

English for University Students in Ethiopia: Implications of the Needs Analysis at Haramaya University, Ethiopia

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Abstract The purpose of the study was to assess the English language needs of university students in a context, where English is used as the medium of instruction and general English courses are taught across all disciplines. To achieve this purpose, based on Hutchinson & Water's [6] target needs analysis approach, a 5-Point Likert Scale needs analysis questionnaires were designed and distributed to 152 medical science students at Haramaya university to determine the students' frequency of English language use, their perceived importance of English for academic studies, their English language lacks, and areas of English they want training in. In addition, the general course materials taught to the students were evaluated to determine their suitability to the English need of the students. Descriptive statistics were employed in analyzing the quantitative data while content analysis was applied in analyzing the qualitative data. The results indicated the perceived importance of English for the students' academic studies, their English language lacks and area in which they want training in. In addition, the study identified the inadequacy of the general English courses to meet the students' English language needs. The study suggests that there is a need for English courses with an ESP orientation to meet the specific needs of students in their academic studies.

Keywords: Needs Analysis (NA), English for Specific Purposes (ESP), Target Needs (TN), General English (GE)

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1. Introduction

ESP has witnessed substantial growth over the past five decades. Universities, higher institutions, and vocational institutions find it an essential practice to create ESP programmes for their students. These developments are related directly to the developments in various disciplines with reference to specific language needs. In tracing the origins of ESP, Dudley-Evans and St. John [3] believed, "The study of languages for specific purposes has had a long and interesting history going back, to, as far as the Roman and Greek Empires." However, they acknowledge its more recent developments as a full-fledged discipline saying that, "since the 1960s, ESP has become a vital and innovative activity within the Teaching of English as a Foreign or Second Language movement." ESP is the teaching of English used in academic studies or the teaching of English for vocational or professional purposes. The main concern of ESP has always been and has remained on preparing learners to communicate effectively in the tasks prescribed by their study or work situation. It is often said that ESP lacks an underlying theory, but according to Dudley Evans and St. John [3], it can be said that ESP could be outlined based on either the

specific nature of texts that learners require knowledge, or the nature of the teaching based on the needs related. In view of the strong orientation to ESP, the purpose of this study was to identify the English language needs of medical science students in relation to the academic requirements at Haramaya University, Ethiopia. More specifically, the study aimed to identify students' perceptions of the frequency of English language use in academic studies, their ability in performing in English, areas in which they need English language training and the existing English language courses.

In Ethiopia, English serves as a medium of instruction at secondary and tertiary levels. In this context, mastering the English language is of paramount importance for students to succeed in learning their subjects through the medium of English textbooks and lectures [9]. Nevertheless, at a university level in Ethiopia, General English language courses are offered irrespective of the disciplines of the students. Similarly, Haramaya University offers English language courses, namely, Basic Writing Skills which mainly focuses on writing skills and Communicative English Skills which mainly focuses on the four language skills for medical science students as a compulsory module for all first year students. However, these courses do not seem to meet students' English language needs as they were designed without taking into

consideration the language needs the students. As a result, there seems to be lack of integration between the language needs of students and the language courses offered. As our experience and observation shows, this is currently affecting students' academic success in Haramaya university in particular and Ethiopian universities in general.

The motivation for this research came from the dissatisfactions expressed by instructors and students concerning these general English language courses' inadequacy in enhancing students' communicative abilities. Instructors complained that their students' lacked communicative skills to express their ideas clearly in English and also faced difficulties in using English in academic situation. They claimed that the general English language courses did not seem to promote their students "Academic English language ability". Students on their part also showed lack of motivation towards the courses criticizing that the courses did not help them overcome the language difficulties they faced in studying their major courses. The researchers were inspired by these problems and intended to conduct needs analysis (NA) to explore the medical students' English language needs in relation to academic requirements as perceived by students and their instructors. A detailed identification and analysis of the students' English language needs for academic study would present a solid base for convincing Haramaya University in particular and all Ethiopian public universities in general to design English courses with ESP orientation to cater for the English language need of students with respect to their academic disciplines.

2. Needs Analysis

Hutchinson and Waters [6] define ESP as an approach to language teaching in which all decisions as to content and method are based on the learner's reason for learning. The basic question of ESP is: Why does this learner need to learn a foreign language? Similarly, Dudley-Evans and St. John [3] further describe ESP as the teaching and learning of English as a second or foreign language which meets specific needs of the learners and which makes use of underlying methodology and activities of the discipline it serves.

Needs analysis was introduced into English Language Teaching (ELT) through ESP movement in 1960s. According to Evans and Green [4], NA has been used for identifying the types of the academic activities and tasks of different disciplines and the students' needs of academic English language skills to effectively study their majoring courses. According to Hyland [8], NA refers to the techniques for collecting and assessing information that is relevant to course design. It is the means of establishing the how and what of a course. It is a continuous process, because we modify our teaching as we learn more about our students, and in this way it actually shades into evaluation – the means of establishing the effectiveness of a course. According to Munby [11], the work done in the field of ESP has generally followed the assumption that if a group of learners' English language needs can be accurately identified and specified, this can be used to determine the content of a language programme that will meet these needs. Orr [12] mentioned that among the variables that NA of ESP will identify is

the list of relevant skills that learners must master in order to successfully accomplish the specific academic or workplace purposes for which they seek specialized training.

Several approaches to NA have been provided by different scholars. The first approach to NA is named as Target Situation Analysis (hereafter TSA). According to Hyland [8], TSA would tell us about what the learners need to be able to do in the target language by the end of the course. This includes understanding the needs and expectation of the sponsoring organization. Another approach to NA is called Present Situation Analysis (PSA hereafter). The PSA is based on identifying students' control of the target language at the beginning of the language course [10]; it seeks to estimate students' present strengths and weaknesses in the language, in skills, and in experience of learning [3].

Hutchinson & Waters [6] proposed their approach to NA, in which they supported that materials and methodology of an ESP course are to be determined by learners' needs. Their approach, which includes the TSA, the PSA, and objective needs as well as subjective. In addition, they further divided the target needs into three parts: necessity (needs identified by the requirements of target situation), lacks (the necessary proficiency for the target situation minus what the students already know), and wants (what the students desire to learn). In the approach suggested by Dudley-Evans & St John [3], NA was broadened largely to encompass not only the TSA and the PSA, but also deficiency analysis, linguistic analysis, discourse analysis, genre analysis and means analysis. According to their NA approach, in order to analyze and identify the learners' needs, all of these multifaceted approaches to NA should be applied.

The present study adopted Hutchinson & Waters' [6] approach to NA because in comparison with approaches to NA suggested by other scholars, it provides a more manageable framework for analyzing the target situation and also a parallel framework for analyzing learning needs and is comprehensive and clear as it includes the TSA, the PSA, objective needs, and subjective needs by dividing the learners' target needs into necessity, lacks, and wants. Moreover, Hutchinson & Waters' approach [6] has been recommended and adopted by many scholars (e.g. [1,8]).

3. Objectives of the Study

The major objective of this study was to investigate the English language needs of medical science students in relation to academic requirements at Haramaya University as perceived by students. The following four questions guided the research reported in this paper:

1. To what extent is English language used by students in their academic studies?
2. How important is English language for medical science students for their academic studies?
3. What is the perceived ability of the students in performing in English language in their academic studies?
4. To what extent are the existing English language courses relevant for students' academic studies?

4. Methodology of the Study

4.1. Participants of the study

In the study, descriptive survey design was used to obtain the students' perceptions of English language needs in academic studies and evaluative research design was used to evaluate the suitability of the existing English courses. The sample comprised randomly chosen medical science students: 152 fourth and fifth year students. Senior classes were chosen with the assumption that they have better awareness than the junior classes concerning the importance of English language in their academic studies.

4.2. Methods of Data Collection and Analysis

The primary tool used to conduct this study was a needs analysis questionnaire (hereafter NAQ) covering various dimensions of English language needs at the University level written in English with a combination of closed and open ended questions. In developing the questionnaires, we made use of some items adapted from [7] and [5]. The NAQs consisted of three parts. The first part contained questions that were used for eliciting background information of the respondents regarding their gender, academic department, and class level to establish their profile for the study. The second part consisted of four sections (A, B, C&D) each comprising of 23 items, which were further subdivided into four sub-skills: namely reading (items 1 to 5), listening (items 6 to10), speaking (items 11 to15) and writing (items 16 to 23). In Section A, students rated their frequency of English language use based on a five-point Likert scale 5= most frequently, 4=frequently, 3=sometimes, 2=least frequently and 1=never. In section B, students rated the importance of English in their studies based on a rating scale 5=most important, 4=important, 3=moderately important, 2=least important and 1=unimportant. In section C, students rated their ability to perform in English skills in their academic studies based on based on a rating scale 5=very good, 4=good, 3=average, 2=weak and 1=very weak. In section D, students rated their training needs in English based on 5=training is needed to a very great extent, 4= training is needed to a great extent, 3= training is needed to some extent, 2=a little training needed and 1=no training needed.

The third part of the questionnaire was composed of 5 items which were designed to provide data to assess in-depth students' views of the existing English language courses. The questionnaire was piloted and modified in light of the comments received from 20 respondents not sampled in this study. In addition, textbook analysis was conducted using a checklist which consists of nine items developed based on Cunningsworth [2] to examine whether or not the English language courses being offered at the university adequately satisfy the students' academic language needs. The data were analyzed using SPSS version 20.

5. Results

This section presents the results of the study in the following order: students' frequency of English language use, perceived importance of English for medical students, students' English language lacks and students' English language wants.

1. Students' frequency of English language use in their academic studies

Table 1 below presents students' responses regarding their frequency of English language use, with reference to several activities common to academic contexts related to medical science disciplines.

Table 1. Students' frequency of English language skill use in the academic studies

English Language skills			
A. Reading sub-skills	M	SD	Overall Mean
1. Reading professional journals.	3.61	.74	4.116
2. Reading instructions for lab/ assignments.	4.24	.79	
3. Reading study notes.	4.51	.63	
4. Reading patient case notes /history.	3.71	.70	
5. Reading medical textbooks and lecture hand outs.	4.51	.50	
B. Listening sub-skills			4.118
6. Listening to instructions and explanations in labs.	4.17	.77	
7. Listening to follow question and answer sessions in class.	3.47	.61	
8. Listening to spoken presentations in class.	3.67	.91	
9. Listening to follow course lectures.	4.67	.58	
10. Listening to follow seminars.	4.61	.52	
C. Speaking sub-skills			2.958
11. Speaking to continue daily conversations.	2.31	.53	
12. Participating in classroom oral presentations.	3.19	.46	
13. Speaking to give seminars.	3.34	.53	
14. Speaking to discuss with teachers / classmates in class.	2.93	.39	
15. Speaking to ask and answer questions in class.	3.02	.29	
D. Writing sub-skills			3.6625
16. Writing to take notes from books/ lecture handouts.	4.28	.74	
17. Writing medical reports.	3.15	.60	
18. Writing term papers.	4.25	.73	
19. Writing to take lecture notes.	4.32	.61	
20. Writing lab reports.	3.42	.61	
21. Writing examination answers.	3.83	.80	
22. Writing articles for medical journals in medicine.	2.53	.91	
23. Writing patient's case history.	3.52	1.1	
Overall Mean			3.714

The overall mean (3.714) in Table 1 implies that English is perceived to be used frequently by students in their academic studies. Of the four language skills, listening skills (overall mean=4.118), followed by reading skills (overall mean=4.116) are perceived to be frequently used in academic studies. Reading skills (overall mean=4.13) and listening skills overall mean=4.12) have been perceived to be frequently used skill by medical science students, followed by writing (overall mean=3.67). On the other hand, speaking skills have been viewed to be sometimes used skill, as it received the lowest mean score (overall mean=2.958).

Among the sub-skills of listening, it was found that listening to follow seminars and listening to course lectures were viewed to be most frequently performed listening activities (mean scores were between 4.50 and 5.00). The remaining listening sub-skills, i.e. listening to instructions and explanations in labs, followed by listening to spoken presentations, and question and answer sessions in class were viewed to be frequently used (mean

scores ranged from 3.50 to 4.49). In general, the students' perception of using listening skills in their academic studies ranged from frequently to most frequently, which implies that listening is highly required for the academic success of the students.

Among the sub-skills of reading, it was found that reading medical textbooks and lecture handouts, and study notes were viewed to be most frequently performed reading activities in English (mean scores were between 4.50 and 5.00). The remaining reading sub-skills, i.e. reading instructions for lab and assignments, followed by patient case notes and history, and professional Journals were viewed to be frequently used reading activities (mean scores were between 3.50 and 4.49). The implication of this is that students are expected to read a lot of medical textbooks which are mostly written in English for their academic success.

However, students perceived that speaking skills is not as such used in their academic studies. It was found that students sometimes speak to give seminars (3.34), to participate in classroom oral presentations (3.19) and to ask and answer questions in class (3.02). But they rarely get involved in daily conversation (2.31). The finding implies that the students do not have the exposure to use the language outside the classroom, as the use of English in Ethiopia is merely limited to a classroom context.

With regard to writing sub-skills, though it is not used like the listening and reading sub-skills, it was perceived to be used by students ranging from sometimes to frequently. For instance, it was found that writing to take lecture notes, followed by term papers, take notes from books and lecture handouts, examination answers, and writing patient's case history were viewed to be frequently performed by students (mean scores were between 3.50 and 4.49). The remaining writing sub-skills, i.e. writing lab reports, medical reports, and articles for medical journals in medicine were perceived to be sometimes used sub-skills (mean scores were between 2.50 and 3.49).

2. Perceived importance of English language for academic studies

Table 2 presents responses concerning the perceived importance of English for the students' success in the study of their major courses.

From the mean values in the table, in the overall mean (4.14) suggests that English is perceived to be important for the academic success of the students. Of all the language skills, though the students perceived that all the four language skills are important for their studies, they tended to prioritize the importance of listening (overall mean=4.278) and speaking (overall mean= 4.104) skills more than reading (4.09) and writing (4.077) skills for their academic success.

Among the reading sub-skills, it was found that the ability to read medical textbooks and lecture handouts was viewed to be most important (mean scores were between 4.50 and 5.00). The remaining reading sub-skills, i.e. reading study notes, followed by reading professional journals, patient case notes and history, and instructions for lab and assignments were viewed to be important (mean scores were between 3.50 and 4.49).

Similarly, among the listening sub-skills; it was found that the ability to listen to follow course lectures was perceived to be most important for students' academic study (mean score= 4.62). The remaining listening sub-

skills, i.e. listening to follow seminars, followed by instructions and explanations in labs, question and answer sessions, and spoken presentations in class were perceived to be important (mean scores were between 3.50 and 4.49).

Regarding the speaking sub-skills, it was found that the ability to ask and answer questions in class, give seminars, participate in classroom oral presentations, discuss with teachers and classmates in class were viewed to be important speaking sub-skills (mean scores were between 3.50 and 4.49). On the other hand, the ability to participate in classroom oral presentations was perceived to be most important. The remaining sub-skills, i.e. the ability to continue daily conversation was viewed to be moderately important (mean score=2.98).

With regard to the sub-skills of writing, it was found that writing to take lecture notes, followed by writing examination answers and patient's case history were viewed the most important sub-skills (mean scores were between 4.50 and 5.00). The remaining sub- skills, i.e. the ability to write medical reports, followed by take notes from books / lecture handouts, and term papers were viewed to be important sub skills (mean scores were between 3.50 and 4.49). Whereas, the ability to write lab reports and articles for medical journals in medicine were viewed to be moderately important (mean scores were between 2.50 and 3.49).

Table 2. Responses regarding the Importance of English for students' academic study

Importance of English Language skills			
A. Reading sub-skills	M	SD	Overall mean
1. Reading professional journals.	4.18	.66	4.09
2. Reading instructions for lab/assignments.	3.60	.70	
3. Reading study notes.	4.34	.58	
4. Reading patient case notes /history.	3.65	.48	
5. Reading medical textbooks and lecture handouts.	4.68	.47	
B. Listening sub-skills			4.278
6. Listening to instructions and explanations in labs.	4.35	.59	
7. Listening to follow question/ answer sessions in class.	4.20	.45	
8. Listening to spoken presentations in class.	3.80	.49	
9. Listening to follow course lectures.	4.62	.49	
10. Listening to follow seminars.	4.42	.66	4.104
C. Speaking sub-skills			
11. Speaking to continue daily conversations.	2.98	.52	
12. Participating in classroom oral presentations.	4.60	.49	
13. Speaking to give seminars.	4.32	.47	
14. Speaking to discuss with teachers / classmates in class.	4.23	.78	
15. Speaking to ask and answer questions in class.	4.39	.53	4.077
D. Writing sub-skills			
16. Writing to take notes from books / lecture handouts.	4.18	.57	
17. Writing medical reports.	4.42	.50	
18. Writing term papers.	3.68	.61	
19. Writing to take lecture notes.	4.72	.45	
20. Writing lab reports.	3.36	.64	
21. Writing examination answers.	4.67	.47	
22. Writing articles for medical journals in medicine.	3.05	.80	
23. Writing patient's case history.	4.64	.55	4.14
Overall mean			

3. The students' English language lack

Table 3 presents the students' self-ratings of their present academic English language proficiency in using English in their studies. With regard to this point, Robinson [13] states as many students all over the world are studying technical or academic subjects wholly or partly through the medium of English, their command of the English language must be such that they can reach a satisfactory level in their specialist subject studies. Hence, this part of the study is seen as a means to assess the students' competence in the language skills in the target situation, concerning the language learning which has been attained during the studies and abilities acquired by the students in agreement with their needs of the language in their discipline.

Table 3. Responses with respect to students' competence in the language Skills in the target situation

English language skills	M	SD	Overall Mean
A. Reading sub skills			
1. Reading professional journals.	3.34	.94	3.868
2. Reading instructions for lab/assignments.	3.80	.76	
3. Reading study notes.	4.32	.72	
4. Reading patient case notes /history.	3.47	.70	
5. Reading medical text books and lecture hand outs.	4.41	.65	
B. Listening Sub-skills			
6. Listening to instructions and explanations in labs.	3.32	.47	3.166
7. Listening to follow question/ answer sessions in class.	3.34	.83	
8. Listening to spoken presentations in class.	3.01	.68	
9. Listening to follow course lectures.	3.04	.56	
10. Listening to follow seminars.	3.12	.49	
C. Speaking Sub-skills			
11. Speaking to continue daily conversations.	2.35	.59	2.816
12. Participating in classroom oral presentations.	2.99	.42	
13. Speaking to give seminars.	2.53	.78	
14. Speaking to discuss with teachers& classmates.	3.01	.56	
15. Speaking to ask and answer questions in class.	3.20	.62	
D. Writing Sub-skills			
16. Writing to take notes from books/lecture handouts.	4.07	.70	3.49
17. Writing medical reports.	3.60	.86	
18. Writing term papers.	3.74	.96	
19. Writing to take lecture notes.	3.07	.76	
20. Writing lab reports.	3.50	.91	
21. Writing examination answers.	3.49	.70	
22. Writing articles for medical journals in medicine.	2.78	.80	
23. Writing patient's case history.	3.67	.82	
Overall mean			3.335

Based on the mean values in the table, the overall mean 3.335 implies that the students' ability in English skills is average. Of the four skills, the students' competence in reading and writing is close to good (overall mean scores were 3.868 and 3.49 respectively) but is average for listening and speaking (overall mean scores were 3.166 and 2.816 respectively).

Among the reading sub-skills, it was found that the students' ability in reading medical textbooks and lecture handouts, study notes, and instructions for lab and assignments were viewed to be good (mean scores were

between 3.50 and 4.49). The students' competence in reading professional journals and patient case notes and history were viewed to be average (mean scores were between 2.50 and 3.49). However, their ability to read professional journals received the lowest mean score (3.34) of other sub-skills.

With regard to listening sub-skills, the students considered themselves not competent enough in performing listening activities. They rated their ability in listening average including their skills to follow question and answer sessions in class, instructions and explanations in labs, follow seminars, course lectures, and spoken presentations in their academic study (mean scores were between 2.50 and 3.49). Similarly, the students viewed their ability to be average in speaking to ask and answer questions, discuss with teachers and classmates, participate in classroom oral presentations, and to give seminars (mean scores were between 2.50 and 3.49), but rated themselves weak in daily conversation (mean score=2.35).

With regard to writing sub-skills, it was found that the students viewed themselves to be good in performing the writing activities such as taking notes from books and lecture handouts, writing medical reports, term papers, patient's case history (mean scores were between 3.50 and 4.49) and average in writing examination answers, to take lecture notes, and articles for journals in medicine (mean scores were between 2.50 and 3.49). The results showed that though the students considered the importance of the skills provided in this study as necessary and important, their competence is average. This shows a lack or need in terms of the ideal competency in the students' mind and their competence level. According to Hutchinson and Waters [6] the target proficiency needs to be matched against the existing proficiency of the learners.

4. The students' English language wants

Table 4 presents the responses obtained from the students regarding their training need that they would like to receive to improve their English language skills.

From the overall mean value (4.05), as shown in Table 4, students perceived that they needed training a great extent to improve their English language skills for their academic purposes. Of the four skills, they prioritized reading (4.12), followed by listening (4.10), speaking (4.08) and writing (3.89).

Among the sub-skills of reading, it was found that the students' expressed training needs for reading medical textbooks and lecture hand outs and study notes to a very great extent (mean scores were between 4.50 and 5.00). They also expressed training needs for reading instructions for lab and assignments, followed by patient case notes and history, and professional journals to a great extent (mean scores were between 3.50 and 4.49). Similarly, they expressed a great extent training needs to all items of listening sub-skills for their success in their academic life (mean scores were between 3.50 and 4.44). Listening to follow course lectures and seminars were viewed to be the first and second most needed sub-skills (mean scores were 4.44 and 4.41 respectively).

With regard to speaking sub-skills, the students expressed a very great extent training needs for speaking to give seminar (mean score= 4.59) and a great extent training needs for speaking to participate in classroom oral presentations, discuss with teachers and classmates, and

ask and answer questions in class for the success of their academic study (mean scores were between 3.50 and 4.49). Similarly, they expressed a great extent of training need for writing to take lecture notes, term papers, lab reports, examination answers, patient's case history, articles for medical journals, and medical reports to improve their academic writing skills (mean scores were between 3.50 and 4.49). As Spack (1988, in [8]) suggests that the writing approach should be based on process of learning guided by analyzing and synthesizing readings that represents a variety of academic genres across disciplines since they share certain features.

Table 4. Responses regarding students' English language training needs for their academic study

English Language sub-skills			
Reading sub-skills	M	SD	Overall mean
1. Reading professional journals.	3.94	.78	4.124
2. Reading instructions for lab/assignments.	4.20	.70	
3. Reading study notes.	4.53	.79	
4. Reading patient case notes and history.	3.22	.58	
5. Reading medical text books and lecture hand outs.	4.73	.56	
Listening sub-skills			4.104
6. Listening to instructions and explanations in labs.	4.34	.69	4.08
7. Listening to follow question and answer sessions in class.	3.76	.82	
8. Listening to spoken presentations in class.	3.57	.87	
9. Listening to follow course lectures.	4.44	.78	
10. Listening to follow seminars.	4.41	.88	
Speaking sub-skills			4.08
11. Speaking to continue daily conversations.	3.05	.51	3.89
12. Participating in classroom oral presentations.	4.43	.63	
13. Speaking to give seminars.	4.59	.52	
14. Speaking to discuss with teachers & classmates.	4.21	.73	
15. Speaking to ask and answer questions in class.	4.12	.43	
Writing sub-skills			3.89
16. Writing to take notes from books/lecture handouts	3.13	.68	4.05
17. Writing medical reports.	3.72	.51	
18. Writing term papers.	4.07	.42	
19. Writing to take lecture notes.	4.27	.45	
20. Writing lab reports.	4.32	.88	
21. Writing examination answers.	4.25	.89	
22. Writing articles for medical journals in medicine.	3.71	.71	
23. Writing patient's case history.	3.67	.76	
Overall Mean			4.05

5. Evaluation of the relevance of the existing English language courses for students' needs

Table 5. Students' responses regarding the usefulness of the current English language courses for their academic needs

Question	Choices	F(152)	%
How useful are the existing English language courses in relation to your English language needs?	Not useful	102	67.1
	Of little use	26	17.1
	Of some use	9	5.9
	Useful	15	9.9
	Very useful	-	-

In response to the existing general English courses, the majority of the respondents as shown in Table 5 responded

negatively to the usefulness of the courses in terms of meeting their English language needs. 67.1% and 17.1% of the students expressed that the courses are "not useful" and "of little use" respectively. This shows the inadequacy of the English courses offered at the university to promote the students' English language skills that they need for success in their academic studies. Similarly, the textbook analysis result shows that the course materials did not reflect specific language and content from medicine as needs analysis was not conducted when the courses were designed. Hence, the students' English competence required for academic success was found to be unsatisfactory. The result suggested that the English courses offered to medical students in particular and other department students at Haramaya University are not relevant to bring the intended goal to improve students' English language needs in relation to academic requirement. Therefore, revising or redesigning the courses is suggested. Hutchinson & Waters [6] believe that learners' wants and their views about the reasons why they need a language should not be ignored as they may "have a clear idea of the necessities of the target situation [and] will certainly have a view as to their lacks."

6. Conclusions and Implications

ESP focuses on the learner and is one of the greatest contributions of language teaching which assumes the thorough analysis of the students' needs when designing the language course. ESP, a well-groomed branch of ELT, is distinguished from General English due to its comprehensive needs analysis on the intentional level. In this paper, to identify the students' English language target needs, Needs Analysis was done as it can tell us a lot about the nature and content of the learners' target language needs. This survey was conducted as a preliminary step towards the identification of the needs of medical science students for English language in terms of the frequency of their use of English language skills, the importance of these skills in their studies, their ability in performing in English and their English language wants at Haramaya University as perceived by a sample of 152 medical students. Apart from this, the existing English language courses were evaluated using a checklist for their relevance to English language needs of the students. The findings indicate that medical science students are expected to frequently perform reading, listening and writing while they sometimes use English in their speaking activities in studying their major courses.

With regard to importance of English in their studies, the students indicated that the most needed skill for success at the university level is listening skill, followed by reading and writing skills but speaking skill is the least needed. In respect to their English language lack, the students indicated that their competence in English in general and speaking and listening in particular is average. In addition, their competence in reading and writing is not as expected at a university level. As a result, the data indicated training needs in all language skills for students' academic study and success. Besides identifying learners' needs, the findings showed that the current language courses do not seem to respond to the students' target language needs. They are found to be deficient to help the

students to develop the English language skills required in their academic studies. Therefore, the study recommends relevant English courses that are designed based on an ESP orientation to meet the students' needs in their academic studies.

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