

**Exploring Medical Departments Students
' English Language Needs:
From Students and Instructors' Perspectives**

Asst. Lect. Osama W. Al-Safar

Asst. Lect. Suha A. Yahya

Department of English Language,
Al-Noor University College, Mosul, Iraq

Abstract

The need for English language has dramatically increased for language learners in general and other specializations in particular due to the wide emergence of English language in studying most fields specifically, medical fields. Therefore, the question of what to teach calls for syllabus designers, educators and English language instructors to reconsider English language courses that are taught to students of medical departments in EFL learning contexts. In light of that, the current study aims to investigate English language needs of first year students of medical departments at Al-Noor University College from the perspectives of concerned students and English language instructors in medical departments in order to contribute to the development of English language course. Based on that, data were collected via two questionnaires each consisted of (27) items on six themes categorized as follows: (5 items) on needs of English language course in general, (6 items) on purpose of learning English language, (4 items) on listening skill, (4 items) on speaking skill, (4 items) on reading skill, (4 items) on writing skill. The questionnaires were presented to the sample of the study which included two parties at Al-Noor University College, namely (500) first stage students in medical departments and (13) instructors who teach English language in medical departments. Following that, data were analyzed statistically using SPSS program and the total results of the responses to the items of the language skills have been calculated to identify the most important skill to the respondents. Finally, some conclusions and recommendations are given on the basis of the findings.

Keywords: English Language Needs, Medical Departments, English for General Purposes, English for Specific Purposes, English for Medical Purposes.

المستخلص

ازدادت الحاجة إلى اللغة الانكليزية بشكل كبير لمتعلمي اللغة بشكل عام والتخصصات الأخرى بشكل خاص بسبب الاندماج الواسع للغة الانكليزية في دراسة معظم المجالات وخصوصاً المجالات الطبية. لذلك، فإن مسألة ما يجب تدريسه تتطلب من مصممي المناهج والتربويين وتدريسي اللغة الانكليزية إلى إعادة النظر في مواد اللغة الانكليزية التي يتم تدريسها لطلاب الأقسام الطبية في سياقات تعلم اللغة الانكليزية كلغة أجنبية. في ضوء ذلك، تهدف الدراسة الحالية إلى استقصاء احتياجات اللغة الانكليزية الأكاديمية لطلاب المرحلة الأولى في الأقسام الطبية في كلية النور الجامعة من وجهة نظر الطلاب المعنيين وتدريسي اللغة الانكليزية في هذه الأقسام من أجل المساهمة في تطوير مادة اللغة الانكليزية. بناءً على ذلك، تم جمع البيانات من خلال استبانتين تتكون كل واحدة منهما من (27) فقرة حول ستة محاور مصنفة على النحو التالي: (5 فقرات) عن احتياجات مادة اللغة الانكليزية بشكل

Exploring Medical Departments Students' English Language Needs: From Students and Instructors' Perspectives

عام، (6 فقرات) عن الغرض من تعلم اللغة الانكليزية، (4 فقرات) عن مهارة الاستماع، (4 فقرات) عن مهارة التحدث، (4 فقرات) عن مهارة القراءة و (4 فقرات) عن مهارة الكتابة. تم عرض الاستبيانات على عينة الدراسة التي ضمت طرفين في كلية النور الجامعة وهما (500) من طلبة المرحلة الأولى في الأقسام الطبية و (13) تدريسي ممن يقومون بتدريس اللغة الإنكليزية في الأقسام الطبية. بعد ذلك تم تحليل البيانات إحصائياً باستخدام برنامج SPSS وتم احتساب النتائج الإجمالية للإجابات لفقرات مهارات اللغة لتحديد أهم مهارة بالنسبة للمشاركين. أخيراً، تم تقديم بعض الاستنتاجات والتوصيات على أساس النتائج.

الكلمات المفتاحية: احتياجات اللغة الإنكليزية، الأقسام الطبية، اللغة الإنكليزية لأغراض عامة، اللغة الإنكليزية لأغراض معينة، اللغة الإنكليزية لأغراض طبية.

1. Introduction

Regardless of students' specialty of education and their future profession, they are taught English language for general purposes (EGP). In fact, this approach neglects students' needs and interests by the administration and even language instructors. As a solution to this problematic area of education, English for Specific Purposes (ESP) has come into use in the 1960s (Master, 2005; Johns, 2013). This approach of ESP in teaching the language offers a course that considers learners' academic English language needs. Therefore, such ESP courses have to reflect the needs of learners and offer what is more appropriate in teaching English language rather than teaching general English (Richards, 2001: 32).

Moreover, various sub-divisions of ESP have appeared due to the wide emergence of English language into different fields because of the acceptance of English language as the international language for most fields, for example science and medicine. According to Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998), this emergence of English language has led to other ESP branches, specifically English for Medical Purposes (EMP). This branch emphasizes the role of communication and interaction as well as discussions on medical issues (Master, 2005). Ferguson (2013) adds that writing medical reports and prescriptions are key concepts in teaching EMP.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

The needs of English language for each specialization are different from the needs of other specializations. For example, Engineering students' needs are different from Law students' needs and medical departments students' needs. Thus, courses may differ in terms of goals of curriculum and content, purpose of learning, and focus on language skills.

However, students of medical departments in Iraqi Universities in general and at Al-Noor University College in particular are studying one ministerial syllabus with different levels for four stages of their education which is (New Headway Plus). This curriculum focuses heavily on grammar and simple daily life conversations and vocabularies like tenses, articles, prepositions, greetings, names of countries, giving advice and making suggestions, etc. Nonetheless, this syllabus does not meet English language needs of students of medical departments. Hence, these limits make instructors feel frustrated and demotivate their students. In light of that, the current study tries to explore medical departments students' English language needs in EFL context by answering the following questions according to concerned students and instructors' perspectives:

1. In terms of English language course, what are the medical departments students' needs?
2. In terms of purpose of learning English, what are the medical departments students' needs?
3. What are the medical departments students' needs of language skills? Which one is mostly needed?

1.2 Aims of the Study

The current study aims at:

1. Identifying what is meant by English for General Purposes, English for Specific Purposes and English for Medical Purposes.
2. Investigating medical departments students' English language needs from students and instructors' perspectives in terms of English course, purpose of learning English and language skills in EFL contexts.
3. Identifying which language skill is most important to students of medical departments from students and instructors' perspectives.
4. Recommending plans to teach English to students of medical departments based on their English language needs.

1.3 Hypotheses of the Study

For the sake of experimentation, the following hypotheses are posed:

1. Students need to study English language for all of their educational stages.
2. Students of medical departments study English language for general and medical purposes.

Exploring Medical Departments Students' English Language Needs: From Students and Instructors' Perspectives

3. Students of medical departments need to improve the four language skills to employ them in their field. However, Writing is the most language skill that students of medical departments consider as the most important.

1.4 Limits of the Study

The current study is limited to investigate some of medical departments students' English needs from students and instructors' perspectives in terms of course, purpose of learning English and language skills i.e. listening, speaking, reading and writing. It is further limited to 1st year university students in (7) medical departments at Al-Noor University College during the first semester of the academic year 2022-2023. These departments include (Department of Dentistry, Department of Pharmacy, Department of Radiology and Sonar Techniques, Department of Anesthesia Techniques, Department of Prosthetic Techniques, Department of Medical Laboratory Techniques and Department of Optics Techniques).

2. Review of Related Literature

2.1 Needs Analysis

According to Brown (1995: 21), “needs analysis is the systematic collection and analysis of all relevant information necessary to satisfy the language learning requirements of the students within the context of the particular institutions involved in the learning situation”. Similarly, Richards, Platt and Weber (1985, cited in Brown, 1995: 35) define needs analysis as “the process of identifying the requirements for which a learner or group of learners necessitates a language and arranging the needs according to priorities”. In other words, as a part of developing a course according to the needs and interests of learners, needs analysis is regarded as a starting point in gathering information from participants via different methods such as questionnaires or interviews, then translate the results into interpretations (Graves 2000; Basturkmen (2010). Accordingly, needs analysis answers the questions of what, why, where and when to teach the language (ibid, 2010).

Furthermore, Nunan (1988) and Brown (1995) believe that involving administrators, instructors, and students is crucial in collecting data for needs analysis to develop the language courses to achieve reliability in analysis of data. More importantly, Dudley-Evans and John (1998: 125) classify these

needs analyses into several themes such as personal information that includes reasons for attending language courses, present situation of English language course, how to use language skills etc.

2.2 English for General Purposes versus English for Specific Purposes

Over the last few decades, (ESP) has emerged into educational system as a part of EGP and an approach of teaching English language to non-native speakers of English. However, EGP refers to teaching learners general English to deal with general situations in English. It is also called ‘TENOR- the teaching of English for No Obvious Reason’ (Abbot, 1981; cited in Islam, 2014: 68). EGP is used to teach English in contexts where learners have a general reason for studying the language. For example, the language that is taught at school levels to make students be familiar with the general language structures and grammar (ibid: 69).

On the other hand, ESP offers more than EGP by considering learners’ needs and objectives of learning English. It provides learners the language they need to carry out the requirements in their academic and professional field (Widdowson, 1983). According to Hutchinson and Waters (1987), ESP courses are related to answer the question of “why do learners need to learn English?”. Similarly, Orr (2001: 207) asserts that ESP refers to “English language instruction designed to meet the specific learning needs of a specific learner or group of learners within a specific time frame for which instruction in general English will not suffice”. Thus, while EGP learners focus on mastering the language and passing exams, ESP learners study English language for the purpose of developing their skills according to their particular needs (Richards, 2001).

2.3 English for Medical Purposes

According to Dudley-Evans & St. John (1998: 7) ESP is divided into two main divisions, namely English for Occupational Purposes (EOP) and English for Academic Purposes (EAP) which are related to whether the learners are studying English for academic purposes or occupational/professional purposes. Each of these two main divisions has been sub-divided according to learners’ specialization and the purpose of studying English language (Hutchinson and Waters, 1987).

Exploring Medical Departments Students' English Language Needs: From Students and Instructors' Perspectives

For example, EST that refers to English for Science and Technology, EBE which refers to English for Business and Economics, and ESS English for the Social Sciences) and EMP that refers to English for Medical Purposes. The following figure illustrates the classification of ESP:

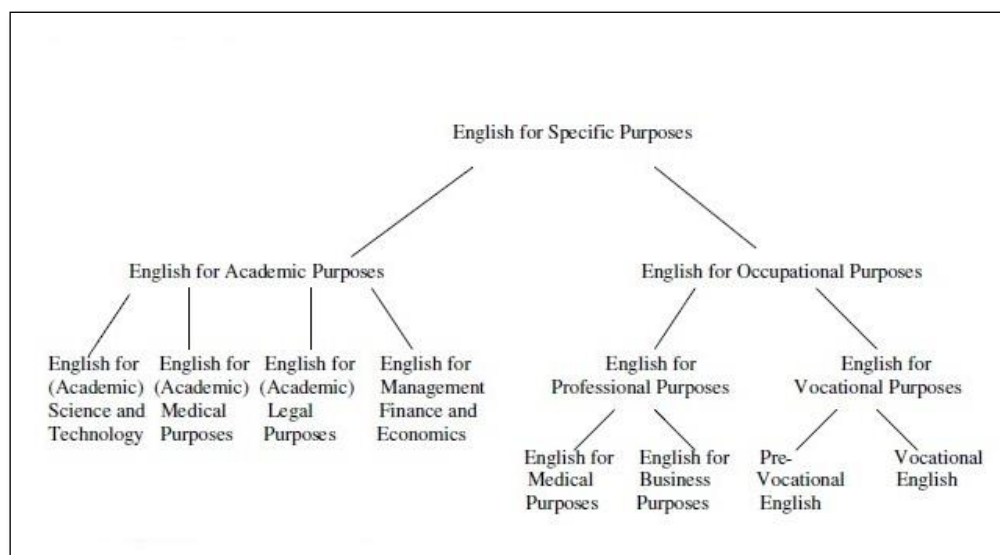


Figure (1) Branches of ESP Adopted from (Dudley-Evans & St. John, 1998: 7)

As displayed in Figure (1) above, it is worth mentioning that EMP has been classified as a branch of both ESP and EAP (English for Academic Purposes). Thus, English language needs of students of medical fields that are related to communication, interaction, reading articles and writing essays are considered EAP needs. On the contrary, students' needs of discussing on medical issues, participating in medical conferences and interacting with patients are considered EOP (ibid). Therefore, EMP course involves learners' academic and medical English language needs and includes topics related to the language skills such as writing medical reports or giving presentations in medicine.

2.4 Previous Studies

There is a considerable amount of literature on learners' English language needs of medical learners in different contexts focusing on the role of EGP and EMP. For example, Fang (1987) conducted a study to investigate English language needs of students from different medical departments such as Department of Dentistry, Department of Pharmacy, Department of nursing and Department of Medical Technology. The results indicate that students study English language for occupational purposes

along with communicational and linguistic purposes. It has been found that listening skill is the most important skill as compared with writing which was the least important.

Similarly, Chia et al. (1998) conducted a study to investigate medical students' English language needs in Taiwan. The results of the study indicate that medical students need English language for both academic purposes and professional purposes and that students and instructors believe that English language course should continue for more than one year. As for the language skills, the results show that listening is the most important skill.

However, in examining English language needs of medical students, some recent studies have found that reading skill is the most important one (Vahdany and Gerivani, 2016; Çelik, 2017).

The current study aims to investigate English language needs of students of medical departments in terms of English language course, purpose of learning, and English language skills. The following sections tackle the practical part of the study.

3. Methodology

To achieve the aims and verify hypotheses of the current study, the following sub-sections describe the practical steps that have been followed.

3.1 Population and Sample

The population of this study included all the first year college students in the medical departments at Al-Noor University College during the first semester of the academic year 2022-2023 as well as the instructors who teach English language in medical departments at Al-Noor University College. The total number is 2021 students, distributed in seven departments, namely Department of Dentistry, Department of Pharmacy, Department of Radiology and Sonar Techniques, Department of Anesthesia Techniques, Department of Prosthetic Techniques, Department of Medical Laboratory Techniques and Department of Optics Techniques. They have been selected on purpose due to the newly ministerial decree to limit teaching English language to only first stage students.

Moreover, Randomization is the method of sampling used in the current study in order to avoid the risk of being biased. Based on that, the sample of the study included 500 students from the research population and (13) instructors who teach English language in the aforementioned medical departments.

3.2 The Questionnaire

According to Dörnyei (2003), questionnaires are instruments that are used to collect data via questions or statements presented to participants either to write out their answers or react on by choosing from given options. Based on that, as an instrument of the study, two questionnaires were conducted for collecting data on students of medical departments English language needs from students and instructors perspectives. Each questionnaire included (27) items which were designed in light of a deep theoretical research and a review of related literature. The questionnaires were designed to consist of five-point Likert scale, namely (strongly agree, agree, not sure, disagree, strongly disagree) and cover six themes as follows: (5 items) on English course attending in general, (6 items) on purpose of learning English language, (4 items) on listening skill, (4 items) on speaking skill, (4 items) on reading skill and (4 items) on writing skill.

3.3 Validity and Reliability

To ensure validity of the present study, apart from the deep theoretical research on related literature, the items of the questionnaires were submitted to jury members who are experts in the field of TEFL from whom an approval has been obtained for adopting the questionnaires as a measurement instrument.

Moreover, after ensuring validity, the questionnaire was piloted to check reliability via presenting it to volunteer participants other than those who were chosen for the main study. Then, Cronbach's Alpha Measurement was adopted and the result was (0.82) which is considered satisfactory according to Cronbach's Alpha Measurement.

3.4 Procedures

As protocol procedures, the researchers asked permission from the dean of Al-Noor University College to collect data. Following that, the final version of the questionnaires were administrated to (500) students of medical departments in the first stage and (13) instructors who teach English language to students of medical departments.

Furthermore, the study was based on voluntary basis and the participants were informed about the purpose of the study. Additionally, the questionnaires were designed on Google Forms. The instructions and the items were all presented in both English and Arabic to avoid any misunderstanding.

4. Results and Discussion

The data obtained of the current study have been statistically analyzed using SPSS program. These results are analyzed and discussed in this section according to the themes of the questionnaires of students and instructors respectively. The results of each item of the questionnaires are displayed in the following tables:

Table (1) Results of Students and Instructors' Responses to English Language Course

	No.	Items	Students		Instructors	
			Sharpness	Weight percentile	Sharpness	Weight percentile
English Language Course	1	The current English language courses of the ministerial curriculum (New Headway Plus) are sufficient to meet medical departments students' academic and professional English language needs.	2.9220	58.44%	2.2308	44.62%
	2	Subjects relevant to medical fields need to be merged with the current ministerial courses of English language. i.e. Medical Terminology and passages on medicine.	3.7820	75.64%	4.2308	84.62%
	3	Students of medical departments should study English language in all stages of their education.	3.9540	79.08%	4.0000	80.00%
	4	Students of medical departments should study English language for only the first stage.	3.7080	74.16%	2.1538	43.08%
	5	Students of medical departments are able to study their specialty in English language without studying English language courses.	2.6980	53.96%	2.0000	40.00%
Total			3.4128	68.26%	2.9231	58.46%

To translate the results in the preceding table into interpretation, the standard mean is divided by the standards (number of options to the items).

Exploring Medical Departments Students' English Language Needs: From Students and Instructors' Perspectives

Accordingly, $3/5 = 0.6$ or 60%. Thus, what is higher than 60 % is considered high percentage and what is lower than 60 % is considered low percentage.

More importantly, the percentages of the results of students and instructors' responses to item (1) are (58%) and (44%). On the contrary, the percentages of item (2)(75% for students) and (84% for instructors)are statistically higher than the percentages of item (1). These two items are related to the content of English language course. Hence, the results of these items indicate that the current English language course does not meet English language needs of students of medical departments and that some subjects related to their specialty like terminology and passages on medicine would be more beneficial to medical students and meet their English language needs. As for items (3, 4 and 5) which are related to attending English language course, the results show that English language should be taught in all the stages in medical departments since the percentages of item (3), which reads that students should study English language in all stages of their education for both students and instructors, are higher than the percentages of items (4 and 5), which limit attending English language course for only the first stage and/or no need for attending it at all. Therefore, the first hypothesis of the study is accepted.

Table (2) Results of Students and Instructors' Responses to the Purposes of Learning English Language

	No.	Items	Students		Instructors	
			Sharpness	Weight percentile	Sharpness	Weight percentile
Purpose of learning English Language	6	Students of medical departments need to study English language for the purpose of interacting and communicating in English in general.	3.3660	67.32%	4.2308	84.62%
	7	Students of medical departments study English language to pass the exams and raise their average scores.	3.2300	64.60%	3.5385	70.77%
	8	Students of medical departments need to study English language for the purpose of delivering presentations in their field in English language.	3.3220	66.44%	3.5385	70.77%

	9	Students of medical departments need to study English language for the purpose of understanding what they are reading and listening to.	3.1760	63.52%	4.5385	90.77%
	10	Students of medical departments need to study English language for the purpose of understanding how to form sentences with correct grammar and having rich repertoire of vocabulary.	3.1480	62.96%	4.0769	81.54%
	11	Students of medical departments need to study English language for the purpose of learning terminologies and their historical derivations.	3.3580	67.16%	4.0000	80.00%
Total			3.2667	65.33%	3.9872	79.74%

Based on the results shown in the preceding table, studying English language for the purpose of interacting and communicating with people in general is a need for students of medical departments along with their needs to learn medical terminologies and their derivations. The Weight percentiles indicate that having students engaged in speaking activities as well as studying medical terminologies are the most important purposes that students of medical departments need to learn English for. This explains that students of medical departments study English language not only for general purposes or only for medical purposes but for both, communication (general purpose) and terminology (medical purpose). Thus, the second hypothesis of the study is accepted.

More interestingly, results of instructors' responses to items (9 and 10) concerning studying English language for the purpose of developing students' receptive skills (understanding what they are reading and listening to), learning how to form sentences with correct grammar and enriching their vocabulary repertoire support the responses of students in terms of studying English not only for medical purposes or only for general purposes. These results go in line with items (1 and 2) that are related to the content of English language course for including medical subjects within teaching general English. However, studying English for the purpose of passing

Exploring Medical Departments Students' English Language Needs: From Students and Instructors' Perspectives

exams and delivering presentations in their field are the lowest results for this theme.

Concerning the language skills, the following tables display the results of the four language skills and how important these skills to the respondents.

Table (3) Results of Students and Instructors' Responses to Listening Skill

	No.	Items	Students		Instructors	
			Sharpness	Weight percentile	Sharpness	Weight percentile
Listening Skill	12	Students of medical departments need listening skill for listening to general topics and understand daily conversations.	3.8060	76.12%	4.5385	90.77%
	13	Students of medical departments need listening skill to comprehend medical conversations and discussions in class lectures in English.	3.8140	76.28%	4.6154	92.31%
	14	Students of medical departments need listening skill to comprehend oral presentations, seminars and conferences.	3.7320	74.64%	4.6154	92.31%
	15	Students of medical departments need listening skill to comprehend medical audio and video sources.	3.8080	76.16%	4.5385	90.77%
Total			3.7900	75.80%	4.5769	91.54%

According to the results shown in Table (3), both students and instructors consider the need for listening skill to comprehend medical conversations and discussions in English of high importance in studying English language. However, while students give more importance to focus on listening to general topics and understand daily life conversations, instructors tend to highlight students' need for listening to comprehend oral presentations, seminars and conferences. However, all items of listening are of high importance to students and instructors. This means that students of medical departments are in need for developing listening skill.

Table (4) Results of Students and Instructors' Responses to Speaking Skill

	No.	Items	Students		Instructors	
			Sharpness	Weight percentile	Sharpness	Weight percentile
Speaking Skill	16	Students of medical departments need speaking skill in order to learn how to ask questions and participate in class discussions.	3.7720	75.44%	4.3846	87.69%
	17	Students of medical departments need speaking skill for delivering oral presentations, seminars and conferences about medical issues in English language.	3.7300	74.60%	4.5385	90.77%
	18	Students of medical departments need speaking skills to interact with foreign patients.	3.3980	67.96%	4.0000	80.00%
	19	Students of medical departments need speaking skill for conversational English, such as telephoning, greeting, invitation, etc.	3.6940	73.88%	4.3077	86.15%
Total			3.6485	72.97%	4.3077	86.15%

As displayed in the preceding table, the results of responses to item (1) indicate that students and instructors focus more on the importance of improving speaking skill to learn how to ask questions and participate in class discussions. This may be due to the passive role of students in activities related to speaking. Furthermore, instructors' responses indicate that students need to improve speaking skill to learn delivering presentations and discussing medical issues in English. On the other hand, results of responses to items (18 and 19) which are about improving speaking for interacting with foreign patients and for daily-life conversations are lowest among the other items. This might be related to the setting in which students are learning English, EFL.

Exploring Medical Departments Students' English Language Needs: From Students and Instructors' Perspectives

Table (5) Results of Students and Instructors' Responses to Reading Skill

	No.	Items	Students		Instructors	
			Sharpness	Weight percentile	Sharpness	Weight percentile
Reading Skill	20	Students of medical departments need reading skill to understand stories, novels, newspapers, etc.	3.0920	61.84%	3.1538	63.08%
	21	Students of medical departments need reading skill to understand and translate books, articles and researches in medical field.	3.8040	76.08%	4.3846	87.69%
	22	Students of medical departments need reading skill to understand instructions of assignments and homework.	3.2220	64.44%	4.0000	80.00%
	23	Students of medical departments need reading skill to understand laboratory instructions.	3.7140	74.28%	4.4615	89.23%
Total			3.4580	69.16%	4.0000	80.00%

What stands out in table (5) above is that instructors and students regard reading to understand and translate books, articles and researches in medical field as the most important needs of reading skill as compared with reading to understand novels or newspapers (for general purposes). These findings could be attributed to the fact that students of medical departments face difficulties in understanding medical texts because of their deficiency in reading comprehension and poor vocabulary knowledge. Additionally, improving reading skill to learn and understand laboratory instructions are also given attention from students and instructors' perspectives.

Table (6) Results of Students and Instructors' Responses to Writing Skill

	No.	Items	Students		Instructors	
			Sharpness	Weight percentile	Sharpness	Weight percentile
Writing Skill	24	Students of medical departments need writing skill to learn how to use English language in writing medical reports and researches in English.	3.7660	75.32%	4.7692	95.38%
	25	Students of medical departments need writing skill for writing CVs, essays, etc.	3.4500	69.00%	4.0000	80.00%
	26	Students of medical departments need writing skill to learn how to write assignments and answer questions in exams.	3.7340	74.68%	4.4615	89.23%
	27	Students of medical departments need writing skill for learning how to write medical prescriptions.	3.6200	72.40%	4.4615	89.23%
Total			3.6425	72.85%	4.4231	88.46%

The results of item (24) in the table (6) above show that learning how to write medical reports and researches in English is the most important element that should be emphasized when teaching writing to students of medical departments. Besides, students also need to focus on writing skill for learning how to write assignments and answer questions in exams. Additionally, results of items 26 and 27 also indicate that instructors give attention to improve writing skill in terms of learning how to write medical prescriptions while students consider learning how to write assignments and answer question as their most important needs of writing skill. Clearly, instructors focus on how to develop students' writing skill for their future profession while students focus more on how to write assignments and answer questions in exams.

Another significant theme of the questionnaire is ordering the language skills according to their importance to the participants. Therefore, the total percentages of the results of responses are calculated and adopted for ordering the language skills. The following tables and figures give more illustration.

Exploring Medical Departments Students' English Language Needs: From Students and Instructors' Perspectives

Table (7) Total Results of Students' Responses to Language Skills

No.	Skills	Sharpness	Weight percentile	Order
1	Listening skill	3.7900	75.80%	1
2	Speaking Skill	3.6485	72.97%	2
3	Reading Skill	3.4580	69.16%	4
4	Writing Skill	3.6425	72.85%	3

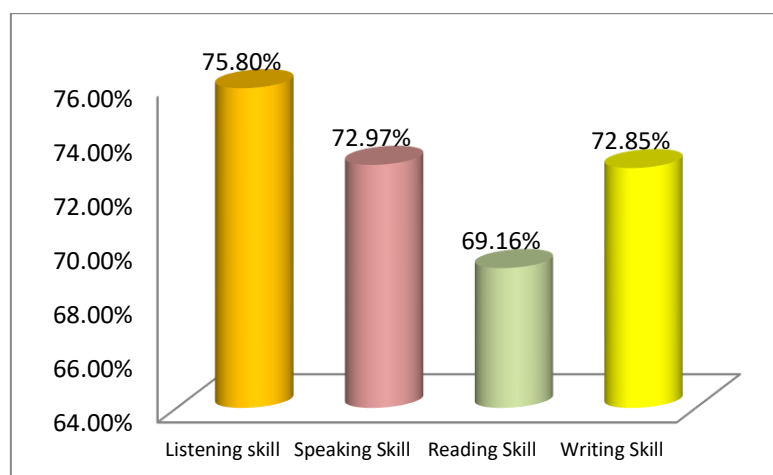


Figure (2) Total Results of Students' Responses to Language Skills

Table (8) and Figure (2) below concern instructors' responses:

Table (8) Total Results of Instructors' Responses to Language Skills

No.	Skills	sharpness	weight percentile	Order
1	Listening skill	4.5769	91.54%	1
2	Speaking Skill	4.3077	86.15%	3
3	Reading Skill	4.0000	80.00%	4
4	Writing Skill	4.4231	88.46%	2

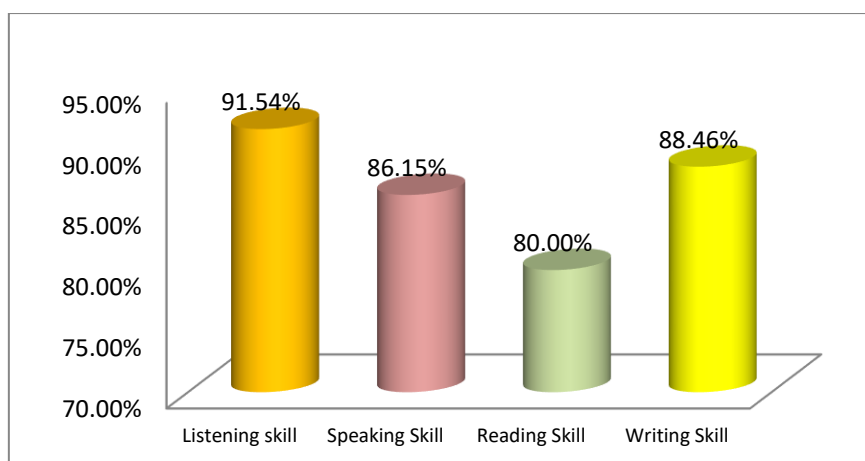


Figure (3) Total Results of Instructors' Responses to Language Skills

Based on the total results shown in tables (9 and 10) and illustrated in Figures (2 and 3), it is found that both students and instructors believe that listening skill is the most important skill for students of medical departments while reading is the least one that got attention among the other skills. This can be attributed to students' inability to understand what they are listening to because of the little exposure to English language in such EFL setting which makes use of native language in-class lecturing.

However, on the one hand, results show that writing and speaking come after listening respectively in terms of order of importance of language skills according to students' responses. On the other hand, results of the responses of instructors indicate that speaking and writing come after listening in terms of order of importance of language skills.

The findings of the current study are in line with the findings of the previous studies. In terms of course and purpose of the study which read that (studying English for academic and medical purposes and attending English courses for all education stages) are in line with those of (Fang, 1987; Chia et. al., 1998). Surprisingly, the results are also in line with these studies in terms of the order of the most important language skill, which is listening. Therefore, the first and second hypotheses of the study are proved, while the third one is rejected.

However, the findings of the present study contradict with the findings of (Vahdany and Gerivani, 2016) where listening is found to be the most important skill in the current study, reading has been found to be the most important skill in Vahdany and Gerivani's (2016) study. This can be attributed to the context in which English language is being taught (see also, Çelik, 2017).

5. Conclusions

The objective of the current study is to investigate medical departments students' English language needs at Al-Noor University College. The results obtained provide interesting insights into medical departments students' English language needs. This permits drawing some important conclusions. First, the findings indicate that the current English language curriculum does not meet English language needs of students at medical departments. Besides, on the contrary to the ministerial decree to limit teaching English language to only first year students, findings show that both students and instructors are in favor of teaching English language course for all the stages of education in medical fields. Secondly, students' prior purposes of learning English language are using English language communicatively, learning medical terminologies and subjects relevant to their field of education as well as learning how to form correct sentences, having rich vocabulary repertoire. This means that the purpose of learning English language of students of medical departments at Al-Noor University College is for both English for general purposes and English for medical purposes.

Thirdly, according to students and instructors' responses, listening is the most important skill followed by writing and speaking while reading comes at the end. Moreover, students of medical departments need listening for understanding what is being said inside classes to overcome their difficulties in understanding discussions in their medical fields and learn from online audio-based sources. As for writing, students need to have knowledge on how to write medical reports with correct grammar of English language. For speaking, students of medical departments need to develop their communication skills for the purpose of learning how to ask questions and participate in-class discussions. Understanding and translating books and researches in medical fields and understanding laboratory instructions are also components that are needed in reading skill. Accordingly, instructors and students believe that students of medical departments need to improve all four language skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) for the role of these skills in the future profession of students of medical departments.

6. Recommendations

Based on the conclusions of the study, it is recommended to highlight the importance of academic and professional English language for medical fields. Moreover, subjects relevant to medical fields like terminology need to be merged while teaching general English. Following that, the four language skills and medical terminology need to be integrated into English language courses in medical fields giving priority to communication skills and medical terminology by engaging students in class activities to develop their listening and speaking skills. Furthermore, it is advisable for syllabus designers and English language teachers to take into consideration the needs of students of medical departments.

References

- Basturkmen, H. (2010). *Developing courses in English for specific purposes*. Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave/Macmillan
- Brown, J. (1995). *The elements of language curriculum. A systematic approach to program development*. Boston: Heinle & Heinle.
- Çelik, H. (2017). *Perceived language needs of undergraduate medical students enrolled in a consecutively running ESP course*. The Journal of Teaching English for Specific and Academic Purposes, 5(2), 209-218.
- Chia, H. U., Johnson, R., Chia, H. L. & Olive, F. (1998). *English for college students in Taiwan: A study of perceptions of English needs in a medical context*. English for Specific Purposes, 18(2), 107-119.
- Dörnyei, Z. (2003). *Questionnaires in second language research*. New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishers.
- Dudley-Evans, T. and St. John, M. (1998). *Developments in English for specific purposes: A multi-disciplinary approach*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Fang, F. S. (1987). An evaluation of the English language curriculum for medical students. *Papers from the Fourth Conference on English Teaching and Learning in the Republic of China*. Taipei: Crane Publishing Co. pp. 111-129.
- Ferguson, G. (2013). English for medical purposes. In Paltridge, B., Starfield, S. Chichester (Eds.). *The Handbook of English for Specific Purposes*. Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell.

Exploring Medical Departments Students' English Language Needs: From Students and Instructors' Perspectives

- Graves K. (2000). *Designing language course. A guide for teachers.* USA: Heinle & Heinle.
- Hutchinson, T. and Waters, A. (1987). *English for specific purposes. A learning centered approach.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Islam, M. (2014). *The differences and similarities between English for Specific Purposes (ESP) and English for General Purposes(EGP) teachers.* *Journal of Research (Humanities)*, 1(2), 67-76.
- Johns, A. M. (2013). *The history of English for specific purpose research.* In B. Paltridge & S. Starfield (Eds.). *The handbook of English for specific purposes* (pp. 5-31). Chichester, West Sussex; Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Master, P. (2005). Research in English for specific purposes. In E. Hinkel (Ed.). *Handbook of Research in Second Language Teaching and Learning* (pp. 99-116). London: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Nunan, D. (1988). *The Learner-centered curriculum.* New York: CambridgeUniversity Press.
- Orr, T. (2001). *English language education for specific professional needs.* *IEEE Transactions on Professional Communication*, 44(3), 207-211.
- Richards, J. (2001) *Curriculum development in language teaching.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Strevens, P. (1988). *ESP after twenty years: A re-appraisal.* In M. Tickoo (Ed.), *ESP: State of the Art (pp. 1-13)*. Singapore: Seameo Regional Centre.
- Vahdany, F. & Gerivani, L. (2016). *An analysis of the English language needs of medical students and general practitioners: A case study of Guilan University of Medical Sciences.* *International Journal of English Language and Literature Studies*, 5(2), 104-110.
- Widdowson, H. G. (1983). *Learning purpose and language use.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.