ENGLISH LANGUAGE TARGET NEEDS OF MEDICAL STUDENTS AT IBB UNIVERSITY IN YEMEN

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ENGLISH LANGUAGE TARGET NEEDS OF MEDICAL STUDENTS AT IBB UNIVERSITY IN YEMEN

by

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CNA	Critical Needs Analysis
CLT	Communicative Language Teaching
DM	Department of Medicine
df	Degrees of freedom
EBE	English for Business and Economics
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
EGP	English for General Purposes
EIL	English as an International Language
ELT	English Language Teaching
EMP	English for Medical Purposes
EOP	English for Occupational Purposes
ESP	English for Specific Purposes
ESS	English for Social Studies
EST	English for Science and Technology
FMHS	Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences
GE	General English
GSSC	General Secondary School Certificate
GTM	Grammar Translation Method
IU	Ibb University
K-W	Kruskal-Wallis (test)
LSA	Learning Situation Analysis
LSP	Languages for Specific Purposes
MA	Means Analysis
MBBS	Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery
MoE	Ministry of Education
NA	Needs analysis
PSA	Present Situation Analysis
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
TBLT	Task-based language teaching
TSA	Target Situation Analysis

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KEPERLUAN *TARGET* BAHASA INGGERIS PELAJAR PERUBATAN DI UNIVERSITI IBB DI YEMEN

ABSTRAK

Kajian ini berdasarkan dorongan untuk memahami keperluan pelajar bagi kursus Bahasa Inggeris untuk Keperluan Khusus (ESP). Kajian ini bertujuan untuk menyiasat keperluan *target* Bahasa Inggeris untuk pembangunan kursus Bahasa Inggeris Keperluan Khusus (ESP) sedia ada di Fakulti Perubatan dan Sains Kesihatan (FMHS) di Universiti Ibb (IU) di Yemen. Analisis keperluan (NA) adalah aset penting dalam mereka bentuk dan membangunkan kurikulum ESP yang sesuai untuk memenuhi keperluan akademik dan profesion pelajar. Konsep kajian ini berdasarkan struktur teori konstruktivisme, disokong dengan kajian Hutchinson and Waters' (1987) sebagai bahan kajian tentang mengenal pasti keperluan, kekurangan dan kehendak kalangan pelajar. Kaedah kajian triangulasi melibatkan dua instrumen untuk mengumpul data kuantitatif dan kualitatif iaitu soal selidik dan temu bual separa berstruktur. Kaedah kajian triangulasi telah dilaksanakan tentang keperluan Bahasa Inggeris. Strategi persampelan secara maksimum digunakan untuk mengumpul data daripada pelbagai pihak tentang analisa keperluan *target* Bahasa Inggeris. Kajian melibatkan soal selidik yang diberikan kepada 186 pelajar perubatan pada tahun pertama, kedua, ketiga, keempat dan kelima, 4 pensyarah ESP, dan 10 pensyarah Mata Pelajaran Jabatan Perubatan (DM); selain itu, temu bual separa berstruktur telah dijalankan bersama15 orang pelajar perubatan, 4 orang pensyarah ESP, dan 10 orang pensyarah DM Subject Matter. Analisis statistik telah dijalankan menggunakan IBM® SPSS® Statistics V24. Data kuantitatif di analisis dari segi kekerapan, peratusan, min dan sisihan piawaian menggunakan analisis deskriptif, diikuti dengan analisis tematik

data kualitatif temu bual separa berstruktur. Nilai alfa Cronbach yang tinggi menunjukkan kebolehpercayaan dan kesahan soalan yang tinggi. Ujian Kruskal-Wallis (K-W) bukan parametric digunakan untuk membuat pelbagai perbandingan manakala ujian Mann-Whitney U digunakan untuk membuat dua perbandingan iaitu menilai perbezaan statistik dan kehadiran padanan dan ketidakpadanan maklum balas. Hasil kajian ini mendedahkan bahawa penguasaan kemahiran/sub-kemahiran Bahasa Inggeris yang digunakan adalah mendengar, diikuti dengan membaca dan menulis. Selain itu, kemahiran bertutur dianggap kemahiran yang jarang dipraktikkan. Persamaan antara data kuantitatif dan data kualitatif memberi maklumat yang terperinci tentang kemahiran dan sub-kemahiran yang diperlukan oleh pelajar. Walaupun begitu kajian mendapati bahawa semua kemahiran Bahasa Inggeris adalah penting untuk pengajian akademik dan kerjaya masa depan para pelajar. Penemuan semasa mendedahkan bahawa pelajar perubatan kurang kemahiran berkomunikasi dan mempunyai kelemahan dalam sebutan dan tatabahasa; Oleh itu, para pelajar memerlukan lebih banyak latihan dalam kemahiran bertutur, mendengar dan komunikasi. Secara umumnya, walaupun kursus ESP membantu sedikit sebanyak disebabkan oleh beberapa batasan pada kandungannya, kajian ini mengesahkan kegunaan analisis keperluan untuk mendapatkan maklumat tentang keperluan linguistik pelajar. Implikasi pedagogi terhadap pelajar, pensyarah DM Subject Matter dan penggubal ESP dan syor untuk menerokai lebih banyak penyelidikan, teori dan amalan dalam bidang NA adalah dicadangkan.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE TARGET NEEDS OF MEDICAL STUDENTS AT IBB UNIVERSITY IN YEMEN

ABSTRACT

Driven by the understanding that learners' needs should be considered for an effective English for Specific Purposes (ESP) course, this study aimed to investigate the English language target needs for the development of the existing ESP course at the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences (FMHS) at Ibb University (IU) in Yemen. The needs analysis (NA) is a vital asset in designing and developing suitable ESP curriculum to meet the academic and professional requirements of the students. The conceptual framework of the present study is based on structuration theory and constructivism theory, along with Hutchinson and Waters' (1987) framework utilised as a tool to identify the learners' necessities, lacks and wants. A triangulation research method was followed in the present study. Thus, two different instruments, questionnaires and semi-structured interviews were used to collect quantitative and qualitative data. A sequential explanatory mixed-methods approach was adopted for the English language target needs analysis. The maximum variation purposive sampling strategy, the most common purposive sampling strategy, is employed in the current study to select a representative sampling of the stakeholders and to give much insight into needs analysis from different perspectives. A study involves questionnaires administered to 186 medical students in the first, second, third, fourth, and fifth years, 4 ESP lecturers, and 10 Department of Medicine (DM) Subject Matter lecturers; in addition, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 15 medical students, 4 ESP lecturers, and 10 DM Subject Matter lecturers. The statistical analysis was conducted using IBM® SPSS® Statistics V24. The quantitative data were

analysed in terms of frequency, percentages, means, and standard deviations using descriptive analysis, followed by a qualitative data thematic analysis of semi-structured interviews. A high Cronbach's alpha value indicates the high reliability and validity of the questions. A non-parametric Kruskal-Wallis (K-W) test for making multiple comparisons and a Mann-Whitney U test for making dual comparisons were employed to assess the statistical differences and the presence of a match and mismatch of responses. The findings of this study revealed that the most frequent English skills/sub-skills used by medical students is the listening, followed by reading and writing. On the other hand, the medical students considered speaking skills the least frequently used English language skills. Similar to the quantitative results, the qualitative results give more in-depth information about the skills/sub-kills identified as necessary by the candidates. Even though the findings considered that all English language skills were important for the student's academic studies and future careers, the current findings revealed that medical students lack communication skills and have weaknesses in pronunciation and grammar; thus, students need more training in speaking, listening and communication skills. Generally speaking, while the ESP course was helpful to some extent due to some limitations to its content, the findings from this study confirm the usefulness of needs analysis to obtain information about the students' linguistic needs. Pedagogical implications for students, DM Subject Matter lecturers, and ESP designers as well as recommendations to explore more avenues of research, theoretical and practical insights into the NA field are proposed.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

English has been a common *lingua franca* in the global scientific community for many decades, enabling millions of professionals to deal with their routine activities (Mauranen, Hynninen, & Ranta, 2016; Millot, 2015; Tardy, 2004). It has become mandatory and used as the medium of instruction in most Faculties of Languages, Science, Engineering, Technology, Medical and Health Sciences. It is commonly used in commercial, education, and other technical domains (Al-Hammadi & Sidek, 2015). It has been broadly concurred that English is essential for undergraduate students to empower them to work effectively in their academic and related subjects (Basturkmen, 2014; Grynyuk, 2016; Sidek, Ramachandran, & Ramakrishan, 2006). For science and technology students, English is learned as a subject and for special education services (Abuklaish, 2014). Consequently, learning English is required to meet two kinds of needs: current and future needs. The former is related to the English requirements for students to succeed academically. The latter is the needs of the students who require the language in their day-to-day situations. In other words, English is used for specific purposes, i.e., to perform professional activities such as writing lab reports or business letters (Basturkmen, 2014).

English requirement as a second or unknown dialect puts an incredible weight on numerous nations' informational resources. English for Specific Purposes (ESP) course intends to develop language skills (reading, writing, listening, and speaking) with training and teaching networks. English can lead to outstanding jobs in advanced education worldwide (Binti Ramsa, 2014; Chalikandy, 2013; Jordan, 1997).

This chapter introduces a comprehensive background by giving an overview of this research and clarifying the problem statement and the inquiry objectives. Then the research questions are described. Finally, this chapter concludes by identifying the key terms used in this study.

1.2 Background of the Study

This part combines an outline of the use of English in educational and social contexts in Yemen. It also briefly explains the critical problems in English teaching and learning in Yemen. The present study aims to investigate the English language target needs of medical students in the Division of Medicine (DM) in the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences (FMHS) at Ibb University (IU). This section summarises the recent English course (ESP hereafter) provided to first-year medical students at IU.

Needs analysis (NA) is a vital asset and the most distinctive feature in ESP course design (Sari, Setiawan, & Tridinanti, 2020). Up to date, only two studies have investigated the English courses provided by the Faculty of Dentistry at IU and mentioned that no ESP was implemented for dentistry students (Al-Kadi, 2012; Al-Qasim, 2017). Therefore, based on their recommendations, a nascent new ESP course used in the newly established FMHS at IU requires further research to investigate the English needs of medical students. Notably, this study attempts to study the NA of the English language course for medical students.

A NA model based on Hutchinson and Waters' (1987) framework is used in the present study; more detail is in section 2.5.2. A short overview of the related terms seems appropriate at this juncture to shed light on the student's concepts, target and

learning needs. The first concept, which is the primary concern of this research, is target needs which refers to the inevitable target situation's requirements. The term is divided into three main components: "necessities", "lacks", and "wants". Hence, this would help identify the students' English language target needs, which is essential for achieving their English courses (Hashim et al., 2013; Lodhi, Shamim, Robab, Shahzad, & Ashraf, 2018). The second concept is learning needs. It alludes to what the students need to perform in order to learn (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987). It is utilised as a broad term that incorporates the essential factors of the learning procedure, such as students' motivation and attitudes toward learning the English language, teaching methods and techniques in classrooms, teaching and learning styles and preferences, and the learning strategies. Identifying the learning needs of the students could contribute to updating the classroom instruction and developing the teaching/learning situation (Basturkmen, 2014; Hyland, 2006; Moiinvaziri, 2014; Xiao, 2006).

1.2.1 Yemen in Brief

Yemen is one of the oldest civilisation centres in the Middle East. It is an Arabic-speaking nation located at the southern tip of the Arabian Peninsula. The population of Yemen estimates at nearly 31.82 million in May 2023. The majority of the people are Arab Muslims, while few are non-Arab (including, Afro-Arab, South Asians, and Europeans) and other ethnicities (e.g., Jewish, Christian, and Hindu) (Population, 2023). Yemen comprises twenty-one governorates and one municipality. Sana'a is the political capital, and Aden is the country's economic capital. Ibb city is one of the medium-sized cities in the country, which lies in the Highlands with an elevation of 2050 metres above sea level. It is a rich farming region, and the most cultivated area is terraced (ibid.).

1.2.2 English Language Education in Yemen

1.2.2(a) English Language Education at Public Schools

English has two beginnings in the Yemeni instruction system. In south Yemen, the English language was introduced in the nineteenth century with the British arrival, which dominated and ruled a large portion of the southern domains for about one and a half centuries (1839-1967). However, the British opened the first public school in Aden, the core of the south, in 1856. This school kept going for a long time and started flourishing in 1866. Subsequently, English became a mandatory subject in the new schools (Al-Aghbari, 2002; Pierpaoli Jr & Tucker, 2017; Smitson, 2014).

Although the northern part of Yemen remained closed to the outside world during the Imamate rule, the first attempts to teach English to students were made by Imam Yahya, through a textbook, in the 1920s. The North of Yemen opened up to the world after the revolution in 1962. This period was marked by the shift from a monarchy to a republic. Non-native speakers such as Egyptian and Sudanese teachers commenced teaching English in 1963 (Al-Ahdal, 2010a; Al-Murtadha, 2019). The Ministry of Education (MoE) of Yemen felt that English is an essential "window" to the world of science and technology and advancement in all circles of life. Therefore, English was mandatory in Basic (Primary) and Secondary education programmes. Consequently, students began studying English from grades 7 to 12 (Al-Murtadha & Feryok, 2017).

Following the reunification of the Southern and Northern parts of Yemen in 1990, and due to the country’s political and financial progress, English has gained a strong reputation in the education system (Al Awd, Othman, & Ismail, 2017). Hillenbrand (1994, p. 5073) previously affirms that:

> *"Since unification, English is beginning to become the most important foreign language in Yemen. English is the lingua franca among the non-Arab groups (from the UK, German, the USA, Pakistan, the Philippines, Malaysia, and other countries) working in Yemen. It must be noted here that it is taught and learned as a compulsory subject with regard to the learning and teaching of English in the Yemeni schools and higher education institutions."*

Over the last three decades, Yemen's English curriculum has been frequently modified, and this subject's outcomes remain unclear. Even though the students learn English for six years, they face many English problems when joining colleges/ universities in the future. Bataineh, Bataineh, and Thabet (2011) reported a mismatch between Yemeni teachers' theoretical knowledge of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and their actual practice in the schools' classrooms. Ahmed (2018) also found that the procedures and strategies utilised in teaching English at schools are like those used in teaching Arabic (the mother tongue).

Erling (2015) reported that the MoE of Yemen planned to start teaching English as part of the curriculum from Grade 4 instead of Grade 7, but it was more challenging to implement due to the political instability. Recently, many Yemeni researchers have identified the factors affecting the teaching and learning of the English language among Basic and Secondary students, such as big classrooms, shortage of teaching supplies and materials, weak skills in teaching English as a foreign language (EFL), time constraints and lack of focus on communication skills, lack of access to English and the late of learning English, the use of Arabic language as a teaching tool, and the interference between English and Arabic (Ahmed & Qasem, 2019; Al-Sohbani, 2015; Bin-Hady, 2018). Figure 1.1 summarises how English has been taught as a compulsory subject in the education system at the Yemeni public and post-secondary levels.

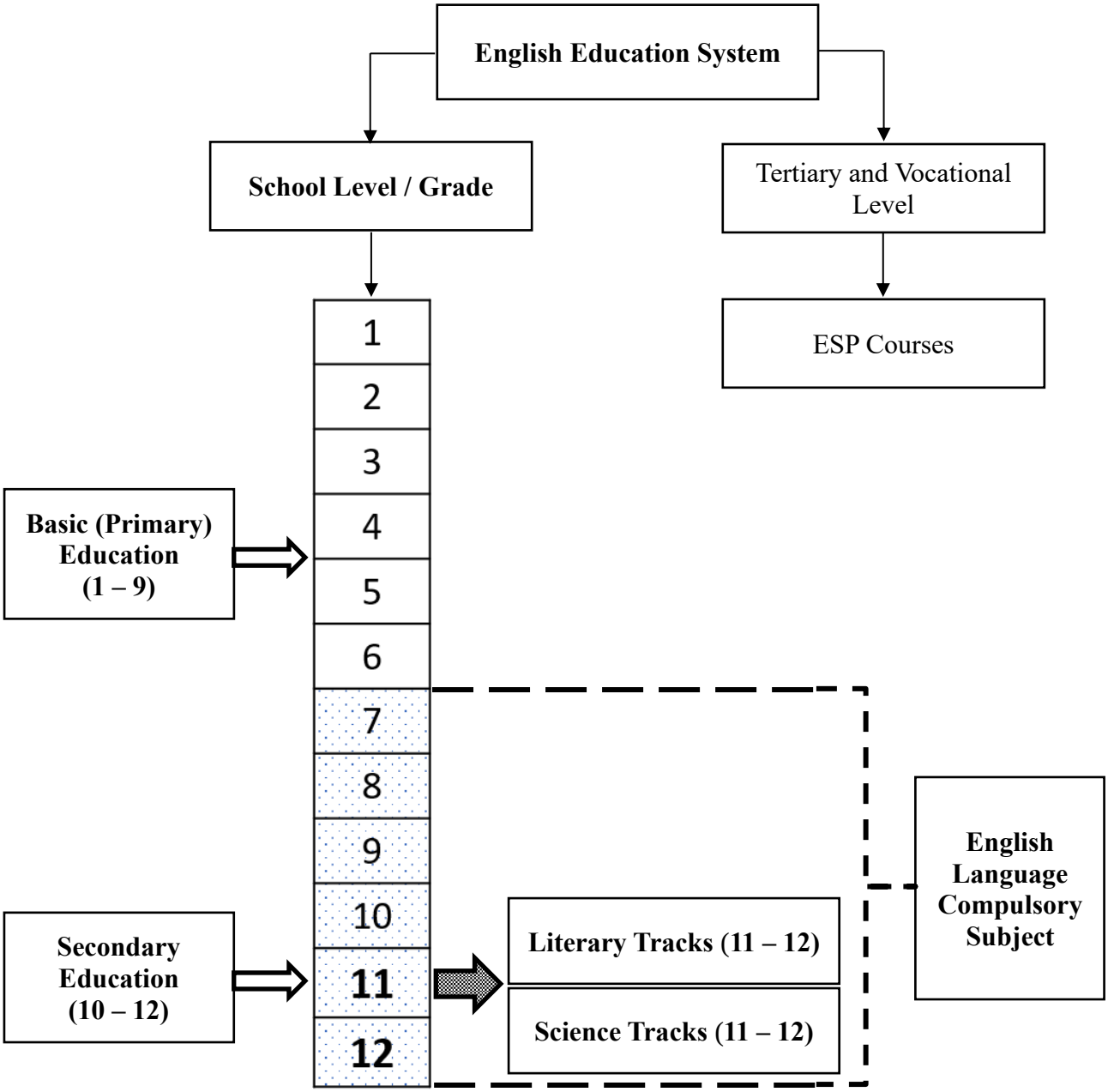

Figure 1.1 English education in public schools and post-secondary level

1.2.2(b) English Language Education at Universities

English is regarded as a tool for daily life communication and specific purposes. It was noted that some courses aim to develop the specific language skills

of the learners, entirely related to their professions, known as ESP (Alptekin, 2002; Daulay, 2020). ESP is an evolving division of English as a Foreign Language instruction in higher education worldwide. The ESP is recognised as a technique that provides significance to the learners' needs, giving them the language they require for their educational and professional needs (Agustina, 2014). In this regard, Nițu (2002, p. 154) points out that "ESP (English for Specific/Special Purposes) has witnessed rapid and steady development, becoming today one of the most important branches of English Language Teaching (ELT)."

In Yemen's universities, the English language is studied either as a required subject for two to four semesters in most non-medical faculties, whereas it has been taken as an ESP course for only two semesters and used as a medium of instruction for all subjects at the medical faculties, more detail in the next section 1.2.3. Therefore, for instance, medical students at Ibb University must study their main subjects in English to keep up with current knowledge and any progress in their fields. ESP classes are employed in the university curriculum for some reasons, such as (1) the overall knowledge of the primary significance of ESP in the field of education made it necessary to select suitable materials to serve the particular educational and job purposes of the learners, (2) most specialised books are released in English in almost all science topics, and (3) there is a strong demand for English around the world including Yemen (Abdullah, 2005, 2015). Thus, these reasons indicate the countless importance of English in Yemen's educational and professional fields.

Some scholars have recognised the importance of implementing suitable ESP courses in the higher education of the Yemeni system, especially for science and medical students. The Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery (MBBS) medical

degree has offered by 10 Yemeni governmental Universities (total = 16) and only four private (total = 59) Yemeni Universities and Colleges. The governmental universities are Sana'a University, Thamar University, University of Aden, Taiz University, Ibb University, Hadhramout University, Hodeidah University, Amran University, Jibla University for Medical and Health Sciences, and the University of Saba Region. Consequently, the English language needs of ESP courses for medical students were investigated in a few universities, such as Sana'a University, Hadramout University, and Aden University by a few researchers such as Bin-Tayeh (1996), Al-Fadly (2004), and Abdullah (2005), more details in section 2.5.7. However, they found that the ESP courses did not fulfil the needs of the students. ESP learners require implementing English for academic needs in different contexts (such as research, reading medical books, and attending seminars) or for practical needs by considering other English types in practice, hospital, and occupation. Designing the ESP course for medical students in the FMHS at IU has not been investigated. Therefore, the present study attempt to explore the English language target needs for medical students at IU.

1.2.2(c) English in the Society of Yemen

Nowadays, English has become the first international language. Therefore, Yemeni learners perceive the English language's significant role because it is regularly used in education, commercial, and other technical domains (Al-Hammadi & Sidek, 2015). It has been stated that English is principally the source language opening the window to the international community in the 'global village' and, in that capacity, the international ID to advance in each field of human endeavour (Seargeant & Erling, 2011). Al-Tamimi (2010) mentioned that even though English is not the formal dialect in Yemen, it is the most vital foreign language used after the official Arabic language.

It might also be noted that even the "young generation is attracted to English language learning. English is becoming prevalent not only among males but equally among females, which has been seen in the increasing number of learners getting enrolled in the English programmes in Yemen" (Syed Ekhteyar, 2007, p. 40).

As globalisation becomes more common, Yemen's Strategic Vision (2000-2025) aims to enhance human development. Yemen's Strategic Vision 2025 provides specific importance to education and training, improving university education standards, meeting society's requirements, and keeping pace with developments in the human and practical sciences (Azman, Bhooth, & Ismail, 2013). Thus, Yemeni learners should be empowered with the skills and strategies to reach new communities outside their classroom. This current need has led to the imposition of the English language as a mandatory topic at the primary, secondary, professional and university levels. It also requires better teaching to develop highly skilled language users. Therefore, four key strategic objectives, such as governance, institutional diversification, resources, and linked to teaching, research and service, have been proposed for developing higher education in government sectors to build the education system in Yemen. In 2003, a five-year strategic plan was announced. The strategic plan's objectives included: reforming the curricula of the public universities, reframing the ministry itself, improving the teaching-learning process, offering language laboratories and electronic system libraries to all universities, and promoting procedures of translation and publishing (Ezzi, 2019; Muthanna & Karaman, 2011).

Some factors may contribute positively to improving the English language in Yemen, such as interacting with non-Arab organisations working inside the country is needed. Yemenis also need to use the language to travel overseas for higher education

and access references published in English in science, technology, education, commerce, politics, and industry (Mohammed, 2009). More notably, Sharma (2003, p. 4) mentioned earlier that the ability in English "can bring us new knowledge in science and technology; it can open new avenues of employment in companies and assist in promoting indigenous business." However, Habtoor (2004) also stated that English had become the language of occasion for learners to improve their future careers by joining international organisations and companies that offered good promotions for their staff. Thus, applicants must show their language skills as a condition of admission to these organisations. For this reason, English has become the most commonly used foreign language in Yemen. Therefore, researchers realised that learners need specific English courses and technology to improve English proficiency and meet society's growing requirements (Bin-Hady & Al-Tamimi, 2021).

1.2.2(d) Problems in Teaching and Learning of English in Yemen

It is evident from the above description in this chapter that English plays a significant role in the Yemeni academic and public contexts. Nevertheless, it has been noted that most Yemeni EFL learners have been unable to use English effectively. Many factors could be recognised as the flaws of Yemeni students in the English language. One of these variables might be the absence of native English speakers' exposure to the target language (Rabab'ah, 2003). That means learning is restricted to the classroom taught by Arab native speakers (Al-Hammadi & Sidek, 2015).

In other words, since Arabic is Yemen's primary language, and English is not used in day-to-day circumstances, the learners are unable to practice the language outside the classroom (Syed Ekhteyar, 2007). Thus, this produces Arabic-based bilingual learners due to a lack of communication abilities, and a considerable number

of learners study English to pass their exams (Ahmed, 2018; Ahmed & Pawar, 2018). Al-Eryani (2007) examined how Yemeni EFL Learners release the speech act of refusal compared with Yemeni native speakers of Arabic and American native speakers of English in "Refusal Strategies by Yemeni EFL Learners". Despite comparable strategies, cross-cultural variation was still apparent in the language groups. This kind of comparative research on speech acts is impressive compared to EIL (English as an International Language). It can be argued that in a single target speech community, we progressively need to consider the usefulness of teaching learners to comply with target norms. This arises from the reality that any language must be mastered by practise (ibid.).

Other issues are linked to the techniques and methods used in teaching English in Yemen (Al-Naqeeb, 2012; Leong & Ahmadi, 2017). For instance, the Grammar Translation Method (GTM) is still used in Yemen's English schools, which has no origins in any language learning theory. Some barriers have delayed the implementation of efficient learning strategies, such as communicative and learner-centred methods in English classrooms in Yemen (Al-Sohbani, 2013; Altamimi, 2014). One of these barriers could be the huge number of students per class in schools, foundations, and universities in Yemen (Ahmed, 2018; Al-Fattah, 2003).

Another issue could be linked to Yemeni students' psycho-social influence on linguistic and cultural background and nature. However, Yemenis and Arab students generally have an inherent culture with a lengthy belief of absolute obedience to authority as dependent learners who look to the instructor as a supplier of knowledge and advice (Al-Quyadi, 2000; Al-Tamimi & Shuib, 2009b).

Another probable reason for Yemeni learners' low level and proficiency in English language skills might be the unsuitability of the English language *syllabi* in schools (Al-Sohbani, 2013) and universities (Al-Hassaani & Qaid, 2021; Alrefaee, Mudkanna, Almansoob, & Alrefaee, 2019; Mohammed & Sidek, 2015).

1.2.3 Ibb University (IU): A Brief Overview

Ibb University is one of the foundational universities undergoing expansion and development in recent years. It was founded in 1996 as the fifth public university in Yemen. The main campus of IU is located in Ibb Governorate. It consists of eleven faculties, as shown in Figure 1.2. Namely Faculty of Education – Ibb, Faculty of Education - Al-Nadira, Faculty of Arts, Faculty of Administrative Sciences, Faculty of Science, Faculty of Agriculture and Food Sciences, Faculty of Engineering and Architecture, Faculty of Dentistry, Faculty of Specific - Al-Saddah, and recently the Faculty of Law and Faculty of Medicine and Health Science. It also has eight centres for research, including the Centre for Languages and Translation, Engineering Consultancy Centre, Centre for Development and Quality Assurance, Centre for Computer and Information Technology, Centre for Psychological and Educational Counselling, Centre for Educational Training, Centre for Environment and Chemical Security and Centre for Research and Studies. The total number of IU students has reached more than 20,000 students (males and females) enrolled in the academic year 2020-2021 (Student's Prospectus, 2021). Like all Yemeni universities, IU has a selective admission policy based on entrance examinations. Students should pass the General Secondary School Certificate (GSSC) with a required grade for each faculty. The students then go through specific exams, oral and written. However, few faculties receive undergraduates based only on their final score on the GSSC.

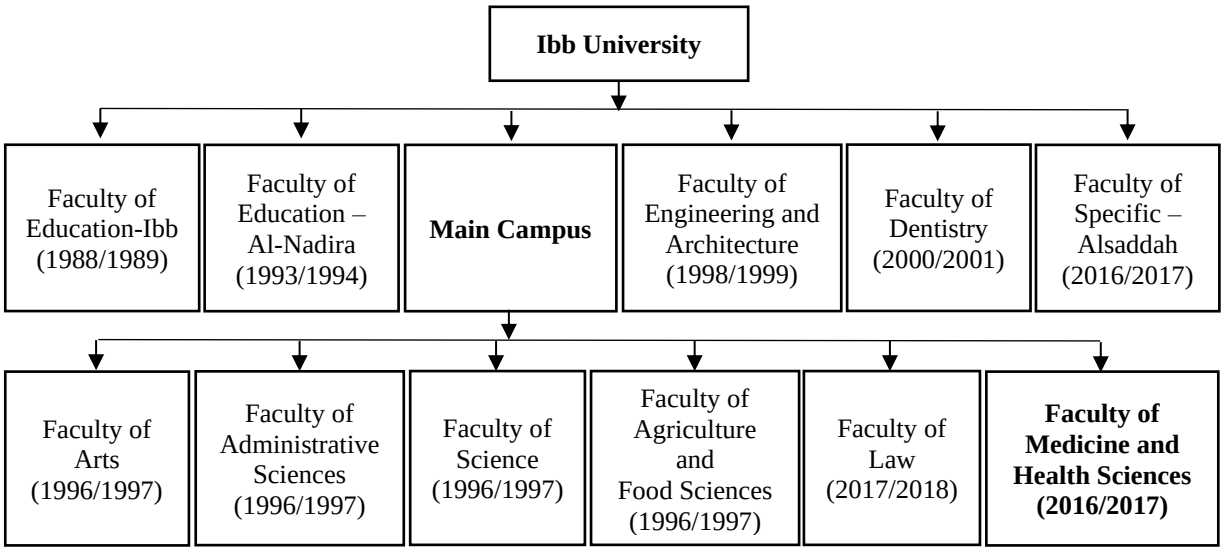

Figure 1.2 Main Faculties of Ibb University

Students are required to study English language courses with the codes (101 and 102) during the 1st and 2nd semesters in the first year in most faculties of IU. All students in these faculties must take two or three hours of English language courses every week. Each course lasts 13 to 15 weeks. The mother tongue (Arabic language) is the medium of instruction and administration in all these faculties. Additionally, students in some of the departments in the Faculty of Science, such as Microbiology, Physics and Chemistry, are exceptionally taking additional English language courses (103 and 104) with different allocated time for four semesters of their study.

Conversely, English is mandatory and used as the medium of study instruction in English Departments at the Faculties of Arts, Education, and Languages, the Center for Qualification and Educational Research, the Faculty of Dentistry and the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences at IU. Rugh (2002) claims that medicine, science, and engineering courses are taught in English at Yemeni universities because new developments in these areas are continuously published in English.

English courses are usually conducted for general purposes (EGP) in the Faculties of Education and Arts, where English impacts all curriculums. The EGP attempts to teach study skills (skimming, scanning, and using a dictionary), language systems (vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar), and the four language skills to help students to tackle their university courses (Zohrabi, 2010). In contrast, English is taught for a specific purpose in the other Faculties. All English courses at IU are organised and run by the Languages and Translation Centre, which is managed and controlled by the English Department at the Faculty of Arts (Yassin & Abdul Razak, 2017).

1.2.4 Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences (FMHS)

Ibb University established the FMHS in 2016/2017. The idea to establish the FMHS was introduced by the local Jibla Hospital and the high authorities at IU's presidency in 2007. The FMHS was developed as a consequence of the urgent needs of society. The Division of Medicine (DM) is the first-established division in the FMHS. Therefore, it was planned with Jibla Hospital to be an educational university hospital by increasing the quality of medical services provided and expanding the building of the halls and the clinical capacity. The high level of undergraduates, especially among female students who could not move to another city, motivated the government to establish such a department to meet society's needs. Figure 1.3 shows that the FMHS comprises three main divisions: Medicine, Medical Laboratories, and Clinical Nutrition and Dietetics. The faculty follows a two-semester system (using "Term 1" and "Term 2" designations), in which students must study a variety of subjects specific to their disciplines.

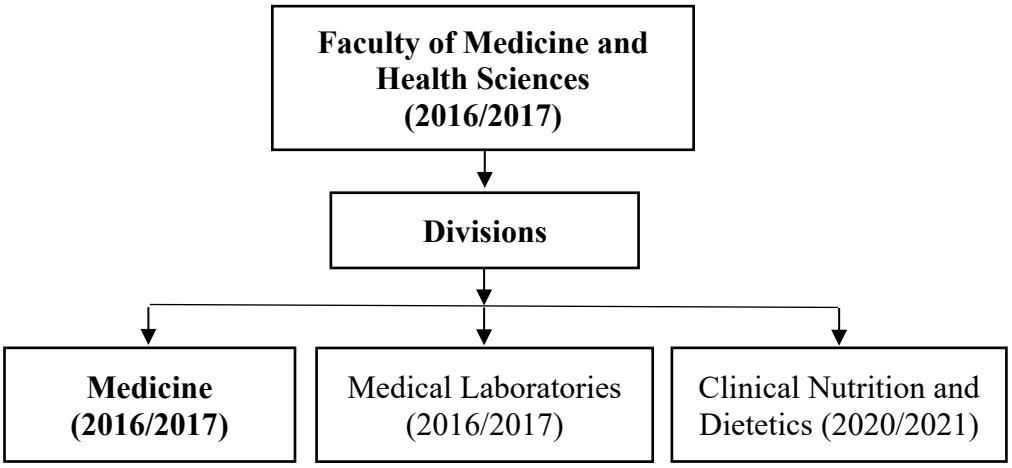

Figure 1.3 Divisions of FMHS at Ibb University

Total official enrollment in the DM was 358 (188 males and 170 females) degree-seeking students in 2020/2021. Every year, the DM receives about 50 to 100 new students. The admission is according to competitive chemistry, biology, and English assessments conducted by the Department of Student Affairs. The admission and coordination English test contains two pages with five questions about reading comprehension (factual and inference types) and grammar (multiple-choice and fill-in-the-blank) without considering other skills. Some other criteria regarding age, the scores, and the validity of the General Secondary School Certificate (GSSC) are also applicable; i.e., 5-year-old GSSCs are ineligible. In other words, applicants should apply not more than four years after leaving secondary school. The students should have obtained a scientific Secondary School Final Examination Result with a cumulative 90% rate or above. The Medicine programme offers six years of instruction (five years in the first stage and one year of clinical training) for twelve semesters and then a one-year internship programme, allowing the students to graduate with a Doctor of Medicine (MBBS) degree.

1.2.5 The English Language Curriculum for Medical Students at IU

The English language is the medium of instruction to teach academic subjects in the DM at IU. All the subject-matter courses, seminars, conferences, and other activities are conducted in English throughout the six-year study. Furthermore, the English courses (101 and 102) are included in the syllabus as required courses and taken as ESP courses divided into two semesters for first-year medical students. The time allocated for each course is only two hours per week. However, the Department of English Language in the Faculty of Art at IU has revamped the syllabus with ready-made materials in order to seek to equip learners with the necessary expertise in their academic study. Al-Fadly (2004, p. 18) stated that these courses aim to "develop and improve students' communication competence in the four language skills".

ESP lecturers design nearly all English language syllabuses for the different faculties of IU. It was confirmed that if the ESP course is not designed to fulfil the goals of learners and the needs of society, it is valueless and used randomly without purpose (Al-Qasim, 2017; Alduais, 2012). The ESP lecturers have faced many challenges, such as controlling and motivating the classrooms, difficulties in English communication with students, lack of vocabulary, and learning and teaching strategies for developing ESP courses for medical students and other divisions where the courses should follow not only the learners' needs and perspectives but also contributions to the classrooms (Deocampo, 2020; Pritchard & Nasr, 2004). The value of appropriate context and expertise is identified by Nunan (1987, p. 75):

> *"If teachers are to be the ones responsible for developing the curriculum, they need the time, the skills, and the support to do so. Support may include curriculum models and guidelines and may include support from individuals acting in a curriculum advisory*

position. The provision of such support cannot be removed and must not be seen in isolation from the curriculum."

Nunan realised that skills, support and time issues are essential for ESP lecturers to encounter the authentic task of developing curricula (Nunan, 1987). The ESP course for first-year medical students was prepared and taught by an Assistant Professor of Translation & Interpreting Studies at IU, Dr. Mohammed Abduh Khoshafah, in 2018 (Khoshafah, 2018). It should be noted that the ESP course in the DM is simply a collection of various topics linked to the medical field. The ESP course contents (about 221 pages) comprise 56 themes in the medical specialisation taught in two semesters (Appendix **A**). This course starts with note-taking on the human body parts with their functions and ends by defining the list of medical abbreviations. The course includes various medical concepts and practising conversations focusing on new and challenging acoustics in medical terminology. Despite taking ESP courses, Yemeni students still experience many problems in using English. Many variables triggered the learners' poor English skills, such as large and crowded classes, subjects' backgrounds, oral and communications skills, motivation, and learners' learning strategies (Al-Fadly, 2004; Al-Tamimi, 2010).

This section presented a comprehensive background by explaining how English was introduced into Yemen and clarifying the progress of the strategies utilised in teaching English at schools and universities. Then, it described some problems encountered in teaching and learning English in Yemen. Finally, this section ended by identifying how the English language is used as the medium of instruction to teach academic subjects in some disciplines, including the DM at IU, which is employed in the current study. Thus, rather than creating specific English courses to meet the students' needs in their specific fields, the ESP courses, which have been

adopted and implemented for all undergraduates at the FMHS, including first-year medical students, lack investigation.

1.3 The Statement of the Problem

Numerous scholars and specialists (e.g., Basturkmen, 2014; Brown, 2016; Bytyqi, 2021; Chen, 2005; Escorcia, 1985; Hutchinson & Waters, 1987; Hyland, 2019; Kandil, 2002; Nunan, 1988; Richards, Platt, & Weber, 1985; Trace, Hudson, & Brown, 2015; Wette, 2018) have recognised the significance of distinguishing students' needs in order to prepare students to utilise English well in their scholarly, proficient, or work environment situations. Basturkmen (2014, p. 18) rightly argues that these students have various needs. They need to learn English "not for its own sake nor for gaining a general education but to smoothing the path to entry or greater linguistic efficiency in academic, professional or workplace environments." Therefore, students are motivated to learn a language relevant to their needs (Oroujlou & Vahedi, 2011). For the last two decades, several English language needs studies have been undertaken in the majors of the medical field (Abdullah, 2005; Al-Ahdal, 2010a; Al-Fadly, 2004; Al-Kadi, 2012; Bin-Tayeh, 1996), engineering (Al-Dugaily, 1999; Al-Tamimi, 2010), English (Al-Haddad, 2005; Farae, 2005), and others (Shuja'a, 2004; Yassin, Razak, & Maasum, 2019). However, the existing ESP courses at the Yemeni universities should improve to meet the students' English language needs and perspectives. The ESP courses are only designed based on accessible materials. The needs analysis is not practised, and the students' needs are neglected, as Al-Kadi (2018) mentioned. Furthermore, Homadi (2003) conducted a study at the Faculty of Commerce and Economics (FCE) at Sana'a University in Yemen to evaluate students' proficiency in

English. The findings of Homadi's study concluded that the ESP course was poorly designed and revealed a mismatch between what is taught and what is needed.

The current study is in line with the National Strategy for the Development of Higher Education in Yemen and Ibb University Strategy 2025 (Alsurori & Salim, 2017), concerning that medical sciences and engineering students, in particular, need a good grasp of the English language learning to meet their academic and occupational needs. Recently, researchers found that the English courses in the Faculty of Dentistry at IU were poor and not responsive to the students' needs. There was no official structural syllabus, such as explicitly specified contents, objectives, and endorsements (Al-Kadi, 2012; Al-Qasim, 2017). The current study investigates the English language needs of medical students at different levels of study by investigating the academic target needs (i.e., lacks, necessities, and wants) to meet the needs of medical students in their academic and professional fields. In general, Al-Qasim (2017) added that the courses English (101), English (102), English (103), and English (104) at IU are taught randomly without taking into account the learners' specific needs. According to ESP lecturers and some administrators at IU, English language courses are neither preceded by course specifications nor needs analysis. Thus, learners have shown difficulties grasping and understanding sentences from English to Arabic and vice versa, as Alfadly and Aldeibani (2013) reported.

From the information provided earlier in this chapter, it is evident that all English language courses at IU, even those implemented for medical students, are still operating the courses for general purposes, regardless of the difference in the students' needs. The lack of English language courses for medical students to fulfil their English language target needs leads to a weakness in continuing their English educational

courses. Al-Kadi (2012) added that the English course is inadequate and inefficient, and there is a disparity between what is needed and what is taught to Dental students at IU. The English course is taught without a deliberate survey of the requirements of dentistry students at IU. Besides, this course has no curriculum specifications nor needs analyses. According to Al-Qasim's (2017) findings, the declarations of both the Dean of the Faculty of Dentistry and the Head of Human Sciences at IU, English courses are collected and taught randomly. Al-Qasim added that Dentistry students also claimed that these courses are aimless, useless, and do not match the learners' academic and occupational needs (ibid.).

Liton (2015) recommended a demand for continuous NA approaches (please refer to sections 2.5.2 and 2.5.3) to fill the gap between ESP textbooks' content and real workplace needs. ESP lecturers can, thus, tackle the connection between the content in the classroom and can cross this gap. As Brown (2016, p. 5) highlights, ESP is related to a particular category of students' needs, and "if there is no needs analysis, there is no ESP." The English language course (ESP) for medical students at IU is neither preceded by an empirical and systematic study of the students' needs specification nor needs analysis in this new division in the newly established faculty (Al-Kadi, 2018). Thus, the ESP course requires further research to study the English language target needs (necessities, wants and lacks) and should be organised based on students' needs and interests (Alduais, 2012; Arroyyani & Nurhayati, 2019; Innocent, 2017).

The limitation of literature in NA research in the EFL context in general and Yemen also motivates the current study. Kandil (2002, p. 10) stated that the learners' needs have not yet "received sufficient attention from researchers and language

teaching professionals in the Arab World." Consequently, these EFL students "rarely have input in their language teaching context" (ibid.).

Considering these critical issues and the problems explained earlier, the researcher is motivated to conduct this study to investigate the medical students' English language target needs at IU in Yemen. Therefore, the study investigates whether the current ESP course is appropriate for medical students. The study also attempts to fill this gap by establishing the English language needs of medical students and the language skills required for students to accomplish their studies. The study sheds light on the reality of ESP classes, the difficulties, and the need to conduct a NA study every two or three years to cope with the changing needs of the students throughout the years of study that can help them in their future careers.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

This study aims to investigate the English language target needs of the first, second, third, fourth, and fifth-year of medical students who studied in the academic year 2020-2021 in the Division of Medicine (DM) in the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences (FMHS) at Ibb University (IU) from the perspectives of the students, ESP lecturers and DM Subject Matter lecturers. The main objectives are as follows:

1. To determine the English Language skills that medical students at IU have to acquire to function effectively in the target situation.
2. To identify the current gap between the English language skills of medical students at IU and their ability to study their major courses successfully.
3. To evaluate the English language skills that medical students at IU desire to learn.

1.5 Research Questions

In line up with the objectives of the present study mentioned above, this study attempts to answer the following research questions:

1. What English Language skills do medical students at IU have to acquire to function effectively in the target situation? (Necessities)
2. What is the current gap between the English language skills of medical students at IU and their ability to study their major courses successfully? (Lacks)
3. What English language skills do medical students at IU desire to learn? (Wants)

1.6 Significance of the Study

The significance of present study could be useful for identifying the English language target needs of medical students at IU. The findings could help understand the needs more profoundly and fill the present situation gap under study. The outcomes will add to the literature in this EFL context and help ESP lecturers and curriculum designers improve or generate an efficient curriculum, syllabi, and materials in the ESP framework for medical students at IU. The current research would further develop the understanding of NA investigators since new ideas and practices may be expanded based on the study's results and implications. On the other hand, the study could be important since it may implement solutions to improve the practice of English learning for medical students at IU as follows:

Firstly, the results may be utilised to create a framework to develop an effective syllabus (ESP course) to fulfil the English language target needs and the language skills required for the medical students at IU to accomplish their studies.

Secondly, the study could raise the ESP lecturers' awareness of certain English language needs of medical students at IU by defining the English target needs of learners. This would allow ESP instructors to implement adjustments that fit the language needs of their learners; as argued by Kandil (2002, p. 2), NA research has significant importance because it "will better enable language teaching professionals to cater for their learners' specific needs and save a lot of wasted time and effort." Al-Qasim (2017), who designed a curriculum for dentistry students at IU, suggested that NA must be prioritised for other faculties.

Thirdly, the current study could also raise the DM Subject Matter lecturers' awareness of certain English language needs of medical students at IU. The study could be anticipated that the outcomes would contribute to improving the knowledge and awareness of medical students regarding their English language target needs to build and improve their weaknesses in English language skills. According to the Instructional Manual of FMHS at IU (2020/2021), all the academic subject matters are taught in English. Therefore, medical students need appropriate and adequate language skills to communicate effectively with lectures, do assignments, and write medical reports or projects. Thus, medical students also need English after graduation for their future careers. Being doctors requires them to have at least the basic knowledge of English to deal with medical equipment, drugs, conferences, sources, reports, and prescriptions. Thus, English has been regarded as an instrument not just for life communication but also for particular reasons that allow millions of professionals to handle their day-to-day activities (Al-Murtadha & Feryok, 2017; Alptekin, 2002; Laban, 2008; Millot, 2015).

1.7 Limitations of the Study

This research focuses on the needs analysis and perspectives in evaluating English for Specific Purposes (ESP) courses designed for medical students at IU. Some limitations should be highlighted in the current research to avoid misinterpretations and over generalisations of the findings. Firstly, the main focus is only on the English language target needs, including the students' necessities, lacks, and wants, for deep investigation of the medical Students' target needs because this study is almost the first needs analysis conducted on medical students of the FMHS at IU. Additionally. the learning needs have not been involved in the present study because no professional students have graduated yet from this newly established department. Thus, the learning needs, such as the students' motivation and attitudes toward learning the English language, teaching methods and techniques in classrooms, teaching and learning styles and preferences of the English language course, and the learning strategies are excluded due to no professionals graduated students for a more comprehensive study and also time restrictions. Therefore, this part of the limitation is beyond the researcher's control and shows difficulties in tracing medical students after graduation.

Secondly, the sample of the population involved in quantitative data collection of this study is limited to the first, second, third, fourth, and fifth year of medical students who studied in the academic year 2020-2021 (n=186), the 4 ESP lecturers who teach the English language courses to the medical students, and 10 DM Subject Matter lecturers who teach major courses in the FMHS at IU. On the other hand, qualitative data were collected from only 15 medical students, 4 English Language Lecturers, and 10 DM Subject Matter lecturers using a one-to-one interview instrument. The small number of these participants may not represent all population in