Needs Analysis of English at the Medical School in the Jordan University of Science and Technology

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Abstract

English for specific purposes (ESP) programmes has recently received much emphasis as these programmes were supposed to save time and efforts on the part of the teacher, the learner, and course designer because such courses tend to teach subject-related or occupation-related English instead of Teaching Common Core English (i.e. teaching grammar, reading comprehension and writing composition) for no obvious purpose.

Proponents of ESP programmes claimed that such programmes promote motivation and presumably contribute towards effective learning.

The main purpose of this study was to assess and survey the present needs of the students of medicine for English in the University of Science and Technology as examined by a sample of students (100 students) and of teaching staff (40 faculty members). The general goals of this study were as follows :-

1. To determine what skills or sub skills students need to practice more from students’ point of view, and ESP courses should emphasize.

2. To determine what skills or sub skills students need to practice, from their teachers' point of view, and the ESP courses should emphasize.
3. To identify what adjustments students of medicine hope to be done upon the ESP programme used in the Jordan University of Science and Technology.

4. To identify what adjustments teachers of medicine hope to be done upon the ESP programme used in the Jordan University of Science and Technology.

The importance of this study is derived from the fact that it is the first (to the best knowledge of the researcher) at the Jordan University of science and Technology to investigate the above mentioned goals.

The data obtained in this study were drawn from two questionnaires which were designed by the researcher. One was designed for the students and the other was designed for the teachers.

Total numbers and percentages were used to answer the questions of the study.

The findings of the study were:-

* Speaking skill was number one then reading, listening and writing had the least importance in students' opinions.

* The ability to understand lectures and take notes, the ability to present oral reports, reading text books and taking class notes were the most important sub skills in students' opinions.
* There was a wide difference between students' self evaluation and Teachers' evaluation concerning general ability of English Language except speaking skill.

* (48%) of the students agreed that speaking skill has the highest level of difficulty.

* (40%) of the students agreed that the University English Language syllabus is unhelpful for their specialty.

* (54%) of the students suggested exchanging these courses with what they called Medical, Terminology and Latin courses.

* (30%) suggested that more concentration should be placed on the speaking skill and about the same percentage suggested to have more emphasis on the listening comprehension skill.

* (42.5%) of the teachers' sample believed that their students' training in the English language during the secondary stage was just mediocre.

* Most of the teachers' suggestions concerning adjustment upon the English language syllabus were like students' except that (7.5%) of the teachers' sample suggested using Arabic language as a medium of instruction while teaching medical subjects.