The Dhaka University Journal of Linguistics: Vol. 4 No. 7 & 8 February & August 2011 Page 1-26 Published on November 2014 by the Registrar, Dhaka University
ISSN-2075-3098

The Specific English Language Needs of Science Students at Dhaka University – A Case Study

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Abstract

This paper presents a brief summary of the findings of a Needs Analysis (NA) which was carried out to investigate and identify the specific English language learning needs of the students from the Departments of Physics, Bio-chemistry and Psychology at Dhaka University, Bangladesh. A questionnaire survey was done involving 30 teachers and 90 students of the above department. Results revealed that English is important and indispensible for Science students and also highlighted that the existent English proficiency of students is below the required proficiency level and the course is considered very difficult. The first section establishes theoretical considerations. The second part summarizes the Science Students' needs analysis findings along with the Science Teachers' perceptions. The final section offers constructive suggestions to address the gap and equip Science students with the necessary skills required to meet the challenges of university level education and global market demands..

Key Words: *Needs Analysis, Evaluation, English proficiency, language learning needs*

1. Introduction

Bangladesh is a nation which is struggling against poverty and illiteracy but at the same time wants to participate in the global economy. The desire to be part of the global economy has led to "*an explosion*" of foreign investments in most former colonies which in turn has resulted in lots of job opportunities where English competency is an employment prerequisite (Tsui & Tollefson, 2007). English, part of Bangladesh's colonial heritage, is not commonly used in daily interaction; but the contemporary corporate world needs a work force competent in English. As Qader states-

> "Within the country, employment in any organization looks for proficiency in English. Entry into government jobs requires being selected through a competitive examination where English is a subject, while any non-government office that has dealings outside the national border looks particularly for people with English proficiency. Since the pay structure of such NGO's is better than other jobs, people are interested to be employed there, and want to learn English." (Qader, 1999, p.187)

In compliance with the demands of industry all public universities implemented compulsory English courses in the freshman year from the 1994-95 academic sessions, as per the instructions of the Ministry of Education and the University Grants Commission. Compulsory English courses were thus introduced at all departments of the Dhaka University. Since all the Science textbooks are in English and the latest developments in Science and technology are disseminated in English journals and media this was deemed urgent. However, the general standard and levels of Science students' English proficiency remains unsatisfactory, despite learning compulsory English for an entire academic year. After their implementation, most courses have never been evaluated. Consequently the constraints, problems and limitations of the students and teachers have not been acknowledged or identified. Therefore, there is a necessity to identify the specific English language needs of the students at Dhaka University and renew the English courses based on these needs. This study primarily

focused on identifying the specific English language needs of Science students at Dhaka University and also tried to determine the effectiveness of the current English courses and offer suggestions for improvement.

Canagarajah (1999 : 2) has called for a pedagogy in which periphery community members "have the agency to think critically and work out ideological alternatives that favor their own environment". In this regard Kumaravadivelu noted that–

> a context-sensitive language education can emerge only from --- a critical awareness of local conditions of learning and teaching that policy makers and program administrators have to seriously consider in putting together an effective teaching agenda --- involves practicing teachers --- observing their teaching acts, evaluating their outcomes, identifying problems, finding solutions and trying them out to see once again what works and what doesn't. (Kumaravadivelu, 2006, p.172)

2. Theoretical Considerations

2.1 Needs Analysis: A Definition

The method of identifying learners' needs is termed Needs Analysis (NA). NA is a prominent feature and vital element in designing any syllabus (Munby, 1978; Robinson, 1991). NA serves as the tool for identification and justification for an ESP course. According to Hutchinson and Waters (1987), NA is the irreducible minimum of an ESP approach to course design'. The primary goal is to determine the content for an appropriate English language course, so a NA to identify the specific needs of the target learners should be conducted before determining the outline and syllabus content of a course. Gardner and Winslow (1983) affirmed that the need to conduct a NA is "to produce information which acted upon makes a course better adapted to students' needs" (cited in Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998 : 121). Brindley (1984) provided a clearer explanation by identifying NA as a set of tools, techniques and procedures for determining the

language content and learning process for specified groups of students.

In the local scenario several Bangladeshi researchers and curriculum experts lamented the lack of any comprehensive and tangible data on the needs of Bangladeshi, tertiary level learners. In this regard some researchers strongly recommended that NA be conducted at Dhaka University and at other Bangladeshi universities. Khan (2000) evaluated the English Foundation Course being used at the Humanities faculty of Dhaka University and concluded that:

> the syllabus needs to be revised and developed -- the *content of the syllabus needs to be outlined clearly* -- the current syllabus does not specify course objectives -- the *contents of the syllabus need to be rewritten keeping in mind the needs and demands of the students.* -- before revising the syllabus *a needs analysis could also be carried out to determine student needs.* (Khan, 2000:106-7)

Similarly Haque & Zaman (1994) recommended a NA on the basis of their investigations into the language learning motivation, and anxiety of Bangladeshi tertiary level learners learning English and affirmed that:

> the *EFL course should aim at academic purposes and learner needs/wants* as -- the *learners' needs and wants tremendously control the whole package of teaching materials,* aids and equipment, and the application of teaching techniques and strategies, the employment of classroom activities and, most importantly, the method of teaching and the *construction of the syllab*us. (Haque & Zaman 1994:79)

2.3 Evaluation

Evaluation is a necessary part of NA; Weir and Roberts (1994) observed that –

> Evaluation is a part of the whole educational process, specially, in ELT that seeks to improve the educational quality of language program or project normally while it is in progress. (Weir and Roberts, 1994:4)

Evaluation provides the means for determining whether any program is meeting its goals; that is, whether, the measured outcomes for a given set of instructional inputs match the intended or pre-specified outcomes i.e. evaluation is carried out to see whether the stated objectives have been achieved. Similarly Tuckman (1985) opined that:

> how successfully the language program innovations are being implemented can only be observed by a systematic evaluation procedure. (Tuckman, 1985 : 3)

So, Evaluation is integral to professional practice; research conducted on various ELT programs or projects have shown how systematic evaluation generates relevant data and information about the program's innovation or whether changes need to be made in the course outline and the selected materials and how far it can be continued or whether it is transferable etc. The whole educational process that is the refining an ELT program cannot be completed without a methodical evaluation procedure

The main purposes of evaluation in language education projects and programs are for accountability or developmental purposes, or closely linked to the concept of awareness raising (Rea-Dickins and Germaine, 1998).

3. Methodology

3.1 Method of Study

In order to examine how far the existing ELT courses at the Faculty of Science at Dhaka University are meeting needs of the Science students. This survey was conducted through questionnaires with 90 purposively selected second year students from the Departments of Physics, Bio-chemistry and Psychology at Dhaka University and 30 purposively selected subject teachers from the same departments.

Two structured questionnaires were developed for generating responses from the participants. The questionnaires included structured and open ended questions regarding the concerned ELT courses and generated teachers' and students' views about

pedagogical and organizational aspects. A total of 90 second year students and 30 subject teachers were invited to complete the questionnaires.

All the students had completed the compulsory ELT courses and the teachers taught at the same selected departments. The survey was conducted with the view to generating quantitative and qualitative data. The data collected through the questionnaires were analyzed using SPSS software. For easy reference the data has been presented in table form and frequency counts and percentages have been used to describe the findings and data analyses.

3.2 Participant Characteristics

Selected participants were undergraduate students studying at the Departments of Physics, Bio-chemistry and Psychology at Dhaka University. All of them had enrolled at the respective departments after having successfully completed their H.S.C.(Higher Secondary Certificate Exam). H.S.C. courses offered at Bangladeshi colleges follow the curriculum and syllabus of the N.C.T.B. (National Textbook and Curriculum Board) where the medium of instruction is predominantly Bangla. The age of the students ranged from 19-21 years.

3.3 Data Gathering Tool

Two computer coded questionnaires were designed and piloted among two corresponding small samples of respondents to generate data. The questionnaires were finalized after the piloting. In its version questions were included focusing on exploring learners' views on their current ELT courses, needs and expectations. It also included questions on learners' future academic needs, of specific language skills that might be important for their professional and academic success. The questionnaires were designed to generate data on which skills are important to learners' current and future use and to what extent they are important. There were also questions on the frequency of problems faced by learners while trying to develop each

skill or sub-skills. The frequency was measured on a five point Likert scale ranging from very often to never.

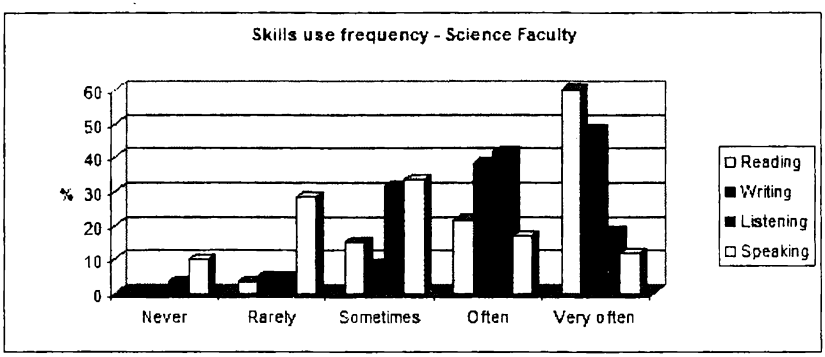
4. Findings and Discussion

The Science students' perceptions regarding the four language skills are presented in this section.

4.1 Frequency of use of the language skills

The findings for frequency of use of the four skills are presented in Figure 1

Figure 1: Frequency participants are expected to use language skills



Significantly:

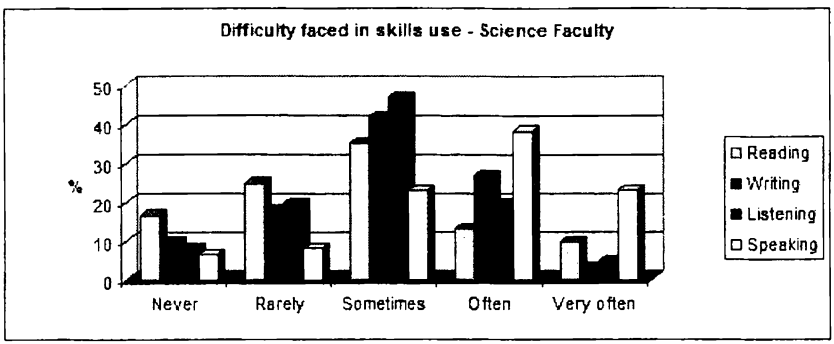
- 28.4% students "often - very often" speak in English
- 60% students "often - very often" listen in English
- 81.7% students "often - very often" read in English
- 86.6% students "often - very often" write in English

The high frequencies obtained for reading and writing may be attributed to the fact that the officially stated medium of instruction at the Science Faculty is English and all texts are in English. The slightly lower listening frequency may be because teachers code-switch and as students cannot be forced to speak in English strikingly low speaking frequencies were found. Findings were corroborated by classroom observation.

4.2 Difficulty faced in the language skills

The difficulty Science students faced whilst using the language skills are given in Figure 2.

Figure 2 Frequency of difficulty faced while using English language skills



Notably:

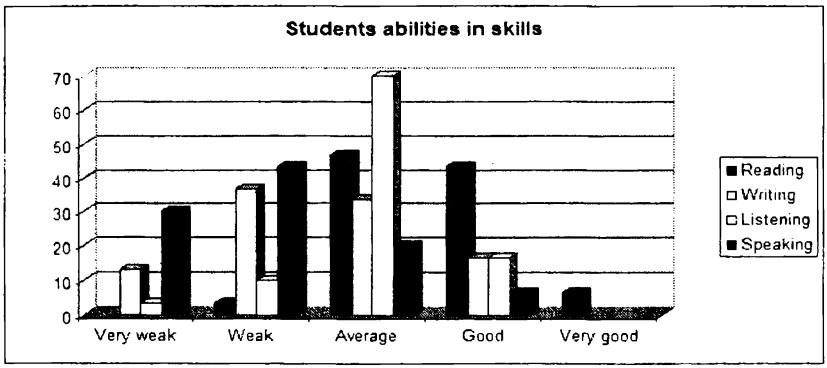
- 23.3 % students "often - very often" faced difficulty in reading
- 30 % students "often - very often" faced difficulty in writing
- 25 % students "often - very often" faced difficulty in listening
- 61.6 % students "often - very often" faced difficulty in speaking
- 23.3 - 46.7 % students "sometimes" faced difficulty in all of the skills

Thus, all the skills are difficult for Science Faculty students; particularly speaking most difficult..

4.3 Science Teachers' perception of Science students' proficiency in the four skills

The findings for the Science teachers' perceptions of Science students' proficiency in the four skills based on their evaluation of students' class performance and written assignments are presented in Figure 3.

Figure 3: Teachers' perception of students' proficiency in the four skills



Science Teachers' perceived:

- In Reading most students (>95%) were "average – very good"
- In Writing opinions were divided between 50% "very weak - weak" students & 50% "average - good" students
- In Listening - most students (70%) were "average",
- In Speaking – most students (>70%) were "weak - very weak".

1. Conspicuously reading was the only skill Science teachers perceived Science students as "very good" at.
2. ***4.4 Frequently engaged in Reading Tasks***
3. It was found that Science students "often-always" read textbooks (100%); selected chapters of books (95%); reference books or journals and photocopied notes (85%); workbook or lab instructions (81.7%); newspapers (75%), online or internet materials (71.6%) and reports or proposals (68.3%). (See Appendix 1)
4. ***4.5 Frequently engaged in Writing Tasks***

It was noted that most Science students took lecture notes; wrote exams or in-course essays; tutorial assignments or papers; reports or lab reports; prepared flow-charts or tables. (See Appendix 1)

4.6 Frequently engaged in Listening Tasks

Most Science students frequently listened to and understood: class or tutorial discussions, lectures and notes, questions or points raised during class or tutorials and listened to and carried out instructions or directions. (See Appendix 1)

4.7 Frequently engaged in Speaking Tasks

Most Science students took part in social conversations; class or tutorial or group discussions, answered questions and expressed opinions or objections. (See Appendix 1)

4.8 Freshmen Science Students' perceptions of Reading Ability

Table 1 displays the findings for the Science students' perceived ability in the reading sub-skills:

Table 1: Ability in reading sub-skills

	Very weak-Weak%	Average%	Good-Very good%
Reading a text quickly to get a general idea of its content	13.3	56.7	30
Looking through a text quickly to find specific information	15	53.3	31.6
Guessing the meanings of unknown words from their context	18.3	35	46.6
Understanding the main points of a text	6.7	45	48.3
Reading a text slowly & carefully to understand the details of the text	25	48.3	51.6
Reading to respond critically	21.6	53.3	25
Understanding a writer's attitude & purpose	20	46.7	33.3
Understand & interpret charts, graphs, tables	10	36.7	53.3
General comprehension	3.3	51.7	45

Note: Data is presented in percentages (%)

Most Science students perceived themselves as "average--very good" in reading sub-skills; however a number of Science students perceived themselves as "weak-very weak" in:

- Reading a text slowly and carefully to understand the details of the text (25%)
- Reading to respond critically (21.6%)
- Understanding a writer's attitude and purpose (20%)
- Guessing the meanings of unknown words from their context (18.3%)
- Reading a text quickly to get a general idea of its content (13.3%)
- Understand and interpret charts, graphs, tables (10%)

Science teachers' perceived Science students as "average" in reading. The reading sub-skills need improvement. These perceptions of difficulty in the reading sub-skills appear to be supported by Zhu & Fleitz (2005) needs analyses findings that students felt "challenged by the large amount of reading expected" of them.

4.9 Freshmen Science Students' perceptions of Writing Ability

Table 2 illustrates the findings for the Science students' ability in the writing sub-skills.

Table 2: Ability in writing sub-skills

	Very weak-Weak%	Average%	Good-Very good%
Using correct punctuation & spelling	8.3	50	41.6
Structuring sentences	8.3	55	36.6
Using appropriate vocabulary	21.6	46.7	31.6

Organizing paragraphs	8.3	56.7	35
Organizing the overall assignment	8.3	56.7	35
Expressing ideas appropriately	18.3	43.3	38.3
Developing ideas	13.3	46.	40
Expressing what you want to say clearly	15	40	45
Addressing the topic	8.3	53.3	38.3
Adopting appropriate tone & style	26.6	51.7	21.6
Following instructions & directions	6.6	55	38.3
Evaluating & revising your writing	10	50	40
Overall writing ability	10	48.3	41.6
Completing written tasks	13.3	36.7	50

Note: Data is presented in percentages (%)

Most of the Science students rated themselves as "average-very good" in the writing sub-skills. But a considerable number of Science students rated themselves as "very weak-weak" in:

- Adopting appropriate tone and style (26.6%)
- Using appropriate vocabulary (21.6%)
- Expressing ideas appropriately (18.3%)
- Expressing what you want to say clearly (15%)
- Developing ideas (13.3%)
- Evaluating and revising your writing (10%)
- Overall writing ability (10%)

This corresponds to the teachers' findings that the majority of the Science students (57%) are "weak" at writing. Leki & Carson (1994) found that students felt the need to "supply relevant details in their written answers...organize writing...write clearly" and display "language proficiency." Along the same lines Zhu & Fleitz, (2005) reported that students particularly felt the "strong need to produce acceptable academic writing".

4.10 Freshmen Science Students' perceptions of Listening Ability

Table 3 presents the results of students' ability in the listening sub-skills:

Table 3: Ability in listening sub-skills

	Very weak-Weak%	Average%	Good-Very good. %
Listen to & understand lectures & notes	10	28.3	61.6
Listen to & carry out instructions/directions	6.7	43.3	50
Listen to & understand class/tutorial discussions	3.3	50	46.7
Listen to & understand questions/points raised during class /tutorials	3.3	50	46.7
Listen to & answer questions in class/tutorials	11.6	53.3	35
Listen to & understand seminars & talks	25	53.3	21.6
Listen to & understand television programs	11.6	45	43.3
Listen to & understand radio programs	18.3	46.7	35
Listen to & understand different English accents	35	33.3	31.6

Note: Data is presented in percentages (%)

The majority of the Science students claimed to be "average-very good" in listening. However many students admitted to being "very weak-weak" in:

- Listening to and understanding:
- Different English accents (35%)
- Seminars and talks (25%)
- Radio programs (18.3%)
- Television programs (11.6%)
- Lectures and notes (10%)
- Listening to and answering questions in class or tutorials (11.6%)

Many Science students are "weak" at core listening sub-skills. The teachers' findings are contradictory as most teachers (86%) perceived the students as "average- very good" in listening. Many researchers (Mason, 1995, Ferris, 1998, Mulligan & Kirkpatrick, 2000, Zhu & Fleitz, 2005,) have reported similar findings that the "processing required to understand lectures, take meaningful notes" created problems for students.

4.11 Freshmen Science Students' perceptions of Speaking Ability

Table 4 depicts the findings for the Science students' ability in the speaking sub-skills.

Table 4: Ability in speaking sub-skills

	Very weak-Weak%	Average%	Good-Very good%
Asking questions	23.3	45	31.6
Answering questions	15	63.3	21.6
Expressing opinions /objections	15	60	25
Delivering oral presentations /reports	25	48.3	26.7
Explaining processes /procedures	33.3	43.3	23.3

Brainstorming	43.3	43.3	13.3
Taking part in class/tutorial /group discussions	18.3	43.3	38.3
Taking part in social conversations	23.3	50	26.7
Speaking with other fluent speakers of English	28.3	48.3	23.3

Note: Data is presented in percentages (%)

It was found that most Science students claimed to be "average-very good" in speaking. But a remarkable number of students (15-43.3%) also acknowledged to being "very weak-weak" in all the speaking sub-skills. These findings reflect the teachers' findings that most teachers (57%) perceived students as "weak" at speaking sub-skills. Dooey (2006) reported that students found it difficult to "participate effectively in class discussions; communicate effectively with lecturers, give presentations" and it seemed that "they were merely grappling with the need to understand and be understood" these findings are also supported by other research. (Zhu & Fleitz, 2005). Significantly the highest percentage of students acknowledged to being "very weak-weak" in speaking.-skills. Therefore Science students need extensive improvement in the speaking sub-skills.

4.12 Science Students' perception of the Learning & Usefulness of Course

The results for the learning and usefulness of the course are illustrated in Table 5.

Table 5: Students' perception of course learning & usefulness

Strongly disagree	3.3
Disagree	8.3
Not sure	16.7
Agree	36.7
Strongly agree	35.0

Note: Data is presented in percentages (%)

Most Science students (71.7%) felt the course helped them. But some students (11.6%-16.7%) felt the course was "not useful-unsure". Thus the course does not meet certain students' needs.

4.13 Science Students' perceptions of course difficulty

Table 6 presents the findings for the difficulty Science students faced in following the course in class.

Table 6: Difficulty faced by Science students in following the course in class

	Never %	Sometimes %	Often %	Very often %	Always %
The discussions in class were difficult for me	6.7	53.3	18.3	16.7	5
The language of the course book/handout /materials were difficult for me	10	40	35	8.3	6.7
The tasks and activities were difficult for me to do	6.7	45	30	8.3	10
I had difficulty in completing the given work on time in class	6.7	53.3	21.7	10	8.3

Note: Data is presented in percentages (%)

It is noted that:

- 40% students "often-always" found class discussions difficult

- 50% students "often-always" found the language of the course book or handouts or materials difficult
- 48.3% students "often" found the tasks and activities difficult
- 40% students "often" had difficulty completing work timely in class

Most Science students (40-53.3%) "sometimes" faced difficulty with all of the above. Thus the course; course materials and tasks are difficult for the students, this needs to be addressed in future course design.

4.14 Science Students' perceptions of prevalent teaching styles

Table 7 illustrates the Science students' perceptions of the most frequently used teaching styles.

Table 7: Frequency of the different classroom teaching styles being used

	Never %	Rarely %	Sometimes %	Often %	Very often %
Lecturing	1.7	5	16.7	33.3	43.3
Teacher asking questions & students answering	5	26.7	23.3	31.7	13.3
Group discussions with teacher as facilitator		21.7	38.3	31.7	8.4
Students given work & working independentl y out of class	8.3	21.7	41.7	18.3	10
Student presentations	13.3	23.3	30	28.3	5

Students silently doing written work in class	31.7	15	38.3	15)	
Using drama music role plays games	33.3	18.3	36.7	8.3	3.3
Group or pair work	35	20	28.3	13.3	3.3

Note: Data is presented in percentages (%)

It is seen that the most frequently used teaching style is Lecturing (73.6%).

4.15 Science Students' perceptions of preferred teaching styles

Table 8 illustrates the students' perceptions of teaching styles they preferred.

Table 8: Science Students' preferences of teaching styles

	Not at all helpful %	Not very helpful %	A bit helpful %	Quite helpful %	Very helpful %
Lecturing	3.3	15	21.7	30	30
Teacher asking questions & students answering			21.7	35	43.3
Group discussions with teacher as facilitator		1.7	20	28.3	50
Students given work	1.7	6.7	15	35	41.7

& working independentl y out of class					
Student presentations		5	30	31.7	33.3
Students silently doing written work in class	1.7	20	30	23.3	25
Using drama music role plays games	6.7	6.7	23.3	35	28.3
Group or pair work	1.7	5	13.3	28.3	51.7
Students doing practical fieldwork	3.3	8.3	11.7	25	51.7

Note: Data is presented in percentages (%)

In the Science students' perception the most helpful teaching styles are:

- Group or pair work (80%); Teacher asking questions and students answering (78.3%)
- Group discussions with teacher as facilitator (78.3%)
- Students given work and working independently out of class (76.7%)
- Students doing practical fieldwork (76.7%)

Thus, there is clear disagreement between the Science students' preferred teaching styles and the prevalent classroom teaching style.

4.16 Science Students' Suggestions for Course Improvement

Finally, Science students made some comprehensive suggestions for improving the courses. These suggestions give a clearer insight into

what the students really want from the English courses and what these courses ought to be like. The suggestions are illustrated in Table 9:

Table 9: Science Students' Suggestions

	Psychology	Physics	Bio-chemistry
Increased time allocation for Listening	8	-	8
Increased time allocation for Speaking	22	36	18
Increased time allocation for Reading	8	11	12
Increased time allocation for Writing	26	8	12
Increased time allocation for Grammar	8	-	6
Increased time allocation for Vocabulary	-	8	6
Introduction of practical subject related materials	12	21	20
Introduction of Fieldwork	-	16	9
Introduction of movie/drama/music/debate	16	-	3

Note: Data is presented in percentages (%)

5. Recommendations

The needs analysis found that Science students were "weak" in varying degrees in all four language skills. Pally's (2000) exploration of student work in intermediate-advanced level classes supports this research by showing a "gap between the skills taught and those needed by students headed for academic/professional settings" (Chitrapu, 1996; Kasper, 1995/6; Leki & Carson, 1994, 1997; Smoke, 1998; Pally, 2000).

The teachers' needs analysis findings also supported these findings and established that Science students lacked adequate proficiency in all the skills, particularly the productive skills.

This needs analysis identified:

- Science Faculty students' specific English language needs
- Strengths and shortcomings of the present language courses
- Areas in need of improvement
- Areas of difficulty

The following recommendations have been made to make the courses more effective.

- Courses should be redesigned keeping in mind the Science students' specific needs and the teachers' needs
- Practical, real life, subject related materials and fieldwork should be used, which Science students can relate to and connect with, then the classroom teaching-learning will have transfer value
- Course content, classroom teaching and activities should integrate the four skills and provide practice in all four skills, not just in reading and in writing as is the case now {Science students suggested the inclusion of: Additional speaking (76%); writing (46%); reading (31%) and listening (16%)}
- Course content should be specified based on needs analyses and not randomly as is the case now
- Class discussions; language of the course book, handouts, materials, tasks, activities and completing work timely in class are all very difficult for students at present; in future course design must address this issue to make the course, materials and teaching more learner friendly in order to optimize teaching-learning

6. Conclusion

The Departments of Physics, Bio-chemistry and Psychology of Dhaka University were investigated in this study. The findings gathered

through questionnaires administered to Science students have been presented and discussed in detail. Evaluation is an intrinsic part of teaching and learning; it provides specific pointers and guidelines to curriculum developers and practitioners for future development and planning of courses and for management and implementation of classroom tasks and activities. Thus, this study has implications for future curriculum development as it raised awareness and provided information for teachers, curriculum experts, and decision makers about the existing English courses and the Bangladeshi Science students' needs.

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Appendix 1

Frequency of the different reading materials students read

	Never N (%)	Sometimes N %	Often-Always N %
Newspapers	3 (5)	12 (20)	45(75)
Magazines	4 (6.7)	25 (41.7)	31(51.7)
Novels/storybooks	7 (11.7)	20 (33.3)	33(55)
Reference books/Journals	1 (1.7)	8 (13.3)	51(85)
Textbooks			60(100)
Selected chapters of books	2 (3.3)	1 (1.7)	57(95)
Photocopied notes	2 (3.3)	7 (11.7)	51(85)
Reports/proposals	4 (6.7)	15 (25)	41(68.3)
Workbook/Lab instructions	2 (3.3)	9 (15)	49(81.7)
Online/internet materials	5 (8.3)	12 (20)	43(71.6)

*All figures within parentheses are in percentages

Frequency of the different writing tasks students write

	Never	Sometimes	Often-Always
Taking lecture notes		5(8.3)	55(91.6)
Writing tutorial assignments / term papers		10(16.7)	50(83.3)
Writing exams / in-course essays	5(8.3)	4(6.7)	51(85)
Summarizing	5(8.3)	12(20)	43(71.6)
Paraphrasing	7(11.7)	9(15)	44(73.3)
Editing/proof-reading/revising	6(10)	12(20)	42(70)
Translating	3(5)	19(31.7)	38(63.3)
Writing proposals / project papers	13(21.7)	12(20)	35(58.3)
Writing research papers	17(28.3)	11(18.3)	32(53.3)
Writing reports/lab reports	3(5)	8(13.3)	49(81.6)
Preparing flow-charts/tables	9(15)	6(10)	45(75)
Writing case studies	16(26.7)	11(18.3)	33(55)
Writing business letters	28(46.7)	11(18.3)	21(35)
Writing resumes	15(25)	17(28.3)	28(46.6)
Writing references	9(15)	20(33.3)	31(51.6)
Writing introductions	9(15)	16(26.7)	35(58.3)
Writing commentaries	14(23.3)	11(18.3)	35(58.3)
Writing news article/features	24(40)	8(13.3)	28(46.7)
Writing e-mails	11(18.3)	10(16.7)	39(65)
Creative writing	12 (20)	16(26.7)	32(53.3)
Essay writing	2(3.3)	15(25)	43(71.6)

*All figures within parentheses are in percentages

Frequency of the different listening tasks students perform

	Never	Sometimes	Often-Always
Listen to & understand lectures & notes	2(3.3)	8(13.3)	50(83.3)
Listen to & carry out instructions/directions	1(3.3)	5(8.3)	54(90)

Listen to & understand class/tutorial discussions		2(3.3)	58(96.6)
Listen to & understand questions/points raised during class/tutorials	2(3.3)	8(13.3)	50(83.3)
Listen to & answer questions in class/tutorials	4(6.7)	13(21.7)	43(71.6)
Listen to & understand seminars & talks	3(5)	17(28.3)	40(66.6)
Listen to & understand television programs	3(5)	9(15)	48(80)
Listen to & understand radio programs	13(21.7)	16(26.7)	31(51.6)
Listen to & understand different English accents	5(8.3)	23(38.3)	32(53.3)

*All figures within parentheses are in percentages

Frequency of the different speaking tasks students perform

	Never	Sometimes	Often-Always
Asking questions	5(8.3)	28(46.7)	27(45)
Answering questions	2(3.3)	24(40)	34(56.6)
Expressing opinions /objections	7(11.7)	19(31.7)	34(56.6)
Delivering oral presentations /reports	10(16.7)	22(36.7)	28(46.6)
Explaining processes /procedures	6(10)	23(38.3)	31(51.6)
Brainstorming	10(16.7)	18(30)	32(53.3)
Taking part in class/tutorial /group discussions	4(6.7)	18(30)	38(63.3)
Taking part in social conversations	8(13.3)	13(21.7)	39(65)
Speaking with other fluent speakers of English	17(28.3)	17(28.3)	26(43.3)

*All figures within parentheses are in percentages