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## The English Language Vocabulary Needs of Yemeni Students, 12<sup>th</sup> Grade, in the Light of 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skill Requirements

Noman Mosleh Mosaed Alsayadi<sup>1\*</sup>, Qaid D. A. Farea<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Department of English Studies, Faculty of Arts, Ibb University, Yemen

<sup>2</sup> Department of Curriculum and Teaching Methods, Faculty of Education, Ibb University, Yemen

\*Email: [nomanalsayadi@ibbuniv.edu.ye](mailto:nomanalsayadi@ibbuniv.edu.ye)

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*EL Vocabulary Needs,*

*Needs Analysis,*

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### Abstract:

For developing the current *English Course For Yemen-6 (ECY-6)* of Grade 12 (G12), this study investigated Yemeni G12 students' EL Vocabulary needs in the light of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, mainly from the perceptions of the enrolled G12 students and EFL teachers in the public schools in Ibb City during the study-year 2019-2020. It also examined if there were statistically significant differences between the group of male and female G12 students themselves and the group of G12 students and EFL teachers in their perceptions. The tool was G12 Students and EFL Teachers' Open-ended Questionnaires with a randomly selected sample of 356 students and 19 EFL teachers (both males and females) in Al-Dihaar and Al-Mashannah Districts in Ibb City. Statistical Package of Social Sciences (SPSS) specifically Cronbach's Alpha, Means, Standard deviation were used. *Recognizing Technology-keywords such as install, uninstall, download, configure, etc.* scored the first rank with very high mean value (4.90) as the most important needs. This study strongly recommended that ECY-6 should be updated immediately accordingly to fulfill G12 students' 21<sup>st</sup> EL vocabulary needs.

# The English Language Vocabulary Needs of Yemeni Students,12<sup>th</sup> Grade, in the Light of 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skill Requirements

احتياجات طلبة الصف الثاني عشر لتعلم مفردات اللغة الانجليزية على ضوء متطلبات القرن الواحد والعشرين- مدارس مدينة إب الحكومية كنموذج

نعمان مصلح مسعد أحمد<sup>1</sup>، قائد ديوان فارع<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>قسم دراسات إنجليزية، كلية الآداب، جامعة إب، اليمن

<sup>2</sup>قسم مناهج وطرائق التدريس، كلية التربية، جامعة إب، اليمن

\*Email: [nomanalsayadi@ibbuniv.edu.ye](mailto:nomanalsayadi@ibbuniv.edu.ye)

الكلمات المفتاحية:	الملخص:
احتياجات مفردات اللغة الإنجليزية، تحليل الاحتياجات، مهارات القرن 21	من أجل تطوير منهج اللغة الانجليزية لطلبة الصف الثاني عشر في اليمن، هدفت هذه الدراسة الى تقصي احتياجات طلبة الصف الثاني عشر لتعلم مفردات اللغة الانجليزية في ضوء متطلبات القرن ال(21) و درجة اهميتها من وجهة نظر كلٍ من طلبة الصف 12 و معلمي اللغة الإنجليزية لمعرفة درجة أهميتها واطهار أي فروق دالة إحصائية بين آراء الطلبة(ذكورًا و اناثًا) من جهة وبينهم و بين المعلمين من جهة أخرى. ووفقا للمنهج الوصفي، تم توزيع استبانتين على عينة عشوائية من المعلمين و الطلبة ( 19 – 356) في مدارس مدينة اب الحكومية للعام الدراسي 2019-2020م. و بعد تحليل البيانات وصفيًا واستدلاليًا باستخدام الأساليب والحقيبة الإحصائية في العلوم الاجتماعية (SPSS)، كانت ابرز النتائج هي ( تعلم مفردات التكنولوجيا في مادة اللغة الانجليزية) حيث حصلت على درجة عالية جدا من حيث الأهمية من وجهات نظر الطلبة ومعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية. وأوصت الدراسة بضرورة تطوير محتوى منهج المادة في ضوء نتائج الدراسة الحالية من أجل تلبية احتياجاتهم المعاصرة في مفردات اللغة الانجليزية للقرن الواحد والعشرين.

## 1. Introduction

English Language (EL) is still the international language franca, so most of the world countries teach it at schools and universities. Furthermore, any EL curriculum must be updated periodically mainly from the perceptions of its main users (students and teachers) through needs analysis (NA) in order to meet the emerging and up-to-date EL needs. Otherwise, this EL curriculum is not a needs-based but an old-fashioned one.

As well as being the international lingua franca, English language (EL) serves as the language of business, advertising, research and higher education, culture, entertainment, etc. Al-Mekhlafi (2017) viewed EL as a global medium of communication. Also, Gradual (2006) pointed out that EL is a main factor of globalization (as cited in Jia-Huey 2007, p. 1). Similarly, Jackson (2004) stated that EL teachers should develop their learners' requirements needed for global competency. Also, Stewart (2007) stated that learners should develop their global competence.

In addition, needs are not fixed (Soruc, 2012). So, today's EL needs, uses and demands are actually different from those of the previous century due to globalization, and digitalization. Globalization and digitalization of 21<sup>st</sup> century have reshaped communication affecting how and with whom we communicate and deeply altering the terrain of EL education (Lotherington & Jenson, 2011). As a result, the success of the world depends greatly on the ability of individuals to function as successful members of this small village (The Languages and Literatures Department of St. John's University 2013). Thus, EFL and ESL students are considered "a complex, energetic, and tech-savvy individual" (Crockett, 2015, p. 2). As a result, EL curricula must be developed and updated continuously in order to meet their students' actual EL needs.

Pedagogically speaking, any existing ELT curriculum must be updated, and developed from time to time mainly from the perceptions of students and their teachers. Richards (2013) argued that EL teachers' and learners' interactions is central in driving the teaching-learning process. Involvement of learners and teachers is a key factor in determining success in EL programmes (Nunan, 2010 and Thurman as cited in Al-saadi

2013, p.273). In addition, Al-Hamlan and Baniabdelrahman (2013) have argued that "Syllabus is one of the ways to applying the already existing curriculum to the personal needs of teachers and learners" (p.120).

The procedures used for identifying and gathering these students' needs are called Needs Analysis (NA) which have been proved as a fundamental method in either designing a new ESL/EFL curriculum or in developing an existing one by Hutchinson & Waters (1987), Long (2005), Nation and Macalister (2010), Tudor (1996), Richards (2010), Tzotzou (2014), Priyanka, Asyiah and Febriani (2017), Aknabi (2017), Jinzhu (2018), Sabarun (2019), Komlosi-Ferdinand (2018), etc.

ECY is merely a ready-made, top-down ELT curriculum that comes from the Ministry of Education despite the idea of needs-based curriculum which has become famous in the literature of ESL, EFL and ESP designing courses. For example, Al-Naqeeb (2012, p. 11-12) asserts, "the choice of ECY was taken by the Research Center and Educational Development (CED) because this course is specially prepared for Arab students and considered to be communicative-oriented one". Also, Al-Tamimi (2006, p.17) points out "Generally speaking, ECY has been adopted to be taught in Yemeni schools in the belief that it focuses on the communicative aspects of the language.". Not only that, but ECY has been originally written for Qatar State Farae (Personal interview, 2018).

Based on the above-mentioned NA data, this study aimed at answering the following questions:

1. What are the English language vocabulary needs of Grade Twelve students in the light of 21<sup>st</sup> century requirements in Ibb City public schools in the study-year 2019-2020 as perceived by G12 Students and their EL Teachers?
2. Are there any statistically significant differences of perceptions among G12 students group ( Males and Females) due to the gender variable regarding the EL vocabulary needs of G12 students in the light of the 21<sup>st</sup> century requirements in Ibb City public schools in the study-year 2019-2020?

3. Are there any statistically significant differences of perceptions among G12 students and EFL teachers group concerning the EL vocabulary needs of G12 students in the light of the 21<sup>st</sup> century requirements in Ibb City public schools in the study-year 2019-2020?

## 2. Methods

This study was conducted under quantitative research approach to analyze the G12 students' EL vocabulary needs in the light of the 21<sup>st</sup> century requirements. Quantitative approach presents a holistic picture of the studies phenomena (Malik & Hamied, 2016).

The research population were the enrolled 4537 students of G12 (2110 males and 2427 females) and 76 EFL teachers (6 males and 41 females), in the study-year 2019-2020 in Ibb city, Yemen. In fact, the study population is divided into two educational districts (Al-Dihaar and Almashannah), and each educational district has a number of secondary Schools which are in turn divided into male and female schools. So, it was essential to use a random sample. Hence, the random samples were 356 G12 students and 19 EFL teachers in 9 public secondary schools representing (10%) of the G12 students population and (20%) of the EFL teachers population. Moreover, the data were collected through G12 students' and EFL teachers' close-ended questionnaires. Both questionnaires contained the same EL vocabulary needs with 4 items, and they were translated into Arabic to ensure the participants' understanding (See Appendix A). Both questionnaires were based on the five-point Likert scale with *strongly disagree*, *disagree*, *not sure*, *agree*, and *strongly agree*. The first drafts of the questionnaires were given to 16 validators (See Appendix B) from Yemen, Oman and the UK to examine if it would report valid scores. The 19 validators were given the questionnaires via their Emails with a covering letter which included the objectives and the questions of the study (See Appendix C). The 4 items were remain the same after the step of validation. The questionnaires' reliability was assured through piloting them in the two famous secondary schools: Mujamaa Al-Saeed Secondary School (Females) and Al-Nahadah Secondary School (Males) on November 5<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup>, 2019. Almost 30

students were randomly selected from the two different secondary schools. They were 15 male students and 15 female students. The EFL teachers of each school were chosen too. They were 2 males and 2 females. The Cronbach's Alpha coefficient for the students and teachers questionnaire was 0.84, and this revealed that the questionnaires were acceptable since they were used for the first time.

## 3. Study Findings and Discussion

After gathering the quantitative data of the questionnaires, this raw data was coded by assigning codes and numbers to the variables. A detailed *codebook* was used in order to avoid any misplacing or losing of the keys of the data. The frequency provided next to each statement were given a score e.g., strongly disagree, disagree, not sure, agree, and strongly agree, which helped in coding the subjects' responses as well as in calculating the mean values and standard deviations (See Table 1 below).

**Table 4.1:** Criteria for Interpreting G12 Students & EFL Teachers Questionnaires' Results

Values	Scale	Degree
4.2-1-5	Strongly Agree	Very High
3.41-4.20	Agree	High
2.61-3.40	Not sure	Moderate
1.81-2.60	Disagree	Low
1-1.80	Strongly Disagree	Very Low

The data was processed by using Statistical Package of Social Sciences (SPSS), and the results were discussed to answer the study questions. First, the total degree of importance of EL vocabulary needs of the G12 students' and EFL teachers' questionnaires from the perceptions of them both was discussed (see Tables 4.2). After that the means scores of responses for each *item* included in G12 students' and EFL teachers' questionnaires were discussed separately from the perceptions of G12 students and EFL teachers questionnaires (see Tables 4.3). Then, the means scores of T-values of male and female G12 students' perceptions of EL vocabulary needs was discussed (see Table 4.4). Finally, the total means scores of U and Z-values of G12 students' and EFL teachers' perceptions of EL vocabulary needs were also discussed (see Table 4.5).

### • Findings and Discussion Related to G12 Students' and EFL Teachers' Perceptions about EL Vocabulary Needs

**Table 4.2:** Total Means, Standard Deviations, Importance Degree of EL Vocabulary Needs from G12 Students' & EFL Teachers' Perceptions

Domain	Mean	SD	ID
Total Mean of Vocabulary Needs	4.73	0.36	Very High

*SD= Standard Deviation. ID= Importance Degree. VH=Very High*

In details, Table 4.2 mentioned above shows the total mean score of EL Vocabulary Needs in the light of 21<sup>st</sup> century requirements from the G12 students' and EFL teachers' perceptions. The G12 students' and EFL teachers' perceptions were very high since the total mean score was (4.73) and the standard deviation was

**Table 4.3:** EL Vocabulary Needs Items According to Their Means Values, Standard Deviations, Importance Degree & Rank from G12 Students' & EFL Teachers' Perceptions

Items No. as mentioned in Questionnaire	Vocabulary Needs	Means	SD	ID	Rank
1	Recognizing Technology- keywords such as install, uninstall, download, configure, etc.	4.90	0.31	VH	1
2	Recognizing university context language keywords such as professor, assignment, lecturer, etc.	4.81	0.46	VH	2
3	Recognizing social-media apps communication keywords such as tweet, video-call, share a post, etc.	4.61	0.65	VH	3
4	Recognizing non-governmental Organization keywords such as aid, coordinator, etc.	4.59	0.66	VH	4

*SD= Standard Deviation. ID= Importance Degree. H= High. VH=Very High*

As shown in Table 4.3above, item 1 *Recognizing Technology- keywords such as install, uninstall, download, configure, etc.* scored the first rank with very high mean value (4.90) from the perceptions of the G12 students and EFL teachers. This indicates that both G12 students and their EFL teachers are aware of the importance of the technology key words. This can be due to that most of today's G12 students have technical devices such as Ipods, smart cell phones, etc. Item 2 *Recognizing university context language keywords such as professor, assignment, lecturer, etc.* scored the second rank with a very high value (4.81). This result shows that G12 students and their EFL teachers are

(0.36). This shows clearly that the degree of importance of the four EL vocabulary needs items is very high from the perceptions of the G12 students and their EFL teachers. This result indicates that ECY-6 actually lacks the up-to-date EL vocabulary which belongs to the 21<sup>st</sup> century life.

### • Mean Score of Importance Degree of Each Item in EL Vocabulary Needs

As illustrated in Table 4.3 below, the means values of EL vocabulary needs domain from the perceptions of the G12 students and EFL teachers in the light of the 21<sup>st</sup> century requirements occur within (4.90) to (4.59). That is, the items (1, 2, 3 & 4) were ranked in Table 4.3below in descending order according to their means values (4.90, 4.81, 4.61 & 4.59), standard deviations (0.31, 0.46, 0.65 & 0.66) and importance degrees (very high, very high, very high & very high) respectively. (See Table 4.3) below

aware of the need for the words used in the university context. It also show that they are going to need these university words immediately after one year of school graduation. Item 3 *Recognizing social-media apps communication keywords such as tweet, video-call, share a post, etc.* scored the third rank with also a high mean value (4.61). This reveals that G12 students and their EFL teachers are in great need of these words because they face these words every day. This also indicates that they use these words in their academic life. Further, item 4 *Recognizing non-governmental Organization keywords such as aid, coordinator, etc.)* scored the last rank with a very high mean value (4.59), too. This result

shows that G12 students and their EFL teachers find these words very important due to the spread of organizations today.

#### • Findings and Discussion Related to G12 Students Gender

Regarding the differences among the G12 students related to gender in Table 4.4 below, the t-test for the two independent samples was employed in order to measure the statistically significant differences between the means values of the perceptions of the G12 male and female students. The t-value obtained for the *Vocabulary Needs* included in G12 students

questionnaires is not (-1.03) statistically significant at (0.05) level because the p-value of the *Vocabulary Needs* is (0.19) higher than (0.05). The mean value (4.75) of the G12 male students is higher than the mean value (4.70) of G12 female students, so there are no statistically significant differences between the G12 male and female students. This result shows clearly that both male and female G12 students find the four items of EL vocabulary needs very important for them all.

**Table 4.4:** Total Means, Standard Deviations & T-values of G12 Male Vs. Female Students' Perceptions of EL Vocabulary Needs Regarding Gender

Domain	Gender	Students	Mean	SD	DF	t-value	P. value	Level of Significance
EL Vocabulary Needs	F	184	4.70	0.39	354	-1.3	0.19	Not Sig.
	M	172	4.75	0.33				

Note. S.D= Standard deviation; DR= Degree of Freedom; Sig.= Significant

#### • Findings and Discussion Regarding G12 Students and EFL Teachers Group

In order to measure the statistically significant differences between the means values of

the G12 students and EFL teachers' perceptions included in the G12 students' and EFL teachers' questionnaires regarding *EL Vocabulary Needs*, Mann-Whitney (U test) test was used.

**Table 4.5:** Total Means Ranks, U & Z Values of EL Vocabulary Needs From G12 Students' & EFL Teachers' Perceptions Group

Domain	Type	No of Ss & Ts	Mean Rank	Ranks Sum	U Value	Z Value	Significance Value	Level of Significance
EL Vocabulary Needs	Ss.	356	183.01	65,151.50	1,605.50	-4.16	0.000	Sig.
	Ts	19	281.50	5,348.00				
	Ts	19	287.00	5,453.00				

Note. Ss = Students; Ts. = Teachers; Sig.= Significant

As shown in Table 4.5 above, the U-value obtained for the *Vocabulary Needs* (1.605.50) is statistically significant at (0.05) level because the sig. value of *Vocabulary Needs* is (0.000) lower than (0.05) level. The mean rank of the EFL Teachers (281.50) is higher than the mean rank of the G12 students (183.01). Therefore, there are statistically significant differences in favor of the EFL Teachers. This significance reveals clearly that EFL teachers are more aware of these EL vocabulary needs than their G12

students. This result indicates that EFL teachers can represent these needs in their EFL classrooms.

#### 4. Recommendations

The following points were recommended strongly:

- 1- The time devoted for EL subject in Yemeni public school time table is fair enough for achieving positive outcomes; 5 periods a week at the basic level and 6 at the second-

ary level. Thus, this time is more than enough for infusing the four EL vocabulary needs in the light of the 21<sup>st</sup> century requirements identified in this study.

- 2- Furthermore, Yemeni government should conduct a large-scale needs analysis which includes large number of ELT curriculum stakeholders e.g., students, EFL supervisors and EFL teachers, parents and any other effected parties by the reform of the ELT curriculum, ECY.
- 3- It is strongly recommended that the Ministry of Education in Yemen should review its policy regarding ECY-6 vocabulary needs, so it can prepare EFL students of G12 to cope effectively in their academic life or elsewhere.
- 4- EFL students of G12 should be given opportunities where they can practice these new findings of EL uses through authentic tasks and realia.
- 5- These requirements will promote students' EL competence, technology use ability, motivation, etc.
- 6- The Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research should cooperate with Yemeni universities to update an up-to-date BA English programme at collage of Educations according to these needs
- 7- A limitation of this study was that the inability of involving the official members in the Ministry of Education due to the shortage of the study's budget. So, it is strongly recommended that a large-scale needs analysis should be conducted by any further studies.

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