

## **CHAPTER SIX**

### **RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

In this chapter the results of the study are presented and discussed in six main sections. The first section describes the subjects' demographic variables. The second section is an evaluation of the English Language Program. The third section looks into the evaluation of students language proficiency. Section four investigates subjects' perception about English and Arabic as mediums of instruction in the University, while section five discusses the orientation of subjects to study English. The last Section looks into the use of English and Arabic for Academic purposes in the University.

#### **6.1 CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SAMPLE**

The subjects who participated in this study were randomly selected from three different types of population: students, English language instructors and subjects' lecturers at The University of Khartoum in Sudan. For the students group a total of 250 subjects were selected. Out of that number, 204 completed questionnaires were returned and this constitutes a return rate of around 70%. The 204 completed questionnaires were used in the final analysis.

##### **6.1.1 Students background information**

Out of the 204 questionnaires returned, 110 were from the Faculty of Arts, which constitutes 53.9% of the total turnout. While 94 came from the Faculty of Science, that is 46.1%. The majority of the students (57.8%) came from third year in Faculties, 19.6%

from fourth year group, 11.3% from second year and another 11.3% from fifth year group.

### **6.1.2 English Language Instructors' background information**

This group consists of 9 instructors who responded to the questionnaire out of the total population of 15 teachers. All of them were Sudanese nationals, non-native speakers of English. They spent their schooling in Sudanese government school, where all subjects were taught in Arabic, but, English was offered as a subject from Form One (Year 7) upwards, with about between 5 to 8 periods a week. When they entered the University, in the Faculties of Arts or Education, they studied General English as a compulsory subject in the first year. From the second year onward, they specialized in English as a Second Language, where they study courses on English Linguistics and Literature until graduation. All University Instructors should obtain an accumulative average of 3.00 or above to continue their studies for the fifth year, after which they graduate with a degree of "Honors".

All instructors who graduated from the Faculty of Arts have no solid background on teaching methodology, syllabus design or preparation of material. The reason is that in the Department of English of the Faculty of Arts the focus was on teaching courses closer to Theoretical Linguistics than Applied Linguistics. Examples of these courses are English phonetics and phonology, English Syntax, Lexical Studies (morphology), Semantics, Discourse Analysis, Stylistics and Translation. In addition to that there is a literature component in the Program. There is only one course of Applied Linguistics called "English as a Second Language". This situation was different from what was taught in the Department of English in the Faculty of Education in the same University. There they teach courses related to Applied Linguistics which include: Syllabus Design, Materials Production, Testing and Evaluation, Lesson Planning, Class Management, Educational Administration and Methodology of Teaching. The Faculty of Arts' English

Department was not actually intended to produce "language teachers", that was the job of the Faculty of Education which has been established for this purpose. The result was that, the graduates of the Faculty of Arts have the knowledge about language, but they lack the methodology of teaching it to others in addition to their lack of experience and training. Now; the graduates of the Faculty of Arts constitute the core of the teaching staff in the current English Program.

It was found that 33.3% of English instructors got their degrees before 1990 (the year in which the Arabicisation Policy was implemented), while the majority of them (66.6%) graduated after 1990. This is a significant percentage as the majority of the English Instructors were a product of the same Policy. Some of them only enrolled in the University after 1990. This result also shows that the program started with fresh graduates, who started their career of teaching at the University. They lack the experience that qualifies them to deal with difficult situations such as handling large classes, preparing materials and evaluating students. The University should have appointed instructors from among the graduates of the Faculty of Education who have spent some time teaching in schools or in other universities.

Investigations on this regard revealed that 55.6% of the instructors hold postgraduate degrees, while 11.1% have certificates of teaching English in addition to their B.A. degree. Only 33.3% of the respondents hold the basic degree without any extra qualification. This result shows that, in term of academic qualification, the instructors are very highly qualified. This high qualification is actually one of the strongest points of the teaching staff in the Program.

88.9% of the instructors said that they joined the University Service after 1990 and 11.1% joined before that date. The 11.1% recruited before the 1990 were attached to the English Language Service Unit (ELSU) which taught Scientific English to the students in Faculty of Science prior to Arabicization. This result shows that many English

teachers were appointed after the implementation of the Arabicization Policy. However, the number was not big enough to cater for the huge influx of students who joined the University after 1991 due to the Policy of doubling and tripling of the intake in all exiting universities.

Both the date of graduation and the date of joining to the University service unit indicate that the teachers had little or no experience in teaching before they joined the English Program. For most of them, teaching in this University was their first experience. If this program is to be successful, then the University needs to recruit teachers with sound experience to support the new comers and train them. The high qualifications of the graduates of the Faculty of Arts are needed, but this could suit teaching English as specialization at the University level rather than teaching its basics.

The respondents were asked about the training that they got since they joined the University of Khartoum. Their responses showed that 77.8% of them received in-service training, while 22.2 did not. The result showed that the University has been putting some effort in training the teaching staff and boosting the position of the English language.

44.4% of the participants said that their teaching load was more than 10 periods per week, while 22.6% teach between 6 to 10 hours and 33.3% teach 4 to 6 hours only. This shows that the majority of the instructors have a very light teaching load per week. This fact could be exploited by splitting the big groups into smaller ones, in that way the teachers would have an increased load, but fairly smaller classes.

The subject lecturers are professors who teach specialized subjects. 53.3% were selected from the Faculty of Arts and 46.7% from the Faculty of Science. From their responses, it was found that 73.7% of them taught 1 to 2 courses on that semester, while 26.7% taught between 3 to 5 courses (each course has 3 teaching hours per week).



## **6.2 EVALUATION OF THE CURRENT ENGLISH PROGRAM**

In this section, we will attempt to evaluate the perspective of the participants towards the English Program that has been implemented at the University of Khartoum after the Arabicisation Policy. The investigation focuses on finding answers to the concerns, which are presented in the following three sub-sections.

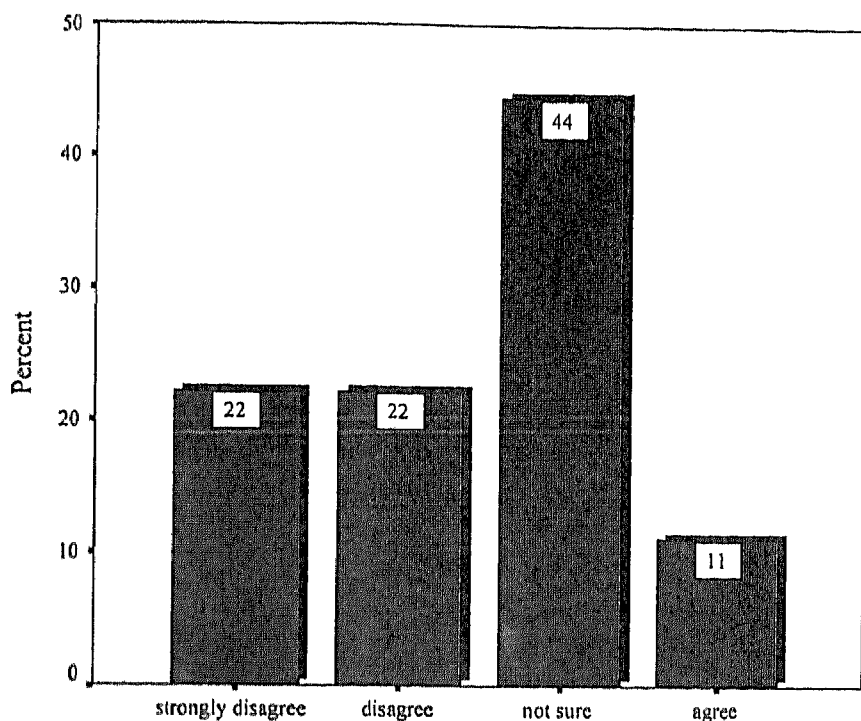
1. **PLANNING** which includes (planning for the language, objectives of teaching English and needs analysis).
2. **INSTRUCTIONAL**, which includes (syllabus, teaching materials and perception of outcome of the program).
3. **ADMINISTRATIVE**, which includes (administration, funding and some practical difficulties faced in the teaching setting).

### **6.2.1 PLANNING FOR THE ENGLISH PROGRAM**

Three issues will be investigated under this section, they include, planning for the program, objectives of the program and learners' needs analysis. The percentages and graphs are used here to give a more elaborative discussion for the three issues under investigation.

#### **6.2.1.1 Planning for the English Language**

Percentages of the responses on planning for the role of English in the University of Khartoum show that 44% of the English language instructors disagreeing with the statement that the University has planned for the English Program. Strangely, another 44% of the respondents indicated that they were not sure. And 11% believed that the University has planned for the role of English (Figure 6.1, page 177)



**Figure 6.1:** Instructors response to a statement that planning was done for the English Program

The reason why the majority of respondents believed that the University has not planned for the role of English is because they have not seen obvious any sign to indicate that planning has been done. For example, teachers have not seen any research project set to survey the situation, design the syllabus and prepare the materials, as was done by the University of Malaya when faced with the same situation in mid and late seventies, before they embarked teaching English. The other missing sign was that teachers have not seen the University organizing any workshops, conferences or seminars to help plan for the role of English in the light of the Arabicisation Policy. The University of Khartoum has not used any instrument to gather information to help determine the nature of English Program to be offered. That is why the majority of teachers believed that there was no planning done in preparation for the current English Program.

This lack of planning was caused by the time frame given to the University to comply with the Arabicization Policy. The University's Administration was completely occupied with meeting the deadline for implementation. Everybody at the top management wants to make sure that lecturers abide by the directive and start to teach in Arabic. Any resistance to that trend was considered an offence and mostly interpreted as opposition to the newly self-installed government. In this atmosphere planning for English ranked second in the University's priorities.

Some issues, which came together as a package along with Arabicization, also undermined the University's ability to focus on English. They included challenges such as doubling the number of students' intake, the abolishment of free food and accommodation privileges for students and the sharp increase in tuition fees. These problems led to violent students demonstrations in which three students were killed in clashes with police, and ended up with closing down of the University for almost six months. The researcher was an eye witness to these events when he was a student at the same university during that time. Other internal challenges that might have affected the planning capabilities of the university was the sacking of around 70 senior teaching staff in 1990/1991 and the migration of several hundred staff to Arab and Western countries either in protest or in search for better paid jobs.

Faced with these monumental changes, the University gave little time to plan for English under the new Arabisation Policy. Even without all these distractions, it was nearly impossible to formulate a policy as far-reaching as a language policy in a matter of months. The experience of the University of Malaya, for example, has shown that it might take 10 years to plan, prepare the materials and make the full transition from English to the national language as a medium.

The many "not sure" responses could be explained in two ways. First, may be the teachers were honest about the answer as around 66% of them indicated in the

demographic section that they joined the University service after 1990. So they were not aware whether the University has taken any steps to plan for the English program or not. The interpretation for the "not sure" responses is that teachers were not involved in any planning made, this made them unaware for the steps taken in this regard. This interpretation supports a claim raised during interviews that all decisions regarding English were taken at "higher levels" and teachers were not consulted on the planning and running of the Program.

The large percentage of instructors who were "not sure" could also be interpreted to mean that some respondents were reluctant to reveal their opinions if they run contrary to matters related to political decision. Some of them might have believed that there was no planning done, but they were intimidated to express that openly, that is why they preferred the response "not sure". There was an understandable fear among some lecturers from being labeled as opponents to the government, as the whole issue of Arabicization was highly politicized. It was a sensitive matter because it was related to the overall policy adopted by the government to consolidate the Islamic and Arabic identity of the whole country.

The central government took a political decision to Arabicize the medium of instruction and directed the universities to make the teaching of English compulsory. The universities on their part took quick decisions to teach all subjects in Arabic and ordered English to be a "University Requirement" subject that all students need to study and pass before they could be awarded their degrees. What happened in the two cases was policy making, but as Robin (1981) noted, policymaking is not planning. People need to sit and study the policy carefully, read the reality of the situation, decide on the requirement for change and set a timetable to carry out the implementation.

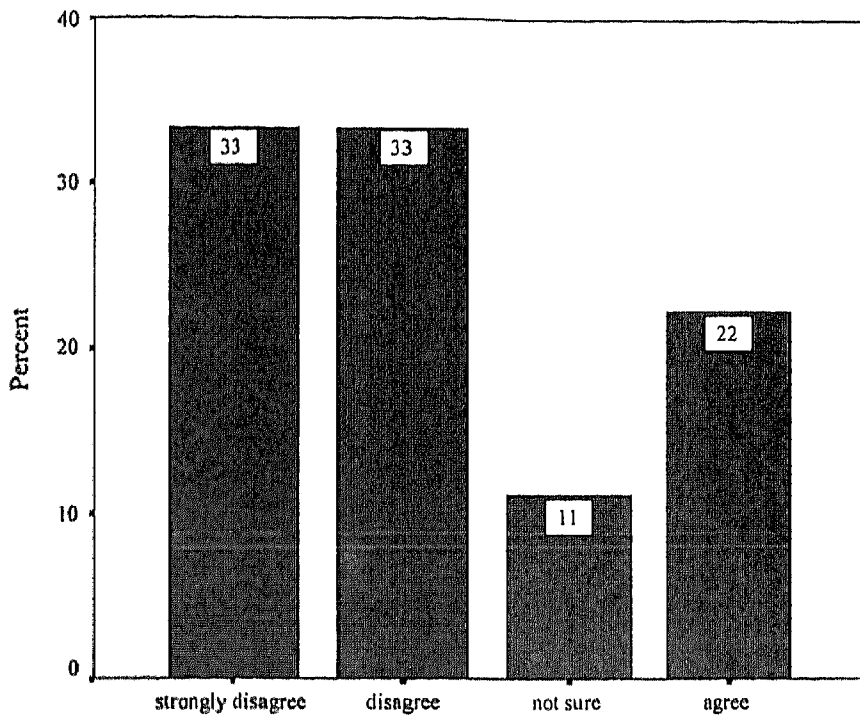
Robin (1983) cited an example of a lack of planning for the position of the foreign language requirement in U.S. universities similar to the case of University of Khartoum. She found that in these universities, the language requirement was established without specifying what the skills to be attained were, without considering students' need for these skills and without considering the social opportunities to use the foreign language.

Faced with the same dilemma in the Nigerian context, Emenyonu (1989) felt that it was not enough for a language to be taught. Its status must be defined, and its role and expectations must be spelt out to facilitate decisions on curriculum, methodology, preparation of teachers, and the nature and provision of texts and other resources that are important to a teaching-learning situation. The absence of a clear objective for teaching English in the university, coupled with the lack of planning, makes the answer to the next question about the syllabus more predictable.

#### **6.2.1.2 Objectives of English Language Teaching**

The results obtained from the respondents revealed a serious reality regarding the clarity of objective of teaching English in the University. 66.6% of the English language Instructors who participated in this study believed that there were no clear objectives for teaching English at the University, while another 11.1% indicated that they were not sure. Only 22% thought that there were clear objectives for the role of English (Figure 6.2, page 181)

These findings are closely linked to those of the planning variable discussed above. The majority of teachers disagree with the statement that the university has clear objectives for teaching English. This type of perception could be attributed to two reasons.



**Figure 6.2:** Instructors opinion on whether the University has a defined objective for the role of English

First, the lack of orientation for teachers of the stated objectives, which means very poor communication of goals from the part of the Administration of University Requirement and its English Department with their staff. The other reason is the obvious discrepancy between what stated in the program’s syllabus document and what was actually taught in class, as will be explained in the sections on syllabus and materials. The mismatch created a sense of confusion among teachers and made them feel that there is no clear objective as each teacher is teaching what he/she thinks is right.

The University of Malaya in Malaysia, for example, originally an English medium university, had long realized that there had to be a defined policy on English language. in order to preserve its status in national education. Asmah (1979) affirmed that, “the University (of Malaya) is the only institution in the whole country which has a defined policy on the teaching of English, and that policy is teaching English for reading comprehension.” (pg. 25)

The above results are not good news, as program objectives constitute the compass that determines the direction the program is heading. What was revealed above was that almost two thirds of the teachers directly involved in the program admitted that they were not aware of the objectives of the program in which they were involved and committed to its advancement. This fact has certainly affected the whole teaching processes such as preparation of materials, teaching methodology and activities and left them without direction as well.

The above result shows that the instructors were not even aware of the objectives of the course that were stated in the Four-year Syllabus which was designed by the University in 1993. A critical look at the three objectives that the syllabus pledged to achieve by the end of the course reveals that the objectives of the course themselves need to be revised to address the purposes for which students need to study and use English. The objectives are stated as below:-

1. To bring the students, on graduation, up to a level of satisfactory general competence in English Language in the four skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing. (Specifically, to read analytically and be able to interpret literature relevant to their specific discipline and to express themselves clearly and intelligibly both in speaking and writing as well as to understand lectures and seminars given in English and to be able to write coherent notes and take part in such lectures.)
2. The course will simultaneously develop a specific competence related to the academic field of study, where English is relevant, and to future postgraduate professional requirement.
3. The course will provide sufficient training in translation from Arabic to English geared to the students' studies and professional competence.

The three aims mentioned above are a clear manifestation for the lack of the overall vision that is related to the objective of teaching English in the University and the

immediate needs of students. If we put as a target for teaching English, the training of students in English to enable them to access library textbooks and reference books written in English, then the three aims mentioned above should be questioned.

The first aim, which puts the four language skills on a par with each other, seems unrealistic and irrelevant. It is unrealistic because the time allocated for English teaching (2 hours per week) is not enough, and the class size is too big (over 200 students in some classes), the physical setting does not support communicative language methodology (lecture hall with fixed benches) and the lack of teaching aids and facilities such as tape recorders, OHP, microphones, and sometimes no electricity. All these factors make the teaching of the four skills and reach a reasonable level seems impossible. The irrelevancy of this aim comes from the fact that students do not need all the four skills to function successfully in the university in the current situation. Since all lectures, seminars and class discussions were carried in Arabic, this makes listening and speaking skills obsolete and of a lesser importance to the students. On the other hand, since all exam questions are set in Arabic and the assignments are expected be submitted in the same language, the writing skill loses its relevance in the academic life of students. Only reading skills are considered of a central and direct role in performing academic activities in the light of changing the medium of instruction to the national language. Students need to read, understand and extract information from authentic material in their field of specialization as proven that most of the existing library resources are available in English. Students need to be trained in reading skill and strategies of extracting meanings, and be familiarized with the terminology and vocabulary in their field to enable them to access these resources. To achieve that, this aim should be narrowed down as follows,

"To bring the students up to a satisfactory level in the reading skill to enable them to make use of all library resources to the extent that they will be able to comfortably read,



fully comprehend and criticize material in their field. The teaching of the other three skill should only be considered in the context of supporting the reading skill".

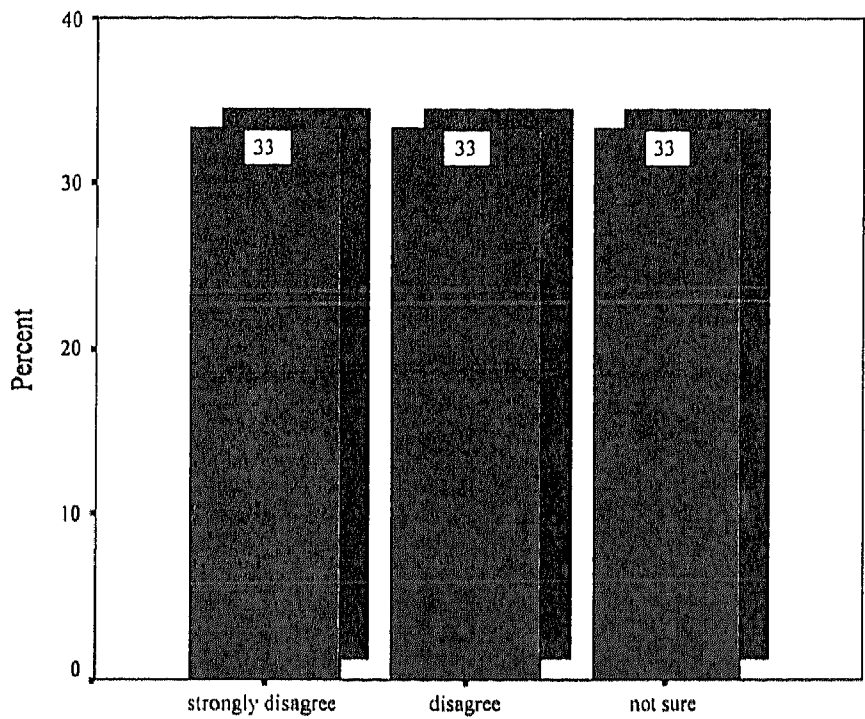
The second aim for teaching English as specified above, seems unspecific and rather ambiguous. It is difficult to explain exactly what the University meant to achieve here. It is not clear what 'specific competence" refers to. On the other hand, there is mention of "future postgraduate professional requirement". In our opinion the future needs of students should not be a factor in determining the nature of English Program. Furthermore, English has never been a determinant requirement in the job market in the majority of institutions in Sudan after independence, though knowing English is a privilege. We believe that the current English Course should be tailored to address the challenges that students face in their undergraduate studies only. Different programs designed for those purposes should address any other deferred needs.

The third aim also appears to be irrelevant in the sense that students do not need to translate the texts that they read. What they need is to develop the paraphrasing and summarizing skills that enable them to understand the basic ideas in the texts and rewrite them in their own words in Arabic. The irrelevance of this aim also comes from the fact that the intended direction of translation is from Arabic to English, while in reality it should be the other way round. That is because the students need to read texts in English and translate them, if they ever need to, to Arabic, which is the language of assignments, tests, and exams. Students are not expected to produce any work in English for the purpose of their studies at the University.

#### **6.2.1.3 Needs Analysis**

The findings from instructors' responses show that two thirds (66.6%) of the participants disagree or strongly disagree with the statement that the University conducted needs analysis surveys to investigate the needs for the English language after

the implementation of Arabicization in the University of Khartoum. The other 33.3% indicated that they were not sure. As expected, these results are similar to that of planning, as needs analysis is part of the planning process (Figure 6.3 below).



**Figure 6.3:** Instructors’ responses to the a statement that no needs analysis was done before designing the English program

The instructors strong disagreement with the “needs analysis” statement could be interpreted in the light that instructors have not witnessed any occasion in which their opinions regarding the English Language situation were taken neither through questionnaire surveys nor interviews. They also have not seen moments in which their students were surveyed to assess their needs for studying English in the light of Arabicization Policy.

Ignoring the needs of the students, or assuming needs on their behalf, may result in designing irrelevant courses. As a consequence, instructors may end up teaching unmotivated students. Al-Hakim (1984), working in a Syrian context, attempted to specify the needs for which her students would need English. During the implementation, however, it became clear to her that the reasons why the students

wanted to learn English were different from what she, as a teacher, had considered as their needs.

Al Busairi (1991) drew the attention to this fact when he said, “ In the past, there has been little or no research at all into foreign language needs. It seems that we have been so absorbed in the development of subject-central curricula that we have almost forgotten the students’ needs and orientations” (pg. 3). He concluded that teachers who wish to take full advantage of their students' motivation to learn English should consider the purposes for which students will use English and the needs they perceive to be associated with their future use of English.

Agban (1999) investigates the lack of interest of Sudanese University students in their English classes, which results in achieving very low marks in English, a phenomenon that has been in existence since the beginning of Arabicization Policy in 1991. He found that one of the factors that led to these poor results was students' absenteeism from classes, which he considered as an indicator for a lack of motivation. Students sometimes complain to their teachers saying that since they are students of engineering, medicine or economics, why do they need to waste their time in learning English. Agban (1999) hypothesized that students are not motivated to learn English, because they were unaware of their need to study the language. This hypothesis seems to represent the truth at the University of Khartoum. To solve this problem the University should adopt a need awareness campaign at the beginning of every new intake in which both English and subject teachers would take part. Such campaign should include explaining the importance of English in gaining knowledge in their specialized subjects, orientation session in the library to show the volume of resources written in English, and other programs that illustrate the role of English in today's world. Later on, subject teachers should play a greater role in demanding from students to refer to textbooks and

references in English. It should not be made easy to pass the exams and score high marks by simply depending only on lecture notes.

## 6.2.2 INSTRUCTIONAL IMPLICATIONS

### 6.2.2.1 The Syllabus

The syllabus constitutes an important part of any course design process. Until 1990, the University was following the ESP syllabus designed by the renowned scholar John Swales and his team in English Language Service Unit (ELSU). These syllabi and the materials based on them were the outcome of a project supported by the British Council and targeted at University of Khartoum student population in early 1970s. The aim of that syllabus was to bridge the gap in English language for students who were coming from Arabic-medium schools to English -medium University.

This section derives its data from investigating two syllabi documents, one is a syllabus document prepared for the purpose of teaching English for 4 years, the second syllabus document is a compressed version of the first document and designed to teach English for two years. The data obtained from the interview showed that in 1991 a Committee was formed to look into the English Program and its syllabus. The Committee recommended that teaching ESP should cease and proposed a General Common-core English Program instead. The Committee then came out with a four-year syllabus (please see appendix E). This syllabus focused on the four language skills (reading, listening, writing and speaking). The teaching time was 2 hours per week, which meant that students would study English for 60 hours a year (a total of 240 hours in four years). The program was implemented and students used to take the English course with them to the next year if they fail to pass it in the same year. However, the Faculty of Science later on decided that students have to pass the English exam at the end of the

second year as a condition for promotion to the third year. Failing to do so would result in students repeating the second year.

#### **6.2.2.2 The Contents of the Four-year Syllabus**

The contents of the Four-year Syllabus were divided into four parts according to the number of academic years. Each part in turn is divided into two courses. The first course of part one was set with the main objective of to write simple, grammatically and semantically correct sentences and to expand them into longer ones. While the second course of part one has three objectives, which are intended to enable the students to write a simple coherent paragraph, to build their vocabulary and to train them on translation at the word level.

The second part of the syllabus, which is intended for year two in the university, is also divided into two courses. The first course has the following objectives:

1. Reading skills
2. Reference work
3. Translation at sentence level

While the second course of part two aimed at the following three objectives:

1. Continuation of reading skills
2. Listening to mini lecture
3. Summarizing and note taking

The first course of part three comes with two main objectives:

1. The teaching of basic writing
2. The training on translation

At the time that the second course of part three has three objectives:

1. Continuation of writing skills
2. Group discussion

### 3. Training on translation

The four part of the syllabus was taught in year four in the university. The first course on this part set the following objectives:

1. Develop the writing skills
2. Group discussion
3. Introduction to instant translation (interpretation)

On the other hand the second course was meant to achieve one main objective which is to provide training in translation which aims at equipping students with reasonable mastery in translating topics, articles, reports and discussions.

A deeper look at the objectives set in the syllabus reveals five important facts about the nature and focus of the English Program under the Four-year Syllabus. First, there was too much focus on translation from Arabic into English, which was not of direct importance for students under Arabicization policy. For example, out of the total number of 19 objectives spread over the four years and contained in 8 courses we could notice the following trend.

Table 6.1 (page 190) shows that almost 40% of the focus of the program was on training students for translation from Arabic into English, starting from translation at word level up to the level of instant translation or interpretation. This type of focus seems unjustifiable. There was no pressing need and clear objective for training on translation at word level, moreover, it is totally irrelevant to teach students instant translation, as there is no need, for what so ever, for that. It appears as if the overall objective of the Program is to prepare the students to be professional translators.

Second, writing skills were given much attention than was given to other language skills. Around 20% of the weight of the program is dedicated for the writing skills, at

Skill to be taught	number of times the skill is mentioned in syllabus objectives
Translation skills	8 times
Writing skills	4 times
Reading Skills	2 times
Speaking skills	2 times
Listening skills	1 time
Building Vocabulary	1 time
Reference	1 time

Table (6.1): Distribution of skill across the four-year syllabus

the time that students do not need to write lecture notes, assignments, tests or exams in English. All these activities are conducted through the medium of Arabic Language at the moment.

Third, there was two little attention paid to reading skills and speaking skills with a weight of 10% for each in the program, while the listening skills got the least attention by obtaining 5% of the weight of the program. We are particularly interested in the development of reading skills, because we consider them as the skills that are very crucial for students' success at the tertiary level.

Fourth, from the structure of the program it appears that skills are treated as separate entities with each one appears in a different course of the program.

Fifth, the Program seems to ignore students' background knowledge as it starts teaching articles, prepositions, tenses etc from the beginning. It should be remembered that the students have been studying English for 7 years before entering the University.

Since its introduction, the Four-year Syllabus faced a very strong resistance from many Faculties within the University who felt that the teaching of English interfered with their teaching of specialized subjects. They also stated the difficulties they faced in term of fitting-in the English classes into their timetable in addition to the shortage in lecture

halls. Under the growing pressure, the Four-year Syllabus was reduced to a two-year syllabus in 1998.

### **6.2.2.3 The Two-year Syllabus**

The Two-year Syllabus was given a total of 90 teaching hours, which means that about 150 hours were slashed from the original Four-year Syllabus. This arrangement was found reasonable and acceptable for the Faculties.

Despite the harsh reduction of time allotted for English in the manner mentioned earlier, the aims of the new syllabus remained the same. Although the second aim was slightly modified to be read as, " to bring the students to a satisfactory level of competence in the four language skills with the following order of priority: reading, writing, listening and speaking"

At least there is a recognition and awareness this time that the reading skills should come first in the order of priority. This is considered a right step, although the course maintains the teaching of the other skills.

The Two-year Syllabus included sections on the methodology to be followed to achieve the objectives. This part was absent from the previous syllabus. Instead, the preceding syllabus included a section that was titled " Means, Needs and Conditions for Achieving the Objectives".

The content of the first year course of the Two-Year Syllabus includes,

1. Study skills: the use of references, dictionaries and library.
2. Teaching passages, increasing Vocabulary, punctuation, articles and tenses.
3. Teaching number, agreements, prepositions and parts of speech.
4. Introducing sentence patterns.
5. The passive voice.

While the contents of the second year course include the following.



1. Teaching writing skills
2. Training in Reading (silent and aloud)
3. Group discussion and conversation
4. Training on Translation
5. Survey of English phonology and comparison between Arabic and English morphology and Syntax.

Although the objectives of this course maintained that reading skills would be given priority, there was little evidence in the contents of the course to prove so. Instead, new but irrelevant items on the teaching of phonology, morphology, contrastive analysis and syntax were added to the contents of the first-year course, which was basically dedicated to the teaching of English Grammar.

#### **6.2.2.4 The Alternative Syllabus**

Although the above-described objectives were meant to serve the purpose of providing a common-core English course for all students in the University, it was obvious that there was no clear purpose for offering an English course in the University in the first place. It was evident from this investigation that there seems to be no specified objective for teaching English or no definition for the role of the language after to the implementation of the Arabicization policy. Teaching English cannot be isolated from the fact that it is no longer the language of instruction in the University, and that it is still needed as a language of modern knowledge which students need to access information, specially in its written form. This lack of vision about the new role of English is the factor that led to "translation" be granted almost half of the weight of the program, and writing skills given almost quarter of that weight, while the reading skills rated only on the third or fourth position. All the discussion above, leads us to suggest

that the whole English Program in the University of Khartoum should undergo a profound process of review which may shake the very foundation of the Program.

To build a strong and relevant English program in the University, a more scientific approach for course design has to be followed. The following steps should be incorporated in constructing the new course:

1. The conduct of intensive research into the English program taught at school level in the General Education prior to the University. This research should determine the items and level of language a successful student is expected to learn by the time he enters the University, the problems that are faced by schools in teaching English, the shortcomings and strengths of the syllabus, analysis of the materials used, the teachers training and the percentage of syllabus coverage.
2. Analysis of students real results in the two board Exams: at the end of the Basic Level at year 8, and at the end of the Secondary Level at the eleventh year. The objective of that is to have an insight about the true level of language proficiency when students are admitted to the University. Because according to what is practised now, it would be misleading to accept the published results as a real assessment that would enable us to judge the level that students have reached so that the University would prepare for them courses that would take them from where they end at the secondary level. This type of analysis is important, because given the many problems faced by schools, it is difficult to assume that students have learnt what they should learn.
3. Conducting a placement test or a University entry English test for students who qualify for admission into universities to determine their level and placement into homogeneous groups. The results of this test in addition to the results of the analysis mentioned in the above point should constitute the backbone for judging the students background knowledge. This background knowledge should be the point of departure

for the English Program, and what ever is mastered here should not be repeated as it would be very de-motivated for students.

This view is also shared by Allen and Widdowson (1978) when they stated that "there is no point in presenting a remedial English class at the University level with a speeded-up version of the Secondary School syllabus, for the class will rapidly become bored and resentful even if they show evidence of not having fully mastered the material" (pg. 66).

4. The role and objective for teaching the English Language should be redefined to take into consideration the change in the instrumental value of the language as a medium of instruction in the dawn of Arabicization of Higher Education.

5. A needs analysis should precede the designing of syllabus and the preparation of materials. This type of need should put into considerations that English is now needed for academic purpose or a language of library and information. So, the reading skills should constitute the core of the course.

6. Translation should not be a central part of such a program. It would be a waste of time to do so. What students need is a global understanding of a text in English, extract the main ideas and write them in Arabic in their own words.

7. The course should not focus on English structures (grammar, morphology, phonology etc.).

As Allen and Widdowson (1978) pointed that "we assume that the students have some knowledge of how the language works, which derives from pedagogical grammar. We also assume that this knowledge will be consolidated as the students experience language used in meaningful contexts" (pg. 68). But if we teach them bits and pieces as is done in the way grammar is taught to them, then that will take the language out of its meaningful context. Instead it should center on text structure, to identify the main ideas by using textual clues, guessing, predictions, inferences and other techniques. Students should be taught about how people write and how do they organize their ideas and not

how to write, as they do not need to write in English. Students should go beyond looking at the definite/ indefinite articles, prepositions, and tenses to look for meanings and ideas.

6.2.2.5 Teaching Materials

The findings of the materials variable show that the majority of instructors believe that the materials used in teaching students are ineffective ( $M = 3.44$ ,  $sd. = 1.23$ ). The percentages and the bar graph in figure 6.4 (below) show that 67% of the respondents judged the materials currently used in the English Program as ineffective, while 22% of them believed them to be effective and 11% were not sure.

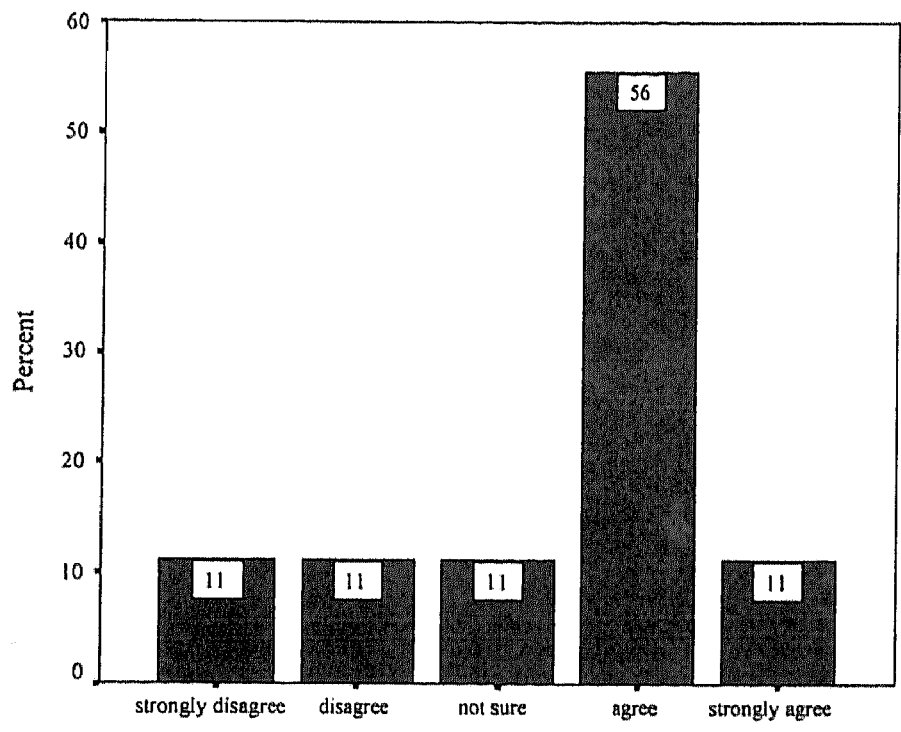


Figure 6.4: Instructors evaluation for the efficiency of the English teaching materials

The information obtained from the interview helps us to find explanation for the above findings. The interview reveals the following facts:

1. Starting from 1991, English ceased to be the medium of instruction in the University, and the role of the Language completely changed.
2. From 1991 to 1994 the status of English Language in the University remained undefined.
3. In 1994 the ESP program was officially halted and replaced by a General Common-core English Course.
4. The same ESP books and materials continued to be used until 1996 because there was no alternative provided for the teachers.
5. The first course-book for new English Program appeared only in 1997.
6. The new materials which, were designed by the English Department in the Arabicization Unit, were strongly resisted by teachers and students. Their objection was built on the ground that the texts selected were not relevant, and there were gross mistakes in the texts due to the haste in which the books were produced.
7. As an alternative, the English instructors chose not to use the provided materials and started to use their own materials.

There were some problems that emerged from adopting this direction. First, there was no authorized body to check and approve the materials selected by the individual teachers. Second, it was difficult to see how such materials were related to and meet the objectives of teaching English and match the syllabus designed for that purpose. Third, such a move by teachers created a sense of lack of control on the part of the English Department, on the direction the Program was heading, it also made any evaluation process for the Program difficult. This situation created the kind of feeling among teachers that the materials were not systematic, and this made them judge it as ineffective as illustrated by their responses to the question of materials.

The issue of course book and teaching materials has always been high on the agenda. As soon as it came into being in 1998, the Administration of University Requirements (AUR) formed a committee to look into the materials used and come out with a new scheme of work. Since then the Committee held sporadic meetings but produced no result until the writing of this report (August 2003).

The Head of the English Department admitted to this failure in the his 2001 Report to the University when he says, " A Committee was formed to review the materials of the English Course. It has been working on that, but at a very slow pace, and it has produced no result so far" Hamooda (2001). He proposed that the work of the Committee be reviewed to determine the obstacles that hindered it from doing its job.

The criteria for course materials were specified in the "General Framework for Course Book", which was a document prepared by the English Department sometime earlier. The problem with this Framework started with the aims stated for teaching English in the University as follows:

1. To develop specific competence related to the students' academic field of study.
2. To bring the students to a satisfactory level of competence in the four language skills in this order of priority: reading, writing, listening and speaking.
3. To provide sufficient training in translation.

These aims might be built on the type of syllabus on which the Framework relies. However, a simple look at these aims shows that they are not targeting the new role of English as a language that students need only to access information from books and other written sources in their field of specialization. Therefore, the mentioning of developing students competence in the FOUR skills is quite irrelevant, because students do not need the speaking and listening skills any more in academic activities as all lectures and class discussions are conducted in Arabic. The same applies to the writing skill as all students are expected to write their lecture note, assignments and

examinations in Arabic. The materials should particularly aim at teaching and supporting reading skills. Other skills should be taught only in contexts that support the reading skills. Even teaching translation in this program seems not necessary and not relevant as well, as the real objective is not to translate, but to understand the gist of meaning and express it in whatever form suitable and understood in Arabic. Widdowson (1974) refers to this process as language transfer rather than translation.

It was stated in the introductory part of the Framework that the English course was intended to cater for the special academic needs of students in specific disciplines and fields of study. However, a closer look at the content of the materials specified in the Framework reveals that the book does not adopt the approach of teaching the whole language according to new trends of Communicative Language Teaching. Instead, it contains sections on teaching bits and pieces of language such as: Articles, prepositions, tenses, nouns, pronouns, passive etc. This kind of materials will be a mere repetition for topics that students already covered in School syllabus. They cannot be teaching articles and tenses to students who have been studying English for at least 7 years in schools. Even if they have not fully mastered such primitive elements of language, repeating them here will not meet the aims of the Course-book, which have been stated above. Widdowson (1974) supports this view. He suggests that teachers should make use of the students' knowledge of some language and some science in their mother tongue and put that together; in this way, language teachers will not be teaching language and rules of use as such (because students already know that), instead, they will be providing the students with an opportunity to induce meaning by reference to their own knowledge. As mentioned in the Framework, English is taught for academic purposes. However, no evidence is provided by the contents of the Framework to show that students will be taught the kind of strategies needed to extract meaning from texts. It has become clearer

examinations in Arabic. The materials should particularly aim at teaching and supporting reading skills. Other skills should be taught only in contexts that support the reading skills. Even teaching translation in this program seems not necessary and not relevant as well, as the real objective is not to translate, but to understand the gist of meaning and express it in whatever form suitable and understood in Arabic. Widdowson (1974) refers to this process as language transfer rather than translation.

It was stated in the introductory part of the Framework that the English course was intended to cater for the special academic needs of students in specific disciplines and fields of study. However, a closer look at the content of the materials specified in the Framework reveals that the book does not adopt the approach of teaching the whole language according to new trends of Communicative Language Teaching. Instead, it contains sections on teaching bits and pieces of language such as: Articles, prepositions, tenses, nouns, pronouns, passive etc. This kind of materials will be a mere repetition for topics that students already covered in School syllabus. They cannot be teaching articles and tenses to students who have been studying English for at least 7 years in schools. Even if they have not fully mastered such primitive elements of language, repeating them here will not meet the aims of the Course-book, which have been stated above. Widdowson (1974) supports this view. He suggests that teachers should make use of the students' knowledge of some language and some science in their mother tongue and put that together; in this way, language teachers will not be teaching language and rules of use as such (because students already know that), instead, they will be providing the students with an opportunity to induce meaning by reference to their own knowledge. As mentioned in the Framework, English is taught for academic purposes. However, no evidence is provided by the contents of the Framework to show that students will be taught the kind of strategies needed to extract meaning from texts. It has become clearer



in recent research that in teaching of language for academic purposes, it is insufficient to develop materials which aim to introduce the students only to the linguistic features which are salient in a particular field of discourse without paying attention to the strategies required by the students which justify the study of these features in the first place.

The issue of the type of materials to be used was not addressed clearly by the Framework. It was assumed that since the nature of the whole English program is that of a common-core English, the materials selected should be of a general nature too and not be based on any particular discipline. This issue raised the question of authenticity of materials. As the original purpose of these materials was to equip the students to deal with authentic examples of specialist discourse found in their textbooks and reference books, it would be of great help to students to be exposed to that type of materials in the English classes. Such materials should be exploited in the same way a student would need to use authentic materials when he/she goes to the library.

There is a lot of argument about simplifying the materials in ESP classes. Some views supporting the use of authentic materials raised the following two points against modifying the teaching material for the purpose of teaching. First, they say that the adapted texts cannot be viewed as a helpful stage towards dealing with authentic materials, and secondly, this distortion renders the adapted texts potentially more than less difficult to comprehend. But Widdowson (1974) argued that "the authentic language data becomes increasingly more impracticable as one's audience become more heterogeneous in term of study goals", in this way he links authenticity to comprehensibility. Widdowson in particular believes that a text, which the learners do not fully understand, is not authentic for those students, what ever relevant that text might be to the students' field of study. Mackay and Mountford (1978) tried to compromise by saying, "the learners should be presented with learning material that is

both authentic-appropriate as communication and simplified-appropriate to their level" (pg. 19). For them, the simplification part could apply to our demand for what to be done by the text rather than modifying the structures of the text itself.

Andrews (1984) pointed out a similar challenge in Sudan Polytechnic. He said that, "while many of the published materials the English unit possessed were inadequate or insufficient in number, we did not have the money to buy more or better material and we did not have enough staff to prepare a large number of specific courses." (pg. 180)

The University of Malaya in Malaysia did the best planning for materials preparation, in our opinion. The project that was known as (UM English for Special Purpose Project) or UMESSP in short came as part of the U.M.'s English language policy. Asmah (1979) explains that purpose of the project was to develop materials for the teaching of English for reading comprehension. The project produced materials in the form of manuals and teaching aids.

The material of the course should be authentic and driven directly from textbooks or reference books related to students' field of specialization. The topics selected should be related to topics students are studying in Arabic.

The staging of these topics could follow the same structure of course outlines designed to teach the specialized subject. In this way students will feel that what is taught to them in the English classes has a direct relationship to what they study in their fields of specialization. This is the type of feeling that would generate and increase students' motivation to study English at the University level even though it is no longer the medium of instruction.

This type of activity needs a very close coordination and cooperation between the English teachers and the subject lecturers. The lecturers should be part of the material selection process, and are expected to play the greater role in term of selecting the

relevant and authentic topics. While the role of the English teachers would be confined to grading of these topics according in term of difficulty and decide on the length of texts and prepare the suitable activities to be able to use the texts for the purpose of teaching the English Language.

The lack of motivation results from the teaching materials, which teachers and specialists prepare. The fact that materials writers often base their material on what they think their students' need gives a very scant attention to what students want. If they had thought of both needs and wants the students would have been motivated.

The teaching routines should not concentrate on grammatical structures any more. Instead they should be concerned with reading for meaning and technique that can help students to read efficiently and effectively. As all readings are motivated by a purpose, students need to be made aware of the need and purpose for reading in English. They need to know that English language is important for them to deepen their knowledge about their subject of specialization.

Teaching materials are important part of teaching and learning process. The design or selection of such materials needs to be handled by specialists, teachers and students. When the ESP Program started at the University of Khartoum in the early 1970s, very famous scholars such as John Swales were invited to design materials and teach in the Program. Books designed by that Project were in use until early 1990s. The purpose of that ESP Program was to provide support for students who came from Arabic medium Secondary Schools to study their subject of specialization in the University where the medium of instruction was English. In the Faculty of Science, the English Program was called "Scientific English" and the texts were heavily drawn from the students' fields of specialization. Now, young and inexperienced instructors were left to the trial and error

process to select and design materials whose only function might be passing time in class and providing a basis for passing the end of semester exams.

#### **6.2.2.6 Worthiness of the English Language Program**

The findings from the instructors' responses to the worthiness of the English Program show that the instructors hold a more negative view about the benefits students get from the English Program than their students do ( $M = 2.88$ ,  $sd. 1.05$ ). Students' perception on the other hand is more positive ( $M = 3.11$ ,  $sd. 1.18$ ).

Describing the results by percentages shows that 33% of the instructors judged the benefit their students get from the English Program as "good" while 66.6% believe that it is "average" or "below average." (Figure 6.5, page 203).

The students' assessment was different from that of their instructors as 45% believed the benefits they get is "good" or "very good" and 55.5% judged the benefits that they get from the Program as "average" and "below average" (Figure 6.6 page 204)

These results were expected, given all the problems mentioned about the syllabus, materials and others. Most students and teachers believed that the benefit of the English Program is only average, although a few of them were quite satisfied. The low rating of the benefits students get from the English program could be due to the mismatch between what the program intended to do according to its syllabus document and what is actually taught as apparent from the course materials and to the mismatch between what is taught in class and the real need for English in the present academic context. In the syllabus and materials sections discussed earlier in this chapter, it was established that the stated aims of the syllabus and the materials used to represent it do not actually serve the purpose of preparing students to extract information from written sources. simply because that was not a stated aim in the syllabus. In terms of students wants, we saw in the section addressing "the Most Important Language Skill" that students considered speaking as equally important as reading. Despite the fact that speaking

skills are not skills that students "need" for academic activities, they became skills that students "want" or wish to learn. To the disappointment of the students, the results from "the most focused skill in the program" section revealed that speaking was one of the least focused skills in the English class.

The value of this program could be judged by the feedback elicited from students and teachers as shown above. Since the program does not fully satisfy those parties involved, a different course of action, starting with a formative evaluation, should be taken to remedy the situation.

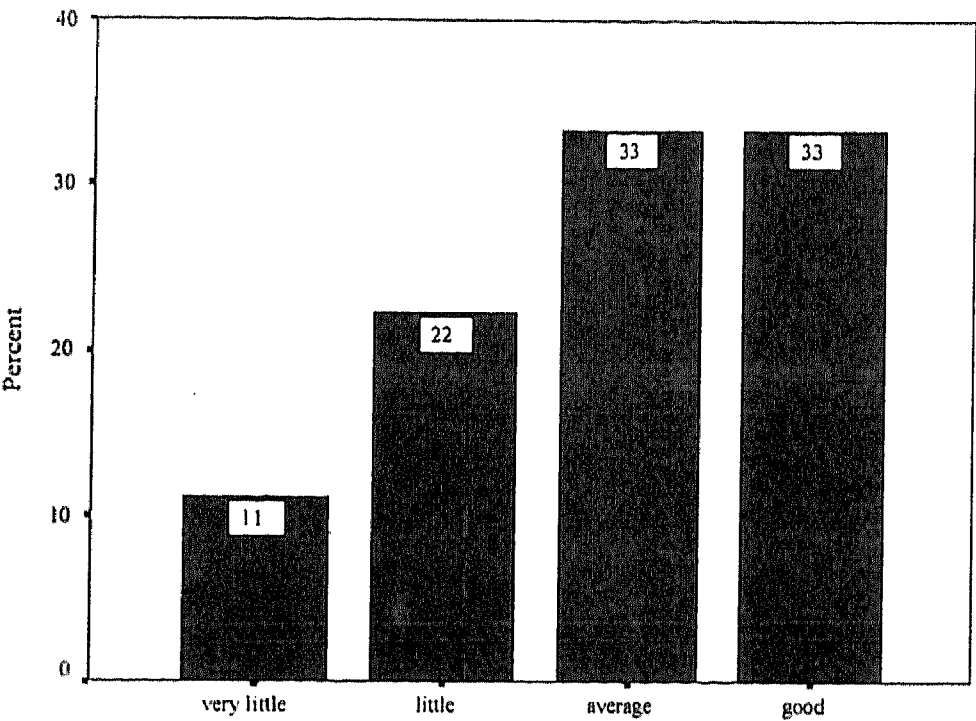
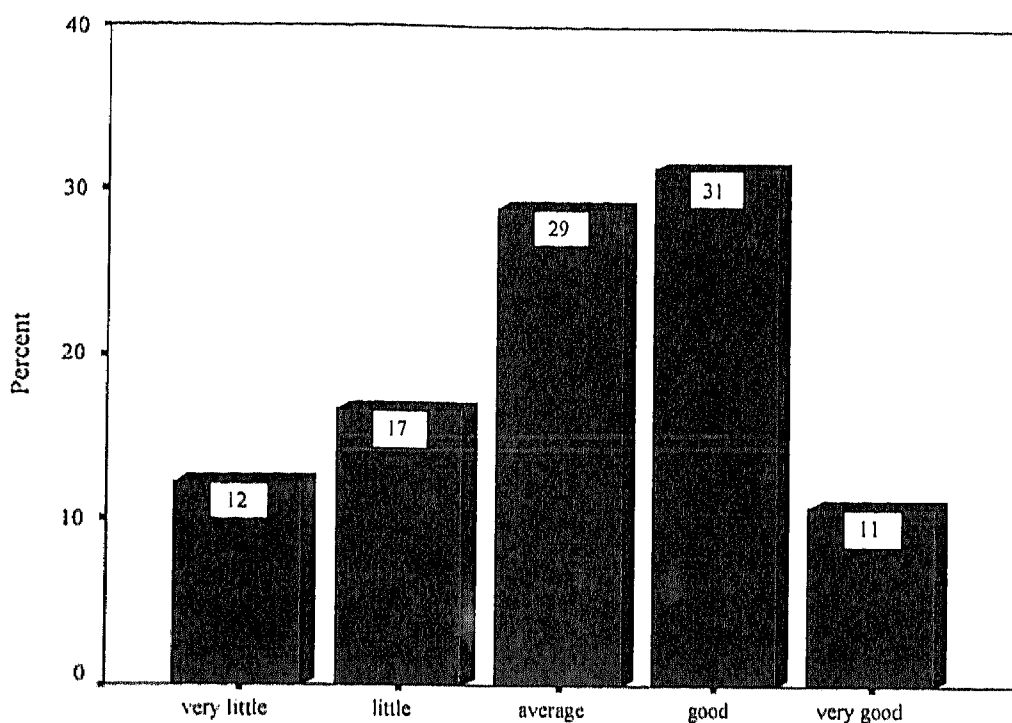


Figure 6. 5: Instructors' evaluation for the benefit students got from the English Program



**Figure 6.6:** Students' evaluation for the benefit they got from the English Program

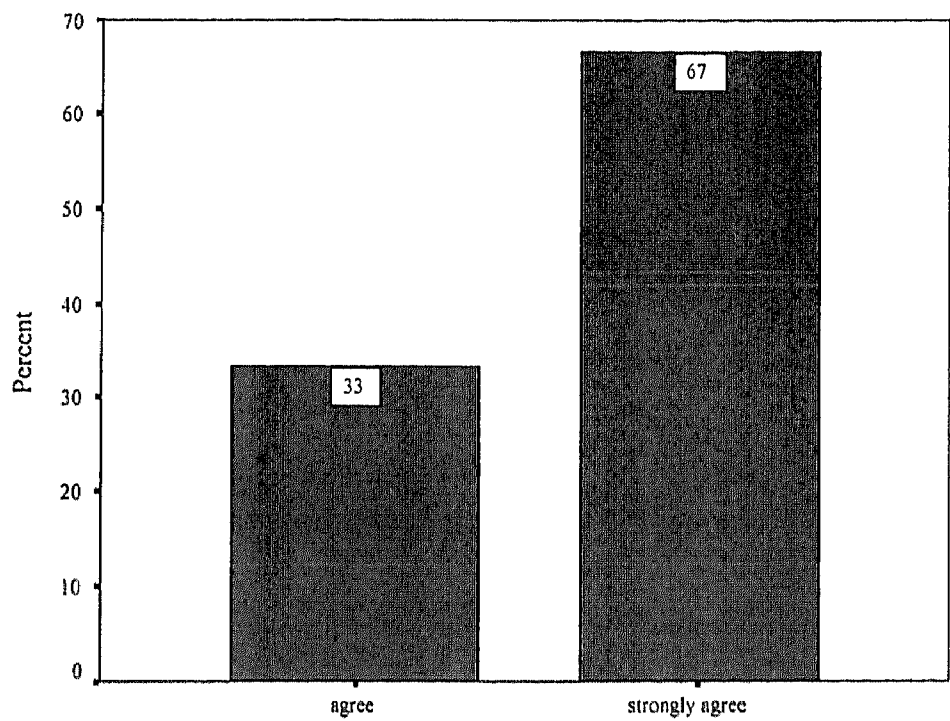
## **6.2.3 ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS**

### **6.2.3.1 Funds for Developing the English Program**

Results of the “funding” variable revealed that almost all participants strongly agree that there were not enough funds allocated to develop the English program ( $M = 4.66$ ,  $sd. = .50$ ). This result was confirmed by the percentages, which are presented in Figure (6.7, page 205). They show that 67% of the participants strongly agree with the statement and 33% agree with it.

The information gathered from the interviews supports these finding. It is believed that the lack of funds was evident from the University’s failure to support the English program with any teaching resources other than few appointed teachers, offices and lecture-halls. All matters related to research and development, materials, teaching aids, teacher training etc. were not addressed by the budget. In discussions with them, the English instructors believe such a big project for teaching English all over the

University requires a lot of support, especially financial support. They say the money is needed to carry out research, hold conferences and seminars, prepare or purchase the teaching materials, train teachers and provide teaching aids for them.



**Figure 6.7:** Shows Instructors responses to statement that there were no enough funds provided for the English Program

In fact, in the current situation, the University may not be able to respond to the above demands from its own budget, simply because the University is still struggling to provide the monthly salaries for its staff, which sometimes come a week or more after the starting of the following month. The alternative solution for the financial difficulties of the English Program is to seek the help of the British Council. In fact there was a lot of cooperation and help provided by the British Council to the University in the 1970s. and the creation of ELSU stood as an example for that. However, when the current government came to power in 1989, the political ties with UK became very tense because of differences over political issues. The situation reached the climax when the Government expelled the British Ambassador from Sudan in 1994. This incident and

others affected the interaction between the British Council and all Government-related institutions including the University of Khartoum. The University needs to approach the British Council again, to make use of the funds available to them to develop the English Program.

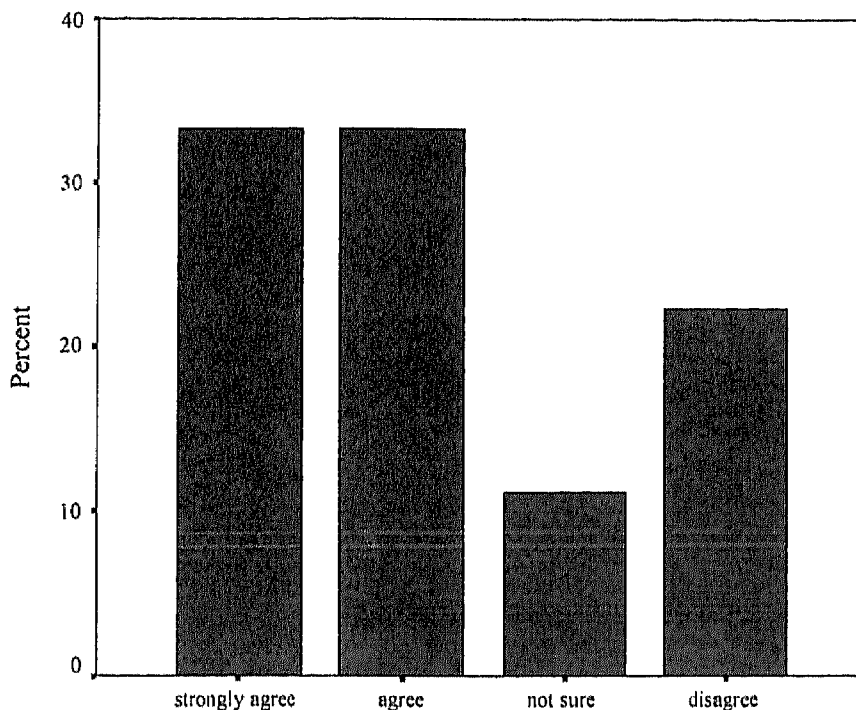
The University of Khartoum may also make use of its historical links with some British Universities and institutions such as the University of London to provide research funds to develop the English program. There are many institutions in UK which want to conduct research projects, and they have the funds or have access to get funds. What the University of Khartoum should do is to prepare a written proposal for the whole project including the total cost and try to propagate it to those institution and get them involved in a joint research effort.

#### **6.2.3.2 Administration of the English Program**

The findings obtained from the instructors' responses indicated that the majority of them believe that the English Program should be placed under a separate language center or unit ( $M = 3.77$ ,  $sd. 1.20$ ). Looking at the percentages presented on Figure (6.8 page 207), it could be seen that 66.6% of the respondents preferred a separate body, such as a language center, to manage the English language Program in the University, while 22.2% opted for the status quo, where, a body called the Administration of University Requirements administers the English language Program.

In addition to English, this Administration is responsible for managing the teaching of three other subjects introduced with the Arabicization policy, namely, Computer Skills, Sudanese Studies and Arabic language. The results above show the amount of frustration of Instructors. They feel that placing English under this Administration marginalizes its role and reduces the financial support that it could get from the University or elsewhere.





**Figure 6.8:** Instructors responses to a statement that English Program should be placed under an independent unit.

If the English Program were placed under an independent language center of its own, this would give it the flexibility of establishing direct contact with external bodies to conduct research projects. This helps in designing of syllabus, preparation of materials and evaluation of teaching processes; and constantly makes adjustments to accommodate changes. The advantages of having a separate language center may include the following,

1. Raising the administrative status of the body responsible for the English Program from a Department to a Center gives it more authority and accessibility to higher authorities within the University, and this may help to get things done more easily.
2. The status of a center gives its Head greater freedom in establishing relationship with the British Council and other related bodies that could support the English program.

3. The Administration of the Center would be busy with one problem only, which is the advancement of English language in the University, unlike the present situation where the top administration is busy with other subjects such as Sudanese studies, Arabic and Computer skills.

The position of English program as a Department weakens its internal administrative processes. The 2001 Report prepared by the Head of the English Department, who is responsible for the English Program was a true manifestation of the financial sufferings of the Program. After more than ten years in operation, still the Head of the Department was asking the University to provide his office with basic needs such as a computer set, a photocopy machine, petty cash and a secretary for the Department. This also affects the efficiency of managing the program. One example for that, in conducting this research, the researchers needed information and documents such as course syllabus, copies of materials and others to support his arguments. It became apparent that the office of the head of English Department could not provide any assistance because either they do not have these documents or they could not locate them among the pile of papers stocked in the cabinets. The researcher was referred to the office of the head of the Administration of University requirement, where he got a copy of the two-year syllabus and the Framework for Course-book. To get the Four-year Syllabus the researcher had to approach individual teachers to get one. As for the course materials the researcher was referred to a Professor in the Faculty of Education who designed the course book for the four-year Syllabus. It happened that that professor was sick in bed for months, so the researcher could not meet him despite the several calls made to his house as his condition did not allow him to receive visitors. Later on, one teacher managed to assist by providing a copy of that book. Samples of materials currently in use were obtained directly from teachers, as the Department does not have copies. To get more information on how the English program was planning for at the beginning,

the Department referred the researcher to the Senate. The senate officer needed the date of the meeting to check the minutes; the department could help with regard to that. This story is reported to explain weakness in the internal administrative processes and documentation in the Department of English (University Requirement).

6.2.3.3 Class Size and Other Practical Difficulties

In response to an item about the class size variable, around 11.1% of the instructors indicated that they teach more than 200 students in one class, while the majority (55.4%) indicated that they teach between 100 – 200 students in one class. Only 33.3% said they have classes of 50 – 100 students. None of them had classes of below 50 students.(Figure 6.9 below)

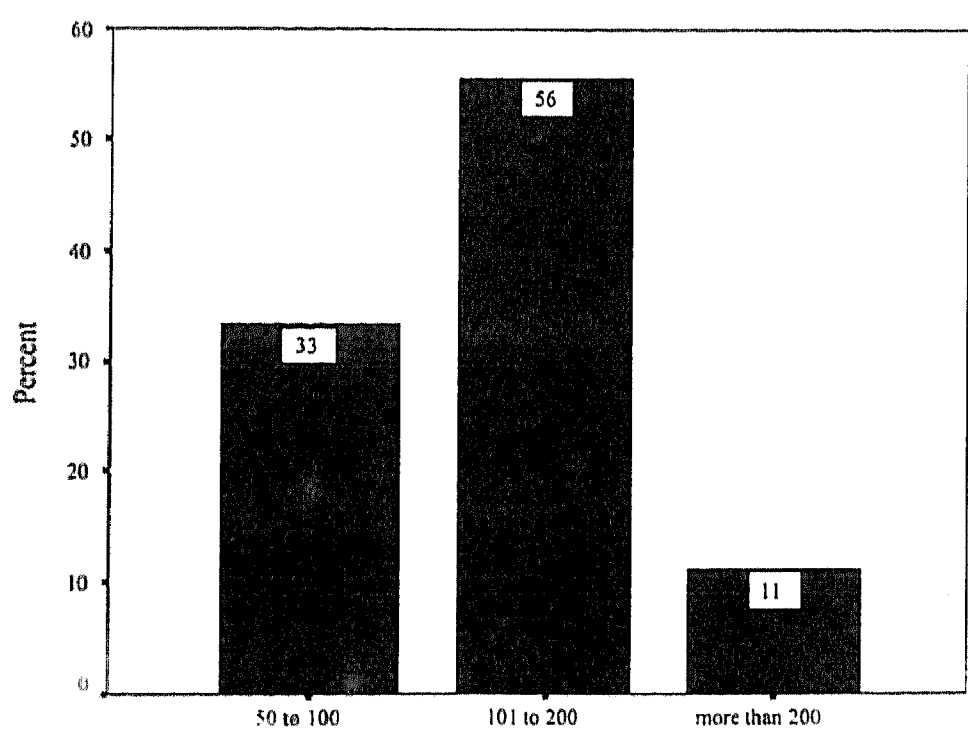


Figure 6.9: The Number of students in the English Classes

The new Educational Policy of 1990 that came as a result of the Conference on Higher Education Issues, stipulated that the universities should double their intake the following academic year. The University of Khartoum was required to admit around

4,000 students in accordance with this new Policy. The University has appointed 15 instructors and teaching assistants to teach English as a University Requirement for all faculties except the Faculties of Arts and Education, where English is taught by English Departments in these faculties. It comes as no surprise that the teachers ended up with very large classes. If we consider the time allotted for English (two hours per week), we can see how little the benefit that individual students could get.

Gilley (2002) described the situation in the English Department of the University of Khartoum. She complained that the seating in the classroom lessened the effectiveness of the teacher and deprived him/her of carrying out group-work because the lecture halls use rows of benches, and the seats and tables are bolted to the floor. She also pointed that there were no microphones, which resulted in some students at the back not hearing the teacher. The large number of students per class, in her opinion, was one of the reasons that further reduced any benefit the students might get from the two English hours. The University has to look into reducing the ratio of students to teachers, either by dividing the students into smaller groups and making the teachers teach extra hours or recruiting new staff to teach English in the University.

English teachers recommended that the maximum number of students per class should be around 50 students. This implies that additional teachers need to be recruited or the current staff is given additional paid hours to teach the new groups. But, if the University is to attract the existing staff to teach extra periods then they have to reconsider the rates that they pay for such extra hours and the timing of their payments. The instructors reported that other private institutions offer them very attractive payments to teach part-time hours. Sometimes these payments are double or triple what the University of Khartoum pays them. They also noted that when they teach in other colleges they get their pay at the end of each month, but if they teach additional hours at

the University of Khartoum they need to wait two or three months before they can get their pay. That is one of the reasons most of them do not prefer to teach extra hours in the University.

**6.3 PERCEPTION OF LANGUAGE ABILITIES**

This section addresses the issue of language proficiency in the four basic language skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing). The students, Instructors and Subject Lecturers were asked to evaluate students’ proficiency in each of the skills on a five-point scale (very good, good, average, weak, very weak).

Table (6.2, page 212) presents the mean scores and Standard deviation for students and instructors responses regarding the four language skills. The table shows that students rates themselves the highest in listening skills (mean = 3.79 and sd. 3.77), followed by reading skills (mean 3.75, sd. .91) then writing skills (mean 3.68, sd. 1.08) and last in speaking skills (mean 2.82, sd. 1.12). The instructors’ evaluation was, however, different somehow. In all means the evaluation of instructors was lower than that of students. They rated the students highest abilities in reading skills (mean 3.22, sd. 1.20) followed by listening skills (mean 3.00, sd. 1.22) then writing skills (mean 2.55, sd. 1.50) and then speaking (mean 2.44, sd. 1.58). As could be noticed, both groups of respondents agree that students’ abilities in speaking skills are considered the poorest. A t-test was conducted to test acceptance or rejection of hypothesis at a level of confidence of 95%.

Variable	Students		Instructors	
	Mean	sd.	Mean	sd.
Evaluation of students' ability in the listening skills	3.7941	3.7779	3.0000	1.2247
Evaluation of students' ability in the reading skills	3.7549	.9198	3.2222	1.2019
Evaluation of students' ability in the speaking skills	2.8284	1.1208	2.4444	1.5899
Evaluation of students' ability in the writing skills	3.6814	1.0834	2.5556	1.5092

**Table 6.2:** The mean scores and standard deviation for students and instructors’ responses regarding the four language skills

Following is a more detailed descriptive analysis for the findings obtained from instructors, students and lecturers responses, using percentages, graphs and table.

### 6.3.1 Evaluation of the Listening Skill

Results obtained from students’ responses to an item to evaluate their listening skill showed that the majority of the students (49%) evaluated themselves as very good and good, while 34.3% see themselves as average in the listening. Around 15% rated themselves as weak and very weak (Figure 6.10, page 213)

The same question was put to the English Language instructors to respond to. The objective was to see if both parties see the same picture in the same way, which might help better in redesigning the language course in the University. As for the listening skill. 33.3% of the instructor rated the students as very good or good, while 33.3% as average and the rest of the 33.3% look at the students' proficiency in the listening skill as weak or very weak (Figure 6.11, page 213). Table (6.3, page 214), on the other hand, provides a comparison of the responses of the two groups.

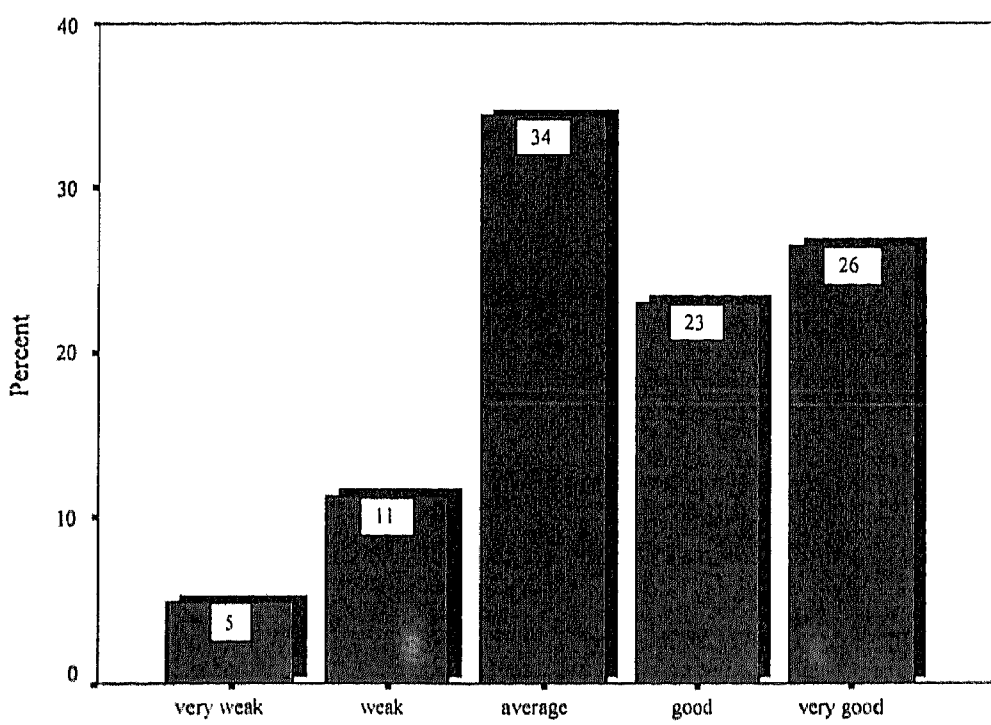


Figure 6.10: Students evaluation of their listening skills

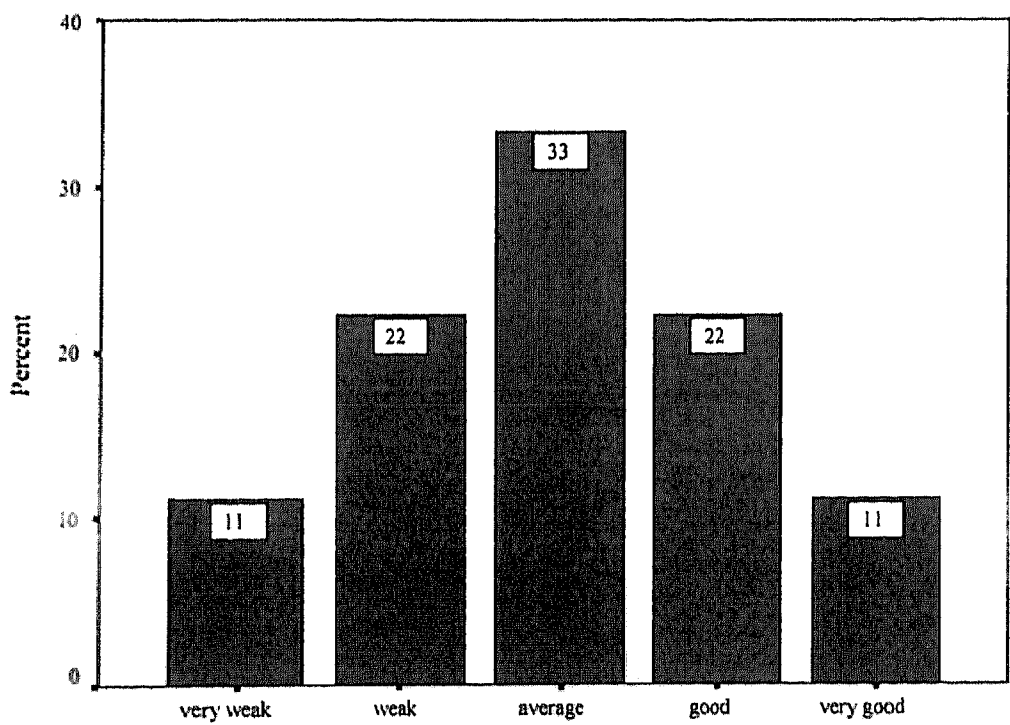


Figure 6.11: Instructors' evaluation for students' listening skills

	Students Evaluation in %	Teacher's Evaluation in %
Very good	26.0	11.1
Good	23.0	22.3
Average	34.3	33.3
Weak	11.3	22.2
Very weak	4.9	11.1

**Table (6.3):** A comparison between students and Instructors responses for the listening skills.

The comparison provided in the table above shows a general agreement between teachers and students on the percentage of the average level of students. However, most teachers judged that the majority of the rest of students fall below average, while students believe that it was the other way round.

These results lend support to Zughouli and Hussein (1985) who found that 78% of the students surveyed judged themselves as very good and good, but only 64% of their teachers judged them to be so. This indicates that students, on the whole, tend to overestimate their language capabilities. This low estimation by students and instructors of listening skills, compared to that of Zughouli and Hussein (1985), may be due to the fact that the students' exposure to the English language was drastically reduced by the change of the medium of instruction to Arabic.

Other considerations could also play a role, such as the absence of English usage outside the classroom, and its rare use in the mass media. In addition, there are very few native speakers or foreign English speakers. In the case of University of Khartoum, we believe that students did not actually have the chance to evaluate their listening ability. Teaching at the school level does not promote or test this ability due to the lack of facilities and shortage of qualified teachers. Even at the level of the national



examination such as the Sudan Secondary Certificate Examination this skill was totally ignored. This situation continues at the University English Program as well. Instructors here were faced with many challenges such as teaching in large groups of over 200 students, constant electricity blackout and poor ventilation especially during hot summer months, lack of language labs, tape recorders and tapes to improve listening. Due to these circumstances teachers do not have the chance neither to teach nor to assess listening skills in a proper way that can give the students a true picture of their level.

### **6.3.2 Evaluation of the Reading Skill**

The results of evaluating the reading skill showed that 60% of the students see their level as very good or good and 34% as average. With only 6% rated themselves as weak or very weak. Still the majority of students saw that their level in the reading skill was above average (Figure 6.12, page 216). We have to note here that reading is a key skill for students who need English to access information in written sources, as in the case of these students. Any misjudgment or overestimation from their part will give an impression that every thing was all right, while the problem lies under the ashes.

The instructors, on the other side, held a very different opinion for the level of their students in the reading skill. Results from their responses indicated that 33.3% of them evaluated the level of students in reading as weak compared to 4% of students who judged themselves as weak, while another 33.3% saw students reading ability as average. The rest of them (33.4%) saw the level of reading as very good or good (Figure 6.13, page 216)

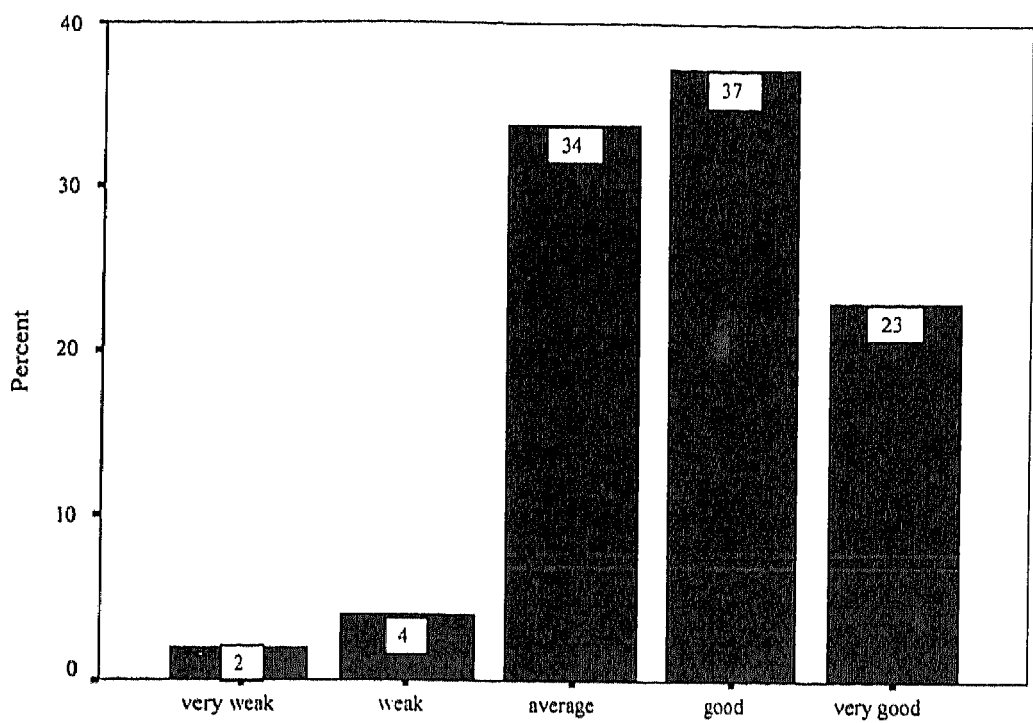


Figure 6.12: Students Evaluation of their Reading Skills

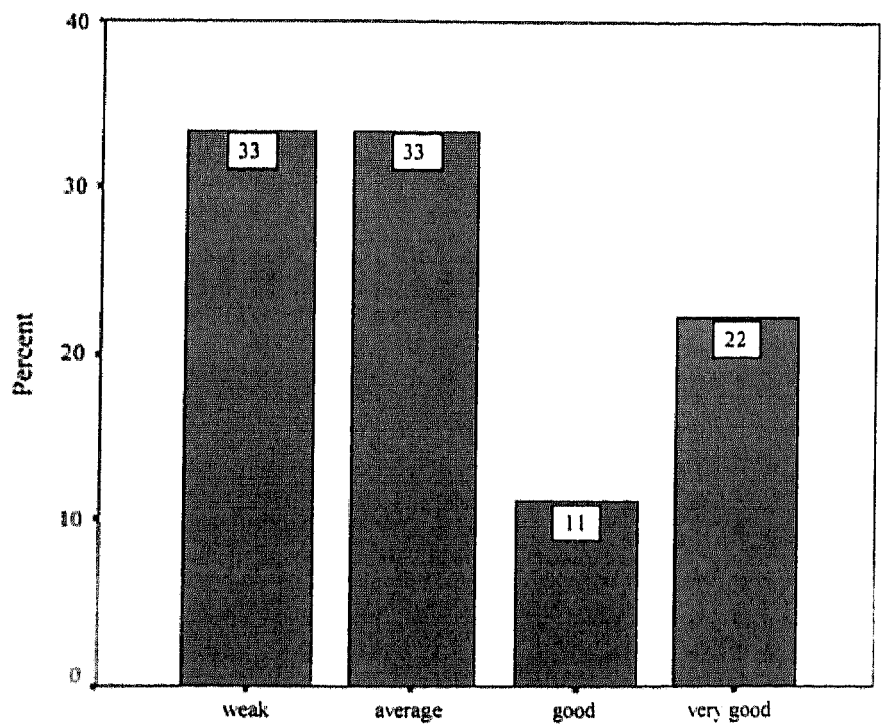


Figure 6.13: Instructors' Evaluation for Students Reading Skills

	Students Evaluation in %	Teacher's Evaluation in %
Very good	22.1	22.2
Good	37.3	11.1
Average	33.8	33.3
Weak	3.9	33.3
Very weak	2.0	-

**Table (6.4):** A comparison between students and Instructors evaluation for the reading skill.

From the comparison provided in table (6.4) above, it was clear that, the overwhelming majority of students believe that their reading ability was above average, at the time that the teachers were divided over the issue. One third of them believe that the level of student reading was weak, another saw it average while the other third thought that it was above average.

Regarding reading, Zughoul and Hussein (1985) again found the same trend, i.e. the students overestimated their abilities. Whereas 85% of their students judged themselves as good and very good, only about 44% of their teachers thought so. Most of the teachers classified their students' reading abilities as "mediocre".

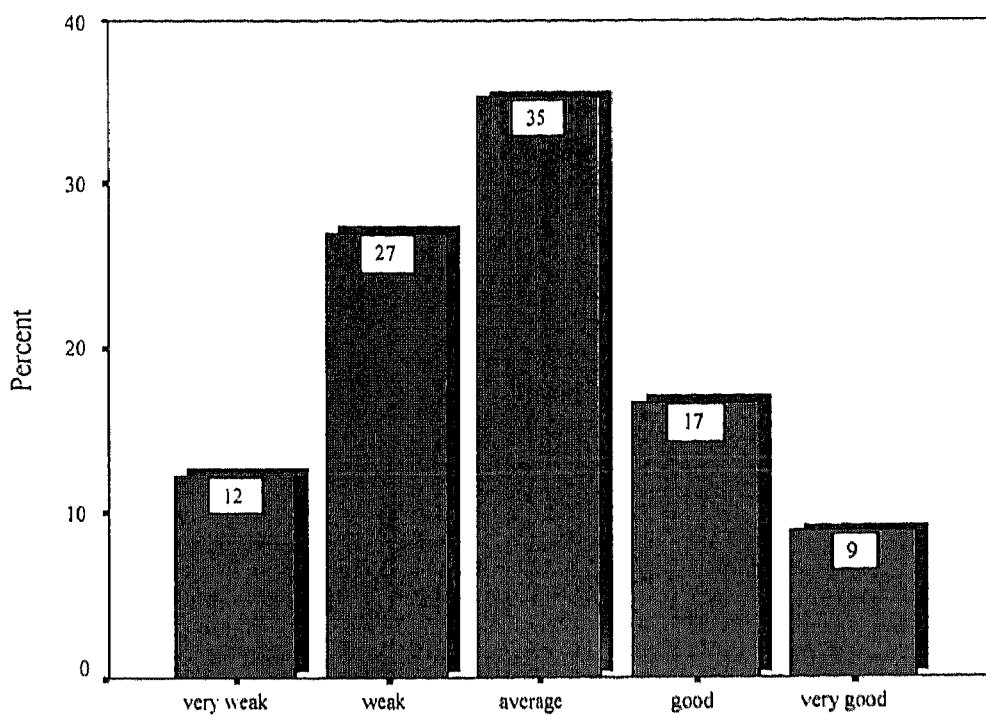
The high rating by students of their reading ability may also be due to their misunderstanding of what reading means or what skills are involved in reading. Some of them might think that if you know how to read English words aloud from a text, then you are a good reader. Reading involves more than just articulation of word or reading aloud. The reading techniques are very important in saving the time. Skimming for example helps students to get a quick general overview of the topics, while scanning constitute a method of selective reading. These two techniques are very useful when students are searching for specific information. They are decisive factors for students to

judge if they need to continue reading the passage or not. We were not sure if students know how to use textual clues, guess meanings and use surrounding context to predict the meaning of unfamiliar words or not. Students need to distinguish the main ideas from the supporting details in a paragraph. Other features of reading such as understanding sense relationships, information transfer, distinguishing relevant from irrelevant, predicting outcome, making inferences, evaluating and analyzing information and drawing conclusion are all parts of a successful reading.

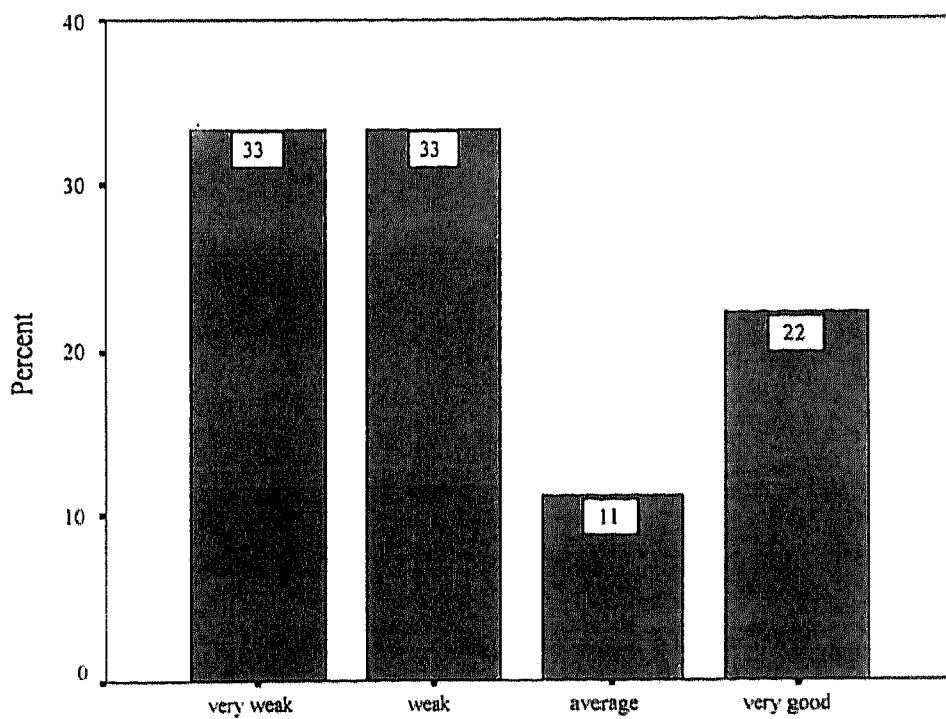
In overestimating their reading ability students might have got a clue from their results in the Secondary Certificate Examination, which qualified them to enter the university. Despite the fact that the students English marks on those exam might appear very high, they do not actually tell the true story of the student level, because these results were normally scaled up to increase the percentage of students' pass in the exams. From the researcher's own observation and experience with these students, he advocates the opinion that students level in reading skill is below average. That is why the English program should really focus on strengthening the reading skills and strategies in addition to encouraging students to look at a whole paragraph for a general meaning rather than to get drowned in the meaning of individual words.

### **6.3.3 Evaluation of the Speaking Skills**

As for oral skills, only 25% of the students judged themselves as good or very good, while 39.2% rated themselves as weak or very weak, and 35.3% saw their ability as average (Figure 6.14, page 219). The language instructors judged their students' oral ability even more harshly. 66.6% of them judged the students as weak or very weak in speaking, while only 11.1% saw them as average. (Figure 15, page 219).



**Figure 6.14:** Students Evaluation for their Oral Skills



**Figure 6.15:** Instructors Evaluation for Students Abilities in Oral Skill

These results sounded very fair. The reasons for the weakness in speaking skill depend greatly on the syllabus, the methodology of teaching and the facilities in the school system. Where many unqualified teachers, who themselves do not speak fluent English, find themselves teaching English to children at the beginners' level. This problem was coupled with the lack of exposure to the language outside the class.

	Students Evaluation in %	Teacher's Evaluation in %
Very good	7.4	22.2
Good	17.2	0
Average	35.2	11.1
Weak	26.5	33.3
Very weak	12.7	33.3

**Table (6.5):** A comparison between students and Instructors responses for the speaking skill.

When the two results are put together as shown in table (6.5) above, we come across one of the few instances where both teachers and students agree that the level of majority of students in certain skills fall below average.

In contrary to that Zughouli and Hussein reported considerable variations between students and faculty members' evaluation of speaking ability. Whereas 56% of the students judged their ability in speaking as "good" and "very good" only 10% of the faculty judged them to be so; and whereas 10% of the students judged their ability in spoken English as "weak" and "very weak", 50% of their faculty judged them to be so.

In the case of the University of Khartoum, the students seemed more realistic about their speaking ability. The majority admitted that they were weak in speaking, a fact strongly supported by the English instructors. Again, this situation is due to the limited contact between the students and any English-speaking individuals, native or non-

native, as almost all the staff members in the university are locals. Thus, even if the students are good in English, or have the potential to be so, they have no chance to develop their fluency, neither in class nor outside the classroom.

6.3.4 Evaluation of the Writing Skill

The discrepancy between the students' and the instructors' evaluation of their writing abilities in English could not have been clearer. 57.9% of the students judged their ability in writing as "good" and "very good", and 12.7% admitted that they were weak in writing (Figure 6.16, below). The language instructors took an opposite view with 66.6% judging the students' writing ability as "weak" or "very weak" and only 22.2% rating them as good or very good. Another 11% of the instructors evaluated them as average (Figure 6.17, page 222).

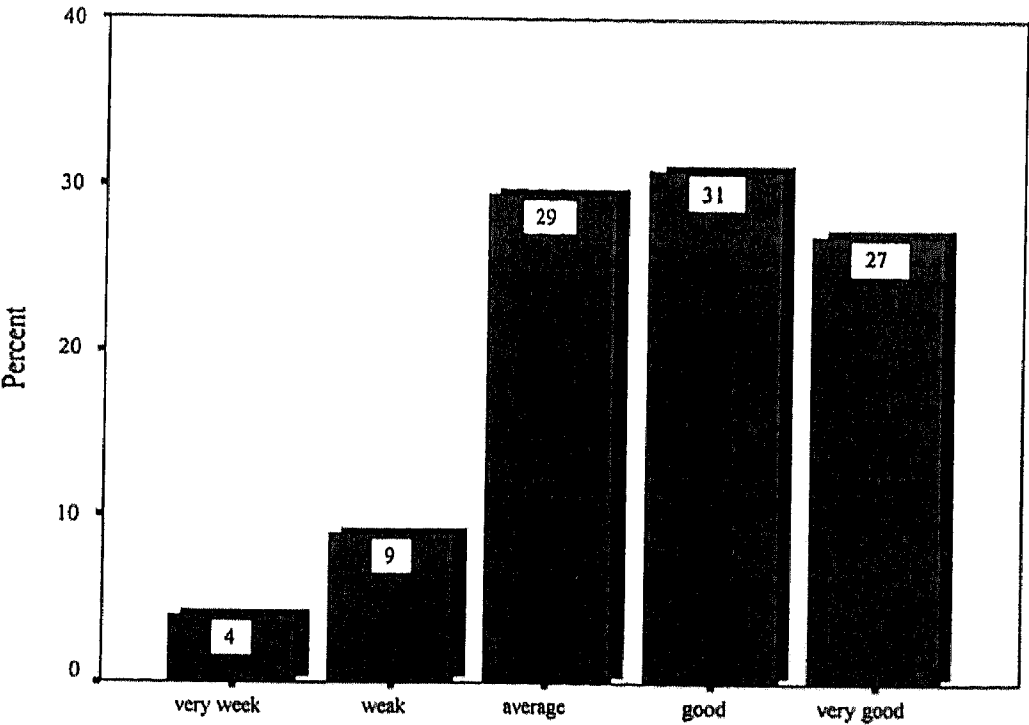
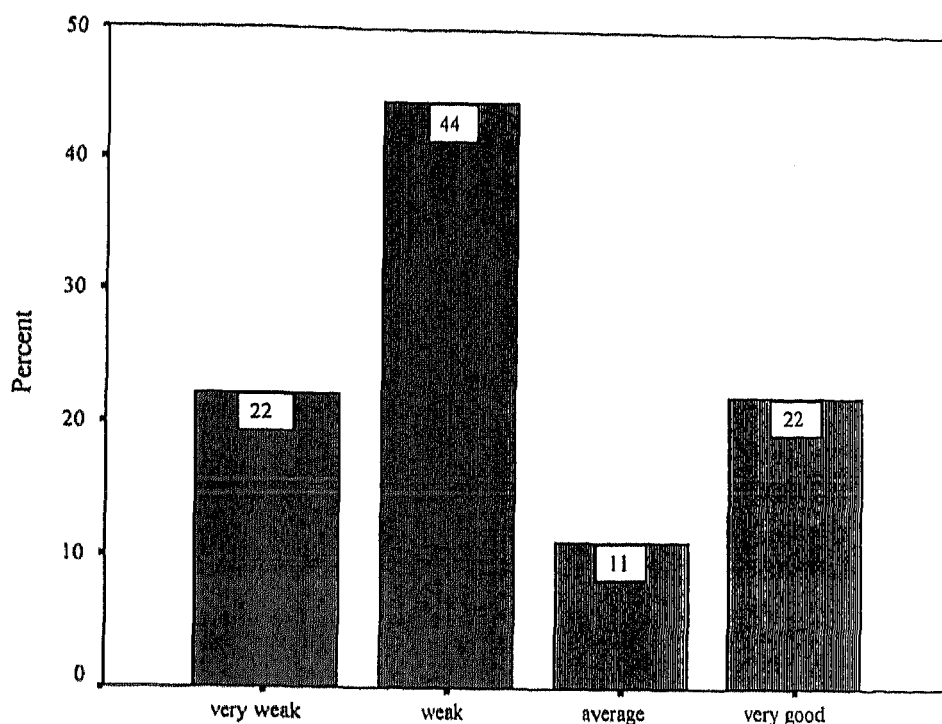


Figure 6.16: Students Evaluation of their Abilities in Writing Skills.



**Figure 6.17:** Instructors Evaluation for Students' Abilities in Writing Skills

	Students Evaluation in %	Teacher's Evaluation in %
Very good	26.0	22.2
Good	30.9	0
Average	29.4	11.1
Weak	8.3	44.4
Very weak	4.4	22.2

**Table (6.6):** A comparison between Students and Instructors Responses for the Writing Skills.

The sharp contradiction shown on table 6.6 (above) speaks for itself. Students write filling lots of pages thinking that they were producing excellent pieces of compositions, but that did not convince their teacher who evaluated them as very poor in writing. The problem lies in the understanding of students of what is involved in the writing skills.



From the researcher's experience with some of these students showed that, the most difficult skill for them was writing. They might have very wonderful ideas, but they always present them in a very incoherent way, lacking cohesion ties and organization. Students need to be taught how to structure their ideas, how to build paragraphs that rotate around one main idea supported by details such as statistics, comparison, contrasts, reasons etc. Students lack the environment of meaningful writing; they did have the chance to write genuine texts outside the academic context, as all their correspondences and other forms of writing were done in Arabic. It is hoped that the expanding opportunity of writing e-mails and chats through the Internet would help students develop some of the aspects of writing skill if not all.

Zughoul and Hussein (1985) found the same contradiction between students and faculty members regarding the evaluation of the writing skills. Whereas 51% of the students judged their writing ability as "good" and "very good" only a meager percentage (14%) of the faculty thought so. The overwhelming majority of faculty members (85%), however, judged the students' writing ability as "mediocre" or "weak".

Benson (1991) reached a similar conclusion. His results showed that the students rated themselves much lower in understanding (listening) and speaking than on reading and writing. 51.4% of his subjects felt that they understood English "not well" and almost 50% felt that they could speak English only "a little". They were much more confident of their reading and writing ability.

If students are subjected to a reading test, it is predicted that their results will be much lower than what they feel about their abilities in reading skills. The English final exam results of 120 students of Biology and Math groups reported in Agban (1999) shows that 89 of them failed to pass their English exams. This could be interpreted as an

indicator of students weakness standard of English, although they feel their level of English is very good.

Since the role of English in the University has changed from a medium of instruction to a vehicle of information carrier or an access to the library resources, teaching reading skills should constitute the core part and be the main focus of any English program that emerge as a response to this change in role.

### **6.3.5 The Most Important Language Skill**

Another very crucial statement was put for the three groups. The statement read: "which of the following English language skills do you think is more important to you than the others for success at the university level: listening, writing, speaking, or reading?"

After assessing the students' abilities in the four different skills in the previous part, this part attempts to ascertain which skill the subjects consider the most important for their success at the university level and how they rank the other remaining skills.

The students' opinion about which was the most important skill for them was rather surprising. 35% of them believed that reading was the most important skill, which is logical given the new position of English in the university, but another 35% thought that speaking was the most important skill. Only 16% ranked listening in the third position and 12% positioned writing last (Figure 6.18, page 226).

Students must be thinking of some other delayed need, as they there was no need at the university level now to justify the high rating of the importance of speaking skills. But generally it was noticed that the person's ability to speak the language was very highly valued in the country than any other skill. Some educated individuals even try switch codes between English and Arabic when they converse with others in Arabic language, to show off their intellectuality and knowledge of the foreign language. In terms of job in the civil service and most of the private sectors, speaking English does not constitute

a plus point. In Sudan, English is a factor only if graduate students want to work with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, international organizations, foreign companies, and embassies.

Despite the students' high ranking for speaking skill, such skill could not be considered an important factor for students' success at the university level in the light of the Arabicization policy, as it is totally irrelevant to all academic activities such as class presentations and discussions are performed in Arabic.

This type of ranking was not unique to our students only, as Hock and Chitravelu (1980) reported the same case at the University Malaya in Malaysia. They explained the preference for speaking by students, saying,

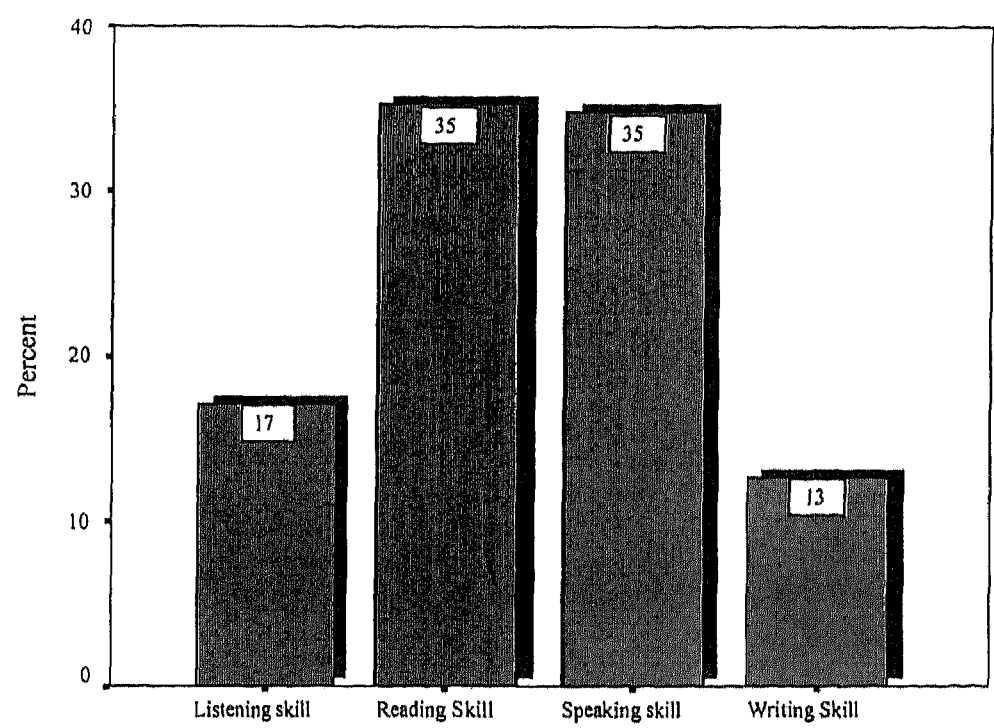
"Students regarded reading as an important but difficult skill to learn. Speaking English was viewed as a more tangible, achievable and useful skill to learn, especially for career purposes. For this reason, UM decided to include one unit on speaking interaction when they designed the project named the UMESPP, just to accommodate the students' desire to be able to communicate in English".(pg. 67)

However, in the case of Malaysia, students' responses seemed more acceptable, because English is very widely used in business activities especially in urban area. Fluency in spoken language is considered an advantage in competing for jobs, especially in private sectors.

The reading skills are always placed as top priority for students at university level, the other skills follow in ranking with some degree of variability. Schutz and Derwing (1981) found the greatest variability was in the position of speaking and writing, with writing being more important in some categories. In terms of frequency of use, they found that listening rated higher than reading. In the case of desired command, however, speaking outweighed all other skills, indicating that speaking ability is desirable even when all other objective factors rated it very low (in terms of need). A possible explanation for this might be that the students desired to have a good command of

spoken English because speech presents the most noticeable evidence that a person is proficient in that language.

The ranking by the English instructors seems quite reasonable and logical. 55.6% of them rated reading as the most important skill, 22.2% ranked writing second, while listening and speaking shared the third position with 11% support for each (Figure 6.19, page 227).



**Figure 6.18:** Students' judgment for the most English Language skills (above)

Subject lecturers also lent support to the instructors' rating as 60% of them believed that reading is the most important skill while 27% of them ranked listening in the second position and 13% placed writing in the third position. Contrary to what the students thought as an important skill, the lecturers gave no support to speaking skills. They considered it completely unimportant (Figure 6.20, page 228).

Looking at the students' immediate needs, the Instructors and subject Lecturers judgment seems more practical and realistic with regard to the most important language.

The type of responses elicited from their students would make their job very difficult in terms of the syllabus objectives, the materials to be taught and the methodology of presenting it.

The instructors' ranking was supported by a research conducted by Benson (1991) in the Japanese context. His findings showed that most of the subjects placed reading and writing above understanding (listening) and speaking.

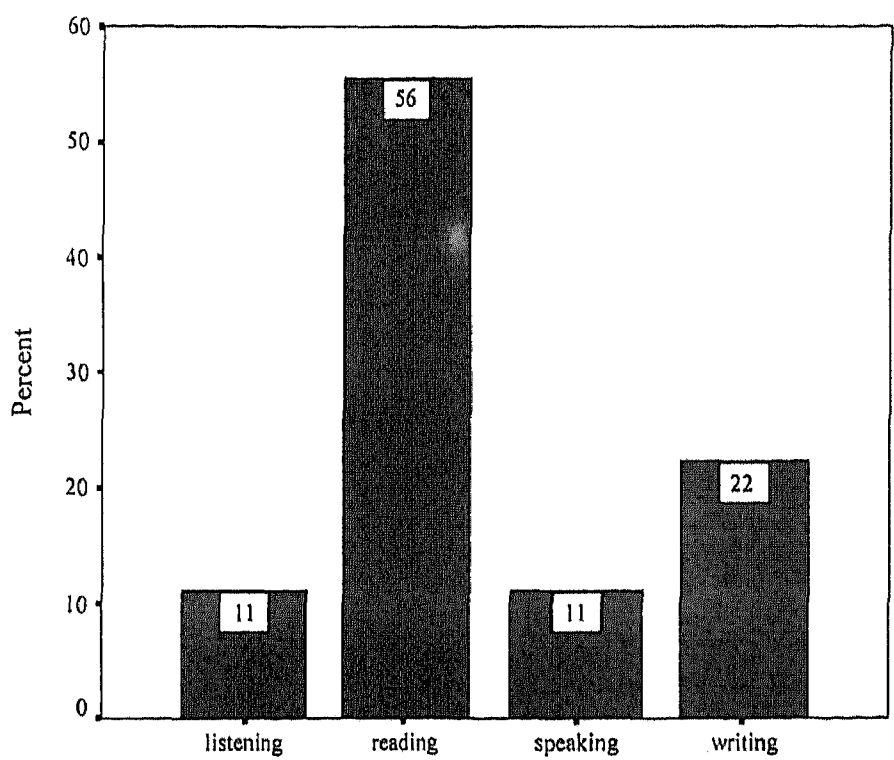
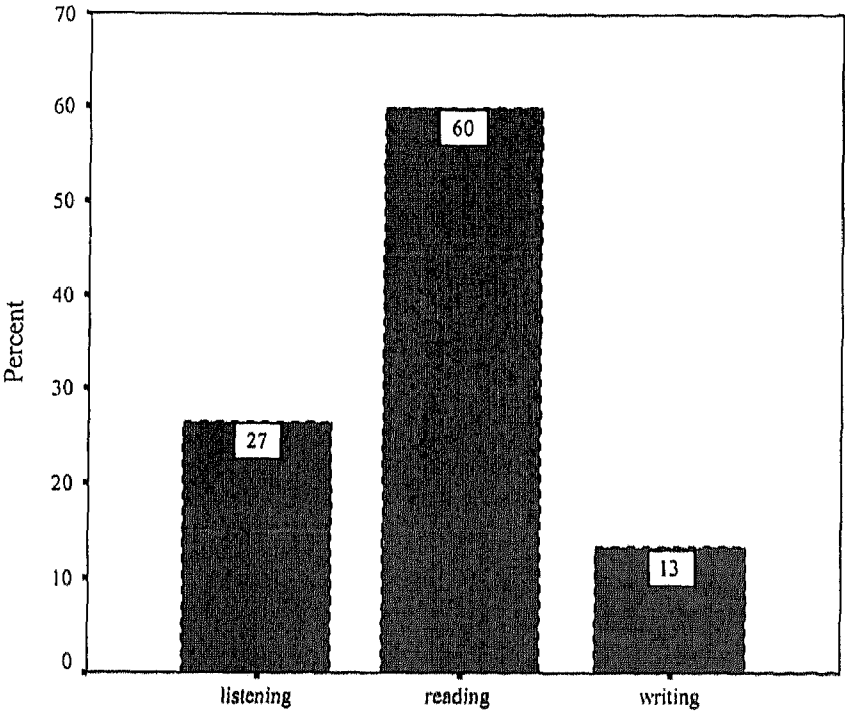


Figure 6.19: Instructors' judgment for the most important English Language skill

In the context of Jordanian universities, Zughoul and Hussein (1985) found that both students and faculty members considered listening comprehension as the most important skill. However, differences in ranking appeared in the position of the other skills. Whereas students felt that speaking ranked next to listening, followed by reading and writing, faculty members arranged skills in a different hierarchical order: reading, writing and speaking. But the difference here is that in the Jordanian context English

was still used as a medium of instruction in some Faculties at the time the study was carries out, that is why many students believed that it was crucial for them to listen to and speak the language.



**Figure 6.20:** Lecturers' judgment for the most important English Language skill

Most research supports the ranking of reading in first place. Escorcia (1985) says that 90% of her respondents confirmed that English is the language most important for them in their career, and reading comprehension is the skill most widely accepted as responding to this need.

Even before the Arabicization policy was implemented, in a study carried out at Sudan Polytechnic, Andrews (1984) concluded that reading was the most important skill. He says, “ Although the trend towards Arabicization posed a problem, it also in a sense helped us by limiting our position and forcing us to make difficult but necessary decisions, such as concentrating on attempts to improve the reading skill.” The

experience of the University of Malaya in Malaysia also lends support to raising the importance of reading. Asmah (1979) stated that U.M. felt that the feasibility of the English program lays in singling out the skills most relevant to the students' needs in the context of their university career and in the role of English in their professional life once they graduate. Through research it was found that reading was the most important skill in the context of U.M.

Another research study carried out in the Colombian context and reported in Larben-Pusey and Pusey (1987) indicated that of the various skills emphasized in their EST/ESP classes in Colombian higher education institutions, all institutions placed more stress on reading skills than on any other skill.

Although the students at the University of Khartoum placed equal importance on speaking and reading, their instructors and subject teachers thought that reading should be on the top. The views of the instructors and lecturers are supported by findings from many research studies and projects around the world, as explained above.

The high ranking of importance of speaking skills by students is an indication that the students were not very much aware of the academic, instrumental need for English at the university level. Their motivation here is clearly integrative. Dudley Evans (1998) also notices the same trend and he described it as follows " it could be very difficult to decide what students real needs are. In theory, students need to focus on the reading skills, in practice the reading of English textbooks or articles may be little more than an optional extra, and students may be motivated by materials that focus on other skills or on delayed needs rather than supposed immediate needs ". (pg. 37)

This mismatch between the institution's perception of students' needs and students judgment of their own true needs and wants often results in a lack of students motivation and the consequent disappointment of teachers.

### 6.3.6 The Most focused Language Skill in the English Program

In the previous two sub-sections, we presented and discussed the students' proficiency in the four language skills, and got an idea about the most important language skill for them. The objective of this part is to identify the language skill that was most focused in the current English Program in University of Khartoum.

The English instructors were first asked to rank the skills according to their focus in the English Program, with the most focused language skill rank first on the list. The results show that 67.8% of the respondents indicated that it was reading followed by listening then writing. There was no mention of speaking skills at all (Figure 6.21, page 232). The students on the other hand, support the instructors' ranking regarding reading skills, although with a lesser percentage (38%), followed by listening (31%), then writing (19%) and finally speaking (12%) (Figure 6.22, page 232).

	Students perception		Instructors perception		Lecturers Perception	
Ranking of skills according to importance	1. reading	35%	1. reading	56%	1. reading	60%
	2. speaking	35%	2. writing	22%	2. listening	27%
	3. listening	17%	3. listening	11%	3. writing	13%
	4. writing	13%	4. speaking	11%	4. speaking	0%
Ranking of skills according to focus in English Program	1. reading	38%	1. reading	67%	Not applicable	
	2. listening	31%	2. listening	22%		
	3. writing	19%	3. writing	11%		
	4. speaking	12%	4. speaking	0%		

**Table 6.7:** A comparison between students and staff perception regarding the most important and most focused skills in the English Program



Table (6.7, page 230) cross-examines the results of this section with the previous responses on the most important language skill. It illustrates that instructors who believed that the most important language skill is reading ranked it as the most focused skill of their teaching. However, they ranked writing as the second most important skill, but their second focus in their teaching was on listening.

There was no clear justification for why some of the instructors were focusing their efforts for teaching the listening and writing skills. If the objective of the program was to support the students academically, then this effort should be redirected towards improving the reading skills. Listening skills were irrelevant, because students were not required to listen to lectures or seminars in English and the same applies to writing. Concentrating on the development of the reading skills should be the core objective of any English Program, especially in situations like the University of Khartoum

The purpose for teaching English here should be to enable students to approach and make use of materials written in English and follow up current research in periodicals which is mostly published in English.

This comparison also reveals some disappointing facts for the students. As mentioned earlier, 35% of participant students considered speaking skills as equally important as reading skills. But, from the instructors' responses it was clear that the oral skills were not among skills that instructors focus on when they teach in class.

The students were hoping that the class would be an opportunity for them to practise their oral skills, since there was no room for them to do that in the campus, or on the streets or at home, because of the complete dominance of the Arabic language there.

The discrepancy between what the teachers and the students believed as most important skills and what is actually practiced in class, further deepened the doubts about the existence of any objectives for teaching the language. From the discussions above, we

can conclude that all participants believe that reading is the most needed skill and it remains the focus of this Program and any English programs to come.

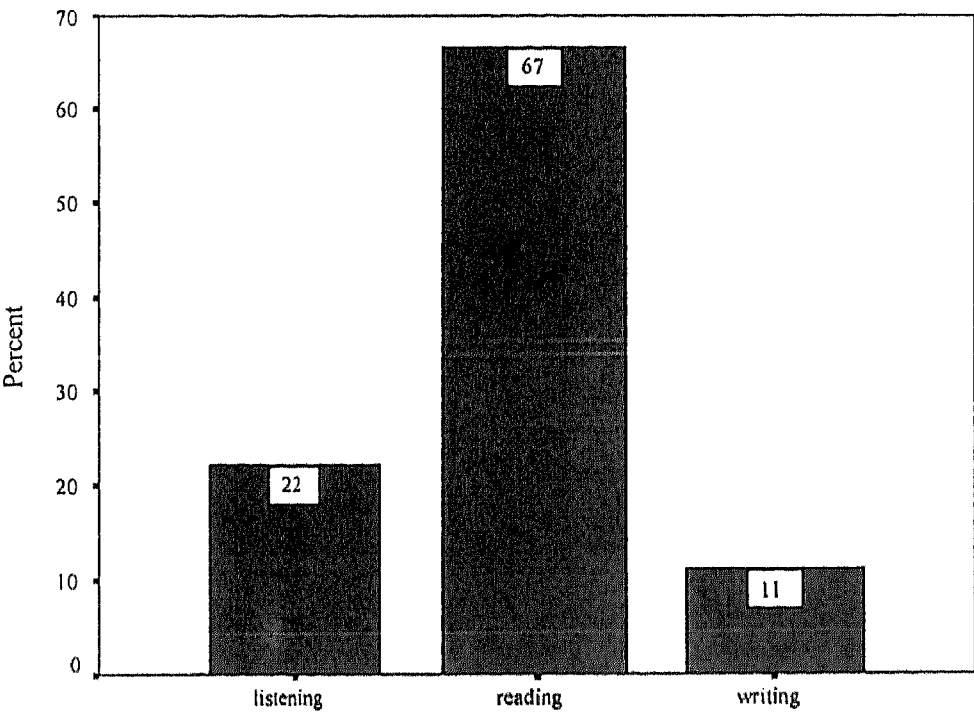


Figure 6.21: Instructors view on the most focused skill in the English Program

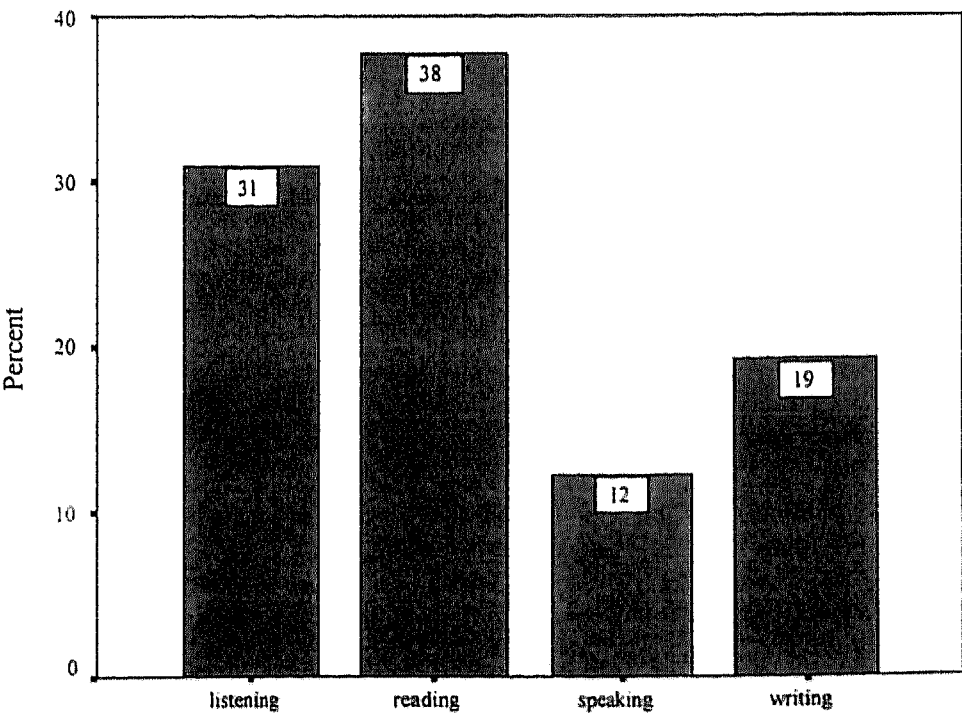


Figure 6.22: Students view on the most focused skill in the English Program

6.4 PERCEPTIONS TOWARD ENGLISH AND ARABIC AS MEDIUMS OF INSTRUCTION

6.4.1 Perception about the Importance of English Language

The findings of the “importance of English” variable show a very strong recognition from all groups of respondents for the role that English language can play in the university. The results presented in table 6.8 reveal that the vast majority of students’ (89.2%), and the great majority of subject lecturers (86.7%) and a big majority of instructors (77.8%) responded in the affirmative to the statement that English plays an important role at the university level. This result is consistent with the public educational policy which states that for Arabicization to succeed, the students need to have a good command of English language.

	Yes	No	Not sure
Students	89.2	10.8	-
Instructors	77.8	22.2	-
Lecturers	86.7	13.3	-

Table 6.8: Students, Instructors and Lecturers opinions on whether English plays a decisive role for students' success at the University

Taha (1990) reported the same general agreement about the instrumental value of English as an additional language in the context of Arabicization. 90% of the teachers and 67% of the students who participated in his study indicated that the English teaching program should be strengthened, if and when Arabicization is fully implemented.

Mohammed (1992) recognized the importance of English in the context of Arabicization, but he recommended that English programs should be geared towards the

training and preparation of the students for their future professions. He added that "there was no reason to waste time and resources assigned to ELT in teaching irrelevant English not leading, in the long run, to further integration with the students' field of subject" (pg. 199).

The results elicited from the three groups of respondents mentioned above is an indication of a very wide awareness from the part of students and their teacher of the role of English in the tertiary education. This made us conclude that the problem of English Language at the university was not caused by the lack of interest from the parties involved, but from the problems within the English Program itself. This type of problem needs a thorough investigation into the role English should play, the type of English taught, the teaching materials etc.

#### **6.4.2 Use of Arabic as a medium of instruction**

Here is another statement designed to measure the perception of the participants towards the new policy of Arabicization. The statement was presented in all three sets of questionnaires. It was put to the respondents as follows: "The University is justified in using Arabic as a medium of instruction". The options for answering the statement were presented in the form of a five-points ordinal scale: strongly agree, agree, not sure, disagree, and strongly disagree.

The findings from the students and subject lecturers responses are presented in table 6.9 (page 235). The means and standard deviations generated revealed that students slightly disagree that the University was justified in using Arabic as a medium of instruction ( $M = 2.67$ ,  $sd. 1.53$ ), they also moderately agree that they are proficient enough to study subjects of specialization through the medium of English ( $M = 3.44$ ,  $sd. 1.14$ ). They are strongly favoring the reverse to English as medium; hence abandon the Arabicization Policy, ( $M = 4.03$ ,  $sd. 1.30$ ). The subject lecturers on the other hand,

slightly disagree that the university was justified to use Arabic as a medium ( $M = 2.87$ ,  $sd. 1.01$ ). However, there is a clear variation between students and instructors regarding students' ability to study subjects of specialization in English. Lecturers low mean score indicates that they strongly disagree that students are able to study through the medium of English ( $M = 2.20$ ,  $sd. .86$ ). They very slightly disagree that the University should go back to teach through the medium of English ( $M = 2.93$ ,  $sd. 1.43$ ).

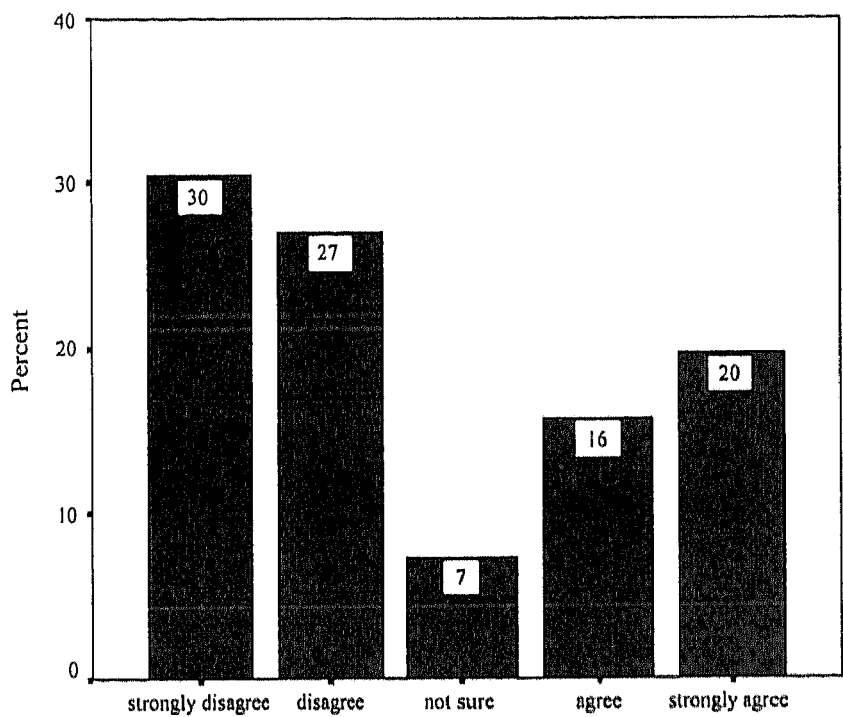
The Instructors findings show that they very slightly disagree that the University was justified in using Arabic as a medium of instruction ( $M = 2.89$ ,  $sd. 1.17$ ). In response to students' ability to study subjects of specialization in English, instructors seem to support the lecturers' judgment. They strongly disagree with this statement students are proficient enough to study their courses in English ( $M = 2.33$ ,  $sd. .50$ ). It was surprising to see the instructors support the students' views regarding going back to teaching in English. The results show that instructors moderately agree that the University should go back to teaching in English ( $M = 3.89$ ,  $sd. .92$ ).

Variable	Students		lecturers		Instructors	
	mean	Sd.	mean	Sd.	mean	Sd.
University is justified in using Arabic as a medium	2.67	1.5264	2.87	1.0601	2.89	1.1667
Students are proficient enough to study their courses in English	3.44	1.1410	2.20	.8619	2.33	.5000
The University should go back to teaching in English	4.03	1.3032	2.93	1.4376	3.89	.9280

**Table 6.9:** Students and Staff Mean Score Regarding their Perception on the Use of English and Arabic as Mediums of Instruction

Further descriptive means are used here to give a more detailed picture of the subjects' opinions. The percentages show that the majority of the students (57.4%) disagreed with the statement that the University was justified in choosing Arabic as a medium of

instruction 35.3% of them surveyed agreed. A very small percentage (7.4%) indicated that they are not sure.(Figure 6.23 below).



**Figure 6.23:** Students opinion on using Arabic as a medium of instruction

One interpretation for this type of response could be that, for a long time, the University of Khartoum took pride in being the country’s top English-medium University. The University students used to feel that they were more distinguished and prestigious than students from other universities, in terms of job market and societal status. This new policy made all universities teach in Arabic, this made the University of Khartoum lose one of its most distinctive features.

Another interpretation could be that the Arabicization policy came as part of an Educational package of reforms that directly affected the students’ lives. Among these reforms is the withdrawal of the privileges of free food and accommodation that the students had enjoyed for decades. For this reason, many students rejected the educational policies in their totality, including Arabicization. A third factor could be

that some students see Arabicization as one of the government's agendas to expand its Islamic influence, especially students who support opposition or secular parties and non-Muslim students.

A fourth group, which includes students from the Southern Region or those who studied in International English medium schools locally or abroad, feel that with Arabic as a medium they would academically be at a disadvantage because they are less proficient in the Arabic language, especially standard Arabic. Students from the South, though few in numbers, feel that the spread of Arabic Language is a threat to their local African cultures, this is one of the factors that are fueling the ongoing war in the southern part of the country.

The results above could also be seen in the light of students' response to the importance of English, where they put very high regard for the language. It reflects a high motivation from the part of students to retain English as a medium of instruction.

The reaction of the English language instructors to the same statement was quite interesting. 44.4% of the respondents indicated that they were not sure, while 33.3% agreed that the University is justified in using Arabic as medium and a minority of 22.2% disagreed with the statement. (Figure 6.24, page 239).

It was generally noticed that, to any question regarding general policies, the instructors' response was more towards the "not sure". As mentioned earlier, this could be considered as intentional neutrality as some teachers prefer not to voice out their disagreement towards the government policies. In fact some teachers became very reserved and sometimes indifferent, since the University dismissed many of its staff members who objected to the policies proposed by the new government in the early 1990s. Judging by the results of those who gave positive or negative responses, it was

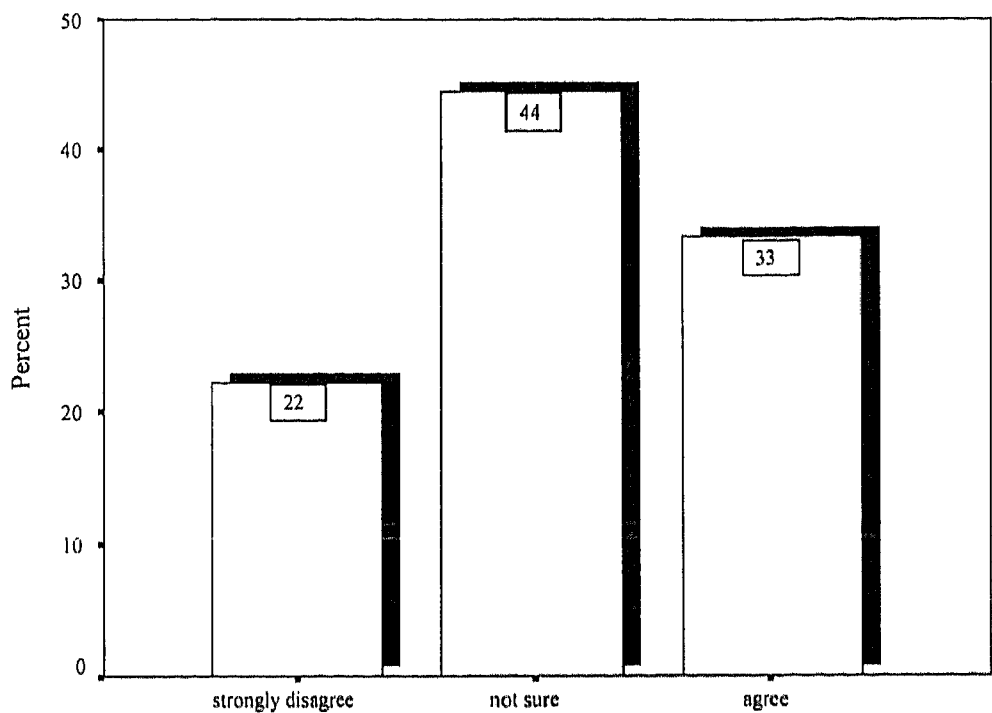
clear that the instructors support the move towards using Arabic as a medium. That could be because they believe that it is hard for their students to perform academic activities efficiently in a foreign language due to the students' low standard of English. The subject lecturers, on the other hand, seemed divided over the issue. Around 46.6% of the respondents disagreed with the statement, while 40% supported it. Only 13.5% indicated that they were not sure. (Figure 6.25, page 239)

In the past, the subject lecturers objected to the Arabicization policy citing reasons such as:

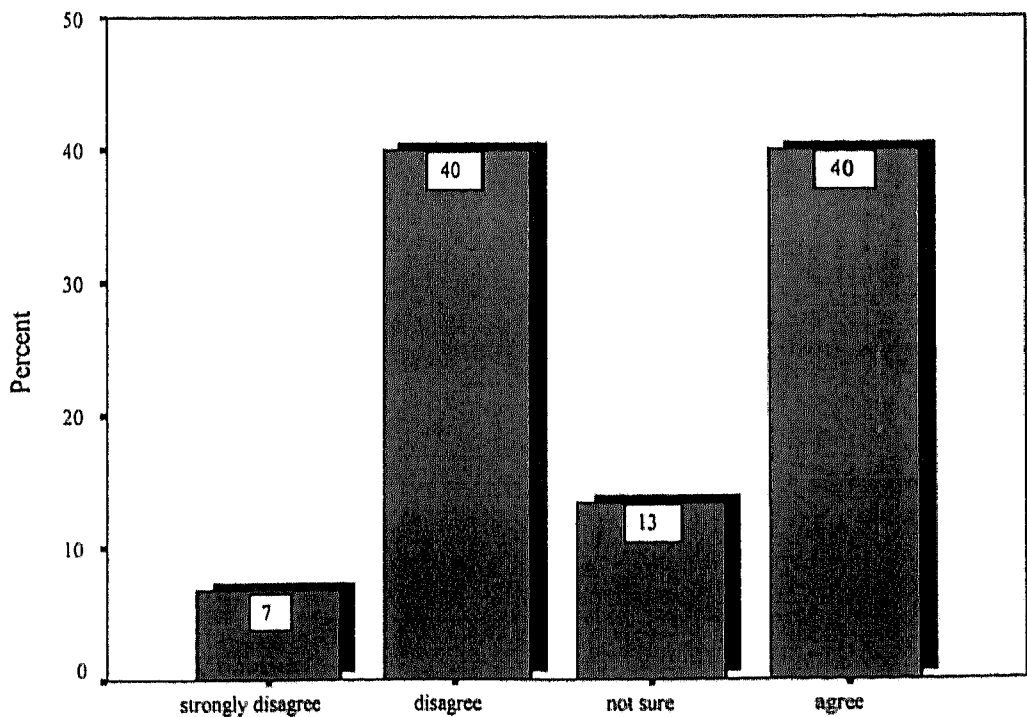
1. It is easier for them to teach in English as they themselves studied the subject in English.
  2. Most of the textbooks are available in English
  3. Very few textbooks and reference materials are available through the medium of Arabic, especially in the field of natural sciences.
  4. The translated terms in Arabic are more alien to the students than the English terms
- (Taha 1990:298)

However, those who support the move towards Arabic cited reasons such as the low level of English ability among students. Generally speaking, the matter looks very controversial. While most of the students believe that the University has no justification to use Arabic as a medium of instruction, the majority of the English Language instructors remained uncertain, meanwhile, the subject teachers appeared to be divided over the matter.





**Figure 6.24:** Instructors' view on using Arabic as a medium of instruction



**Figure 6.25:** Lecturers' opinion on using Arabic as a medium of instruction (above)

6.4.3 Going back to English

The results from the previous statement suggested that the subjects were not strongly in support of the Arabicization policy. But what, in their opinion, was the alternative? To get an answer to this question, the students were asked to respond to the following hypothetical statement “the university should go back to teaching in English.” The majority of the students (76.5%) cheerfully supported the suggestion, while 15.7% disagreed and the rest were unsure (figure 6.26 below).

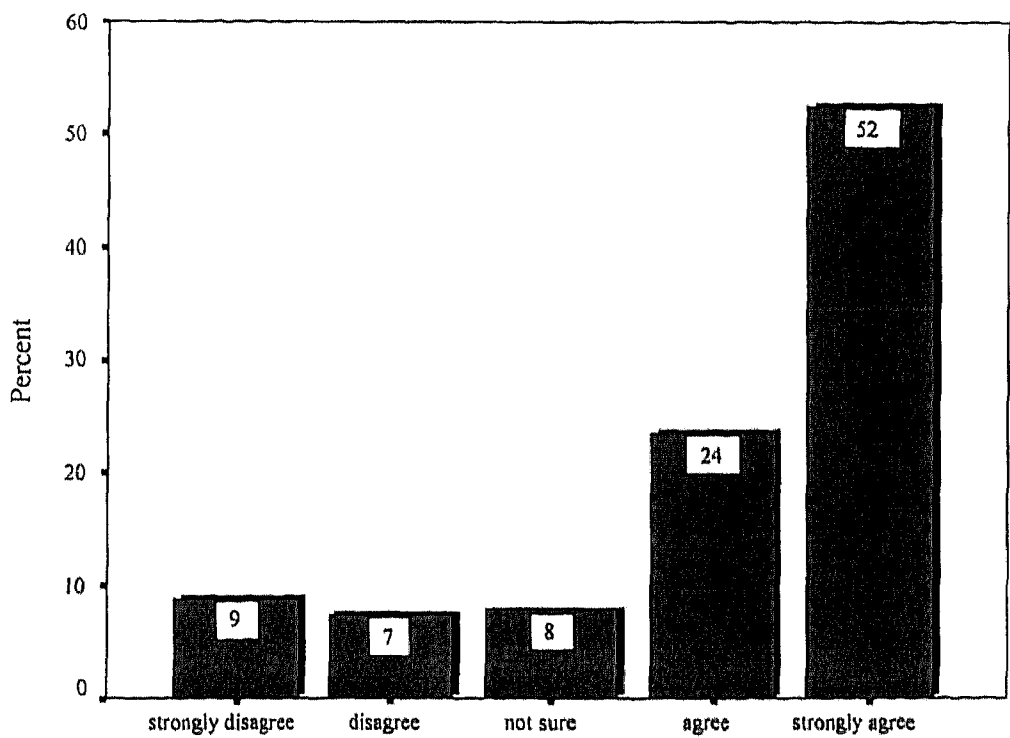


Figure 6.26: Students opinion on going back to teaching in English

Although the question was a highly hypothetical one, the responses might reflect a nostalgic feeling, on the part of the students, towards an international language that lost its position. It shows the recognition for the role of English language especially in allowing students more opportunity in the future if they want to continue their studies abroad or seek employment in a non-Arabic speaking country. Weak proficiency in English cripples students ambitions and confines their job opportunities to local market or Arab neighboring countries. Studying in English also gave graduates of the

University of Khartoum, in the past, edge over their counterparts from other Arabic medium local universities in term of job opportunities or status in society at large.

These results are consistent with the responses to the above statement about whether the University was justified in using Arabic as a medium. These responses could also be interpreted as a sign of high interest and motivation from the part of the students to study and be proficient in English language. This is considered as a good sign as many universities, which teach English as an auxiliary subject, complained about the lack of motivation from the part of the learners to study English. However, it may also be read as a reaction to what they saw as forcible implementation of the Arabicization policy.

Despite their belief that students proficiency in English is below average, the majority of the English instructors agreed with the statement that the University should go back to teaching in English, while 44.4% of them indicated their neutrality (Figure 6.27, page 242).

As for the subject lecturers results show that they were sharply divided over the issue, with 47% disagreeing with the statement and 46% believing that the university should go back to teaching in English for the reasons we cited in the above section. (Figure 6.28, page 242)

It is very difficult to understand the instructors' responses for this statement. Although a good percentage indicated that they were not sure, the majority supported the students in their wish to revert to English as a medium. Responses from the interviews reveals that instructors support the use of English as a medium for the science fields only. because of the lack of reference books written or translated to Arabic in these fields. The results obtained from the subject lecturers, deepened their state of division. It also reflects that the issue of Arabicization and English as a medium still a debatable one.

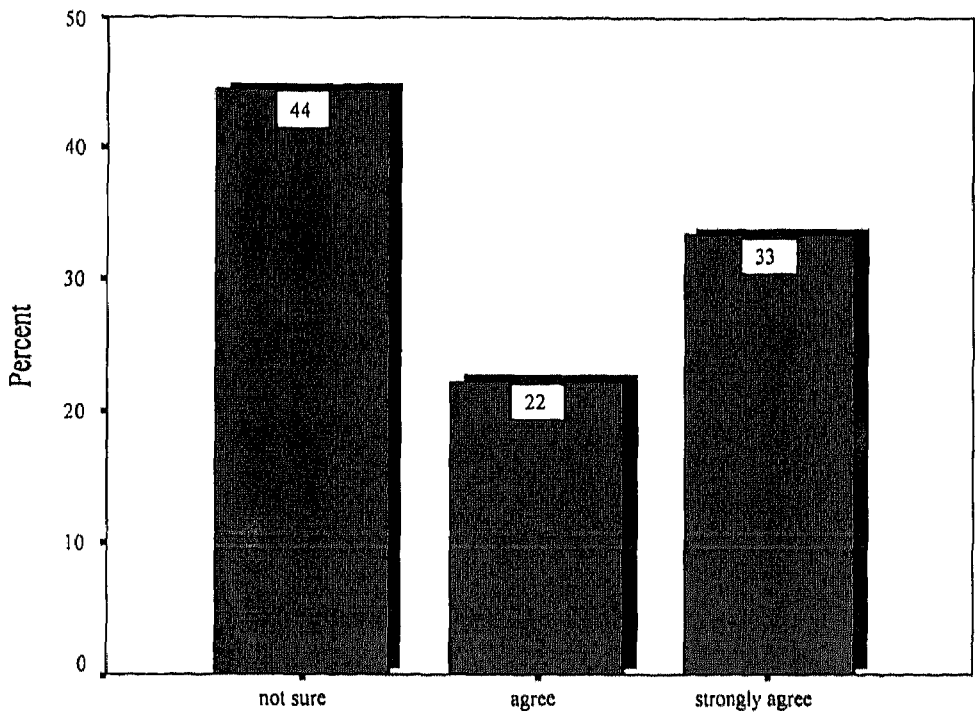


Figure 6.27: Instructors opinion on going back to teaching in English

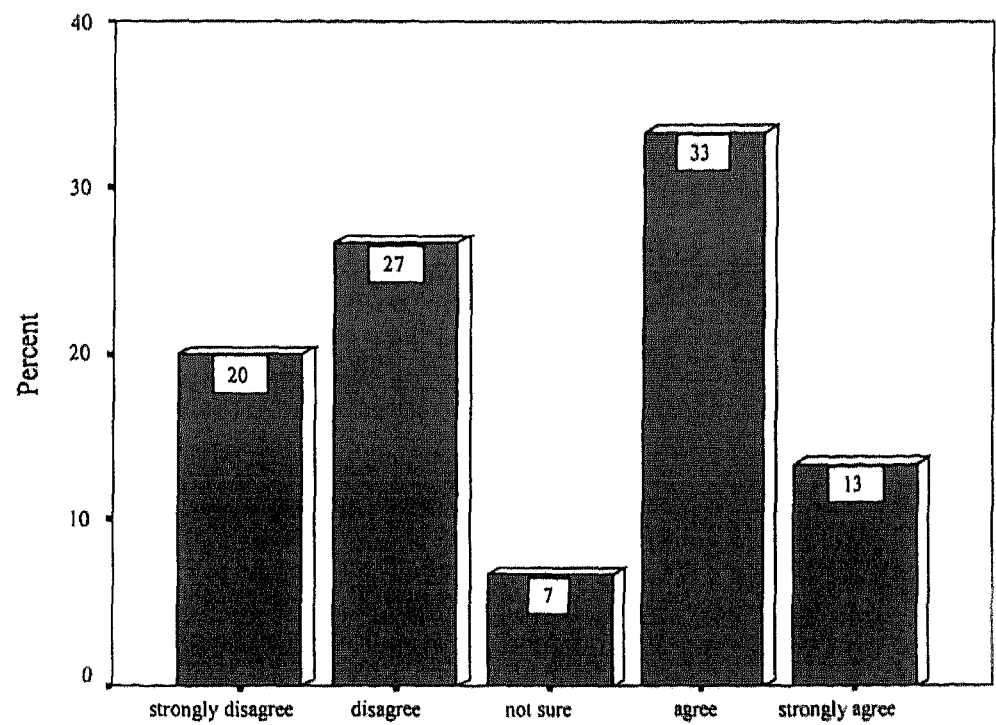


Figure 6.28: Lecturers opinion on going back to teaching subjects in English

That was because, from the beginning, the policy came from top to bottom with the subject lecturers at the end of the receiving part. They did not have the chance to air their opinions, or give suggestions regarding the gradual implementation. They were just asked to teach in Arabic the following academic year. Any reluctance or resistance to that directive used to interpreted as opposition to the new reforms that were advocated by the Military Government.

**6.4.4 Ability to study subject of specialization in English**

In the previous section the respondents showed a strong preference for return to teaching in English. But, the crucial question was that, does students' language proficiency enable them to study their subject of specialization in English?

Students' responses to this statement show that 52% of the students believed that they were proficient enough to study any subject in English, while 20% disagreed. Around 27% of them were not decided (Figure 6.29, page 245).

This high level of confidence on the part of the students could be attributed to their high rating for their abilities in the four language skills. In that part, the majority of the students believed that their abilities were above average.

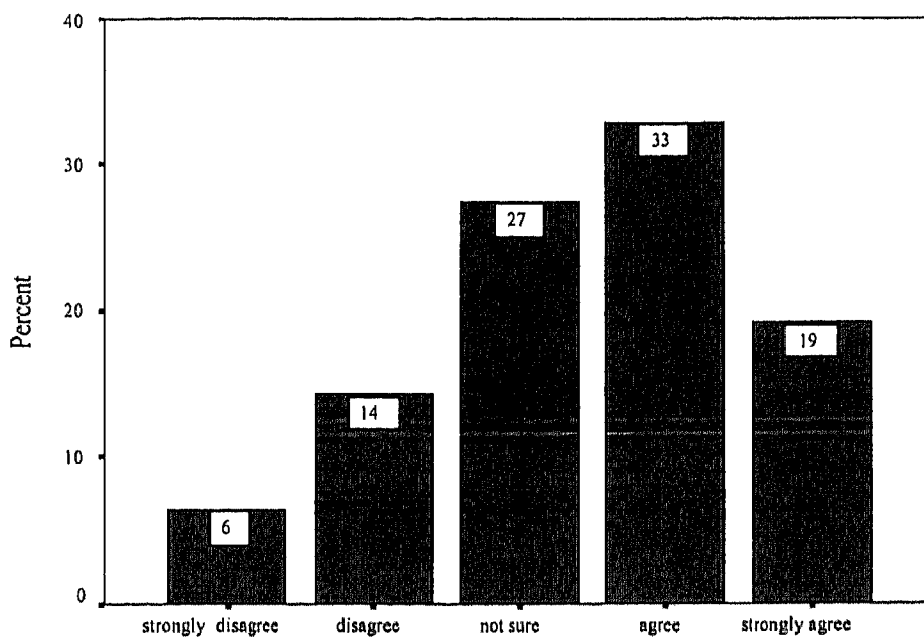
The percentage of students who pass the English paper in the Sudanese Secondary Certificate Exams, which is considered the qualifying Exam for entering the University, shown on the table below gives the impression that students rating was justifiable:

Year of Exam	Percentage of passes in English
1998	79.4%
1999	81.8%
2002	79%

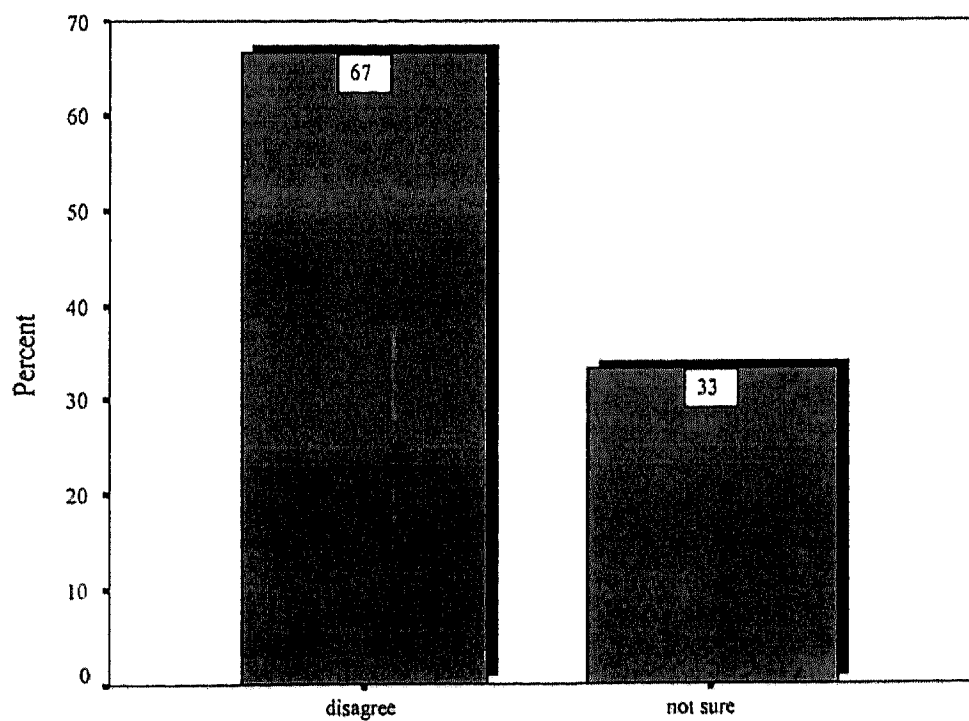
**Table (6.10):** percentage of students passes in Sudan Secondary Certificate English Exam

These results, which were obtained directly from the Examinations and Assessment Division in the Ministry of Education, show at the first sight that a very high percentage of students succeeded in their exams and that the level of English in Education is satisfactory. However, these results do not reflect the true percentage of passes in English. The percentage of those who really pass the exams does not exceed 10% of the total number of students who sat for the exam. The fact is that, the Ministry of Education is following a technique called "scaling up" by which they manipulate the figures to increase the percentage of passes in board Exams. The Exams Division defended the technique by saying that the system is still fair to all students as their ranking remains the same as achieved in the real Exam. The Ministry is following this way to cover the weaknesses in the system of education and the real problems faced by whole educational cycle in the country. Hadra (1998) confirm this practice as she said "... even School Certificate Exam results were often scaled up to bring the right number of pupils to the pass standard (40%) required for university entry" pg. 42. Scaling the results gives a false picture about the real performance of students in that subject. It is very misleading not only for students and their parents, but to decision makers and planners. If the University is going to depend on the results of these exams to determine background knowledge then it would be misled too.

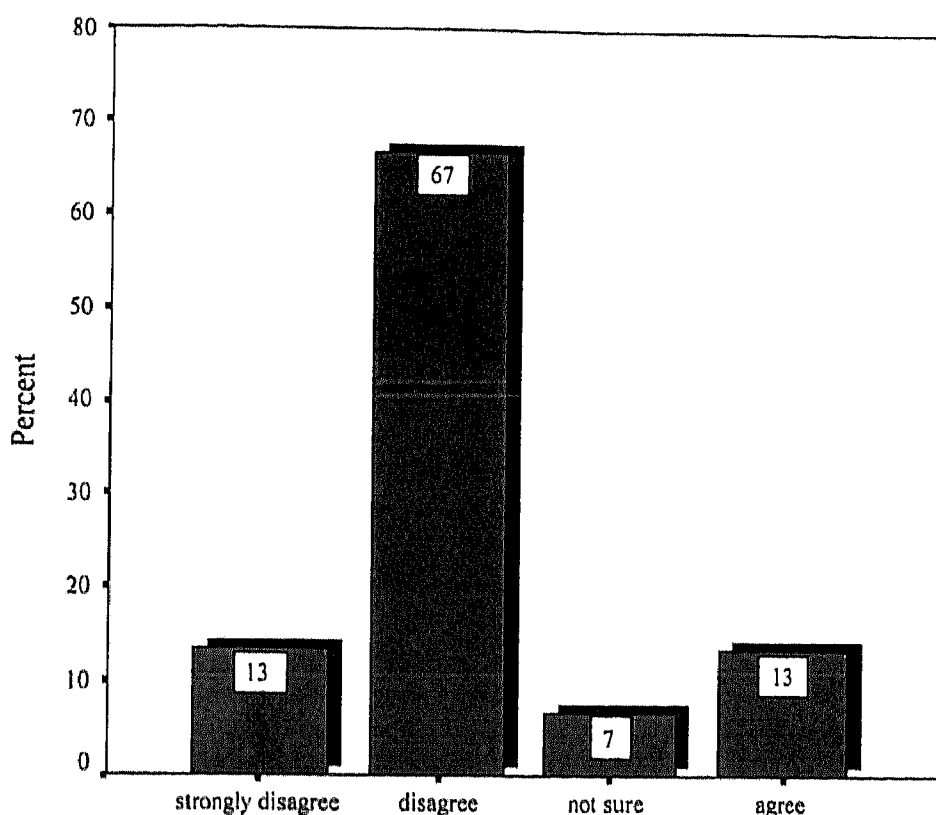
Students might believe that their English level is very high as shown in his exam results and become complacent, thinking that they do need to put more effort. They already express that kind of complacency in responding to this questionnaire by saying that. their English level qualifies them to study their specialized subject in that language.



**Figure 6.29:** Students evaluation for their abilities to study their subjects in English



**Figure 6.30:** Instructors' evaluation for students' abilities to study subjects in English



**Figure 6.31:** Lecturers' evaluation for students' abilities to study their subjects in English

The English instructors gave a contrary evaluation. 66.7% of them believed that the students' language proficiency does not qualify them to study subjects in English. Earlier the instructors gave a low rating for the students' abilities in the four skills (Figure 6.30, page 244). The majority (80%) of the subject lecturers disagreed with the statement. (Figure 6.31, above)

The result showed that the students are being unrealistic about their level of proficiency in English. Fulfilling their wish for a return to the use of English would be difficult, if not risky. Douglas (1986) warns of the consequences of using English as a medium of instruction without adequate preparation, saying that, "The students learnt to tolerate a high degree of non-comprehension in their lectures, tutorials and reading. This in turn



meant that they must have developed means of gaining knowledge and passing examinations that could overcome weaknesses in comprehension" (pg. 97). Douglas (1986) mentioned two techniques used by such students to overcome lack of comprehension. One technique is called "spotting" by which students concentrate only on certain topics predicting that they would appear in the exam and they use the second technique which is called "rote learning" or memorizing some articles by heart as a preparatory step to enter the Exams. Douglas (1986) developed an interesting hypothesis on this regard. He suggested that students, lacking an adequate grasp of the grammatical meanings of exam questions, would ignore such meanings and search the question for "key words" that would aid them to structure responses from their memory bank of data. On these grounds, Douglas (1986) questions the viability of teaching the students in English.

It is believed that there are many advantages of teaching in Arabic; one of it is the high degree of comprehension and the ability of the students to initiate and freely participate in class discussions. The students would have responded to the question in this way had the English program satisfied their desire to have a strong command of the language. Strengthening the teaching of English to help students use their knowledge of English to access the enormous body of published materials in English would make the students more appreciative of the instrumental role of both languages.

#### **6.4.5 Attendance in the English Language Classes**

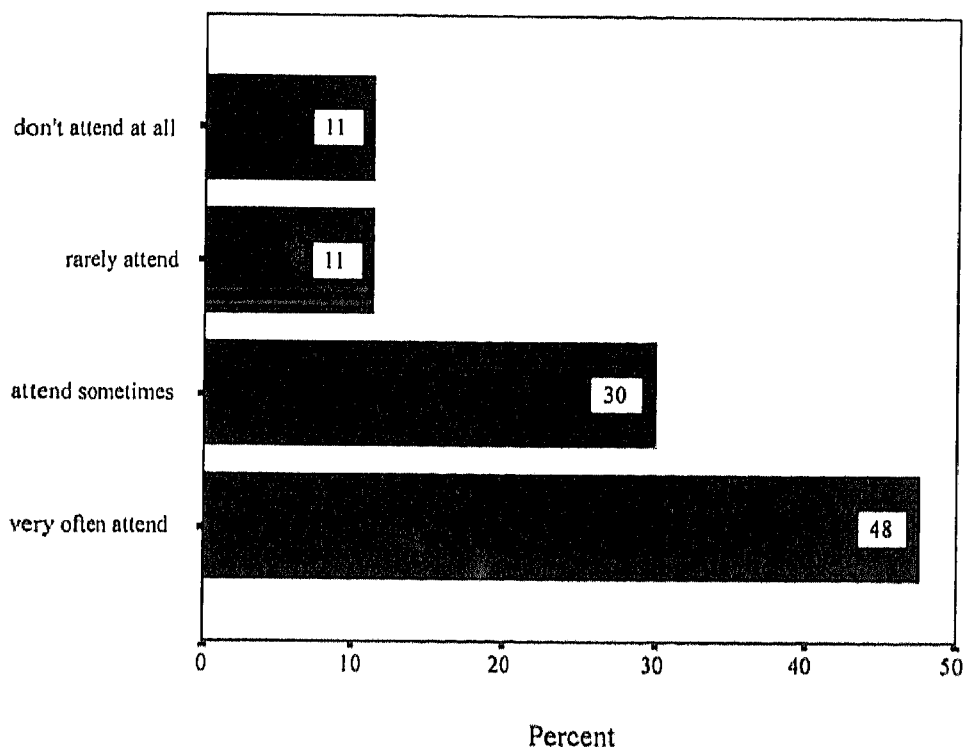
The fact was that the status of the English language in the University of Khartoum is an auxiliary course, which has no direct link to the students' academic life in a sense that is part of their specialization, or not even recorded in the transcript. It was only a compulsory requirement for graduation. The other fact was that students study English in classes with huge numbers of students, with average or little value as suggested by

the instructors. These facts might lead us to expect that the students' motivation to attend those classes would be very low. Surprisingly, the findings from the students' responses indicate a slight inclination to attend the English classes ( $M = 3.13$ ,  $sd. 1.01$ ). The percentages analyses also show that 48.% of the students said that they very often or always attend the English classes, while 30% of them indicated that they attend sometimes. Only 22% of the participants show that they rarely or never attend English classes. (Figure 6.32, page 249)

These results show that almost 50% of the students have a very strong commitment to learning the English language even though the whole environment was not conducive for learning. One of the factors that might have discouraged those who rarely attend the English classes was the exam-oriented nature of the program itself. Many students put as an objective passing the exam and fulfill the University Requirement. What students do in class was not part of students' final grade. Some students never attended the English classes but they still passed the Exam.

As long as students can score very high grades in their specialization without having to refer to English books and since the English results do not show up in their transcript, it does not make any difference for them if they pass the English Exam or fail it. The matter should be looked at and there should be some kind of link between consulting reference books in English and the final grades students' score, especially in the field of sciences. Otherwise the University would be producing very weak graduates with shallow knowledge in their specialization. There should also be some kind of recognition for English by including it in the students' transcripts upon graduation.

Making English more relevant to the students' studies and careers means making teaching more interesting by reducing class size, using different methods and using teaching aids to make the English class more attractive and lively.



**Figure 6.32:** Students' attendance in the English classes

## 6.5 STUDENTS' ORIENTATIONS

### 6.5.1 Students' Orientations for Studying English Language

In the previous section, it became apparent that students are generally very motivated to study English; they even preferred to be taught their specialization in English. This part looks into the type of motivation that drives students to study each of the English skills. The purpose here is to study students' orientation for studying the language. Al-Busairi (1991) defines the orientation as “the student’s reasons for studying the language.” According to him, students’ motivation for learning could either be integrative or instrumental. The integrative reasons focus on the desire for interaction with members of the target language community. While instrumentally motivated students, have more

pragmatic or utilitarian reasons for studying English, such as the wish to achieve certain academic or professional goals. Therefore, studying students' orientation will help identify their language needs and, hence, guide the design of teaching materials and choice of teaching methods

Four statements were posed here to determine the purpose for which the students need to use the English language. For each language skill they were provided with a series of item for language use (sub-skills) and were asked to rank them according to importance. This will give an indication as for what students need to study the English language and for what reasons. The same items were presented to the language instructors to compare the responses of the two groups.

#### **6.5.2 Orientation towards the Listening Skills**

- First students were asked to decide on the purposes for which they need to study and use the listening skill. The purposes were grouped into either instrumental or integrative motives to study the skill.

Students were asked to prioritize the reasons why they wanted to acquire the listening skills. Although English is no longer the medium of instruction in the University of Khartoum, 39.2% of them said that they needed listening skills to listen and understand lectures and to take notes. Another group (28.4%) said that they needed that skill to understand questions and follow-up discussions in English. A minority of 17.2% indicated that they needed listening skills to listen to entertainment programs and only 15.2% said that they needed to listen to and understand native speakers. (See table (6.11, page 251).

Using Al-Busari's (1991) classification, we may confidently say that the students were instrumentally oriented towards English listening skills, since they say they want to study the language for pragmatic, academic reasons. There is still about one third of the

respondents who have integrative orientation to study the language either for leisure purposes of to integrate with the native speakers of the language.

Responses obtained from the instructors showed that 66.7% of the participants emphasized the importance of listening for understanding lectures and taking notes and 11.1% thought of developing the listening to understand questions and discussions in class as shown in (table 6.12, below). Both reasons support students' views about the instrumental value for studying English listening skills.

Purpose for listening skills in English	Percent	Orientation
Understand lectures and take notes	39.2	Instrumental
Understand questions and discussions in class	28.4	Instrumental
Understand programs and films in English	17.2	Integrative
Listen to native speakers and understand them	15.2	Integrative

Table 6.11: Students' judgment for the orientation to listening skills

Purpose for listening skills in English	Percent	Orientation
Understand lectures and take notes	66.7	Instrumental
Understand questions and discussions in class	11.1	Instrumental
Understand programs and films in English	11.1	Integrative
Listen to native speakers and understand them	11.1	Integrative

Table 6.12: Instructors' judgment of Students' orientation to listening skills

Students gave very high instrumental value for the listening skills, despite the fact that they do not need to listen to lectures and take notes in English at undergraduate level. They might be thinking in terms of what Escorcía's (1985) refers to as "ideal" needs. As

many students indicated that they want to continue their education abroad where English might be the medium of instruction as could be seen from their response to the oral skills below.

### **6.5.3 Orientation towards the Oral Skills**

To assess students' orientation for studying the oral skills, which they find as equally important as reading, six reasons for using the oral skills were given to them and were asked to rank them according to importance. This include the following:

- The ability to raise questions in the classroom.
- The ability to speak to a foreigner.
- The ability to use the language outside the country (Sudan).
- The ability to find a job abroad.
- The ability to continue education abroad.
- The ability to deliver oral presentation in the classroom.

The results showed that 47.5% of the students indicated that they needed oral skills most to help them to continue their education and use the language abroad, while another 32.9% said they need oral skills to raise questions, participate in class discussions and deliver presentations in English (perhaps when they go to study abroad). Only a small fraction (12.3%) said they needed oral skills to communicate with native speakers or other foreigners.

Again, the stress on the instrumental value of the skills is apparent (table 6.13, page 253). However, the subject lecturers, looking at the real and immediate needs for oral skills, did not see the importance of this skill in class. The majority of them (66.6%) believed that the students might need the skill to speak intelligibly to native speakers and foreigners. In this way, they promote the integrative value for the oral skills. Only 33.3 of the instructors judged that students need oral skills to raise questions and participate in class discussions and deliver presentations (Table 6.14, page 253).

Purpose for of oral skills in English	Percent	Orientation
Ability to continue education and use language abroad	47.5	Instrumental
Raise questions and participate in class discussions and deliver presentations	32.9	Instrumental
Speak to native speakers and foreigners	12.3	Integrative
Find a job abroad	7.5	Instrumental

**Table 6.13:** Students' judgment for the Orientation to Oral Skills

Purpose for Oral skills in English	Percent	Orientation
Speak intelligibly to native speakers and foreigners	66.6	Integrative
Raise questions and participate in class discussions and deliver presentations	33.3	Instrumental

**Table 6.14:** Instructors' judgment of Students' Orientation to Oral Skills

#### 6.5.4 Orientation towards the Reading Skills

It was established earlier in Section 6.3.2 that all participants agreed that reading was the most needed skill in the current situation. In this section, the main objective is to know what type of motivation that drives students to study reading. To decide on their orientation for studying reading skills, the students were asked to rank a list of seven reading purposes according to their importance to them. The list includes:

- Reading for general comprehension
- Reading textbooks
- Reading newspapers
- Reading professional journals
- Reading catalogues

- Reading reference materials
- Reading English literature

The findings show that 83.3% of the students indicated that they need reading for instrumental purposes that include reading of textbooks, reference books and journals for general comprehension. The other 16.7 selected using reading for more integrative reasons such as enjoying English literature and read of newspapers and magazines (Table 6.15, below).

The English language instructors think that students need reading for purely instrumental purposes. They shared the same views with students as 44.4% of them considering reading for general comprehension as the most important reason. 33.3% thought that students needed reading skills to handle textbooks and 22.2% said that they needed the skill to use reference books. Both parties agreed on the instrumental value of reading for students. (Table 6.16, page 255).

These results support the findings of Zughoul and Hussein (1985). In their findings, both students and faculty members were in full agreement that the most needed sub-skill was reading textbooks. Next in importance was reading to comprehend tests and examinations, and reading reference materials was ranked third. The same kind of difference between students and teachers was detected here too. Whereas faculty members emphasized reading professional journals and catalogs, students emphasized reading newspapers and magazines

Purpose for reading skills in English	Percent	Orientation
Reading textbooks, reference books and journals for general comprehension	83.3	Instrumental
Read newspapers and magazines	5.4	Integrative
Read novels, poems and short stories	11.3	Integrative

**Table 6.15:** Students' judgment for the Orientation to Reading Skills



Purpose for reading skills in English	Percent	Orientation
Reading textbooks, reference books and journals for general comprehension	100	Instrumental

**Table 6.16:** Instructors' judgment of Students' Orientation to Reading Skills

### 6.5.5 Orientation towards the Writing Skills

Writing is the last skill for which we need to investigate students' orientation. A considerable percentage (42.6%) of the students favored developing writing skills for the purpose of taking notes in class in English. 14.7% preferred it for writing research papers, while another 14.7% needed it for writing Master and Ph.D. theses and dissertations in the future. All these are considered instrumental reasons. Only 20.6% of the students indicated that they needed writing skills for integrative purposes (table 6.17, below). The instructors supported these rankings, as all of the participants agreed on the students' instrumental motivation for acquiring writing skills (Table 6.18, page 256). These results were consistent with the students' purposes for learning reading and listening skills. But different from their orientation to study speaking skill where students' emphasized on the integrative motivation to speak English. There was a clear trend for wanting English skills for future academic needs such as doing postgraduate studies, or study in English-medium institutions.

Purpose for writing skills in English	Percent	Orientation
Write lecture notes in class	42.6	Instrumental
Write theses and research papers	36.8	Instrumental
Write personal letters and fill in forms	20.6	Integrative

**Table 6.17:** Students' judgment for the Orientation to Writing Skills

Purpose for writing skills in English	Percent	Orientation
Write lecture notes in class	66.7	Instrumental
Write tests and exams	33.3	Instrumental

**Table 6.18:** Instructors' judgment of Students' Orientation to Writing Skills

Zughoul and Taminian (1984) supported the above findings. They found that 59.5% of their respondents viewed English as more instrumental than Arabic for finding a good job. 70.13% of their respondents viewed English as more useful than Arabic in pursuing high education.

Benson (1991), however, reached a different conclusion. His findings showed a clear rejection of instrumental motivation. He attributed students' reasons for studying English, more to situational factors, such as the compulsory nature of English, than to personally thought-out reasons. The rejection of instrumental reasons, however, reinforces the idea that the students do not see English as playing a vital part in their lives, either currently or in the future.

In the case of the University of Khartoum, there was no direct, relevant need for English in classes or exams. It was basically needed to access textbooks and other reference materials. The students' response reflects a strong wish for English to play a greater role in their academic life, as we saw in their response to the question on the medium of instruction. From the results above we can confidently conclude that the students and their teachers support and believe in the instrumental orientation to study most of the language skills. However, a solution is to be found for the problem of the speaking skills. Students were consistent in raising the value of these skills. First they said that speaking is as equal for them as reading in terms of importance, and second, here they showed that they do not actually need these skills for academic or other pragmatic purpose. They showed that they were integratively oriented towards the oral skill. But

as noticed above, speaking was not one of the skills that are focused in the current English program. In the end, the University of Khartoum might need to resort to a compromising situation similar to that of University of Malaya in Malaysia by offering an oral component along the Reading-focused Program.

## **6.6 USE OF ARABIC AND ENGLISH LANGUAGE FOR ACADEMIC PURPOSES**

This section investigates the frequency of students' reference and their reliance on either Arabic or English written sources in completing written academic assignments. The items included in the survey questionnaires were designed to determine the frequency of students' reference to lecture notes, handouts, textbooks, reference books and professional journals in both Arabic and English languages in preparation for exams, tests and assignments and term papers. A three-point scale was presented along with each item to indicate the frequency of use as (either always, sometimes or never/rarely). The section has two parts, the first discusses the frequency of reference to sources in Arabic language and the second assesses frequency of reference to sources in English. The responses of the students and the subject lecturers were recorded and compared. The mean and the standard deviation were calculated to facilitate the process of comparing the two groups.

### **6.6.1 Frequency of Reference to Arabic Language for Academic Reading**

The table (6.19, page 258) presents the mean and the standard deviation for both students and subject lecturers with regard to the frequency of reference to sources in Arabic. The findings from students responses presented reveal a very high reliance on

lecture notes ( $M = 2.59$ ,  $sd. = .79$ ), handouts ( $M = 2.36$ ,  $sd. .71$ ), Arabic textbooks ( $M = 2.31$ ,  $sd. .79$ ) and reference books ( $M = 2.36$ ,  $sd. .75$ ), however the results show a low reliance on specialized journals in Arabic ( $M 1.85$ ,  $sd = .86$ ). The lecturers judgment was similar to students' in two areas of frequency of reference to lecture notes recorded a little higher here ( $M = 2.67$ ,  $sd. = .72$ ) and handouts in Arabic a little lower ( $M = 2.27$ ,  $sd. .88$ ). Two areas where there is a substantial difference between the responses of the two groups are textbooks and reference books in Arabic. In both areas the lecturers recorded a lesser frequency of students references to these crucial sources of information ( $M = 2.00$ ,  $sd. .76$ ), and ( $M = 1.60$ ,  $sd. .74$ ), respectively. Lecturers agree with students in the low rating assigned to journals ( $M = 1.40$ ,  $sd. .74$ ).

The percentages presented on table 6.20 (page 260) confirm the above results. The table shows that a very high percentage of students (73%) said that they “always” depend on the lecture-notes in Arabic when they prepare for their exams, tests and assignments; while 15 % said they depend on lecture-notes “sometimes”. The same table reveals that half of the students (50%) reported that they “always” depend on handouts in Arabic given to them by the lecturers, while 36.3% depend on them “sometimes”, the rest of students indicated that they “rarely or never” refer to handouts in Arabic.

Source of reference	Students responses		Lecturers responses	
	Mean	Sd.	Mean	Sd.
Lecture note in Arabic	2.59	.7062	2.67	.7237
Handouts in Arabic	2.36	.7129	2.27	.8837
Textbooks in Arabic	2.31	.7938	2.00	.7559
Reference books in Arabic	2.36	.7532	1.60	.7368
Specialized journals in Arabic	1.85	.8641	1.40	.7368

**Table 6.19:** The mean Scores for Students and Lecturers responses to frequency of reference to sources of information in Arabic

The percentage of reference to textbooks and reference books is similar to that of handouts, but a lower percentage was recorded for journals. Slightly over 50% of the

students said that they refer to textbooks in Arabic when preparing for exams and 27.5% admit that they only refer to them sometimes. As for reference books 52.5% of the students indicated that they always depend on reference books in Arabic to prepare for exams or write term papers. 30.9% refer to them sometimes, while 16.7% never or rarely use such resource materials. The professional journals published in Arabic are even scarcer than textbooks and reference books, especially in the sciences. When respondents were asked to indicate the frequency of their reference to this source of knowledge in their academic activities, 30.9% of the students stated that they always refer to periodicals, while 23.5% indicated that they refer to them only sometimes. The majority of the students admitted that they rarely or never depend on professional journals in preparing for their exams or term papers.

The lecturers' ratings were not very different from that of their students with regard to reference to lecture notes and handouts. 80% of the subject lecturers agreed that students "always" depend on their lecture notes to prepare for these activities and 47.7% believed that students always refer to handouts. However, the discrepancy is clear in the areas of textbooks, reference books and journals, where the lecturers judged the frequency of students' reference to these sources much lower than the students did.

Only about 30% thought that their students always refer to textbooks in Arabic, while 40% believe that their students refer to them sometimes. Around 27% believe that students never refer to textbooks in Arabic. Only 20% of the lecturers thought that students always depend on reference books in Arabic. Almost half of them (46.7%) said that their students never or rarely refer to that source, while 33.3% indicated that students use reference books written in Arabic sometimes. As for professional journals, the majority of the lecturers (73.7%) believed that the students rarely or never refer to journals in Arabic.

Reference materials	Always %		Sometimes %		Rarely %	
	Students	lecturers	Students	lecturers	Students	lecturers
Lecture notes	73	80	15.2	13.3	11.2	6.7
Handouts	50	46.7	36.3	26.7	13.7	26.7
Textbooks	52	33.3	27.5	40	20.6	26.7
Reference books	52.5	20	30.9	33.3	16.7	46.4
Periodical journals	30.9	20	23.5	6.7	46.6	73.3

**Table 6.20:** Students and lectures views on frequency of reference to materials in Arabic sources

Students' high dependency on lecture-notes and handouts in Arabic could be interpreted in two ways. One possible interpretation is that, with their weak level of English, the students have such difficulty accessing the books in the library, which are mostly available in English, so they make little effort to obtain knowledge from these sources and resort to handouts as an alternative.

Andrews (1984) pointed to this problem and its effect on the academic level of students. He said, "Lecturers recognize the decline (of English standards) and therefore demand less and less of their students both academically and linguistically. The students are spoon-fed; they are no longer expected to follow-up references in the library and examination answers are marked extremely generously." (pg. 177)

Hock and Chitravelu (1980) also supported this view when they say "subject specialists, however, though conceding that reading was important, were also anxious to help the disadvantaged reader by reducing the necessity to read through supplying handouts in the mother tongue" (pg. 67)

Coleman (1988) also discussed the weak level of English in Indonesia and pointed to the reluctance of teachers to assign any work that requires English materials. He noted

that students hardly use the library at all. In effect students are restricted to their lecture notes as the only source to which they can refer.

This dependency on lecture notes and handouts defeat the purpose of universities to train students to do independent research. Without training, there will be little difference between a school and a university. Andrews (1984) warned that the inevitable regrettable consequences of the trend is downgrading of the general standard of education in the polytechnic [where he carried out the study] and, one suspects, in other tertiary institutions.

The second way in which the above results could be interpreted is that there is a shortage of textbooks, reference books and professional journals in Arabic in the library. Most students, particularly undergraduates, need to refer to some written sources of information when they prepare for an exam or other assigned written work. If Arabic textbooks are not available and the English textbooks are linguistically inaccessible, lecture notes play a prominent role.

From our observations in the University of Khartoum main library, we noticed that many students were busy copying lecture notes from other students who attended the classes or who have better abilities in taking notes. Few seemed to actually be using the library to do research. Actually, this was a common old practice in the University of Khartoum during the time when English was a medium of instruction. It happened that many students did not understand the lessons directly from the lecture, because of their weak English level, so they used to borrow and copy the lecture notes from their friends and ask them to explain the lesson to them. After Arabicization, students started to understand the lectures, but were not trained to take lecture notes, that is why they still continue the old practice of copying others' notes.

From the above results, it is apparent that only half or less than half of the students make use of the written resources published in Arabic. The lecturers' ratings revealed a very weak tendency among students to use the few resources in Arabic. The main reason for students' reluctance to consult Arabic written materials is that such materials rarely exist in all fields. The last part of this section reveals that the library has not been supplied with reference books in Arabic since the inception of the Arabicization Policy. The few books that the library obtained during this period came in the form of donations from institutions and individuals. They may not suit or cover all field of study in a systematic way.

The lack of reference books in Arabic was the major concern of much research made on Arabicization. Zughoul (1985), for example, noted in the Jordanian context that, "with the exception of the Faculty of Arts and Humanities where a sizable number of Arabic textbooks are in use, other faculties rarely order Arabic textbooks and in some cases never order any Arabic textbooks." (pg. 137).

These results are a warning signal to the University of Khartoum's authorities. The University should work hard to provide a budget to make written reference materials more available in Arabic since many students depend on them. Few Arabic publications will just make the situation worse by pushing students further to depend only on their lecture note. Subject lecturers should also play a role in telling the students about the existence of such books by providing a list of readings, because the library system still not automated. The main library uses the manual catalogue card system until now, and this makes it difficult to find books. A computerized library will give students a quick and easy access to books related to their subjects.

The scarcity of materials published in Arabic led the Faculty of Medicine in the University of Khartoum to rebel against the policy of Arabicization after one year of



trial. Kandela (1983) quoted the Dean of the Faculty who described the new Policy as a hasty experiment, which was implemented without adequate preparation.

6.6.2 Use of English language for Academic Reading

The previous part of this section discussed the frequency of students' reference to materials obtained from written sources in Arabic language. This part focuses on the participants' perspective about students' reference to materials written in English. The mean and standard deviation were calculated and presented on table 6.21, below). The findings from students' responses show a low rating for all sources. Reference to textbooks in English ranked just below average ( $M = 1.93$ ,  $sd. = .79$ ), followed by reference books ( $M = 1.91$ ,  $sd. = .81$ ), then closely followed by handouts ( $M = 1.90$ ,  $sd. .81$ ) and the lowest ranking went to professional journals ( $M = 1. 63$ ,  $sd. .79$ ). The subject lecturers share the same ranking with the students though at lower ratings. The ranked reference to textbooks in English just below average ( $M = 1.93$ ,  $sd. = .70$ ) followed by reference books ( $M = 1.87$ ), then come handouts ( $M = 1.47$ ,  $sd. .64$ ) and last ranked the professional journals ( $M = 1.27$ ,  $sd. = .59$ ).

Source of reference	Students responses		Lecturers responses	
	Mean	Sd.	Mean	Sd.
Handouts in English	1.90	.8126	1.47	.6399
Textbooks in English	1.93	.7911	1.93	.7037
Reference books in English	1.91	.8162	1.87	.8338
Specialized journals in English	1.63	.7869	1.27	.5936

Table 6.21: The mean Scores for Students and Lecturers Responses to Frequency of Reference to sources of information in English

Reference materials	Always %		Sometimes %		Rarely %	
	Students	lecturers	Students	lecturers	Students	lecturers
Handouts	28.4	13.3	33.3	33.3	38.2	53.3
Textbooks	27.7	20	37.7	33.3	34.8	46.7
Reference books	28	26.7	32.8	26.7	39.2	46.6
Periodical journals	19.6	26.7	24	13.3	56.4	60

**Table 6.22:** Students and lectures views on frequency of reference to materials in English sources

The above results were confirmed by presenting the percentage assigned to each source of reference. Table 6.22 (above) illustrates that 38.2% of the students said that they rarely depended on handouts in English, while 33.3% of them depended on them sometimes, and 28.4% indicated that they always referred to these sources of information. On the other hand, 53.3% of the subject lecturers stated that their students rarely or never referred to handouts in English when preparing for exams, while 33.3% said that students depended on English handouts sometimes, and only 13.3% indicated that students always refer to this source of information.

This low dependency on handouts in the English language may be due to two reasons. Either the lecturers do not supply students with handouts in English in the first place, or the students, with their low level of English, were unable to access the materials and hence ignored them. In case of the first factor, lecturers need to encourage and sometimes force students to refer to English resources. In fact, subject lecturers make a lot of difference to the English programs at the University level. They can render them irrelevant, if they do not ask students to consult references in English, and the easiest way to do that is by supplying handouts in English. If the second reason is true, then this supports our argument here that students were not equipped enough to access

information in resources written in English, and the solution is to design an English for Academic Purposes program to train the students and qualify them to do so.

As for frequency of reliance on textbooks in English, the light majority of the students (37.7%) indicated using such resources sometimes, while a good percentage (34.8%) showed that they rarely or never used textbooks in English to help them write their term papers or prepare for their exams. Only a small percentage of the students (27.5%) indicated that they always depend on textbooks in English to prepare for their exams.

The subject lecturers confirmed the above results, as 46.7% of them believed that their students rarely or never referred to textbooks in English, while 33.3% said that the students used such resources sometimes. Only 20% thought that students always depended on textbooks in English.

As for reliance on the reference books in English, 39.2% of the students and 46.6% of the lecturers indicated that the students rarely or never referred to reference books in English, while 32.8% of the students and 26.7% of the teachers believed that students sometimes depended on reference books in English. Only 28% of the students and 26.7% of the lecturers hold the view that students always depended on such resources.

In the case of professional journals, a considerable majority of students (56.4%) and a good majority of lecturers (60%) thought that students rarely or never depended on professional journals in English. Only 24% of the students and 13.3% of the students indicated that they referred to those resources sometimes. A small percentage of students (19.6%) and 26.7% of the lecturers said that students always refer to professional journals in English.

The above results revealed the fact that most of the students did not use reference materials written in English in their academic life. The previous section on the use of

Arabic showed students only moderately used Arabic publications. They mostly depended on handouts and lecture notes in Arabic. Douglas (1987) regretted such a situation saying that, "Of what value is the enormous body of published materials in English if students do not have the linguistic competence to make use of it?"(pg. 97)

Students do not really make use of the resources in English. This was due to their low-level English. This also confirms that the lecturers rating about the level of English among students was more realistic than that of the students. Many research studies found a correlation between the level of English and the academic standard of students. Mohamed (1991) concluded that, "the overall effect is that a weak performance of English among undergraduates would certainly have its strong impact on the progress in the field subject" (pg. 14).

Kambal (1984) noted the same thing in the Saudi context as he said, "Arabicization of courses at King Faisal University has resulted in the reduction in the number of contact hours in English. There is no doubt that this will reduce the opportunity students will have to benefit from these journals and reference materials available only in English." (pg. 17). He suggested that care should be taken to improve the standard of the English language rather than allow it to deteriorate as a result of a shift in language emphasis.

The importance of English was also felt in other contexts where the national language is the medium of instruction. Asmah (1983) stated that Malaysian students still have to use textbooks written in English. One of the reasons she gave for this was the lack of books in Malay language. She admitted that it would take many decades before Malaysians are able to produce a sufficient number of books for the various academic disciplines. Hassan (1981) also pointed to the same problem of a lack of textbooks in Malay emphasizing that English texts and reference books can temporarily fill this vacuum, provided that the students are taught adequate knowledge of English.

This same type of problem is faced in context where the Arabic language is used as a medium of instruction at tertiary level, where English plays a vital role in undergraduate and postgraduates studies. Zughoul and Taminian (1984) found that 71.13 % of their respondents viewed English as more useful than Arabic in pursuing higher education.

Reference materials	Always %		Sometimes %		Rarely %	
	Arabic	English	Arabic	English	Arabic	English
Lecture notes	73	-	15.2	-	11.2	-
Handouts	50	28.4	36.3	33.3	13.7	38.2
Textbooks	52	27.5	27.5	37.7	20.6	34.8
Reference books	52.5	28	30.9	32.8	16.7	39.2
Periodical journals	30.9	19.6	23.5	24	45.6	56.4

**Table 6.23:** Students views on frequency of reference to materials in Arabic and English

Reference materials	Always %		Sometimes %		Rarely %	
	Arabic	English	Arabic	English	Arabic	English
Lecture notes	80	-	13.3	-	6.7	-
Handouts	46.7	13.3	26.7	33.3	26.7	53.3
Textbooks	33.3	20	40	33.3	26.7	46.7
Reference books	20	27.9	33.3	32.8	46.4	39.2
Periodical journals	20	26.7	6.7	13.3	73.3	60

**Table 6.24:** Lecturers views on frequency of students' reference to materials in Arabic and English sources

### **6.6.3 The Situation of Sources of Information in English and Arabic**

Most of the research done on Arabicization in Sudan and other countries of the Arab world pointed to one serious problem that has a far reaching impact on the level of education under such policies, i.e. they all stressed the lack of textbooks and reference materials written in Arabic. It was true that Islam and the Arabs contributed a lot to the world's civilization through the huge number of volumes produced by Muslim scholars during the Middle Ages. However, after the industrial revolution in Europe, Arab and Islamic civilization was very much marginalized and made little contribution to knowledge, especially during the 17<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century through to the 1950s almost all the Arab countries were colonized either by Britain, France or Italy. During this period the teaching of English and French dominated the academic life and system of education in these countries.

During this time also, western civilization flourished so well that it became a model to many nations. This civilization was based on an enormous number of writings in English and French and other European languages. The role of other languages, such as Arabic, in contributing to the advancement of knowledge was nearly eclipsed. This phenomenon was further aggravated by the paucity of contributions by Arab scholars written in Arabic. Especially during the colonial period, the West was the center of publishing, and most Arab scholars, having been educated primarily in English or French, contributed writings in those languages. After independence, countries like Syria embarked on a movement to Arabicize the medium of instruction in higher education, including the sciences. Currently, Syria is the only Arab country teaching medicine in Arabic.

This situation made English the language of modern knowledge in the Arab universities, and Sudan is not an exception. It was earlier established that the English program currently taught in the University of Khartoum does not have the capability and

resources to prepare students for such a task. The lack of textbooks and reference books in Arabic limits the students’ access to knowledge. The current research considers this situation to be a serious problem that will in the short and long term lead to weakening the standards of education in an institution of high repute such as University of Khartoum.

### 6.6.4 Efforts of Translation of Textbook at the University of Khartoum

Following the decision to Arabicize the courses throughout the institution of Higher Education, the University of Khartoum encouraged its lecturers to produce their own textbooks in Arabic or translate the available textbooks from English to Arabic. A limited financial incentive was offered for lecturers who participate in such an effort. Until today, the list of translated and authored books in Arabic reached 60 titles only in all branches of knowledge: 43 of these books are in the different fields of sciences and 17 in the fields of Humanities. The table below provides breakdown of books according to subjects.

Sciences		Humanities	
Area	Number of books	Area	Number of books
Sciences	21	Economics	1
Agriculture	5	Statistics	2
Engineering	9	Sociology	1
Veterinary	6	Psychology	1
Medicine	2	Islamic Studies	3
		Linguistics	5
		Arts	1
		Geography	3

**Table 6.25:** Numbers and classification of translated textbook in Arabic

### **6.6.5 The Supply of Textbooks and Reference books in the Main Library**

Since English was the Language of instruction in the University for almost a century, most of the stock of textbooks and reference books in the main library and Faculties and Departmental Libraries was published in English language. Books in Arabic Language are very rare, especially in the field of sciences. Most of the available books in Arabic are in the fields of Islamic Studies, Arabic Language and Literature, History, Philosophy and few other fields of Humanities. Even the few contributions of some Sudanese scholars were published in English.

With the introduction of Arabic as a sole medium of instruction, there was a demand on the part of the University to allocate extra budget to supply its libraries with textbooks and reference books in Arabic. At the same time, it was expected that the University would invest more on developing the English Program, which emerged as a direct response to the Arabicization policies. To estimate the number of textbooks and other reference materials available for the students, the researcher paid a visit to the book supply section in the University's Main Library. The person in charge there informed him that since 1990, the University has not invested any budget in ordering new textbooks, reference books or periodical journals. All books received by this section over the past decade came in form of donations either from individuals or from other institutions. The problem with this type of book supply is that the donors give what they have and not what the university needs. These books may not be relevant to many fields of study in the University, and they might be written in English which defeats the current demands for textbooks in Arabic.

A checking of records of books donated to the library during three randomly selected years from the last decade reveals the result that is presented in (table 6.26, page 271).



Year	Total number of books received	Number of books in Arabic	Percentage of books in Arabic
1993	3499	1500	43%
1995	5700	1600	28%
1999	9309	2800	30%

**Table 6.26:** Recently donated books to U. of K main library sorted by language

Looking at the records presented in the above table, it becomes clear that the average number of books in Arabic constitutes only one third of the total number of books received over the three selected years. This supports the argument that still students need to depend heavily on materials written in English to supplement what they study in lecture halls. Therefore, the University needs to take serious and genuine steps towards strengthening the teaching of a Reading for Meaning English Program to enable students to perform the kind of independent study required and expected from university students.

In fact the University is facing two obstacles with regard to supplying books written in Arabic Language. The first problem is that there are very few books originally written or translated to the Arabic Language, especially in the field of modern science. This is what made the Faculty of Medicine in this University to resist the move to teach in Arabic. They tried it for one academic year, then they totally rejected the idea and reversed back to English. Under pressure, The University compromised with the Faculty of Medicine and gave it a temporary exemption for classes to be conducted in English, a practice that continues until today. The students complained that the terminologies translated in Arabic were misleading and sometimes the translated term is more difficult than the original English term, and appears equally alien to the students' repertoire of Arabic Vocabulary. They are arguing that, if they have to study a new term any way, then let it be in English, which is more universal. There are two reasons that would

discourage the move towards translating the English materials into Arabic to solve the problem of shortage in Arabic books. First, this process would prove to be more costly and impractical, because it is composed of two layers, first to translate the books and then to print and publish them. The other reason is that the huge body of knowledge published or translated to English language, and the rapidly advancing knowledge and research in the fields of sciences and technology, which is basically done in English, would make the job look like an endless race. The practical solution is to train the students and arm them with the appropriate language proficiency and reading skills and strategies to enable them to extract information from different library resources.

The second problem with providing Arabic books is the inability of the University to secure the needed fund to supply the library with books. For the past two decades the University has been struggling to secure the salaries of its staff at the end of every month. Over the years all funds, which were supposed to be directed for development, dried out. In this process ordering new books was one of the chapters that has been closed. The Deputy Chief Librarian confirmed that the main library has no separate budget allocated in the overall budget of the University. All what it receives is 10% of the postgraduate fees in foreign currency and 5% of the postgraduate fees in local currency, in addition to 10% of the tuition fees of undergraduate students. The library was promised a fund of around \$20,000 from the University. But the fulfillment of that promise has yet to be seen.

The publication of research in journals is by large in English as confirmed by the International Task Force for assessing the Scientific Output in the Third World (1986). Since much of the research is done in the developed countries in the West. English-speaking authors also writes books and articles, for most parts. Because of that, people in developing countries like Sudan, wanting to read or publish in international journals, need to know and be proficient in English.

This section discussed the academic role of Arabic and English in the University of Khartoum. It was reported that students very frequently depend on lecture notes and handout in addition to the few textbooks and reference books in Arabic. It was also established that students rarely or never refer to textbooks and reference books in English. The information obtained from the library uncovered that most of the books that were received by the library over the last ten years came in form of donation, and only one third of those books was in Arabic Language. Unless the University make some effort to strengthen the teaching of English and supply more books in Arabic language in all fields of knowledge, then the Arabicization proceed would deem disastrous to university's academic excellence.

## CONCLUSION

The results of the study have been presented in the form of percentages and frequencies. The mean and standard deviation have been used as statistical tools wherever appropriate. The results were discussed and interpreted in the light of the published literature. The graphic presentations such as bar graphs and tables were used to facilitate visualizing the results. The results attained and the discussion that follow provided useful insights that will help in understanding the nature of the problem within the University Requirement English Program. The findings of the study will be summarized in the following chapter.