

Analysis of Technical and Vocational Education Training Institute Learners' English Language Skills Needs and the Instructional Modes Employed: Academic and Career Contexts

Ephrem Zeleke, Mebratu Mulatu Bachore *, Zeleke Arficho

Department of English Language and Literature, Hawassa University, Ethiopia

*Email: mebratumulatu@gmail.com

Received for publication: 07 August 2022.

Accepted for publication: 14 October 2022.

Abstract

The main purpose of this study was to analyze the level of importance of the four English language macro skills needed by the undergraduate trainees at the Ethiopian Federal Technical and Vocational Education Training Institute. It also aimed to assess whether or not the instructional modes the trainers employed in teaching English suits the needs of trainees' specific academic fields. The study employed descriptive design and two data collection tools, namely close-ended questionnaire and semi-structured interview. By using simple random sampling technique, 80 trainees among second and third year trainees were selected and four Communicative English Language Skills course teachers took part. Moreover, 30 former graduates and 30 major course trainers were included using simple random sampling technique. The data collected through the questionnaire was analyzed quantitatively using SPSS version 20 and qualitative data was analyzed using thematic approach. The study showed that receptive skills were slightly found to be more important than productive skills in academic contexts. Specifically, though all macro skills are important, reading becomes the most needed skill by the trainees in both academic and occupational contexts. The study also revealed that there is a mismatch among the prescribed instructional approach, trainees' preferred learning modes and instructional modes employed by the English trainers in the Federal TVET Institute (FTI).

Keywords: English language skills; instructional modes; TVET

Introduction

Background of the Study

At present, many countries, both in the developed and developing world, are engaged in improving the capacity of technical and vocational education and training (TVET) systems as the TVET plays key roles in equipping individuals with pertinent skills and knowledge for the job market (Bünning & Zhao, 2006, p.17). Historically, TVET has moved from traditional learning through apprenticeship and informal training to the present highly organized technical and vocational education and training offered in many countries of the world (Chikati, et al. 2019). In the same vein, Adamu (2016) states that the twenty first centuries presents a radically different economy and society, which is likely to have profound implications on Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET). Getachew (2016) and has recommended that equipping citizens with relevant knowledge and skills to develop their competence to actively engage in economic activities for a better standard of living is critical for the development of any nation, regardless of context. This shows that the ongoing globalization and resulting changes in the education of skilled workers require a unique framework in TVET teacher training as well as a system of further education for teachers.

TVET in Ethiopia has been in place since the early 1940s. Since then, Ethiopia has adopted various TVET Policies and strategies since the last three decades to improve the capacity of TVETs across the nation. As of 1994 E.C, the TVET program has been detached and re-organized as a result of which TVET trainers had training in different universities to upgrade their qualifications in various in-service programs. However, the universities are not specialized in training of TVET program trainer; rather, they are graduates of pure Engineering degree programs. TVET teacher education takes place largely within general teacher education qualifications offered at higher education institutions and there was no specific curriculum for TVET teachers. As result, the TVET colleges have been recruiting pure Engineering graduates having CoC (Certificate of Competency) as trainers. Such trainers have been offered induction trainings by their respective colleges as they graduated from non-teaching background. Thus, this approach, according to MoE (2008), has not addressed the actual competence needed in the economy, as most programs are characterized by of low quality and theory-driven approaches due to resource constraints and lack of skilled TVET teachers. This depicts that a systematic integration of TVET with the job market need has not yet been achieved. Therefore, the needs of different target groups have to be addressed through different forms of learning environments considering their aptitudes and personal ambitions, specific competence needs and other specific requirements (MoE, 2008, p.17).

On the other hand, in the TVETs, the English language common courses have been offered to the trainees having the same purpose within other academic disciplines (social sciences, Engineering and Education). It is believed that enabling trainees to be competent in using English language in the academic and in their future occupational contexts. In other words, the English language proficiency skills based on needs analysis in cooperation with a program of vocational training promotes the specific field itself. Based on this view, in Ethiopia, the Federal TVET institute (FTI) trainees are given Communicative English Skills course mainly for academic and professional purposes. They are mostly required to write their theses, project proposals and reports. They are also expected to read academic materials, make oral presentations and learn the courses using English. Upon the completion of their first degree, the graduates are also expected to train learners in TVET colleges using English as a medium of instruction. In the occupational context, the trainers are also expected to deliver work related communication skills courses. Therefore, English is considered as one of the most useful subjects in TVET to enhance the trainees' communication competence.

In the context of this research, Communicative English Skills course is offered to all first year students of Federal TVET Institute. This means, as the students/trainees are from different field of studies having different needs, the course material is used commonly with less consideration of learners' specific language learning needs. This is to mean that the learners are usually provided with general purpose English. However, focusing on English for specific academic purpose (ESAP) which is oriented to students from a particular academic field is important (Hidayat 2018, p.4). So, it is the needs of the learners which determine the purpose and the contents of the English course curriculum at tertiary levels where the learning goals (academic and occupational) are clearly defined.

English for Academic Purposes (EAP) in the Context of TVET Institutes

English for Academic Purposes (ESP) arose as a term in the 1960's as it became increasingly aware that *General English (GE)* courses frequently did not meet trainees or employers' needs. In contrast, in the context of ESP, English is taught for specialized learners with some specific vocational and educational purpose in mind. In line with this, Hutchinson & Waters (1987 p.53) depict that what distinguishes ESP from General English is not the existence of a need as such but rather an awareness of the need. However, literature indicated that the line between where General English courses stop and ESP courses start has become very vague indeed. For example, vocationally

oriented language learning (VOLL) is designed for learners who are prepared for a range of semi-skilled employment or occupations, which require English as an additional competence (Vogt and Kantelinen 2013 as cited in Widdo, 2015).

EAP is in-sessional English language support offered at universities or higher TVET institutes where English is the language of instruction. EAP “refers mainly to the academic needs of students and of future professionals who would seek a career in the academic environment (Ypsilantis & Kantaridou, 2007, p.69 cited in Hadjiconstantinou and Nikiforou, 2012). This approach encourages using the language in academic environments for academic purpose. So, EAP is taught generally within educational institutions to students needing English in their studies. Supporting this, Hamp-Lyons, (2001) confirms that in the context of EAP learners of English are learning it for academic or professional advancements.

English for Academic Purposes (EAP) is a sub-branch of ESP which is concerned with the identification of students’ communication needs and study skills in tertiary education (Gnutzmann, 2009, p.526). According to Ulum, (2015), the aim of an EAP program is to support students with developing their language skills so that they become more competent in their subject specific courses. EAP courses should focus on a common core—a set of language skills. English for academic purposes maintain that for the students to succeed academically and to be able to further their studies they need to be proficient in different English skills such as reading, writing, listening and speaking as well as develop sufficient vocabulary (Madileng, 2017). English for Academic Purposes strives to explicitly match teaching content to the language and study needs of the learners (Dvoretzkaya, 2016). He further divided EAP as English for General Academic Purposes (EGAP) and English for Specific Academic Purposes (ESAP). EGAP focuses more on common core study skills, while ESAP is more subject-specific (Dvoretzkaya, 2016). ESAP focuses on developing professional and academic skills through content which is appropriate to the discipline the course is designed to serve (Hyland, 2006, and Hadjiconstantinou and Nikiforou, 2012). This approach, (Gnutzmann, 2009, p.526), encourages use of the language for studying in academic environment focusing on skills that are essential to academic activities..

English Language Needs Analysis

Needs analysis, is now often viewed as an integral part of English language curriculum development and review. In relation to ESP, Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998: 122) and Otilia, (2015) depict needs analysis as the ‘cornerstone’ of ESP which precisely directs learners to the pathway of effective learning. Moreover, needs analysis should be the starting point for devising syllabuses, course materials and the kind of teaching and learning that takes place. In ESP, needs analysis focuses on the skills learners need to study or work effectively in their target situations. Therefore, prior to it the necessity of data collection comes which contains of the information about the learners and their learning needs.

It is necessary for the institutions to design or develop the English curriculum to find out a set of competencies needed by the students. Similarly, proponents of the communicative approach argued that the selection of instructional materials should be based on a systematic analysis of the learners needs for the target language. So, to design an effective language course, it is critical to know why a learner decides to study a particular language.

As ESP is highly associated with the language needs of the learners or trainees, it is ideal to conceptualize the term “need” first. According to Richards (2001), ‘needs’ are defined as the gap between a learner’s current abilities in a language and the outcomes that s/he is expected to achieve. Thus, language needs analysis involves the assessment of the needs for which a group of learners may require language. It also refers to the techniques for collecting and assessing information rele-

vant to course design. According Şahan, Çoban & Topkaya (2011) identifying and clarifying the analysis of learner needs helps educators and practitioners shape a fitting curriculum that addresses the specific learning situations.

In a very specific perspective, needs involve what learners know, don't know or want to know, and can be collected and analyzed in a variety of ways (Hyland, 2006). It is the process of determining the needs for which a group of learners require a language and also arranging the needs according to the priorities (Abdullah, 2005, Tafenau, 2017). It is carried out to establish the “what” and the “how” of a course. In this case, “what” is concerned with content or linguistic input of the language and “how” refers the mechanism we put the content into practice. It is the language needs analysis that helps the teacher or course developer decide what the course should focus on, what content in terms of language or skills to include and what teaching/learning methods to employ. Therefore, the language experts must identify the trainees' needs in a specific field of study when designing an English course material to better meet the needs of the individuals (Tafenau, 2017). When the curriculum content, materials, and teaching approaches match learners' perceived and actual needs, learners' motivation and success are enhanced (Singh, et al., 2019).

Rationale of the Study

A needs analysis in broad terms can be described as identifying “what learners will be required to do with the foreign language in the target situation, and how learners might best master the target language during the period of training (Richards, 2001). It benefits the learners as the curricula are then designed based on their true needs. Moreover, it is the process of determining the needs for which a learner or group of learners require a language and also arranging the needs according to the priorities (Abdullah 2005, p.62). One of the main concerns of the educational specialists is the relevance of their programs to the graduates' success on the current competitive labor market. In this case, the type of English needed has to be related to the learners' current study and future roles. Thus, it is the language needs analysis that serves as a useful tool to clarify and confirm the true needs of trainees in the two contexts. Astika (1999) explained that needs analysis is not only the starting point for materials development, but also guides selection of contents, assessment, and classroom activities. This implies that needs analysis is necessary to design the English curriculum which is aligned with a set of competencies needed by the students.

There is no longer a one-size-fits-all form of English. The different purposes of learning English must consist of different language programs where learners can choose the one that is most favorable according to their academic or occupational needs (Albassri, 2016). Similarly, the teaching approaches in the field have been adapted to meet the needs of trainees. He also contended that language theories such as English for specific purposes and needs analysis have emerged in order to address and meet individual's goals.

The Ethiopian FTI did not succeed in training trainers specifically using English as a medium of instruction in teaching content subjects at TVET colleges where they are assigned as instructors. The possible factors to this are like, the competencies are not well identified; the organization of modules is found weak; teaching methods employed are highly dominated by the traditional lecture method which do not consider the learners' work environment, and not yet aware of movement of higher education institutions (HEIs) towards competence-based curricula (MoE, 2018, p.56). This is also proved by the present researchers' experience as well as concerned stakeholders, namely assessors, supervisors, college deans and other officials who always complain that both the trainers' and trainees' English language proficiency is not satisfactory. Ali, etal (2017) also claimed that the trainers of the TVET program as well as the trainees themselves fail to feel confident and

comfortable in their proficiency level in the language of instruction. Moreover, many trainees, even including trainers who failed to pass a theoretical exam: CoC (certificate of competency) associate their problem with their low English language ability to comprehend the questions very well. Indirectly supporting the aforementioned claim, Singh, et al. (2019) argued that not only do TVET graduates need to excel in technical skills, but they also need to be equipped with other essential skills such as communication skills especially English language competency. However, “in the current vocational trainings where the trainees are expected to be skillful and knowledgeable as well as effective communicators in their specific fields of study, the common course -English seems to be given little emphasis contrary to what is expected to be achieved by the particular trainees”. In the same vein, Ali, et al. (2017) also demonstrated that there is a great demand for a new English language program which suits to the TVET contexts.

The researchers believe that unless the trainees gain field related language input and practice it accordingly during their stay in the university, they could not be able to communicate effectively in their current study and future carrier. As the learners’ learning needs in the research context are different across field of studies, the teaching learning material should be prepared considering this context. This could be achieved through aligning the language input to the trainees’ respective field of study to better succeed in their academic study, and future career. The researchers agree that the courses should be designed and given based on the specific contexts. This is because “a set of standards developed to enhance ELT in one context cannot be applied to other contexts (Mahboob & Tilakaratna, 2012). Yan also argues that the investigation of learning demands of target learners provide references for English course design and teaching for students in different majors (2016, p.37).

It seems that the English courses offered in the Federal Technical Institute (FTI) do not target specific needs, and are not integrated to the content courses. This shows that there is a gap between the way the graduates trained and expected to practice in actual workplaces. Likewise, the objectives set for the Communicative English Skills courses are not achieved as graduates’ English language proficiency is below the expected standard both in the academic and work context. This is confirmed in the new Ethiopian Education Development Roadmap (EERM) as follows:

Significant number of trainers has serious English language deficiency in reading, writing and speaking. However, the training facility manuals, occupational standards, teaching training learning material (TTLM), competency exams (CoC) and model curricula are available and prepared in English. Individual TVET institutions are expected to prepare their curricula and learning materials in house in English by its trainers. As a result, most trainees fail to capture adequate knowledge and skills required for their occupation in training due to poor communication. That leads to poor training and incompetent graduates in occupations (2018, p.73).

The above quotation clearly indicates the trainer-graduates incompetency in English language and how this affects the TVET training programs. This mainly because the English courses are offered without conducting English language needs analysis (ELNA). This shows that little is known about the trainees’ English language needs of the learners in, in the FTI since the program has been launched recently.

Thus, the main objective of this research was to analysis the FTI learners’ needs of the four macro English language skills and instructional modes trainers employ in teaching English.

. The specific objectives of this study were:

- To analyze the level of importance of the four macro English language skills needed by the FTI undergraduate trainees.

- To examine whether or not instructional modes the FTI trainers employ in teaching English suits the needs of trainees’.

This study attempted to answer the following research questions:

- To what extent are the four macro English language skills needed by the FTI undergraduate trainees?
- Do the instructional modes the FTI trainers employ in teaching English suits the needs of trainees?

Materials and Methods

Research Design

A descriptive design and a mixed-methods research approach were applied in this study. A mixed-methods approach helps to get an in-depth opinion from study participants (Dawson, 2007, p.15-16) since it allows the use of quantitative and qualitative methods in combination to conduct an in-depth analysis (Creswell, 2012, p.535).

Sampling Techniques

Availability sampling technique was employed to select the FTI as the study setting which is the only institute apart from its satellite campuses. In this sampling technique, as the name suggests, sampling units are selected based on who are available as samples, as the researcher does not have any option (Singh, 2007). Eighty participants out of 805 second and third year trainees who already took the English language courses were selected through systematic random sampling technique and 30 participants and the same number of participants out of 147 former graduates and 150 major course instructors respectively were selected using simple random sampling techniques to fill in questionnaires. All the English language teachers on duty (4) were made to take part in the interview. Many needs analysis are conducted using availability samples: informants available and willing to participate.

Data Collection Tools

In this study, data triangulation was achieved by different data collection tools, namely questionnaires, document analysis and semi-structured interview. This is because “a combination of methods can be desirable as it enables you to overcome the different weaknesses inherent in all methods” (Dawson, 2007, p.35).

Three forms of close-ended questionnaires were designed in English: one for the trainees, the second for the former graduates and the remaining one for the major subject instructors. Focusing on the objectives of the study, the questionnaires were produced taking into account the framework suggested by Hutchinson and Waters (1987) and questionnaires proposed by Basturkmen (2010) and referring to several studies conducted on students’ English language needs analysis (Abuklaish, 2014; Richards, 2001; Chatsungnoen, 2015; Yilmaz, 2004; Taşçı, 2007; Tilahun 2003; Saleh Al-Shoaib, 2016; Mohammed, 2016; Ebadi and Naderifarjad, 2015; Alfehaid, 2011). In relation to this idea, Long (2005) and Leary (2001) say that closed items provide standardized, easily coded and quantified data. Cronbach's alpha which was computed to ensure the reliability of the questionnaires produced 0.97 alpha values for the trainees’ questionnaire and 0.93 alpha value for the former graduates’ major course instructors’ questionnaires. In order to achieve validity, the questionnaires were commented by relevant experts and project supervisors focusing on the contents and clarity of the items

In order to examine the fitness of the English language course materials (Communicative English Skills I and II modules) to the trainees’ needs and fields of study, content analysis checklist

(evaluation criteria/guidelines) was adapted from Ebadi and Naderifarjad (2015) and Ur (1999). Such documentary evidence provides information on relevant issues and problems under investigation. Semi-structured interview was also conducted with four trainees, two former graduates, two major course teachers and four English language teachers, to enrich data collected through the questionnaires. The content of the interview was similar to that of the questionnaires thematically.

Data Collection Procedures and Ethical Considerations

The questionnaires were distributed to the study participants and the aim of the study in general and the questionnaires in particular was explained to the participants before the questionnaires were administered. During the completion of the questionnaires, general orientation was also given orally in Amharic language when necessary as it is the language that majority of the participants speak to avoid any misunderstanding of the questions. Then, document analysis was carried out to evaluate the Communicative English Skills course materials in terms of relevance to the trainees' academic and professional needs. Lastly, interviews were conducted. While conducting the interviews, the investigators made careful attempts to probe the participants in order to obtain in-depth information and their responses were recorded. The participants were communicated that their identity would be kept anonymous and the information they provide would only be used confidentially for the research purpose. The essence of anonymity is that information provided by participants should in no way reveal their identity. A participant or subject is, therefore, considered anonymous when the researcher or another person cannot identify the participant or subject from the information provided (Newuman, 2007). The researchers also told the participants that if they did not want to participate in the study, they had the right not to participate.

Data Analysis Methods

Quantitative data gathered via the questionnaires were analyzed by using the SPSS 20.00 to produce descriptive statistics, namely frequencies, percentages and mean values. Qualitative data gathered through document analysis and interviews were analyzed qualitatively using either in narrative or descriptive modality according to the situation. In analyzing the interview data, thematic analysis was done. Themes were identified from the data until no further themes could be identified. Identified themes, then, were compared with each other in order to make sure that there were no overlaps.

The interpretation of mean values was dependent on the calculation of accepted boundaries of each response, which were obtained by dividing the serial width 4 by the number of responses 5 and found to be 0.8 (Topkaya, 2010, cited in Şahan, Çoban and Topkaya, 2016). The key used for mean interpretation in the study is presented below in the table.

Table 1. Key for Mean Interpretation (Source: Şahan, Çoban and Topkaya, 2016)

Scale	Mean Range	Interpretation	Interpretation
5	4.21-5.00	Very Important (VI)	Very Frequently Needed (VFN)
4	3.41-4.20	Important (I)	Frequently Needed (FN)
3	2.61-3.40	Moderately Important (MI)	Sometimes Needed (SN)
2	1.81-2.60	Not Important (NI)	Rarely Needed (RN)
1	1.00-1.80	Not Sure (NS)	Never Needed (NN)

Results and Discussion

Research Question 1: To what extent are the four macro English language skills needed by the FTI undergraduate trainees?

Table 2. Trainees' Questionnaire Results on Perceived Priority Order of Major skills for Academic Purposes

Macro-skills	NS		NI		MI		I		VI		Mean
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	
<i>Reading</i>	-	-	3	3.8%	5	6.3%	25	31.3%	47	58.8%	4.45
<i>Writing</i>	1	1.3%	4	5%	3	3.8%	28	35%	44	55%	4.38
<i>Speaking</i>	-	-	4	5%	10	12.5%	27	33.8%	39	48.8%	4.26
<i>Listening</i>	1	1.3%	3	3.8%	7	8.8%	28	35%	41	51.3%	4.31

Key: NS=Not sure NI=Not Important MI=Moderately Important VI=Very Important

As Table 2 shows, 58.8% of the trainee participants perceived that reading is *very important* skill and 31.3% of the respondents considered it as “important” for their academic study. Following this writing was found to be “very important” skill by 55% of trainee respondents and 35% of the respondents considered it as “important” skill. In the same table it is indicated 51.3% of the trainees believed that listening is very important skill, and 35% of them responded that listening is considered as *important* skill. The mean value indicates that the current trainees assumed that they need reading as the most important skill followed by writing skill in the academic context (see Table 2). Speaking was perceived to be the least important skill by 48.8% of respondents with means value 4.26. Listening was perceived to be the third most important skill for learning major courses by 51.3% of respondents. The trainees were also interviewed to rank the importance of English language skills in order of their importance for the field of study. The trainees' interview result shows they rated reading in the first place followed by writing. Here is one respondent's view:

“..Reading and writing skills are very important. This is because one cannot have idea to write without reading relevant texts. It is difficult to prioritize. If you ask me to rate, reading skill comes slightly in the first place as it is a tool to search for knowledge.” (FG M-2)

The findings disclosed that reading is the most important skill for the trainees' academic purpose, which is followed by writing skill, placed as second. This agrees with Fadel and Rajab's (2017) study that revealed reading is the first skill which the students perceived to be the most frequently used skill and writing skills come second with a minor difference to that of reading. The study by Dagmawit (2012), which partially disagrees with the present study finding, exposed that reading and listening are required for the students' academic study. Likewise, the investigation by Chatsungnoen (2015) and Abuklaish, (2014) also show that reading skill was ranked as the most necessary and then writing by all the participants which is consistent with the current study. However, this finding is opposite with Nimasari's (2018) study that speaking is the most preferred skill, followed by listening, reading, and writing. In this case, conversational skills (speaking and listening) were found to be more important than reading and writing. Minase (2009) studied students ELNs on medical students come up with different finding. His study result shows that speaking and reading are favorite skills of the students while the teachers recommend speaking and writing as the most important skills to medical students. In another study, Güler (2004) surveyed that reading was the skill that should be given priority in the English language programs. The study conducted by Fadel and Rajab (2017) also concluded that speaking skills have been regarded as the least frequently used skill. Thus, from the results of the current and related studies, it is possible to underscore that though reading is the most important skill preferred by the trainees, all skills are found to be important as their mean values range between 4.26-4.45.

The Importance of Macro Skills Academic Purpose

Table 3. Priority Order of Major Skills in the Academic Context as Perceived by Graduates

Macro-skills	NS		NI		MI		I		VI		Mean
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	
Reading	-	-	-	-	3	10%	8	26.6%	19	63.3%	4.53
Writing	-	-	1	3.3%	-	-	12	40%	17	56.7%	4.50
Speaking	-	-	3	10%	2	6.6%	8	26.6%	17	56.7%	4.30
Listening	-	-	1	3%	-	-	11	36.7%	18	60%	4.53

Key: NS=Not sure NI=Not Important MI=Moderately Important VI=Very Important

The above table indicates that 19(63.3%) former graduates perceived that reading is very important skill and 26.6% of them perceived that it is important skill in academic settings. Only 3 (10%) former graduates perceived that reading is moderately important in academic context for content course learning. In the case of writing, 17 (56.7%) believed that it is 'very important' skill and 26.6% of the former graduates perceived writing as important skill for major course learning. In the same table (Table 3), it is indicated that 17 (56.7%) former graduates believed that writing skill as 'very important' and 26.6% of them perceived that it is *important* skill for academic learning. Similarly, 60% of the former graduates perceived that listening is *very important* skill and 11(36.7%) graduates perceived that listening is an *important* skill for content course learning. Likewise, the mean score also indicated that reading and listening were equally the most important skill for academic study; and followed by writing and speaking. Thus, it can be concluded that receptive skills were found to be more important than productive skills in the academic situation.

The results coincide with Tilahun's (2003) findings which showed that the students are more interested in receptive skills. This view is supported by Belachew's (2008) study result. He concluded that all language skills are needed with relatively more emphasis on listening and speaking, whereas in occupational settings, all the language skills are important with relative emphasis to reading and writing skills. Thus, the former graduates perceived that the four language skills are very important for their studies.

The Importance of the Macro Skills for Graduates' Career

Table 4. Importance Order of Major Skills in the Professional Context as Perceived by Graduates

Macro-skills	NS		NI		MI		I		VI		Mean
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	
Reading	-	-	-	-	2	7%	10	33.3%	18	60%	4.53
Writing	-	-	5	16.6%	-	-	12	40%	13	43.3%	4.26
Speaking	-	-	1	3.3%	6	20%	7	23.3%	16	53.3%	4.26
Listening	-	-	1	3.3%	5	16.6%	6	20%	18	60%	4.36

Key: NS=Not sure NI=Not Important MI=Moderately Important VI=Very Important

As it is indicated in Table 4, in occupational context, reading was the very important skills as perceived by 18 (60%) former graduates, 10 (33.3%) graduates perceived reading as "important" and 5(6.6%) of the former graduates perceived it as moderately important skill in professional context. In the same table, writing skill is perceived as very important by 13 (43.3%) and important by

12 (40%) former graduates in the professional context. Moreover, 16% of the former graduates perceived that writing skill is not important for expected work environment. In occupational context, speaking was the ‘*very important*’ skills as perceived by 16 (53.3%) former graduates and 7 (23.3%) graduates perceived as ‘*important*’ skill. In addition, 6 (20%) former graduates believed speaking as moderately important and 1 (3.3%) graduates considered as it is ‘*not important*’ skill. In the case of listening, 18 (60%) former graduates perceived that listening is ‘*very important*’ skill and 20% of them perceived as it is an important skill for professional purpose and 5 (16.6%) former graduates believed that listening is moderately important. According to the former graduates interview result, speaking is rated in the first place. In addition, the graduates’ interview response indicated that speaking to be the most important skill for their current career followed by reading and writing skills as second and third. For example, two respondents said the following:

“*For my carrier, I think speaking skill is more important as I need it to communicate with foreign customers in person and through digital technology. Since this can also be done through writing emails and text messages, I feel that reading and writing are also important*” (FG 6)

“*In the TVT context, first, the trainees should comprehend what s/he reads and listens before producing a text. In addition, the trainees are expected to transfer technologies. This always requires them to refer texts about technologies from different sources. This makes reading and writing skills much more needed in the context.*” (FG-4)

In similar manner, the mean score results indicated almost all the language skills were found to very important as all the mean score is above 4.2 (see key for interpretation in Table 1). However, this finding is opposite to Chatsungnoen’s (2015) and Elleni (2010) study. Their study finding concluded that speaking and listening were the most important skills the students need in order to be successful in their future occupation though all the language skills were found to be important for them. Dagmawit (2012) and Fadel and Rajab (2017) concluded that in the case of English for occupational purposes (EOP) writing is the most important skill which contradicts with current study result.

Major Course Trainers’ Questionnaire Results on Frequency Order of the Four Macro-skills

Table 5. Major Course Trainers’ Questionnaire Results

Macro-skills	VFN		FN		SN		RN		NN		Mean
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	
<i>Reading</i>	24	80%	6	20%	-	-	-	-	-	-	4.9
<i>Writing</i>	24	80%	5	16.6%	-	-	1	3.3%	-	-	4.6
<i>Speaking</i>	21	70%	6	13.3%	2	6.6%	1	3.3%	-	-	4.5
<i>Listening</i>	23	76.7%	6	20%	-	-	1	3.3%	-	-	4.7

Key: VFN=very frequently needed FN= frequently needed SN=sometimes needed RN=rarely needed NN=not needed

As revealed in Table 5, speaking was perceived as the ‘*very frequently needed*’ skill by 21 (70%) major course respondents and it was perceived as ‘*frequently needed*’ skill by 4 (13.3) participants. Similarly, 2 (6.6%) of the major course trainers perceived that speaking is *sometimes needed* and only 1 (3.3%) of perceived that speaking skill is needed ‘*rarely*’ for academic study. Both reading and writing were also perceived to be very frequently needed skills by 80% of major course trainers. The result in Table 5 also shows that 23 (76.6%) major course trainers perceived that listen-

ing was *very frequently needed* skill and 6 (20%) of them believed that it is frequently needed skill in the academic context. Only 3.3% of perceived that listening skill is needed rarely. Likewise, 24 (80%) major course trainers considered that reading is *very frequently needed skill* in the academic context and the remaining 6 (20%) of them needed it *frequently* in the same context. In the same manner, writing skill was *very frequently needed* skill by 24 (80%) respondents and ‘frequently needed’ as perceived by 5 (16.7%) of major course trainers in the academic context. Only, 1 (3.3%) of the major course trainers perceived that writing is *sometimes needed* skill in studying content courses. Concerning significance order of the major skills the English trainers’ interview result revealed that reading was also the most important skill in the academic context and others are equally important.

“For my future career, reading is very important skill; and writing is also the decisive skill as they both are inseparable. For example, for journal publication writing is very important. As to me writing is important for personal development. Most of the tasks are done through writing. So as to my view writing is the most important skill.” (MCTr 1).

Thus, this study result revealed that in the academic studies of trainees-engineers, it was found that reading, listening, writing, and speaking were very frequently needed English skills, in this specific order. This study finding partially agrees with the study finding of Fadel and Rajab (2017). Their study found that productive skills are more important than receptive ones in the academic context.

This finding is also similar with the study conducted by Dagmawit (2012) that concluded in the case of English for academic purposes reading is the most important skill. This result (order of frequency) contradicts with Belechew’s (2007) finding. On his study finding it is revealed that for academic purposes, listening skill was found to be the most important skill followed by speaking, reading and writing. Generally according to the mean score result in Table 5 it is found that almost all the language skills were reported to be the *very frequently needed* skills for academic success with insignificant differences. This finding also coincides with Belechew (2007). His study generally concludes that all the four language skills are important for following the major courses and for their prospective jobs, but with varying degree.

Table 6. Summary of Priority Order of the Four Macro-skills for EAP and professional career based on Mean Scores

Macro-skills	Current Trainees	Former Graduates		Major Course Trainers
	EAP	EOP	EAP	EOP
Listening	4.31	4.36	4.53	4.7
Speaking	4.26	4.26	4.30	4.5
Reading	4.45	4.53	4.53	4.9
Writing	4.38	4.26	4.50	4.6

Key: EAP=English for academic purpose EOP=English for occupational purpose

As a summary, in table 6, it is possible to note that the trainees believed that reading is the most important skill for academic purpose, which is followed by writing, listening and speaking with insignificant mean differences. In general, the mean score value indicated that all the four basic skills are very important or very frequently needed for both academic and professional purposes as the values falls on the range 4.21-5.00. This finding is supported by the study conducted by Şahan,

Çoban, Topkaya, (2016) that put equal emphasis on the four basic language skills. Elleni (2010) also concluded that all the language skills were found important for the students. There was also nearly similar study result by Elsaid and Nur (2018) that revealed the most important skills were writing and speaking; however, reading and listening were found to be important as well.

Research Question 2: Do the instructional modes the FTI trainers employ in teaching English suits the needs of trainees' specific academic fields?

Table 7. Trainees' Questionnaire Results on preferred modes of learning

I prefer or like	SD		D		NS		A		SA		Mean
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	
lessons where discussions is offered	3	3.8%	1	1.2%	6	7.5%	40	50%	30	37.5%	4.16
lessons where I can do something practical	3	3.8%	3	3.8%	9	11.2%	42	52.5%	23	28.8%	3.99
lessons where pictures are offered	5	6.2%	3	3.8%	10	12.5%	35	43.8%	27	33.8%	3.95
the teacher to explain everything	1	1.2%	10	12.5%	10	12.5%	30	37.5%	29	36.2%	3.95
to learn through quizzes	3	3.8%	5	6.2%	6	7.5%	40	50%	26	32.5%	4.01
to study English by talking to others	3	3.8%	6	7.5%	6	7.5%	39	48.8%	26	32.5%	3.99
to learn individually	2	2.5%	4	5%	10	12.5%	32	40%	33	41.2%	4.14
learning or doing activities in pairs	2	2.5%	3	3.8%	12	15%	32	40%	30	37.5%	4.05
learning activities in small groups	1	1.2%	9	11.2%	16	20%	28	35%	32	40%	4.09
doing activities in large groups	2	2.5%	4	5%	15	18.8%	25	31%	29	36.2%	3.88

Key: SD=strongly disagree D=disagree NS=not sure A=agree SA=strongly agree

The above table demonstrates the type of learning modes which are mostly preferred by the trainees. Accordingly, 30(37.5%) trainees' participants "strongly agree" that they preferred to learn through discussions, and 40 (50%) agree that they prefer this mode of learning with highest mean score value 4.16. This illustrates that majority (87.5%) of the participants preferred to learn through discussions. Likewise, 81.3% of the trainees perceived that they preferred to learn practically; 77.2% of the trainees felt that they prefer to learn through diagrams/pictures, and 73.3% of trainees perceived that their preferred mode of learning is learning through lectures or explanations. Learning through quizzes is a preferred mode of learning as perceived by 82.5% of the trainee participants. In the same way, learning by talking to others is a preferred mode of learning by 81.3% of the trainee.

In the same table above, some items inquired the trainee to note whether they would prefer to study individually, to work in pairs, to learn in small or large groups. Results showed that 33 (41.2%) trainees preferred learning individually, and 32 (40%) trainee favored learning in small groups. More than one-third, 37.5% of the respondents also strongly agree that learning in pairs is appropriate mode in the classroom instruction. For the item whether the trainees prefer to learn individually, learn well in pairs, small or large groups, the majority of them perceived that learning in-

dividually is well preferred with mean score 4.14. Moreover, based on the mean values, learn through discussions, learn individually, learn in small groups, and learn in pairs are the most preferred modes of learning (see Table 7). Thus, trainees enjoy learning individually, working in small groups, and learning in pairs from most preferred to least one. They were almost chosen by more than 75% of the trainees. Complementing the outputs in the table, the interview result showed that the most frequent mode of lesson deliver was teachers' explanation focusing on language structures. For example, one of the interviewees uttered the following:

"I want to learn English individually, in pairs, in the form of project, and discussions. I also like small group mode of instructional strategy. In my view group work is employed frequently in English classes." (Tr11).

The former graduates' interview result indicated that lecture mode was the usual instructional strategy used by English instructors. Regarding to their preferred mode of learning, one of the former graduates responded as:

"We want to learn English in pairs, in small groups and through discussions. During English classes, small group mode was our most preferred instructional approach that we enjoy." (FG1).

"I sometimes use small group and pair work modes of teaching but I mostly employ lecture mode of teaching as the classes are usually large and my focus is on covering topics. However, I believe that other approaches are appropriate to promote trainees learning because of large class size I dominantly use lecture mode of lesson delivery." (EngTr1).

From the above interview data, it is possible to note that the English trainers are using whole-class instruction or lecture mode is the preferred instructional strategy for them though they are aware of their limitation. However, the trainees' response revealed that they wanted to learn English individually, in pairs, in small groups, quiz form, in the form of project, and discussions. This reveals that there is a mismatch between the courses delivery mode by the English trainer and trainees' preference.

Unlike the above findings, Tagel (2007) reported that trainers are often using individual work and sometimes pair and small group work. But, the result of the current study is more credible as the number of the samples is more that the aforementioned study and the results are generated from multiple data sources (tools). On the other hand, supporting the present finding, Abuklaish (2014) concluded that the majority of the respondents were relatively interested in seeing diagrams in English classes which is not usually preferred mode by the trainees in present study. Similarly, Nimasari (2018) disclosed that most science participants, who are very much closed to TVET participants, seemed to be happiest working in small groups and pairs for activities. Furthermore, Nimasari (2018) indicated that the majority of students choosing group work as their most pattern of learning to class interaction, and pair work as the second preference to have language interaction to improve speaking ability and to have peer feedbacks.

Conclusions and Implications

Though the finding of the present study indicated that all macro skills are important for trainees at TVET institutes, their importance can be categorized in academic and occupational or career environment. Accordingly, reading is the most important skill for academic purpose followed by writing, listening and speaking skills. In the occupational environment, reading is still the most important skill, followed by listening, writing and speaking, in this specific order. For former graduates who are in the occupational environment, conversation skills (listening and reading) are found to be

more important than productive skills for the same purpose. Thus, it is possible to conclude that reading is the most important skill for TVET trainees both in the academic and career context.

Regarding the modes of delivery, the trainees preferred to learn through a combination of different learning modes (integrated modes). Specifically, they most prefer to learn through discussions, learning individually, and learning in pairs and in small groups. But, the English instructors are dominantly using lecture mode in the class. This indicates that there is a mismatch among the prescribed modes of learning in the material, trainees' preferred learning styles and instructional modes employed by the teachers in the context of TVET institutes.

Based on the conclusions, teaching material writers and designers as well as English teachers have consider the learners preferences and deliver lessons based trainees preferred learning styles and mode of delivery so that they can accommodate the different learning styles of trainees. Moreover, syllabus designers have to consider the trainees' priorities both in mode of delivery and language skills and revise/prepare the teaching and learning materials accordingly.

References

- Abdullah, G.,M.,A. (2005). *Needs of ESP learners for practical English communication: A case study of first year students at the Medical College* (Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Aden, Yemen).
- Abuklaish, A. (2014). *Investigating the language needs of undergraduate science students in Libya* (Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Southampton, UK).
- Adamu, I. (2016). The role of teacher training institutions in Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) in Nigeria. *Journal of Advanced Research in Social and Behavioural Sciences*, 3(1), 46-512, ISSN: 462-1951.
- Albassri, I. A. (2016). *Needs analysis-informed teaching for English for specific purpose* (Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, California State University, San Bernardino).
- Alfehaid, A. (2011). *Developing an ESP curriculum for students of health sciences through needs analysis and course evaluation in Saudi Arabia* (Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Leicester).
- Ali, et al. (2017). Investigating the relevance of ESP (English for specific purpose) for TVET (Technical and Vocational Education and Training) Colleges in Ethiopia. *International Journal of Multidisciplinary and Current Research*, 5(2017). Retrieved from <http://ijmcr.com>
- Astika, G. (1999). The role of needs analysis in English for specific purposes. *TEFLIN Journal*, 10(1), 31-47.
- Basturkmen, H. (2010). *Developing courses in English for specific purposes*. University of Auckland, New Zealand.
- Belachew, Z. (2008). *English language needs analysis of construction trainees in Entoto Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) College* (Unpublished, MA Thesis, AAU, Ethiopia).
- Bünning, F., and Zhao, Z-Q. (eds). (2006). TVET teacher education on the threshold of internationalization. In WENT, Internat. Weiterbildung und Entwicklung gGmbH
- Chatsungnoen, P. (2015). *Needs analysis for English for specific purposes (ESP) course for Thai undergraduates in a food science and technology programme*. Massey University, Palmerston North, New Zealand.
- Chikati, D., K., Wachira L., N., Mwinzi, J., M. (2019). The historical development of vocational education and training for persons with visual impairments in Kenya. *International Journal*

- of Science and Research (IJSR), 9(7), 1450-1453, ISSN: 2319-7064, doi: 10.21275/SR20705205250.
- Creswell, J., W. (2012). Educational research planning, conducting and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research (4th ed). New York, Pearson Education, Inc.
- Dagmawit, T. (2011). English Language Needs Analysis of TVET Business Students (MA thesis): AAU
- Dawson (2007). A Practical Guide to Research Methods. A User-friendly guide for Mastering Research Techniques and Projects (3rd ed). UK: How to books.
- Dudley-Evans, T. & St John, M. (1998). Developments in ESP: A Multi-disciplinary Approach. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Dvoretzskaya, V., E. (2016). English for academic purposes in higher education curriculum. *Journal of Tambov State Technical University, Tambov*, 2(3) doi: 10.17277/voprosy.01.147-152.
- Ebadi, S., & Naderifarjad, Z (2015). Evaluation of EAP textbooks for the Iranian students of Medical Sciences: A comparison between SAMT materials and "Oxford English for Career: medicine", *Journal of Applied Linguistics and Language Research*.
- Elleni, P., K. (2010). *An Assessment of the English language needs of tourist guide students and the language course materials at Catering Tourism Training Institute (CTTI) and Lion Ethiopia Tourism and Hotel College (LETHC)* (Unpublished MA thesis, AAU, Ethiopia).
- Elsaid, M. A. S., & Nur, H. S. M. (2018). Needs Analysis in English for Academic Purposes: The Case of Teaching Assistants at the University of Khartoum. *HOW Journal*, 25(2), 49-68. <https://doi.org/10.19183/how.25.2.409>
- Fadel, S & Rajab, H. (2017). Investigating the English language needs of the female students at the faculty of computing and information technology at King Abdulaziz University in Saudi Arabia. *English Language Teaching*, 10(6). Retrieved from <http://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v10n6p69>.
- FDRE, MOE. (2008). *National Technical & Vocational Education & Training (TVET) Strategy* (2nd ed). Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.
- FDRE, MOE. (2018). *Ethiopian Education Development Roadmap (2018-30). An integrated Executive Summary*: Ministry of Education, Education Strategy Center (ESC). A.A, Ethiopia.
- Getachew H., S. (2016). *Towards competence-based Technical-Vocational Education and Training (TVET) in Ethiopia* (Ph.D Thesis, Wageningen University, Netherland). ISBN: 978-94-6257-900-2. Retrieved from <http://dx.doi.org/10.18174/388252>
- Gnutzmann, C. (2009). Language for specific purposes vs. general language. In Knapp, K. and Seidlhofer, B. (Eds). *Handbook of foreign language communication and learning (Volume 6)*. Berlin, German.
- Gözüyeşil, E. (2014). An analysis of engineering students' English language needs. *Procedia Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 1(16), 4182-4186, doi: 10.1016/j.sbspro.2014.01.913
- Güler, C. (2004). An Investigation into the Academic English Language Needs of Students at Yildiz Technical University and Disciplinary Teachers' Attitudes towards English-Medium Instruction at the Tertiary Level (MA Thesis): Bilkent University, Ankara
- Hadjiconstantinou, S and Nikiforou, E. (2012). ESAP courses: An innovative vista in language learning. From needs analysis to evaluation: *English for Specific Purposes World*, 12(36), ISSN 1682-3257. Retrieved from <http://www.esp-world.info>
- Hamp-Lyons, L. (2001). English for academic purposes, In D. Carter and R. Nunan, *The Cambridge TESOL guide* (pp. 126-131). Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

- Hidayat, R. (2018). A needs analysis in learning English for airline staff program. *English Education Journal (EEJ)*, 9(4), 589-613.
- Hutchinson, T., & Waters, A. (1987). *English for specific purposes: A learning centered approach*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.
- Ilmu, D. (2015). Syllabus of vocational high school based on ESP approach. *Indonesia International Journal of Advanced Multidisciplinary Research*, 15(2), 98–100. Retrieved from <http://s-o-i.org/1.15/ijarm-2-10-21-India>
- Leary, R. M. (2001). *Introduction to behavioral research methods (3rd ed)*: Boston. Allyn and Bacon
- Long, M. H. (2005). *Second language needs analysis*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Madileng, M., M. (2017). *Understanding the intended and enacted national certificate vocational English curriculum* (Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg).
- Mahboob, A., & Tilakaratna, N. (2012). *A principles-based approach for English language teaching policies and practices*. University of Sydney, Australia, TESOL International Association, A TESOL White Paper.
- Minase Gessesse (2009): Identifying Students' Language Needs in Private Medical Colleges in Bahir Dar"(MA thesis).Bahir Dar University
- Mohammed, S., A., H. (2016). Investigating the application of needs analysis on EAP Business Administration Materials. *English Language Teaching*, 9(3). Retrieved from <http://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v9n3p74>
- Newuman, L., W. (2007). *Basics of Social Research: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*. Pearson Boston: Education, Inc
- Nha T., T., V., & Burns, A. (2014). English as a medium of instruction: Challenges for Vietnamese tertiary lecturers: *The Journal of Asia TEFL*, 11(3), 1-3.
- Nimasari. P. (2018). An ESP Needs Analysis: Addressing the Needs of English for Informatics Engineering. *JEES (Journal of English Educators Society)* <https://doi.org/10.21070/jees.v3i1.1085>
- Otilia, M. S. (2015).Needs Analysis in English for Specific Purposes: *Economy Series*, Issue 1, volume II: Constantin Brancusi University of Targu-JIU
- Richards, J.C. (2001).*Curriculum development in language teaching*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Şahan, Ö., Çoban, M., Topkaya, Z., E. (2016). A language needs analysis of engineering undergraduate students at a technical university: A Turkish case: *English for Specific Purposes World*, 17(51), ISSN: 1682-3257. Retrieved from www.esp-world.info
- Saleh Al-Shoaibi, A., Q. (2016). *Designing a suggested syllabus framework in the light of the investigated students' English language needs in the faculty of computer and information technology* (Unpublished MA Thesis, Sana'a University, Republic of Yemen).
- Singh, H. et al. (2019). An ESP approach in teaching trainees at TVET. *Oral Communication Skills* 7(10), ISSN: 2320-9186.
- Singh, K. (2007). *Quantitative social research methods*: Singapore, Sage Publications.
- Singh, K.Y. (2006). *Fundamentals of Research Methodology and Statistics*. New Delhi: New Age International Publishers
- Songhori, M. H. (2008). Introduction to Needs Analysis: *English for Specific Purposes World*, 4(20), 1-25.
- Songhori, M. H. (2008). Introduction to Needs Analysis: *English for Specific Purposes World*, 4(20), 1-25.

- Tafenau, B. (2017). *Designing a study aid for an ESP course: English for joiners* (Unpublished MA Thesis, University of Tartu).
- Tagel E. (2007). *An investigation in to the English language course needs of electricity students of Dilla TVET College* (Unpublished MA Thesis, AAU, Ethiopia).
- Taşçı, Ç. (2007). *An Analysis of Medical Students' English Language Needs* (MA thesis). Bilkent University, Ankara
- Tilahun B.T. (2003). *An Analysis of the Need of Evangelical Theological College:With Reference to Meserete Kristos College* (MA thesis).AAU
- Ur,P. (1991). *A Course in Language Teaching Practice and Theory*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- Widdo, P., H. (2015). *The development of vocational English materials from a social semiotic perspective: Participatory action research* (Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, University of Adelaide, Australia).
- Yan., W. (2016). The problems and countermeasures of vocational English teaching practice in higher vocational education. *Cross-Cultural Communication*, 12 (12), 35-39.
- Yilmaz, F . (2004). *An English Language Needs Analysis Of Preparatory Class Students at Gaziosmanpasa University* (MA Thesis): Bilkent University, Ankara