Evaluating Learners' Perceptions on an EAP Course Program at Tripoli University's Faculty of Education

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Abstract

This paper is a study to evaluate the EAP course program through the perceptions of 40 students in their final semester at the School of Education of Tripoli University. The study aimed to obtain feedback from EFL students regarding the EAP course delivered in the faculty of education. The data were collected through a questionnaire to assess the students' EAP course content & skill improvement, the learner autonomy, the testing system procedures, EAP teaching materials & resources, and the EAP teaching methods. This paper also reviews some research studies regarding EAP program evaluation and learner autonomy. The findings of this study revealed that there is a great need for the development of the students' academic writing skills in, summarizing, paraphrasing, avoiding plagiarism, referencing skills. The study offers some suggestions for the improvement of the quality of the EAP program, considering students' perceptions and suggestions as legitimate needs.

Keywords: English for Academic Purposes, Program Evaluation, Learners' Needs, Learner Autonomy.

تقييم أراء الطلبة حول برنامج اللغة الإنجليزية للأغراض الأكاديمية في كلية التربية بجامعة طرابلس – ليبيا

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ملخص الدراسة

هذه الورقة هي عبارة عن ملخص لدراسة أجريت لتقييم برنامج مقررات اللغة الانجليزية لأغراض اكاديمية من خلال آراء 40 طالبا في الفصل الدراسي الأخير في كلية التربية بجامعة طرابلس. حيث كان الهدف من هذه الدراسة هو الحصول على معلومات من خلال آراء الطلبة عن البرنامج الأكاديمي المستخدم في هذه الكلية. تم جمع البيانات من خلال استبيان لتقييم محتوى برنامج المقررات الدراسية للطلبة وتحسين مهاراتهم الأكاديمية واستقلالية التعلم ونظام الامتحانات ومواد التدريس والمصادر والمواد المستخدمة وطرق التدريس. كما استعرضت هذه الورقة أيضا بعض الدراسات البحثية المتعلقة بالبرنامج الأكاديمي، واستعرضت ايضا نتائج تحليل البيانات وطريقة مناقشتها وتم تقديم بعض الاقتراحات لتحسين جودة برنامج المقررات الدراسية الاكاديمية مع الأخذ في الاعتبار أهمية اراء الطلبة واقتراحاتهم كاحتياجات مشروعة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: اللغة الإنجليزية للأغراض الأكاديمية، تقييم البرنامج، احتياجات المتعلمين، استقلالية المتعلم.

1. Introduction

Over the past few years, in many foreign language contexts, such as in Libya, there has been an increasing tendency to use English as a medium of instruction at the higher level of university education. Therefore, few universities and technical colleges, such as, colleges of science, medicine, and faculties of foreign languages offer English language course programs for Academic purposes (EAP) to their undergraduate students. There is no doubt that the purpose of the EAP course program is to equip students with academic skills as well as communication skills that enable them to use the target language properly in the academic setting and to be successful in their academic studies. This paper is a summary of an evaluation study of the EAP program conducted on EAP students in their final semester at the faculty of education. It aimed

to investigate the students' perceptions about their existing EAP course program with reference to the EAP course content, learner autonomy, testing system, EAP learning materials & resources and EAP teaching methods.

2. Literature Review
2.1. English for Academic Purposes
English for Academic Purposes (EAP), a branch of English for Specific Purposes (ESP), aims to develop learners' academic and research skills so that they can study, communicate, and carry out research in the target language academic setting.

Taking into account non-native settings, EAP courses are directed at helping EFL learners to achieve success in the academic context where English is used as a medium of instruction (Dubley-Evans & St John, 1998). EAP language instruction is skills-orientated and is concerned with the teaching of learning strategies at the macro-level, such as note-taking, scanning, skimming, predicting ideas, inferring, deducing academic words from the context, discussing in seminars & conferences and giving oral presentations, summarizing a text and paraphrasing an idea, reporting and essay writing, and referencing skills & work-citing, etc.

Richards (2001) advocates that needs analysis originated from the ESP movement with the aim of collecting information about learners' needs. In fact, as Hutchinson and Waters (1987) maintained that what distinguishes ESP from general English is not the existence of a need as such, but rather an awareness of the need.

Therefore, selecting teaching materials and designing textbooks in EAP should consider the needs of the learners. EAP curriculum designers and materials developers agree that in order to meet EAP objectives, successful courses depend greatly on the learners' needs and are based on an integration of both the process and product of academic writing.

Richards, (2001) supports the view of using eclecticism as an approach to teach EAP. This approach is a mixture of various practices of communicative, skills-based, task-based, process and discourse approaches that are integrated to develop learners' language mastery and improve their communicative competence.

Moreover, advocates of EAP stress the importance of strategic language learning that raises learners' consciousness of utilizing

strategies for task accomplishment and self-awareness of language strategies, strengths and weaknesses (Brown, 2007). This strategy instruction approach encourages learners to be independent learners and develops their skills to pick up strategies that are useful for successful development of academic skills and lexis

However, Kennedy (2001) argues that if learners fail to achieve their target language needs, this means that there is a mismatch between levels of actions in language classroom and what happens in real-life situations i.e. actual language use. Therefore, this study aims to investigate the students' perceptions of EAP learner needs to see if there is a mismatch between their needs and the content of their existing EAP course program.

2.2. Program Evaluation

To ensure the quality of an EAP course program, i.e. to maintain its efficiency and effectiveness, an evaluative study should be conducted accordingly. Program evaluation in the educational academic setting, is the process of collecting information to identify certain aspects of a language teaching program in order to see how that program works and make decisions when necessary (Richards, 2001). The main aim of conducting an evaluation is to assess classroom instruction practices and enhance student learning process on a day-to-day basis.

Throughout a program evaluation process all aspects of learning and teaching should be considered. There are different types of program evaluation either formative, which is conducted during the course, or summative being carried out at end of the course. Formative evaluation aims at refining the course program by making, whenever necessary, adjustments and alterations to the program. Summative evaluation on the other hand, is formal and aims to assess how effective and successful the program is. Regular summative evaluations are conducted to assess the situation, identify successes, and inform program improvements. This process helps maintain the program's effectiveness and enables timely interventions to address any issues that arise (Trumbull & Lash, 2013).

On the whole, one can argue that well-planned program evaluation can provide deep insights about what is going on in classroom practices in order to create more effective teaching methods and better learning styles.

2.3. Learner Autonomy

Hump-Lyons (2001) asserts that EAP is learner-cantered. Accordingly, the humanistic approach according to Thornbury (2006) emphasizes the central role of the learner in the learning process. According to Sahito, Khoso & Phulpoto (2025), students' active engagement in the learning process enhances their academic performance. Learner autonomy is therefore a learner's ability to be self-motivated and responsible for his/her own learning.

In order to promote learner autonomy, learners should take the initiative and be responsible for what is learned and that learners should make their voices heard in the decisions that might have a negative impact on them. Irrespective of traditional teaching methods, learner autonomy gives learners opportunities to make their own decisions about learning. In other words, learners have the freedom to access teaching resources to improve their own learning strategies.

It is worth noting that learning autonomy is not that innate. It is generally the teacher's responsibility to promote learner autonomy and train learners how to study on their own. As learners acquire the right learning strategies, they can then create their own learning processes, conduct self-assessment techniques, effectively use learning resources, identify learning opportunities and develop their own learning strategies.

Therefore, the humanistic approach to evaluation concentrates on the students' views and perceptions about teaching and learning. Thus, it is the learners' opinions about a course program and their experiences throughout the learning process that are worth investigating when evaluating an EAP course.

Hedge (2000) argues that learners' comments and feedback are essential to design a successful EAP course. Learners' feedback concerning their views on certain teaching and learning styles provides important information about their needs and helps researchers obtain more insights of what is exactly going on before decisions are made. The opinions and perceptions of students can be a rich source of information for syllabus designers, helping them create more effective and relevant curricula in order to improve students learning abilities (Eslam, 2010).

3. Methodology

The main purpose of this research is to evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of the EAP program at the Faculty of Education Tripoli through the perceptions of the learners. Therefore, this study aimed to address these questions:

1) What are the learners' perceptions concerning the existing EAP program?

2) How did the textbook teaching materials meet the EAP learners' needs?

3) What possible changes could be made to improve the EAP program?

Even though the researcher of this study believes that the students are the only critics of the EAP course under investigation, he is fully aware that the teachers' views are worth considering. Syllabus design and development is not only a matter of thinking but it is a process of acting to be carried out by both teachers and students. Hence, there is no doubt that the learners' active engagement in the course of learning influences their decisions as how to construct their curriculum.

There can be differences between what teachers believe should happen and what actually happens in class. Therefore, students' reactions to course content, testing system, teaching materials, and teaching and learning styles as well as their ideas and suggestions and feedback are of great significance to the development of a successful EAP program.

3.1. Participants

This EAP course evaluation was conducted with 40 EFL students, aged between 18 and 25, at the Faculty of Education Tripoli, University of Tripoli. The target students are those who had completed their EAP course and are in their final semester of study.

3.2. Data Collection

The EAP program evaluation was undertaken at the end of the course in the form of summative evaluation. The aim was to gather information about the existing EAP language program via a questionnaire measuring the quality of the course. Quantitative research, according to, Rao & Woolcock (2003) relies heavily on numbers and is used to measure the levels and changes in the impact of learning. The questionnaire provided objective

assessment data on the EAP course and was considered most appropriate for the purpose of the study.

3.3 Theoretical Framework

For the purpose of the study, an attempt was made to design a questionnaire on the basis of the theoretical framework proposed by Hutchinson & Waters (1987) and Hyland (2006) who proposed a Target Situation Analysis framework that consists primarily of the following questions:

Why are the learners taking the course?
How do the learners learn?
What resources are available?
Who are the learners?
Where will the course take place?
When will the course take place?
(Hutchinson & Waters, 1987)

Hutchinson and waters (1987) made a clear distinction between two types of needs. The first type of needs is called "target needs", which refers to what students are supposed to do in the target situation. The second type of needs proposed is called "learning needs" which involves taking into consideration how learners learn, their reasons for learning, course duration and location.

Moreover, Hyland (2006) maintain that EAP became popular owing to the large numbers of international students studying in British and American universities. For this reason, these universities decided to provide EAP courses to develop students' academic research skills and their communication skills in English to meet the standards required for university entry where English is used as a medium of instruction. He also proposed the following Target Situation Analysis:

Who will the learner use the language with?
Why do learners need the language?
Where will the learner use the language?
What genres will be used?
What is the typical structure of these genres?
What will the content areas be?
(Hyland, 2006)

3.4. Questionnaire Development

This study makes use of a student Questionnaire which was developed to obtain quantitative information via students'

perceptions on the EAP course. The questionnaire comprises 45 close-ended questions grouped in five sections: Course content, learner autonomy, learning materials & resources, testing system, and teaching methods. The participants were asked to complete the questionnaire by indicating their views using a five-point Likert scale as follows: (5) Always True, (4) Mostly True, (3) Sometimes True, (2) Rarely True, and (1) Never True.

The questionnaire in this study was developed based on the relevant needs analysis literature namely (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987; Hyland, 2006). The questionnaire was first pretested on EAP teachers to obtain their views on learner target needs, their current level of competency to perform discipline-related EAP skills, and some other EAP aspects. To ensure maximum clarity on the part of the participants, the questionnaire was translated into Arabic which is the participants' native language. Later, the questionnaire was submitted to two ELT teachers and two psychology professors to further check for clarity, content-relatedness, and format. Before collecting the data, the questionnaire was also pretested on some students and as a result some ambiguities and irrelevances were modified accordingly and finally the reliability of the questionnaire was confirmed.

Table (1) Students questionnaire results

Student name: Class:			Never True	Rarely True	Sometimes True	Mostly True	Always True
Course Content	1	My academic writing skills in, summarizing, paraphrasing, avoiding plagiarism, referencing skills have been developed	0	N=19 47.5%	8	N=13 32.5%	0
	2	My academic listening skills in note-taking, inferring & deducing the meaning skills have been developed	0	N=17 42.5%	7	N=15 37.5%	0

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	3	My academic reading skills in scanning, skimming, guessing, , inferring the meaning skills have been developed	0	4	5	N=22 55%	9
	4	My academic speaking skills in giving oral presentations, & communicating skills have been developed	6	N=24 60%	5	5	0
	5	My academic critical skills in EAP have been developed	10	5	N=25 62.5%	0	0
	6	My academic analytical skills in EAP have been developed	13	N=16 40%	9	2	0
Learner autonomy	7	I usually set my own goals for each semester	7	N=15 37%	N=12 30%	3	3
	8	I feel I can think critically	N=10 25%	7	N=23 57.5%	0	0
	9	I use other English textbooks and resources on my own will	0	N=22 55%	11	7	0
	10	I have learnt how to use source materials independently	5	N 13 32.5%	N=14 35%	N=8 20%	0
	11	I use my own strategies to learn academic English	4	N=12 30%	N=13 32.5%	N=11 27.5%	0
	12	I can write essays on my own/ without needing a teacher	1	N=21 52.5%	11	7	0
	13	I would like to use cassettes/ video/ CD's in the foreign language, outside of the classroom	0	N=10 25%	N=17 42.5%	13	0

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	14	I would like to choose the content of what is to be taught in the English lesson	0	0	13	N=20 50%	7
	15	I know my weaknesses and work on them	10	N=21 52.5%	9	0	0
	16	My language learning success depends on what I do in classroom.	0	0	5	12	N=23 57.5%
	17	I have my own ways of testing how much I have learned.	9	N=22 55%	9	0	0
	18	While learning English, I use my own strategies in which I can learn and reflect on my own	0	N=24 60%	10	5	1
learning materials & resources o	19	The EAP topics were engaging & interesting	6	N=19 47,5%	0	15	0
	20	The EAP learning materials were relevant	8	N=16 40%	6	10	0
	21	The EAP text books were useful	9	N=12 30%	4	N=15 37%	0
	22	The library had enough sources for EAP study	N=1947.5%	N=16 40%	5	0	0
	23	The college had work stations & internet access	N=21 52.5%	N=17 42.4%	2	0	0
	24	The classes had OHP, multimedia, video facilities, audio-visual audio facilities	N=21 52.5%	N=19 47.5%	0	0	0
	25	The learning materials were sufficient and provided a balance	9	N=17 42.5%	4	0	0

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		of the four language skills				
	26	The content & the subject of the textbooks were met with my needs	8	N=15 37.5%	N=14 35%	3	0
Testing System Te	27	Tests & assignments were directly linked to the course of instruction	4	N=13 32.5%	N=16 40%	7	0
	28	I was given enough feedback & comments regarding assignments & tests	7	N=17 42.5%	4	N=12 30%	0
	29	I was given the opportunity to see back my exams & assignments	9	N=17 42.5%	1	13	0
	30	I was given enough time to answer the exam essay tasks	7	N=21 52.5%	2	10	0
	31	Exams & assignments results would always come out in an appropriate time	2	7	3	N=19 47.5%	8
	32	Tests & assignments tasks were challenging & difficult	0	4	7	N=21 52.5%	8
	33	Tests were the only measurement to pass the EAP course rather than through EAP research assignments	0	1	5	N=23 57%	11
Teaching methods Aca	34	The teachers would always control the class and take initiative and were responsible for my EAP learning	0	0	3	N=15 37.5%	N=22 55%

35	The teachers would always encourage us to work in pairs & groups & peer work	9	N=19 47.5%	6	6	0
36	The teachers helped me to make use of source materials & other resources in the class	4	N=16 40%	N=11 27.5%	9	0
37	The teachers' practices were in line with my expectations	8	N=18 45%	9	5	0
38	I was guided by the teachers to write essays & assignments	0	3	4	N=16 40%	N=17 42%
39	The teachers used lecture-based instruction rather than discussion-based instruction	0	0	3	N=21 52.5%	N=16 40%
40	The teachers used reading materials to teach EAP	0	4	6	N=22 55%	12
41	The teachers had enough course materials	9	N=19 47.5%	6	6	0
42	The teachers had enough EAP specialized knowledge	4	N=12 30%	N=18 45%	6	0
43	The teachers motivated me to work independently	6	N=17 42.4%	7	N=10 25.%	0
44	The teachers gave me regular feedback to check my progress	7	N=18 45%	4	N=11 27%	0
45	The teachers used Arabic translation to teach EAP reading texts	0	7	5	N=21 52.5%	7

Note: N= number of students' responses, % = percentage of students responses

4. Data Analysis and Results

The questionnaire was administered to the students in the last week of their final semester. The quantitative data obtained throughout the questionnaire were compiled and analysed. The average percentage for each item of the questionnaire was calculated. After calculating the averages of percentages, it was concluded that only the highest percentages of the results would be considered. The learners were involved in the process of evaluation by encouraging them to assess some aspects of the EAP course curriculum. They were asked to complete the questionnaire.

They were allowed to state their opinions about issues related to course content, learner autonomy, EAP course materials and resources, the testing system, and EAP teaching methods, and to identify some aspects of the EAP Program. The findings of the study were discussed concerning the data obtained from the questionnaire.

4.1 The EAP Course content

Results obtained from the questionnaire regarding the EAP course content in Table 1 revealed that almost most of the academic skills needed improvement as students indicated their opinions about their academic skills achievements.

According to the students' responses to the (item 1) regarding their academic writing skills, the findings showed that almost half of the students or 47.5% (N=19), indicated that their writing skills in, summarizing, paraphrasing, referencing skills have not been developed enough, whereas only 32.5% (N=13) of the students reported that they thought they have developed their academic writing skills.

Regarding students' views about (item 2), the data obtained indicated that 42.5% (N=17) of the students believed that their academic listening skills in note-taking, inferring and deducing the meaning skills have not been developed, whereas, only 37.5% (N=15) of the students indicated that they have developed their academic listening skills in note-taking, inferring & deducing the meaning.

As for item (3), almost more than half of the students (55%; N=22), believed that they have developed their academic reading skills in scanning, skimming, guessing, inferring the meaning etc.

As far as academic speaking skills are concerned, the findings with reference to item (4) revealed that more than two thirds of the students responses (60%; N=24) indicated that their academic speaking skills in giving oral presentations, discussing, asking & answering questions, communicating skills in class have not been developed and that students believed that they did not improve their academic speech as in giving oral presentations, etc.

With reference to item (5), the data indicated that around 62.5% (N=25), which is almost more than two thirds of the students, felt that they did not improve their academic critical skills and that around 42.5% (N=17) of them believed that the EAP course contents did not develop their academic critical skills.

The data also demonstrated that around 40% (N=16) of the student felt that their academic analytical skills in EAP have not been developed regarding item (6).

On the whole, the information obtained from the questionnaire revealed that all academic skills needed improvement. Therefore, it can be interpreted from the data that most students seemed to have experienced difficulties with their academic speaking skills in giving oral presentations and that they had difficulties with their writing skills too, e.g. in summarising, paraphrasing, referencing skills, understanding academic written and spoken discourse, as well as taking notes during the lectures. This suggests that most of the students expected the EAP classes to be arranged according to their needs and that the EAP course syllabus and content would be designed for their target situation needs.

It can be concluded that the students did not have any opportunities to improve their academic critical thinking skills nor their academic analytical skills inside the class due to the type of syllabus used. This finding is similar to the study of Berman and Cheng in 2010, which revealed that writing skill was the most needed skill to improve. Also, the findings of this study are similar to those of Liu, Chang, Yang and Sun (2011) and are also consistent with Terraschke and Wahid (2011) who found that most problems of the EAP English skills as perceived by students were in productive skills; writing and speaking.

4.2. Learner Autonomy
Based on the data obtained, the findings of the study indicated that around (37%) N=15 of the students believed that they couldn't set

their own goals for each semester to be independent learners as shown in item (7). The data also indicated that almost (57.5%) N=23 of the students felt that they could not independently use their academic critical skills as shown in item (8). The data also indicated that almost more than half of the students (55%) N=22 could not make use of other English textbooks and resources on their own will as in item (9) due to the fact that students depended heavily on their teachers. Moreover, the data of the study indicated that almost (32.5%) N=13 of the students believed that they didn't know how to use source materials independently as in item (10). The data also revealed that around (30%) N=12 of the students felt that they could not use their strategies to develop their academic language skills as in item (11). From the data obtained it can be inferred that the EAP course lessons did not help students to raise their strategy awareness which they could use independently to develop their academic language skills. The findings of the study also revealed that almost more than half (52.5%) N=21 of the students couldn't write essays on their own/ without needing a teacher as shown in item (12).

Furthermore, the results revealed that around (50%) N=20 half of the students would like to choose the content of what was to be taught in the English lesson. This could explain the reason why students were not happy with the content of the textbooks used in class as in item (14). The data of the study also showed that more than half (52.5%) N=21 of the students did not know their weaknesses and could not work on them as in item (15). Moreover, the findings demonstrated that more than half (57.5%) N=23 of the students believed that their language learning success depends on what they do in classroom.

In addition, the data of the study showed that almost more than half of the students (55%; N=22) believed that they did not have their own way of assessing how much they have learned, and that around 60% (N=24) of them believed that while learning English, they did not use their own strategies with which they could learn and reflect on their own as in items 17 & 18.

On the whole, based on the results of the study, it could be concluded that students' self-assessment, reflection skills, study skills, and cognitive and metacognitive learning strategies required improvement. Therefore, almost all learners needed to develop their study skills in order to be independent learners.

4.3. EAP Learning Materials & Resources

From the data obtained regarding the EAP course materials and resources, the results indicated that the majority of the students were less than satisfied with the EAP topics. More evidently, the data showed that almost 47.5% (N=19) of the students expressed their dissatisfaction with the EAP topics as being less engaging and disinteresting. About 40% (N=16) of them were less satisfied with the EAP learning materials which they believed were irrelevant. The data also indicated that around 30% (N=12) of the students thought that the EAP text books were less useful.

Almost all of the students expressed their dissatisfaction about the library services as it did not provide enough sources for EAP study, and that almost 52.5% (N=21) of the students believed that the college had no work stations and no internet access. The data also revealed that around 52.5% (N=21) of the students believed that that the classes had no OHP, multimedia, video or audio-visual facilities. The study findings also showed that students did not share a positive view about the text book employed as course material and guide for EAP instruction. Therefore, it can be assumed that the text books need to be changed and the library needs resources for learners to study Academic English.

Additionally, it can be inferred from the statistics that the topics and materials were neither engaging nor interesting for the students. The results also indicated that almost 42.5% (N=17) of the students thought that the learning materials were insufficient to provide a balance of the four language skills. On the whole, the data obtained suggests that almost all the students believed that the content and subject of the textbooks did not meet their needs. Therefore, it can be said that the students need an EAP textbook that focuses on study skills and strategy training in accordance with their specific needs.

4.4. Testing system

Based on the data collected, it seemed that the testing system also needed improvement. The results of the study revealed that around 32.5% (N=13) of the students believed that the tests and assignments were not directly linked to class instruction and as a result there was a discrepancy between the course content and the tests /exams assessment. In other words, the tests and the assignments were invalid measurements for the student' EAP skills, for they did not test whet they were supposed to test. It can

also be inferred that most students indicated dissatisfaction with teachers' feedback. The data revealed that around 52.5% (N=21) of the students reported that they needed to be given detailed feedback regarding their achievement at exams.

Further, it could be assumed from data that the students were not satisfied with the testing system used at the college. The findings also showed that almost 52.5 (N=21) of the students demonstrated dissatisfaction with the tests and assignment tasks as they were challenging and difficult. The results also indicated that around 57% (N=23) of the students believed that the tests were only used as a measurement tool to assess their performance in order to pass the EAP course rather than through an EAP research essay. On the whole, it can be said that the goal of the course was not to assess students' achievements on how to write academic essays or research paper assignments but was designed instead to assess students on how to pass exams.

4.5. EAP teaching methods

The quantitative data collected regarding EAP teaching methods as shown in the Table 1 revealed negative aspects of the teaching methods employed. For example, the results showed that around 55% (N=22) of the students believed that the teachers would always control the class and take initiative and were responsible for the EAP learning as students seemed to be guided by their teachers during their EAP classes. The findings of the study also showed that almost (47.5%) N=19 of the students reported that the teachers rarely encouraged them to work in pairs, groups or peer work. The data also revealed that around 40% (N=16) of the students reported that teachers rarely helped them to use source materials and other resources in the class.

Based on the data obtained, it can be inferred that almost all the students were dissatisfied with the teaching methods and that their teachers lacked thorough knowledge of academic English. The statistics also showed that the teachers did not seem to motivate student participation nor helped them make use of the materials and resources in the class; 45% (N=18) of the students pointed out that the teachers' practices were not in line with student expectations.

The results of the study also showed that 52.5% (N=21) of the students believed their teachers tended to use lecture-based rather than discussion-based instruction, and that around 55% (N=22) of the students reported that the teachers used straight forward reading

materials to teach EAP instead of the communicative approaches. The results also revealed that 52.5% (N=21) of the students revealed that the teachers used Arabic to teach EAP reading texts and that around 47.5% (N=19) of the students thought that teachers did not seem to have enough course materials to teach EAP.

On the whole, it can be concluded that EAP teacher practices were not in line with student expectations and as a result teaching practices did not meet learners' needs.

5. Discussion

Although some research studies have indicated that academic reading has been the main and real learning need for most EAP learners, the findings of this study found that EAP learners prioritised writing skills as the main need in the academic setting. They need English language teaching materials that help them to write academically well. Such materials should focus on developing learner ability to construct coherent arguments, utilise appropriate vocabulary, and adhere to academic conventions. By addressing these specific writing needs, educators can better support EAP learners in achieving their academic goals. In other words, learners require more productive teaching materials for the writing input in this community of practice.

Taking into account the issues mentioned above, it can be argued that the main objective of the EAP course program is to develop the learners' academic skills and to raise their awareness of learning strategies in order to help them use English academically in various settings. However, the findings of this study suggest that there is not much emphasis given to the development of learners' academic skills or strategies. For this reason, it is suggested that an urgent intervention has to be made to improve existing academic syllabuses by giving more emphasis to the teaching of academic skills and study skills where the priority is towards much needed skills and strategies by EAP learners.

Furthermore, the findings of this study revealed that there is a great need for the development of the students' academic writing skills in summarizing, paraphrasing, avoiding plagiarism, and referencing skills. This suggests that these writing skills should be included in the EAP curriculum to promote students' writing skills and intrinsic motivation. From the data obtained, it was clear that the writing component of the EAP curriculum needs notable changes.

Moreover, EAP students need to be given more time and opportunities to raise their awareness of the ethics of writing academic research and to develop a deeper understanding of the various citation styles. Additionally, incorporating peer review sessions could further encourage collaboration and constructive feedback, ultimately leading to improved writing proficiency and confidence among students.

Students also need to be aware of how to avoid plagiarism as one type of cheating. Therefore, more focus should be given to including summarizing, paraphrasing, and referencing skills in the EAP syllabus to ensure that students have confidence in their final writing product and that it can be published and read by the community. Students also referred to the importance of writing skills, mostly because they needed their writing products to be published and read in academic and professional settings. They also want to write academically and professionally in their subject domain to enable them to publish their works.

The findings revealed that the contents of the teaching materials included no goals or plans for writing and no reference to teaching writing strategies. It can be said that EAP students emphasized their need to communicate with journal editors, publishers, and colleagues effectively. To perform these functions, textbooks should include findings from genre analysis studies (Johns, 2013). The findings also showed that students have difficulties with their academic listening skills, such as note-taking, inferring, and deducing meaning. Therefore, it can be concluded that the materials in this EAP course program do not match EAP students' needs and expectations in terms of their academic skills.

Therefore, there is a great need to develop the EAP curriculum, providing learners with opportunities to practice these skills and strategies both inside and outside the classroom. To improve students' listening skills in note-taking, more supplementary materials containing listening tasks can be developed according to students' needs. For instance, audio-visual recordings of lectures can be used to develop students' note-taking skills in academic settings .As stated by Harvey and Nicholls (2007), materials based on EAP tutor notes or other lecture series can be created to develop students' grammatical and lexical competences. These real-life audio-video materials expose students to authentic language, enabling them to understand lectures and extract key information.

The quantitative data obtained from the questionnaire revealed that students seem to have difficulties producing academic speech. It can be interpreted that students are not satisfied with their academic speaking performance and need to develop their presentation and participation skills. This suggests that an extensive amount of exposure to communicative tasks and activities could be included in the EAP curriculum, and more input of academic speech should be included in teaching materials to create an environment for academic discussions and seminar simulations in EAP classes.

On the whole, the listening and speaking skills were referred to as necessary needs, although these needs did not meet learners' expectations. There were no listening and speaking activities or practices included in the teaching materials to develop students' presentation or participation skills. Additionally, there were no academic listening activities or tasks to enhance students' listening skills in note-taking, inferring, or deducing included in the textbook or EAP curriculum.

This problem could be attributed to the teaching material developers' intuitions of the EAP community of practice. In other words, material designers see the EAP course only as preparation for reading, which indicates how much they lag behind the learners' needs and EAP needs analysis.

With regard to reading skills, the findings suggested that students need to develop their linguistic competence and academic reading strategies to understand academic texts. To develop such strategies, both extensive and intensive reading activities and tasks can be designed and incorporated into teaching materials. Intensive reading tasks should focus on sub-skills such as skimming, scanning, deducing meanings of unknown words from context, and identifying different patterns of text organization.

Extensive reading tasks can include activities that help develop skills like skimming, identifying key information, and managing lengthy texts – all essential skills for academic success (Harmer, 2017). This view is also supported by Macalister (2008), who claimed that extensive reading tasks positively influence the rate at which learners acquire the target language and that vocabulary will be acquired incidentally during the reading process.

EAP learners need reading for academic purposes to understand subject-matter content, such as articles, journals, and abstracts,

rather than reading for general or fun purposes. Existing textbooks included few, if any, rhetorical genres and did not meet students' needs. As Richards (2001) state, when students collectively express something they need to read, the contents of the textbook could be organized according to the strategies that create this competence in effective reading. From this perspective EAP textbooks did not include reading strategies as a need for the EAP learners.

The findings of the study also demonstrated a strong need for strategy training and explicit instruction in study skills since strategy awareness encourages students to take initiative and be responsible for their own learning. Therefore, it can be argued that awareness of learning strategies helps students become more autonomous and independent and more aware of their own learning style. Therefore, explicit instruction of language learning strategies can be incorporated into in the EAP program to ensure the students success in their academic studies.

The findings of the study indicated that students were dissatisfied with the textbooks. The teaching materials in this EAP program did not meet the students' needs. To improve the learning process, authentic teaching materials should be integrated with the EAP textbooks, including input of academic language use. Richards & Renandya (2002) claim that such authentic materials can have a positive impact on the learners by drawing their attention and involvement making them more interested and curious to learn and find out in an engaging way.

It can be suggested, therefore, that authentic written and oral texts should be included in the textbook to enhance students learning of academic skills and acquisition of academic lexis. Moreover, the data from the findings indicated that the testing system needs improvement since the majority of students believed that this type of measurement did not test what it was supposed to test. Students were only required to pass an academic course in order to pass the final exam rather than achieve research writing skills through academic essays and assignments. It can be argued that the testing system employed was not valid because it did not test what students were expected to be tested on. Therefore, the consistency between the objectives of the exams and the objectives of the academic curriculum must be aligned.

Alderson & Beretta (1992) argue that in order to maximize test content validity, test specifications can be developed to minimize

subjectivity of the writing component. Clear test instructions should be developed and an analytical rubric should be prepared for the test. Weigle (2002) suggested that in order to give students constructive feedback about their exam results more time should be allocated for the test analysis. Therefore, students should be able to see their midterm and final exam results and need to be provided with feedback to see if they are making progress or not.

On the whole, it can be concluded that in order to design an EAP course for EFL students, it is important to provide learners with a great amount of exposure to academic contents, activities and tasks in the classroom via authentic and more engaging materials and stimulating activities. Outside the classroom, students should be provided with plenty of additional and supplementary learning opportunities such as audio-visual recordings and online reading & learning, independent learning assignments & homework to trigger their critical and analytical skills for academic purposes (Brown, Harmer, 2007)

6. Conclusion and Suggestions

This study suggests that there is a strong need among EAP students to develop their academic skills mainly in writing. The study also found that EAP textbooks and teaching materials rarely meet the needs of the EAP language learners. The study suggested that various sources of learning, not solely textbooks, should be employed for a successful EAP course program. The study indicated that any mismatches between learners' needs and textbooks may lead to not only learners' lack of EAP knowledge but also it will not help learners function properly in their academic target profession.

The study raised another praiseworthy idea that EAP teachers should carry out continuous evaluation to assess learners' needs and the quality of the EAP course. That is, EAP needs analysis has to be an ongoing and dynamic process (Hyland, 2006). The study also suggested that textbook designers and materials developers should find answers to the framework question model proposed by Hyland (2006) with reference to the present situation and target situation in general. The study also suggested that strategy training and learner autonomy needs analysis of the EAP learners should be an underlying basis for the EAP course. The study also suggested that a wide range of language skills, activities, practices, and

authentic materials should be part and parcel of the EAP course program in order to meet the specific needs of the learners.

Due to the spread of the English language as an international lingua franca over the past twenty years, EAP language learners need to communicate with and take part in real target language situations (Mckay, 2011). Since the importance of learning English for science and research has become the most sought after need for researchers and authors, this need has brought about huge amounts of online materials and academic textbooks.

To put it in a nutshell, teaching methodologies and teaching styles should match EAP textbooks to fulfil the learners' needs. As Gray (2002) suggested language teachers and learners can adopt and adapt to their target language situations. It is worth noting that EAP learners in this study indicated a strong need to communicate like general language learners, and as a result, they need to understand the genres of communication skills in EAP contexts.

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