Teaching English for Specific Purposes: A no man's land area of activity: Investigating ESP courses administered in Iranian Universities

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Abstract

Teaching English for Specific Purposes (TESP) is a fairly recent development in EFL; it is a language course with a needs oriented approach to TEFL responding to future job or study needs rather than general interest. The teaching of such courses requires an interest in the specialist area and flexibility needed in transferring from TEFL to EAP. To develop and administer a course of ESP/EAP, the researcher teacher often has to have a variety of skills: choice of appropriate materials, evaluation procedures, syllabus and a suitable methodology good for managing learning strategies, promoting practice, and conveniently shaping the input to the EAP courses. The EAP administered in Iran for various university students majoring in various courses are designed either parallel to their professional studies (called in-study courses of EAP) or for post-study students (advanced EAP courses for MA and PhD students), the content of which is based on students' future study requirements (e.g. note taking from books and lectures, answering exam questions for the training course, reading, and writing, etc.). Since EAP courses are to be administered repeatedly for groups of students who have the same needs and approximately the same proficiency level, research with the goal of discovering whose area of activity teaching such courses is, seems to be an inevitable research issue in Iran, calling for inquiry. The fact is that both content teachers and English teachers share in their common knowledge of English, but the knowledge of the subject is unique to the subject teacher and the knowledge of pedagogy is to EFL teacher.

Subject teachers at present teach true EAP courses designed for students in every specific major of study and EFL teachers from English departments currently teach semi-EAP courses designed for students in five major divisions of science: social, medical, pure, educational and engineering sciences, This study is an investigation into the problem of which group of teachers, subject or EFL, are entitled to do the true EAP teaching, by first evaluating the quality of the EAP courses currently presented. The work is undertaken to a) describe the shortcomings of the present EAP administration based on a survey using questionnaires presented to both current and past students, EFL teachers, and subject lecturers; the aim is seeking information for the state of affairs of the currently administered EAP courses. Structured interview is used for developing enlightening lines of inquiry with both students and subject as well as language lecturers. The collected data are analysed statistically to display the present situation of the work. The same method of data collection is used for collecting relevant information and opinions regarding the function of methodology, syllabus, and effective

materials accurately prepared based on a proper analysis of the needs of the students. Finally, having examined the gap between the present situation and needs analysis data, possible solutions are introduced based on previous research contributions. The questions used for the solution phase will address issues related to the dilemma: a) relegating the job to EFL departments, b) using team teaching, and c) using collaborative teaching programs through the involvement of both subject and EFL teachers. The descriptive method of data analysis and the qualitative analysis of the interview data reveal: a) there are shortcomings in the present EAP administration which call for improvement, b) collaborative teaching will not only result in the production of good quality materials with regards to both conceptual content and language, but also bear teaching outcome that removes the problems resulting from the absence of pedagogical expertise.

Key words: ESP, TEFL, EAP, needs analysis, syllabus design, methodology, materials preparation.

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1. Introduction

A significant aspect of language instruction at a tertiary level is learning English for a given purpose, with the specific aims of getting to know specialized vocabulary, enlarging one's knowledge of the subject matter by reading in English and being able to use the language in the prospective profession or study areas by becoming prepared for some common situations such as carrying out higher level studies, going for an interview or conducting professional correspondence. Finally, students would like to become proficient enough to do research for their B.A./B.Sc. or M.A./M.Sc. theses, so they must ideally be able to find and evaluate English language sources, read and understand articles and books, translate, examine, and produce. As can be seen, with such a wide array of needs and relatively little amount of language instruction, the teacher must be tactful in choosing contents, materials, methods, and mode of work, to motivate students to work on their own and showing them effective ways of looking for information.

It is evident that English is the lingua-franca of almost all professional as well as academic careers available today, especially in science and technology. This contemporary reality will force university administration to open their eyes on what to achieve in a language classroom and how to achieve. Teaching English for Specific Purposes is widespread in many countries of the world, also in Iranian universities (English for Academic Purposes, henceforth EAP); however, it is facing with obstacles which call for creative solutions. One question is what qualifications the teachers need and what the students require. The aim of this article is to

describe the situation of ESP teachers in Iran, demonstrate the urgent need for new ways of delivering instruction and to show the solutions to the problems in the form of a collaborative cross departmental association. This can work to a) teach the courses in question and b) prepare ESP materials in the form of textbook production, which will be a series of classroom lessons or self-study activities using the content of the disciplines to learn English .

In view of university graduates' need of a good English Language command in the workplace, this research aims at investigating ways to meet with the current language needs of students in universities and colleges, especially in the area of reading comprehension skill. Education at the university is a crucial stage because at this level students are preparing themselves to enter into another phase of their life that is their career, and therefore, they have certain expectations of what they want to learn and achieve in their learning process .

In introduction, it seems necessary to evoke the foreign language teaching context at Iranian universities by highlighting its main characteristics. The current situation of learning a foreign language at a tertiary level is the continuation of language instruction from the secondary school, students leaving school supposedly around the intermediate level, having passed around 450 to 500 hours of instruction, and starting the tertiary English at this level. Due to the strong administrative pressure to study English, it is the case that most students endeavour to learn the language, even if their starting language level is lower than intermediate, with the extreme cases starting as unqualified beginners. Currently the average amount of language instruction for undergraduate program amounts to 120 hours, distributed among four semesters of studies. Language groups differ in size from at least 14, in the case of postgraduate courses to almost a maximal 60 students, with mixed ability groups when it was not possible, due to administrative limitations, to organize a few language level groups. The consequence of having large classes is the lessening of the role of methodology in undergraduate courses; while in the case of postgraduate courses, methodology can be implemented to involve students in useful course activities.

When comparing secondary language education with the tertiary level, one can see several differences: a) language exposure (around 450 to 500 hrs vs. 120 hrs), b) change of student attitude (where English is seen as one of the major subjects to be obligatorily taken at school-leaving exams and used in university entrance exam, followed by add-on programs deemed by students to be a much needed commodity to the main faculty subjects useful for their future profession), c) language level (with groups being more heterogeneous than the secondary language education with levels of proficiency higher), d) change in the role of the teacher (the teacher becoming more of an organizer, facilitator, materials writer, while less of a resource and a teaching aid), e) availability of materials (where instead of a variety of multi-level course books with accompanying materials one has little choice as for the textbook, being forced into the role of materials writer). When devising any language learning course, it is absolutely essential to start with creating a learner profile and investigating the target learner's expectations about the different aspects of the course (Nunan, 1995; Harmer, 1991). Learner needs, apart from logistical considerations, administrative considerations, psychosocial considerations, are what a course designer has to take into account, according to Richards and Rodgers (1986). As Nunan (1987) suggests, the modern classrooms should experience a shift from a teacher-centred curriculum, decided upon in advance by the teacher, to a learner-cantered one, where the purpose for learning, individual differences, learning styles preferences, and students' needs and interests determine to a large extent the content and methodology of the course.

For the purposes of the current research, a survey was carried out in a group of fourth-year university students majoring in social sciences, intending to investigate their attitude towards learning the specific foreign language and the expectations as for the ESP courses offered. As it turned out, language needs of students are multifold, and sometimes hard to reconcile; although the survey can demonstrate the needs viewed prototypically by the majority in certain respects to be practiced in a needs analysis program. On the one hand, learners expect the development of general language proficiency, including gaining mastery in reading, listening, writing and speaking, enlarging vocabulary, perfecting the use of the grammatical system and enhancing communicative abilities; on the other hand, they have specific English study needs to be observed.

The first and most prominent concern for the courses administrated is the books accessible on the Iranian book market. As shown in EFL and ESP research into teacher attitude to the coursebook, for many teachers the course book equals the language teaching method, and when selecting materials they might not even realize that they adopt a certain set of beliefs about the learning objectives, techniques, procedures, the teacher's role and the learner's role. In order to raise the consciousness of teachers, many researchers suggest a thorough course book evaluation (Harmer, 1991; Sheldon, 1988; Williams, 1983). The problem of course book evaluation and, in consequence, its adaptation or supplementing becomes especially up-to-date in the case of ESP materials, where the accessibility of materials differs according to the discipline studied .

There are not sufficient coursebooks that can be used by teachers of English for academic purposes, especially when postgraduate EAP programs are concerned. In comparing the accessibility of materials, unlike EAP materials which are rare in book markets, in the case of English for general purposes (EGP) coursebooks are found in plenty; they are developed in many language levels, with a multitude of accompanying materials and sufficient teacher guidance in teacher's books, teacher resource books, tests, video cassettes and coursebook-related software. On the other hand, the ESP teachers have few materials at their disposal, with only some basic titles on one level, providing reading development and ESP vocabulary, however, without developing all the skills equally and with much less focus on formal structures, such courses fail to accomplish the target level needs of the EAP students. We are faced with a situation in which pedagogically trained teachers with good knowledge of English who have developed the skill necessary to teach EAP courses for classes of different language needs effectively suffer the lack of content knowledge which can potentially be an obstacle to comprehension overriding the privilege of having language knowledge. On the other hand, trained teachers in content departments enjoy the advantage of having the shared knowledge assumed to be required for comprehending ESP texts; however, they lack the linguistic knowledge to a desirable extent as well as pedagogy. The EAP in Iran is in need of trained teachers who, a) with regards to content knowledge, are well-developed on the one hand, and b) are pedagogically skilled with good knowledge of language formal structures and the ability to conduct needs analysis and perform materials preparation with an assumed syllabus and methodology motivating enough to satisfy the needs of various groups of EAP students. In addition, the EAP courses are in urgent need of a) course books containing ESP texts, reading comprehension questions with a methodology which renders the course motivating and attractive as well as b) good teachers who, in addition to being a pedagogically trained teacher, are capable of doing research in the pursuit of needs analysis, designing course methodology, and preparing materials. Presently, there are some majors for which there are no coursebooks or any other language materials on the market, nor are there any plans for that. Coursebooks are hardly available especially at an MA level, and teachers

must look for some other ways of finding materials in running lessons of such courses. Evidently, given the time and the expense required, with teachers working in isolation, materials prepared will not enjoy an effective methodology and syllabus designed for the needs of the students.

2. Review of Literature
2.1. English for Academic Purposes (EAP)

EAP can be defined as "the portion of the curriculum which prepares students for gainful involvement in study situations ranging from low-level to sophisticated language needs in technical fields" (Anthony 1997: 56). EAP courses focus on meeting the demand for students by providing specific language training and skills through content-based instruction (CBI) activities in order to enhance basic skills development in particular reading skill. According to Anthony (1997), most EAP classes consistently expose students to sufficient training in reading, writing, speaking and listening. From the trainings, then students are assumed to accomplish their specific professional functions that are required and necessary in their field of study or work.

EAP is more specific compared to ESP because it focuses on the specific disciplines; it includes skills required by students in order to prepare students for their future study needs. Basic skills in EAP are academic reading as the primary skill, writing, listening and speaking as less and less demanded skills. In the context of this study, reading skills required to perform in academic functions are incorporated into the target needs of the students. In our university administration, needs of EAP students are limited to the ability of various faculty students in conducting research studies in English, taking advantage of computer resources, as well as for discussion in academic encounters. Given the intensive nature of the program of instruction, due to the limited time and budget allocated, oral skills required in presentation and attending conference presentations are either ignored or less attended to. Writing various genres of language, e.g. summary, letter, review etc. are among the skills left almost untouched. EAP programmes should efficiently incorporate basic job readiness skills such as job search, interviewing, preparing resumes, letters and filling out work-related forms.

2.2. The target situation needs analysis approach

Learners come into a class hoping to achieve something at the end of the day. In learning a language, the ultimate aim is to be able to utilize the language in day-to-day tasks and most importantly in satisfying their career demand. The needs of the students are crucial to ensure that learning takes place and the learners achieve their long-term goals. In a long- term goal, learners will experience the need to communicate in the target language outside of classrooms. Besides that, they also realize that there are vast opportunities career wise. It is evident that there is a necessity to identify the goals of the learners in language classrooms particularly because it does in a way determine the success of a language programme.

According to Chambers (1980) early instruments for establishing needs is by investigating the target situation for which learners were being prepared: the language need of the target situation is the goal of the ESP course. Thus needs analysis should be concerned with the establishment of communicative needs and their realizations, resulting from an analysis of the communication in the target situation, what is referred to as "target situation analysis".

(Chambers 1980: 25). The central issue to ESP is the necessary starting point in materials and course design. This is important because practitioners have to be selective at specific content-based materials and topics to ensure relevance. In order to achieve a reliable needs analysis, various forms of pedagogic and content needs have to be identified to provide information about learners and the educational environment. In doing so, researchers identify three specified areas of needs analysis: a) present and target needs analysis, also referred to as deficiency analysis, analysis which gives information about what the learners' learning needs are, what students think they need and lack; b) strategy analysis which seeks to establish how learners wish to learn rather than what they need to learn. By investigating the learners' preferred learning styles and strategies, we get a picture of the learners' conception of learning; and finally c) means analysis which takes into account issues and conditions related to the educational environment in which the ESP course is to take place.

Hence, it is evident that the role of needs analysis in an ESP setting is crucial as the focus is very much on learners and also the language and linguistic skills and items. Furthermore, analysing the language requirement in profession and analysing students' needs are important as to match suitability and to verify the contents necessary for the ESP course. It is vital that a comprehensible needs analysis be conducted to ensure that materials and course design later reflect EAP for higher learning students; it is only when such needs are discovered that students involve themselves in the tasks introduced. Having pointed out the significance of three types of knowledge involved in EAP practice, namely language, pedagogy, and content knowledge, we now address them by focusing on the major issue of the how the three can be dealt with for having successful EAP administration.

2.3. The problem

The focus of the present paper is to discuss the two sides of ESP instruction namely the teacher and materials preparation, as lessons using the content materials as a basis for conducting lessons or self-study activities. Discussing teaching and materials, we are lead to the question as who the EAP teaching is to be allocated to. This issue is so urgent that it calls for effective investigation. Due to the inadequacy or non-existence of ELT materials for specific purposes, university teachers can adopt a variety of solutions, with the ones suggested in this article among the most frequently implemented by ESP practice in the world.

The need to develop the skill is crucial due to the rapid change and development of scientific advancement that requires graduates to acquire a certain level of EAP reading skills. Besides that, the widespread use of computers and the Internet have dramatically raised the need for effective academic communication. Reading skills crucially needed are all job or study related written communication exchanges. Keeping this in view, it is felt that reading courses offered at university level should target on reading related to study needs and functions to ensure that the learners are well equipped with the required skills in order for them to perform at the work or study places.

2.4. The objectives of the study
This study aims at investigating the needs and expectations of the EAP students with regards to the EAP reading comprehension courses offered in universities in Iran. The study attempts to a) reveal the current EAP currently practiced by practitioners at work; and b) students' attitude will be sought whether the courses offered reflect the specific communication needs

of the study situations in the university curricula. Questions regarding methodology are also used seeking information for their views about the richness of class activities. Then the results will be used as evidence for the revision of the EAP courses currently practiced in two ways: a) forming a cross-departmental association between the content teachers and the EFL practitioners to initiate the practice of either team teaching or collaborative teaching as implemented currently in the EAP world and b) establishing designs for course methodology and materials preparation programs out of such association to the satisfaction of BA and MA level EAP courses.

2.5. Research questions
The present study attempts to answer the following research questions:
   1. What are the expectations and needs of the students with regards to their communicative abilities to function efficiently in academic activities in the future? This is where the students' points of view are taken into account on whether the EAP skills developed at tertiary level enabled them to transit confidently from learning to self-study. Students who have completed their training are the main focus because they should, by then, be able to decide on what skills are used most frequently at the academic setting.
   2. What is the course content of the current administration and how the current administration prepares the students for their future study needs? Are the students exposed to the necessary skills required?
   3. What solutions can be proposed for the current deficiencies in the EAP practice? The focus will be teaching and materials based on the academic needs of the university students .

3. Method
3.1. Subjects
Nineteen BA and MA social science students were selected from two different institutions, namely Isfahan University (11, henceforth IU), and Islamic Azad University of Najaf Abad (8, IAUNA). Their age group ranges from 23 – 29 years old. Students from both universities had completed levels of general English courses and also at least a course in EAP. In the EAP course, students were introduced to the reading skills needed for the social science discipline. The undergraduate students were required to do two specific English courses; in addition to two EAP undergraduate courses, MA students were required to undergo two EAP courses each of which was regarded as a two credit course included in the obligatory curriculum of education; in other words, an MA level graduate has presumably passed a number of 240-260 hours of EAP instruction. The students involved are those who had undergone at least one of the EAP training course at their faculty departments prior to the time of data collection of the study presented here. These students' views demonstrate EAP practice and are views presented after completing the EAP training.

3.2. Instrumentation
The data collection technique used for this study is a set of questionnaire designed to gather information about the courses currently administered and to find out the gap of the students' needs to match with the future study situation. The questionnaires were submitted to both EAP practitioners from content departments and to the EAP students who had already passed at least one EAP course. The questionnaire consists of three sections: personal details, EAP communication needs and the current EAP programmes at the selected higher learning institutions.

3.3. Research design

The research project at hand was conducted by, firstly, designing the questionnaire as the instrument for data collection. Then the subjects for the research were identified and selected from the groups of BA and MA social science students as well as EAP practitioners. A pilot study was conducted among three students in Isfahan University to foresee possible drawbacks of the questions used and to add or omit items wherever necessary. Based on the findings of the pilot study, a revised set of questionnaire was designed and used in the collection of data. The results of the pilot study will not be mentioned here for brevity.

4. Results and discussion of the findings
4.1. Current EAP Programme and the students' needs

The focus of this study is to identify the communication needs of students to prepare them to enter independent study and research in future academic or professional career through English. Before analysing the needs from the students' perspective, it is relevant to present data regarding the content of the English courses offered in the higher learning institutions involved (the data collected through informal unstructured interview with the teachers involved). This section will identify the types of skills taught and their relevance to the needs of the students and also the importance of learning English as a preparation to enter higher academic programs.

Table 1 skills offered by the currently practiced syllabus (data collected through unstructured interviewing of seven EAP teachers, members of Geography, Sociology and History departments)

Skills presented	% of responses
Reading Comprehension	78%
Translation	82%
Comprehension of Oral lectures	16%
Formal Structure: Sentence and discourse	9%
Essay Writing	8%
Summary Presentation	7%
Sentence Construction	7%
Paraphrasing	2%
Letter Writing	4%
The EAP Instruction Adequate?	21%

The distribution of the types of skills learned shows degree of emphasis in instruction, in the sense that an average proportion of 78% of the skills is devoted to reading comprehension, 82% translation, 16% oral activities, 9% formal structure, 7% writing summaries, 7% writing sentences or putting in order the words in scrambled sentences, 2% paraphrasing and 4% writing letters. The overall finding from the data tabulated above is that EAP instruction focuses on either translation or reading comprehension.

Generally all students agree that English is important in their field of study. During their academic training they would be required to use English. However, for the question as to how relevant is their English course in preparing them for the study tasks, 79% said that the English programme is inadequate to prepare them for the study needs involved, especially in comprehending EAP materials leave alone writing them. According to the students, they were not exposed very much to the types of writing genres used in their disciplines of study. In fact, the structure and format of materials were very rigid. For example, when they were taught how to write as well as to understand texts, the lecturer focused too much on the transliteration of the text rather than the structural cues used in the written text. As a result the students thought they could not apply what was taught to them when they would get involved in practical self-study of texts, being faced with the experience of not finding out what was wrong with their deciphering of the text. They would think they knew the lexicon used in the text, but they'd experience difficulty decoding the given EAP text. They found that texts vary depending on topics and the important criterion in understanding is uncovering the message and information to be conveyed and intended by the writer. However, 12% respondents from Isfahan University claimed that the English course for the academic purposes was helpful and useful in their future study functions. Still another %12 who had attended an EAP course practiced by an EFL teacher pointed out that EAP course they attended failed for them, since the EFL teacher often faced difficulty explaining the EAP passages used as the materials. Lack of content knowledge caused real trouble on the teacher's part to the extent that the teacher needed students' help for the compensation of the shortage of content knowledge.

4.2. Needs analysis data of the students
Needs analysis is regarded as a criterion in ESP and it is a matter of searching the needs for an established group of students in order to match between skills in learning and using what has been learnt. Therefore, a needs analysis is considered primary in this study. The following questions were posed in gathering the data: Which skills are required most for future study needs? What are the expectations of students from their EAP class ?

Table 2 Skills needed for EAP students

skills	Percentage
Special vocabulary (the EAP jargon)	98%
Formal structures	98%
Essay writing	70%
Summary writing	84%
Comprehension of EAP written texts	98%
Oral Skills	46%

Based on the findings from the questionnaire, the need to develop comprehension skills, learn the EAP jargon (98% for both) as well as formal structures (90%) are the highest skills required in performing the future study in the academic area. 18 out of 19 students stated that these language skills are the most important. The next two important skills are essay and summary writing. Based on the findings 70% of the respondents indicated that writing essays is another skill which is important, while 84% responded that writing summary is also an important skill in performing their job.

In answering the second question most respondents indicated that they are not satisfied with the present syllabus offered at the universities in question. They felt that the syllabus did not equip them well in order to enter the higher education programs. 86% of the respondents felt that there would be an urgent need to change/revise the syllabus, while 12% said they were happy with the present syllabus and 14% were not sure.

When asked about the reasons for the need to change/revise the syllabus, the respondents gave various reasons: the courses are far lower than their future study needs at their future study functions (80%). Another reason stated was repeated programmes from previous semesters (98%); that the course in question focused on the same issues and almost the same topics covered in previous one/s. Still another reason was that the course activities were boring and not challenging (76%). The fourth reason pointed out was lack of focus on formal structures both at a sentence level and at discourse (90%). Only a few stated that the courses were difficult (30%).

The findings also reveal the mismatch of what EAP courses offered at the institutions with the real needs of the students involved. The mismatch is presented in the table below:

Table 3 Communication Skills offered at the EAP courses

Study-related skills	IU	IAUNA
Tr, En to Per	Yes	Yes
Tr, Persian to English	No	No
Read Comp activities	Yes	No
Formal exercise	No	No
Essay writing	No	No
Summary writing	Yes	No
Rev writing, reading	No	No
Oral activities	No	No
Aca Let writing	No	No

4.3. Methodological issues in IAP teaching

The different ways of how a learner acquires, retains and retrieves information are collectively termed as learning styles or learning preferences. According to Reid (1987) learning styles are internally based characteristics, often not perceived or consciously used by learners, for the intake and comprehension of new information. Regarding making decisions regarding activities to be used in the classrooms He states that successful language teaching-learning is dependent upon the willing co-operation of the participants in the interaction as to the goals of the interaction. Co-operation cannot be imposed but must be negotiated. The teachers should find out the students' language learning preferences then only decisions on the types of activities can be made.

In this section of the project, students' views about what course activities are motivating for them were sought. We collected data to investigate the styles preferred by the EAP learners and to examine how relevant the EAP teachers' current practice in classes is to the students learning preferences. The questionnaire focused on learning styles which include strategies for learning through the four basic skills development and vocabulary expansion. Learning at home, jargon learning styles, and preferred class activities viewed desirable by students are the focus of data collection.

Students were asked whether they like learning by (a) listening, (b) reading, (c) writing d) taking notes from lectures, e) taking notes from books they are to study and f) making summary of classes. The responses are given below. In the case of number 1, students reveal their interest in oral practice, while the teachers would not find this skill a vital one for the students' needs.

Table 4: Learning strategies preferred

Options	ST: Yes %	ST: No %	T: Yes	T: No
(1) listening and speaking	85	15		No
(2) reading comprehension	94	6	Yes	
(3) writing as home practice	60	40		No
(4) taking notes from lectures	77	23	Yes	
(5) taking notes from what is read	60	40	Yes	
(6) making class summaries	42	58		No
(7) translating	60	40	Yes	

94% of the students prefer learning by reading. As indicated by the response, this preference is known and agreed by their teachers who incorporated it in the course activities. Low percentage was received for making summaries (42%); in this case agreement was discovered to exist between what the teacher thought and the students viewed as their needs.

Another important issue is EAP vocabulary development. Unlike what most people believe, vocabulary learning is a complicated task. The students learning a new word have to pay attention to spelling, pronunciation, stress, parts of speech, and collocational constraints in contextual occurrence with other lexical items in various situations. Attempting to learn a word involves incorporating knowledge of these characteristics of the word. We sought responses of students for how new vocabulary items should be effectively learnt, and whether the options were encouraged in class work. The possible strategies include: by using the word in a sentence, thinking of relationship between known and new, saying or writing the word several times, guessing the unknown words, and reading with no dictionary help. Results can be observed below:

Table 5: Vocabulary Learning

Strategies preferred	% St: Yes	Yes	No
(1) using new words in a sentence	98	Yes	
(2) thinking of relationships between known and new	83		No
(3) saying or writing words several times	75		No
(4) avoiding verbatim translation	60		No
(5) guessing the unknown	77	yes	
(6) reading without looking up words	85	yes	

Option one is preferred most by the students (98%) and this is also agreed by the teachers when all of them believe that the students prefer to learn vocabulary by using new words in a sentence. Option two also received a rather high percentage by the students. However, this is not what the teachers did in the course activities.

What learners find very useful in the classroom is a question with several possible choices: (1) role play (2) language games, (3) songs, (4) talking with and listening to other students, (5) memorising conversations/dialogues, (6) getting information from guest speakers, (7) getting information from planned visits, (8) writing a learning diary, and (9) learning about culture. The collected results are illustrated in the table below:

Table 6: Learning Activities

Options	Yes %		Yes %	No %
(1) role play	92			No
(2) language simulations	74			No
(4) Oral discourse with other students	72			No
(5) rehearsing memorised dialogues	53			No
(6) getting information from presentations	62			No
(7) reporting from planned visits	58			No
(8) writing a learning diary	57			No
(9) learning about culture	51			No

Role play is most beneficial according to the students; however none of the nine activity types was incorporated in the EAP courses students attended. Teachers should provide situations which lead to student-student activities. Students prefer to be directly involved in the language rather than teacher controlled classroom.

4.4. Solutions
EAP practice involves some key methodological qualities including input shaping, encouraging students to learn, managing learning strategies, and finally practice and use of language knowledge learnt. The EAP teacher does all kinds of jobs: course design, administration, materials preparation and evaluation. The role of methodology tends to be of less significance when classes are large with mixed ability students, and when grouping is not completely by speciality. Low budget, low status of the teacher, shortness and intensity of the courses can also aggravate the results. Under such circumstances, a language teacher cannot be expected to learn several disciplines; even if it is done, only little knowledge can be attained and little knowledge can be dangerous for presenting it at class.

Lack of content knowledge cannot, in the culture of our university students, be compensated by asking from the students questions about the conceptual content of materials, since students culturally view the teacher's as a source of authority. Neither can it be possible for the EFL teacher to develop competence in the subject area to the level required. When there is no help available for consulting with a specialist, nor time for preparation and a good textbook, the practice is apt to fail. There are situations which are varied. In post-study situations the shortage of prior knowledge can be a big obstacle for the EFL practitioner's transfer to EAP practice. The teaching in MA level must be quite specific; the EFL teacher's lack of understanding will be the gap of shared knowledge assumed between the members of the discipline. The desirable level of specialist knowledge brings confidence although in a number of pre-study and simultaneous situations it is not the pre-requisite.

Team teaching is encouraged since failure may be related to both language and subject knowledge. Student, subject teacher, and language teacher are in need of cooperation and need one-another's assistance. Team teaching can provide a chance for the students to learn what they have not understood before. The language teacher learns the prior knowledge required. The subject teacher receives feedback on how well he communicates with the students. Team teaching can be achieved in several methods of cooperation. The first form of team teaching involved two teachers' presence at class; the subject teacher gives the lecture and the language teacher helps in language points. In exam, the subject lecturer discusses the content of the answers, while the language teacher could help with linguistic and thematic structuring. The specialist writes the course and the language teacher is to act as a consultant check to see that any questions or problems of structure, vocabulary, or pronunciation were given immediate attention. The second form of cooperation is achieved by subject-language integration program of teaching. The material has derived from some earlier collaboration between language teacher and subject teacher. Assignments are marked by both the language teacher and the subject teacher. The language teacher prepares and works on recorded materials and the subject teacher checks the subject lectures. Only one teacher attends the class attending to both language and content areas. Collaboration is done in material preparation. A third solution to EAP practice possibly useful in Iranian context is called parallelism formed in parallel mini courses, in which language based classes will be accompanied by parallel content-based classes in which topic content is introduced. The weekly two hour classes will be divided into two one hour sessions each specified for either content or language points. The fourth style of EAP team teaching is cooperative teaching in

which constant contact is formed across the content department and the language department. The language skills involving understanding new content will be worked out. The language teacher will be in need of some content knowledge. Interesting attractive topics may not be areas in which ESL instructors are knowledgeable. Specialist lecturers can help here by providing topics and in commenting on the contents of the finished assignments. Discussion between language and content teachers through weekly meetings are held to secure continued cooperation between the two instructors.

The survey conducted as which way of team teaching will be adequate for Iranian universities demonstrated interesting results. Seven Teachers from the language department pointed out that out of the four options, collaboration can be done in the form of associations made by two teachers each from either language department or subject department. They would be able to share their expertise in doing materials preparation and designing course methodology. Class attendance will be in accord with the two teachers' agreement. They opt for attending the classes by each teacher in every other session. The sessions would focus on language points; and for the subject teacher the session will be allocated to explaining the issues related to content reading and understanding texts.

Table 7: The most adequate team teaching in Iranian context, Language teachers' views:

Team teaching:	Helpful	Very helpful	Not helpful
Type 1: two teachers present at a time			
Type 2: subject-language integration only subject lecturer attends			
Type 3: parallel mini-courses, dividing each session into two			
Type 4: cooperation and contact, language teacher attends classes			

Table 8: The most adequate team teaching in Iranian context, Subject Lectures' views:

Team teaching:	Helpful	Very helpful	Not helpful
Type 1: two teachers present at a time			
Type 2: subject-language integration only subject lecturer attends			
Type 3: parallel mini-courses, dividing each session into two			
Type 4: cooperation and contact, language teacher attends classes			

When five lectures were interviewed as for how they thought the problem could be solved, the majority believed a) cross-departmental association was vital and productive b) subject

lecturers were entitled to do the teaching and c) they welcomed the idea of handling the task through the cooperation described.

Projects might be financially supported by university administration to achieve the goal of materials preparation in all levels. A departmental administrative EAP teaching at all levels of proficiency is recommended to be formed in which EFL stuff get associated with subject teachers across other departments. The decision for how to handle the EAP course could be made out of some case by case discussion. When the EAP department is formed, cooperation will be inevitable the results of which will certainly be beneficial to the practice. The results of such cooperation will be two-fold: successful teaching administration and materials preparation in the form of series of lessons with a methodology assumed.

5. Implications of the findings

Based on the findings, though some general skills such as English to Persian translation and to some lesser extent reading comprehension activities are covered in present EAP courses, the responses reflect that students may not have enough exposure to learn more specific language involving tasks. The need for a review of the current EAP syllabus reflects the idea that the language programme is insufficient in preparing the students to perform academic tasks at the study functions. However, with the proposed revision of the current syllabus which focuses more on study-related communication tasks, then, the mismatch between the courses offered and the actual academic needs will be minimized.

The purpose of EAP courses is to fulfil the needs of students in preparing them for the study functions to be involved in future study tasks. Attending such courses will aid them to become more competent as researchers in advanced social science areas of study. Revision in the currently administered EAP courses will result in tremendous increase in motivation to learn, interest and participation. The learners are more willing to learn and perform tasks as they can see the significance of learning the skills. In brief, EAP does create a different learning environment for learners and this is important in order to produce capable students.

6. Conclusion

Types of learning that focus merely on receptive skills do not appeal to students; there is a significant tendency among learners towards class content that observes both receptive and productive skills emphasised equally .
   •Vocabulary learning for students is not a writing activity. The most significant way of mastering new words is in fact 'using new words in a sentence' and 'thinking of relationship between known and new ."
   •Finally, students expressed views that they would only feel satisfied with their language proficiency level when they see themselves involved and actively functioning in English.

Effective language teaching and learning can only be achieved when teachers are aware of their learners' needs, capabilities, potentials, and preferences in meeting these needs. We have observed that students' preferences are not satisfied in many instances. The results obtained call for a step forward to the formation of especial cross-discipline departments; towards a co-operation in designing syllabuses, doing weekly course planning, and classroom management.

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