NEEDS ANALYSIS FOR ENGLISH FOR ACADEMIC PURPOSES: IMPORTANCE OF ACADEMIC LANGUAGE SKILLS FOR UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN ETHIOPIA

Sileshi Chemir
tiranurfitria@gmail.com
Addis Ababa University, Ethiopia

Tamene Kitila
kitilatame@gmail.com
Addis Ababa University, Ethiopia

Corresponding Author:

kitilatame@gmail.com

This study aims to investigate undergraduate students' needs analysis in English for Academic Purposes. In this study, three hundred-eight first-year students and forty-one EAP and subject area instructors at Wachemo University participated. The research employed a mixed-methods approach that utilized a questionnaire and a semi-structured interview to ascertain the important academic English language skills and sub-skills prioritized by participants. The findings revealed that the participants indicated all the academic language skills as important for students' academic study in the university. The instructors prioritized the academic language skills (academic reading and academic vocabulary) as important, whereas the students ranked the language skills (academic writing and academic speaking) as the first importance. The study emphasized the importance of conducting learners' needs analysis before developing any English for Academic Purposes course. Findings in the current study could be provided as implications for course designers and recommendations for future studies.

INTRODUCTION

English for Academic Purposes (EAP) has grown as a specific discipline within the English language teaching curriculum. According to Thompson & Diani (2015), there has been a prolific increase in scholarly literature in English for Academic Purposes (EAP), particularly at tertiary levels. Thus, University students learn EAP to listen, read, and write or communicate their disciplinary literature, most published in English (Elsaid Mohammed & Nur, 2018; Hutchinson & Waters, 1987). As a result, EAP refers to the teaching of English to a particular group of students in the university.

h the current notion of globalization and the growing popularity of the Information Communication Technology (ICT), the dominant use of English language is indisputable in higher education settings. Therefore, the primary emphasis of EAP is to help university students be successful in their academic subjects. It is also believed that focusing on academic English skills help students use it for their professional and job careers (Yenus, 2017). According to Tseng (2014), the students' good English skills would help them gain benefits in their future academic and professional domains. Nevertheless, Eslami (2010) maintained that the teaching of EAPs have been criticized for not having sufficient findings based on the actual needs of students.

Statement of the Problem

In the Ethiopian education system, the English language serves as a medium of instruction from secondary school through universities. On the other hand, EAP (Communicative English Skills) is taught as a compulsory course in Ethiopian Universities to enhance students' academic English language skills to cope with academic conventions in their specific field of study. For instance, Biniam et al. (2015) affirmed that being proficient in the English language in such a context is paramount for learners to study their subject area courses using the English medium textbooks and lectures. However, the EAP course modules offered to first-year

students are prescribed by the course designers without considering the learners' actual language needs and wants. The course objectives point out that students in the EAP (Communicative English skills) program need to listen to lectures, read textbooks, take/make notes, speak (communicate in different situations), write exams, projects, assignments, term papers, and research works in English. Although the program objectives hastily claim the English language needs for the learner's academic achievement, the courses seem to fail in addressing their prescribed goals. This means critical problems remain unresolved regarding university students' English language proficiency to pursue their academic studies. This may be because courses taught to these students are not designed based on learners' dynamic needs.

Studies revealed that materials and textbooks too often rely on the material designers' intuition and experience rather than focusing on the dynamic learners' needs and contexts (Astika, 2015; Kuzborska, 2011; Ouafa, 2019). Due to this fact, the Communicative English skills courses often fail to address students' academic English language needs. Thus, the researchers' observations and practical experiences affirm that such a situation impedes students' academic success in the Ethiopian higher education context. However, to the researchers' best knowledge, few or no studies have been conducted to discover the academic English language needs of Social Sciences and Humanities students in Ethiopian higher education. Therefore, to address this gap, this study set out to explore academic English language most needed for students' academic success at the College of Social sciences and humanities at Wachemo university. As a result, the following research question is posed to address the gap in the area, if any. Generally, the study aimed to explore the most important academic English skills and sub-skills needed by first-year students.

Literature Review

Needs Analysis in EAP

West (1994) reveals that needs analysis involves both the target situation of learners and the learning process. Hutchinson and Waters (1987) put forward that both target needs and learning needs are used in the learning-centered approach. Dudley-Evans & St John. (1998) also formulated needs analysis model, comprising seven components (professional and personal information about learners, language information about target contexts, learners' language deficiencies, learning needs, how to communicate in target situations, and learners' course-related requirements). The goal of the needs analysis is thus to identify the target language teaching and learning needs to design an effective curriculum. Therefore, needs analysis is the process of establishing the "what" and "how" of a course (Dudley-Evans & St John., 1998; Juan, 2014).

Therefore, needs analysis aimed to determine priorities, such as which academic language skills (academic listening, speaking, reading, writing, vocabulary or grammar), and which sub-skills, (e.g., conversation on the phone or drafting meeting minutes) are more or less significant in the target or present situation (Basturkmen, 2010). Thus, the information gleaned from needs analysis should help the course designers and practitioners focus instruction on academic English skills priorities for the student's academic study. It is believed that EAP delivers the necessary academic language skills provision as learners' transition from secondary to higher education. It is also believed that such provision of EAP should be based on the systematic Needs Analysis regarding the academic language skills students require before any curriculum design (Basturkmen, 2006, 2010). As a result, EAP needs analysis is an important aspect to ensure that curriculum contents should match with the students' needs as thoroughly as possible.

Academic English Skills and NA

The 21st century education highlights how students are able to combine content knowledge, specific skills, and literacies necessary to succeed in their academic study and professional life. Cummins (2011) defines academic English as the English needed for reading, writing, speaking and listening in the content areas. The proficiency of these skills is a guarantee for learners to be able to access opportunities in academic setting. According to Menggo et al. (2019), these skills are more than technological literacy and include proficiency in critical thinking, problem-solving and communication to ensure that students succeed in their academic endeavors. Accordingly, materials should be designed in line with the learners' needs of these skills.

Learners' language needs analysis across the globe has also found that the academic language skills of academic listening, speaking, reading and writing are the important skills needed in EAP curriculum (e.g., (Basturkmen, 2010; Chatsungnoen, 2015; Dudley-Evans & St John., 1998; Hyland, 1997; Menggo et al., 2019; Shing & Sim, 2011; Thompson & Diani, 2015). Thus, the literature would help the course designers focus on the demands of each of the language skills during material development for the activities in the target and learning situations. Consequently, this section reviews these academic English skills for the reasons mentioned above.

Academic Listening Skills

Listening is important and is considered as a primary channel for learning a language (Chatsungnoen, 2015; Nunan, 1988). Further, listening impacts the development of speaking, reading, and writing abilities in learning a language. Solikhah (2015) also confirmed that listening skill is considered as basic needs of English literacy because listening occurs at any circumstance a learner uses English for communications. Thus, good listening skills are necessary for learners to become effective communicators. Listening in EAP has many similarities with

listening in English as a foreign/second language, since it is cognizant of the same cognitive processes and demands the utilization of identical sub-skills in line with the purpose for listening (Goh, 2013). In addition, developing EAP listening require more high-level listening skills relevant to the requirement for learners' academic study than for English as a foreign/second language (Chatsungnoen, 2015; Goh, 2013).

Academic Speaking Skills

The teaching of English speaking has become increasingly significant in the context of English as a foreign/second language (EFL/ESL). For instance, Eiadeh et al. (2016) assert that academic speaking is one of the basic four language skills that should be developed in order to effectively communicate in both first and second language learning contexts. Academic speaking instruction is also critical, as a large number of university students wish to study English to be able to communicate effectively. As previously indicated, the critical nature of the language skills necessitates the development of supporting speaking materials that are based on needs analysis. Needs analysis leads material developers to discover learners' academic language needs. It is an essential input in the design of curriculum and syllabus development. The major role of needs analysis provides crucial data to aid teachers in making an appropriate decision for material development.

Academic speaking material preparation should cover students' target and learning needs of speaking components/skills such as pronunciation, structure, vocabulary, fluency, and accuracy (Menggo & Suastra, 2019). Additionally, English speaking materials should assist learners in becoming more natural when expressing their thoughts. Although past research reveals that needs analysis is necessary, it must be conducted by speaking experts in order to accurately reflect students' genuine need, resulting in an emphasis on learners' learning outcomes and students' long-term competency. While the assumption that needs analysis toward academic-English speaking skills is vitally important for success learners' academic

study, the concept has not been strongly explored in Ethiopian higher education context

Academic Reading Skills

Academic reading is an important language skill for EFL students in higher education since it allows them to explore information as references and instructional resources for their studies. It is considered to be one of the most crucial skills for EFL learners that need to acquire is the ability to comprehend academic. In other words, academic reading is a critical language skill for EFL learners because it allows them to communicate their expectations for their issue. Nowadays, academic reading is regarded as the most important skill for university students to acquire knowledge about their own discipline (Wahyono & Puspitasari, 2016)

Therefore, when academic reading is considered, it is crucial to conduct an NA taking into account the characteristic features and requirements of the target group and the requirements of the context concerned (Köse et al., 2019). For instance, Park (2012) conducted an NA to investigate whether learning outcomes of a reading course for international students met the learners' needs in an academic context at the University of Hawaii. Based on the participants' views, she reported that 72% of the students in different academic contexts considered reading articles in academic journals the most important skill, while 28% indicated that the ability to comprehend lab instructions and reports is the most important skill. In addition, the students reported having difficulty with vocabulary specific to their fields, reading comprehension, dealing with long and complex texts, general academic vocabulary, reading strategies, and reading speed.

Academic Writing Skills

Academic writing skill is considered the most important area of academic skill, however, teaching writing in EAP program is very challenging. According to Solikhah (2015), most instructors admit that to write a paragraph or an essay in English, teachers should teach grammar, vocabulary, and writing techniques. This

is because with low competency in vocabulary and grammar, students feel more difficult to impress creativity in writing.

It is believed that academic writing is at the center of teaching and learning in higher education to accomplish various purposes (Coffin et al., 2003). First, students may be required to produce essays, written examinations, or laboratory reports whose primary purpose is to demonstrate the nature and mastery of disciplinary course content of "the learners' target language needs" (Hutchinson, 1988, p. 71). In assessing such writing, teachers focus on the content and form of the writing- the language used, the text structure, argument construction, grammar, and punctuation (Coffin et al., 2003). Second, students may also be asked to write texts that trace their reflections on the learning process itself, as journals where they record thoughts, questions, problems, and ideas about readings and lectures (Ibid).

Academic Grammar

Chatsungnoen, (2015) and Ouafa (2019) suggested that EAP teachers should focus on teaching the grammar of science. This would help learners understand and write scientific papers which are characterized by the following grammatical forms: verb, tense, the passive voice, use of prepositions, modals, nominalization etc., (Blaj-Ward, 2014). This concept corresponds with many EAP scholars in that teaching grammar in the EAP context should be relevant to learners' needs, and EAP teachers should be aware of the use of grammar forms and functions in specific contexts (Paltridge & Starfield, 2013). That means EAP courses emphasize language in context rather than teaching discrete grammatical forms and language structures.

Academic Vocabulary

For years, educators and educational researchers have recognized the critical significance of vocabulary knowledge in reading comprehension, and understanding text requires a basic knowledge of words (Yopp et al., 2009). However, vocabulary learning and teaching is a constant challenge for students and

teachers since vocabulary acquisition has received less attention in ESL/EFL classrooms. As a result, a greater emphasis on vocabulary acquisition is crucial for the English language learner's language learning process. Academic vocabulary is typically more technical and less frequently used than in conversational English classrooms. Thus, students are constantly required to use higher-level language functions such as analyzing, predicting, explaining and justification (Chung & Nation, 2004; Mukoroli, 2011).

The EAP classroom focuses mostly on academic language, which students use to acquire new knowledge. Thus, students enrolled in English for Academic Purposes class require language skills to comprehend academic content and engage in classroom activities and assignments; it is also important for the teachers to employ specific and technical terminologies that will empower students to master vocabularies for their academic studies. In addition, Mukoroli (2011) found that vocabulary instruction directly improves comprehension; therefore, material designers must develop a needs-based academic vocabulary that assists learners in their course of study.

METHOD

The current study used mixed methods to provide significant insights to the participants regarding the important skills required for the students' academic study. Thus, the researchers adopted both quantitative and qualitative methodologies in the current research.

Participants and Sampling

The research was carried out in one of the universities in Ethiopian located in Southern part the country. It is about 230 kilometers from the capital, Addis Ababa. A total of four hundred twenty-one subjects participated in the study (Seventy-two participated in the pilot study, and three hundred forty-nine participated in the main study). The participants were first-year students and their instructors in the College of Social Sciences and Humanities. The student

participants were studying a compulsory EAP course during the first and second semesters of the first academic year at the time of the study. The instructors were full-time EAP and subject area teachers offering EAP and subject area courses.

From among 1106 total population, 324 systematically sampled students participated in the main study. The sample comprised nearly 30% of the student population enrolled in the second semester of the academic year of 2021, when this study was undertaken. On the other hand, 64 instructor participants from the College of Social Sciences and Humanities participated. The instructors' population was sampled using a census sampling approach since their number was trivial for the questionnaire data.

Instruments

Data were collected from learners and instructors to identify academic language skills and sub-skills participants need to prioritize in the target and learning situations. Consequently, an essential step in Needs Analysis is selecting an information-gathering instrument, which is a great measure to determine the quality of the data to be collected (Basturkmen, 2010; West, 1994). Various investigators have also recommended some common techniques for Needs Analysis. For instance, Long (2005) explains, "some [techniques] requiring more expertise or time than others, and some being more appropriate than others for different situations or use with different kinds of informants" (p. 30-31). These techniques have both pros and cons. According to West (1994), when comparing methods, questionnaires, interviews, and observations are the three most common tools in needs analysis study. However, on the other hand, Astika (2015) stressed that questionnaires and interviews are two commonly used instruments for needs analysis. Therefore, questionnaires and semi-structured interviews were preferred as information gathering instruments for the current study. Hence, the following section explains each instrument.

Questionnaire

The questionnaire was employed as the primary data collection instrument in the study. Thus, the data from the questionnaire would help the researchers explore the important academic language skills prioritized by the participants while studying their major courses. Thus, the questionnaire implicitly comprised learning and target situation needs. It was also divided into academic English language skills and sub-skills considering the target and the learning situations to explore learners' needs for English for Academic Purposes.

Therefore, the respondents were asked to rank academic language skills and sub-skills using 5-point scale items. Similar questions were employed for both the students and the instructors. In addition, vocabulary and grammar components were included in the questionnaire. The questionnaire was adapted from the widely-used needs analysis models (e.g., Dudley-Evans & St John., 1998; Hutchinson & Waters, 1987; Munby, 1978; Nunan, 1988) and previous empirical studies(e.g., Alfehaid, 2011; Alkutbi, 2018; Chatsungnoen, 2015; Jordan, 1998; Qotbah, 1990; Richards, 2001). Additionally, the questionnaire was pilot tested for validity purposes.

Interview

Interviews provide the interviewer with sufficient flexibility and allow the interviewer to obtain unexpected responses from the interviewees (Richards, 2009). Thus, in conjunction with the questionnaire, semi-structured interviews were used in this research to elicit in-depth information that could complement the questionnaire. The interview questions were also compatible with the questionnaire. All of the interviews were conducted in the English language considering the participants' multilingual nature.

Reliability Test

According to Dörnyei (2003), data collecting tools should have a reliability score of at least 0.60. The instruments are listed in Table 1. for the reliability test.

Table 1. **Reliability Test**: Cronbach's α Values for sample Students and instructors

Instrument/item	Cronbach's alpha	No. of items Reliability
Students' questionnaire	.87	59
Instructors' questionnaire	.86	59

Source: Survey Data (2021)

The study found that the two instruments provide fairly similar scores for the constructs from both stakeholders, as shown in Table 3.1.

Data Collection Procedures

Following a series of discussions with key stakeholders, a random sample of students was drawn from each of the 20 sections, which comprised between 54 and 58 students. The selected sample comprised between 18 and 19 student respondents in each section. Following that, the final version of the questionnaire was distributed to 324 first-year undergraduates in February 2021. Most of the subjects completed the questionnaire in class under the supervision of the researchers and instructors. A total of 308 correctly completed questionnaires were returned, yielding a response rate of around 95%. The questionnaire elicited detailed information about students' academic English skills and sub-skills.

The same instrument was also completed by all EAP and subject area instructors, yielding a response rate of 64%. This means forty-one respondents filled in the questionnaires and returned to the researchers. And the remaining 23 of the respondents did not return the questionnaire, with a non-response rate of 36%. Finally, SPSS version 20 was used to analyze the data.

Regarding the interview data collection procedures, the questions were designed based on the questionnaire data. According to Chatsungnoen (2015), scholars use four fundamental procedures to gather data via interview. These include interview preparation, interview setup, interview interaction, and post-

interview organization (Talmy & Richards, 2010). Moreover, validity was ensured by checking the interview questions from the supervisors' and colleagues' perspectives.

Accordingly, consent was made before the interview to record the participants' voices using a call recorder device. Flexible hours were implemented to allow responders to speak freely over the phone since there was no eye contact or gestures to give the interviewee cues. Hence, the interviews were conducted at different times, from February 19, 2021, to March 3, 2021. Call recorder apps were used to record all of the interviews. Luckily, most of the participants were in the active subscriptions and had good exposure to network access, except a few respondents hung up and ended the call; there were connection problems in some of the interviews. However, the dialogues with participants who had access to the network were handled calmly and patiently. The data from the semi-structured interviews were qualitatively analyzed using Miles & Huberman's (1994) techniques for data collection, data reduction, and data display.

Data Analysis Techniques

This section describes how the data obtained from the participants were analyzed; therefore, the study focused on analyzing students' and their instructors' perceptions regarding the academic language skills required of students in the EAP program using the mixed-research methods. Then, descriptive statistics were used for the quantitative data analysis and qualitative technique was used to analyze the interview data. The section is explained as follows.

Quantitative Data Analysis

After clearing the data, the responses to closed-ended items were analyzed using the SPSS software, commonly employed in Educational research (Alfehaid, 2011; Dornyei, 2007). Therefore, the questionnaire data were coded into SPSS 20.0 version as the first step in data processing involves converting the subjective data into numbers through 'coding procedures' (Dornyei, 2007, p. 180). As a result,

statistical tools, including percentages, mean, standard deviation and sample (n), were run to measure EFL learners' important academic English skills and sub-skills required in the target and learning situations.

In this research, the mean values represent information about the participants' scores by considering all the scores. The standard deviation is an index of the average disparity among the scores to indicate the average distance between individual scores and the mean. Furthermore, the participants' numbers (n) represent the total sample of the respondents who participate in the study. Such statistics are almost always reported in tables, which offer a typical sample following the American Psychological Associations (APA) format (Dornyei, 2007).

Qualitative Data Analysis

The semi- structured interview data were used to examine students' EAP needs analysis to substantiate the questionnaire data. Each audio-recorded interview was transcribed verbatim and made tangible forms to navigate easily. The transcript of each interview was sorted in the sequence of interview questions. The transcription process included unfinished sentences, phrases, expressions, and pauses. Finally, representative quotes were selected for the findings and discussion sections.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section summarizes the findings and discussion in order to find what academic language skills and sub-skills do first-year students need to study. In the following section, respondents were asked their perceptions of the importance level of major academic English skills and sub-skills to answer the study's research question (RQ). The questionnaire contains two sub-sections, i.e., (a) academic language skills and (b) academic language sub-skills. The sub-section of academic language skills, in turn, contains many items under each. Academic language skills contain six items, whereas academic language sub-skills contain a total of 41 items, so the respondents were asked to rank order the skills from very important (5) to

not very important (1) to express their views. The first section, which consisted of six items, is analyzed.

Table 4.1. The **Importance Levels** of the **Major Academic English Language Skills**

Descriptive Statistics

Perceived level of importance of Academic English language skills	Instructors			Students		
	Mean	N	S. D.	Mean	N	S. D.
Academic Speaking	4.61	41	0.80	4.43	308	.92
Academic Listening	4.41	41	0.92	4.37	308	.88
Academic Writing	4.56	41	0.90	4.46	308	.86
Academic Reading	4.66	41	0.69	4.42	308	.87
Grammar Items	4.59	41	0.71	4.23	308	.00
Academic Vocabulary	4.66	41	0.73	4.30	308	.95
Overall average	**4.58**	**41**	**0.79**	**4.37**	**308**	**0.75**

* For each sub-skill, ranking 5 is very important, and 1 is not very important. The higher the mean, the more important the sub-skill is.
Source: Survey data (2021)

Table 4.1. showed that the importance of the major academic English skills was analyzed using descriptive statistics. Both groups of the respondents agreed that all the academic language skills are most needed by rating very important levels for all the items, with an overall mean average of 4.50. It can be gleaned from the Table that academic vocabulary and academic reading skills were found to be the most important skills for teacher respondents, with the same mean score (M=4.66) for both. This is the highest mean score among teacher respondents. Academic speaking and grammar items were also found to be very important skills for students' academic study, with mean scores of (M=4.61, M= 4.59) respectively. Academic writing and listening were found to be the 'less' important skills, with

average mean scores of 4.56 and 4.41 for teacher respondents, respectively. However, it should be noted that both items attracted a significant level of students' attention.

The student respondents also rated all the academic language skills as 'important' and 'very important'. As indicated in the Table, academic writing and speaking skills were rated as highly needed skills with an average mean of 4.46 and 4.43, respectively. On the other hand, academic reading and listening skills (with mean scores of 4.43 and 4.37, respectively) had approximately congruent means. In contrast, academic vocabulary (M= 4.30) and academic grammar (M= 4.23) were the 'least' rated items of student responses, but still modestly high preferences because the items shared good perceptions from both groups of the respondents.

However, both the instructors and the students indicated different needs on the priority of the major academic language skills (academic reading, writing, speaking, listening and vocabulary), and the total mean score of instructors depicted (M= 4.58), which is more than the total mean for the student respondents (M= 4.37).

On the other hand, interview questions were asked about the importance of the major language skills. Accordingly, the major academic language skills required by the student and the instructor participants were asked to prioritize (rank order) these skills according to their importance for the learners' academic success in the university. It is believed that instructors have good awareness and understanding (from experience and practical observation) of their students' academic language priorities. Accordingly, although the sampled instructors had different views on the priorities of these academic language skills, most participants agreed on the importance of the four language skills for students' academic study. For example, while most sampled teachers claimed academic reading and writing as the most important skills followed by listening and speaking for students' academic success, two of the interviewees claimed academic listening as the most required skill. They claimed that students need to listen to their teachers with concentration since they expect to be successful in their studies. '…most of the time in university, students want to study listening as the first and most important thing of language. Hence,

their belief about communicative English courses is to have good English listening proficiency. However, when interrogated about the other skills, two of them expressed writing as the second important skill; reading and speaking are the third and fourth skills, respectively

Additionally, this study made an attempt to collect data about respondents' perceptions of academic language sub-skills. These sub-skills consisted of 41 items on a five-point Likert scale (from 'very important' (5) to 'not very important' (1)). To do this, the respondents were provided with a list of sub-skills and were asked to rate the importance of each, as shown below.

Table 4.2. **Academic Listening Sub-skills** as ranked by the respondents

Items	Descriptive Statistics					
	Instructors			Students		
Academic listening sub-skills	Mean	N	S. D.	Mean	N	S. D.
Listen and understand daily conversations	4.8	41	.54	4.5	308	.79
Listen and understand discussions/ seminars presentations in English	4.9	41	.23	4.6	308	.61
Listen to instructions and ask for information	4.9	41	.23	4.5	308	.52
Listen to lectures for general understanding (listening to obtain gist)	4.9	41	.23	4.3	308	.99
listen for specific points to remember (listening to obtain specific information)	4.6	41	.61	4.3	308	.86
Understand lecture and ask questions for clarification	4.8	41	.42	4.3	308	.98

Understand the main ideas of lectures	4.9	41	.32	4.4	308	.79
Recognize supporting ideas/examples	4.8	41	.38	4.2	308	1.01
Understand the organization of lectures	4.5	41	.51	4.4	308	.69
Listen to lecture and take notes	4.7		.56	4.3	308	.93
Identify different views/ideas in the lecture	4.7	41	.48	4.3	308	1.06
Understand key vocabulary items	4.5	41	.61	4.5	308	.93
Overall average	**4.75**	**41**	**.43**	**4.39**	**308**	**.85**

* For each sub-skill, ranking 5 is very important, and 1 is not very important. The higher the mean, the more important the sub-skill is.

Source: Survey data (2021)

Data on the level of importance of the listening sub-skills is obtained from instruments using descriptive statistics. Table 4.2 revealed that both respondents (n= 41 & n=308) indicated that all the academic listening sub-skills are important for students' academic study in the university.

Among the listening sub-skills, 'Listen and understand discussions/ seminars presentations in English', 'Listen to instructions and ask for information and 'Listen to lectures for general understanding' and 'listen to understand the main ideas of the lectures' were ranked by the majority of the instructors as important academic skills needed, with a similar average mean score of (M= 4.90). This is followed by 'recognizing supporting ideas' (M= 4.8), 'listening and understanding daily conversations' and understanding lecture and asking questions for clarification' (M= 4.8) mean score; 'listen to lecture and take notes' (M= 4.7) and 'identify different ideas/views in the lecture' received (M= 4.7) mean score.

The other sub-skills such as 'listening for specific points to remember (listening to obtain specific information) (M= 4.6); 'Understand the organization of lectures, and 'Understand key items of vocabulary' (M= 4.5) were ranked as less important sub-skills, albeit categorized under 'very important' in the Likert scale description table. However, the total mean score for this group of respondents is 4.8, which means the respondents agreed that all the academic listening sub-skills mentioned are very important for students' academic success.

On the other hand, student respondents rated a mean score greater than 4.0 points on average for all the items. This might indicate they agreed that the sub-skills are 'important' or 'very important' for students' academic study. As shown in the table, respondents (n= 308) showed that all the listening sub-skills are very important for their academic study at university, with a total mean average of 4.4 with no statistically significant difference among the items of the questionnaire. Among the listening sub-skills, 'listen and understand daily conversations' (M= 4.5), 'Listen and understand discussions/ seminars presentations in English' (M= 4.6), and 'listen to instructions and ask for information (M= 4.5), in which all the three sub-skills together exhibited above 4.5 mean scores. The total mean score of these sub-skills was 4.4. This means the sampled participants agreed that the entire sampled listening sub-skills mentioned are essential for students' present and target academic study. This is aligned with the data from instructors. The following section describes student responses on the important levels of academic speaking sub-skill.

Table 4.3. **Academic Speaking Sub-Skills** Ranked by the Respondents

Items/sub-skills	Descriptive Statistics					
	Instructors			Students		
Academic speaking sub-skills	Mean	N	S.D.	Mean	N	S.D.
Participate actively in discussions in English	4.95	41	.23	4.60	308	.69

Ask and answer questions in English	4.84	41	.38	4.48	308	.67
Make presentations/Present oral reports	4.89	41	.32	4.69	308	.50
Give oral instructions	4.74	41	.45	4.25	308	1.02
Talk to colleagues and instructors in the class	4.63	41	.49	4.25	308	.78
Use visual aids	4.26	41	.73	4.18	308	.94
Speak from notes	4.37	41	.68	3.77	308	1.15
Communicate ideas confidently	4.84	41	.50	4.50	308	.87
Speak clearly (pronunciation)	4.63	41	.83	4.41	308	.96
Communicate ideas fluently	4.74	41	.81	4.26	308	1.04
Overall average	**4.69**	**41**	**0.54**	**4.34**	**308**	**0.86**

* For each sub-skill, ranking 5 is very important, and 1 is not very important. The higher the mean, the more important the sub-skill is.

Source: Survey data (2021)

Regarding the academic speaking sub-skills (Table 4.3), all the items were ranked as 'important' or 'very important' sub-skills for students' EAP study, with a total mean average of (n= 41, M=4.70 and n=308, M=4.34) which is located between 'very important' and 'important' levels. This means that nearly all the participants believed that focusing on such academic sub-skills is considered very important for learners' academic success. For instance, (Fadel & Rajab, 2017)

indicated that speaking and listening should not be ignored because they are essential skills students need to achieve their academic studies successfully. Moreover, those skills are significant since they facilitate the students' learning process in the present and target situation.

Specifically, the results revealed that SS&H college students found the sub-skills important to their studies at the university. Thus, in terms of the most important sub-skills used, the results showed, 'Make presentations or present oral reports (4.69) and 'Participate actively in discussions (4.60) received much attention from most sample participants. Additionally, 'Communicate ideas confidently' (4.50), 'Ask and answer questions in English' (4.48) and 'Speak clearly or pronunciation' (4.41) were ranked moderately but still at the level of 'important' and very important. On the other hand, 'Communicate ideas fluently' (4.26), 'Give oral instructions (4.25), 'Talk to colleagues and instructors in the class ' (4.25), and 'Use visual aids (4.18), and 'Speak from notes' (3.77) were the least ranked items compared to the sample teachers. This implies considering such sub-skills in the learners' target and present needs analysis during course design.

The importance levels of academic reading sub-skills were analyzed in the next section.

Table 4.4. **Academic Reading Sub-skills** as Ranked by the Respondents

Academic Reading Sub-skills	Descriptive Statistics					
	Instructors			Students		
	Mean	N	S. D.	Mean	N	S. D.
Reading professional/academic textbooks	4.78	41	.41	4.62	308	.68
Reading for general and specific information	4.79	41	.42	4.54	308	.69

Reading articles in journals/ Magazine or newspaper articles	4.47	41	.84	4.26	308	.98
Reading instruction manuals/guides	4.68	41	.48	4.41	308	.84
Reading course hand-outs	4.79	41	.42	4.62	308	.77
Reading instructions for assignments or projects	4.68	41	.48	4.52	308	.80
Reading instructions for labs or field trips	4.68	41	.58	4.38	308	.79
Reading lecture/study notes	4.79	41	.42	4.47	308	.74
Reading reference books (e.g., encyclopedias, dictionaries etc.)	4.79	41	.42	4.67	308	.51
Interpreting graphs/diagrams/tables	4.56	41	.50	4.13	308	.95
Overall average	**4.7**	**41**	**0.5**	**4.46**	**308**	**0.78**

* For each sub-skill, ranking 5 is very important, and 1 is not very important. The higher the mean, the more important the sub-skill is.

Source: Survey data (2021)

Considering the reading sub-skills, Table 4.4 showed that nearly all participants considered that these sub-skills are the most important skills for EAP learners. For example, as revealed in the Table, 'Reading for general and specific information,' 'Reading course handouts', 'Reading lecture/study notes' and 'Reading reference books' were reported as the most important sub-skills with the same mean score (nearly M= 4.80) for instructor respondents. 'Reading professional/academic textbooks' (M= 4.78) was ranked as the second most important sub-skill, followed by 'Reading instruction manuals, 'Reading instructions for assignments or projects'

and 'Reading instructions for laboratory' registered the same mean score (M= 4.68). 'Interpreting graphs/diagrams/tables' (M= 4.56) and 'Reading articles in journals/ Magazine or newspaper articles' (M= 4.47) were ranked as the least needed sub-skills but still with moderately high rankings as per the Likert scale description (see Table 3.1).

However, as regards student respondents, 'Reading reference books' (n=308; M= 4.67), 'Reading professional/academic textbooks (M= 4.62), 'Reading course handouts' (M= 4.62), 'Reading for general and specific information' (M= 4.54), 'Reading instructions for assignments or projects' (M= 4.52), 'Reading lecture/study notes' (M= 4.47) were ranked as highly needed sub-skills compared to the other sub-skills, which were ranked as having the total average mean score (M= 4.46). Hence, the reading sub-skills were selected as the most important academic English language skills required for learners' target or learning needs, with a total average mean of n=350; M= 4.6 for both groups of sample respondents.

Table 4. 5. The Importance Levels of **Writing Sub-Skills** as Ranked by the Respondents

Descriptive Statistics						
	Instructors			**Students**		
Academic Writing Sub-skills	**Mean**	**N**	**S.D.**	**Mean**	**N**	**S. D.**
Writing laboratory reports	4.78	41	.42	4.33	308	.85
Writing assignment	5.00	41	.000	4.40	308	.84
Writing field trip reports	4.79	41	.42	4.34	308	1.04
Writing essays	5.00	41	.000	4.38	308	1.00
Writing descriptions of experiments	4.89	41	.31	4.43	308	.95

Writing Project/field reports	4.89	41	.32	4.33	308	.83
Writing notes in lecture /Note-taking in class	4.74	41	.45	4.36	308	.88
Writing critiques to an article	4.89	41	.31	4.12	308	1.05
Preparing presentations	4.89	41	.31	4.55	308	.66
Writing summary	4.83	41	.37	4.47	308	.74
Overall average	**4.87**	**41**	**0.291**	**4.37**	**308**	**0.88**

* For each sub-skill, ranking 5 is very important, and 1 is not very important. The higher the mean, the more important the sub-skill is.

Source: Survey data (2021)

According to Sharndama et al. (2014), academic writing is the most important content of EAP courses in most tertiary institutions. It includes all forms of writing typical to tertiary educational settings, from everyday academic writing such as taking lecture notes or doing written class works to more complex writing tasks that the learners engage in as part of the fulfillment for the award of certificates in their course of studies (Ibid).

Therefore, for the sub-skills specified in Table 4.5, which are forms of academic wiring skills, 'Writing essays' and 'Writing assignments' attracted more attention from the respondents with a mean score of (M= 5.0). This might indicate that since university students frequently deal with writing essays and assignments in their academic courses, these two sub-skills were thought as the most important academic skills for learners' academic study. Cognizant of this, (Sharndama et al., 2014), stressed that academic writing is undertaken more frequently than any other activity in academic settings. Moreover, 'Writing descriptions of experiments', 'writing Project/field reports', 'Writing critiques to an article' and 'Preparing presentations' were rated as important sub-skills with mean score (M= 4.89) each; meanwhile 'Writing summary' (M= 4.83), 'Writing field trip reports' (M= 4.79),

'writing laboratory reports' (M= 4.78) and 'Writing notes in lecture /Note-taking in class (M= 4.74) were considered as the least important sub-skills in comparison, but still they were rated as very important to learners' academic success.

In the same way, writing sub-skills specified in the questionnaire were labelled as very important or important sub-skills needed for students' academic and career success. Five of the 10 sub-skills ('Writing assignment' (4.40), 'Writing essays' (M= 4.38), 'Writing descriptions of experiments' (M= 4.43), 'Preparing presentations' (M= 4.45) and 'Writing summary' (M= 4.47)) had a mean score above the total average mean (n=308; Mean= 4.37), whereas the other five items ('Writing laboratory reports' (M= 4.33), 'Writing field trip reports' (M= 4.34), 'Writing Project or field reports' (M= 4.33), and 'Writing notes in lecture or note-taking in class (M= 4.36) and 'Writing critiques to an article' (M= 4.12)) had a mean score below the overall mean value. However, these sub-skills still received high importance levels from the sample respondents.

The participants' responses to most of the items about academic language sub-skills were thought to be important for students' academic study in the university, particularly helping learners succeed. The respondents were asked to provide their perceptions about each sub-skill. The use of asking such needs (wants) in EAP needs analysis helps identify needs, rank their importance, and build programs or syllabi based on the rankings.

In summary, to decide the rank order of the academic language skills that the respondents prioritized, it is important to look at the related sub-skills. Thus, the sampled participants prioritized these language skills according to their perception of the language learning processes they needed.

CONCLUSIONS

The current research tried to identify first-year students' needs regarding the importance and frequency of the English language skills and sub-skills used in their field of study. According to the findings obtained from questionnaires and

semi-structured interviews, all the language skills and components were considered important by both participants and stakeholders. For example, the results showed that the students are aware of the most important academic English skills they use in their academic endeavors, like academic listening, reading, vocabulary, speaking and academic writing skills. By investigating a variety of stakeholders similar to this study, Kaewpet (2009) discovered that all language skills are equally important.

However, both the instructors and the students indicated different needs on the major academic language skills priority. While instructors prioritized academic reading and vocabulary, the students prioritized academic writing and speaking for their achievements. Thus, course designers have to pay the most attention to learners' needs when designing English material. The EAP course material should be prepared based on the learners' perceived needs, lacks and wants.

The EAP teachers and course designers should consider these needs by focusing on academic language skills and sub-skills. The current curriculum should also be amended with some omissions and additions that cater for the students' needs and discipline requirements. As Ahmed (2012) states, "If teaching materials do not fulfil the immediate needs of the students, this will cause a lack of motivation" (p.115). Therefore, the course materials should be tailored according to the students' dynamic needs to relief their language difficulties.

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