

# ***Perceptions of Islamic Studies Students towards English Language: A Study at Undergraduate Level in southern Punjab***

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## ***Abstract:***

*Mostly Islamic studies students have mixture of the languages in their mind i.e. Arabic, Urdu, English etc. They are facing some linguistic problem in learning their course contents. Presently there is no specific course of study and curriculum suited for this particular purpose. Keeping in view actual problems of the students. It creates the need of consideration to the opinion of students while designing their course contents. The emphasis of this paper is on the perceptions of Islamic Studies students on the importance of learning the English Language for the comprehension of Islamic study course contents. 63 Islamic Studies students from The Islamia University of Bahawalpur and Government Sadiq college women University Bahawalpur were administered with the needs analysis questionnaire. The collected data were analyzed quantitatively through SPSS (version 22). The results of this study shows that students have a positive perception to learn English Language to achieve the success in their subject matter related to Islamic study. The findings of the current study are significant for teachers, Students and policy makers.*

**Keywords:** *Islamic studies, English for Specific Purpose (ESP), Course contents, Undergraduate,*

## **Background of the Study**

English for Specific Purposes (ESP) has given the world a new worldview on how people should communicate. Different fields require different ways of speaking hence the usage of different vocabulary and discourse differ

from one field to another. Realizing the necessity of having different needs in every field makes ESP the most relevant course needed in every field of studies. Speakers must know how to use the language correctly or at least being proficient in the English Language. But knowing the rules of grammar per se is no longer necessary. Students should know the correct grammar forms to be used as well as the jargons needed in their specialized field. In the context of Islamic Studies, students are hardly exposed to the English Language due to many reasons. One of it is the lack of awareness on how useful English Language can be for their field. Many Islamic Studies books and scholarly articles are written in English, for example the best translation of the Quran is in the English Language, which has been translated by Abdullah Yousaf Ali in 1938. By having the language competence, students are more able to understand reading materials written in English by great Muslim scholars and correspondingly, they will be able to preach the knowledge of Islam to people from other religions and make them understand the beauty of Islam and correct their current misconceptions of this religion. This duty lies in the hand of the Islamic Studies students. Students often feel disinterested in learning English because they do not see the connection between the courses that they are taking with English Language. Secondly, the usage of General English's (GE) syllabus does not meet the students' needs. How does it not meet the student's needs – explain here in 2 sentences or so. Thus, the reason why this research is carried out is to identify the needs of English for the Islamic studies students', which would later feed into the design of a syllabus and materials that can cater to their field of study, in this case the Islamic Studies programme. Afterwards this course of study will be named English for Islamic Studies that will instruct the students in the relevant field and teach all the four main language skills. English for special purposes employs principles and procedures in teaching learning process that are different from that used by General English. (Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998). ESP has two main subdivisions. first is English for learning purposes that is called English for Academic Purposes. Here we have teaching of English in the field of medical, technology and science etc. Second division is called English for Occupational purposes. Here English is taught to extend a career or grow in profession e.g English for technicians. Experts say that in ESP, demands and requirements must be investigated first that would be instrumental in designing course and teaching activities. This awareness of requirements is called Need Analysis. (Higgins, 1966; Richterich in Trim in et al., 1973/80; Strevens, 1977; Coffey, 1984). Needs analysis is the most essential step in designing course and teaching methodology. It tells what learner needs to do in achieving specific target. It consists of assessing the perceived needs of the learners and strategies to attain that specific teaching

objectives .In this investigation,, extensive information about learner is collected. In this way, learner's present position is studied so that a specific syllabus and teaching method may be designed for him .Target situation is analyzed in terms of necessities ,wants ,lacks ,aims ,goals , destination of learner , prior knowledge ,targeted knowledge ,techniques of teaching, learning tasks ,resources, methods of assessment etc. This information can be collected through questioning, interviews, observations etc.

Today language information is basic to make due in the worldwide time. The language has affected the fast trade of data. The job of English as a most widely used language is unquestionable as practically all individuals everywhere throughout the world talked and fathom it. Close to it clear upheld by Crystal (2003:3) a language accomplishes a really worldwide status when it builds up an extraordinary job that perceived in each nation. Disregarding English becomes official or unknown dialect of a nation it turns into a general truth for worldwide correspondence. As per Kachru (1992) (referred to in Cetinkaya, 2009) the present status of English on the planet as far as three circles: inward, external and growing circle. Inward hover alludes to districts where the English is the primary language of the speakers, as verification U.S.A, U.K, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. The second is external hover alludes to the locales where English is utilized as a systematized second language because of expansionism included India, Kenya, Malaysia, Singapore ,Zambia and some more. The latter is growing circle alludes to the English as an unknown dialect for global correspondence for these nations are not previous settlements in points of interest Thailand, Indonesia, South Korea, Japan, Turkey, etc. In any case, English is considered as a universal language not just on the grounds that about quarter of the total populace is as of now familiar or capable in English yet English likewise has extraordinary status in pretty much every nation on the planet (Crystal, 2003).English is a ground-breaking language in entire parts of human life as a piece of correspondence and status benefit. It likewise assumes a significant job in numerous areas for example in business, economy, instruction, wellbeing, designing and some more. Moreover, Crystal (2003:4) claims that language can be focused on in a nation's unknown dialect educating despite the fact that this language has no official status. It turns into the language which youngsters are destined to be encouraged when they show up in school, one generally accessible to grown-ups who for reasons unknown, never learnt it or scholarly it gravely in early their training years.

### **English language and Teaching Islamic Subject**

The job of English as a worldwide language is obvious. It is utilized for correspondence among countries, individuals, and media. English is a necessary subject in Pakistan's schools. Today, training Islamic substance

to the world is become the principle point of every Islamic researcher in everywhere throughout the world. This piece of the more extensive idea of incorporating Islam into human information which works over an expansive scope of branches of knowledge (Hasan, 2015). Bringing and acquainting Islamic substance with world by utilizing language. The understudies in Faculty of Islamic Sciences have this vision as the future researchers in showing Islamic substance. They perceive their situation as the future instructors and the requirements of the present world isn't about an educator who sit and show Islamic substance in their mom language, however the necessities of current circumstance is utilizing English to spread and train Islamic substance to the world in the other word is called proclaiming of Islam. They see English as a language of intensity. They accept in the event that they can ace or utilize English for everyday life as well as in encouraging it will give more profit commitment for the humanity. The positive discernment about English indicated that they have experienced the procedure in sifting, overseeing and deciphering an item or circumstance that has basic commitment for their future. In the other hand they do convey Islamic substance to the world by utilizing English in addition they can learn, comprehend and apply the new information that is written in English.

### **Purpose of the Study**

This study seeks to investigate the perception of students from the Islamic studies programme towards English language. Therefore this study will answer the following research questions.

1. How do Islamic studies students perceive the status of English Language?
2. What kind of English language items need to be included in the syllabus for IS?

### **Methodology**

#### **Sample**

The sample consists of 63 semester one Islamic Studies students randomly chosen from a total of 500. They are students from two universities i. e The Islamia University of Bahawalpur and Government Sadiq College Women University of Bahawalpur. These 63 students are required to answer a set of needs analysis questionnaire on EIS and they have been exposed to the English Language since their start of education up to current level. They have also been introduced to various Islamic Studies terms and jargons in their content courses.

#### **Data Collection**

The Instrument used in this study is a set of needs analysis form. Most of the ESP courses begin its process with a needs analysis form. This is the most crucial stage because it will determine the students' needs and it is very important so that the students will be motivated to learn English. EIS is a new branch in the LSP world hence there is no particular sample that

can be used. Nonetheless, this study adapted other needs analysis forms to guide the needs analysis form used in this study. The construction of questions and sections in this needs analysis are based on the framework used by Dudley Evans and St. John (1998) who suggested that any needs analysis form should include the current level of learner's proficiency, his recognized and identified target and available resources and limitations of teaching learning process. The needs analysis form is divided into four different sections. Section A pertains to respondents' personal information or demographics. Section B on the other hand, looks at the language information about the learners. Meanwhile, section C focuses on the language learning information and lastly section D aims to look at the professional communication information of the learners.

### Data Analysis

Data analysis were done using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS-22). The study used descriptive analysis whereby each item were analyzed individually. The data collected will be presented in the form of tables and charts for better understanding of the responses given by the respondents for this specific study.

### RESULTS

This section will look at the data that has been analyzed based on the respondents' responses. The data from section A, on students' personal information is not presented in the form of graphs. It will be discussed in the next section.

Table 1 showing the demography of the participants

Demographic variables		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	51	81.0
	Female	12	19.0
Age	17-20 Years	16	25.4
	21-23 Years	41	65.1
	Above 23 Years	6	9.5
Mother Tongue	Urdu	12	19.0
	Saraiki	38	60.3
	Punjabi	13	20.6

Table 1 represents 81% male and 19% female gender of the study. Age groups of the participants was divided into three categories, 25.4% belonging to 17-20 years age group, 65% belonging to 21-23 years age group and 9.5 were from above 23 years age group. Participants of the study were belonging to three (Urdu, Saraiki and Punjabi) mother tongue group.

Mostly 60.3% Saraiki mother tongue, 20.6 Punjabi and 19% were from Urdu mother tongue back grounds.

Table 2 showing the mean standard Deviation of three factors

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	t-value	p-value	Mean Difference
Language Information about the Learners	Male	51	30.49	5.089	.713	-.745	.459	-1.176
	Female	12	31.67	4.097	1.183			
English as a International Language	Male	51	26.33	4.803	.673	.000	1.000	.000
	Female	12	26.33	4.479	1.293			
Professional Academic Communication	Male	51	25.71	4.356	.610	-.157	.875	-.211
	Female	12	25.92	3.204	.925			

Table 2 in the factor, language information of the learners' shows. Majority of the respondents feel English language difficult due to English – Arabic mixture in their mind while the want to use English. Majority of the respondents have shown their difficulty and confusion in English grammar and vocabulary learning and usage. Results have revealed Islamic study students belonging to both male and female gender, confused about the English prepositional usage. They are also feeling English Language pronunciation and accent difficult. English listening skill of most of the Islamic study students is very poor and they are unable to write correct academic English. Statistical non-significant correlation was found between male and female Islamic studies students.

Most of the participant of the study are aware about the significance of the English language as an international Language and motivated to learn it. They admit learning of English language as the need of the day their course contents are in English language. Most of the respondents think that English language will assist them to communicate in the globe. Majority of the participants of the study think that learning of Islamic studies contents in English language will create job opportunities for them and will also make them able to preach Islam in the western countries. Most of the respondents have correlated their subject expertise with correct English writing and consider English language learning essential to be learnt by them.

As for as responses of the participants are about the factor professional academic communication, according to most of the participants of the study their teachers do not teach course contents in English language and students are unable to have conceptual clarity of their course contents in English language. Most of the respondents have the point of view that their teachers neither explain lesson in English nor do they communicate in English language in the class. Most of the responses are in the favor that Islamic

studies teacher usually teach in Urdu and Arabic language or use code mixing( Urdu, English and Arabic) While teaching in class

Table 3 showing the ANOVA results of three factors with Age Variable

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	f- value	p- value
Language Information about the Learners	17-20 Years	16	31.13	5.365	.799	.455
	21-23 Years	41	30.24	5.029		
	Above 23 Years	6	32.83	1.472		
	Total	63	30.71	4.907		
English as an International Language	17-20 Years	16	27.00	3.950	1.386	.258
	21-23 Years	41	25.71	5.188		
	Above 23 Years	6	28.83	.753		
	Total	63	26.33	4.708		
Professional Academic Communication	17-20 Years	16	26.50	3.521	1.844	.167
	21-23 Years	41	25.10	4.443		
	Above 23 Years	6	28.17	2.229		
	Total	63	25.75	4.139		

Table 3 results indicates analysis of variance results of three factors (language information, English as an International Language and professional academic communication) correlated to three age groups ( 17-20, 21-23 and above 23). P-values indicate statistical non-significant correlation was found among the responses of the participant with respect to age variable.

Table 4 showing the ANOVA results of three factors with Mother tongue Variable

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	f-value	p-value
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Language Information about the Learners	Urdu	12	30.75	6.047	1.829	.169
	Saraiki	38	29.95	4.620		
	Punjab i	13	32.92	4.232		
	Total	63	30.71	4.907		
English as a International Language	Urdu	12	27.58	4.833		
	Saraiki	38	25.50	4.898	1.526	.226
	Punjab i	13	27.62	3.686		
	Total	63	26.33	4.708		
Professional Academic Communication	Urdu	12	25.33	5.280		
	Saraiki	38	25.55	4.032	.433	.651
	Punjab i	13	26.69	3.401		
	Total	63	25.75	4.139		

Table 4 results indicates analysis of variance results of three factors (language information, English as an International Language and professional academic communication) correlated to three age groups (Urdu, Saraiki and Punjabi). P-values indicate statistical non-significant correlation was found among the responses of the participant with respect to Mother variable.

Table 5 showing the Regression results of three factors with Gender Variable

	Mean	Std. Deviation	R-value	P
Gender	1.19	.396		
Language Information about the Learners	30.71	4.907	.095	.459
English as a International Language	26.33	4.708	.759**	.000
Professional Academic Communication	25.75	4.139	.778**	.000

Table 5 results indicates regression results of three factors (language information, English as an International Language and professional academic communication) correlated to two gender groups (male and female). P-values indicate statistical significant correlation was found among the responses of the participant with respect to gender variable and two factors i.e. English as an international language and Professional Academic communication.

Table 6 showing the Regression results of three factors with Age Variable



	Mean	Std. Deviation	R-value	P
Age	1.84	.574		
Language Information about the Learners	30.71	4.907	.035	.784
English as a International Language	26.33	4.708	.759**	.000
Professional Academic Communication	25.75	4.139	.778**	.000

Table 6 results reveals analysis of Regression results of three factors(language information, English as an International Language and professional academic communication) correlated to three age groups( 17-20, 21-23 and above 23). P-values indicate statistical significant correlation was found among the responses of the participant with respect to age variable and two factors i.e. English as an international language and Professional Academic communication.

Table 7 showing the ANOVA results of three factors with Mother tongue Variable

	Mean	Std. Deviation	R-value	p-value
Mother Tongue	2.02	.635		
Language Information about the Learners	30.71	4.907	.146	.252
English as a International Language	26.33	4.708	.759**	.000
Professional Academic Communication	25.75	4.139	.778**	.000

Table 7 results indicates analysis of regression results of three factors (language information, English as an International Language and professional academic communication) correlated to three age groups (Urdu, Saraiki and Punjabi). P-values indicate statistical most significant correlation was found among the responses of the participant with respect to Mother Variable and two factors i.e. English as an international language and Professional Academic communication.

### DISCUSSION

This section discusses the findings gathered by using the methods stated earlier. The discussion focuses on the two research questions of this study. The research questions are repeated here for easy referencing.

1. How do Islamic studies students perceive the status of English Language?
2. What kind of English language items need to be included in the syllabus for IS?

Students of Islamic studies seem to have a positive perception in learning the English Language. They do feel that it is important to learn English as stated in results where most of them agreed that English Language is important to them meanwhile another other group felt that learning the English Language can be interesting correlated to motivation.. Though their mother tongue is either Urdu or Saraiki or Punjabi, as shown in data analysis, they still feel that learning the English Language is important and as seen in results most of the respondents used English Language besides their mother tongue. Though the response on the importance of English is on the positive side, maximum number of the respondents thought that by using the English Language, the learning needs and the target needs of the students who are pursuing this course will not be met if they learn English. This perhaps is mainly due to their weakness in mastering English Language which might hinder them from understanding the real meaning of Quran and related Sunnah knowledge. In addition, they felt that Arabic Language is also important in addition to the English Language. This is the challenge faced by many English language lecturers teaching Islamic Studies students. However, this study argues that it is possible to change their mindset if they are introduced to different types of Islamic related articles at the early part of their tertiary education and if the syllabus and the materials used by the teachers match with their need. When asked which component that they would like to practice more, most of the respondents said that they needed more practice on all the four skills, namely speaking, writing, reading and listening. They felt that they are weak in English due to their difficulty in mastering all these components. The respondents stated that speaking is the most important skill to be acquired, followed by reading, writing and listening in order to enhance the use of the English language in the formal set up. This can be attested in the results indicating that students expect to learn speaking more than any other component in the language skills. The reason behind this is simply because they prefer to become Islamic studies professional and preachers. By having the real knowledge e.g. Islamic Studies, the respondents are aware that it is their responsibility to preach to other people around the world about Islam hence, they feel the importance to master spoken English. In order to enhance the usage of the English Language in the classrooms, the respondents felt that the usage of Islamic related articles as their learning materials is most helpful tool for them to learn English. This is followed with role-playing activities and instructional activities verified from the findings. This is an important factor that any syllabus designer or material developer should be aware of. Because the

respondents clearly stated that they want to focus more on speaking and reading, material developers should bring authentic content materials that make use of jargons and terminologies from the particular specialized discipline into the classroom for the students. If their aim is to preach, then they should be able to speak in English by using the correct jargons and terminologies in their field. This will increase the motivation for students to learn the language or carrier content. Gabriela (2015), in her study which focuses on Target Situation Analysis, believes that the benefit of a syllabus based on Needs Analysis proves to be a motivating factor for ESP apprentices, who see its practical relevance, whereby they can get more actively involved in their learning process and eliminate their fear of foreign language barriers in real professional situation. Needs analysis is a procedure to determine what areas should be included in course to meet the target needs of learner. It locates indispensable things for the learners in some selected field or area. "What the learner should be able to do at the end of the program?" is the question addressed by Need Analysis. Here learner and his destination play the central role. Firstly learner's current competence is assessed .what learner can already do and what more to learn .In addition to this, time for course is estimated ,facilities and equipment's available are checked and constraints are also identified. It also describes difficulties and hindrances in learning process. Need analysis is the basic feature in developing syllabus. It makes instructor enable to use appropriate strategies and methods of teaching. It is believed that using need analysis as a method to gather data from the respondents is the best way in constructing materials for the EIS students as suggested by Sysoyer (2000). Sysoyer claims that Need Analysis is an approach to understand the key requirements of learners to design course and teaching material. (Sysoyer, 2000).

Results show that the focused students have constructive observation toward English language, particularly when showing Islamic substance so as to all individuals in over the world can comprehend about Islam, at that point they can create themselves in looking through new information about Islam in Islamic sources which is written in English brilliant manner is because of their learning language, current scholarly needs and future academic decisions keeps on target to set a decent recognition toward English. They have a similar point of view about English as a lingua franca, if they are acceptable in English they can make their fantasies work out, upheld by Centinkaya (2009) state language students considered English as a universal language that is spoken by a large portion of individuals in everywhere throughout the world. English language job is evident as a mass apparatus of correspondence it is a significant normal language that can associate them to the world.

### CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this research reports on a preliminary study that was performed to gather data on how the students viewed English Language and what they needed if they were given a chance to decide on the elements to be included in their syllabus. A simple needs analysis questionnaire was used to collect the data for this pilot study. It comprised of TSA, LSA and PSA to identify the students' lack, needs and wants (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987). From the findings it can be concluded that by conducting a needs analysis, a syllabus and material developer will be able to come up with a course that will cater to the students' lacks, needs and wants. This is very important because the goal of any LSP courses is to attract students' attention and interest, hence their needs if taken care of will assure the course developer of having a set of fully-motivated students. Students perceived that they needed to improve their speaking and reading skills because their aim is to preach about Islam. Hence, the material developer and syllabus designer should be well aware of this and include these important points when developing the EIS course and materials. EIS is considered new and because of the lack of references and no LSP course in the field of Islamic studies, a new set of needs analysis form was developed and it is felt that this research has contributed a novel perspective in the LSP world. It is recommended that further research should be done to gain more data in order to produce various materials for EIS courses. Research on assessments on EIS too can be done once EIS is implemented.

The positive view of Islamic studies students in instructing Islamic investigations toward English is demonstrated that for entire angles whether you are join up with English division, or you are most certainly not. The central matter is English as a most widely used language, and afterward if the non-local speakers can ace and use it for correspondence their status level will be better than the other who can't ace it. The present impression of understudies in showing learning Islamic investigations towards English language is certain. They have such a fantastic vision to build up their own aptitude in English, at that point on the off chance that they can do well in that ability they will be proficient Islamic instructors who can convey or educate and get the Islamic information from composed or oral sources and they will achieve the proclaiming of Islamic training both for neighborhood and outsiders.

### Recommendations

On the basis of findings and discussions following are the recommendations:

1. Teachers of Islamic studies should use English language in the classroom.
2. Students of Islamic studies should be encouraged on the English language communication.

3. Islamic studies learners must be taught required vocabulary in their first semester of degree program.
4. English Phonology ( sounds, pronunciation and accent) should be included in the course of Islamic studies students.
5. A proper English listening practice must be the part of Islamic studies students.
6. Islamic studies students must be given training on English language writing skills.
7. Conceptual clarity about all terminologies related to Islamic knowledge must be given in English language in addition to Arabic and Urdu.
8. Students of Islamic studies should qualify IELTS.

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