Developing An ESP Material For IT Students: Need Analysis

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Abstract:- This Study Aims to Design an ESP Syllabus for Information Technology College at Saudi Arabia. A Questionnaire and Interview were used for Data Collection. It was found that students highly appreciated courses of English that related to their study: They need to study all the four skills of language in relation to IT. Based on these needs, it is recommended that a suitable syllabus for students should be designed to meet their needs.

Key Words: ESP - Information Technology – Needs Analysis.

I. INTRODUCTION:
Information Technology and Computer Science (IT) in Technological Colleges play an essential role in today's business world. One charge of the Department, concerned with ESP programs for students of IT, is to develop English language proficiency of the students to enable them to secure appropriate levels of academic attainment and also prepare them for future professional development. The demands for ESP are to help students in enriching their linguistic competences mainly in communication and improve their performance, as well. English is regarded as the key language in this field. Since IT is a global manufactory, it demands an international language to flourish. Unarguably, English language has been established an international leading stance, compared to other languages in the world. The proposed syllabus, which is one of the main objectives of this paper, is expected to satisfy, to the utmost desired level, the needs of IT students. This paper is genuine response to the call for a specialized course for students of IT colleges. People working in this field: employees, students or workers – need to acquire vocabulary, expressions, and sound knowledge of how conversations required for doing their job professionally. In connection to this, the paper aims at identifying the language needs, wants and lacks of the students IT in K.S.A. Moreover, the paper aims at fitting the intended syllabus within the overall strategy of its college and explore the ways in which syllabus can be designed according to the most fashionable trends in this field.

II. CURRICULUM / SYLLABUS DISTINCTION:
Etymologically syllabus means a “label” or “table of contents.” The American Heritage Dictionary defines syllabus as outline of a course of study. However, the term “syllabus,” “syllabus design,” “curriculum,” and “course” have given rise to confusion in terms of their definitions and use. To begin with, it seems of great importance to define the term syllabus in order to have a better understanding of what it actually means and to which aspects and dimensions of ELT it is related. Of course, it should be noted that there are many challenges to properly defining and elaborating on the concept “syllabus.”

For example, in recent years the focus of syllabuses has shifted away from structure to situations, function and notions to topics and tasks. That is why as Nunan (1988a: 52) highlights: with the development of the latter obviously “the traditional distinction between syllabus design and methodology has become blurred.” Accordingly, though it is a little difficult on initial appearance to describe syllabus, it seems possible to make an attempt to define syllabus at least in an understandable way. In Wilkins, (1981) words syllabuses are defined as “specification of content of language teaching which have been submitted to some degree of structuring or ordering with aim of making teaching and learning more effective processes.” A syllabus can also be seen as “a plan of what is to be achieved through our teaching and our students learning” “Breen, 1984.” While its function is “to specify what is to be taught and in what order” Prabhu, (1984), Hutchinson and Waters (1987: 80) define syllabus at its simplest level “a statement of what is to be learnt” they further add that “... it reflects of language and linguistic performance”. Yalden (1987: 87) also refers to syllabus as “summary of the content to which learners will be exposed. The concept of “curriculum” has been important in second language programmers throughout the history of EFL/ESL, though “curriculum though” as a field of educational studies is fairly new”. (Stern:1983:434). It is not surprising, therefore, that as with other generally
Accepted And Widely Used Terms (E-G Autonomy, Communicative) There Is Little General Agreement On Actual Form And Function, Though Interpretation Does Fall Into Two Main Terms. In The First Of These, Term “Curriculum” Refers To The Statement Of The Programme Of The Studies Of An Educational System. Stehouse(1975) Describe A Curriculum As An Attempt To Communicate The Essential Properties And Features Of An Educational Proposal In Such A Form That It Is Open To Critical Scrutiny And Capable Of Effective Translation Into Practice. In The Second And More Recent Meaning “Curriculum” Includes All That Is Required In The Teaching-Learning Process, Including Materials, Equipment, Examinations And Teachers Training Programme. In This View The Curriculum Is Concerned With What Can And Should Be Taught To Whom, How, And When. Nunan Adds To His Curriculum “Elements Designated By The Term Syllabus A Long With Consideration Of Methodology And Evaluation “. Nunan(1988:14) And White Et Al (1988: 186) See Curriculum As “… Concerned With Objectives And Methods As Well As Content”.

Syllabus Design:
There Can Be At Least Eight Major Questions Confronting Syllabus Designers And Which Therefore Particularly Appropriate To This Study:

1-How To Represent Language Knowledge As A Complex Of Competences (Linguistic, Socio-Linguistic Discoursed, Pragmatic Etc. ).
2-How To Represent Language Knowledge As The Underlying Capacity To Apply, Adapt And Refine Rules And Conventions During Language Learning And Use.
3-How To Represent Language Capability As The Ability To Interpret And Express Meaning And Negotiate With And Through Spoken And Written Text.
4-How To Represent Such Knowledge And Capabilities In Ways Which Are Amenable To The Professions Development Of The Practice Of Teaching.
5-How Can Syllabus Planning Interact With Methodology In A Mutually Beneficial Way During A Period Of Innovation?
6-How Can The Syllabus Harmonies In An Unconstraining But Facilitative Way With Internal Process Of Language Acquisition, The Strategic Behavior Of Learners, And With The Personal-Syllabus Creation Of Different Learners?
8-If The Designer’s Plan Of Content Is Consistently Subordinated Within The More Salient Teaching / Learning Experience Of The Classroom, How Might The Designer Nevertheless Exploit The Organizing Principles Of A Syllabus So That The Accessibility Of New Knowledge And Alternative Ways Of Developing Language Capability Is Maximised For Both The Teacher And Learners? In Other Words, How Might The Focusing, Selection, Subdivision, And Sequencing Of Content Become Explicit Elements Within The Classroom Experience?

The Questions Of The Students Included Three Categories
a) Academic Situation
b) Occupational Situation
c) Social/Domestic Situations

Within These Categories, There Were Numerous Smaller Subcategories (Theme) That Describe The Kind Of Activities To Be Carried Out. Then, These Theme Subcategories Were Further Divided Into Individual Tasks. The Actual Questions For The Questionnaires Were Made By Using Description Of The Themes And Adding Tasks As Examples.

Syllabuses Versus Courses:
Similar Conflicting Views Have Been Postulated To Distinguish Between The Concepts Of ‘Syllabuses’ And ‘Courses’. Courses And Syllabuses Are Generally Perceived To Be Two Different Things, Partly It Must Be Admitted Simply By Customary Collocation, Given That The Two Terms Are Not Always Used Indistinguishably. But A ‘Course’ Might Be Taken To Mean A Real Series Of Lessons, While A ‘Syllabus’ Can Be Taken To Be Something Rather More Abstract, With A Fewer Details Of The Blow By Blow Conduct Of Individual Lessons. Thus Any Two Educational Practitioners Might Quite Properly Write Rather Different Courses, With Different Materials, But Based On The Same Syllabus. This Happens A Lot In Publishing, For Example, When Communication Became Popular As A Basis For Course Design, Each Major ELT Publisher Published A Course Based On What Became Known As A “Communicative Syllabus”, Often Using The Council Of Europe Staged Language Taxonomies As A Basis E.G. Van EKJ 1975. Graves Takes

English For Specific Purposes (ESP):
The Origins Of ESP:


The Second Key Reason Cited As Having A Tremendous Impact On The Emergence Of ESP Was A Revolution In Linguistics. Whereas Traditional Linguists Set Out To Describe The Features Of Language, Revolutionary Pioneers In Linguistics Began To Focus On The Ways In Which Language Is Used In Real Communication. Hutchinson And Waters (1987) Point Out That One Significant Discovery Was, In The Ways That Spoken And Written English Vary. In Other Words, Given The Particular Context In Which English Is Used, The Variant Of English Will Change. This Idea Was Taken One Step Farther. If Language In Different Situations Varies, Then Tailoring Language Instruction To Meet The Needs Of Learners In Specific Contexts Is Also Possible. Hence, In The Late 1 960s And The Early 1 970s There Were Many Attempts To Describe English For Science And Technology (EST). Hutchinson And Waters (1987) Identify Ewer And Laborer, Swales, Selinker And Trimble As A Few Of The Prominent Descriptive EST Pioneers. The Final Reason Hutchinson And Waters (1987) Cite As Having Influenced The Emergence Of ESP Has Less To Do With Linguistics And Everything To Do Psychology. Rather Than Simply Focus On The Method Of Language Delivery, More Attention Was Given To The Ways In Which Learners Acquire Language And The Differences In The Ways Language Is Acquired. Learners Were Seen To Employ Different Learning Strategies, Use Different Skills, Enter With Different Learning Schemata, And Be Motivated By Different Needs And Interests. Therefore, Focus On The Learners’ Needs Became Equally Paramount As The Methods Employed To Disseminate Linguistic Knowledge. Designing Specific Courses To Better Meet These Individual Needs Was A Natural Extension Of This Thinking. To This Day, The Catchword In ESL Circles Is Learner-Centered Or Learning-Centered.

Needs-Analysys(NA)

An Introduction To Needs Analysis

According To Noonan (L981) Curriculum Differs From A Syllabus In That The Former Is “Concerned With Making General Statements” Whereas The Latter Is ‘More Localized And Based On Accounts And Records Of What Actually Happens At The Classroom Level As Teachers And Learners Apply A Given Cuicu1ui To Their OW Situation “In Creating A Syllabus, However The Problems Remain Of (1) Defining The Local Situation (2) Collecting The Accounts And Records And (3) Analyzing The Records With Respect To The Learning Situation One Recently Oft-Used Technique Which Can Aid In Solving These Problems Is Needs Analysis. Needs

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Analysis Is “Conceiy2ed With Indenting General And Specific Language Needs That Can Be Addressed In Developing Goals, Objectives And Content In A Language Program” (Chards & Rodgers 1986: 156). Although It Was Originally Designed For Areas Other Than English Education The So-Called “Communicative Needs Analysis” Found A Happy Niche For Application In ESL This Is Due To Trends Towards Teaching Nontraditional English Such As English For Special Purposes (ESP).

Exactly How Should A Needs Analysis Be Undertaken? Three Important Factors In Performing Needs Analyses AreIdentifiedHereByLong(2005)AsFollows

*Sources

Major Sources For Needs Analyses Are A) Previous Needs Analyses, Which Can Provide Working Examples As Well As Valuable Insight In To Needs Of Students In Similar Programs And With Similar Experiences. B) Students Themselves (With The Caveat That Students Are Usually Preexperienced; That Is, They Do Not Know What They Will Need To Know), C) Applied Linguists (Good Sources For Language Requirements) And D) Domain Experts, Often Referred To As “Insiders’ This May Include Business People As Well As “Returnees”, Or Students Who Have Previous Experience In Dealing With The Target Situation.

*Triangulation:


Definitions And Historical Background:


Necessities, Needs And Lacks :

In Recent Years, There Has Been A Healthy Trend In Course Design With The Focus Shifting From Teacher-Centered To Learner-Centered Activities And In This Connection, A Lot Of Credibility Is Being Given To Need Based Courses In ESL Programme. Needs Analysis Is A Device To Know The Learners’ Necessities, Needs, And Lacks In Order To Develop Courses That Have A Reasonable Content For Exploitation In The Classroom. Needs Analysis Is Therefore A Process For Identifying And Defining Valid Curriculum And Instructional And Management Objectives In Order To Facilitate Learning In An EnvironmentLeft That Is Closely Related To The Real Life Situations Of The Student. It Brings Into Sharp Focus The Settings And Roles That The Learner Is Likely To Face After He Finishes His Formal Education. Actually, The Switch Of Attention Towards Communicativ01 Highlighted The Role Of The Learner And His Needs In Modern Educational
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• Communication As A General Purpose;
• The Underlying Demands On The Learner That Such A Purpose May Imply;
• The Initial Contributions Which Learners May Bring To The Curriculum
• The Process Of Teaching And Learning;
• The Roles Of Teacher And Learners;
• The Role Of Content Within The Teaching And Teamimg, And Finally;
• The Place Of Evaluation Of Learner Progress And Evaluation Of The Curriculum Itself From Communicative Point Of View.

Needs Analysis And Language Use :
As Mentioned Earlier, The Switch Of Attention From Teaching Language System To Teaching The Language As Communication Highlighted The Role Of The Learner And His Needs. The Range Of Possible Uses Of Language Is As Extensive As The Range Of Possible Purposes And Intentions That People Have For Using It, So, The Emphasis On The Use Of Language As Communication Concentrates On The Users Themselves. The Main Problem Of The Users Of Language, And Especially Those Living In Developing Countries, Is That Though They Have Received Several Years Of Formal English Teaching, They Frequently Remain Deficient In The Ability To Actually Use The Language, And To Understand Its Use In Normal Communication, Whether In Spoken Or Written Mode. This Results In A Switch Of Attention From Teaching Language System To Teaching The Language As Communicative System.

The Questionnaire:
The questionnaire Was Given To It Students. They Were Seventy Four Students Whose Future Job, To A Large Extent, Depends On Acquiring English Language.

3.2- Teachers Interview:
A Semi Structured Interview For University Teachers Was Runned. The Questions Were Formulated On The Basis Of PSA (Present Situation Analysis) About The Following Topics:
1- Students, Motivation, Beliefs And Attitudes Toward Learning English.
2- Linguistic Difficulties Encountered By Students.
3- Students’ Preferences Concerning The Type Of Syllabus Content.
The Teachers Were Interviewed To Reflect On The Kinds Of Language Problems And Linguistic Difficulties Their Students Encounter. They Were Asked About Their Roles And Experiences Related To Curriculum Development.

Analysis Of Students’ Questionnaire

(1) Students Present Proficiency In Speaking Skills

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Options</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V Good</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>21.6</td>
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Students Who Assess Their Speaking Standard As Being Satisfactory (27%). It Shows That The General Speaking Standard Is Below The Average “Good”.

(2) Students Present Proficiency In Reading Skills

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>12.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>V.Good</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>20.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>32.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfactory</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>29.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Weak</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>100</td>
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</table>

The Standard Of Reading Among The Target Students Seems To Be Much Better Than In Speaking Skills. The Total Percentage Of The students Whose Standard (Good, Very Good And Excellent) Is (64%).

Students Present Proficiency In Listening Skills

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V.Good</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>13.5</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Since, There Are No Recorded Materials For listening; Therefore, The Majority Of Students Are below The Average Of Good. (32.4% , And 13.5%) , (49%) Are Of Satisfactory And Weak Standard.

Students Present Proficiency In Writing Skills

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>74</td>
<td>100</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Pertaining To The Writing Skills Most Students Have “Good” Level Of Proficiency (43%).

Students Present Proficiency In Vocabulary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>2</td>
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</table>

Concerning The Present Level Of Vocabulary Among The Students, The Majority Of Them (35.1%) Have A Satisfactory Level. This Reveals That Most Of The Students Have Insufficient Vocabulary.
What Concerning Are The Most Load Of About Twelve Though They Do Not Exposed To Such Experiences.

The Communicative Competence, Since The Findings Efforts, And Library. Mentioned That There Are Three Resources Available To Their Students To Access: Structural Content Relevant To Their They Complain About? Show Great Enthusiasm In Learning English. The Teachers (100%) Stated That Their Groups Are Easy To Teach. Very Low Proficiency Level In Grammar, Students. (40%) Said That Their Students Are Suffering From Vocabulary. (20%) Decided That Students Have Difficulties (20%) Of The Teachers Mentioned Speaking And Vocabulary As Problematic Areas For The Problems And Linguistic Difficulties Students Encounter While Learning The Language? Related Textbooks E.G (Translating Some Specialized Topic Form Arabic To English). What Are The Language Problems And Linguistic Difficulties Students Encounter While Learning The Language? Concerning The Difficulties (20%) Of The Teachers Mentioned Speaking And Vocabulary As Problematic Areas For The Students. (40%) Said That Their Students Are Suffering From Vocabulary. (20%) Decided That Students Have Very Low Proficiency Level In Grammar, And Writing. Is Your Learning Group Easy Or Difficult To Teach? All The Teachers (100%) Stated That Their Groups Are Easy To Teach. Are Your Students Motivated To Learn English? How? All Teachers Interviewed (100%) Believe That Their Students Are Highly Motivated, For They Show Great Enthusiasm In Learning English. What Type Of Content Do They Prefer? And What Difficulties They Complain About? The Teachers Were Divided Into Two Groups. (40%) Stated That Their Students Prefer Structural Content Relevant To Their IT Studies, (60%) Of Them Stated The Content Based Syllabus That Teaches Them IT Content. Are There Any Learning Resources Your Students Have Access To? All Teachers Mentioned That There Are Three Resources Available To Their Students To Access: The Internet, Teachers’ Efforts, And Library.

Findings:
The Study Found That There Is A General Needs For IT Students Concerning English Language Focusing On The Communicative Competence, Since English Is International Language, And IT Is Considered As An International Manufacturing. Students Are Unable To Follow Native English Speakers; Even recorded One. Since They Do Not Exposed To Such Experiences. Most Of The IT Students Feel Satisfied In Their Writing Skills. Though, More Activities Will Be Needed In This Field As Responded.

III. ANALYSIS OF TEACHERS’ INTERVIEW:
Teachers And Their Attitudes Towards Their Students’ Proficiency Is One Of The Real Assessments. Here Are The Questions Answered By The Teachers Who Were Interviewed. What Teaching Loads Do You Have And What Resources You Make Use Of? Most Of The Teachers Have A Teaching Load Of About Twelve Hours A Week. They Use Their Own Collection Of Materials Depending On Different Sources Of English Language. (40%) Depend On Extracts From Specialized Publication. Of Course Those Are The Ones Who Have Access To The Internet And Are Able To Find Get Relevant Materials. The Other (40%) Use Some Related Textbooks E.G (Translating Some Specialized Topic Form Arabic To English). What Are The Language Problems And Linguistic Difficulties Students Encounter While Learning The Language? Concerning The Difficulties (20%) Of The Teachers Mentioned Speaking And Vocabulary As Problematic Areas For The Students. (40%) Said That Their Students Are Suffering From Vocabulary. (20%) Decided That Students Have Very Low Proficiency Level In Grammar, And Writing. Is Your Learning Group Easy Or Difficult To Teach? All The Teachers (100%) Stated That Their Groups Are Easy To Teach. Are Your Students Motivated To Learn English? How? All Teachers Interviewed (100%) Believe That Their Students Are Highly Motivated, For They Show Great Enthusiasm In Learning English. What Type Of Content Do They Prefer? And What Difficulties They Complain About? The Teachers Were Divided Into Two Groups. (40%) Stated That Their Students Prefer Structural Content Relevant To Their IT Studies, (60%) Of Them Stated The Content Based Syllabus That Teaches Them IT Content. Are There Any Learning Resources Your Students Have Access To? All Teachers Mentioned That There Are Three Resources Available To Their Students To Access: The Internet, Teachers’ Efforts, And Library.

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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Last Language Area To Be Assessed By The Students Is Grammar. The Majority (37.8%) Shows Satisfactory Level Of Proficiency. Again Most Of Them Lack The Average Knowledge Of Grammar And Only (33.8%) Have Good Knowledge Of It.

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The Study Found That There Is A General Needs For IT Students Concerning English Language Focusing On The Communicative Competence, Since English Is International Language, And IT Is Considered As An International Manufacturing. Students Are Unable To Follow Native English Speakers; Even recorded One. Since They Do Not Exposed To Such Experiences. Most Of The IT Students Feel Satisfied In Their Writing Skills. Though, More Activities Will Be Needed In This Field As Responded.

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