

English Occupational Needs of Garment and Apparel Fashion Technology Trainees of Ethiopian Federal Technical and Vocational Training Institute

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Abstract

This paper was aimed at investigating the English needs of garment and apparel fashion technology trainees of the Ethiopian Federal Technical and Vocational Training Institute. A sequential mixed research design was used to conduct this study. The data-gathering instruments were questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, and direct observation. All the trainees were considered to fill out the survey questionnaire. Besides, interviews were held with ten possessively selected trainees. The third data collection tool was direct observation. Three different observations were held in two different contexts. The interview and observation were used to clarify issues that had been discussed from the data collected through the questionnaire. The findings revealed that the most important English language skills for trainees' future jobs are speaking, writing, listening, and reading in decreasing order of importance. About the ability of the trainees, they are relatively better in reading and listening than in speaking and writing skills. The important and difficult English language sub-skills for the trainees are also identified and prioritized concerning the English macro-skills. Finally, the preferred learning style of trainees is the visual learning strategy.

Keywords: English for specific purposes, English for occupational purposes, English for academic purposes, needs analysis, trainee

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Introduction

The increasing interest in English courses which are designed for distinct usage, allows new ideas of language learning to gradually flourish and expand into more complex and different modes of communication. Widdowson (1978) pointed out that linguistics' goal was to untie its user's English language rules. However, a gradual change from the formal components of language to a more functional approach has recently been noted, where language is used merely as a tool in real life. This kind of perception helped to promote English for Specific Purposes and considerably contributed to its rise (Lightbown and Spada, 2002). The sphere of English for specific purposes was thought to be a proper theoretical point of departure. The reason for this is that ESP typically tries to meet the perceptible needs of learners, makes use of the underlying practices of the disciplines it serves, and focuses on language suitable to the specific environment in terms of lexis, grammar, style, genre, and discourse (Dudley-Evans, 1994; Berns, 1984). Here comes needs analysis which is essential for the development of a comprehensive and effective curriculum and syllabus in a language course that promotes learners' satisfaction of their needs and preferences.

According to Guo (2007), English is deemed significantly important in almost every area of discipline, especially in this globalized era where communications among individuals all over the world are borderless and through a variety of channels. With the globalization of trade and economy and the continuing increase of international communication in different fields, the demand for English for Specific Purposes is expanding, specifically in countries like Ethiopia where English is taught as a foreign language. The primary need for this growth is the wide usage of English as the global language and as the main medium for communication. Therefore, English is important in the education system especially in tertiary institutions which are keys in developing and producing graduates as potential employees to realize the needs of the local and international work force. When designing a course, there are numerous factors to consider. These include the learners' current knowledge and gaps, the resources available, including time, the teachers' skill, the curriculum designer's strengths and limitations, and teaching and learning principles. If these factors are not taken into account, the course may be inappropriate for the situation and learners for whom it is designed, and it may be ineffective and inefficient as a means of encouraging learning (Nation and Macalister, 2010).

According to Javid (2010), no single teaching methodology can be sufficient to address diverse and peculiar needs of ESP learners, and ESP practitioners have to pick and choose from a multitude of teaching methodologies to conduct an effective ESP course. It is also important for ESP practitioners to run ESP courses in collaboration with content teachers and these courses require methodologies that are specialized or unique as they are governed by scientific analyses of the diverse specific learners' needs. ESP practitioners should consider ESP learners' individual learning factors suc

h as their learning styles, attitudes, motivation, learning strategies etc. as well as local culture and academic ecosystem to ensure effective learning. Employers (TVET colleges) of Ethiopian Federal Technical and Vocational Training Institute graduates expect them to communicate effectively in English to contribute to the training of middle and high-level technicians. These employers recruit graduates based on their ability to demonstrate their skills, capability and knowledge during the job interview process. In addition, the graduates of the University are required to prepare teaching, training and learning materials (TTLM), prepare operation sheets and conduct assessments in English. Moreover, the trainees after graduation are expected to adapt technologies that can benefit the country. To adapt technologies, English plays an important role in getting innovative ideas, models, structure, components, and operations of machinery from the internet or printed materials in English. Therefore, the language is one of the mechanisms used to achieve the technology transfer tasks given to technical and vocational education and training (TVET) colleges.

To realize the objective stated in English, the University provided three English courses to B level trainees-Communicative English Skills I, Communicative English Skills II and Basic Writing Skills. These courses did not result in equipping the trainees with the required English competency. As a result, a need for ESP course has arisen in the University. The general English has been tried for many years but it does not bring the necessary language competency, so it may be good to try English for specific purpose which has not been tried before although lots of researches had been carried out in this stream. Hence, as Kaewpet (2009) stated every ESP courses should not be conducted without needs analysis. Similarly, Richards (2001) stated a sound educational program should be based on an analysis of learners' needs.

The English language courses, like all other courses, have to be aligned with the University's mission of producing competent and innovative trainers and leaders; equipping graduates of FTVTI with the required skills to conduct quality technology research; providing demand-driven community and consultancy services; and ensuring engagement with industry and foreign institutions. Without the English language, it is difficult to get innovative ideas from different sources, share ideas and apply them in the training process. In addition, it is difficult to effectively communicate with foreigners in charge of industries and conduct feasible technology transfer. Therefore, it is important to evaluate the courses in order to see how far they are helping the University in achieving the goals and objectives of the training.

In 2015, the University conducted a tracer study to examine how far its graduates are competent as expected. The result of tracer study of the University indicated that the graduates lacked theoretical knowledge in their subject and they were not also good in the English language. As a result of this, they were not able to prepare comprehensible teaching, training, learning materials (TTLM), operation sheet and assessment. Thus, it is necessary to answer these questions: what are the English needs of the trainees? What are the trainees' English deficiencies that need to be addressed? What are the preferred learning styles of the trainees?

Methodology

Research Design

A sequential mixed-research approach was used. In this approach, the results of the qualitative study were used to clarify what was found out in quantitative study. In the quantitative study the researcher tried to identify the degree of importance of variables to the occupational needs of trainers. These same variables were explored using qualitative methods to be compared with the quantitative result.

Participants of the Study

In this study, three sections of garment and apparel fashion technology trainees in Ethiopian Federal Technical and Vocational Training Institute (FTVTI) were taken as participants. Since the study analyzes the needs of garment and apparel fashion technology trainees, forty-six regular program trainees were made to fill the questionnaire. The regular

program trainees were the focus because almost all the trainees become trainers in TVET colleges.

Data Gathering Instruments

Richards (2001) stated that questionnaire, interview, meeting, observation, task analysis, and collecting learner language samples are the means for getting the necessary data for analyzing needs. The researcher employed different data gathering instruments so as to triangulate the data

and arrive at a sound conclusion. The data gathering tools were questionnaire, interview and observation.

Questionnaire

Questionnaire was used as a main data collecting instrument because the study focused on identifying the perceptions of trainees on the importance of the language macro-skills and sub-skills, so it is appropriate instrument to cover lots of issues. In addition, the study also tried to get ideas from participants on the most frequent learning styles that the trainees preferred to make use of. This can make easier to score the responses to questions and to obtain an overall measure of opinions of the trainees. The questionnaire was adapted from Richards' needs analysis questionnaire for non-English background students (2001). The rating scale in Richards' questionnaire was made on frequency, and the questionnaire scale for this study was made on importance and difficulty of using the skills and learning styles on a five point Likert scale.

The questionnaire was evaluated for validity by three English instructors who had exposure on needs analysis researches. The researcher added some items based on these instructors suggestions and also reworded some items for clarity. He added the last part of the questionnaire based on the English instructors' comments. Then the questionnaire was sent to the researcher's advisor for comments. The advisor provided comments that helped the researcher to change the wordings of some items and changes were also made on the rating scale which was originally 'frequency' scale as that of Richards to 'importance' rating scale based on his comments.

The questionnaire consisted of four parts. The first part of the questionnaire was about background information of the trainees and it contained five questions. The second part of the questionnaire dealt with the English language needs and difficulties of the trainees. This part of the questionnaire included five sub-parts. The first sub-section comprised speaking skill, listening skill, writing skill, reading skill, grammar and vocabulary. The trainees were required to rate the importance and difficulty of these four language macro skills and language knowledge areas on a scale given from 1 to 5. The second sub-section included items that dealt with degree of importance and difficulty of listening sub-skills to the trainees to be rated under the scale given 1 to 5. In the third part of trainees' questionnaire, they were asked about their language learning preferences. There were twenty four items to be rated on a five point frequency scale by the trainees. In the last part of the questionnaire, the trainees were required to reply how frequently they used English in the classroom, and they were also requested to write any suggestions regarding their English language necessities, gaps and preferences.

In order to administer trainees' questionnaire, the researcher first communicated Dean of the Satellite Center through the FTVTI Satellite Centers Director in order to make things went smoothly. The researcher sent the questionnaires to language teachers who work in Arbaminich and Dire Dawa. The teachers were oriented through cell-phone that they should give trainees (respondents) general explanations on how to rate language importance, language difficulty and learning styles. The teachers administered the questionnaire in their presence as they should avail themselves in case the respondents encounter ambiguity in the questionnaire and need clarification.

Interview

In this study, a semi-structured interview was used as supplementary data collection instruments to the main data gathering tool which was a questionnaire. A semi-structured interview with outlined topics for discussions was employed. The purpose of using the semi-structured interview was that it allowed the researcher to manage the interview in a flexible manner guided by preplanned interview questions. It also enabled the researcher to discuss various topics with multiple themes providing room for free responses from the interviewees. Ten trainees were randomly selected for the interview from the University. From these respondents, the interviews with trainees were held in local language (Amharic) to make them feel confident and express themselves well and freely. Before the interview was conducted, the interviewee was requested for his/her consent. When the interviewee agreed, he/she was briefed about the purpose of the research. Then, the researcher employed a recording when the interviewee was willing; otherwise, the interview was held by two interviewers. Both of the interviewers took notes of what the interviewee explained. Then, they compared and rewrote their notes just after they had finished the interviews.

Observation

The type of observation used was direct observation. Observation was the third data gathering instrument in this study. The observation was conducted in two different contexts where the participants were involved in practical activities. One of the situations was in-school training where trains were carrying out project works which involved production of various types of garment. Another situation was in-company training where the trainees went to garment factories to exercise the knowledge, skills and attitude the got during training. In each context the observation was made three times for a period of three hours. Since the result of the first two observations and that of the third observation became similar, the researched decided not to make additional observation. The observation was made focusing on the behavior displayed during the practical training period pertaining to the objective of the study, so the researcher recorded behaviors that helped him clarify the data gathered through questionnaire and interview.

Data Analysis Methods

In order to analyze the data collected through the questionnaire, both descriptive statistics were used- mean, and standard deviation. The results were presented using tables, and graphs. In order to generate these statistical results, SPSS 24 software was employed. After the analysis, the results were compiled and included in the final written report. Then the data collected through individual interviews were recorded into notebooks and/or tape recorders. Tape recorded data was first transcribed by two English instructors. One of the instructors translated the responses of the trainees from Amharic to English and the second instructor translated the English version back into Amharic. Then comparison was made between the Amharic responses of the trainees and the back translation of the second instructor.

All the qualitative information gathered during the survey was transcribed, and written down in English (if it is conducted in local language) and then entered into the computer using word processing. Finally, the qualitative information obtained from each interviewee was categorized under similar theme focusing on the most occurring issues in each of the ten interviewees. The observation of two settings was analyzed separately to see what the trainees need for academic and occupational purposes. Then, the main idea of each message was analyzed to find out which language aspects were underlined. The data gathered through interviews and observations were discussed with respect to the issue collected through questionnaire that was analyzed quantitatively.

Results and Discussion

The data gathered regarding trainees' needs through questionnaire, interview and

observation are presented and discussed. The data collected were presented in three different sections. In the first section, data analysis of the degree of importance and difficulty of English language macro-skills and sub-skills were discussed. The second section focused on analyzing the language learning preferences of the trainees. Finally, the trainees' English language use was discussed.

Data Analysis of Trainees' Language Needs

Reliability of Items

The reliability of 58 items concerning trainees' need, 58 items about trainees' lacks, and 24 items regarding trainees' learning preferences were run and the result of all this 140 items were presented in table 1.

Table 1. Reliability of All Items

<i>Cronbach's Alpha</i>	<i>Number of Items</i>
0.966	140

The reliability all 140 items except background issues was tested and it became 0.949 which indicated that they were highly reliable.

Importance and Difficulty of English Macro-Skills

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics on Importance and Difficulty of English Skills

<i>Language Skills and areas</i>	<i>Importance Mean</i>	<i>Importance Std.</i>	<i>Difficulty Mean</i>	<i>Difficulty Std.</i>
Speaking	4.67	0.52	1.96	1.11
Writing	4.61	0.49	1.91	0.86
Listening	4.33	0.60	2.24	0.90
Reading	4.20	0.58	2.20	1.15
Grammar	4.04	0.84	2.89	1.25
Vocabulary	3.41	1.38	3.46	1.07

The trainees' rate speaking skills as being the most important of all the skills for their future jobs with a mean score of 4.67 and the deviation was almost the same with other skills except vocabulary. Then they rate writing skill ($M=4.61$, $Sd=.49$) as a second important skill for their future job. Speaking and writing, as they were the first and second important skills, were also the most difficult skills respectively. When inquiring about specific English skills, writing was considered the second most important skill which was in agreement with Male et al. (2009), Evans (2010), and Spence and Liu (2012). According to these authors writing skill was considered the most important, and in this research writing was the second most important which indicated that it required attention during material preparation. Listening skill was the graduating trainees' third preferred skill for their future job, and its mean was 4.33. Fourthly comes reading skill with an average score of 4.19. Reading and listening were the third and fourth most difficult skills respectively with scores of 2.20 and 2.24. Grammar with an average score of 4.04 becomes the fifth preference of the prospect graduates. Finally vocabulary was regarded as the least important skills with an average score of 3.41.

In the interview held with the trainees, one of the interviewee (Tr1) said: Writing and reading are more important to me in order to attend my training. I need to write assignments, essay type exams and project reports. I also read handouts, reference books and online materials. I think speaking is very important for my future job because at the time of provision of the training most of the activities involve speaking skill. For example, I am required to deliver a lecture to my

trainees, ask questions, give oral explanation during demonstrations, and conduct oral questions, give oral explanation during demonstrations, and conduct oral assessments. So, speaking is the most important skill for my future job performance and even in my own training here in the Unive

rsity.

In this study, speaking and writing skills were identified as the two most important English macro-skills. As outlined by Spence & Liu (2013) the two most common English core skills were writing and reading. Here in these two studies writing skill was the most needed skill by the respondents of the two studies. Speaking skill was needed very much by garment and apparel fashion technology trainees because they were required to deliver frequent project paper presentations and in-company training that demanded the trainees to do probable less reading than speaking. Listening was the less commonly needed skill as figured out by this study as that of Spence & Liu (2013).

Concerning the difficulty of the four English macro skills, Spence & Liu (2013) found out that the most difficult skills for the majority were speaking and listening, with speaking rated as being slightly more difficult than listening. On the other hand, writing and reading were rated easiest, with reading being rated as the least difficult of the four core English skills. To the contrary, this study came up with a different result in that writing skill was the most difficult skill which was identified as easiest by Spence and Liu. It also differed in raking listening skill as the least difficult English macro skills which was taken as the difficult skill by the two scholars. Writing was taken as the most difficult by garment and apparel fashion technology trainees because they were expected to prepare project reports, writing assignments, answering essay-type questions etc. in training context. Similarly, at workplace setting, they were expected to prepare teaching and learning materials, information sheet, operation sheet and assessments which all of these tasks involved more writing. In general, the interviewees' replies indicated that speaking skill was a very important skill for them as they provided lectures and demonstrations to their trainees. The explained that writing skill was also important to them as it helped them in preparing materials and assessments to their trainees.

This analysis indicated us that the syllabus designers need to focus on the productive skills –speaking and writing skills. It was then essential to give English language training to improve the language competency of the FTVTI graduates focusing on these identified needs. The analyses of the skills difficult level indicated that the focus areas for syllabus designers and material developers should be first writing skill followed by speaking skill. The writing skill can be integrated with speaking. Being the most important and the most difficult made the two skills to be the focus of English language improvement training.

Importance and Difficulty of Listening Sub-skills

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics on Importance and Difficulty of Listening Sub-skills

<i>Listening Sub-skills</i>	<i>Importance Mean</i>	<i>Importance Std.</i>	<i>Difficulty Mean</i>	<i>Difficulty Std.</i>
Listening to:				
short training to trainers	4.30	0.63	2.28	1.28
trainee's questions	4.13	0.78	2.07	1.31
class discussions	4.35	0.57	2.35	1.16
short talks at workshops	4.37	0.57	2.26	1.06
class presentations of projects	4.46	0.55	2.72	1.20
trainees' explanations	4.24	0.52	2.11	1.10

instructions	4.11	0.60	2.57	1.17
advice of fellow technicians	3.87	0.65	2.22	0.96

The important listening sub-skills whose score were 4.30 and above were listening to class presentations of projects, listening to short talks at workshops, listening to class discussions and listening to short training to trainers with similar standard deviation of 0.55, 0.57, 0.57 and 0.63 respectively. Their deviations showed that the scores were clustered to the mean. In other words, there were no outliers (too extreme low value or high value). The next four important listening sub-skills were listening to explanation of trainees, listening to seminar presentation, listening to trainee's questions, and listening to instructions with mean scores of 4.24, 4.15, 4.13 and 4.11. The third category of listening sub-skills was less important skills with average scores of 3.87 and 3.76. These listening skills were listening to advice from fellow technicians and listening to foreigners' talk at workplace.

Regarding difficulty, the difficult of these sub-skills in descending order of difficulty were listening to trainee's questions (2.07), listening to explanation of trainees (2.11), listening to seminars presentation (2.15), listening to advice from fellow technicians (2.22), listening to short talks at workshops (2.26), listening to short training to trainers (2.28), listening to foreigners' talk at workplace (2.33), listening to class discussions (2.35), listening to instructions (2.57), and listening to class presentations of projects (2.72). The figures in brackets were the mean scores of respective sub-skills. The deviation of these sub-skills was almost the same and around 1 standard score from the mean which indicated the distribution does not had outliers.

Considering the importance difficulty level of the listening sub-skills, it was sound to focus primarily on listening to class presentations of projects, listening to short talks at workshops, listening to class discussions, listening to short training to trainers, to explanation of trainees, and seminar presentation. Mostly the listening activities should focus on facilitating the interaction between trainers and trainees as most of the above sub-skills prevailed that the interlocutors were trainers and trainees.

Importance and Difficulty of Reading Sub-skills

Table 4. Descriptive Statistics on the Importance and Difficulty of Reading Sub-skills

Reading Sub-skills	Importance Mean	Importance Std.	Difficulty Mean	Difficulty Std.
Reading:				
garment making books	4.41	0.54	2.59	1.02
garment technical manuals	4.39	0.65	2.24	1.16
charts/ diagrams related to garment	3.93	0.80	2.98	1.11
interpreting models	4.09	0.81	2.61	1.31
instructions	4.41	0.62	2.41	1.44
technical articles	4.48	0.59	2.11	1.27
Teaching, training and learning materials	4.39	0.54	2.24	1.14
information sheet	4.46	0.50	2.24	1.18
operation sheet	4.48	0.55	2.07	1.08
letters	3.93	0.61	2.43	1.20
table and work program	4.09	0.63	2.35	0.95

notices	3.93	0.90	2.43	1.13
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Reading technical reports was the most important sub-skills to the prospect trainers with a mean score of 4.57. Reading technical articles and reading operation sheet were the second most important reading sub-skills with average scores of 4.48 with similar standard deviation. The third important sub-skill was reading information sheet with a mean score of 4.46. Two of the reading sub-skills-reading instructions and reading books related to garment occupation- were the fourth important skills with the same mean 4.41. Reading garment technical manuals, and reading teaching, training and learning materials had the same mean score of 3.39. This result agreed with Kaewpet (2009) finding which indicated that Thai civil engineers most commonly used reading sub-skill was also reading English manuals. The sixth important sub-skills were reading table/work program, and reading and interpreting models. Their mean scores were the same 4.09. Three of the reading sub-skills were relatively the least difficult ones. These skills were reading charts/diagrams related to garment occupation, reading letters, and reading notices. They had the same mean score 3.93.

In the observation, it was confirmed that the trainees read, interpreted and followed information on work specifications, standard operating procedures and work instructions, and other reference material provided to them.

Regarding difficulty of these skills, reading operation sheet was the most difficult reading sub-skill, and its mean was 2.07. The second most difficult sub-skill was reading technical articles with average score of 2.11. Three of the reading sub-skills were the third most difficult ones. These were reading information sheet; reading garment technical manuals; and reading teaching, training and learning materials with the same mean of 2.24. The rest reading sub-skills were relatively less difficult and their mean range from 2.35 to 2.98. These skills in descending order of difficulty were reading table/work program, reading instructions, reading letters, reading notices, reading books related to garment occupation, reading and interpreting models, reading technical reports, and reading charts/diagrams related to garment occupation. Their average scores were 2.35, 2.41, 2.43, 2.43, 2.59, 2.61, 2.76 and 2.98 respectively.

Importance and Difficulty of Speaking Sub-skills

Table 5. Descriptive Statistics on the Importance and Difficulty of Speaking Sub-skills

<i>Speaking Sub-skills</i>	<i>Importance Mean</i>	<i>Importance Std.</i>	<i>Difficulty Mean</i>	<i>Difficulty Std.</i>
Asking questions	4.17	0.80	2.89	1.22
Responding to questions	4.17	0.80	2.80	1.20
Participating in pair/group discussions	4.50	0.51	2.46	1.19
Giving oral presentation	4.52	0.55	2.22	1.36
Giving instructions	4.17	0.61	2.17	1.22
Describing diagrams/ charts	4.09	0.63	2.54	1.21
Responding to interviews	4.39	0.65	2.52	1.33
Giving lectures	4.50	0.51	1.91	1.30
Providing demonstration	4.50	0.51	2.39	1.32
Explaining a process	4.50	0.55	2.17	1.00
Talking about specifications	4.17	0.68	2.46	1.22
Making suggestions	3.91	0.76	2.72	1.34

Responding to suggestions	3.83	0.88	3.57	1.09
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Giving oral presentation was the most important sub-skill and its average score was 4.52. Giving lectures, providing demonstrations, explaining a process, and participating in pair/group discussions were the second most important speaking sub-skills with the same average score of 4.50. The third most important sub-skill was responding to interviews with an average score of 4.39. Asking questions, responding to questions, giving instructions, and talking about specifications had the same mean score of 4.17; and they were ranked as the fourth most important speaking sub-skills. In the observation, it was found out that the trainees were talking about washing, drying, and ironing instructions that they needed to follow. The trainees also worked consulting with each other when they were developing designs with respect to the specification set to the garment they were required to produce. The trainees interpreted instructions, specifications and standards appropriate to the required product (jacket, overcoat, sweater, trousers, skirts etc. of a different size, color and pattern). They were conveying all necessary instructions or information in producing the garment. The trainees were observed listening to comments of their trainer and replying why they made the garment in a certain way they chose. The explained the advantage of making the garment in the way they designed (size, color, pattern, shape and so on).

The second most important sub-skill, giving lecture, was also the most difficult sub-skill with an average score of 1.91. This entails that lecturing should be the focus of training materials. The second most difficult sub-skills were giving instruction and explaining a process with the same average score of 2.17. The third and the fourth difficult speaking sub-skills were giving oral presentation, and providing demonstrations with mean 2.22 and 2.39 respectively. Participating in pair/group discussions and talking about specifications were the fifth difficult sub-skill with the same average score of 2.46. Responding to interviews, describing diagrams/ charts, making suggestions, responding to questions, asking questions, and responding to suggestions were the difficult speaking activities of which their average scores were 2.52, 2.54, 2.72, 2.80, 2.89, and 3.57 respectively. The trainee (Tr2) explained: The most difficult skills to me is giving lecture, describing process and preparing training materials because I lack the vocabulary and grammar knowledge to express what I intended to present. Therefore, I often use local language in order to explain concepts and processes to my trainees.

The fourth and the fifth most important speaking sub-skills, giving oral presentation and giving instruction, were in agreement with Kaewpet (2009) results which stated that giving presentations in English and giving English instructions were the most commonly used skills by Thai civil engineers. This similarity arose as the garment and apparel fashion technology prospective trainers' functions were more on delivery of lessons to their trainees. The most important speaking sub-skills identified in this needs analysis (asking questions, responding to questions, participating in pair/group discussions, giving oral presentation, and giving instructions) go along with Kim (2006) findings that most relevant skills were participating in whole-class discussions, discuss readings or participate in small group discussion activities in class. Ferris (1998) also stated that class participation and small group work were the most frequently used speaking activities.

Importance and Difficulty of Writing Sub-skills

Table 6. Descriptive Statistics on the Importance and Difficulty of Writing Sub-skills

<i>Writing Sub-skills</i>	<i>Importance Mean</i>	<i>Importance Std.</i>	<i>Difficulty Mean</i>	<i>Difficulty Std.</i>
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Writing:				
assignments	4.22	0.81	2.72	1.29

From the thirteen writing sub-skills that the trainees were asked to rate, writing TTLM and writing operation sheet to their trainees were the two most important writing sub-skills with average scores of 4.57 and 4.46 respectively. Two of the writing sub-skills were the third most important skills. These sub-skills were writing project proposals and writing information sheet. They had the same 4.43 mean score, and their standard deviation scores were also the same 0.50. Writing project reports was ranked as the fourth most important writing sub-skills. Writing assessments to trainees and making notes come next to writing project reports with the same average score of 4.24. Three of the writing sub-skills-writing assignments to trainees, writing comments to trainees' assessments and writing instructions related to garment making-had the same mean 4.22 which made them the six preferred skills by the prospect trainers. The remaining three writing sub-skills preparing and labeling diagrams related to garment occupation, writing letters/ memos/ notice and writing work plan/schedule were the last writing sub-skill categories which were relatively less important with average scores of 4.13, 4.00 and 3.50 respectively. The standard deviation of all the writing sub-skills except writing work plan/ schedule were almost the same and less than 1 which indicated that the deviation from the mean also made them similar. This shows that the priority made on the bases of average score is appropriate. One of the interviewees (Tr6) confirmed:

The most important sub-skill for me is writing TTLM, writing operation-sheet, project proposal and project reports. These are the skills which I am required to prepare before I joined the University for upgrading myself to bachelor of garment technology. I seldom used English in my previous training because I did not have the required vocabulary, grammar, and competence to write and speak in English. The trainees were observed drawing sketches of the garment they planned to sew and taking measurements of the fabric and used pattern making tools to produce garment as per the requirements. Concerning the difficulty level of these skills, the most difficult writing sub-skill was writing operation sheet with an average score of 2.50. Three of the writing sub-skills, i.e. writing project proposals, writing project reports, and writing instructions to garment making, were rated as the second most difficult sub-skills by the trainees. Their average scores were 2.57 and their deviation from the mean were also almost the same. Writing teaching/training and learning materials, and writing information sheet were the third difficult writing sub-skills with the same mean score of 2.61. The relatively less difficult writing sub-skills as perceived by the trainees in decreasing order of difficulty were writing assignments, writing assessments, preparing and labeling garment making diagrams, making notes, writing letters/ memos/ notice, writing comments to trainees' assessments, and writing work plan and schedule. Their average scores were 2.72, 2.78, 2.85, 2.87, 2.89, 3.09, and 3.35 respectively and their standard deviation ranges from 1.10 to 1.29. Interviewee Tr8 stated:

Writing proposals and writing project reports are the most difficult writing task. The writing skills course that I took does not deal with proposal and report writing skills. As a result, we did not have any practice of writing project proposal and reports which would help us to succeed in our study in this University and in our future job which required us more of a writing skill and a speaking skill.

The twenty-four learning styles which the respondents were asked to rate how frequently they used each of them was categorized into three. These were visual, auditory, and tactile learning styles/preferences. The trainees prefer visual learning style to auditory and tactile. From auditory and tactile learning styles, the trainees prefer tactile. Regarding the use of visuals, Canning-Wilson (1996) states that students can enhance the clarity of any given meaning by creating joint links; they can help learners draw out language from their own knowledge or personal experiences. From

auditory and tactile learning styles, the graduates prefer tactile. This can go along with Brown (2008) findings which stated that students learn more by doing and experiencing rather than by observing.

Trainees' Learning Styles

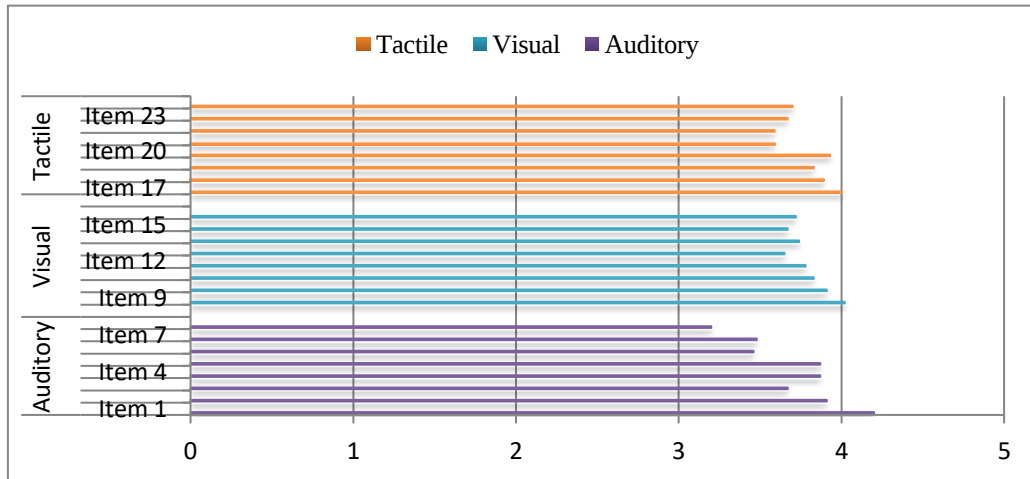


Figure 1. Descriptive Statistics on Trainees' learning Style

The most frequently used learning style (solving puzzles) go along with what Jones' (2007) explanation that puzzles, problems, and brain-teasers can stimulate meaningful communication if students work together to solve them. According to Javid (2010), no single teaching methodology can be sufficient to address diverse and peculiar needs of ESP learners and ESP practitioners had to pick and choose from a multitude of teaching methodologies to conduct an effective ESP course. It was also important for ESP practitioners to run ESP courses in collaboration with content teachers and these courses required methodologies that were specialized or unique as they were governed by scientific analyses of the diverse specific learners' needs. Consequently, visual learning style was the most preferred style to technical and vocational learners, yet it was also important to use the most preferred learning styles from tactile as well as from auditory styles.

English Use during Training Periods

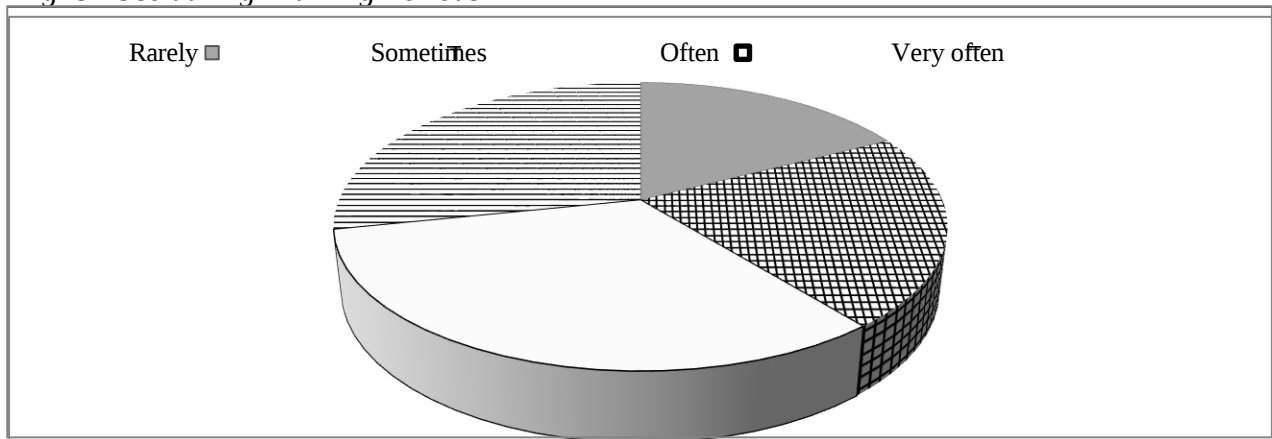


Figure 2 presented how frequently the trainees use English during training sessions. Twenty-eight of the trainees used English very often, and thirty-three percent of the trainees used English often. This indicated that the majority (61%) of the trainees interacted in English most of the time. The rest 39% of the trainees did not use English frequently. The trainees should be encouraged to speak English as much as possible, but the content should be limited to real life

occurrences likely to be experienced in their future work contexts. The procedures described above can be taken as a guide to develop an ESP curriculum depending on the results arrived at through needs analysis.

Observation

Observation result in Training Setting

During observation it was found out that they were talking about garments caring instructions among their groups during practical activities. They were particularly talking about washing, drying, and ironing procedures that they needed to follow. It was observed that they were label garment equipment and various body parts of a person and made a record of them. Besides, they were making various patterns on clothes as described in the manual. The trainees were observed making lots of description during their training. They were describing how the sewing machine works and how it is operated. They were also talked about the size, color, pattern of various clothes like suit, skirt, scarf, pajama and dress. They were making trade sketches of new garment designs, fabric swatches, and specifications.

They were talking about specifications of clothes that they decided to make. They drew simple designs based on design principles explained to the by the trainer. They were talking about cutting style (horizontal, vertical, circular, diagonal), size, and the overall look of the clothes. They made adjustments when they recognized they were not making the garment up to the standard that the group had been agreed upon. They were making typical cuts and silhouettes for the clothes that they are making according to the specifications that they had determined in advance. They were seen selecting the correct linings, buttons, zips and thread to exactly match the garment the designed and that they were going to produce.

They were often giving suggestions to one another and responding to suggestions their group-mate had made. They were suggesting a given piece of fabric, color match all components to complement, such as zips, buttons, thread, linings and other appropriate trims. They interpreted instructions, specifications and standards appropriate to the required product (jacket, overcoat, sweater, trousers, skirts etc. of a different size, color and pattern). They were conveying all necessary instructions or information in producing the garment. They were listening to comments of their trainer and replied why they made it in a certain way. The explained the advantage of making the garment in the way they designed (size, color, pattern, shape and so on).

They were observed preparing workstation that enabled them to start work. They prepared a color wheel, a value chart, appropriate tools and equipment. They were measuring dimension and kept neatness in the completion of the charts. They worked consulting with each other when they were developing designs with respect to the specification set to the garment they were required to produce. They were taking notes about sequence of operations. They made recording of what they had done for later reporting of their practice during the training in the workshop/laboratory. They documented the procedures that they made use of in order to transfer the best practices to micro and small enterprises.

They read, interpreted and followed information on work specifications, standard operating procedures and work instructions, and other reference material provided to them. They received explanations from a trainer or a tool-person and interpreted design brief accordingly. They used suitable program functions in their personal computers, and then they exchanged ideas about their designs. They made their design using digital embroidery machines. They clarified and checked task-related information and carried out the work as per occupational health standards. They drew sketches of the garment they planned to sew. They took measurements of the fabric and used pattern making tools to produce quality production output as per the requirements.

Observation result in Workplace Setting

In micro and small enterprises, it was observed that garment design, and preferred fabric

were discussed and agreed with client. They interacted with the client in the presentation of ideas and designs. They made accurate measurements of their client as per their preferred styles and color. They checked and ensured that design was suitable for their client. During in-company training held in garment factories, it was observed that they interacted with clients, individuals, work groups and supervisors. They read, interpreted and used information regarding work specifications, standard operating procedures and work instructions. They followed sequence of operations to stitch a garment as per the specifications. They clarified what and how they would perform the task they were assigned in before they began the work.

They performed hand and machine sewing and applied trims. They checked whether the specifications were met. They carried out performance evaluation and maintained accurate work records in accordance with procedures set. They interpreted work instructions, specifications and standards appropriate to the required product. They used computers to manipulate present and distribute information to their supervisors. Before they began work, they listened to in-company supervisors for explanation of using the machinery at a textile company. They were told about the layout for a store and how they could use the store as per the existing layout. They also listened to quality assurance analyst and a factory floor supervisor about the standards and procedure they should follow in execute the tasks they were given. They were also told about packing options and standards.

Discussion

This section offers responses to the research objectives and recommendations to material designers and teachers. To begin with, speaking and writing skills was found out to be the most relevant language skills to the trainees, so these two English macro-skills should be given priority in designing English language training materials. From the speaking sub-skills, giving oral presentation, giving lectures, providing demonstrations, explaining a process, participating in pair/group discussions and responding to interviews are important speaking activities which are important for trainees' future job. The most important writing sub-skills are writing TTLM, writing operation sheet, writing project proposals, writing information sheet, and writing project reports. One of these sub-skills correlates with that of Kaewpet (2009) in which the most relevant sub-skill to the civil engineers were writing reports in English.

Concerning trainees' English gaps, it was found out that writing skill was more difficult than any other macro-skills. The next difficult skill to the trainees was speaking. The most difficult writing sub-skills are writing operation sheet, writing project proposals, writing project reports, writing instructions to garment making, writing teaching/ training and learning materials, and writing information sheet. Pertaining to speaking sub-skills, giving lecture, giving instruction, explaining processes, giving oral presentation, and providing demonstrations, participating in pair/group discussions and talking about specifications most difficult sub-skills to trainees. Boshier (2013) found out that organizing and presenting ideas clearly and effectively is one of the ten most difficult tasks which similar in this study finding that giving oral presentation is the fourth difficult task for the trainees.

Regarding learning preferences, visual learning was trainees' most preferred learning style. The second and third preferred learning styles were tactile and auditory respectively. Most of the trainees use English during their training which indicated that English was important to them in attending and becoming successful in their training. However, around two-fifth of the trainees had not frequently used English. As it was explained by Spence & Liu (2013) working engineers could improve their existing English skills which could open opportunities for career advancement. For this reason, we could help trainees to be successful not only in the academic setting but also in workplace setting if we designed English course which addressed the most relevant language skills

and the skills gaps of the trainees.

Conclusion

In this section, conclusions are made based on the analysis and interpretation presented in section 4 and 5. Most of the trainees use English during training delivery; however, they have difficulty in the most important macro-skills and sub-skills that the trainees need. Speaking and writing skills are the most important as well as the most difficult skills to the trainees which make them to be the focus of English language improvement training. Language course designers and material developers should give priority to oral presentation skills including giving lectures, providing demonstrations, and explaining a process. Participating in pair/group discussions and responding to interviews are also important speaking activities which are important for trainees' future job. The centrality of writing is evidenced by the role it plays at both entry and exit course levels. Writing is sometimes used to determine whether a student is accepted on a particular course of study and usually "constitutes the main form of assessment. Writing has remained a central activity that supports what \) calls 'essayist literacy' practices in higher education. explained it is not surprising, for example, to find in assignment briefs and their accompanying marking criteria a reference to an essay when in fact the lecturer may want the students to write a report or a critique. In this research, it is identified that writing is the most relevant macro-skills which goes along with the works of scholars stated in this paragraph. The most important writing sub-skills are writing teaching, training and learning materials, writing operation sheet, writing project proposals, writing information sheet, and writing project reports. These writing sub-skills are the ones which are most frequently used in the training situation.

Conflict of Interest

No conflicts of interest.

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