CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter reports the analyses of the data obtained from the needs analysis conducted to identify tertiary students' academic English language needs. The responses given by 93 students, 10 ESL (English as a second language) lecturers and 8 subject lecturers through answering questionnaires are presented here. The findings are presented according to the following sections: Personal particulars, English language ability and difficulty, English language needs, language learning needs and course evaluation. All the data collected are analyzed using SPSS version 15.0 software to tabulate the frequency and percentages of the responses.

4.1 Personal Particulars

In this section, the personal particulars of the students, ESL lecturers and subject lecturers are presented.

4.1.1 Students' Personal Particulars

Table 4.1: Students' programmes

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	information technology	33	35.5	35.5	35.5
	management	39	41.9	41.9	77.4
	science	21	22.6	22.6	100.0
	Total	93	100.0	100.0	

According to table 4.1, 39 respondents (41.9%) were former students of the Foundation for Management programme, 33 (35.5%) were information technology students and 21(22.6%) were science students.

4.1.2 ESL Lecturers' Particulars

Ten ESL lecturers from the Servicing English Department of Unisel participated in the study. All of them have at least four years of experience in teaching the courses Proficiency English 1 (PE 1) and Proficiency English 2 (PE 2) to foundation students.

4.1.3 Subject Lecturers' Particulars

There were three engineering lecturers, three information technology lecturers and two management lecturers involved in the study. Three of them were senior lecturers who had been teaching various subject/content courses in their respective faculty for 6 – 7 years and the remaining five were lecturers who possessed 2 – 5 years of teaching experience.

4.2 English Language Ability and Difficulty

Research Question 1: What are the specific language difficulties encountered by the students in learning at the university perceived by themselves, ESL lecturers and the subject lecturers?

In this question, the respondents were asked to rate the students' ability and difficulty when using English language for various academic purposes in the learning process. Here, the

students' responses will be presented first and followed by ESL lecturers and subject lecturers' responses.

4.2.1 Students' English Language Proficiency

This part presents the analysis of the students' proficiency level in the four macro-skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) where students, ESL lecturers and subject lecturers were asked to rate the students' proficiency using the rating scales ranging from 'excellent', 'good', 'average', 'weak' to 'very weak'.

4.2.1.1 Students' Perceptions of Their English Language Proficiency

Table 4.2.1(a): Students' perceived English language proficiency level

Proficiency level	Listening		Speaking	
	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Excellent	12	12.9	6	6.5
Good	41	44.1	24	25.8
Average	35	37.6	48	51.6
Weak	5	5.4	12	12.9
Very weak	0	0	3	3.2
Total	93	100.0	93	100.0

Table 4.2.1(b): Students' perceived English language proficiency level

Proficiency level	Reading		Writing	
	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Excellent	17	18.3	8	8.6
Good	44	47.3	27	29
Average	30	32.3	42	45.2
Weak	1	1.1	15	16.1
Very weak	1	1.1	1	1.1
Total	93	100.0	93	100.0

Table 4.2.1(a) shows that most of the students (41) perceived themselves as having good listening skills. 12 students rated themselves as excellent, 35 rated themselves as average and only 5 perceived themselves as being weak in the skills. Whereas for speaking proficiency, slightly more than half of the students (48) perceived themselves as achieving average level in the skills. Besides that, 6 students rated themselves as excellent and 24 rated themselves as having good speaking skills. On the other hand, 15 students perceived themselves as weak and one perceived himself/herself as very weak in the skills. As for reading proficiency, almost half the students (44 students or 47.3%) rated themselves as being good. This is followed by 30 students who perceived themselves as average and 17 perceived themselves as excellent. For the remaining two students, one perceived himself/herself as weak and the other one being very weak. With regard to writing skill, 42 students indicated that they had achieved average level, 27 had achieved good level and 8 at the excellent level. In addition, 16 students stated that their writing skill was under average level.

Judging from the responses, it is apparent that the students showed much more confidence in their receptive skills (reading and listening) than in their productive skills (speaking and writing), which reported higher percentage of students with average and lower proficiency level. This is concurrent with the study findings of Jamali and Hasliza (2002). In conclusion, reading was recorded the most proficient skill of the students. This scenario is also observed by Jordan (1997) who states that students almost always cite reading as the skill causing them least difficulty in learning.

4.2.1.2 ESL Lecturers' Perceptions towards the Students' English Language Proficiency

Table 4.2.2(a): ESL lecturers' perceptions towards the students' listening and speaking proficiency level

Proficiency level	Listening		Speaking	
	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Excellent	-	-	-	-
Good	-	-	-	-
Average	6	60.0	6	60.0
Weak	4	40.0	3	30.0
Very weak	-	-	1	10.0
Total	10	100.0	10	100.0

Table 4.2.2(b): ESL lecturers' perceptions towards the students' reading and writing proficiency level

Proficiency level	Reading		Writing	
	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Excellent	-	-	-	-
Good	-	-	-	-
Average	10	100.0	3	30.0
Weak	-	-	3	30.0
Very weak	-	-	4	40.0
Total	10	100.0	10	100.0

Tables 4.22(a) and 4.22(b) reveal that some of the ESL lecturers' had the similar perceptions towards the students' proficiency level in the four language skills. As for listening skill, out of the ten ESL lecturers, six of them perceived that the students had achieved average level and four perceived that their students were still weak. For speaking proficiency, six lecturers rated the students as achieving average level, three felt that the students were weak and one felt that the students were very weak. Furthermore, all of them (100%) ranked the students' reading proficiency as average. Lastly, three ESL lecturers

perceived that the students had only achieved an average level in writing skill. For the remaining, three rated the students as being weak and four rated the students as being very weak.

Based on the findings, the ESL lecturers seemed to have negative perceptions of the students' ability in all the four skills. In their opinions, the students had only achieved average or lower level of proficiency in the four skills. However, despite the strict feedback given by the ESL lecturers, there is still an obvious agreement between them and the students that the students' reading skill is better than the other skills and writing is the most serious problem among the students.

4.2.1.3 Subject Lecturers' Perceptions towards the Students' English Language Proficiency

As shown in table 4.2.3, seven subject lecturers (87.5%) perceived that the students had achieved an average level in listening skill and only one (12.5%) perceived them as being 'good' in the skill. As for speaking proficiency, most of them (6) rated the students as being weak and two rated them as being average. Besides that, five subject lecturers stated that the students were at the average level of reading proficiency and the remaining three perceived them as being good in the skill. Lastly, an equal number of the subject lecturers perceived their students as being weak and very weak in writing.

It can be observed that the subject lecturers' responses were also relatively similar with the ESL lecturers' responses. In their view, the students seem incredibly weak in writing and speaking as compared to listening and reading skills. Generally, the findings reveal a match in the perceptions between the students and the lecturers with reference to

the students' proficiency level in the four major language skills and this implies that there is a need to emphasise more on the students' major weaknesses – speaking and writing skills, when reviewing the current curriculum of PE1 and PE2. However, it is interesting to note that, when most of the students (57%) ranked listening skill being their strength (good and excellent), all the ESL lecturers (100%) and almost all the subject lecturers (87.5%) rated the students as being average and weak. This is most probably due to the students' failure in self-reflecting their ability in listening as it is not included as part of the assessment in the language courses. Another possible reason would be the students mistakenly perceived listening effectively as listening attentively.

Table 4.2.3(a): Subject lecturers' perceptions towards the students' listening and speaking proficiency level

Proficiency level	Listening		Speaking	
	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Excellent	-	-	-	-
Good	1	12.5	-	-
Average	7	87.5	2	25.0
Weak	-	-	6	75.0
Very weak	-	-	-	-
Total	8	100.0	8	100.0

Table 4.2.3(b): Subject lecturers' perceptions towards the students' reading and writing proficiency level

Proficiency level	Reading		Writing	
	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Excellent	-	-	-	-
Good	3	37.5	-	-
Average	5	62.5	-	-
Weak	-	-	4	50.0
Very weak	-	-	4	50.0
Total	8	100.0	8	100.0

The following section will discuss the students, ESL lecturers and subject lecturers' perceptions of the difficulties faced by the students in the four language skills.

4.2.2 Perceptions of Difficulties in Listening

In this part, the respondents were required to indicate the level of difficulties that the students face when performing various listening sub-skills. The identified listening sub-skills include understanding and following lecturers' instruction, understanding the content of the lectures, understanding the meaning of many words used by lecturers and etc. The respondents were asked to rate on a four-point (1- 4) Likert scale as "a lot of difficulty", "some difficulty", "little difficulty" and "no difficulty".

4.2.2.1 Students' perceptions of their difficulties in listening sub-skills

Table 4.2.4: Students' perceived difficulties when listening to English (N=93)

item	Listening sub-skills	A lot of difficulty		Some difficulty		Little difficulty		No difficulty	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
a	Understanding and following lecturers' instruction	2	2.2	23	24.7	30	32.3	38	40.9
b	Understanding the content of the lectures	3	3.2	15	16.1	44	47.3	31	33.3
c	Understanding the meaning of many words used by lecturers	3	3.2	23	24.7	45	48.4	22	23.7
d	Understanding the lecturers when they speak fast in English	6	6.5	44	47.3	30	32.3	13	14.0
e	Getting the important points of lectures	4	4.3	27	29.0	40	43.0	22	23.7
f	Taking brief and clear lecture notes	4	4.3	28	30.1	30	32.3	31	33.3
g	Understanding questions asked by lecturers	5	5.4	24	25.8	30	32.3	34	36.6
h	Following a classroom discussion	8	8.6	12	12.9	31	33.3	42	45.2

As shown in table 4.2.4, most of the students perceived that they did not have serious problems in most of the listening sub-skills. For instance, when they were asked if they had difficulty in understanding and following lecturers' instruction, 40.9% of them stated that they did not have difficulty at all, 32.3% of them had little difficulty, 24.7% had some difficulty and only 2.2% had a lot of difficulty. Furthermore, when reflecting on difficulty in understanding the content of the lectures, almost half of them (47.3%) had only little difficulty. In looking at the students' ability of understanding the meanings of the words used by their lecturers, 48.4% of the students stated that they had little difficulty, 24.7% of them faced some difficulty and this is closely followed by 23.7% who had no difficulty. There were only 3 students (3.2%) had a lot of difficulty in this skill. Besides that, 44 students (47.3%) indicated that they had some difficulty in understanding the lecturers when they speak fast in English. Also, 30 students had little difficulty, 22 had no difficulty and 6 had a lot of difficulty.

As for the next listening sub-skill – "getting the important points of lectures" 40 students indicated that they had little difficulty, 27 had some difficulty, 22 had no difficulty and 4 had a lot of difficulty. With regard to the ability in taking brief and clear lecture notes while listening, most of them had little difficulty (32.3%) and no difficulty (33.3%). Besides that, most of the students perceived themselves as having no difficulty (36.6%) and little difficulty (32.3%) in understanding questions asked by their lecturers. Similar to the responses for item a, b, f and g, the majority of the students had either no difficulty (45.2%) or little difficulty (33.3%) to follow a classroom discussion which is conducted in English medium. They were only 12 and 8 students who encountered some difficulty and a lot of difficulty respectively in this sub-skill.

The findings indicate, generally, no serious difficulties in listening were perceived by the students. Having to understand the lecturers when they speak fast in English was identified as the major difficulty (having a lot of difficulty and some difficulty) by the students (53.8%). This is followed by difficulty in taking lecture notes (34.4%) and getting the important points of lectures (33.3%).

4.2.2.2 ESL Lecturers' Perceptions of the Students' Difficulties in Listening Sub-skills

Table 4.2.5: English language lecturers' perceptions towards the difficulties encountered by the students when listening to English (N=10)

item	Listening sub-skills	A lot of difficulty		Some difficulty		Little difficulty		No difficulty	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
a	Understanding and following lecturers' instruction	-	-	7	70.0	3	30.0	-	-
b	Understanding the content of the lectures	-	-	10	100.0	-	-	-	-
c	Understanding the meaning of many words used by lecturers	5	50.0	5	50.0	-	-	-	-
d	Understanding the lecturers when they speak fast in English	7	70.0	3	30.0	-	-	-	-
e	Getting the important points of lectures	5	50.0	5	50.0	-	-	-	-
f	Taking brief and clear lecture notes	5	50.0	5	50.0	-	-	-	-
g	Understanding questions asked by lecturers	-	-	10	100.0	-	-	-	-
h	Following a classroom discussion	8	80.0	1	10.0	1	10.0	-	-

According to table 4.2.5, seven lecturers stated that the students had some difficulty in understanding and following lecturers' instruction and three felt that the students had little difficulty in this sub-skill. As for the ability of understanding the content of the

lectures and the questions asked by lecturers, all the ESL lecturers perceived that the students had some difficulty. Besides that, there were an equal number of them indicated that the students had a lot of difficulty and some difficulty in understanding the meaning of words used by lecturers. The same responses were also obtained when they were asked to rate the students' ability in getting the important points of lectures and taking brief and clear lecture notes during lectures. With regard to the ability in understanding the lecturers when they speak fast in English, most of the lecturers (7) perceived that the students had a lot of difficulty. When asked about the students' ability in following a classroom discussion, almost all of the ESL lecturers (8) stated that they had a lot of difficulty.

This analysis shows that, as perceived by the ESL lecturers, the sub-skills which the students experienced the most difficulty in (or a lot of difficulty) are following a classroom discussion which is conducted in the English medium (80%) and in understanding lecturers who speak fast in English (70%). For the first problem, it is perceived that the students struggled to understand the content of the discussion. One ESL lecturer wrote in the questionnaire that, "*It is hard to have classroom discussion with students especially when the issue discussed are beyond their existing knowledge*" while another also wrote that "*It is hard to get them to respond in classroom discussion as they always look blur…in fact they are not clear of what is going on*".

4.2.2.3 Subject Lecturers' Perceptions of the Students' Difficulties in Listening Sub-skills

Table 4.2.6: Subject lecturers' perceptions towards the difficulties faced by the students when listening to English (N=8)

item	Listening sub-skills	A lot of difficulty		Some difficulty		Little difficulty		No difficulty	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
a	Understanding and following lecturers' instruction	-	-	1	12.5	6	75	1	12.5
b	Understanding the content of the lectures	-	-	2	25.0	4	50.0	2	25.0
c	Understanding the meaning of many words used by lecturers	-	-	2	25.0	4	50.0	2	25.0
d	Understanding the lecturers when they speak fast in English	-	-	3	37.5	5	62.5	-	-
e	Getting the important points of lectures	-	-	3	37.5	5	62.5	-	-
f	Taking brief and clear lecture notes	-	-	4	50.0	4	50.0	-	-
g	Understanding questions asked by lecturers	-	-	4	50.0	4	50.0	-	-
h	Following a classroom discussion	-	-	4	50.0	4	50.0	-	-

75% of the subject lecturers stated that the students had little difficulty in understanding and following lecturers' instruction. This is followed by another two lecturers who respectively felt that their students were having some difficulty and no difficulty in this sub-skill. For the ability of understanding the content of the lectures, four lecturers perceived that the students had little difficulty; two perceived that they had some difficulty and another two perceived that they had no difficulty. The same responses were also obtained in evaluating students' ability of understanding the meaning of words used by

lecturers. On the other hand, five lecturers stated that the students had little difficulty in understanding the lecturers when they speak fast in English and getting the important points of lectures. Moreover, an equal number of the lecturers respectively perceived that the students had little difficulty and some difficulty in taking brief and clear lecture notes, understanding questions asked by lecturers and following a classroom discussion. This finding is contradictory to what the ESL lecturers had perceived about the students' difficulties in various listening sub-skills. Generally, all the subject lecturers felt that their students did not face serious problems in most of the listening sub-skills.

4.2.3 Perceptions of Difficulties in Speaking

This part investigates the difficulties encountered by the students in performing various speaking or communicative tasks such as using correct pronunciation, speaking fluently, speaking confidently, getting ideas to speak, using the right words and sentence patterns, giving presentation in class and etc. The respondents were asked to rate on a four-point (1- 4) Likert scale as "a lot of difficulty", "some difficulty", "little difficulty" and "no difficulty" and all the responses are shown in the following sections.

4.2.3.1 Students' Perceptions of Their Difficulties in Speaking Sub-skills

Table 4.2.7 clearly illustrates that the students perceived themselves as having difficulty in using correct pronunciation when speaking. For this, 41 students stated that they had some difficulty and 13 had a lot of difficulty. With reference to the ability of speaking fluently, most of them had little difficulty (46.2%) and this is followed by students who possessed some difficulty (38.7 %), a lot of difficulty (11.8%) and no

difficulty (3.2%). Besides that, for speaking confidently, 35 students rated themselves as having little difficulty and 33 had some difficulty in this sub-skill. For the remaining 25 students, 15 of them had a lot of difficulty and 10 had no difficulty at all. Item d seeks students' feedback on their ability in getting ideas to speak and communicate. Their responses were: had some difficulty (40 students), had little difficulty (33 students), had no difficulty (11 students) and had a lot of difficulty (9 students). Furthermore, almost half of the students (48.4 %) stated that they had some difficulty in using the right words and sentence patterns while speaking.

Table 4.2.7: Students' perceived difficulties when speaking and communicating in English (N=93)

item	Speaking sub-skills	A lot of difficulty		Some difficulty		Little difficulty		No difficulty	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
a	Using correct pronunciation	13	14.0	41	44.1	30	32.3	9	9.7
b	Speaking fluently	11	11.8	36	38.7	43	46.2	3	3.2
c	Speaking confidently	15	16.1	33	35.5	35	37.6	10	10.8
d	Getting ideas to speak	9	9.7	40	43.0	33	35.5	11	11.8
e	Using the right words and sentence patterns	6	6.5	45	48.4	36	38.7	6	6.5
f	Giving presentation in class	13	14.0	34	36.6	36	38.7	10	10.8
g	Asking and answering questions	7	7.5	35	37.6	37	39.8	14	15.1
h	Participating in small group discussions	5	5.4	17	18.3	38	40.9	33	35.5
i	Participating in large group discussion	4	4.3	30	32.3	36	38.7	23	24.7
j	Speaking with friends in English outside the classroom	8	8.6	28	30.1	31	33.3	26	28.0

Regarding the ability of giving presentation in class, 36 students responded that they had little difficulty, 34 had some difficulty, 13 had a lot of difficulty and the remaining

10 had no difficulty. For asking and answering questions, 37 students felt that they had little difficulty, 35 had some difficulty, 14 had no difficulty and 7 had a lot difficulty. When asking about the difficulty faced while participating in small group discussions, 40.9% of the students (38) indicated that they had little difficulty. For the rest of the students, 33 responded with no difficulty, 17 with some difficulty and 5 had a lot of difficulty. Similarly, for participating in large group discussions, more than a quarter of them had little difficulty (38.7%). Lastly, for the ability of speaking with friends in English outside the classroom, 31 students indicated that they had little difficulty, 28 had some difficulty, 26 had no difficulty and 8 had a lot of difficulty.

The above analysis reveals that the students face difficulties (either a lot or some) in almost all the speaking sub-skills. At the top of the list is the ability to use correct pronunciation (58.1%). This is followed by difficulty in using suitable words and sentences (54.9%), getting ideas to speak (52.7%), speaking confidently (51.6%), speaking fluently (49.5%) and giving presentation in class (49.5%). This finding lends support to those presented by Evans and Green (2007), whose subjects reported that they find it difficult to speak accurately, communicate ideas fluently and present information orally. On this matter, Evans and Green advocate that students' development in fluency and accuracy is probably impeded by the fact that subject lecturers place greater emphasis on content rather than other criterion.

4.2.3.2 ESL Lecturers' Perceptions of the Students' Difficulties in Speaking Sub-skills

Based on the data shown in table 4.2.8, in general, all the ESL lecturers responded that the students had difficulties in all the speaking tasks. There were four and six lecturers

who respectively felt that the students had a lot of difficulty and some difficulty in using correct pronunciation when speaking and getting ideas to speak. Not only that, all the lecturers also stated that the students had a lot of difficulty to speak fluently and confidently. Besides that, all of them also perceived that the students possessed some difficulty when asking and answering questions and participating in small group discussion. With reference to the ability of speaking grammatically correct English, seven lecturers perceived that the students had a lot of difficulty and three perceived that the students had some difficulty. As for using the right words and sentence patterns while speaking and communicating, eight lecturers felt that the students had some difficulty and two felt that they had a lot of difficulty. When evaluating the students' ability of giving presentation in class, there were six and four lecturers who respectively rated the students as having a lot of difficulty and some difficulty. Furthermore, an equal number of them stated that the students had a lot of difficulty and some difficulty when participating in large group discussion. Finally, when the lecturers were asked if their students had any difficulty in communicating with friends in English outside the classroom, eight of them stated that they had a lot of difficulty and two stated that they had some difficulty.

The results show a significant contradictory opinion between the students and ESL lecturers with regard to students' speaking ability. While some students rated themselves as facing only a little or no difficulty, all the ESL lecturers commented that their students, in fact, had either a lot of difficulty or some difficulty in all the speaking sub-skills. In their view, the students faced the most problems in speaking confidently and fluently where 100% of them stated that the students had 'a lot of difficulty'. Following these tasks were such as speaking with friends in English outside the classroom (80%), speaking

grammatically correct English (70%), using correct pronunciation (60%) and giving

presentation in class (60%).

Table 4.2.8: ESL lecturers' perceptions towards the difficulties faced by the students while speaking and communicating in English (N=10)

item	Speaking sub-skills	A lot of difficulty		Some difficulty		Little difficulty		No difficulty	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
a	Using correct pronunciation	6	60.0	4	40.0	-	-	-	-
b	Speaking fluently	10	100.0	-	-	-	-	-	-
c	Speaking confidently	10	100.0	-	-	-	-	-	-
d	Getting ideas to speak	4	40.0	6	60.0	-	-	-	-
e	Speaking grammatically correct English	7	70.0	3	30.0	-	-	-	-
f	Using the right words and sentence patterns	2	20.0	8	80.0	-	-	-	-
g	Giving presentation in class	6	60.0	4	40.0	-	-	-	-
h	Asking and answering questions	-	-	10	100.0	-	-	-	-
i	Participating in small group discussions	-	-	10	100.0	-	-	-	-
j	Participating in large group discussion	5	50.0	5	50.0	-	-	-	-
k	Speaking with friends in English outside the classroom	8	80.0	2	20.0	-	-	-	-

The ESL lecturers also gave some comments on this matter such as "*the students are too shy to speak in front of the class*", "*they are lack of confidence to present ... dare not to project their voice*", "*they are unable to construct proper sentences and always use back the same words*", "*they will never speak English with friends and the worst is they continue speak Malay to me although I only use English with them*" and one lecturer even wrote that "*when I ask them to speak in English, they always reply me by saying 'tak pandai'* (not capable of). The comments demonstrate that, besides having problem to speak

grammatically correct English, the students are also not confident in using the language to communicate. Additionally, five of them also commented on the students' poor pronunciation such as "*they pronounce English words just like their mother tongues*" and "*some of the students cannot pronounce or differentiate certain sounds like [th], [e] and [ae]*".

Similar responses are also found between the students and ESL lecturers. Both perceived that students' major difficulty were in speaking fluently and confidently, giving presentation in class, speaking with friends in English outside the classroom and speaking grammatically correct English. As for the last two weaknesses (speaking with friends in English outside the classroom and speaking grammatically correct English), it is evident that there is a need to help the students to overcome the anxiety of using English in daily communication and the elements of grammar, somehow, has to be stressed so that students' grammatical mistakes in speaking could be minimised.

4.2.3.3 Subject Lecturers' Perceptions of the Students' Difficulties in Speaking Sub-skills

As noted in table 4.2.9, the students were perceived by five and three subject lecturers correspondingly as having some difficulty and little difficulty in using correct pronunciation when speaking. Besides that, an equal number of the subject lecturers stated that the students had either a lot of difficulty or some difficulty in speaking fluently, confidently and speaking grammatically correct English. On the other hand, five lecturers felt that their students had a lot of difficulty in getting ideas to speak and while communicating with their friends in English outside of the classroom. With regard to

giving presentation in class, five perceived that the students had little difficulty and three perceived them as having no difficulty. Moreover, when the lecturers were asked about the students' ability to ask and answer questions, four rated them as having little difficulty, two rated them as having no difficulty and one rated them as having a lot of difficulty. For participating in small group discussions, four of them stated that the students possessed little difficulty, two perceived them as having some difficulty and another two perceived them as having no difficulty. Conversely, for participating in large group discussion, four lecturers felt that their students had no difficulty and the remaining felt that the students had no difficulty.

Table 4.2.9: Subject lecturers' perceptions towards the difficulties faced by the students while speaking and communicating in English (N=10)

item	Speaking sub-skills	A lot of difficulty		Some difficulty		Little difficulty		No difficulty	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
a	Using correct pronunciation	-	-	5	62.5	3	37.5	-	-
b	Speaking fluently	4	50.0	4	50.0	-	-	-	-
c	Speaking confidently	4	50.0	4	50.0	-	-	-	-
d	Getting ideas to speak	5	62.5	3	37.5	-	-	-	-
e	Speaking grammatically correct English	4	50.0	4	50.0	-	-	-	-
f	Using the right words and sentence patterns	-	-	-	-	4	50.0	4	50.0
g	Giving presentation in class	-	-	-	-	5	62.5	3	37.5
h	Asking and answering questions	1	12.5	1	12.5	4	50.0	2	25.0
i	Participating in small group discussions	-	-	2	25.0	4	50.0	2	25.0
j	Participating in large group discussion	-	-	-	-	4	50.0	4	50.0
k	Speaking with friends in English outside the classroom	5	62.5	3	37.5	-	-	-	-

It is observed that the subject lecturers, ESL lecturers and the students' responses were incredibly matched. All the subject lecturers also found that the students had difficulty (either a lot or some) in speaking fluently and confidently, getting ideas to speak, speaking grammatically correct English and speaking with friends in English outside the classroom. One lecturer stated that "*the good ones are ok and not so bad, but the weak ones will always use English with Malay*" while the other lecturer wrote that "*they can't present and talk smoothly if they don't refer to papers*". Besides the above, one lecturer realized that although the students were able to give a presentation but they were unable to organize and deliver their ideas or points clearly. He wrote that, "*The way the students present are so not organized... they love to jump from one point to another without linkage...sometimes I also can't get what they mean*". Overall, the above findings are borne out by Jordan (2009) who speculates that the most persistent problem encountered by the students (in most of the surveys conducted) is the lack of ability to express themselves adequately in the spoken language. Moreover, participation in academic discussion has also been noted by him as an area of major difficulty especially in comprehension of spoken English (e.g. when speakers speak too fast and use difficult vocabulary), the pressing need to formulate a contribution quickly (e.g. cannot think of what to say), and inability to formulate an idea in English. In conclusion, the students need be given more opportunities to practise group discussion in order to acquire good oratory skills.

4.2.4 Perceptions of Difficulties in Reading

This part examines the difficulties encountered by the students when reading in English such as understanding the difficult words in textbooks, journals, magazines, etc, identifying main points, identifying supporting details and etc. In this part of the

questionnaires, the respondents were asked to rate on a four-point (1- 4) Likert scale as "a lot of difficulty", "some difficulty", "little difficulty" and "no difficulty".

4.2.4.1 Students' Perceptions of Their Difficulties in Reading Sub-skills

Reading is of the most important skills in learning English language. Thus, it is vital to examine learners' reading proficiency. Based on table 4.2.10, it is noted that more than half of the students had no difficulty (8.6%) and little difficulty (47.3%) in understanding difficult words in textbooks, journals, magazines, etc. Other than that, when finding out about the students' ability in understanding the content of textbooks, journals, magazines, etc, nearly half of the students (49.5%) stated that they had only little difficulty. This is followed by students who had no difficulty (23.7%), some difficulty (23.7%) and a lot of difficulty (3.2%).

Table 4.2.10: Students' perceived difficulties when reading in English (N=93)

item	Reading sub-skills	A lot of difficulty		Some difficulty		Little difficulty		No difficulty	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
a	Understanding the difficult words in textbooks, journals, magazines, etc	4	4.3	37	39.8	44	47.3	8	8.6
b	Understanding the content of textbooks, journals, magazines, etc	3	3.2	22	23.7	46	49.5	22	23.7
c	Identifying main points	4	4.3	29	31.2	40	43.0	20	21.5
d	Identifying supporting details	4	4.3	29	31.2	44	47.3	16	17.2
e	Reading quickly to get the general meaning of reading texts	7	7.5	31	33.3	34	36.6	21	22.6
f	Reading to find specific information	6	6.5	31	33.3	38	40.9	18	19.4
g	Taking brief and clear notes while reading	4	4.3	25	26.9	47	50.5	17	18.3

Identifying main points (item d) is another important sub-skill in reading. For this, 60 students stated they had little difficulty and no difficulty and the remaining 33 had some difficulty and a lot of difficulty. Regarding the difficulty faced in identifying supporting details, 44 indicated that they had little difficulty, 29 had some difficulty, 16 had no difficulty and 4 had a lot of difficulty. Besides that, in evaluating their ability of reading quickly to get the general meaning of reading texts, 34 of them rated themselves as having little difficulty, 31 having some difficulty, 21 having no difficulty and 7 having a lot of difficulty. Moreover, when asking about the difficulty encountered in identifying specific information, 38 of them had little difficulty, 31 had some difficulty, 18 had no difficulty and 6 had a lot of difficulty. Lastly, more than half of the students (47 or 50.5%) had only little difficulty in taking brief and clear notes while reading.

Generally, it is observed that greater number of students expressed some degree of ease in most of the reading sub-skills as compared to listening and speaking skills. Nevertheless, the students do face difficulties also in certain sub-skills such as to understand difficult words in reading texts, reading quickly to get the general meaning of reading texts, identifying main points and supporting details. The problem of understanding difficult words, which was claimed difficult by most of the students (44.1%), could be the main factor that directly or indirectly causes them to face difficulties in other sub-skills as Coady and Huckin (1997) believe that vocabulary acquisition is the central and the most primary component in language learning. This finding is largely corroborated by those reported in Evans and Green (2007) who found that their students had problem in attempting to understand difficult words as well. Thus, it could be inferred that there lexical competence has an impact on reading ability. Jordan (1997) states that students often express a need to expand their vocabulary.

4.2.4.2 ESL Lecturers' Perceptions of the Students' Difficulties in Reading Sub-skills

As shown in table 4.2.11, an equal number of the ESL lecturers stated that the students had some difficulty and little difficulty in understanding the difficult words in textbooks, journals, magazines, etc. For the ability of understanding the content of textbooks, journals, magazines, etc, the majority of the ESL lecturers (8) perceived that the students had a lot of difficulty. Similarly, all of them gave the same response when they were asked to rate the students' ability in identifying main points, identifying supporting details and reading quickly to get the general meaning of reading texts. All of them rated the students as having some difficulties in those reading sub-skills. For the remaining two sub-skills - reading to find specific information and taking brief and clear notes while reading, the ESL lecturers also gave the similar responses where nine of them perceived that the students had some difficulty and only one perceived them as having little difficulty.

Table 4.2.11: ESL lecturers' perceptions towards the difficulties faced by the students when reading in English (N=10)

item	Reading sub-skills	A lot of difficulty		Some difficulty		Little difficulty		No difficulty	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
a	Understanding the difficult words in textbooks, journals, magazines, etc	-	-	5	50.0	5	50.0	-	-
b	Understanding the content of textbooks, journals, magazines, etc	8	80.0	2	20.0	-	-	-	-
c	Identifying main points	-	-	10	100.0	-	-	-	-
d	Identifying supporting details	-	-	10	100.0	-	-	-	-
e	skimming to get the general meaning of reading texts	-	-	10	100.0	-	-	-	-
f	scanning for specific information	-	-	9	90.0	1	10.0	-	-
g	Taking brief and clear notes while reading	-	-	9	90.0	1	10.0	-	-

The above analysis shows that both ESL lecturers and students were of the similar opinion. The ESL lecturers also found that the students had difficulty (a lot and some) in sub-skills like understanding the content of textbooks, identifying main points and supporting details and skimming to get the general meaning of reading texts. Of all these, having to understand the content of reading materials like textbooks and journals was identified as the students' most serious problem where 80% of the lecturers stated that they had a lot of difficulty. One lecturer commented in the questionnaire that "*the students will normally take a long time to finish reading just one-page long text*". Besides that, one lecturer wrote that "*without an English-Malay dictionary, I don't think they can survive*" while another also wrote that "*they feel bored whenever I ask them to do reading comprehension exercise*". Thus, there is a need to strengthen students' reading sub-skills.

4.2.4.3 Subject Lecturers' Perceptions of the Students' Difficulties in Reading Sub-skills

Table 4.2.12: Subject lecturers' perceptions towards the difficulties faced by the students when reading in English (N=8)

item	Reading sub-skills	A lot of difficulty		Some difficulty		Little difficulty		No difficulty	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
a	Understanding the difficult words in textbooks, journals, magazines, etc	-	-	7	87.5	1	12.5	-	-
b	Understanding the content of textbooks, journals, magazines, etc	-	-	2	25.0	6	75.0	-	-
c	Identifying main points	-	-	6	75.0	2	25.0	-	-
d	Taking brief and clear notes while reading	-	-	3	37.5	5	62.5	-	-

As shown in table 4.2.12, a high percentage of the subject lecturers (87.5%) perceived that the students had some difficulty in understanding the difficult words in textbooks, journals, magazines, etc. There is only one lecturer who felt that the students had only little difficulty. Regarding the ability of understanding the content of textbooks, journals, magazines, etc, there were six and two lecturers respectively stated that the students had little difficulty and some difficulty. Besides that, six of them indicated that the students had some difficulty in identifying main points and two felt that they had little difficulty. Finally, five subject lecturers perceived that the students had little difficulty in taking brief and clear notes while reading and this is followed by three others who felt that the students had some difficulty.

4.2.5 Perceptions of Difficulties in Writing

This part investigates the difficulties encountered by the students when writing in English such as using correct spelling, using correct punctuation, using suitable words, using varieties of words, writing grammatically correct sentences, and etc. The respondents were asked to rate on a four-point (1- 4) Likert scale as "a lot of difficulty", "some difficulty", "little difficulty" and "no difficulty".

4.2.5.1 Students' Perceptions of Their Difficulties in Writing Sub-skills

Based on the data shown in table 4.2.13, 46 students (49.5%) stated that they had little difficulty in using correct spelling when writing in English. For the others, 32 had some difficulty, 11 had no difficulty and 4 had a lot of difficulty. As for the ability of using correct punctuation in writing, 44.1% of the students responded that they faced little

difficulty, 43.0% faced some difficulty, 7.5% had no difficulty and 5.4% faced a lot of difficulty. With reference to using suitable words in writing, almost half of them (49.5 %) claimed that they had only little difficulty. Besides that, when the students were asked to rate their ability in using varieties of words in their writing, the responses collected are 42 students had some difficulty, 40 had little difficulty, 6 had no difficulty and 5 had a lot of difficulty. Furthermore, when asking if they could write grammatically correct sentences, 41 of them indicated that they faced some difficulty, 38 had little difficulty, 13 had a lot of difficulty and only one student had no problem at all.

Table 4.2.13: Students' perceived difficulties when writing in English (N=93)

item	writing sub-skills	A lot of difficulty		Some difficulty		Little difficulty		No difficulty	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
a	Using correct spelling	4	4.3	32	34.4	46	49.5	11	11.8
b	Using correct punctuation	5	5.4	40	43.0	41	44.1	7	7.5
c	Using suitable words	6	6.5	30	32.3	46	49.5	11	11.8
d	Using varieties of words	5	5.4	42	45.2	40	43.0	6	6.5
e	Writing grammatically correct sentences	13	14.0	41	44.1	38	40.9	1	1.1
f	Using a variety of sentence patterns	8	8.6	42	45.2	35	37.6	8	8.6
g	Linking sentences in a paragraph	2	2.2	31	33.3	43	46.2	17	18.3
h	Getting ideas to write	6	6.5	32	34.4	39	41.9	16	17.2
i	Organizing points/ information when writing	5	5.4	36	38.7	35	37.6	17	18.3
j	Writing introductions	4	4.3	24	25.8	45	48.4	20	21.5
k	Writing body sections	6	6.5	37	39.8	37	39.8	13	14.0
l	Writing conclusion	5	5.4	32	34.4	40	43.0	16	17.2
m	Rewriting other's ideas using your own words (citation)	7	7.5	27	29.0	43	46.2	16	17.2
n	Using suitable format in writing e.g. letters and reports	7	7.5	28	30.1	41	44.1	17	18.3
o	Writing bibliography / references	7	7.5	38	40.9	36	38.7	12	12.9

With regard to the ability of using a variety of sentence patterns, 45.2% of the students rated themselves as having some difficulties, 37.6% having little difficulty, 8.6% having no difficulty and another 8.6% having a lot of difficulty. A part from that, 43 students indicated that they had little difficulty in linking sentences in a paragraph. For the remaining, 31 had little difficulty, 17 had no difficulty and only 2 had a lot of difficulty. For the sub-skill – getting ideas to write (item 5h), 39 students had little difficulty, 32 had some difficulty, 16 had no difficulty and 6 had a lot of difficulty. Regarding the ability of organizing points/ information in writing, 36 of them responded that they had some difficulty, 35 had litter difficulty, 17 had no difficulty and 5 had a lot of difficulty.

It is noted that almost half of the students (48.4%) possessed little difficulty in writing introduction. As for writing the body sections, there were an equal number of students (37) rated themselves as having some difficulty and little difficulty respectively. Other than that, for writing conclusion, 40 students mentioned that they had little difficulty, 32 had some difficulty, 16 had no difficulty and 5 had a lot of difficulty. As for citation, 43 students stated that they had little difficulty, 27 had some difficulty, 16 had no difficulty and 7 had a lot of difficulty. Moreover, 41 students (44.1%) responded that they had little difficulty in using suitable format in writing e.g. letters and reports. On the same issue also, 28 rated themselves as having some difficulty, 17 with no difficulty and 7 had a lot of difficulty. Finally, most of the students perceived themselves as having some difficulty (40.9%) and little difficulty (38.7 %) in writing bibliography/references.

It is apparent that the students, as perceived by themselves, encountered difficulties in all the writing sub-skills. Among the major difficulties (either a lot or some) include writing grammatically correct sentences (58.1%), using a variety of sentence patterns

(53.8%) and words (50.6%), using correct punctuation (48.4%), writing bibliography (48.4%), writing body section (46.3%), organizing points (44.1%) and getting ideas to write (40.9%). The scenario is also witnessed by Normah and Suzana (2004) in a survey of examining tertiary students' attitude towards writing where the results showed that 75% of the respondents had problems writing English essays and generating ideas for writing.

Of all the above, students ranked writing grammatically correct sentences as the most difficult sub-skill. As 58.1% of the students affirmed this, it clearly shows that most of them were unable to write without any grammatical mistakes. The findings, similar to those in Evans and Green (2007), suggest that the students perceive themselves as experiencing greater difficulty with the language rather than the content or structure of academic texts. It is important to note that although most general writing skills are covered in the present curriculum, the students' responses possibly reveal that they have not gained sufficient confidence in mastering all the writing skills and some specific skills may have been overlooked especially the mechanism in writing such as the use of correct punctuation and writing bibliography.

4.2.5.2 ESL Lecturers' Perceptions of the Students' Difficulties in Writing Sub-skills

In table 4.2.14, five ESL lecturers perceived that their students had some difficulty in using correct spelling when writing in English and for the other five lecturers, their students had little difficulty. As for the ability of using correct punctuation in writing, all of them stated that the students had some difficulty. Besides that, six of them responded that the students had a lot of difficulty in using suitable words when writing and four felt that the students had some difficulty. The same responses were also obtained for the students'

ability in using a variety of sentence patterns and getting ideas to write. With regard to the

ability of using a variety of words in writing, an equal number of them respectively

perceived that the students had a lot of difficulty and some difficulty. Moreover, when they

were asked if the students were able to write grammatically correct sentences, seven stated

that the students had a lot of difficulty and three felt that they had some difficulty.

Table 4.2.14: ESL lecturers' perceptions towards the difficulties faced by the students when writing in English (N=10)

item	writing sub-skills	A lot of difficulty		Some difficulty		Little difficulty		No difficulty	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
a	Using correct spelling	-	-	5	50.0	5	50.0	-	-
b	Using correct punctuation	-	-	10	100.0	-	-	-	-
c	Using suitable words	6	60.0	4	40.0	-	-	-	-
d	Using varieties of words	5	50.0	5	50.0	-	-	-	-
e	Writing grammatically correct sentences	7	70.0	3	30.0	-	-	-	-
f	Using a variety of sentence patterns	6	60.0	4	40.0	-	-	-	-
g	Linking sentences in a paragraph	9	90.0	1	10.0	-	-	-	-
h	Getting ideas to write	6	60.0	4	40.0	-	-	-	-
i	Organizing points/ information when writing	-	-	10	100.0	-	-	-	-
j	Writing introductions	-	-	10	100.0	-	-	-	-
k	Writing body sections	-	-	10	100.0	-	-	-	-
l	Writing conclusion	6	60.0	4	40.0	-	-	-	-
m	Citation	8	80.0	-	-	2	20.0	-	-
n	Using suitable format in writing e.g. letters and reports	-	-	8	80.0	2	20.0	-	-
o	Writing bibliography / references	-	-	6	60.0	4	40.0	-	-

Apart from that, almost all the ESL lecturers (9) perceived that the students had a lot of difficulty in linking sentences in a paragraph. In addition, all ESL lecturers also rated the students as having some difficulties in organizing points or information, writing introductions and writing body sections of essay; whereas for writing conclusion, six of them perceived that their students had a lot of difficulty and four stated that the students had some difficulty. With reference to citation, almost all the lecturers (8) indicated that the students had a lot of difficulty. Additionally, there were eight and two lecturers who respectively felt that the students had some difficulty and little difficulty in using the suitable formats when writing letters and reports. Lastly, six lecturers reported that the students had some difficulty in writing bibliography or references and another four felt that the students only faced a little difficulty.

The above analysis shows that both ESL lecturers and the students were of the similar opinion where the students encountered difficulties in all the writing sub-skills. In the ESL lecturers' evaluation, the students faced the most problem (had a lot of difficulty) in linking sentences in a paragraph (90%), citation (80%), writing grammatically correct sentences (70%), getting ideas to write (60%), using suitable words (60%), using a variety of sentence patterns (60%), writing conclusion (60%) and using varieties of words (50%). Besides the above responses, the ESL lecturers also provided additional comments in the questionnaires about the students' writing proficiency. One of them stated that "*the students have serious problem in planning for writing…there is no flow in their writing*". Another lecturer also added that "*It is hard for the weak students to think of idea to write and elaborate points*". Besides that, one lecturer wrote that "*the students always use direct translation from Malay or Chinese language in composing*" while another one mentioned

that "*they use the same function words throughout... they are very weak in using tenses, subject-verb agreement and preposition*".

4.2.5.3 Subject Lecturers' Perceptions of the Students' Difficulties in Writing Sub-skills

As noted in table 4.2.15, an equal number of the subject lecturers (4) perceived that the students had either some difficulty or little difficulty in using correct spelling and getting ideas to write. Besides that, six and two lecturers correspondingly stated that the students had little difficulty and some difficulty in using suitable words and linking sentences in a paragraph. About the students' ability in using a variety of words in writing, five subject lecturers indicated that the students had little difficulty and three felt that they had some difficulty. Other than that, when they were asked if the students were able to write grammatically correct sentences, six of them perceived that the student had some difficulty and two perceived that the students had little difficulty. As for citation, six lecturers rated the students as having some difficulty and another two rated them as having a lot of difficulty. Lastly, six and two lecturers respectively perceived that the students had little and no difficulty in writing bibliography/references.

Contradictory to what the students and ESL lecturers had perceived, all the subject lecturers perceived that the students did not face a lot of difficulties in most of the writing sub-skills except for citation. A plausible reason is that they only require the students to achieve sufficient level of communicative competence or only focus on the subject matter or content and not so much on the writing skills or style of writing. This is affirmed by Weir (1988, cited in Jordan, 1997) where the subject tutors are more concerned with

content than with mechanical accuracy features, and their criteria of assessing written work are on the relevance and adequacy of the subject content, the clarity of message and the arrangement and development of written work. On the same matter, Jordan (1997:48) criticises that "the subject tutors are often linguistically unaware and cannot always distinguish a poorly conceived idea from an idea that is expressed through inadequate English". Thus, all these reasons contribute to the perceptions of both subject lecturers and student and ESL lecturers when assessing students' ability of writing in English.

Table 4.2.15: Subject lecturers' perceptions towards the difficulties faced by the students when writing in English (N=8)

item	writing sub-skills	A lot of difficulty		Some difficulty		Little difficulty		No difficulty	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
a	Using correct spelling	-	-	4	50.0	4	50.0	-	-
b	Using suitable words	-	-	2	25.0	6	75.0	-	-
c	Using varieties of words	-	-	3	37.5	5	62.5	-	-
d	Writing grammatically correct sentences	-	-	6	75.0	2	25.0	-	-
e	Linking sentences in a paragraph	-	-	2	25.0	6	75.0	-	-
f	Getting ideas to write	-	-	4	50.0	4	50.0	-	-
g	Reproducing other's ideas using own words or citation	2	25.0	6	75.0	-	-	-	-
h	Writing bibliography/ references	-	-	-	-	6	75.0	2	25.0

4.3 English Language Needs

Research Question 2: What perceptions do the students, ESL lecturers and subject lecturers have regarding the importance of various listening, speaking, reading and writing tasks? This part of the questionnaire is designed to obtain information on the types of English language tasks under the four macro skills that the respondents perceive as important in helping the students to learn at tertiary level.

4.3.1 Perceptions of the Importance of Listening Skills

This section presents the outcomes of the analyses of the listening tasks that the students, ESL lecturers and subject lecturers perceive as important to the students in their learning. The listening tasks include listening and understanding lectures, listening and understanding discussions, listening to and following instructions, listening and understanding social conversation, listening and understanding presentations and listening to take down notes. The respondents were asked to rate the importance of various listening tasks on a four-point (1- 4) Likert scale as "very important", "important", "not very important" and "not important".

4.3.1.1 Students' Perceptions of the Importance of Listening Tasks

According to table 4.3.1, all the students ranked listening and understanding lectures as being the most important task – very important (79.6%) and important (20.4%). Besides that, 66.7% of them perceived that listening and understanding discussion was very important and 31% also perceiving it as important. Furthermore, almost all the students

(97.8%) stated that listening to and following instructions was very important and important. Only two students ranked this task as not very important to them. For listening and understanding social conversation, most of the students (49.5%) indicated that it was important. Besides that, for listening and understanding presentation, 53.8% of them perceiving it as being very important, 40.9% perceiving it as important and 5.4% perceiving it as not very important. For the last task – listening and taking down notes, 83 students felt that it was very important and important. Generally, most of the students (around 90%) ranked all the listening tasks as 'very important' and 'important'. Based on the findings, the need to understand lectures (79.6%) as well as to understand discussions (66.7%) were ranked the most or very important skills by the students.

Table 4.3.1: Students' perceptions with regards to the importance of listening tasks (N=93)

item	Listening tasks	Very important		Important		Not very important		Not important	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
a	Listening and understanding lectures	74	79.6	19	20.4	-	-	-	-
b	Listening and understanding discussions	62	66.7	31	33.3	-	-	-	-
c	Listening to and following instructions	56	60.2	35	37.6	2	2.2	-	-
d	Listening and understanding social conversation	44	47.3	46	49.5	2	2.2	1	1.1
e	Listening and understanding presentations	50	53.8	38	40.9	5	5.4	-	-
f	Listening and taking down notes	47	50.5	36	38.7	10	10.8	-	-

4.3.1.2 ESL Lecturers' Perceptions of the Importance of Listening Tasks

Table 4.3.2: ESL lecturers' perceptions with regards to the importance of listening tasks (N=10)

item	Listening tasks	Very important		Important		Not very important		Not important	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
a	Listening and understanding lectures	7	70.0	3	30.0	-	-	-	-
b	Listening and understanding discussions	6	60.0	4	40.0	-	-	-	-
c	Listening to and following instructions	7	70.0	3	30.0	-	-	-	-
d	Listening and understanding social conversation	10	100.0	-	-	-	-	-	-
e	Listening and understanding presentations	7	70.0	3	30.0	-	-	-	-
f	Listening and taking down notes	5	50.0	5	50.0	-	-	-	-

As shown in table 4.3.2, all the ESL lecturers ranked all the listening tasks as being either very important or important to the students. For the tasks - listening and understanding lectures, listening to and following instructions and listening and understanding presentations, seven lecturers perceived that these tasks were very important and three perceived them as being important to the students. In addition, six of them stated that listening and understanding discussions was very important and four felt that it was important in helping the students to learn at tertiary level. Moreover, all the ESL lecturers ranked listening and understanding social conversation as a very important task for the students. With regard to this, one ESL lecturer stated that "*the students have to deal with different people such as lecturers, peers and officers from different departments to solve different kind of academic and non-academic matters*". Similarly, another lecturer also

wrote that "*In learning, the students have to engage in various conversations with individuals of different background especially in obtaining information*". Finally, an equal number of them (5) ranked listening and note-taking as being very important and important respectively. In brief, the above analysis shows that both ESL lecturers and the students' opinion are almost the same.

4.3.1.3 Subject Lecturers' Perceptions of the Importance of Listening Tasks

Table 4.3.3: Subject lecturers' perceptions with regards to the importance of listening tasks (N=10)

item	Listening tasks	Very important		Important		Not very important		Not important	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
a	Listening and understanding lectures	4	50.0	4	50.0	-	-	-	-
b	Listening and understanding discussions	5	62.5	3	37.5	-	-	-	-
c	Listening to and following instructions	4	50.0	4	50.0	-	-	-	-
d	Listening and understanding social conversation	3	37.5	5	62.5	-	-	-	-
e	Listening and understanding presentations	5	62.5	3	37.5	-	-	-	-
f	Listening and taking down notes	5	62.5	3	37.5	-	-	-	-

According to the above table, all the subject lecturers, like the ESL lecturers, ranked all the listening tasks as either very important or important to the students. Four of them ranked listening and understanding lectures and following instructions as very important and important listening tasks for the students respectively. Furthermore, five of them also perceived that listening and understanding discussions, listening and understanding

presentations and listening and taking down notes as very important. In addition, the three other subject lecturers also felt that these tasks are important to the students. Lastly, five and three subject lecturers respectively perceived that listening and understanding social conversation was an important and very important task. Overall, the ESL lecturers and subject lecturers seemed to indicate support for the relative importance of all the listening tasks. To conclude, it is interesting yet not surprising to note that almost all the respondents unanimously ranked all the listening tasks as 'very important' and 'important'. This is closely matched with their perceptions with regard to the students' listening ability (refer 4.2.2.1, 4.2.2.2 & 4.2.2.3) where they perceived that the students had problems in understanding the lecturers when they speak fast in English, taking lecture notes while listening, getting important points of lectures and following a classroom discussion. This implies that the students need to be given more practice of the listening tasks.

4.3.2 Perceptions of the Importance of Speaking Skills

This part presents the outcome of the analyses of the speaking tasks that the students, ESL lecturers and subject lecturers perceive as important to the students in their learning. The speaking component is made up of tasks such as presenting written assignments, participating in discussion, communicating with other students inside and outside of the classroom, communicating with lecturers inside and outside of the classroom, communicating with people in different social situation and making suggestions. The respondents were asked to rate the importance of various speaking tasks on a four-point (1-4) Likert scale as "very important", "important", "not very important" and "not important".

4.3.2.1 Students' Perceptions of the Importance of Speaking Tasks

It is noted in table 4.3.4 that almost half of the students (49.5%) perceived that presenting written assignments was an important task. 43.0% of them also perceiving it as being very important. As for participation in discussion, 52.7% of them perceived it as very important and 47.3% perceived it as important. Besides that, when the students were asked about the importance of communicating with other students inside and outside of the classroom, their responses were - very important (39.8%), important (48.4%) and not very important (11.8%). On the other hand, for communicating with lecturers inside and outside of the classroom, 58.1% of the students indicated that it was very important, 52.7% stated that it was important and 5.4% perceiving it as not very important. Other than that, for communicating with people in different social situation, 49 students felt that this was an important task. In addition to that, 30 students felt that it was very important, 12 felt that it was not very important and 2 felt that it was not important. Finally, most of the students (49.5%) perceived that making suggestion was an important task in their study.

Based on the findings, more than 80% of the students ranked all the speaking tasks as very important and important. The responses, following the degree of importance, are participating in discussion (100%), communicating with lecturers inside and outside of the classroom (94.7%), presenting written assignments (92.5%), making suggestions (89.3%), communicating with other students inside and outside of the classroom (88.2%) and communicating with people in different social situation (85%). There were only a small number of them who felt that those tasks were 'not very important' or 'not important'.

Table 4.3.4: Students' perceptions with regards to the importance of speaking tasks (N=93)

item	Speaking tasks	Very important		Important		Not very important		Not important	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
a	Presenting written assignments	40	43.0	46	49.5	7	7.5	-	-
b	Participating in discussion	49	52.7	44	47.3	-	-	-	-
c	Communicating with other students inside and outside of the classroom	37	39.8	45	48.4	11	11.8	-	-
d	Communicating with lecturers inside and outside of the classroom	54	58.1	34	36.6	5	5.4	-	-
e	Communicating with people in different social situation	30	32.3	49	52.7	12	12.9	2	2.2
f	Making suggestions	37	39.8	46	49.5	10	10.8	-	-

4.3.2.2 ESL Lecturers' Perceptions of the Importance of Speaking Tasks

Table 4.3.5 reveals that the ESL lecturers' responses on the importance of various speaking tasks are quite similar. Six lecturers stated that presenting written assignment was an important task and another four even felt that this was a very speaking important task for the students. On the other hand, there were six and four lecturers respectively perceived that participating in discussion was very important and important respectively. The same responses were also obtained for making suggestions. Besides that, almost all of them (9) perceived that communicating with other students inside and outside of the classroom and communicating with people in different social situation were very important to the students' learning. For communicating with lecturers inside and outside of the classroom, six lecturers ranked it as very important, three ranked it as important and only one ranked it as not very important. Generally, the ESL lecturers view all the speaking tasks as very

important and important particularly in the need of communicating with other students inside and outside of the classroom (90%) and communicating with people in different social situation (90%).

Table 4.3.5: ESL lecturers' perceptions with regards to the importance of speaking tasks (N=10)

item	Speaking tasks	Very important		Important		Not very important		Not important	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
a	Presenting written assignments	4	40.0	6	60.0	-	-	-	-
b	Participating in discussion	6	60.0	4	40.0	-	-	-	-
c	Communicating with other students inside and outside of the classroom	9	90.0	1	10.0	-	-	-	-
d	Communicating with lecturers inside and outside of the classroom	6	60.0	3	30.0	1	10.0	-	-
e	Communicating with people in different social situation	9	90.0	1	10.0	-	-	-	-
f	Making suggestions	6	60.0	4	40.0	-	-	-	-

4.3.2.3 Subject Lecturers' Perceptions of the Importance of Speaking Tasks

As presented in table 4.3.6, all the subject lecturers' responses towards the importance of various speaking tasks were quite parallel. Four of them felt that presenting written assignments was very important to the students. The remaining four lecturers also perceived it as being important. For participating in discussion and making suggestions, five subject lecturers ranked these tasks as important and three ranked them as very important. Furthermore, most of the lecturers (6) responded that communicating with other

students and lecturers inside and outside of the classroom were very important. The remaining two lecturers also indicated that these two tasks were important. Apart from that, all the lecturers stated that communicating with people in different social situation was very important. The findings reveal the matching opinion between the subject and ESL lecturers with regard to the students' need in speaking. For the subject lecturers as well, all the speaking tasks were regarded as either very important or important especially in the need to communicate with people in different social situation (100%). In addition to that, a lecturer from the Faculty of Industrial Management pointed out the importance of negotiation skills where she wrote that "*the students need to be taught the methods of negotiating in different corporate sectors*".

Table 4.3.6: Subject lecturers' perceptions with regards to the importance of speaking tasks (N=8)

item	Speaking tasks	Very important		Important		Not very important		Not important	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
a	Presenting written assignments	4	50.0	4	50.0	-	-	-	-
b	Participating in discussion	3	37.5	5	62.5	-	-	-	-
c	Communicating with other students inside and outside of the classroom	6	75.0	2	25.0	-	-	-	-
d	Communicating with lecturers inside and outside of the classroom	6	75.0	2	25.0	-	-	-	-
e	Communicating with people in different social situation	8	100.0	-	-	-	-	-	-
f	Making suggestions	3	37.5	5	62.5	-	-	-	-

4.3.3 Perceptions of the Importance of Reading Skills

This part presents the outcomes of the analyses of the reading tasks that the students, ESL lecturers and subject lecturers perceived as important to the students in their learning. The reading tasks are reading course books, reading and understanding technical material, reading and making notes, etc. All respondents were asked to rate the importance of various reading tasks as "very important", "important", "not very important" or "not important".

4.3.3.1 Students' Perceptions of the Importance of Reading Tasks

According to table 4.3.7, there were an equal number of students (42) who ranked reading course-book as very important and important task respectively. Only 9 students ranked this task as not very important. Besides that, almost all the students (93.6%) also perceived that reading and understanding technical material was equally important. Similarly, for the task – reading and making notes, the students perceived it as being very important (39.8%) and important (46.2%). Moreover, when the students were asked about how important was reading newspaper articles in their study, their responses were – very important (36.6%), important (57.0%), not very important (5.4%) and not important (1.11%).

Reading lecture handouts is another common academic task. For this, almost all the students ranked it as either very important or important (97.9%). There were only 2 students who stated that it was not very important. Besides that, slightly more than half of

the students (52.7%) perceived that reading articles on the internet was important to them in their study. In addition to this, 23 students ranked it as being very important, 20 ranked it as being not very important and only 1 ranked it as not important. Lastly, when they were asked to rate the importance of understanding visual data such as tables, charts and diagrams, 84 students (90.3%) perceived that it was very important and important.

Table 4.3.7: Students' perceptions with regards to the importance of reading tasks (N=93)

item	Reading tasks	Very important		Important		Not very important		Not important	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
a	Reading course books	42	45.2	42	45.2	9	9.7	-	-
b	Reading and understanding technical material e.g. journal and magazines	37	39.8	50	53.8	6	6.4	-	-
c	Reading and making your own notes	45	48.4	43	46.2	5	5.4	-	-
d	Reading newspaper articles	34	36.6	53	57.0	5	5.4	1	1.1
e	Reading lecture handouts	46	49.5	45	48.4	2	2.2	-	-
f	Reading articles on the internet	23	24.7	49	52.7	20	21.5	1	1.1
g	Understanding visual data (tables, charts, diagrams)	35	37.6	49	52.7	9	9.7	-	-

Similar to the responses gained pertaining to aural and oral needs, an impressively high number of students also viewed the identified reading tasks as being 'very important' and 'important'. Of all the responses, reading lecture handouts (97.9%), reading and making own notes (94.6%), reading newspaper articles (93.6%) and reading technical materials such as journal (93.6%) were high on the list of important reading tasks. It is also interestingly to note that there is an obvious contradicting opinion among the students with regard to the importance of reading articles on the internet. Although the result reveals that

23 students (24.7%) ranked this task as very important, there were 21 students (22.6%) who

ranked it as not very important and not important at all.

4.3.3.2 ESL Lecturers' Perceptions of the Importance of Reading Tasks

Table 4.3.8: ESL lecturers' perceptions with regards to the importance of reading tasks (N=10)

item	Reading tasks	Very important		Important		Not very important		Not important	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
a	Reading course books	7	70.0	3	30.0	-	-	-	-
b	Reading and understanding technical material e.g. journal and magazines	7	70.0	3	30.0	-	-	-	-
c	Reading and making own notes	6	60.0	4	40.0	-	-	-	-
d	Reading newspaper articles	4	40.0	6	60.0	-	-	-	-
e	Reading lecture handouts	7	70.0	3	30.0	-	-	-	-
f	Reading articles on the internet	4	40.0	5	50.0	1	10.0	-	-
g	Understanding visual data (tables, charts, diagrams)	4	40.0	5	50.0	1	10.0	-	-

As shown in table 4.3.8, seven ESL lecturers ranked reading course books, reading

and understanding technical material (e.g. journal and magazines) and reading lecture

handouts as being very important tasks for the students. At the same time, three other

lecturers also ranked these three reading tasks as important. Apart from that, reading and

making own notes was perceived being very important and important task by all of them.

When asking about the importance of reading newspaper articles to the students, six ESL

lecturers stated that it was important and four stated that it was very important. For the last

two reading tasks - reading articles on the internet and understanding visual data (tables,

charts & diagrams), the responses given by the lecturers were the same. For this, five rated the two tasks as important; four felt that they were very important and one indicated that the tasks were not very important. In short, according to the perspectives of the ESL lecturers, all the reading skills were considered either 'very important' or 'important' except for one lecturer who perceived reading articles on the internet and understanding visual data being 'not very important'.

4.3.3.3 Subject Lecturers' Perceptions of the Importance of Reading Tasks

Table 4.3.9: Subject lecturers' perceptions with regards to the importance of reading tasks (N=8)

item	Reading tasks	Very important		Important		Not very important		Not important	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
a	Reading course books	6	75.0	2	25.0	-	-	-	-
b	Reading and understanding technical material e.g. journal and magazines	8	100.0	-	-	-	-	-	-
c	Reading and making your own notes	4	50.0	4	50.0	-	-	-	-
d	Reading newspaper articles	3	37.5	5	62.5	-	-	-	-
e	Reading lecture handouts	5	62.5	3	37.5	-	-	-	-
f	Reading articles on the internet	3	37.5	5	62.5	-	-	-	-
g	Understanding visual data (tables, charts, diagrams)	5	62.5	3	37.5	-	-	-	-

As presented in table 4.3.9, most of the subject lecturers (6) perceived that reading course books was a very important reading task to the students and this is followed by another two lecturers who felt that it was important also. Besides that, to all of them, reading and understanding technical material e.g. journal and magazines was very

important as well. Moreover, an equal number of the lecturers (4) stated that reading and making own notes was either very important or important to the students. In addition, reading newspaper articles and reading articles on the internet were also perceived as being important and very important tasks. Finally, five lecturers stated that reading lecture handouts and understanding visual data were very important, and three lecturers felt that the tasks were important too. Overall, the subject lecturers placed the greatest emphasis on the task - reading and understanding technical material where 100% of them rated it being very important to the students.

4.3.4 Perceptions of the Importance of Writing Skills

This part presents the outcomes of the analyses of the writing tasks that the students, ESL lecturers and subject lecturers perceived as important to the students in their learning. The writing tasks include taking lecture notes, writing daily journals, writing proposals, writing formal letters, etc. The respondents were asked to rate the importance of various writing tasks as "very important", "important", "not very important" and "not important".

4.3.4.1 Students' Perceptions of the Importance of Writing Tasks

As illustrated in the table 4.3.10, taking lecture notes, to the students, was the most important writing task with 61.3% of them ranked it as being very important and 35.5% ranked it as being important. For the second writing task which is writing daily journals, it was viewed important by 42 students and very important by 19 students. However, 32 students stated that it was either not very important or not important at all. As for writing proposals, 47 students (50.5%) felt that it was an important writing task. This is followed

by those who felt that the task was very important (28%), not very important (18.3%) and not important (3.2%). Writing formal letters, on the other hand, was perceived as being very important and important by 78 students (83.9%)

Table 4.3.10: Students' perceptions with regards to the importance of writing tasks (N=93)

item	Writing tasks	Very important		Important		Not very important		Not important	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
a	Taking lecture notes	57	61.3	33	35.5	3	3.2	-	-
b	Writing daily journals	19	20.4	42	45.2	28	30.1	4	4.3
c	Writing proposals	26	28.0	47	50.5	17	18.3	3	3.2
d	Writing formal letters	32	34.4	46	49.5	11	11.8	4	4.3
e	Projects	50	53.8	39	41.9	4	4.3	-	-
f	Reports	48	51.6	36	38.7	9	9.7	-	-
g	Summary writing	42	45.2	45	48.4	6	6.5	-	-
h	Presenting visual data (tables, charts, diagrams)	33	35.5	48	51.6	12	12.9	-	-

Project-writing was on the second highest rank of all the writing tasks which was recognized as being very important by 50 students (53.8%). For the remaining students, 39 of them ranked it as being important and 4 ranked it as being not very important. Similarly, for report-writing, the students' responses were - very important (51.6%), important (38.7%) and not very important (9.7%). Besides that, summary-writing was perceived as being important, very important and not very important by 45, 42 and 6 students respectively. The data also shows that many students (51.6%) viewed presenting visual data as an important task in their study. This is followed by students who felt that it was very important (35.5%) and not very important (12.9%).

Overall, it is important to note that the students mainly had the same perceptions when judging the importance of various writing tasks where most of the tasks were ranked

'very important' and 'important'. Topping the list of the perceived important writing tasks is taking lecture notes (96.8%). This is followed by project-writing (95.7%), summary-writing (93.6%) and report-writing (90.3%). According to the results, writing daily journals and writing proposals were given the least emphasis. This was probably due to the perception that these tasks were not relevant to their course of study.

4.3.4.2 ESL Lecturers' Perceptions of the Importance of Writing Tasks

Table 4.3.11: ESL lecturers' perceptions with regards to the importance of writing tasks (N=10)

item	Writing tasks	Very important		Important		Not very important		Not important	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
a	Taking lecture notes	4	40.0	6	60.0	-	-	-	-
b	Writing daily journals	4	40.0	6	60.0	-	-	-	-
c	Writing proposals	4	40.0	6	60.0	-	-	-	-
d	Writing formal letters	4	40.0	6	60.0	-	-	-	-
e	Projects	6	60.0	4	40.0	-	-	-	-
f	Reports	6	60.0	4	40.0	-	-	-	-
g	Summary writing	4	40.0	6	60.0	-	-	-	-
h	Presenting visual data (tables, charts, diagrams)	4	40.0	6	60.0	-	-	-	-

Based on the data collected, all the ESL lecturers ranked all the tasks as either very important or important. As shown in table 4.3.11, for the tasks - taking lecture notes, writing daily journals, writing proposals, writing formal letters, writing summary and presenting visual data (tables, charts & diagrams), six of them ranked these tasks as being important and four ranked them as being very important. Besides that, as for project and report-writing, six lecturers perceived that these two writing tasks were very important to the students and four lecturers felt that they were important as well. Unlike some students'

responses, the ESL lecturers considered all the writing tasks as 'very important' and 'important'.

4.3.4.3 Subject Lecturers' Perceptions of the Importance of Writing Tasks

Table 4.3.12: Subject lecturers' perceptions with regards to the importance of writing tasks (N=8)

item	Writing tasks	Very important		Important		Not very important		Not important	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
a	Taking lecture notes	4	50.0	4	50.0	-	-	-	-
b	Writing daily journals	-	-	-	-	6	75.0	2	25.0
c	Writing proposals	5	62.5	3	37.5	-	-	-	-
d	Writing formal letters	4	50.0	4	50.0	-	-	-	-
e	Projects	6	75.0	2	25.0	-	-	-	-
f	Reports	8	100.0	-	-	-	-	-	-
g	Summary writing	-	-	3	37.5	5	62.5	-	-
h	Presenting visual data (tables, charts, diagrams)	-	-	3	37.5	5	62.5	-	-

As shown in table 4.3.12, four subject lecturers perceived that taking lecture notes and writing formal letters were very important to the students. The other four lecturers also felt that these two tasks were important. As for writing daily journals, six lecturers stated that it was not very important and two lecturers even felt that it was not important at all. On the other hand, for proposal-writing, there were five and three lecturers respectively perceived that it was a very important and important writing task. Besides that, in the view of most of the subject lecturers (6), project-writing was considered very important to the students. Similarly, all the lecturers also found that report-writing was equally important. Lastly, five lecturers stated that summary-writing and presenting visual data were not very important. However, the remaining three indicated that the tasks were important. In

contrast with the ESL lecturers' opinions, it is observed that writing daily journals was deemed as the least important writing skill by the subject lecturers where all of them considered it as 'not very important' and 'not important'. The same responses were also obtained from the students. Besides that, the subject lecturers also did not place much emphasis on summary-writing and presenting visual data.

4.4 Learning Needs

Research Question 3: What are the students and ESL lecturers' perceptions towards the design and the use of instructional materials for PE1 and PE2?

This part of the questionnaires is designed to obtain information on the students' learning needs. All respondents were asked to state their opinions about the design of instructional materials, teaching aids, assessment techniques, learning modes and classrooms activities for Proficiency English 1 and Proficiency English 2 courses.

4.4.1 Instructional Materials Production and Adaptation

This part seeks the respondents' opinions on the types of instructional materials to be used in the two language courses and how the materials should be produced or designed. The responses were measured on a four-point (1-4) Likert scale as "strongly agree", "agree", "disagree" and "strongly disagree".

4.4.1.1 Students' Perceptions towards the Design of Instructional Materials for PE1 and PE2

Based on the data shown in table 4.4.1, 52 students (55.9%) agreed and 36 students (38.7%) strongly agreed that the instructional materials for the English language courses should be related to their programmes. However, there were only 5 students who disagreed with the idea. Similarly, when asking if the materials should be related to their daily experience, almost all of them responded with 'agree' (53.8 %) and 'strongly agree' (39.8%). Furthermore, more than half of the students (62.4%) agreed that the teaching and learning materials should be related to the current issues. This is followed by students who strongly agreed (33.3 %) and disagreed (4.3%). Besides that, there were 53 and 25 students who respectively agreed and strongly agreed that the instructional materials should be taken from sources like magazines, journals or websites. 14 students disagreed and one student strongly disagreed with this. With reference to modifying instructional materials to suit the students' level of proficiency, almost all of the students had the same opinion where 90 students (96.8%) agreed and strongly agreed to it. Moreover, when asking if the materials used should be related to Malaysian context and culture, 60 students agreed, 21 strongly agreed, 10 disagreed and 2 strongly disagreed. Lastly, 54 (58.1%) students agreed that the materials should be related to foreign context and culture. For the remaining, 19 of them strongly agreed, 18 disagreed and 2 strongly disagreed.

The major findings revealed that almost all the students (more than 90%) 'strongly agreed' and 'agreed' that the materials used in PE1 and PE2 should be modified to suit the students' level of proficiency (96.8%), related to the current issues (95.7%), related to students' programmes (94.6%) and related to students' daily experience in the present and

in the future (93.6%). Similar findings were also found in Muhammad Nadzri (2004) where more than 75% of his student respondents agreed that materials should be modified to suit the level of proficiency, related to subjects, daily experience, social activities and current interest. As for the present study, modifying materials to suit the students' level of proficiency is also topping the list. Gaudart (2003:9) pointed out that 'there is no way that materials aimed at the "average" student can be used by all learners' and she further commented that poor materials together with the inability of teachers to adapt the materials to their own needs will create a situation of failure. Thus, it is vital to recognize students' current level of proficiency before providing any forms of input to them. This is also reflected in Krashen's Input Hypothesis (Lightbown & Spada, 2006).

Table 4.4.1: Students' perceptions pertaining to the design of instructional materials (N=93)

item	The design of teaching and learning materials	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
a	Related to students' programmes	36	38.7	52	55.9	5	5.4	-	-
b	Related to students' daily experience in the present and in the future	37	39.8	50	53.8	6	6.5	-	-
c	Related to the current issues	31	33.3	58	62.4	4	4.3	-	-
d	Taken from magazines, journals or websites	25	26.9	53	57.0	14	15.1	1	1.11
e	Modified to suit the students' level of proficiency	45	48.4	45	48.4	3	3.2	-	-
f	Related to Malaysian context and culture	21	22.6	60	64.5	10	10.8	2	2.2
g	Related to foreign context and culture	19	20.4	54	58.1	18	19.4	2	2.22

These interesting responses suggest that the students would expect to learn the language in a content-based environment where the learning materials should be relevant to

their course of learning and this reflects that the need of an ESAP course is higher than an EGAP course. Also, the findings advocate the idea of ESL lecturers knowing the students' proficiency level, learning experience and the current issue in advance before embarking in designing materials for the students.

4.4.1.2 ESL Lecturers' Perceptions towards the Design of Instructional Materials for PE1 and PE2

As shown in table 4.4.2, eight ESL lecturers strongly agreed that the teaching and learning materials used for PE1 and PE2 should be related to the students' programmes and the current issues. Another two lecturers also agreed to this. Apart from that, an equal number of them strongly agreed (5) and agreed (5) that the instructional materials used for PE1 and PE2 had to be related to the students' daily experience and it should be modified to suit the students' level of proficiency. Regarding the sources for designing instructional materials, nine lecturers agreed and one lecturer strongly agreed with the use of realia from magazines, journals or websites. Besides that, all of them also agreed that materials used in the class should be related to the Malaysian context and culture. On the other hand, when asking if the materials should be related to the foreign context and culture as well, different responses were obtained. For this, six lecturers agreed and four disagreed to it.

Similar to the students' response, all the ESL lecturers also 'strongly agreed' and 'agreed' that the instructional materials used for PE1 and PE2 should be designed based on the criteria above especially in preparing materials that are related to the students' programmes. The same finding was also found in Yeoh (2006) where the majority of her lecturer respondents also agreed that the materials used in language class should be related

to programme content as she believed that students would be able to connect the materials

used in language class to what they learn in subject-related classes.

Table 4.4.2: ESL lecturers' perceptions pertaining to the design of instructional materials (N=10)

item	The design of teaching and learning materials	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
a	Related to students' programmes	8	80.0	2	20.0	-	-	-	-
b	Related to students' daily experience in the present and in the future	5	50.0	5	50.0	-	-	-	-
c	Related to the current issues	8	80.0	2	20.0	-	-	-	-
d	Taken from magazines, journals or websites	1	10.0	9	90.0	-	-	-	-
e	Modified to suit the students' level of proficiency	5	50.0	5	50.0	-	-	-	-
f	Related to Malaysian context and culture	-	-	10	100.0	-	-	-	-
g	Related to foreign context and culture	-	-	6	60.0	4	40.0	-	-

4.4.2 Teaching Aids

This part seeks the respondents' opinions on the types of teaching aids that should

be used in PE1 and PE2 courses. The responses were measured on a four-point (1-4) Likert

scale as "strongly agree", "agree", "disagree" and "strongly disagree".

4.4.2.1 Students' Perceptions towards the Use of Teaching Aids for PE1 and PE2

The use of textbook or exercise book in the class, based on table 4.4.3, was agreed by 53 students (57.0%). Another 28 students also strongly agreed to use textbook and this is followed by 7 students who disagreed and 5 strongly disagreed with the idea. For the use of radio and cassettes, more than two-third of the students (78.5%) agreed and strongly agreed. Besides that, the use of TV, CD and CD player was agreed and strongly agreed by 56 and 29 students respectively. Using computers with relevant courseware in teaching was in favoured by most of the students where 43 of them strongly agreed and 42 agreed that it should be used in class. Moreover, the use of PowerPoint slides was also agreed by the majority of the students (54.8%). For the use of OHP, most of them (59.1%) also agreed to it. Lastly, when the students were asked about the use of newspapers and magazines, many of them responded positively with 60 students agreed and 23 students strongly agreed. However, there were also students who disagreed (9) and strongly disagreed (1) with it. The results show that the two most highlighted teaching aids to be used in the English courses, in the perspectives of the students, were computer with relevant courseware, TV, CD and CD player. This could suggest that there is a need to embark in computer-assisted language learning (CALL) programme as it is not conducted presently in the university. Besides the above mentioned teaching aids, 2 students suggested the use of journal articles in language class.

Table 4.4.3: Students' perceptions pertaining to the types of teaching aids that should be used in PE1 and PE2 (N=93)

item	Teaching aids	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
a	Textbook/ exercise books	28	30.1	53	57.0	7	7.5	5	5.4
b	Radio & cassettes	19	20.4	54	58.1	17	18.3	3	3.2
c	TV, CD, CD player	29	31.2	56	60.2	8	8.6	-	-
d	Computers (relevant CD and software)	43	46.2	42	45.2	8	8.6	-	-
e	PowerPoint Slides	33	35.5	51	54.8	7	7.5	2	2.2
f	OHP	20	21.5	55	59.1	16	17.2	2	2.2
g	Newspaper and magazine	23	24.7	60	64.5	9	9.7	1	1.1

4.4.2.2 ESL Lecturers' Perceptions towards the Use of Teaching Aids for PE1 and PE2

Table 4.4.4: ESL lecturers' perceptions pertaining to the types of teaching aids that should be used in Pe1 and PE2 (N=10)

item	Teaching aids	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
a	Textbook/ exercise books	5	50.0	5	50.0	-	-	-	-
b	Radio & cassettes	5	50.0	5	50.0	-	-	-	-
c	TV, CD, CD player	5	50.0	5	50.0	-	-	-	-
d	Computers (relevant CD and software)	3	30.0	6	60.0	1	10.0	-	-
e	PowerPoint Slides	1	10.0	2	20.0	7	70.0	-	-
f	OHP	3	30.0	6	60.0	1	10.0	-	-
g	Newspaper and magazine	5	50.0	5	50.0	-	-	-	-

As presented in the above table, all the ESL lecturers either strongly agreed or agreed to the use of textbooks or exercise books, radio & cassettes, TV, CD, CD player, newspapers and magazines when teaching the two courses. With regard to the use of

computer (with relevant courseware) and OHP in teaching, six lecturers agreed, three strongly agreed and one disagreed. Finally, seven lecturers disagreed with the idea of using PowerPoint slides in teaching the language courses. There were only two lecturers agreed and one strongly agreed to use this as teaching aid. In short, unlike the students, the use of PowerPoint slides was not in favoured by many ESL lecturers.

4.4.3 Assessment

This part seeks the students and ESL lecturers' opinions on the types of assessments that should be conducted in PE1 and PE2 classes. The responses were measured on a four-point (1-4) Likert scale as "strongly agree", "agree", "disagree" and "strongly disagree".

4.4.3.1 Students' Perceptions towards the Types of Assessment That Should Be Conducted in PE1 and PE2

Table 4.4.5: Students' perceptions pertaining to the types of evaluation activities that should be conducted in PE1 and PE2 classes (N=93)

item	Evaluation activities	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
a	Classroom test/ short quizzes	40	43.0	52	55.9	1	1.1	-	-
b	Project work (individual)	37	39.8	40	43.0	14	15.1	2	2.2
c	Project work (pair)	38	40.9	50	53.8	3	3.2	2	2.2
d	Project work (group)	47	50.5	35	37.6	8	8.6	3	3.2
e	Individual presentation	24	25.8	50	53.8	19	20.4	-	-
f	Group presentation	42	45.2	44	47.3	5	5.4	2	2.2
g	Listening test	35	37.6	49	52.7	9	9.7	-	-
h	Oral test	35	37.6	51	54.8	7	7.5	-	-
i	Final examination	53	57.0	36	38.7	3	3.2	1	1.1

In general, almost all the students were agreed (55.9%) or strongly agreed (43%) to have classroom test or short quizzes. There was only one student who disagreed with it. With reference to doing project work individually, a total of 40 students agreed, 37 strongly agreed, 14 disagreed and 2 strongly disagreed. As for doing project work in pair, 88 students (94.7%) agreed and strongly agreed. Whereas for doing project work in group, there were 47 students (50.5%) strongly agreed and 35 agreed (37.6%). Thus, in comparison with individual and group work, more students preferred to do work in pairs.

With regard to individual presentation, 53.8% of the students agreed to it. This is followed by those who strongly agreed (25.8%) and disagreed (20.4%). In addition to that, there were 44 and 42 students who respectively agreed and strongly agreed to have group presentation as assessment. Besides that, a total of 49 students agreed and 35 strongly agreed to have listening test in the language class. Oral test is another type of important assessment in English language classes. For the present study, there were only 7 students disagreed to it. Lastly, there was a surprising large number of students (89) strongly agreed and agreed that final examination should be conducted for PE1 and PE2. There were only 4 students disagreed and strongly disagreed. The similar finding was also found in Muhammad (2004) where the majority of his subjects also agreed to have final examination. It is apparent that, generally, the students prefer to have classroom test or short quizzes (98.9%), final examination (95.7%), paired-project work (94.7%), group presentation (92.5%), oral test (92.4%) and listening test (90.3%) as assessments in the English language courses.

4.4.3.2 ESL lecturers' Perceptions towards the Types of Assessment That Should Be Conducted in PE1 and PE2

With regard to the types of assessment activities that should be conducted in PE1 and PE2 courses, almost all the ESL lecturers gave the same responses. For instance, while eight of them strongly agreed to conduct classroom tests or short quizzes, project work (in pair) and group presentation in the language class, another two also agreed to it. Not only that, there were nine and one lecturer respectively strongly agreed and agreed that project work (individual & group), individual presentation, listening test, oral test and final examination should be carried out to evaluate the students.

Table 4.4.6: ESL lecturers' perceptions pertaining to the types of evaluation activities that should be conducted in PE1 and PE2 classes (N=10)

item	Evaluation activities	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
a	Classroom test/ short quizzes	8	80.0	2	20.0	-	-	-	-
b	Project work (individual)	9	90.0	1	10.0	-	-	-	-
c	Project work (pair)	8	80.0	2	20.0	-	-	-	-
d	Project work (group)	9	90.0	1	10.0	-	-	-	-
e	Individual presentation	9	90.0	1	10.0	-	-	-	-
f	Group presentation	8	80.0	2	20.0	-	-	-	-
g	Listening test	9	90.0	1	10.0	-	-	-	-
h	Oral test	9	90.0	1	10.0	-	-	-	-
i	Final examination	9	90.0	1	10.0	-	-	-	-

4.4.4 Modes of Conducting Activities

This part requires the students and ESL lecturers to decide on the modes which are suitable for the students to do their academic tasks. The common modes used consist of individual-basis, pair-basis and group-basis.

4.4.4.1 Students' Perceptions towards the Modes of Doing Academic Tasks

Table 4.4.7: Students' perceptions pertaining to the modes used for conducting academic activities (N=93)

item	Modes of conducting activities	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
a	Individually	28	30.1	45	48.4	17	18.3	3	3.2
b	In pairs	21	22.6	62	66.7	7	7.5	3	3.2
c	In small group (3-4)	38	40.9	46	49.5	7	7.5	2	2.2
d	In large groups (> 4)	22	23.7	34	36.6	26	28.0	11	11.8
e	As a whole class	11	11.8	29	31.2	32	34.4	21	22.6

According to table 4.4.7, more than half of the students agreed (48.4%) and strongly agreed (30.1%) to carry out learning activities individually. However, there were also 17 students who disagreed and 3 strongly disagreed with this. Besides that, the idea of doing tasks in pairs also received positive response from the students with 62 students agreed and 21 students strongly agreed to it. Furthermore, as for having 3 to 4 students in a group, 90.4% of them agreed and 40.9% strongly agreed. Only 9 students did not like the idea. In contrast, there were fewer students agreed (36.6%) and strongly agreed (23.7%) to work in a large group which consists of more than 4 members. When the students were asked about carrying out academic tasks on a whole class-basis, more than half of the students (57%) were either disagreed or strongly disagreed. To conclude, most of the students prefer

(strongly agree or agree) to carry out academic tasks in pairs and in small groups (3-4 persons). The results also clearly demonstrate that the students against the idea of carrying out activity as a whole class basis.

4.4.4.2 ESL Lecturers' Perceptions towards the Modes of Doing Academic Tasks

As shown in table 4.4.8, the ESL lecturers either strongly agreed (6) or agreed (4) that the students should carry their academic tasks individually, in pairs or in small groups (3-4 students). In addition, all of them disagreed and strongly disagreed with the idea of students carrying academic activities in a large group which consists of more than four students. As for doing task on a whole-class basis, eight lecturers strongly disagreed and two lecturers disagreed with it. In comparison with the students' responses, the ESL lecturers also preferred their students to do tasks individually, in pairs or in small groups (3-4 persons). Not only that, the lecturers also rejected the idea of asking students to do activities as a whole class basis.

Table 4.4.8: ESL lecturers' perceptions pertaining to the modes used for conducting academic activities (N=10)

item	Modes of conducting activities	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
a	Individually	6	60.0	4	40.0	-	-	-	-
b	In pairs	6	60.0	4	40.0	-	-	-	-
c	In small group (3-4)	6	60.0	4	40.0	-	-	-	-
d	In large groups (> 4)	-	-	-	-	7	70.0	3	30.0
e	As a whole class	-	-	-	-	2	20.0	8	80.0

4.4.5 Types of Activities

This part requires the respondents to decide on the types of academic activities that should be carried out in PE1 and PE2 courses. The responses were measured on a four-point (1-4) Likert scale as "strongly agree", "agree", "disagree" and "strongly disagree".

4.4.5.1 Students' Perceptions towards the Types of Academic Activities for PE1 and PE2

As presented in table 4.4.9, most of the students (94.6%) preferred to have lectures in language class with 46 and 42 students strongly respectively agreed and agreed to it. In addition to that, many students would love to have public speaking to be included as part of the learning activities. For this, 48 students agreed and 35 strongly agreed. Debate was another interesting activity which was favoured by many students where 47 students agreed and 25 strongly agreed to have it as learning activity. As for singing, the responses were – strongly agreed (40.9%), disagreed (29.0%), strongly agreed (20.4%) and strongly disagreed (9.7%). Furthermore, 94.6% of the students responded positively that grammar exercise should be included in the language class. For this, 51 students agreed and 37 strongly agreed. However, 4 students disagreed and 1 strongly disagreed. Besides that, even more students agreed (50) and strongly agreed (40) to have reading comprehension as learning activity.

Table 4.4.9: Students' perceptions pertaining to the types of activities that should be carried out in PE1 and PE2 classes (N=93)

item	Types of activities	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
a	Lectures	46	49.5	42	45.1	3	3.2	2	2.2
b	Public speaking	35	37.6	48	51.6	9	9.7	1	1.1
c	Debate	25	26.9	47	50.5	20	21.5	1	1.1
d	Singing	19	20.4	38	40.9	27	29.0	9	9.7
e	Grammar exercise	37	39.8	51	54.8	4	4.3	1	1.1
f	Reading comprehension	40	43.0	50	53.8	2	2.2	1	1.1
g	Drama / role play	29	31.2	44	47.3	17	18.3	3	3.2
h	Audio visual activities (e.g. listening to cassettes and watching videos)	33	35.5	51	54.8	7	7.5	2	2.2
i	Written assignments	35	37.6	49	52.7	8	8.6	1	1.1
j	Mini projects	32	34.4	47	50.5	12	12.9	2	2.2
k	Language games	39	41.9	45	48.4	8	8.6	1	1.1
l	Homework	24	25.8	44	47.3	20	21.5	5	5.4

As for drama or role play, a total of 44 students agreed, 29 strongly agreed, 17 disagreed and 3 strongly disagreed. Having audio-visual activities like listening to cassettes and watching videos is the common language learning activities. For this, more than half of the students (54.8%) stated that they agreed and 35.5% also strongly agreed. Nonetheless, there were also 9 expressed with disagreement. Similarly, the majority of the students (90.3%) either agreed or strongly agreed to have written assignments. Besides that, with reference to mini projects, 50.5% of the students agreed, 34.4% strongly agreed, 12.9% disagreed and 2.2% strongly disagreed. Other than that, carrying out language games in class receive 90.3% of agreement from the students. Finally, as for giving homework, the majority of the students agreed (44) and strongly agreed (24) with the idea. However, the remaining 20 students disagreed and 5 strongly disagreed to have homework. In general, the students' preferred types of classroom activities include reading comprehension

(96.8%), lectures (94.6%), grammar exercise (94.6%), audio-visual activities (90.3%), written assignments (90.3%) language games (90.3%) and public speaking (89.2%).

4.4.5.2 ESL lecturers' Perceptions towards the Types of Academic Activities for PE1 and PE2

Table 4.4.10: ESL lecturers' perceptions pertaining to the types of academic activities that should be carried out in PE1 and PE2 classes (N=10)

item	Types of activities	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
a	Lectures	7	70.0	3	30.0	-	-	-	-
b	Public speaking	7	70.0	3	30.0	-	-	-	-
c	Debate			10	100.0	-	-	-	-
d	Singing			10	100.0	-	-	-	-
e	Grammar exercise	6	60.0	4	40.0	-	-	-	-
f	Reading comprehension	3	30.0	7	70.0	-	-	-	-
g	Drama / role play	7	70.0	3	30.0	-	-	-	-
h	Audio visual activities (e.g. listening to cassettes and watching videos)	7	70.0	3	30.0	-	-	-	-
i	Written assignments	7	70.0	3	30.0	-	-	-	-
j	Mini projects	7	70.0	3	30.0	-	-	-	-
k	Language games	2	20.0	2	20.0	6	60.0	-	-
l	Homework	6	60.0	4	40.0	-	-	-	-

Regarding the types of activities that should be carried out in PE1 and PE2 classes, seven and three ESL lecturers strongly agreed and agreed respectively to have lectures, public speaking, drama or role play, audio-visual activities (e.g. listening to cassettes and watching videos), written assignments and mini projects. Not only that, all of them also agreed that debate and singing should be conducted in the class as part of the learning activities for the students. Besides that, six lecturers strongly agreed to give grammar

131

exercises and homework to the students as extra learning activities. Another four also agreed to this. As for having reading comprehension as learning activity in class, seven of them agreed and three strongly agreed to it. Lastly, six ESL lecturers disagreed with the idea of conducting language games in the class. However, there were two lecturers agreed and strongly agreed to have it as classroom activity.

There seem to be disagreement in the choice of activities among the ESL lecturers and between the students and the ESL lecturers. It is noticed that the ESL lecturers strongly agreed and agreed to have all the activities to be conducted in PE1 and PE2 except for language games which was surprisingly rejected by 60% of them. This totally contradicted with students' preferences where 90.3% of them strongly agreed and agreed to have language games as learning activity. On this matter, a few ESL lecturers provided reasons in the questionnaires. Among the responses given were, e.g. "*It takes too much of time to prepare and conduct language games in class*", "*It is not suitable for the students as all of them are adult learners*", "*I am not good in conducting language games and what more for a big class as what we always get every semester*" and "*It would be a good idea to teach beginners…it is not applicable in our situation as we have mixed-ability students in class*". This shows that the reluctance of the ESL lecturers to conduct language games in class is caused by factors such as in terms of preparation and conduct, difficult to control the class, not suitable for tertiary students and not suitable for the current teaching situation. These findings lend support to Gaudart's (2003:29) review of using games in teaching where she pointed out that "many teachers are under the impression that it is only primary (elementary) school learners who enjoy games and apparently believe that once a learner reaches puberty, the learner loses all desire to play games". She also adds that "many

teachers feel that there is too much work involved in designing a game and they therefore prefer to simply use the textbook".

4.5 Course Evaluation

(Research Question 4: What are the students' opinions regarding the current English courses - PE1 & PE2?)

In section 5 of the students' questionnaires, the students were asked to evaluate both the English courses – PE1 and PE2. There were three questions in this section. The first question asked the students to self-reflect and evaluate the content of PE1 and PE2 by stating 'YES' or 'NO'. The second question asked the students to rate PE1 and PE2 separately based on the preset grades – 'excellent', 'good', 'moderate', 'poor' and 'very poor'. The last question was an open-ended question which asked the students to provide suggestions or recommendations to improve the two English courses.

4.5.1 Evaluation of PE1 and PE2

The first item (table 4.5.1) seeks to find out from the students if the two English language courses were interesting. For this, 93.5% of the students had answered 'yes' and only 6.5% said 'no'. Besides that, same responses were collected from the students in the next two items where there were 90 students agreed that the course level and the course content were good and only 3 students responded with 'no'. Regarding the students' input of knowledge, 88.2% of the students stated that they had learned a lot in the courses and the remaining of the students did not feel the same. When the students were asked about the arrangement of the courses, 84.9% of the students indicated that the courses were well

arranged and run smoothly. However, 14 students did not agree to this. Other than that, where learning resources and facilities were concerned, the least positive feedback was recorded with 73.1% of the students stated that it was sufficient and 26.9 % felt that it was not sufficient. In addition, most of the students (94.6%) realized that the courses have helped them in their studies.

Table 4.5.1: Students' self-reflection of PE1 and PE2

item		Yes		No	
		No.	%	No.	%
a	The courses are interesting.	87	93.5	6	6.5
b	The course level is right.	90	96.8	3	3.2
c	The course content is good.	90	96.8	3	3.2
d	I learned a lot in the courses.	82	88.2	11	11.8
e	The courses are well arranged and running smoothly.	79	84.9	14	15.1
f	The resources and facilities to learn the two courses are enough.	68	73.1	25	26.9
g	The courses have helped me in my studies.	88	94.6	5	5.4
h	My listening skills have improved after taking the courses	84	90.3	9	9.7
i	My speaking and communication skills have improved after taking the courses.	78	83.9	15	16.1
j	My reading skills have improved after taking the courses.	85	91.4	8	8.6
k	My writing skills have improved after taking the courses.	76	81.7	17	18.3
l	I am motivated to learn in these courses.	80	86.0	13	14.0
m	The evaluation techniques (e.g. test, oral test, final exam, etc) are suitable.	85	91.4	8	8.6
n	The tutorials are relevant.	79	84.9	14	15.1
o	Overall, I am satisfied with the quality of the courses.	86	92.5	7	7.5

The students were also asked to reflect on their improvement in the four language skills after the courses. Firstly, as for whether their listening skills had improved after taking the courses, 90.3% of them stated 'yes' and 9.7% stated 'no'. Next, as for speaking

and communication skills, 83.9% of them stated that they had improved and 16.1% stated that they did not improve. For reading skills, 85 students stated that they had improved and 8 students did not. In addition, when they were asked if they had improved in their writing skills, the number of students who stated 'yes' was reduced to 76 and there were 17 students stated 'no'. Moreover, when asking about the motivation level while taking PE1 and PE2, the majority of the students (86.0%) felt that they were motivated in class and 8.6% were not. Besides that, when asking about the suitability of the evaluation techniques used by their ESL lecturers, 91.4% of them indicated that it was suitable and 8.6% did not have the same opinion. Furthermore, when asking if the tutorials given were relevant, 79 stated 'yes' and 14 said 'no'. In conclusion, 86 students (92.5%) were satisfied with the quality of the courses and 7 were not satisfied.

From the above data analysis, it can be concluded that an impressively high number of students (with an average of about 80%) had given positive assurance pertaining to PE1 and PE2. This is confirmed when the majority of the students (92.5%) testified that they were satisfied with the quality of the two courses. However, the results also reveal few aspects which ESL lecturers should take note of. For instance, quite a number of students (26.9%) stated that the resources and facilities to learn the two courses were not enough. Also, there were students pointed out that their speaking, communication and writing skills did not improve after taking the courses.

4.5.2 Rating of Proficiency English 1

Table 4.5.2: Students' rating for PE1

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	excellent	24	25.8	25.8	25.8
	good	54	58.1	58.1	83.9
	moderate	15	16.1	16.1	100.0
	Total	93	100.0	100.0	

According to table 4.5.1, the majority of the students (58.1%) rated Proficiency English 1 as a 'good' course. In addition to that, 25.8% of the students graded the course as 'excellent' and 16.1% graded the course as 'moderate'.

4.5.3 Rating of Proficiency English 2

Table 4.5.3: Students' rating for PE2

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	excellent	29	31.2	31.2	31.2
	good	55	59.1	59.1	90.3
	moderate	7	7.5	7.5	97.8
	poor	2	2.2	2.2	100.0
	Total	93	100.0	100.0	

There appears to be no obvious differences in the ratings between PE1 and PE2. The majority of the students (59.1%) indicated that PE2 was a good language course. In addition, 31.2% of the students stated that it was an excellent course, 7.5% stated that it was just moderate and there were 2 students who felt that the course was poor.

4.6 Students' Recommendation

At the end of the questionnaire, students were asked to provide suggestions or recommendations to improve the two English courses. All the feedback obtained was in the form of open-ended responses. There were only 36 student responded in this section. Despite the small number, they were some pertinent suggestions with regard to improving the current PE1 and PE2 courses.

Table 4.6.1: Students' recommendation to improve PE1 and PE2

Categories/ No. of respondents	subcategory	Example of responses
Teaching aids & Learning tasks (27)	Teaching aids	• "*should use TV and CD player in class*" • "*use computer to learn is more interesting because can find information from the internet*" • "*use different materials, don't use exercise book only, it is boring*"
	Classroom activities	• "*The lecturer should arrange language games and drama in class*" • "*should give more tutorials and language games*" • "*should have more fun activities...to make the subject interesting so the students will be more focus*" • "*should do more interesting activities in class to make the students to have more interest to learn in class*"
Language skills (12)	Productive skills	• "*lecturer can focus more in teaching the students speaking and writing in English*" • "*teach students to use idioms in writing*" • "*Students should be given more exercise or assignment to improve their writing skill*" • "*can teach the students how to write letter, resume and proposal*"
	Receptive skills	• "*my reading is poor, I want more practice for reading comprehension because reading texts in MUET are very difficult*" • "*give the students more excise in listening*"

Learning duration (5)	• *"This course should be offered every semester so students can learn more"* • *"we need a longer time to learn in this course so we can learn more"*
Level of language input (7)	• *"the level is high and too difficult, can make it a little bit easier for us"* • *"I cannot understand many reading texts"* • *"lecturers should use simple words when teaching"*
Classroom size (4)	• *"the class is too big and it is difficult for listening exercise...I really cannot listen to the tape-recording"* • *"It is better to conduct the class in a group of 10 to 20 students from the same programme...this will make them feel more confident to talk in English"*

Generally, many students recommended that more interesting classroom activities such as language games and dramas should be conducted frequently in class so that they will be more motivated to learn the language. In terms of teaching aids, the students' suggestions were to use TV, CD player and computer with internet access. Conversely, they remonstrated against the idea of using exercise books solely in class as it will cause boredom to the students. Next, with regard to language skills, it is interestingly to note that the students' need in writing was rather high as most of their recommendations were related to writing skills. This finding corresponds to the students' self-rating of writing skills where the majority of them perceived that they encountered either 'a lot of difficulty' or 'some difficulty' in most of the writing sub-skills (see 4.2.5.1, 4.2.5.2 & 4.2.5.3).

Furthermore, the level of language used by the lecturers and also in the learning material was claimed to be too high by the students. Thus, they felt that it was too difficult for them to cope with it. Besides that, recommendations with reference to the learning duration were also made by the students. They propounded a longer learning period for PE1 and PE2 and also offer English courses like PE in every semester. Another important

point that should be given attention is about the number of student in a class. For this, some students suggested that it will be more efficient to learn and conduct activity like listening in a smaller class.

4.7 Summary of Major Finding

The tables below provide a summary of the following:

4.7.1 The Major Problems Encountered by the Foundation Students in the Use of English

Table 4.7.1(a): Summary of the major problems faced by the students in the use of English

Listening	Speaking
1. Understanding the lecturers when they speak fast in English 2. Taking brief and clear lecture notes 3. Getting the important points of lectures 4. Understanding questions asked by lecturers 5. Understanding the meaning of many words used by lecturers	1. Using correct pronunciation 2. Getting ideas to speak 3. Speaking confidently 4. Speaking fluently 5. Speaking with friends in English outside the classroom 6. Speaking grammatically correct English

Table 4.7.1(b): Summary of the major problems faced by foundation students in the use of English

Reading	Writing
1. Understanding the difficult words in textbooks, journals, magazines, etc 2. Reading quickly to get the general meaning of reading texts 3. Reading to find specific information 4. Identifying main points 5. Identifying supporting details 6. Taking brief and clear notes while reading	1. Writing grammatically correct sentences 2. Using a variety of sentence patterns 3. Using varieties of words 4. Writing bibliography / references 5. Getting ideas to write 6. Linking sentences in a paragraph 7. Citation

4.7.2 The Most Important English Learning Tasks Required by the Students

Table 4.7.2(a): Summary of the most important English learning tasks required by the students

Listening	Speaking
1. Listening and understanding lectures 2. Listening and understanding discussions 3. Listening to and following instructions 4. Listening and understanding social conversation 5. Listening and understanding presentations 6. Listening and taking down notes	1. Participating in discussion 2. Communicating with other students inside and outside of the classroom 3. Communicating with lecturers inside and outside of the classroom 4. Communicating with people in different social situation 5. Making suggestions

Table 4.7.2(b): Summary of the most important English learning tasks required by the students

Reading	Writing
1. Reading course books 2. Reading and understanding technical material e.g. journal and magazines 3. Reading and making your own notes 4. Reading lecture handouts	1. Taking lecture notes 2. Writing proposals 3. Writing formal letters 4. Projects 5. Reports 6. Summary writing

4.7.3 The Most Preferred Instructional Material Design, Teaching Aids, Assessments, Learning Modes and Classroom Activities

Table 4.7.3(a): Summary of the most preferred instructional material design and teaching aids

The design of instructional materials	Teaching aids
1. Related to students' programmes 2. Related to students' daily experience in the present and in the future 3. Related to the current issues 4. Modified to suit the students' level of proficiency 5. Related to Malaysian context and culture	1. TV, CD, CD player 2. Computers (relevant CD and software) 3. Newspaper and magazine

Table 4.7.3(b): Summary of the most preferred assessment, modes of conducting activities and types of activity

Assessment	Modes of conducting activities	Types of activities
1. Classroom test/ short quizzes 2. Project work (pair) 3. Project work (group) 4. Individual presentation 5. Group presentation 6. Listening test 7. Oral test 8. Final examination	1. Individually 2. In pairs 3. In small group (3-4)	1. Lectures 2. Public speaking 3. Grammar exercise 4. Reading comprehension 5. Audio visual activities 6. Written assignments 7. Mini projects 8. Language games

4.8 Conclusion

All the data obtained from the students, ESL lecturers and subject lecturers' questionnaires pertaining to tertiary students' academic English language needs have been analyzed and presented in this chapter. The finding demonstrates that there are similarities and differences in the perceptions among the respondents with regard to the students' ability and difficulty in the four language skills, English language needs and learning needs. Apart from that, the course evaluation outcomes and the students' recommendations to improve PE1 and PE2 are also presented here. The summary and conclusion of the study will be presented in the next chapter.