Need Analysis for English Acquisition Skills of Undergraduate Students of SOL, University of Delhi

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Abstract: Education is self-reliant when it addresses the actual need of the students. Need analysis is a process that identifies the specific needs of the students. A teacher, before planning and making any syllabus and curriculum and teaching-learning material, should do need analysis of the students for making them proficient in the target language. This study aims to identify the actual needs and existing learning gaps of undergraduate students in English acquisition skills. The sample consists of 30 students studying in B.A. and B.Com (Prog) 1st year, SOL, University of Delhi, studying Communicative Language Course with three different levels (10 from each level). This study is quantitative and qualitative in nature to get the information related to the needs of the target group.This paper reveals that the existing self-instructed material is not apt for the students as they come from low socioeconomic and educational backgrounds. They need the right kind of exposure for the development of English language skills. Most students feel that they are proficient in reading skills and the skills on which they need to work are majorly speaking, then writing and then listening.

Keywords: Need analysis, English Communication skills, SOL

1. Introduction

Having good English communication skills is the most essential and demanding skill in this current scenario. English is the world's most important language due to its communicative and educative value. (Sagayam, 2019) concludes that for Indians having good English communication skills means better education, better culture and higher intellect. (Yarlagadda et al., n.d. 2016) also, highlight that in India communication in English is needed to reduce unemployability and enhance advancement in their currentcareers at both national and international levels. Therefore, communicationskill inEnglish is one of the essential skills demanded in 21st-century youth.

But in India, learning of English language remains focused on the teaching of a textbook and gets good scores in the examination. After learning the English language for 10 or 12 years, students are still not able to use this language in real-life situations. (Rahmatillah, 2019)argues that even though students have been learning English since elementary school, their English proficiency is very limited which is why Universities have to teach English as a compulsory subject in colleges.

To achieve this aim, the University Of Delhi, India,in 2019, has started the Communicative Language Course in English. This course is compulsory for all the students studying B.COM (P) and BA (P) in regular colleges as well as the School of Open Learning (all affiliated with the University of Delhi). This course has three levels based on different levels of language learning acquired in

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school. The three streams A, B and C are offered to students who have studied English up to class XII, class X and class VIII respectively.

The School of Open Learning (SOL) is a constituent college providing distance educationin India which gives opportunity to students who are preparing for competition exams and an SOL graduation degree has the "same value" as of regular degree. SOLalso offers the same Communicative Language Course to their students.

This paper attempts to find out the learning gaps and actual needs of SOL students studying this course which will help further, to design a syllabus or new self instructed material for this Communicative Language Course in English.

2. Need Analysis

A teacher, before planning and making any syllabus and curriculum and teaching-learning material, he/she should identify the actual needs or requirements of the students for making them proficient in the target language.

Need Analysis in English language acquisition is an attempt to collect the information to build a comprehensive understanding of the needs or problems facing by the students when they try to communicate in English.

 Richards (2001), Yana(2016), Wahyono & Puspitasari (2016),Menggo et al., 2019)emphasize the importance of need analysis for the appropriateness of a syllabus, learning material, and teaching-learning strategy. The learning objectives of a learning material should match up with the actual needs of the students. Need analysis helps to find out the gap between the existing level and expected level and further it acts as a powerful tool that helps teachers to design materials in line with the learners' target needs and learning needs.

Now the teaching-learning process is becoming student-centered and the success of any teaching-learning material is measured by the criteria to what extent the teaching material plan can fulfil the need of the students. So the self instructed material can be designed based on the students' needs and is expected to make the students proficient and more confident in using English for communication.

3. Objectives of the Study

(i) To develop a questionnaire for the undergraduate students to know their needs and gaps in the learning of Communicative language course in English students studying in BA (P) and B COM (P) 1st year, SOL.

(ii) To develop a pre-determined questionnaire for a senior faculty teaching in SOL to be asked in a telephonic interview.

(iii) To analyze the responses of the questionnaire given by the students and interviewee to know the actual needs of the students

4. Design of the Study

The present study is quantitative and qualitative in nature.

5. Population

Population in the present study is 1st-year undergraduate SOL students studying in BA (P) and BCOM (P). The population is divided into three streams: Language through Literature, English Fluency, and English Proficiency offered to these students who have studied English up to class XII, class X and class VIII respectively.

6. Sample

The researcher decides to take a sample of 30 students – 10 from each group for quantitative study and one senior faculty teaching in SOL for qualitative study.

7. Tools Used

Data were collected using two tools:

(a) Need Analysis questionnaire for ELAS for the students and

(b) Need Analysis questionnaire for faculty working at SOL.

8. Statistical Techniques Employed

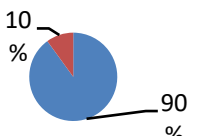Percentage and Pie chart has been used to analyze and show the responses of the students.
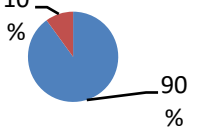
9. Data Analysis

Quantitative data from the questionnaire were analyzed using the percentage and presented using Pie Chart. Qualitative data from the telephonic interview is presented qualitatively.
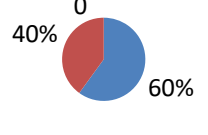
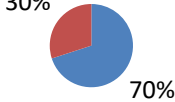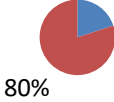### (a) Need Analysis questionnaire for ELAS for the students

The questionnaire contains 10 multiple choice questions and 2 open ended questions related to students' actual needs in English communication skills. The students are given many options to tick to get the maximum information from the students. The questions and their responses are presented below:
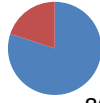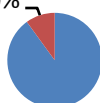
Table 1

S. No	Statement	Levels	Options 12	1-10	6-8	6-10	Pie Chart
(i)	For how many years have you studied English in your school?	LTL	90%	10%	0	0	
		EF	100%	0%	0	0	
		EP	90%	0%	10%	0	

Table 2

S. No	Statement	Levels	Options English	Hindi	Pie Chart
(ii)	In which medium did you study in your school?	LTL	60%	40%	

	Levels	Government school	Private School	Pie Chart
	EF	70%	30%	30% 70%
	EP	20%	80%	20% 80%

Table 3

S. No	Statement	Levels	Options		Pie Chart
			Government school	Private School	
(iii)	You passed your Class XII from	LTL	80%	20%	20% 80%
		EF	50%	50%	50% 50%
		EP	90%	10%	10% 90%

Table 4

S. No	Statement	Levels	Options			Pie Chart
			Colleges or University	Home	Society	
(iv)	Where do you need to communicate in the English language	LTL	90%	20%	40%	20% 40% 90%
		EF	60%	20%	70%	70% 60% 20%
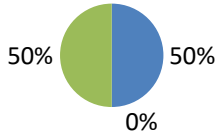
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		EP	60%	40%	40%	
						40% 60% 40%
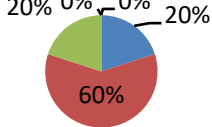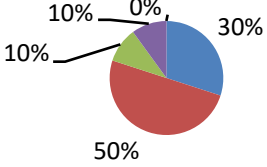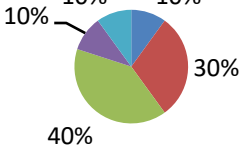
Table 5

S. No	Statement	Levels	Options			Pie Chart
			Yes	No	May be	
(v)	Are you able to use the English language proficiently?	LTL	30%	0%	70%	30% 0% 70%
		EF	50%	20%	30%	30% 50% 20%
		EP	20%	20%	60%	20% 60% 20%
(vi)	Do you confidently answer someone who asks you something in English?	LTL	60%	30%	10%	30% 70%
		EF	60%	30%	10%	30% 70%
		EP	20%	60%	20%	20% 80%
(vii)	Do you know the basics (about noun, pronoun, adjective, verb, adverb, simple sentences) of the grammar of the English Language?	LTL	60%	0	40%	40% 60% 0%
		EF	70%	20%	10%	10% 20% 70%

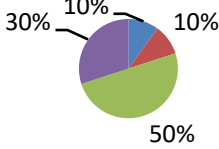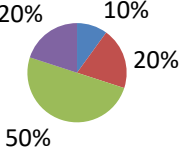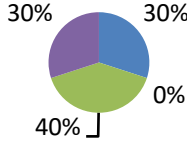|					
EP	50%	0	50%		
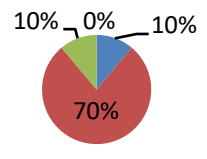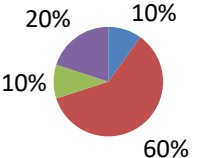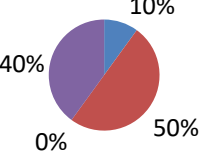
Table 6

S. No	Statement	Levels	Options					Pie Chart
			Everything	Mostly	some	A little	Very Little	
(viii)	When people speak to you in English, how much are you able to understand?	LTL	20%	60%	20%	0	0	
		EF	30%	50%	10%	10%	0	
		EP	10%	30%	40%	10%	10%	

Table 7

S. No	Statement	Levels	Options				Pie Chart
			Listening	Reading	Speaking	Writing	
(ix)	Tick the English language skill in which you are the least proficient	LTL	10%	10%	50%	30%	
		EF	10%	20%	50%	20%	
		EP	10%	0%	40%	30%	

(x)	Tick the English language skill in which you are the most proficient	LTL	10%	70%	10%	0	10% 0% 10% 70%
		EF	10%	60%	10%	20%	20% 10% 10% 60%
		EP	10%	50%	0	40%	10% 40% 0% 50%

(xi)   What problem do you face while answering anyone in English?

(xii)   Write about the situations when you need to communicate in English in your life.

10.(a)   Findings and Discussion:

It is interpreted from the Table 1 that 90% students in LTL group, 100% in EF group, and 90% in EF group have studied the English language for 12 years (from class 1 to 12). It does not follow the criteria set by the University of Delhi. The criteria are students who have studied the English language till class 8, class 10, and class 12 get English C, English B, and English A respectively. Table 2 and 3 gives the some information about the students' socio-economic and educational background. It reveals that 60% students in LTL group and 70% students in EF group studied in English medium schools, whereas only 20% students in EP group had studied from the English medium schools. In LTL and EP groups, 80% and 90% students completed their higher secondary education from government schools respectively but on the contrary only 50% students passed from the Government schools.

The situations and conditions where these students need to use English language is made known from the Table 4. 90% students in LTL group, 60% in EF group, and 60% in EP group feel that they need to communicate in English in colleges and universities. The second place is society where 40% students in LTL group, 70% in EF group, and 40% in EP group need to be proficient in English language. At their home, only 20%, 20%, and 40% students in LTL, EF, and EP group respectively need to use English language in their conversation.

Table 5 shows that only 30% students in group LTL, 50% in EF, and 20% in EP are confident that they can use English language for communication proficiently whereas 70%, 30%, and 60% students in LTL, EF, and EF respectively are not sure about it. It also reveals that in LTL and EF, 60% of students can give answers confidently in English when someone asks them something in English. In contrast to these two groups, in EP, only 20% of students can answer confidently. 30%, 30%, and 60% students in LTL, EF, and EP respectively are not able to answer in English confidently and rest of the students are not sure about it. In LTL, EF, EP, 60%, 70% and 50% students know basic grammar respectively whereas 40%, 10%, and 50% students in LTL, EF, and EP respectively are not clear in their mind about it.

Table 6 illustrates that a fewer number of students (20% in LTL, 30% in EF, and 10% in EP group) comprehend fully when people speak to them in English. Many students (60% in LTL, 50% in EF,

and 30% in EP group) understand most of the English speech of the speaker. In EF and EP groups, 10% of students in each group have very poor listening skills.

Table 7 informs that in LTL and EF groups, 50% students and 40% in EP group are least proficient in speaking. It also enlightens that 70% students in LTL, 60% in EF, and 50% in EP group are proficient in reading skills. Listening skills and writing skills cannot be ignored as only 10% and 0% students in LTL, 10% and 20% in EF, 10% and 40% in EP group feel that they are most proficient in these two skills.

Many students feel that they have a short vocabulary while using English as communication. They face problems in speaking English as they hesitate a lot, feel nervous, and do not have enough confidence to speak fluently. One or two students face problems on the part of pronunciation and a little bit of grammar.Most students need to communicate in English while receiving any call from colleges and institutions, for introducing themselves to others, have a conversation with the person who is well versed in English, working in their offices, moving around in society and with their friends, and for their career advancement.

(b) Need Analysis questionnaire for faculty working at SOL (interview)

Researcher: On what basis you have divided the students of BCom (p) and BA (p) into 3 groups?

Interviewee: *Students who have studied the English language till class 8 get English C. Students who have studied the English language till class 10 get English B. Students who have studied the English Language till class 12 get English A.*

Researcher: What kind of educational background these students have?

Interviewee: *The students who are not eligible for regular colleges at the University of Delhi take admission to the School of Open Learning. They have no other choice.These students come from low socio-economic backgrounds whose parents are illiterate and passed their secondary education from a government school. It does not mean that these students are not intelligent but they did not get the right amount of exposure to English language skills. The condition for the same is very pathetic at the elementary stage then what could you do at the higher education level.*

Researcher: What is the level of their proficiency level in the English language?

Interviewee: *These students have the worst language skills even they do not have study skills and social skills. They do not have the right attitude for studying and learning on their own. They do not know how to study with self-instructed material.*

Researcher: Despite SOL students' low socio-economic and educational background, what are the other problems for the students?

Interviewee: *There is a common syllabus for students studying in regular colleges and SOL students which is a big disadvantage for SOL students. The syllabus was decided by the committee where no SOL faculty is a member of that committee. This syllabus does not suit the needs of SOL students as they have a different educational background as compared to regular students.*

Enough Faculties are not there in SOL. Currently, there are only 4 permanent teachers in the Department of English. The student-teacher ratio is very high. SOL gives the facilities of PCP (Personal Contact Program) where the student-teacher ratio is 25: 1 where students are supposed to study their self instructed material before coming to this PCP and discuss their problems with the teacher. But in actuality, PCP has converted into a class of 100-150 students where students come in the class as a blank slate. And the teacher has to complete the whole syllabus in just a few days.

SOL does not have enough faculties to teach so many students at a time. Because of these poor facilities, this year enrollment of BA (Eng H) has come down very significantly.

Researcher: What kind of material do you suggest for these students so that they can use English well in real life?

Interviewee: *There should be a practice workbook where small paragraphs are given for the exposure of English language skills. Creative assessment should be used where we can evaluate how much students can understand from any reading passage, poetry, etc. Questions should be different from the usual pattern like creative questions which encourages students to write their views after understanding the context.*

(b) Findings and Discussion:

It is revealed that SOL students have been split into three graded levels: English A, B, and C. Students who studied English language till class 8, 10, and 12 get English C, B, and A respectively. Students, who do not get admission in regular colleges, have low socio-economic background, and low educational background take admission in SOL collegebecomes problems for students and teachers. Moreovercommon syllabus that does not suit their needs, shortage of faculties, and low study skills and social skills are other problems. They need the training to study the self instructed course so that they can take benefits from PCP programs conducted to solve their problems.

SOL students need right amount of exposure for the development of English language skills. Practice workbook, creative questions and creative assessment are some of the suggestions given by the faculty to improve the self-instructed material.

11. Conclusion:

It was found that theexisting Communicative Language Course in English course is not apt for the students of SOL as it does not address the exact need and problems of the students in acquiring English language skills. They come from low socioeconomic and educational backgrounds (different from regular colleges), have low study and social skills, and the poor language skills. It is concluded that focus should be given to listening, writing, and majorly on speaking skills.While speaking in English, students feel that they have a short vocabulary and they hesitate a lot, feel nervous, and not so confident. Creative assessment is suggested so that accurate evaluation can be done for all the four skills of the English language.

National Education Policy 2020 attempts to move away from rote learning and adapting competency-based learning where the emphasis will be laid on to the development of the skills so that students can perform with acquired skills in their future. In the light of this view, this study attempts to analyze the actual needs of the students for their English proficiency level so that teacher can understand their needs and design the self-instructed material for this course.

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