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**NECESSITY OF INTRODUCING A NEEDS-BASED SYLLABUS
TO ENHANCE LANGUAGE SKILLS OF THE STUDENTS OF
VOCATIONAL EDUCATION**

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Abstract

This paper aims at studying the theoretical information about Needs Analysis, ESP, and also reviews the findings of some relevant studies in the field of Needs Analysis and ESP. A large number of Indian students go abroad for study and professional purposes. Because of incompetency in the English language, many of them have to suffer. In India itself, every state has its regional language. Although Hindi is a national language, it is not useful in many states of India. Therefore, English language can become an alternative. To bring language competency among the Indian students, it is quite essential to teach English to them according to their needs and usefulness of the language in their future role as students or professionals. A review of the studies will bring a clear idea about how language programs based on the learners' needs help the learners develop language skill/s comfortably.

Keywords: Needs Analysis, Vocational Education, ESP

Introduction

English language has become an integral part of academic and professional settings. One cannot ignore the significance of the English language. English has earned the status of lingua franca because of its significance in higher studies and almost all professions worldwide. One who wants to go for higher studies, wants to study in international universities, wants to go abroad for professional purposes, or wants to settle abroad must think first about his/her language proficiency. Hence, the English language's knowledge and use have become a must.

Learning English or developing language skills is not a big issue for native speakers. However, it is one of the major complex things for the non-natives. Moreover, in a country like India where there is diversity in language, culture, dialects, etc. the problem of learning English and developing language skills brings a lot of supplementary questions.

Therefore, one of the easiest and smartest solutions to enhance language skills among the learners is to prepare a syllabus or language program for the learners according to their needs and the usefulness of the language program for their future objectives.



Key terms

Needs analysis

Needs analysis, which attempts to gather data about the students and identify the goal scenario and setting of studying ESP, is regarded as the cornerstone of English for Particular Purpose.

Vocational Education

All India Council for Technical Education defines Vocational Education as Education that prepares learners for jobs that are based in manual or practical activities, traditionally non-academic and totally related to a specific trade, occupation, or vocation.

ESP:

Hutchinson and Waters (1987, p.19) define ESP as “an approach to language teaching in which all decisions as to content and method are based on the learners’ reason in learning”.

Origin of ESP

Many language experts opine different views regarding the emergence of the ESP. However, according to Hutchinson and Waters (1987:6-8), the key drivers of ESP were the desire for a Brave New World, a linguistics revolution, and the learners' concentration. To further their efforts to better understand ESP, they have also seen two historical incidents. The conclusion of the Second World War was the first significant event, ushering in a period of distinctive advancement in worldwide scientific, technical, and commercial activity. English gained the status of lingua franca for a number of reasons, but most significantly because of the economic might and technical development of the United States in the post-war globe. The early 1970s oil crisis was the second occurrence, which led to the oil-rich nations being the hub of Western finance and expertise. English also happened to become the predominant language of knowledge at the same time. As a result, it became increasingly important to have competent language instructors.

The second primary cause of the significant influence on the development of the area of ESP was a linguistics revolution. Language qualities were initially framed by earlier linguists, and later researchers began to concentrate on how language is utilised in everyday contexts. Hutchinson and Waters (1987:30) highlight one of language's most fundamental concepts: the distinction between written and spoken English.



Also, they noted that there are variances in how English is used depending on the circumstances, and that despite these disparities in language use, the main insight to emerge from this study was the variety of needs among learners. EST: English for Science and Technology was therefore introduced after several failed efforts.

The last reason cited by them was the learners and their psychology. The focus shifts from the methods and approaches of delivering language to how learners acquire language, the strategies that the learners employ to acquire language, and the impact of atmosphere on language acquisition. The learners' needs and requirements were given priority and through ESP, classes became learner-centred and learning-centred, as the need of an individual was of prime importance.

English for Specific Purposes

English is taught to students from a variety of backgrounds in ESP, a field of education, in order to help them get ready for their futures in either the academic or professional worlds. ESP strongly emphasises teaching English for a specific goal in order to motivate students to learn the language necessary for their profession. Students could learn language skills through ESP in order to excel in their academic or professional surroundings. An illustration might be, "English for Lawyers," "English for Commerce," etc. The following traits of ESP were introduced in 1998 by Dudley-Evan, T., and St.John,M.J.

1. Absolute Characteristics

- a. Defined to meet specific needs of the learners
- b. Make use of underlying methodology and activities of the discipline it serves
- c. Focuses on the language appropriate to these activities in terms of grammar, lexis, register, study skills, discourse, and genre

2. Variable Characteristics

- a. Maybe related to or designed for specific disciplines
- b. In specific teaching situations may use a different methodology from that of general English
- c. Usually for adult intermediate or advanced learners
- d. Generally designed for intermediate or advanced students
- e. Assume some basic knowledge of the language system

(Dudley-Evans, 1998)



Needs Analysis

Basturkmen (2010) defines needs analysis is the “gap between what the learner needs to know to operate in the target situation and the learner’s present language proficiency or knowledge”. She explained the following five steps procedure in needs analysis for nursing staff.

1. Target Situation Analysis: This process emphasizes the identification of tasks, activities, and skills wherein it is essential to use English for the nurses about the level they should be aware of and to be able to use to fulfil their professional duties.
2. Discourse Analysis: Discourse analysis is to understand the language used in the Target Situation Analysis. It ascertains the understanding of direct and execute language in action that the learners are required to know in their profession.
3. Present Situation Analysis: Present Situation Analysis is to scrutinize the present knowledge of the nurses. It also emphasizes the ability level concerning the demands of the target situation. It helps in determining the gap between the present knowledge and the knowledge the learners required. It can be achieved using questionnaires, interviews, observation, etc.
4. Learner Factor Analysis: Learner Factor Analysis is executed to determine the needs of the learners and the priorities of the learners in learning circumstances.
5. Teaching Context Analysis: Teaching Context Analysis refers to figuring out teaching surroundings for instance setting of class, materials to be implemented, selected time for teaching, etc. which inspire the learners to go through the treatment successfully.

Related studies

Mulyani (2013) carried out a study to find out whether or not the English teaching materials given at the nursing college students fulfil the nursing English needs at work and to find out the English teaching materials that are suitable for the needs of nursing students. The result of this research showed that the students needed nursing English teaching materials which consisted of general English and nursing English by nursing demonstration practice as the methodology in English teaching. The result also indicated that speaking was the most important skill in studying nursing English teaching material.



The purpose of Alinezhad and Gholami's (2012) research was to examine the English language requirements of nursing students as they pursue their education and nursing practitioners as they work. The study's findings demonstrated the influence that participants' proficiency in the English language had on both their academic and professional lives.

Freihat and Al-Makhzoomi (2012) conducted a study to explore the learning needs of nursing students in Jordan. They found that the participants have difficulty in communicating with clients in the various clinical setting, inability to follow through with step-by-step procedures, difficulty charting or documenting appropriately in clients' records, and accidentally misread the numbers written on the physician's orders. The researchers opined both social English and ESP enable nursing students to communicate in English with clients, colleagues, and nursing supervisors of culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, and enrich them as individuals.

In his research, Maulik Barot (2020) identified the demands of engineering students. He then created and tested instructional materials to improve the communication abilities of undergraduate engineering students. The pre-experimental one group pre-test post-test study design was employed by the researcher. 88 undergraduate engineering students took part in the study as the research's sample. The study's findings were largely encouraging. The study's conclusions show that the learners' communication abilities are enhanced by the need-based teaching materials.

In a study Shemal Mevada (2018) created and tested a module to help engineering students improve their writing abilities by using real-world materials. To ascertain the language exposure and evaluate the current curriculum for engineering students, the researcher performed a requirements analysis survey. The module was created using the results of the requirements analysis. The participants were split into the experimental group and the control group according to a proper experimental study design that the researcher used. According to the study's findings, students' writing skills are improved by the module that was created based on their demands.

In order to improve the communication abilities of UG students, Surendrasinh Gohil (2012) performed a study and created multimedia materials. At the virtual language lab, he produced multimedia items and tested them out with UG students. The effectiveness of the multimedia materials was demonstrated by the



pre- and post-test results, which also showed a substantial difference in the participants' mean scores between the two tests.

In order to ascertain the professional requirements of the English language for medical representatives, Agha Masood Ahmed Khan, Abdul Ghaffor Awan, and Muhammad Imran Afzal (2016) performed a research study. Questionnaires and interviews were utilised by the researchers to gather data for this study. The sample was chosen from a total of 90 medical representatives. Thematic analysis was utilised to analyse qualitative data, whereas the scientists employed SPSS software to analyse quantitative data. The data analysis reveals that medical professionals have a pressing need for ESP training. Also, it demonstrates how the English language is necessary for medical personnel to perform their many professional duties. The study found that there are several benefits to learning English for medical personnel. The report also made clear that Pakistan's current English curriculum falls short of meeting the demands of medical professionals. The study also showed that participants are more drawn to targeted language programmes with goals.

Conclusion

Thus, this paper mainly discussed the significant studies carried out in the field of Needs analysis, ESP, and material production. It can be noted from the study of the paper that ESP has been instrumental in developing language skills among non-natives associated with different academic and professional backgrounds. Needs also play a significant role in designing ESP courses. The results of the studies mentioned in the paper show that it can be very helpful to the students of non-native countries to improve their language skills if the students are taught language keeping in mind their present linguistic level in English and preparing a syllabus based on their needs. Instead of implementing a traditional syllabus that is mainly based on learning of grammar and forms of English language, the syllabus prepared keeping in mind the needs of the learners will help them learning the language in an easy and interesting way. The programs specifically vocational education at university level must have the syllabus of English which is useful to the students during their academic and professional career as well. Such studies can be helpful to the syllabus designers and material developers to prepare materials and syllabus keeping in mind the present linguistic level of the learners and provide them with the appropriate material which encourages them to learn English language and enhance their language skills to meet the desired objective gradually.



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