



RESEARCH PAPER

Examining the English Lingual Needs of Zoology Students at Undergraduate Level in Sindh: A Case of University of Jamshoro

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ABSTRACT

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The study is designed to find English lingual needs in undergraduate students of zoology department in one of the Public Sector University, Jamshoro, Pakistan. The questionnaire was used as a data collection tool to know about the English language opinions of zoology students that belonged to diverse lingual backgrounds at the undergraduate level in quantitative form. The questionnaire tends to elicit different lingual needs from students of varied lingual backgrounds. This study discloses some of the interesting facts about interests in students to give preference to skills of speaking, their interests in British English, to find their perceived need of English usage in abroad, eagerness for learning English and their current competency in English. The interview protocol was used to find the interest and motivation of zoology students in detailed form. However, one finds predictable regulations. Though, all respondents were students of zoology department, they had immediate lingual wants of English that are educational in nature and contextual, where English is used frequently. The significance of study lies to a fact that it does provide path for ESP teachers and practitioners in helping them to design specific courses with particular materials for undergraduate students of zoology department.

Introduction

The new field of English for specific purposes has received great attention in research of applied linguistics. The attention is attracted by lingual practitioners and linguists. Gatehouse (2001) has been cited to divide field of ESP into further divisions. They are English for the academic purposes, English for the occupational purposes and English for the economic purposes. The design of course for English to the academic purposes is one of the complex activities. According to Clark (1999) it does involve planning of course and issues to the development of materials with its evaluation.

Literature Review

The study of Carter (1983) stressed to the significance of student's self-direction in learning. There is a need to teach and make appropriate selections in learning of processes with some new techniques that are required in adoption of teaching. On the other hand, Gatehouse (2001) have disagreed with points raised by Carter (1983) and claimed that the learning of new teaching techniques is not necessary for high caliber learners.

ESP and Analysis of Needs

The development and evolution in ESP focused on the needs and wants of learners. The specific courses were designed and planned with its basis on needs that learners had in preference and trends of instructors for job markets. However, the issues with analysis of needs are complex and not straight. They are even tricky to find the needs of learners at specific time that is dynamic. Clark (1999) did draw the attention towards the phenomenon. They pointed out the learners' needs that are measured in with completion of course. They differentiated all between two conditions. The two conditions are stable and emerging wants of learners. There are two kinds of needs. They are subjective and objective. The both needs are required for future instruction and think significant for successful jobs in market. The complexity of issue deters and does add challenges to the tasks. Basturkmen (1998) defined the analysis of needs with identification to situations and complexities that is observed by participants. The functions of target condition are conjunction that is interviews and questionnaires. Analysis of aim is determination of current with future wants of students. Basturkmen (1998) tends to find gaps in between current curriculum and proficiency.

Analysis of the English Language Needs of Students

The process of analyzing the needs does involve different dimension in giving instruction and learning of language. Cowling (2007) discussed difficult activities that are used in development of materials. He presented the significance of triangulation method that can help them to develop specific material of ESP. It is authenticated and even validated by ESP practitioners. Basturkmen (1998) employed mixed method design for consideration of lingual needs in learners. Seedhouse (1995) discoursed about the significance of analyzing the needs in data form. This can assist in design of course. He even suggested specific techniques to analyze needs and provide concrete way to link the perceived wants of students with practices in classroom. The oriented classroom version focuses more on implementation with feasibility for analysis of needs. The results were incorporated in classroom of English language practice. It does provide theoretical assistance in analysis of needs with refer to different dimensions. Basturkmen (1998) contributed the analysis of needs on undergraduate students in department of Petroleum and Engineering from the University of Kuwait. She employed both techniques qualitative and quantitative to process responses from different members, students

and the other faculty staff. The different aspects of English language in learners were found. The aspects were proficiency in language usage, expectations with course of language and etc. The results of this study were used for design of tailor based lingual course. This course was been in accordance to specific needs of students and other demands of academic staff. Rahman (2011) conducted research on particular needs that learners had in reference to ELT within University of Najran, Saudi Arabia. The various suggestions were forwarded for the planners of language courses and the teachers in line of particular lingual wants of students. The gender specific differences in learners were identified. The responses by participants were preferred to four lingual skills of them. According to Rahman (2011), there is a need of research action, the teacher are even required to conduct their individual analysis in order to identify the preferences of learners in detail. According to the study, the preference does vary with aims, proficiencies and capabilities in individuals.

Perceptions of English Teachers and Students to Analysis Needs

Ferris (1998) conducted an interesting study that highlighted the perceptions of teachers and the students in contrast to their needs of language. The responses were collected with the help of questionnaire from three renowned universities. In the end, the responses of both were compared.

The main differences that were found in responses from teachers and their students were based on contextual differences. The researcher raised many queries about validity in interpretations of analyzing the needs in form of data representation with its implications. The research had multifarious points to analyze in the form of needs.

Material and Methods

Research Design

The current study is designed on mixed method. The qualitative and quantitative both methods are employed to collect the responses of the students in department of zoology. It proves an authenticity of the responses given by the students.

Participants

The undergraduate students of zoology department in one of the public sector University of Sindh have been taken as the participants of this study.

Research Site

One of the natural science departments in one of the Public Sector University in Jamshoro, have been taken as the site of research by the researcher.

Research Instrument

The responses of students were elicited for English language needs. The modified version of questionnaire was created. The questionnaire was constructed to a model named "Processor of Communicative needs". According to Le Ha (2005), the model of Munby has been criticized due to its redundancy. The overall questionnaire has been divided into three main parts. The part 1 tries to find the personal information of participants. Part 2 is related to obtain the responses on macro stage. The elements at the macro level include the preferred lingual skills, the medium to communicate, setting, and the current language competency with its future hopes. The Part 3 tends to be more particular and deduces the responses of students on language need at the micro stage. This part of questionnaire inquire from the learners about their inclination towards teaching of grammar, the values of accent, the strategies to learn a language, different kinds of material to learn that could be used in classroom. The interview protocol is used to highlight interests of students to learn English. The following study aimed to give guidance to the planners of English course and teachers of English language at undergraduate level to teach English to zoology students in one of the Public Sector University in Jamshoro. The participants for this study were randomly selected. The variable of gender is not taken under consideration and the academic level is equal to all. The study has been analyzed with the help of SPSS software in the form of frequencies. However, the qualitative form of data is analyzed through content analysis. The measure of responses in study is given in next section.

Results and Discussion

Quantitative Findings of the Data

Learning of Zoology Content

There are many interest eliciting patterns that emerged from the responses of students. Majority of responses (i.e. 58%) ranked use of English to *learn various contents of zoology* as their primary objective to learn English. Therefore, this option was ranked highest.

Various Domains of Work

It was followed by the responses of students that ranked *working in different domains* as the second most significant objective to learn English. Around 30% of the students responded for the need of English to different purposes of work.

Social Status and Examination

The third necessary option that students of zoology ranked was about the societal status and passing of the semester based examination. Around 19 % of the students responded that English helps them to upgrade their societal status and pass departmental examination.

Priority of the Language Skill that is required for the English Use in Classroom

Amongst the four language skills of English, the students of zoology department ranked the need of speaking skill in English as the most important skill for them. Around 62% of the responses ranked speaking skill on the priority basis. The listening skill was ranked the least in priority with around 10 % of the responses.

Need in Classroom

The use of English is significant for the students. They need it to communicate with their colleagues and teachers. Around 72% of the respondents agreed to this premise. It was followed in a rank by the perception that English is the official language in Pakistan. Around 60% of the students perceived it on basis of its official significance. The need of English to comprehend lectures in class followed third in rank. Around 50% of the participants responded that they require competence in English to understand lectures of zoology in English. The response of students to use English for library purposes was second last in rank. 30% of the responses state that they need English to read different related materials of zoology in English from library. The last domain in rank with reference to responses of students is English for the travelling purposes. 11% of the participants opted for this response.

Abroad Purposes

Students were asked to respond for a need of English in and outside of the country. According to the responses of students, they required English for both purposes. 72% of responses were in favor of English need for abroad purposes. However, 28% of responses claimed that they need English to use inside the country.

Teaching Techniques

So far the techniques to teach and learn English of students is concerned, around 77% of responses perceived that they prefer technique to teach and learn English that could focus on learning of grammatical structures and grammar of language.

Proficiency in Linguistic Abilities

One of the objectives in this study is based on knowing the current lingual competence of zoology students in English. The competence to perceive English that could serve students in their academic and occupational purposes. Majority of the students perceive that they have average competence in learning and comprehend English. Around 66% of participants opted for the option "Average" to perceive their proficiency in English. 10% of students responded that they perceive their competence in English as poor. 9% of students perceived that their proficiency is

very good and 15% of the responses were uncertain to present any view about their competence in English. Majority of students perceived that they lack proficiency to comprehend lectures in class, fluency to speak and wide range of zoology specific vocabulary. The students desired that they must have lingual comprehension to each of the English word in learning. 55% of students agreed to it.

Accent

The issue of accent is greatly perceived by the students of zoology. According to the majority of responses, (i.e. 68%) of the students claimed British variety as the only authentic variety to teach and learn.

Materials to Read

The students desired to comprehend content of academic journals and newspapers. 76% of the participants responded that they require English to read and understand the specific materials.

Qualitative Findings of the Data

In order to validate the quantitative data, three students of zoology department were taken as the participants to know about their interest and motivation to learn English. The need to learn English was known with the help of themes that were extracted from the interviews taken from the participants. The themes have been discussed below.

Language of the Content

The entire course outline of zoology subject at the undergraduate level is composed in English language. Therefore, the instructors are required to convey the content to students in English within classrooms. The native language is used in case, if the alternate meaning of a word or a concept is not available in English. Therefore, it is a great challenge for students and the instructors to have proper command on English language. **Participant 2** highlighted the need of English in classroom by claiming its significance in communication and conveying of meaningful messages in interaction. According to the **participant 2**:

“English is the only language used as a medium of communication to convey the concepts related to course of zoology. The explanation of course related concepts by the instructors in classroom either through slides or the supplementary materials is guided in English. The videos on animal documentaries from their birth to survival and death are documented in English; therefore, in order to understand the course, one needs to have basic competence in English”.

(Participant 2-Zoology Department, Public Sector University, 2019)

Rigid Pattern of Examination

Similarly, the pattern of Examination is scripted in English. The University examination policies do not allow promotion and attempt of paper in other languages. Therefore, in order to write proper concepts of zoology in paper, the students urged to have proficiency in English. This has been validated by the **participant 3**. It is followed as:

“The major part of exams in University is conducted in the written format. The courses that are taught from PART I of the undergraduate year to the last year that ends with the write-up of dissertation and a viva-voce, all are strictly allowed to attempt in English. Therefore, the competence in all four lingual skills in English is important for the student of zoology. There are separate marks assigned on proper construction of grammatical structure, to the use of specific words of zoology in slots to the fluency of English in viva-voce...”

(Participant 3-Zoology Department, Public Sector University, 2019)

It shows that the rigid pattern form of examination is also one of the aspects to promote learning of English for the students of zoology at their undergraduate level in one of the Public Sector University in Jamshoro. They need to develop proficiency in English for their successful examination.

Promotion of Academic Research

The journey of four years in University does not end with the passing of examination only. The platform of academic research along with the examinations does play a vital role to promote individuals for their higher studies aboard and on national grounds. It creates a collaborative platform for all academic scholars from different spheres of natural science disciplines to share the current phenomenon in natural sciences around the globe. Therefore, a student with general competence in English can take part in global platforms of academic researches. This need have been encountered and highlighted by the **participant 3**. The need that is followed is described by the participant as:

“Every topic that is either taken from the course book or the research articles written on several topics of zoology are all research based. They are written by the authentic research scholars of national and international repute. Not only this, the efforts for higher studies demand academic proficiency in research. These all are accepted on international scale, when they are scripted in English. It is because English is the only international language that binds scholars from different disciplines of social and natural sciences at one platform to share scholarly dialogues.”

(Participant 3-Zoology Department, Public Sector University, 2019)

No doubt, the principle that has been raised by the **participant 3** is valid. The international academic council accepts research that is composed in English. Even, the academic research has become an important domain in higher studies. The students feel an urge to prove their worth in field of research, if they excel in English language.

Recruitment in the Job

The recruitment of students in different government and private positions is made possible after they have passed a departmental or general recruitment examination. These examinations are conducted in English. Therefore, it is extremely significant for candidates to have certain proficiency level in English. The students of zoology department are eligible to apply for various positions that are announced against vacant posts after their graduation. Majority of students after their completion of graduation do apply for announced vacancies in literacy and education departments against various posts of zoology in public or private sector colleges and universities. Similarly, there are vacancies for them in forestry, horticulture and veterinary departments. There are number of chances for the graduate candidate of zoology to apply after their graduation in field of zoology. Therefore, the students after their graduation do urge for the competence in English usage to pass recruitment in federal and provincial examinations. The urge was highlighted by the **participant 1** in an interview.

“If you want to seek a job of a satisfactory grade after your graduation, then English is the only source that can help you along with the knowledge of your specific course. One cannot survive in examinations if found poor to comprehend the basics of English grammar. The knowledge of subject is necessary but, even 25% of these examinations do possess English on a separate section. The section comprises of various exercises that are based on grammar corrections, vocabulary, and comprehension, passive and active and so and forth...”

(Participant 1-Zoology Department, Public Sector University, 2019)

English is acknowledged as the most significant source for the students of zoology to get hired for the better job after their completion of graduation. The above four basic themes have highlighted the importance of English for students. Therefore, they felt a need to excel their proficiency in English to proceed successfully for their futures.

The findings of the study are useful to create an insight about lingual needs of zoology students to learn English at undergraduate level.

Discussion on the Findings

The investigation on lingual needs of undergraduate zoology students has indicated some regular patterns in learning. The respondents of this study are all undergraduate students that require English language for their successful position in academic and occupational levels. So far the needs of zoology students is concerned, they require proficiency to enhance their speaking skill with their colleagues and the teachers in classroom. The need is followed by the comprehension of lectures in classroom. The responses of the participants met with some strange clashes. It is bind to a fact that many respondents have confessed for a need of English up to the infrequent levels. The majority opted the option 'sometimes' for the need of English in classroom. However, the opinion of respondents was divided. Around 49% of respondents believed for the use of English on frequent manner for their future lives. Even, the majority of respondents preferred to take daily English classes. However, the classes of English for the desired period of study are two as per the week. The students of zoology focused on English grammar. They preferred to have an engagement with the teaching technique that should concentrate on grammar only. It shows that the students have focused merely on previous teaching and learning experiences. There is a great misconception in students to consider teaching of English with teaching of grammar only in multilingual context of Pakistan. Though, the respondents even claimed for a need of English to serve their oral purposes. However, they felt that the grammatical knowledge is necessary for the successful use of English language. The confidence of students to efficiently use English was good. They claimed that the lingual capabilities are important and they had sufficient knowledge of it. However, still they required different strategies for its improvement. The degree to exaggerate responses given by students has been ignored to safe their deficiencies on public ground. Majority seemed reluctant to present their actual lingual proficiency in capabilities of English usage. The attitude towards perfection is also evident in respondents. The students desired to learn every English word that is taught to them. The respondents did not exactly felt to comprehend the actual need of learning English. It is because they are non-native speakers of English and did not exactly aspire to know lingual proficiency for their success in academic and professional stages. Therefore, it depends on the English teacher to fix particular targets for proficiency in students rather than to develop their sense of achieving the knowledge of language. The students have a great interest to learn the British variety of English. This has reflected our communal norms that are set for social acceptance. They are based on legacy. The lingual variety of the colonial masters has a deep influence on minds of subcontinent population. There may be the number of individuals that still believe British variety as one of the most authentic varieties of English. The theory based on varieties of English is not perceived by them. Therefore, it merely depends on English teachers to guide students of zoology with future aspects of English and different varieties of English. So far reading content of English is concerned, 38% of respondents stated that they can read and understand newspapers in English. However, it is strange to know that around 18% of participants desired to understand course content of

zoology and academic research. From this, it can be stated that English is required as mark of great social position than comprehension of course content. The participants gave preference to revise the teaching and learning techniques of English. The majority of students claimed that they feel in ease with working to one member in a group. The direct instruction imparted by the teacher in classroom did not seem popular amongst the students. Around 32% of the respondents found it comprehensible. 29 % opined that it was slightly comprehensible for them to understand the course content. Therefore, it is significant for the course designers and English teachers to cope with all relevant points to design course of English that could specifically serve the students of zoology at their undergraduate stage.

Conclusion

The present survey concentrates on the exploration of the learners' academic needs of the learners before offering them mandatory language courses at undergraduate level. It helps provide a guideline to the planners and language teachers alike to chalk out their courses and lesson plans. The study focus to explore educational wants that learners had to learn English in undergraduate stage. The needs and wants of learners will assist lesson planners and lingual teachers to plan lessons and the entire course. The guide is not complete unless teachers are surveyed. The opinions with surveys are extensively used in market of the jobs. They require expertise in specific lingual skills and required to fulfill the preference of employees. The current topic discussed in a study highlights one of the aspects in analysis of needs. It is a better hope for study that it can further create grounds to analyze needs. The results of this study can provide concrete background for students and EAP course designers of zoology department. The results focus on one of the disciplines of natural sciences (i.e. zoology). The English needs of other disciplines in natural sciences have not been discussed neither fields of social science fields. The development of materials and their evaluation is not addressed in this study.

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