

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ



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*To My Family*

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## **Abstract**

The aim of conducting this study was to investigate the foreign language learning needs of undergraduate economics and business management students in faculties of social sciences of Alzahra and Azad Naragh University. In the study, which was designed on the basis of a quantitative –qualitative basis using interviews and questionnaires, 146 female undergraduate business management as well as 150 economics students, 80 graduates, and 24 university professors participated. By the results, discrepancies were found between the needs of undergraduate business management and economics students. For the business management students reading, writing, and then speaking respectively should be emphasized but for the economics students writing, reading, and listening respectively were the matter of importance. There should be more systematic emphasis on specific sub skills. Professors should update their methodology in teaching skills and they should concentrate more on reading and writing strategies and sub skills in order to develop these skills. In addition, as the students did not feel satisfied with the amount of L2 teacher talk in class, it is suggested that professors run classes in English language not in Persian. It is hoped that the findings of this study would shed light on syllabus design and curriculum development for ESP programs in Iran.

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## **List of Abbreviations**

**ESP:** English for Special Purposes

**EGP:** English for General Purposes

**TEFL:** Teaching English as a Foreign Language



# *Chapter One*

## *Introduction*

## 1.1 Introduction

In Iran almost all non-English major undergraduate students should pass ESP courses during their studies to improve their subject-specific English and perform more successfully in their disciplines. Because "ESP is designed to meet special needs of the learners"(Dudley-Evans & St. John, 1998, p.4), to ensure some success for these learners, teachers and curriculum developers need to determine what each learner needs and wants to learn. To obtain this essential information the very starting point should be conducting a needs analysis. Needs analysis is now viewed as "the logical starting point for the development of a language program" and through conducting needs analysis learning needs can be responded (Richards & Renandya, 2002, p.75). The most efficient way to inform the material and curriculum developers of the goals and objectives of the course is to determine the needs of the students. In this way they come to know which content area to add or delete and which teaching methodology is the best in order to help students get a better command of English in their area of study. As Long (2005) suggests, "There is an urgent need for courses of all kinds to be relevant and to be seen to be relevant to the needs of specific groups of learners" (p. 19). To achieve this end, it is fundamental to conduct an exhaustive needs analysis before designing an ESP curriculum and material (Johns, 1981).

From the field of language teaching, the focus of this research is on ESP (English for Specific purposes). Hutchinson and Waters (1987) maintain that any course, General English or ESP, should start with the question 'why do these learners need to learn English?', and they remark that "all courses are based on a perceived need of some

sort" (p.53). Therefore, it is essential to identify academic needs before designing a language course. The main purpose of this research is to investigate the real English language needs of the students during their undergraduate studies. This study focuses on the language needs of Business management and Economics students based on their ESP courses they will pass during their study. This research can be a contribution to English language syllabus, which may need to be re-evaluated according to the needs of the students. Such an analysis of the needs will make the teachers more aware of the students' needs and help design a more effective and efficient language course. Information gathered is related to the students' English language demands for macro skills and their attitudes toward language instruction. Moreover, teachers' views regarding students' language needs are investigated.

## **1.2. Statement of the Problem**

Based on the researcher's experience, some of the students from different majors are not satisfied completely with the kind of language program instruction in English for general and English for specific purposes courses and they are complaining that whatever they actually need as English language are not met and they have to attend English language institutions to meet their needs. Seferoglu (1998) in his thesis states that "most foreign language programs do not provide learners opportunities in the classroom to develop the skills that they will need in their target language encounters" (p.3). This is the case that mastering English is of paramount importance for some of the university majors such as Business management and Economics considering their future profession. Due to the growing need to use

English internationally in the field of trade, commerce, and business, it seems necessary to investigate the needs of students of the above mentioned majors so they could function effectively in their professions. Thitthongkam (2011) found out that foreign language plays an important role in business sector especially in import and export companies for communication and negotiations with customers, other companies, and foreign countries. This raises the question of "what are the needs and expectations of these students?" The purpose of this study is to investigate the language needs of Iranian Business management and Economics undergraduate students and their English language professors' view in this regard.

### **1.3. Significance of the Study**

With the emergence of learner-centered approaches, English language programs need to adapt their curriculum and materials to the needs and expectations of students. Needs analysis in second language program has been started with emphasizing English for specific purposes instruction and most of the needs analysis researches conducted up to now have been related to ESP. To the best of the researcher's knowledge, almost no research has been conducted on needs analysis of students majoring in Business management and Economics in Iran, but students and graduates of these majors are dealing with English if not more than other majors at least as much as them regarding their future job. In this regard, Rajabi and Azarpour (2011) state that "a graduate majoring in business administration and management is usually employed in factories or industrial companies where he has a great need to be able to communicate with other companies around the world" (p.29). Thus, the researcher thinks that