An Investigation into the Effectiveness of an ESP Course: A Case Study of Graduate Students of Psychology

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Abstract

The present study investigated the efficiency of an ESP Course offered to Graduate Students of Psychology at Islamic Azad University of Tonekabon. To this end, a needs analysis was carried out to establish the major needs of the students and evaluate the course according to these needs. The need analysis was performed by administering a questionnaire at the beginning of the course the results of which were compared with those of a course evaluation at the end of the ESP program. The findings of these questionnaires indicated that the students felt that they needed the language to improve their test scores first, and then to read and write academic articles. The evaluation of the course also distinguished the efficient parts of the program and identified the parts which needed major or minor adaptations. In this regard, the course book seemed insufficient and incompatible with the students' needs, although teacher's presentation was believed to be comprehensive. The ESP course therefore requires modification both in the material, and in some particular techniques to help students achieve their objectives.
Keywords: ESP, effectiveness, needs analysis, syllabus

INTRODUCTION

Theoretical Background

The role of English as the language of communication in the world is undeniable. English is considered as a means that facilitates growth in other subjects (Albakrawi & Almutairi ,2013), and the international language of the technology and commerce (Su, 2010). According to Chen, Chang, and Chang (2016), not only is English a school subject, but also a skill that requires substantial content knowledge. As a result, the needs of the target situation must be identified in order to accomplish the objective of effective communication.

General-purpose English Courses, show the learners how to communicate more effectively. On the other hand, English for specific purpose (ESP) courses help them learn the career-oriented English skills to meet employers' demands of the learners who seek to enter the workplace. These students must both learn as much knowledge as possible on their target context and develop their English language skills with regard to what is required by the target department managers or personnel directors. Widdowson (1998) asserts that "General purpose English is no less specific and purposeful than ESP. What distinguishes them is the way in which the purpose is defined." (p. 8)

Based on the definition given by Dudley-Evans and St. Johns (2013) "needs analysis is the process of establishing the "what" and "how" of a course" (p. 121). Coleman (1988) believes that needs analysis is the second principled characteristic of ESP. The major role of learners' needs in designing a course/syllabus is undeniable. Nation & Macalister (2010) define curriculum design as the process that "involves the integration of knowledge" from various sources in Applied Linguistics, ranging from language acquisition, teaching methodology, language assessment, language description and materials development.

Passing the ESP course, students are expected to overcome the pre-planned difficulties. In this case needs analysis is truly responsible for identifying learners' needs to help practitioners develop the most appropriate course. Richards (2001) maintains that, in ESP context, learners are more or less described in terms of performance, i.e. the main point is their usage of the language at the end of the course. In this vein the goal of the ESP course is to make the learners ready for carrying out a specific task or set of tasks. These goals are set by the practitioners, principals as well as the learners themselves. With this regard, the present study tries to indicate the level to which the goals of the learners have been met. It investigates efficiency of the current ESP course to disclose if this course can lead the learners to their objectives. In other words, it reveals if this ESP course needs modifications in any forms to stand truly in line with learners' needs. There are a large number of ESP courses held each semester in different contexts, but how effectively the curriculum has been developed should be meticulously observed.

The factors that are important for the efficacy of an ESP course based on what Kim (2009) suggests are the responsibility of the ESP practitioner to analyze the needs and investigate the special language that is needed for the students on the one hand, and collaboration and cooperation of organization and outsiders with the practitioner on the other. Based on the study done by Edwards (2000), the efficacy of an ESP course comes out of teacher's experience and students themselves rather just focusing on needs analysis and course design. To what extent an ESP course can be Successful is highly essential because this course has been designed and developed to fulfill specific purposes and particular needs of the learners. Celce-Murcia (1991) postulates that "A successful ESP course is not based on mastering particular materials; it involves mastering learning skills" (p. 230); therefore, learners need to master the learning skills in order to achieve their goals.

A Review of Literature on Empirical Studies on Needs Analysis

In 2002 Bosher, S. and Smalkoski, K. conducted A needs analysis for students of nursing at the College of St. Catherine in order to investigate why these students could not achieve what they have been supposed to. The observed program was a speaking and listening course in a healthcare setting. The main focus of this course was how to establish an interaction in a clinical setting with the clients. In the Academy year 1997 to 1998 almost 4% of the students were non-native speakers of English as a second language. 70% of the ESL students were in the Associate of Science (AS) degree nursing program. Faculty was concerned about the difficulty many of these ESL students where having succeeding in their program. In response to their concerns, a needs analysis was conducted of ESL nursing students during the Academy year 1997 to 1998. Lepetit and Cichocki (2002) analyzed language needs of university students who were participating in a language program preparing to work as health professionals. Needs analysis, in this study, was considered a valuable and possible resource of information for designing curricula for health professionals according to learners' needs. The main aim of the study done by Kormos, J., Kontra, E.H. and Csölle, A. (2002) was to investigate the language wants of English majors in Hungary. First a questionnaire was administered to 279 students at all the six universities of Hungary where there are students majoring in English language and literature combined with TESOL. The same questionnaire was also completed by 80 students who graduated from one of the universities in Hungary in the past 5 years.

Jackson, J. (2005) did an investigation to report on the perceptions of business lecturers about the linguistic and conceptual problems encountered by their Chinese students. The views of 45 business lecturers at five tertiary institutions in Hong Kong were gathered by means of semi-structured interviews and group discussions.

In his study, Oanh, D.T.H. (2007), examined two EAP programs at two universities—in New Zealand and Vietnam—to see if needs analysis receives any attention in these two programs, and, if so, how needs analysis is carried out and if the process works effectively. Based on the findings, both sides can learn lessons and implications can be suggested for similar programs. Cowling, J.D. (2007) investigated a number of courses which were intended to give students practical English language training focusing on language used in business situations which they may encounter in their workplace. This study got the researcher to analyze the needs of students and design a course accordingly.

Chostelidou, D. (2010) performed a needs analysis in order to focus on the presentation of the wealth of data which emanated from the students' questionnaires and interviews and provide rich insights into their perceived needs as learners and as language users. The participants involved in the study were 395 students of Accountancy in the A. T.E.I. of Thessaloniki. Data were collected through the students' questionnaire, which included closed- and open-questions and was administered to 395 students. Moreover, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 35 students in an attempt to gain more meaningful insights into the situation.

In 2011, Lan, Khaun, and Singh did a study to determine language skills and competencies which a group of university students need at the workplace and to investigate if their career needs are being met by the existing English language programs at the university, using a survey questionnaire with students and structured interviews with representatives of related industries. They found English to be widely used in the surveyed organizations because tasks and transactions are performed in English. They also stress that all the four skills, namely speaking, listening, reading, and writing, are required for these tasks.

Later, in 2012, Rahman conducted a study to explore the needs for reading skills among undergraduate students in the field of computer science at Putra University, Malaysia. The study found that students in the field of computer science have difficulties in reading skills. Moslehifar and Ibrahim (2012) carried out a study on the needs analysis of the English communication skills of final-year electrical engineering undergraduates in University Technology, Malaysia. They also conducted another study on the oral communication skills in English with focus on matching the skills developed at the university and the demands of the industry in Malaysia.

Paci, M. (2013) tried to bolster importance of English language particularly in Albany context and in the fields of engineering. She notes that engineers need English not only for interpreting the data and theories but also to communicate. Paci states that "it is necessary to design an English language curriculum to meet the students' needs at best." (p.02) The researcher utilized A questionnaire with 29 questions to obtain as much information as possible about the participants' linguistic needs, professional and English-learning related goals, age, field of study, commitment to learning, motivation, and learning styles General English placement test & oral interview with 15 items seven short answer type and eight open-ended semi-structured interview with teachers focus was mainly on the students' proficiency, their learning needs and the difficulties the teachers have encountered in all aspects of their work The last instrument was an observation of the institutional and social factors by using Nation's chart of environment constraints and effects. The results of the surveys, students' observations and the interviews conducted with ESP teachers indicate the variety of students' needs. In her study Kim, H. H. (2013) aimed at providing detailed description of the needs analysis to develop an ESP course for engineering students in Korea. customers' needs were subject to analyze to develop an ESP syllabus we. In this case, the customers are students, engineering professors and industries and the ESP course is supposed to serve for the specific purpose. The engineering programs undertaking accreditation system have their articulated goal of the program and the engineering professors best understand what kind of English education is needed accomplish the goal. Sarudin, Noor, Zubairi, and Ahmad (2013) conducted a needs assessment of workplace English and Malaysian graduates' English language competency, using a sample of 295 companies representing 14 industry sectors using a 14-item survey questionnaire, focus group discussions, and semi-structured interviews.

Recently, Aliakbari and Boghayeri (2014) conducted a needs analysis study for ESP design in Iranian context, involving a total of 48 students and 72 graduates who responded a researcher-made questionnaire.

Sothan, S. (2015) undertook a study with the aim of exploring English language needs of 166 undergraduate students at Life University and those of 225 employers in Cambodia, using a survey questionnaire, which was categorized into two forms: one for undergraduate students and the other for employers. The questionnaire was administered among 166 current students of Life University, located in Sihanoukville, Cambodia. They were randomly selected from all majors; except the students whose major is English. The employers include 15 banks and microfinance institutions, 180 commercial companies, 7 factories, and 23 NGOs.

THIS STUDY

The current study seeks to illustrate an image of students' needs and identify what they expect from this course, meanwhile it focuses on investigating the extent to which these needs and expectations have been addressed and fulfilled which might lead to some course modifications. In this regard, this study is an evaluation of the current ESP program at AZAD University of Tonekabon designed and offered to the graduate students of psychology. In addition, the success or failure of the already existing course will be discussed and probable suggestions and modifications will be provided.

The following research questions have thus been raised:

- What do students of psychology expect from an ESP course?
- How much has the offered ESP course for the graduate students of psychology been successful and efficient?
- Can the students of psychology who take and pass the course achieve the goals that have been set for the ESP course?

The following research hypothesis has been postulated in a sense that covers all overlapping parts of the research questions:

- The current ESP program covers all the students' needs and provides them what they expect in a comprehensive form, as a result there is no need for course modification and material adaptation.

METHOD

Participants

Participants of the present study consisted of 20 graduate students of psychology at the Islamic Azad University of Tonekabon. These participants were students of one class among the three different classes of graduate students of psychology who were doing their ESP course in the second semester of their M.A. program. All the participants were females in an age ranging from 22 to 29. A general observation revealed that most of them do not hold a B.A. in the field of psychology (an approximate percentage of 75%).

Nonetheless all of them had passed a general English course at the B.A. level and had just finished a general ESP course in the first semester of their M.A. program. The current ESP course was rather a more specified ESP course as a part of their curriculum.

Instruments

The data were collected utilizing a Needs Analysis questionnaire at the beginning of the ESP program as well as a Course Evaluation Survey at the end of the course.

Needs Analysis questionnaire

Researcher referred to the study done in 2002 by Susan Bosher and Kari Smalkoski on the English language needs of nursing students in an ESL setting for the use of needs analysis questionnaire which was then modified and piloted by the researcher for the case of graduate students of psychology at Islamic Azad University. This questionnaire consisted of 23 different needs that were supposed to be as the major needs of their field of study. It was a 4-point Likert scale type questionnaire ranging from 1 (very much), 2 (somewhat), 3 (a little) to 4 (not at all). The fact that both nursing and psychology students need to communicate with patients or clients was one main reason for usage of Bosher's (2002) needs analysis questionnaire.

Course Evaluation Survey

The course evaluation that has been used in the present study has also been extracted from the Bosher and Smalkoski's study titled "From needs analysis to curriculum development: Designing a course in health-care communication for immigrant students in the USA". This course evaluation survey consisted of three different parts. The first two parts were structured in the form of questionnaires. The first questionnaire resembled the needs analysis questionnaire in order to give students a chance to evaluate how much the course was founded on the principles expected by the students, and then evaluate whether the program had been able to address each of their needs. The second part of the survey offered students different techniques utilized during the course; therefore, they could mark the efficiency of each technique after doing the program. Finally, the students were supposed to answer six open-ended questions designed to seek different points of view towards the course. The first part was modified with replacing the questionnaire items which were used for the present study with original ones and some more techniques were added to the second part of this survey while the open-ended questions were left without any modifications. Students were required to give their answers briefly and concisely.

Research Design

As Long (2005) states, "It is difficult to overemphasize the likelihood that use of multiple measures, as well as multiple sources, will increase the quality of information gathered". (p. 32) It transpired that this method was particularly useful as identifying the specific needs of the students was not always clear, and by casting a large net to cover many sources allowed for more opportunities to identify needs and also to filter

out any inaccurate perceived needs through the use of triangulation. Use of needs analysis questionnaire for identifying learners' needs as well as taking advantage of course evaluation survey in order to evaluate the course aside from the nature of the current study led the researcher to take a quasi-experimental method in carrying out this research.

Pilot study

The researchers piloted the study in order to evaluate the feasibility of the study and evaluate the reliability of the instruments. During the administration the researcher was present probing any possible ambiguities with which participants might encounter so as to identify the further changes that should be done on the items of the questionnaire. According to the feedback received from the participants, the language and wording of some items have been modified. (see appendix D) The questionnaire was distributed among a represented sample of ESP students of psychology at Islamic Azad University of Tonekabon. As far as the value of Cronbach Alfa goes, the reliability of the needs analysis questionnaire and the course evaluation survey were computed to be 0.83 and 0.8 respectively, showing the reliability of the measures.

Procedure

A needs analysis is conducted in order to identify "what learners will be required to do with the foreign language in the target situation and how learners might best master the target language during the period of training" (West, 1994, p. 1). The needs analysis questionnaire was distributed to all twenty graduate students of psychology at Islamic Azad University of Tonekabon. They had fifteen minutes to choose among the four possible options. This questionnaire was administered at the beginning of the term to identify their needs. At the end of the ESP program, a course evaluation consisting of three parts was carried out in order to collect students' opinions of the course to disclose to what extent the course was successful in fulfilling their needs. This three-part course evaluation survey was a little time consuming, and took approximately forty minutes to be done.

RESULTS

Analysis of the needs analysis questionnaire

The data concerning learners' needs was gathered through A survey of graduate psychology students' needs in the ESP course. The questionnaire was administered to the participants at the beginning of the course. The items were chosen in a way to reflect the major parts of an ESP course for the graduate students of psychology. The results of the analysis of the questionnaire are illustrated in Table 1. (See appendix A), through which the needs of the graduate students of psychology are highlighted. The data was analyzed using descriptive statistics, and frequency counts were tabulated and converted to percentages. The findings are also illustrated in Figure 1 (See appendix A), and the results are described in the following section.

According to the categorization of needs into three classes of necessities, lacks and wants The item labeled as "improve my English test score" falls in the class of wants. Based on students' choice, the table indicates that students' tendency to improve their English test score is the most important need in comparison with other items. The majority of the students, i.e., 90% of them, wanted to improve their English test score.

Based on the findings, the need of "writing an article" was believed to be very much important for 55% of the whole population while 10% did not need to write an article at all. Among the students, 50 % believed that "asking questions", and "understanding an article" are both of high importance to them. Concerning the fourth item in the questionnaire which??, half of the population chose this item (i.e. asking questions) as "somewhat" and "a little" important whereas no individual marked the "not at all" option for this item.

Only 45% of the Students claimed that they highly needed the knowledge of the present course to summarize their information. "Accessing English research references", "Taking part in conferences", "Writing reports of your research studies", "Restating information" were selected equally by the participants.

With a slight difference, 35% of the participants reported that they wanted language to introduce themselves and give speeches while 30% of them did not need the language for introducing themselves at all.

Only 30% of the students believed "reading books" was what they highly needed the language for. "pronunciation", and "making small talks" had the same portion for the English language needs of the graduate students of psychology at Islamic Azad University at Tonekabon. Interestingly both of these two needs were deemed as a little important, by a fairly high percent of students. (50% for making small talk and 45% for pronunciation)

Approximately half of the population (55 %) maintained that "Collecting and collating relevant research information" was very much or somewhat important as one of their language needs which cannot be considered a major need compared to the other items.

Next, "Sharing feelings", "Requesting help or support from a colleague", "Confronting a non-native patient", and "Expressing opinions" were selected as very much important needs by 20 % of the population considered fairly low.

The lowest shares belong to the needs of "Using technical equipment, including computers", "Understanding nonverbal communication", "Being an active listener", and "Understanding cultural values". In this case just a minority of the students has paid a heed to these language needs which shows there should be no room left for them at the current ESP course in this context.

Results of Evaluation of the ESP course for the graduate psychology students

Results of the first part of the course evaluation

At the end of the term a course evaluation survey was given to the participants in order to identify which parts of the course went wrong and needed to be redefined. In this vein, the degree to which students' needs were fulfilled, usefulness of the techniques utilized during the course and some personal ideas from the students' opinions were gathered. The present survey was developed in three parts. The first part evaluates if students' needs were fulfilled and their goals were met. Table 2 (see appendix B) discloses what percentage of the population have maintained each item of the ESP course very much, somewhat, a little or even not at all successful at fulfilling their needs. The findings of the first section of the course evaluation survey are also illustrated in the Figure 3.2(see appendix).

According to the students' evaluation, current ESP course was generally successful in fulfilling students' needs to "Understand an article", "improve my English Test score", and "Writing an article". Particularly, 70 % of the participants reported that the course had been very much successful in making them understand an article: obviously a considerable proportion of the whole sample. The result of study done by Kormos, J., et al. (2002) suggest that students use English mainly for academic purposes during their university studies. The most important functions for English majors in their future occupation seem to be expressing their opinion, reading texts on the Internet, conversing with non-native speakers, writing e-mail messages, giving explanations and instructions, and translating oral and written English in a variety of occupations.

However, the students were not the main participants in Jackson's study (2005) and lecturers were assigned in order to identify students' needs it was cleared out that students in generally had poor study habits, inadequate reading and writing skills, weak problem-solving skills, and were reticent in class as their main lacks.

Also in 2011, Lan, Khaun, and Singh's findings show that there are lacks of proficiency in and mastery of English language. The problems encountered are speaking and writing skills. Based on these findings, they suggest that English courses for the workplace provided by the university should include learning and teaching materials for speaking and writing skills.

Moslehifar and Ibrahim's (2012) Findings show that oral communication skills are perceived to be the most important skills for the labor market. The need to improve the test score was considered the most important need among the students for which this course had been very much successful. 60% of the population maintained that the current ESP course was successful at fulfilling the need to write an article, which was the main priority of 55% of the students.

The needs that were of high importance in the study carried out by Sarudin, et.al (2013) suggest institutions of higher learning adequately prepare their students with employability skills associated with communications in English for the workplace.

According to the Table 2, half of the participants found this course very much successful in fulfilling the need to give a speech. This shows that although only 35% of the students were led to believe that giving speech is a very important need of theirs, 50% of the whole admitted the success of the course in making them satisfy this need.

The path for "Accessing English research references" and "Reading books" were highly paved based on the students' evaluation. According to the results, 45% of the population believed that these needs were truly addressed by the ESP course. "Asking questions", and "Writing reports of your research studies" were selected by 40% of the students as the needs fulfilled by the course.

35% of the population upheld the ESP course successfully met the requirements of having students introduce themselves and collect relevant data for their research studies. Next, 30% of the participants evaluated this course as very much successful in getting them to meet their needs in Restating information, expressing opinions, and Taking part in conferences. In this case, more students had found these needs as their major needs than those who believed that the needs were fulfilled during the current program.

Sothan, S. (2015) also found English to be somewhat often used at the workplace in Cambodia. Findings also confirm some particular English language needs as perceived by undergraduate students and employers.

 Table 2 shows that only a minority of students (less than 30%) think that almost 35% of the items were fulfilled through this ESP course. According to both tables, although the number of students who considered these needs essential to them were not much high (almost 20% of them), these needs could change and new language needs might be defined for these students. In a comparison, Aliakbari and Boghayeri (2014) found reading comprehension skill, followed by writing, speaking, and listening skills to be the important skills, respectively.

Results of the second part of the course evaluation

In the second part of the survey students were supposed to choose the degree to which each of the techniques used in the course was useful. These techniques were added by a consultation with the teacher of the ESP course. It is worth noting that the mentioned techniques were the most common ones in the current ESP courses offered at Islamic Azad University of Tonekabon. The success or failure of any of these techniques is revealed when they are in line with learners' needs and can help them accomplish their objectives. The results of how much these techniques have been useful for the students are described in Table 3 (see appendix C). The results are also illustrated in Figure 3. (See appendix C)

In the current ESP program, the teacher has been the sole person responsible for designing and implementing these techniques. It is worth noting that in any teaching/ learning contexts there are a number of people including curriculum developers, material providers, who decide on the type of the activities That should be used. The ten activities that are mentioned in the present study are decided by the researchers and the current ESP practitioner. Some of them are generally used in any teaching/ learning context while a number of these techniques have been particularly used in the present ESP program by the teacher.

Table 3 shows that "abstract writing" has been highly useful, as 80 % of the population considered this activity as very useful. In the next ranks are "Writing an article", "summarizing information" and "writing a report".

"Analyzing articles and papers" technique as it has been chosen to be very useful by 75% of the participants stands in the next order. It suffices to report that no participant has found abstract writing and Analyzing articles and papers not useful at all. In line with what has been justified in the use of previous technique, students seemed to need this task in order to accomplish those research-oriented studies.

Final exam which has been considered as a technique in this context has been evaluated as a very useful one by 60% of the learners (this number reduces to 50% in the case of midterm exam). In this vein, students seem to admit that they need an exam as a criterion to act as an indicator showing them their level of knowledge.

Presentations or lectures that are usually a major part of masters' programs in Iranian context as a predetermined type of exercises have been made use of in the current ESP course. According to the findings less than half of the population (45% of the participants) believed that presentations and exercises have been very useful. Not only does 'In-class presentation' give students the chance to represent what they have grasped, but it can also serve them as a sample to help them get prepared for presentation in a conference. It is also worth pointing out that the need to taking parts in conferences has been seen very much important by 30% of the participants.

The other techniques utilized in the classroom as part of the syllabus for the current ESP program have been class discussion and use of a course book. Among the students, only35% credited these two materials very much useful in the class and believed that they can address the needs that have already been analyzed. This particular finding might lead the ESP practitioner or the course designer to modify the class discussions and the course book that has already been assigned to this class).

Among all the techniques, the activities of the current course book have had the least importance as evaluated by the students. Only 25% of the participants have seen these activities very much useful. In this case a substitution for the book or the offered activities is essential. It is also worthwhile for the syllabus designer to rethink about these materials.

In addition, Aliakbari and Boghayeri (2014) also found learners' dissatisfaction with the textbooks, the pertinent topics, and length of the courses to exist, leading to a conclusion that the courses does not fully meet the learners' needs.

Problems with a course book, according to Jennifer Goodman (2011), might root in the fact that students may "have had past experiences with a "bad" textbook", in other words, "following a book which is not well chosen in terms of their age, interests and needs." the classes may not bring them the variety they seek "or perhaps you or they just want a break or a change from routine." In this case an alternative to the present course book or even omitting the course book from the syllabus can act out as a solution.

Results of the third part of the course evaluation survey

The third section of the course evaluation survey consists of six open-ended items about the current ESP course. The items are as follow:

1. *Would you recommend this course to a friend who is a non-native speaker of English? Why or why not?*

2. *How many credits do you think this course should have? How many hours per week should the class be held? (Currently it is a 2-credit course that meets 2 hours once a week.)*

3. *What did you find most useful about this course?*

4. *What did you <u>not</u> find useful about this course?*

5. *Please comment on the mid-term and final exams. Consider the content and types of questions used for the mid-term, and the nature and procedure used for the final exam.*

6. *Do you have any suggestions for how the course could be improved?*

The pile of answers of the third part of the course evaluation survey revealed the following facts about each of the students.

With regard to the first question 55% of the population would like to recommend the current ESP program to their non-native friends. They believed that the current course was in line with their language needs, it could help them find the correct structure of an academic essay and taught not parallel them how to write an article, make them familiar with professional terminologies of psychology and also increase their self-confidence. On the other hand, the rest of the participants, some of whom even left this part intact, showed no interest in suggesting this course to other students. Some of them asserted that the discussions were useless and the role of the course book has not been well-defined.

In terms of the credits for this program a high number of students (70% of them) believed that the current number of credits is fairly enough and no more time is needed to be devoted to this program during each week. The fact that these students have already had a kind of general ESP in the previous semester can explain why the majority

of the participants see no need for more credits to be considered for this course. Only 20% of all the students would like to increase the time to 3 hours per week and the number of students who wanted this course to be omitted from their syllabus was not considerable (only 10%).

With regard to the positive point of the course, students referred to teacher's use of published abstracts which was her main source of presentation in the course as the most useful technique. This furnished them with the information they need to produce an abstract of their own. However, a majority of students mentioned this procedure as their favorite activity and found it the most useful part of the course some of them referred to teacher's good English knowledge (particularly a good British accent) and structure of both midterm and final exam.

In terms of the things that students did not find useful about the course, a large number of them not research based (85% of the whole population) referred to use of the course book. They mentioned that the course book should be either changed or omitted from this course and the use of academic papers or a more appropriate course book would be a far better choice. Some of them asked for a dictionary which exclusively defines psychology terminologies. The presentations that were part of their course were deemed not very much useful and they preferred not to give a lecture. instead they would like to do a written research. Some of the students, asked for omitting the midterm examination from the syllabus and a number of them found the few number of group and pair works useless. Pair and group works were of the essence to them but they believed unless there is no organized plan for taking advantage of these techniques in the class they ought to be removed from their lesson.

According to the participants of the current study, the structure of both midterm and final exams were acceptable. Midterm exam consisted of some open ended questions and some parts which students were supposed to write the Farsi equivalents for the words and phrases as well as translating some sentences in Farsi while for the final exam students were required to write a short abstract besides answering a number of multiple choice questions. Some students as mentioned before would like not to participate in the midterm exam and asked for its deletion from the course. A majority of them mentioned that the process that was taken during the term in which they were being prepared for understanding and writing an abstract led them to write an abstract of their own. Furthermore, some students reported that the part of the exam and also the course where they were required to translate some fixed phrases and sentences were completely useless because it has no value in their real life or future career.

To improve the course, a large number of students asked for the change or omission of the current course book, increasing the credits of the current ESP program, merging the course that has been offered in the previous term with the current one (this would give them more chance to get prepared for understanding and writing academic essays), and changing some parts of the exams. They were pleased with their teacher and her way of teaching whereas they wanted her to reduce the frequency of translation tasks that they were required to do in the class, at home and in the exams.

DISCUSSION

The findings of the current study led the researchers to bring some modifications to the current ESP program in terms of materials. Likewise, Bosher and Smalkoski (2002) designed a curriculum around learner lacks or big gaps between the current skills of ESL students of nursing and the target skills.

Differences between the various sub-disciplines in Jackson's study (2005) also highlighted the need for discipline-specific ESP courses for second and third-year students. The study illustrates the importance of seeking input from business faculty so that the genuine needs of students can be identified and addressed in well-designed, discipline-sensitive business communications programs. In this regard there was need for designing a more specific ESP program.

On the other hand, the major difference between Cowling's study (2007) and the present research is that he has tried to analyze the needs then design a course but in this case it has been tried to analyze leaners' needs then evaluate the already designed course in terms of the outcomes and the level to which it has been successful to fulfil the goals that have been set.

In line with the findings of the current study, Chostelidou's findings (2010) reveal the need for the development of a highly specific ESP language course with a clear focus on the target discipline.

Rahman (2012) clearly confirms that findings of the study may help the ESP practitioners design an appropriate English language program for the undergraduates. Based on the findings, the researcher also stressed that the study may enable the ESP practitioners to make informed decisions on the students' English needs in the field of computer science. In addition, findings of the study positively contribute to students' knowledge of their weaknesses and strengths in English language skills.

According to Moslehifar and Ibrahim's (2012) oral communication skills play a crucial role at the work place in Malaysia, as a result a modification in the ESP course was needed in order to fulfill this need. Based on findings, Aliakbari and Boghayeri (2014) suggest that revisions of the current programs seem to be necessary to offer more effective ESP courses for architecture students in Iranian universities. Similarly, Sothan, S. (2015) be concluded that revisions of the current program seem to be necessary to offer more effective English language courses for students.

CONCLUSION

Empirical investigation into the effectiveness of ESP teaching has been limited (Johns and Dudley-Evans, 1991; Master, 2005). Through the needs analysis, different language needs of graduate students of psychology at Islamic Azad University of Tonekabon were identified and using a course evaluation survey provided the data to address the second

research question which questioned the efficiency and success of the current ESP program. The second survey was administered at the end of the course and as elaborated in the previous part consisted of three sections in order to indicate (1) how much each need has been addressed during the course, (2) how useful were the activities and materials that were utilized in the class, and (3) students' personal points of view towards the current ESP course.

According to the results of the course evaluation survey, the two needs of "writing an article" and "improving the test score" have been addressed according to students' claims by the current ESP course. The findings of the second part of this survey revealed that abstracts writing and analyzing an article were considered the most useful activities. The results of the third part indicated that students were generally satisfied with the course, exclusively the teacher but would like some modifications in the program. The book could not get them satisfied because it was not exactly making them achieve their needs and might even hinder their success. This book was assigned to provide students with more specialized vocabulary terminologies and professional passages but has not been successful in getting students involved and as a result was rejected by a considerable number of students. As obtained through the answers and also the results of the previous part, the course book needs a revision. The use of this course book seems unidentified based on the students' language needs. As a result, the course book should be changed with the one which provides students with more opportunities to learn professional terminologies in psychology, getting them prepared for writing an article in this field, making them familiar with the nature of conferencing and bringing some real situations to the pedagogical context. The absence of such a course book would be neglected if all these materials could be provided and presented by the ESP practitioner. The researcher's suggestion for this part is making use of another English book for students of psychology. in this regard the book *English for Psychology in Higher Education Studies edited by Terry Philips and published by Garnet Education* can be a helpful source*.* This course book gives students more chances to get exposed to real language in the field of psychology and help them improve their language skills for further usages. Although This book can be a proper source for these students it might be more challenging and may even get teacher in trouble because it needs a fixed amount of time to be worked on. Therefore, the researcher suggests the ESP designer to consider this book as one of the main resources and just pick up the material that is in line with students' major needs. In this case, the book that has already been assigned to this course can act as another resource besides the material that ESP practitioner brings to the class. According to the needs of graduate students of psychology the teacher might need to adapt some parts of the book to have a more efficient outcome.

The teacher can refer students to the journals that publish works in the field of psychology in order to have them furnished with the knowledge to write an article. Assuring that all students can benefit from this kind of technique, the teacher might need to offer students her help and support or group students for peers support in

order to facilitate the process of understanding an abstract or article, paving the way for writing one.

Due to the students' evaluation of the course this change in choosing the more appropriate material was needed. The other point that needed consideration was the assessment procedure of the current ESP program. Learning specialized vocabulary terms is an integral part of any ESP program but the assessment must not be restricted to these terms and translating them from English to the mother tongue or vice versa. In this case, the part of assessment which were focused on students' ability to produce texts of themselves in English, even if they are not so much complicated and structured, ought to be emphasized. And the assessment should leap at students' major needs.

The third research question addresses the success and efficacy of the current ESP program. In this case, the extent to which the present course with the offered materials and techniques has fulfilled students' major language needs has been a concern of this study. According to students' evaluation of the course and with regard to their personal opinions the current course was a suitable program to help them achieve what they had planned for. Things that needed reconsiderations were modifications that were needed on the material, textbook, and midterm exam. Needs analysis illuminated that some parts of the language have been ignored by the students as a result these dimensions should be either removed from their syllabus or the reason for this ignorance should be investigated. For an instance, a few of the population needed this language for their pronunciation. In this case the procedure that has been designed for teaching pronunciation whether needs to be re-designed or there should be no plan for teaching pronunciation at all. The researcher suggests that these parts of the course can be neglected even in developing the syllabus and other parts such as preparing students for lecturing, taking parts in conferences, and their ability to read, understand and produce an academic text should be emphasized because students usually attend a master's program to deepen "their knowledge, and/or they are seeking a job that requires a graduate degree" (Perlman, 2001).

PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

Needs analysis in ESP, according to Basturkmen (2010) refers to a course development process. In this process the language and skills that the learners will use in their target professional or vocational workplace or in their study areas are identified and considered in relation to the present state of knowledge of the learners, their perceptions of their needs and the practical possibilities and constraints of the teaching context. In this sense, the findings of the present study indicated students' main points of interest and their major needs. Therefore, possible modifications in the syllable should be done with respect to these needs. According to this analysis, not all aspects of teaching English language was favored by students of psychology. syllabus designers and curriculum developers, faculty members and psychology staff in particular, should consider their students' major needs and find the right materials, equip them with what they actually need in order to help them accomplish their objectives. As stated before, the ever growing number of students who are attending master's program would get all

stakeholders to act out more attentively and bring novel thoughts to the particular field of study.

Course evaluation, as Dudley Evans and St. John (2013) mention establishes effectiveness of an ESP course. With this regard, the evaluation that was done has illuminated the weaknesses and strengths with the current ESP course. Accordingly, there are reforms that need to be done in picking up the proper materials, implementing and course book as well as the assessment procedure. The current ESP program needs to be revised according to the aspects that have already been cleared up. The practitioner should adapt her teaching to what students desire not to what the faculty members expect. Because every individual has a personal intention of attending the master's program and all these objectives cannot be addressed by a fixed syllabus where there is almost no supervision. These findings can also be generalized to similar contexts in which students are supposed to attend a fixed course where obviously needs a structured needs analysis to be performed. In these contexts, it is no surprise if a majority of attendances would like to improve their test scores rather than taking advantage of them in their real life situations.

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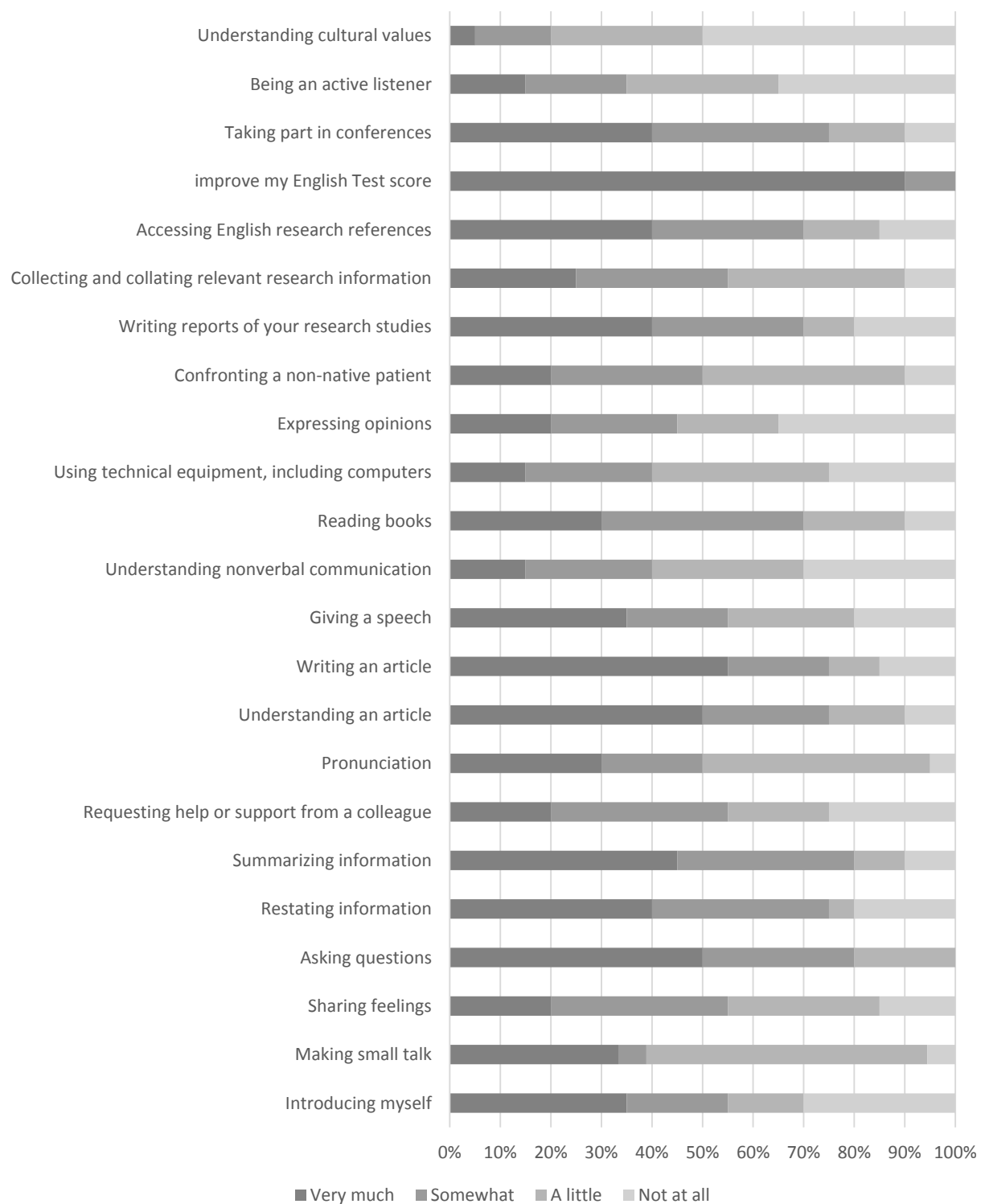
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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Table 1.: A survey of graduate psychology students' needs in the ESP course								
		Very much		Somewhat		A little		Not at all	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
1	Introducing myself	7	35	4	20	3	15	6	30
2	Making small talk	6	30	1	5	10	50	3	15
3	Sharing feelings	4	20	7	35	6	30	3	15
4	Asking questions	10	50	6	30	4	20	0	0
5	Restating information	8	40	7	35	1	5	4	20
6	Summarizing information	9	45	7	35	2	10	2	10
7	Requesting help or support from a colleague	4	20	7	35	4	20	5	25
8	Pronunciation	6	30	4	20	9	45	1	5
9	Understanding an article	10	50	5	25	3	15	2	10
10	Writing an article	11	55	4	20	2	10	3	15
11	Giving a speech	7	35	4	20	5	25	4	20
12	Understanding nonverbal communication	3	15	5	25	6	30	6	30
13	Reading books	6	30	8	40	4	20	2	10
14	Using technical equipment, including computers	3	15	5	25	7	35	5	25
15	Expressing opinions	4	20	5	25	4	20	7	35
16	Confronting a non-native patient	4	20	6	30	8	40	2	10
17	Writing reports of your research studies	8	40	6	30	2	10	4	20
18	Collecting and collating relevant research information	5	25	6	30	7	35	2	10
19	Accessing English research references	8	40	6	30	3	15	3	15
20	improve my English Test score	18	90	2	10	0	0	0	0
21	Taking part in conferences	^	40	7	35	3	15	2	10
22	Being an active listener	3	15	4	20	6	30	7	35
23	Understanding cultural values	1	5	3	15	6	30	10	50

Figure 1.

Figure 1.

Categories (top to bottom): Understanding cultural values, Being an active listener, Taking part in conferences, improve my English Test score, Accessing English research references, Collecting and collating relevant research information, Writing reports of your research studies, Confronting a non-native patient, Expressing opinions, Using technical equipment, including computers, Reading books, Understanding nonverbal communication, Giving a speech, Writing an article, Understanding an article, Pronunciation, Requesting help or support from a colleague, Summarizing information, Restating information, Asking questions, Sharing feelings, Making small talk, Introducing myself

Legend: ■ Very much ■ Somewhat ■ A little ■ Not at all

Appendix B

		Very much		Somewhat		A little		Not at all	
Table 2: Part one of the Evaluation of the ESP course									
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
1	Introducing myself	7	35	2	10	6	30	5	25
2	Making small talk	3	15	4	20	8	40	5	25
3	Sharing feelings	2	10	3	15	6	30	9	45
4	Asking questions	8	40	6	30	2	10	4	20
5	Restating information	6	30	4	20	7	35	3	15
6	Summarizing information	5	25	5	25	4	20	6	30
7	Requesting help or support from a colleague	5	25	3	15	8	40	4	20
8	Pronunciation	1	5	2	10	7	35	10	50
9	Understanding an article	14	70	4	20	1	5	1	5
10	Writing an article	12	60	5	25	1	5	2	10
11	Giving a speech	10	50	6	30	0	0	4	20
12	Understanding nonverbal communication	3	15	4	20	7	35	6	30
13	Reading books	9	45	7	35	3	15	1	5
14	Using technical equipment, including computers	4	20	3	15	8	40	5	25
15	Expressing opinions	6	30	4	20	3	15	7	35
16	Confronting a non-native patient	3	15	3	15	4	20	10	50
17	Writing reports of your research studies	8	40	7	35	2	10	3	15
18	Collecting and collating relevant research information	7	35	6	30	6	30	2	10
19	Accessing English research references	9	45	7	35	3	15	1	5
20	improve my English Test score	13	65	3	15	1	5	3	15
21	Taking part in conferences	6	30	5	25	7	35	2	10
22	Being an active listener	5	25	4	20	6	30	5	25
23	Understanding cultural values	2	10	1	5	4	20	13	65

Figure 2
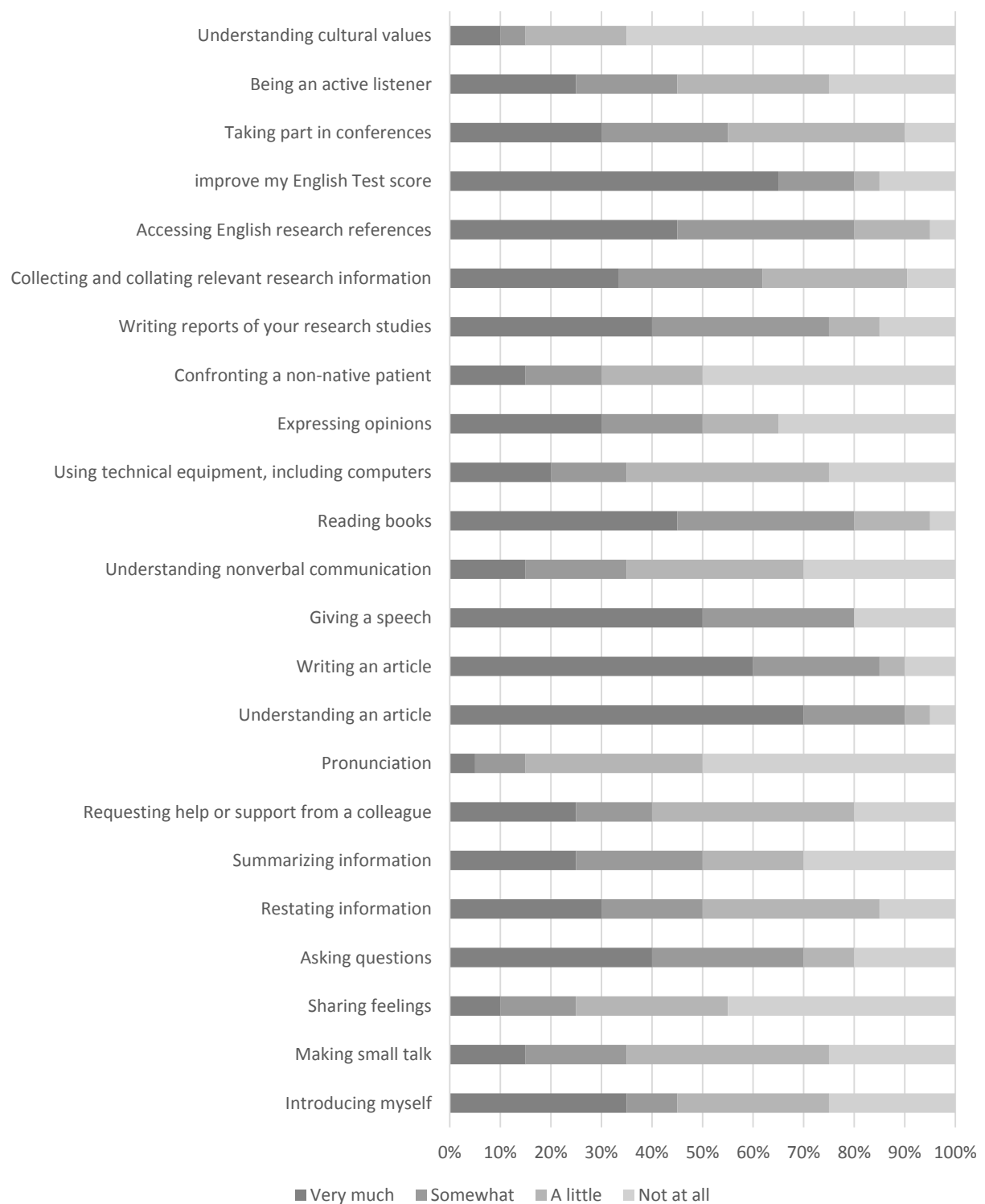
Appendix C

Table 3. Part two of the Evaluation of the ESP course								
		very useful		somewhat useful		a little useful		not at all useful	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
1	Presentations/exercises	9	45	8	40	2	10	1	5
2	Class discussions	7	35	8	40	5	25	0	0
3	Mid-term exam	10	50	6	30	4	20	0	0
4	Final exam	12	60	7	35	0	0	1	5
5	Abstract writing	16	80	1	5	3	15	0	0
6	Analyzing articles and papers	15	75	4	20	1	5	0	0
7	Content of the course book	7	35	7	35	2	10	4	20
8	Exercises of the course book	5	25	3	15	8	40	4	20
9	Translating essays	11	55	6	30	1	5	2	10
10	Group/ pair work	9	45	5	25	3	15	3	15

Figure 3
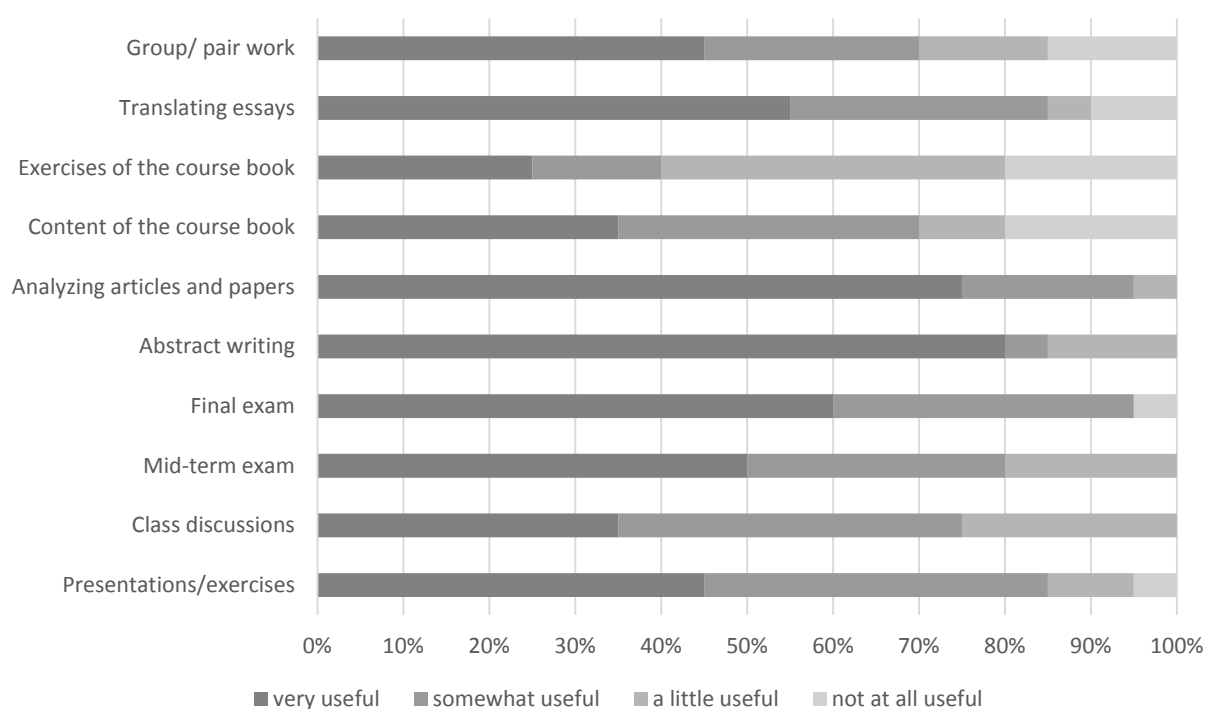
Appendix D

Direction: Please indicate how much you feel you need to improve each of the following skills by circling the appropriate number listed to the right of each skill: (1) = very Much (2) = somewhat (3) = a little (4) = not at all					
1	Introducing myself	1	2	3	4
2	Making small talk	1	2	3	4
3	Sharing feelings	1	2	3	4
4	Asking questions	1	2	3	4
5	Restating information	1	2	3	4
6	Summarizing information	1	2	3	4
7	Requesting help or support from a colleague	1	2	3	4
8	Pronunciation	1	2	3	4
9	Understanding an article	1	2	3	4
10	Writing an article	1	2	3	4
11	Giving a speech	1	2	3	4
12	Understanding nonverbal communication	1	2	3	4
13	Reading books	1	2	3	4
14	Using technical equipment, including computers	1	2	3	4
15	Expressing opinions	1	2	3	4
16	Confronting a non-native patient	1	2	3	4
17	Writing reports of your research studies	1	2	3	4
18	Collecting and collating relevant research information	1	2	3	4
19	Accessing English research references	1	2	3	4
20	improve my English Test score	1	2	3	4
21	Taking part in conferences	1	2	3	4
22	Being an active listener	1	2	3	4
23	Understanding cultural values	1	2	3	4