Investigating English Language Reading and Writing Target Lacks and Wants of Social Work Students at the University College of Applied Sciences, Palestine

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Abstract

The goal of this paper and central objective of this study was to investigate and find out social work students' English language skills target needs at the University College of Applied Sciences (UCAS), through determining and identifying the social work students’ lacks, and wants to function effectively in their academic and work domain. The findings in this paper are drawn from a research study on investigating English language target needs of social work students at the university college of applied sciences, Palestine. Following Hutchinson and Waters’ (1987) NA model, the respondents of this study are social work students and teachers, and ESP teachers. This study uses a triangulation mixed methods design. Quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques including a questionnaire and interviews are employed to identify the students’ lacks, and wants. Generally, the findings show that speaking and writing are the most important for the social work students, as perceived by all the respondents, to function effectively in the academic and job domain. Finally, the study will broaden the scope and archive of data relevant to research on ESP and NA. It is hoped that this study will be an initial step in developing a suitable ESP course at UCAS, as it tries to encourage other researchers to pursue the subject further, as well.

Key words: Target Lacks and Wants, Social Work Students, University College, Applied Sciences.

Introduction

In the era of globalization and technological and industrial progress, countries all over the world are doing their best to escort such development. Hasman (2004) stated that English language has a remarkable spread in various life domains; such as education, science, technology, business, policy etc. Accordingly, educational institutions devote money, time, and efforts to meet the scientific and technological needs and goals, since joining the developed and civilized world is unattainable without distinguished educational systems. In this regard, the University College of Applied Science (UCAS) in the Gaza Strip is a case in point. UCAS is an academic institution which has been established to provide the Palestinian community in Gaza Strip with its needs by graduating highly-qualified and well-trained professionals, besides transferring science and technology to Palestinian society through its all various sectors. The main goal of the present study is to investigate the Social Work students’ English Target lacks, and wants at UCAS in relation to their reading and writing skills.

Background of the Study

Even though Arabic is the official language of Palestine as it is the mother tongue of all Palestinians, teaching English language is considered to be one of the main components of the Palestinian education...
curriculum. Including obligatory English components in the Palestinian curriculum is a natural reflection to the significance and usefulness of English language that have been recognized by the Palestinian policy makers in the Palestinian educational system. In this respect, Harmer (1991) explained that English was already on its way to become a genuine Lingua-Franca by the end of twentieth century. Moreover, Keshta (2000) mentioned that English language is a worldwide language, since it is used as a medium of communication among all countries in the world of trade, business, and technology. Consequently, English is essential for Palestinians to pursue their higher education and employment either in Palestine or abroad. Therefore, English as a language has become an indispensable demand for all levels and fields of life.

According to Dallil Al Kuliah Al Jame’iah (2011), passing the GE course is compulsory for all UCAS students in their first year; regardless of their different majors of study. UCAS students have to set for different ESP courses based on the kind of the majors and specializations they are involved in. For example, English for computing, English for Business, English for social Work, English for Legal Purposes, and English for Religious purposes are, respectively, taught for students of Information Technology Department, Management and Finance Sciences Department, Social work students, Legal Secretarial students. Regarding the ESP materials, the representative of the Curriculum Unit in the Humanities Department stated that almost all the ESP curriculum and books used at UCAS, including English for Social Work, are imported from British or/and American universities. Therefore, ESP teachers at UCAS try to adjust the imported materials to fit the students’ levels of achievement and culture, since the existing ESP curriculum has never been officially evaluated, till this moment, based on the students’ target or learning needs.

Literature Review

In the world of English language teaching (ELT), the last few years have witnessed numerous rapid changes, due to the ELT practitioners’ efforts to create and renovate better teaching methods on one hand, and to remove the irrelevance in ELT on the other hand. In this regard, Naerssen and Kaplan (1987) reported that the concept of relevance has been of great significance and triggered a revolution in the world of ELT in terms of content, purpose, and situation of the English courses. Naerssen and Kaplan added that this revolution is particularly seen to be in the sphere of ESP which has been developed in response to the advancements in the sciences, technologies and careers, in most aspects of life that require more specific English rather than GE.

In light of this, huge amounts of changes have been taking place in the learning and teaching of languages. An obvious change is that learners are becoming interested in using languages for specific purposes rather than just the general use of communication and conveying a message. To this effect, Hutchinson and Waters (1987, p. 6) stated that “Previously the reasons for learning English had not been well defined. Knowledge of a foreign language has been regarded as a sign of a well-rounded education, but few had really questioned why it was necessary”. In other words, when a foreign language is learnt or taught, it has been considered as a part of the general educational objectives. This new tendency of learning a language, i.e. using languages for specific purposes, has gained great popularity and is now attracting a large audience. ESP refers to a strong movement which has spread worldwide and is still continuing to do more powerfully and effectively. Growing out as a branch from the traditional TEFL/TESL programmes, ESP has progressively established itself as a separate new trend, significantly influencing the entire English Teaching/Learning process.

English for Specific Purposes (ESP)

The important developments in ESP, as seen by Swales (1985), have taken place after the year 1962. He means that before the year 1962, the ELT concentration was mainly on vocabulary and grammatical patterns, while after that the concentration has been shifted from describing the linguistic aspects to their
frequencies. Swales added that such essential shift occurred after the publication of Barber’s book i.e. Some Measurable Characteristics of Modern Scientific Prose. In other words, Barber’s book was the first turning point in the development of ESP where the role of English as a means, not as an end, has been recognized. The second turning point which caused the departure from the grammatical frequencies to communicative use of English has taken place after the year 1974 after the publication of Allen and Widdowson’s book i.e. teaching the Communicative Use of English.

Needs and Needs Analysis

Needs

Robinson (1989) reported that no matter what method is used in gathering information about the learners' needs and their situation, it is clear that identifying the needs in ESP has always been a crucial and central issue. In the respect of the significance of needs in ESP, Mackay and Mountford (1979) stated that choosing the teaching material cannot be decided without knowing to whom and why teaching is required. However, many ESP thinkers have found that defining the concept of needs is unattainable. In other words, no clear-cut definition of needs appears to be available to be generalized in defining needs in all contexts and situations. According to Robinson (1980), the difficulty of having a fixed definition for the needs concept may be due to the flexibility of this term, since the identification of the needs depends on the learners' experiences, level, and several other factors. Moreover, Richterich and Chancerel (1978) expressed the difficulty in defining the concept of needs by stating that "the concept of language needs has never been clearly defined and remains at best ambiguous." Thus, it is clear that needs are difficult to be defined, however, Richterich and Chancerel (1978) pointed out that "needs are the gap between what is and what should be" (ibid). In that point, Berwick (1989, p. 52) supported Richterich and Chancerel definition of needs by mentioning that the term needs is best described “as a gap or measurable discrepancy between a current state of affairs and a desirable future state”. To clarify the concept of needs, another relevant issue is worth to be discussed in this context i.e. the types of needs, particularly the distinction between the different types of needs. The distinction between those types is necessary because there are many situations that arise in ESP. This means, each ESP situation varies from the other ESP situations. Therefore, the following sub-section discusses the types of needs.

Types of Needs

To explain the types of needs, McDonough (1984) differentiated among four possible situations that any learner can be in one of those categorized learning situations. These four situations are as follows: (1) A situation in which the learner wants to learn more than he needs to learn; (2) (A situation) in which the (learner) needs to learn more than he wants; (3) (A situation in) which the learner neither wants nor needs to learn at all; and (4) (A situation) in which the learner wants (and) needs to learn. According to McDonough, a typical ESP situation comes closest to situation number 4 i.e. “the learner wants and needs to learn”. In brief, it appears how difficult to make Needs universal in all situations, because needs depends upon the situation.

On the other hand, Robinson (1991, p. 8) defines lacks and wants as “what the students do not know or cannot do in English”. According to Hutchinson and Waters (1987, p. 60), considering needs only in terms of the target situation is insufficient because the course designer also needs to know: “What knowledge and abilities will the learners require in order be able to perform to the required degree of competence in the target situation?”. Therefore, Collins (1991) did not ignore these issues and reported that learning needs is very important in the teaching-learning process, as it lead to changes in practice. Collin added that learning needs assessment has become a priority of policy-makers for continuing professional development. So, the learners’ lack, wants, needs and interests should be addressed when
conducting NA. To sum up, when needs are concerned, talking about need analysis is inevitable because it the way in which researchers assess the needs.

Identifying the Target Needs

The target needs model comprise three important distinctions: Necessities, Lacks and Wants. By Necessities, Hutchinson and Waters mean the requirements of the target situations. On the other hand, the term Lacks refers to the gap between what the learner knows and what he/she should know. The term Wants refers to the views of what should be known. It is worth mentioning that the theoretical framework is adopted from Hutchinson and Waters’ (1987) target needs model. Furthermore, the Social Constructivism Theory and Structuration Theory, which are consistent with Hutchinson and Waters’ framework, were implied within the adopted framework of the current investigation.

In brief, the current research adopts Hutchinson and Waters’ (1987) framework to investigate the English language Target Needs of Social Work students at UCAS. In this regard, it is worth mentioning that choosing this certain framework to be applied in the current investigation is justified. First of all, West (1994, p. 3) stated that Hutchinson & Waters’ NA framework proposes "a useful classification of needs which may be seen to reflect differing viewpoints and give rise to different forms of NA". Furthermore, Mason (1994, p. 1) reported that “Hutchinson & Waters provide a more manageable framework for analyzing the target situation and also a parallel framework for analyzing learning needs”. All in all, by being comprehensive, adaptable, recognized, familiar and appropriate and by being suggested and endorsed by NA scholars and researchers (e.g., Mason, Chen, 2005; Rahim, 2005; Shuib, 2005; Hyland, 2006; Al-Tamimi & Shuib, 2009; Al-Tamimi & Shuib, 2010; Alastal, 2011), the researcher believes that using such framework is defensible in the present study.

The Statement of the Problem

In January 2012, the researcher conducted a preliminary interview with the head of the Curriculum Unit at UCAS to identify the policy of selecting ESP materials at UCAS. The head of the Curriculum Unit stated that almost all the ESP materials, including the English for Social work course, are adopted and adapted from other international universities. In July 2011 the researcher carried out informal interviews with graduates social work students to elicit their views on the usefulness of the English for Social Work course. The graduates opined that they finish their study at UCAS without sufficiently benefit from the English for Social Work course that they had taken. This insufficient benefit may be due to the materials used which have been chosen by their ESP teachers whose choices have not been based on the actual needs, Lack, wants and levels of the students. In this regard, Eslami (2010) stated that the language teaching focus recently has been shifted from teachers to learners. So, learners needs have been considered with great importance in curriculum development. Additionally, Richards (2001) suggested that emphasis should be on learners’ needs as the initial step in curriculum development. The concern to make language courses more pertinent to learners’ needs lead to a better ESP teaching, since it makes ESP learners ready to communicate efficiently and effectively in their academic and job domain tasks.

In the field of needs analysis (NA), many studies (Kormos et al., 2002) have been carried out internationally and confirmed the significance of identifying learners’ target needs by showing the threats and risks of neglecting NA in developing ESP courses. However, Molhim (n.d.) reported how rare and limited NA literature among the Arab world researchers. Additionally, the researcher inspired by Kandil (2003) when reported that Arab EFL learners hardly participate or involve in their language teaching context, because the learners’ needs, lacks and wants have not been sufficiently investigated in the Arab World. Based on reviewing the related literature, to the best of the researcher’s knowledge, no single NA study tackled social work student’s lacks and wants neither locally nor internationally. To solve this problem, the current study sheds light on the exact needs, lacks, wants and demands of the social work students by collecting data from both the students and their teachers at UCAS.
The Research Objectives
The main goal of the present study is investigating UCAS Social Work students’ English Target lacks, and wants; therefore there are three main objectives for carrying out this study. The three objectives are as follows:
1. To identify the English language skills difficulties the Social Work students face in the target situation.
2. To examine the English language skills the Social Work students want to learn in the target situation.

The Research Questions
To fulfill the assigned research objectives, the study has been conducted to answer the following research questions:
1. What are the English language skills difficulties do the Social Work students face in the target situation?
2. What are the English language skills do the Social Work students want to learn in the target situation?

Theoretical Background of the study
The study aims at investigating English language target lacks and wants of social work students at the university college of applied sciences, Palestine. To achieve this aim by carrying NA to identify the social work students’ English language skills lacks, and wants, the researcher adopted Hutchinson and Waters’ (1987) target needs framework. Furthermore, the Social Constructivism Theory and Structuration Theory, which are consistent with Hutchinson and Waters’ framework, were implied within the adopted framework of the current investigation.

Methodology
The mix of quantitative and qualitative research design was adopted for this study. The study sought to investigate English language target lacks and wants of social work students at the university college of applied sciences, Palestine, through determining and identifying the social work students’ English language skills lacks, and wants to function effectively in their academic and work domain. According to the head of Admission and Registration Department at UCAS (2012), the total number of ESP students is 1192 students, while the main population of this study consisted of all social work students at the university college of applied sciences, Palestine, whereby ESP students, were also used in supporting the collected data from the actual population. The findings in this paper are drawn from a research study on English language target needs of social work students in Palestine based on data collected from social work students of University College of applied sciences. Data were collected from the social work students and ESP students through questionnaires and social work teachers through interview. A proportional sampling technique was adopted in selecting the respondents to represent the population of the study, based on Kotrlik and Higgins (2001) sampling size table. The estimated number of the main population stands at 310 social work students comprising of 118 male and 192 female social work students who were officially registered in the second semester of the academic year 2012. The sample size for this study was 90 Social Work students (45 males and 45 females). For the qualitative study 3 social work teachers 4 males and 4 females’ social work students were randomly selected to participate in the interview.

Findings
This section was mainly confined to display the quantitative data of the current research that have been obtained from the Social Work students responses on the group administered questionnaire. To answer the three research questions that have been raised in chapter 1, this section will be discussed under two sub-sections that deal with the English language and communication needs of the students, based on their own perception. In other words, under the sub-skills of Reading and writing the results will be analyzed and interpreted. Under each sub-section, the researcher will focus on the efficiency, frequency,
importance, and training needs of each item in the questionnaire. It is worth mentioning here that the mean of each skill is displayed.

**Reading Target Needs**

The term “Target Needs” refers to Lacks, and Wants determined by the learners' target situation. In other words, they are the needs which learners have to know in order to function effectively in their target situations i.e. academic and job domain. In this regard, the Social Work students’ responses on the reading sub-skills are displayed in Table 2, including the questionnaire's items and its means for each sub-skill. The reading sub-skills were the first seven items (from item 1 to item7) in the questionnaire.

Table 1: Reading Skill and Sub-Skills

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>READING SKILL</th>
<th>Efficiency</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Importance</th>
<th>Training</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading textbooks</td>
<td>2.5667</td>
<td>3.0319</td>
<td>2.2111</td>
<td>1.7556</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading technical articles</td>
<td>2.9444</td>
<td>2.9894</td>
<td>2.4667</td>
<td>1.9556</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading technical manuals</td>
<td>2.9444</td>
<td>2.6064</td>
<td>2.1000</td>
<td>2.0111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading texts on computers</td>
<td>2.4889</td>
<td>2.7660</td>
<td>2.3889</td>
<td>1.9333</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading instructions</td>
<td>2.2889</td>
<td>2.4681</td>
<td>1.8444</td>
<td>1.9222</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading study notes</td>
<td>2.3444</td>
<td>2.5532</td>
<td>2.1667</td>
<td>1.8889</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proof reading</td>
<td>2.7333</td>
<td>2.9681</td>
<td>2.3000</td>
<td>1.9222</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 indicates that social work students were more efficient when they read technical articles and technical manuals, as the overall mean for those two sub-skills was 2.9444, followed by the sub-skill of Proof reading, editing or fact checking that recorded an overall mean of 2.7333. In contrast, the table shows that the students were less efficient in reading instructions for assignments/projects with an overall mean of 2.2889. The order of the students’ efficiency in the given reading sub-skills starting with the most efficient was: Reading technical articles, Reading technical manuals, Proof reading, editing or fact checking, Reading textbooks, Reading texts on computers, Reading study notes, and Reading instructions for assignments/projects.

In terms of the students’ frequency of using the reading sub-skills, Table 1 shows that reading textbooks is the most frequent type of reading that the students use to practice, followed by Proof reading, editing or fact checking. Table 1 indicates that the overall mean of Reading textbooks is the highest i.e. 3.0319, followed by 2.9681 for Proof reading, editing or fact checking. In the same vein, the table reported that Reading instructions for assignments/projects is the least frequent reading sub-skill used among the social work students at UCAS, with an overall mean of 2.4681. In short, the order of the reading sub-skills frequency, starting with the most frequently used is: Reading textbooks, Proof reading, editing or fact checking, Reading technical articles, Reading texts on the computer, Reading technical manuals, Reading study notes, and Reading instructions for assignments/projects.

Regarding the importance of the given reading sub-skills, in the eye of the social work students, Table 1 shows that Reading technical articles is pointed as the most important reading sub-skill with an overall mean of 2.4667, followed by Reading texts on computers with an overall mean of 2.3889. To conclude,
the social work students arranged the importance of the given reading sub-skills by starting with the most important, as follows: Reading technical articles, Reading texts on the computer, Proof reading, editing or fact checking, Reading textbooks, Reading study notes, Reading technical manuals, and Reading instructions for assignments/projects.

Finally, Table 1 indicates that reading technical manuals needs the most training among the other given reading sub-skills with an overall mean 2.0111, while the least training is needed in reading textbooks, as the overall mean for training needs in this sub-skill is only 1.7556. Regarding training that the students need in the reading sub-skills, reading instructions for assignments/projects and proof reading, editing or fact checking are equally ranked. The order of the given reading sub-skills, based on the need of training, is as follows: Reading technical manuals, Reading technical articles, Reading texts on the computer, Reading instructions for assignments/projects, Proof reading, editing or fact checking, Reading study notes, and Reading textbooks.

Writing Target Needs

This sub-section deals with the writing target needs. It analyses the students' efficiency in performing the given writing sub-skills, how frequently the students use these sub-skills, the importance of such sub-skills to the social work students, and the amount of training the students need in writing. The writing sub-skills items are presented in Table 2, as follows: Table 2: Writing Sub-Skills Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WRITING SKILL</th>
<th>Efficiency</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Importance</th>
<th>Training</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Writing reports</td>
<td>2.9556</td>
<td>2.8298</td>
<td>2.2111</td>
<td>1.7889</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taking notes in lectures</td>
<td>2.8444</td>
<td>2.8511</td>
<td>2.3333</td>
<td>1.8444</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing test/exam answers</td>
<td>2.2667</td>
<td>2.3298</td>
<td>1.8111</td>
<td>2.0000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing formal emails</td>
<td>3.2000</td>
<td>3.4468</td>
<td>2.5667</td>
<td>1.8111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing informal emails</td>
<td>3.1778</td>
<td>3.3298</td>
<td>2.5222</td>
<td>1.7333</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing instructions</td>
<td>2.8333</td>
<td>3.0000</td>
<td>2.4111</td>
<td>1.6333</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing minutes</td>
<td>2.9778</td>
<td>2.9468</td>
<td>2.3444</td>
<td>1.7778</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing proposals</td>
<td>3.0111</td>
<td>3.0000</td>
<td>2.2778</td>
<td>1.8556</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing formal letters</td>
<td>2.8333</td>
<td>2.9681</td>
<td>2.1000</td>
<td>1.6667</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 indicates that the social work students perceived that they are more efficient in writing formal emails with an overall mean of 3.2000, followed by writing informal emails with an overall mean of 3.1778, while writing test/exam answers is perceived as the least efficient writing sub-skill that social work students perform, as the overall mean of performing this sub-skill is only 2.2667. In other words, the social work students arranged their efficiency in performing the given writing sub-skills from the most efficient as follows: Writing formal emails, Writing informal emails, Writing effective proposals, Writing
minutes, Writing reports, Taking notes in lectures, Writing instructions, Writing formal letters, and Writing test/exam answers.

Regarding the frequency of using those writing sub-skills, Table 2 shows that writing formal emails, followed by writing informal emails are the most frequently used writing sub-skills among the students, with overall mean of 3.4468 and 3.3298 respectively. In contrast, the sub-skill of writing test/exam answers is the least frequently used one among the students, with an overall mean of 2.3298. Upon that, the frequency of using the given writing sub-skills, based on the social work students’ view, taking into account that writing instructions and writing effective proposals recorded the equal overall mean, is as follows: Writing formal emails, Writing informal emails, Writing instructions, Writing effective proposals, Writing formal letters, Writing minutes, Writing reports, Taking notes in lectures, and Writing test/exam answers.

Regarding the importance of the given writing sub-skills, Table 2 shows that writing formal emails and writing informal emails are the most important writing sub-skills for the social work students, since the recorded overall mean for those sub-skills are, respectively, 3.2000 and 3.1778. Surprisingly, Table 2 pointed writing test/exam answers as the least important writing sub-skill with an overall mean of 1.8111. Table 2 presents the arrangement of the most important writing sub-skills to the least important ones as follows: Writing formal emails, Writing informal emails, Writing instructions, Writing minutes, Taking notes in lectures, Writing effective proposals, Writing reports, Writing formal letters, and Writing test/exam answers.

Table 2 indicates that the most training needed among those writing sub-skills is found to be needed in writing test/exam answers with an overall mean of 2.0000, while the least training needed in writing instructions, as the overall mean for training needs in this writing sub-skill is only 1.6333. Table 4.2 presents the need for training in the given writing sub-skills is arranged from “needing a lot of training” to “no need of training” as follows: Writing test/exam answers, Writing effective proposals, Taking notes in lectures, Writing formal emails, Writing reports, Writing minutes, Writing informal emails, Writing formal letters and, Writing instructions.

**Qualitative Data**

This section is devoted to present the qualitative data of the current research that have been obtained through conducting interviews with randomly selected Social Work students, social work teachers, and ESP teachers at UCAS. The main goal of conducting such interviews is to verify the quantitative results of the social work students on one hand, and to include other perceptions namely the ESP teachers and the Social Work teachers on the other hand. Therefore, the interview’s technique of collecting data provides a broader vision regarding the social work students English language target needs.

**Analysis for the Interviews**

Three sets of interviews were used to reveal more accurate and valid information relevant to the main goal of the current study i.e. investigating the English language target needs of the social work students at UCAS. Upon the request of the respondents the interviews were only audio-recorded. Additionally, for the analysis process of the interviews, the researcher had transcribed and listed all the responses. Then, the researcher had categorized the interviewee’s responses, based on the themes of the interviews’ questions, into four categories. Both Social work students and ESP teachers responded to the similar questions (please see appendix D and E) that lead the researcher to classify their responses under the four themes of the interviews. On the other hand, the Social Work teachers’ responses were classified under two categories of the interviews’ themes, since their responses were about the importance of the English language skills for the Social Work students, and giving suggestions on the English for Social Work course as well. The four themes of the interviews are as follows:
. The social work students’ proficiency in the English language skills
. The English language skills frequency for the social work students
. The English language skills importance for the social work students
. The English language skills training needs for the social work students

In the respect of analyzing the interviews, the responses of the participants will be compared and contrasted, to present the qualitative results of the current research. To have clearer and more comprehensive perceptions about the English language target needs for the social work students at UCAS, selected quotes were used to illustrate the participants’ opinions. The quoted extracts of the interviews were translated by the researcher from Arabic to English, since the interviews, with social work students and teachers, were conducted in Arabic. On the other hand, the ESP teachers’ responses were quoted as it was, since their interviews were conducted in English. The direct quotations of the social work students were coded and cited according to their gender, as well as the ESP teachers and the social work teachers quotations were cited as ESP teachers and Social work teachers, respectively.

Social Work students’ English Target Needs
The interviews indicate that all the participants stressed the importance of the English language skills to the Social Work students in order to function effectively in both the academic and occupational domain. In other words, several respondents emphasized that English is very important in the job domain of social workers, and to perform better in the academic life of studying social work. The following responses, divided into five themes, show the respondents’ views:

Summary of the Qualitative Data
To sum up the qualitative results of the recorded interview with the different three groups of the participants, this sub-section provides a brief summary of the interviews. In this regard, one can conclude the weakness of the social work students when trying to speak and communicate in English language, even statistically they indicated that they are quite efficient in performing the given speaking sub-skills through the questionnaire. In the same vein, all the students opined that they would like to attend more English language skills training courses to improve their ability in performing all the English language skills, to meet the requirement of their academic and job domain. It is worth mentioning that discussion on both the quantitative and qualitative data will be provided in details within the first section of the following chapter.

Discussion of the Findings
The main goal of this sub-section is to answer the two research questions that have been raised in the beginning of this paper. Accordingly, the following three sub-sections headed by the objectives of the current investigation triangulate the quantitative and qualitative responses of the participants. The results are discussed by comparing and contrasting its indications to pave the way to a clear conclusion and useful recommendations. In other words, by triangulating the obtained data, the following sub-sections will discuss the social work students’ English language skills needs, with reference to the lacks, and wants.

Frequency of Using the English Language Skills
Responses elicited from students’ questionnaire, regarding their perceptions on the frequency of using the given English language skills indicate that writing skills recorded the highest overall mean, followed by
reading, speaking, and listening, respectively. The findings indicate that writing skills are the most frequently used skills. Based on the researchers’ long experience in teaching at UCAS, the frequency of the writing and reading skills is expected as the current teaching approach focuses on the paper based on activities and assignments. On the other hand, paying attention to the oral skills is avoided to some extent due to the large numbers of students in the classrooms that may waste the time of the class. To get a comprehensive understanding of the social work students’ English language skills necessities, the following sub-section discusses the results of the importance of those skills. The above mentioned results of the students’ questionnaire were verified by those obtained from the interviews.

The Students English Language skills Lacks
To answer the first research question i.e. What are the English language skills difficulties do Social Work students face in the target situation?, this sub-section is mainly presented to discuss the social work students’ Lacks and wants. To determine the social work students’ English language skills needs in their target situation, the researcher discusses the findings in terms of Lacks and wants that appeared in Hutchinson and Waters’s (1978) target needs framework. Accordingly, the students’ efficiency in using the English language is discussed below.

As described earlier, the social work students’ were asked in the questionnaire to level their ability in using the English language skills. Statistically, the results show that the two English language skills are ordered from the most efficiently used by the students to the least efficiently used as: reading and writing. Surprisingly, the results of the interviews with the social work students show a slight different in the order to the level of their efficiency in the English language skills. In other words, the social work students’ interviews’ findings indicate that the students are more efficiently in using the skill of reading compared to using the other productive skills i.e. writing.

The students show more frankness in their responses to the interviews compared to those of the questionnaire. Based on the interviews results, the students mentioned that they did not like to show their poor level of speaking in the questionnaire. Therefore, the students’ estimation of their speaking ability was higher than it is in real. In this regard, the students’ overestimation to their own abilities in the speaking skill goes with the findings of many previous NA studies such as Zughoul and Hussein (1985); Taillefer (2007); and Bacha and Bahous, (2008). In the same vein, Covington (1989), as cited by Turner (2006), stated that the students’ needs to preserve their dignity and worth is one of the possible factors that justify students’ overestimation to their abilities. In this respect, Bandura (1988) cited in Bandura (1989, p. 1176) stated that “the stronger belief in their capabilities, the stronger and more persistent are their efforts.” In the light of Tuner and Bandura explanations, the researcher concludes that the students’ desire to maintain dignity caused higher grading for their speaking abilities while responding to the questionnaire, even the students were more opened in the interviews. The interviews highlighted the social work students’ poor ability and low level in performing the productive skills (writing and speaking) compared to their ability in performing the receptive ones (listening and reading) as expressed by the majority of the interviewees. Being less efficient in using writing and speaking skills is expected among EFL students, since they are not exposed to the English language outside the classrooms.

To conclude, the social work students, the ESP teachers, and the social work teachers have the view in which social work students are very weak in performing all the language skills. Almost all the interviewees agreed upon the inadequate performance of the social work students in speaking and writing abilities compared to their abilities in using the skills of reading and listening. Equally, the qualitative findings obtained from the students’, and ESP teachers interviews indicate that social work students are very poor in performing all the language skills, as their English is weak and unsatisfying, even the students’ reading and listening skills are shown as slightly better than speaking and writing ones. Even though the qualitative results to some extent contrast the quantitative results in which the students perceived themselves to be somehow efficient in speaking.
The Students’ English Language Skills Wants

Under this sub-section, the second research question, i.e. what are the English language skills do the Social Work students want to learn in the target situation? is answered. According to Hutchinson and Waters (1987), the learners’ Wants are identified once the students’ necessities and lacks have been identified. Therefore, based on the quantitative and qualitative results of the current study, the social work students’ English language skills training needs are discussed below.

The quantitative data obtained from the students’ questionnaire show that the social work students are relatively conscious of their English language skills Wants. Statistically, the majority of the social work students revealed the urgent need of a lot of training in the reading skill in general, and in particular training is needed in reading technical manuals, Reading technical articles, Reading texts on the computer, Reading instructions for assignments/projects, and Proof reading, editing or fact checking. Interestingly enough, this point has been verified by the responses of almost all the participants (social work students and teachers and the ESP teachers) while conducting the interviews. On the other hand, the qualitative data show the students deficiency to understand what they read, so they found that there is a need for training in all reading sub-skills to upgrade their writing abilities. Additionally, the students and their ESP teachers expressed the students need for training in all the English language skills, with focus on the speaking and writing, to be successful social workers in the near future jobs. The following direct quotes indicate the urgent need for training in reading and writing skills.

“they need training in all the English skills i.e. speaking, writing, reading, and listening” (ESP teacher)

“They need training in all areas but especially in reading and writing” (ESP teacher)

“Communication skills training courses are needed . . . memorizing vocabularies is not the best way to communicate successfully with others” (student)

“I think reading” (student)

“writing reports is a very important skill to me as a social worker, since we have to record each case we deal with in its own file” (student)

“reading and writing courses which is useful for communication” (student)

Regardless the amount of training social work students need, the statistical data show that the most training is needed in Reading skill. The findings reveal the urgent need for social work students to develop their English language skills, as the results discussed in this section show that social work students lack the oral and written language skills which are necessary for them to acquire to function effectively in their academic and workplace domain. In other words, the different views from the perceptions of ESP teachers and social work students indicate that the priority to speaking and writing in terms of the amount of training the students need, especially in certain sub-skills such as: Writing test/exam answers, Writing effective proposals, Taking notes in lectures, Writing formal emails, Writing reports, Writing minutes, Communicating with public individually, Participating in discussions, Responding appropriately to questions and Facilitating group and/or meeting discussion, Explaining information, ideas, opinions, Negotiating effectively, Asking questions, and expressing/discussing ideas and information with clarity and organization. It is worth mentioning here that students show their desire to attend training in almost all the English language sub-skills.

To sum up, the results discussed in this sub-section display that social work students at UCAS need to be proficient in using writing skills in English, with taking the importance of reading into consideration.
Although, like other Palestinian students, the social work students spent more than 12 years studying English at schools, their level in using the English language skills is still poor and low. This conclusion is consistent with Kavaliauskiene (2002) who reported that although students learn English for 8 years as a school subject at their school level; it is not enough for them to reach an intermediate level of proficiency in language. In short, this study shows that all the teachers and students admitted the need for training in reading and writing skills for social work students, bearing in mind that the students expressed their readiness, willingness, and tendency to attend more training courses to improve their performance in the English language sub-skills that the above results revealed.

**Recommendations**

It is worth reminding that the main goal of this NA is to come up with findings that would serve as foundation to design an ESP course for social work students, at UCAS, that would meet their needs. Based on the analysis of the quantitative and qualitative data, the researcher introduces this sub-section to present some general recommendations. These recommendations are provided with hope to help decision makers at UCAS to improve their English for Social Work courses and to broaden their perceptions about the social work students and teachers, ESP teachers and their target situation that they are involved in. As far as the results were displayed, interpreted, and discussed, the researcher suggests and recommends the following implications that may act as signposts to decision makers at UCAS:

1. The social work students’ needs should be taken into consideration, so the English for Social Work course should be redesigned for a better performance within the academic and occupational domains of the students.
2. One of the obstacles that weaken social work students reading abilities can be the unfamiliarity of journal articles at UCAS educational system So, UCAS teachers should pay attention to such point and guide their students toward right tracks of knowledge.
3. Based on the perception of social work students and teachers and the ESP teachers as well at UCAS, speaking and writing skills are with high level of importance, so a lot of training is needed in those skills to improve the students’ abilities.
4. ESP teachers at UCAS should coordinate with the social work staff to establish a coherent team work to improve the English of the social work course.
5. ESP teachers at UCAS should be aware of the social work field by attending training to have enough background about the nature of this specialization and the nature of the professional responsibilities that social work students will be involved in.

**Conclusion**

Based on the investigation carried out in the current study, the researcher concludes that certain English language skills are needed to enable social work students to succeed in their academic and occupational settings. According to Hutchinson and Waters (1987), Robinson (1991) and Hyland (2006) conducting NA is a must to precisely identify what particular learners need to be taught in English and how they should be taught this English. Adopting Hutchinson and Waters, 1987 target needs framework, the researcher explores and identifies the social work students’ language skills needs in terms of lacks, and wants. For the writing skill, the results show that social work students need to learn how to write test/exam answers. Writing reports, writing formal letters, taking notes in lectures, and writing effective proposals.

As far as writing is concerned, it was found that the majority of social work students are deficient in many required writing skills such as; writing test/exam answers, writing formal letters, Writing reports . . . etc. Regarding speaking skill, it perceived as a very important skill by all the participants, therefore results show that the social work students should be trained how to respond appropriately to questions, Participate in discussions, Communicate with public . . . etc. As for the listening needs, it is concluded.
that social work students are required to be trained to be able to follow lectures, follow question/answer sessions, listen to instructions and explanations . . . etc. Finally, concerning the reading skill, it is found that students at UCAS do not seem to have enough vocabulary to help them understand what they read. Accordingly, it has been noticed that the social work students have a lot of problems in reading instructions for assignments/projects, reading study notes, reading textbooks . . . etc.

To summarize, the data interpretation show that all the skills: reading, writing, listening and speaking skills are important. A clear-cut ordering to the importance of those skills is obviously found unattainable; however, consensus of the majority of the participants implies that writing and speaking are very important for social work students, so a lot of training is needed in certain sub-skills such as: writing test/exam answers, writing effective proposals, taking notes in lectures, writing formal emails, writing minutes, communicating with public individually, participating in discussions, responding appropriately to questions and facilitating group and/or meeting discussion, explaining information, ideas, opinions, negotiating effectively, asking questions, and expressing/discussing ideas and information with clarity and organization.

Furthermore, the findings indicate the significance of NA for social work students in EFL context to develop their language skills to function effectively in their target situation. In another vein, the current study came out with various recommendations to help satisfying the social work students’ English language target needs. Also, this study is a trigger for future research, since it suggests some directions for further research in the field of ESP and NA. Finally, this study may be helpful to any ESP situations similar to the ESP situation at UCAS; in other Palestinian or Arab universities. However, it is worth reminding the reader that according to Hammersley and Woods (1987, p. 11): “No research can match methodological ideals ... we must bear in mind that even studies that fall for short of the ideal can make a valuable contribution to our understanding ... The methodological effectiveness of a study is what it can tell us about the phenomenon investigated in relation to what we want to know and what we already know”

To summarize, this study provides a beneficial vision for other researchers in the field of NA in the Arab EFL context in general, and in Palestinian context in particular. It is hoped that the results and the recommendations of the current NA serve as guidelines to what should be done in order to develop a desired ESP course to the social work students to effectively function in their academic and work domain.

References


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