

Assessing the English Language Needs of Persian Literature University Students from Teachers' Perspective

Yalda Shahmoradi*

M.A. graduate, Department of English language and literature, Faculty of foreign Languages, Allameh Tabataba'i University, Tehran

Siros Izadpanah

Assistant Professor, Department of English Language Teaching, Zanjan Branch, Islamic Azad University, Zanjan

Abstract

Since needs analysis firstly introduced by the publication of Munby's communicative syllabus design in 1978, many researchers carried out on the needs analysis of university students majoring different courses in order to prepare for their target language needs. The purpose of this study was to identify the English language needs of the Persian literature university students. To this effect, five female and five male specialist English teachers in three universities in Tehran and two universities in Zanjan were picked by purposive sampling to be data sources of the study. All the teachers had the Ph.D. level of education, teaching M.A. students of Persian literature. The data were collected using a five-point Likert scale English Language needs questionnaire (Chan, 2001), answered by specialist English teachers. The study was experimental and quantitative in nature. In order to analyze the data, mean and Chi-Square test were attained using SPSS, version 16. As the results had shown, reading skill was the most important skill in academic studies of the Persian literature university students, speaking skill was the most essential skill in their future profession, and writing skill was the main skill that would be important in their private/social life. Furthermore, the female specialist English teachers' perspective was different from male ones regarding Persian literature university students' learning needs and target needs. In conclusion, the implications of the findings of the study can be presented for language researchers, specialist English teachers, test designers, and materials developers.

Keywords: English for specific purposes (ESP); needs analysis; occupational language needs; Persian literature students; target language needs

* M.A. graduate, Department of English language and literature, Faculty of foreign Languages, Allameh Tabataba'i University, Tehran, Iran

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Email: *yaldash1390@yahoo.com*

1. Introduction

In an age when the English language is prominent due to its international usage and increasing movements in industry and technology, there are growing demands in public lifelike the urgent role of the education in general and foreign language learning as a prime example of it. Therefore, one of the biggest roles of the English for Specific purposes (ESP) has been the importance of extensive and careful needs analysis for foreign languages' course design (Johns & Dudley-Evans, 1991).

Many researchers asserted that there is increasing dissatisfaction with materials and methodologies of English courses (Amirian & Tavakoli, 2009; Atai & Shoja, 2011) among adults and students considering their academic, occupational or survival needs. One of the most significant current discussions of the assessing the English language needs of Persian literature university students is perceived dissatisfaction with their general and English for academic purpose (EAP) courses, teaching methodology, textbooks and evaluation methods. Therefore, it is important to know specifically what their needs are and design a curriculum based on the students' and subject specialists' needs. Considering the variety and complication of ESP and EAP objectives, conducting a comprehensive needs analysis is crucial before planning and designing an ESP or EAP syllabus and material (Nikui Nezhad, 2007).

Since the Munby's (1981) earliest reports on communicative syllabus design in which he placed situations and functions in the needs analysis framework, several kinds of needs analysis have also been introduced such as target situation analysis, pedagogic needs analysis, discourse analysis, present situation analysis, and genre analysis. Subsequently, many researches were done to investigate them in different contexts including universities. Different EAP courses' needs analyzed, but some majors were left behind. Thus, the present research may provide a different way to approach Persian literature students' needs analysis from their specialist English teachers perspective and scrutinize it in detail.

However, the researchers to date have mostly tended to focus on large numbers of needs assessments in other different majors (Akbari, 2016; Basturkmen, 1998; Esmaeili, 2016; Habtamu, 2008) rather than needs analysis of Persian literature university students. Keep different learners' needs in mind, every single course require its needs assessment. The absence of formal needs analysis procedures in ESP course design in Persian literature field has provided the stimulus for the design of the study, which has been conducted in order to deal with the issue of ESP courses to the needs of a target group of learners. Although few studies were done in this matter (Alibakhshi, Kiani & Akberi, 2010; Bahrevar, 2012), there is so much to investigate, considering syllabus designers' and curriculum developers' perspective, Persian literature

textbooks in addition to the ways perceived needs should be applied in the ESP courses.

The information gathered by this study will help syllabus designers, curriculum developers, subject matter teachers, students, and researchers to gain a new insight on the Persian literature university students' learning, social life, and target needs. This study will answer the students' mentioned needs with a better method.

Therefore, the primary purpose of this study was to identify Persian literature students' academic studies, social life, and future profession needs in order to find which skills and subskills require more focus. Keeping these purposes in mind, the following research questions were developed:

1. What are the perceptions of Persian literature instructors regarding the importance of the four skills (reading, listening, speaking, writing) referring to learning, social life, and target needs?
2. Which of the four skills and their subskills are needed more by Persian literature students to fulfill their language learning and target needs?
3. Is there any significant difference between male and female specialist English instructors regarding the analysis of the learners' learning and target needs?

2. Literature Review

2.1. English for Specific Purposes

There are many definitions for English for specific purposes. However, Dudley-Evans and St John (1998, p.3) declared that the Strevens' (1988) is the most comprehensive one. He defined ESP as:

English language teaching which is designed to meet specified needs of learners; related in content to particular disciplines, occupations and activities; centered on language appropriate to those activities in syntax, lexis, discourse, semantics and so on, and analysis of the discourse; and in contrast with 'General English'.

The origin of the ESP movement resulted from general developments in the world economy in the 1950s and 1960s. As stated by Dudley-Evans and St John (1998, p.19), this was the time of the developments in:

Science and technology, the increased use of English as the international language of science, technology and business, the increased economic power of certain oil-rich countries and the increased number of international students studying in the United Kingdom, United States of America and Australia.

ESP programs' communicative orientation is also highlighted by Hutchinson and Waters (2002, p.16). They asserted that ESP is a branch of the

English language teaching (ELT) tree with communication and learning as the nourishing roots. Furthermore, they divided ESP into two main types. Their division is based on English learners need for academic studies: English academic purposes (EAP), or for work/training: English for Occupational Purposes (EOP), English for Vocational Purposes (EVP) and Vocational English as a Second Language (VESL).

ESP underwent many phases of development since its establishment. Dudley-Evans and St John (1998, p.20-27) thoroughly investigated these trends, namely “Register Analysis, Rhetorical and Discourse Analysis, Analysis of Study Skills, Analysis of Learning Needs”. As briefly stated, Register analysis mainly focuses on vocabulary and grammar of the ESP texts. Rhetorical and discourse analysis deals with organizations and patterns of a text and the linguistic means used in specific context. Analysis of study skills addresses the thought processes that support language use. Finally, analysis of learning needs focuses on relating language analysis to learners’ target situation needs, which was established by John Munby (1981).

2.2. Needs Analysis

The answer to how educators or practitioners develop successful curricula often lies in needs analysis. Needs analysis (NA) is a powerful tool that helps clarify and validate true needs. It allows educators and practitioners to form the curriculum development that bases the content of language courses on the communication needs, wants, and interests of the learners (Lepetit & Cichocki, 2002). It ties learning as closely as possible to teaching (Grier, 2005); it directs educators and practitioners to provide better and more available sources for the students of the program concerned (Long, 2005).

The students’ needs are the absolute characteristics of English for specific purpose courses together with using the underlying methodologies and activities of the regulation it serves and focuses on the language skills and appropriate discourse to these activities (Dudley-Evans, St. John, 1998). As recommended by Richterich and Chancedrel (1980), needs analysis regards the needs conveyed by the learners themselves, by the teaching establishment, by the user-institution, or by all three.

However, needs analysis has gone through many phases, with the publication of Munby's communicative syllabus design in 1978, situations and functions were placed within the framework of needs analysis. In his book, Munby initiated ‘communication needs processor’, which is the basis of his approach to needs analysis. Afterward, Chambers (1980) introduced the term target situation analysis based on his work. Since then, several other terms have also been introduced “present situation analysis, pedagogic needs analysis, deficiency analysis, strategy analysis or learning needs analysis, means analysis, register analysis, discourse analysis, and genre analysis”. (Dudley-Evans and St. John, 1998, p. 125)

Moreover, Long (2005, p.25-29) went through a comprehensive literature survey concerning sources that can be used to get information on NA. He mentioned five major options to do so: 1. Published and unpublished literature, 2. Learners, 3. Teachers and applied linguists, 4. Domain experts, 5. Triangulated sources (using different sources to gain required data).

Regardless of various dichotomies of the needs, perceived or felt needs, objective or subjective needs, target or learning needs (Nikui Nezhad, 2007) mentioned in the literature, different approaches to needs analysis try to meet the needs of the learners in the process of learning a second language. Not a single approach to needs analysis can be a trustworthy indicator of what is needed to improve learning. A modern and comprehensive concept of needs analysis is proposed by Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998, p. 125) which encompasses all the above-mentioned approaches. They elaborated the of NA in its eight main current concepts: 1. Target situation analysis and objective analysis, 2. Wants, means, subjective needs, 3. Present situation analysis, 4. Lacks, 5. Learning needs, 6. Linguistic analysis, discourse analysis, genre analysis, 7. Objectives of the course, and 8. Means analysis.

To this day, many studies have done throughout the world in general, and in Iranian context in particular, on the needs analysis of students considering different branches of ESP such as EAP and EOP. For example, Lepetit and Cichocki (2002) carried out a needs analysis study entitled "Teaching languages to future health professionals: a needs assessment study", with university students who were attending a language course and preparing to work as health professionals. One hundred and sixty five health care field students answered a needs analysis questionnaire built by the authors based on in-depth interviews. The findings stressed the importance of oral and written skills besides target culture instruction for the health studies students.

For a similar purpose, the English language needs of the petroleum and engineering students and faculty members in Kuwait University's College were investigated by Basturkmen (1998) in her study "Refining procedures: a needs analysis project at Kuwait University". The results of this study supported the fact that needs analysis is a useful tool to collect information on students and faculty members' perceptions on students' language needs and on the relative significance of skills and sub-skills, as well as faculty members' expectations of students' English language proficiency. The required data were gathered by interviewing ten students and faculty members in addition to two hundred questionnaires. The results indicated differing perceptions between students and faculty members on the importance of reading skill, in that the later believed that reading and listening skills are equally important, whereas students thought the listening skill is the most important one. Moreover, faculty members and students considered reading textbooks the most important task.

In another study, Rose and Sookraj (2015) tried to evaluate undergraduates' language needs and measure their English course progress in their study "Needs analysis: undergraduates' evaluation of a university-wide English language course". Two hundred and four students from six different faculties assessed importance and effectiveness of different language skills throughout a needs analysis questionnaire. The findings showed the discrepancy between the students' perception of their development in their ESP courses and their actual development.

Moreover, in a related article "Meeting students' needs in two EAP programs in Vietnam and New Zealand a comparative study", Oanh (2007) investigated the needs analysis in two different EAP programs, New Zealand and Vietnam universities. Thirty-three students and four teachers from New Zealand, and ninety-nine students, and four teachers from Vietnam participated in the study. The data were gathered by means of observation and interview. The results showed that in New Zealand, needs analysis was considered as the main point of the EAP programs, conducted through a series of systematic data collection instruments. However, unfortunately, in Vietnam, course designers presuppose the students' needs analysis; acquire it by informal information gathered by students or teachers' personal experience and observation.

Similarly, many researches on ESP and EAP needs analysis were done in Iranian universities and different courses, such as in biology (Moslemi, Moinzadeh & Dabaghi, 2011), business administration (Mahdavi Zafarghandi, Khalili Sabet & Sharoudi Lomar, 2014), chemistry (Rostami & Zafarghandi, 2014), computer engineering (Esmaeili, 2016), nursing (Akbari, 2016), psychology (Moslemi et al, 2011), and tourism management (Eslami Rasekh & Simin, 2012).

In their study, "ESP needs analysis of Iranian MA students: a case study of the University of Isfahan", Moslemi et al. (2011) investigated the English language needs analysis of M.A. students of five different majors, namely biology, psychology, physical training, accounting and west philosophy. Eighty students of Isfahan University as well as twenty-five subject-specific and seven English instructors participated in this study. Using interviews, questionnaires, and textbooks, the researchers came to conclusion that the majority of the participants were not satisfied with their M.A. ESP courses, and wanted a vital change in the English instructions of their university's educational system. In another study entitled "EAP needs analysis in Iran: the case of university students in chemistry department", Rostami & Zafarghandi (2014) inspected chemistry students' language needs. To do so, ninety chemistry students and twenty instructors answered questionnaires in order to reach the present status of the English language practice in the students' studies and upcoming professions as well as their required abilities in the ESP courses. Both instructors and students asserted reading as the most important

skill, highlighting vocabulary and reading speed as the main areas required for their studies.

For a similar purpose, Esmaeili (2016) scrutinized EAP needs analysis of computer and mechanical engineering English courses in Islamic Azad University of Shiraz. She asked three hundred and sixty five undergraduate computer and mechanical engineering students and eight EAP instructors to participate in the students' and instructors' questionnaire besides the instructors' interview and observation. Data analysis revealed dissatisfaction of most of the participants with textbooks, teaching methods, and evaluations. EAP instructors' interviews reported unsatisfactory of the learners' English proficiency. Moreover, classroom observations manifested the most frequent classroom activities as follows: English to Farsi translation, technical terms translation and reading.

Interestingly, some needs analysis studies were conducted on Persian literature, such as Alibakhshi et al. (2010), Bahrevar (2012), Liaghat and Latif (2013), and Nikui Nezhad (2007). As mentioned, Liaghat and Latif (2013) researched on the inconsistency between ESP course syllabus and general English course syllabus for the Persian literature major. Firstly, five Persian literature major instructors were selected in order to carry out the interviews. Then, the obtained information used to devise a questionnaire and distribute it among two hundred and fifty Persian literature students who passed their ESP course. Finally, another five Persian literature ESP course instructors was chosen for classroom observation. The data revealed "a great deficiency and a gap in teaching ESP in general and teaching ESP to students of Persian literature in particular." (p.322)

In another study, "A survey of academic needs of ESP students across three majors", the academic needs of Persian literature students as well as electrical engineering, and chemistry students of Kashan University were assessed by Nikui Nezhad (2007). She collects the data through a needs analysis questionnaire answered by sixty university students. The data analysis revealed that ESP courses and materials were not developed regarding the Persian literature students' needs and interests. Unfortunately, they had a negative attitude towards their ESP course and materials. Furthermore, they ranked reading skill and reading textbook task as the most important skill and subskill.

However, the absence of formal needs analysis procedures in ESP course design in Persian literature field has provided the stimulus for the design of the study, which has been conducted in order to deal with the issue of ESP courses to the needs of a target group of learners. Although few studies were done in this matter (Alibakhshi et al., 2010; Bahrevar, 2012), there is so much to investigate, considering syllabus designers' and curriculum developers' perspective, Persian literature textbooks in addition to the ways perceived needs should be applied in the ESP courses.

3. Method

3.1. Design of the Study

The present study was experimental in nature. It examined the relationship between the present statuses of the involved variables (Birjandi & Musallanejad, 2002). It was also a quantitative study, which means that it focused on the mathematical, statistical or numerical analysis of data, which acquired through polls and questionnaires.

3.2. Participants

The participants of this study were five female and five male specialist English teachers in three universities in Tehran and two universities in Zanjan. All of the teachers had the Ph.D. level of education, teaching students of Persian literature. The average age of female teachers was 44.6, male teachers' was 51.2, and the average age of all participants was 47.9.

3.3. Instrument

To assess the English language needs of Persian literature university students from teachers' perspective, a 5 point Likert scale English and subject area teachers' questionnaire (See Appendix A) on English language needs was adapted from Chan (2001) and reliability and validity of the questionnaire have been proved by ten experts using content validity ratio (CVR): 0.86 and content validity index (CVI): 0.88. The aim of this questionnaire was to get information on, a. the teachers' attitude of the Persian literature students' language needs, b. how they could rate the Persian literature students' language proficiency or competence, and c. their attitude of the Persian literature students' language learning difficulties or problems.

4.4. Data Collection and Analysis

The English and subject area teachers' questionnaire was given to specialist English teachers who taught M.A. Persian literature students in five different universities. The answers collected and tabulated to analyze. Descriptive statistics, such as the mean and the frequency of the responses, were mainly used in order to answer research questions 1 and 2. In order to answer the third research question, the data were fed into Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS), version 16, to perform the chi-square test. As Hatch and Lazaraton (1991, p.394) stated

For frequency data, an appropriate statistical procedure to test the relationship is the Chi-square test. It tests the relationship between the variables (how well they go together) rather than how one variable affects another. The Chi-square procedure does not allow us to make cause – effect claims.

4. Results and Discussion

Participants presented the importance of learning English with respect to the four skills. They were asked to rate how important reading, listening, speaking, and writing would be for the students' academic studies, future profession, and social life. The findings for each research questions are as follows:

1. *What are the perceptions of Persian literature instructors regarding the importance of the four skills (reading, listening, speaking, writing) referring to learning, social life, and target needs?*

Table 1 and figure 1 represent the perceptions of Persian literature instructors regarding the importance of four skills (reading, listening, speaking, and writing) in the students' academic needs.

Table 1

The importance of four skills (reading, listening, speaking, and writing) in students' academic needs

<i>Skills</i>	<i>Mean</i>
Reading	3.96
Listening	3.91
Speaking	3.9
Writing	3.89

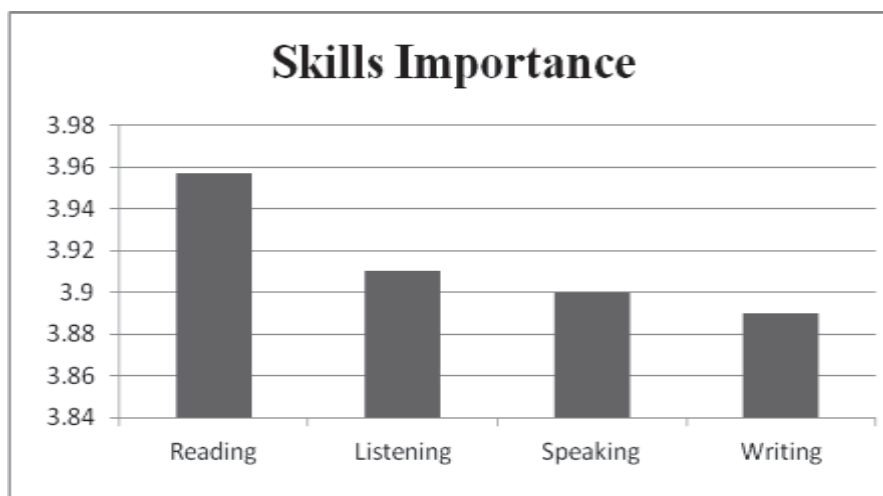


Figure 1. The importance of four skills (reading, listening, speaking, and writing) in students' academic needs

As table 1 and figure 1 show, reading skill (mean: 3.96) is the most important skill in Persian literature students' academic studies.

Table 2 and figure 2 represent the perceptions of Persian literature instructors regarding the importance of four skills (reading, listening, speaking, and writing) in the students' social life.

Table 2

The importance of four skills (reading, listening, speaking, and writing) in students' social life

<i>Skills</i>	<i>Mean</i>
Reading	4.02
Listening	3.95
Speaking	3.98
Writing	4.19

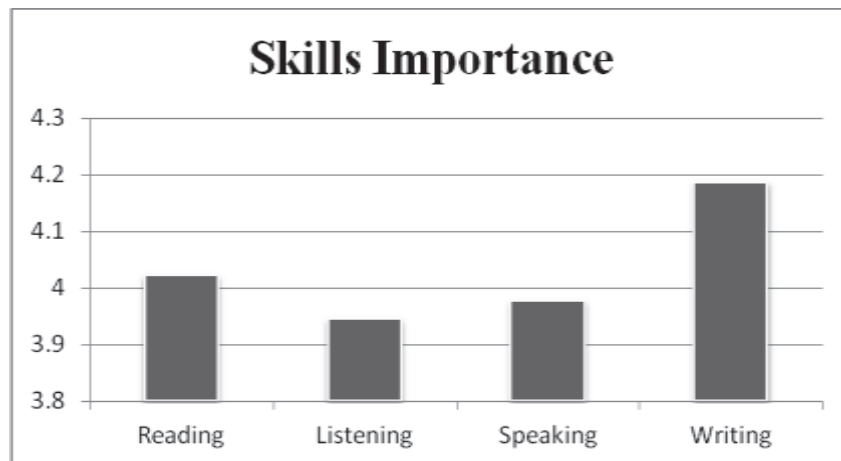


Figure 2. The importance of four skills (reading, listening, speaking, and writing) in students' social life

As table 2 and figure 2 represent, writing skill (mean: 4.19) is the most important skill in Persian literature students' social life. Table 3 and figure 3 represent the perceptions of Persian literature instructors regarding the importance of four skills (reading, listening, speaking, and writing) in students' target needs.

1. As table 3 and figure 3 show, speaking skill (mean: 4.16) is the most important skill in the Persian literature students' target needs.

2. *Which of the four skills and their subskills are needed more by Persian literature students to fulfill their language learning and target needs?*

One subskill in each of the four skills (reading, listening, speaking, and writing) is the most important in the students' academic studies. Tables 4, 5, 6, 7 and figures 4, 5, 6 and 7 subsequently represent subskills of each four skill.

Table 3

The importance of four skills (reading, listening, speaking, and writing) in students' target needs

<i>Skills</i>	<i>Mean</i>
Reading	3.69
Listening	3.92
Speaking	4.16
Writing	3.92

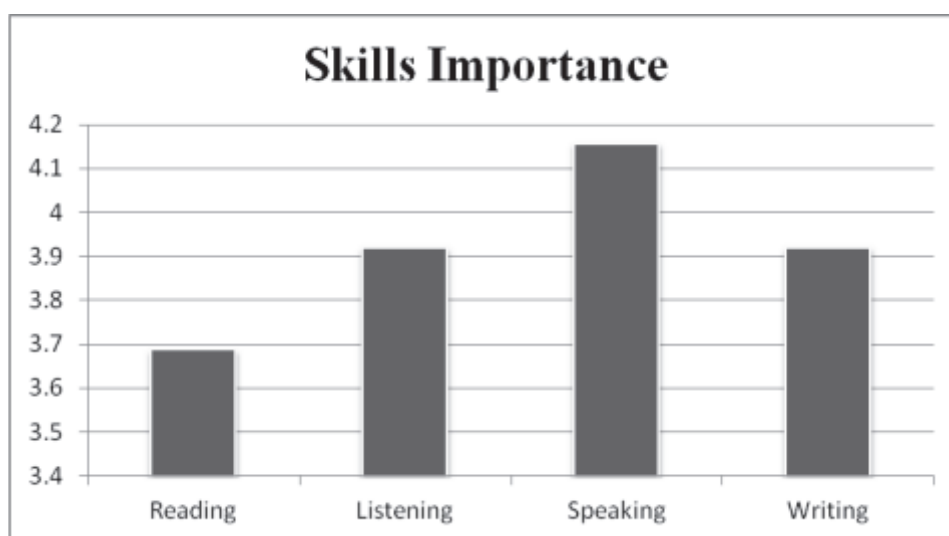


Figure 3. The importance of four skills (reading, listening, speaking, and writing) in students' target needs

Table 4

Importance of each reading subskill in Persian literature students' academic studies

<i>Reading</i>	<i>Mean</i>
newspaper	3.2
magazines/periodical	3.4
Academic texts	4.7
lecture handouts	4
reference tools	4.5
university prospectuses	3.6
on the internet	4.3

As table 4 and figure 4 show, reading academic texts (mean: 4.7) is the most important reading subskill for the Persian literature students' academic studies.

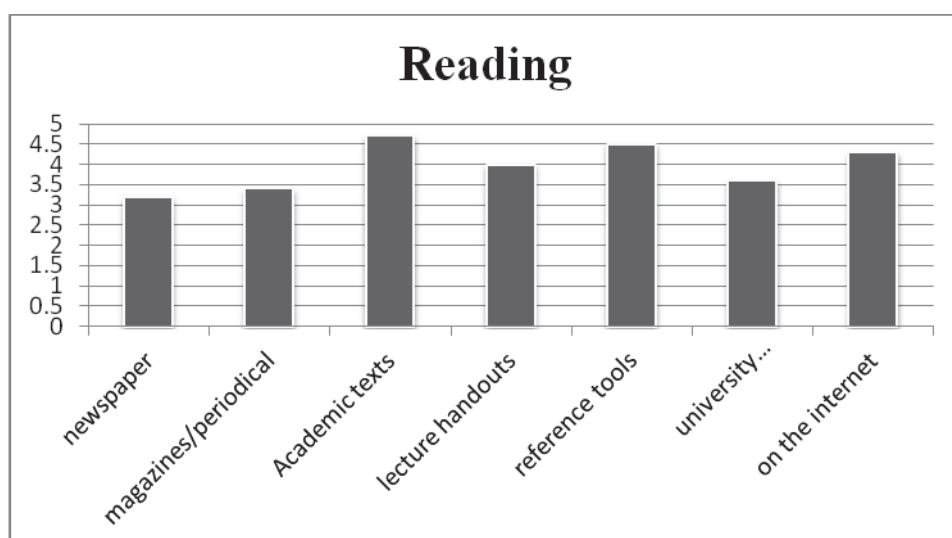


Figure 4. Importance of each reading subskill in Persian literature students' academic studies

Table 5

Importance of each listening subskill in Persian literature students' academic studies

<i>Listening</i>	<i>Mean</i>
to the radio	3.3
to television programs	3.4
to videos	3.1
to films	4.1
to course lectures	4.3
to seminars	3.9
at meetings	4.1
to representations	4.2
Class discussions	4.9
in tutorials	3.8

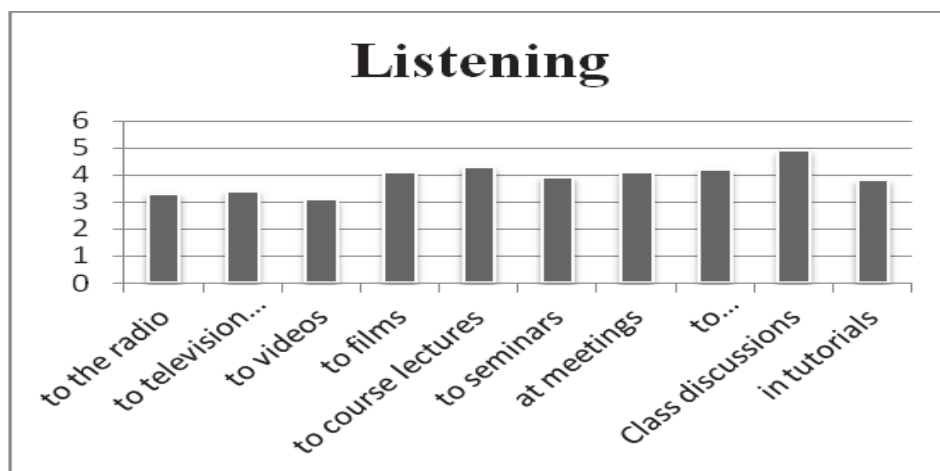


Figure 5. Importance of each listening subskill in Persian literature students' academic studies

As table 5 and figure 5 show, listening to class discussions (mean: 4.9) is the most important listening subskill for the Persian literature students' academic studies.

Table 6

Importance of each speaking subskill in Persian literature students' academic studies

<i>Speaking</i>	<i>Mean</i>
in class discussion	4.8
with lecturers	4.2
at conferences	3.6
at seminars	3.6
at meetings	3.6
in tutorials	3.5
at presentations	4

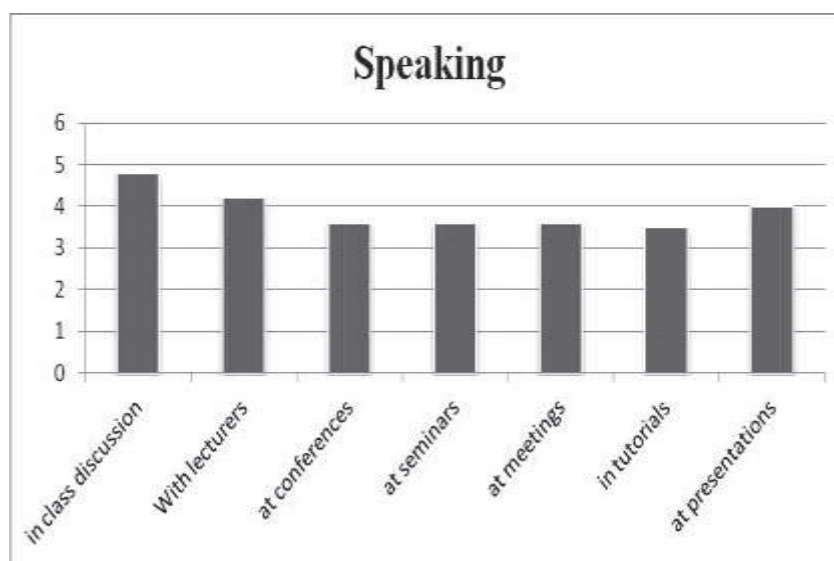


Figure 6. Importance of each speaking subskill in Persian literature students' academic studies

As table 6 and figure 6 show, speaking in class discussions (mean: 4.8) is the most important speaking subskill for the Persian literature students' academic studies.

Table 7

Importance of each writing subskill in Persian literature students' academic studies

<i>Writing</i>	<i>Mean</i>
letters/forms/job applications	3.7
plays	3.3
course assignment	4
reports	3.5
short stories	4.1
on the internet	3.9
compositions and essays	4.5
notes/memos	3.4
examination papers	4.1
translation	4.4

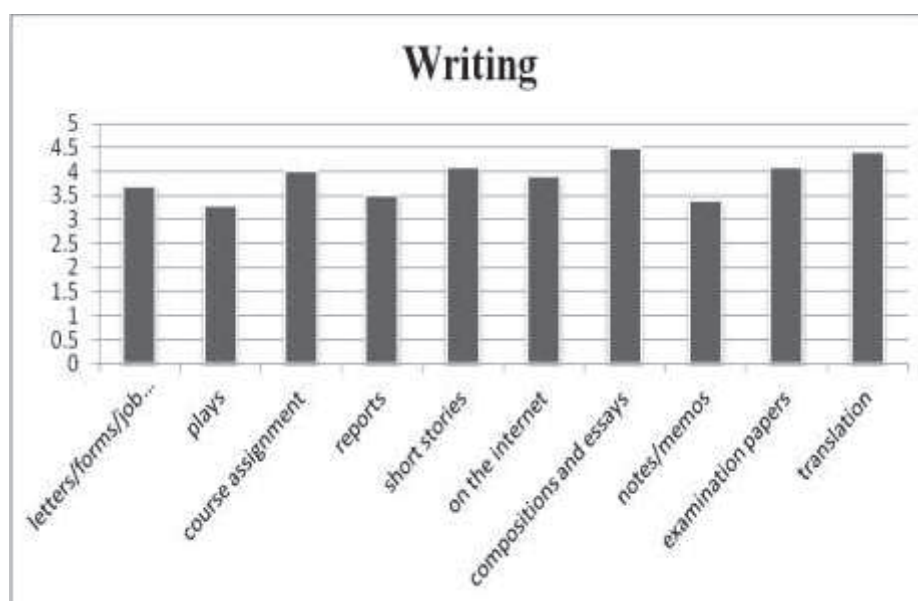


Figure 7. Importance of each writing subskill in Persian literature students' academic studies

As table 7 and figure7 show, writing compositions and essays (mean: 4.5) is the most important writing subskill for the Persian literature students' academic studies.

There is one subskill in each four skills (reading, listening, speaking, and writing) that is most important in students' target needs. Tables 8,9,10,11 and figures 8,9,10and11 subsequently represents subskills of each four skill.

Table 8

Importance of each reading subskill in Persian literature students' target needs

<i>Reading</i>	<i>Mean</i>
newspaper	2.9
magazines/periodicals	3.4
reference tools(e.g. dictionaries)	4.4
reports	3.6
e-mail messages	4.5
on the internet	4.4
plays	3.6
fictions	4
notices	3.7
letters	3.5
comics	2.9
short stories	3.9
advertisements	3.1
poems	4
company regulations	3.6
newsletters	3.5

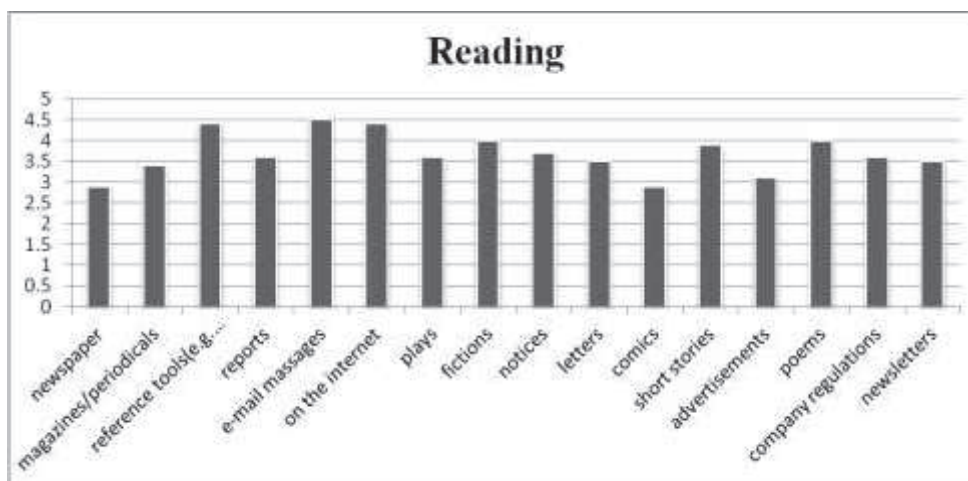


Figure 8. Importance of each reading subskill in Persian literature students' target needs

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As table 8 and figure 8 show, reading e-mail messages (mean: 4.5) is the most important reading subskill for the Persian literature students' target needs.

Table 9

Importance of each listening subskill in Persian literature students' target needs

<i>Listening</i>	<i>Mean</i>
to the radio	3.9
to television programs	4.1
to videos	3.8
to films	4.2
at meetings	3.9
theater	3.5
to representations	3.8
on the telephone	4.2
at conferences	3.8
to movies	4

As table 9 and figure9 show, listening to films and listening on the telephone (mean: 4.2) are the most important listening subskills for the Persian literature students' target needs.

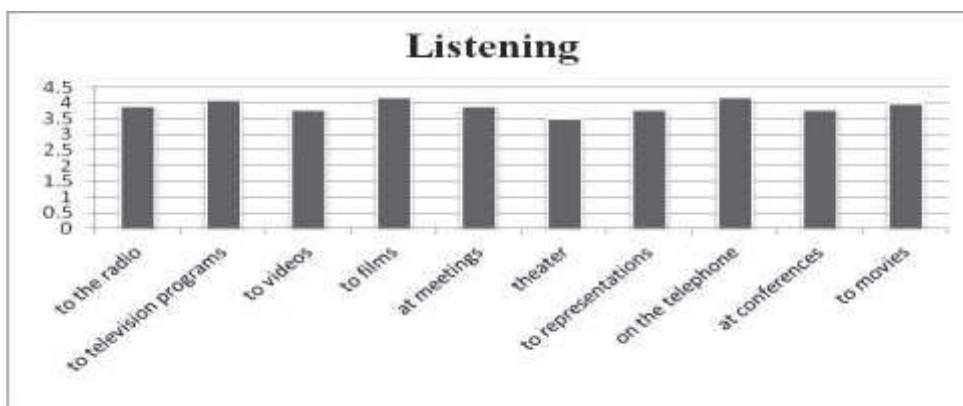


Figure 9. Importance of each listening subskill in Persian literature students' target needs

Table 10

Importance of each speaking subskill in Persian literature students' target needs

<i>Speaking</i>	<i>Mean</i>
at stage	4.1
at conferences	4.3
at rehearsal	3.5
at seminars	3.9
on the telephone	4.5
at meetings	4.1
in informal situations	4.6

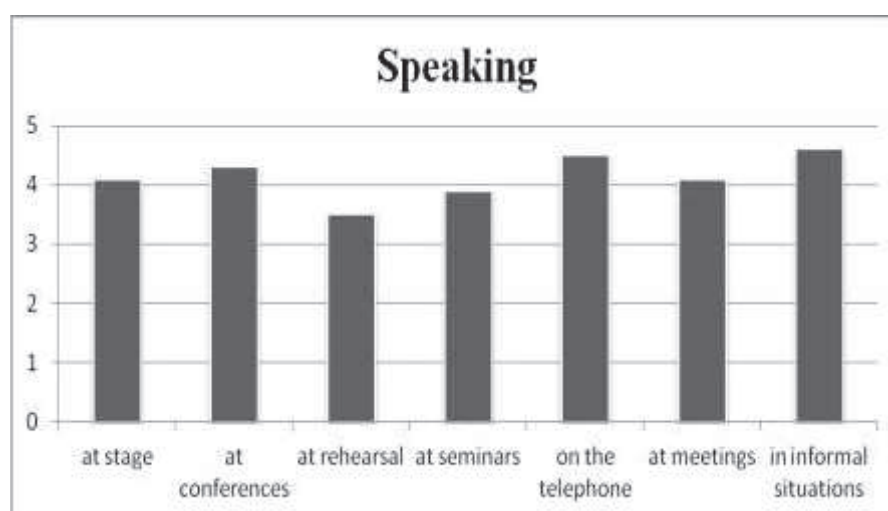


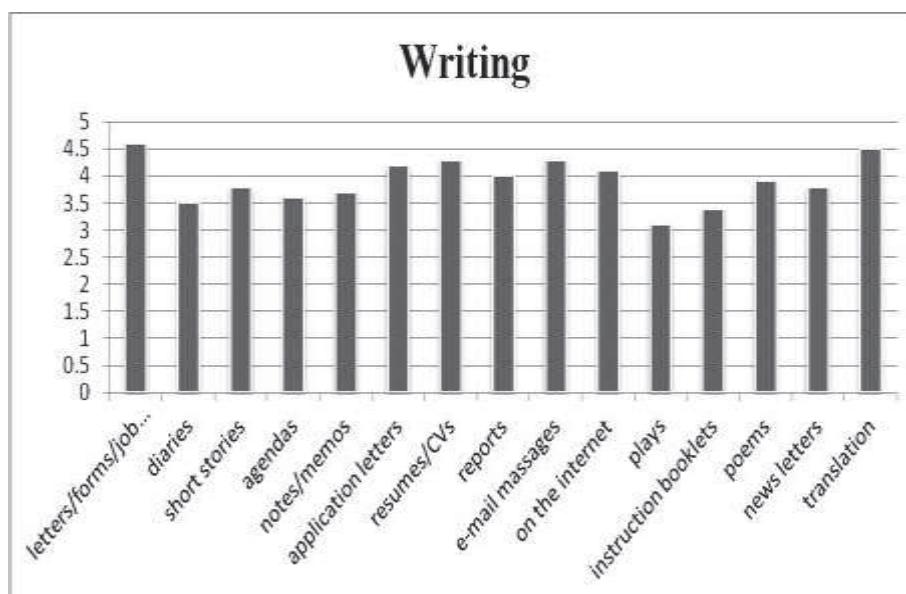
Figure 10. Importance of each speaking subskill in Persian literature students' target needs

As table 10 and figure 10 show, speaking on the telephone and in informal situations (mean: 4.5) are the most important listening subskills for the Persian literature students' target needs.

Table 11

Importance of each writing subskill in Persian literature students' target needs

<i>Writing</i>	<i>Mean</i>
letters/forms/job applications	4.6
diaries	3.5
short stories	3.8
agendas	3.6
notes/memos	3.7
application letters	4.2
resumes/CVs	4.3
reports	4
e-mail messages	4.3
on the internet	4.1
plays	3.1
instruction booklets	3.4
poems	3.9
news letters	3.8
translation	4.5

*Figure 11. Importance of each writing subskill in Persian literature students' target needs*

As table 11 and figure 11 show, writing letters/forms/job applications (mean: 4.6) is the most important listening subskill for the Persian literature students' target needs.

3. *Is there any significant difference between male and female specialist English instructors regarding the analysis of the learners' learning and target needs?*

Q1: Is there any significant difference between male and female specialist English instructors regarding the analysis of the learners' learning needs?

The analysis of crosstabs (two-way chi-square) was run to probe any significant differences between the male and female specialist English instructors regarding the analysis of the learners' learning needs. Table 12 displays the frequencies, percentages and standardized residuals (Std. Residual) for the male and female instructors' selection of the five choices. The former two indices are descriptive and should be interpreted horizontally, i.e. within each group; while the latter – Std. Residual – is an inferential index based on which conclusions as to the significance of the differences can be made. This index should be interpreted vertically for comparing the selection of each of the choices by the two groups. Std. Residuals beyond +/- 1.96 (Field, 2009) indicate that the selection of the choice is not random; hence significantly beyond expectation.

Table 12

Frequencies, Percentages and Std. Residuals; Learners' Learning Needs

		Learning					Total	
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree		
Gender	Male	Count	13	43	71	35	8	170
		%	7.6%	25.3%	41.8%	20.6%	4.7%	100.0%
		Std. Residual	-.3	1.6	2.0	-.3	-4.0	
	Female	Count	72	158	264	185	171	850
		%	8.5%	18.6%	31.1%	21.8%	20.1%	100.0%
		Std. Residual	.1	-.7	-.9	.1	1.8	
Total	Count	85	201	335	220	179	1020	
	%	8.3%	19.7%	32.8%	21.6%	17.5%	100.0%	

Based on the results displayed in table 12 it can be concluded that majority of the male instructors (41.8%, Std. Residual = 2 > 1.96) are undecided regarding the learners' learning needs. Adding up the percentages for the "strongly disagree" and "disagree" choices, it can be concluded that 32.9 percent of the male instructors disagree with the learners' learning needs. On the other hand; 25.6 percent (20.6% strongly agree and 4.7% agree) with

the learning needs of the students. Based on these results, it can be concluded that the male specialist English instructors are mainly undecided or skeptical regarding the analysis of the learners' learning needs.

Comparing with the male instructors, the female teachers have expressed a higher percentages of agreement (42.9 percent; 20.1% strongly agree and 21.8% agree) with learning needs of the students. Lower percentages of female teachers have taken; a neutral position (31.1%) and disagreement (27.1 percent; 8.5% strongly agree and 18.6% agree).

In brief, it can be concluded that the female instructors agree with the learning needs of the learner more than male teachers. They have shown less disagreement and taken a less neutral position.

However only two of the Std. Residuals are statistically significant; the male teachers selection of the "strongly agree" choice is less than expectation while they have selected the "undecided choice more than expectation.

The results of chi-square ($\chi^2(4) = 27.55, P < .05$) (table13) indicate that the differences observed in table12 are statistically significant. Thus, the first null-hypothesis as there is not any significant difference between male and female specialist English instructors regarding the analysis of the learners' learning needs is rejected.

Table13

Chi-Square test; learners' learning needs

	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	27.557 ^a	4	.000

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 14.17.

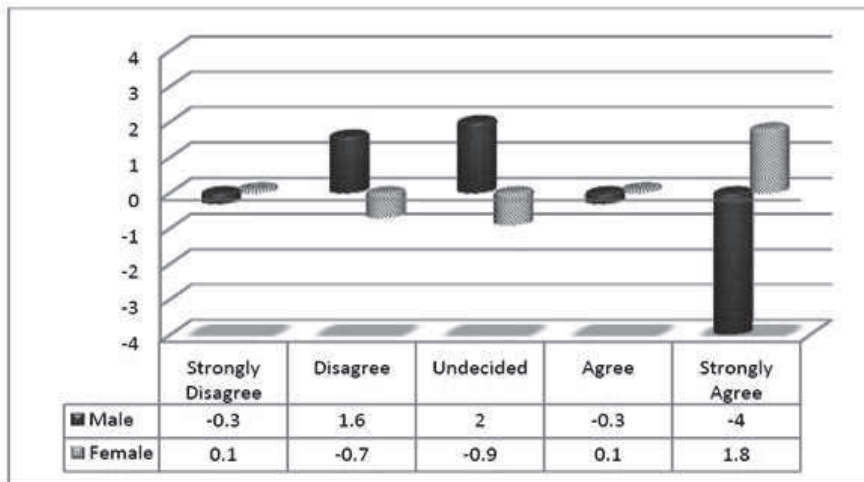


Figure 12. Std. residuals; learners' learning needs

Q2: Is there any significant difference between male and female specialist English instructors regarding the analysis of the learners' target needs?

Based on the results displayed in table14 it can be concluded that majority of the male instructors (40.4%, Std. Residual = 4.4 > 1.96) are undecided regarding the learners' target needs. Adding up the percentages for the "strongly agree" and "agree" choices, it can be concluded that 41.5 percent of the male instructors agree with the learners' target needs. On the other hand; 18.1 percent (1.6% strongly disagree and 16.5% disagree) with the target needs of the students. Based on these results it can be concluded that the male specialist English instructors are mainly agreed or undecided regarding the analysis of the learners' target needs.

Table14

Frequencies, percentages and Std. residuals; learners' target needs

		Target Needs					Total	
		Str ongly Disagree	D isagree	Un decided	A gree	St rongly Agree		
Gender	Male	Count	14	140	343	228	125	850
		%	1.6%	16.5%	40.4%	26.8%	14.7%	100.0%
		Std. Residual	-5.7	-.9	4.4	.0	-1.5	
	Female	Count	100	163	198	227	162	850
		%	11.8%	19.2%	23.3%	26.7%	19.1%	100.0%
		Std. Residual	5.7	.9	-4.4	.0	1.5	
Total	Count	114	303	541	455	287	1700	
	%	6.7%	17.8%	31.8%	26.8%	16.9%	100.0%	

Comparing with the male instructors, the female teachers have expressed a higher percentages of agreement (45.8 percent; 19.1% strongly agree and 26.7% agree) with target needs of the students. Lower percentages of female teachers have taken; a neutral position (23.3%, Std. Residual = -4.4). A higher percentage of female instructors disagree (31 percent; 11.8% strongly disagree and 19.2% disagree) with the learners' target needs.

In brief, it can be concluded that the female instructors agree with the target needs of the learner more than male teachers. They have also shown more disagreement. They have also taken a less neutral position.

Only four of the Std. Residuals are statistically significant; the male teachers selection of the "strongly disagree" choice is less than expectation (Std. Residual = -5.7) while they have selected the "undecided choice more than expectation (Std. Residual = 4.4). The reverse pattern can be seen for the female instructors. The female teachers selection of the "strongly disagree" choice is more than expectation (Std. Residual = 5.7) and they have selected the "undecided choice less than expectation (Std. Residual = -4.4).

The results of chi-square ($\chi^2 (4) = 110.25, P < .05$) (table15) indicate that the differences observed in table14 are statistically significant. Thus, the second null-hypothesis as there is not any significant difference between male and female specialist English instructors regarding the analysis of the learners' target needs is rejected.

Table15
Chi-Square test; learners' target needs

	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Square	Chi- 110.259 ^a	4	.000

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 57.

Figure 13 displays the Std. Residuals as appeared in table14.

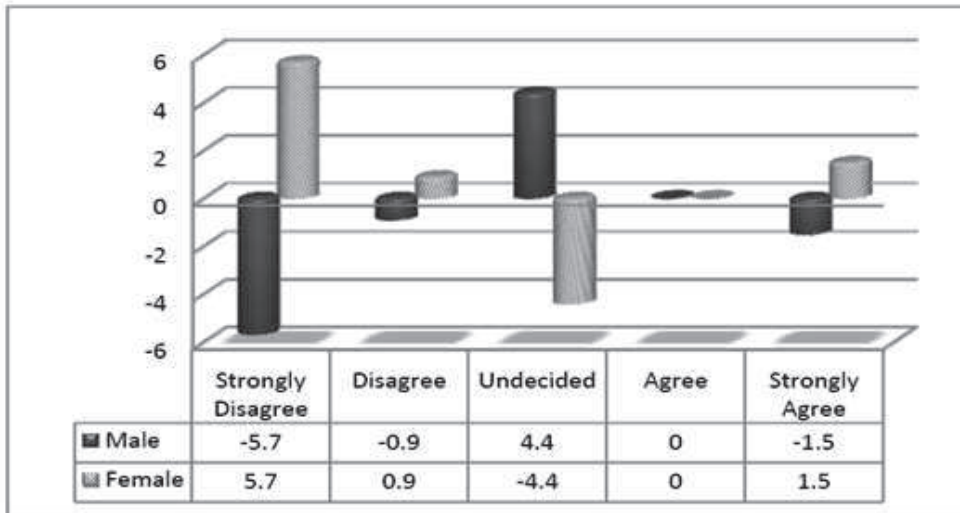


Figure 13. Std. residuals; learners' target needs

Therefore, male and female specialist English teachers have different perspective about their students learning needs and target needs.

4.2 Discussion

The primary purpose of this study was to identify Persian literature students' academic studies, social life, and future profession needs in order to find which skills or subskills require more focus.

The results showed the importance of different skills, reading skill for Persian literature students' academic studies, writing skill for their social life, and speaking skill for their target needs. Besides, specialist English teachers evaluated listening to class discussions and writing letters/forms/job applications as the most important subskills for their students' academic

studies and target needs. Moreover, male and female specialist English teachers did not have the same opinion about the students' learning and target needs.

The first main finding of the study was the importance of reading skill for Persian literature students' academic studies, writing skill for their social life, and speaking skill for their target needs. Fortunately, this finding is confirmed by some studies done in the Iranian context, such as Akbari (2016), Moiiinvaziri (2014), Nikui Nezhad (2007), and Rostami & Zafarghandi, (2014), whose results revealed reading as the most important skill for university students in different majors. This may be because that most of EAP courses' reading texts in Iran were developed by the Center for Research and Development of Texts for University Students in Iran, known as the name of SAMT books. The main goal of these books is defined as enhancing the reading comprehensions of the university students (Hayati, 2008). Indeed, Atai and Nazari (2011) asserted that the university students' reading needs were based on perceived importance of knowledge of each field's vocabularies, understanding the meaning of the field-related texts, and knowing terminologies.

Moreover, the results go with what Mahdavi Zafarghandi et al. (2014) and Pourshahian, Gholami, Vaseghi & Kalajahi (2012) reported. Interestingly, Mahdavi Zafarghandi et al. (2014) and Pourshahian et al. (2012) accentuated the significant needs of the students with regard to writing skill. This need might be due to the students' lower level of English language proficiency before attending their ESP courses, lack of motivation or prior practice and knowledge in writing for a practical purpose (Moslemi et al., 2011).

In contrast, some other researchers (Boniadi, Ghojazadeh & Rahmatvand, (2013); and Moattarian & Tahririan, 2014) focus on students' needs on all four reading, writing, speaking and listening skills equally. Moattarian and Tahririan (2014) stated that the existing ESP courses insufficiently address students' specific needs. Unfortunately, it can be because of the fact that in Iran, "ESP curricula have not yet been successfully developed in satisfying the students' professional needs in target situations" (p.13) or lack of adequate exposure to the English language in both school and university levels to meet their objective or subjective needs of different majors.

The second finding of this study was the students' need in listening to class discussions as the most important subskill for their academic studies. This finding is confirmed by Ferris and Tagg's (1996) study in which they stressed the prominent role of preparing students for comprehension of different kinds of lecture or discussion. This result may be attained for the reason of translation-focused teaching techniques frequently used in Iranian EAP classes, like English to Farsi translation of paragraphs, and translation of technical terms (Esmaeili, 2016). Interestingly, lack of communicative

components appeared in some needs analysis studies (Akbari, 2016) conducted in Iranian ESP courses.

The last finding of the current study was the different opinion of the male and female specialist English teachers regarding the students' learning and target needs. This result was confirmed by Pourshahian et al. (2012). They declared "males and females reported different needs though the study found that female's need in all language skills was more than their male counterpart group" (p.872). On the contrary, Shomoossi, Rad, and Rakhshani (2013) reported quite a contradictory result. The difference in the finding can be due to each university's syllabus objectives and the different nature of EAP and ESP courses manifested in specialist English teachers' perceived needs.

As the final point, the findings of this study can be a database for academic, social and target English language needs of Persian literature students. Therefore, this study has some implications on the importance of the needs of students of Persian literature, highlighting the essential changes in the ESP courses and trying to inform all the involved stakeholders on the needed course accommodation. It is suggested to Iranian ESP policy makers and syllabus designers to reconsider the condition and the importance of needs analysis as a fundamental issue in order to form consistency and unanimity among the currently disconnected chains of textbook development, teaching methodology, syllabus design, material development and curriculum development. Clearly, this claims "a state of mind open to external evaluation and the ability and willingness to question traditional values and modes of operations". (Taillefer, 2007, pp.148-149)

5. Conclusion and Implications

The purpose of the current study was to assess the English language needs of Persian literature university students from their teachers' perspective, besides; it determines their academic studies, future profession along with their social life needs in detail.

The first and major finding of the study is that reading, writing, and speaking skills are the most important skills in Persian literature students' academic studies, social life, and target need, respectively. The second finding of the study is that listening to class discussions and writing letters/forms/job applications are the most important subskills for the Persian literature students' academic studies and target needs, respectively. In addition, the last finding to emerge from this study was the different perspective of male and female specialist English teachers on their students learning and target needs.

In summary, the results showed the importance of reading skill for Persian literature students' academic studies, writing skill for their social life, and speaking skill for their future profession needs. Besides, specialist English teachers evaluated listening to class discussions and writing letters/forms/job applications as the most important subskills for their students' academic

studies and target needs. Moreover, male and female specialist English teachers did not have the same opinion about the students' learning and target needs.

Nevertheless, far too little attention has been paid to the Persian literature students' current English language proficiency in their academic studies, social life and future target occupation. Some other studies are also suggested to inspect the ways to increase the students' proficiency and considering the reported needs in different educational aspects such as policymaking, textbook development, teaching methodology, syllabus design, and material development. It is also suggested to replicate this research study by investigating the above-mentioned needs from different perspective, like Persian literature undergraduate and graduate students as well as ESP syllabus developers.

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Appendices:

Appendix A:

**English teachers and subject area teachers' questionnaire
Questionnaire on English Language needs**

This questionnaire is designed to help identify the English Language needs of MA students of Persian literature. Your responses are useful for the design and evaluation of the English course being offered.

Please answer each question based on your own opinions and experiences. You are guaranteed the confidentiality of your responses!

Instruction: For each item “tick” the appropriate space or “write” in the space provided. For questions where a scale is provided, please “circle the relevant number.

Part one

Initialscourse(s) taught... .., Position....., average class size..... Number of years of teaching experience.....,level of education, gender.....age.....

Part two

Academic Studies

Use the following scale for column 1

- 5. Very important
- 4. Important
- 3. Moderately
- 2. Not important
- 1. Totally unimportant

Use the following scale for column 2

- 5. Very good
- 4. Good
- 3. Average
- 2. Not good
- 1. Poor

- 1. Reading**
- h. newspaper
 - i. magazines/periodi (e.g. Economist, Scientist)
 - j. Academic texts (e.g. course books, journals)
 - k. lecture handouts
 - l. reference tools (e.g. dictionaries)
 - m. university prospectuses

How would you rate the **importance of learning** each of the following for students' academic studies?

How would you rate **Students' competence** in terms of each of the following for their academic studies?

n. on the internet
 Others(please specify
 and rate)

Academic Studies

Use the following scale for column 1

5. Very important

4. Important

3. Moderately

2. Not important

1. Totally unimportant

Use the following scale for column 2

5. Very good

4. Good

3. Average

2. Not good

1. Poor

2. Listening

k. to the radio
 l. to television programs
 m. to videos
 n. to films
 o. to course lectures
 p. to seminars
 q. at meetings
 r. to representations
 s. Class discussions
 t. in tutorials
 Other(please specify and
 rate)

3. Speaking

h. in class discussion
 i. With lecturers
 j. at conferences
 k. at seminars
 l. at meetings
 m. in tutorials
 n. at presentations
 Other(please specify and
 rate)

4. Writing

j. letters/forms/job
 applications
 k. plays
 l. course assignment
 m. reports
 n. short stories
 o. on the internet

- p. compositions and essays
 - q. notes/memos
 - r. examination papers
 - s. translation
- Other(please specify and rate)

Future profession

How would you rate the **importance of learning** each of the following for students' future profession?

5. Reading

- q. newspaper
 - r. magazines/periodicals (e.g. Economist, New Scientist)
 - s. reference tools(e.g. dictionaries)
 - t. reports
 - u. e-mail messages
 - v. on the internet
 - w. plays
 - x. fictions
 - y. notices
 - z. letters
 - aa. comics
 - bb. short stories
 - cc. advertisements
 - dd. poems
 - ee. company regulations
 - ff. newsletters
- Other(please specify and rate)

Use the following scale for column 2

- 5. Very good
- 4. Good
- 3. Average
- 2. Not good
- 1. Poor

How would you rate **Students' competence** in terms of each of the following for their future profession?

6. Listening

- k. to the radio
- l. to television programs
- m. to videos
- n. to films
- o. at meetings
- p. theater
- q. to representations
- r. on the telephone
- s. at conferences
- t. to movies
- Other(please specify and rate)

Future profession

Use the following
scale for column 1

- 5. Very important
- 4. Important
- 3. Moderately
- 2. Not important
- 1. Totally

Use the following
scale for column 2

- 5. Very good
- 4. Good
- 3. Average
- 2. Not good
- 1. Poor

7. Speaking

- h. at stage
- i. at conferences
- j. at rehearsal
- k. at seminars
- l. on the telephone
- m. at meetings
- n. in informal situations
- Other(please specify and rate)

8. Writing

- o. letters/forms/job applications
- p. diaries
- q. short stories
- r. agendas
- s. notes/memos
- t. application letters
- u. resumes/CVs
- v. reports
- w. e-mail messages

p. to videos										
q. to films										
r. on the telephone										
s. to religious services										
t. at religious social functions										
u. while travelling in taxi										
v. in shops/restaurants										
w. at social functions										
Other(please specify and rate)										
11. speaking										
k. with non-Persian speaking friends										
l. with family										
m. with acquaintances										
n. with strangers										
o. in shops/restaurants										
p. at religious social functions										
q. on the telephone										
r. while travelling abroad										
s. at social functions										
Other(please specify and rate)										
12. writing										
h. personal letters										
i. business letters/forms/job applications										
j. e-mail messages										
k. on the internet										
l. compositions and essays										
m. diaries										
n. notes/messages/memos										
o. translation										
Other(please specify and rate)										

Use the following scale to rate statements 13 to 15:

- 5. Strongly agree
- 4. Agree
- 3. Moderately agree
- 2. Disagree
- 1. Strongly disagree

- 3. a. A good knowledge of English grammar is essential for my academic studies.
 b. A good knowledge of English grammar is essential for my future profession.
 c. A good knowledge of English grammar is essential for my social/private life.

- 4. a. Specialist vocabulary is essential for my academic studies.
 b. Specialist vocabulary is essential for my future profession.
 c. A good general knowledge of English vocabulary is essential in my social/private life.

- 5. a. Good English pronunciation is essential for my academic studies.
 b. Good English pronunciation is essential for my future profession.
 c. Good English pronunciation is essential for my social/private life.

16. My main problem(s) in learning English is/are:

17. Please feel free to add below any comments or views that you think have not been covered in this Questionnaire:

Thank you.