Investigation of the Unified English Language Syllabus of Khartoum State Vocational Training Centers

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to investigate and evaluate the unified 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 some hypotheses: The current English language syllabus does not sufficiently motivate the trainees in language learning. The trainees themselves are not sufficiently satisfied with the current syllabus. The study adopts the descriptive analytical methodology, with questionnaire for 50 trainees, 9 English language trainers. 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 vocabulary. The study recommends: The current English language syllabus should be provided with sufficient amount of technical vocabulary to meet the trainees needs. To reach trainers' satisfaction about the course, the course taught should meet the trainees' vocational purposes.

 Keywords: vocational needs, motivation, English language Trainers, The New English File,

المستخلص:

تهدف هذه الدراسة لتقصي وتقويم مقرر اللغة الإنجليزية الموحد لمراكز ولاية الخرطوم للتدريب المهني لمعرفة إلي مدي ملاءمته لإحتياجات المتدربين. لتحقيق ذلك وضعت الدراسة أربع فرضيات: لا يحفز مقرر اللغة الإنجليزية الحالي لحدٍ ما المتدربين في تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية. لا يرضي مقرر اللغة الإنجليزية الحالي إلي حدٍ ما المتدربين أنفسهم.إعتمدت الدراسة المنهج الوصفي التحليلي, مع إستخدام الإستبانة لعدد 50 متدرب و 9 مدربي لغة إنجليزية. كشفت الدراسة : لا يلبي مقرر اللغة الإنجليزية الحالي بشكل مرضي إحتياجات المتدربين المهنية. سيكون المتدربين متحفزين بشكل مرضي لتعلم اللغة الإنجليزية من خلال مقرر يركز بشكل أكبر علي المفردات المهنية.أوصت الدراسة: يجب أن يزود مقرر اللغة الإنجليزية الحالي بالقدر الكافي من المفردات المهنية لمقابلة إحتياجات المتدربين.للوصول لرضي مدربي اللغة الإنجليزية عن المقرر يجب أن يتوافق المقرر مع أغراض المتدربين المهنية.

INTRODUCTION

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. Actually, the course is meant to be as an assistance for the trainees in communication.

 Communication is very important for the successful trainee as stated below. Communication is very important to all organizations. A business person cannot provide a good service if one does not communicate effectively and efficiently.

1- A misinterpreted message can create costly delays; a poorly written report can lead to a wrong decision; confusing instructions can cause injury, the destruction of expensive equipment or the loss of an important customer. Communication errors are often expensive. English has come to be seen as one of the resources that businesses need to manage efficiently if they are to maximize competitive advantage in the market place (Erreygers & Jacobs, 2006)"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 & Roberts, 1987)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.

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.Research Methodology:In order to conduct this study, a descriptive analytical method will be followed, and (SPSS) program is 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 distribu-ted to the selected sample to get their feedback about the current syllabus, and of course is checked by some language experts before distribution in order to insure its validity and reliability.

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.

The sample is as follows: 50 trainees, 10 trainers.

The Study Hypotheses:To match the study questions the following hypotheses are formulated:

1-The current English language sylla-bus does not sufficiently meet the trainee's vocational purposes.

2.The current English language syllab-us does not sufficiently motivate the trainees in language learning.

3-The teaching staff at the training centers are not sufficiently satisfied with the current English language syllabus.

4- The trainees themselves are not sufficiently satisfied with the current syllabus.

2. Literature review: 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.

"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".

(Ewer and Lattore 1969) "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". (Hutchinson & Waters 1987) 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.

"ESP was the solution for professionals who had to learn English to be able to enter the job market" (Ahmed (2012) 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 languag (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.

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).

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).

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.

(Shahriari and Behjat 2014) 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,

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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. "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".(Long 2005) 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:

Descriptive Statistics of Trainees

Table 1: Trainees' Age Description

Trainees' Age Description

			Statistic	Std. Error
Age	Mean		19.96	.400
	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	Lower Bound	19.16	
		Upper Bound	20.76	
	5% Trimmed Mean		19.88	
	Median		20.00	
	Variance		7.832	
	Std. Deviation		2.799	
	Minimum		16	
	Maximum		26	
	Range		10	
	Interquartile Range		5	
	Skewness		.394	.340
	Kurtosis		-.835-	.668

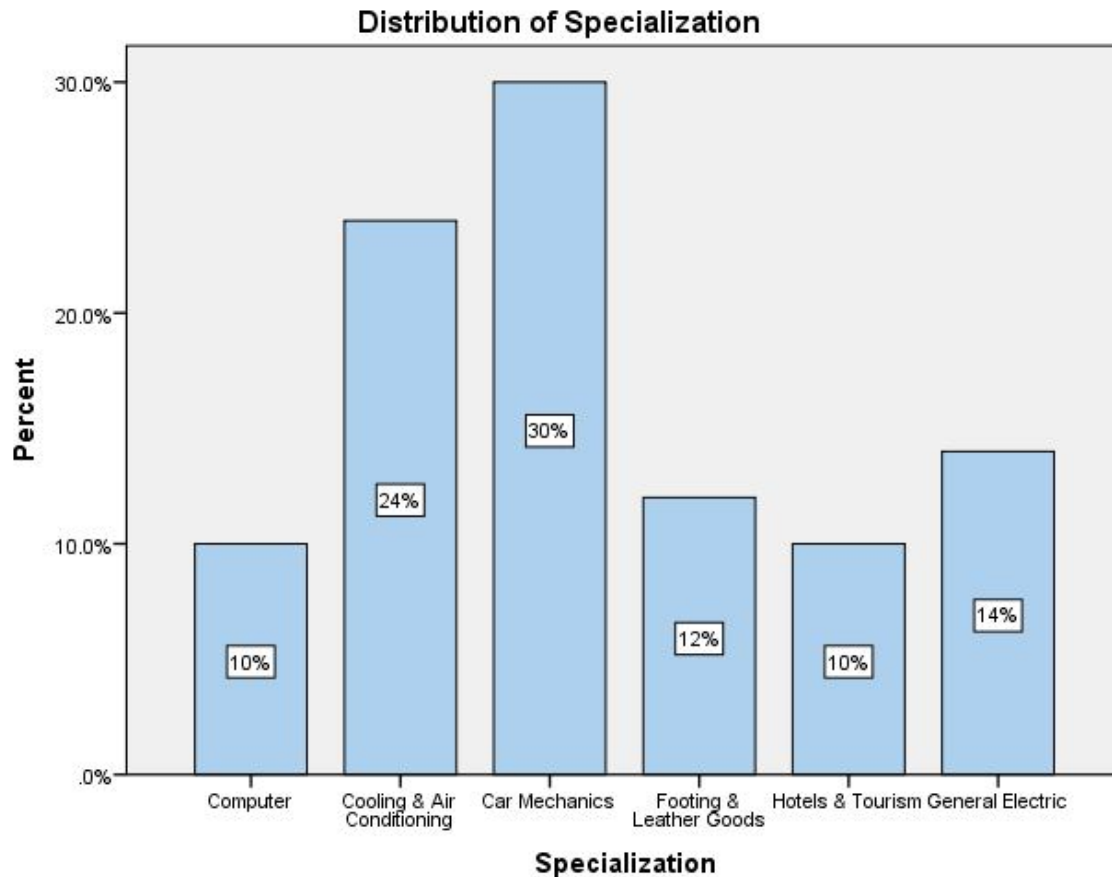**Socio-demographic Profile of Trainers (Teachers)**

Figure: 1: {Trainees specializations}

Most of the specializations have a percentage of presence around 12%, except for the Cooling & Air Conditioning (24%), and the Car Mechanics (30%), most probably because they have more weight of occurrence in the sample. The matter is due to number of trainees available at the time of study, in addition to some specific admission's conditions to technical sections. Computer section takes only trainees with no less than 70% from the preparatory section. That is why the number of trainees in computer section is always few.

Chi-Square Value, Median and Answers' trend for Trainees 'Questionnaire:

In order to answer the study questions and to verify the hypotheses a median will be calculated for each of the statements in the questionnaire. This median , which was given Grade (5) as a weight for each answer "Strongly agree", and grade (4) as a weight for each answer "agree" grade (3) as a weight for each answer "neutral", grade (2) as a weight for each answer, " disagree" and grade (1) as a weight for each answer "strongly Disagree"..Willshow the views of the study individuals

Answer's trends, will be known by calculating the median. A Chi-square test has been made to know the significance of differences in answers.

Table 2: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 preparatory course	30.200	0.00	1	Agree
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

From the table above:

1- The value of chi-square for the statement is (67.720) with (p-value=0.000 < 0.05), and depending on the table (1), this indicates that there is significant differences at the level (5%) between answers of study individuals and in favor of strongly agree.

2- The value of chi-square for the statement is (45.600) with (p-value=0.000 < 0.05), and depending on the table (1), this indicates that there is significant differences at the level (5%) between answers of study individuals and in favor of strongly agree.

3- The value of chi-square for the statement is (30.200) with (p-value=0.000 < 0.05), and depending on the table (1), this indicates that

there is significant differences at the level (5%) between answers of study individuals and in favor of agree.

4- The value of chi-square for the statement is (26.800) with (p-value=0.000 < 0.05), and depending on the table (1), this indicates that there is significant differences at the level (5%) between answers of study individuals and in favor of strongly agree.

5- The value of chi-square for the statement is (12.800) with (p-value=0.00>0.05), and depending on the table (1), this indicates that there is significant differences at the level (5%) between answers of study individuals and in favor of strongly ag

Chi-Square Value, Median and Answers' trend for Trainees 'Questionnaire:

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Answer's trends, will be known by calculating the median. A Chi-square test has been made to know the significance of differences in answers.

Table 3: 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

From the table above:

1- The value of chi-square for the statement is (0.111) with (p-value=0.739> 0.05), and depending on the table (2), this indicates that there is no significant differences at the level (5%) between answers of study individuals.

2- The value of chi-square for the statement is (0.667) with (p-value=0.717> 0.05), and depending on the table (2), this indicates that there is no significant differences at the level (5%) between answers of study individuals.

3- The value of chi-square for the statement is (2.77) with (p-value=0.96> 0.05), and depending on the table (2), this indicates that there is no significant differences at the level (5%) between answers of study individuals.

4- Value of chi-square for the phrase is (2.000) with (p-value=0.369> 0.05), and depending on the table (2), this indicates that there is no significant differences at the level (5%) between answers of study individuals.

5- The value of chi-square for the statement is (0.333) with (p-value=0.550> 0.05), and depending on the table (2), this indicates that there is no significant differences at the level (5%) between answers of study individuals.

6- The value of chi-square for the statement is (1.556) with (p-value=0.954> 0.05), and depending on the table (2), this indicates that there is no significant differences at the level (5%) between answers of study individuals.

7- The value of chi-square for the statement is (0.111) with (p-value=0.817> 0.05), and depending on the table (2), this indicates that there is no significant differences at the level (5%) between answers of study individuals.

8- The value of chi-square for the statement is (1.00) with (p-value=0.739> 0.05), and depending on the table (2), this indicates that there is no significant differences at the level (5%) between answers of study individuals.

9- The value of chi-square for the statement is (0.667) with (p-value=0.317> 0.05), and depending on the table (2), this indicates that there is no significant differences at the level (5%) between answers of study individuals.

10- The value of chi-square for the statement is (2.111) with (p-value=0.717> 0.05), and depending on the table (2), this indicates that there is no significant differences at the level (5%) between answers of study individuals.

Verification of the Study Hypotheses:

1: According to **table:2** 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: -** *"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.

2: Depending on the findings in **table:** **2** 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: - "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: 3** highlights the same result.

3: According to trainers' questionnaire analysis as illustrated in the response of trainers to the statements (4, 9) in **table: 3 the third hypothesis: - "The teaching staff at the training centers are not sufficiently satisfied with the current English language syllabus"**. **-** is confirmed.

4: As it is clear from trainers' questionnaire and with reference to statements :(4, 9) **the fourth hypothesis: - "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: 2** 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 for the trainees' needs.

4. Conclusions:
Based on the results obtained the study has come out with the following conclusions:

• The Unified English language syllabus of Khartoum State vocational training centers does not sufficiently meet the trainees' vocational needs.

• The trainees will be sufficiently motivated to learn English language through a syllabus that concentrates more on technical language of the field.

• The New English File is not designed in the same way as the other courses taught at the preparatory course.

• The trainees are expected to be more satisfied with the current syllabus, if provided with the technical language which they might use at work.

• Teaching a syllabus meeting the trainees, and the vocational purpose is expected to satisfy the trainer.

• 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 more satisfied if their vocational lacks are

5. Recommendations:

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.

- To increase the trainees' motivation towards learning English language the English syllabus should concentrate more on technical language.

- The current English language syllabus should be designed the same way the other courses taught at the preparatory course are designed regarding trainees needs.

- To motivate the trainees in learning English language it is recommended that the curse should concentrate on the language they might use at work place.

- To reach trainers' satisfaction about the English language syllabus, the course taught should meet the trainees' vocational needs.

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