needs Analysis: It is the process of identifying needs or gaps in the learning process to find the best or appropriate solution. Or it is to identify causes to select solutions (Kaufman, 1994).

2. ESP courses: Basturkmen (2010: 17) explains that "ESP courses set out to teach the language and communication skills that specific groups of language learners need or will need to function effectively in their disciplines of study, professions or workplace".

Chapter Two
Section One
A Theoretical Background
Needs Analysis Approach

Needs Analysis approach was propounded by the council of Europe Modern Language Project group before 1970s. The council designed a syllabus which was then criticized because it was not based upon learners' needs (Fatihi, 2003). The most well-known work on needs analysis was "John Munby's *Communicative Syllabus Design (1978)"* (Hutchinson & Waters, 1991: 315). Later on, the approach gained its broad scope as a result of growth, progress and contributions made to Needs Analysis Approach.

ESP approach looks at students to have different needs and interests which affect students' motivation and learning (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987). Its courses are designed to teach English for specific groups of language learners to use it functionally and effectively in their disciplines of study, professions or workplaces by focusing on communication skills (Basturkmen, 2010). The teachers in these courses teach learners to learn English language within their specialization concerning vocabularies and texts. Also ESP is mainly concerned with language learning in addition to language use and this is deeply related to being aware of what our learners need to learn in the target situations (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987).

Furthermore, designing language courses is not something easy or cheap. It costs large amounts of money. Therefore, officials, designers, planners or teachers have to implement needs analysis before any other step. Altschuld et al. (2000) draw our attention to three levels of target groups and their needs:

1. Primary Level: in which the target learners directly take advantage of the learning process output.

2. Secondary Level: in which the target learners are individuals or groups who deliver the learning outcomes.

3. Tertiary Level: it involves supplements and inputs to be used to find solutions.

The most important level is the primary one because it is the core of any need analysis process. It is the touchstone behind the existence of secondary and tertiary levels, not the other way around. In addition to that point, needs analysis is not a fixed process. Needs have to be changed or modified throughout the courses because learners' needs change as courses go on (Robinson, 1991). This is part of any course evaluation and development to see what works and what does not (Richards, 2001).

Stages of Needs Analysis

ESP process includes five stages. Dudley-Evans & John (1998: 121) state that "The key stages in ESP are needs analysis, course (and syllabus) design, materials selection (and production), teaching and learning, and evaluation."

McKillip (1987: 9-24) identifies five steps in needs analysis:

1. Identifying "users and uses" of the need analysis. In this step, information or data is collected. For instance, the targeted learners and analysis purposes are identified. Analyzing and describing the target learners and the environment.

2. Identify needs which is done by either:

    2.1. Describing problems: there are three types of problems in needs analysis:

        a. Problems can be identified when comparing what is expected with the learning process outcomes. This happens when there is no match between goals and objectives and the learning achievements.

        b. Problems also come out when there is no capability to developing inefficient outcomes. Sometimes, problems that appear on the surface throughout the course need to be defined or dealt with by the teachers or officials. This happens as a result of unawareness or carelessness.

        c. Sustaining needs: Poor outcomes can be maintained or sustained against failure by offering continuous solutions such as developing current objectives, altering or adding new ones.

    2.2. Describing solutions: According to McKillip (1987: 22), there are three dimensions for evaluating solutions which are: "cost analysis, impact and feasibility".

3. Assessing the importance of the needs: the process of assessing needs is an ongoing process. When problems and solutions are identified, then needs have been evaluated or assessed. The following questions can be asked in this step:

    -Which of the needs are the most important?
    - Do any of the needs contrast with the other ones?
    - Is there an agreement among levels of target learners about the
     relevance and importance of the needs?

4. Communicating results: This is the final step in which need analysis results must be communicated to decision makers, users.

Miliani (1994) and (Benyelles, 2009).states that there are four points have to be taken into account as a course pre-design process. They are as follows:

1. Situation analysis: It includes the requirements of learners and institutions, profiles, attitudes, and materials.

2. Aims and Objectives: After identifying learners' needs analysis, aims and objectives have to be stated as they are the core achievements of any course.

3. Syllabus Content: The curriculum content can be designed by organizing materials.

4. Assessment: Collecting data according to the curriculum content or subject before or during the course help in modulating the content of the syllabus.

Bradshaw assigned four types of outcome expectations that support judgments of needs (McKillip, 1987):

1. Normative need: according to this type, expectations depend on the teachers' knowledge of needed skills or expected learning. It takes place when there are deficiencies in individuals or groups and they are below expectations and norms, e.g. some university students' level in English is below the expected level. Their level fall within beginner level.

2. Felt need: here the needs are identified according to a desire or feeling other than performance. It is a matter of needs awareness. Sometimes learners do not have an immediate perception of what they need from learning. Thus, the needs analysis process includes perceived and present needs in addition to potential and unrecognized needs. The best example to this type is the parents' expectations about the needed instructions in math at the elementary level.

3. Expressed need or demand: when felt need becomes an expressed need and people turn what they want into actions. Here expectations are based on behavior of target learners and on how learners make use of the course outcomes, e.g., when 300 students come to a biology class but in actual fact the class contains only 100 chairs.

4. Comparative need: Comparative expectations mainly depend on the similarity of the comparison group and the target population. Such expectations can neglect unique characteristics that invalidate generalizations. For example, one university has a phonology lab and all other universities in the same district do not have.

Types of Need Analysis

Needs analysis is divided into the following categories:

1. Performance analysis: This analysis does not include individual analysis only, but organizational analysis too. The kind of the organization requirements and individuals' needs decide what course objectives, techniques and content are needed. Swanson (1994) shows that analysis of performance constituents decides expectations of future performance on the behalf of both individuals and organizations. To improve performance, it is necessary to describe these two interrelated elements in addition to the processes which are greatly affected by the actual and desired performances of the other two elements (Castle, 2005; Rummler & Brache, 1995). Clarke (2003) argues that performance analysis helps to identify what criteria are needed to reach the organization targeted expectations concerning individuals and processes performance. This can be applied to universities. They need to set forward the level of future expectations on the part of teachers, students, and the educational process.

2. Task Analysis: Tasks and activities need also to be identified and limited in order to achieve clear goals and objectives. Swanson (1994: 172) and Bemis et al (1983: 96-97) highlight that "knowledge, tools, conditions, and requirements" are crucial elements that affect performance standards and consequently, the goals. Jonassen et al (1999) state that task analysis is important to resolve instructional problems, e.g. if students' level in English is below what is expected, a course in English has to be developed or changed to meet their needs and there is a need to define and produce goals, objectives, tasks of teaching, important tasks, task sequence, design, media, assessment and evaluation. Kazanas (2004) emphasizes that conditions and standards of any task have also to be established in a clear and direct way.

3. Process or Job Analysis: This analysis seems to be similar to task analysis. The former describes the outline of the process or the job, i.e. "scope, responsibilities, and tasks", and the later describes "knowledge, skills, tools, conditions, and requirements… but at a different level" Jonassen et al (1999: 47). This type of analysis comes to find a solution to any problem related to performance. It is mainly concerned with describing the process or the job constituents.

4. Systems and Approach analysis: This analysis is adopted first by Rummler & Brache (1995). It helps to understand system variables and then try to describe the appropriate change to improve performance. For example, if students at the university level are unable to write a report on any chosen subject, there must be an analysis of the various

levels; the organizational, the process, and teachers or students. Rummler & Brache (1995: 109) state that "strategies, goals, measures, organization structure, and the organizational resources" decide what kind of solutions appropriate to each problem. For instance, sometimes a university decides to develop and design a curriculum then after teaching it many problems appear to the surface. The curriculum itself becomes the source of the problem not the students themselves because the curriculum may not motivate them to learning.

5. Competency Analysis: This type of analysis is very important for assigning the right individual or may be a group of people who with certain competencies to the right task or profession. The word competencies in this sense can be defined as "underlying characteristics of employees that enable them to perform a job or task" (Swanson and Holton, 1998: 30).

6. Skill and Knowledge Analysis: it is mainly concerned with identifying the kinds of skills and knowledge needed to fill the gaps and solve the problems. This kind of analysis is better to be incorporated in any new projects or processes. For example, designing new courses for certain levels and may be adding or modulating objectives. Gupta (2007) states that such an analysis can be used when there are new opportunities, systems, or responsibilities. It is also suitable for updating programs, reorganizing, or supporting development or growth. This analysis can be also called "content analysis" http://www.hr-guide.com/data/G510.htm.

Dudley-Evans & John (2009) have another classification for needs analysis some of them are mentioned earlier and some are not. They are as follow:

1. Objective needs analysis, which means analyzing objectives need to be achieved from the process of learning.

2. Subjective needs analysis, e.g. what learners' needs from a course.

3. Linguistic analysis, discourse analysis, genre analysis, which are all related to the linguistic knowledge.

4. Means analysis, i.e. information about the environment where the course will take place.

They also recognize another type of analysis called "present situation analysis" for the purpose of identifying learners' current skills and language use. It compromises two or three types of analysis

Nunan (1988) adds that there is a learner analysis which focuses on the learner. Dudley-Evans & John (2009) state that needs analysis can be classified into:

1. Subjective Needs Analysis: which is concerned with subjective information that reflects the learner's views, goals, and priorities. It is also called "person analysis" http://www.hr-guide.com/data/G510.htm.

2. Objective Needs Analysis: which is concerned with objective information that focuses on true facts and description of the learner, e.g. age, and mother language.

 West (1994) has another needs analysis taxonomy. They are divided into:

1. Target-situation Analysis: It describes what is expected from learners in the target language by putting forward what is needed depending on the language need to be learnt, language skills, and finally the "situations, functions or tasks" that learners need to develop in the target language.(Munby, 1978)

2. Deficiency Analysis: It describes gaps; i.e. the learners' knowledge and their future expectations.

3. Strategy Analysis: It identifies the learner's preferred learning styles; what methods of teaching and strategies needed.

4. Means Analysis: It is mainly concerned with the "teaching environment", i.e. - the learners' culture, the teachers' or staff qualifications, levels or background, innovations, logistics, and restrictions of needs based language courses.

5. Language Audits: It is concerned with strategic decisions of important requirements when defining language needs. Language audits over look and examine that all the above kinds of analysis works or not for any course or practice.

Other two types of analysis can be accepted within this prolonged classification. They are:

1. Training Suitability Analysis: It explains any course desired solutions by following effective procedures.

2. Cost-Benefit Analysis: It defines the return on investment (ROI) of training http://www.hr-guide.com/data/G510.htm.

There are two other types of needs analysis:

1. Anticipated or future needs: this is mainly concerned with answering the question (what is going to be in the future?) rather than (what is needed now?). A distinction has to be drawn between present demands and the future ones or what is projected in the future. Such needs should be part of any planned change, e.g. if a new technology is planned to be used in the future course, teachers require to learn to use and practice it effectively.

2. Critical- incident need: this focus on identifying problems that emerge when failures have certain consequences, e.g. in certain cities, when there are security or political crises, security measures have to be taken in classrooms.

(http://www.amandaszapkiw.com/elearning/principles-of-design/module-3-1)

On the basis of the researcher's readings, there can be other important types of needs analysis, which are as follows:

1. Formative analysis: Since needs analysis is not a stable process designed for limited areas, levels or any other variable; therefore, formative analysis can be done at different course stages to describe any required changes or modulations.

2. Summative analysis: The results of this analysis are wider. They can be useful for any future courses designation.

Needs Analysis Objectives

Basturkmen (2006) states that ESP objectives focus mainly on the following areas:

1. Content of language use

2. Targeted competencies

3. Basic knowledge

4. Effective strategies

5. Advanced awareness

Stern (1992) distinguished four types of ESP teaching objectives:

1. Proficiency objectives which refer to acquire proficiency in the four language skills: reading, writing, listening and speaking.

2. Knowledge objectives which include two levels.

3. Linguistic knowledge objectives which fall within language analysis and awareness of linguistic competencies.

4. Cultural knowledge objectives which refer to acquiring and stimulating socio-cultural rules, values, interests and beliefs.

5. Affective objectives: They enhance positive attitudes towards learning.

6. Transfer objectives: They develop learners' ability to make generalizations from different learning situations.

Authenticity

Authentic materials are those which are created with some real-life goal. They include both spoken and written language samples. For example, books, magazines, ads, movie reviews, TV shows, conversations, train schedules, etc.

Authentic Materials have many advantages:

1. Authentic materials bring learners into direct contact with a reality level of English language.
2. Authentic materials need to be up-to-date and constantly being updated.
3. Authentic materials need to be relevant to the learners' specializations.

Writing materials for ESP courses is one of the most significant features of ESP practices (Hutchinson & Waters 1987). Many ESP teachers use technology in their classes like videos accompanied by written exercises and activities (Baleghizadeh & Oladrostam, 2010). These videos are used in order to "contextualize language for students" (Baleghizadeh & Oladrostam, 2010: 10). Brown (2007) directs our attention to the point that there are students who are "right brain dominant". Those students depend on images to remember and think. Therefore, videos will be very helpful for them to acquire learning quickly. According to Harmer (2001, 70), there are a number of reasons why videos should be used:

1. practicing language-in-use
2. being more aware of the cross-cultural variety
3. making learners more creative
4. increasing motivation
5. empowering long term memory especially if learners experience exciting learning

Motivation

Communicating English language is one aim that our learners need to achieve when learning. As teachers of English language, our aim is to make our learners be motivated towards language and interested in learning it.
Motivation role, in the process of learning, is very important. In addition to that, motivation and learning are intermingled. When learners are motivated, effective learning happens.
(Pask, 2001; Ford & Chen, 2000; Lumsdaine & Lumsdaine, 1995; Felder & Silverman, 1988) show that teachers use different teaching methods or "teaching styles" in their classes. These vary depending on the students' level, and the students' preferred "learning styles". Teachers vary according to the teaching methods or styles. They concentrate on either of the following:

1. Providing principles or using applications;
2. Teaching the subject in a logical way starting from details till reaching the big idea, others do the opposite moving from the big idea to the details;
3. Providing information by lecturing or describing, by using words whether written or spoken, others like to use visual aids, demos and experiments;
4. Some teachers adopt methods that focus on teachers as the center of learning process and their students are only listener, others want their students to discuss, ask, and argue.

Students also vary according to the "learning styles" they prefer. They adopt certain "preferences or predispositions to behave in a particular way when engaged in a learning process". It has been approved that students whose learning styles match with the teaching approach "tend to retain information longer, apply it more effectively, and have more effective post course attitudes towards the subject than do their counterparts who experience learning/teaching mismatch" (Felder et al, 2002: 11). As a result of adopting a functional and effective learning style will help students to develop their skills and acquire knowledge.

It is very important in the ESP curriculum to make learners "dynamic contributors in their learning either in the classroom or out of it. Students use the adequate and favorite learning strategies and put a rapid and durable learning rhythm to achieve the stated objectives. They are more intrinsically than extrinsically oriented. Learning is more individualized than standardized and students are more open to new ideas. They take responsibility for their own actions and accept related consequences". (Kashani, 2007: 87).

Another point is that the materials produced to teach any ESP course have to encourage learners' stimulation to learn the language. Teachers have to choose interesting articles and exercises to stimulate learners' thinking by providing knowledge and adequate activities. Teachers also have to structure their courses in a rational way to increase learning chances.

An analysis can be drawn here between two types of motivation. The first is the intrinsic motivation which is propelled by the inner potentials while extrinsic motivation is propelled by outside effects (Giancola, 2014). Learners can be intrinsically motivated depending on each student's perception of what is required to be done inside the class and why s/he is doing something. Intrinsic motivation can be achieved when learners feel that the learning environment around them is full with "enjoyment, interest, satisfaction of curiosity, self-expression, or personal challenge" (Amabile, 1993: 188). Moreover, when intrinsically motivated, learners will feel back they are satisfied, have accomplished, and achieved something (George & Jones, 2012)

Extrinsic motivation is linked to the satisfaction from the external results of fulfilling duties or tasks such as getting a certificate, a gift, or simply hearing a word. Similarly, Amabile (1993) states that extrinsically motivated learners are individuals who are extrinsically motivated when they are engaged in doing tasks in order to achieve goals. Another point is that those learners are motivated to finish what they are required to do because they want to avoid punishment, so they think of immediate aftereffects. Moreover, these two types of motivation can work independently or they both work together at the same time (George & Jones, 2012). Student engagement is a term that needs to be highlighted also. It is used to "describe an individual's interest and enthusiasm for school, which impacts their academic performance and behavior" (Oberio & Paresh, 2013: 43). You can describe learners as being engaged when they pay attention to their lectures, have curiosity, passion and interest towards learning, feel optimistic, and consequently they learn and progress in their study.

Needs Analysis or Needs Assessment

The first process in any instructional design is the needs assessment (Rossett, 1987). Some use this term to assess a training process. Kaufman (1994); Rothwell & Kazanas (2004) show that needs assessment is not for training but it is used to define any performance gaps. Reaching up this point, the next step is needs analysis which helps to define causes, conditions and effects behind the problem/s in hand and the possible or appropriate solutions for these problems (Kaufman: 1994). The point that needs to be high-lightened is that the priority of needs assessment to needs analysis is not a ground rule. There can be different methods used to describe problems.

Many terms are used to describe needs assessment or analysis. There are "front-end analysis, training needs assessment, needs assessment, needs analysis, task analysis, and job-

task analysis are several terms used synonymously with needs assessment" (Robbins et al, 1996: 776; Rossett, 1987: 35)

The process of a needs assessment is mainly concerned with collecting information about a need which can be a problem in any curriculum content. The purpose of a needs assessment is to answer some familiar questions. For example:

1. Why do we have to change the current curriculum?
2. Who is involved in doing this change?
3. How can the learners' needs be identified and met in the new designed curriculum?
4. What are the appropriate techniques we need to use to assess needs? Or: What do our learners need in the new curriculum?
5. When will the teachers apply using the new curriculum? Or: how much time do we have to define learners' needs?

As it is mentioned earlier in the beginning of this section, a needs analysis is not a fixed or stable process. It takes place before, during, and after the language course. It is a long-term planning process. This means that learners' needs, objectives, materials, and content are continuously evaluated. The assessment of the course is relatively a long- term process. It can be done prior, during, and after the end of the course. White (1998: 91) argues that needs analysis is not "a pre-stage for the design of language courses". It is an "on-going process". It can be used "to design, improve and implement language programs"; therefore, needs analysis assessment can be classified into the following stages:

1. A needs analysis pre-assessment.
2. A needs analysis mid- assessment
3. A needs analysis post- assessment

Identifying learners' needs before the beginning of the course is the regular process that is done by teachers, experts, officials or organizations to define what is required as outcomes at the end of the course. The assessment or evaluation of the needs is carried out as part of the delivery of the course. The course content can be reshaped when collecting information during the teaching process. The process does not end to this point. Comprehensive information can be collected after the end of the course. There are different techniques to collect information about learners' needs. They can be "surveys, questionnaires, interviews, attitude scales, intelligence texts, language tests, job analyses, content analyses, statistical analyses, observation, data collection, or informal consultation with sponsors, learners and others" Hutchinson and Waters, 1987:58; Palacios Martínez, 1994: 143). They can be a review of relevant literature, assessments, or work samples.

It is important in needs analysis/assessment to consider different measures and methods of assessment, e.g., client surveys – questionnaires, key informant interviews (McKillip, 1987).

Information or data collection helps to have a comprehensive view of the learners' needs as a data base for evaluating and revising the course. A need analysis is a judgment dependent. It is not a ready-made concept. (Brindley, 1989: 63) state that needs identification "reflects interests and values of those making such a judgment".

Needs assessment identifies and prioritizes needs, while needs analysis breaks needs down and suggests causes of and solutions to needs. (Benjamin, 1989)

Section Two
Analytical Background of the Current English Curricula
Salahaddin University-Erbil (as a model)

English Curricula taught in Iraqi Universities

Most of the English curricula taught at universities in their different colleges and departments do not improve students' English language to the level that they can communicate in English and use language effectively and functionally. This is an important issue that needs officials to focus on in order to help our students make use of English curricula. They will be able to get good jobs after graduation because most of the jobs ask for qualifications and one of these is the ability to speak and write in English.

As it is mentioned earlier in section one, English curricula taught in Iraqi universities are mostly designed without paying any attention to needs analysis approach. The English curriculum content i.e., goals, objectives, methodology, materials, techniques are not set out according to this approach. Incorporating a need analysis approach is an important premier step before designing English curricula. The need for such curricula or courses has been is a major concern of all countries where English language is the mother language or the second one (Salager-Meyer, 2000). Focusing on Learners' needs comes out from the interest in designing language courses that could satisfy individuals and social needs (Palacios Martínez 1994). Needs analysis fulfills the gap between "what is" and "what should be" (Witkin & Altschuld, 1995: 23). It focuses on the consequent future i.e., what are the target learning outcomes.

The curriculum content plays an important role to achieve specific purposes in English language teaching (ELT). The need for specific courses in English for specific specializations or fields of study is part of ESP courses. The term needs analysis has come to the surface as a result of the developments in educational psychology in 1960s which led to ESP. Dudley-Evans & John (1998) presented a list of ESP characteristics which are as follows:

1. ESP is outlined to meet specific learners' needs.
2. It involves an underlying methodology in addition to activities.
3. Its core is language (grammar, lexis, register), skills, discourse and genres appropriate to these activities.
4. It is designed for specific specialization or disciplines.
5. It manipulates specific teaching situations, a different methodology from that of General English.

Robinson (1991: 3); Kennedy & Bolitho (1984: 14) and McDonough (1984: 23) agree that ESP courses are designed for adults or advanced learners or those who have a specialization or a job because they are much likely "aware of specific purposes and needs in learning the language". Basturkman (2003: 48-50) and Widdowson (1983: 6) distinguish between "narrow angle" and "wide angle" ESP courses. The narrow angle covers courses for learners who want to develop a particular profession or academic specialization, e.g. German businessmen learning customer service. The wide angle courses are designed with a general approach and with broad objectives. It either covers "language variety (e.g. academic English, Business English)" or it covers "those which address learners' common needs with reference to a set of disciplines or occupations (e.g. English for General Academic Purposes, English for Health Professionals)".

ESP is divided into two main branches; the first branch is EOP (English for Occupational Purposes) (Kennedy & Bolitho, 1984; McDonough, 1984; Dudley-Evans & John, 1998). The second branch is EAP (English for Academic Purposes) which is mainly concerned with "the teaching of English with the specific aim of helping learners to study, conduct research or teach in that language" (Flowerdew & Peacock, 2001: 8). EAP was developed as one of ESP types given to learners for academic purposes at the university level. On the other hand, EAP was distinguished as a general study-skills orientation, and not depending on a specific language context analysis (Jordan 1997).

EAP goal is to engage students in an academic environment with focus on making them acquire communicative skills (Watson Todd, 2003; Hyland & Hamp-Lyons, 2002). Another main branch of EAP is EST (English for Science and Technology). EAP is concerned with equipping learners with communication skills in English to study language usage in education disciplines (Jordan, 1997). Another branch is ESAP (English for Specific Academic Purposes) which refers to develop language and related skills learners need in higher education (Jordan, 1997). ESP/EAP courses have been developed in Western Europe in addition to content-based instruction (CBi) in English; an approach that enhances both language acquisition and academic success (Song, 2006) by the incorporation of content material into language classes (Kavaliauskiene, 2004). Furthermore, ESP is one of the usages of CBi, in which content knowledge is taught academically. There is another branch of EAP which is EST (English for Science and Technology) which works within both the academic and the occupational uses of language (McDonough, 1984; Dudley-Evans & John, 1998; and Jordan, 2002).

Finally, "The goals of EAP and EOP are not always easily separable" (Belcher, 2006: 134), e.g. one can teach English for business may be for either academic or occupational purposes. In other words, an English course designed to help students read business textbooks would clearly be EAP, "but a course designed to teach learners how to participate in business meetings or take phone calls definitely has an EOP dimension to it" (Flowerdew & Peacock, 2001: 11-12).

Curriculum Content Description

General criteria that describe English curricula taught in Iraqi universities are stated below:

8. Generally speaking, English curricula are designed to teach general English not academic English.

9. Even if the English curricula content focus on academic vocabularies and texts, they are not designed on the bases of a needs analysis approach.

10. They are designed with a little focus on authentic materials and activities.

11. They do not focus on developing all the students' skills. Most of these curricula try to develop reading and writing.

12. The activities and techniques are personally designed by university teachers if the course is designed by them.

13. Since the texts and materials are generally not authentic, they do not motivate students intrinsically and extrinsically.

14. They do not develop students' English language within their fields of study.

Depending on the researcher observation and experience in teaching English and teaching the curriculum designed by Salahaddin University-Erbil, the following explanation will be presented.

The textbook is taught for first year students at Salahaddin University-Erbil in all its colleges and departments. It is entitled "General English for University Students". It is divided into five themes. The themes are:

- Theme One: Education
- Theme Two: Psychology and Sociology
- Theme Three: Work and Business
- Theme Four: Science and Nature
- Theme Five: The Physical World

Then, each theme is divided into four skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing). Each skill in each theme has a sub topic. Each skill has five lessons. Many exercises are included.

Is the textbook designed according to ESP?

The answer is NO.

The textbook Major Problems

The textbook does not represent the students' needs. It focuses on general areas. Most of students complain from the textbook for different reasons:

1. The major important problem is that the textbook in very general for them. Students express their attitude towards it negatively. They say that it does not add any important detail to their major fields of study.

2. The majority of students in high level colleges like engineering for example, consider this book very much easy for them. It does not add important information for them. So, it does not motivate them or enhance their competencies.

3. There are other students with low level in English language like those who study geography, history, or Islamic studies, consider this very difficult for them. They were accepted in such departments because they have got medium or good averages but most of them are beginners or high beginners in English.

Chapter Three
Conclusions, Suggestions and Recommendations

Research Conclusions

On the bases of the previous theoretical background and the description of the English curricula taught in Iraqi universities in addition to the description of General English curriculum taught for students at Salahaddin University-Erbil, the following conclusions are reached:

1. ESP courses are important for developing students' competencies within their specialization or field of study.

2. Iraqi universities in general and Salahaddin University in particular can develop their English curricula depending on EAP (English for Academic Purposes) and ESP (English for Scientific Purposes) which are branches of ESP.

3. A needs analysis approach is the first step towards designing academic English curricula.

4. Designing a curriculum according to a needs analysis approach will help students of English in our universities to learn an academic English language within their specialization and interests.

5. These curricula will enhance intrinsic and extrinsic motivation on the part of the learners and teachers are going to get positive feedbacks throughout the process of learning.

Suggestions

1. According to the ESP course which is explained in detail in this research, the researcher suggests writing research papers about ESP in addition to some experimental research papers within this area.

2. When applying a needs analysis approach, there are many procedures or stages that are explained in detail within the research which can be adapted and developed to design

English curricula for university students. The researcher suggests the following steps when applying a needs analysis approach in designing a new curriculum:

- Analyzing needs of learners;
- Describing aims and objectives;
- Describing and designing curriculum subjects and contents;
- Assessing learners' needs throughout the course to achieve the course goals and objectives which automatically help in evaluating the whole course.

Recommendations

The researcher recommends that Salahaddin University-Erbil adopts ESP approach and needs analysis in designing courses for all the colleges and their departments for first year students instead of General English coursebooks. The researcher also recommends setting up a committee that works on developing these courses.

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ملخص

اصبحت اللغة الانكليزية اللغة المستخدمة في المجالات العلمية والاكاديمية. ونحن كتدريسيين نهتم بشكل رئيسي بجعل طلبتنا يكتسبون مهارات اللغة الانكليزية باحتراف. يهدف البحث الحالي بتسليط الضوء على مجال بحثي لم يتم اعطاءه اهمية سابقا في الجامعات العراقية بصورة عامة وفي جامعة صلاح الدين بصورة خاصة. وهدف البحث هو اقتراح تصميم منهج للغة الانكليزية للطلبة على المستوى الجامعي على حسب نظرية تحليل الحاجات والتي هي الخطوة الرئيسية في تصميم مقررات دراسية على حسب نظرية "اللغة الانكليزية للاغراض التخصصية". نظرية تحليل الحاجات تعمل على اغناء ليس فقط حاجات المتعلمين ولكن ايضا حاجات المجتمع. المنهج المصمم على وفق هذه النظرية يتبنى مواد دراسية ذات محتوى واقعي حقيقي وهو المفتاح باتجاه جذب والاستحواذ على اهتمام الطلبة في الجامعات العراقية بصورة فعالة في مواقف تواصلية. هذه النظرية تركز على تحديد حاجات المتعلمين في اللغة المراد تعلمها ومن ثم تصميم مقررات دراسية ومناهج لهم. تصميم مثل هذه المناهج سوف يساعد في تطوير مهارات المتعلمين (الاستماع، التحدث، القراءة والكتابة) في ضمن تخصصاتهم وتعزيز تفكيرهم النقدي، والمعلومات التطبيقية في مجال تخصصهم ومن ثم يصبحون متمكنين من الحصول على المعلومة ونقلها واستخدامها لاغراض احترافية في مجال عملهم في المستقبل. هنالك حاجة الى تحديد مكونات حاجات المتعلمين وتوظيفها في بناء مناهج في اللغة الانكليزية ضمن التخصصات العلمية والانسانية. حيث ان تحديد الاهاف العامة والخاصة وطرائق التدريس المناسبة والمواد والفعاليات في هذه المناهج سوف يؤدي الى زيادة التحفيز الداخلي والخارجي وبذلك يستطيع الطلبة من استخدام اللغة باحترافية وبواقعية وذات معنى.

هذا البحث سيتكون من ثلاث فصول. الفصل الاول هو مقدمة عامة للبحث وسيتناول المشكلات واهمية البحث، الاهداف، الفرضيات، الحدود، الاجراءات، وتعرف للمصطلحات. والفصل الثاني مقسم الى مبحثين. الاول هو خلفية نظرية لاهم محاور البحث والثاني هو تحليل لمناهج اللغة الانكليزية الحالية وجامعة صلاح الدين هي نموذج للبحث الحالي. اما الفصل الثالث يتضمن الاستنتاجات والمقترحات والتوصيات.