



Designing an ESP Course for Iranian Students of Architecture: A Skill-Based Approach

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Abstract

The purpose of the present study is to design an ESP course targeted at Iranian students of Architecture. To do this, a needs analysis questionnaire was administered to elicit information about the skills they required in their profession. Based on the information obtained through the needs analysis questionnaire, specific learning goals and objectives were identified. A PET test was also administered to specify the learners' level of language proficiency. Since the results gathered by the needs analysis questionnaire showed that reading and writing are the skills mostly used in both their course of study and place of work, a course was designed to address the objectives of reading comprehension and writing. Based on the identified goal and objective statements, the researcher adopted a skill-based syllabus to enable students to acquire the necessary knowledge and ability to act successfully in their course of study and work place. Based on the selected syllabus framework, a pre- intermediate sample course was designed aiming to provide the opportunity to cover the required reading, vocabulary, writing, and grammar skills.

Keywords: curriculum, English for Specific Purpose (ESP), syllabus, syllabus design, skill-based syllabus, needs analysis

INTRODUCTION

According to Richards (2001), language teaching is one of the world's largest educational ventures, specially teaching second or foreign languages (SLT/ FLT). Hundreds of people around the world spend large amount of time and effort, and invest a great deal of money to learn and master a new language. Teachers and course planners devote an enormous amount of their time and energy into planning language courses, preparing teaching materials, and evaluating. They may even renew and change their teaching according to their learners' needs. According to Chen, Chang, and Chang (2016), not only is English a school subject, but also a skill that requires substantial content knowledge. As a result, the needs of the target situation must be identified in order to accomplish the objective of effective communication.

In fact, as Richards (2001) put it, the processes of curriculum development are central elements in designing language program and these processes have become more widely accepted in language teaching. A language program can be referred to as any organized course of language instruction. Curriculum development, according to Richards can be referred to the range of planning, organizing and implementation processes involved in designing, developing or renewing a curriculum. These processes at first focus on needs analysis, situational analysis, planning learning outcomes, course organization, selecting and preparing teaching materials, and evaluation.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM AND PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The students of all majors need to have enough English knowledge to get their needed information from these sources, whereas large amount of academic courses around the world and professional journal articles are written in English. To meet the language needs of Iranian university students of Architecture in order to get their needed information from mentioned sources is the main reason for the present study. Lack of appropriate, feasible, and effective English textbooks according to Iranian university students of Architecture is the most important problem that can be referred in this study. The purpose of this study is to analyze the language needs of Iranian university students of Architecture, and provide an appropriate textbook for ESP courses in Architecture.

Based on the information obtained through the analysis of the needs, the study will develop a skill-based syllabus targeted at Iranian university students of Architecture. Since it demands a big team and a great deal of time and energy to carry out all the stages involved in the development of curriculum, the present study was confined to the planning stage, and the other two stages, i.e. implementation and evaluation will be left to further studies. Moreover, taking into consideration Hamp-Lyons's belief (1991, as cited in Carter & Nunan, 2001, p. 126-127) on ESP courses, i.e., "many ESP courses/ programs place more focus on reading and writing, while most general English courses on speaking and listening", the researcher focused on the objectives related to reading and writing on the basis of the results obtained from needs analysis questionnaire.

SIGNIFICANCE OF AND JUSTIFICATION FOR THE STUDY

The study of English as a key knowledge, and as the principal international language of science and technology is of imperative significance in Iranian system of education. Lack of training in EFL, and, specifically in ESP, creates linguistic barriers between a college student and the rest of world, and above all, isolates her/ him from modern world. In fact, successful training in English demands appropriately and effectively designed textbooks. Thus, designing appropriate materials is the most important feature of ESP education, yet, a large amount of ESP teachers' time may be invested in writing appropriate materials according to their learners' needs and purposes as there are no suitable materials, and if there is, it may be impossible to buy them because of currency or import restrictions. The results obtained from this study may be useful in designing a suitable ESP course for Iranian Architecture students.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND OBJECTIVES

The present study intends to answer the following questions:

1. What are the Architecture learners' language needs?
2. What language skills do Architecture students need to acquire according to their needs?
3. What are the requirements of an appropriate syllabus to meet the needs of Iranian students of Architecture?

The study attempts to achieve the following objectives:

1. To find out the purposes which the university students of Architecture are learning English for;
2. To determine language skills or knowledge they require in order to perform particular tasks; and
3. To develop appropriate syllabus framework according to the needs of Architecture students

REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

ESP (English for Specific Purposes)

Making language courses more relevant to the language learners' needs, according to Richards (2001), led to the emergence of Language for Specific Purposes (LSP), which in English-language teaching is known as ESP (English for Specific Purposes). The ESP approach to teaching English began as a response to the need to prepare large number of non-English background students who are studying at American and British universities from 1950s. The need to prepare materials to teach for those who had mastered general English but needed English for use in employment, the need for materials to be used for business purposes, and the need to teach English for immigrants who needed the language to deal with job situations (Richards, 2001).

The growth of the ESP movement is a result of the rapid economic development of the world, which has been greatly affected by ELT methodology and the developments of Applied Linguistics (Dudley-Evans & St. John, 2013). The first dominating approach to ESP course design focused on the grammatical and lexical items of a particular field of English. With the popularity of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), language use became the key emphasis in the ESP world. In the early 80s, it was believed that there was a certain need underlying a particular language use, and that in addition to needs, learning processes and learning skills are also needed to be taken into account (Dudley-Evans & St. John, 2013).

ESP Classification

Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998) noted that ESP has been divided into two main areas: English for Academic Purposes (EAP) and English for Occupational Purposes (EOP). EAP and EOP also have been divided into sub-categories according to discipline or

Professional areas. In EAP, English for Science and Technology (EST) has the main area, but English for Medical Purposes (EMP), English for Legal Purposes (ELP) are also included in this division. EOP, on the other hand, refers to English that is not for academic purposes; it refers to Professional purposes (EPP) and Vocational purposes (EVP) in work or pre-work situations. English for Business Purposes (EBP) is an occupational purpose, so it is also within EOP part. In English for Vocational Purposes (EVP) there are two sub-sections: Vocational English is concerned with the language of training for specific trades or occupations, and Pre-Vocational English is concerned with finding a job and interview skills.

An ESP course design is usually based on the specific needs of the learners of a particular discipline. There are different ESP courses according to its users so they can be referred as purpose-oriented courses, such as EST, EAP, EOP, EBP, ESS, etc. Hutchinson and Waters (1987) maintained that several successful experiences in designing ESP courses are outlined in which the ESP course designers conduct needs analyses to specify the learners' target needs and learning needs and then incorporate the required linguistic elements and skills into the syllabus.

Curriculum

According to Richards and Renandya (2002), the process of curriculum development and syllabus design in language teaching usually involves assessing the needs of learners in a language program, developing goals and objectives, planning a syllabus, selecting teaching approaches and materials, and deciding on assessment procedures and criteria.

Language Curriculum Development

According to Richards (2001), since the 1980s, the view that curriculum development processes are primary elements in language program design has become more widely accepted in language teaching. Curriculum development in language teaching began in 1960s, but syllabus design, which is considered as a major factor in language teaching, emerged much earlier than curriculum development. Language curriculum development is an aspect of a broader field of educational activity known as curriculum development or curriculum studies.

Curriculum development, according to Richards (2001), focuses on determining what knowledge, skills, and values students learn in schools, what experiences should be provided to bring about the intended and needed learning outcomes, and how teaching and learning can be planned, measured, and evaluated. In other words, curriculum development, according to Richards (2001), referred to the set of planning and implementation processes involved in developing or reviewing a curriculum. These processes focus on needs analysis, situation analysis, planning learning outcomes, course organization, selecting and preparing teaching materials, and providing for effective teaching and evaluation. These elements are viewed as forming a network of interacting systems; the notion of system suggests that change in one part of system has effects on the other parts of the system (Richards, 2001).

The History of Language Curriculum Development

Richards (2001) believed that teaching English as a second or foreign language became rapidly an important activity after World War II. Immigrants, refugees, and foreign students generated large need for English courses in the United Kingdom, Canada, the United States, and Australia. The role of English as an international language of communication expanded increasingly by the 1950s. Air travel and international tourism led to much greater mobility of people, that caused the growth of English courses. English was increasingly important in international trade and commerce.

The history of curriculum development in language teaching according to Richards (2001), traced back to the notion of syllabus design which is one aspect of curriculum development but is not identical with it. As Richards (2001) put it, syllabus is a specification of the content of a course of instruction which lists what will be taught and tested. It is just one aspect of the more comprehensive process of curriculum development which included the processes of determining the needs of groups of learners, developing the goals and objectives of the program, determining the appropriate syllabus, course content and structure, teaching methods, and carrying out the evaluation (Richards, 2001).

Curriculum Theory

Curriculum revolution movement, providing the basis for new approaches to language teaching and for the development of new language teaching materials in the 1950s and 1960s, has gradually given rise to a systematic approach to curriculum development and change as well as to the formulation of basic principles of curriculum (Stern, 1983) . In short, it has done changes to what is known as curriculum theory.

According to Stern (1983), curriculum theory is concerned with:

1. underlining ideological and philosophical assumptions of curriculum known as curriculum philosophy;
2. the conceptualization of 3 main components of curriculum, i.e., purpose and content, instruction and evaluation; and
3. the curriculum process consisting of systematic curriculum development, the implementation of curriculum in educational situation and curriculum evaluation.

Learner-Centeredness

The "learner- centeredness" term groups all the educational philosophies that stress the learners' individual needs, the role of learners' individual experience, and the need to develop awareness, self-reflection, critical thinking, learner strategies, and other qualities and skills that are believed to be important for learners to develop (Pinar, 1975, as cited in Richards, 2001) .

According to Roberts (1998, as cited in Richards, 2001), constructivists emphasize that learning involves active construction and testing of one's own representation of the world and accommodation of it to one's personal conceptual framework. The learning process is seen as re-learning and reorganization of one's previous understanding and representation of knowledge. This philosophy has had a strong influence on language curriculum development. Teaching is done with an emphasis on the prior knowledge, beliefs, and expectations. According to Richards (2001), within this tradition, reconceptualists emphasize the role of experience in learning.

Components of Curriculum

According to Stern (1983), the essential components of curriculum are as follows:

Purpose and Content

The first essential component of curriculum refers to the purpose (goals & objectives) and content (substance or subject matter). There is a great deal of emphasis on the definition of goals and classification of content. According to Stern (1983), objectives expressed as concrete acts or items of knowledge are referred to as behavioral, performance, or instructional objectives. The attempts to specify educational objectives were a significant contribution to curriculum theories in the 1960s (Stern, 1983). As Richards (2001) puts it, goal refers to a statement about general changes that the program wants to make about the learners in the process of learning and to give exact emphasize to program goals, statements of more specific purposes are produced that are called as "objectives".

Instruction

The second major group of components deals with the process of teaching and learning, and learning how to teach the objectives. Consequently, the how of education, i.e., teaching methods, the time allocation, the selection and arrangement of content, the methods of presentation, and so on can also be considered as part of curriculum (Stern, 1983).

Evaluation

According to Stern (1983), the third aspect of curriculum, i.e. evaluation, refers to the assessment of whether teaching achieves its objectives; it serves to make judgment about the progress and performance of individual students exposed to curriculum.

Curriculum evaluation, as Richards (2001) stated, is concerned with collecting information about different aspects of a language program in order to understand how the program works, and how successfully it works, enabling different kinds of decisions to be made about the program, such as whether the program responds to the learners needs, whether further teacher training is required for teachers working in the program, or whether students are learning sufficiently from it.

Curriculum Process

Stern (1983) believed that the new curriculum development, its implementation, and evaluation are the activities that must be carefully planned and applied.

Curriculum development, according to Richards (2001), in language teaching began in the 1960s. It is a kind of comprehensive process that focuses on what language knowledge and skills students need to learn, what experiences should be provided to bring about the intended learning outcomes, and how teaching and learning can be planned, measured, and evaluated. Curriculum development is a practical activity consisting of set of interrelated processes that focuses on designing, revising, implementing, and evaluating language programs since it seeks to improve the quality of language teaching process through planning and developing language programs. A language program refers to any organized course of language instruction. Teachers devote a great deal of their energy and time into planning language courses, preparing teaching materials, and teaching their classes (Richards, 2001).

A General Curriculum Model

According to Nunan (2001), the field of curriculum is concerned with planning, implementation, evaluation, management, and administration of educational programs and syllabus design refers to selecting, sequencing, and grading content. The diagram shows these stages in general curriculum design:

Planning \Rightarrow Implementation \Rightarrow Evaluation

The first stage, i.e. planning, deals with identifying learners' needs and purposes; establishing goals and objectives; selecting and grading content; organizing appropriate learning arrangements; and selecting, adopting or developing appropriate materials and learning tasks. The second stage, i.e. implementation, is concerned with the actual teaching/learning process and seeks the ways in which the intentions of the curriculum planners, which were developed during the planning stage, are translated into action.

Syllabus

According to Reilly (1988), a syllabus is a 'road map' for any course. Syllabus is used to provide structure and security to both teachers and learners. Several distinct types of language teaching syllabuses exist, and these different types may be used in different teaching situations. The integration of subject matter (what to talk about) and linguistic matter (how to talk about it) relates to language teaching syllabus.

Different Types of Syllabus

Reilly (1988) stated that there are different types of syllabuses in language teaching, and these different types may be used in various teaching situations. The choice of a syllabus is a major decision in language teaching, and it should be made as consciously and with as much information as possible. The choice may range from the more or less purely linguistic, content of instruction is grammatical and lexical forms of language, to purely

semantic or informational, the content is some skill or information and only incidentally contains the form of language (Reilly, 1988).

Synthetic / Analytic Syllabus

Wilkins (1976) was the first who made distinction between synthetic and analytic syllabuses. He describes these approaches as follows:

In synthetic language teaching syllabus the different language parts are instructed separately and step by step so the acquisition of these parts is a process of gradual accumulation until the whole language structure of language has been built up. Thus, synthetic syllabi rely on the learner's ability to learn in part independently of one another, and also to integrate the pieces when he/ she wants to use them for communicative purposes. In contrast, analytic syllabuses are organized in terms of the purposes for which the language is learnt and the kinds of language performance that are necessary to meet these purposes. Thus analytic refers to the operation required to learner.

Product / Process Oriented Syllabus

The product-oriented syllabuses according to Nunan (2001) are those which focus on the language knowledge and skills that learners have to learn as a result of instruction. In contrast, a process-oriented syllabus focuses on the processes of learning and learning experiences themselves.

Grammatical Syllabus

Richards (2001) believed that this kind of syllabus is organized around the grammatical items of language program. The choice and sequencing of these grammatical items reflect either the ease or difficulty of items but their relationship to other aspects of syllabus that may be being developed simultaneously (Richards, 2001).

In this syllabus according to Nunan (2001), the input is selected and sequenced according to simplicity and complexity of grammatical notions. Once an item is introduced and required the mastery of it before moving to the next item. The assumption is that language consists of a finite set of rules which can be combined in various ways to make meaning. These rules are learned in the additive fashion so that it is mastered before incorporated into the learners' pre-existing knowledge.

Lexical Syllabus

Lexical syllabus according to Lewis (1993) is an alternative to grammar based approaches concentrates on developing and mastery of learners' proficiency with lexis, words, and word combinations. According to this syllabus, an important part of language acquisition is the ability to comprehend and produce lexical phrases an unanalyzed wholes, by which learners get pattern of language traditionally thought of as grammar. According to his view, lexis is the basis of language, which is one of the central organizing principles of any meaning- centered syllabus. Instruction focuses on relatively fixed

expressions that occur frequently in spoken language rather than on originally created sentences.

Notional / Functional Syllabus

According to Nunan (2001), functions may be described as the communicative purposes for which the language is used. Notions are the conceptual meanings (objects, entities, logical relationships, and so on) which are expressed through language (Nunan, 2001) . The functional-nationalism has the tremendous merit of putting students and their communicative purposes at the center of curriculum (Finocchiaro & Brumfit, 1983 as cited in Nunan, 2001) .

Communicative functions are considered to be the most important part of this syllabus, so that it is organized around these functions such as requesting, complaining, agreeing etc. The assumptions underlying this syllabus is that mastery of individual functions will result in overall communicative ability (Richards, 2001).

Situational Syllabus

In situation syllabus the content is organized according to the language needed in different situations such as airport, restaurant, hotel etc. a situation is a setting in which particular communicative acts typically occur. This syllabus identifies a situation in which the learner will use the language and the typical communicative acts and language used in that setting. They have the advantage of presenting a language in context and teaching language of immediate practical use (Richards, 2001).

Skill-based Syllabus

According to Richards (2001), skill-based syllabus is organized around different underlying abilities that are involved in using a language for purposes such as reading, writing, listening or speaking. Learning language through skills is based on the assumption that learning complex activity such as "listening lectures" includes mastery of a number of individual skills or micro skills that makes up the activity together.

Content-based Syllabus

This syllabus is organized around themes, topics, or other units of content. Rather than grammar, functions, or situations, content is the starting point in syllabus design. In topic-based syllabus, language presentation is done by content rather than the other way around (Richards, 2001).

Natural Syllabus

According to Krashen and Terrell (1983, as cited in Nunan 2001), the principles underlying the approach are based on the empirical research and can be summarized as follows:

- the communication skill is the goal;

- comprehension proceeds production;
- production emerges i.e. learners are not forced to respond;
- activities that promote subconscious acquisition rather than conscious learning are central; and
- affective filter is lowered.

Text-based Syllabus

An integrated type of syllabus according to Richards (2001), since it combines elements of different types of syllabuses. The following advantages are suggested for text-based syllabus:

- explicitly teach about the grammatical and structural features of spoken and written texts;
- links spoken and written texts to the social and cultural contexts of their use;
- allowing for designing of units of work that focus on developing skills in relation to whole texts; and
- provides learners with guided practice as they develop language skills for meaningful communication through texts (Richards, 2001).

The focus on specific skills rather than more general language proficiency and its impracticality in many situations are the features that have been criticized (Richards, 2001).

Task-based Syllabus

The syllabus, which is organized around the tasks that students will complete in the target language. Task is a kind of activity or goal that is carried out using language such as finding the differences, giving directions, reading an instruction and assembling a toy. A task-based syllabus is based on tasks that have been specially designed to facilitate second language learning and one in which tasks or activities are the basic units of syllabus design (Richards, 2001).

Integrated Syllabus

There is not an absolute choice for the use of a kind of a syllabus in the context of learning rather decisions about a suitable syllabus framework for a course reflects different priorities in teaching. In most courses there might be a number of different syllabus strands, such as grammar linked to skills and texts, tasks linked to topics and functions, or skills linked to topics or texts (Richards, 2001).

Needs Analysis

As it is believed the key stages in ESP are needs analysis, course design, material selection, teaching and learning, and evaluation. These are not separate, linearly-related activities, rather they represent phases that overlap and are interdependent. Needs analysis is neither unique to teaching language, needs assessment is the basis of training program and aid development program, nor, within language training, is it unique to LSP and thus to ESP. Needs analysis is the corner stone of ESP and leads to a very focused course (Dudley Evans & St. Johns, 1998) .

Needs analysis as Nunan (2001) stated refers to a group of procedures collecting data about learners and communication tasks for use in syllabus design. It is set of tools, techniques, and procedures determining the language content and learning process for specified groups of learners.

The Purposes of Needs Analysis

According to Richards (2001), learners' language needs may be easy to determine, particularly if they need to learn language for specific purposes e.g. nursing, hotel industry etc. in this case the required tasks are carry out by employees in English and their required language needs of the tasks are determined. The obtained information through needs analysis procedure can be used as a basis for planning a training program. However, in some cases learners' needs are not determined so easily e.g. students learning English as a secondary school subject in an EFL context. However, according to Richards (2001), the students' needs are not perceived immediately, curriculum planners will generally have consulted employers, parents, teachers, and others to find out what knowledge of English they have to achieve to graduate. The needs analysis includes the study of perceived and present needs as well as potential and unrecognized needs.

Type of Needs

The term needs is not as straightforward as it might appear, the term sometimes used to refer to wants, desires, demands, expectation, motivations, lacks, constraints, and requirements (Brindley, 1984, as cited in Richards, 2001). Sometimes needs are described as a linguistic deficiency describing the difference between what a learner can presently do in a language and what he/she should be able to do. This view presents needs as an objective reality and is simply there to be identified and analyzed. Porcher (1977, as cited in Richards, 2001) offers a different perspective: "need is not the thing that exists and might be encountered ready-made. It is constructed, the center of conceptual networks and product of number of epistemological choices." Needs are depend on judgment and reflects the interests and values of those making judgment.

Needs Analysis in ESP

One important feature of ESP course to language teaching according to Richards (2001) is that it focuses on the learners' purpose for which they need to learn English rather than a syllabus reflecting the structures of general English in planning language courses.

Rather than developing a course around an analysis of language, an ESP approach starts with an analysis of learner's needs. Different types of students have different type of needs and their education should be restricted to what they need. These needs as Richards (2001) put it are fairly specific; they are identified and then they determine the content of any course. In ESP learner's needs are described in terms of performance, what the learner will be able to do with a language at the end of the course whereas in general English course the goal is usually an overall mastery of the language that can be tested on a global language test, the goal of an ESP course is to prepare the learners to carry out a specific task or set of tasks.

METHODOLOGY

Participants

The study was conducted at Islamic Azad University, Tabriz Branch. 70 Architecture students participated in the first phase of questionnaire who were not the main group of the study. Only 96 Architecture students participated in this study although there were about 130 Architecture students. Some variables such as age, sex, language ability, and course level were not controlled. The participants all were at second year of their education and they have passed their general English course.

Instruments

Two instruments were used in the present study: a needs analysis questionnaire and a proficiency test Preliminary English Test (PET). The needs analysis questionnaire was adopted from Gravatt, Richards, and Lewis (1997). First, the questionnaire was translated into Persian, and the Persian version was piloted to a group of learners who were not the main participants. This piloting was carried out for two reasons. First, the original questionnaire was developed for an ESL context whereas the context of the present study was EFL. Second, the questionnaire had been translated into Persian, and might have problems in wording. The piloted questionnaire was administered to specify the learners' needed skills and their area of difficulty. This questionnaire was composed of different parts to determine specific information. In the first part, the expected skills needed in the course of study and the difficulty that each skill would provide were questioned. In the next part, the importance of each general skill (speaking, listening, reading, and writing) while studying and after graduation were questioned. The other parts specified the sub skills of each skill and asked the participants' interests in their ESP classes. In the last part, the needed modifications for English course were questioned.

After specifying the needs and required skills, one standard test (PET Test) was administered to describe the students' level of proficiency and to find out that at what level the course should start. The content of the test was limited to reading and writing skills according to the obtained results through the needs analysis questionnaire. The reading part contained five main parts. In the first part of the test, Three-Option Multiple Choice items focused on the ability to find the main idea of the reading text. The second part which included matching items tried to test the students' ability for finding the

specific and detailed information. The True/ False part focused on the scanning ability for specific information. The Four-Option Multiple Choice items examined the students' ability for understanding the writers' attitude, opinion, and purpose and reading for gist, inference, and global meaning. The last part of the reading, which was Cloze-Test, tried to find out the students' ability in understanding the vocabulary, grammar, and lexico-structural patterns in the text. With regard to the writing part, the first part tested the grammar knowledge of students, mainly rephrasing and reformulating of information, and their spelling knowledge. In the second part of the writing section, students had to produce a short communicative message to focus on communication of specific message. The third part focused on the ability to use and the language. Coherence, organization, spelling, and punctuation were assessed in the third part as well.

Procedure

The needs analysis questionnaire proposed by Gravatt, Richards, and Lewis (1997, as cited in Richards, 2001) was piloted to 70 Architecture students who were not the main participants of the study. The obtained results showed that some parts of the questionnaire had low reliability; therefore, these parts were removed. Then, the final version of the questionnaire was presented to the main group of the participants. The needs analysis questionnaire consisted of various parts eliciting information about language skills that learners need, the problematic language skills, and their purpose of language learning. From the gathered information through the needs analysis questionnaire, the needed skills can be ranked as follows: the most needed language skill for Iranian Architecture students was reading and then writing. Listening and speaking were the least needed skills. The following areas of difficulty were also identified from the gathered information through the needs analysis questionnaire.

In the case of the most needed skill, i.e., reading comprehension, the students had difficulty in:

- Reading a text to get the general idea;
- Reading a text to understand the details;
- Reading a text quickly to locate specific information;
- Guessing unknown words in a text; and
- Understanding the specialist vocabulary.

In the case of writing, they had difficulty in:

- Using appropriate vocabulary;
- Structuring the sentences;
- Expressing ideas appropriately;
- Addressing topics; and
- Expressing what they want to say clearly.

In the case of listening according to the questionnaire results, the students may have difficulty in:

- Have trouble understanding the subject matter;
- Have trouble understanding lengthy descriptions in English; and
- Have trouble understanding lectures.

Moreover, in the case of speaking skill students have difficulty in:

- Have trouble wording what to say;
- Not know how to say something in English;
- Have difficulty with pronunciation of words; and
- Not know the best way to say something in English.

After determining the areas of difficulty, i.e. the students' needs, the next step was to state the statements about goals and objectives of the course from the gathered information. Goals refer to the general purposes for which a language is being learned (Richards, 2001 & Nunan, 2001). Identifying the learning goals, according to Nunan (2001), is an important step in the developmental process of language program. In this study, the goals and objectives from the gathered information can be derived through examining each area of difficulty and specifying the required skills and knowledge such as understanding the specialist vocabulary, reading text for understanding the main points, sentence structuring, etc. The following goals were identified for an ESP course for the Iranian students of Architecture.

The course should enable the students to:

- Read a wide variety of authentic, specialist text in English with comprehension and at reasonable speed;
- Comprehend basic Architecture terminology;
- Read the text critically to get not explicitly stated information; and
- Write well-structured and meaningful sentences.

Goal statements, according to Nunan (2001), are relatively imprecise. They are general statements, so they need to be fleshed out to provide information for the course and program planning. To give more precise focus, Richards (2001) believes that goals are accompanied by more specific statements called "objectives"; They are concrete description of purposes which refer to a statement of specific changes that a program tries to bring about.

To derive precise objectives from specified goals on the basis of the needed skills, i.e. reading and writing, the objectives were:

In the case of reading, at the end of the course students should be able to:

1. Use linguistic clues in the text as keys to get the meaning, including:
 - a) Deducing meaning and understanding the meaning of unknown words through using word formation knowledge and context clues;
 - b) Decoding complex phrases and sentences including complex embedding and clause relations in compound and complex sentences;

- c) Recognizing and interpreting cohesion devices for linking different parts of text;
- d) Recognizing and interpreting discourse markers; and
- e) Understanding the time sequence.

2. Read for information:

- a) Identifying the topic;
- b) Identifying the main idea (stated, implied) ;
- c) Noticing the details;
- d) Getting the general point of the text through rapid reading (skimming) ; and
- e) Looking for specific information (scanning).

3. Read critically and interpretatively:

- a) Getting implied meaning through making inferences; and
- b) Getting the writers intentions and viewpoints.

In the case of writing, the students must be able to:

- 1. Present ideas and information in an organized way in written assignments, including:
 - a) Generating ideas;
 - b) Organizing ideas;
 - c) Writing fluently; and
 - d) Using appropriate discourse markers and conjunctions.
- 2. Write effective work-related reports and letters:
 - a) Using appropriate terminology.

According to the obtained results from the needs analysis questionnaire, the language skills and knowledge needed for Architecture students were mostly reading and writing in their courses, which can be regarded as dominating skills in their work place.

Based on goals and objectives that have been established, the rationale for the course and program was described as follows:

The English course is developed for the Architecture students at Tabriz Azad University. The emphasis in the course is mostly on reading skill needed for reading comprehension of a wide variety of texts with specialist terminology and linguistically complex ones, and writing skill required to generate information and ideas in an organized ways.

According to Richards (2001), knowing the level at which a program will start, i.e., the entry level is necessary. This information about the learners' proficiency may help to adjust the goals and objectives of the course since these processes do not occur at a linear order. To do this, a General Placement Test was administrated. The test which was the standard PET test. The content of the test was specified according to the results obtained

from the needs analysis questionnaire and the specified objectives of the course focusing on the two dominated skills, i.e., reading and writing.

The results from the test indicated that the learners were at their pre-intermediate level. Thus, the entry level of course would be pre-intermediate level.

After determining the entry level at which the course would start, the content of the course was developed on the basis of needs, prerequisite learning, set of objectives, and the results obtained from the General Placement Test. The results obtained from the standard test indicated the learners' problematic areas in their level of proficiency. These problematic areas in the test specified the content of the course to be focused and emphasized in the language program. On the other hand, the type of syllabus framework which was considered as the basis for the course would have affected the content of course. According to the objective statements and course rational the desired syllabus frame work was skill-based. The topics of the course were specified on the basis of the articles presented by one of the professors of the Architecture department who had years of experience in teaching ESP for Architecture students.

Topics:

1. Architecture;
2. Architectural Planning;
3. The Purpose of Architecture;
4. Stylistic Periods 1;
5. Stylistic Periods 2;
6. Stylistic Periods 3;
7. Architecture adopted to climate;
8. Egyptian Architecture;
9. Islamic Architecture; and
10. Mesopotamian and Iranian Architecture.

SCORING AND DISPLAYING THE DATA

For designing any course, knowing the learners needs is the most important step and knowing their proficiency level to justify the related goal and objective statements are the secondary important step. Having the required information one needs analysis questionnaire and one proficiency test were employed in this study. After collecting the data, it was time to rank and present them in the meaningful way to get the needed results out of them. The results were tabulated in order to determine the language needs of the Architecture students statistically, their required skills, areas of difficulty in their needed skills, their proficiency levels, and problematic areas of their language proficiency. At the end, all of this information was used to develop an ESP syllabus and course book for Architecture students at Tabriz Azad University. The findings through the study are first presented as data description and then illustrated in various tables.

Needs analysis

The questionnaire developed by Gravatt, Richards, and Lewis (1997) is specified for ESL context to determine the language needs. However, in the context in which the presented study was completed, English is used as a foreign language and its use is confined to English classes at university. It should be borne in the mind that some of the questions in the needs analysis questionnaire were not related in the study since it was developed for an ESL context. Therefore, the questionnaire was piloted to a similar group of students to remove the irrelevant items according to the EFL context. The results obtained from piloting the questionnaire showed that the reliability of some parts of questionnaire was insignificant. They were approximately zero and had to be deleted since this questionnaire was developed in an ESL context, but the researcher intended to use it in an EFL context.

The skills required by Architecture students in their course of study

The results of piloting needs analysis questionnaire which elicited information about the reading, listening, speaking, writing skills needed by Architecture students in their course of study are illustrated in Tables 1.2, 3 and 4. Based on the results, 82% stated that they very often use reading, 54% of the students stated that they often use writing in their course of study, 62% of them stated they never use listening and %20 stated they rarely use listening, and 65% stated that they rarely use speaking skill.

Table 1. *Reading skill*

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	VO	79	82.3	83.2	83.2
	O	9	9.4	9.5	92.6
	S	5	5.2	5.3	97.9
	R	1	1.0	1.1	98.9
	N	1	1.0	1.1	100.0
	Total	95	99.0	100.0	
	System/ Missing	1	1.0		
	Total	96	100.0		

Note: VO= very often, O= often, S= sometimes, R= rarely, and N= never

Table 2. *Writing skill*

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	VO	25	26.0	26.0	26.0
	O	52	54.2	54.2	80.2
	S	9	9.4	9.4	89.6
	R	7	7.3	7.3	96.9
	N	3	3.1	3.1	100.0
	Total	96	100.0	100.0	

Table 3. *Speaking skill*

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	VO	3	3.1	3.1	3.1
	O	5	5.2	5.2	8.3
	S	4	4.2	4.2	12.5
	R	63	65.6	65.6	78.1
	N	21	21.9	21.9	100.0
	Total	96	100.0	100.0	

Table 4. *Listening skill*

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	VO	4	4.2	4.2	4.2
	O	3	3.1	3.1	7.3
	S	9	9.4	9.4	16.7
	R	20	20.8	20.8	37.5
	N	60	62.5	62.5	100.0
	Total	96	100.0	100.0	

Materials

The results of this part of the needs analysis questionnaire elicit information about the materials that students are expected to read in their course of study and work place, which are illustrated in Tables 5 to 53.4. 74% journal articles, 61% newspaper articles, 91% text books, 83% selected chapters of books, 69% photocopied notes, 28% computer presented reading materials are expected to be read by the learners.

Table 5. *Journal articles*

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Y	71	74.0	74.7	74.7
	N	24	25.0	25.3	100.0
	Total	95	99.0	100.0	
Missing	System	1	1.0		
Total		96	100.0		

Table 6. *Newspaper articles*

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Y	59	61.5	64.1	64.1
	N	33	34.4	35.9	100.0
	Total	92	95.8	100.0	
Missing	System	4	4.2		
Total		96	100.0		

Table 7. *Textbooks*

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Y	88	91.7	92.6	92.6
	N	7	7.3	7.4	100.0
	Total	95	99.0	100.0	
Missing	System	1	1.0		
Total		96	100.0		

Table 8. *Selected chapters*

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Y	80	83.3	83.3	83.3
	N	16	16.7	16.7	100.0
	Total	96	100.0	100.0	

Table 9. *Photocopied notes*

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Y	67	69.8	70.5	70.5
	N	28	29.2	29.5	100.0
	Total	95	99.0	100.0	
Missing	System	1	1.0		
Total		96	100.0		

Table 10. *Computer presented reading materials*

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Y	27	28.1	29.7	29.7
	N	64	66.7	70.3	100.0
	Total	91	94.8	100.0	
Missing	System	5	5.2		
Total		96	100.0		

The frequency of difficulties of these materials is presented in the above Tables. Accordingly, 64% of the learners often have difficulty reading journal articles, 74% of them often have difficulty reading newspaper articles, 78% of the learners often have trouble reading text books, 81% often have difficulty reading selected chapters of books, 70% of the learners often have trouble reading photocopied notes, and 52% of them sometimes have trouble reading computer presented materials.

Skills to be improved

The results illustrated in this part show the learners' preferences to improve their different language skills through English course. The results are presented: Accordingly,

38% of the learners state that listening to pronunciation, intonation, and stress pattern of English has high importance, 28% of them state that lecture note taking has high importance, 30% of them believe that general listening comprehension has moderate importance, 25% of them state that giving formal speeches has less than moderate importance, 22% of them believe that communicating effectively with staff has high importance, 36% of them believe that essay writing has high importance, 32% of the learners state that lab report writing has moderate importance, 30% of them state that describing objects or procedures has less than high importance, 33% of them state that writing introductions and conclusions have moderate importance, 35% of them state that writing references and quotations have moderate importance, 31% of the learners believe that formulating coherent arguments has moderate importance, 34% of the learners state that synthesizing information from different sources has high importance, 40% of the learners state that analyzing written materials has high importance, 71% of them state that vocabulary knowledge has high importance, 67% of them state that reading quickly has high importance, 46% of them state that reading for author's viewpoint has high importance, 54% of the learners believe that summering materials has high importance, and 61% of the learners state that general reading comprehension has high importance.

Reading Test

As indicated in previous parts, the reading test contains five parts and each one has specific goal. The first part of the reading tests the learners' ability to get the main message in the reading. There are five 3-options multiple choices. As the results illustrate, 15% of the learners got 1 out of 5, 40%, 22%, 14%, and 6% of learners were able to get a score of 2, 3, 4, and 5 out of 5 respectively.

Table 11. *Reading test part 1*

Scores	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
1	15	15.6	15.6	15.6
2	39	40.6	40.6	56.3
3	22	22.9	22.9	79.2
4	14	14.6	14.6	93.8
5	6	6.3	6.3	100.0
Total	96	100.0	100.0	

Table shows the learners ability to locate specific information and detailed comprehension. This part contains five questions each of which with 1 point. As illustrated in the table, 6% of the learners got 0, i.e., they could not answer the questions correctly. 20%, 37%, 21%, 8%, and 4% of the learners were able to get 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 out of 5 respectively.

Table 12. *Reading test part 2*

Scores	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
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Valid	0	6	6.3	6.3	6.3
	1	20	20.9	20.9	27.1
	2	37	38.5	38.5	65.6
	3	21	21.9	21.9	87.5
	4	8	8.3	8.3	95.8
	5	4	4.2	4.2	100.0
	Total	96	100.0	100.0	

In part three, the scanning ability for specific information was examined. The results from this part (Table 88.4) show that nobody could get 10 out of 10; 2% of the learners got 9 and 8, 6% of them were able to get 7, 8% got 6, and 16%, 21%, 22%, 11%, 4%, 4% were able to get 5, 4, 3, 2, 1, 0 out of 10 respectively.

Table 13. *Reading test part 3*

Scores	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
0	4	4.2	4.2	4.2
1	4	4.2	4.2	8.3
2	11	11.5	11.5	19.8
3	22	22.9	22.9	41.7
4	21	21.9	21.9	64.6
Valid 5	16	16.7	16.7	81.3
6	8	8.3	8.3	89.6
7	6	6.3	6.3	95.8
8	2	2.1	2.1	97.9
9	2	2.1	2.1	100.0
Total	96	100.0	100.0	

As illustrated in the table, the learners' scores related to their ability to understand the author's attitude and opinion and to read for gist and global meaning are as follow. 6% of the learners were able to get 5 out of 5. 11%, 28%, 33%, 12%, and 8% of them were able to get 4, 3, 2, 1, and 0 respectively.

Table 14. *Reading test part 4*

Scores	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
0	8	8.3	8.3	8.3
1	12	12.5	12.5	20.8
2	32	33.3	33.3	54.2
Valid 3	27	28.1	28.1	82.3
4	11	11.5	11.5	93.8
5	6	6.3	6.3	100.0
Total	96	100.0	100.0	

The results illustrated in show the learners' score related to vocabulary and grammar knowledge and understanding lexico-structural patterns in the reading text. 5% of the learners could not answer those ten questions correctly; 4%, 13%, 28%, and 17% were able to get 1, 2, 3, and 4 respectively. 8% could get 5 and 6, and 5%, 3%, and 2% were

able to get 7, 8, and 9 respectively. 4% of the learners answered none of the questions in this part.

Table 15. *Reading test part 5*

Scores		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	0	5	5.2	5.4	5.4
	1	4	4.2	4.3	9.8
	2	13	13.5	14.1	23.9
	3	27	28.1	29.3	53.3
	4	17	17.7	18.5	71.7
	5	8	8.3	8.7	80.4
	6	8	8.3	8.7	89.1
	7	5	5.2	5.4	94.6
	8	3	3.1	3.3	97.8
	9	2	2.1	2.2	100.0
Total		92	95.8	100.0	
Missing	System	4	4.2		
Total		96	100.0		

Writing test

The first part of the writing tested mainly the grammar knowledge of the students, rephrasing and reformulating of information, and their spelling knowledge. No marks were given if a word was misspelled and if the answer was more than three words. In the second part of the writing, the students had to produce a short communicative message to focus on communication of specific message. To gain top marks, all three points must be covered in their writing. Marks were not deduced for small errors. Their writing scored on the basis of General Mark Scheme for Writing Part 2. The third part of the test focused on the ability to use and control the range of Threshold-level language. Coherence, organization, spelling, and punctuation were assessed in the third part too. In the first part of the writing, 37% of the learners did not answer correctly, 25% of them got 1. 12%, 9%, and 2% were able to get 2, 3, and 4 respectively. 13% of them answered none of the questions in this part.

Table 16. *Writing test part 1*

Scores		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	0	36	37.5	43.4	43.4
	1	24	25.0	28.9	72.3
	2	12	12.5	14.5	86.7
	3	9	9.4	10.8	97.6
	4	2	2.1	2.4	100.0
	Total	83	86.5	100.0	
Missing	System	13	13.5		
Total		96	100.0		

According to the Mark Scheme, the learners' results were marked and illustrated in Table 17; 20% did not answer this part, 42% of the learners got 0, i.e., their answers were totally incorrect, 29% of them got 1 out of 5, and 5% and 2% of the learners were able to get 2 and 3 respectively.

Table 17. *Writing test part 2*

	Scores	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	0	41	42.7	53.9	53.9
	1	28	29.2	36.8	90.8
	2	5	5.2	6.6	97.4
	3	2	2.1	2.6	100.0
	Total	76	79.2	100.0	
Missing	System	20	20.8		
Total		96	100.0		

The last part of the writing test was writing an informal letter to a friend or narrating a story. The learners had to write longer than 100 words or they would receive low marks. The obtained results showed that 35% of the learners did not answer this part, 30% of them have 0, i.e., they wrote inappropriate answers, 28% of them got 1, and 5% of them got 2. None of the learners completed the third part correctly.

Table 18. *Writing Test part 3*

	Scores	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	0	29	30.2	47.5	47.5
	1	27	28.1	44.3	91.8
	2	5	5.2	8.2	100.0
	Total	61	63.5	100.0	
Missing	System	35	36.5		
Total		96	100.0		

DESCRIBING THE DATA AND DISCUSSION

The results obtained from the needs analysis elicit information about what language skills and language knowledge the Architecture students require in order performing their needed tasks. Based on the results:

1. Reading and writing are the most needed in their course of study and work place. Thus, the ESP program must be designed in a way to give priority to developing these two skills.
2. The following areas of difficulty were specified according to their results in conjunction with four skills:

In speaking the difficulty areas were:

- Having trouble wording what they want to say quickly;
- Not knowing how to say something in English;
- Not knowing the best way to say something in English; and
- Having difficulty with pronunciation.

In listening the difficulty areas were:

- Having trouble understanding lectures;
- Having trouble understanding lengthy descriptions in English; and
- Having trouble understanding the subject matter of the talk.

In writing skill the difficulty areas were:

- Structuring sentences;
- Using appropriate vocabulary;
- Addressing topics;
- Expressing ideas appropriately; and
- Expressing what they want to say clearly.

In reading skill, the difficulty areas were:

- Understanding specialist vocabulary in a text;
- Guessing unknown words in a text;
- Reading a text to establish a general idea of the content (skimming);
- Reading a text slowly to understand the details of the text; and
- Looking through a text to locate specific information (scanning).

Thus, the designed program must address these difficulties and provide learners with opportunities to overcome these difficulties through practicing the tasks.

3. The expected materials included text books, selected chapters, journal articles, photocopied notes, and newspaper articles. According to these results, the course content must be selected from these sources.
4. The results obtained from the part focusing on the needed English skills to be improved showed that learners preferred:
 - Knowledge of vocabulary;
 - Reading quickly;
 - General reading comprehension;
 - Reading for author's viewpoint;
 - Summarizing materials; and
 - Essay writing

5. The results about modifying the course or the way it is taught showed that most of the students preferred the way it is taught and they don't want any changes in their English courses.

The results obtained from standard Placement test indicated that:

1. Majority (63%) of the learners got scores among between 2-3 in the first part of the test. This part tests their ability to get main idea of the text. 15% of learners got scores less than 2 and 20% got above 3.
2. In the second part of the reading test which examined learners' ability to locate specific information and detailed comprehension 60% of learners got scores between 2-3, 27% of them got less than 2, and 12% got scores above 3.
3. The number of questions in part 3 is 10 which examined learners' scanning ability for specific information. In this part 44% of learners got scores between 3-4, 19% of them got scores less than 3, and 35% of them got scores above 4.
4. Part four examined the learners' ability to understand author's attitude and opinion and to read for gist and global meaning in the text. 61% of learners got scores between 2-3, 20% of them got scores between less than 2, and 17% of them got above 3. The majority of them are in the moderate level.
5. The last part examined their vocabulary and grammar knowledge and their understanding of lexico-grammatical patterns in the text. Half of the learners, i.e. 45% , got scores between 3-4, 22% of them got less than 3, and 27% got above 4. 4% of them did not answer the questions totally.
6. The first part of writing tested the grammar knowledge of learners', rephrasing and reformulating of information and their spelling knowledge too. More than half of the learners, i.e. 62% got scores less than 2, 24% of them got scores between 2-4. 13% of learners did not answer this part.
7. In the second part of writing students had to create a short message to focus on communication of specific message. To gain top marks, all three specified points must be covered in their writing. 20% of learners did not produce the message totally. 71% of learners got less than 2. 7% of them got scores between 2-3. None of the learners could produce the intended message perfectly.
8. In the third and last part of writing test learners had to choose between two alternatives. Write a story or informal letter for a friend. On the basis of mark scheme 66% of learners did not create the message totally or correctly, i.e. 36% of them did not write anything and 30% got zero and 33% of them got scores between 1-2.

Comparing the obtained results, indicates the criteria for determining the proficiency level of Architecture students, the researcher concluded that the approximate proficiency level of these students in the reading comprehension, writing, and sub skills of

vocabulary, grammar, reading comprehension, and writing was pre- intermediate. Thus, entry level for program was pre- intermediate.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was to develop an ESP course for Iranian Architecture students at Tabriz Azad University. Having administrated the needs analysis questionnaire, the researcher made an attempt to reveal the difficulty areas. Then, the learning goals of the course were specified based on the obtained information from these difficulty areas with regard to the four language skills and their sub skills, and accordingly precise, relevant, and feasible objectives were derived from these goals. The ESP courses according to Hutchinson and Waters (1987) seek to provide ways helping learners to develop skills and strategies which will continue to grow after the ESP course finished.

In the process of designing a language program, addressing all these difficulty areas required a big team and a great deal of time and energy, based on the obtained results from the needs analysis, the reading and writing skills were found to be the most used ones by the architecture students in the course of study and occupational settings and more important ones for their success in their studies and work place. The language program was decided to address the objectives related to reading comprehension and writing skills.

Based on the goals and objectives established for the intended language program, the course planning began. After describing the course rational, the researcher specified the learners' language level to determine at which level the program would start, i.e. the entry level. To do this, a standard test (PET) was administrated. The obtained results from the test indicated that the students were at the pre intermediate level.

Having determined their language proficiency level, the researcher chose the appropriate content to meet the objectives of the course. The content was determined according the needs analysis and PET results.

Once the scope and sequence were determined, the appropriate syllabus framework was selected. Based on the determined goals, a skill-based syllabus was selected through which linguistic competencies (vocabulary, grammar, and discourse) were grouped into generalized type of behavior, such as writing well-formed paragraphs, reading a text to locate specific information, and so on.

Since many foreign language students' most important goal is to develop reading skill, it receives a major focus in many second or foreign language teaching situations. Reading texts present various pedagogical purposes, they provide good models for writing, and opportunities to introduce new topics.

The theoretical principle of the present skill-centered course design according to Hutchinson and Waters (1987) can be described as follow:

According to theoretical hypothesis, underling any language behavior are certain skills and strategies, which the learner uses to produce or comprehend the discourse.

Having selected the skill-based syllabus according to Hutchinson and Waters (1987) as a framework for an ESP course in the process of course designing the two other stages were as follow:

Stage 1: Select texts for the course; and

Stage 2: Write exercises to focus on skills/ strategies in the syllabus.

It is hoped that the proposed program helps ESP learners develop reading skills required to read and comprehend a wide variety of authentic texts including Architecture terminology through guessing unknown words, reading texts to get main idea, finding specific information, and expressing ideas appropriately and using appropriate vocabulary in writing work-related reports. Appendix F shows the course designed based on the findings of the study.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDIES

Curriculum development process, according to Nunan (2001), is concerned with planning, implementation, evaluation, management, and administration of educational program. Syllabus design is a subsidiary component of curriculum design which focus on the selection and grading of the content. In the first stage, i.e. planning the learners' needs and purposes are identified, the goals and objectives are specified, the content is selected and graded, and appropriate materials and learning tasks are selected and graded. The second stage relates to the actual teaching and learning process. In fact, the teacher takes the designed syllabus at the planning stage in the class. After implementation of the syllabus, the third stage, i.e. evaluation of the program starts. The teacher tries to find out what students have learned and what they have not learned during the second stage. According to the obtained results, the recommendations about what changes should be done to improve things in future (Nunan, 2001).

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