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Analyzing English Syllabus in the Department of International Relations at Bahauddin Zakariya University, Multan

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Abstract: The aim of this research study is to analyze the appropriateness of the English syllabus according to the true language needs, which is being offered to the students of International Relations Department of Bahauddin Zakariya University, Multan. To carry out this research study, students of IR department (Part 1 and 2) have been taken as a sample population to collect required data. To check the appropriateness of the offered English syllabus and existing level of English language competence according to the students' needs; two research tools have been taken as: test and interview. In order to get the actual feedback from the students, a test consisted of four basic skills of English (listening, speaking, reading and writing) was conducted to 50 students of IR department. Interview was conducted to the teachers of IR department in order to get the actual information about the appropriateness of the English syllabus and the competency level of the students. Collected data through both the sources were analyzed qualitatively as well as quantitatively. The findings from these sources provided the results which were expected before the accomplishment of this research work. The findings of this research advocated that the EAP should be adopted to make the existing syllabus appropriate and need based in order to refine the basic English language skills of the students. This recommended course is very productive for social sciences disciplines of the BZU.

Keywords: EAP; ESP; Bahauddin Zakariya University.

1. Introduction

Generally in Pakistan, our educational system is facing a lot of issues and challenges. Students' illiterate family background, low quality basic education, negligence with the basic language skill, lack of proper awareness with grammatical structure, incompetency, poor traditional teaching methodologies and inappropriate offered syllabus are some of the factors which not only affect the students' performance but also create certain obstacles which result into students' failure in coping with the syllabus of English in their respective departments. Realizing the worldwide significance of English, the BZU introduced new policies and declared English as the only medium of instruction in all Social Sciences Departments. The research in hand is to analyze and evaluate the students' needs according to the appropriateness of current syllabus which is being taught at the department of International Relations at the BZU Multan. All departments follow English as a medium of instruction and for examination purposes as well. At national and international platforms, particularly, the students of International Relations discipline have to make room for their successful survival which is only possible by possessing comprehensive English language skills so that their academic needs must be properly considered while chalking out their English syllabi. As the current research is to analyze English syllabus in the Department of International Relations at Bahauddin Zakariya University, Multan, it would certainly facilitate the teachers of IR discipline to design need based, effective and flawless syllabus that could help the students to face the tough challenges of academic and professional needs, not only in Pakistan but also abroad, successfully. After analyzing the appropriateness of the offered English syllabus and their language skills with reference to the true needs of the students, the findings and results of this research work will surely benefit the other disciplines of Social Sciences Departments as History, Geography, Political Science, Journalism, Economics, Psychology etc. The purpose of this study is to analyze English syllabus at International Relations Department at the BZU through need analysis. This research focuses to analyze that to what extent the course offered, fulfills the IR students' language needs. It also tends to discover the gaps between the language needs of the IR students, their performance level and existing competence. Moreover, the identification of students' notion of language needs and wants, is the purpose of this research work. Another objective of this study is to know that how IR students rate their own competence in particular skills of English related to their academic settings, professional growth and social domain. The difficulties faced by the IR students while coping and learning

syllabus of English and provision of productive, effective and useful solutions of these difficulties, are some of the objectives of this research study.

2. Research Questions

1. Is English syllabus of IR Department at Bahauddin Zakariya University appropriate according to the needs of the students?

Subsidiary Questions

2. How much students of IR Department are efficient in reading skill needed in their academic setting?
3. How much students of IR Department are competent in writing skill needed in their academic setting?

3. Literature Review

3.1. Definition of EAP

The term EAP was initially introduced in 1974 by Jones (1992) and propagated in almost 1975. The development of EAP at university level in Great Britain started in 1989 by the senior fellows of British Association of Lectures in English for Academic Purpose (BACEAP). EAP flourished in many perspectives and settings. Actually academic needs and situations of various countries counted much in the advancement of EAP. The term EFL (English as a Foreign Language) is very popular in Finland or Germany. Somewhere, it is known as ESL (English as Second Language). It is considered by the linguists that EAP is required at higher level studies especially in those foreign countries where English is used as the first language. Jordan (1997) has described EAP in terms of the communication skills in English which are necessarily required for study objectives in academic institutions. In EAP, the core objective of language learning is the capability to cater the learners' selected academic domains (Johnson, 1981). According to Flowerdew and Peacock (2001), it is a teaching of English with the main goal to facilitate the students' studies in that particular language.

3.2. Distribution of EAP

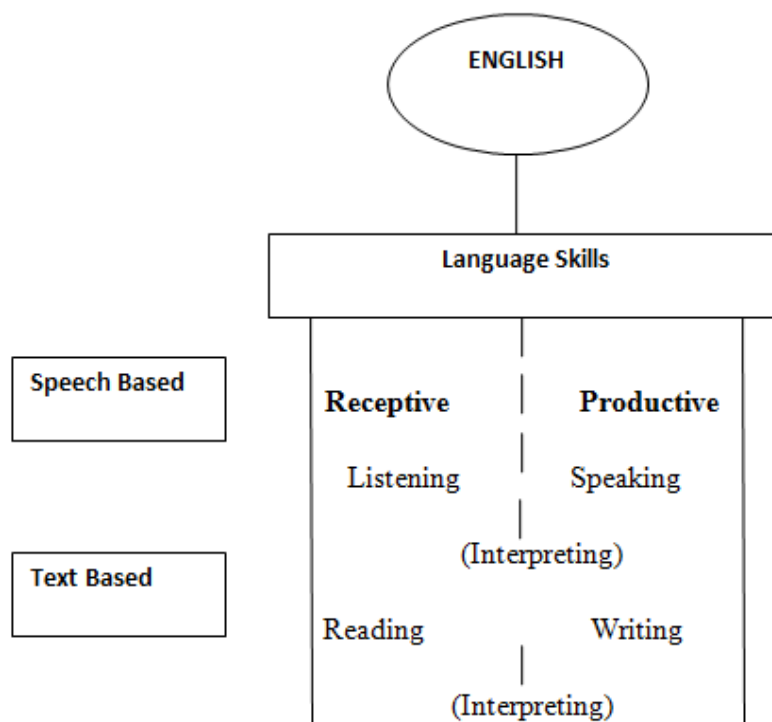
There are certain features of the distribution of English language as ESP, GE, EAP, Study Skills; all these aspects are needed for special domains. English language teaching proceeds towards ESP by qualifying through various purposes such as social or general etc. After that other two initiatives derived out from ESP:

- 1) English for Occupational Purposes (EOP)
- 2) English for academic purposes (EAP)

EAP can be divided into two parts:

- 1) English for General Academic Purposes (EGAP)
- 2) English for Specific Academic Purposes (ESAP)

Dudley Evans adopted the ideas of Blue, related to EAP, he described that English for General Academic Purposes is related to the skills of English Language Teaching and these skills are common to all domains. There are certain basic skills along with sub-skills which are linked to the major important skills.



General Purposes
For no specific situation
e.g. school exams
(Or 'TENOR')
(Dudley-Evans and John, 1998)

Social Purposes
For dialogue
purposes and communicative
contexts e.g. shopping

English for Specific Academic Purposes (ESAP) advocates the teaching of specific features of English that segregate one academic discipline from other disciplines. This field helps the students in their specific academic discipline. In this strand, students utilize their skills which they have acquired in EGAP studies. Simply, ESAP includes the special activities which students execute in their specific field while EGAP is utilized for general studies and general contexts.

3.3. The Advancement of EAP

Certain changes carried out in the advancement of EAP in the beginning of 1960's. After that, it was considered a multi -faceted approach rather than a monolithic universal process. With the passage of time, it absorbed lot of changes promptly in certain various settings.

According to [Hutchinson and Waters \(1987\)](#), these trends were monitored and observed to see its development and changes.

3.4. Writing for Academic Purpose

Writing skill involve in dealing with the understanding of the expected outcomes of the community with special discourse as well as knowing the reader.

In teaching writing skills, two techniques are considered,

- 1) The approach of the product which displays the text, after its analysis it is handed over the students to write another similar task. Such task affects the actual thoughts of the students in the context of understanding the discourse of community as well as awareness of a reader ([Dudley-Evans and John, 1998](#)).
- 2) Approach of the process based on planning, organizing, comprising, reviewing, drafting, editing etc. [Jordan \(1997\)](#).

This technique helps the students to be more effective and responsible for their learning task ([Jordan, 1997](#)).

3.5. Reading Skills for Academic Purposes

This skill has an important share in the course of EAP that transfers the text from "a linguistic object" to "a vehicle of information."

The core purpose of EAP courses is to focus on macro structure of the selected text and to find the data from it instead to involve the students in linguistically valued analysis ([Dudley-Evans and John, 1998](#)). Identification of language and skills contribute very much in effective and productive reading. During the process of reading, awareness with grammatical structures and vocabulary features of various micro skills can be acquired. ([Dudley-Evans and John, 1998](#)).

3.6. English for Specific Purpose

English for specific purpose is defined in many ways but according to [Flowerdew and Peacock \(2001\)](#), it is to teach English with the prime aim to facilitate the learner in his studies or research work in the specific language. As EAP encircles various disciplines and certain practices, such sorts of definitions not only hide but also expose study skills related to teaching. A lot of work is also related to general English which is defined in certain ways as well. We have to keep this fact in consideration that EAP has come into existence from the massive field of English for Specific Purpose.

EAP actually relates to research of language and instruction which targets the special needs required for communication and other practices of specific people in academic settings. It highlights the deep but basic instructions to understand the linguistic, social and cognitive demands of academic domains. It helps the learner to prepare himself to participate in cultural and academic settings with specific vocabulary, knowledge and communicative skills.

EAP also reflects the pros and cons of ESP. Sometimes, it focuses on the strong side of interdisciplinary research work and sometimes it focuses on use of language and those ways through which learner gets control over these issues. It has certain commitments to the analysis of language, contextual relevance and special communicative needs of the learners in the society. But with these affirmative aspects of ESP, it has also inherited certain drawbacks in its wake. As it is said that it does not give value to the students' norms, traditions and culture; and is reluctant to engage critically with the goals, values and practices of any institutions.

It is fact that ESP approaches and theories originate from classical trends in ELT, it has followed along with needs analysis and training of the learners to ensure effective communicative basis in the work which is related to the specific branch of study. Teaching English for specific purposes has been a separate field or activity within ELT. But there are certain differences related to methodologies or field knowledge that actually makes the field specific

one. In fact, specific knowledge, learner's need based knowledge and the need for teaching the specific knowledge are the very much aspects of ESP.

English for Specific Purposes (ESP) was a new branch of English teaching and learning. ESP had emphasized the learners' abilities to use language as a tool for communication and was also concerned with the learners' problems. ESP was an approach to language learning and teaching that was based on learners' needs to use language in specific learning contexts. All decisions for selecting content and teaching methods were based on the learner's reasons for learning. To be more precise, ESP was an approach to organize the contents of the English courses was relevant to the specific needs of specific groups of learners.

Jolly (1984) has contributed in this regard and described ESP as concerned with meeting the learner's particular needs related in content to particular disciplines, occupations, and activities. The language taught had to be appropriate to those activities in lexis, syntax, discourse and semantics. This was in contrast to EGP, where specific learning needs were not identified. Johnson (1981) claimed that ESP courses were courses which concentrate mainly on the learner rather than a non-learner such as a teacher, a sponsor, or an institution. Syllabi and materials were determined in essence by the prior analysis of the communication needs of the learner.

Hutchinson and Waters (1987) indicated that the purpose of an ESP course is to perform adequately in a situation in which learners would use language they were learning. In order to lead to the goals, outcomes and instructions of the course, needs analysis is the most important stage for analyzing English syllabus.

ESP is unique in that it aims at discovering the true needs from the learners themselves, their teachers and their potential employers. But, identifying the needs of learners from the relevant people to be treated in syllabus design and material production is not an easy task.

Needs is not all what we have discovered, but, what we have identified through careful judgment of overall situational analysis. Jordan (1988) gives a simpler definition of need as "the gap between what is and what should be".

In the earlier period, ESP was dominated by the teaching of English for Academic Purposes (EAP); most of the research is carried out in the area of EAP. English for Occupational Purposes (EOP) has played a vital but nevertheless smaller role. In the early 1960s, a variety of changes took place in the development of EAP. By this, it has been considered a multidisciplinary approach, not a monolithic universal phenomenon. It has undergone through a lot of variations with different speeds in different situations. (Hutchinson and Waters, 1987).

The prevailing educational system of English in Pakistani universities is a matter of serious consideration. For this purpose, the English syllabus taught in Social Sciences Departments of the BZU is seriously needed to be analyzed on scientific basis to find out its efficacy, relevancy, gaps between what is being offered and what is needed; and the existing deficiencies within the syllabus.

The Social Sciences students especially IR students, have to perform so many responsibilities in their academic, professional and social settings. ESP and EAP are very much required in their professional life. They have to cope with many challenges nationally and internationally to achieve their objectives. For this, they are extremely needed to be well-versed in English. Only a well-designed and carefully chosen EAP syllabus could guarantee their lifelong success in today's competitive job market. This fact cannot be ignored at all that there are certain constraints as influence of mother tongue, family background, teacher's negligence and students' non-serious attitude which seriously affect the students' performance at all levels.

This research study is designed to analyze the English syllabus being offered to the IR students at the BZU Multan to see whether the existing syllabus is appropriate according to the needs of the students for their academic and professional purposes or not. This research will also highlight the flaws of English syllabus and provide valuable suggestions and recommendations to make this syllabus effective and according to the needs of the students.

Therefore, the in hand research work has its basis in the theory of English for Academic Purposes (EAP).

It has been observed that teaching English for Specific Purpose and English for General Purposes have certain significant features in common which keep important considerations in teaching methodologies, certain techniques and linguistic advancements.

But even though both GE and ESP are different from each other in relation with requirements and needs of specific profession and the sources of motivation to be considered into the language classroom.

4. Research Methodology

The data was collected from IR Department of BZU, Multan. As a quantitative tool test was administered to the students of International Relation department, one of the main department of social sciences department. The ultimate aim of the test was to diagnose the existing level of competency of social sciences students in accordance with the English Language skill which are needed to accomplish academic tasks in various situations. In this research work 50 students from IR department of BZU had been chosen as sample population. Out of these 50 students, 25 female students (50%) and 25 male students (50%) had been taken for this research as a population. As a quantitative tool test was administered to the students of International Relation department, one of the main department of social sciences department. The ultimate aim of the test was to diagnose the existing level of competency of social sciences students in accordance with the English Language skill which are needed to accomplish academic tasks in various situations. Before to design the test questions, guidance was sought from the EAP literature, analysis and evaluation well formed test as IELTS and TOEFL and the literature related to evaluation and testing. The test is based on four major skills.

- Listening
- Speaking
- Reading
- Writing

The total time span for the four tests was 1:20 minutes (For each test – 30 minutes). The test was conducted in the relevant department after seeking prior permission from the head of the department. The test is conducted in two segments. Speaking and listening in segment I while reading and writing in segment II.

5. Data Analysis

The collected data was analyzed with the help of evaluation sheet and certain diagrams. Test was administered in IR department, 50 students participated in this test and the allocated time for this activity was 30 minutes.

The reading comprehension passage consists of a reading passage and 15 questions related to that particular passage. Over all responses of the comprehension passage have been presented in the table below.

Table-1. Students' responses to show the percentage of reading skills

No. of Questions	Right Answers	Wrong Answers
Question No. 1	44%	56%
Question No. 2	40%	60%
Question No. 3	50%	50%
Question No. 4	30%	70%
Question No. 5	42%	58%
Question No. 6	20%	80%
Question No. 7	54%	46%
Question No. 8	40%	60%
Question No. 9	24%	76%
Question No. 10	52%	48%
Question No. 11	34%	66%
Question No. 12	76%	24%
Question No. 13	28%	72%
Question No. 14	58%	42%
Question No. 15	26%	74%

Total No. of Students = 50
Right Answers: 41.2
Wrong Answers: 58.53

Question No.1

From the selected 50 students, the answer of 44% pupils (No.22) is accurate while rest of the 56% (No.28) pupils could not answer the questions correctly. It indicates that most of the students are not competent enough to select the appropriate answer.

Question No.2

In this question 40% (No.20) students answered correctly while remaining 60% (No.30) students remained incapable to respond accurately. It indicates that most of the students are least competent to select the right option.

Question No.3

By analyzing the response of Q No. 3, it is observed that 50% (No.25) selected the correct option. However rest of the 50% pupils (No.25) attempted wrong options. It shows that there was not specific and noticeable difference between the two extreme options; right and wrong.

Question No. 4

While answering this question only 30% students (No.15) are able to tick the right option. On the other hand, 70% students (No 35) could not comprehend well so they chose the incorrect option. It shows remarkable difference in the understanding level of the students as most of the students are unable to tick the right option.

Question No. 5

Attempting this question 42% students (No.21) selected the right option. While 58% (No.29) stroke the wrong option. This difference reveals that most of the students were not competent touch the right option.

Question No. 6

Out of 50 students, surprisingly only 20% students (No.10) answered correctly while 80% (No.40) are inefficient to select the right option. It states the clear difference between the understanding levels of the participants.

Question No.7

The test, taken by the students manifested that 54% students (No.27) exhibited correct response while 46% (No.23) out of 50 students provided wrong answers. It shows that most of the students are efficient enough to display their reasonable reading skills.

Question No.8

Among the total selected population 40 % students (No.20) showed right response while the rest 60% (No.30) did not tick the correct option. It shows that many students could not demonstrate their demanded skill.

Question No.9

In this comprehension question, only 24% students (No.12) remain capable to select the right choice while other 76% participants (No. 38) provide the wrong options. It clearly indicates the low competence of the students regarding reading skills.

Question No.10

In this question 52% (No. 26) students responded correctly while other 48% (No 24.) students remained inaccurate to adopt the right choice. It indicates that more students' response towards the question is positive.

Question No.11

By analyzing the feedback of Q No. 11, it is noticed that 34% (No.17) chose the suitable answer Contrary to this, other 66% pupils (No. 33) responded inappropriately. It displays significant difference in the comprehending approach of the participants.

Question No. 12

While answering question No.12, 76% students (No.38) efficiently responded to this question by selecting the correct answer. On the other side, only 24% students (No.12) could comply false responses to the given choices. It represents that majority of the students perform effectively by touching the correct option.

Question No. 13

Dealing with this question only 28% students (No.14) gave the correct answer. While 72% participants (No.36) present the wrong option. So, large number of students remains unable to comprehend the given question correctly.

Question No.14

Out of 50 participants, 58% students (No.29) respond well while 42% (No.21) candidates tick the wrong option. It shows good comprehending approach towards the reading skill.

Pie Graph (Figure 1)

The presented analysis in the form of Pie Graph shows that 59% provided answers were incorrect while 41% answers were correct. This clearly indicates that most of the students remained incapable to display their proper competency level. So, proper attention is needed to uplift reading skills with the help of maximum practice.

The results related to the writing skills of the students have been discussed in this very chapter. Students were handed over an essay to comment freely in order to check the level of writing skills. The written assigned topic was analyzed under these certain features: vocabulary, language, content, organization and mechanism. The received data are analyzed in tabular and interpreted in the form of graphs and words. The writing test was administered in the department of IR at BZU Multan. 50 students participated in this test and the given time for the writing test was 30 minutes. The researcher himself instructed the students before to conduct this test. The writing test has been attached in Appendix – A.

Figure-1.

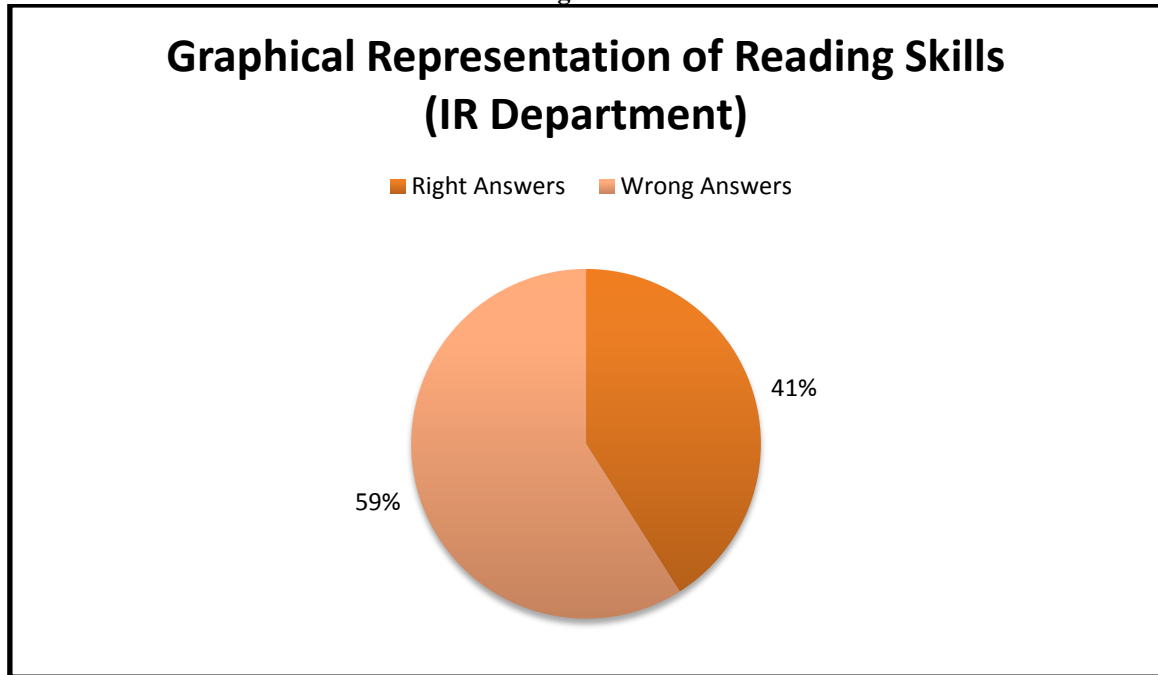


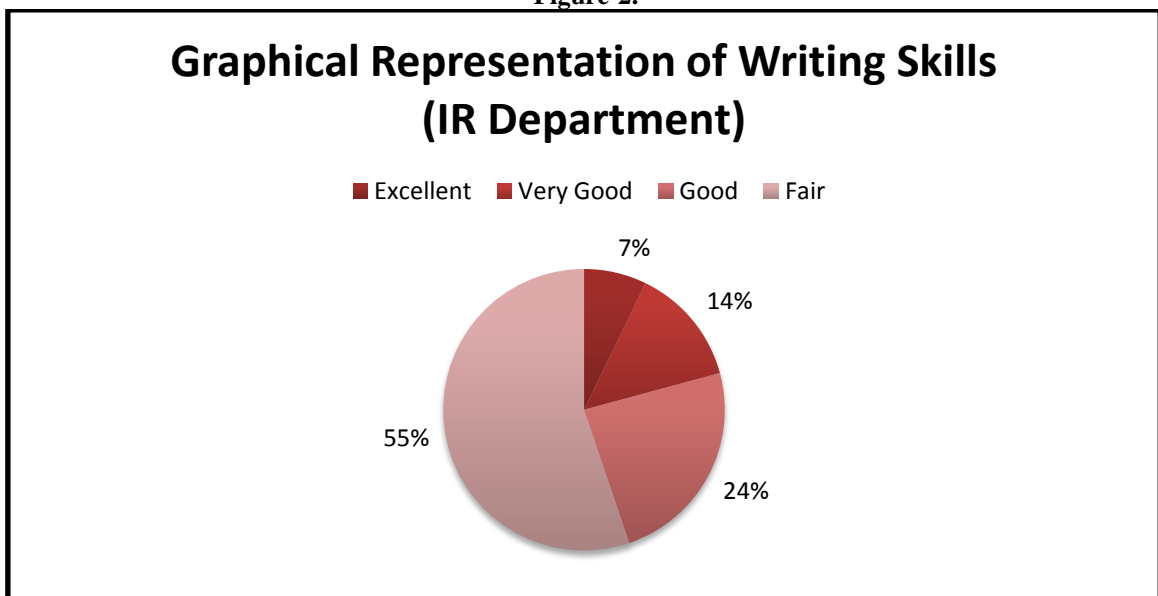
Table-2. Showing participants' responses in percentage regarding writing skills

	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Fair
Vocabulary	4	6	12	28
Language	2	8	10	30
Content	6	10	14	20
Organization	2	6	8	34
Mechanism	4	4	16	26
Total	18	34	60	138
Percentage	7.2%	13.6%	24%	55.2%

Total No. of Students = 50

Above mentioned are the key features of a written text. Students' writing skill is analyzed in the context of these mentioned features in order to get proper estimation of the competency level of writing skills at the department of IR BZU Multan. It was noticed that majority of the students remained incompetent in producing expected and appreciable written expression. Only few could hardly achieve the maximum level of performance. It indicated that the existing level of the students' writing skills in IR department is below average and most of the students are required to develop proper writing skills in order to meet the national and international academic outcomes.

Figure-2.



Pie Graph (Figure 2)

The presented analysis in the form of Pie Graph shows that 55% students could not fall in the expected standard and remained inefficient to attempt the given question. Only 7% students could fall in the category of excellent. This clearly indicates that most of the students remained incapable to display their proper competency level.

6. Findings and Results

The findings will present the results of the research questions which were mentioned in the beginning of this research study. The overall purpose of the research study was to suggest the new course from the field of EAP for the students of IR department, one of the key disciplines of social sciences departments of BZU Multan. So, they key research questions were:

1. Is English syllabus of IR Department at Bahauddin Zakariya University appropriate according to the needs of the students?
2. How much students of IR Department are efficient in reading skill needed in their academic setting?
3. How much students of IR Department are competent in writing skill needed in their academic setting?

The findings related to these main questions exposed that the offered English syllabus to the students of IR department is inappropriate and is not according to the needs of the students for the proper accomplishment of academic requirement.

This study is carried out to check the needs of the students related to English language but the offered results related to reading skills are below the level of satisfaction. The analysis of reading skills is accomplished in IR department. Test is administered to gather data through a reading passage. The participants were asked to tick the right options given in the form of MCQs. In IR department, 41% candidates selected the right answer while 59% provided the wrong option. It manifests that students who come from different backgrounds and cultures, at post graduate level do not possess sufficient knowledge and appreciable awareness towards reading skill. They remain casual to respond reading skills properly. So it is estimated that in IR department even post graduate students are unaware with the basic reading skills.

This study is carried out to check the needs of the students related to English language but the offered results related to writing skills are not up to the mark. The analysis of writing skills is accomplished in IR department. Students were given a topic to comment about within (200-250) which was related to their field. In IR department, only 7% could qualify (Excellent) category, 14% students fell in the (Very Good) category, 24% students could touch (Good) category while 55% students could not meet the expected level of competence.

It reveals that students who come from different backgrounds and cultures, at post graduate level do not have proper skills to write in their own words with appreciable written expression. They committed many grammatical errors and mistakes. So it is estimated that in IR department, even the post graduate students, lack proper written expression and could not express properly to fulfill the expected outcomes.

Recommendations

According to the findings of my research study, I, as a researcher recommend English for academic purposes (EAP) course. In this connection, certain important points are note worthy.

- The course is comprised of the findings of the research study which have been presented in the above chapters.
- In the light of discussions about many types of syllabuses described above, I recommend an eclectic approach for the suggested course.
- The suggested course is based on five parts:
 1. Listening
 2. Speaking
 3. Reading
 4. Writing
 5. Mechanics of Writing
- The teachers will independently plan their teaching schedule according to their preference, keeping in view the students' needs.
- They will be having freedom to focus on one or more than one parts for their students. Integrated skills can also be planned by the teachers.
- The course would facilitate the students of both the semesters in their academic. i.e semester and annual. So, syllabus can be planned according to the needs of either systems (annual, semester). However teachers should complete the suggested course outline.
- Focusing on the outline of the proposed syllabus, teachers will be at liberty to select teaching material and relevant books as study material, recommended in Appendix D.
- Findings of the research propose Communicative Teaching Methodology (CMT) for the suggested course.
- So CLT is recommended for the purpose.

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