



## ESP-Needs Analysis for Evaluating the English Language Syllabus of Khartoum State Vocational Training Centers

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### **ABSTRACT:**

This study aims to investigate and evaluate the English language syllabus of Khartoum state vocational training centers to see to what extent it meets the trainees' needs. To achieve that the study sets four hypotheses: To some extent the current English language syllabus does not sufficiently meet the trainee's vocational purposes. , To some limit the teaching staff at the training centers are not sufficiently satisfied with the current English language syllabus. The study adopts the descriptive analytical methodology, with questionnaire for 50 trainees, 9 English language trainers along with an interview for 3 administrative staff members. The findings of the study reveals that: The current English language syllabus does not sufficiently meet the trainees' vocational purposes. The trainees will be sufficiently motivated to learn English language through a course that concentrate more on technical language. The general administration of vocational training supports any positive changes in the current syllabus that help trainees to learning English. The study recommends: The current English language syllabus should be provided with sufficient amount of technical vocabulary to meet the trainees needs. Trainees' expectations being taught sufficient amount of technical vocabulary at the preparatory course should be considered. The general administration should support making some amendments to the current syllabus so as to meet the trainees' vocational needs. Further studies are suggested: On ESP- needs analysis in broader way. On the opinions and experiences of the trainees and the trainers about the suggested syllabus to examine whether the current study is effective.

**Keywords:** The English language syllabus, The trainees, Trainers, The New English File, The administrative staff

### **المستخلص:**

تهدف هذه الدراسة لتقصي وتقويم مقرر اللغة الإنجليزية لمراكز التدريب المهني بولاية الخرطوم لمعرفة مدى ملاءمته لإحتياجات المتدربين. لإنجاز ذلك وضعت أربع فرضيات : لا يلبي مقرر اللغة الإنجليزية الحالي لحد ما بصورة مرضية إحتياجات المتدربين المهنية. لا يرضي مقرر اللغة الإنجليزية الحالي لحد ما مدربي اللغة الإنجليزية والإداريين بمراكز التدريب المهني. تتبنى الدراسة المنهج الوصفي التحليلي مع إستخدام الإستبانة ل 50 متدرب، و 9 مدربي لغة إنجليزية والمقابلة الشخصية لعدد 3 إداريين. يتبين من نتائج الدراسة : مقرر اللغة الإنجليزية الحالي لا يلبي بصورة مرضية إحتياجات المتدربين المهنية . سيتحفز المتدربين بصورة مرضية لتعلم اللغة الإنجليزية من خلال مقرر يركز على اللغة الفنية.الإدارة العامة للتدريب المهني تدعم اي تغييرات إيجابية على المقرر الحالي بما يساعد المتدربين لتعلم اللغة الإنجليزية. توصي الدراسة بالآتي: ينبغي أن يزود مقرر اللغة الإنجليزية الحالي بقدر كافي من المفردات الفنية لمقابلة إحتياجات المتدربين. توقعات المتدربين دراسة قدر كافي من المفردات الفنية في الكورس التحضيري يجب أن تؤخذ في



الإعتبار. على الإدارة العامة للتدريب المهني دعم أى تغيير على مقرر اللغة الإنجليزية الحالي لمقابلة الإحتياجات المهنية للمتدربين الدراسات المستقبلية مقترحة في: تحليل إحتياجات اللغة الإنجليزية للأغراض المحددة بصورة أوسع. في آراء و تجارب المتدربين ومدربي اللغة الإنجليزية حول المقرر المقترح لرؤية مدي فاعلة الدراسة الحالية.

## 1. Introduction:

Since this study is to be conducted at Khartoum state vocational training centers, some light on them should be shed. There are centers built by the government of the State in 2009 and have been financially supported by the European Union, while the United Nations Organization for Industrial Development (UNIDO) provided the technical support. Four centers have been built in different locations in Khartoum State. Each center has different vocations, and every now and then a huge number of trainees is admitted with their different interests in different vocations; for instance, Halfaya vocational training center which is located in Bahri has five sections: Welding with three sub-sections, Hotels and tourism, Electronics with two sub-sections, and Electricity installations, Beauty section. The centers' direct aim is to assist the local communities specifically the IDPs (the internally displaced people). The centers provide means of acquiring a quicker skill and the quality of being competent at the same time. CBT system is adopted in the centers (competency based training system), which means that the trainee stays at/works on the same task until the task being mastered, regardless to how much raw materials are consumed.

Admission eligibility is for those aged between 15 and 25 males and females with basic school certificate as a minimum admission requirement. After admission they are called trainees, and have to go at first through the preparatory course. This course lasts for thirteen months, in which they take six different subjects; English

language is one of them. The end of the preparatory course is marked by a final assessment that qualifies the successful trainees to the technical level/course. The technical course duration is about sixteen weeks. At the technical level the trainees take specified vocations upon their choices, and under general regulations that organize admission's issue. Here they remain until they leave certified as skilled workers.

The demand for the skilled workers is an ongoing process in both local and regional labor market.

The trainees are given an English language course to prepare them for labor market. At least the amount that makes him/her able to communicate professional information and to perform some particular job related functions.

The English language course prescribed for the vocational trainees at Khartoum State vocational training centers is a compulsory one. The aim behind getting the trainees to study English language is not for intellectual nor amusing purposes. In contrary, the course is meant to be as an assistance for the trainees in communication.

This study attempts to investigate the current English language syllabus (New English File-Beginner), or the unified English language syllabus. This syllabus is completely (EGP) English for general purposes it has been designed for trainees whose scope and purpose is technical/ vocational. Some questions and hypotheses have been raised to see if the



current syllabus is sufficiently appropriate for the trainees' needs.

According to (Brumfit & Roberts, 1987)

*"Needs analysis is an investigation, in light of specification of the tasks. A learner or group of learners will be required to perform in the target language needed to be learnt in order to bring about proficiency in these particular tasks. The results of needs analysis can be used to determine suitable teaching techniques"*.

Brumfit and Roberts have shed light on the importance of needs analysis and that it is the stage prior to syllabus designing, also it determines the suitable teaching technique.

Needs analysis is an initial step in designing a course which motivates the subsequent course activities through its validity and relevancy.

#### **The Objective of the Study:**

The objectives of the study are as follows:

- 1- To investigate the English language Syllabus of Khartoum State Vocational Training Centers, to see to what extent it fits the trainees' vocational purposes.
- 2- To encourage curricula designers to pay attention to the vocational trainees needs regarding English language learning.
- 3- To promote the awareness of the decision makers to the importance of the suggested syllabus.

#### **Research Methodology:**

In order to conduct this study, a descriptive analytical method will be followed, and (SPSS) program will be used to analyze the data. A questionnaire for trainees at technical level in addition to English language trainers at the preparatory level will be used. The questionnaire will be designed according to the main questions and hypotheses of the study. This questionnaire will then be distributed to the selected sample to get their feedback about the current syllabus, and of course will be checked by some language

experts before distribution in order to insure its validity and reliability. Also structured interview will designed for some staff members from the general administration of Khartoum State vocational training participating in this study.

The population is all centers under the authority of General administration of vocational training-Khartoum State. The suggested sample is about 60 from both trainers (teachers) and trainees along with 3 administrative staff. The sample is as follows: 50 trainees, 10 trainers, and 3 administrative staff.

#### **The Study Hypotheses:**

To match the study questions the following hypotheses are formulated:

- 1- To some extent the current English language syllabus does not sufficiently meet the trainee's vocational purposes.
- 2- To some extent the current English language syllabus does not sufficiently motivate the trainees in language learning.
- 3- To some extent the teaching and administrative staff at the training centers are not sufficiently satisfied with the current English language syllabus.
- 4- To some extent the trainees themselves are not sufficiently satisfied with the current syllabus.

#### **2. Literature review:**

The emergence of the ESP was mainly affected by three main factors, they are as follows:

- a- The demands of a Brave New World  
The period after the termination of the Second World War in 1945 was an era of expansion in scientific, technical and economic activities. This expansion created a unified world dominated by two factors: technology and commerce. For many parts in that world there were urgency to learn English language not for the pleasure or prestige of knowing the



language, rather to benefit from technology and to share the world commerce.

b- A revolution in linguistics (The shift from grammar to communication)

During the period before 1945 the traditional aims of linguistics had been to describe the rules of English usage, which was grammar. The earliest scholars in linguistics at that time started to think about the ways in which language is used in real communication. They were completely convinced that language in different situations varies. For instance there are big differences between the English of commerce and that of engineering. Making language instruction to meet the needs of learners in specific context has to be thought of. The outcome was that English needed by a particular group of learners could be identified by analyzing the linguistic characteristics of their specialist area of work or study.

c- Focus on the learners:

The new trends in educational psychology also played a big role regarding the rise of ESP, by making the learners and their attitudes to learning English language the central issue. IF Learners have different needs and interests then courses have to be designed in accordance to that. This is in short was the notion of ESP.

The term ESP goes back to 1960s. At that time the textbooks neglected the specific language needed by science students.

Ewer and Lattore (1969) say:

*“The aim was to produce a syllabus which gave high priority to the language forms students would meet in their studies and in turn would give low priority to forms they would not meet”.*

Hutchinson & Waters (1987), explain:

*“ESP has increased within in structional practice due to market forces and improved awareness within the academic and business*

*communities that the needs of learners and students should be met wherever possible”.*

There were many factors which led to the growth of ESP. One of them was the failure of traditional language teaching to provide the type of language which meets the new specializations’ needs. The second reason was many professions have been created during 1960s. When the traditional language failed to take learners needs into consideration the call for different approaches (ESP) became a necessity.

Ahmed (2012), says:

*“ESP was the solution for professionals who had to learn English to be able to enter the job market”*

The beginning of ESP was an attempt to make science textbooks go the same line with students’ needs and goals.

#### **ESP versus EGP:**

ESP is a learner-centered approach compared to teaching English as a foreign/second language (Ahmad, 2012). ESP is a program specifically designed for specified group of learners, who aim to learn the language for specific purpose.

ESP courses differ from General English because they broaden one’s knowledge about specific subject matter, by offering intensively specialized vocabulary that in turn prepares learners to use the language in their future professions (Varnosfadrani, 2009).

Varnosfadrani (2009) discusses an extremely valuable point about the ESP course route and direction. A course that put more emphasis on the learners and how to be equipped with the language which make them communicatively competent in their future vocations. The researcher agrees with this idea as it supports the study’s notion.

#### **Definition of Needs Analysis**

The term, “analysis of needs” first appeared in the 1920’s in West Bengal, a province of India



when Michael West introduced the concept of “needs” to cover what learners will be required to do with the foreign language in the target situation and how learners might best master the language during the period of learning (West, 1994).

According to Iwai, Kondo, Lim, Ray, Shimizu & Brown (1999), needs analysis is defined as gathering information from a specific group of learners with the intent of developing a curriculum that meets their learning needs.

They clarify: In the case of language programs, those needs will be language related. Once identified, needs can be stated in terms of goals and objectives which, in turn, can serve as the basis for developing tests, materials, teaching activities, and evaluation strategies, as well as for reevaluating the precision and accuracy of the original needs assessment. (p. 6).

#### **Needs Analysis in English for Specific Purposes:**

In the late twentieth century, language researchers shifted the emphasis from linguistic competence to an emphasis on communicative competence performance in English-language teaching. Subsequently, this resulted to “a switch from ‘content,’ which normally meant grammar and lexis, to ‘objectives’ which refers to many variables other than linguistic content” (Shahriari & Behjat, 2014, p. 321).

The growing interest in occupational and vocational purposes forced language programs to provide adequate curricula to meet this interest. The attention was increased about syllabus design in the field of English language teaching. English being an international language, this concept has played an extremely important role in increasing emphasis on the field of English for Specific Purposes (ESP).

According to Shahriari and Behjat (2014), to meet the rapid growth of English speakers round

the globe, the demands for learning English varied accordingly. Some may learn English to communicate when traveling; others may learn the language for academic purposes, or to meet the demand of specific professions and jobs.

It is vital to be aware of learners’ needs when designing courses and lesson objectives, especially in the field of second-language acquisition (SLA) (Long, 2005).

Group members’ needs vary greatly when learning a second or a foreign language; for example, immigrants, international students, and those who require learning a language for occupational or vocational motivation have distinct purposes for learning English. Each group acquires English for different registers, skills, genres and lexicons. From the point of view of ESP practitioners, the problems in education are “unique to specific learners in specific contexts” (Belcher, 2006).

A course design process, must consider the learners’ needs, otherwise, a general English language program for all learners will be inadequate and ineffective. This is exactly the study problem which the researcher is trying to solve through applying a suitable needs analysis approach.

Long (2005), mentions:

*“Just as no medical intervention would be prescribed before a thorough diagnosis of what ails the patient, so no language teaching program should be designed without a thorough needs analysis. Every language course should be considered a course for specific purposes, varying only in the precision with which learner needs can be specified – from little or none in the case of programs for most young children to minute detailed in the case of occupationally-, academically- or vocationally-oriented programs for most adults”.*

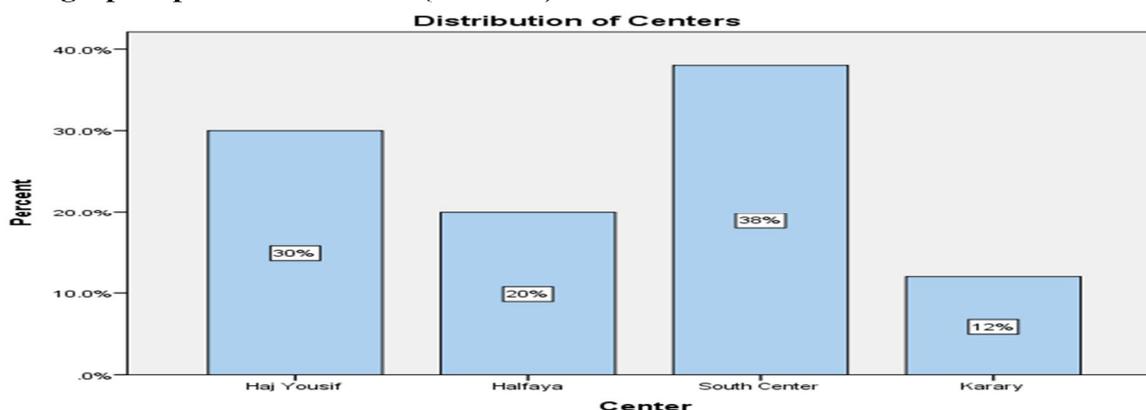


Pioneers such as Jordan (1997) and Hutchinson and Waters (1987) have laid the foundation for needs analysis in ESP. However, researchers in the field of applied linguistics and TESOL professionals must shed light on detailed

methodologies and give serious attention to needs analysis. The effort now should be made to investigate needs analysis generalizations that vary from one population to another (Ananyeva, 2014; Long, 2005).

### 3.Results and Discussion:

#### Socio-demographic profile of trainees (students):



**Figure: 1{Centers}**

This diagram shows the trainees sample percentage according to each center. Varying in percentage is due to the fact that the clusters chosen in the sampling procedure are the specializations, not the centers. South center took the highest percentage as shown above,

because the participants available were from the two main specializations there (Cooling & Air-conditioning, General Electric). While only some participants from Footing & Leather Good, made Karary Center the lowest one.

**Table: 1 Description of Trainers' Years of Experience**

	Statistic	Std. Error
Years of experience Mean	9.43	1.771
95% Confidence Interval for Mean Lower BoundUpper Bound	5.10 13.76	
5% Trimmed Mean	9.14	
Median	7.00	
Variance	21.952	
Std. Deviation	4.685	
Minimum	5	
Maximum	19	
Range	14	
Interquartile Range	4	
Skewness	1.704	.794
Kurtosis	3.207	1.587



a. Lillie for Significance Correction

Table 1: Description of Trainers' Years of Experience

Table 1 shows that the mean years of experience for all trainers is over 9yrs, which is a decent

experience in the field of education. In addition, the table shows a large std. dev. (>4.5yrs), which reflects a good variation in experience which should affect positively the interaction and mutual avail between generations.

**Table: 2 Descriptive Statistics of Trainees**

	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum
Age	49	10	16	26
Valid N (Leastwise)a	49 <sup>a</sup>			
a: 1 missing value.				

**Table3: Socio-Demographic Profile for Administration Staff**

Position	Gender	Qualification	Years of Experience
Director General for Vocational Training Administration	Male	PhD	9
Director of Scientific Affairs	Male	MA	9
Head of Curriculum Development	Male	MA	5

**Table 3** clearly sheds light on an important part of the study sample. The part upon which the study findings can be translated into a tangible syllabus, it is obvious that the trainees and English language trainers' opinions are

fundamental for this study, the same weigh should be given to administrative staff's opinions as they are crucial for getting the whole issue into actions.

**Table 4: Chi-Square Test Results for Trainees' questionnaire:**

No.	Statement	Chi-square value	P-value	Median	Trend
1	The current English language syllabus does not sufficiently meet my needs as a vocational trainee	67.720	0.00	2	Strongly Agree
2	I am sufficiently motivated to learn English through a course that concentrates more on technical language	45.600	0.00	2	Strongly Agree
3	I expected to be taught a sufficient amount of technical vocabulary at the	30.200	0.00	1	Agree

	preparatory course				
4	The English language syllabus is not designed in the same way as the other courses I studied at the preparatory course	26.800	0.00	2	Strongly Agree
5	I might be more satisfied about the current syllabus, if provided with the technical language which I might later use at work scope	12.800	0.01	2	Strongly Agree

**Table 5: Chi-Square Test Results for Trainers' questionnaire:**

No	Statement	Chi-square value	P-value	Median	Trend
1	The learner is expected to be sufficiently motivated in language learning when they feel that the course meets their needs	.111	0.739	2	Strongly Agree
2	The current English language syllabus compared to the other subjects taught at the preparatory course, is not designed according to the vocational purposes	.667	0.717	2	Strongly Agree
3	The trainees are expected to be more satisfied when the course content meets their vocational needs	2.77	0.96	2	Strongly Agree
4	Teaching a syllabus meeting the trainees, and vocational purpose satisfy me as a trainer	2.000	0.369	2	Strongly Agree
5	The trainees are less motivated in learning English, because they see their vocational need are not sufficiently included in the syllabus	0.333	0.550	2	Strongly Agree
6	The current English language syllabus needs to be provided with technical vocabulary which meets the trainees' vocational purposes	1.556	0.954	2	Strongly Agree



7	The vocational vocabulary is ignored in the current syllabus	0.111	0.817	4	Disagree
8	The course which sufficiently provides relevant vocational language is expected to satisfy the trainees	1.00	0.739	1	Agree
9	A course which pays attention to the learners specific needs, is expected to satisfy the trainer	0.667	0.317	2	Strongly Agree
10	The trainees are expected to be satisfied if their vocational lacks are translated in the syllabus	2.11	0.717	2	Strongly Agree

#### Administrative Staff's Interview Questions:

**1- Does the vocational training staff believe that some amendments need to be made to the current syllabus so as to meet the trainees' vocational needs better?**

The three administrative staff referred to in table: 3 are strongly interested in making changes on the current syllabus to meet the trainees' vocational needs.

**2- To what extent the administration is aware that the current English language syllabus lacks the sufficient amount of technical vocabulary?**

The general trend of the administrative staff members' answers is in favor of that the current English language syllabus lacks the sufficient amount of technical vocabulary.

**3- Could the suggested syllabus be discussed after analyzing and evaluating the current English language syllabus?**

According to their answers to question three in the interview they do agree to discuss the suggested syllabus (a syllabus that combines both English for general purposes and English for specific purposes).

**4- Does the administration support any changes in the current syllabus that help motivating trainees to learning English?**

All participants referred to in table: 3 support any amendments on the current syllabus that positively affect trainees' motivation toward learning English language.

**5- Is the administration aware that the English language syllabus is not sufficiently designed in accordance with trainees' needs, compared to the other subjects taught at the preparatory course?**

Variety of opinions were given to this question, but the general trend is still towards that the current English language syllabus is not designed the same way other courses were designed.

#### Study Hypotheses Verification:

##### Hypothesis 1:

According to table:4 and the Chi- Square test in addition to the trainees answers 'trend for the first statement (**The current English language syllabus does not sufficiently meet my needs as a vocational trainee**) it is quite clear that the first hypothesis: -*"To some extent the current English language syllabus does not sufficiently meet the trainee's vocational purposes"*. - Is confirmed. This confirmation reflects the importance of the analysis done, it also reveals the gap in the



current syllabus regarding the trainees vocational needs.

As for trainers questionnaire exactly from the **Statements** measuring the relation between course content and trainees' needs (Statement 2, Statement 6 & Statement 7) they obviously support the confirmation of **the first hypothesis**.

#### **Hypothesis 2:**

Depending on the findings in **table: 4** and the response of trainees to the second statements: **(I am sufficiently motivated to learn English through a course that concentrates more on technical language)** we find that **the second hypothesis: - "To some extent the current English language syllabus does not sufficiently motivate the trainees in language learning."** - Is confirmed. The results arrived at proclaims the trainees perception to their needs which could not have been recognized and heard off, unless such a study was conducted. This in turn implies the significance of this study and the consistency and accuracy of its hypotheses. Trainer's interaction to (the second and the fifth statements) in trainers' questionnaire stated in **table: 5** highlights the same result.

#### **Hypothesis 3:**

According to trainers' questionnaire analysis as illustrated in the response of trainers to the statements (4, 9) in **table: 5** and the response of administrative staff members (**referred to in table: 3**) to the interview questions **the third hypothesis: - "To some extent the teaching and the administrative staff at the training centers are not sufficiently satisfied with the current English language syllabus"**. - is confirmed

#### **Hypothesis 4:**

As it is clear from trainers' questionnaire and with reference to statements :( 4, 9) **the fourth hypothesis: - "To some extent the trainees themselves are not sufficiently satisfied with the current syllabus"**. - is confirmed according to

trainers point of view. The confirmation of **the fourth hypothesis** according to the trainees can be drawn from their response to statements (3, 5) in **table: 4** as well.

The focus of this study was to investigate the current English language syllabus (New English File- Beginner), or the unified English language syllabus of Khartoum State vocational training centers. This syllabus is completely (EGP) English for general purposes it has been designed for trainees whose scope and purpose is technical/ vocational. Some questions and hypotheses have been raised to see if the current syllabus is sufficiently convenient to the trainees' needs.

#### **4. Conclusions:**

From the opinions of the respondents and the findings of this research the study came out with the following:

- The current English language syllabus does not sufficiently meet the trainees' vocational purposes.
- The trainees will be sufficiently motivated to learn English language through a course that concentrate more on technical language.
- The trainees expected to be taught a sufficient amount of technical vocabulary at the preparatory course.
- The current English language syllabus is not designed in the same way as the other courses the trainees studied at the preparatory course.
- The trainees will be more satisfied with the current syllabus, if provided with the technical language which they later use at work scope.
- The trainees are less motivated, because their vocational needs are not included in the current syllabus.
- The course which provides relevant vocational language is expected to satisfy the trainees.



- The trainees are expected to be satisfied if their vocational lacks are translated into the syllabus.
- The course which pays attention to the learners' specific needs satisfies the trainer.
- The vocational training's general administration is interested in making some amendments to the current syllabus so as to meet the trainees' vocational needs.
- The general administration is aware that the current English language syllabus lacks the sufficient amount of technical vocabulary.
- The general administration is ready to discuss the suggested syllabus.
- The general administration supports any positive changes in the current syllabus that help trainees to learning English.

#### 5.Recommendations:

In order to improve the current English language syllabus of Khartoum state vocational training centers, and in light of the study findings the study recommends the followings:

- The current English language syllabus should be provided with sufficient amount of technical vocabulary to meet the trainees' needs.
- The current English language syllabus should concentrate more on technical language so as to motivate the trainees in learning English language.
- Trainees' expectations being taught sufficient amount of technical vocabulary at the preparatory course should be considered.
- To motivate the trainees in learning English language it is recommended that the course should concentrate on the language they might encounter at work scope.
- To reach trainers' satisfaction about the course, the course taught should meet the trainees' vocational purposes.

- The general administration should support making some amendments to the current syllabus so as to meet the trainees' vocational needs.
- The general administration should support providing the current syllabus with the sufficient amount of technical vocabulary.
- The general administration should support any positive changes in current syllabus that help trainees to learning English.
- A new syllabus that combines both English for general purposes and English for specific purposes should be supported by the general administration.

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