LANGUAGE LEARNING NEEDS ANALYSIS FOR THE REFORM OF THE OMANI GRADE 11 EFL PROGRAM

SAID HAMED RASHED AL- SAADI

UNIVERSITY OF MALAYA

2013

LANGUAGE LEARNING NEEDS ANALYSIS FOR THE REFORM OF THE OMANI GRADE 11 EFL PROGRAM

SAID HAMED RASHED AL- SAADI

Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of Education, University of Malaya
In Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

2013

UNIVERSITY OF MALAYA
STATEMENT OF ORIGINAL AUTHORSHIP

Name: (IC/Passport No.): **Said Hamed Rashed Al-Saadi**

Registration/Matric.No: **PHA070054**

Name of Degree: Doctor of Philosophy

Title of Thesis:

Language Learning Needs Analysis for the Reform of the Omani Grade 11 EFL Program

Field of Research: **Teaching English as a Foreign Language**

I truly and wholeheartedly acknowledge that:

(1)   I am the one and only writer of this produced work;

(2)   This produced work is original;

(3)   Any use of copyrighted works has been done in a fair and appropriate manner and for a purpose allowed for any extracts or quotations. References or reproduction from or to any produced work containing copyright has been clearly and completely identified and acknowledgement of the title of said work and its author/writer has been stated in this work.

(4)   I do not have any actual knowledge that this produced work violates any copyright of any other work;

(5)   With this I relinquish each and every right in the produced work to the University of Malaya ("UM"). Beginning from this day UM owns the copyright to this produced work and any reproduction or use in any form or any manner whatsoever is prohibited unless written permission is obtained from UM;

(6)   I am fully aware that if, in the production of this work, I have violated any copyright of another work with intention or otherwise, I may be subjected to legal action or any other action as decided by UM.

Signature of Candidate   Date

Declared in truth and witnessed in the presence of:

Signature of Witness   Date

Name:
Position:

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

All praise is due to Allah, we praise, seek his help, and ask for his forgiveness, and peace and blessings of Allah be upon his slave and his messenger, Prophet Mohammed. All thanks is due to Allah for all the uncountable bounties he has granted me and all the success he has bestowed upon me.

My first special thanks, gratitude, and dedication are due to my supervisor, Prof. Dr. Moses Samuel, who has been my main source of inspiration in writing my thesis and fulfilling the candidature requirements. I would not have made such achievement without his continued support and advice. His broad knowledge in the field of English language education has given me some insight into how to synthesize, refine, and complete the study.

I would like to gratefully acknowledge my dissertation committee for their commitment of time and guidance in all my graduation work. Special thanks to Prof. Fatimah Hashim and Dr. Phuangphet Tonawanik for their kind advice in the instrumentation, their discussions on my dissertation research and for their instructive guidance and comments through all the stages of my dissertation writing. I would also like to express my deep gratitude to Dr. Vijay and Dr. Abdoh Meklafi for their kind and constructive advice in the goal of study and the improvement of the survey questionnaire.

I also wish to thank University of Malaya and the staff of the Faculty of Education at University of Malaya who have offered me their full support and assistance. My thanks are also due to the local and international PhD club research members whose friendship, help, and support throughout the journey was deeply

SYNOPSIS

To develop a national framework of needs analysis, the present study investigated the English language learning needs of the Omani Grade 11 EFL students. Using a multidimensional model of needs analysis, it addressed the language use context, the English language instruction context, the learners' motivation and goal context, and Means Analysis context. The research questions covered each of the needs dimensions and examined the competing discourse found between the different stakeholders. In order to put needs analysis on a sound theoretical and empirical base, the present study examined the needs of new explored population by addressing the language learning needs of the pre-university/school level students in the Arab world. Multiple sources, such as 982 students, 64 teachers, 4 supervisors, 3 heads of department and 4 English language textbooks were approached for data collection. In addition, a variety of data was gathered and compared using multiple methods such as questionnaires, interviews, and textbook analysis. Textbook analysis revealed that reading skill and listening skill were the language macro skills used most frequently whereas little attention was paid to speaking and writing skill. Most of the teachers, supervisors and heads of department perceive speaking as the most important skill to be taught for the Grade 11 students and listening as the least important skill. The subject of needs analysis (NA) had not yet received sufficient attention from researchers and language teaching professionals in the Omani educational system. It was found that the Grade 11 EL curriculum did not meet the perceived needs of Omani students according to the expectations of students, teachers, supervisors and heads of department. The majority of respondents considered that the purpose of the Grade 11 EL program was to prepare the students well to pass the General Diploma examination. The majority of the teachers, supervisors and heads of department were not satisfied with the Grade 11 EL program. Examining the

comporting discourse among different stakeholders revealed that there was significant difference found between teachers and students in their attitudes toward the current English Language program in Grade 11, in their perception of writing and speaking difficulties. No statistically significant difference was found between urban and rural students in their perception of the EL learning needs of Omani students in Grade 11. Finally no significant difference was found between female and male students in their attitudes toward the current English language program and in their perception of writing and speaking difficulties.. The implementation needs of the study findings were analyzed and were provided in reference to the theoretical and the methodological implications, the underpinning principles and content implications, the teaching material and methodology implications, and the implications for teacher training and assessment.

Sinopsis

Analisis Keperluan Pembelajaran Bahasa Di Kalangan Pelajar Bahasa Inggeris Sebagai Bahasa Asing Oman Untuk Reformasi Program Bahasa Inggeris Gred 11

Untuk membangunkan satu kerangka kajian keperluan, kajian ini mengkaji keperluan pembelajaraan Bahasa Inggeris dalam kalangan murid Bahasa Inggeris sebagai Bahasa asing Gred 11 di Oman. Kajian ini menggunakan model pelbagai dimensi yang merangkumi kajian keperluan, meliputi konteks penggunaan bahasa, konteks pengajaran/ instruksion Bahasa Inggeris, motivasi pelajar serta konteks tujuan dan analisis min konteks. Persoalan kajian ini menyentuh setiap dimensi keperluan dan juga menguji wacana yang berlainan yang di dapati di kalangan pelbagai pihak berkepentingan untuk memastikan analisis keperluan dalam keadaan teoritikal dan empirikal yang kukuh. Kajian ini mencontohi keperluan pembelajaran pelajar di pra universiti dan sekolah di rantau Arab. Kajian ini juga mengambil kira triangulasi teknik pengumpulan data dan punca maklumat faktor yang penting dalam kajian keperluan. Pelbagai punca maklumat seperti 982 pelajar, 64 guru, 4 penyelia, 3 ketua jabatan dan 4 buku teks Bahasa Inggeris digunakan untuk pengumpulan data. Kesahan data merupakan faktor yang penting dalam kajian keperluan. Tambahan pula, pelbagai data dikumpul dan dibanding menggunakan kaedah pelbagai seperti soal selidik, temu bual dan analisis buku teks. Analisis buku teks menunjukkan membaca dan menulis adalah kemahiran makro digunakan secara kerap manakala kurang perhatian diberi kepada kemahiran bertutur dan penulisan. Kebanyakan guru, penyelia dan ketua jabatan

mempunyai persepsi bahawa lisan/pertuturan sebagai kemahiran yang paling penting untuk pelajar Gred 11 dan kemahiran mendengar sebagai kemahiran kurang penting. Dalam sistem pendidikan Oman, kajian keperluan masih belum menerima perhatian yang mencukupi daripada pelbagai pengkaji dan profesional dalam pengajaran bahasa. Mengikut persepsi pelajar, guru, penyelia dan ketua jabatan Kurikulum Bahasa Inggeris kini tidak memenuhi keperluan yang pelajar Oman. Majoriti responden menganggap tujuan program Bahasa Inggeris gred 11 adalah untuk menyediakan pelajar sebaik-baiknya untuk lulus peperiksaan diploma am. Majoriti guru -guru, penyelia dan ketua jabatan tidak puas hati dengan program Bahasa Inggeris Gred 11 yang sedia ada. Kajian ini juga memaparkan kewujudan pelbagai persepsi dalam kalangan pelbagai pihak berkepentingan seperti antara guru dan murid dari segi sikap mereka terhadap program Bahasa Inggeris Gred 11, dalam persepsi mereka tentang masalah penulisan dan pertuturan. Dapatan kajian menunjukkan tidak terdapat perbezaan signifikan secara statistik antara pelajar bandar dan luar bandar dari segi persepsi mereka mengenai keperluan pembelajaran pelajar Bahasa Inggeris Gred 11 di Oman. Akhir sekali, tiada perbezaan signifikan secara statistik didapati antara pelajar lelaki dan perempuan berkaitan dengan sikap terhadap program Bahasa Inggeris dan persepsi mereka tentang masalah penulisan dan pertuturan. Keperluan implementasi dapatan kajian dianalisis dan cadangan diberi dengan merujuk kepada prinsip asas, kandungan dan kaedah pengajaran, implikasi kepada latihan guru dan implikasi kepada pentaksiran.

Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

List of Acronyms

Acronyms	Stand For
BE	Business English
CfBT	Centre for British Teachers
CLT	Communicative Language Teaching
CNP	Communicative Needs Processor
EAP	English for Academic Purposes
EBP	English for Business Purposes
EBT	English for Business and Technology
EEP	English for Educational Purposes
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
EGP	English for General Purposes
EL	English Language
ELT	English Language Teaching
EMP	English for Medical Purposes
EOP	English for Occupational Purposes
ESP	English for Specific Purposes
EST	English for Science and Technology
IE	Intensive English
LNA	Learning Needs Analysis
NA	Needs Analysis
PSA	Present Situation Analysis
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
TSA	Target Situation Analysis
TBLT	Task Based Language Teaching

List of Appendices

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to set the scene for the study by introducing the research context and the state of education in Oman in section 1.2.1. In section 1.3, the statement of the problem is presented followed by the aims and objectives of the study in section 1.4. The research questions are listed in 1.5 and the extent of the study is presented in 1.6. This is followed by the significance of the study in 1.7, and in 1.8, the theoretical framework of the study is discussed. Section 1.9 concludes the chapter by laying out the organization of the study.

1.2 The Study Context

This section provides background information about the context in which the current study takes place. It describes the context of education in Oman and then, more specifically, the state of English language teaching in Oman. The latest educational reforms in the Omani educational system and their rationales are also explained. I had to draw on my experience and on official documents to analyze the current state due to the shortage of similar studies or the novelty of the reforms.

1.2.1 The State of Education in Oman

The official school system in the Sultanate of Oman started in 1970 when His Majesty Sultan Qaboos Bin Said assumed power. His vision was to see the Sultanate re-enter the global arena and to use the country's natural and human resources to develop a modern economy. In his earliest speeches in 1970, he noted:

> Our country has been deprived for a very long period of time from education, which is considered as the base for administrative and technical efficiency…starting from this fact, educating and training our people should start as soon as possible. (9 August 1970)

In 1969, there were only three elementary schools in Oman, all for the boys of the elites with a capacity of 909 male students and 30 teachers. In order to achieve its goal, the government established a Ministry of Education, which was responsible for all educational matters in the Sultanate.

The Omani government pays considerable attention to education. It was agreed from the outset that 12 years of government schooling should be offered free of charge to all Omani children. It followed an educational ladder, which included six years in primary education, three years of preparatory education and three years of secondary education. The education system was called "General Education". This education system used to be described as a linear system in that it focused more on the students' products rather than process. The lessons were geared more towards knowledge rather than understanding and application, which led to the observation that secondary school outcomes lacked the essential skills needed for work or study; therefore, a gap existed between the Ministry of Education's products and the expectations of other organizations, such as institutes, universities, and colleges.

The process of streaming into arts or sciences starts from the second year in secondary, which is based entirely on the choice of the students. Subjects included in the science stream are Islamic studies, Arabic, English, mathematics, physics, chemistry and biology. Physical education and drawing are also offered at the secondary level, but are not considered a condition to achieve a 'pass'. The arts stream includes Islamic studies, Arabic, English, mathematics, economics, history, science, geography and the present Islamic world as a condition to achieve a 'pass'. Physical education and drawing are offered, but are not included as examination subjects. On completion of the third year of secondary education, students sit for the general secondary certificate examination.

In both streams, at the third secondary level, the minimum pass mark is 50% in Islamic studies and Arabic and 40% in other subjects. The total mark awarded in each subject is determined by the average marks obtained from the end of the semester examination. In the end, students are awarded "The General Secondary Certificate" that indicates final marks in each subject and overall total marks (i.e., a combined average percentage for all subjects). The state of the English language within Omani society and its educational principles are explained in the following section.

1.2.2 The State of the English Language in Oman

English in Oman, just like the majority of countries in Asia, is treated as a subject for study rather than as a living language to be spoken in daily conversation. Therefore, the EFL classroom context is very different from a natural ESL learning environment. Since Oman is an Arab country, English does not have a significant function in Omani society (Al-Issa, 2004). It holds the status of a foreign language (Al-Busaidi, 2004). It is also the only foreign language taught in government schools and is

taught as a compulsory subject. The lack of a surrounding community of English speakers outside the classroom increases the challenge for EFL instructors in Oman. The English language teaching program begins at an early stage in the first grade (6 years old) and English is taught at public and private schools, colleges, institutes and universities.

Oman, in its public statements, has recognized the fundamental role the English language is playing worldwide as a language of science and technology. Its choice of English as the only foreign language to be taught in school is primarily for "transition" purposes. The importance of English within the Omani government is evident in the reform of General Education (as explained in the next section), annual official reports such as those of the Ministry of Education (2004, 2005, 2007), recommendations of international conferences, the vision for Oman's economy (Oman- 2020), and the national English language policy plan.

Omani students live in a monolingual society, which is attempting to become a bilingual society. Arabic is the mother tongue of the majority of Omani learners and it has a tremendous influence during English classes. Kachru (1992) classifies countries that use English in terms of three concentric circles namely, the inner circle, the outer circle and the expanding circle. The inner circle includes countries where English is the first, or the native, language. The outer circle includes countries where English is the second language, and the expanding circle includes countries where English is a foreign language. Now the question is, where do Arab speakers of English in general, and the Omani speakers of English in particular, belong? Certainly, they do not belong to the first two circles; they belong to the expanding circle, though they may slowly move to the outer circle because more and more of the Arab learners are learning English.

Learners in Omani schools study English as one of the subjects among all the other subjects that are being taught in Arabic. To use Mackey's (1965) typology of bilingual education, the "language–switch" in the English class creates a "pseudo–bilingual" situation. Rivers' (1976) notions of "skill-getting" and "skill-using" remain almost "ideal". In school, the English bilingual program is in a way an "immersion bilingual education program" where students dive in at the shallow end and gradually move toward the deep end. However, when they go to college the education program becomes monolingual, that is, the medium of instruction changes to English, which may be called a "submersion program" involving adaptation to the "majority" class language with no use of the home language. Put another way, they dive in at the deep end and somehow try to survive. Thus, the overall teaching-learning situation is complex.

In tertiary education, English gains a more prominent role. It is used as the medium of instruction in many higher education institutions. This shift in status is not always realized by students, or even teachers, and is likely to cause problems, among which is the one investigated by the current study in section 1.3. Most high school students graduate with very low language proficiency and face difficulty coping with college English (Al-Busaidi, 2004). On the other hand, some students have relatively high proficiency, but these have either received some type of additional language training prior to attending college or come from a very sophisticated family where English is introduced in the early years.

One of the powerful ideologies that govern English language learning and teaching in Oman is the culturalist ideology and the various paradigms embodied with it (Al-Issa, 2004). Exposure to the culture of the target language helps learners develop motivation toward learning that language. Jiang (2000) claims that "…culture and

language are inseparable'' (p. 328) and are intimately related. Al-Issa (2002) argues that textbooks like *Our World through English* (OWTE), which is the textbook in the general Omani education system, concentrate more on the local culture, which fails to contextualize the target language.

Conventional classrooms, as is the case in the Sultanate of Oman, are about the textbook and centered on the textbook. Textbooks in the Omani education system, as Al-Issa (2002) describes them, are considered the center of the educational process and the point at which students and teacher meet. This creates a disparity between theory and practice or between policy formulation and policy implementation. Hence, the teacher role becomes crucial in building and eliminating this gap and disparity (Al-Issa, 2004). In 1998, Oman recognized the need to undertake a radical reform of its educational system to cope with the new challenges of the twenty-first century. The reforms and their rationale are explained in the next section.

1.2.3 The Educational Reforms and their Rationale

Two recent developments have made it urgent for the Omani Ministry of Education to introduce reforms into the country's educational system. The first of these developments involves the globalization of the world economy. The second development is specific to Oman, which is the government's policy to promote the "Omanization" of the Sultanate's economy in order to reduce dependency on foreign labor (Ministry of Education, 2005).

In 1995, His Majesty the Sultan launched the conference "The Vision for Oman's Economy: Oman-2020" to consider the future direction of the country's economic and social development. It was reported that the acquisition of global knowledge, information and technology and the development of advanced human skills

are becoming essential prerequisites for progress. The unmistakable conclusion of the conference was that education would be a key contributor to the country's future prosperity. The Ministry of Education has thus taken steps to ensure that students would be adequately prepared for the requirements of higher and further education, the labor market, and modern life in general. To achieve that, the Ministry of Education in Oman began to plan for a number of major reforms aimed at improving the quality of the entire school system.

As a result of the government's commitment to reform its educational system and in order to make its education more responsive to the future needs of Omani society, the basic education system has been gradually introduced since 1998. The movement in favor of Education for All (EFA), which is supported by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) throughout the world, recommends a longer period of compulsory education for all children and youth. This movement was received favorably in Oman (Rassekh, 2004).

The new system has been defined as a unified education system provided by the government for all children of school age. It is now centered more on learners, using an approach based on critical thinking, autonomous learning and lifelong learning. It is based on providing the basic requirements of information, knowledge and skills and on developing attitudes and values, which enable both male and female students either to continue with further studies or join training programs according to their aptitudes and abilities. Basic education is concerned with the integration of theory, practice, thought, work, education and life. It endeavors to develop all aspects of an individual's personality in an integrated way. It also seeks to implant values and practices that are necessary to achieve skilfulness in teaching and learning in order to meet the intended

educational development. Examining various research and official documents, like Al-Nueimi (2002), Al-Issa (2004), and the Ministry of Education (2005), reveals that fundamental changes and reform in the educational system are required to accomplish various demands such as:

1. "The *Omanization* policy", which represents the percentage of Omanis in the labor force and the necessity of solving the shortage of qualified individuals among nationals. Al-Nueimi (2002) explains that statistics have revealed that the majority of Omani job seekers are secondary-school dropouts or high-school graduates. Most of them have no professional or vocational qualification, which prevents their integration into the local job market.

2. An increasing awareness that oil as an economic resource is finite and its unstable price depends on external circumstances beyond local control. Therefore, Oman has to adopt diversification of the economy, development of human resources, exploitation of available natural resources and the creation of suitable conditions to encourage the private sector to perform a greater role in national economic growth.

3. The need of the citizens to be prepared to encounter the challenges of globalization.

4. The obligation of the country to produce a generation that is physically and morally strong, proud of its country and its cultural heritage, and equipped with the knowledge of modern science and technology.

Although the duration of basic education is 10 years, two stages have been identified, namely Cycle One (grades 1-4) and Cycle Two (grades 5-10). Those who

pass grade 10 successfully shall be promoted to the following level, post-basic education, which continues for two years of study and prepares students to sit for the general education certificate. Figure 1.1 shows the structure of the general education system and the current reformed basic education (Ministry of Education, 2007).

General Education		Basic Education and Post Basic Education	
Grade Levels	Stages	Stages	Grade Levels
12	Secondary Education	Post Basic Education	12
11			11
10		Basic Education Cycle Two	10
9	Preparatory Education		9
8			8
7			7
6	Primarily Education		6
5			5
4		Basic Education Cycle One	4
3			3
2			2
1			1

Figure 1.1. Structure of Basic Education and General Education in Oman.

The implementation of this system started in the academic year 1998-1999 with grade one and two in 17 schools, so in 2001-2002, the first group of students were promoted from cycle 1 to cycle 2. The number of basic schools increased to 589 schools in the school year 2006-2007. Table 1.1 shows the distribution of schools and students in both basic and general education in the school year of 2007/2008 (Annual Book of Educational Statistics, 2007).

Table 1.1

Distribution of Schools and Students in Public Education by Gender (2007/2008)

	Schools				Students		
Education type	Male	Female	Mixed	Total	Male	Female	Total
Basic Education	168	132	361	661	143,869	139,268	283,137
General Education	189	118	84	391	136,785	130,314	270,099
Total	357	250	445	1052	283,654	269,582	553,236

The actual school days for basic education are approximately 180 working days per year. The length of each period in grades one to nine is 40 minutes, and 45 minutes for grade 10-12. There are five working days, Saturday through Wednesday, per week. There are 35 periods per week for general education and 40 periods for basic education schools.

In the academic year 2007-2008 the Omani Ministry of Education began the implementation of a reform program called Post-basic Education, which is a continuation of the basic education program. It was in response to the call of the "Future Vision Conference for the Omani Economy (Oman 2020)" to prepare Omani human resources of a high caliber with competencies and skills, capable of keeping abreast with scientific and technological development. In addition, the consultancy study in 1995 on the development of general education in Oman highlighted the relationship between education and the work market and emphasized the teaching of English language, mathematics and science. In 2001, another consultancy study was carried out in cooperation with the Centre of British Teachers (CBT) that offered recommendations leading to the creation of a comprehensive new curriculum,

instruction and evaluation model for grades 11 and 12 (Ministry of Education, 2005). Its recommendations also included implementation of a multi path system based on the teaching of certain basic skills. This study included visits to different countries such as Jordan, Singapore, and Austria to get firsthand experience on pre-college education.

Post-basic education is defined as a two-year program of education following 10 years of basic education. The rationale for this program is to continue the development of basic skills for employment and career planning. The development of such skills enables students to take advantage of learning, training, and work opportunities available to them after the completion of schooling (Post-basic, 2007). Among the general objectives of post-basic education are to develop different types of problem solving thinking and abilities, as well as employing scientific thought in particular real-life situations and arriving at relevant decisions. Moreover, students are expected to make effective use of the skills of independent and continuous learning in carrying out research and benefit from information technology in a way that helps their cultural, scientific and professional development. Finally, students are encouraged to form positive attitudes towards all types of productive and voluntary work, display positive attitudes toward saving and caring for public property and the environment, as well as exhibit an appreciation of aesthetic and artistic values.

Many features characterize post-basic education. As this system is a response to the previous system's shortcomings, it provides various core courses, as well as optional ones, which cater to the different needs of students intending to enter the workforce directly and those hoping to carry on with higher education. It is also flexible in that students have the opportunity to change their choice of subjects (except science subjects) at the end of Grade 11. Besides that, the post-basic education system promotes the principles of individual learning in order to meet the needs of all students

(i.e., those who are less able academically, those who are highly able and need additional challenges, and those who choose not to pursue further education).

Based on the innovations of the Omani government to reform its educational system in general and the introduction of post-basic education, the current study undertakes an English language learning needs analysis (NA). Its ultimate objective is to examine the Omani EFL students' language learning needs in public school in order to provide data that might help in making the current English language program in the Omani schools more capable of producing students with efficient and appropriate language and academic skills. Analyzing learners' needs is widely recognized as an important feature of English for specific purposes (ESP), English for academic purposes (EAP) and English language teaching programs (Graves, 2000), as is the case in post-basic education schools in Oman. "It is now widely accepted as a principle of program design that NA is a vital preparation to the specification of the language learning objectives" (Briendly, 1989, p. 3). Assessing the learners' needs is an integral part of competency-based education (CBE) (Grant & Shank, 1993, p. 2).

1.2.4 Emerging Issues in Omani Post Basic Education

This section draws on the sections from 1.2.1 to 1.2.3 which presented a broad background about the Omani Educational context and highlights the present practical issues and grounds for the present study. It presents the practical rationale for this study which tries to bridge the gap between the higher education agencies and the outcomes of the post basic education in Oman. Some of the recent emerging issues in Omani post basic education are as follows,

1. The outcomes of the previous educational system failed to equip Omani students with the proper literacy skills for further studies or various

ranges of careers (Ali & Salih, 2013; Issan & Gomaa, 2010; Soruc, 2012). As job seekers, they found themselves being employed in semi skilled jobs with low income. Unemployment, according to Maroun et al. (2008), is driven on the one hand by lack of skills, which are directly associated with the infrastructure of the education system, and low wages and low motivation, which are directly related to the socioeconomic environment on the other hand. Furthermore, unemployment rates are high amongst Grade 12 graduates. Gonzalez et al. (2008) attribute this to "lack of skills and competencies necessary for productive work" (p. 165). One of these necessary skills and competencies is English language.

2. Choices within the curriculum in the previous system were not on offer for students to satisfy their needs, abilities, aspirations and future ambitions. Education in Oman has been blamed for being didactic, focusing more on delivering and memorizing facts, repetition of definitions, passive reception of knowledge, acquisition of declarative knowledge at the expense of procedural knowledge, textbook dependency, adoption of teacher-centeredness, while giving less attention to individual differences in the classroom, interactive learning, student-centeredness, and introduction and development of higher-order cognitive skills (Al-Issa & Al-Bulushi, 2011). This is believed to have its negative implications for productivity and rapid economic growth, as low productivity leads to low returns.

3. The quality of English language teaching in the secondary education systems in Oman is not yet up to international standards. Secondary

school graduates are considered unprepared to directly enter the labor market with relevant language skills or to enter competitive university programs. According to the Education For All Global Monitoring Report released by UNESCO (2009), Oman was ranked 82 out of 125 countries in terms of the education development index, indicating that the country's education investment did not translate into the desired outcome. Education in Oman, as is the case in all the MENA countries, is centralized with the government being the sole responsible agency for making policies, financing and delivering all the services, including curricula and syllabi design, materials and textbook production and initial and in-service teachers training and employment.

The current study is motivated by the preceding issues on the educational system as well as the gap in knowledge addressed in the area of Needs Analysis. The theoretical and practical rationale for this study are discussed in the statement of the problem as in the next section.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

Most NAs are concerned with needs specification at the level of individuals or, most often, learner type (Long, 2005). Although analyzing learners' needs is theoretically of primary importance in the current English Language teaching approaches, there is a lack of NA studies in a societal or nationwide context. A limited number –if any– of nationwide empirical NA studies exist in contrast to a much wider body of work, which addresses individual learners, or certain learner type needs. Recent researchers of NA, such as Coleman (1998), Long (2005), Brecht and Rivers (2005), Kivanmayi (2012), Cowling (2007), and Al Saadi, and Samuel (2013), stress

the notion of generalization of the NA findings in the societal level as a new trend in this field. This movement toward societal or national large scale NA is becoming relatively important in the field of TEFL/TESL. What is needed now is a serious effort to identify generalization that can be made about how best we can teach English. Long (2005) points out that, "in an era of globalization and shrinking resources, however, language audits and needs analyses for whole societies are likely to become interestingly important (p. 6)." The present study therefore, is devoted to a methodology for laying out—to the best extent possible—a national language learning needs analysis framework of Omani students learning English at Grade 11 in the post-basic education schools. Yet, as will be explained in the next chapter, there is a need for prioritization (Richards, 2001), because it is beyond the capability of a single study, such as the present one, to examine all the issues found in the literature of NA.

While English language learning needs have been covered by many studies, the current study tries to add to related studies (as discussed in 2.4.2) by focusing on the gaps that need to be addressed in the current study. The past studies did not address the pre-college students; rather they all concentrated on university students. A vast majority of the recent NA research targets adult learners or undergraduate/postgraduate university students neglecting the needs of EFL/ESL learners at the school level of a nation. From my observation and teaching in pre-college schools, I realized there exists a need to better understand the linguistic skills and competencies needed to enhance the students' academic progress to equip them properly for their future study and to fill the gap that exists between schools and the higher education level (see 1.7.4).

The other gap in knowledge is that the majority of recent NA studies focused on one approach of NA and did not make use of the innovations in this field. NA can be interpreted from different dimensions based on the approach or the framework in

question. According to this research, linguistic analysis or the linguistic domain in NA is the most distinctive feature of all language analysis schools such as Systematic Functional Linguistics, Exchange Structure Analysis, Genre Analysis Approach, and Critical Discourse Analysis. This conclusion is also supported by many recent researchers such as Coffin (2001), Long (2005), Al-Busaidi (2004), Shuja'a (2004) and Krohn (2008). However, linguistic analysis is still a relevant aspect of NA research . A good NA framework cannot ignore the relative importance of other NA dimensions such as the learner dimension, the means dimension, the present situation dimension, the target language use dimension, and the context dimension The present study tries to utilize a multidimensional model of needs analysis, as explained in 2.5.2, to capture different theoretical perspective of NA (Aguilar, 2005; Cowling, 2007; Krohn, 2008; Long, 2005; Taillefer, 2007).

As an Arab society, Omani society does not assign a functional role to English (Ali, and Salih, 2013; Al-Issa, 2002); English is only used for academic and professional purposes. Whereas Arabic is the official language and the language of daily communication in Omani society, English is taught as a subject in the school curriculum and is not connected to the other subjects. Due to this isolation, learners perceive English language learning as learning English for its own sake rather than as a means of understanding subjects in the school curriculum (Al-Busaidi, 2003). However, when they move to higher education where English is the medium of instruction of all subject areas (Ali & Salih, 2013; Issan & Gomaa, 2010; Soruc, 2012), it can be extremely hard for students to realize the new role of English in their academic life. They learn English to acquire linguistic aspects of the language . They may not realize that the main purpose of learning the English language is to acquire

subject matter and professional competence rather than learning English for its own sake.

Practically, this study is also motivated by the frequent claims and complaints about the low standard of school graduates, especially their weak English language proficiency after having studied English language for 12 years (Al-Busaidi, 2003; Al-Issa & Al-Bulushi, 2012; As'Syabi, 1995; Issan & Gomaa, 2010). Statistics on ELT in Oman show that the vast majority of the students who leave Grade 12 and join different public and private higher education academic institutions lack the ability to use language effectively and appropriately in all four skills throughout the range of social, personal, school, and work situations required for daily living in a given society. The same largely applies to the hundreds of students who are awarded scholarships to English-speaking and non-Arabic speaking countries every year to study for their First Degree.

English language teachers complain that the current language program is perhaps ineffective in meeting students' needs. In spite of the ongoing changes and modifications in the English language curriculum and teaching materials, and the great efforts made by language teachers to prepare students for higher studies as much as possible, the English language proficiency level of high school graduates is still low. Another concern raised by ET in public schools is that students are unable to express opinions in writing or construct "decent" sentences. Keen (2006) argues that writing deficiencies are stumbling blocks that pull down the students' grades.

Because school graduates are academically and linguistically under prepared, all higher education institutions in Oman are required to re-educate those learners if they want to produce competent graduates. Therefore, intensive English language courses are conducted as learners join these institutions to help them develop positive

attitudes toward the target language and teach them the necessary language and academic skills for their academic progress. These intensive courses are an extra burden to the higher education institutions, which resulted in greater financial demands and an increase in the study duration and tuition.

Based on the understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the former studies and the practical need of the Omani context, the present study tries to take advantage of the development in NA theories by expanding the focus of NA to a new trend which is large scale, societal or nationwide NA. It proposes the use of a multidimensional framework to account for the different facets of needs that might occur within the same society. In doing so, my aim is not to list the language structures students need to acquire, rather it is to apply a multiple approach, source and method of a nationwide NA framework to implement innovations and reforms in the Omani ELT program, which should be based on the kind of empirical insight of students' needs we currently lack and which is presented in this study. It is hoped that the present study will help in understanding and developing the state of EFL teaching and to put in practice the innovations in the era of NA as suggested by Long (2005) and Cowling (2007). At the same time, it is hoped that the language needs analysis will reveal what the stakeholders want to achieve from the program. The findings will serve as a guide for teachers, course designers, and decision makers to effectively enhance the current ELT program.

In addition, there has been scarcity of written and published research on the different aspects of ELT policy and planning in Sultanate of Oman (Al-Issa & Al-Bulushi, 2012). This study is expected to make some significant contribution to this important, but overlooked area.

1.4 Aims and Objectives of the Study

Based on the aspiration of the Omani government to reform its education system and because the English language proficiency level of the students after completing 12 years of required English language lessons at schools is still low, the present study attempts to analyze the language learning needs of Omani students in post-basic education schools. These objectives are divided into the following components:

1. To identify the skills and sub skills developed in the current English language course book in Grade 11 of Omani schools.

2. To analyze the English language learning needs of Omani students in Grade 11 as perceived by students, teachers, supervisors and heads of department.

3. To analyze to what extent the decision makers are aware of the English language learning needs of the Grade 11 students.

4. To identify the extent to which the perceived learning needs of Omani students are met by the content of the Grade 11 English language course book used in Omani schools.

5. To identify the purposes of the Grade 11 English language program in Omani public schools as perceived by students, teachers, supervisors and heads of department.

6. To identify the attitudes of learners, teachers, supervisors and heads of department toward the current English language program in Grade 11 at post-basic education schools in Oman.

7. To find out the diversities and similarities in the participants' perceptions of the students' needs.

They above objectives address the different NA dimensions covered in this study. Objectives 1 and 4 target the learning situation needs, which seek information about the extent to which the current instruction addresses the students' needs. The second objective looks at the language use needs as perceived by students, teachers, supervisors and heads of department. This objective provides information that helps to identify the students' wants, and necessities as highlighted by Hutchinson and Water (1978). Objective 3 covers the means analysis dimension of needs as advocated by Holliday (1992) and Jordan (1997). It gathers information from the decision makers on source, time, students' needs, challenges confronting the current EL program and suggestions for innovations. Objectives 5-6 gather information about the participants' purposes and attitudes toward the current EL program in the post-basic education schools in Oman. This is to address the learners' needs dimension (Dudley-Evans & St. John, 1998). The final objectives highlight the competing discourse found between the different participants and among certain groups.

1.5 Research Questions

Based on the description of the context of the study, the study problem, the aims and objectives of the study, and the theoretical frameworks on needs analysis, which are presented in Chapter Two, the study will seek to answer seven research questions.

1. What are the skills and sub skills developed in the current English language course book in Grade 11 of Omani schools?

2. What are the English language learning needs of Omani students in Grade 11 as perceived by students, teachers, supervisors and heads of department?

3. To what extent are the decision makers aware of the English language learning needs of the Grade 11 students?

4. To what extent are the perceived students' learning needs met by the content of the Grade 11 English language course book used in Omani schools?

5. What are the purposes of the Grade 11 English language program in Omani schools as perceived by students, teachers, supervisors and heads of department?

6. What are the attitudes of students, teachers, supervisors and heads of department towards the current Grade 11 English language program in Omani schools?

7. Are there any differences in the perceptions of English language learning needs between groups (e.g., students and teachers) and within the same group (e.g., urban and rural students)?

It is argued that needs analysis is an ongoing process (Holliday, 1995), which may encompass more than one phenomenon (Graves, 2000). The above research questions address the stakeholders: students, teachers, supervisors, and heads of the departments. They also cover different NA dimensions, such as current language use, learning needs, means analysis and learners' needs. Questions 1 and 4 target the learning situation needs, which seek information about the extent to which the current instruction addresses the students' needs. Question 2 looks at the language use needs of the students, which can provide information that helps to identify the students' wants, lacks, and necessities (Hutchinson & Water, 1978). Question 3 covers the means analysis approach (Jordan, 1997). It gathers information from the decision makers on

source, time, teaching experts and support to enhance the EL program. Questions 5-7 gather information about the participants' purposes and attitudes toward the current English Language program in the post-basic education schools in Oman (Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998), which address learners' needs analysis.

1.6 The Scope of the Study

The current study is limited to the examination of the English language learning needs of Grade 11 students in the post-basic education schools in the Sultanate of Oman. It is not concerned with other needs such as financial needs, physical needs or academic subject needs like computers, history, geography or others. It is limited to Grade 11 of post-basic education students; other grades will not be considered.

1.7 Potential Significance of the Study

The analysis of English language learning needs of Omani students in Grade 11 of post-basic education schools has a number of theoretical, methodological, pedagogical, and practical implications.

1.7.1 Provides a Societal or a Nationwide Framework of Needs Analysis

Needs analysis by its very nature is highly context- and population-specific (West, 1994); therefore, a new operational definition should be conducted for each assessment (Berwick, 1989). Until now, few—if any—studies have been conducted to analyze the learning needs of a whole society or a nation (Long, 2005; Nelson, 2000). In addition, previous NA studies have investigated the needs of an individual or a learning type or, as Krohn (2008) notes, for instrumental reasons, for professional,

occupational, or "survival" purposes. Long (2005, p. 6) points out that "in an era of globalization and shrinking resources, however, language audits and needs analyses for whole societies are likely to become interestingly important." The present study may be significant for NA in TEFL, as it tries to present a framework for analyzing students' language learning needs in a nationwide context for the purpose of establishing better learning objectives, and designing content, material and methodology for English language courses. The methodology adopted by this study, particularly with regard to sampling, data collection and analysis, may be applicable to further studies in a similar context around the world.

1.7.2 Expands NA's Focus to School Level Students in the Arab World

In order to put needs analysis on a theoretical and empirical base, as is expected in the area of applied linguistics, Long (2005) calls for "replication with different populations in different sectors" (p. 12), as well as a new methodological approach (Krohn, 2008). The present study provides an example of a new unexplored population and context, as it investigates the learning needs of school level students at post-basic education schools in Oman, which has not been tackled yet. Most NA studies investigate the learners' needs at the university or college level, such as Cho (1999), Patterson (2001), Al-Busaidi (2003), Abdulaziz (2004), Shuja'a (2004), Al-Husseini, (2004) and Keen (2006). In addition, no attempt has been made to study the language needs of school students in the Arab world systematically, or more specifically in the Omani context to the best of the researcher's knowledge (Ali, and Salih, 2013). Kandil (2009) states that, "The subject of needs analysis (NA) has not yet received sufficient attention from researchers and language teaching professionals in the Arab world." He

also adds that, "A critical examination of English language instruction in the governmental schools of the Arab world reveals that NA is virtually non-existent." Students' needs are simply intuited for them, rather than analyzed or assessed. It has been assumed that students at the pre-university stage are unable to convey their language learning needs; this has created the need to look for an alternative approach to help in inferring young learners' language learning needs. Pearson (1981) and Al-Busaidi (2003) argue that skills should be introduced at the lower level of language instruction and not postponed until higher levels. By delaying the introduction of the needed skills in early stages, students are given only a brief term or two of practice in both conceptually and technically difficult areas. Given this short introduction, Pearson (1981) believes that students enter academic programs lacking essential skills and are likely to resort to ineffective coping strategies. Therefore, the current study benefits and adds to the existing theories of teaching English to young learners and assessing learners' language needs by expanding the scope of the study to a new unexplored context, namely the learning needs of pre-university level students in governmental schools. This requires the triangulation of theories, methods and sources to infer the students' language learning needs.

1.7.3 Contributes to the NA Literature

The literature review presented in this study will provide a synthesis of the different perspectives of NA. Al-Husseini (2004) in his thesis noted that despite the relatively long history of NA and the increasing body of research and publications at the level of articles and theses, there has not been an assigned book focusing on NA since Munby (1978), which is now rather dated. NA, however, has played a significant role in other works, so its information has to be sought from a range of resources both

published and unpublished. Therefore, this is an extra burden on researchers, teachers, needs analysts, and material designers and may prevent them from identifying the correct and necessary information for a given context. Thus, the current study contributes to future research by reviewing and synthesizing as much of the literature as possible, highlighting the main developments in NA.

1.7.4 Participates in Bridging the Gap between Secondary Education and Higher Education

A gap exists between secondary education and the methods used in the academic requirements for higher education in Oman (Al-Busaidi, 2003). Faculties at universities believe that the academic and language learning skills ought to be part of the students' secondary school preparation. Students on the other hand seem to be faced with tremendous pressure in coping with the academic skills and English language demands of university study, and have difficulty in making a smooth transition from secondary school to university. This study tries to analyze the language learning skills needed in higher education institutions, which are integrated or woven into the curriculum.

1.7.5 Reemphasizes the Role of Learning Skills in Helping Students be Responsible for their Learning

This study considers learning skills as a set of strategies to help students take responsibility for their studies. It also recommends learning skills as an integrated part of the English program in Omani public schools. Themalil (2004) suggests that a responsible attitude toward learning or study habits, which aims to achieve future goals, can help students fully accomplish the expected outcomes at the end of the year.

Therefore, this study will reemphasize the importance of analyzing students' learning needs and provide a clear list of the students' language learning needs to be used as a resource in guiding future improvement of the English program in terms of content, sequence, and materials.

1.8 Theoretical Framework of Needs Analysis

Needs analysis is a familiar concept in English language teaching (ELT), and teaching English as a second/foreign language (TESL/TEFL). Many surveys have been done on approaches to needs analysis teaching such as West (1994), Al-Saadi and Samuel (2012), Gonzalez, Karoly, Constant, Salem, and Goldman (2008), Kiranmayi (2012), Maroun, Samman, Moujaes, and Abouchakra (2008), O'Sullivan (2008), Ali and Salih (2013), Akyel, and Ozek (2010), Soruce (2012), Nallaya (2012). Communicative language theories have demonstrated that learners' needs should no longer be defined in purely linguistic terms. Because of its broad nature, defining NA is a challenging task. In the language needs literature, needs are often defined in terms of dichotomies (Krohn, 2008; Oanh, 2007). Widdowson (1983) provided a distinction between goals-oriented versus process-oriented needs. This dichotomy reviewed needs as an ends means. Hutchinson and Waters (1987) conceptualized goal-oriented needs as language use needs and process-oriented needs as learning needs (Krohn, 2008). They used the term "target needs" to refer to the "language use needs" and categorized them into three subcategories, namely necessities, lacks and wants. Necessities are what the learner has to know in order to function effectively in the target situation (Hutchinson & Waters, 1978, p. 54). Lacks are the gap between what is required in the target situation and the existing proficiency of the learner. Wants are seen as what the learner wants or feels is needed. With regard to the learning strategies approach, two types of needs are

identified: the learner's preferred strategies for progressing from where they are to where they want to go and the teacher's strategies to help the learners meet their needs.

Ritchtrich (1975) pointed out that the learning process, by being responsive to learners' expressed needs, becomes a source of its own change. He distinguished between "objective" and "subjective" needs. This dichotomy was adopted by many needs analysts such as Numon (1988) in the Learner-Centered Approach, Brindley (1989), and Brown (1994). Objective needs analysis aimed at collecting factual information for setting broad goals related to language content, whereas subjective needs analysis aimed at gathering information about learners, which can be used to guide the learning process once it is underway (Fatihi, 2003). Berwich (1989) similarly categorized needs according to their provenance, contrasting felt (subjective) needs and perceived (objective) needs. He defined needs as "a gap or measurable discrepancy between a current state of affairs and a desired future state". Felt needs refer to the "wants" or "desires", which are derived from insiders and the "perceived needs", are derived from outsiders, from facts, and from what is known and can be "verified". Another dimension to view NA is "situation analysis" (Brown, 1995; Richards, 2001) or "means analysis" (Holliday, 1992, 1995; Jordan, 1997). Situation analysis will focus on the "internal constraints" and investigate the related cultures or environments such as classroom, policies, requirements, resources, Ministry of Education, and so forth.

NA can be interpreted from different dimensions based on the approach or the framework in question. In my opinion, linguistic analysis, or the linguistic domain in NA, is the most distinctive feature of all language analysis schools such as Systematic Functional Linguistics, Exchange Structure Analysis, Genre Analysis Approach, and Critical Discourse Analysis. This conclusion is also supported by many recent researchers such as Coffin (2001), Long (2005), Al-Busaidi (2004), Shuja'a (2004) and

Krohn (2008). Although linguistic analysis is a relevant aspect of NA research (Al-Husseini, 2004), a good NA framework cannot ignore the relative importance of other NA dimensions such as the learner dimension, the means dimension, the present situation dimension, the target language use dimension, and the context dimension.

The review of NA literature proves that the combination of different theories of needs analysis provides researchers with a holistic view of their participants' needs. Shuja'a (2004) uses three NA dimensions, which he calls "three folded needs"; namely, target language needs, present situation analysis and means analysis. Purpura and Graziano-King (2004) developed a model comprising four dimensions: the context, the learner, the target and the present language dimension. They investigated the foreign language needs of professional school students in international affairs. Krohn (2008) uses the same model proposed by Purpura and Graziano-King (2004) but adds a fifth dimension, which is the institutional means dimension, "to find about the language requirements, expectations policies and course offering and how they may be readjusted to address the needs" (p. 25).

Based on the above discussion of the theoretical and practical assumptions of NA, the current study maintains a multi-theoretical perspective or multidimensional model of needs analysis. To date, study findings, such as Long (2005), Aguilar (2005), Taillefer (2007), Cowling (2007) and Krohn (2008), have emphasized the need for triangulation of data sources, investigators and theoretical perspectives.

The conceptual framework of the present study adopted a multidimensional model of needs analysis (see section 2.5.2), as in Purpura and Graziano-King (2004) and Krohn (2008), to provide decision makers and teachers at the Omani post-basic

education schools with empirical data to inform the renewal of the English language curriculum. The analysis considers the following situations:

1. Target language Needs: Munby (1978) (see section 2.3.3), the language use context.

2. The learning Situation: Hutchinson and Waters (1987), English language instruction for Omani students (see section 2.3.5).

3. The learner situation: the learner motivation and goal for learning English, Hutchinson and Waters (1987).

4. Means analysis: Holliday (1995) to identify the factor that may impact the implementation of the English language curriculum in Omani schools (see section 2.3.7).
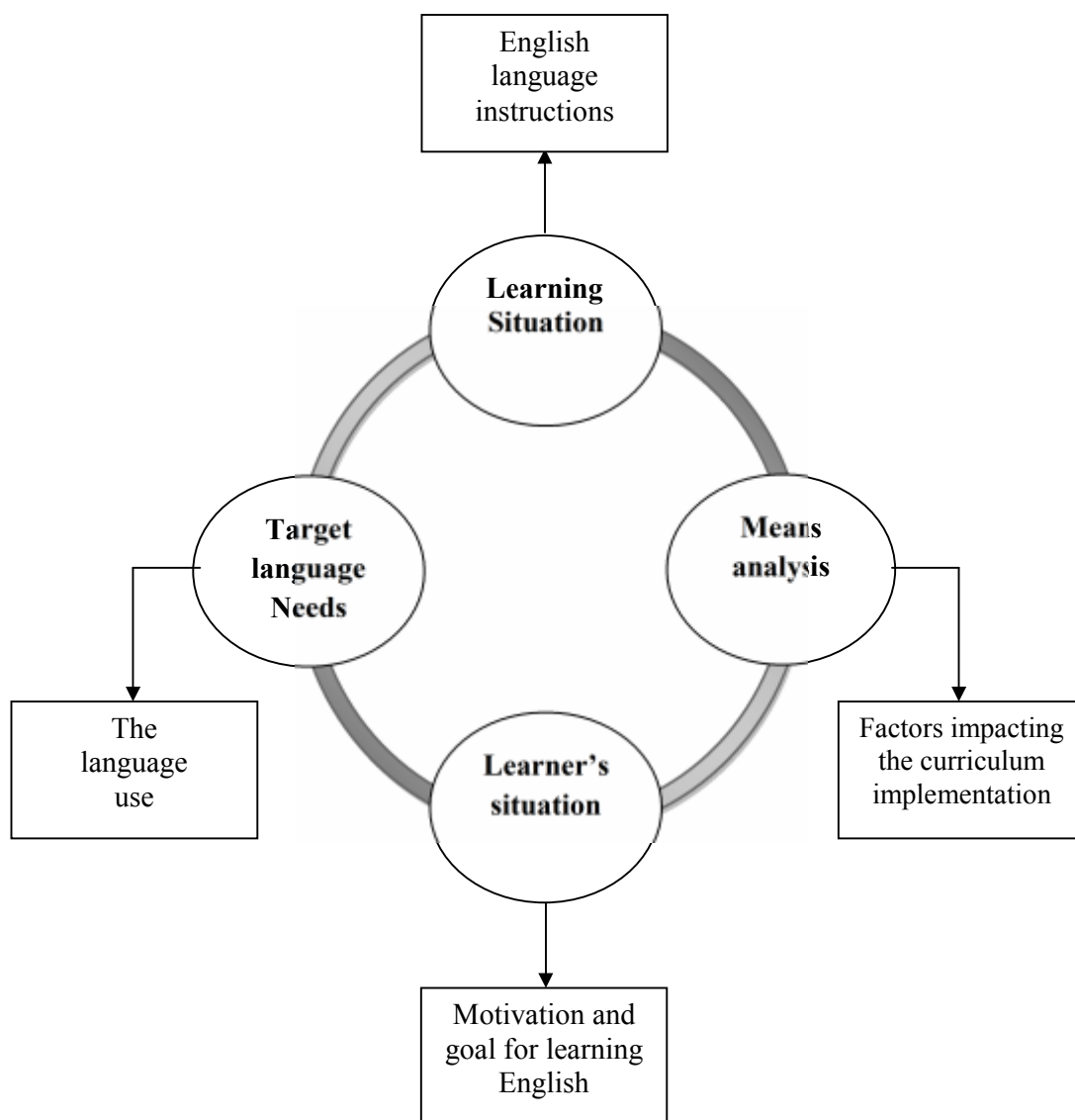
Figure 1.2. The multidimensional theoretical framework proposed in the current study.

This multidimensional theoretical framework contributes to the existing NA literature by expanding its focus to nationwide NA, which accounts for all different facets of needs in order to have a holistic and conclusive impression about the learners' linguistic needs. It is therefore proposing a multidimensional framework of NA that triangulates different facets or approaches of needs as well as resources and methods for laying out—to the best extent possible—the analysis of the EFL students' learning

needs in a nationwide context. The rationale behind adopting a multidimensional model for NA in the current study is fourfold:

1. The model was developed in the context of large-scale studies of foreign language needs (Krohn, 2008), similar to the current study, which analyzes the language learning needs of EFL learners in a nationwide context in Oman.

2. It has the flexibility of involving multi-dimensions to account for all types of needs that can enhance the language teaching outcomes.

3. It predicts where gaps and unmet needs would be likely to occur (see Figure 2.5), for example, the gap might appear between the learning needs and the learner needs or what the learner wants to learn and what they are expected to know.

4. Triangulation of needs dimensions contributes to the trustworthiness of the gathered data and increases confidence in the research findings (Aguilar, 2005).

Adapting such broad analysis confronts the analyst with some constraints, including the appropriate needs analysis approach, large sample size and the preference of certain methods such as questionnaires, surveys, studies of government publications or documents, and so forth. Therefore, triangulation of data collection techniques and source of information is considered a crucial factor in needs analysis (Brecht & Rivers, 2005; Coleman, 1998; Cowling, 2007; Long, 2005; Richards, 2001). Multiple sources, such as students, teachers, supervisors, heads of department and EL textbooks, will be approached for the purpose of data collection. In addition, a variety of data can be gathered and compared using multiple methods such as questionnaires, interviews, and text book analysis.

1.9 Organization of the Thesis

This thesis is divided into five chapters. The first chapter spells out the background, the study context and the study problem. It also highlights the aims and objectives of the study, the research questions, the significance of the study, the scope of the work and the theoretical framework of the needs analysis.

The second chapter refers to the already existing research on the matter and discusses the directions of those research. It traces the theoretical development in the area of needs analysis and then it discusses approaches to NA. After that studies related to the current study are analyzed, followed by a discussion of the implementation of all the above for the present study, and new developments in NA.

The third chapter describes the research design and the methodology adopted in the current study. The population, sample, and type of instruments are discussed. The methodology of data analysis is also discussed. A description of the pilot study, main data collection and ethical aspect of the study are given.

The fourth chapter offers a description and analysis of the data, which are presented in tables, charts, and graphs accompanied by a discussion on the observations.

The fifth chapter reveals the theoretical implications of the current findings followed by the methodological implications. The implications of the underpinning principles and content are presented as well as implications for teaching materials and methodology, implications for teacher training and implications for assessment. It highlights the findings and conclusions emerging from the discussion and analysis in the preceding chapter. Suggestions and recommendations for further research are made in this chapter,

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter is devoted to developing a theoretical framework for needs analysis (NA). It starts by tracking the historical development of needs analysis in 2.2. The approaches and frameworks of NA are discussed in 2.3. Then the literature on needs analysis is discussed in 2.4, followed by a discussion of the related studies in 2.4.2. A discussion on the literature and approaches of NA is presented in 2.5, which tries to reach a conceptual foundation of language NA in 2.5.1. The implication for the present study is highlighted in 2.5.2. This is followed by presenting new developments in NA as in 2.5.3. In 2.5.3.1, the implementation needs are discussed.

2.2 The Development of Needs Analysis

Needs analysis is a vital tool for decision making in the human services and education (McKillip, 1987). This study is aimed at providing a theoretical foundation from needs analysis literature, which will be provided in the following sections. Al-Husseini (2004) argues that the phases of NA development are highly overlapping, so chronological sequence is not absolute. The development is presented in the literature as a series of discourse, but overlapping phases, for example, register analysis, discourse analysis, target situation needs analysis and means analysis.

2.**2.1 Pre-1960s Development**

Many writers and researchers in NA, for example, Hutchinson and Waters (1987), Al-Husseini (2004) and Nelson (2000), consider register analysis in the early 1960s as the birth date of NA. Yet the idea of needs can be seen underlying some of the main innovations in language teaching, for example the Direct Method, which took place in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Nunan (1988, p. 43) states, "During the 1970s, NA procedures made their appearance in language planning and became widespread in language teaching. In their first days, such procedures were used as functions, notions, lexis, in most detailed manner."

In addition, the Modern Language Association of America, in 1892, explicitly saw language needs as only, "The ability to converse should not be regarded as a thing of primary importance for its own sake, but as an auxiliary to the higher ends of linguistic scholarship and literary culture." (Thomas, 1901, in Mackey, 1965, p. 147)

Understanding of the importance of language learners' needs and the ways of fulfilling them started a long time before the emergence of register analysis in the 1960s. Yet the explicit conceptualization of such needs only started to take place from the 1960s onward as a result of a range of actions. Language teaching (LT) underwent many changes in the 1960s. Stevens (1977) provides a description of the major intellectual and contextual changes in the field. These changes can be summarized in the rejection of the assumption that the success of language teaching is through the application of a homogeneous single method, because many other factors can lead to success or failure in LT; they all must be considered (Strevens, 1977).

Educators' concentrated on searching for a sufficiently homogeneous single method of language teaching during the period of the emergence of the Direct Method in the late 1800s and early 1900s to the late 1950s and early 1960s. The American

Audio-lingual method was designed originally for USA military officers and then implemented with university students. It did not work as successfully in the new context as it did in its original one, since the factors that helped it succeed in the first place did not necessarily exist elsewhere (Al-Husseini, 2004). Students involved in the American universities applying the audio-lingual method were highly selected. The teachers were trained besides the fact that they were native speakers. It took place in an English speaking country and the teaching was intensive. It was introduced in new contexts, which were developed overseas countries in which English was a foreign or second language. Strevens (1977) suggested two hypotheses to explain the failure of this method in the American universities.

1- It was blamed on the need to consider new linguistic and psychological trends.

2- The audio-lingual approach was not designed to work in the new conditions to which it was exported.

Based on these two hypotheses, the new approach did not stand, although it had a good linguistic and psychological base. Therefore, it was realized that successful language teaching and learning is governed by a complex set of variables, not just the method used.

2.2.2 Needs Analysis in the 1960s

The emergence and conceptualization of NA in the 1960s was due to different factors that enhanced the development of this approach. The first attempts were in English for Specific Purposes (ESP) to fulfil the learners' needs by identifying the type of language needed in the context of use. The spread of higher and further education with the concomitant need to gain access to the required knowledge, available either

exclusively or most readily in English, was a factor. ESP also was a response to the high demand area of English for science and technology, from the pioneering work in Chile in the 1960s to the projects in Saudi Arabia in the mid 1970s (Munby, 1978). From the early 1960s, many ESP programs around the world were dissatisfied with the student outcomes. This was attributed to the idea that learners were taught English regardless of their aims, needs or interests (Berwick, 1989). Therefore, many programs later on determined all essentials by prior analysis of the learner needs rather than non learner-centered criteria such as teachers or institutes' preference. In addition, many articles and reports about NA and ESP programs began to be published such as Ewer and Hughes-Davies (1971), Herbert (1965), Mackey (1965).

The second factor contributing to the emergence of NA in the 1960s was the rapid change in education in the USA because of a number of social factors. The guarantee of federal financial support to the educational and service providing agencies in the USA was stipulated with providing a precise identification of needs. Finally, the behavioral objective movement, which appeared at that time, also encouraged the idea of needs analysis by emphasizing the analysis and measurement of all goals in the educational enterprise. This forced needs analysis to become an integral part of the education processes.

2.2.3 NA in the Late 1960s and Mid 1970s

From its early beginning in the 1960s, NA has grown fast and widened in focus. Approaches to NA have changed as views on language and language teaching have changed. It was noticeable that the areas of ESP, English for Academic Purposes (EAP) areas and English for Science and Technology (EST) have been particularly important in the development of NA. From the late 1960s to the mid 1970s, the focus of NA was

the concept of special language Register Analysis. The aim of this analysis was to identify the grammatical and lexical features of any register (e.g., Electrical Engineering constituted a specific register different from that of, say Biology or General English) (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987). Nelson (2000) believed that the basic idea behind Register Analysis was that the choice of language used, in certain circumstances, was predetermined. It was realized that the English needed for any given group of learners could be identified by analyzing the linguistic features of the language that group uses in its area of work or study. This type of analysis was criticized for focusing only on the sentence level and providing no reasoning for why words occurred where they did.

Swales (1981) developed a modified approach known as Genre Analysis, which accounted for culture and situation. It has also placed discourse analysis in a communicative context (Al-Husseini, 2004). Based on that, teaching materials took this linguistic feature as their syllabus. Studies which analyzed the register of scientific and technical language include Ever and Latorre (1969), Swalves (1981), and Selinker and Trimble (1976) (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987).

In the 1970s, the functional approach also started to flourish. The term "function" is used to describe the different uses of language (Al-Husseini, 2004). The essence of this approach is that language is not only vocabulary and grammar, but also idea, thought, feeling, and so forth, which exist and are transmitted between people in spoken and written discourse. This was considered a second phase of NA which shifted attention from sentence level to the level above the sentence which was called Rhetorical or Discourse Analysis. The leading lights in this movement were Widdowson in the UK and Trimble, Lackstroom, and Todd-Timbre in the USA (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987).

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) was another movement in NA initiated by Munby in 1978 in his book titled *Communication Syllabus Design.* It marked a new direction in NA history in the English teaching context in many parts of the world. Munby's (1978) proposed approach to NA soon drew great attention from syllabus designers, particularly ESP course book designers. Hutchinson and Waters (1987) described his contribution as a landmark in ESP which had a huge influence on ESP, since it provided a new vision on individual needs. CLT's ultimate objective was that of teaching a second language for communicating with other speakers focusing on speaking, listening, writing for specific communication purposes and on authentic reading texts (Al-Husseini, 2004). Many criticisms were raised against Munby's approach; although it was complex, thorough and highly standardized it was said to lack constancy and showed no transparent link to syllabus design (Ha, 2005). Munby (1978, p. 3) noted that, "Communication Syllabus design as yet lacks a rigorous system for deriving appropriate syllabus specification from adequate profiles of communication needs."

Therefore, he also explained:

An attempt to solve this problem by designing dynamic processing models that start with the learner and end with his target communicative competence. It is the detailed syllabus specification, the target communicative competence, which constitutes the essence of what should be embodied in the course material.

Munby designed a model (Figure 2.1) which consisted of two stages: Communication Needs Processor (CNP) and the interpretation of the profile of needs derived from the CNP in terms of micro-skills and micro-functions. The CNP was set out under eight variables that affect communication needs by organizing them as

parameters in a dynamic relationship to each other. The CNP operated by looking at its "inputs"–the foreign language participant—and information concerning the participants' identity and language. Then it required information on the eight variables: purposive domain, setting, interaction, instrumentality, dialect, target level, communicative event, and communicative key. In the second stage of the model, the user took the activities with their communicative keys and decided which of three alternative ways of processing them was appropriate. The alternatives were:

1. Specification of syllabus content by focusing on micro-skills.

2. Specification by focusing on micro-functions.

3. Specification by focusing on linguistic forms (Ha, 2005).

```
                    ┌─────────────────────┐
                    │    Participant      │
                    └─────────────────────┘
                               │
                               ▼
                    ┌─────────────────────┐
                    │    Communicative    │
                    │       Needs         │
                    │     Processor       │
                    └─────────────────────┘
                               │
                               ▼
                    ┌─────────────────────┐
                    │      Profiles       │
                    │        Of           │
                    │      Needs          │
                    └─────────────────────┘
                               │
                               ▼
          ┌────────────────────┴────────────────────┐
          │                                          │
          │                               ┌──────────────────┐
          │                               │     Meaning      │
          │                               │    Processor     │
          │                               └──────────────────┘
          ▼                                          │
  ┌──────────────────┐                               ▼
  │ Language Skills  │                     ┌──────────────────┐
  │    Selector      │                     │    Linguistic    │
  └──────────────────┘                     │     Encoder      │
          │                                └──────────────────┘
          │                                          │
          └────────────────────┬─────────────────────┘
                               ▼
                    ┌─────────────────────┐
                    │    Communicative    │
                    │     Competence      │
                    │    Specification    │
                    └─────────────────────┘
```
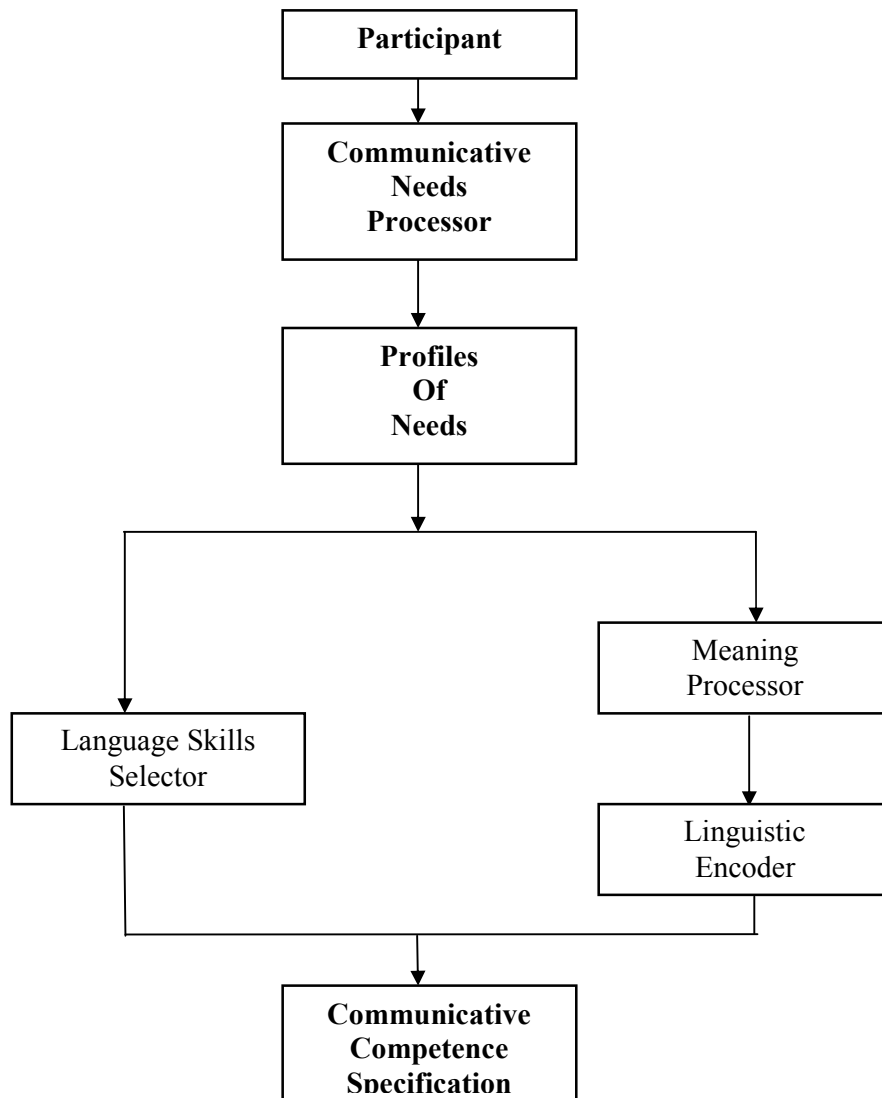
Figure 2.1. Model of specifying communicative competence (Munby, 1978)

Obviously, Munby thoroughly explored every aspect relating to learners' needs. His work was detailed and complex, as well as informative. After analyzing Munby's approach, Ha (2005) thought that it focused on the aspect of communication and the assumptions regarding the role of language, the learner, the syllabus and the teacher. This indicated that he was taking into account language, culture and communication purpose, but gave no attention to implementation (activities, resources and classroom dynamics). Many specialists have also criticized this approach for not addressing

learners adequately, for example, Hutchinson and Waters (1987), Holliday and Cook (1982), Holliday (1983, 1994), White (1988), McDonough (1984) Al-Husseini (2004) and Ha (2005). Holliday and Cook (1982, p. 137) asserted that, "The needs analysis [Munby's model] should be treated, not as a blueprint, but as a heuristic device which may or may not be applied in full or in part."

Ha (2005, p. 2) concluded:

He also seems to assure a very teacher-directed method, in which students' inputs about purpose are superficial and only required at the beginning of the course. It is clear that his emphasis on text and his categorisation rely on his intuition. All of these weaknesses result in criticisms of his work.

2.2.4 Needs Analysis in the 1980s and 1990s

A new development was introduced in NA in the 1980s by Holliday and Cook (1982), and Hutchinson and Waters (1987). The new view was directed toward the language-learning context. Holliday and Cook (1982) used Means Analysis to identify constraints that may be encountered in implementing a learning program in a particular local situation (Tajino, Tomas, & Kijima, 2005). Studying the local situation was in order to find out how the language course can be implemented. Four main areas were targeted:

A- The classroom culture/learners factors.

B- Staff profiles/teacher profiles.

C- Status of language teaching/institutional profiles.

D- Change agent/change management included an assessment of what innovation was necessary or possible in order to establish an effective language program (West, 1994).

In their book, Hutchinson and Waters (1987) promoted the Learning-Centered Approach, which was targeted at providing information about how the language learner learns the language. This approach not only considered needs in terms of target situation needs, which used to consider questions such as what knowledge and abilities learners would require in order to be able to perform to the required degree of competence in the target situation. New frameworks were considered to analyze learners' needs in both situations: the language use situation and the language-learning situation.

NA interests were directed at two main contexts, which were the language-learning context and the language use context. Analyzing the learners' needs in the target context is known as Target Situation Analysis (TSA), while needs analysis which focuses on the language-learning context, was formerly known as Present Situation Analysis (PSA) (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987). Information related to both TSA and PSA are essential in need analysis.

Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998) reported that besides focusing on learners' needs and wants, their current skills, and their competencies and lacks, analysts should recognize the importance of learners' cognitive styles and learning preferences. Jordan (1997) argues that the legitimate demands of the institute have to be recognized and that teachers and course designers have their own purposes, priorities, needs, strategies and constraints.

Another notable area of growth in needs analysis has been in terms of the sophistication of the linguistic analysis applied to real-world situations. Work in sociolinguistics, discourse analysis and other cross-disciplinary approaches to language (e.g., Fairclough, 1992) has broadened the definition of language from that of an isolated linguistic system to be mastered, to a social and cultural object which is

embedded in the workplace, the classroom and all aspects of social intercourse. This leads to a heightened awareness of what it means to know a language, and extends categories of linguistic knowledge beyond structural ladders and vocabulary lists to more dynamic and strategic competencies needed to effect, maintain or change roles and relations within particular contexts or domains of discourse.

Other aspects of needs analysis have similarly received attention from theorists. Jordan (1997) notes the diversity of ways in which the data informing decision-making may be collected, for example, through questionnaires, interviews, tests, audits, self-assessment forms, diaries and case studies. Masuhara (1998) suggests that the very diversity of frameworks, guidelines, and taxonomies available to course designers seems to be leading to the emergence of a new course design paradigm in which administrators or teachers select suitable teaching materials from readily available predesigned published materials. They then leave it to classroom practitioners to fine-tune the material to the students' preferences. The steps of needs analysis, goal specification, syllabus design, and choice of methodological procedures are assumed to have already been carried out by the materials writers (Tajino et al., 2005).

2.2.5 Needs Analysis Development in the Twenty-First Century

In the current century, a model of innovation "Implementation Needs" was added by Waters and Vilches (2000). It was based on identifying the basic characteristic of innovation implementation needs particularly in large-scale curriculum reform. They argue that the initial decision making in ELT innovation usually takes place among personnel at the top of the top-down enterprise ignoring those who are responsible for implementing the innovation, such as teachers and students. This frequently leads to the failure of the proposed innovation. The model Waters and

Vilches suggested took into account the innovation implementers from the early stages of the innovation.

Yet, the recent trend in the research on needs analysis is the need for meaningful collaboration between concerned people in an educational project. The reality has often been that specialists tend to "work **for** rather than **with** subject specialists" and be reluctant to "critically engage with the value of institutional goals and practices." Tajino et al. (2005) argue that designing an EAP course requires collaboration among various concerned stakeholders, including students, subject teachers, institutional administrators and ESP teachers themselves. While needs analysis is often considered functional to EAP, alternative research methodologies such as Soft System Methodology (SSM) may be required to facilitate meaningful collaboration between these parties. SSM is a research methodology developed in management Studies. It is a learning system by means of which collaborative pathways are developed in a systematic way in order to better understand complex human problem situations.

The historical development of NA shown in this section is illustrated in the following Figure 2.2.

Future
2013

Twenty First
Century

1980s

1970s

1960s

Soft System Methodology

Implementation Needs Analysis

Learning-Centered Analysis

Means Analysis

Target Needs
Analysis

Discourse
Analysis

Register
Analysis

Awareness of students'
needs started to develop
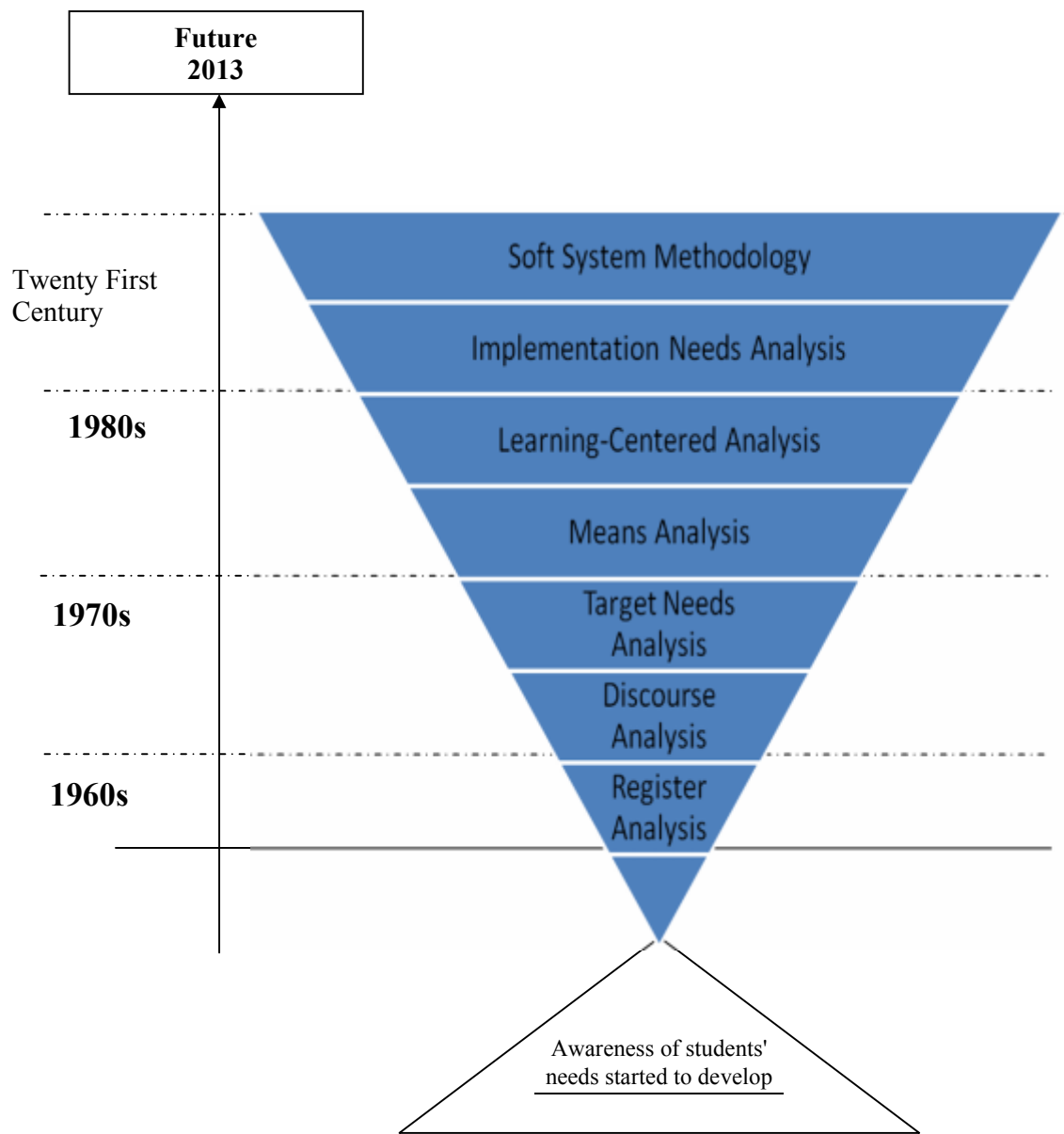
Figure 2.2. The historical development of NA.

2.3 Needs Analysis Approaches and Frameworks

Needs analysis (NA) has been an important feature of ELT, ESP, EAP and adult education courses (Graves, 2000). Over the past two decades, the amount of research looking into students' needs, beliefs, and attitudes toward learning English has substantially increased (Soruc, 2012). The reasons for this growing body of research on learner needs can be attributed to the fact that needs analysis lays the foundations of curricular decisions. The previous section 2.2 reviewed the historical development of NA from the pre-1960s to the twenty-first century. This section highlights the different approaches and frameworks of NA.

2.3.1 Register Analysis

"…English of the English of Electrical Engineering constituted a specific register different from that of Biology or of General English, the aim of the analysis was to identify the grammatical and lexical features of these registers" (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987, p. 10). Based on that, the assumption of this approach is that the register of an English course varies according to the different specifications, so the English needs of any group of learners can be identified by analyzing the linguistic features of the language that group would use in its area of work or study. Teaching materials, therefore, would consider the analyzed linguistic features as the syllabus.

Register analysis provides some pedagogical motives to ESP, the one most relevant is making the ESP course more relevant to learners' needs. It has also given some pedagogical findings about the nature of the text used in ESP teaching and the linguistic characteristics of ESP. Scientific and technical English use certain grammatical and lexical forms, which distinguish them from general English (Dudley-Evans & St. John, 1998; Ewer & Hughes-Davies, 1971; Swales, 1988). For example,

the most predominant tense in the scientific register is the present simple tense while the passive voice and nominal compounds are more favored in the scientific register than general English. In terms of lexical forms, it was also found that register analysis gives more importance to what Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998) call *semi* or *sub-technical vocabulary*, such as "consists of", "contains", "enables", "acts as" and so forth. Most of the materials designed under register analysis are driven by the linguistic analysis that underpinned them. Nevertheless, the materials based on this approach (e.g., Herbert, 1965) despite being sound for their period were dense, repetitive and lacking in verity (Dudley-Evans & St. John, 1998).

Conclusions reached by register analysis were not satisfactory on more than one ground. It has limited its focus to the structural and lexical features of discrete sentences. Therefore, it revealed there was very little distinction in the sentence level in scientific texts. Second, it was rather descriptive, as it did not provide explanation of why certain words or structures were preferred (Nelson, 2000). Furthermore, Coffey (1984) argues that register analysis could not be used, as there is no significant way in which the language of science differs from any other kind of languages. These perceived weaknesses of the register analysis approach led to the second movement in needs analysis, rhetorical or discourse analysis.

2.3.2 Discourse Analysis

The difficulties which the students encounter arise not so much from a defective knowledge of the system of English, but from unfamiliarity with English use, and that consequently their needs cannot be met by a course which simply provide further practice in the composition of sentences, but only by one which

develops a knowledge of how sentences are used in the performance of different communicative acts (Allen & Widdowson, 1985, p. 74).

Unlike register analysis which analyzes the sentence at an independent level and offers no explanation of how sentences are combined to form paragraphs, discourse analysis regards the text as one unit consisting of many sentences which are linked together to communicate one whole idea. It introduces the idea of relating language form to language use. It is based on the premise that communicative competence includes the ability to use linguistic forms to perform communicative acts and to understand the communicative functions of sentences and their relationship to other sentences (Munby, 1978). Discourse analysis, therefore looks into text coherence, meaning, unity and cohesion, and links between sentences and between clauses (Al-Husseini, 2004; Nelson, 2000).

The value of discourse analysis is seen by selecting a communicative unit rather than grammatical element. It also has a pedagogical assumption that texts of different disciplines differ in their rhetorical features, for example, the rhetorical structure of a science text is different from that of a commercial text. Based on that, the teaching materials are designed to teach students how to recognize the textual patterns and organizational patterns of a text. However, Munby (1978) and Al-Husseini (2004) argue that more analysis and description are needed to elaborate on the extent to which texts of different domains differ. In addition, the scope and focus of discourse analysis is still on the target language as it is limited to encountering the organizational patterns of spoken and written texts. Other factors such as learner motivation, learning materials preference and resources are not considered at this stage. Materials produced under the banner of Discourse Analysis neglect the development of specific study skills; none of the four skills, however, are given specific attention (Dudley-Evans & St. John, 1998).

Therefore, needs analysts' major focus in the late 1970s shifted to the study skills as explained in 2.3.4.

2.3.3 Target Situation Analysis

In his attempt to make a contribution to syllabus design, Munby (1978) proposed the Target Situation Analysis Approach. This approach has provided an organized procedure for relating language analysis more closely to learners' reason for learning. Some researchers, such as Hutchinson and Waters (1987), think that this approach adds nothing to the needs analysis concept compared to Register Analysis and Discourse Analysis; rather it is concerned with the linguistic features of the syllabus.

Munby (1978) developed the most extensive example of this approach, which is called *Communicative Syllabus Design*. The purpose of this model is to derive syllabus specifications from an adequate profile of the communication model by designing a systematic model that starts with the learners and ends with the target communicative competencies. The model functions in a linear fashion. First a curriculum designer constructs a needs profile, then there is a specification of a particular language skill and function that the learners will need to meet the specified needs. In the end, the model produces a very detailed target syllabus to enable the profiled learners to meet communicative needs within a designated target situation (Paterson, 2001).

Munby's model was called Communicative Needs Processors (CNP). As in Figure 2.1, this model is set out under eight variables that affect communicative needs by organizing them as parameters in a dynamic relationship to each other (Ha, 2005). These parameters provide information about:

1. **Participants:** information concerning the participants' identity and language. The data related to identity includes sex, age, nationality and place of residence.

The data concerning language identifies the participants' mother tongue, target language and present level.

2. **Purposive domain**: information related to the purpose of learning the target language whether educational or occupational.

3. **Setting**: provide data about the target setting in which the language will be used which can be a physical setting such as location, place of work, place of study, duration and frequency of use of English. In addition, data should be gathered about the psychological setting in which the target language is to be used, such as cultural differences, cultural similarities, age/sex discrimination and age/sex non-discrimination.

4. **Interaction**: identification of those with whom the participant has to communicate in the target language and the relationship between them such as teacher-student and doctor-patient.

5. **Instrumentality**: It is concerned with identifying constraints on the input in terms of the medium, media and channels of communication such as written-spoken, monologue-dialogue, face to face-telephone.

6. **Direct level**: six dimensions of levels are determined.

    A. Size: (length and quantity) of utterance or text.

    B. Complexity: of utterance or text including for example coherence.

    C. Range of forms: range of forms micro function-micro skills.

    D. Delicacy: refers to the level of specificity and detail.

    E. Speed: the rapidity of flow.

    F. Flexibility: ability to handle unexpected communication.

7. **Communicative events**: this parameter is concerned with what the participant has to be able to do, for example, interchange between the air traffic controller and the pilot.

8. **Communicative key**: it is concerned with how someone does an activity comprising an event like the tone, manner or sprit in which the act is done.

Obviously, Munby explores thoroughly every aspect relating to learners' needs. His work is probably the most detailed and complex as well as informative (Ha, 2005). It provides comprehensive data banks, which can be used as checklists for syllabus design. Munby's approach focuses on the aspect of communication and the role of the language, the learners, the syllabus and the teacher. It has a tremendous impact on ESP; as Hutchinson and Waters (1987) remarked, this approach marked a watershed in the development of ESP (Al-Husseini, 2004).

Others, however, did not agree with Munby's model, such as Hawkey (1980) who did not view Munby's book as a tool that can help them effectively or pragmatically for two reasons. First, it presupposed a homogeneous language situation, which is impossible in heterogeneous classes where learners come from different backgrounds with different targets and proficiencies. Second, the model did not consider some important features such as psycho-pedagogic, methodological, and administrative factors. This criticism was also supported by others, for example, McDonough (1984), Hutchinson and Waters (1987) and Al-Husseini (2004) who believed that these factors, such as motivation, learning strategies, resources, and so forth, are essential elements of the learning context and have a big influence in language learning. They are addressed by other approaches particularly the learning-centered approach which will be discussed in this section. Moreover, Coffey (1984, p. 7) agreed that, "The process provided is too complicated to put in practice in most

circumstances and it does not give the user a flexible tool to use because it needs to be amended as time goes." Types or levels of communication may be unchanged, but the learners' needs may change constantly.

Although Jordan (1997) regarded Munby's model as a landmark in the development of NA and probably the best-known framework for TSA, however, like other authors, he commented that the model should have considered practical constraints at the beginning of the NA processes instead of considering them after the procedure had been worked through. Second, "the language items chosen for practice in ESP/EAP should reflect those used in the real world" (Jordan, 1997, p. 24).

2.3.4 Skills and Strategies Approach

In reaction to the language-centered approach, which gives a description of the language used in the target situation as discussed in previous approaches, a shift has taken place in the teaching of skills. It was felt that having a description of the nature of the language of the target situation is not sufficient, as Philips and Shelt Lesurth (1978, p. 105) put it:

> It is insufficient to develop materials which aim to introduce the students only to the linguistic features which are salient in a particular field of discourse without paying attention to the strategies required by the student which justify the study of those features in the first place.

The skills and strategies approach emerged for contextual reasons. This means that while using the language, a number of thought processes make us understand the discourse. Based on that, learners should be provided with the strategies component rather than the linguistic input. Thus deducing a particular word from the context is a

thought process that takes place regardless of the surface structure of the discourse (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987).

Contrasting the language learning idea presented by this approach to the register and discourse analysis view reveals that there is a shift in the focus from the target language feature to the process underlying its use and the development of the target skills such as reading (Al-Husseini, 2004; Hutchinson & Waters, 1987). The move toward the skills and strategies approach directs the attention more to the learners than to the language. Learners are helped to practice the reasoning and interpreting strategies to work out the meaning of the words from the context, for example, guessing the meaning from a context or comparing words with words from their mother tongue. These strategies and skills then become the scope of the analysis.

The skills and strategies approach shifted the analysts' attention to looking below the surface of a language to encounter the processes and strategies underlying language use, which enable the learner to capture the surface forms (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987). This move has also focused the attention more to the learner than to the language. On the other hand, it underestimated the role of any specific register, so it believed that there is no need to focus on the register of any specific discipline because the underlying processes are universal and applicable to any register. It addition, it views the language learner as a *thinking being* who can be asked to observe and verbalize the interpretative processes applied in language use (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987, p. 14). It is also considered that this approach still see students as language users rather than language learners. The next section will consider the learning strategies and the present situation analysis as addressed by Hutchinson and Waters (1987) in the learning centered approach.

2.3.5 Learning Centered Approach

A close examination of the previous four approaches discussed in this chapter reveals that they are all based on the description of language "use". Whether the focus was on the surface forms, as in Register Analysis, or on underlying processes, as in the Skills and Strategies Approach, the intent was to describe what people do with language. As Hutchinson and Waters (1987, p. 14) described it:

> We cannot simply assume that describing and exemplifying what people do with language will enable someone to learn it. If that was so, we would need to do no more than read a grammar book and a dictionary in order to know the language. A truly valid approach to ESP must be based on an understanding of the processes of language learning.

This represents the emergence of a learning centered approach (p. 60), which was a fulfilment of a need that previous approaches could not fulfil by providing information about how the language learner learns the language.

Hutchinson and Waters' (1987) book stresses the role of learning needs analysis in the ESP context, which does not mean that their framework is not applicable to different EL settings. The focus of their book is on ESP, because the whole book is concerned with ESP rather than any other branch of ELT. More important is that the proposed framework finds its way into the literature of ELT, NA and ESP as can be noted in Graves (2000), Al-Husseini (2004) and Shuja'a (2004).

This approach is based on the principle that learning is completely determined by learners. Hutchinson and Waters (1987) argue that learning is not an end product in the learners' mind, rather it is a process in which learners use what skills and knowledge they have in order to make sense of the new knowledge. Learning,

therefore, is an internal process depending on the learner's existing knowledge and abilities. Although they place a large emphasis on the learners, Hutchinson and Waters (1987) refuse to accept the learner-centered approach in favor of the learning centered approach, because they believe that there is more than just the learner to consider. It is just one factor to be considered, but not the only one.

The learning centered approach, as opposed to other NA approaches, namely Target Needs Analysis and Skills Needs Analysis, varies in the way the language learner is perceived. The Target NA approaches learners in order to specify their target purpose; then they are ignored (Al-Husseini, 2004). The Skills and Strategies NA approaches the learners for their target purposes and the skills they apply to use the language in the target context; then the learners are also ignored. The learning centered approach considers learners at every stage of course design and indicates that "we must look beyond the competence that enables someone to perform, because what we really want to discover is not the competence itself, but how someone acquires that competence" (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987, p. 73). The language-centered approach and skill-centered approach view the learner as a user rather than a learner. They are also criticized for being static and inflexible. A syllabus designed in the skills centered approach is based on the analysis of the skills that learners use to perform in the target context and the knowledge learners bring to the language class. On the other hand, the learning centered approach assumes that the needs and resources change with time. This has made the syllabus designed using this approach more dynamic, so it can respond to developmental needs. Both target situation analysis (language-based approach) and the learning situation influence the needs analysis in syllabus design. They also influence the materials, methodology and evaluation process. The Hutchinson and Waters (1987) framework consists of six sets of questions about the

language in the target context. They used a similar checklist to analyze learning needs like the sets used for target situation analysis. To compare the two approaches, the two frameworks are presented in Table 2.1 (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987, pp. 59-62).

Table 2.1
Distinction between TSA and PSA

Target Situation Analysis TSA	Present Situation Analysis PSA
Why is the language needed?	**Why are the learners taking the course?**
• For study.	• Compulsory or optional;
• For work.	• Apparent need or not;
• For training.	• Are status, money, promotion involved?
• For a combination of these.	• What do learners think they will achieve?
• For some other purpose, e.g., state, examination, promotion.	• What is their attitude towards the EP course? Do they want to improve their English or do they resent the time they have to spend on it?
How will the language be used?	**How do the learners learn?**
• Medium: speaking, writing, reading etc.	• What is their learning background?
• Channels: e.g., telephone, face to face.	• What is their concept of teaching and learning?
• Types of texts of discourse: e.g., academic texts, lectures, informal conversation, technical manual, catalogues.	• What methodology will appeal to them? • What sorts of techniques are likely to bore/alienate them?
What will the content area be?	**What resources are available?**
• Subject: e.g., medicine, biology, architecture, shipping, commerce, engineering.	• Number and professional competence of teachers
• Level: e.g., technician, craftsman, postgraduate, secondary school.	• Attitudes of teachers to ESP; • Teachers' knowledge and attitudes to the subject content; • Materials; • Aids; • Opportunities for out-of class activities.
Who will the learner use the language with?	**Who are the learners?**
• Native speakers or non natives;	• Age/sex/nationality;
• Level of knowledge of receiver: e.g., expert, layman, students;	• What do they know already about English? • What subject knowledge do they have/what are their interests?
• Relationship: e.g., colleagues, costumer, teacher, supervisor, subordinate;	• What is their socio-cultural background? • What teaching style are they used to? • What is their attitude toward English or toward the culture of the English-speaking world?

Where will the language be used?	Where will the ESP take place?
• Physical setting: e.g., office, lecture theatre, hotel, workshop, library; • Human content: e.g., alone, meeting, demonstration, on telephone; • Linguistic context: e.g., own country, abroad;	• Are the surroundings pleasant, dull, noisy, cold, etc?
When will the language be used?	**When will the ESP course take place?**
• Concurrently with the ESP course or subsequently; • Frequently, seldom, in small amount, in large chunks.	• Time of day; • Everyday/once a week; • Fulltime/part-time; • Concurrent with need or pre-need

The Hutchinson and Waters framework is a complex process involving more than just looking at what the learner will have to do in the target situation. They actually combine language analysis, strategy analysis and means analysis. It is also important to mention that taking into consideration the target needs and the learning needs as integrated approaches has strengthened this approach and increased its meaningfulness to analysts, and the framework soon found its way into the literature of needs analysis and course design.

2.3.6 Strategies Analysis

The obvious focus for this analysis is methodology; however, learners' preference, regarding size of groups in class, ways of learning in and out of class, and so forth, are also taken into consideration by this approach (West, 1994). The work of Hutchinson and Waters (1987) has influenced this approach because both collect information on how to reach the "destination". It is based on the investigation of learning strategies as pointed out by Allwright (1982) who argues that learners should express their needs in their own terms. He almost used the same terms as Hutchinson and Waters (1987) with some differences. He used the term "need" to refer to the

language skills which are relevant to the learners, the term "wants" for what the learners perceive as high priority and "lack" to refer to the gap between the learners' language abilities and the desired ones.

Recent research have been conducted to carefully define the specific language strategies in learning English as a second language, such as O'Malley, Chamot, Stewner, Russo, and Kupper (1985), and Brown (2000). They concluded that learning strategies are of great importance and help ESL learners in particular because of the limited time learners spend in class. This would result in increasing the number of students being dependent on themselves outside the classroom.

A distinction should be highlighted between communicative strategies and learning strategies. Communicative strategies are the use of verbal and nonverbal mechanisms to communicate information (Brown, 1994). The learning strategies refer to the processing of the inputs in the forms of storage and retrieval. They are sub categorized into three categories: metacognitive strategies, cognitive strategies and social affective categories (Brown, 1994). Metacognitive strategies are the overall processing of the learning process which include planning for learning, monitoring production, thinking about learning and evaluating an accomplished learning activity (Al-Husseini, 2004). Cognitive strategies are focused on the learning of specified tasks. Examples of cognitive strategies are repetition, grouping, role taking, contextualization, and so forth. Social affective strategies are the process of involving another member of the learning context such as working in pairs, groups, asking for teacher clarification, and so forth (Brown, 1994). These components are suggested as having to be equally combined in a syllabus design to offer learners a comprehensive understanding of the language. A wider approach, which embeds strategies analysis and expands the focus, is Means Analysis, which is explained in the next section.

2.3.7 Means Analysis

As a reaction against Munby's (1978) ignorance of the contextual factors, such as political, administrative, economic and personal, which exist and affect any language teaching setting, Holliday and Cook (1982) introduced Means Analysis. Munby (1978) viewed certain variables not directly connected to the target Situation Analysis as "constraints" and classified them into five categories: political, logistical, psycho-pedagogic, administrative and methodological. Although these variables shape the English language teaching setting, Munby (1978) neglected them while formulating his approach. Others, like Holliday (1984) and Swales (1989), feel that such factors require immediate consideration. Holliday (1994, p. 199) states that "most of the features which the Means Analysis surveys are those defined by Munby (1978, p. 217) as the factors which remain as 'constraints' on syllabus specifications produced by his needs analysis."

Means Analysis is concerned with the study of the contextual factors present in the teaching situation and the attempt to incorporate them in a constructive manner (Tudor, 1996). In other words, it tries to identify the factors responsible for the success and failure of introducing innovation to language teaching. Holliday and Cook (1982, p. 134), the founders of this approach, explain that "it assesses the capability of the local institution to take the innovation required by the project in question and the means for implementing such innovation." Many researchers support this approach, such as Swales (1980), McDonough (1984), and Hutchison and Waters (1987); all stand against Munby's (1978) assumption of postponing the cultural, socio-political, linguistic, administrative and psycho-pedagogic constraints until after syllabus design. This approach differs from the usual NA approaches in that it does not attempt to impose categories based on linguistic description; rather it allows sensitivity to the situation. It

also regards the above factors as "local features" (Holliday & Cook, 1982) and "essential factors" (Holliday, 1994, p. 108), refusing the judgmental terms such as "restraints". They are considered as contributors to the design of appropriate methodology and should be taken into account from the very beginning of NA (Holliday & Cook , 1982).

The difference between the traditional needs analysis approaches and the Means Analysis (MA) approach is illustrated in Figure 2.3.
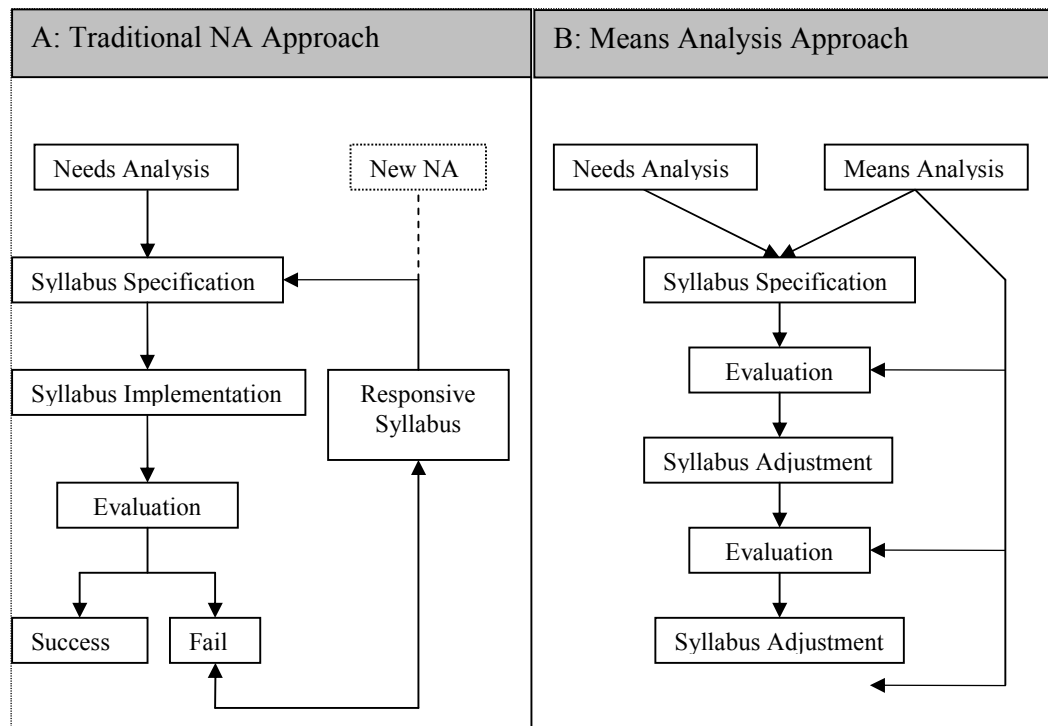
Figure 2.3. The difference between the traditional needs analysis approaches and Means Analysis (MA) approach, adopted from (Holliday, 1994, p. 200).

Figure 2.3 shows how Means Analysis complements NA in syllabus development, which reveals two important features of the MA. First, it is an ongoing process which continually surveys the educational environment as it changes in time. Second, it is predictive, which enables us to predict what might happen in the future if certain innovations are introduced.

Means Analysis does not target the classroom only, but also the surrounding environment. Holliday (1994) argues that the classroom is a culture within a wider complex of cultures between which there are many complex channels of influences. Different agents influence the classroom setting such as parents, peers, the market, Ministry of Education, employers and cultural expectations about the teaching and learning process (Holliday, 1994). These agents have a direct influence on learners and the learning environment. A number of studies have been done to identify some of these interacting influences of culture on the classroom such as Dudley-Evans and Swales (1980), Coleman (1987), Thorp (1991) and Holliday (1994). The relationship between the classroom culture and other cultures that influence it is clarified in Figure 2.4, where the classroom is in the center of the diagram surrounded by different factors.
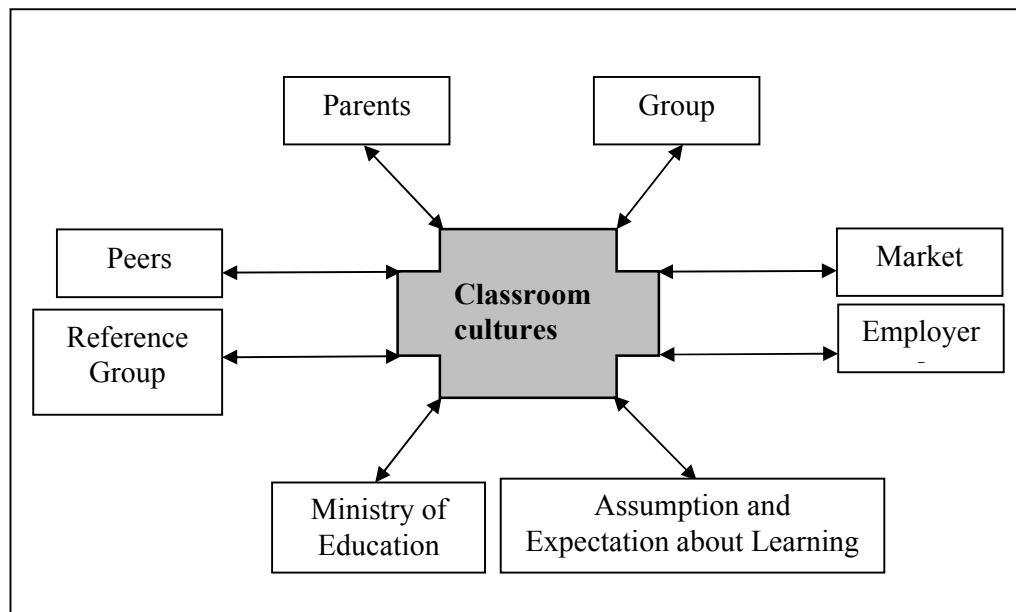
Figure 2.4. The different factors surrounding classroom culture.

The interaction between factors that surround the classroom and the classroom culture influence the teaching environment. Means analysis is an instrument for investigating all different cultures that influence the classroom teaching environment.

Means Analysis was designed as an instrument for data collection (Holliday, 1992) to investigate all aspects of the deep issues found in all educational environments. However, Holliday and Cook (1982, p. 140) concluded that "means analysis lacked a systematic approach." Holliday (1992) provided a systematic approach of the MA by setting out the principles of MA as in Table 2.2.

Table 2.2

The Means Aanalysis Principles Set by Holliday (1992)

No.	Principles of Means Analysis
1-	An ongoing survey of the cultural, socio-political, logistical, administrative, psycho-pedagogic, and methodological features of the host educational environment as it changes in time before and during the process of innovation.
2-	An emphasis in turning so called "constraints" to advantages, treating them as conditions for design.
3-	A search for appropriate methodology at all levels, from classroom to curriculum to project management.
4-	The systematic formation of hypothesis about what might happen in the future if certain innovation was to be introduced. The systemic testing and reformation of hypotheses as innovations are tried out.
5-	Means Analysis has the capacity to learn how to proceed from its own experience. This learning is both substantive, in terms of using current findings to determine new direction and foci in the survey, and procedural, in terms of an ongoing adjustment of methodology.
6-	Incorporation and direction of other lower investigation devices which address specific aspects of the project manager's job. Hence, needs analysis would be informed by the higher order means analysis. Decisions about their use, timing and design would thus depend on the wider socio-cultural knowledge of the host educational environment.
7-	Observation not only of the "foreign" cultures of the host educational environment, but also of the cultures of the project in their interaction with these cultures.

The most distinctive MA principle is that it is an ongoing process which responds to changes and improvement before and during the process of course

development, as in Principle 1. By doing so, MA not only turns those factors, which Munby (1978) called "constraints", into "fundamental variables" or "conditions", but takes into consideration all different stages of syllabus design (before and after). This has also made MA responsive and informative by giving it the time to gather all the required data for adjusting its own methodology and determining the project direction. Another significant feature of MA is the research methodology it employs. Because it surveys all aspects of the educational environment (see Principle 1 above), and due to the unspoken nature of informal order, "means analysis needs a strong observation, ethnographic components" (Holliday, 1992). Ethnographic investigation mainly depends on the observation of student and teacher behavior in the classroom, the host institution and other relevant cultures. Therefore, NA provides information on how the methodology of both the project and the curriculum can be appropriate (Holliday, 1994).

To conclude, this section has highlighted the different approaches of Needs Analysis and it has shown the philosophies and educational values behind each of them. Each framework has its focus and scope that distinguish it from other frameworks of NA. Yet our understanding of what constitutes NA and the applicability, or prioritization, of its various components remains unclear. There is a need to link the essence of these approaches/frameworks together, particularly Means Analysis and Hutchinson and Waters' (1987) framework to clarify the meaning of NA. This issue will be discussed in 2.5 after considering in 2.4 some related studies that were influenced by NA approaches and frameworks.

2.4 Literature of NA

Needs analysis has been tackled as an educational phenomenon since the 1960s. The literature of NA consists mainly of articles (for example Holliday (1982, 1992)) published in academic journals (such as *Applied Linguistics*, *TESOL Quarterly*, *System* and *ESP Journal*), ESP/EAP books (e.g., Hutchinson & Waters, 1978), Robinson (1980, 1991), and Jordan (1997)), curriculum/course design books (such as White (1988) and Graves (2000)), and academic research (for example, PhD theses such as Al-Dugaili (1999), Patterson (2001), Al-Husseini (2004) and Shuja'a (2004). The reason for this growing body of research on learners' needs can be attested to the fact that needs analysis lays the foundation of curriculum decision (Sorus, 2012).

2.4.1 Observations about the Literature of NA

A close analysis of the NA literature reveals three important observations. First, an observation, made by Long (2005), that little attention is paid to needs analysis itself in terms of the methodological options it employs. Long (2005) argues that, "Unfortunately, while books and journals are replete with reports of NA each year, with very few exceptions (see Van Els & Oud-de Glas, 1983; Van Hest & Oud-de Glas, 1990), relatively little attention is paid to needs analysis itself." The focus should be directed exclusively to NA. Al-Husseini (2004), Swales (1985), West (1994), and Long (2005) argue that language teachers and applied linguists need to be familiar with the frameworks and approaches of NA to avoid repeating mistakes and reinventing the wheel and, more importantly, they need familiarity with the wide array of sources and methods available today. Therefore, there is an urgent need for a serious research program focused on methodological options in NA itself. Second, Nelson (2000) and Al-Husseini (2004) conclude that most of the results of language analysis of the late

NA approaches have been firmly kept in-house by the language institutions concerned. Although earlier approaches of NA were of great help and guidance to teachers by suggesting the type of language that might be needed in certain contexts, "late NA models did not ever do that—models are presented and the results are kept in- house by their users" (Nelson, 2000, p. 50). This situation, in my estimation, may happen due to the inapplicability of the findings. While the initial focus on the approaches to NA was directed toward finding sound and suitable methods of NA, believed to be of generic applicability and global concern, the actual results are situation specific (Nelson, 2000).

Third, most NAs are concerned with needs specification at the level of individuals or, most often, learner type (Long, 2005). Modern needs analysts owe a considerable debt to the pioneers in the field of NA, as they have laid the foundation in the form of conceptual ground-clearing, concrete examples of NA and insights into complexities of domain specific language use. Researchers such as Nelson (2000) and Long (2005) stress that what is needed now is a serious effort by applied linguists to identify generalizations that can be made about how to conduct NA for a certain population in a certain sector. However detailed and insightful the findings about language tasks and genres encountered in this or that context, they are often only of use to other contexts featuring the same or similar students; whereas, the findings based on studies of far wider audiences are of greater relevance, especially the methodological lessons arising from such studies. Long (2005) points out, "In an era of globalization and shrinking resources, however, language audits and needs analyses for whole societies are likely to become interestingly important." Findings of good (or bad) analysis at this level can greatly affect federal, state or governmental language policies, with far reaching consequences for millions of people for years to come. Adapting such broad analysis confronts the analyst with some methodological constraints, some of

which are: scientific sampling, large sample size and the preference for certain methods such as questionnaires, surveys, and studies of government publications or documents. Furthermore, findings and the rationale for recommendations need to be explicit, empirically supported, and expressed in familiar terms, since the primary audiences for findings from public sector NAs include politicians, economists and other stakeholders. This study contributes to the literature of NA by analyzing the linguistic needs of the Omani EFL learners in public schools, which will provide a framework for conducting NA on a national basis; the data and results of this NA will be available for public scrutiny in empirically-supported recommendations.

In the next section, a discussion of some large-scale related studies at the level of PhD is presented. The discussion is going to show how these research studies are directed by NA development in their aims, approaches and frameworks, methodology, findings and recommendations. The discussion will also provide insight into the development and nature of practical NA and will be linked to the development of the present research.

2.4.2 Discussion of the Studies

The seven studies reviewed in this section are all large-scale studies of NA at the PhD level. They were conducted during the years 1999-2013; therefore, they all involve post Munby (1978), post Hutchinson and Waters (1987) and post Holliday (1991-1992) approaches to Means Analysis. This, however, enables me to follow the new trends of NA and to find a gap that the present study would fill for a better understanding and application of NA. The studies used different approaches to NA and applied different methodologies in terms of sources, methods and interpretation. Six studies out of seven were conducted in Arabic speaking countries, similar in context to

66

the present study, while the Patterson (2001) study took place in Singapore. The shared

feature among these studies is that all were carried out to analyze EFL/ESL students'

learning needs in an academic context. It is hoped, therefore, that the present study will

help in understanding and developing the state of English language teaching in this part

of the world and to put into practice the innovations in the era of NA as suggested by

Long (2005) and Cowling (2007). The studies' aims, data collection methods, sources

and findings are presented in Table 2.3, followed by a discussion of their strengths,

drawbacks and implications for the current study.

Table 2.3

Aims, Methods, Sources and Findings of Related Studies on Needs Analysis

The study	Aims	Methods	Sources	Findings
Al-Dugaily (1999)	To survey the students language needs in the Faculty of Engineering in Sana'a University in Yemen.	Questionna ire Structural interviews	Students Tea- chers	Most of the students and teachers agreed that the ESP courses were poor and not responsive to the students' needs. Teachers agreed that students had great difficulty in performing language skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing.
Patterson (2001)	To conduct a Needs Analysis in a Functioning English for Academic Purposes Program in Singapore.	Question- naire Interviews Observa- tion	Students Tea- chers	"Suggestions are made concerning the amount of emphasis that the NA indicates is needed with reference to 16 language skills."
Al-Busaidi (2003).	To investigate the academic needs of EFL learners at Sultan Qaboos University in Oman.	Interview Question- naire Email dialogue	Faculty mem- bers Students	"Students has mixed perception about the role of the intensive program in meeting their needs." There is a lack of integration between the language centre and the college course. The academic skills did not receive enough coverage in the language program.

Al-Husseini (2004)	To provide a methodological framework to inform the design of foundation year program at the college of technology in Oman. To provide a framework for enhancing the implementation needs analysis in the NA from the outset of the process.	Question-naire Interviews Observa-tion Genre analysis	Students Tea-chers Adminis trators	"Triangulation of resource and instrument is important in order to obtain a tangible picture of the different types of needs in questions." The majority of stakeholders were dissatisfied with the graduates of the foundation year program. There is a lack of clarity about purpose, the learners' needs and course principle. Identify 5 present situation and target situation needs.
Shuja'a (2004)	To determine three kinds of needs that have been established in the literature: present situation, target situation and learning needs. To specify goals and objectives of business English in Yemen.	Questionna ire Interviews Discussion	Students Tea-chers Com-pany officers	A command of both spoken and written English skills is highly expected and required of new business graduates by the employment market. A large majority of students lack a working knowledge of English. All the study participants are not satisfied with the current business English course.
Ali and Salih (2013)	To find the perceived views of language teachers on the use of Needs Analysis in ESP materials writing	Question-naire	Tea-chers	The findings of this study showed that the vast majority of EFL teachers are in favor of using needs analysis as a basis for ESP/EAP materials writing and they believe that it is a significant factor in successful ESP materials development.
Alasta and Shuib (2012)	To investigate students' perceptions of the academic English Language Target Needs of under-graduates at the Faculty of Applied Science at Al-Aqsa University .	Question-naire	Students	The results indicate that, according to students', the most important academic English language skill for the FAS students' study is reading comprehension, followed by listening comprehension, and then writing. In addition, the most important academic English language subskills for the FAS students' study are as follows: reading textbooks; reading to understand text and exam questions; following and understanding class lectures; understanding lectures in order to take notes; writing class notes, and writing test and exam answers.

As mentioned earlier, the common feature of the reviewed studies is that they all employ needs analysis as a tool for investigating English language demands of non-native speakers of English. They approach students' English demands using different frameworks. Al-Husseini (2004) Ali and Salih (2013) and Alasta and Shuib (2012), for example, made use of present situation analysis (PSA) and target situation analysis (TSA) to address an analysis of learners' needs in the language course, depending heavily on the framework raised by Hutchinson and Waters (1987). Al-Husseini (2004, p. 80) justifies this by saying "because there is a relationship between PSA and TSA, some specialists, for example (Robinson, 1991) think that NA may be seen as a combination of PSA and TSA." Shuja'a (2004) adopts what is called "a three-fold needs analysis" (p. 84). He drew heavily on Dudley-Evans and St John (1988). The three-fold needs consist of target situation analysis, present situation analysis and learning needs analysis. Including the three dimensions of needs, namely TSA, PSA and Learning Needs, has increased the meaningfulness of the Shuja'a (2004) study. The findings in the "findings and discussion" section, however, were discussed in a shallow way under the heading of linguistic difficulties, non-linguistic difficulties and language requirements. They appeared in heading format, while giving more explanation of, for example, their cause, and effects or how utilizing them in developing the new course would facilitate implementation.

Al-Busaidi (2003) studied the academic needs of EFL learning through the skills and a strategy needs approach. He mentioned, "It can be extremely difficult to predict student academic achievement based on their language test scores alone" (p. 31). This has helped in enabling a better understanding of the process underlying the use of language; however, it neglected the new innovations in NA, for example, the

learning centered approach coined by Hutchison and Waters (1987) and Means Analysis developed by Holliday and Cook (1982), and Holliday (1994, 1995).

In addition, the target populations of all the five studies are in the level of undergraduate students, for example, Patterson (2001), Al- Busaidi (2003) and Shuja'a (2004) studied university students' language needs, whereas Al-Dugaily (1999) and Al-Husseini (2004) investigated the linguistic needs of college students. The findings about the language genres, tasks, and so forth, are often of use to other contexts with the same or similar students. Recent researchers of NA, such as Coleman (1998), Long (2005), Brecht and Rivers (2005) and Cowling (2007), stressed the notion of the generalization of the NA findings at the societal level. Long (2005, p. 5) argues that "what is needed now is a serious effort by applied linguists to identify generalization, that can be made about how best to conduct needs analysis for population A or B in sector C or D, given constraints E or F." At the societal level, the needs for language are generally defined within very general social goals such as national security, social justice or the like (Brecht & Rivers, 2005). The rationale behind associating language with societal goals is to motivate policy and planning for language education at the national level. In light of this innovation in language teaching and needs analysis, the present research is devoted to a methodology for laying out—to the best extent possible—the analysis of the Omani EFL students' learning needs in public school.

As to methodology, two observations can be made in relation to NA in the studies included in Table 2.3. All studies used English students and English teachers as the main sources of information. This conforms with findings of current and previous studies, that learners and teachers have special rights when it comes to deciding the content of the course they are to undergo (Brecht & Rivers, 2005; Holliday, 1992, 1994; Hutchinson & Waters 1987; Long, 2005; Nunan, 1988). This conclusion is

logical because it raises the level of awareness of both parties as to why they are doing what they are doing and leads them to reflect usefully on means and ends. It is also important to note that even when learners and teachers are able to provide useful and reliable insight about present or future needs, better and more readily accessible sources may be available including experienced language supervisors, graduates of the program concerned, employers, administrators, and so forth. This is achieved by Al-Husseini (2004), who approached six groups of sources, and Shuja'a (2004), who also approached employers in addition to students and teachers to make the data obtained more reliable and meaningful. Others, such as Al-Dugaily (1999), Patterson (2001) and Al-Busaidi (2003), depended on students and teachers as the main and the only source for their data collection. Therefore, the reliability of their findings is in question, since involving other relevant sources would have provided more meaning and insight about the language involved in functioning successfully in the target discourse.

The second observation, in relation to the methodological aspect of the reviewed studies, is that questionnaires and interviews are the most dominant tools used in all studies such as Ali and Salih (2013) and Alasta and Shuib (2012) (see Table 2.3). Al-Dugaily (1999) uses them as the only tools for data collection in his study. In fact, many NA studies in teaching English as a second language (TESL) are carried out via semi structured interviews, or more commonly questionnaires, for instance, Aguilar (1999), Choo (1999), Abdul Aziz (2004), Keen (2006), Davies (2006), Vadirelu (2007), Taillerfer (2007), Cowling (2007), Cid, Granena, and Traght (2009) and Spada, Barkoui, Peters, So, and Valeo (2009). Yet, they are not the only resources in most NA research. Recently, NA studies such as Al-Husseini (2004), Shuja'a (2004) and Patterson (2001), focused their NA by using the multi method approach of *triangulation* to, as Patterson (2001) puts it, "both clarify the meaning and increase the

validity" of the research findings. Triangulation is a procedure used by NA researchers to enhance the reliability of their data interpretation (Long, 2005). It involves the use of multiple data-collection methods and may involve the cooperation of multiple data sources, investigators and theoretical perspectives (Aguilar, 2005). The rationale behind the notion of applying triangulation techniques is to contribute to the trustworthiness of the data and increase confidence in research findings. Based on this assumption, the present study considers triangulation of methods and sources as a main research principle that is going to be practically carried out to gain a clearer picture of students' English language learning needs.

In addition, two studies, namely Al-Dugaily (1999) and Patterson (2001), lack an implementation vision, while other studies, such as Al-Husseini (2004) and Shuja'a (2004), used the findings to propose and suggest developmental modification in the target context. Implementation has become an important component of NA in recent years (see 2.5.3.1). Many studies on innovation and implementation have appeared in the last two decades, such as Holliday and Cook (1982), Holliday (1994), Waters and Vilches (2001), Bosher and Smalkoski (2002) and Cowling (2007). The notion of "implementation needs" is based on the importance of constructing an understanding of how to implement NA findings and recommendations in the planning stage (Al-Husseini, 2004). The current study is taking the implementation needs of suggested changes into consideration in Chapter Five by analyzing the implementation needs of the findings.

Finally, only one study, namely Al-Husseini (2004), approaches top decision makers or stakeholders in the data collection phase. The other four research studies ignored stakeholders during their study procedure and only mentioned them in the last chapter, when it came to recommendations. Involving decision makers or stakeholders,

such as language specialists, supervisors, heads of department, administrators, employers, and so forth, is very fundamental at the foundation building stage (Richards, 2001; Waters & Vilches, 2001). It is also of great importance for the success of the implementation needs of any study, since these stakeholders are the ones to decide whether to accept, reject or modify the implementation initiatives suggested by the study findings. Therefore, the present study is approaching EL supervisors, the heads of EL supervision departments, the head of the Evaluation Department and the head of the Curriculum Department in the Ministry of Education in Oman during the data collection stage to investigate their perception about the NA in question.

In conclusion, this section provides an analytical review of some related studies, which indicates that all studies are affected by the development in NA approaches and frameworks to different degrees. Hutchinson and Waters' framework of learning needs is used by Al-Husseini (2004) and particularly by Shuja'a (2004) who integrates it with Holliday and Cook's (1982) framework of Means Analysis. The skills and strategies approach is adopted by Al-Busaidi (2003). All seven studies were conducted on undergraduate students in a university or a college, so their findings are only of use to contexts of the same or similar students. No generalization can be made of them as to how best to conduct NA at the nation, society or state level. Five out of seven studies depend on EL students and EL teachers as the only source for data collection. Interview and questionnaire are the only instruments used by Al-Dugaili (1999). Others used multiple methods in addition to the questionnaire and interviews to add more meaningfulness and reliability to their findings. An implementation need, which recently has become a dominant phenomenon in NA and innovation planning, is ignored by three studies as discussed above. Finally, only one study, namely Al-Husseini (2004), considers stakeholders during its procedures as a source of

information for the students' NA, while the others ignore or involve them only in the initial stage of their studies.

Based on the understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the former studies, the present study tries to take advantage of the developments in NA theories by expanding the focus to consider different approaches of NA (see 2.5.2) and by focusing on a national level needs analysis and implementation needs. It also triangulates theories, methods and sources in order to ensure more meaningful, valid and reliable information.

2.5 Discussion on the Literature and Approaches of NA

After the presentation of the NA approaches and analytical frameworks in 2.3 and the review of the related studies on NA provided in 2.4, it is obvious that NA, by its very nature, is highly context-dependent and population-specific (West, 1994). Therefore, NA as can be understood from the different approaches and different studies discussed above, is too wide and divergent. There is a need to synthesize the views and conceptual foundations of NA, as this section is trying to do. Second, new development in NA is also highlighted in the coming section to establish an understanding about the possibility of prioritization of the content and methodology of the NA processes.

2.5.1 Conceptual Foundations of Language NA

Needs analysis is a familiar concept in English language teaching (ELT), as well as in teaching English as a second/foreign language (TESL/TEFL). The term "Needs Analysis" first appeared in India in the 1920s, but it was established formally during the 1970s by the Council of Europe in the field of ESP (Brindley, 1989; Richards, 2001; White, 1988). There have been many surveys of approaches to needs

analysis teaching (West, 1994). Conceptualizing needs analysis is something that has generated controversy because linguists in the ESP field have not agreed yet on the definition of the term 'need' itself (Ali & Salih, 2013). Needs analysts have argued that the definition of 'needs' depends on the perception of those making the judgment. Communicative language theories have demonstrated that learners' needs should no longer be defined in purely linguistic terms. Because of its wide nature, defining NA is a challenging task. In the language needs literature, needs are often defined in terms of dichotomies (Krohn, 2008; Oanh, 2007). Widdowson (1983) provided a distinction between goals-oriented versus process-oriented needs. This dichotomy reviewed needs as an ends means. Hutchinson and Waters (1987) conceptualized goal-oriented needs as language use needs and process-oriented needs as learning needs (Krohn, 2008). They used the term "target needs" to refer to the "language use needs" and categorized them into three subcategories, namely necessities, lacks and wants. Necessities are what the learner has to know in order to function effectively in the target situation (Hutchinson & Waters, 1978, p. 54). Lacks are the gap between what is required in the target situation and the learner's existing proficiency. Wants are seen as what the learner wants or feels is needed. With regard to the learning strategies approach, two types of needs are identified: the learners' preferred strategies for progressing from where they are to where they want to go and the teacher's strategies to help the learners meet their needs.

Ritchtrich (1973) explained that the learning process, by being responsive to learners' expressed needs, becomes a source of its own change. He distinguished between "objective" and "subjective" needs. This dichotomy was adopted by many needs analysts such as Numon (1988) in the Learner-Centered Approach, Brindley (1989), and Brown (1994). Objective needs analysis aimed at collecting factual

information for setting broad goals related to language content, whereas subjective needs analysis aimed at gathering information about learners, which can be used to guide the learning process once it is underway (Fatihi, 2003). Berwich (1989) similarly categorized needs according to their provenance, contrasting felt (subjective) needs and perceived (objective) needs. He defines needs as, "A gap or measurable discrepancy between a current state of affairs and a desired future state." "Felt needs" refer to the "wants" or "desires", which are derived from insiders and the "perceived needs", are derived from outsiders, from facts, from what is known and can be "verified". Another dimension to view NA is "situation analysis" (Brown, 1994; Richards, 2001) or "means analysis" (Holliday, 1995, 1992; Jordan, 1997). They research the "internal constraints" and investigate the related cultures or environments such as classroom, policies, requirements, resources, Ministry of Education, and so forth.

NA, as can be seen, can be interpreted from different dimensions based on the approach or the framework in question. In my opinion, linguistic analysis or the linguistic domain in NA is the most distinctive feature of all language analysis schools such as Systematic Functional Linguistics, Exchange Structure Analysis, Genre Analysis Approach, and Critical Discourse Analysis. This conclusion is also supported by many recent researchers such as Coffin (2001), Long (2005), Al-Busaidi (2004), Shuja'a (2004) and Krohn (2008). However, linguistic analysis is still a relevant aspect of NA research (Al-Husseini, 2004). A good NA framework cannot ignore the relative importance of other NA dimensions such as the learner dimension, the means dimension, the present situation dimension, the target language use dimension, and the context dimension. Based on this foundation, I advocate the use of a multidimensional model of needs analysis.

2.5.2 Implication for the Present Study

Based on the above discussion of theoretical and practical assumptions of NA, the current study maintains a multi theoretical perspective or multidimensional model of needs analysis. Study findings, to date, such as Long (2005), Aguilar (2005), Taillefer (2007), Cowling (2007) and Krohn (2008) have emphasized the need for triangulation of data sources, investigators as well as theoretical perspectives,

Shuja'a (2004) uses three NA dimensions, which he calls "three-fold needs": target language needs, present situation analysis and means analysis. Purpura and Graziano-King (2004) developed a model comprising four dimensions: the context, the learner, the target and the present language dimension. They investigated the foreign language needs of professional school students in international affairs. Krohn (2008) uses the same model proposed by Purpura and Graziano-King (2004), but adds a fifth dimension, which is the institutional means dimension, "to find about the language requirements, policies expectations and course offering and how they may be readjusted to address the needs" (p. 25).
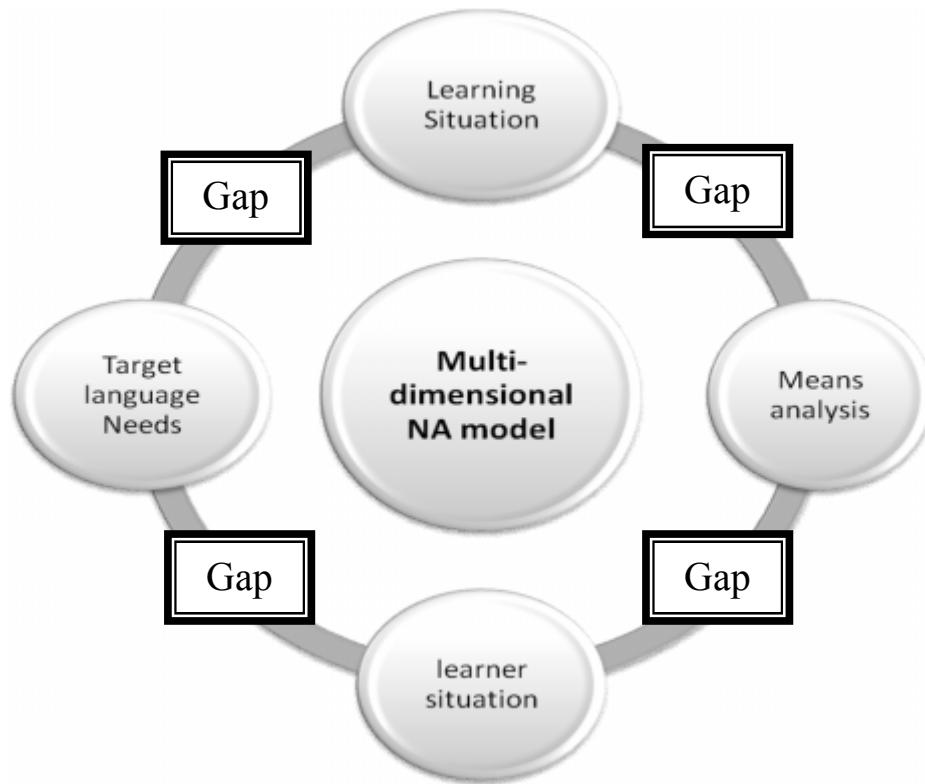
Figure 2.5. The multidimensional model adapted in the current study.

The current study uses a multidimensional model as in Figure 2.5. It investigates English language learning needs of Omani students studying in post-basic education schools by addressing the following domains:

1. Target language needs; Munby (1978) (see 2.3.3 above).

2. The learning situation; Hutchinson and Waters (1987), English language instruction for Omani students, (see 2.3.5 above).

3. The learner situation; the learner's motivation and goal for learning English, Hutchinson and Waters (1987).

4. Means analysis; Holliday (1995) to identify the factor that may affect the implementation of the English language curriculum in Omani schools (see 2.3.7).

The rationale behind adopting a multidimensional model for NA in the current study is four fold.

1. The model was developed in the context of large scale studies of foreign language needs (Krohn, 2008), similar to the current study, which analyzes the language learning needs of EFL learners in a nationwide context in Oman.

2. It has the flexibility of involving multi-dimensions to account for all types of needs that can enhance the language teaching outcomes.

3. It predicts where gaps and unmet needs would be likely to occur (see Figure 2.5), for example, the gap might appear between the learning needs and the learner needs or what the learner wants to learn and what they are expected to know.

4. Triangulation of needs dimensions contributes to the trustworthiness of the data gathered and increases confidence in the research findings (Aguilar, 2005).

2.5.3 New developments in NA

NA Literature, post Munby's communicative approach era, has witnessed a shift from emphasis on course design to implementation and evaluation (Al-Husseini, 2004). Implementation needs and evaluation have become an important element in the needs analysis processes. This study thus reconceptualizes this sub-element within the processes of NA.

2.5.3.1 Implementation needs

As mentioned earlier in 2.4.1, most of the results of language analysis of the late needs analysis approaches have been firmly kept in-house by the language institutions concerned (Al-Husseini, 2004; Nelson, 2000). Such failure in ELT research has directed linguists and analysts to investigate the reasons behind such ignorance and how to overcome it. The value of needs analysis in ELT research is mainly in the conclusion and the innovation it introduced to the English Language teaching process. The findings of structurally based NAs tend to produce lists of content of most commercially published grammar books. This throws into question the relevance of conducting NA and the validity of its outcomes (Long, 2005). Much research on innovation in ELT has appeared in the last two decades (Al-Husseini, 2004). Some of them are Holliday and Cook (1982), Holliday (1994, 1995, 2001), Graves (2001), Feez (2001), Sergeant (2001) as well as Waters and Vilches (2001). They provided language specialists, teachers and material developers with a coherent set of guiding principles for implementing language teaching innovation/reform.

From the early stage of needs analysis planning, the analysts needed to consider the implementation of their study findings as a main component of the research proposal. Innovation study should consider from the outset how to implement its suggested change/model. This can be achieved, according to Waters and Vilches (2001, p. 133), "by catering appropriately to a range of innovation implementation needs 'considering those' who will actually design and implement the innovation, and those who will form the majority of its end-users", for example the administrators, managers, heads of department, supervisors, teachers and students.

To identify the basic characteristics of implementation needs, Waters and Vilches (2001) developed the "Implementation Needs Model" in the form of a matrix.

Their model helps in describing a better picture of the full range of needs involved in the ELT innovation implementation process. The model is a two dimensional matrix; the vertical dimension is concerned with the levels of needs and the horizontal looks at the areas of needs. Al-Husseini (2004) thinks that the most distinguishing feature of this model is that it considers the end-users as early as the planning stage in what is called "foundation-building needs".

This new dimension to needs analysis is important in the current study. Both the decision makers at the top of the administration hierarchy and teachers should be initially familiarized at the foundation-building stage, with the findings and recommendations of this study. Based on the innovation in NA, it is concluded that implementation needs are a major dimension in the NA process of the current study.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The present study requires extensive surveys to identify the language learning needs of Omani students learning English in public schools. This chapter is concerned with the methodology of the needs analysis for the English program in Omani public schools and the ways of improving it to fit its purposes. The methodology is built on the statement of the problem and the research questions presented in Chapter One and the theoretical discussion of NA frameworks set down in Chapter Two, as illustrated in Figure 3.1.

The current study is justified by the critical review of the Needs Analysis literature which revealed a lack of NA studies in a societal or nationwide context. Limited number –if any– nationwide empirical NA studies exist in contrast to a much wider body of work, which addresses individual learners, or certain learner type needs. In addition, the past studies did not address the pre-college students; rather they all concentrated on university students. A vast majority of the recent NA research targets adult learners or undergraduate/postgraduate university students neglecting the needs of EFL/ESL learners at the school level of a nation. The other gap in knowledge is that the majority of recent NA studies focused on one approach of NA and did not make use of the innovations in this field.

As to methodology, two observations can be made in relation to NA procedures. All studies used English language students and English language teachers as the main sources of information. This complements the findings of current and previous studies, that learners and teachers have special right to, when it comes to deciding the content

of the course they are to undergo (Brecht & Rivers, 2005; Hutchinson & Waters, 1987; Holliday 1992, 1994; Long, 2005; Nunan, 2001).This conclusion is logical because it raises the level of awareness of both parties as to why they are doing what they are doing and leads them to reflect usefully on means and ends. It is also important to note, that, even when learners and teachers are able to provide useful and reliable insight about present or future needs, better and more readily accessible sources may be available including experienced language supervisors, graduates of the program concerned, employers, administrators, and so forth.

The second observation, in relation to the methodological aspect, is that questionnaires and interviews are the most dominant tools used in all studies. Al-Dugily (1999) used them as the only tools for data collection in his study. Many of NA studies in Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL) research are carried out via semi structural interviews, or more commonly questionnaires, for instance, Aguilar (2005), Choo (1999), Abdul Aziz (2004), Keen (2006), Davies (2006), Vadirelu (2007), Taillefer (2007), Cowling (2007) Cid, Granena, and Traght (2009) and Spada, Barkoui, Peters, So and Kiranmayi (2012), Ali and Salih (2013), Soruc (2012), Alastal and Shuib (2012), Nallaya (2012), and Valeo (2009). Yet, they are not the only resources in most of NA research . Recently, NA studies such as Al-Husseini (2004), Shuja'a (2004) and Patterson (2001), focused their NA by triangulating multi method approaches to, as Patterson (2001) puts it, "clarify the meaning and increase the validity" of the research findings. Triangulation is a procedure used by NA researchers to enhance the reliability of interpretation of their data (Long, 2005). The rationale behind the notion of applying triangulation techniques is to contribute to the trustworthiness of the data and increase confidence in research findings

Triangulation of data collection techniques and source of information is considered crucial in needs analysis (Brecht & Rivers, 2005; Coleman, 1998; Cowling, 2007; Long, 2005; Richards, 2001). Therefore, multiple sources, such as students, teachers, supervisors, and heads of department are approached for the purpose of data collection. In addition, a variety of data were gathered and compared using multiple methods such as questionnaires, interviews, and text book analysis. The two types of data collected in the present study (qualitative and quantitative) allowed for two types of triangulation (Krohn, 2008): methodological triangulation (multiple data gathering procedures) and data triangulation (multiple sources of information). Figure 3.1 summarizes the theoretical framework and its relation with the research questions of the present study.
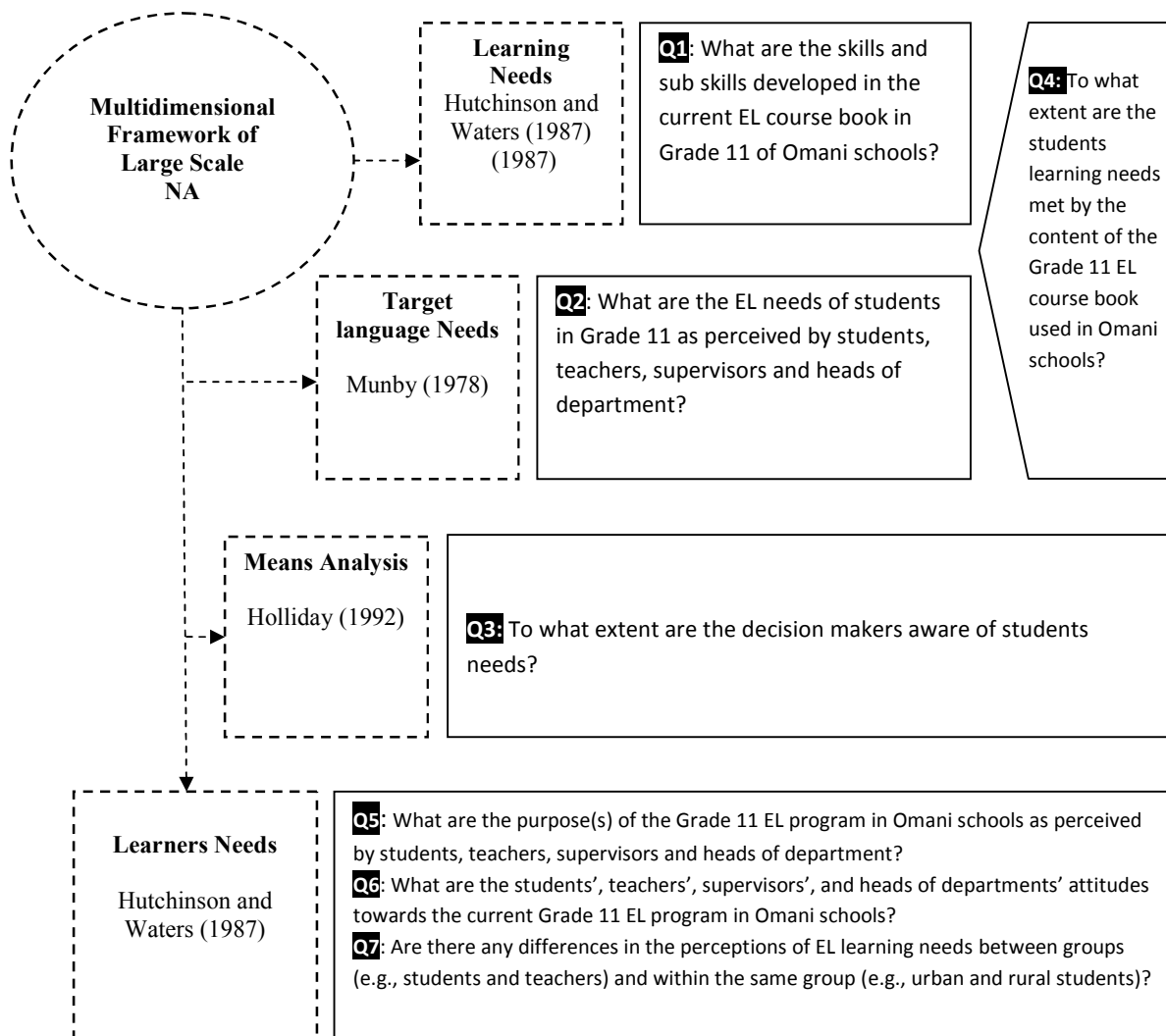
Figure 3.1. Summary of the, framework, and research questions of the study.

Participants

Five different sources were approached for the purpose of data collection namely: students, teachers, supervisors, heads of department and the English language textbooks. The purpose of involving these five different sources of information is to make the gathered data more authentic, reliable and relevant to the objectives of the study. It is fundamental to have different sources of information in needs analysis

(Shuja'a, 2004); this will make it possible to have as much varied information as possible. These resources are described in the next section.

Students and teachers are two of the main resources of information in NA studies, e.g., Shuja'a (2004), Cowling (2007), Krohn (2008), Taillefer (2007), Kawepet (2009), Read (2008), and Spada, Barkaoui, Peters, So, and Valeo (2009). Recent research in NA has recognized the role of other stakeholders, who are close to decision makers, such as supervisors and heads of department. Table 3.1 demonstrates the characteristics of the participants included in this study.

Table 3.1

The Characteristics of Participants from the Omani Educational System

No.	Participants	Characteristics
1	EFL students	The target students are the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students learning English in Grade 11 of the governmental Omani schools. They are male and female aged between 16 and 18.
2	EFL teachers	English language teachers who teach English as a foreign language in the Omani governmental schools.
3	Supervisors	English language regional supervisors who supervise English Language teaching in the schools.
4	Heads of department	The head of the English department in the directorate general of curriculum, and the supervision department in the Ministry of Education in Oman. Being close to the decision-making processes, they are important sources of data in the current study.

The intention to include a sample of students from the Omani schools is justified by the fact that these students are the core of the learning and teaching process. All kinds of educational planning and curriculum reforms are meant for their benefit. In addition, they are the first party affected by any change in the English syllabus; the information they supply is crucial to gain insight into their English learning problems. This is of great help for the curriculum designers and decision makers. Students will express their needs, wants and desires, which are the bases for any English language needs analysis. Therefore looking into students voices should make us gain some important insights underpinning effective or ineffective language program in schools (Sorus, 2012).

The rationale for selecting Grade 11 students as study sample not others grade is because they are the outcomes of the cycle two system. They are in the first year out of two from the post basic education which produce the incomers for universities or private sectors. Therefore, it was felt focusing on Grade 11 students would enable the researcher to capture pictures about the outcomes of the basic education and can give chance to cater for the students needs in the coming grade which is Grade 12.

Overall, students and teachers are the main sources of information for many needs analysis studies, for example, Al-Busaidi (2003), Al-Husseini (2004), Aseyabi (1995), Graves (2000), and Shuja'a (2004). In fact, any needs analysis has to incorporate information about the learners' perceptions of what they want to learn and how they want to learn it. This has recently become an important dimension added to the needs analysis approach, which is distinguished from earlier more mechanical approaches.

Heads of department are also included because they are close to decision makers in the Ministry. They are also the ones to decide whether to accept or reject the

implications for reforms recommended by the current study. Therefore, their involvement is essential for these two reasons. Table 3.2 shows the study population, which is Grade 11 students, distributed according to gender and educational region in the academic year 2007/2008.

Table 3.2

Distribution of Grade 11 Students by Gender and Educational Region for the

2007/2008 Academic Year

Educational regions	Gender		Total
	Male	Female	
Muscat	4609	4613	9222
Al-Batinah (North)	5042	4996	10038
Al-Batinah (South)	3327	3118	6445
Al-Dakhiliyah	3610	3423	7033
Al-Sharqiyah (South)	1853	1822	3675
Al-Sharqiyah (North)	1852	1636	3488
AL-Bruraimy	634	498	1132
Al-Dhahirah	1610	1446	3056
Dhofar	2008	1976	3984
Al-Wusta	292	138	430
Musandam	296	246	542
Total	25133	23912	49045

It is important to understand that all regions adopt the same language program. In other words, they have the same course books, assessment style, resources, and so forth. The students in all Omani regions share the same background characteristics

when it comes to EL teaching and learning. They are for example, Omani, boys and girls, aged between 16 to 18 years, in Grade 11 and come from all parts of Oman with the same linguistic and ethnic background. Each of the eleven regions can represent the others in terms of philosophy, contents, objectives, needs, students and teachers. In this sense, the differences between urban and rural students were not significant as discussed in section 4.8.4, which expand on the shared similarities explained in this section. Because of these similarities, the data was gathered from four out of the eleven regions.

3.2.1 Sampling

Although the research literature provides no specific percentage of participants that can be considered a sufficient sample (Al-Husseini, 2004; Shuja'a, 2004), using the maximum possible number of participants was the rationale for this study. A stratified sampling technique was used to select 1000 EFL students and 100 EL teachers teaching English in Grade 11 schools. Also 4 EL supervisors and 3 heads of the departments (Supervision and Curriculum Department) were purposively selected due to their limited number in the Ministry of Education in Oman. The random student and teacher sample was drawn from four out of eleven educational regions of the whole Sultanate. These four regions were Muscat, Al-Sahrqyah South, Al-Batenah South and Al-Batenah North (see Appendix H for Oman map). Stratified sampling techniques are generally used when the population is divided into separate groups (strata) which differ along selected characteristics such as gender, age, size, or geographical location. According to the current study, the Omani students are divided into regions, and each region is divided into schools; the schools are sub divided into male and female schools. Random samples were drawn from each subgroup operation or stratum. This

method is especially appropriate when particular subgroups are known to vary or when some characteristic, such as age, is known to be related to the outcome of interest. Stratified sampling was chosen because this method was the most suitable for the research context due to three considerations, namely, the demographics of educational regions, to reduce the sampling errors and to get a representative sample.

Table 3.3

Study Sample Distribution According to Gender and Region

Gender		Region				Total
		Muscat	Al-Batyneh North	Al-Batyneh South	Al-Sharqyeh	
	Male	119	103	124	178	524
	Female	43	126	121	168	458
Total		162	229	245	346	982

After the data collection per Table 3.3, the total number of completed and useful questionnaires to be analyzed was 982 out of 1000 students from 4 educational regions in Oman. The remaining 18 questionnaires were discarded because they were incomplete. The study participants were divided into 524 male students and 458 female students studying English in Grade 11 of Omani schools.

In addition, 64 out of 80 teachers participated in this study from the 4 educational regions in Oman. They were divided into 34 male teachers and 30 female teachers teaching English in Grade 11 schools. The remaining 16 questionnaires were discarded, as they were found incomplete.

3.3 The Study Instruments

"It is difficult to overemphasize the likelihood that use of multiple measures, as well as multiple sources, will increase the quality of information gathered" (Long, 2005, p. 32). This is essential in the present study, as it undertakes a national survey to analyze the language learning needs of Omani students in Grade 11. A mixed quantitative and qualitative methodology was adopted with questionnaires, interviews, and text book analysis being the main data gathering tools. A brief description of questionnaires and interviews as instruments is provided in the following section.

3.3.1 Questionnaires

Questionnaires were used to collect information from the students and teachers from the Omani public schools. The rationale for selecting this tool is for two reasons. First, the questionnaires enabled data collection on a large scale compared to interviews. Questionnaires are widely used in educational research as a technique to deduce attitudes and perceptions (Cowling, 2007; Kawepet, 2009; Krohn, 2008; Read, 2008; Spada, Barkaoui, Peters, So, & Valeo, 2009; Shuja'a, 2004; Taillefer, 2007). Questionnaires allow generalization of the results and have a good track record. The second reason for choosing this technique is that questionnaires are a useful tool for collecting information from a large number of participants (Long, 2005) and can be tailored to fit the particularities of each group of participants. Therefore, two sets of questionnaires were designed to address the EFL students and teachers (copies are provided in Appendix C and E).

The EL teachers' survey was written in English, while the students' survey was in Arabic for two reasons. First, it was easier for students to understand in their native language. Second, the statements included were difficult and responding to them in

English might make it more complex for students to fully grasp the intent of the survey. The questionnaires were first written in English and then translated into Arabic. Two procedures were taken to ensure accuracy of the translation. First, the source version of the questionnaires was translated into Arabic and then the Arabic version was translated back into English by the researcher and other specialists familiar with English and Arabic. The back translation was to ensure that the original intent of the source questionnaire was perceived and to make a comparison between the Arabic and English versions. Examples of some of the necessary changes which were made to the questionnaires are as in items 7, 13 and 20. Item 7 wording after the back translation was "understanding ideas after reading a text", but changed to "remembering major ideas when I read an English text". **Item 13** wording after the back translation was "finding out meaning of new words", but this was changed to "inferring meaning of terms from a text". Another example of the translation changes is in **item 20** wording after the back translation was "describing myself and others in writing", which was changed to "expressing themselves well in writing".

The questionnaire content

The students and teachers questionnaires consist of three sections:

Section 1 elicited demographic information about teachers and students. Teachers were asked to provide information about their gender, school type and the years of experience and university of graduation. Students on the other hand, were asked to supply information about their gender, school type, region, English score and whether they have studied additional English courses in private or summer schools. It is noted that personal information such as gender and school type were not considered as study variables; rather they provided information about whether the questionnaires

were distributed to a sufficiently varied sample to represent the study population and are also used to study the similarities and differences within and between the groups, as in Research Question Seven.

Section 2 was related to the students' purpose for studying English in Omani public schools. It was aimed at finding out the purpose of the English language course, as perceived by the teachers and the students. Teachers and students were provided with four alternative purposes to rank according to importance. Graves (2000) argued that such information can help to shape goals and to alert learners to what is realistic within the construction of the course. Students were also asked about the most important language skill they would need in order to improve their English. The task was to rank the macro-skills from 1 to 4 according to their importance (1 being the most important and 4 the least important). Students and teachers were also provided with four statements regarding their attitudes toward the current English curriculum. They had to choose from a three point scale (agree, neutral and disagree).

Section 3 included the language use needs, which were sorted according to the four different language skills (reading, writing, listening, and speaking). These data were based on self-reports on the type and frequency of language activities, skills and sub-skills that the students practice. The skills were chosen for their documented importance in the skill literature. The third section included 50 items (see Table 3.4) representing activities, skills and sub-skills; participants were asked to indicate on a scale of frequency, how often they face difficulty doing each one during their study. In developing this test, the following needs analysis studies were consulted, for example, Al-Busaidi (2003), Al-Husseini (2004), Al-Sybil (1995), Graves (2000) and from my own experience as an English teacher and supervisor.

Table 3.4

The Items Included in the Students' Questionnaire

The Skills	The Items
Reading	Understanding general ideas when reading in English. Understanding how the ideas in an English text relate to each other. Understanding charts and graphs in a scientific text. Understanding English vocabulary and grammar when I read. Understanding the most important point in a text. Organizing the important ideas and concepts in an English text. Remembering major ideas when I read an English text. Figuring out the meaning of new words by using the context and my background knowledge. Using the library and internet to find information that I am looking for. Understanding an English text well enough to answer questions about it later. Differentiating between statements of facts and statements of opinion. Using a dictionary to find out meanings. Inferring meaning of terms from a text. Understanding an English text as easily as an Arabic one.
Writing	Writing a summary of information I *read or* listened *to.* Organizing my writing, so that the reader can understand my main ideas. Supporting my writing with examples, evidence and data. Taking notes that demonstrate the main points. Writing an essay in the class on an assigned topic. Expressing myself well in writing. Expressing ideas and arguments effectively. Using correct grammar, vocabulary, punctuation and spelling. Sequencing paragraphs in the article. Structuring clear statements without any ambiguity or vagueness. Translating some concepts and ideas from Arabic to English. Incorporating data and illustration in my writing. Relating the topic I write to my knowledge and experience. Writing a good introduction and a conclusion to my article. Writing a questionnaire in English. Writing curriculum vitae CV in English. Explaining in writing the content of graphs, tables, charts and diagrams. Writing a report about an action in the past. Editing my own or others' papers for grammar and style problems. Writing a letter of application. Writing a report on scientific projects done in a laboratory. Writing a paragraph from notes. Writing a proposal about future plans.

Listening	Understanding the main idea of a conversation or a lesson.
	Relating information I hear in English to what I already know.
	Understanding the speaker's attitude or opinion about what he or she is saying.
	Understanding the relationships among ideas I listen to.
	Remembering the most important points after listening to an English text.
Speaking	Making myself clear when speaking to others.
	Delivering a well prepared presentation.
	Talking for few minutes about a topic I am familiar with.
	Participating in a conversation or a discussion in English.
	Stating and supporting my opinion.
	Responding to questions orally.
	Orally summarizing information I have read or listened to.
	Answering exam questions correctly.

Participants were also given the chance to add any linguistic skills they think were missed. In addition, there was a cover letter in the form of consent for participation attached to the questionnaire. The letter appealed to the respondents to participate in the research by explaining that their inputs were confidential and crucial to the success of the current study.

3.3.1.1 Piloting the Questionnaire

Before piloting the questionnaire, it had gone through a pre-piloting stage where it was distributed among five ELT specialists from Sultan Qaboos University and the Ministry of Education. Other copies were distributed among PhD students studying in the University of Malaya. Their contribution was to comment on the language of the student questionnaire and its suitability for the language competence of Grade 11 of Omani post-basic education students. They were also requested to comment on the design and its fitness. They were advised to simplify the language and explain some of

the terms used in the questionnaire. The overall outcome of this pre-piloting step was further simplification of the questionnaire items.

The pilot study was carried out in Al-Sharqyeh South region. The piloting was to provide information about the extent to which the participants were cooperative and keen to help in completing the questionnaire. It has also helped in testing the validity and reliability of the study instrument (see the discussion in section 3.3.1 and 3.3.2).

Almost 100 students were randomly selected for piloting the questionnaire from four different schools consisting of 50 male students and 50 female students. Students were given the Arabic version of the questionnaire and the English version was given to the teachers. The researcher himself administered the pilot run to the piloting sample to gather information regarding the following:

a. The time taken for students and teachers to complete the questionnaire. It was found that (15) fifteen minutes was the range of the time frame for administering the questionnaire to an individual.

b. The clarity of the instructions. Students had some confusion in understanding the rubric for the purpose and attitudes sections of the questionnaires, so the given alternatives were clearly presented in bold at the top part of each section.

c. The ambiguity of the questionnaire items

d. Requirement to include new topics. This resulted in adding an open-ended question at the end of the questionnaire to give participants the chance to include any further needs not included.

e. Difficulties encountered during the questionnaire administration

Table 3.5

The Number of Completed Copies of the Questionnaire in the Pilot Study

	Male	Female	Total
Distributed	50	50	100
Collected	30	50	80
Incomplete	20	0	20

The pilot questionnaires were collected back immediately. The pilot run gave me useful hints and clues to discover loopholes and inaccuracies in the questionnaire. Only 80 copies of the questionnaire were found suitable to be analyzed and 20 were missing or cancelled due to incomplete answers given. These 80 copies were divided as in Table 3.5. This step was followed by an analysis of the subjects' responses to the questionnaire to ensure more reliability and validity of the scale as explained in the following section.

3.3.1.2 Reliability of the Scale

Another indicator of the trustworthiness in the quantitative research tools was the instrument's reliability (Lincoln & Gobi, 1985). It indicated that the developed questionnaire would give the same results if it measured the same thing (Neumann, 2001). The proposed questionnaire's reliability was estimated by two different approaches, Internal Consistency Approach and Equivalence Reliability.

The Internal consistency approach.

This method was based on the calculation of the correlation coefficient between each item's score and the score of the whole scale. Cronbach's alpha coefficient was

used, and the reliability was .94, which was considered significant and indicated that all variables included were reliable. Educators such as Likert and others (1934) reported that a reliability coefficient between .62 and .93 could be trusted.

The Equivalence reliability

Equivalence Reliability addresses the question: Does the measure yield consistent results across different indicators? Neumann (2001) stated that researchers examine equivalence reliability of examinations and long questionnaires with the split-half method. Using SPSS, the questionnaire that consisted of 50 items was divided into two parts as follows:

a. Part one: items 1 to 25.

b. Part two: items 26 to 50.

The split-half method helped to find the effect of items' inconsistency as a source for error using the variance between the two halves. The correlation coefficient between the two parts was calculated and found to be .79 as in Table 3.6, which shows that the scale was reliable and the two parts were highly correlated. This means that both parts would give the same results.

Table 3.6

Pilot Study Spilt Half Reliability

	Characteristic	Value
Part 1	N of items	25
	Cronbach's alpha	.896
Part 2	N of items	25
	Cronbach's alpha	.890
Correlation Between Parts		.785

3.3.1.3 The Validity of the Questionnaires

Before being able to conclude that this study was trustworthy and ethical, however, some more detailed aspects of the issue must be considered. A quantitative study could not accomplish its most basic functions if the researcher had not established trust and reciprocity in the field. Therefore, to examine whether the developed instrument would report valid scores, I tested the validity of the instrument for the following reasons:

1. To avoid poorly designed questions or measures of variables.

2. To make useful predictions from the scores.

3. To ensure a good design of the study.

4. To avoid misunderstanding of the questions in the instrument, which might result in a state of stress or fatigue in students.

5. To ensure the usefulness and applicability of the gathered information.

Neumann (2001) had argued that validity was harder to achieve than reliability. One could not have absolute confidence about validity because constructs were abstract ideas, whereas indicators were concrete observations. Therefore, validity is part of a dynamic process that grows by accumulating evidence over time. Creswell (2005) thought that, more recently, measurement specialists have began to view validity as a unitary concept and advocated that scores are valid if they have use and result in positive social consequences. The validity of the current study was assured using content validity and factor analysis

The Content Validity

Content validity is the extent to which the questions on the instrument are representative of all the possible questions that a researcher could ask about the study content (Creswell, 2005). The main rationale behind using this form of validity was to make use of the expert who would know and could comment about the investigated topic since students' linguistic needs. It could have been of less usefulness if the research theme were related to assessing personalities or attitude scores.

The first draft of the student and teacher questionnaires consisted of 65 items. I developed these items after reviewing the following:

     a. Sets of related scales and studies that tackled EL students' needs analysis.

     b. Experts' views and ideas on students' linguistic needs.

     c. Research experience as an English teacher and English language supervisor.

In order to make use of the panel of judges' or experts' feedback regarding the extent to which the new scale measures the linguistic competences needed by Omani students, the questionnaires were handed to 12 arbitrators from Oman, Yemen and the UK as in Table 3.7. They were addressed formally in a letter (Appendix A) asking them to read the items and determine the suitability of each item to measure students' linguistic needs and provide their comments regarding the clarity of the items, thoughts and presentation and to comment on the translation (if included).

Table 3.7

The 12 Arbitrators Who Participated in Evaluating Content Validity

No	Name	Job	Agency	Country
1	Mr. Saeed Al-Harthi	Director of Applied Science Curriculum Department	MOE	Oman
2	Mr. Ali Azmi	Senior EL Supervisor	MOE	Oman
3	Fawzia Al-Zedgali	Head of English Curriculum Department	MOE	Oman
4	Simon Etherton	Trainees Trainer	MOE	Oman
5	Michele Ni Thoghdha,	Chief EL Supervisor	MOE	Oman
6	Dr. Ali Mahdi Kazem	Lecturer	SQU	Oman
7	Dr. Abdo Maklafi	Lecturer	SQU	Oman
8	Dr Abdulmoneim Mohmoud	Lecturer	SQU	Oman
9	Dr. Ali Al-Zamili	Lecturer	SQU	Oman
10	Dr Abdulhamid Al-Sheqa	Lecturer	Sanaa University	Yemen
11	Dr Vijay	Lecturer	Dofar University	Oman
12	Mr. Mark Krzanowski	Educational Expert	IATEFL	UK

Note. MOE = Ministry of Education; SQU = Sultan Qaboos University; IATEFL = International Association of Teachers of English as a Foreign Language

This step resulted in changing some of the terms in the questionnaire into more simplified language to facilitate understanding among the study participants. It had also resulted in limiting the scope of this study to analyzing the linguistic competence needed by Omani students to enhance their academic performance, so some of the items, which were classified as academic skills, were integrated with the four language skills such as the items from 44 to 64. Overall, the final draft of the questionnaire consisted of 50 items. Examples of the omitted statements from the questionnaire are presented in Table 3.8.

Table 3.8

Examples of Some Omitted Statements

N.	Omitted statements
1	Writing a summary of information that I have listened to.
2	Understanding the relationships among ideas I listen to.
3	Orally summarizing information I have listened to.
4	Summarizing a paragraph in one sentence.
5	Organizing and presenting information in an oral presentation.
6	Using the library to search for information.
7	Editing my own or others' papers for grammar and style problems.
8	Recognizing and producing a descriptive text.
9	Recognizing and producing a narrative text.
10	Recognizing and producing a persuasive text.
11	Recognizing and producing an argumentative text.
12	Recognizing and producing a lab report.
13	Recognizing and producing memos and letters.
14	Interpreting graphs, tables, charts, etc.

Factor Analysis

This procedure was to study the factorial validity of the scale. Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) is used to uncover the underlying structure of a relatively large set of variables. EFA with principal component analysis was aiming at empirically revealing and demonstrating the hypothesized, underlying structure of the questionnaire in question.

Based on data of the pilot sample, the 50 items of the Language learning needs analysis questionnaire were experimented using exploratory factor analysis. The factor analysis gave the value 0.8 based on the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) Measure of

Sampling Adequacy's index which is considered a good value regarding this index. In the test of factor loading, using the eigenvalues of Kaiser's criterion, 10 values placed above 1.0. According to Kaiser's criterion, only factors with eigenvalues greater than 1 can be retained (Kaiser, 1960). Therefore, 10 factors have loading on the scale's items. Based on the factor loading values and the shape of the scree plot (Appendix J), Varimax Rotation was used to rotate the factors.

Varimax Rotation extracted four factors with the coefficient 0.3 or above. According to the literature review, Language needs analysis classification was based on the language macro skills; speaking writing, listening and reading (Alastal, & Shuib, 2012; Janda, 2009; Kiranmayi, 2012; Nallaya, 2012).

According to the table in Appendix J, a total of 14 items belong to the first dimension 'reading', 23 items of 50 belong to the second dimension 'writing', 8 items belong to the third dimension 'listening', and 5 items belong to 'speaking'. The items as in Appendix J were the outcome after analyzing the factor analysis outputs. The items were rearranged and grouped into four components according to the distribution to each macro skill.

3.3.2 Structured Interviews

The use of interviews is widely reported in NAs as being one of the most direct ways of finding out what people think. This method encourages the research participants to express themselves freely; sensitive matters and issues are easily expressed in face-to-face discussions. The rationale for utilizing this tool is because the researcher has the advantage of clarifying and disambiguating unclear questions in the interview due to in-depth coverage of the issues. Interviews also provide in-depth

details about some of the questions raised because "interviews have a higher response rate than questionnaires because respondents become more involved and motivated" (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2000, p. 269). The information gained from these interviews was for triangulating (Leung, 2006) the data gathered from the questionnaires with the researcher's interpretation of that data by having supervisors and heads of department talk about their objectives and intentions. The advantage of interviews was that, through this tool, the researcher could extend the investigation of ideas, feelings or attitudes and could seek further clarification of ideas. Therefore, the aims of these interviews were:

1. To complement the questionnaire responses with face-to-face facts related to the current state of English language teaching and curriculum.

2. To have practical information about the priorities of English language skills for the students.

3. To obtain information from highly experienced people in the field regarding the real needs of their schools and their expectation of the new reform in teaching English.

Interviews were based on a common schedule drawn up based on the pilot study findings. The common questions addressed in the structured interviews were:

1. What are the language skills and sub skills students need in post-basic education schools?

2. To what extent is the current English program in Grade 11 capable of equipping students with the required English language skills and competencies for their current and prospective needs?

3. Is it important to learn about the students' language needs? How can it be done?

4. What is/are the purpose(s) of the current English language curriculum/program in post-basic education schools?

5. How important is English for the students to succeed in their academic study?

6. How could the existing English language program be improved to meet the academic needs and demands of students in post-basic education schools? What are areas that need improvement?

These six questions focused on the four main items in the research questions, which were:

1. The English language learning needs of Omani students. This issue is addressed in questions 1, 2 and 3.

2. The learner's purposes in studying English in Omani public schools. This topic is addressed in question 4.

3. The attitudes toward the current English language program in Grade 11 of Omani schools. This issue is addressed in question 5.

4. Feedback for the reform of the current program was addressed in question 6.

In addition, the interviews triangulated with the questionnaire content. Questions 1, 2, and 3 triangulate with section 3 of the questionnaire, which was concerned with the language use and needs. Questions 4 and 5 triangulated with section 2, which was related to the learners' purposes and attitudes.

The interview was used to gather in-depth qualitative data about the students' needs from the supervisors (4), the head of the supervision department (1), and the heads of the Curriculum Department (2). Thus, seven interviews were conducted individually. The interviews were based on the following questions:

The head of the English language supervision department and supervisors

Interviewing the head of the English language supervisor department aimed at finding out about the following points:

1. How do you understand the purpose of the current English language program in Grade 11?

2. To what extent do you think the skills provided to students in the Grade 11 course book meet their needs? What do they actually need to know?

3. Is it important to study the students' language learning needs?

4. Have teachers or supervisors systematically analyzed their students language needs? How should it be done?

5. How could the current EL program be improved in order to be more efficient in fulfilling its purpose? What are the barriers, if any, that can handicap the development?

Head of the Curriculum Department

The interview with the head of the Curriculum Department sought to answer the following questions:

1. What are the objectives of the English language program? How were they set? And by whom?

2. What are the actual language needs of Grade 11 students? How have they been identified? And how clear are they to the course designers, supervisors and teachers?

3. Are there any skills that you regard as key/core skills? Which ones? Why?

4. Is the current practice in the Grade 11 English language program in schools sufficient to meet the language needs of the learners?

5. What are the suggestions to improve the current English language program? Do you see any barriers that may handicap such improvement?

3.3.3 The English Language Course Book

The first research question analyzes the present learning situation (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987) by identifying the language skills and the sub-skills found in the English Language textbook using course book analysis. The rationale for doing the course book analysis because the most important source of present situation data in designing an EL syllabus is the analysis of the text book (Richards, 2004). Course book analysis enhances the readers' and the researcher's understanding of what the exact content of the Grade 11 course book is by making explicit the patterns of language skills choices found in the current textbooks. The main purpose of this analysis is to help understand the type of language program currently being offered to the students. It will help also in identifying whether the current English program addresses the perceived students' needs or requires modification. In addition, the rigidity of the Omani syllabuses, their lack of flexibility, variety, and challenge were reported as an additional obstacle to the students' target language improvement (Al-Issa 2006; Al-Issa & Al-Bulushi, 2012; Gonzalez, 2008; Kiranmayi, 2012).

The textbooks are local ELT materials titled *Engage with English* aimed at teaching English as a foreign language to Omani students in Grade 11 of public schools. It was written and produced locally. They are task based textbooks because tasks are the unit of progression. Task in this sense is defined as a workplan that requires learners to process language pragmatically in order to achieve an outcome that can be evaluated in terms of whether the correct or appropriate propositional content has been conveyed (Kiranmayi, 2012). The textbook writers used the objectives from

the curriculum framework as discussed in section 4.2 and as in Appendix J to construct a series of tasks to achieve these goals. Thus the national textbooks were task based in orientation. The course books function in a linear manner in the sense that teachers have to finish a unit before proceeding to the next unit there are specifications of particular language objectives that the learners will need to meet (see appendix J).

The Ministry of Education assigned the writing of the Grade 11 course books to Omani authors. It appointed a team of Omani officials from the English Language Curriculum Department (ELCD) to check and report on the content of each of the textbooks prior to its introduction. After the piloting and introduction of *Engage with English*, questionnaires about the content of the book were sent to some English language inspectors and teachers, students, and parents to elicit their opinions and ideas. The book was found to concentrate on teaching certain skills more than others (Al-Issa 2006; Al-Issa & Al-Bulushi, 2012).

Detailed descriptions of the characteristics and contents of the Grade 11 EL textbooks are as follows

1. **The course book** is divided into two books for each semester. Each book is divided into five themes and each theme is classified into five different units. Each unit focuses on a particular language skill: reading, grammar, vocabulary, listening & speaking and writing. At the end, there are two optional units titled "Across Culture" and "Reading for Pleasure". They are designed as standalone units that can be used in class or for self study.

2. **The workbook** mirrors the framework of the course book. It is also divided into two books for each semesters. The workbook activities include writing and further language practice activities. At the end of each theme are reviews, which provide grammar and vocabulary revision activities for the theme as well as

wordlist activities and personalization activities. A grammar reference section, wordlist and a language function review are also provided at the back of the book. The workbook also contains a writing section, where students complete free writing assignments and extended writing tasks.

3.3.3.1 The Unit of Analysis

The unit of analysis in the current analysis is task-based analysis. Long and Norris (2000), Long (2005), and Ferch (2005) advocate that task-based needs analysis allows coherence in course design. It would be of little use to analyze learners' needs in terms of linguistic units, such as words, structures, notions or functions (Long, 2005). The basic tenet of Task Based Analysis is the task which in this sense is defined as a workplan that requires learners to process language pragmatically in order to achieve an outcome that can be evaluated in terms of whether the correct or appropriate propositional content has been conveyed (Kiranmayi, 2012). The rationale for doing task-based analysis rather than linguistic analysis is as follows:

1. A practical rationale for doing task based needs analysis is that teaching in the Omani context is text book oriented with little space for teachers to use other materials based on their selection. The entire curriculum was covered by the text book. Therefore, analyzing the tasks in the textbook would reveal the intent of the course and this also can be of potential value in the implication section in chapter five.

2. Linguistic based needs analysis tended to result in lists of decontextualized structural items similar to the content table of any grammatical syllabus not based on any needs analysis. They provided very little, if nothing, on how or to what end the structures were used in the target context, which therefore made

such analysis of little use to course designers or material writers. Real world or real life task analysis offered more insight about the students' needs compared to "usages" modelled in grammar based language teaching materials.

3. Task based analysis revealed more than the text-based analysis about the dynamic qualities of target discourse (Long, 2005). Traditional text-based analysis reflected static orientations. They were the result of people's attempts to communicate with one another.

4. Task-based NA readily lent itself as input for the design language syllabus or course. The task-based NA findings were the bases for Task Based Language Teaching TBLT, which as described by Long (2005), was radically learner-centered and catered to the learners' internal developmental syllabus.

5. According to the current study, the bases for other kinds of NA collected via questionnaires and interviews were skills and task format. Because the textbook analysis triangulates with the findings of research question two and four, it became necessary to conduct the text book analysis based on task units to make it easier to synthesize and compare the current available skills with the reported needs of the different research participants.

The prescribed sequence of steps or procedures for the course book analysis is illustrated in section 4.2 of chapter four.

3.4 Data Analysis

After gathering the quantitative data using questionnaires, I used the coding procedure to code the raw data by assigning numbers to variable attributes. This process was accompanied by creating a detailed codebook to avoid misplacing or losing the keys of the data. It is worth indicating that the frequencies provided next to

each item of the questionnaire were given a score (e.g., never = 1, rarely = 2, sometimes = 3, often = 4, and always = 5), which helped in coding the subjects' responses as well as in calculating the mean values. The questionnaire data were keyed into the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software directly. To avoid coding or entry error and missing data, the researcher recoded a 10 percent random sample of the data a second time as a cleaning procedure to ensure more accuracy of data entry. Care was given to the process of coding for data entry before conducting the analysis. The raw data were triple checked, sifted and edited.

A summary of the data analysis of each instrument is provided in Table 3.9. The quantitative data obtained was analyzed using the SPSS software.

Descriptive and inferential statistical analyses were used to answer the research questions. The descriptive statistics were used to indicate the percentage and the frequency distribution of the respondents' gender, school type, region, English score and English background within student and teacher questionnaires.

Table 3.9

Summary of the Resources, Methods and Data Analysis of the Current Study

Research questions	Resources	Methods	Analysis Procedures
1. What are the skills and sub skills developed in the current English language course book in Grade 11 of Omani schools?	Grade 11 EL Textbooks	Textbook Analysis	Close study of the content.
2. What are the English language learning needs of Omani students in Grade 11 as perceived by students, teachers, supervisors and heads of department?	Students, teachers, supervisors & heads of department	Questionnaires + interviews	Measures of central tendencies (percentage, mean and standard deviation)+ Close study of transcripts
3. To what extent are the decision makers aware of the students' needs?	Supervisors, & heads of the departments	Interviews	Close study of transcripts
4. To what extent are the students' learning needs met by the content of the Grade 11 English language course book used in Omani schools?	Students, teachers, supervisors & heads of department	Questionnaires + interviews + textbook analysis	Measures of central tendencies (percentage, mean and standard deviation)
5. What are the purpose(s) of the Grade 11 English language program in Omani schools as perceived by students, teachers, supervisors and heads of department?	Students, teachers, supervisors & heads of department	Questionnaires + interviews	Measures of central tendencies (percentage, mean and standard deviation)+ Close study of transcripts
6. What are the students', teachers', supervisors', and heads of departments' attitudes towards the current Grade 11 English language program in Omani schools?	Students, teachers, supervisors & heads of department	Questionnaires + interviews	Measures of central tendencies (percentage, mean and standard deviation)+ Close study of transcripts
7. Are there any differences in perceptions of English language learning needs between groups (e.g., students and teachers) and within the same group (e.g., urban and rural students)?	Students & teachers	Questionnaires	Independent sample t-test.

Measures of central tendencies (mean and median) were used to analyze the data for research questions 2, 4, 5 and 6. In addition, to compare between participants' perceptions, inferential analysis was adopted. Mainly the inferential analyses were used to indicate the answers for research question 7. Independent sample *t*-test was used in analyzing the gathered data because it was the best alternative to compare mean values of independent samples.

Qualitative data were analyzed by close study of the transcripts to identify what interviewees said regarding their attitudes and perceptions about the students' needs. The framework adopted in the analysis was based on Creswell (2005).

I depended on the constant comparative method to synthesize the set of qualitative data. After conducting each interview, the analysis started with transcription from the audio cassettes. Examples of the interviews transcripts are provided in Appendix D. Early analysis was found to be fruitful as it helped in organizing the thinking about the obtained data and the categories generated for interview questions were used as the guiding framework during the interviews and as categorization codes (Al-Husseini, 2004). Categorization refers to the process of coding data into categories to reduce a large text into a few tables and figures. Categories are organizing devices that allow researchers to locate and then gather all instances of a particular kind. Categorizing and grouping the data according to the issues treated by the questions provided an analytical framework (Robson, 1993). The coding system started first with open coding which resulted in transcribing all the interviews in texts. Then line-by-line examination of the data was used to develop concepts of codes to critically break apart the data into meaningful categories. This step resulted in creating many categories; therefore, I needed to synthesize these sets of categories and combine many of them depending on the previous studies. I depended on three peer reviewers as a continuous

check for credibility during the study to comment on the emerging categories and on the final categories. The final categories after the analysis were as follows:

1. Language needs

2. The purposes of Grade 11 English language program

3. Attitudes toward the current English language program

4. Examining students' needs

5. Difficulties and challenges facing the current EL program

6. Suggestions for improving the current English language program

The qualitative data gathered were then analyzed according to the above categories raised. Each category provided the answers by the different participants to that topic. Different participants' views were expressed differently because they had different responsibilities and, therefore, different views. The various utterances of the different participants were distinguished by writing a description before each utterance, for example, a head of department, or a supervisor. This helped me to account for all different views held by different individuals. The research questions were transcribed by the tag word "the researcher". Finally, all interviews were conducted and transcribed in English. All quotations in the following analysis were from the recorded interviews conducted with the different participants. To maintain confidentiality the different heads of the departments are referred as "head of the department" because referring to them by their full job title would reveal their identity.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter provided a rationale for the design of the questionnaire, the interview and text book analysis. This chapter contains an analysis of the data obtained from the various respondents involving students, teachers, supervisors and heads of departments. The research instruments answer the following research questions:

1. What are the skills and sub skills developed in the current English language course book in Grade 11 of Omani schools?

2. What are the English language learning needs of Omani students in Grade 11 as perceived by students, teachers, supervisors and heads of departments?

3. To what extent are the decision makers aware of the English language learning needs of the Grade 11 students?

4. To what extent are the students' learning needs met by the content of the Grade 11 English language course book used in Omani schools?

5. What are the purpose(s) of the Grade 11 English language program in Omani schools as perceived by students, teachers, supervisors and heads of departments?

6. What are the attitudes of students, teachers, supervisors, and heads of department toward the current Grade 11 English language program in Omani schools?

7. Are there any differences in the perceptions of English language learning needs between groups (e.g., students and teachers) and within the same group (e.g., urban and rural students)?

The above sequence of the research questions is justified by the nature of needs analysis as an ongoing process (Holliday, 1995), which should encompass more than one phenomenon (Graves, 2000). The seven research questions, which are answered by the three tools and address students, teachers, supervisors, and heads of the departments, deal with four analytical contexts as follows:

a. The language use context, which requires a Target Language Needs Analysis (Munby, 1978). Question 2 looks at the perceived language use needs of the students, which can provide information that helps to identify and state the students' wants, and necessities (Hutchinson & Water, 1978).

b. The English language instruction context of Omani students, which requires a Learning Situation Analysis (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987). Questions 1 and 4 target the learning situation needs, which seek information about the extent to which the current instruction addresses the students' needs.

c. The learners' motivation and goal context, which requires the Learner Situation Analysis (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987). Questions 5-7 gather information about the participants' purposes and attitudes toward the current English language program in the post-basic education schools in Oman (Dudley-Evans & St. John, 1998), which address learners' needs analysis.

d.   Means Analysis (Holliday, 1995) to identify the factors that may affect the English language curriculum implementation in Omani schools. Question 3 covers the means analysis (Jordan, 1997). It gathers information from the decision makers on source, time, teaching experts and support to enhance the EL program.

The reason behind considering the four different contexts as a conceptual framework of the present research was to develop a multidimensional model of needs analysis to conduct a nationwide needs analysis of the linguistic needs of Omani students. This can provide decision makers and teachers in the Omani post-basic education schools with empirical data to inform the renewal of the Grade 11 English language curriculum.

A multidimensional model for NA in the current study has been adopted for four reasons. First, the model was developed in the context of large-scale studies of foreign language needs (Krohn, 2008), which analyze the language learning needs of EL learners on a large scale context. Second, it has the flexibility of involving multi-dimensions to account for all types or facets of needs that can enhance the language teaching outcomes. For example, classrooms in public schools are very complex situations to be analyzed for students' needs. The analysts should study all it takes to account for all parties involved in the schooling system such as pupils, teachers, parents, school administration, supervisors, high-level decision makers, the labor market and so forth. Therefore, NA predicts where gaps and unmet needs would be likely to occur. Finally, triangulation of needs dimensions contributes to the trustworthiness of the gathered data and increases confidence in the research findings (Aguilar, 2005).

Triangulation of data collection techniques and sources of information is considered crucial in needs analysis (Brecht & Rivers, 2005; Coleman, 1998; Cowling 2007; Long, 2005; Richards, 2001). Therefore, multiple sources, such as, students, teachers, supervisors, heads of the departments and EL textbooks were used for data collection. In addition, varieties of data were gathered and compared using multiple methods such as questionnaires, interviews, and text book analysis (see Figure 3.1). The two types of data collected in the present study (qualitative and quantitative) allowed for two types of triangulation: methodological triangulation involving multiple data gathering procedures and data triangulation involving multiple sources of information (Krohn, 2008). It is worth noting that the information gathered by means of a certain instrument is useful, but not conclusive unless supported by the findings from other instruments and resources, such as students', teachers', supervisors', and heads of the departments' questionnaires, interviews and text book analysis. This can provide an actual picture about the students' needs that can back up the reported needs gathered by a single resource or a single instrument.

In what follows, the findings and the analyses are organized according to the research questions. Different participants' views were expressed differently because they had different responsibilities and therefore, different views. For this reason, some questions such as research questions 2, 5, and 6 were examined according to the perceptions of the different participants, whereas questions 1, 3, 4 and 7 were analyzed based on themes addressed in the questions. The results of this chapter will be used to suggest recommendations for improving the current English language program in Grade 11 of Omani schools.

4.2 Research Question 1

The first research question, "What are the skills and sub skills developed in the current English language course book in Grade 11 of Omani schools?", analyzes the present learning situation by identifying the skills and sub-skills found in the Grade 11 English language textbook through text book analysis. The findings of this question are prerequisites for research question Two and Four, to decide if the language activities/skills included in the textbook met or did not meet the perceived students' needs.

It was stated in Chapter 3 (Methodology) that text book analysis as a systematic and objective research method was used in collecting data for Research Question One. A textbook analysis was used in this section to analyze the English language tasks, skills and sub-skills embedded in the Grade 11 English language teaching materials.

Perhaps the most important source of present situation data in devising an EL syllabus is the analysis of authentic texts (Richards, 2004). Text books analysis enhances the readers' and the researcher's understanding of the exact content of the Grade 11 course book by making explicit the patterns of language skill choices found in the current textbooks. Textbooks analysis is different from data provided by questionnaires and interviews in that it provides first-hand information about the language skills and sub-skills in Grade 11 schools (Al-Husseini, 2004). Questionnaires and interviews provide subjective information according to the participants' perceptions, whereas the text book analysis reveals data about the language skills as they were found in the analyzed textbooks. It provides wide scope and more thoughts on what goes on rather than what is said to go on, as in a questionnaire or interviews.

Ferch (2005) explained that text book analysis systematically follows a prescribed sequence of steps or procedures. Therefore, five basic steps were followed in conducting the text book analysis. These procedures were as follows:

1. Identifying the sampling units, which were the Omani EL textbooks titled *Engage with English*. These text books were locally written by authors from Ministry of Education and produced locally as explained in section 3.33. The total numbers of textbooks were four divided into two semesters. More details about the Grade 11 EL textbooks are provided in section 3.3.3. All the textbooks were analyzed from both semesters to have a conclusive picture about all task types included and the skills provided.

2. Deciding on the unit of analysis for the text book analysis. The unit of analysis in the current analysis was the task, as in Ferch (2005), Long (2005) and Long and Norris (2000). The rationale for relying on task-based text book analysis is justified in 3.3.3.1.

3. Developing the coding categories and the coding forms. The coding forms were based on the four macro skills: reading, writing, speaking and listening. The rationale for not including other elements was to keep the analysis focused on listing the main skills and sub-skills that the textbook provides for Grade 11 students. Tables, as in Tables 4.1 and 4.2, were developed as coding categories to key in the skills sorted according to the main four macro skills used in this study.

4. Coding the data and managing the recording process. The sample of activities were further reduced into manageable sizes that yielded generalizable findings. Data were broken down into skills and sub-skills.

5. Analyzing the data, where the content analyst makes inferences and generalizations about the data. Al-Husseini (2004) and Ferch (2005) advocate that text book analysis can involve synthesizing the gathered data by involving descriptive statistical data such as raw scores, percentages, and frequencies rather than describing the findings in words. In this dissertation, the data analysis was a multi-step process. First, the data were calculated by using some descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentages for each repeated task. Each of the four macro-skills was tabulated separately. Second, I summarized the most frequent sub-skills that emerged from analyzing the Omani EL textbooks. This step allowed for summarizing the findings of research question one.

These elements and procedures were used in this section as a framework for the Grade 11 English language textbooks analysis. Detailed descriptions about the different textbooks used in the textbook analysis and the unit of analysis are provided in section 3.3.3 .

4.2.1 English Language Curriculum Framework

This document describes the English Language Curriculum for government schools in the Sultanate of Oman, since 1998. The curriculum for grade 11 is called "Engage with English".

To provide the context for the first research question, it is noted that the prescribed textbooks were developed by a team of local writers who used the English Language framework (Ministry of Education, 2010) as a guideline. The curriculum framework lists the objectives of the English language teaching from grades 1-12. It discusses that the Sultanate of Oman faces the challenge of preparing its youth for life

and work in the new conditions created by the modern global economy. These conditions require a high degree of adaptability and a strong background in mathematics, science, technology and languages in order to deal with rapidly changing technologies and developing international business opportunities. Therefore, the English Language Curriculum is designed to provide students with the skills, knowledge and attitudes that Oman's youth need to succeed in this rapidly changing society.

The curriculum general objectives are classified into two different types of objectives.

1. **Linguistic objectives** which address language learning. They are classified in the domains of vocabulary, grammar, and other linguistic skills such as reading, listening, speaking and writing.

2. **Non-linguistic objectives** which address socio-cultural and attitudinal dimensions of learning. They related to culture, learning strategies, attitudes and motivation.

The English Language Curriculum specific objectives are grouped into three categories;

(1) objectives of the English Language curriculum for Grades 1 – 4

(2) objectives of the English Language curriculum for Grades 5 – 10, and

(3) objectives of the English Language curriculum for Grades 11 – 12.

The objectives of the English Language curriculum for Grades 11 – 12 as included in Appendix J are the focus of this study scope.

The textbook writers used the objectives to construct a series of tasks to achieve these goals. Thus the national textbooks were task based in orientation. The analysis of the findings for research question one does examine the skills and sub skills found in

Grade 11 textbooks based on a task-based analysis. The rationales for the selection of this kind of analysis (task based) are explained in chapter three section 3.3.3.1.

While the curriculum framework provides the guidelines for the design of the teaching materials (i.e., the textbooks), the practise of EL teaching in Omani public schools is based on the Coursebooks rather than the curriculum framework (Al-Saadi & Samuel, 2013). Teachers are strictly required to implement the entire textbook and they are monitored by the regional EL supervisors. As such, there is little likelihood for teachers to design their own materials. In general, it is considered that ELT in the Omani context is text books driven. Hence, teachers agency is subordinated to the text books.

In the case of the present research, while examining the supervisors' and heads of department's understanding of the Grade 11 purposes (see section 4.6), it was noticed that not all participants have copies of curriculum framework document. Some supervisors have clarified that they have never seen it and it is not available with supervisors and school teachers. They presumed that such document (curriculum framework) can only be used by textbooks authors, not by teachers. As such it is claimed that it was more appropriate to analyze the textbook rather than the curriculum framework only, which was found to involve a very broad terms. Task based analysis was considered more useful because it addressed specific details of the curriculum content in terms of the tasks, activities and texts.

Appendix I provide a mapping for the curriculum framework and the unit of the textbooks. This illustrates how the macro skills are thematically arranged and sequenced. It shows the link between curriculum framework and the textbook content. In addition this mapping set the stage for the Learning Situation Analysis (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987) , which is provides a theoretical framework for research question one.

4.2.2 The Textbooks Analysis Findings

The textbook analysis identified the main skills and sub skills included in ten themes found in Grade 11 English language textbooks. The skills and sub skills are listed in Table 4.1 and Table 4.2 according to the main macro skills of reading, writing, speaking and listening. The four macro skills are the main factors needed and taught in an ESL classroom (Janda, 2009). The focus of this analysis was on tasks as explained in 3.3.3.1.

The result of the text book analysis is presented in the following series of tables. Table 4.1 presents a summary of the findings of the skills and sub skills included in Grade 11 EL textbooks semester 1, whereas the second semester's analysis is provided in Table 4.2.

Table 4.1

Summary of Text Book Analysis Findings of Tasks Included in Grade 11 EL Textbooks (Semester 1)

Themes	Reading	Writing	Speaking	Listening
1 Communication	**Recognize topic sentence in a paragraph** Skim the text and decide on a title Read and match the topic sentences to the paragraph **Recognize supporting information** Read and decide if a statement is true or false **Review parts of speech** Match the speech bubbles to the gestures Find words from a text	**Write an email** Review writing process Write their own poem using the given cues	Make suggestions Discuss the rules for responsible use of mobile phone Describe a person or an object you do not know the name of.	**Listen to specific information** Listen and complete the text Listen and complete a chart Listen and match words with descriptions Listen and decide if the given sentences are true or false Listen and choose the correct answer Listen to the radio phone-in and answer the question
2 Lost and Found	Work out the word's meaning from the text Using different strategies for guessing meaning from a text **Read for specific information** Guess words from a context Look up words from the dictionary Recognize supporting information in a paragraph Find words from a text with certain meaning	Recognize written instructions **Edit a written text** Paragraph coherence Write a process text	Use the expression for asking for and cheeking information Use certain expressions for talking about a period of time Discuss a topic in a group	**Listen to specific information** Listen and complete the table Listen and decide if the given sentences are true or false Listen and underline the correct answer Listen and complete a list Listen and choose the correct picture

Table 4.1 Continued

Summary of Text Book Analysis Findings of Tasks Included in Grade 11 EL Textbooks (Semester 1)

Themes	Reading	Writing	Speaking	Listening
3 Travellers and Tourists	**Read for specific information** Read the adverts and discuss **Sequence paragraphs with in a text** Skim jumbled paragraphs and sort them into topics Choose a title for an article Choose the best tense to express future plan and prediction Intensive reading Complete the crossword with correct verbs Match the terms with definition Fill in gap with expressions	**Write a holiday post card** Complete a postcard with words to describe a holiday **Write a description of a tourists resorts** Produce a brochure for tourists resort	Make and respond to suggestions Discuss the meaning of some expressions Practise emphatic intonation Role play	Listen to an answering machine and find pictures Listen and decide if the given sentences are true or false Listen to check predictions Listen and match words with a brochure Listen and decide on the kind of place being described Listen to a conversation and tick the appropriate boxes
4 Innovation	**Infer meaning from context** Read for specific information Infer meaning from a text Read and choose the correct sentence Match questions with answers Skim film reviews and match with the title Read reviews and answer questions Match scientific words with their definition **Word chains** Complete table with different parts of speech Recognize the different parts of the word like prefix and suffix Read a complaint email or letter	**Write a letter of complaint** Write yes no question Correct the given sentences Write their prediction about themselves or their lives	**Give advice** Practise giving advice to others Practise asking for and giving advice **Use time expression** Practise intonation of questions and answers	**Listen for gist and specific information** Listen and answer questions Listen and tick Listen and recall Listen and decide if the given sentences are true or false Listen and write note Listen to webcast

Table 4.1 Continued

Summary of Text Book Analysis Findings of Tasks Included in Grade 11 EL Textbooks (Semester 1)

Themes	Reading	Writing	Speaking	Listening
5 We are what we eat	**Answer multiple choice comprehension questions** Use vocabulary concerning food, health and diet Build words using suffixes Read and match letters to the replies Read definitions and choose the correct words Use words to fill in gaps in the statements Read the descriptions and match them to people Complete table with correct words using prefixes that indicate job title and subject area Read and answer comprehension questions Read the text and look up phrases	Links words together in a written text Write an essay about the advantages and disadvantages Free writing about opinion based on discussion	Discuss advantage and disadvantages Give an opinion, refute an opinion and offer a different opinion	Listen and match each body function to the correct vitamin Listen and complete a chart Listen to an interview and number the topics according to their order Listen and underline the correct option Listen to many speakers Listen and tick the expression they hear Listen to a recording and fill in with words from the box

Table 4.2

Summary of Text Book Analysis of the Tasks included in Grade 11 EL Textbooks (Semester 2)

Themes	Reading	Writing	Speaking	Listening
1 World Breakers	**Read gapped phrases and sentences in a variety of text types** Complete gapped texts Read and choose the best title Read and match the paragraph with these topics Choose the correct definition Read and decide if statements are true or false Find synonyms from the text Find words which match the definition Use words to complete the crosswords	**Use non-defining relative clause** Use the given adjective to write comparative and superlative forms **Write a short profile or biography**	Use question tags	**Listen for specific information** Listen and choose the correct answer Listen and complete the gap Listen to a conversation and answer the questions Listen and correct the statement
2 All the world's a stage	**Read and answer true and false questions** Choose the best title Read and decide if statements are true or false Read and find out type of musical instruments Read and match sentences with the correct usage Match words from a text with definition Correct the given sentences for facts Use words to complete sentences Read an article to answer comprehension questions Complete the sentences with words from box Read words, phrases and sort them into categories	**Write a film review** Write a true statement about your partner Use certain verbs to write about your life Write about your television habits	**State, agree, disagree with opinion**	**Listen for general and specific information** Listen to a conversation and answer the questions Listen and make note Listen and choose the correct adjective Listen and match speakers with their activities Listen to debates and note down

128

Table 4.2 Continued

Summary of the Text Book Analysis of the Tasks Included in Grade 11 EL Textbooks (Semester 2)

Themes	Reading	Writing	Speaking	Listening
3 Connections	**Find references in sentences** **Find topic links within paragraph** Read and choose the best topic statement for each paragraph Read and choose the correct alternative Match each statement to its usage Correct sentences with the use of (still, yet, already and just) Match the adjectives to their definitions Scan the text and choose the best title Read and decide if statements are true or false Complete the puzzle by using clues Match the paragraphs in the letter to the descriptions	**Write an application letter** Rewrite given sentences using yet, already, just… Write up jumbled words as complete sentences Make a list of things that you do every day Unjumble the letters to words of a certain type	**Give and respond to advice** Discuss in a group certain topics Choose a card with a situation and discuss the solution	**Listen for general and specific information** Listen and decide if the given sentences are true or false Listen and check your understanding Listen and match 2 halves of each sentence
4 Planet Earth	**Find links between paragraphs in a written text** Underline the topic linking phrases Match the summary sentences to the paragraph Read and answer the questions Read and decide if statements are true or false Match each statement to its usage Read and choose the best option Match the words to their definitions Reorder the sentences match the adjectives to the prepositions complete the sentences with adjectives	**Link ideas together in a written text in a variety of ways** Write an essay introducing contrasting arguments	**Use different expressions to give an opinion** Discuss in a group certain topics	**Listen for specific information** Listen and answer questions Listen and decide if the given sentences are true or false Listen and match the appropriate phrases

129

Table 4.2 Continued

Summary of Text Book Analysis of the Tasks Included in Grade 11 EL Textbooks (Semester 2)

Themes	Reading	Writing	Speaking	Listening
5 Transitions	**Read for text cohesiveness** **Read for specific information** Scan and choose the best title Read and answer the questions Read and decide if statements ate true or false Recognize the modal verbs and their usage Match words to their meaning Use words in their right context	**Review text editing** **Write a festival report** Write passive sentences	**Making a personal plan and resolutions** Discuss certain topics in a group	**Listen to longer spoken test** Listen and answer questions Listen and decide if the given sentences are true or false Listen and complete the gap

Patterns that emerged from the textbook analysis were that reading was the language macro skill used most frequently, followed by listening. Writing and speaking were used less frequently, but the usage varied across the textbooks. The analysis revealed that the receptive skills were more common than productive skills

The total number of analyzed reading tasks was 89 tasks, which supported the fact that reading was the most frequently used language skill across the analyzed textbooks. Reading is the primary skill of the activities because students have to be able to read the directions and then respond in English. Students must be able to read in the language whether they work individually or in small groups.

Hence the first unit of each theme focused on reading. Students read a variety of text types using different strategies. Different reading texts were included such as film review, book review, advertisements, email letters, and puzzles. The analyzed textbooks included different reading micro-skills that were statistically calculated using frequency and percentages to see the most frequent tasks embedded in the textbooks as in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3

Frequencies of Reading Tasks Included in Grade 11 EL Textbooks

N.	Tasks	Frequency	Percentages
1	Find out synonyms, words or reference from the text	8	8.9%
2	Read and decide if a statement is true or false	8	8.9%
3	Read and match the topic sentences to the paragraph	8	8.9%
4	Match the terms with definitions	8	8.9%
5	Read and answer comprehension questions	8	8.9%
6	Work out or infer the word meaning from the text	7	7.8%
7	Skim the text and decide on a title	7	7.8%
8	Match each statement to its usage	5	5.6%
9	Complete the sentences with words from the box	4	4.4%
10	Read and choose the correct alternative	3	3.3%
11	Complete table with different parts of speech	3	3.3%
12	Read a complaint email or letter	3	3.3%
13	Fill in gap with expressions	3	3.3%
14	Complete the crossword or a word chain with correct verbs	3	3.3%
15	Skim jumbled paragraphs and sort them into topics	2	2.2%
16	Sequence paragraphs within a text	2	2.2%
17	Recognize supporting information	2	2.2%
18	Match the speech bubbles to the gestures	2	2.2%
19	Read for specific information	2	2.2%
20	Look up words from the dictionary	1	1.1%
	Total	89	100%

Eighty-nine tasks were sorted as sub reading tasks from Grade 11 EL textbooks. The first five reading skills in Table 4.3 were the most frequent reading skills included in the ten themes. Grade 11 EL textbooks provided students with different reading tasks, such as to read and match the topic sentences to the paragraph, match the terms with their definitions, find out synonyms, words or references, decide if a statement is true or false and answer comprehension questions.

The other receptive skill was listening. It was the second macro skill used most frequently. Listening is essential for second language acquisition. Unit Four of each theme focused on developing students' listening and speaking proficiency. It covered interactional and transactional uses of English. Students were provided with different purposes for listening such as listening for information as well as listening for pleasure. Students listened to the radio, answering machine, conversations, webcasts, interviews, many speakers, debates and long texts. Grade 11 EL textbooks also had scripted and semi-authentic listening tasks. Most frequent listening tasks as included in Tables 4.1 and 4.2 were analyzed using some descriptive statistics such as frequency and percentages to see the most frequent tasks embedded in the textbooks as in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4

Frequencies of Listening Tasks Included in Grade 11 EL Textbooks

N.	Task	Frequency	Percentages
1	Listen and decide if the given sentences are true or false	8	17.7%
2	Listen and complete a chart, text, table, list	8	17.7%
3	Listen and match words with descriptions	6	13.3%
4	Listen and answer the question	6	13.3%
5	Listen and choose the correct answer, picture or adjective	5	11.1%
6	Listen and take note	3	6.6%
7	Listen and check prediction or understanding	3	6.6%
8	Listen and tick the appropriate picture	3	6.6%
9	Listen and find pictures	1	2.2%
10	Listen and recall	1	2.2%
11	Listen and order	1	2.2%
	Total	45	100%

Forty-five tasks were sorted as sub listening tasks from Grade 11 EL textbooks. The first two listening skills in Table 4.4 were the most frequent listening skills included in the ten themes. Grade 11 EL textbooks provided students with different listening tasks, such as to listen and decide if the given sentences are true or false, listen and complete a chart, text, or table, listen and match words with descriptions, and listen and answer the question. Overall, the listening activities in the textbooks gave more priority to straightforward tasks that required listening for specific information.

Unit Five of each theme emphasized development of students' writing skills. Almost all included writing tasks that required students to write for a purpose rather

than to write for the sake of writing. Repeatedly, students were referred to the process involved in writing before starting to accomplish any writing task. Different genres of writing were highlighted in every theme, such as vocational and academic genres, which provided the space for practising different genres that can build a solid foundation of writing skills. Students were exposed to the stage of writing from reading a model text to free writing. Examples of the writing purposes found in Grade 11 EL textbooks were to write an email, holiday postcard, description of a tourist resort, letter of complaint, short profile or biography, film review, application letter, and a festival report.

The pattern that also emerged from the textbook analysis was that speaking was the language macro skill used least frequently. In each Unit Four, there was a "SoundBits" activity which highlighted the functional language found in the theme such as giving an opinion or making a suggestion. This activity was followed by the "Activate your English" activity where the focus was on the fluent use of the functional language highlighted in the "SoundBits" box. Examples of the speaking tasks provided were to make suggestions, describe a person or an object, give and respond to advice, use time expressions, discuss advantages and disadvantages, state, agree, disagree with opinions, and make personal plans or resolutions.

4.2.3 Discussion of the Findings for Research Question 1

The section has addressed the issue of the Omani English language instruction context, which provides the theoretical framework for the first research question as it covers the Learning Situation Analysis dimension (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987) of the multidimensional framework for nationwide needs analysis (see section 1.8 and Figure 3.1). It analyzes the skills and sub skills developed in the current Grade 11 English language course. Textbook analysis identified the skills and the sub skills found in

Coursebooks through a task based analysis as advocated by Long and Norris (2000), Long (2005) and Ferch (2005).

The main pattern that emerged from the EL textbooks analysis was that four macro skills the presentation in the textbook varied in number of tasks devoted to each skill. This shows that there was no equal attention given to each skill. Receptive skills were over presented in contrast to productive skills. This can be attributed to the claim by Ferch (2005) that in the beginning of instruction, it is easier to receive the language than to produce it.

Reading was the language macro skill used most frequently, followed by listening. Writing and speaking were used less frequently. Eighty-nine tasks were sorted as sub reading tasks from Grade 11 EL textbooks. Although reading was the most dominant skill, it was noticed that the activities in the textbooks gave more priority to straightforward reading tasks that required lower cognitive tasks such as skimming and scanning skills, but less attention was given to higher cognitive reading skills such as understanding, inferring, figuring out or organizing. The obtained data-in this sense- did not support the fact that the level of difficulty in the target language increased in the latter themes bearing in mind the course book is linear in the sense that teachers have to finish a unit before proceeding to the next unit. In other words, the beginning themes should have offered more "scaffolding" (Vygotsky, 1978) or support to students and then gradually the student should encounter more challenging tasks that require higher thinking ability. Ferch (2005) explained that the latter themes in an EL textbook should confront students with more challenging tasks, with less assistance as their communicative competence increases. Students should have developed greater levels of reading competence by later themes than the levels they had in beginning themes. As to the Grade 11 EL textbooks, the end/last themes did not require more English than initial themes in terms of the English language proficiency level of the activities required.

Across the grade EL textbooks, the language of the directions accompanying the activities did not change from beginning themes to end themes. Beginning themes should use primary English and gradual change has to occur as students move from the beginning themes to the latter themes.

The second macro skill used most frequently was listening. Forty-five tasks were sorted as sub listening tasks from grade 11 EL textbooks. Listening is essential for second language acquisition. This is supported by many second language acquisition theories, namely, Krashen's monitor theory (1982) and Terrell's natural approach (1986). These theories advocate that students need comprehensible input before they are capable of target language output; in short, students should be provided with exposure in the target language before they are required to produce any utterances in the target language.

Although the analyzed material provided a chance to practise different writing genres, they should be more creative and have stimulating activities to focus students' attention on the things to be learned. Hobelman and Wiriyachitra (1995) stressed that writing material should be interesting, aligned with students' interests, practical and related to real world tasks. During the analysis, it was noticed that writing tasks were separated at the back of the workbook and students had to refer to that section whenever they want to perform any writing tasks. This created the feeling with teachers and students that writing was not an essential task to be mastered because what was kept at the back of the book was supplementary material or glossaries. It also impressed upon the teachers that writing was not given sufficient attention in the new textbooks as discovered during the teacher interviews

Speaking was the language macro skill used least frequently. Overall, however, far too little attention was paid to speaking in the Grade 11 EL textbooks. It was felt that this kind of training should come much earlier since speaking was unanimously chosen

by all teachers as the most important skill for Omani students as in 4.3.2.1. Most of the speaking activities were in the form of pair or group discussions in the class. Students were not given the chance to practise presentations or other types of public speech. Students should be engaged in conversations, provide and obtain information, express feelings and emotions, and exchange opinions if they are to reinforce their speaking skills. They should get used to greetings, accepting or refusing invitations, and managing conversations with expressions. Instead the text books offered more guided speaking tasks, which were designed for practising uttering some expressions, but very few—if any—purposeful or stimulating English Language speaking tasks were provided to students to practise real life speaking occasions.

The findings of Research Question One can be fed back into the Grade 11 EL program and be a foundation for material developers for two reasons. First, the analytical methodology applied here provided real world, or real life, task analysis, which offered more insights about the students' needs through comparing what is presented to them and their perceived priority, as in Research Question Four. Second, the task-based NA findings are the bases for Task Based Language Teaching (TBLT), which, as described by Long (2005), is radically learner-centered and caters for the learners' internal developmental syllabus.

The findings of the task-based NA complemented those of the other instruments, providing firsthand information about the language uses that were reported as in the questionnaire and interview findings explained in the next sections.

4.3 Research Question 2

The second research question, "What are the English language learning needs of Omani students in Grade 11 as perceived by students, teachers, supervisors and heads of departments?", looks at the target language needs (Munby, 1978) of Omani students.

This can provide information that helps to identify and state the students' wants, and necessities according to their perceptions, their teachers' perceptions, supervisors' and heads of departments' perceptions. The findings of this question triangulate with the first research question findings and are the prerequisite to research question 4 to decide if the students' perceived language needs are met by the content of the English language course book in Grade 11.

Interviews and questionnaires were used as tools to collect data from students, teachers, supervisors and heads of departments. The interview was used to gather in-depth qualitative data about the students' needs from the supervisors (4), the head of the supervision department (1), and the heads of the Curriculum Department (2). Thus, seven interviews were conducted individually.

The questionnaire aimed at finding out about students' (n = 982) and teachers' (n = 64) perceptions of the most important language skill they need and the main language used, which were sorted according to the four different language skills (reading, writing, listening and speaking). The rationale for this sorting is justified by the fact that the four macro-skills are the main factors needed and taught in an EFL classroom. Many NA studies used the same classification when addressing the language domain of students' needs such as (Alastal & Shuib, 2012; Janda, 2009; Kiranmayi, 2012; Nallaya, 2012).

In developing this questionnaire, the following studies in needs analysis were considered, for example, Al-Busaidi (2003), Al-Husseini (2004), Al-Sybil (1995), Krohn (2008), Graves, (2000), Purpura and Graziano-King (2004), and the researcher's experience as an English teacher and supervisor. The items were refined by the pre-pilot and pilot studies (see 3.3.1.2). This data were based on a self-report on the frequency of the difficulty students face while performing any language activities, skills and sub-skills. The skills were chosen for their documented importance in the skill literature.

The third section of the questionnaire included 50 items (see Table 3.3) representing activities, skills and sub-skills, which students were asked to indicate on a scale of frequency, how often they find it difficult to perform each skill.

The frequencies provided next to each questionnaire item were given a score (e.g., never = 1, rarely = 2, sometimes = 3, often = 4, and always = 5), which helped in coding the subjects' responses as well as in calculating the mean values. The quantitative data obtained were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Care was given to the process of coding for data entry before conducting the analysis. The raw data were triple checked, sifted and edited.

In what follows, the findings presentation is organized according to the research participants, so the student findings are presented separately, followed by the findings related to the teachers, and finally supervisors and heads of department. This is helpful to show the different perceptions and priorities according to each group. It is also helpful to achieve cross group and within group comparison, which is going to be discussed in research question seven to draw on the similarity and diversity of language needs in post-basic education schools.

4.3.1 Findings Related to the Students

As mentioned in chapter 3, students' perceptions about their purposes, attitudes and needs were gathered using questionnaires. The results of each part of the questionnaire are presented in the sections that follow. Later, in Chapter Five an attempt is made to synthesize these sets of findings.

4.3.1.1 Importance of the Four Macro-skills

In the second section of the students' questionnaire, Item Two investigated the importance of the four macro-skills. Students were asked to rank the macro-skills

according to their importance to them (1 as the most important and 4 as the least important). The participants' answers were analyzed using frequencies, percentage and the means of each rank of the four language macro-skills. Then they were ordered in descending order according to the mean values to provide a clearer picture about the overall importance of the four skills as perceived by students themselves. The results are presented in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5

Students' Perception of the Most Important Macro-skill

The macro-skills	Analysis	Students' Ranking				Mean	Std. Deviation	Final Ranking
		1	2	3	4			
Reading	Frequencies	331	265	201	106	2.09	1.025	1
	Percent	36.7	29.3	2203	11.7			
Speaking	Frequencies	369	148	207	179	2.22	1.177	2
	Percent	40.9	16.4	22.9	19.8			
Writing	Frequencies	117	349	304	133	2.50	.897	3
	Percent	13	38.6	33.7	14.7			
Listening	Frequencies	90	137	188	488	3.19	1.028	4
	Percent	10	15.2	20.8	54			

The mean values as presented in Table 4.5 show that reading (2.09) was placed in the first rank because 36.7% of the participants thought it was the most important language skill to be mastered. Speaking (2.22) was seen as the second most important language skill followed by writing (2.50) in the third rank. The frame was lower for listening (3.19); almost 54% of all participants thought it was the least important skill out of the four skills. The students' perceptions of the priorities among the language skills reflected their real wants. This indicated that students faced difficulties dealing with reading tasks and accordingly they had less ability with English language reading compared to other macro skills. This finding matched the conclusion by Deutch (2003)

141

that reading was unanimously chosen by all participants as the most important skill for students. Curriculum designers should consider this finding by placing more emphasis on promoting students' reading abilities. Thus, reading comprehension should certainly be given priority over other skills.

Summary of the Findings of this Section

- Reading (2.09) and speaking (2.22) were seen as the most important macro-skills according to students' perception.

4.3.1.2 The Language Needs

Section 3 of the students' questionnaire is a scale item section that includes the language needs sorted according to the four language skills (reading, writing, listening and speaking). Deutch (2003) argues that it is possible to determine which of the four skills is most essential for the specific target language use. Students (n = 982) were provided with 50 items representing activities, skills and sub-skills, and were asked to indicate on a scale of frequency how often they have difficulties while performing the given tasks. They had to choose from five alternatives of frequency: never, rarely, sometimes, often, and always. The skills included were chosen for their documented importance in the skill literature. Note that the descriptions provided in each item of the questionnaire were given a score (e.g., never = 1, rarely = 2, sometimes = 3, often = 4, and always = 5), which helped in coding the subjects' responses as well as in calculating the mean values. The quantitative data obtained were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Care was given to the process of coding for data entry before conducting the analysis. The raw data were triple checked, sifted and edited. In what follows, a detailed presentation of the findings is organized according to the four language skills: reading, speaking, writing, and listening.

4.3.1.2a Reading Skills

The reading skills and sub skills findings are displayed in Table 4.6 in descending order, so the students' highly perceived needs are placed first.

Table 4.6

Language Reading Needs Preferred in Grade 11 Schools as Reported by the Students

N.	Statements		Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always	Mean	Std. Deviation
3	Understanding charts and graphs in a scientific text.	Frequency	141	191	181	257	212	3.21	1.361
		Percent	14.4	19.5	18.4	26.2	21.6		
11	Differentiating between statements of facts and statements of opinion.	Frequency	170	184	193	203	232	3.15	1.419
		Percent	17.3	18.7	19.7	20.7	23.6		
4	Understanding English vocabulary and grammar when I read.	Frequency	114	210	237	284	137	3.12	1.230
		Percent	11.6	21.4	24.1	28.9	14		
8	Figuring out the meaning of new words by using the context and my background knowledge.	Frequency	151	205	222	211	193	3.09	1.348
		Percent	15.4	20.9	22.6	21.5	19.7		
1	Understanding general ideas when reading in English.	Frequency	118	202	218	362	82	3.09	1.176
		Percent	12	20.6	22.2	36.9	8.4		
9	Using the library and Internet to find information that I am looking for.	Frequency	168	214	182	220	298	3.07	1.389
		Percent	17.1	21.8	18.5	22.4	20.2		
12	Using a dictionary to find out meanings.	Frequency	167	197	202	240	176	3.06	1.357
		Percent	17	20.1	20.6	24.4	17.9		
5	Understanding the most important point in a text.	Frequency	133	139	257	234	119	2.97	1.228
		Percent	13.5	24.3	26.2	23.8	12.1		
10	Understanding an English text well enough to answer questions about it later.	Frequency	161	228	231	219	143	2.95	1.301
		Percent	16.4	23.2	23.5	22.3	14.6		
6	Organizing the important ideas and concepts in an English text.	Frequency	142	251	246	215	128	2.93	1.254
		Percent	14.5	25.6	25.1	21.9	13.0		
7	Remembering major ideas when I read an English text.	Frequency	167	241	207	234	133	2.92	1.304
		Percent	17	24.5	21.1	23.8	13.5		
13	Inferring meaning of terms from a text.	Frequency	165	250	213	208	145	2.92	1.314
		Percent	16.8	25.5	21.6	21.2	14.8		
2	Understanding how the ideas in an English text relate to each other.	Frequency	99	276	300	224	83	2.91	1.116
		Percent	10.1	28.1	30.5	22.8	8.5		
14	Understanding an English text as easily as an Arabic one.	Frequency	229	218	171	195	196	2.85	1.422
		Percent	23.3	22.2	17.4	19.9	17.2		

This step is important for making priorities in skills presentation in the curriculum. Students (n = 982) responded to 14 reading micro-skills. The highly rated reading skills, based on the students' perceived needs, are presented in Table 4.6.

High mean values in the difficulty scale denote more difficulty, which is related to less ability. Where students have difficulty in achieving any skill, their ability in the same skill is low. On the other hand, where they have little difficulty in a skill, their ability in that skill is high. The first 7 items in Table 4.6 show large mean values ranging from 3.21 to 3.06. They represent the frequent sub-reading skills that students face difficulty with while reading in English. Items 3 (understanding charts and graphs in a scientific text), 11 (differentiating between statements of facts and statements of opinion), 4 (understanding English vocabulary and grammar when I read), 8 (figuring out the meaning of new words by using the context and my background knowledge), 1 (understanding general ideas when reading in English), 9 (using the library and Internet to find information that I am looking for), and 12 (using a dictionary to find out meanings) were considered the most difficult reading sub-skills compared to other sub skills included in Table 4.6. It can be concluded that tasks with high mean values represent the most challenging tasks as perceived by students. Accordingly, students' ability in these skills is low since they displayed higher difficulty means. These tasks also take place frequently as part of everyday learning; therefore, they are essential in enhancing learning progress.

4.3.1.2b Speaking Skills

The speaking skills and sub skills findings are displayed in Table 4.7 in descending order. As previously mentioned, this step is important for making priorities in skills presentation in the curriculum. Students (n = 982) responded to 8 speaking

micro-skills, which are items 43 to 50 in the questionnaire. Table 4.7 presents the highly

rated speaking skills organized based on the students' perceptions.

Table 4.7

The Language Speaking Needs Preferred in Grade 11 Schools as Reported by Students

N.	Statements		Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always	Mean
50	Answering exam questions correctly.	Frequency	142	210	222	241	167	3.08
		Percent	14.5	21.4	22.6	24.5	17	
48	Responding to questions orally.	Frequency	181	181	238	208	174	3.01
		Percent	18.4	18.4	24.2	21.2	17.7	
43	Making myself clear when speaking to others.	Frequency	169	233	221	192	167	2.95
		Percent	17.2	23.7	22.5	19.6	17	
44	Delivering a well prepared presentation.	Frequency	197	205	223	213	144	2.90
		Percent	20.1	20.9	22.7	21.7	14.7	
46	Participating in a conversation or a discussion in English.	Frequency	176	242	216	202	146	2.90
		Percent	17.9	24.6	22	20.6	14.9	
49	Orally summarizing information I have read or listened to.	Frequency	166	251	232	199	134	2.88
		Percent	16.9	25.6	23.6	20.3	13.6	
45	Talking for a few minutes about a topic I am familiar with.	Frequency	192	236	206	205	143	2.87
		Percent	19.6	24	21	20.9	14.6	
47	Stating and supporting my opinion.	Frequency	187	232	236	207	120	2.84
		Percent	19	23.6	24	21.1	12.2	

The first 4 items in Table 4.7 show large mean values ranging from 3.08 to 2.90. They represent the frequent sub-speaking skills that students find difficult when speaking in English. Items number 50, 48, and 44 were the most needed speaking skills as reported by Grade 11 students. These four items shared academic purpose such as answering exam questions and delivering a good presentation. The last four items, which reflected the lowest sub speaking skills, also shared communicative functions such as orally responding to questions and stating or clarifying their opinion.

4.3.1.2c Writing Skills

Students' perceptions about their writing skills and sub skills needs are displayed in Table 4.8 in descending order. This step is important for making priorities in skills presentation in the curriculum. Students (n = 982) responded to 23 items representing writing micro-skills which are items 15 to 37 in the questionnaire. Note that the frequencies provided next to each item of the questionnaire were given a score (e.g., never = 1, rarely = 2, sometimes = 3, often = 4, and always = 5), which helped in coding the subjects' responses and in calculating the mean values.

Table 4.8

Language Writing Needs Preferred in Grade 11 Schools as Reported by the Students

N.	Statements		Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always	Mean
16	Organizing my writing, so that the reader can understand my main ideas.	Frequency	167	184	243	205	183	3.05
		Percent	17	18.7	24.7	20.9	18.6	
20	Expressing myself well in writing.	Frequency	182	197	197	216	190	3.04
		Percent	18.5	20.1	20.1	22	19.3	
25	Translating some concepts and ideas from Arabic to English.	Frequency	161	216	207	235	163	3.02
		Percent	16.4	22	21.1	23.9	16.6	
18	Taking notes that demonstrate the main points.	Frequency	164	224	212	217	165	2.99
		Percent	16.7	22.8	21.6	22.1	16.8	
24	Structuring clear statements without any ambiguity or vagueness.	Frequency	170	221	228	221	142	2.94
		Percent	17.3	22.5	23.2	22.5	14.5	
22	Using correct grammar, vocabulary, punctuation and spelling.	Frequency	161	250	197	238	136	2.94
		Percent	16.4	25.5	20.1	24.2	13.8	
23	Sequencing paragraphs in the article.	Frequency	176	232	223	231	120	2.88
		Percent	17.9	23.6	22.7	23.5	12.2	
33	Editing my own or others' papers for grammar and style problems.	Frequency	175	218	279	171	139	2.88
		Percent	17.8	22.2	28.4	17.4	14.2	
27	Relating the topic I write to my knowledge and experience.	Frequency	188	228	219	214	133	2.87
		Percent	19.1	23.2	22.3	21.8	13.5	
37	Writing a proposal about future plans.	Frequency	213	222	202	202	143	2.84
		Percent	21.7	22.6	20.6	20.6	14.6	
15	Writing a summary of information I read or listened to.	Frequency	176	248	241	199	118	2.83
		Percent	17.9	25.3	24.5	20.3	12	
17	Supporting my writing with examples, evidence and data.	Frequency	189	244	229	296	124	2.82
		Percent	19.2	24.8	23.3	20	12.6	
21	Expressing ideas and arguments effectively.	Frequency	183	228	267	196	108	2.81
		Percent	18.6	23.2	27.2	20	11	
28	Writing a good introduction and a conclusion to my article.	Frequency	221	220	210	193	138	2.80
		Percent	22.6	22.4	21.4	19.7	14.1	
30	Writing a curriculum vitae CV in English.	Frequency	248	230	159	186	159	2.77
		Percent	25.3	23.4	16.2	18.9	16.2	
19	Writing an essay in the class on an assigned topic.	Frequency	227	238	189	188	140	2.77
		Percent	23.1	24.2	19.2	19.1	14.3	

32	Writing a report about an action in the past.	Frequency	202	259	228	171	122	2.75
		Percent	20.6	26.4	23.2	17.4	12.4	
26	Incorporating data and illustrations in my writing.	Frequency	202	252	234	190	104	2.74
		Percent	20.6	25.7	23.8	19.3	10.6	
36	Writing a paragraph from notes.	Frequency	212	266	213	185	106	2.70
		Percent	21.6	27.1	21.7	18.8	10.8	
34	Writing a letter of application.	Frequency	292	199	167	177	147	2.68
		Percent	29.7	20.3	17	18	15	
31	Explaining in writing the content of graphs, tables, charts and diagrams.	Frequency	230	256	218	167	111	2.67
		Percent	23.4	26.1	22.2	17	11.3	
29	Writing a questionnaire in English.	Frequency	295	219	164	161	143	2.63
		Percent	30	22.3	16.7	16.4	14.6	
35	Writing a report on scientific projects done in a laboratory.	Frequency	323	197	159	154	149	2.60
		Percent	32.9	20.1	16.2	15.7	15.2	

As seen in Table 4.8, the mean values of all the items in the difficulty scale are high and range from 3.05 to 2.60. A high mean value in the difficulty scale denotes more difficulty, which is related to less ability. Where students have difficulty in achieving any skill, their ability in the same skill is low. On the other hand, where they have little difficulty in a skill, their ability in that skill is high. The above mean values, therefore, reveal that according to the students' perception they have less ability with English writing or face little difficulty overall when dealing with any writing task.

4.3.1.2d Listening Skills

The students' perceptions about their listening skills and sub skills findings are displayed in Table 4.9 in descending order. As mentioned earlier, this step is important for making priorities in skills presentation in the curriculum. Students (n = 982) responded to 5 items representing listening micro-skills which are items 38 to 42 in the questionnaire. Table 4.9 presents the highly rated listening skills organized based on the students' perceived needs.

Table 4.9

Language Listening Needs Preferred in Grade 11 Schools as Reported by the Students

N.	Statements		Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always	Mean
					Scale			
39	Relating information I hear in English to what I already know.	Frequency	194	202	205	200	181	2.97
		Percent	19.8	20.6	20.9	20.4	1804	
42	Remembering the most important points after listening to an English text.	Frequency	150	235	236	228	133	2.96
		Percent	15.3	23.9	24	23.2	13.5	
40	Understanding the speaker's attitude or opinion about what he or she is saying.	Frequency	169	209	236	241	127	2.95
		Percent	17.2	21.3	24	24.5	12.9	
41	Understanding the relationships among ideas I listen to.	Frequency	158	239	239	204	142	2.93
		Percent	16.1	24.3	24.3	20.8	14.5	
38	Understanding the main idea of a conversation or a lesson.	Frequency	192	222	218	183	187	2.91
		Percent	19.6	22.6	22.2	18.6	17	

The items in Table 4.9 show mean values ranging from 2.97 to 2.91, which are the lowest range of mean values reported in the student questionnaires. This indicates that students faced less difficulty while listening in English, and, therefore, their listening ability was better in contrast to the other macro-skills. Items 39, 42 and 40 reflect some listening micro skills that students need to master in order to enhance their academic progress.

4.3.1.3 Additional Needs Raised in the Open-ended Question

Having analyzed students' responses to closed-ended questions, we now focus on the open-ended question. The question, "If you have other linguistic needs, please write them down", aimed at giving the students the opportunity to express their needs in their own words without any restrictions. Interestingly, the students' responses comprised a number of varied, interrelated and interesting themes. Open-ended questions such as this yield voluminous information that has to be organized to allow easy analysis and interpretation. The procedure adopted was as follows.

The students' responses to this question were listed in a sheet to facilitate detection of patterns and regularities in the responses. Through the process of "text book analysis", eight categories, descriptive of the responses, were developed. As the process of categorization proceeded, a panel of two arbitrators was asked to comment on the emerging categories. Some categories that seemed closely related were combined, resulting in only five categories. This comparatively small number of categories representative of all regularities and patterns made the analysis less difficult and more comprehensive. The categories obtained were as follows:

1. Textbook

2. Teaching process

3. Testing system

4. Remedial courses

5. Others

After arriving at these categories, each one of them was written on a separate sheet. The students' responses were translated into English and every response was listed under its corresponding category. Some responses had more than one answer. In this case, every different answer would be listed separately under the relevant category.

A summary of the students' responses relating to each of these categories/themes is presented in the next sections.

4.3.1.3a The Textbook

This category included themes such as suitable, comprehensive, detailed, enough, and so forth. It also covered the layout and appearance of the book according to students' perceptions. A vast majority of the students expressed their views saying that the textbook should be modified and developed to be more motivating and to match their needs in daily life and in future work. One respondent wrote, "Change the course book with one that takes into consideration our daily life needs which we come across every time." Another respondent wrote, "The English Language course book is long and crowded and needs long time to be covered."

Many students want an English course book, which is reflective of their needs in the study. Here are phrases taken from their responses: "train me more to speak fluently", "motivating for reading", "help in enhancing my reading and writing skill", and "provides detailed grammar explanation with enough examples".

In addition, features such as suitability, flexibility and simplicity of the course book were also mentioned by the students when describing their preferred course book. Moreover, the students were very articulate in mentioning more features of an ideal English course, features such as clarity, comprehensiveness and appearance. Some phrases were: "the book have to have as much graphics, pictures", and "should be motivating to be read".

Thus, it can be argued that the students know the usefulness and effectiveness of the course book, which contains pictorial illustrations. Their responses did emphasize the difficulty of the current course and its dullness. This also confirmed that students were aware of what would help them to learn better.

In addition to the textbook features and layout, students mentioned that they want a course book providing them with good chance to practice speaking, read different topics, write letters, know new important vocabulary, communicate with others to express their feelings and thoughts, extra grammar focused sessions and extended glossaries with word meanings at the end of the course book.

Lastly, these remarks on the content of the English textbook provide designers with guidelines on how to go about preparing a course book more suitable for the students' requirements.

4.3.1.3b Teaching Process

This category includes the teacher, the teaching methods and teaching references and aids. It was evident from most of the student responses that these three elements played a vital role in facilitating the process of learning and teaching alike. Many respondents commented on the role of teachers in helping them to learn. These are some excerpts of their comments about the teachers: "be informative and knowledgeable", "be experienced with ways of teaching the language", "help me learn English in a proper way", "be more co-operative and supportive", "takes into account the students' ability and deal with them accordingly", "use only English in the class", and "focus more in explaining the patterns rather than finishing the course book".

Moving to teaching methods and teaching references and aids enabled us to see how far the students were aware of the importance of the kind of teaching methods and teaching aids available. Here are some quotations from the students: "more speaking opportunities in the class", "all should answer", "more practice and feedback", "new way of teaching", "involve everyone in the class", "use of internet", "English language puzzles", "extracurricular activities", "use other references" and "make English language learning centers in the schools". Examining students' feedback on classroom

methodology reveals that a significant number preferred to be more involved in the English language class and called for more practice or competence oriented teaching. Furthermore, these results suggested that students were open to new teaching styles mainly the student-centered approach. These data also revealed that students linked enjoyable activities with effective learning.

Some students also mentioned that a dictionary should be provided to each student for looking up new words and that every school should be provided with a digital English language learning center, whereby they can practice English and work individually to improve their English language proficiency.

From the above, it is interesting to note that students knew how their language abilities could be developed and improved. Therefore, meeting the students' needs and wants assuredly can help the students learn English in a better way.

4.3.1.3c Testing System

Interestingly, the students responding to this question have commented also on the English language test. The vast majority of them mentioned that exams were very difficult and they were not from the course book. This comment can be justified by the fact the school students used to have content area exams related to other subjects, such as math and science, where the exam items were mainly from the textbook content, whereas the case was different in English. EL tests are language proficiency tests, which examine students' language acquisition. Students also said that the recordings used in the exam were not clear and were faster than what they usually hear in the class.

4.3.1.3d Remedial Courses

Being aware of their deficiency in English, many students suggested having remedial courses in order to enable them to cope with the English language textbook. They wanted remedial courses in order to "help (us) understand and comprehend the language", "focus on our weakness", and "remind us of the basics of the English language rules".

4.3.1.3e Others

The grim reality of learning a foreign language is revealed by students' self-assessment of current strengths and weaknesses in various language areas (Kavaliauskiene & Užpaliene, 2003). Students in this category blamed their previous education where they did not study English in a proper way. They also mentioned that being in large classes did not give them the chance to receive individualized instruction. Some students suggested some solutions to cope with the increasing English language demand on the schools. They thought that summer courses should be established to provide them with chances to practice English. They also asked for extra periods of English during the school day. They thought that certain periods should be specified for speaking and writing because they needed more time to practice, submit and get feedback.

Students also suggested having weekly or monthly competitions in English within and between classes and schools. In addition to the competitions, they also called for more time during the school day to practice English.

Summary of the findings of this section

- The four most needed speaking skills as reported by Grade 11 students shared academic purpose such as answering exam questions and delivering a good presentation.

- The pattern shared by the five highest writing skills needed is that they all have communicative and academic purpose. On the other hand, the last items with the lowest mean values in writing skills (i.e., items 31, 29, and 35) shared a scientific purpose. Analyzing students' responses to the questionnaires showed that there were some skills and sub skills reported as more important than others in every language skill.

- Some students called for changing the current textbook with a new one that considers their needs.

- The students did not restricted their comments to the course content only, but also expressed their views about many other things that would facilitate the learning processes including the textbook, teachers, teaching methods, testing, remedial courses and so forth.

- The inclusion of these themes in the students' responses goes in line with the fact that what the learners have to learn and how learning and teaching are done are unavoidably interrelated.

4.3.2 Findings Related to the Teachers

This section is devoted to analysis of the findings gathered through administrating the teachers' questionnaires. As mentioned in Chapter 3, teachers' perceptions about their students' purposes, attitudes and needs were gathered using a questionnaire. The results of the three parts of the questionnaire are presented in the section that follows. In Chapter 5, an attempt is made to synthesize these sets of

155

findings together with the other findings obtained through different tools to draw recommendations for the renewal of the Grade 11 EL program.

4.3.2.1 Importance of the Four Macro-skills

In the second section of the questionnaire, Item 2 investigated the importance of the four macro-skills. Teachers were asked to rank the macro-skills according to their importance to their students (1 as the most important and 4 as the least important). The participants' answers were analyzed using the means of each rank of the four language macro-skills. Then they were ordered in descending order to provide a clearer picture about the overall importance of the four skills as perceived by teachers. The responses are given in Table 4.10.

Table 4.10
The Teachers' Perception of the Most Important Macro-skill

The macro-skills	Analysis	Teachers' Ranking				Mean	Std. Deviation	Final Ranking
		1	2	3	4			
Speaking	Frequencies	35	13	10	6	1.80	1.026	1
	Percent	54.7	20.3	15.6	9.4			
Reading	Frequencies	16	16	22	10	2.41	1.035	2
	Percent	25	25	34.4	15.6			
Writing	Frequencies	9	17	17	21	2.78	1.061	3
	Percent	14.1	26.6	26.6	32.8			
Listening	Frequencies	6	17	16	25	2.94	1.022	4
	Percent	9.4	26.6	25	39.1			

The mean values in Table 4.10 show that speaking (1.80) was unanimously chosen by teachers as the most important skill for Omani students. Reading (2.41) was the second most important macro-skill followed by writing (2.78). The frame was lower for listening (2.94).

Summary of findings of this section:

- Speaking was unanimously chosen by teachers as the most important skill for Omani students.

- The teachers' skill ranking yielded less definite priorities. The teachers, like the students, attributed the least importance to listening. However, the relative degree of priorities is not identical.

4.3.2.2 The Language Needs

Section 3 of the teacher questionnaire was a scale item section that included the language use needs, which were sorted according to the four language skills (reading, writing, listening and speaking). Teachers (n = 64) were provided with 50 items representing activities, skills and sub-skills, and were asked to indicate on a scale of frequency how often students have difficulties performing any of the given skills. They had to choose from five alternatives of frequency: never, rarely, sometimes, often, and always. The skills included were chosen for their documented importance in the skill literature. For how these items were chosen as questionnaire items see 3.3.1.1 above. In what follows, a detailed presentation of the finding is organized according to the four language skills: reading, speaking, writing, and listening. The rationale for this sorting is justified by the fact that the four macro-skills are the main factors needed and taught in an EFL classroom. Many NA research used the same classification when addressing the language domain of students needs (Alastal, & Shuib, 2012; Janda, 2009; Kiranmayi, 2012; Nallaya, 2012).

4.3.2.2a Reading Skills

The reading skills and sub skills findings are displayed in Table 4.11 in descending order, so the highly perceived need will be placed first. This step is important for making priorities in skills presentation in the curriculum, because it is an unavoidable need to set priorities, and focus on those skills that are more crucial for the specific intended use. Teachers (n = 64) responded to 14 reading micro-skills. Table 4.11 presents the needed reading skills organized based on the teachers' perceptions.

Table 4.11

Language Reading Needs Preferred in Grade 11 Schools as Reported by the Teachers

N.	Statements		Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always	Mean	Std. Deviation
13	Inferring meaning of terms from a text.	Frequency	3	10	16	16	19	3.59	1.205
		Percent	4.7	15.6	25	25	29.7		
6	Organizing the important ideas and concepts in an English text.	Frequency	0	10	26	25	3	3.33	.798
		Percent	0	15.6	40.6	39.1	4.7		
8	Figuring out the meaning of new words by using the context and their background knowledge.	Frequency	2	11	26	17	8	3.28	1.000
		Percent	3.1	17.2	40.6	26.6	12.5		
12	Using a dictionary to find out meanings.	Frequency	2	9	28	20	5	3.27	.913
		Percent	3.1	14.1	43.8	31.3	7.8		
7	Remembering major ideas when they read an English text.	Frequency	1	10	29	20	4	3.25	.854
		Percent	1.6	15.6	45.3	31.3	6.3		
9	Using the library and Internet to find information that they are looking for.	Frequency	2	11	28	17	6	3.22	.951
		Percent	3.1	17.2	43.8	26.6	9.4		
4	Understanding English vocabulary and grammar when they read.	Frequency	0	11	34	13	6	3.22	.845
		Percent	0	17.2	53.1	20.3	9.4		
3	Understanding charts and graphs in a scientific text.	Frequency	1	19	21	14	9	3.17	1.062
		Percent	1.6	29.7	32.8	21.9	14.1		
10	Understanding an English text well enough to answer questions about it later.	Frequency	4	10	32	10	8	3.13	1.031
		Percent	6.3	15.6	50	15.6	12.5		
2	Understanding how the ideas in an English text relate to each other.	Frequency	1	14	26	22	1	3.13	.826
		Percent	1.6	21.9	40.6	34.4	1.6		
5	Understanding the most important point in a text.	Frequency	3	15	25	14	7	3.11	1.041
		Percent	4.7	23.4	39.1	21.9	10.9		
14	Understanding an English text as easily as an Arabic one.	Frequency	4	16	21	17	6	3.08	1.074
		Percent	6.3	25	32.8	26.6	9.4		
1	Understanding general ideas when reading in English.	Frequency	5	11	29	16	3	3.02	.968
		Percent	7.8	17.2	45.3	25	4.7		
11	Differentiating between statements of fact and opinion.	Frequency	10	16	19	14	5	2.81	1.180
		Percent	15.6	25	29.7	21.9	7.8		

It is worth noting that high mean values in the difficulty scale denote more difficulty, which is related to less ability. Where students have difficulty in achieving any skill, their ability in the same skill is low. On the other hand, where they have little difficulty in a skill, their ability in that skill is high. All the items in Table 4.11 show large mean values ranging from 3.59 to 2.81, which mean that according to the teachers' perception students have less ability with reading sub-skills or face more difficulty while dealing with any reading task compared to other macro skills such as listening and writing.

4.3.2.2b Speaking Skills

The speaking skills and sub skills findings are displayed in Table 4.12 in descending order. As previously mentioned, this step is important for making priorities in skills presentation in the curriculum. Teachers (n=64) responded to 8 speaking micro-skills which are items 43 to 50 in the questionnaire. Table 4.12 presents the highly rated speaking skills organized based on the teachers' perceptions.

Table 4.12

The Language Speaking Needs Preferred in Grade 11 Schools as Reported by Teachers

N.	Statements		Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always	Mean
					Scale			
49	Orally summarizing information they have read or listened to.	Frequency	2	11	32	17	11	3.38
		Percent	3.2	17.2	35.9	26.6	17.2	
50	Answering exam questions correctly.	Frequency	0	7	35	17	5	3.31
		Percent	0	10.9	54.7	26.6	7.8	
44	Delivering a well prepared presentation.	Frequency	2	15	21	15	11	3.28
		Percent	3.1	23.4	32.8	23.4	17.2	
46	Participating in a conversation or a discussion in English.	Frequency	2	13	23	18	8	3.27
		Percent	3.1	20.3	35.9	28.1	12.5	
47	Stating and supporting their opinion.	Frequency	1	22	32	16	4	3.17
		Percent	1.6	17.2	50	25	6.3	
48	Responding to questions orally.	Frequency	1	18	23	14	8	3.16
		Percent	1.6	28.1	35.9	21.9	12.5	
45	Talking for a few minutes about a topic they are familiar with.	Frequency	1	16	25	17	5	3.14
		Percent	1.6	25	39.1	26.6	7.8	
43	Making themselves clear when speaking to others.	Frequency	5	14	25	11	9	3.08
		Percent	7.8	21.9	39.1	17.2	14.1	

Table 4.12 shows large mean values ranging from 3.38 to 3.08. They represent the frequent sub-speaking skills that students face difficulty with while speaking in English. According to teachers, students have a high level of difficulty in achieving speaking skills, which means that their speaking ability is low. This finding is in agreement with similar EFL studies namely, Kttidhaworn (2011) and Shuja'a (2004), who found that the speaking skill, as perceived by their study sample, was the most challenging skill in contrast with other language skills.

4.3.2.2c Writing Skills

The findings for writing skills and sub skills are displayed in Table 4.13 in descending order. As previously mentioned, this step is important for making priorities in skills presentation in the curriculum. Teachers (n = 64) responded to 23 items representing writing micro-skills which are items 15 to 37 in the questionnaire. Table 4.13 presents the highly rated writing skills organized based on the teachers' perceptions.

Table 4.13

The Language Writing Needs Preferred in Grade 11 Schools as Reported by the

Teachers

N.	Statements		Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always	Mean
					Scale			
35	Writing a report on scientific projects done in a laboratory.	Frequency	6	9	12	13	24	3.63
		Percent	9.4	14.1	18.8	20.3	37.5	
25	Translating some concepts and ideas from Arabic to English.	Frequency	2	5	21	27	9	3.56
		Percent	3.1	7.8	32.8	24.2	14.1	
21	Expressing ideas and arguments effectively.	Frequency	3	9	16	23	13	3.53
		Percent	4.7	14.1	25	35.9	20.3	
15	Writing a summary of information they read or listened to.	Frequency	2	10	20	17	15	3.52
		Percent	3.1	15.6	31.3	26.6	23.4	
22	Using correct grammar, vocabulary, punctuation and spelling.	Frequency	0	12	23	14	15	3.50
		Percent	0	18.8	35.9	21.9	23.4	
30	Writing a curriculum vitae CV in English.	Frequency	7	11	9	18	19	3.48
		Percent	10.9	17.2	14.1	28.1	29.7	
24	Structuring clear statements without any ambiguity or vagueness.	Frequency	0	12	21	19	12	3.48
		Percent	0	18.8	32.8	29.7	18.8	
19	Writing an essay in the class on an assigned topic.	Frequency	2	11	18	21	12	3.47
		Percent	3.1	17.2	28.1	32.8	18.8	
16	Organizing their writing, so that the reader can understand their main ideas.	Frequency	2	10	18	25	9	3.45
		Percent	3.1	15.6	28.1	39.1	14.1	
17	Supporting their writing with examples, evidences and data.	Frequency	3	6	26	18	11	3.44
		Percent	4.7	9.4	40.6	28.1	17.2	
20	Expressing themselves well in writing.	Frequency	3	10	18	23	10	3.42
		Percent	4.7	15.6	28.1	35.9	15.6	
26	Incorporating data and illustration in their writing.	Frequency	3	6	28	16	11	3.41
		Percent	4.7	9.4	34.8	25	17.2	
29	Writing a questionnaire in English.	Frequency	7	9	18	11	19	3.41
		Percent	10.9	14.1	28.1	17.2	29.7	
33	Editing their own or others' papers for grammar and style problems.	Frequency	4	8	21	22	9	3.38
		Percent	6.3	12.5	32.8	34.4	14.1	
28	Writing a good introduction and a conclusion to their article.	Frequency	1	13	24	16	10	3.33
		Percent	1.6	20.3	37.5	25	15.6	
23	Sequencing paragraphs in the	Frequency	2	8	30	18	6	3.28

	article.	Percent	3.1	12.5	46.9	28.1	9.4	
18	Taking notes that	Frequency	3	15	18	18	10	3.27
	demonstrate the main points.	Percent	4.7	23.4	28.1	28.1	15.6	
31	Explaining in writing the	Frequency	3	14	18	22	7	3.25
	content of graphs, tables,	Percent	4.7	21.9	28.1	34.4	10.9	
	charts and diagrams.							
27	Relating the topic they write	Frequency	3	12	27	16	6	3.16
	to their knowledge and	Percent	4.7	18.8	42.2	25	9.4	
	experience.							
37	Writing a proposal about	Frequency	2	13	33	12	4	3.05
	future plans.	Percent	3.1	20.3	51.6	18.8	6.3	
34	Writing a letter of	Frequency	5	14	26	12	7	3.03
	application.	Percent	7.8	21.9	40.8	18.8	10.9	
32	Writing a report about an	Frequency	3	15	27	17	2	3.00
	action in the past.	Percent	4.7	23.4	42.2	26.6	3.1	
36	Writing a paragraph from	Frequency	3	16	27	17	1	2.95
	notes.	Percent	4.7	25	42.2	26.6	1.6	

As can be noticed from Table 4.13, the mean values of all the items in the teachers' difficulty scale were high and ranging from 3.63 to 2.95, which was higher than the students' self-reported writing difficulties and the highest mean values found in the teachers' questionnaire analysis. High mean values in the difficulty scale reflect more difficulty, which is related to lower ability. The above mean values, therefore, revealed that, according to the teachers' perception, students had less ability with English writing or overall faced challenges while dealing with any writing task.

4.3.2.2d Listening Skills

The listening skills and sub skills findings are displayed in Table 4.14 in descending order. As previously mentioned, this step is important for making priorities in skills presentation in the curriculum. Teachers (n = 64) responded to 5 items representing listening micro-skills which are items 38 to 42 in the questionnaire. The following table presents the highly rated listening skills organized based on the teachers' perceptions.

Table 4.14

The Language Listening Needs Preferred in Grade 11 Schools as Reported by Teachers

N.	Statements		Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always	Mean
41	Understanding the relationships among ideas they listen to.	Frequency	0	10	31	15	8	3.33
		Percent	0	15.6	48.4	23.4	12.5	
42	Remembering the most important points after listening to an English text.	Frequency	4	9	31	15	5	3.13
		Percent	6.3	14.1	48.4	23.4	7.8	
40	Understanding the speaker's attitude or opinion about what he or she is saying.	Frequency	2	15	29	14	4	3.05
		Percent	3.1	23.4	45.3	21.9	6.3	
39	Relating information they hear in English to what they already know.	Frequency	3	15	29	14	3	2.98
		Percent	4.7	23.4	45.3	21.9	4.7	
38	Understanding the main idea of a conversation or a lesson.	Frequency	4	18	22	15	5	2.98
		Percent	6.3	28.1	34.4	23.4	7.8	

Analysis of the teachers' questionnaire revealed that listening was the least difficult skill according to the teachers', as well as students' perceptions, which indicated that students' listening ability was better compared to other skills. Items 41, 42 and 40 in Table 4.14 represented some of the listening micro-skills that students need to master in order to enhance their academic progress. Speaking mean values were the lowest values compared to the other macro-skills, which indicated that teachers also agreed with the students that listening was not a difficult task to be mastered.

Summary of Findings of this Section

- Teachers' responses to the questionnaires show that some skills and sub skills were reported as more important than others skills.

- Students have less ability with speaking and reading sub-skills, so they face more difficulty while dealing with any speaking or reading task compared to other macro skills such as writing and listening.

- The mean values of all the items in the teachers' writing difficulty were high ranging from 3.63 to 2.95, which were higher than the students' self-reported writing difficulties and the highest mean values found in the teachers' questionnaire analysis.

- Students' top five most needed writing sub-skills shared communicative and academic purpose. On the other hand, teachers' first five priorities were scientific and academic oriented writing tasks. Teachers, therefore, seemed more aware of the students' future EL related challenges that they would face in furthering their studies.

- Listening mean values showed the lowest values compared to the other macro-skills, indicating that teachers also agreed with the students that listening was not a difficult task to master.

4.3.3 Findings Related to the Supervisors and Heads of Department

I interviewed the supervisors and heads of department to provide a more in-depth insight into the actual needs of the Grade 11 students. I asked them different questions such as the following:

- What are the language skills and sub skills students need in post-basic education schools?

- If you were asked to rank the language skills (listening, speaking, writing and reading) according to their importance and priorities to Grade 11 students, how would you rank them?

The interviewees were unable to recall and list all the language uses needed for Grade 11 schools within the interview. Because of that, what was said by the interviewees was not comprehensive unless accompanied with the findings obtained using questionnaires and book analysis. This may raise questions about the suitability of interviews for finding out about detailed needs. What the interview provides is a general idea about the learners' language needs. Therefore, this creates a need to triangulate resources and tools in NA, such as questionnaires and text book analysis, that could provide more thoughts and specific information about the students' language needs.

The interviewees were asked to specify the priorities among the four language skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing). Despite their post, the informants gave different kinds of responses. One head of department perceived that all the four skills carried equal importance because they were very essential in the students' studies. This claim went in line with Kittidhaworn's (2001) findings, which showed that all four sub-skills of Language Skills were perceived to be about equally important to learning in second-year English courses. Two supervisors also stated, "The priority should be directed first to productive skills then to receptive skills." They thought that during Grade 11 students should be prepared to produce the language according to their demands.

While the needs analysis yielded a lucid picture of the students' needs, supervisors' skill priorities were less clear and, therefore, more difficult to define precisely. The inconsistency of priorities chosen by the supervisors and heads of department reflects the diversity of professional practices, which affected not only the extent of their attitudes but also their priorities regarding the four skills.

The majority of the respondents perceived speaking skills as the most important macro-skill compared to the other skills. One head of department said, "It is very important to bear in mind speaking and presentation because bearing in mind that quite a number of our students will find themselves looking for work abroad or work with foreign companies, so it is very important that they are able to speak fluently." Speaking was also seen as the most important macro-skill for students according to the teachers' perceptions, as was explained during the questionnaire findings (see Table 4.10). One head of department described students as "our selling forces" because on many occasions these students would be representing their countries and giving presentations about their country. "How countries view Oman as an investment opportunity, will very much depend on the outcomes of Grade 11 and Grade 12."

The skill given least priority was listening. Almost all participants agreed to place listening as the fourth skill. This could be because the students' listening ability was good in contrast to other skills, so they had better ability in listening according to supervisors and heads of departments. This finding corresponded with the student and teacher questionnaires analysis and revealed similar perspectives toward listening (see 4.3.1.1 and 4.3.2.1).

Reading and writing were in the middle ranks. A head of department commented, "Our students in Grade 11, all of them without exceptions, should be able to read and to write at least should be taking about an IELTS (band 4.5 level)." Not all of them should be able to because there must be strugglers, but again facilities and places for the strugglers were not available

The students at Grade 11 clearly need a bit of advanced reading and writing skills and a lot of speaking practice in a variety of extended contexts. One supervisor provided detailed reading skills as "scanning, skimming, browsing and reading for comprehension". They also needed writing because they were taught to write newspaper

reports and articles, formal and informal letters, essays, and so forth. They also needed to be skilful in some important sub skills of writing such as "brainstorming, organization of ideas, paragraphing, using signposts, using topic sentences and supporting sentences".

The students, according to another supervisor, also needed to "develop critical thinking and lateral thinking skills" accompanied with study skills and research skills as a preparatory kit for their higher studies at the tertiary level.

Summary of findings of this section:

- Interviews were not suitable tools for providing detailed information about learners' linguistic needs. More thoughts and specific information about the language needs should be obtained by questionnaires and text book analysis.

- The majority of the respondents perceived speaking skills as the most important macro-skill compared to the other skills.

- All participants agreed to place listening as the fourth macro-skill.

- There was a need to develop critical thinking and lateral thinking skills accompanied with study skills and research skills.

4.3.3 Discussion of the Findings for Research Question 2

The section has addressed the issue of language use context, which provides the theoretical framework for the second research question. It covers the Target Language Needs Analysis (Munby, 1978) of the multidimensional framework for nationwide needs analysis (see section 1.8 and Figure 3.1). Question 2 looks at the language use needs of the students, which can provide information that helps to identify and state the students' wants. The data were collected using two questionnaires and interviews. The findings presented in the previous sections were organized according to the participants,

and then based on the macro skills. The rationale for this sorting is justified by Alastal and Shuib (2012), Janda (2009), and Kiranmayi (2012) that the four macro-skills are the main factors needed and taught in an EFL classroom.

Reading (2.09) and speaking (2.22) were seen as the most important macro-skills according to students' perception. Analysis of students' responses to the questionnaires showed that there were some skills and sub skills reported as more important than others in every language skill. The students' perceptions of the priorities among the language skills reflected their 'wants'. This finding matched the conclusion by Deutch (2003) that reading was unanimously chosen by all participants as the most important skill for students. This is aligned with Omani students' lack of a reading culture or reading habit in society as highlighted by Kiranmayi (2012) and O'Sullivan (2008). The prized oral tradition in Gulf societies can justify such gap. This absence of reading culture in Omani students results in the absence of any background knowledge, which is critical to comprehension of reading. In Oman the hobby of reading is in a sordid state as there is nothing much to encourage it. There are no public libraries (Kiranmayi, 2012); most of the reading material is imported from abroad and hence expensive.

Close reading of Table 4.8 which reported high mean values in the students' perception of the writing skill therefore, revealed different discussions. The pattern shared by the five highest items is that they all have communicative and academic purpose. Item 16, as an example, is the highest item with a mean value of 3.05. This indicates that the students perceived the most difficult task, of the included writing tasks, to be organizing their writing so that the reader can understand their main ideas. This is also true for Items 20, 25, 18, and 24, which deal with the same phenomena that are: making themselves clear when writing any text in English or how best they can express themselves while writing any argument in English. On the other hand, the items

with the lowest mean values in Table 4.8 (i.e., items 31, 29, and 35) share a scientific purpose. This however does not mean that Grade 11 students have no problem explaining in English writing the content of graphs, tables, charts and diagrams, or writing a report on scientific projects done in a laboratory. This finding is justified by the fact that the Omani Grade 11 students are not learning science in school using English instruction and there is very little or no exposure to English during their science lesson (Al-Saadi & Samuel, 2013). Therefore, according to students, writing English for scientific purposes is not required much because they are not using it during their Grade 11 studies.

The open-ended question provided space for students to articulate all the wants or deficiencies in their EL program. Deutch (2003) argued that, when planning a language course, not only should necessities be considered but also various constraints imposed by the parties involved. Considering the learners' wants is estimated to be a more learner-centered approach than defining the target needs (Ali, and Salih, 2013; Deutch, 2003; Mackay & Bosquet, 1981; Nallaya, 2012; Nunan, 1988). The students did not restrict their comments to the course content but also expressed their views about many aspects that would facilitate the learning processes including the teachers, teaching methods, testing and so forth. The inclusion of these themes in the students' responses goes in line with the fact that what the learners have to learn and how learning and teaching are done are unavoidably interrelated (Al-Husseini, 2004). In addition, the students' responses suggest that they are fully aware of what they actually need and how their needs would be fulfilled.

According to the teachers' perception (64) speaking was the most important macro-skill for students. The results drew similarities to previous work (Ali & Salih, 2013; Janda, 2009; Nallaya, 2012; Soruc, 2012) which mentioned that among the four skills, speaking, as the basic means of human communication, becomes the most

171

demanding skill to learn. Teachers as well as students agreed to place listening as the least important skill out of the four macro-skills; however, their perception of the most important skill varied. Students' language priority was reading whereas teachers' priority was speaking. This revealed the diversity found between teachers and students' perceptions of the priorities of EL skills presentation. These differences between the perceptions of students and teachers are going to be statistically studied later in Table 4.8. Teachers' responses to the third section of the teachers questionnaires showed that some skills and sub skills were reported as more important than others in every language skill. Students had less ability with speaking and reading sub-skills, so they faced more difficulty while dealing with any speaking or reading task compared to other macro skills, such as writing and listening. These results were in clear agreement with the findings of Boyle (1993), Kittidhaworn (2001), and Shuja'a (2004) showing that speaking was reported as the most difficult language skill by their EFL respondents, in contrast to other language macro skills.. This was attributed to the very limited opportunities for practicing in speaking English outside the classroom.

This finding supports the teachers' claim, discussed in 4.3.2.1 above, that the priority in skill presentation in the Grade 11 EL curriculum should be directed to speaking. Students' speaking ability as perceived by teachers was low and they often face difficulty while trying to perform any English language speaking tasks. In addition, one of the findings that also emerged from the Grade 11 EL textbooks analysis, as in 4.2.3, was that speaking was the language macro skill used least frequently in the current Grade 11 EL textbooks, which indicated that the current Grade 11 program did not succeed in enhancing the students' speaking competency. Thus, it becomes necessary to introduce changes in the current EL program to resolve the low EL speaking proficiency among Omani EFL students. This finding is aligned with Nallaya

(2012) who found that speaking was the students' first choice to nominate as the skill where more training was required.

Another interesting feature is the difference found between teachers and students on the priorities among writing sub-skills. Students' first five most needed writing sub-skills shared communicative and academic purpose, such as items 16, 20, and 24. On the other hand, teachers' first five priorities were scientific and academic oriented writing tasks, as in item 35 (to write a report on scientific projects done in a laboratory), item 25 (to translate some concepts and ideas from Arabic to English), item 15 (to write a summary of information they have read or listened to), and item 22 (to use correct grammar, vocabulary, punctuation and spelling). Scientific oriented writing tasks were the least needed skills according to students whereas teachers perceived them as the most challenging task to be mastered. This finding can be justified by the fact that the teachers were more aware of the future EL related challenges that students would face while trying to further their studies, whereas students' judgment of the most needed writing skills were based on their current classroom needs.

As to the use of the questionnaire in this study, it proved to be a useful tool for collecting information from a large number of participants. However, it was insufficient by itself to provide an in-depth or efficient picture of the learners' needs. Therefore, this study recommends that if questionnaires are to be used in NA surveys, they should be triangulated with other tools, such as interviews or textbook analysis, as is the case in the current study.

The supervisors and heads of department interviewed in this study have provided valuable remarks and comments that would help in improving the teaching and learning situation at post-basic education schools in Oman. The interviewees were unable to recall within the time limit of the interview all the language uses that take place in Grade 11 schools. Interviews were found to be less effective in providing

detailed information about learners' linguistic needs. More thoughts and specific information about the language needs should be obtained using questionnaires and text analysis if designed properly. The majority of the respondents perceived speaking skills as the most important macro-skill compared to the other skills. All participants agreed to place listening as the fourth macro-skill. There was also a need to develop critical thinking and lateral thinking skills accompanied with study skills and research skills.

4.4 Research Question 3

The third research question, "To what extent are the decision makers aware of the English language learning needs of the Grade 11 students?", covers the means analysis dimension (Jordan, 1997). It gathers information from the decision makers on source, time, teaching experts and support to enhance the EL program.

The interview was used to gather in-depth qualitative data about the students' needs from the supervisors (4), the head of the supervision department (1), and the heads of the Curriculum Department (2). Thus, seven interviews were conducted individually. The interviews provided answers to the following questions:

1. Is it important to learn about the students' language needs? How can it be done?

2. What are the obstacles, if any, that can hinder the improvement of the current EL program in Grade 11?

3. How could the existing English language program be improved to meet the academic needs and demands of students in post-basic education schools? What are areas that need improvement?

After conducting the interviews, the analysis started with their transcription from the audio cassettes. Examples of the interviews transcripts are provided in Appendix F and G. The interview was coded into categories and thus large texts were reduced into a

few tables and figures. Categories were an organizing device that allowed synthesizing and grouping all instances of a particular kind. Categorizing and grouping the data according to the issues treated by the questions provided an analytical framework (Robson, 1993). Therefore, the analysis was organized according to the following categories:

1. The practise of examining students' needs

2. Difficulties and challenges facing the current EL program

3. Suggestions for improving the current English language program

The qualitative data were gathered and then analyzed according to the issues raised in the questions. Therefore, sections 4.4.1, section 4.4.2. and section 4.4.3 were divided according to the above categories. Each section provides the answers given by the different participants to that topic. Different participants' views were expressed differently because they had different responsibilities and, therefore, different views.

The various utterances of the different participants were distinguished by writing the description before each utterance, for example, "a head of department", and "a supervisor." This helped the researcher to account for all different views that were held by different individuals. The research questions were transcribed by the tag word "the researcher". Finally, all interviews were conducted and transcribed in English (see appendices F and G).

All of the quotations in the following analysis were from the recorded interviews I conducted with the different study participants. Maintaining confidentiality has prompted me to refer to the participants in broad terms. For instance, the different heads of the departments' points of views were discussed by referring to them by "heads of the department" because referring to them by the full job title would reveal their identity.

4.4.1 The Practice of Examining Students' Needs

The information for this point was gathered from the supervisors and heads of department by asking them questions such as:

- Is it important to learn about the students' language needs? How can it be done?

- Have you encountered or been involved in any systematic study or investigation of the students' linguistic needs in Oman?

- Has there been any systematic study of students' linguistic needs in terms of their perceptions, teachers' perceptions or other stakeholders' perceptions?

All the interviewed participants agreed that it was very important to examine the linguistic needs of students as a step before designing any program. Supervisors and heads of department recognized the important role of conducting a NA study to see how best the program could fulfil the assigned needs of the learners. One supervisor stated, "Yes, it is extremely important in order to properly address them for achieving desired learning aims and objectives." Another supervisor similarly said, "Yes, it's important. Teachers of Grade 11 need to be well trained in discovering students' language needs; therefore teachers should get a special course that enables them to recognize students' needs." This indicated that the participants had positive attitudes toward NA and they had realized that in doing NA, subjective and objective information about the learner could be gathered in order to know the objectives for which the language was needed, the situation in which the language will be used, with whom the language would be used, and the level of proficiency required. This attitude towards NA meets with the assumptions of other researchers, such as Weddel and Duzer (1997) Ali and Salih (2013), that NA assures a flexible, responsive curriculum rather than a fixed, linear curriculum determined ahead of time by instructors.

A critical examination of the views of English language supervisors and heads departments about the experience they had with conducting NA studies in the governmental schools revealed that NA was virtually non-existent. Students' needs were simply intuited for them, rather than analyzed or assessed. In responding to whether they have experienced or been involved in any systematic study or investigation of the students' needs in Oman, all the interviewed supervisors and heads of department mentioned, "No." One head of department said, "No, it is rarely studied" and another one stated, "No, I haven't." Another head of department recalled a "limited study" whereby they met some employees and discussed with them what they want most from school graduates. She said, "What actually we have done is a limited study with stakeholders. For example, we went to the Central Bank, Ministry of Defence, police, and some banks, which was before writing the course book. From there we had interviews with the PROs in terms of what they are looking for. Apart from academic qualifications, in terms of language, all of them told what we want is people who can communicate."

Students, supervisors and teachers were not involved even in that "limited study". It was believed that students were unaware of their needs. The reason for not involving teachers and supervisors was, according to one head of department, "that most of the teachers say that the language is changing so much and we as teachers are lagging behind. Basically, teachers in grade 8-10 did come to us and complain that new grammatical elements which have been recently added we ourselves are not familiar with. This we have reported to the Ministry that the training needs to be more intensive. That is one of the problems? In addition, it is always at the back of our minds, which is, can the teacher deal with the new book?"

It can be concluded that the current national syllabus used in teaching EL in Grade 11 of Omani schools was not developed based on any empirical analysis of the

Omani EFL students' needs. This finding justifies the emergent need for conducting the current study in the Omani government school system. The absence of NA studies in Omani schools could be attributed to the following three reasons:

- First, the target situation analysis was not applicable because the target situation was unknown to the students and educators alike in Oman.

- Students' future depended solely on the scores that they attained in the countrywide final year examination, which made it difficult for them and for teachers also to teach English for certain demands or occupational purposes.

- Some readers may argue that it is not possible to conduct NA for such a large number of students.

The picture was evidently teeming with a lot of contradictions and complexities. The researcher asked one head of department about the way the Omani curriculum was developed since no investigation about students' needs existed. She stated, "My understanding is that "experts" drew up a curriculum framework…The (OWTE) and (*English for Me*) my understanding is that were developed based on experts in Oman and then from that material were written. And then after the material were written and distributed people were asked to comment on that. To the best of my knowledge students have not been involved in that process."

If the purpose of language instruction in Grade 11 of the government schools is to raise the general English language proficiency level of the learners in the whole country, the government should regularly conduct language audits that involve a large number of students, teachers, administrators, supervisors, researchers, and other interested parties. Such a large-scale NA, like the current one, should be able to better inform decision makers of the particular needs of students in the governmental schools. If it is practically difficult to cater for the various needs of such a large number of students, such language audits will at least enable officials to choose or design the

language teaching materials that best meet students' general needs. This is believed to be more expedient than predicting students' needs by individuals regardless of the students' actual needs, preferred learning strategies, local language learning environment, and so forth.

Therefore, the subject of needs analysis (NA) has not yet received sufficient attention from researchers and language teaching professionals in the Omani educational system. As a result, Omani learners rarely have input in their language-teaching context. Oanh (2007) concluded that in designing EFL and ESL courses, needs analysis requires special attention. This could make students more motivated and responsible for their studies and achievement.

Summary of Findings of this Section:

- All the interviewed participants agreed that it was very important to systematically examine the linguistic needs of Omani students, which reflected that they had positive attitudes toward NA studies.

- The subject of needs analysis (NA) has not yet received sufficient attention from researchers and language teaching professionals in the Omani educational system.

- No empirical nationwide NA of Omani EFL students' linguistic needs was carried out during the process of developing the current EL framework.

- The government should regularly conduct language audits that involve a large number of students, teachers, administrators, supervisors, researchers, and any other interested parties. Such a large-scale NA should be able to better inform decision makers of the particular needs of students in the governmental schools.

4.4.2 Difficulties and Challenges Facing the Current EL Program

Another new lead which came up during the interviews and which was not among the pre-decided topics was to ask participants about the difficulties and challenges in the current EL program in Grade 11. The information for this point was gathered from the supervisors and heads of department by answering the following questions:

- What are the obstacles, if any, that can hinder the improvement of the current EL program in Grade 11?

- Do you see any barriers that may handicap such improvement?

- For the sake of introducing reforms, what are the challenges you face as a department in adapting the new reforms or changes to the system?

- From all the comments, feedback and notes you received from the field about the Grade 11 English language curriculum, what are the areas that need to be worked on or developed?

The supervisors and heads of department did not restrict their comments to the course content, but also expressed their views about many other things that would facilitate the learning processes including the teachers' training, teaching style, learning environment and so forth. The inclusion of these themes in the participants' responses is aligned with the fact that what the learners have to learn and how learning and teaching are done are unavoidably interrelated.

Answers to the above questions yielded voluminous information that has to be organized for easy analysis and interpretation. The procedure adopted was as follows.

The supervisors' and heads of departments' responses to this question were listed on a sheet so as to make it easy to see patterns and regularities in the responses. Through the process of "text book analysis" six categories, descriptive of the responses, were developed. As the process of categorization proceeded, a panel of two arbitrators

was asked to evaluate the emerging categories. Based on that, some categories, which seemed closely related, were combined, resulting in the final four categories. These comparatively small numbers of categories were representative of all regularities and patterns and facilitated the analysis, making it more comprehensive. The categories obtained were as follows:

1. Difficulties concerning the learning content

2. Teacher training and teaching style

3. Inadequate school environment

4. Other educational and administrative challenges

After arriving at these categories, each one of them was written on a separate sheet. Some responses had more than one answer. In this case, every different answer was listed separately under the relevant category. A summary of the supervisors' and heads of departments' responses relating to each of these categories/themes is presented in Table 4.15.

Table 4.15

Summary of Difficulties and Challenges Facing the Current EL Program According to

Supervisors and Heads of Departments

Learning content	Inadequate school environment
- Limited number of hours allocated to EL teaching in the Ministry schools. - Heavy, long and difficult EL textbooks - Big jump in the level of language presented in the program. - Loose curriculum framework. - No effective program for struggling students. - No special education needs support. - Lack of awareness raising activities for the students to exploit the resources of the language fully for their advantage. - No assessment of students needs. - No reading schemes.	- Non-available resources and materials. - Syllabus framework is unavailable in school nor with teachers. - No motivating educational environment around the school. - No celebration of students' work to develop sense of pride among the students. - Long national and other holidays, which lead to a shortened school year - School does not promote leadership among students.
Teachers training and teaching style	**Other educational and administrative challenges**
- Teacher training is not intensive. It should keep up with teachers through refresher courses. - Teachers are not trained into the system and not by the Ministry. - More focus should be given to teachers' career and professional development program. - Late appointment of teachers. - Teachers are resistant to change and to apply new approach. - Letting go trained and experienced teachers and bringing in new teachers with low proficiency in English. - Loaded teachers' timetables and duties. - Tendency of the teachers to complete the portions rather than exploit the texts fully. - Less than expected attempts of exploiting each student's creative energy on the part of teachers.	- Long national and other holidays, which lead to a shortened school year - Recruiting experts and curriculum authors. - Technology changes. - Less cooperation between the different departments concerned with designing the curriculum. - No proper foundation of the schooling system to develop early child literacy and numeracy skills. - No assessment of students needs. - No reading schemes. - A lot of sudden and immediate changes in the school routines.

Examining the difficulties and challenges facing the current EL program in Grade 11 helped in supporting the suggestions for improving the current EL program. Educators want to understand the possible challenges that hinder the right application of the EL program in order to avoid failure. Previous studies have revealed that problems and challenges are likely to emerge when proposed reforms are implemented in local institutions (Brindley & Hood, 1990; Wang, 2006). In any educational jurisdiction, failing to attend to possible barriers precludes classroom teachers from following the guidelines expected by policymakers (Elmore & Sykes, 1992).

Analyzing the proposed challenges resulted in extracting four factors or categories that, if avoided, would allow the EL program to function far more successfully. The first category concerned learning textbooks, curriculum frameworks, the course content, struggling students and special needs programs. Thus, this factor was labelled "learning content". The second item was named "inadequate school environment" because it was concerned with the school environment, availability of materials and resources, celebration of students' work, leadership, school holidays and motivating educational environment. The third category investigated the difficulties and challenges related to teachers and teacher training, such as training needs, refresher courses, teachers' attitudes, abilities, duties, appointment, and teachers' timetables. Therefore, it was labelled "teachers training and teaching style". The fourth category was named "other educational and administrative factors" as it included items dealing with issues such as shortened school year, recruiting experts and curriculum authors, technology demands, early child foundation program, absence of reading schemes and needs assessments, and sudden changes. Many schools throughout the country lacked important educational technological aids, which have been found in the literature to play an integral role in second language acquisition (Al-Issa & Al-Bulushi, 2012). Non-

technological aids and other printed materials were also missing from different schools (Al-Issa, 2006).

The literature review showed that many studies have found that the first three factors, namely learning content, inadequate school environment, and teachers training and teaching style were the most important challenges that interfere with the success of any EL program. Examples of these studies are Falout and Maruyama (2004), and Sakai and Kikuuchi (2009).

Summary of the Findings of this section:

- What the learners have to learn and how learning and teaching are done are unavoidably interrelated.

- Analyzing the proposed challenges resulted in extracting four factors that, if avoided, would allow the EL program to function far more successfully. These factors were inadequate learning content, problems in teacher training and teaching style, inadequate school environment and other educational and administrative challenges.

- Educators should understand the possible challenges that hinder the right application of the EL program in order to avoid the causes of the failure.

- Previous studies such as Falout and Maruyama (2004) and Sakai and Kikuuchi (2009) found that the first three factors; namely, learning content, inadequate school environment and teachers training and teaching style were some of the most important challenges which interfered with the success of any EL program.

4.4.3 Suggestions for Improving the Current English Language Program

The information for this point was gathered from the supervisors and heads of department by answering the following questions:

- How could the existing English language program be improved to meet with the academic needs and demands of students in post-basic education schools? What are the areas that need improvement?

- What are the suggestions to improve the current English language program?

- How could the current EL program be improved in order to be more efficient in fulfilling its purpose?

The interviewees made different recommendations for improving the Grade 11 EL program. The supervisors and heads of department not only suggested introducing improvements to the course content, but also expressed their views about many other things that would facilitate the learning processes including the teachers' training, teaching style, school environment and so forth. As mentioned earlier, what the learners have to learn and how learning and teaching are done are unavoidably interrelated.

The answers to the above questions yield voluminous suggestions and recommendations that have to be organized to allow easy analysis and interpretation. Therefore, the proposed recommendations were analyzed and presented using the same four patterns that were presented in the previous Section 4.3.6. These patterns are:

1. Recommendations regarding the learning content
2. Suggestions for the teachers training and teaching style
3. Supporting the school environment
4. Introducing changes to some educational and administrative factors

4.4.3.1 Recommendations Regarding the Learning Content

Regarding the suggestions concerning the learning content, supervisors and a head of department suggested completely re-evaluating the educational procedures. According to one head of department, "We have to look at the way English is taught. How it is taught? What resources are there to support it? And to get the students feedback not only to the curriculum, so we need everyone to be involved in the process."

Heavy and difficult curriculums should be replaced with a more flexible one that takes the students' needs as a priority. Tella, Indoshi, and Othwon (2011) argue that crowded curriculums contribute to the unsatisfactory performance of students in secondary education. The curriculum should also account for the expected holidays to deal with the shortened school year in Oman. Teachers' focus should be directed to exploit the texts fully, rather than complete certain portions. A supervisor described the current practice by saying, "The whole emphasizes *[sic]* is at the teacher finishing this curriculum and this is completely contradictory." What is important is what the students learned and how they were learning, not whether the book has been covered.

In terms of the curriculum, a supervisor said, "We need to look at what the boys are interested in and gear the curriculum to how boys learn, which is different in many ways to how girls learn." This should be addressed in the curriculum by, for example, having a range of subjects for boys and girls.

To improve reading ability and to ensure literacy development with students, a reading scheme should be established. One head of department said, "I'm of the opinion that we need a proven reading scheme, which is Macmillan is not, we need a proven reading scheme like the Oxford reading schemes or the Collin big cats. I'm a particular fan of the Oxford reading scheme because I have used it here in the country with the

struggling readers and it has a wealth of resources both book format and IT to support student literacy development." In order to improve literacy teachers needed to actually have the student "read every single day." Teachers have different approaches to doing this. "Also we need a system focusing on phonics like the jolly phonics in private schools." All the foundation skills and phonics should be in place. Then reading every single day has to be addressed and practised on a daily basis.

Some suggested introducing or facilitating certain programs that could enhance the daily teaching and learning. One head of department asked for introducing "special educational need support". This kind of support could identify why learning was not happening and how the parents and the main class teacher could support the students. She explained, "Special educational need support is important in all stages. We have many people working in position in the Ministry of Education who have been put in that job without proper training in place to equip them to actually deliver the proper outcomes."

4.4.3.2 Suggestions for Teacher Training and Teaching Style

Carless (1999) has noted, "If teachers are to implement an innovation, it is essential that they have a thorough understanding of the principles and practices of the proposed change" (p. 355). The supervisors and heads of department interviewed also provided suggestions for teacher training and teaching style. The suggestions included different dimensions such as:

- There is a need to look at the way teachers are trained, or not trained as the case might be, and to get teachers into training on the system much earlier than before.

- There was also a need to look at the teacher's career or professional development quantitatively and qualitatively.

- Training therefore had to keep up with the teachers as refresher courses, especially for those teachers who were resistant to change. A head of department said, "A lot of teachers do not want to change their book because they think they work better, although the new books offer more in terms of what is happening now in the world."

- Do not terminate good expatriate teachers because they are already familiar with the context and the system has already trained them. Do not bring in teachers from a variety of colleges outside of Oman. One supervisor described these new teachers by saying, "...whose IELTS band is 2.5 or 3.5, some of whom you cannot actually do any feedback with them in English because they do not understand you. And they cannot also follow their English supervisors either."

- In terms of the English teachers, they should have a deep understanding of how students learn and they should keep up-to-date with the latest strategies for engaging all kinds of students. They have to differentiate their learning materials to meet the students' needs. They should also be careful about literacy in terms of reading and numeracy. One head of department said:

> Good teachers should have a way of making the students interested in what they are learning. They are also hard working. They see education as a vocation not as a 7 to 2 job. Teaching is not that. This is what we have to inculcate into our teacher all over the country. It is not a job; it is a vocation.

4.4.3.3 Supporting the School Environment

The third pattern of suggestions dealt with supporting the school environment. Different areas in this dimension need to be worked out to ensure a motivating learning environment. Improving the environment would improve student motivation and

thereby student proficiency and achievement. Students should be helped to develop a sense of pride in their learning. A head of department described the condition in many schools saying,

> You do not see work displayed around the school walls or in the classrooms themselves, because people are more concerned about maintenance and keeping the walls clear, rather than celebrating students' work to develop a sense of pride in our students and giving students responsibilities for their own classrooms, their own school, and their own learning environment.

Students should be given responsibilities in schools to develop leadership skills. A head of department gave some examples for achieving this target by wondering:

> Why aren't students responsible for their school, for the way the school is kept, for cleanness, for organizing the students into different houses? Have competition. Have their school different. Why doesn't their school look different? They are like cycle 1 schools. Why don't they have common room where they can sit and relax?

This can be a psychological shift for the students. They can also be involved in the school budget. Use these as learning experiences. There are many opportunities for learning within the school environment. These opportunities can be used to let students get firsthand experience in doing things themselves. She also added:

> Get students to organize the school timetable instead of getting somebody else for doing it. Let them manage the school. Let them be involved in these different tasks. How much will they learn from sitting down working in the timetable with an adult along with them? Think about all the skills they will learn if students were allowed and engaged in running the shop, ordering, collecting the money, bring it to the bank, learning all about the bank.

Doing activities such as that guarantees the school will be well kept and ensures a better learning environment. These are all learning opportunities for life that are lost in Grade 11 schools.

Some of the interviewed personnel highlighted the importance of being very selective in assigning the school leadership or administration, the person who is the principal or the leader of the school. A head of department illustrated the kind of leadership personnel needed:

> needs to be extremely well trained not only in best practices from around the world, but also they have to be exposed to best practices around the world. They have to be highly committed individuals who have deep understanding on best practice, who can coach and mentor teachers, who can raise the level of education entertainment in the school, who can involve and engage everyone in ensuring the school achieves the best outcomes possible. They should also have the ability to involve businesses and local agencies and parents in developing and supporting the school by providing resources to the school.

Leadership is one of the crucial factors in successful schools.

Heads of department and supervisors also recommended that schools should invest in resources. They have to have a reading scheme in place, IT resources, and most importantly work within a framework. The teachers have to have a copy of the framework. One head of department commented, "...to know where they are heading. They knew where the previous teacher has stopped. They know what they are expected to achieve and what is expected from the coming teachers." Although schools provide a course book, the teachers and the students should have the freedom to dip into the other materials, interoperate, and deliver the material in the way that they have identified as most suited to their students' learning style, taking into consideration the students' needs as well.

4.4.3.4 Introducing Changes to Educational and Administrative Factors

Lastly, the interview participants suggested introducing changes to some educational and administrative factors. These suggestions were as follows:

- To ensure a better literacy and numeracy foundation, early childhood centers should be introduced in the country, which are available for parents. A head of department proposed:

  > The governments need to invest quite considerably in early childhood centres because if those parents and children have access to those centers *then we can ensure that children get pro*per foundation through the early childhood centers which would be attached to governments.

  These centers should be functioning in line with international best practices to be assured that children would have learned and practiced proper motor skills.

- There was a need to tackle the learning environment of the school, because the current learning environment does not foster a love of learning. One head of department said:

  > Children have different abilities and different readiness at certain ages. Some children are ready before others, but unfortunately, throughout our schools, at the Ministry of Education children are treated as one block, all doing the same things at the same time.

- The Ministry's schools should link themselves to one of the international examination boards. One head of department admitted:

  > My dream would be to see in different region in Oman (2 schools from each region) as an initial project following Cambridge English program

and having the possibility to be exposed to and to achieve the standards that other students in all other parts of the world are achieving, because my concern is that our standard of education is very low and that our outcomes would not match the level of excellent outcomes of other countries.

There was a serious and national problem and it cannot be afforded with such a young generation to have such disaffected youth who, because of poor education outcomes, cannot get a better education or cannot compete in the job market.

- The Ministry of Education should offer to get the best people and experts to train Omanis on how they should go about writing course books. It is not acceptable to identify teachers in schools or supervisors, expect them to join such critical departments, and then ask them to be involved in writing materials which are going to be in place for the whole country for a number of years to come, without a lead team who themselves have been trained at a very high level.

- Since a curriculum is not only books but encompasses training, supervision, evaluation and other elements, management of all these should come together under the same directorate in the Ministry to have better outputs. A head of department commented, "Now, curriculum does not know what training is doing. Training does not know what curriculum is doing." It was noticed that the inter-departmental cooperation was less effective because departments involved belonged to different directorates in the Ministry. If they worked under the same directorate, they could be more cooperative and people would be forced to work aligned with each other. Trials should be made to bring all of these parties together again; however, people were given positions and they are unwilling to

let go of these positions. No solution can be offered, unless they are gathered together under the same directorate in the Ministry and forced to work together.

- Teachers should be given more freedom to design their own materials and to use extracurricular materials to meet their students' needs. Teachers should not be restricted; rather they should be allowed to use and design different materials to meet their students' needs. They should be encouraged to explore their own creativity.

- Reduce the amount of immediate and sudden changes that hinder teachers from doing their mission. One supervisor reported, "They should not be putting new ideas without piloting them before applying them in the schools. Schools and teachers are fed up with the immediate changes in their daily routine."

- The current EL program should be geared toward a more practice-oriented approach and exploited fully. This can be achieved by: (a) providing sufficient time slots devoted to instruction and practice, (b) changing the tendency of the teachers to complete portions rather than fully exploiting the texts, (c) more attempts to exploit each student's creative energy on the part of teachers, and (d) increasing awareness raising activities for the students to fully exploit the resources of the language to their advantage.

The suggestions discussed above will be considered when discussing the implementation needs and providing recommendations for improving the Grade 11 English language program.

To sum up the findings of this section:

- The supervisors and heads of department did not restrict their suggestions to the content of the course only, rather they freely expressed their views about many other things that would facilitate the learning processes including

recommendations regarding the learning content, suggestions for teacher training and teaching style, supporting the school environment, and introducing changes to some educational and administrative factors.

- The current study will use the mentioned recommendations alongside the other findings to make recommendations for improving the Grade 11 English language program.

4.4.4 Discussion of the Findings of Research Question 3

The section has addressed the factors that may affect the implementation of the English language curriculum in Omani schools. It covers the Means Analysis dimension (Holliday, 1995) of the multidimensional framework for nationwide needs analysis (see section 1.8 and figure 3.1). Question three gathers information from the decision makers on source, time, teaching experts and support to enhance the EL program.

However, all the interviewed participants agreed that it is very important to systematically examine the linguistic needs of Omani students; it was reported that no empirical nationwide NA of Omani EFL students' linguistic needs was carried out during the process of developing the current EL framework. Realizing the importance of NA in EL curriculum design was also documented by Ali and Salih (2013) who investigated the perceptions of 55 EFL teachers. It was concluded that needs analysis has to be encouraged and learners' needs are of utmost importance ESP/EAP materials writing. The findings of this study showed that the vast majority of EFL teachers are in favour of using needs analysis as a basis for ESP/EAP materials writing and they believe that it is a significant factor in successful ESP materials development. Hence, the government should regularly conduct language audits that involve a large number of students, teachers, administrators, supervisors, researchers, and any other interested parties. Such a large-scale NA would be better able to inform decision makers of the

particular needs of students in government schools. This is aligned with the fact that needs are not static, but rather changeable (Sotuse, 2012). In this sense, to bridge the gap between the schools' curriculum and students' needs, Ministry of Education must evaluate curriculums occasionally to decide whether it stll meets the students' needs. This is because the subject of needs analysis (NA) has not yet received sufficient attention from researchers and language teaching professionals in the Omani educational system. As a result, Omani learners rarely have the chance to give their input in the language-teaching context. Oanh (2007) concluded that in designing EFL and ESL courses, needs analysis requires special attention. This could make students more motivated and responsible for their studies and achievement. This study, therefore, is an attempt to shed light on this subject by offering a framework for conducting a national needs analysis of the Grade 11 Omani ESL students' linguistic needs.

Analyzing the proposed challenges resulted in extracting four factors that, if avoided, would allow the EL program to function far more successfully. These factors were learning content, teachers' training and teaching style, inadequate school environment, and other educational and administrative challenges. Educators should understand the possible challenges that hindered the right application of the EL program in order to avoid the causes of failure. Previous studies, such as Falout and Maruyama (2004) and Sakai and Kikuuchi (2009), found that the first three factors, namely learning content, inadequate school environment and teachers training and teaching style, were the most important challenges which interfered with the success of any EL program. The World Bank Development Report (2008) is critical of the fact that the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) countries are invested in information and communication technology through the provision of computers and other sophisticated educational technology, while felling short on training teachers to use this service. Teachers, according to the development report, should be considered at the center of the

education system. Teachers are expected in the educational innovations to continuously evaluate their learners' learning needs and adopt and adapt appropriate methods accordingly, rather than merely deliver knowledge and skills. Teachers can work collaboratively or individually to improve the quality of their schools' outcomes and upgrade their skills and competencies to be accredited and promoted via school grants. This according to Al-Issa and Al-Bulushi (2012) guarantees turning teachers into professionals, rather than continue to be functioning as "… factory workers along a production chain, delivering a range of skills and knowledge to a homogenous group of students" (p. 148).

Several studies have examined factors that facilitate or hinder English language teaching in EFL contexts, for instance, Carless' (2003) study in Hong Kong, Wang (2006) in China, Gahin and Myhill (2001) in Egypt, and Tella, Indoshi, and Othwon (2011) in Kenya, and Al-Issa and Al-Bulushi (2012) in Oman. According to Wang (2006), his research findings revealed that external and internal factors such as resource support, teaching methods, teaching experience, teachers' language proficiency, and teachers' professional development needs had the most impact on a successful implementation of the EL curriculum. These findings challenge some studies that suggest that tests have been the most significant factor in curriculum implementation (Gorsuch, 2000).

The supervisors and heads of department not only gave their suggestions on course content, but also expressed their views about many other things that would facilitate the learning processes including recommendations regarding the learning content, suggestions for the teachers' training and teaching style, supporting the school environment, and introducing changes to some educational and administrative factors. The current study will use the mentioned recommendations alongside other findings to make recommendations for improving the Grade 11 English language program.

4.5 Research Question 4

The fourth research question, "To what extent are the students' perceived learning needs met by the content of the English language course book in Grade 11 of Omani schools?", highlights the English language instruction context of Omani students, which requires the "Learning Situation Analysis" (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987) by collecting information about the extent to which the current instruction addresses the students' perceived needs. The findings of research questions one and two were analyzed to decide if the language activities/skills included in the textbooks met or did not meet the perceived students' needs.

In 4.2 above, the current Grade 11 EL course components were reviewed and analyzed to find out what was the exact content of the Grade 11 course book by making explicit the patterns of language skills found in the textbooks used. This was followed by 4.3 which identified and stated the students' perceived wants, and necessities (Hutchinson & Waters, 1978) according to the students' perceptions, their teachers' perceptions, and the supervisors' and heads' of department perceptions. This section uses the above information to report on the extent to which the students' needs (as illustrated in 4.3 above) were met by current Grade 11 content (as analyzed in 4.2).

It was stated in the methodology in Chapter 3 that questionnaires and interviews were used to unearth the perceived needs of Omani EFL students, and the text book analysis was used as a research tool to provide an actual picture of the exact skills and sub-skills included in the current Grade 11 EL textbooks. A total of 982 students and 64 teachers participated in responding to the questionnaire and 7 interviews were held with supervisors and heads of departments.

In what follows, a detailed presentation of the findings is organized according to the four language skills: reading, speaking, writing, and listening. The rationale for this

sorting is justified by the fact that the four macro-skills are the main factors needed and taught in an EFL classroom. Many NA research used the same classification when addressing the language domain of students needs (Alastal, & Shuib, 2012; Janda, 2009; Kiranmayi, 2012; Nallaya, 2012).

4.5.1 Reading Skills

Reading (2.09) was seen as the most important macro-skill according to students' perception and was perceived as the second most important macro-skill according to teachers, supervisors and heads of department. Questionnaire respondents indicated that students had high difficulty scores on the NA scale, which meant that their reading ability was low. All the items in Table 4.6 and 4.11 showed large mean values ranging from 3.21 to 3.06, which meant that, according to the teachers' perception, students had less ability with reading sub-skills or faced more difficulty while dealing with any reading task compared to other macro skills such as listening and writing.

Eighty-nine tasks were sorted as sub reading tasks from Grade 11 EL textbooks, which made Reading the most frequently used language skill across the Grade 11 EL textbooks. This was justified because reading was the primary skill of almost all the activities. Students had to be able to read the directions and then respond in English.

Grade 11 EL textbooks provided students with the chance to read a variety of text types such as a film review, book review, advertisements, email letters, and puzzles. They also provided students with different reading tasks, such as read and match the topic sentences to the paragraph, match the terms with definitions, find synonyms, words or reference, decide if a statement is true or false, and answer comprehension questions.

Overall, it was noticed that reading skills and strategies were given considerably good attention during the process of developing the current EL textbooks. However, the included activities in the textbooks gave more priority to straightforward reading tasks that required skimming and scanning, with less attention given to higher cognitive reading tasks such as understanding, inferring, figuring out or organizing.

Table 4.16

Reading Skills Priority According to Grade 11 EL Textbooks and Teachers

Teachers' reading skills priority	Grade 11 EL textbook reading skills priority
Inferring meaning of terms from a text.	Find synonyms, words or references from the text
Organizing the important ideas and concepts in an English text.	Read and decide if a statement is true or false
Figuring out the meaning of new words by using the context and their background knowledge.	Read and match the topic sentences to the paragraph
Using a dictionary to find out meanings.	Match the terms with definitions
Remembering major ideas when they read an English text.	Read and answer comprehension questions
Using the library and internet to find information that they are looking for.	Work out or infer the words meaning from the text
Understanding English vocabulary and grammar when they read.	Skim the text and decide on a title
Understanding charts and graphs in a scientific text.	Match each statement to its usage
Understanding an English text well enough to answer questions about it later.	Complete the sentences with words from a box
Understanding how the ideas in an English text relate to each other.	Read and choose the correct alternative

Table 4.16 compares between the first ten reading sub-skills organized in ascending order according to their frequency in the current Grade 11 textbooks as discussed in 4.2.3 and according to the teachers' perceptions discussed in 4.3.2.2a. Teachers considered that students in Grade 11 should be able to infer meaning from a text, organize ideas within a text, figure out the meaning of new words from the context and so forth. These sub-skills require more than skimming and scanning. They require students to use higher cognitive competence, whereas the most frequent reading skills in

Grade 11 EL textbooks mostly require students to skim or scan the text to find specific information or to match topic sentences with paragraphs or match terms with definitions.

4.5.2 Speaking Skills

According to questionnaires and interview findings, speaking was unanimously chosen by all teachers, supervisors and Heads of department as the most important skill for Grade 11 Omani students, whereas students perceived it as the second most important macro skill. One head of department said:

> It is very important to bear in mind speaking and presentation because bearing in mind that quite a number of our students will find themselves looking for work abroad or work with foreign companies, so it is very important that they are able to speak fluently.

Teachers in 5.2.3.1 stressed that the priority in skill presentation in Grade 11 EL curricula should be directed to speaking. Students' speaking ability as perceived by teachers, supervisors and heads of department was low and they often face difficulty while trying to perform any English language speaking tasks.

The teachers reported that students in Grade 11 should develop good speaking literacy such as orally summarizing information they have read or listened to, answering exam questions correctly, delivering a well-prepared presentation, participating in a conversation or a discussion in English, stating and supporting their opinion and responding to questions orally.

Analysis of all three Grade 11 EL textbooks as in 4.3.2 shows an emerging pattern in that speaking was the least frequently used language macro skill. In addition to the short discussion sessions preceding the writing tasks, the current EL textbooks

have speaking activities such as the "SoundBits" activity which highlight the functional language found in the theme such as giving an opinion or making a suggestion. This activity was followed by the "Activate your English" activity where the focus was on the fluent use of the functional language highlighted in the "SoundBits" box. Examples of the speaking tasks provided were to make suggestions, describe a person or an object, give and respond to advice, use time expressions, discuss advantages and disadvantages, state, agree, and disagree with an opinion, and making a personal plan or resolutions.

Overall, however, far too little attention was paid to speaking in the Grade 11 EL textbooks. It was felt that this kind of training should come much earlier since speaking was chosen by most of the teachers, supervisors and heads of department as the most important skill for Omani students, as in 4.3.2.1. Most of the speaking activities were in the form of controlled pair or group discussions in the class. Students were not given the chance to practise presentations or other kinds of speaking practice. They should be engaged in conversations or other speech patterns to provide and obtain information, express feelings and emotions, and exchange opinions. In addition, there were more guided speaking tasks, which were assigned to practise uttering some expressions, but very few—if any—purposeful or stimulating English language speaking tasks were provided to students to practise real life speaking occasions. Students should get used to greetings, accepting or refusing invitations, and managing conversations with expressions.

4.5.3 Writing Skills

A shared pattern that emerged from analyzing questionnaires and interviews was that writing was placed in the third rank according to all participants. The five most difficult writing tasks according to teachers are scientific and academic oriented writing tasks such as writing a report on scientific projects done in a laboratory, translating

some concepts and ideas from Arabic to English, expressing ideas and arguments effectively, writing a summary of information they read or listened to, using correct grammar, vocabulary, punctuation and spelling.

With regard to Grade 11 EL textbooks, they did not shed light on scientific oriented tasks. In addition, students were asked not to use their mother tongue during their English classes as an approach meant to increase students' dependency on English. It would have resulted in better learning conditions if students' first language was strategically used to facilitate their learning. However, students were repeatedly referred to the process involved in writing before starting to accomplish any writing task; the textbooks did not give students the chance to redraft their writing. Many EL textbooks ask students to perform the writing tasks and submit the final draft or write it down in their workbook. Strategies should be developed and included in the course book to give students the chance to write the first draft and get written feedback and based on that rewrite the second or the final draft again in their workbook, so by the end students can have the chance to compare and notice the progress in their writing competency. Writing is a very difficult skill to develop, but it can be mastered only by continuous writing (Al-Saadi, 2008). There is no shortcut to it. Thus, it becomes obligatory to involve our students in exclusive writing sessions. In this context, it is recommended to devote at least one full session per week to writing, so that students should have plenty of opportunities to practice a variety of different writing skills.

4.5.4 Listening Skills

Question 2 findings revealed that listening was the least difficult skill according to the teachers' and students' perceptions as well as supervisors and heads of department. This indicated that students' listening ability was at a better level compared to other skills. All participants also agreed to place listening as the least important skill

203

compared to other macro skills. It is probably because they seemed to have less difficulty in listening because they were dealing with simple lexical and linguistic structures, similar accents, and a similarly slow speed of delivery. In order to enhance communication skills in oral presentation, Jordan (1997) argued that teachers aid in outlining, organizing, and using of graphic-visual devices to help students give a successful and meaningful class presentation as individuals or in groups. Moreover, besides teacher evaluation, using peer evaluation also "has a marked effect on to which speakers take their audience into account" (Jordan, 1997, p. 203).

The most difficult listening tasks that students should master, according to teachers, are: understanding the relationships among ideas they listen to, remembering the most important points after listening to an English text, understanding the speaker's attitude or opinion about what he or she was saying, relating information they heard in English to what they already knew, and understanding the main idea of a conversation or a lesson.

Findings for Question 1 revealed that listening was the second macro skill used most frequently in the current EL textbooks. Forty-five tasks were sorted as sub listening tasks from Grade 11 EL textbooks. The first two listening skills in Table 4.4 were the most frequent listening skills included in the ten themes. Grade 11 EL textbooks provided students with different listening tasks, such as to listen and decide if the given sentences were true or false, to listen and complete a chart, text, or table, to listen and match words with descriptions, and to listen and answer the question. Overall, the listening activities in the textbooks gave more priority to straightforward tasks that required listening for specific information.

Listening is essential for foreign language acquisition. This is supported by many foreign language acquisition theories, namely, Krashen's Monitor Theory (1982) and Terrell's Natural Approach (1986). These theories advocated that students need

comprehensible input before they are capable of target language output. Students should be provided with exposure to the target language before they are required to produce any utterances in the target language.

4.5.5 Discussion of the Findings of Research Question 4

The section has addressed the extent to which the perceived students' learning needs are met by the content of the English language course book in Grade 11. It covers the learning Situation Analysis (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987) of the multidimensional framework for nationwide needs analysis (see section 1.8 and Figure 3.1). Question four utilizes findings of research questions one and two to decide if the language activities/skills included in the textbooks met or did not meet the perceived students' needs.

The majority of the teachers, supervisors and heads of department were not satisfied with the Grade 11 EL program. They reported that the current EL program did not meet the students' needs, as in 4.7.3. Students called for changing the current textbook with a new one that takes their needs into consideration. The patterns that emerged from Question four's findings were that reading skills were given considerable attention during the process of developing the current Grade 11 EL textbooks. It can be inferred that students should gradually be engaged at a higher cognitive reading level since they have been learning English for the past 11 years in the public schools. The later themes should require more English than initial themes in terms of the English language proficiency level. Across all three textbooks, the language of the directions accompanying the activities did not change from beginning themes to end themes. Beginning themes should use primary English and a gradual change should occur as students progress from beginning themes to later themes. The beginning themes should offer more "scaffolding" (Vygotsky, 1978) or support to students. Then, the later

205

themes should confront students with more challenging tasks, with less assistance as their communicative competence increases (Ferch, 2005). Students would have developed greater levels of reading competence by later themes than the levels they had in beginning themes.

Overall, far too little attention was paid to speaking in the Grade 11 EL textbooks. In order to improve speaking skills, Ali and Salih (2013) and Soruc (2012) stressed that students need more social-psychological communication skills. To use the language beyond basic memorized scripts, the students were required to have a sense of English grammar, especially verbs. Some basic grammar instruction might allow them to mingle with the language using the fixed lexical items and expressions as a starting point. Thus, it becomes clear that the current EL curriculum did not meet the perceived needs of Omani students according to the expectations of students, teachers, supervisors and heads of department. Therefore, it is necessary to introduce changes in the current EL program to resolve the low EL speaking proficiency among Omani EFL students.

This is aligned with the finding of Akyel and Ozek (2010) who investigated students needs for the innovation of school in Turkey. Questionnaires and interviews showed that speaking abilities of learners were ignored by the language teaching curriculum Soruc (2012) as well investigated the context and program of an English school in Istanbul and found that speaking materials were insufficient. In addition, Nallaya (2012) also reported that according to her study sample (Malaysian EFL learners) students choose speaking as their first as their first skill to be nominated for more training. It is possible that since most of the participants of this study were from non English speaking country, they need more practise to speak English, so they improve their language and be considered as proficient EL users.

The Grade 11 EL syllabus provided little space for students to develop writing competence. A new Grade 11 EL syllabus has to acknowledge that the skills involved in

learning to write include the ability to draft, revise, conference, edit, proofread, and publish, and to form well-structured, effective texts (Richards, 2004). Although the analyzed material provided the chance to practise different writing genres, they should be more creative and have stimulating activities to focus students' attention on the things to be learned. Hobelman and Wiriyachitra (1995) stressed that writing material should be interesting, aligned with students' interests, practical and related to real world tasks. In summary, the Grade 11 EL texts provided little space for students to develop writing competence. The new Grade 11 EL syllabus should acknowledge that the skills involved in learning to write include the ability to draft, revise, discuss, edit, proofread, and publish, and to form well-structured, effective texts (Richards, 2004). As advocated by many researchers, such as Al-Saadi (2008), Kaewpet (2009), Shuja'a (2004), and Al-Saadi and Samuel (2013) training in writing skills is being emphasized for EFL students currently in the international community. In the Omani Grade 11 context, training in writing communicative events should be further promoted, as it has been determined to be the most frequently needed skill (Kaewpet, 2009). All previous aspects should be gradually included and dealt with to develop students' abilities to write. In addition, Richards (2004) advocated that opportunities to learn English writing should be through readings, discussions, and controlled exercises as well as independent writing.

Overall, Grade 11 EL textbooks provide sufficient attention to listening skills. Unit Four of each theme focuses on developing students' listening proficiency. It covers interactional and transactional uses of English. Students are provided with different purposes for listening, such as listening for information as well as listening for pleasure. Students listened to a radio, answering machine, conversation, webcast, interview, many speakers, debates and long texts. Grade 11 EL textbooks also had scripted and semi-authentic listening tasks. Most frequent listening tasks embedded in the textbooks were included in Table 4.4. In conclusion, it is noted that the current EL curriculum did not

meet the perceived needs of Omani students according to the expectations of students, teachers, supervisors, and heads of department.

4.6 Research Question 5

Research Question 5, "What are the purpose(s) of the Grade 11 English language program in Omani schools as perceived by students, teachers, supervisors and heads of department?", gathers information about the participants' understanding of the purposes of the current Grade 11 English language program in post-basic education schools in Oman. This addresses the learners' needs analysis dimension (Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998). Kavaliauskiene and Užpaliene (2003) mentioned that such a question is essential in any needs analysis questionnaire. Different participants' perception was sought for data collection, including students, teachers, supervisors and heads of department. The findings of this question were triangulated with the findings of Research Question Six and were a prerequisite to Research Question Seven to study the similarities and differences in the perceptions of English language learning needs within the same group and between groups.

As mentioned in chapter 3, both interviews and questionnaires were used as tools to collect data from students, teachers, supervisors and heads of departments. The interview was used to gather in-depth qualitative data about the students' needs from the supervisors (4), the head of the supervision department (1), and the heads of the Curriculum Department (2). Thus, seven interviews were conducted individually, whereas the second part of the questionnaires was reserved for the program purposes of the students (N = 982) and teachers (N = 64) perceptions.

In what follows, the presentation of the findings is organized according to the participants, so the students' findings are presented separately followed by the findings related to the teachers and finally supervisors and heads of departments. This is helpful

to show the different perceptions and priorities according to each group. It is also helpful to achieve a cross group and within group comparison, to draw on the similarities and diversities of language use in post-basic education schools.

4.6.1 Findings Related to the Students

Students' perceptions about their purposes were gathered using a questionnaire. The second section of the student questionnaire tried to ascertain the students' understanding of the "purpose" of studying English in Grade 11. Students were asked to rank four given purposes of English language learning according to their importance (1 as the most important and 4 as the least important). Such information could help to shape goals and to alert learners to what is realistic within the construction of the course (Graves 2000).

The participants' answers were analyzed using the frequency and the overall percent of each rank of the four purposes. Then they were ordered in an ascending order to provide a clearer picture about the overall importance of the four purposes as perceived by students themselves. The responses are shown in the following Table 4.17.

Table 4.17

The Ranking of the Purpose of Learning English in Grade 11 Schools According to

Students' Perception

The Purposes	Analysis	Students' Ranking				Total	Final Ranking
		1	2	3	4		
To pass the General Diploma exam	Frequencies	246	240	222	196	904	1
	Percent	27.2	26.5	24.6	21.7	100	
To complete higher studies	Frequencies	195	296	280	133	904	2
	Percent	21.6	32.7	31	14.7	100	
To find a good job	Frequencies	216	249	265	174	904	3
	Percent	23.9	27.5	29.3	19.2	100	
For daily life	Frequencies	254	116	136	398	904	4
	Percent	28.1	12.8	15	44.1	100	

The responses to this question shed light on learners' current needs. A comparison between the reported importance of the four given purposes shows that there were differences in the students' reasons for studying English in the post-basic education schools in Oman. Students' priorities concerning the reason to study English language course were (1) to pass the General Diploma Certificate (27.2%), (2) to complete higher studies, (3) to find a good job, and (4) for daily life.

Summary of Findings of this section:

- There were differences in the students' reasons for studying English in the post-basic education schools.

- Students' priority concerning the reason to study English language course was to pass the General Diploma exam.

- This finding was supported by the data collected through the interviews as will be seen in 4.6.3.

4.6.2 Findings Related to the Teachers

The second section of the teachers' questionnaire ascertained the teachers' understanding of the "purpose" of studying English in Grade 11. Teachers were asked to rank four given purposes for English language learning according to their importance (1 as the most important and 4 as the least important). Such information can help to shape goals and to alert teachers to what is realistic within the construction of the course (Graves 2000).

Participants' answers were analyzed using the frequency, percentage and mean of each rank of the four purposes. Then they were ordered in ascending order to provide a clearer picture about the overall importance of the four purposes as perceived by the teachers. The responses are shown in Table 4.18.

Table 4.18

The Ranking of the Purpose of Learning English in Grade 11 Schools According to the Teachers' Perception

The Purposes	Analysis	Teachers' Ranking				Mean	Final Ranking
		1	2	3	4		
To find a good job	Frequencies	23	20	17	4	2.03	1
	Percent	35.9	31.3	26.6	6.3		
To pass the General Diploma exam	Frequencies	28	6	13	17	2.30	2
	Percent	43.8	9.4	20.3	26.6		
To complete higher studies	Frequencies	6	28	20	11	2.56	3
	Percent	9.4	42.2	31.3	17.2		
For daily life	Frequencies	6	12	15	31	3.11	4
	Percent	9.4	18.8	23.4	48.4		

A close study of the reported importance for the four given purposes shows that there were differences in the teachers' understanding of the reasons for studying English in the post-basic education schools in Oman. The percent values in the first and the second purpose showed that both purposes were in the same rank; therefore, and for further clarification to see the differences, the mean values were used to rank the given purposes. Teachers' priorities concerning the reason to study the English language are (1) to find a good job, (2) to pass the General Diploma exam, (3) to complete higher studies and (4) for daily life. Teachers thought that students should practice in communicative English to find good job opportunities, whereas students' main reason was to pass the General Diploma Certificate (see Table 4.17). This indicates that there are differences between students' and teachers' understanding of the purposes for the English language program in Oman; however, the *t*-test, as in 4.8.1, indicated that these differences are not significant.

Summary of Findings of this section:

- There are remarkable differences between the teachers' and students' understandings of the reasons for studying English in post-basic education schools.

- The teachers' priority concerning the reason students have to study the English language is to find a good job.

4.6.3 Findings Related to the Supervisors and Heads of Department

The supervisors and Heads of department were interviewed to provide more in-depth insight regarding the purposes of the current Grade 11 EL program in Oman. They were asked different questions such as the following questions:

- What is/are the purpose(s) of the current English language curriculum/program in post-basic education schools?

- If you are given 4 different purposes for students to learn English in Grade 11, can you rank them according to their importance to the students? The choices are to pass the diploma exam, to get a better job, for further education and for general life reasons.

- How and by whom were the objectives of the Grade 11 English language program set?

- How do you understand the purpose of the current English language program in Grade 11?

Different interpretations of the purpose behind the English language program were held by the interviewed supervisors and heads of department. One supervisor understood that the purpose of the EL program in Grade 11 "clearly aims at developing a take-off level proficiency in language skills and also basic research skills. The course is also designed to promote self-study habits among students." Another supervisor thought that it was to "emerge the Omani students into the whole globe and to raise the amount of their awareness."

One head of department thought that it depended on the age of the students, their cognitive ability and their grade. She said:

The objectives of EL program are into two types, broad goals and specific objectives. Broad goals encamps everything and specific objectives are there for all grades. The goals for post-basic education are available in the curriculum framework for post-basic education.

From her point of view, in Grade 11, you teach them English and get stakeholders and employers in front of you because the graduates are expected to have a certain command of English in order for them to join the labour market.

By trying to examine the respondents' understanding of the Grade 11 curriculum framework, the research noticed that not all participants had copies of that document, although they were high stakeholders. A head of department commented on this by saying, "I do not know if any of the teachers is actual having a copy of this document. Certainly any of whom I have asked do not have." This finding provided a justification for why teachers, supervisors and heads of department varied in their understanding for the actual purpose of the EL program in Grade 11.

The discrepancies in the participants' understanding about the purpose of the EL program in Grade 11 was because the objectives and the curriculum framework of the whole program were not available to them, which made them understand the purpose in their own way.

The researcher tried to narrow down the participants' understanding of the program purposes by asking the question in a different way. The question was, "If you are given 4 different purposes for students to learn English in Grade 11, can you rank them according to their importance to the students. The choices are: to pass the diploma exam, to get a better job, for further education and for general life reasons." The different views are shown in Table 4.19. The numbers in the table are the total numbers of responses given to each item by the group of participants in each column. The columns represent the ranking order (1 as the most important and 4 as the least importance). Dotted boxes mean no answer was given.

Table 4.19

The Purpose of Grade 11 EL Program According to Supervisors and Heads of

Departments

The Purposes	Frequencies of Respondents' Ranking				Final Ranking
	1	2	3	4	
To find a good job	--	5	2	--	2
To pass the General Diploma exam	6	--	1	--	1
To complete higher studies	1	1	4	1	3
For daily life	--	1	1	5	4

The findings from Table 4.19 support the findings of the purpose section in the student and teacher questionnaire above. It supports the findings that the majority of Grade 11 students considered the purpose of Grade 11 EL program was to prepare them well to pass the General Diploma exam, as in 4.6.1. Two participants indicated that in order for students to get a good job or complete higher studies they had to pass the final year exam.

Summary of Findings of this Section

- Discrepancy was found in the supervisors' and heads of departments' interpretation of the program purpose among each group and between the groups.

- By trying to examine the supervisors' and heads of departments' understanding of the Grade 11 curriculum frameworks, the researcher noticed that not all participants had copies of that document, which could explain the discrepancies found in the participants' understanding about the program purpose.

- The majority of interview respondents considered the purpose of the Grade 11 EL program was to prepare the students well to pass the General Diploma exam.

- The majority of Grade 11 students and teachers also considered the least important purpose of Grade 11 EL program was for use in daily life.

Having stated the students', teachers', supervisors' and heads of departments' understanding of the Grade 11 EL program purposes, the next section analyzes their attitudes toward the current EL program in Grade 11.

4.6.4 Discussion of the Findings of Research Question 5

The fifth research question investigated the different study participants' understanding of the purposes of the Grade 11 EL program. It covers the learning Situation Analysis dimension (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987) of the multidimensional framework for nationwide needs analysis (see section 1.8 and figure 3.1). Question five looked at the learners' needs analysis dimension (Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998). Kavaliauskiene and Užpaliene (2003) discussed that such a question is essential in any needs analysis questionnaire.

There were differences in the students' reasons for studying English in the post-basic education schools. Students' priority concerning the reason to study the English language was to pass the General Diploma Certificate. These results were not surprising, in that they seemed to be consistent with those of other participants. This finding was supported by the supervisors' and heads of departments' interview findings. The interpretation of these findings was far from being straightforward. This finding reflected the role and function of English language within the Omani context. Omani students were exam oriented as many supervisors and heads of the department have described them during the interviews (see Section 4.6.3). In addition, Omani students, similar to other Arabian Gulf students, are not learning English to integrate

with the community. They do not feel the need for social integration because English in Oman is practiced for limited instructional or "concrete rewards", such as business, exam, internet and so forth (Al-Issa, and Al-Bulushi, 2012; Al-Saadi, and Samuel, 2013; Issan, and Gomaa, 2010; Moody, 2009). This point together with the purpose that should be the focus of the Grade 11 English program are discussed in Chapter Five below, where additional information will be discussed during the interview interpretation.

Remarkable differences were deducted between the teachers' and students' understandings of the reasons for studying English in post-basic education schools. The teachers' priority concerning the reason to study the English language is to find a good job. Such differences and their significances are further interoperated as in section 4.8.1. Resent ELT literature such as Al-Issa and Al-Bulushi (2012), Al-Saadi and Samuel (2013), Ali and Salih (2013), Chien and Hsu (2011), Janda (2009), Nallaya (2012), Robinson (1991) Soruc (2012), and Ferris (1998) reported cases of discrepancies among the perceptions of teachers and students in their perception of the goal of the EL program in each context. Such results can support the discussion that instructors might not always be the best judges of students' needs and challenges in the processes of analysing the needs.

Examining the supervisors' and heads of departments' understanding of the Grade 11 curriculum framework, it was noticed that not all participants have copies of that document, which interoperated the discrepancies found in the participants' understanding about the program purpose. The majority of interview respondents considered the purpose of the Grade 11 EL program was to prepare the students well to pass the General Diploma exam. Remarkable differences were found between the teachers' and students' understanding of the reasons for studying English in the post-

basic education schools. Teachers' priority concerning the reason to study the English language was to get a good job.

The findings from Table 4.19 support the findings of the purpose section in the student and teacher questionnaire above in three ways. First, it supports the findings that the majority of Grade 11 students considered the purpose of Grade 11 EL program was to prepare them well to pass the General Diploma exam, as in 4.6.1. Two participants indicated that in order for students to get a good job or complete higher studies they had to pass the final year exam.

Second, it also supported the findings that the majority of Grade 11 students and teachers considered that the least important purpose of Grade 11 EL program was for daily life. All study participants supported this conclusion, so it was not a relevant purpose. This meets with the observation that is borne by Moody (2009) and Al-Issa (2006). Moody (2009) asserts, "[A] factor contributing to the crisis in ELT relates to attitudes of Arabic speaking students towards English" (p. 102). Omani students do not use English as a means of integration in to a new community, rather they use it as an instrument for concrete social or economic needs (such as getting a good job, passing an exam). Therefore, they do not use English in their daily life to communicate with others, but rather for limited instrumental demands.

Third, and most importantly, this finding also supported the discrepancy found in the participants' interpretation of the program purpose among each group and between the groups. This uncertainty about the program purpose might be because its curriculum framework was not available to everybody involved with the program. Most importantly, it was because of the nature of general school EL programs. English was taught for general reasons because of the fact that students have different interests and reasons to study English.

This finding confirmed what other researchers, such as Wang (2006), have claimed. His research on Chinese college English education indicated that a gap exists between the intended EFL curriculum proposed by national language policymakers and the enacted curriculum practiced by classroom teachers. The two main disjunctions were the differences between policymakers and administrators and between the policymakers and teachers. Within the hierarchical structure, administrators expressed very different perceptions of the national language policies from those expressed by policymakers, whereas teachers continually followed their own teaching beliefs, thereby not fully implementing the intended curriculum. Another example of the discrepancy found between policymakers and teachers or students is Miller and Aldred (2000). They explored students and teachers' perceptions regarding the suitability and usability of communicative language teaching and found a mismatch between ideals and reality in the language classrooms of Hong Kong.

4.7 Research Question 6

The sixth research question, "What are the students', teachers', supervisors', and heads of departments' attitudes towards the current English language program in post-basic education schools in Oman?", looks into the different participants' attitudes toward the current English language program. The findings of this question were triangulated with the findings of Research Question 6 and were a prerequisite to Research Question 7 to study the similarities and differences in the perceptions of English language learning needs within the same group and cross groups.

Interviews and questionnaires were used as tools to collect data from students, teachers, supervisors and heads of departments. The interview was used to gather in-depth qualitative data about attitudes from the supervisors (4), the head of the Supervision Department (1), and the heads of the Curriculum Department (2). Thus,

seven interviews were conducted individually. Whereas the second part of the questionnaires was reserved for the students' (N=982) and teachers' (N=64) attitudes toward the current EL program.

In what follows, the presentation of the findings is organized according to the participants, so the students findings are presented separately followed by the findings related to the teachers and finally supervisors and heads of departments.

4.7.1 Findings Related to Students

After addressing students' purposes and priorities, item three of the second section of the questionnaire investigated the students' attitudes towards the current English language program in Grade 11 schools. The participants were provided with four statements regarding their attitudes towards the current English curriculum. They had to choose from a three point scale (agree, neutral and disagree).

Table 4.20

The Students' Attitudes towards the Current English Language Program in Grade 11

The Statements	Analysis	Choices			Mean	Std. Deviation
		Agree	Neutral	Disagree		
English is the best subject I like.	Frequencies	412	389	171	1.75	.734
	Percent	42.4	40	17.6		
The current English curriculum satisfies my language needs.	Frequencies	335	375	262	1.92	.781
	Percent	34.5	38.6	27		
What we usually do in class is boring.	Frequencies	206	315	451	2.25	.783
	Percent	21.2	32.4	46.4		
I like the way English is taught at school.	Frequencies	409	307	256	1.84	.812
	Percent	42.1	31.6	26.3		

A close look at Table 4.20 reveals that students have positive attitudes towards the current English language program in Grade 11. Almost 42.4% of the participants considered English as their best school subject. This showed that students were internally motivated to learn English; however, 38.6% of them were not sure that the current English curriculum satisfied their language needs. In addition, 46.4% did not agree that what they usually do in class was boring.

Summary of Findings of this section:

- Students had positive attitudes towards the current English language program in Grade 11.

4.7.2 Findings Related to Teachers

Item three of the second section of the teachers' questionnaire investigated the teachers' attitudes towards the current English language program in Grade 11 schools. The participants were provided with three statements regarding their attitudes towards the current English curriculum. They had to choose from a three point scale (agree, neutral and disagree).

Table 4.21

The Teachers' Attitudes towards the Current English Language Program in Grade 11

The Statements	Analysis	Choices			Mean	Std. Deviation
		Agree	Neutral	Disagree		
The current English curriculum meets my students' language needs.	Frequencies	18	21	25	2.11	.819
	Percent	28.1	32.8	39.1		
What I usually do in class is boring.	Frequencies	8	18	38	2.47	.712
	Percent	12.5	28.1	59.4		
I like the way English is taught at school.	Frequencies	17	27	20	2.05	.765
	Percent	26.6	42.2	31.3		

A close look at Table 4.21 reveals that almost 39.1% of the participants did not think that the current English language program had met their students' needs; however, 59.4% of them thought that what they usually do in class was not boring. Teachers also responded that they were not very satisfied with the way English was taught in school. This finding supported the need for the current study to draw on how best the current English language program could be developed in Grade 11 to meet its goals.

To sum up the findings of this section:

- Teachers were not very satisfied with the way English is taught in school.

- 39.1% of the participants did not think that the current English language program meets their students' needs.

4.7.3 Findings Related to the Supervisors and Heads of Department

The supervisors and heads of department were interviewed by the researcher to provide more in-depth insight about their attitudes towards the current Grade 11 EL program in Oman. They were asked different questions such as the following questions:

- To what extent is the current English program in Grade 11 capable of equipping students with the required English language skills and competencies for their current and prospective needs?

- Is the current practise in the EL program sufficient to meet the language needs of Grade 11 learners?

- To what extent do you think that the skills and the sub skills developed in the current English language course book meet the student's needs? Has the program succeeded in meetings its goals?

The supervisors and Heads of department had different attitudes towards the current Grade 11 EL program. The minority were satisfied "to some extent". One supervisor said that "to some extent the current program is good, but still we have the same teachers with the same teaching style and the same beliefs and attitudes among our students." Another supervisor commented, "The current English language programme at Grade 11 is reasonably capable of equipping the students with the necessary skills, knowledge and competencies for their present and prospective needs. However, they would benefit more on the matter if presentation skills and study skills practice is further enhanced."

The majority were fairly unsatisfied with the program. Students were not adequately prepared, from a linguistic point of view, to pursue their university education with a great deal of efficiency. This finding was consistent with other studies findings, for example Al-Husseini (2004). One of the supervisors expressed his dissatisfaction by saying, "I'm noticing that students are moving from grade to higher grade without acquiring the main concepts and the basic skills which put them in difficult situation when they study in higher class."

Answering the question about whether the current English program in Grade 11 has achieved its goals, a supervisor said,

> I don't think that the goals are met yet. Students' needs are not met. Students cannot put in their opinions clearly. They cannot use English as they are expected to do so. Teachers are restricted with their course book, so they do not have the time to give more focus.

Heads of department were dissatisfied with the language competency of Grade 11 graduates. For example, one head of department when asked if the Grade 11 EL program succeeded in meetings its goals, she responded, "If they have, why we have such problems with English language in the country?" The interview participants raised

different common areas of weakness as a trial to explore the different angles of the matter. One head of department explained that the current EL program "is not taking into consideration the students' needs and working where the students are at, not facilitating differentiation and is not supporting the students in terms of literacy and numeracy". The common areas of Grade 11 EL weakness, as mentioned by the interviewed supervisors and heads of department, are illustrated in Table 4.22.

Table 4.22

Common Areas of Weakness, as Mentioned by the Interviewees

Area of weakness	Mentioned by	
	Supervisors	Heads of Department
Literacy and numeracy		√
Expressing ideas and feelings		√
Speaking and presentation	√	√
Phonics		√
Reading	√	√
Writing	√	
Vocabulary	√	√

The current study considered these weaknesses when discussing the recommendations for the Grade 11 EL program improvements in Chapter Five, where the implications of the findings of the study were discussed.

To sum up the findings of this section:

- The majority of the interviewed supervisors and Heads of department were not satisfied with the Grade 11 EL program.

- The common areas of weakness, mentioned by the interviewed supervisors and heads of departments, were taken into consideration and contributed to the recommendations in Chapter Five.

4.7.4 Discussion of the Findings of Research Question 6

Research question six investigated the different study participants' attitudes towards the current English language program in Grade 11.. It covers the learning Situation Analysis dimension (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987) of the multidimensional framework for nationwide needs analysis (see section 1.8 and figure 3.1). Question six looked at the learners' needs analysis dimension (Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998).

Overall, students had positive attitudes towards the current English language program in Grade 11. This finding was supported by the first statement, which reflected the students' positive attitudes towards the English program. In addition to that, 42.1% of the participants liked the way English was taught at school. This is in agreement with Tella et al. (2011) who found that their secondary school students (n = 584) also had positive attitudes towards the English curriculum in Kenya.

Teachers, supervisors and heads of department were not satisfied with the way English is taught in school. These results were not surprising in that they seemed to coincide with those of other study participants. The teachers in this study felt there was a clear mismatch between what their students need and what the curriculum provide. The findings reveal as well a state of negative attitudes toward the current EL program, which might result in undesirable performance from the teachers' side. The vast majority of research conducted in the area of NA has been focused on obtaining evidence as to how teachers' beliefs and attitudes affected their efforts, for example Orafi and Borg (2009) and Li (2001). The latter found that because of students' limited

command of English structures, teachers in South Korea found it difficult to do any oral communicative activities.

The literature on educational innovation has identified mismatches between curricular principles and teachers' beliefs as a major obstacle to the implementation of change (Orafi & Borg, 2009). For example, Levitt (2001, p. 1) argues, "If teachers' beliefs are incompatible with the philosophy of science education reform, a gap develops between the intended principles of reform and the implemented principle of reform, potentially inhibiting essential change." Similarly in ELT, it is clear that curriculum innovations which conflict with teachers' beliefs are less likely to be adopted as planned in the classroom (Orafi & Borg, 2009). Thus, as Breen et al. (2001, p. 472) argue, "Any innovation in classroom practice from the adoption of a new technique or textbook to the implementation of a new curriculum has to be accommodated within the teacher's own framework of teaching principles."

4.8 Research Question 7

Research Question Seven, "Are there any differences in the perceptions of English language learning needs between groups (e.g., students and teachers) and within the same group (e.g., urban and rural students)?", draws comparisons between the different stakeholders to find out the instance of divergent views among stakeholders.

This question triangulated and used the findings obtained by analyzing the students' and teachers' questionnaires highlighted in Research Questions Two section 4.3, Research Questions Five section 4.6 and Research Questions Six section 4.7 to study the similarities and differences in the perceptions of English language learning needs within the same group and between groups.

The needs analysis literature has documented instances of discrepancy between the perceptions of different stakeholder groups with regard to the students' language

226

needs (e.g., Al-Husseini, 2004; Chien, & Hsu, 2011; Krohn, 2008; Purpura et al., 2003; Taillefer, 2007). To learn whether the current study participants differed in their perceptions of the Omani EFL students' EL needs, three comparisons were performed: (a) between students and teachers, (b) between urban and rural students, and (c) according to gender. The overall mean values for the entire scale and each subscale (e.g., attitudes, purpose, reading, writing, speaking and listening) were compared to examine the response patterns. Therefore, Independent Samples T. Test was used to deduct the differences and to decide on the significance of the deducted differences. A difference is statistically significant if it is less than .05 (Muijs, 2004).

4.8.1 Comparing Students' and Teachers' Perceptions.

With respect to the students' (N = 982) and teachers' (N = 64) perceived English-language purposes, the results of the independent samples t. test, as shown in Table 4.23, indicated that the difference between the two groups was not significant at the .05 alpha level. This result met with the questionnaire findings in 4.4.4 that the majority of research respondents considered that the purpose of Grade 11 EL program was to prepare the students well to pass the General Diploma exam.

Statistically significant difference was found between teachers and students (t = -3.949, df = 1034, p < .05) in their attitudes towards the current English language program in Grade 11. This finding justified the difference found in Research Question Six (see 4.7 above), which concluded that students had positive attitudes towards the current English language program in Grade 11 whereas teachers were not very satisfied with the way English was taught in school. 39.1% of the teachers did not think that the current English language program meets their students' needs.

Table 4.23

Teacher' and Students' Independent Samples Test Results

	Mean		*t*-test for Equality of Means		
	Students	Teachers	*t* Value	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Purposes	2.4978	2.5000	-.208	967	.835
Attitudes	2.0065	2.2083	-3.949	1034	.000
Reading	3.0181	3.1853	-1.845	1044	.065
Writing	2.8281	3.3471	-5.730	1044	.000
Listening	2.9436	3.0938	-1.234	1044	.217
Speaking	2.9296	3.2227	-2.726	1044	.007

It is also noticed that students and teachers seemed to perceive their English-language needs in Grade 11 English courses almost in a different way. There were no significant differences between students and teachers in the perceived EL needs in reading and listening as highlighted in the last column in Table 4.23. The difference was found to be significant between the two groups in their perception of writing and speaking difficulties. The difference for the perceived writing needs was significant ($t =$ -5.730, df = 1044, $p < .05$). This indicates that students and teachers perceived writing needs and speaking needs differently.

4.8.2 Comparing Urban and Rural Students

Urban and rural areas are defined by parameters that vary slightly from country to country. In Oman, the most developed urban regions are in the south and the north due to favorable economic and environmental circumstances, especially the availability of water and job opportunities (Al-Mashakhi & Ahmed Koll, 2007). There are no

accurate statistics about the urban and rural populations but estimates in 1993 put the urban inhabitants at 40%.

As mentioned in Chapter Three, students who participated in this research were randomly selected from four different educational regions in Oman. Some students (N = 166) came from Muscat which is the capital city of Oman whereas others came from rural places such as Al-Sharqyeh (N = 348), which is 350 to 400 kilometres from the capital city. To learn whether the students differed in their perceptions of EL needs according to their geographical setting, independent samples t. test was used to deduct the differences between urban and rural students.

Table 4.24

Urban and Rural Students' Independent Samples Test Results

	Means		t-test for Equality of Means		
	Urban	Rural	*t*	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Purposes	2.5080	2.4984	1.630	476	.104
Attitudes	1.9960	1.9786	.340	512	.734
Reading	2.9966	3.0035	-.271	516	.786
Writing	2.9227	2.8836	.906	516	.366
Listening	2.9000	2.9945	-1.008	516	.314
Speaking	2.9752	2.9413	.519	516	.604

The results of the *t*-test analysis in Table 4.24 revealed that there was no statistically significant difference at the 5% level of significance ($p < .05$) between urban and rural students in their perception of the EL learning needs of Omani students in Grade 11. Many interesting interpretation of this finding is discussed in section 4.8.4.

4.8.3 Comparing Male and Female Students

The last demographic variable in accordance with Research Question Seven was the students' gender groups: male students (N = 524) and female students (N = 458). To learn whether the students differed in their perceptions of the Omani EFL students' EL needs according to their gender, an independent samples t. test was used to deduct the differences between male and female students.

Table 4.25

Male and Female Students' Independent Samples Test Results

	Mean		t-test for Equality of Means		
	Male	Female	*t*	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Purposes	2.0448	2.5006	-.916	903	.360
Attitudes	2.0448	1.9694	2.909	970	.004
Reading	3.0434	2.9855	.946	980	.344
Writing	2.9197	2.7548	3.959	980	.000
Listening	2.9861	2.8918	1.440	980	.150
Speaking	3.0059	2.8605	2.818	980	.005

The results of the *t*-test analysis in Table 4.25 reveal that there was no statistically significant difference at the 5% level of significance ($p < .05$) between female and male students in responding to the purpose of the EL program. However, the difference was statistically significant ($t = 2.909$, df = 970, $p < .05$) between male and female students in their attitudes towards the current English language program. This means that male students have different attitudes towards the EL program compared to the female attitudes. Male students (Mean = 2.04) had negative attitudes towards the

current EL program whereas females (Mean = 1.97) were neutral in their attitudes towards the current EL program.

4.8.4 Discussion of the Findings for Research Question 7

Research question seven studies the differences in the perceptions of English language learning needs between groups (e.g., students and teachers) and within the same group (e.g., urban and rural students). It covers the learning Situation Analysis dimension (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987) of the multidimensional framework for nationwide needs analysis (see section 1.8 and Figure 3.1).

It was concluded that different research participants seemed to perceive the English-language needs in the Grade 11 program in a different way. The first patterns that emerged from Question Seven's findings was the significant difference found between teachers and students (t = -3.949, df = 1034, p < .05) in their attitudes toward the current English Language program in Grade 11, which support the discrepancy found in their attitudes towards the current EL program as discussed in section 4.7 above. This finding was similar to other studies in previous needs analysis research in other contexts. Ali and Salih (2013), Chien and Hsu (2011), Janda (2009), Nallaya (2012), Robinson (1991), Soruc (2012), and Ferris (1998) revealed that there were discrepancies among the perceptions of instructors and students. The results showed that instructors might not always be the best judges of students' needs and challenges. As to the language macro-skills, there were no significant differences between students and teachers in the perceived EL needs in reading and listening, but the difference was significant between the two groups in their perception of writing and speaking difficulties. Further studies are required to test this finding in a wider context to find the nature of the differences students and teachers had in the productive skills (speaking and writing).

The second set of comparison was held between urban and rural students. It was concluded that the difference between urban and rural students in their perception of the EL learning needs of Omani students in Grade 11 was not statistically significant at the level of significance ($p <= .05$). It is important to understand that this finding was logical because all regions in Oman adopt the same language program. In other words, they had the same course books, assessment style, resources, and so forth. In addition, as mentioned in Chapter Three, the students in all Omani regions share the same background characteristics. They are, for example, Omani, boys and girls, aged 16 to 18 years old, in Grade 11 who come from the same linguistic and ethnic background. Each of these regions could represent the others in terms of philosophy, contents, objectives, needs, students and teachers. Because of these similarities, there was no significant difference deducted according to the geographical belonging of the students.

This study focused on studying urban and rural differences in their perceived needs of the content, purpose, and attitudes towards the EL program. However studying the same type of participant (Urban and rural), but in reference to other factors such as academic performance or motivation would leads to different findings. This study finding therefore, does not match with that of other studies (e.g., Eslami, 2010; Krohn, 2008; Mazdayasna & Tahririan, 2008) who found that there were differences among different groups of students based on their field of study. Krohn (2008, p. 447) asserted, "Perceptions of needs are not only variable but also changeable." He found that students in the preparatory and first year supported specific purpose language instruction to a greater extent than students in the final years of Rabbinical School studies.

There was no significant difference, at the level of significance ($p <= .05$), between female and male students in responding to the purpose of the EL program, but the difference was significant ($t = 2.909$, df $= 970$, $p < .05$) between male and female students in their attitudes toward the current English language program. The difference

was significant as well between male and female students in their perception of writing and speaking difficulties. This finding is in agreement with some studies, which cited the significant differences between males and females in their attitudes toward the EL program. Wavo (2005) who studied attitudes of 1007 Chinese students toward the EL program found that males and females differed in their attitudes, with females showing higher positive attitudes than males. In the Malaysian context, Bidin, Jusoff, Abdul Aziz, Salleh, and Tajudin (2009) studied the motivation and attitudes of 620 EL students and reached the same conclusion that the mean values of female respondents were slightly higher than those of male respondents.

It is noted that male and female students seemed to perceive their English-language needs in Grade 11 English courses in a different way. There were no significant differences between students according to their gender in their perceived EL needs in reading and listening as highlighted in the last column in Table 4.25. A significant difference was found between male and female students in their perception of writing and speaking difficulties. The difference in perceived writing needs was significant (t = 3.959, df = 980, p < .05), and the significance in speaking differences was evident (t = 2.818, df = 980, p < .05). This indicated that male and female students varied in their writing and speaking priorities. The findings seemed similar in some aspects to those of Manese, Sedlacek, and Leong (1988) stating that female and male foreign undergraduate students did not differ significantly in their self-perceptions and the academic needs of general study skills and writing skills. However, female respondents in Manese et al. (1988) also reported greater needs to become more comfortable in speaking up in class and to take better class notes than did male students. The results of this present study are partly in agreement with those of Eid and Jordan-Domschot (1989) and Kittidhaworn (2001) showing that no significant differences in relation to note-taking skills, improving speaking skills, and writing examination

answers were found between female and male foreign students' perceived English-language needs.

In summary, the three above comparisons included the target population (students), and the practitioners in the field (teachers) were not uniform in their perception of the Omani EFL needs in Grade 11. Similar instances of divergent views among stakeholders stemming from self-interest or different expectations have been documented in other needs analysis or assessments studies (e.g., Al-Husseini, 2004; Krohn, 2008; Purpura et al., 2004; Taillefer, 2007).

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter concludes the study. A summary of the study is presented in Section 5.2. It also summarizes the results of the study as they relate to the research questions. For each research question, a summary of the findings is presented as in sections 5.2.1-5.2.7. This helps in presenting summaries about the recommendations the study has provided to help in reforming the English language program taught for Grade 11 students to produce graduates capable of coping with the language demands of their future academic or career life.

The second part of this chapter presents an overview of implementation needs (see Section 5.3.1). The theoretical implications of the current findings will be discussed in Section 5.3.2, followed by the methodological implications in section 5.3.3. The implication of the underpinning principles and content is presented in 5.3.4. The implication for the teaching material and methodology is presented in Section 5.3.5 followed by an explanation of the implications for teachers' training in 5.3.6 The implications for assessments are examined in Section 5.3.7. Finally, recommendations for further research are provided in Section 5.4.

5.2 Summary of the Study

The overall objective of the current study was twofold. The first aim was to contribute to the existing body of knowledge about the theory of needs analysis in English as a foreign language education. The second aim, and the immediate motivation for the study, is to inform the ongoing curriculum renewal process for Grade 11 in post-

basic education schools in Oman. The data gathered in the study could provide an empirical basis for developing recommendations for the English language instruction component in post-basic education schools.

To expand the scope of language needs analysis, the present study developed a proposal for a large-scale/nationwide framework of needs analysis for analyzing national language needs of pre-university level EFL learners. This framework was for the purpose of establishing better learning objectives, and designing content, material and methodology for English language courses. Recent needs analysts, namely Al-Husseini (2004), Long (2005) and Nelson (2000), reported that until now, few—if any—studies have been conducted to analyze the learning needs of a whole society or nation. To do so, a multidimensional model of needs analysis was used to address the language use context, the English language instruction context, the learners' motivation and goal context, and Means Analysis context to investigate the English language learning needs of the Omani Grade 11 students.

In order to put needs analysis on a theoretical and empirical base, Long (2005) calls for "replication with different populations in different sectors" (p. 12). The present study provided an example of a new unexplored population or context in two ways. Firstly, no attempt has been carried out to systematically study the language needs of school students in the Arab world (Kandil, 2009), or more specifically in the Omani context, to the best of the researcher's knowledge. Secondly, it investigated the learning needs at the school level or pre-university students, which has not been tackled yet. Most NA studies investigate the learners' needs at university or college level, such as Al-Busaidi (2003), Shuja'a (2004), Al-Husseini, (2004) and Keen (2006).

Practically, this study is also motivated by the frequent claims and complaints about the low standard of school graduates, especially their weak English language proficiency after having studied English language for 12 years (Al-Busaidi, 2003;

As'Syabi, 1995). The lack of awareness of the learners' needs is one factor that has prevented the government schools from producing academically and linguistically qualified students. To implement reforms in the Omani Grade 11 EL program, it should be based on the kind of empirical insight of students' needs that is currently lacking but which is presented in this study. To achieve its target objectives, the current study has devised seven research questions:

1. What are the skills and sub skills developed in the current English language course book in Grade 11 of Omani schools?

2. What are the English language learning needs of Omani students in Grade 11 as perceived by students, teachers, supervisors and heads of department?

3. To what extent are the decision makers aware of the English language learning needs of the Grade 11 students?

4. To what extent are the students' learning needs met by the content of the Grade 11 English language course book used in Omani schools?

5. What are the purpose(s) of the Grade 11 English language program in Omani schools as perceived by students, teachers, supervisors and heads of department?

6. What are the attitudes of students, teachers, supervisors and Heads of departmenttowards the current Grade 11 English language program in Omani schools?

7. Are there any differences in the perceptions of English language learning needs between groups (e.g., students and teachers) and within the same group (e.g., urban and rural students)?

The current study utilized the mixed-methods methodology, where data were collected from several sources (informants and documents) and via different methods of data collection procedures and instruments (structured interviews, questionnaires and

textbook analysis). This methodology, which allowed for the collection of both qualitative and quantitative data, was found effective for obtaining a comprehensive and triangulated picture of language needs. Triangulation of data collection techniques and sources of information were considered crucial factors in needs analysis (Brecht & Rivers, 2005; Coleman, 1998; Cowling, 2007; Long, 2005; Richards, 2001). Therefore, one particular innovation of this study was its utilization of two types of triangulation: methodological triangulation and data triangulation (Krohn, 2008). Multiple sources, such as, students, teachers, supervisors, and Heads of department were approached during data collection. In addition, varieties of data were gathered and compared using multiple methods, such as questionnaires, interviews, and text book analysis. The current study also provided a methodological empirical example of an assertion made by Waters and Vilches (2001) and Richards (2001) that involving decision makers, such as language specialists, supervisors, heads of departments, administrators, employers, and so forth, is fundamental to them being familiarized at the foundation building stage. It is also important for the success of the implementation of any study, since they decide whether to accept, reject or modify the implementation of the study findings.

The study has come up with a number of findings, identified a group of needs and provided various suggestions, which together answer the above research questions. This concluding chapter summarizes the results of the study as they relate to the research questions. For each research question, a summary of the findings is presented.

5.2.1 The Findings for Research Question 1

The first research question was, "What are the skills and sub skills developed in the current English language course book in Grade 11 of Omani schools? Textbook analysis was used to identify the skills and the sub-skills found in the Grade 11 English language textbooks. Task based analysis was used as the unit of analysis, as advocated

by Long and Norris (2000), Long (2005), and Ferch (2005). The patterns that emerged from the EL textbooks analysis were presented in Section 4.2 and were as follows:

Reading was the language macro skill used most frequently followed by listening. Writing and speaking were used less frequently. Eighty-nine tasks were sorted as sub reading tasks from Grade 11 EL textbooks. Overall, it was noticed that the reading activities in the textbooks gave more priority to straightforward reading tasks that required skimming and scanning skills, but less attention was given to higher cognitive reading skills such as understanding, inferring, figuring out or organizing. The obtained data also did not support the fact that the level of difficulty in the target language should gradually increase in the later themes.

Listening was the second macro skill used most frequently. It is essential that students need comprehensible input before they are capable of target language output, as advocated by Krashen's Monitor Theory (1982) and Terrell's Natural Approach (1986). Forty-five tasks were sorted as sub listening tasks from Grade 11 EL textbooks. The EL textbooks provided students with different listening tasks, such as to listen and decide if the given sentences are true or false, listen and complete a chart, text, or table, listen and match words with descriptions, and listen and answer the question.

Even though the Grade 11 EL textbooks provided the chance to practise different writing genres, they were less creative and did not have stimulating activities to focus students' attention on the things to be learned. During the analysis, it was noticed that writing tasks were separated at the back of the workbook and students had to refer to that section whenever they wanted to perform any writing tasks. This could create the feeling for teachers and students that writing is not an essential task to be mastered.

The pattern that also emerged from the analysis of all three textbooks was that speaking was the language macro skill used least frequently. Overall, far too little

attention was paid to speaking in the Grade 11 EL textbooks. It was felt that this kind of training should come much earlier since speaking was unanimously chosen by all teachers as the most important skill for Omani students, as in 4.3.2.1.

The findings of Research Question One can be fed back into the Grade 11 EL program and can work as a foundation for material developers. The analytical methodology applied here provided course books task analysis, which offered more insights about the students' needs through comparing what is presented to them and their perceived priority, as in Research Question Four.

The findings of the task-based NA complemented those of the other instruments, providing firsthand information about the language uses that were reported, as in the questionnaire and interview findings explained in the next sections.

5.2.2 The Findings of Research Question 2

The second research question was, "What are the English language learning needs of Omani students in Grade 11 as perceived by students, teachers, supervisors and heads of departments?" Interviews and questionnaires were used as tools to collect data from students, teachers, supervisors and heads of department. The interview gathered in-depth qualitative data about the students' needs from the supervisors (4), the heads of the Supervision Department (1), and the head of the Curriculum Department (2). Thus, seven interviews were conducted individually. The questionnaire explored the students' (n = 982) and teachers' (n = 64) perceptions of the most important language skill needed by Grade 11 students. In what follows, a summary of the findings is organized according to the research participants.

Students (n = 982) were from four educational regions in Oman. Reading (2.09) and speaking (2.22) were seen as the most important macro-skills according to students' perception. The frame was lower for writing (2.50), putting it in third; listening (3.19)

240

was in the final rank, since almost 54% of all participants thought it was the least important skill out of the four skills. The students' perceptions of the priorities among the language skills reflected their perceptions of their wants. This indicated that students faced difficulties dealing with reading and speaking tasks and accordingly they had less ability with English language reading and speaking compared to other macro skills. Analysis of teachers' responses to the questionnaires showed that there were some skills and sub skills reported as more important than others in every language skill, as in Tables 4.6-4.9. Other findings obtained from students' questionnaires are as follows:

- The four most needed speaking skills, as reported by Grade 11 students, shared academic purpose, such as answering exam questions and delivering a good presentation (see Table 4.7).

- The pattern shared by the five highest writing skills needed is that they all have communicative and academic purpose. On the other hand, the last items with the lowest mean values in writing skills (i.e., items 31, 29, and 35) shared a scientific purpose (see Table 4.8).

- In the open-ended section, a number of students expressed their views saying that the textbook should be modified and developed to be more motivating and to match their needs in their current studies and in future work. In addition to the textbook features and layout, students mentioned that they want a course book that provides them with good chances to practice speaking, reading different topics, writing letters, knowing new important vocabulary, communicating with others to express their feelings and thoughts, extra grammar-focused sessions and extended glossaries at the end of the course book.

- The students did not restrict their comments to the content of the course, but also expressed their views about many other things that would facilitate the learning processes including: the textbook, the teachers, teaching methods, testing,

remedial courses and so forth. The inclusion of these themes in the students' responses goes in line with the fact that what the learners have to learn and how learning and teaching are done are unavoidably interrelated. It is interesting to note that students knew and had expectations about how their language abilities can be developed and improved. Therefore, meeting the students' needs and wants assuredly can help the students learn English in a better way.

Teachers (n = 64) were from four educational regions in Oman. Speaking was unanimously chosen by teachers as the most important skill for Omani students. Reading (2.41) was the second most important macro-skill followed by writing (2.78). The teachers' skill ranking yielded less definite priorities. The teachers, like the students, attributed the least importance to listening. However, the relative degree of priorities is not identical. Students' language priority was reading whereas teachers' priority was speaking.

Analyzing teachers' responses to the third section of the questionnaires found that there were some skills and sub skills reported as more important than others in every language skill, as in Tables 4.11-4.14. Other findings obtained from students' questionnaires are as follows:

- Students have less ability with speaking and reading sub-skills, so they face more difficulty while dealing with any speaking or reading task compared to other macro skills such as writing and listening. These results were in agreement with the findings of Boyle (1993), Kittidhaworn (2001), and Shuja'a (2004) showing that speaking was reported as being a difficult language skill by their EFL respondents, while writing skills were considered the least difficult skill. This was justified because the students had very limited opportunities and practice in speaking and reading English outside the classroom.

- The mean values of all the items in the teachers' writing difficulties were high ranging from 3.63 to 2.95, which were higher than the students' self-reported writing difficulties, and the highest mean values found in the teachers' questionnaire analysis.

- Students' five most needed writing sub-skills shared communicative and academic purpose. On the other hand, teachers' first five priorities were scientific and academic oriented writing tasks. Teachers, therefore, seemed more aware of the students' future EL related challenges that would face them while trying to carry on their further studies.

- Listening mean values showed the lowest values compared to the other macro-skills, which indicated that teachers also agreed with the students that listening was not a difficult task to be mastered.

As to the use of the questionnaire in this study, it proved to be a useful tool for collecting information from a large number of participants. However, it was insufficient by itself to provide an in-depth or efficient picture of the learners' needs. Therefore, this study recommends that if questionnaires are to be used in NA surveys, they should be triangulated with other tools, such as interviews or textbook analysis, as is the case in the current study.

The supervisors and heads of department interviewed in this study provided valuable remarks and comments that would help in improving the teaching and learning situation at post-basic education schools in Oman. The interviewees were unable to recall within the time limit of the interview all the language uses that take place in Grade 11 schools. Interviews were found to be less effective in providing detailed information about learners' linguistic needs. More thoughts and specific information about the language needs should be obtained by questionnaires and text analysis, if designed properly. The majority of the respondents perceived speaking skills as the

most important macro-skill compared to the other skills. All participants agreed to place listening as the fourth macro-skill. There was also a need to develop critical thinking and lateral thinking skills accompanied with study skills and research skills, as reported by supervisors and heads of departments.

5.2.3 The Findings of Research Question 3

The third research question was, "To what extent are the decision makers aware of the English language learning needs of the Grade 11 students?" It addressed the means analysis dimension (Jordan, 1997) by gathering information from the different decision makers on source, time, teaching experts and support to enhance the EL program. The interview was used to gather in-depth qualitative data about the students' needs from the supervisors (4), the head of the supervision department (1), and the heads of the Curriculum Department (2). The analysis of the obtained data was organized according to the following categories:

1. The practice of examining students' needs

2. Difficulties and challenges facing the current EL program

3. Suggestions for improving the current English language program

However, all the interviewed participants agreed that it is very important to systematically examine the linguistic needs of Omani students; it was reported that no empirical nationwide NA of Omani EFL students' linguistic needs was carried out during the process of developing the current EL framework. The subject of needs analysis (NA) has not yet received sufficient attention from researchers and language teaching professionals in the Omani educational system. Hence, the government should regularly conduct language audits that involve a large number of students, teachers, administrators, supervisors, researchers, and any other interested parties. Such a large-

scale NA would be able to better inform decision makers of the particular needs of students in the government schools.

Analyzing the proposed difficulties and challenges facing the current EL program resulted in extracting four factors that, if avoided, would allow the EL program to function far more successfully (see Table 4.14). These factors were learning content, teachers training and teaching style, inadequate school environment and other educational and administrative challenges. Educators should understand the possible challenges that hindered the right application of the EL program in order to avoid the causes of failure. Previous studies such as Falout and Maruyama (2004) and Sakai and Kikuuchi (2009) found that the first three factors, namely learning content, inadequate school environment and teachers training and teaching style, were the most important challenges which interfered with the success of any EL program.

The supervisors and heads of department did not restrict their suggestions to the content of the course, but also expressed their views about many other things that would facilitate the learning processes such as:

- Recommendations regarding the learning content. Supervisors and a head of department suggested completely re-evaluating the educational procedures. Heavy and difficult curriculums should be replaced with a more flexible one that takes the students' needs as a priority. To improve the reading ability and to ensure literacy development with students, a reading scheme should be established to have the student read every single day. Special educational needs support should also be established to identify why learning is not occurring and how the parents and the main class teacher can support the students.

- Suggestions for the teachers training and teaching style. Teachers should get training on the system much earlier than the past and it should be done by the Ministry of Education or under the supervision of the Ministry. Training had to

245

keep up with the teachers as refresher courses, especially for those teachers who were resistant to change. Also in terms of the English teachers, they should have a deep understanding of how students learn and keep up-to-date with the latest strategies for engaging all kinds of students. They have to differentiate their learning materials to meet the students' needs. They should also be patient about literacy in terms of reading and numeracy.

- Supporting the school environment. There is a need to ensure a motivating learning environment. Students should be given responsibilities in schools to develop leadership skills. Decision makers should be very selective in assigning the school leadership or administration. Heads of department and supervisors also recommended that schools should definitely invest in resources.

- Introducing changes to some educational and administrative factors. To ensure a better literacy and numeracy foundation, early childhood centers should be introduced in the country. There is a need to tackle the learning environment of the school to foster a love of learning. The Ministry of Education schools should link themselves to one of the international examination boards and offer to get the best people and experts to train the Omanis on how they should go about writing course books. Teachers should be given more freedom to design their own material and to use extracurricular material to meet their students' needs. It is also urgent to reduce the amount of immediate and sudden changes that hinder teachers from doing their mission. The current EL program should be geared towards a more practice-oriented approach and be exploited fully.

5.2.4 The Findings for Research Question 4

The fourth research question was, "To what extent are the students' learning needs met by the contents of the English language course book in Grade 11 of Omani schools?" The findings from Questions One and Two were compared and analyzed to determine the extent to which the current Grade 11 EL instructions address the students' needs. The patterns that emerged from Questions Four's findings were as follows:

- The majority of the teachers, supervisors and heads of department were not satisfied with the Grade 11 EL program. They reported that the current EL program did not meet the students' needs, as in 4.7.3. Students called for replacing the current textbook with a new one that considers their needs.

- Reading skills were given considerable attention during the process of developing the current Grade 11 EL textbooks. It is recommended that students should be gradually engaged in a higher reading level since they have been learning English for 11 years in the public schools. The later themes should require more English than initial themes in terms of the English language proficiency level.

- Overall, far too little attention was paid to speaking in the Grade 11 EL textbooks. According to questionnaires and interview findings, speaking was unanimously chosen by all teachers, supervisors and heads of department as the most important skill for Grade 11 Omani students, but the pattern that emerged from analysis of all three Grade 11 EL textbooks, as in 4.3.2, was that speaking was the least frequently used language macro skill.

- Grade 11 EL syllabus provided little space for students to develop writing competence. The new Grade 11 EL syllabus should acknowledge that the skills involved in learning to write include the ability to draft, revise, conference, edit,

proofread, and publish, and to form well-structured, effective texts (Richards, 2004).

- Overall Grade 11 EL textbooks over taught the listening skills.

- The current EL curriculum did not meet the perceived needs' of Omani students according to students', teachers', supervisors' and heads of departments' expectations.

5.2.5 The Findings for Research Question 5

Research Question Five was, "What are the purpose(s) of the Grade 11 English language program in Omani schools as perceived by students, teachers, supervisors and heads of department?" It investigated the different study participants' understanding of the purposes of the Grade 11 EL program.

There were differences in the students' reasons for studying English in the post-basic education schools. Students' priority concerning the reason to study English language course was to pass the General Diploma Certificate, to complete higher studies, to find a good job, and for daily life. These results were not surprising, in that, they seemed to be consistent with those of other participants. This finding was supported by the supervisors' and heads of departments' interview findings.

Remarkable differences are found between the teachers' and students' understanding of the reasons for studying English in the post-basic education schools. Teachers' priority concerning the reason to study the English language is to find a good job, to pass the General Diploma exam, to complete higher studies and finally for daily life.

There was discrepancy in the supervisors' and heads of departments' interpretation of the program purpose among each group and between the groups. Examining the supervisors' and heads of departments' understanding of the Grade 11

curriculum framework, it was noticed that not all participants have copies of that document, which interoperated the discrepancies found in the participants' understanding about the program purpose. The majority of interviewees considered that the purpose of the Grade 11 EL program was to prepare the students well to pass the General Diploma exam. In addition, similar to the majority of Grade 11 students and teachers, they considered that the least important purpose of Grade 11 EL program was for daily life.

5.2.6 The Findings for Research Question 6

The sixth research question was, "What are the students', teachers', supervisors' and heads of departments' attitudes towards the current English language program in post-basic education schools in Oman?" The data was collected by means of two instruments: questionnaires and interviews. A total of 982 students and 64 teachers participated in answering Research Question Six from four educational regions in Oman.

Overall students had positive attitudes towards the current English language program in Grade 11. Teachers were not satisfied with the way English is taught in school. They (39.1%) felt that there was a clear mismatch between what their students could do and what the curriculum asked them to do.

These results were not surprising, in that, they seemed to coincide with those of other study participants. The majority of the interviewed supervisors and Heads of department were not satisfied with the Grade 11 EL program. The common areas of weakness, mentioned by the interviewed supervisors and heads of department were summarized in Table 4.22 and were taken into consideration when discussing the study recommendation, as in Chapter Five.

5.2.7 The Findings of Research Question 7

Research Question Seven was, "Are there any differences in the perceptions of English language learning needs between groups (e.g., students and teachers) and within the same group (e.g., urban and rural students)?" It made use of independent samples t-test to find out the instance of divergent views among stakeholders.

It was concluded that different research participants seemed to perceive the English-language needs in the Grade 11 program in different ways. The patterns that emerged from Question Seven's findings were as follows:

- There was a significant difference between teachers and students ($t = -3.949$, df $= 1034$, $p < .05$) in their attitudes towards the current English language program in Grade 11.

- There were no significant differences between students and teachers in the perceived EL needs in reading and listening, but the difference was significant between the two groups in their perception of writing and speaking difficulties.

- There was no statistically significant difference at the level of significance ($p < = .05$) deducted between urban and rural students in their perception of the EL learning needs of Omani students in Grade 11.

- There was no significant difference at the level of significance ($p < = .05$) between female and male students in responding to the purpose of the EL program, but the difference was significant ($t = 2.909$, df $= 970$, $p < .05$) between male and female students in their attitudes towards the current English language program.

- There were no significant differences between students according to their gender in their perceived EL needs in reading and listening as highlighted in the last column in Table 4.25 above. The difference was significant between male and female students in their perception of writing and speaking difficulties.

In summary, the above three comparisons included the target population (students), and the practitioners in the field (teachers) were not uniform in their perception of the Omani EFL needs in Grade 11. Similar instances of divergent views among stakeholders stemming from self-interest or different expectations have been documented in other needs analysis or assessments studies (e.g., Al-Husseini, 2004; Krohn, 2008; Purpura et al., 2003; Taillefer, 2007).

5.3 Implications of Findings

This chapter aims at discussing the implications of the findings for the improvement of the Grade 11 English language program in Oman. To date, no large-scale empirical studies of the Grade 11 English language learning needs have been conducted in Oman. Therefore, this study has implications for EFL language education in Oman as well as in other Asian EFL contexts. The implementation needs (Waters & Viches, 2001) of the study's findings and the recommendations will be suggested in order to guarantee successful implementation. As already argued in Section 4.7 above, the content of the Grade 11 EL program was not based on students' needs, so it was not fulfilling the students' needs. Therefore, it was producing learners unable to cope with the language demands in their current and prospective studies.

The findings of this study underscored the importance of investigating the precise English language needs reported by Omani EFL students, teachers, supervisors and Heads of department to assess their Grade 11 students' actual needs. The needs analysis has demonstrated both the complex network of elements that play a significant role in determining the needs of Omani EFL students, and the unavoidable necessity to set priorities. To develop the current EL program in Grade 11, it is believed that the language uses identified by this empirical study should be regarded as learners' target language needs on which the Grade 11 EL curricula should be based. Applying the

findings obtained from answering the seven research questions in Chapter Four has many implications in terms of the material used in the program, the students' assessments, teachers' and students' roles, teacher training, and the relation between the different departments involved in curriculum development.

5.3.1 An Overview of the Implementation Needs

Recent writings on needs analysis, for example Al-Husseini (2004), Orafi and Borg (2009), Wang (2006), and Waters and Viches (2001), concluded that needs analysts have to consider implementation needs from the initial stage. This, according to Al-Husseini (2004), can be done by accounting for those who will implement and use the changes. Useful implications of the research are not guaranteed by proposing a sound syllabus and recommendations for change but rather by careful planning for implementation needs from the early stages (Waters & Viches, 2001). This can be achieved by seriously involving the different bodies (e.g., teachers, managers, students, administrators, etc) during the planning stage.

As mentioned in 2.5.3.1, the value of needs analysis in ELT research is mainly in their conclusion and the innovation they gave to the English language teaching process. The findings of structurally-based NAs tend to produce lists of content of the most commercially published grammar book. This throws into question the relevance of conducting NA and the validity of its outcomes (Long, 2005). Many research on innovation in ELT have appeared in the last two decades, such as Feez (2001), Graves (2001), Holliday and Cook (1982), Holliday (1994, 1995, 2001), Orafi and Borg (2009), Sergeant (2001), and Waters and Vilches (2001). They have provided language specialists, teachers and material developers with a coherent set of guiding principles for the implementation of language teaching innovation/reform.

The findings of this study in terms of the students', teachers', supervisors' and heads of departments' views about the Grade 11 EL program, the students' perceived language needs, and the recommended changes for the reform of the Grade 11 program, can be regarded as the finished task of the study. There is, however, an unfinished task of putting the findings and recommendations into practice (Al-Husseini, 2004). This means that the implementation process of the study's findings and its recommendations will continue after the study has finished.

Before embarking on the implementation needs, the theoretical implications of the current findings will be discussed, followed by the methodological implications in the forthcoming sections.

5.3.2 Theoretical Implications

The present study has potential significance for NA in TEFL, as it presented a framework for analyzing students' language learning needs on a large-scale nationwide context for the purpose of establishing better learning objectives, and designing content, material and methodology for English language courses. Recent needs analysts, namely, Al-Husseini (2004), Long (2005), and Nelson (2000), reported that until now, few—if any—studies have been conducted to analyze the learning needs of a whole society or nation. Previous NA studies have investigated the needs of individuals or a learning type (e.g., Abdulaziz, 2004; Al Busaidi, 2003; Al-Dugaily, 1999; Cho, 1999; Chaudron, 2005; Deutch, 2003; Keen, 2006; Lepetit & Cichooki, 2002; Patterson, 2001; Shuja'a, 2004). Long (2005, p. 6) points out that "in an era of globalization and shrinking resources, however, language audits and needs analyses for whole societies are likely to become increasingly important". The societal approach of NA adopted by this study, particularly with regard to sampling, data collection and analysis, may be applicable to further studies in similar a context around the world.

The current study utilized a multidimensional model of needs analysis to investigate the English language learning needs of Grade 11 in the entire nation of Oman. Purpura and Graziana-King (2004), in their investigation of the foreign language needs of students in a professional school of international affairs in Colombia, proved the usefulness of a multidimensional model for investigating language needs in a very different context. It was characterized by two situations (current academic and future professional) and a unique blend of utilitarian-professional goals and heritage motivation for language learning. Krohn (2008) followed the Purpura and Graziana-King (2004) model to investigate five dimensions of language needs: the context, the learning (instructional) situation, the academic and professional target language use situation, the learner situation and instructional means.

Unlike previous research which examined language needs from just an individual or a learning type or from one or two perspectives (e.g., Al-Busaidi, 2003; Al-Dugaily, 1999; Chuadron, 2005; Deutch, 2003; Lepetit & Cichooki, 2002; Patterson, 2001), the current study set out to concurrently investigate four dimensions of language needs as follows:

1. The language use context, which requires a Target Language Needs Analysis (Munby, 1978). The findings of Research Question Two, as in 4.3, highlight this dimension by identifying the state of students' wants, lacks, and necessities according to their perceptions, their teachers' perceptions, supervisors' perceptions, and heads of departments' perceptions. Findings for Research Question 4, as well, specified to what extent the students' perceived language needs are met by the content of the current English language course book in Grade 11, as in Section 4.5.

2. The English language instruction context of Omani students requires the learning Situation Analysis Dimension by Hutchinson and Waters

254

(1987). This dimension was explained in the findings of Research Question 1, as in Section 4.2, which provided an analysis of the present learning situation by identifying the skills and the sub-skills found in the Grade 11 English language textbook through the use of text book analysis. Findings for Research Question 4, as well, specified to what extent does the content of the current English language course book in Grade 11 meet the students' perceived language needs, as in Section 4.5.

3. The Learner Situation Analysis dimensions, Hutchinson and Waters (1987) and Dudley-Evans and St John (1998), address learners' needs analysis. Findings for Research Question Five, as in 4.6, and Question Six, as in section 4.7, gathered information about the participants' understanding of the purposes of the Grade 11 current English language program and their attitudes towards the current English language program in post-basic education schools in Oman. Research Question 7 drew comparison between the different stakeholders and highlighted the instance of divergent views among stakeholders in their perceptions of English language learning needs within the same group and cross groups (see 4.8).

4. Means Analysis dimensions, Holliday (1995), to identify the factors that may affect the implementation of the English language curriculum in Omani schools. The findings of the third research question, as in Section 4.4, addressed the means analysis dimension (Jordan, 1997) by gathering information from the different decision makers on source, time, teaching experts and support to enhance the EL program.

By adopting the multidimensional framework of needs analysis, the current study provided further empirical support to examine the different dimensions of

255

classroom components to account for all types of needs that can enhance the language teaching outcomes. It also contributed to the trustworthiness of the data and increased confidence in the research findings (Aguilar, 2005).

Another theoretical implication of the study pertains to what has been termed "the competing discourse" of needs assessment (Krohn, 2008), namely the different and sometimes contradictory opinions and perceptions of various stakeholders concerning the students' needs. Discrepancies among stakeholders' views have been documented in a number of studies (Aguilar, 1999; Deutch, 2003; Eslami, 2010; Kaewpet, 2009; Purpura, 2003; Wang, 2006) and were evident in the current study. For example, analysis of the findings for Research Questions Two, Five, Six and Seven has documented differences between students and teachers in their perceptions of the purpose, attitudes and priorities of the language uses. Supervisors and heads of department also differ in their views with teachers and students. Although differences of opinion among stakeholders cannot always be resolved, they should be acknowledged and accounted for to facilitate a negotiation process leading to the implementation stage of the needs assessment (Richards, 2001).

In order to put needs analysis on a sound theoretical and empirical base, as is expected in the area of applied linguistics, Long (2005) calls for "replication with different populations in different sectors" (p.12). The present study provided an example of a new unexplored population or context in two ways. Firstly, no attempt has been carried out to systematically study the language needs of school students in the Arab world, or more specifically in the Omani context, to the best of the researcher's knowledge. Kandil (2009) suggests, "The subject of needs analysis (NA) has not yet received sufficient attention from researchers and language teaching professionals in the Arab world". He also adds, "A critical examination of English language instruction in the governmental schools of the Arab world reveals that NA is virtually nonexistent".

256

Secondly, it investigated the learning needs at the school level, or pre-university students, of post-basic education schools in Oman, which has not been tackled yet. Most NA studies investigate the learners' needs at university or college level, such as Cho (1999), Patterson (2001), Al-Busaidi (2003), Abdulaziz (2004), Shuja'a (2004), Al-Husseini, (2004) and Keen (2006). School students' needs are simply intuited for them, rather than analyzed or assessed. It has been assumed that students in the pre-university stage are unable to convey their language learning needs; this has created the need to look for an alternative approach to help in inferring secondary school students' language learning needs. Pearson (1981) and Al-Busaidi (2003) argue that skills should be introduced at the lower level of language instruction and not postponed until higher levels. By delaying the introduction of the needed skills in early stages, we give our students only a brief term or two of practice in both conceptually and technically difficult areas. Due to this short introduction, Pearson (1981) believes that students enter academic programs lacking essential skills and are likely to resort to ineffective coping strategies. Therefore, the current study added to the existing theories of teaching English to young learners and learners language needs by expanding the scope of the study to a new unexplored context; the learning needs of pre-university level students in the government schools which required triangulation of theories, methods and sources to infer the students' language learning needs.

Finally, the literature review presented in this study provided a synthesis of the different perspectives of NA. Al-Husseini (2004) noted, "despite the relatively long history of NA and the increasing body of research and publications at the level of articles and theses, there has not been assigned book focusing on NA since Munby (1978), which is now rather dated." NA however has played a significant role in other works, so its information has to be sought from a range of resources either published or unpublished. Therefore, it is an extra burden on researchers, teachers, needs analysts,

and material designers and may prevent them from identifying the correct and necessary information for a given context. Thus, the current study contributed to the future research by reviewing and synthesizing as much of the literature as possible, highlighting the main developments in NA.

5.3.3 Methodological Implications

The current study utilized the mixed-methods methodology, where data were collected from several sources (informants and documents) and via different methods of data collection procedures and instruments (structured interviews, questionnaires and textbook analysis). This methodology, which allowed for the collection of both qualitative and quantitative data, was found effective for obtaining a comprehensive and triangulated picture of language needs.

Triangulation of data collection techniques and sources of information were considered crucial factors in needs analysis (Brecht & Rivers, 2005; Coleman, 1998; Cowling, 2007; Long, 2005; Richards, 2001). Therefore, one particular innovation of this study was its utilization of two types of triangulation: methodological triangulation and data triangulation (Krohn, 2008). Multiple sources, such as students, teachers, supervisors, and heads of the departments, were approached for the purpose of data collection. In addition, varieties of data were gathered and compared using multiple methods, such as questionnaires, interviews, and textbook analysis. The two types of data collected in the present study (qualitative and quantitative) allowed for two types of triangulation: methodological triangulation (multiple data gathering procedures) and data triangulation (multiple sources of information).

Most NA research ignored decision makers or high stakeholders during their study procedure and mentioned them in the last chapter, when it comes to recommendations. The current study provided a methodological empirical example of

an assertion made by Richards (2001) and Waters and Vilches (2001) that involving decision makers, such as language specialists, supervisors, heads of departments, administrators, employers, and so forth, is fundamental to familiarize them at the foundation and building stage. It is also of great importance for the success of the implementation needs of any study, since they are the ones who decide whether to accept, reject or modify the implementation of the study findings. Therefore, the present study approached EL supervisors, the heads of EL Supervision Departments, and the head of the Curriculum Department at the Ministry of Education in Oman during the data collection stage to investigate their perceptions about the NA in question.

As for data analysis methodology, this study employed a battery of analytical procedures, including descriptive statistics, frequency analysis, mean ranking and independent sample t-tests for the comparisons within and between the groups. It also provided the internal consistency reliability estimates for each questionnaire; evidence of the measurement consistency of the survey instrument that has been overlooked or not reported in needs analysis research (Krohn, 2008; Long, 2005).

5.3.4 Implications for the Underlying Principles, and Content

This section is concerned with embedding the study findings about the learners' language needs in the Grade 11 EL program. It was argued in 4.5 that the majority of respondents considered that the purpose of Grade 11 EL program was to prepare the students well to pass the General Diploma exam. This purpose represents the academic side of the course. The analysis of this study findings as highlighted in 4.2 (the actual tasks embedded in the course books), 4.3 and 4.4 (the perceived needs of Grade 11 students) shape this study implications for the underlying principles and content for the prospective Grade 11 EL program. Consequently, this set a target for learners' needs analysis, which has been closely analyzed through this study and has resulted in

designing charts 5.2–5.5. They summarize the four target areas of English language of Grade 11 students' needs suggested by this study.

Therefore, teaching and learning in the Grade 11 Omani schools should raise the language competency of all pupils while ensuring the most able achieve the best international standards.

The overarching aim of the Grade 11 English language program is to develop functional fluency and, for the more able pupils, to work towards effective language use. Pupils' language use will be affected by the purpose, audience, context and culture (PACC), and their proficiency in language use is assessed by their attainment of the learning outcomes.

To achieve the overarching aim of the Grade 11 English language program, a four-pronged approach of building a strong foundation and providing rich language for all is suggested as in Figure 5.1.

A Strong Foundation and Rich Language for All

Learner-Centeredness

Learning-focused Interaction

Contextualization

Grammar

Reading

Listening   Speaking

Writing

Vocabulary

Process Orientation

- Principles
- Receptive and productive skills
- Knowledge about language
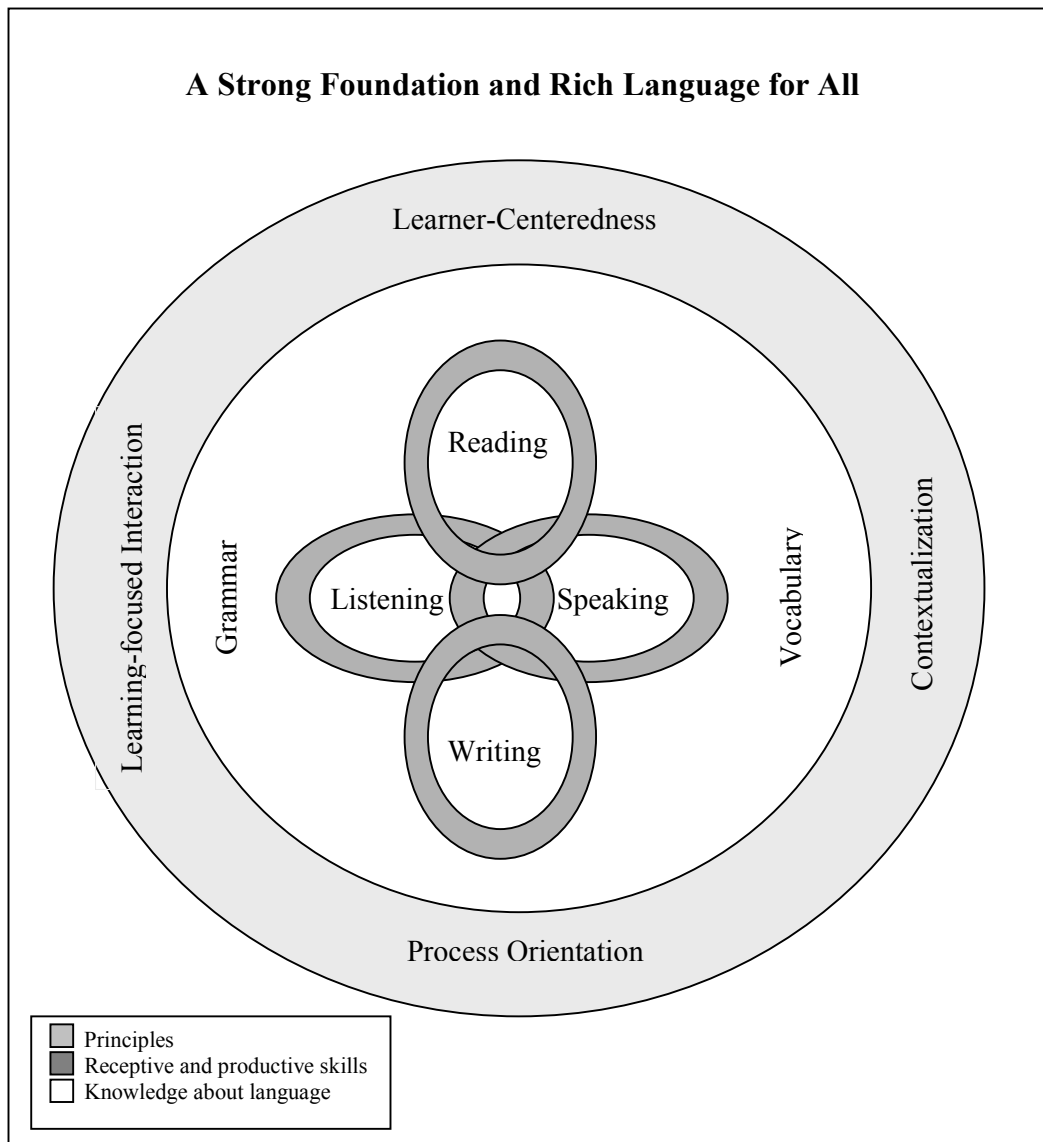
Figure 5.1. English language foundation and providing rich language for all.

Figure 5.1 is based on the understanding of the students' language learning needs the researcher developed during the research phases. The analysis of the perceptions of the different stakeholders including students, teachers ,supervisors, and heads of department conveyed through interviews and questionnaires (see section 4.3, 4.4, 4.6 and 4.7) and the text book analysis of the tasks included in the current EL program (see section 4.2 and 4.5) identified some of the gaps that need to be addressed in any innovation project of the Grade 11 EL program. The underlying principle proposed for the development of the program were drawn from the discussion of the

findings in chapter four and suggestions and recommendations made in section 4.4.3. In addition, the researcher triangulated the obtained data with his knowledge and work experience at the Ministry of Education as an insider of the system to discuss the implications of this research to the TEFL context in Oman.

The key features of the proposed principles, receptive and productive skills and the language knowledge for the Grade 11 English language program are shown in Figure 5.1. The four circles in the middle of the figure represent the language macro skills or the areas of language learning. The white area in the centre represents grammar and vocabulary, which constitutes knowledge about language. The receptive skills, the productive skills, grammar and vocabulary should be taught in an integrated way, together with the use of relevant print and non-print resources, to help the EFL learners make meaningful connections.

The use of circles also indicates the Spiral Progression. This means that the macro/micro skills, grammatical items, structures and various types of texts should be taught, revised and revisited to provide the necessary reinforcement. This will allow pupils to progress from the foundational level to appropriate levels of fluency for functional and communicative purposes.

The four dimensions in the bigger circle represent the underlying principles of EL teaching and learning, adapted from the previous Omani syllabus and another EL syllabus, namely, the Singaporean EL Syllabus 2010 Primary (Foundation) & Secondary (Normal [Technical]).

1. **Contextualization**

Learning tasks and activities should be designed for pupils to learn the language in familiar, authentic and meaningful contexts of use. For example, lessons should be planned around learning outcomes, a theme, or a type of text to help pupils use related language skills, grammatical items/structures and vocabulary

appropriately in spoken and written language to suit the purpose, audience, context and culture. Learning points will be reinforced through explicit instruction and related follow-up practice.

2. **Learner-Centeredness**

Learners are at the center of the teaching-learning process. Teaching will be differentiated according to pupils' needs, abilities and interests. Effective and more interactive pedagogies should be used to engage them and to strengthen their language development.

3. **Learning-focused Interaction**

The teacher should provide a visually and experientially rich environment for communication that will explicitly foster listening and speaking skills and focus on the achievement of the Learning Outcomes. At the same time, the teacher should actively engage pupils by encouraging participation in their learning, boosting their confidence by providing opportunities for success in the use of language, and promoting collaboration among learners from different socio-cultural backgrounds.

4. **Process Orientation**

The development of language skills and knowledge about language involves the teaching of processes. The teacher should model and scaffold such processes for pupils, while guiding them to put together their final spoken, written and/or multimodal products. The teacher should also provide many concrete learning experiences to develop skills and to enhance understanding. Planned and sequential learning experiences from easy-to-learn skills and concepts to incrementally challenging ones will be taught at a suitable pace.

Language needs analyses are carried out to provide the foundation for program design or to provide guidance for the reform or renewal of a curriculum, instructional

materials or classroom pedagogy (Krohn, 2008). As mentioned earlier in 4.4.1, the NA of students' needs helps to understand the possible challenges that hinder the right application of the EL program in order to avoid the causes of failure. It also helps dispel false or inaccurate assumptions about what students need or want of language instruction. Instructional materials that are based on students needs can increase motivation and in consequence lead to a higher achievement level (Dornyei, 2003).

As already argued in the findings in section 4.7, the content of the current Grade 11 EL program was not based on students' needs, so it was not fulfilling the students' needs and therefore it was not producing learners able to cope with the language demands in their current and prospective studies.

As discussed in section 4.2 and in section 4.7, the choices within the curriculum were not on offer for students to satisfy their needs, abilities, aspirations and future ambitions. Education in Oman has been blamed for focusing more on delivering and memorizing facts, repetition of definitions, passive reception of knowledge, acquisition of declarative knowledge at the expense of procedural knowledge, textbook dependency, didactic, adoption of teacher-centeredness, while has given less attention to individual differences in the classroom, interactive learning, student-centeredness, and introduction and development of higher-order cognitive skills (Al-Issa & Al-Bulushi, 2011). This is believed to have negative implications for productivity and rapid economic growth, as low productivity leads to low returns.

To develop the current EL program in Grade 11, it is believed that the language uses identified by this empirical study should be regarded as the learners' target language needs on which the Grade 11 EL curriculum should be based. Applying the obtained findings, as in Chapter Four, has many implications in terms of the course contents.

Listening and reading are receptive skills required for making meaning from ideas or information. Speaking and writing are productive skills that enable the creation of meaning. Grammar and vocabulary, which constitute knowledge about language, are the building blocks required for applying the receptive and productive skills for effective communication.

Figures 5.2–5.5 summarize the four categories of Grade 11 students' target English language needs suggested by this study. They illustrate how the language skills (reading, writing, speaking and listening) are used together to design the Grade 11 EL program objectives. The content of the charts is derived from the questionnaires, text book analysis, interview findings and discussions, which synthesize the Omani EFL learners' language needs as revealed in Chapter Four.

Area of language learning	Reading	
Perform the following to develop and strengthen foundation in reading skills, strategies, attitudes and behaviour…	**Use any of the following reading texts**	**Skills**
▪ Skimming ▪ Scanning ▪ Reading for gist ▪ Reading aloud ▪ Read to understand most of the text ▪ Read for general ideas	▪ Dictionary ▪ Advertisements ▪ www. ▪ Newspaper articles ▪ Formal letter ▪ Textbooks ▪ Short, simple narratives ▪ Selections of poetry ▪ Explanations (e.g., how something works)	▪ Infer meaning of terms from a text. ▪ Organize the important ideas and concepts in an English text. ▪ Figure out the meaning of new words using the context and pervious knowledge. ▪ Make predictions (based on, e.g., prior knowledge and contextual clues) ▪ Use a dictionary to find out meanings. ▪ Recall information (e.g., main ideas, key details, examples) ▪ Use the library and internet to find information. ▪ Understand English vocabulary and grammar as reading. ▪ Understand charts and graphs in a scientific text. ▪ Ask and answer questions related to the text. ▪ Understand how the ideas in an English text relate. ▪ Understand the most important point in a text. ▪ Understand an English text as easily as an Arabic one. ▪ Understand general ideas when reading in English. ▪ Distinguish between statements of fact and opinion. + Construct meaning from visual texts (e.g., pictures, diagrams, charts, maps, graphs, tables) + Identify cause and effect + Compare and contrast ideas + Paraphrase given information + Skim for the gist/ main idea + Scan for details
EXTENSIVE READING …reinforced with exposure to wide reading and viewing.	Read and view widely a variety of simple, reading-age-appropriate and high-interest selections/books from print and non-print sources for pleasure, personal development and to demonstrate independent reading and learning in the literary/content areas.	

The + distinguishes the items which are not included in the questionnaires.

Figure 5.2 Grade 11 students' target area of English language learning needs (Reading Chart)

Area of language learning	Writing

Type of texts	Skills
A: TEXTS FOR CREATIVE AND PERSONAL EXPRESSION ▪ Poetry, e.g., rhymes, song lyrics ▪ Personal Recounts, e.g., diary, journal entries or personal letters describing and reflecting on self, experiences or past events ▪ Narratives, e.g., stories about characters in given situations **B: TEXTS FOR ACADEMIC AND FUNCTIONAL PURPOSES** ▪ Lists, e.g., lists of 'things to do' ▪ Procedures, e.g., recipes, instructions on how to create art or craftwork ▪ Notes, Letters, Emails, Notices And Forms, e.g., notes of excuse, notices for notice boards, letters or email to a friend, teacher or principal to ask for information or feedback ▪ Information Reports, e.g., report on a product/service project proposal/ brochures for the public on given topics ▪ Explanations, e.g., explaining rules of a game or sport, how and/ or why an event or social problem occurs ▪ Expositions, e.g., online forum supporting/disagreeing with a position; reviews of computer games or movies, explaining why these were interesting advertisements.	▪ Write a report on scientific laboratory projects. ▪ Translate some concepts and ideas from Arabic to English. ▪ Express ideas and arguments effectively. ▪ Write a summary of information. ▪ Support the writing with examples, evidences and data. ▪ Relate the topic to their knowledge and experience. ▪ Express feelings and thoughts through free writing. ▪ Incorporate data and illustrations. + Elaborate on, explain and/ or justify the main idea. ▪ Use key words, phrases or clauses to introduce the main idea. ▪ Sequence paragraphs in the article. ▪ Organise facts, ideas and/or points of view in a way appropriate to the purpose and audience. ▪ Write a curriculum vitae CV in English. ▪ Structure clear statements without any ambiguity or vagueness. ▪ Write an essay in the class on an assigned topic. ▪ Write a questionnaire in English. ▪ Edit papers for grammar and style problems. ▪ Write a good introduction and a conclusion to an article. ▪ Take notes that demonstrate the main points. ▪ Explain the content of graphs, tables, charts and diagrams.
Note: No particular order is advocated for the teaching of these texts. Pupils should also be encouraged to express themselves creatively and personally through writing and representing at all levels and to attempt more complex literary and informational/functional texts at the higher levels. At higher levels, writing and representing tasks become more complex in terms of the process skills, language use and context awareness expected of pupils. Pupils should be given opportunities to engage in the creation of multimodal texts.	▪ Write a proposal about future plans. ▪ Write a letter of application. ▪ Write a report about an action in the past. ▪ Write a paragraph from notes. + Check spelling accuracy. + Apply spelling rules and conventions consistently. + Plan by identifying the purpose, audience and context. + Use appropriate cohesive devices (e.g., connectors, pronouns) to indicate relations between different sentences.

The + distinguishes the items which are not included in the questionnaires.

Figure 5.3 Grade 11 students' target area of English language learning needs (Writing Chart)

Area of language learning	Speaking	

Desired learning outcomes	Types of oral discourse	Skills
▪ Speak with accurate pronunciation and appropriate intonation ▪ Plan and present information and ideas for a variety of purposes ▪ Use appropriate skills, strategies and language to convey meaning during interactions	▪ Conversations (e.g., make a request, explain, participate in a pair/group discussion) ▪ Poetry (e.g., recite a simple poem, do choral recitation) ▪ Personal recounts (e.g., share oral anecdotes) ▪ Narratives (e.g., re-tell a story, describe an event) ▪ Procedures (e.g., give directions and instructions) ▪ Explanations (e.g., how something works) ▪ Information reports (e.g., on a project, a school event) ▪ Factual recounts (e.g., news reports, eye-witness accounts) ▪ Expositions (e.g., simple arguments, reviews of a movie/book) ▪ A mixture of types and forms (e.g., a personal recount in an exposition)	▪ Orally summarize information read or listened to. ▪ Answer exam questions correctly. ▪ Deliver presentations with clarity, fluency and confidence. ▪ Respond to questions in an interview/conversation. ▪ State and support an opinion. ▪ Ask questions for, e.g., clarification and understanding, elaboration. ▪ Talk for a few minutes about a familiar topic. ▪ Support meaning through the use of details, experiences and feelings. + Pronounce consonants and vowels clearly and accurately. + Speak clearly and fluently using the appropriate voice qualities, e.g. pace, volume, tone, and stress. + Draw on prior knowledge to understand. + Generate ideas and details appropriate to the purpose, audience, and context. + Use appropriate verbal and non-verbal cues to convey meaning. + Relate events and personal experiences. + Give personal/factual accounts. + Give directions. + Take/answer telephone calls. + Respond with suggestions, feedback, and alternative viewpoints respectfully and politely.

The + distinguishes the items which are not included in the questionnaires.

Figure 5.4 Grade 11 students' target area of English language learning needs (Speaking Chart)

Area of language learning	Listening	

Desired learning outcomes	**Types of oral discourse**	**Skills**
▪ Use appropriate skills and strategies to process meaning from texts ▪ Use appropriate skills and strategies to evaluate spoken, audio and visual texts	▪ Conversations (e.g., make a request, explain, participate in a pair/group discussion) ▪ Poetry (e.g., recite a simple poem, do choral recitation) ▪ Personal recounts (e.g., share oral anecdotes) ▪ Narratives (e.g., re-tell a story, describe an event) ▪ Procedures (e.g., give directions and instructions) ▪ Explanations (e.g., how something works) ▪ Information reports (e.g., on a project, a school event) ▪ Factual recounts (e.g., news reports, eye-witness accounts) ▪ Expositions (e.g., simple arguments, reviews of a movie/book) ▪ A mixture of types and forms (e.g., a personal recount in an exposition.)	▪ Understand the relationships among ideas. ▪ Recall specific details/information. ▪ Understand the speaker's attitude or opinion about what he or she is saying. ▪ Make simple inferences by using prior knowledge, phonological cues and contextual clues. ▪ Understand the main idea of a conversation or a lesson. + Identify main characters and sequence of events. + Select relevant information. + Identify the gist/main idea in a text. + Ask questions about a text. + Follow instructions/convey messages. + Identify supporting details. + Draw simple conclusions by relating observations with prior knowledge. + Identify point of view. + Identify the problem-solution relationship in a text. + Distinguish between fact and opinion.
EXTENSIVE LISTENING	The aim of listening and viewing widely is to develop in pupils a positive attitude towards listening and to view a variety of texts for enjoyment and understanding. Listen to, view and respond to (e.g., express feelings, opinions, observations) a variety of spoken, audio and visual texts.	

The + distinguishes the items which are not included in the questionnaires.

Figure 5.5 Grade 11 students' target area of English language learning veeds (Listening Chart)

The rationale for the inclusion of the Areas of Language Learning Figures (5.2-5.5) is to guide Omani EL specialists in the planning of the Grade 11 schools' EL instructional program in ways that will best cater to the Omani EFL pupils' specific needs, wants and interests. It is also to make use of the data gathered via questionnaires and interviews on the priorities in the skills presentation and how to incorporate them in the new textbooks. They contain all the skills and sub-skills, genres and tasks considered applicable for Grade 11 as found by this study. The charts synthesize the language uses and features resulting from the analysis of questionnaires, textbooks and the interviews conducted in Chapter Four.

It should be made clear that the language skills do not occur in isolation from each other. More than one skill can be needed at the same time (Al-Husseini, 2004). For example, the students may write and read or listen and write simultaneously. In addition, note taking during a lecture is a study skill in an academic setting, but is a writing skill that includes listening also.

More specifically the charts show:

1. The reading strategies needed by Grade 11 students.

2. The types of reading texts that should be used for teaching Grade 11 students.

3. The communicative functions, tasks and sub-skills associated with reading skills that students perform.

4. The intensive reading focus that helps students to read and view a wide variety of sources for pleasure and personal development and to demonstrate independent reading and learning in the literary/content areas.

5. The types of writing texts or the genres that should be used for teaching Grade 11 students.

6. The communicative functions, tasks and sub-skills associated with writing skills that students perform.

7. The desired learning outcomes associated with speaking and listening skills.

8. The types of oral discourse used to teach speaking and listening.

9. Intensive listening, which is to develop in pupils a positive attitude towards listening and to view a variety of texts for enjoyment and understanding.

Curriculum makers should differentiate instruction in many ways. For example, they can modify the difficulty level of the text in terms of its length, information density, and familiarity of the topic to the pupils and the organizational structure of the text. They should also vary the extent of scaffolding, from chunking texts, giving explicit instruction and modelling of the processes, to creating opportunities for pupils to work independently. In addition, varying performance expectations in terms of the duration for task completion and the type of assignments, such as written, oral or performance, will cater to the range of pupils' needs, abilities and interests.

Instruction should be paced according to pupils' needs and abilities (Graves, 2000). The number of new skills for pupils to focus on can be limited at any one point in time so that pupils can have enough time to master each skill. A range of concrete materials in authentic contexts can be used to help situate learning for the pupils so that it is within their experience. Their learning can then be reinforced so that links are made between their learning and their future employment and training needs.

In order to implement the above-mentioned language components, a methodology for the design of instructional material and the teaching of these materials is suggested in the next section.

5.3.5 Implications for Teaching Materials and Methodology

The fulfilment of the learners' needs by English for general purposes (EGP) requires consideration of methodology and material development. Because it refers to a diverse set of rather general and uncontroversial principles, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) can be interpreted in many different ways and used to support a wide variety of classroom procedures (Richards, 2003). The principles of Communicative Language Teaching theory can be summarized as follows:

- The goal of language learning is communicative competence.

- Learners learn a language by using it to communicate.

- Authentic and meaningful communication should be the goal of classroom activities.

- Fluency and accuracy are both important dimensions of communication.

- Communication involves the integration of different language skills.

- Learning is a gradual process that involves trial and error.

Richards (2003) claims that, in the last thirty years, there has been a substantial change in where and how learning takes place. He explains,

> In the 70s, teaching mainly took place in the classroom and in the language laboratory. The teacher used chalk, talk and the textbook. Technology amounted to the tape recorder and filmstrips. However, towards the end of the 70s learning began to move away from the teacher's direct control and into the hands of learners. (p. 19)

With a major focus on developing learner ability to use language appropriately, a student-centred approach is suggested for teaching EGP for Grade 11 Omani EFL learners. The findings of this study suggest those teachers and other ELT specialists in

Oman need to think about the teaching-learning process in terms of what their students really are, rather than the kind of essentialist and static terms that are dictated by theory-based methods and approaches. It is unrealistic to expect learners to respond to teaching in the same way, so teachers cannot make assumptions about how learners will experience their practices (Morrison, 2009).

There are also reports of the student-centered approach being welcomed and resulting in positive learning experiences in EFL contexts. For example, in his summary of research findings related to learner-centered approaches, Nunan (1993) identifies the involvement of learners in making meaning with both their teacher and their peers as a key factor in determining success. Hayes (2003) concluded also that the student-centered approach engages students in active learning by implementing operational techniques that make learners more active and participating. Further, the findings of Morrison's (2009) study suggest that teachers will need to find mechanisms by which they can become more informed about who their students are and how they are experiencing the classroom, including their hopes, struggles, disappointments, transformations, and opposition.

For its principles and other reasons, which are given presently, the student-centered approach is recommended for the design, implementation and teaching of the Grade 11 Omani EL program. It is a response to the suggestions made by the interviewees, which was presented in Section 4.4.3.1 above. The interviewees suggested,

> We have to look at the way English is taught. How is it taught? What resources are there to support it? And to get the students feedback not only to the curriculum, so we need everyone to be involved in the process.

In addition, a vast majority of the students expressed their views in the open-ended part of the questionnaire (see Section 4.3.1. above) saying that the textbook should be modified and developed to be more motivating and to match their needs in daily life and in future work. One respondent wrote, "Change the course book with one that takes into consideration our daily life needs which we come across every while." Many students want an English course book that is reflective of their needs in their studies. Here are phrases taken from their responses: "train me more to speak fluently", "motivating for reading", "help in enhancing my reading and writing skills", and "provides detailed grammar explanation with enough examples".

The student-centered approach also helps students to be more motivated, self-assured and interested in learning English (Al-Husseini, 2004). The supervisors and Heads of department interviewed were not satisfied with the way English was taught in the schools. They thought that what was practised in the schools was traditional; the teachers talk, read, and write on the board. The interview participants (see section 4.4.3.2 above) suggested that teachers have to differentiate their learning materials to meet the students' needs. They should be patient about literacy in terms of reading and numeracy. One head of department said, "Good teachers should have a way of making the students interested in what they are learning." ELT research found that students learn better through active involvement than through traditional lecturing and independent seatwork (Al-Husseini, 2004; Hayes, 2003).

Material development is the creation, choosing, gathering and organization of the materials and activities in the form of units and lessons to carry out and achieve the goals and objectives of the course (Graves, 2000). The findings of this study (see section 4.4.1 above) concluded that the current national syllabus used in teaching EL to Grade 11 Omani learners was not developed based on any empirical analysis of the

Omani EFL students' needs. One head of department described the process of material writing by saying, "My understanding is that they were drawn by experts in Oman and then from that material were written. And then after the materials were written and distributed, people were asked to comment on that."

As discussed in section 4.4.4., it is strongly recommended that since the purpose of language instruction in Grade 11 of the government schools is to raise the general English language proficiency level of the learners in the whole country, the Omani government should regularly conduct language audits that involve a large number of students, teachers, administrators, supervisors, researchers, and other interested parties. Such a large-scale NA should be able to inform decision makers of the particular needs of students in the government schools. If it is practically difficult to cater for the various needs of such a large number of students, such language audits will at least enable officials to choose/design the language teaching materials that best meet students' general needs. This is believed to be more expedient than predicting students' needs by individuals regardless of the students' actual needs, preferred learning strategies, local language learning environment, and so forth. This is aligned with the fact that needs are not static, but rather changeable (Sotuse, 2012). In this sense, to bridge the gap between the schools' curriculum and students' needs, Ministry of Education must evaluate curriculums occasionally to decide whether it stll meets the students' needs.

In deciding on the suitable materials for teaching in Oman, the researcher recommends the organization of a committee consisting of the following (Table 5.1):

Table 5.1

Proposed English Language Curriculum Development Committee

No	Description	Position
1	Director General of Curriculum Directorate General, Ministry of Education.	Head
2	ELT professionals, College of Education and College of Art, Sultan Qaboos University.	Member
3	ELT professionals, Nizwa University, Sohar University, Dohfar University.	Member
4	EL authors and advisors from the English Language Curriculum Section, Ministry of Education.	Member
5	EL material writers and consultants, international experts house.	Member
6	Head of EL supervision department and EL regional supervisors representing all educational regions, Ministry of Education.	Member
7	EL evaluation specialists, Directorate General of Evaluation, Ministry of Education.	Member
8	EL teacher training advisors and teacher trainers, Ministry of Education.	Member
10	EL teachers representing all educational regions, Ministry of Education	Member
11	Design and production officers.	Member
12	Finance department representative, Ministry of Education.	Member

Table 5.1 represents the proposed members of the EL curriculum development committee. All of these administrators should come together under the same directorates in the Ministry to have better outputs. It was noticed through the study findings, as in Section 4.4.2 above, that not all ELT specialists were involved in the process of writing the new syllabus. In addition, the cooperation between the concerned departments was less effective because they belonged to different directorates in the

Ministry. A head of department commented, "Now curriculum does not know what training is doing. Training does not know what curriculum is doing." If they worked under the same directorate, they would have been more cooperative and people would have been forced to work in line with each other. Trials should be made to bring all of these parties together again; however, people are given positions and they will not let go these positions. No solution can be offered, unless they are gathered together under the same directorate in the Ministry.

The Ministry of Education should also offer to get the best people and experts to train Omanis on how they should go about writing course books. It is not acceptable to choose teachers in schools or supervisors and then expect them to join such critical departments to be involved in writing materials, which are going to be in place for the whole country for a number of years to come, without a lead team who have themselves been trained at a very high level.

5.3.6 Implications for Teacher Training

Region-wide, ambitious educational innovations can only succeed if the teachers, who can potentially act as supportive agents, operate along agreed principles and have the means and the competencies to intensively coach and teach. Borg (2003, p. 81) described teachers as "active, thinking decision makers who make instructional choices by drawing on a complex, practically-oriented, personalized, and context-sensitive network of knowledge, thoughts and beliefs." What language teachers do in the classroom is inspired by what they know, believe and think (Branden, 2006). Teachers' cognition not only feeds and inspires actions in the classrooms, but actions taken in the classroom also feed their perception. Moreover, teachers' actions and

perceptions not only influence each other, they are also influenced by, and have an influence on the students' perceptions and actions (Woods, 1996).

Looking into the exact relationship between teacher cognition and teacher action aims to yield deeper insight into what "drives" teachers to act in a particular way in the classroom, which is highly relevant to teachers' training. Generally speaking, teachers' training programs (whether pre-service or in-service training programs) aim to influence teachers' practice in an effort to allow teachers to enhance their professional competence and raise the quality of education they provide (Richards, 1998). Teachers are key players in the reform process of any EL program; if the teachers' attitudes are in agreement with the change/innovation, they are likely to work towards its implementation while the opposite holds true (Al-Husseini, 2004; Carless, 2001). Obal (1998) justifies the fact that most of the schools' objectivises are not achieved due to the passive role teachers take during curriculum development.

Accepting change or innovation is essential for implementation of the proposed changes. This can be achieved, according to Al-Husseini (2004), by involvement and training. Involvement is one way of building towards teachers' ownership, which can be enhanced by approaching them for consultation at the different stages of change. Involvement also helps to reveal to teachers the extent to which the change is in line with their self-interest. Teachers as well as other bodies in this study started at the planning and data collection stages. They were asked about their attitudes, evaluation, purpose, students' needs, challenges and suggestions for improving the current EL program. Their involvement is recommended to continue in the pre-implementation and implementation stages, as they are involved in designing the new curriculum, materials, assessment and training program.

The active and fruitful involvement of teachers in change implementation requires qualifications. Such qualification can be achieved by training. Training is an opportunity for teachers to learn about the rationale for the new reform of teaching, to critically evaluate it, and understand how to get the best out of it (Waters & Vilches, 2001).

Feedback from teachers, supervisors and heads of department regarding the difficulties and challenges facing the current EL program in Grade 11, as in section 4.4.2 above, highlighted that teacher training was characterized as one of the most important challenges that interfered with the success of the EL program. Several studies reached the same conclusion in different EFL contexts, examples of these studies are Carless (2003), Falout and Maruyama (2004), Sakai and Kikuuchi (2009), and Wang (2006).

Understanding the possible teacher training challenges that hinder the right application of the EL program is essential in order to avoid the causes of failure and to propose sound solutions. These challenges were as follows:

- Teachers having difficulties with understanding the teaching material. Some teachers have not taught parts of the curriculum because they did not understand the language being taught.
- Teacher training was not intensive. It should keep up with teachers as refresher courses.
- Teachers were not prepared for the system by the Ministry.
- Teachers were resistant to change and to applying new approaches. They resorted to traditional techniques that do not encourage students and do not match with the curriculum's principles and the philosophy of teaching.

- Letting go of trained and experienced teachers and bringing in new teachers with a low proficiency in English.

- The English language level of some teachers who are offered teaching posts is very poor, especially teachers qualified outside Oman. In addition, other Omani teachers whose EL proficiency is weak were offered posts.

The level of students leaving school at the end of Grade 12 will not be raised significantly if the difficulties outlined above remain unaddressed. Therefore, a serious review of teachers' training programs is needed for the improvement of the current Omani educational system products. Richards and Farrell (2005) contended that the need for ongoing teacher education remains a recurring theme in the language teaching field in the new century.

To ensure teachers make the most of the training program, the Ministry should conduct a nationwide training needs analysis for Omani teachers teaching EL in school. The training priorities for the Omani EFL teachers should be based on an empirical investigation of their urgent wants, lacks and necessities. This investigation should approach all personnel involved with teacher professional development starting from teachers themselves moving to supervisors and other higher personnel in the system. There is also a need to look at the teacher's career or professional development quantitatively and qualitatively.

In addition, there is a need to look at the way teachers are trained, or not trained as the case might be. Teachers should get into the training system much earlier than before. The Ministry should continue offering methodological programs to all those who teach the new curriculum. Training, therefore, has to keep up with the teachers as refresher courses, especially for those teachers who are resistant to change.

Good national and expatriate teachers should be reinforced to avoid bringing in teachers from a variety of colleges outside Oman, whose IELTS band is 2.5 or 3.5, some of whom cannot even give any feedback in English because they do not understand English. The good teachers should be asked to allow other EFL teachers to model their teaching practice in order to allow for sharing experience sessions. Morris (1988) found that teachers in Hong Kong expressed favourable attitudes towards the more process-oriented teaching model during the training session.

Also in terms of the English teachers, they should have a deep understanding of how students learn and keep up-to-date with the latest strategies for engaging all kinds of students. They have to differentiate their learning materials to meet the students' needs and to be patient about literacy in terms of reading and numeracy by having a way of making the students interested in what they are learning.

The Ministry of Education should implement national or international intensive English language proficiency upgrading courses for teachers with poor or weak English. These programs should be focused and accompanied with teaching methodology sessions, so day release is not recommended; rather, they should be run as summer courses. These courses, as well as the career promotion opportunities, should be based on language levelling tests, to establish the needs for the teaching workforce.

The Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Higher Education and Omani universities should collaborate to implement an effective and up-to-date BA program that will prepare undergraduates to teach EFL using the most appropriate teaching methodology that matches with the principles and philosophy of the Omani EFL curriculum. In addition, it is essential that the Ministry of Higher Education, which certifies any English language BA program in the country, liaise closely with the English language section. This is to ensure that graduates leave the colleges or the

universities with the essential skills and competencies necessary to deliver the EFL curriculum.

5.3.7 Implications for Assessment

This section highlights the implications of implementing the findings of this study for the assessment system in the Grade 11 EL program. A brief description of the current assessment system is provided in section 1.2.2.

Supervisors and heads of department (see section 4.4.2) criticized the Omani assessment system in ELT for overlooking the importance of evaluating performance, while at the same time training students to heavily focus on and work towards mastering content and achieving high grades through copying and memorization, which has had negative implications for teachers' and students' motivation and performance.

The means of assessment implemented by the Ministry of Education as reported in research were found to be giving memorization an edge over thinking (Al-Issa, 2002). Exams were almost entirely based upon the national textbooks and focused on non-critical or lower-thinking skills, which fail to test the students' abilities to analyze, synthesize, infer, discuss, evaluate, and argue for and against (Al-Issa 2006; Al-Issa and Al Bulushi 2012). Supervisors and heads of department as in section 4.4.2 reported that one of the reasons behind the poor level in English of the Omani students is the exam-based system, which has negative implications for the students' language development and attitudes about the multiple uses and values of English language. This situation thus affected the students' attitudes and gave them the impression that English is more of a "subject" than an important international language and a language of wider communication with multiple local and global uses and values (Al-Issa, 2006).

There has been a substantial refocusing of the goals and procedures of language testing. Criterion-referenced or competency-based assessment is preferred rather than traditional approaches (Brown, 2000; Richards, 2003). Criterion referenced testing aims at measuring learners' performance, rather than learners' competence, according to a standard or criterion that has been agreed upon. The student must reach the target level of performance to pass the test and his or her score is interpreted with reference to the criterion score rather than to the scores of other students.

In the current period, attention has also shifted to alternative assessment, referring to approaches to testing that are seen as complements to traditional standardized testing (Richards, 2003). Traditional modes of assessment do not capture important information about learners' abilities in a second language and are not thought to reflect real-life conditions for language use. Assessment procedures now include a variety of methods for assessing learner performance in more authentic circumstances including self-assessment, peer assessment, portfolios, learner diaries, journals, student teacher conferences, interviews, and observation.

Although implementing the study findings requires a group of changes to the present assessment system, some current assessment features, for example, variation in the assessment battery (e.g., portfolios, project work, generic tasks, quizzes, self-assessment) and giving feedback to students, should continue to be used in the new paradigm.

For Grade 11 EL teaching and learning to be effective, teachers should identify and monitor pupils' changing needs, abilities and interests. Teachers should also give useful feedback to pupils and provide them with opportunities to act on the feedback to improve their learning.

The revised assessment arrangements are based on a principle that assessment is an integral part of the teaching and learning process and should be aligned with instructional planning decisions (Nunn & Thurman, 2010). Therefore, the Grade 11 assessment system should seek to promote and improve pupils' learning and establish what pupils can do as learners of English based on the aims and learning outcomes in the Grade 11 syllabus.

To assess for learning and to enhance the current assessment system applied in Grade 11, new implementation should be introduced as follows:

1. **Identify pupils' learning gaps and needs**

   This is to ensure that teaching strategies and activities can be changed or modified to improve student learning. This can be approached by developing a bank of "CAN DO" statements for the different language areas. These statements should reflect what students could do with English. They should be derived from the curriculum objectives.

   One practical implication of how to implement this recommendation is by including a diagnostic report given to students by the end of the first semester. This report should be compiled with the "CAN DO" statements derived from the students' own self-assessment and the teacher's continuous assessment information. This will keep the parents, students and even teachers informed of what a student can do with English and exactly what areas need to be looked after.

2. **Provide multiple opportunities for pupils to demonstrate their skills and abilities through meaningful and authentic tasks/activities** so that students' development and progress can be monitored, reported and communicated to parents at meaningful points.

3. **Provide rich, qualitative and formative feedback**, framed in terms of what students can and need to do, to help them determine the next steps to take to improve their learning.

4. **Involve students actively in learning to assess themselves and each other (i.e., self and peer assessment respectively)** using explicit and clear evaluation criteria made known to them. This should be linked with teachers' continuous assessment and final test to inform the students, the teachers, the parents and the education authorities what a student can do with English.

5. **Drop the end of the first semester exam to increase the actual annual teaching and learning hours**.

   The analysis of students', teachers', supervisors' and heads of departments' responses revealed that one of the challenges facing the current EL program was the shortened school year, which was a result of long national holidays and sudden and unplanned holidays (see section 4.4.2). This makes it very difficult for students to reach the academic standards that they undoubtedly could achieve if they had the opportunity. This problem is further exacerbated by the over-assessment of students in all subjects. The mid-semester exam and end of first semester exam significantly disrupt the teaching program in schools and reduce teaching and learning time.

   One recommendation is to replace the end of first semester exam by performance assessments and the students' performance diagnostic report, which was discussed in Implication Number 1 above. This will reduce exam anxiety, which was found among students, as in section 4.3.2.3. It will also provide more space and time for students and teachers to practise different areas of EL learning, which is exactly what students called for in the open-ended parts

of the questionnaire. Different study participants suggested, as in 4.4.3.4 above, that the current EL program should be geared towards a more practice-oriented approach. This can be achieved by: (a) providing sufficient time slots devoted to instruction and practice, (b) changing the tendency of the teachers to complete portions rather than exploit the texts fully, (c) more attempts of exploiting each student's creative energy on the part of teachers, and (d) increasing awareness-raising activities for the students to fully exploit the resources of the language to their advantage.

6. **Develop a system of analysis that reflects the philosophy and content of the curriculum.**

It is clear from reading the Grade 11 assessment documents and from the feedback from teachers and supervisors that there is a mismatch between the curriculum objectives and the assessment system. This can be attributed to the fact that the Evaluation Department and Curriculum Department work in isolation from each other, as was discussed in section 4.4.2 above.

Teachers should assess students both formally and informally at a frequency decided by the school using different modes of assessment so that a wide range of skills, learner strategies, attitudes and behavior can be developed, and items and structures can be learned.

Continuous Assessment (CA) is recommended for assessing student learning throughout the academic year. CA is a way of collecting information about student learning throughout the school year, primarily by regular observation and evaluation of students' performance in normal classroom conditions. CA has several strengths in terms of validity, fairness and student

motivation. It also allows for a convenient assessment of speaking. The range of assessment modes and tasks include:

- Informal tests and quizzes that can be given in the form of non-timed, independent assignments at the end of a few units of work.

- Performance assessments that assess pupils' skills in carrying out an activity, for example, staging a role play or giving an oral presentation.

- Portfolios consisting of pupils' own choice of written work, multimedia productions, and learning logs/journals, which record pupils' achievements for the year, teachers' comments and pupils' reflections.

- Pupil profiling using checklists and classroom observations by teachers or through self-evaluation by pupils, for example, self-evaluation records or checklists.

- Teacher-pupil conferencing on a written product or representation in order to help pupils make improvements by using a set of criteria and giving specific comments.

5.4 Suggestions for Further Research

One of the methodological limitations of the current study that could be remedied in the future relates to the use of self-report data for learning about student "lacks" and necessities. Further studies should attempt target situation discourse samples, such as students' homework, quiz or exam paper analysis to determine the actual areas of weakness that are common with Omani students in Grade 11. An attempt should also be made to study the textual analysis of the types of readings Omani students encounter in their studies.

Another limitation of the present study was the choice of study participants. All study participants belonged to the same organization, which is the Ministry of Education. Similar studies should be carried out in the future that include participants from universities, open markets, the military, banks, the Royal Omani Police and other organizations that recruit MOE outputs. These people are aware of the kind of language needed or the language skills which are needed most and which ones are least used. They represent the discourse community to which most of the students will be applying for studies/jobs after graduation. Thus, the requirements of the discourse community should be taken into account, since having an awareness of the community's values and expectations will help in the design of materials responsive to the target discourse community (Ali, and Salih, 2013; Dudley-Evans, & St. John, 1998; Shuja'a, 2004).

Another potential research is on the usability of the findings in terms of their actual implementation. Further research on the English language NA of Omani students could highlight the aftermath of the assessment, namely whether and how it resulted in changes and renewal of the current Grade 11 curriculum.

5.5 Summary of Chapter Five

This chapter has discussed the study findings by explaining the implementation of the findings for the reform of the Grade 11 English language program in particular and the theoretical and methodological implication of the findings in the language needs analysis in general. It started by presenting a summary of the findings according to each research question. This was to grasp the main findings in order to link them directly to how best these findings can be implemented in the reform of the Grade 11 EL program through empirical recommendations to the different layers of the EL curriculum.

The discussion focused on developing a nationwide framework of language needs analysis, which is of potential significance for NA in TEFL by utilizing a multidimensional model of needs analysis to investigate the English language learning needs of Grade 11 Omani EFL learners in the entire country. This study pertains to what has been termed "the competing discourse" of needs assessment (Krohn, 2008), namely the different, and sometimes contradictory, opinions and perspectives of various stakeholders concerning the students' needs. It was explained that the current study was the replication of needs analysis studies with different populations in different sectors as well as a new methodological approach. It provided an example of a new unexplored population or context in two ways. Firstly, no attempt has been carried out to systematically study the language needs of school students in the Arab world. Secondly, it investigated learning needs at the school level for pre-university students of post-basic education schools in Oman, which has not been tackled yet.

As for data analysis methodology, this study employed a battery of analytical procedures, including descriptive statistics, frequency analysis, means ranking, independent sample t-tests, and the internal consistency reliability estimates "Cronbach's alpha" for each questionnaire. The mixed-methods methodology was replicated in this study, where data were collected from several sources (informants and documents) and via different methods of data collection procedures and instruments (structured interviews, questionnaires and textbook analysis). Triangulation of data collection techniques and source of information were considered crucial factors in needs analysis (Brecht & Rivers, 2005; Coleman, 1998; Cowling, 2007; Long, 2005; Richards, 2001). Therefore, one particular innovation of this study was its utilization of two types of triangulation: methodological triangulation and data triangulation (Krohn, 2008). Multiple sources were triangulated, such as students, teachers, supervisors, and

heads of departments. In addition, varieties of data were gathered and compared using multiple methods, such as questionnaires, interviews, and text book analysis. The current study provided a methodological empirical example of an assertion made by Waters and Vilches (2001) and Richards (2001) that involving decision makers, such as language specialists, supervisors, heads of the departments, administrators, employers, and so forth, is fundamental at the foundation building stage.

The discussion also revealed that teaching and learning in Grade 11 of Omani schools should raise the language competency of all pupils while ensuring our most able achieve the best international standards. The overarching aim of the Grade 11 English language program is to develop functional fluency and, for the more able pupils, to work towards effective language use. Pupils' language use will be affected by the purpose, audience, context and culture (PACC), and their proficiency in language use is assessed by their attainment of the learning outcomes.

To achieve the overarching aim of the Grade 11 English language program, a four-pronged approach of building a strong foundation and providing rich language for all was suggested, as in Figure 5.1. To develop the current EL program in Grade 11, it was believed that the language uses identified by this empirical study should be regarded as learners' target language needs on which the Grade 11 EL curriculum should be based. Applying the obtained findings, as in Chapter Four, has many implications in terms of the course contents. Figure 5.2–5.5 summarized the four categories of Grade 11 students' target English language needs suggested by this study. It should be made clear that language use does not occur in isolation; more than one skill can be needed at the same time (Al-Husseini, 2004). Curriculum makers should differentiate instruction in many ways. For example, they can modify the difficulty level of the text in terms of its length, information density, the familiarity of the topic to the

students and the organizational structure of the text. Instruction should be paced according to students' needs and abilities (Graves, 2000). The number of new skills for students to focus on can be limited at any one point.

With a major focus on developing learner ability to use language appropriately, the student-centered approach was recommended for teaching EGP for Grade 11 Omani EFL learners. The findings of this study suggested that teachers and other ELT specialists in Oman need to think about the teaching-learning process in terms of who their students really are, rather than the kind of essentialist and static terms dictated by theory-based methods and approaches. The student-centered approach also helps students to be more motivated, self-assured and interested to learn English (Al-Husseini, 2004).

For materials development, it is strongly recommended that since the purpose of language instruction in Grade 11 of the government schools is to raise the general English language proficiency level of the learners in the whole country, the Omani government should regularly conduct language audits that involve a large number of students, teachers, administrators, supervisors, researchers, and other interested parties. Such a large-scale NA should be able to inform decision makers of the particular needs of students in the government schools. If it is difficult to cater for the various needs of such a large number of students in practice, such language audits will at least enable officials to choose or design the language teaching materials that best meet students' general needs. In deciding on the suitable teaching materials in Oman, it was recommended to establish a committee comprising representatives of all personnel affected by the new curriculum. All curriculum related management should come together under the same directorate in the Ministry for better outcomes.

The Ministry of Education should also offer to get the best people and experts to train Omanis on how they should go about writing course books. It is not acceptable to choose teachers in schools or supervisors and expect them to join such critical departments and ask them to be involved in writing material which is going to be in place for the whole country for a number of years to come without a lead team who themselves have been trained at a very high level.

Educational innovations can only succeed if the teachers, who can potentially act as supportive agents, operate along agreed principles and have the means and the competence to intensively coach and teach. Accepting change or innovation is essential for the implementation of the proposed changes. This can be achieved, according to Al-Husseini (2004), by involvement and training. Involvement is one way of building toward teachers' ownership, which can be enhanced by approaching them for consultancy at the different stages of change. Active and fruitful teacher involvement in the change implementation requires qualifications. Such qualification can be achieved by training. Feedback from teachers, supervisors and heads of department regarding the difficulties and challenges facing the current EL program in Grade 11, as in Section 4.4.2 above, highlighted that teacher training was characterized as one of the most important challenges that interfere with the success of the EL program. Understanding the possible teacher training challenges that hinder the right application of the EL program is essential in order to avoid the causes of failure and to suggest appropriate solutions.

Therefore, serious and ongoing training programs are needed to improve the current Omani educational system products. To ensure teachers make the most of the training program, the Ministry should conduct a nationwide training needs analysis for the Omani teachers teaching EL in its schools. There is also a need to look at the way

teachers are trained, or not trained as the case might be. Teachers should get into the system much earlier than they used to before. The Ministry should continue offering methodological programs to all those who teach the new curriculum. English language teachers should have deep understanding of how students learn and keep up-to-date with the latest strategies for engaging all kinds of students. The Ministry of Education should implement national or international intensive English language proficiency upgrading courses for teachers with poor or weak English. The Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Higher Education and Omani universities should collaborate to implement an effective and up-to-date BA program that will prepare undergraduates to teach EFL using the most appropriate teaching methodology that matches with the principles and philosophy of the Omani EFL curriculum.

The revised assessment arrangements were based on a principle that assessment is an integral part of the teaching and learning process and should be aligned with instructional planning decisions. Therefore, the Grade 11 assessment system should seek to promote and improve pupils' learning and establish what pupils can do as learners of English based on the aims and learning outcomes in the Grade 11 syllabus. This can be approached by developing a bank of "CAN DO" statements for the different language areas. These statements come from the objectives of the curriculum and reflect what students can do with English.

Multiple opportunities should be provided for pupils to demonstrate their skills and abilities through meaningful and authentic tasks/activities. Teachers should also provide rich, qualitative and formative feedback, framed in terms of what pupils can and need to do, to help them determine the next steps to take to improve their learning. Pupils should also be involved in learning actively to assess themselves and each other. The end of first semester exam should be dropped and replaced by performance

assessments and the students' performance diagnostic report. This will reduce exam anxiety, which was found among students, as in Section 4.3.2.3 above. It will also provide more space and time for students and teachers to practise different areas of EL learning, which is exactly what students called for in the open-ended parts of the questionnaire. In addition, continuous assessment (CA) is recommended for assessing student learning throughout the academic year. CA is a way of collecting information about student learning throughout the school year, primarily by regular observation and evaluation of students' performance in normal classroom conditions.

References

Abdul Aziz, M. (2004). *Needs Analysis of Malaysian Higher National Diploma students* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). University of Malaya, Malaysia.

Aguilar, R. (2005). Sources, methods and triangulation in Needs Analysis: A critical perspective in a case study of Waikiki Hotel maids. In M. H. Long (Ed.), *Second language Needs Analysis* (pp. 127-165). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Akyel, A. S. and Ozek, Y. (2010). A language needs analysis research at an English medium university in Turkey. *Procedia Social and Behavioral Sciences* 2, 969–975.

Al-Busaidi, S. (2003). *Academic Needs of EFL Learners in the Intensive English Language Program at the Sultan Qaboos University in the Sultanate of Oman* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign.

Al-Busaidi, S. (2004). Classroom English Language instruction and academic preference: Establishing bridges to college study. In M. Ramsden & E. Ramaniah (Eds.), *Fourth National ELT Conference Stretching Pedagogical Boundaries: Independent Learning Community Connection and Cultural Context* (pp. 125 -131). Muscat, Oman: Sultan Qaboos University Press.

Al-Dugaily, A. J. A. (1999). *Toward study of the ESP courses and students needs in the Faculty of Engineering, Sana'a University* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). University of Science and Technology, Yemen.

Al-Husseini, S. (2004). *An analysis of English needs of Omani students on Vocational and Technical Course with implementation for the design of Foundation Year English Language Program* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). University of Leeds, UK.

Ali, H. & Salih, A. (2013). Perceived views of language teachers on the use of needs

    analysis in ESP materials writing. *English Language Teaching*, 6 (3), 11-19.

Al-Issa, A. (2002). *An ideological and discourse analysis of English Language*

    Teaching in the Sultanate of Oman (Unpublished doctoral dissertation).

    University of Queensland, Australia.

Al-Issa, A. (2004). The place and role of English language culture in the Omani

    language education system: An ideological perspective. In M. Ramsden & E.

    Ramaniah (Eds.), *Fourth National ELT Conference Stretching Pedagogical*

    Boundaries: Independent Learning Community Connection and Cultural

    Context (pp. 177 -186). Muscat, Oman: Sultan Qaboos University Press.

Al-Issa, A. S. M. (2006). The cultural and economic politics of English language

    teaching in the Sultanate of Oman. *Asian EFL Journal*, *8*(1). Retrieved from

    http://www.asian-efl-journal.com/March_06_asmi.php

Al-Issa, A., & Al-Bulushi , A. (2012). English language teaching reform in Sultanate of

    Oman: The case of theory and practice disparity. *Educational Research for*

    Policy and Practice, 11, 141–176.

Allen, J. P. B., & Widdowson, H. G. (1985). Teaching of Communication Use of

    English. In J. Swales (Ed.), *Episodes in ESP* (pp. 69-87). Oxford, UK:

    Pergamon.

Al-Mashakhi, M., & Ahmed Koll, El-Hag. (2007). *Country pasture/forage resource*

    profiles. Retrieved from

    http://www.fao.org/ag/AGP/agpc/doc/Counprof/oman/oman. html

Al-Nueimi, S. (2002). Developing secondary education in Oman. In *International Conference on the Reform of Secondary Education, 22-24 December 2002.* Muscat, Oman.

Al-Saadi, S. H. (2008). Effective evaluation of students' writing: An applied perspective. *Journal of the English for Specific Purposes Special Interest Group, 31,* 31-34.

Al-Saadi, S., & Samuel, M. (2012). Towards a multidimensional framework for a large-scale needs analysis: A pedagogical perspective. *Arab World English Journal, 3*(3)*,* 46-56.

Al-Saadi, S. & Samuel, M. (2013). An analysis of the writing needs of Omani EFL students for the development of grade 11 English program. *Asian EFL Journal, 15*(1)*,* 24-36.

Allwright, R. (1982). Perceiving and pursuing learners' needs. In M. Geddes & G. Sturtridge (Ed.), *Individualisation* (pp. 24-31). Oxford, UK: Modern English Publications.

Aseyabi, F. (1995). *Identifying the English Language needs of Science students in the College of Science and College of Education and Islamic Science at Sultan Qaboos University* (Unpublished master's thesis), Sultan Qaboos University, Oman.

Askehave, L., & Seales, J. (2001). Genre identification and communicative purposes: A problem and a possible solution. *Applied Linguistics, 22*(2)*,* 195-212.

Belher, D. (2006). English for Specific Purposes: Teaching to perceived needs and imagined future in world of work, study and everyday life. *TESOL Quarterly, 40*(1)*,* 133-155.

Berwich, R. (1989). Needs Assessment in Language Programme from theory to

    Practice. In R. K. Johnson (Ed.), *The Second Language curriculum*. Cambridge,

    UK: Cambridge University Press.

Best, J. W., & Kahn, J. V. (1993). *Research in education*. New Delhi, India: Prentice

    Hall.

Bidin, S., Jusoff, K., Abdul Aziz, N., Salleh, M., & Tajudin, T. (2009). Motivation and

    attitude in learning English among UiTM Students in the Northern Region of

    Malaysia. *English Language Teaching, 2*(2)*,* 16-20.

Borg, S. (2003). Teachers' cognition in Language teaching: A review of research on

    what language teachers think, know, believe, and do. *Language Teaching, 36,*

    81-109.

Bosher, S., & Kmalkoski, K. (2002). From Needs Analysis to curriculum development:

    Designing a course in Health-Care Communication for immigrant students in

    USA. *English for Specific Purposes, 21,* 59–79.

Boyle, E. R. (1993). EST or EGP: A question of priorities. *System, 21,* 79 – 85.

Branden, K. V. den (2006). Training teachers: Task based as well? In K. V. Branden

    (Ed.), *Task Based Language Education from theory to practice* (pp. 217- 248).

    Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Brecht, R., & Rivvers, W. (2005). Language Needs Analysis at the societal level. In M.

    H. Long (Ed.), *Second language Needs Analysis* (pp. 79-104). Cambridge:

    Cambridge University Press.

Breen, M., Hird, B., Milton, O., & Thwaite, A. (2001). Making sense of language

    teaching: Teachers' principles and classroom practices. *Applied Linguistics,*

    22(4)*,* 470–501.

Brindley, G., & Hood, S. (1990). Curriculum innovation in Adult ESL. In G. Brindley (Ed.), *The Second language curriculum in action* (pp. 232-248). Sydney, Australia: National Centre for English Language Teaching and Research.

Brindly, G. (1989). The role of Needs Analysis in adult ESL programme design. In R. Johnson (Ed.), *The Second Language curriculum*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Brown, H. D. (1994). *Principle of language learning and teaching.* Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Brown, H. D. (2000). *Principles of language learning and teaching* (4th ed.). White Plains, NY: Longman.

Carless, D. (1999). Large scale curriculum change in Hong Kong. In C. Kennedy, P. Doyle, & C. Goh (Eds.), *Exploring change in English Language teaching* (pp. 19–37). Oxford, UK: Macmillan.

Carless, D. (2003). Factors in the implementation of Task-Based teaching in primary schools. *System, 31,* 484-500.

Chaudron, C., Doughty, C. J., Kim, Y., Kong, D., Lee, J., Lee, Y., & Urano, K. (2005). A Task-Based Needs Analysis of Tertiary Korean as Foreign Language Program. In M. H. Long (Ed.), *Second Language Needs Analysis* (pp. 225-261). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Chew, K. (2005). An investigation of the English Language skills used by new entrants in banks in Hong Kong. *English for Specific Purposes, 24,* 423–435.

Chien, Ching-ning, & Hsu, Margaretha. (2011). Needs-based analyses of freshman English courses in a Taiwan University. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science, 1*(11)*,* 221-229.

Choo, M. (1999). Teaching language styles of Korean. In S. Kang (Ed.), *The Korean language in America Vol. 3* (pp. 77–95). Monterey, CA: American Association of Teachers of Korean.

Cid, E., Granena, G., & Tragant, E. (2009). Constructing and validating the Foreign Language Attitudes and Gal Surveys (FLAGS). *System, 37,* 496-513.

Coffey, B. (1984). English for Specific Purposes. *Language Teaching, 17*(1)*,* 2-26.

Coffin, C. (2001). Theoretical Approaches to Written Language, TESOL Perspectives. In Anne Burns & Caroline Coffin (Eds.), *Analyzing English in a global context* (pp. 93-122). London, UK: Routledge.

Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2000). *Research methods in education*. London, UK: RoutledgeFalmer.

Coleman, H. (1987). Teaching spectacles and learning festivals. *English Language Teaching Journal, 41*(2)*,* 97-103.

Coleman, H. (1998). Analysing language needs in large organizations. *English for Specific Purposes, 7,* 135–169.

Cowling, J. (2007). Needs Analysis: Planning a syllabus for a series of intensive workplace course at a leading Japanese company. *English for Specific Purposes, 26,* 426–442.

Creswell, J. W. (2005). *Educational research: Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson.

Davies, A. (2006). What do learners really want from their EFL course*? ELT Journal, 60,* 3-12.

Deutch, Y. (2003). Needs Analysis for Academic Legal English Courses in Israel: A model of setting priorities. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes, 2,* 125–146.

Dörnyei, Z. (2003). Attitudes, orientation, and motivations in language learning: Advances in theory, research, and applications. *Language Learning, 53* (sup.)*, 3-32.

Dudley-Evans, T., & St John, M. J. **(**1998). *Developments in English for Specific Purposes: A multi-disciplinary approach*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Eid, M. T., & Jordan-Domschot, T. (1989). *Needs Assessment of international students at Eastern Oregon State College.* East Lansing, MI: National Center for Research on Teacher Learning (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 326 098).

Elmore, R., & Sykes, G. (1992). Curriculum policy. In P. Jackson (Ed.), *Handbook of research on curriculum* (pp. 185-215). New York, NY: Macmillan.

Eslami, Z. (2010). Teachers' voice vs. students' voice: A Needs Analysis Approach to English for Academic Purposes (EAP) in Iran. *English Language Teaching, 3*(1)*, 3-11.

Ever, J. R., & Hughes-Davies, E. (1971). Further notes on developing an English programme for students of Science and Technology. In J. Swales (Ed.), *Episodes in ESP* (pp. 45-57). Oxford, UK: Pergamon.

Ewer, J., & Hughes-Davies, E. (1971). Further notes on developing an ELT program for students of science and technology. *ELT Journal, 26*(1)*, 65-70.

Faillefer, G. (2007). The professional language needs of Economics graduates: Assessment and perspective in the French context. *English for Specific Purposes, 26,* 135–155.

Falout, J., & Maruyama, M. (2004). A cooperative study of proficiency and learners' demotivation. *The Language Teacher, 28,* 3-9.

Fatihi, A. (2003). The role of Needs Analysis in ESL program design. *South Asian Language Review, 13*(1)*,* 39-59.

Feez, Suzan (2001). Curriculum evaluation in Australian Adult Migrant English Programme. In D. R. Hall & A. Hewings (Eds.), *Innovation in English Language teaching: A reader* (pp. 208-228). London, UK: Routledge.

Ferch, T. (2005). *Goal One, Communication Standards for Learning Spanish and Level One Spanish Textbook Activities: A content analysis* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). University of Akron, USA.

Ferris, D. (1998). Students' views of academic aural/oral skills: A Comparative Needs Analysis. *TESOL Quarterly, 32*(2)*,* 289-318.

Forbes, A., While, A., & Ullman, R. (2006). Learning Needs Analysis: The development of a tool to support the on-going professional development of Multiple Sclerosis Specialist Nurses. *Nurse Education Today, 26,* 78-86.

Fulcher, G. (2002). Assessment in English for Academic Purposes: Putting content validity in its place. *Applies Linguistics, 20*(2)*,* 221-236.

Gahin, G., & Myhill, D. (2001). The Communicative Approach in Egypt: Exploring the Secrets of the Pyramids. *TEFL Web Journal, 1*(2). Retrieved from http://www.teflweb-j.org/v1n2/Gahin_Myhill.html.

Gonzalez, G., Karoly, L., Constant, L., Salem, H., & Goldman C. (2008). *Facing human challenges of the 21st century*. Doha: RAND-Qatar Policy Institute.

Gorsuch, G. J. (2000). EFL educational policies and educational cultures: Influences on teachers' approval of communicative activities. *TESOL Quarterly, 34*(4)*,* 675-710.

Grant, S., & Shank, C. (1993). *Discovering and responding to learner needs: Module for ESL teacher training.* Arlington, VA: Arlington County Public Schools. (EDRS No. ED 367 196).

Graves, K. (2000). *Designing language courses: A guide for teachers*. Canada: Heinle & Heinle.

Graves, K. (2001). A framework of course development processes. In D. Hall & A. Hewings (Eds.), *Innovation in English Language teaching* (pp. 178-196). London, UK: Routledge.

Ha, P. (2005). Munby's needs analysis model and ESP, *Asian EFL Journal*, *6*, 239-256.

Herbert, A. J. (1965). *The structure of Technical English*. London, UK: Long.

Hobelman, P., & Wiriyachitra, A. (1995). A balanced approach to the teaching of intermediate - level writing skills to EFL students. In T. Kral (Ed.), *Creative English Teaching Forum* (pp. 122-126). Washington, DC: English Language Program Division.

Holliday, A., & Cook, T. (1982). An ecological approach to ESP. In A. Water (Ed.), *Lancaster practical papers in English Language education* (pp. 124-140). Oxford, UK: Pergamon Press.

Holliday, A. (1990). A role for Soft Systems Methodology in ELT projects. *System, 18,* 77–84.

Holliday, A. (1992). Tissue rejection and informal order in ELT projects: Collecting the right information. *Applied Linguistics, 13*(1)*, 403- 424.

Holliday, A. (1994). *Appropriate methodology and social context*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Holliday, A. (1995). Assessing language needs within an institutional context: An ethnographic approach. *English for Specific Purposes, 14,* 115–126.

Holliday, A. (1998). Project work: An evaluation device. *System, 16,* 77-86.

Holliday, A. (2001). Achieving cultural continuity in curriculum innovation. In D. Hall & A. Hewings (Eds.), *Innovation in English Language teaching* (pp. 169-177). London, UK: Routledge.

Holme, R., & Chalauisaen, B. (2006). The learner as Needs Analyst: The use of participatory appraisal in the EAP reading classroom. *English for Specific Purposes, 25,* 403–419.

Huh, Sorin. (2006). A task-based needs analysis for a business English course. *Second Language Studies, 24*(2)*,* 1-64.

Hutchinson, T., & Waters, A. (1987). *English for Specific Purposes: A learning centred approach*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Hyland, K. (2002). Specificity revisited: How far should we go now? *English for Specific Purposes, 21,* 385–395.

Issan, S., & Gomaa, N. (2010). Post basic education reforms in Oman: A case study. *Literacy Information and Computer Education Journal,1*(1)*,* 19-26

Janda, R. C. (2009, August). CALL-Based instruction: Toward the teaching of speech and oral communication at Angeles University Foundation. *Asian EFL Journal*, Cebu Conference Proceedings (pp. 87-96).

Jiang, W. (2000). The relationship between culture and language. *ELT Journal, 54*(4)*,* 328-334.

Jordan, R. R. (1997). *English for Academic Purposes: A guide and resource book for teachers*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Kachru, B. (1992). Teaching world Englishes. In B. Kachru (Ed.), *The other tongue, English across cultures* (2nd ed.). University of Illinois Press.

Kaewpet, C. (2009). Communication needs of Thai Civil Engineering students. *English for Specific Purposes, 28,* 266-278.

Kandil, A. (2009). Needs Analysis and the Arab Learners. Retrieved from http://ilearn.20m.com/research/needs.html

Kavaliauskienia, G., & Užpaliene (2003). Ongoing Needs Analysis as a factor to successful language learning. *Journal of Language and Learning, 1*(1).

Keen, J. (2006). *English for Specific Purposes for the Law Programme at Taylor's College: A Needs Analysis* (Unpublished master's thesis). University of Malaya, Kuala Lumpur.

Kiranmayi, N. C. (2012). Rethinking the methodology used in developing reading skill in Omani students of a design college. *International Review of Social Sciences and Humanities 4* (1)*,* 24-32.

Kittidhaworn, P. (2001). *An assessment of the English-Language needs of Second-Year Thai undergraduate Engineering students in a Thai public university in Thailand in relation to the Second-Year EAP Program in Engineering* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). West Virginia University, USA.

Krohn, N. (2008). *The Hebrew language needs of rabbinical students in the Conservative Movement* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Columbia University, USA.

Lear, D. W. (2003). *Communicative needs of English-speaking health care professionals who work with Spanish-speaking clients: Case study* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Ohio State University, USA.

Lehtonen, T., & Karjalainen, S. (2008). University graduates' workplace language needs as perceived by employers. *System, 36,* 492-503.

Lepetit, D., & Cichooki, W. (2002). Teaching languages to future health professionals: A Needs Assessment study. *Modern Language Journal, 86*(3)*,* 384- 396.

Leung, P. (2006). *Students' difficulties concerning medium of instruction and medium of examination in Science in a Hong Kong school* (Unpublished master's thesis). University of Hong Kong, China.

Levitt, K. (2001). An analysis of elementary teachers' beliefs regarding the teaching and learning of Science. *Science Education, 86*(1)*,* 1–22.

Li, D. (2001). Teachers' perceived difficulties in introducing the Communicative Approach in South Korea. In D. Hall & A. Hewings (Eds.), *Innovation in English Language teaching* (pp. 149–166)*.* London, UK: Routledge.

Lincoln, Y., & Gobi, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. London, UK: Sage.

Long, M., & Norris, J. (2000). Task based language teaching and assessment. In M. Byran (Ed.), *Encyclopaedia of language teaching* (pp. 597-603). London, UK: Routledge.

Long, M. H. (2005). Overview: A rationale for Needs Analysis and Needs Analysis research. In M. H. Long (Ed.), *Second Language needs analysis* (pp. 1–16). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Mackey, W. F. (1965). *Language teaching analysis*. London, UK: Longman.

Manese, J. E., Sedlacek, W. E., & Leong, F. T. L. (1988). Needs and perceptions of female and male international undergraduate students. *Journal of Multicultural Counselling and Development, 16*(1)*,* 24 – 29.

Maroun, N., Samman, H., Moujaes, C., & Abouchakra, R. (2008). *How to succeed at education reform: The case for Saudi Arabia and the broader GCC region*. Washington, DC: Booz. Retrieved from

http://www.booz.com/me/home/what_we_think/40007409/40007869/40650797 ?pg=all

Masuhara, H. (1998). What do teachers really want from course books? In B. Tomlinson (Ed.), *Materials development in language teaching.* Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Mazdayasna, G., & Tahririan, M. H. (2008). Developing a profile of the ESP needs of Iranian students: The case of students of Nursing and Midwifery. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes, 7,* 277-289.

McCarter, S., & Jakes, P. (2009). *Uncovering EAP: How to teach academic writing and reading.* London, UK: Macmillan.

McDonough, J. (1984). *ESP in perspective: A practical guide*. London, UK: Collins ELT.

McKillip, J. (1987). *Need Analysis: Tools for the Human Services and Education*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage

Miller, L., & Aldred, D. (2000). Student teachers' perceptions about Communicative Language Teaching methods. *RELC Journal, 31*(1)*,* 1-22.

Ministry of Education. (2004). *National report on quality education in Oman.* Muscat, Oman: Sultanate of Oman.

Ministry of Education. (2005). *From access to success: Education for All in the Sultanate of Oman 1970-2005*. Muscat, Oman: Sultanate of Oman.

Ministry of Education. (2010). *The English Language Curriculum Framework*. Muscat, Oman: Author.

Ministry of Education Singapore. (2010). *English Language Syllabus 2010 Primary (Foundation) and Secondary (Normal and Technical)*. Singapore: Author.

Molle, D., & Prior, P. (2008). Multimodal Genre System in EAP Writing pedagogy: Reflecting on a Needs Analysis. *TESOL Quarterly, 42*(4)*, 541-566.

Moody, J. (2007). A neglected aspect of ELT in the Arabian gulf: Who is communication between? In Zhang, L. J., R. Rubdy, & L. Alsagoff (Eds.), (2009), *Englishes and Literatures-in-English in a Globalised World: Proceedings of the 13th International Conference on English in Southeast Asia* (pp. 99-119). Singapore: Nanyang Technological University, National Institute of Education.

Morris, P. (1988). Teachers' attitudes towards a curriculum innovation: An East Asian study. *Research in Education, 40,* 75-87.

Muijs, D. (2004). *Doing quantitative research in education with SPSS*. London, UK: Sage.

Munby, J. (1978). *Communicative Syllabus design*. London, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Nallaya, S. (2012). Overcoming English proficiency challenges through needs assessment. *The Asian ESP Journal*, 8 (2), 125-144.

Nelson, M. (2000). *Learning vocabulary in another language*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Neumann, W (2001). *Social research methods: Qualitative and quantitative approaches.* Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

Nunan, D. (1988). *The learner centred curriculum*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Nunan, D. (2001). Action Research in Language Education. In D. Hall & A. Hewings (Eds.), *Innovation in English Language Teaching* (pp. 197-207). London, UK: Routledge.

Nunn, R., & Thurman, J. (2010). The benefits and challenges of holistic in-house task-based language learning and assessment. *Asian EFL Journal, 12*(4).

Oanh, H., & Thi, D. (2007). Meeting students' needs in Two EAP programmes in Vietnam and New Zealand: A comparative study. *RELC Journal, 38*(3)*,* 324-349.

Obal, P. (1998). *Teachers' role in curriculum development in Kenya: A case study of perception held by Secondary School teachers in Kisii District* (Unpublished master's thesis). Kenyatta University, Kenya.

O'Malley, J. M., Chamot, A. U., Stewner-Manzanares, G., Russo, R. P., & Kupper, L. (1985). Learning strategy applications with students of English as a second language. *TESOL Quarterly, 19*(3)*,* 557-577.

Orafi, S. M., & Borg, S. (2009)*.* Intentions and realities in implementing Communicative Curriculum Reform. *System, 37,* 243–253.

O'Sullivan, A. (2008). Reading and Arab college students: Issues in the United Arab Emirates higher colleges of technology. *The Reading Matrix.* Retrieved from http://www.readingmatrix.com/conference/pp/proceedings/sullivan.pdf

Patterson, T. R. (2001). *Needs analysis in a functioning English for Academic Purposes program.* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). University of Malaya, Malaysia.

Peacock, M. (2001). Pre-service ESL teachers' beliefs about second language learning: a longitudinal study. *System, 29,* 177-195.

Pearson, D., & Campernell, K. (1994). Comprehension of text structures. In R. B. Ruddell, M. R. Ruddell, & H. Singer (Eds.), *Theoretical models and processes of reading* (pp. 448–465). Newark, DE: International Reading Association.

Philips, M. K., & Shuttlesworth, C. (1978). How to arm your students: A consideration of two approaches to providing materials for ESP. In J. Swales (Ed.), *Post-Basic*

education program for future (2007, September 18). *Oman Daily Observer*, p. 24.

Purpura, J. E., & Graziano-King, J. (2004). Investigating the Foreign Language Needs of Professional School Students in International Affairs: A case study. *Teachers College, Columbia University Working Papers in TESOL & Applied Linguistic, 4*(1). Retrieved from

http://www.tc.col) umia.edu/academic/tesol/Webjournal/archives/htm

Rassekh, S. (2004). *Education as a motor for development: Recent education reforms in Oman with particular reference to the status of women and girls.* Swaziland: International Bureau of Education (IBE).

Read, J. (2008). Identifying academic language needs through diagnostic assessment. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes, 7,* 183–190.

Richards, J. C. (1998). *Beyond training*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Richards, J. C. (2001). *Curriculum development in language teaching.* Cambridge, UK; Cambridge University Press.

Richards, J. C. (2003). Then and Now: 30 Years of TEFL/TESL. JALT2003 At Shizuoka, conference proceeding.

Richards, J. C. (2004). *Second Language writing.* Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Richards, J. C., & Farrell, T. S. C. (2005). *Professional development for language teachers: Strategies for teacher learning*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Richterich, R. (1975). Definitions of language type of adults. In Trim et al. (1980) 31-88

Rivers, Wilga, M. (1976). *Speaking in many tongues* (pp. 109-30). Rowley, MA:

    Newbury House.

Robinson, P. (1991). *ESP today: A practitioner guide*. New York, NY: Prentice Hall.

Robson, C. (1993). *Real-world research: A resource for social scientists and*

    *practitioner-researcher*s. Malden: Blackwell Publishing.

Sakai, H., & Kikuchi, K. (2009). An analysis of demotivators in the EFL classroom.

    System, 37, 57-69.

Sergeant, S. (2001). CALL innovation in the ELT curriculum. In D. Hall & A. Hewings

    (Eds.), *Innovation in English Language teaching: A reader*. London, UK:

    Routledge.

Shuja'a, A. (2004). *Business English in Yemen: An empirical study of Needs Analysis*

    (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Deemed University, India.

Soruc, A. (2012). The role of needs analysis in language program renewal process.

    Mevlana International Journal of Education, 2 (1), 36-47.

Spada, N., Barkaoui, K., Peters, C., So, M., & Valeo, A. (2009). Developing a

    questionnaire to investigate Second Language Learners' preferences for two

    types of form-focused instructions. *System, 37,* 70-81.

Stevens, P. (1977). *New orientations in the teaching of English*. Oxford, UK: Oxford

    University Press.

Suarez, T. M. (1990). Purposes and goals of evaluation studies. In Walberg, Herbert &

    Haertel, Geneva (Eds.), *The International Encyclopaedia of educational*

    evaluation (pp. 29-31). Oxford, UK: Pergamon Press.

Swales, J. M. (1981). The function of one type of particle in a chemistry textbook. In L.

    Selinker, E. Tarone, & V. Hanzeli (Eds.), *English for academic and technical*

purposes: Studies in honor of Louis Trimble (pp. 40-52). Rowley, MA:
Newbury House,

Swales, J. M. (1985). *Episodes in ESP*. Oxford, UK: Pergamon Press.

Swales, J. M. (1985). The heart of the matter or the end of the affair? In R. Quirk & H.
G. Widdowson (Eds.), *English in the world: Teaching and learning the
language and literatures* (pp. 212-223). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University
Press.

Swales, J. M. (1988). Communicative language teaching in ESP contexts. *Annual
Review of Applied Linguistics, 8,* 48-57.

Swales, J. M. (1989). Service English Programme design and opportunity cost. In R. K.
Johnson (Ed.), *Second Language curriculum* (pp. 79-90). Cambridge, UK:
Cambridge University Press.

Swales, J. M., Barks, D., & Ostermann, A. C. (2001). Between critique and
accommodation: Reflections on an EAP Course for Masters of Architecture
students. *English for Specific Purposes, 20,* 439-458.

Taillefer, G. (2007). The professional language needs of Economic graduates:
Assessment and perspectives in the French context. *English for Specific
Purposes, 26,* 135-155.

Tajino, A., James, R. & Kijima, K. (2005). Beyond Needs Analysis: Soft System
Methodology for meaningful collaboration in EAP course design. *Journal of
English for Academic Purposes, 4,* 27-42.

Tella1, J., Indoshi, F., & Othuon, L. (2011). Students' perspectives on the secondary
School English curriculum in Kenya: Some related implications. *Educational
Research, 2*(1)*,* 809-817.

Themalil, J. (2004). Study skills: Strategies for helping students take responsibility for their studies. In M. Ramsden & E. Ramaniah (Eds.), *Fourth National ELT Conference Stretching Pedagogical Boundaries: Independent Learning Community Connection and Cultural Context* (pp. 112 -117). Muscat, Oman: Sultan Qaboos University Press.

Thorp, D. (1991). Confused encounters: Differing expectations in the EAP classroom. *ELT Journal, 45*(2)*,* 108–118.

Tudor, J. (1996). *Learner-centeredness as language education.* Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

UNESCO. (2009). *Education for All (EFA) Global monitoring report 2007*. Retrieved from www.efareport.unesco.org

Vadirelu, R. (2007). *A Needs Analysis of teachers teaching Science in English* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). University of Malaya, Malaysia.

Viete, R. (1995). Developing reflective learners in primary secondary and postgraduates course, Research and its Application in ESL Program. In M. David (Ed.), *MELTA Biennale International Conference: Innovation in approach to the teaching and learning of English* (pp. 9-15). Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: MELTA.

Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind and society*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Wang, H. (2006). *An implication study of the English as a Foreign Language curriculum policies in the Chinese tertiary context* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Queen's University, Canada.

Waters, A., & Vilches, (2001). Implementing ELT innovation: A Needs Analysis framework. *ELT Journal, 55*(2)*,* 33- 141.

Wavo, E. (2005). Chinese Students' Attitude towards English Language and Their

    School Performance in English. Retrieved from http://ajol.info/index.Php /ifep/

    article/view/23657

Weddel, K. S., & Van Duzer, C. (1997). *Needs assessment for adult ESL learners*.

    Washington, DC: Center for Applied Linguistics. Retrieved from

    http://www.cal.org/caela/esl_resources/digests/Needas.html

West, R. (1994). Needs Analysis in language teaching. *Language Teaching, 27,* 1-19.

White, R. (1988). *The ELT curriculum*. Oxford, UK: Blackwell.

Widdowson, H. G. (1983). *Learning purpose and language use*. Oxford, UK: Oxford

    University Press.

Woods, D. (1996). *Teachers' cognition in language teaching: Beliefs, decision-making

    and classroom practice.* Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

(Referee Letter)

Dear Dr / Sir / Madam,

I am enclosing with this the first draft of a scale regarding **LANGUAGE LEARNING NEEDS ANALYSIS FOR THE REFORM OF THE OMANI GRADE 11 EFL PROGRAM.**

You are kindly requested to provide your precious comments on:

1. The clarity of the items, thoughts and presentation
2. The translation (if included).
3. The language skills provided in section 3 of the questionnaire.

I would much appreciate your valuable comments on the subject referred to. Thank you very much for your sincere help.

Saeed Hamed Al-Saadi
buabdullah5@hotmail.com

PhD student
Faculty of Education
University of Malaya

LANGUAGE LEARNING NEEDS ANALYSIS FOR THE REFORM OF THE OMANI GRADE 11 EFL PROGRAM

Students' Questionnaire

Dear students,

عزيزي الطالب،

This questionnaire investigates the related needs of students studying in grade 11 of public schools in Sultanate of Oman.

I hope that you will answer it. Your honest response is very important. The information you give is absolutely confidential. The results would not affect you in any way.

It would not take you more than fifteen minutes from your precious time. It might look long, but I have tried it before and it was in this time frame.

Thank you very much for your cooperation.

يهدف هذا الاستبيان الى تقصى الاحتياجات اللغوية للطلبة الدارسين لمادة اللغة الانجليزية بالصف الحادي عشر بالمدارس الحكومية بسلطنة عمان.

أرجو التكرم بالإجابة عن أسئلة الاستبانة المرفقة، وستكون كل المعلومات التي ستدلون بها في طي الكتمان. علماً أن النتائج لا علاقة لها بالتقويم نهائياً.

أن الإجابة عن هذه الاستبانة لن تأخذ أكثر من خمسة عشر دقيقة من وقتك الثمين رغم إنها تبدو طويلة إلا أني قد طبقتها مسبقاً وجاءت في هذا المدى.

وتقبلوا خالص الشكر والتقدير ......

Saeed Hamed Al-Saadi سعيد حمد الساعدي

General Information	*Put (✔).*		(✔)	**معلومات عامة**
Gender:	☐ Male	☐ Female	☐أنثى ☐ذكر	**الجنس:**
School type:	☐Basic	☐General	☐عام ☐أساسي	**نوع المدرسة:**
English language score				**درجة مادة اللغة الإنجليزية :**
Region				**المنطقة:**
Have you Studied English language in private or summer schools?	☐Yes	☐No	☐لا ☐نعم	**هل قمت بدراسة اللغة الانجليزية بإحدى المعاهد الخاصة أو الصيفية؟**

Why do you think you need to learn English?

The following table have four reasons for learning English. Please rank them from 1 to 4 according to their importance to you (1 is the most important and 4 is the least important).

برأيك لماذا تحتاج إلى تعلم اللغة الانجليزية؟

في الجدول التالي اربع اسباب لتعلم اللغة الانجليزية، ارجو ترتيبهم من 1 الى 4 وفق اهميتها لديك، (رقم 1هو الاكثر اهمية و رقم 4 الاقل اهمية).

Reason	Ranking
For daily life	
To complete higher studies	
To find a good job	
To pass the 3rd secondary exam	

الترتيب	السبب
	للحياة اليومية
	لإكمال الدراسات العليا
	للحصول على وظيفة جيده
	للنجاح في امتحان الثانوية العامة

Please rank the skills according to their importance to you (**Rank 1 as the most important and 4 as the least important**).

<div dir="rtl">

ارجو ترتيب المهارات التالية وفق اهميتها لديك، **(رقم 1هو الاكثر اهمية و رقم 4 الاقل اهمية).**

</div>

Skills	Ranking
Reading	
Writing	
Listening	
Speaking	

الترتيب		المهاره
		القراءة
		الكتابة
		الاستماع
		التحدث

Read the following statements and write in your most suitable number next to each statement

<div dir="rtl">

اقرأ العبارات التالية بتمعن، واكتب الرقم المناسب بجانب كل عبارة

</div>

1- Agree   2- Neutral   3- Disagree

<div dir="rtl">

1- موافق   2- غير متاكد   3- غير موافق

</div>

Statements	No.
English is the best subject I Like	
The current English curriculum satisfies my language needs	
What we usually do in class is boring	
I like the way English is taught at school	

الرقم		العبارت
		تعد الانجليزية أفضل مادة لدي.
		منهج اللغة الانجليزية الحالي يرضي إحتياجاتي اللغوية
		ما نقوم به في الصف يعد مملاً
		احب الطريقة التي تدرس بها الانجليزية بالصف.

Please, write the most suitable number next to each statement.

<div dir="rtl">

الرجاء كتابة رقم الاجابة المناسب بجانب كل عبارة

</div>

أبداً	نادرا	غالباً	أحياناً	دائماً
Never	**Rarely**	**Sometimes**	**Often**	**Always**
1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**

When I study English I find difficulty in:

<div dir="rtl">

عندما أدرس اللغة الإنجليزية تكمن الصعوبة في

</div>

No	Statements		الفقرات	*3*
	Linguistic needs			
	Reading			
1	Understanding general ideas when reading in English.		فهم الأفكار العامة عند قراءتي بالانجليزية.	1
2	Understanding how the ideas in an English text relate to each other.		فهم كيفية ترابط الأفكار في نص باللغة الانجليزية مع بعضها.	2
3	Understanding charts and graphs in a scientific text.		فهم الرسوم والاشكال البيانية في نص علمي.	3
4	Understanding English vocabulary and grammar when I read.		فهم مفردات اللغة وقواعدها.	4
5	Understanding the most important point in a text.		فهم أهم الأفكار في أي نص.	5
6	Organizing the important ideas and concepts in an English text.		تنظيم الأفكارو المفاهيم المهمة في نص انجليزي.	6
7	Remembering major ideas when I read an English text.		تذكر الأفكار الرئيسية عند قراءتي نص باللغة الانجليزية.	7
8	Figuring out the meaning of new words by using the context and my background knowledge.		استنتاج معاني الكلمات الجديده من السياق ومعرفتي السابقة.	8
9	Using the library and internet to Find		استخدام المكتبة والانترنت للحصول على المعلومات التي	9

317

#	English		Arabic	#
	information that I am looking for.		أبحث عنها.	
10	Understanding an English text well enough to answer questions about it later.		فهم النص وبشكل جيد للاجابة عن الاسئلة التي تليه.	
11	Differentiating between statements of facts and statements of opinion.		التفريق بين العبارات التي تحمل حقائق والتي تحمل آراء.	11
12	Using a dictionary to find out meanings.		استخدام القاموس للبحث عن المعاني.	12
13	Inferring meaning of terms from a text.		استنتاج معاني المصطلحات من السياق.	13
14	Understanding an English text as easily as an Arabic one.		فهم نص ما بالانجليزية بالسهولة التي افهم بها النص بالعربية.	14
	Writing			
15	Writing a summary of information I *read or listened to*.		كتابة ملخص لمعلومات قرأتها أو إستمعت إليها.	15
16	Organizing my writing, so that the reader can understand my main ideas.		تنظيم ما اكتب ليفهم القارئ أفكاري الرئيسية.	16
17	Supporting my writing with examples, evidence and data.		تدعيم ما اكتب بالامثلة والادلة والبيانت.	17
18	Taking notes that demonstrate the main points.		أخذ ملاحظات توضح النقاط المهمة.	18
19	Writing an essay in the class on an assigned topic.		كتابة مقال بالصف عن موضوع محدد.	19
20	Expressing myself well in writing.		التعبير عن نفسي وبشكل جيد كتابياً.	20
21	Expressing ideas and arguments effectively.		التعبير عن الأفكار والحوارات بفاعلية.	21
22	Using correct grammar, vocabulary, punctuation and spelling.		الاستعمال الصحيح للقواعد والمفردات والاملاء وادوات الترقيم.	22
23	Sequencing paragraphs in the article.		ترتيب الفقرات في المقال.	23
24	Structuring clear statements without any ambiguity or vagueness.		إنشاء جمل واضحة دون أي غموض أو لبس.	24
25	Translating some concepts and ideas from Arabic to English.		ترجمة بعض المفاهيم والأفكار من العربية إلى الإنجليزية.	25
26	Incorporating data and illustration in my writing.		تضمين ما اكتبه بالبيانات والتوضيحات اللازمة.	26
27	Relating the topic I write to my knowledge and experience.		ربط الموضوع الذي أكتبه بمعلوماتي وخبراتي السابقة.	27
28	Writing a good introduction and a conclusion to my article.		كتابة مقدمة وخاتمة جيدة لمقالي.	28
29	Writing a questionnaire in English.		كتابة استبيان باللغة الانجليزية.	29
30	Writing curriculum vitae CV in English.		كتابة سيرة ذاتية باللغة الانجليزية.	30
31	Explaining in writing the content of graphs, tables, charts and diagrams.		التوضيح كتابياً لمحتوى الرسوم والاشكال البيانية والجداول.	21
32	Writing a report about an action in the past.		كتابة تقرير عن حدث ماضي.	32
33	Editing my own or others' papers for grammar and style problems.		تنقيح اعمالي الكتابية واعمال الآخرين من أخطاء النحو واسلوب الكتابة.	33
34	Writing a letter of application.		كتابة رسالة طلب عمل.	34
35	Writing a report on scientific projects done in a laboratory.		كتابة تقرير عن تجارب علمية في مختبر.	35
36	Writing a paragraph from notes.		كتابة فقرة من ملاحظات.	36
37	Writing a proposal about future plans.		كتابة تصور عن خطط مستقبلية.	37
	Listening			
38	Understanding the main idea of a conversation or a lesson.		فهم الفكرة الرئيسية لاي محادثة أو درس	38
39	Relating information I hear in English to what I already know.		ربط بين ما أسمعه باللغة الانجليزية مع ما اعرفه سابقاً.	39
40	Understanding the speaker's attitude or opinion about what he or she is saying.		فهم اتجاهات أو أفكار المتكلم حول ما يقوله.	40

318

41	Understanding the relationships among ideas I listen to.		فهم العلاقة بين الأفكار التي أستمع اليها.	41
42	Remembering the most important points after listening to an English text.		تذكر النقاط المهمة بعد الاستماع لنص إنجليزي.	42
	Speaking			
43	Making myself clear when speaking to others.		إيضاح ما اقول عندما اتحدث إلى الآخرين.	43
44	Delivering a well prepared presentation.		تقديم عرض معد بشكل جيد	44
45	Talking for few minutes about a topic I am familiar with.		التحدث لدقائق قليلة عن موضوع مألوف لدي.	45
46	Participating in a conversation or a discussion in English.		المشاركة في محادثة أومناقشة باللغة الانجليزية.	46
47	Stating and supporting my opinion.		طرح رأيي وتدعيمه بالادلة.	47
48	Responding to questions orally.		الاجابة عن الاسئلة شفهياً.	48
49	Orally summarizing information I have read or listened to.		التلخيص شفهياً لمعلومات قرأتها أو أستمعت اليها.	49
50	Answering exam questions correctly.		الاجابة عن أسئلة الاختبار بشكل صحيح.	50

If you have other linguistic needs, please write them down.	إذا كان لديك إحتتياجات لغوية اخرى، نرجو تدوينها أدناه.

Thank You.....   .... شكرا جزيلا

LANGUAGE LEARNING NEEDS ANALYSIS FOR THE REFORM OF THE OMANI GRADE 11 EFL PROGRAM

Students' Questionnaire (English Version)

Dear students,

This questionnaire investigates the related needs of students studying in grade 11 of public schools in Sultanate of Oman. I hope that you will answer it. Your honest response is very important. The information you give is absolutely confidential. The results would not affect you in any way.

It would not take you more than fifteen minutes from your precious time. It might look long, but I have tried it before and it was in this time frame.

Thank you very much for your cooperation

Said Hamed Al-Saadi

PhD student
University of Malaya
Faculty of Education
Buabdullah5@hotmail.com

Section 1:

General Information	*Put (✓) in to the correct box.*
Gender:	☐ Male ☐ Female
School type:	☐Basic ☐General
Region	
Have you studied English language in private or summer school?	☐Yes ☐No

Section 2:

Why do you think you need to learn English?

The following table have four reasons for learning English. Please rank them from 1 to 4 according to their importance to you (1 is the most important and 4 is the least important).

Reason	Ranking
For daily life	
To complete higher studies	
To find a good job	
To pass the 3rd secondary exam	

Please rank the skills according to their importance to you (**Rank 1 as the most important and 4 as the least important**).

Skills	Ranking
Reading	
Writing	
Listening	
Speaking	

Read the following statements and write in your most suitable number next to each statement
1- Agree   2- Neutral   3- Disagree

Statements	No.
English is the best subject I Like	
The current English curriculum satisfies my language needs	
What we usually do in class is boring	
I like the way English is taught at school	

Section 3:
Please, Read the below statements carefully then <u>**write the suitable number next to each statement.**</u>

Never 1	Rarely 2	Sometimes 3	Often 4	Always 5

When I study English I find difficulty in:

No	Statement	
1	Understanding general ideas when reading in English.	
2	Understanding how the ideas in an English text relate to each other.	
3	Understanding charts and graphs in a scientific text.	
4	Understanding English vocabulary and grammar when I read.	
5	Understanding the most important point in a text.	
6	Organizing the important ideas and concepts in an English text.	
7	Remembering major ideas when I read an English text.	
8	Figuring out the meaning of new words by using the context and my background knowledge.	
9	Using the library and internet to Find information that I am looking for.	
10	Understanding an English text well enough to answer questions about it later.	
11	Differentiating between statements of facts and statements of opinion.	
12	Using a dictionary to find out meanings.	
13	Inferring meaning of terms from a text.	
14	Understanding an English text as easily as an Arabic one.	
15	Writing a summary of information I *read or* listened *to*.	
16	Organizing my writing, so that the reader can understand my main ideas.	
17	Supporting my writing with examples, evidence and data.	
18	Taking notes that demonstrate the main points.	
19	Writing an essay in the class on an assigned topic.	
20	Expressing myself well in writing.	

21	Expressing ideas and arguments effectively.	
22	Using correct grammar, vocabulary, punctuation and spelling.	
23	Sequencing paragraphs in the article.	
24	Structuring clear statements without any ambiguity or vagueness.	
25	Translating some concepts and ideas from Arabic to English.	
26	Incorporating data and illustration in my writing.	
27	Relating the topic I write to my knowledge and experience.	
28	Writing a good introduction and a conclusion to my article.	
29	Writing a questionnaire in English.	
30	Writing curriculum vitae CV in English.	
31	Explaining in writing the content of graphs, tables, charts and diagrams.	
32	Writing a report about an action in the past.	
33	Editing my own or others' papers for grammar and style problems.	
34	Writing a letter of application.	
35	Writing a report on scientific projects done in a laboratory.	
36	Writing a paragraph from notes.	
37	Writing a proposal about future plans.	
38	Understanding the main idea of a conversation or a lesson.	
39	Relating information I hear in English to what I already know.	
40	Understanding the speaker's attitude or opinion about what he or she is saying.	
41	Understanding the relationships among ideas I listen to.	
42	Remembering the most important points after listening to an English text.	
43	Making myself clear when speaking to others.	
44	Delivering a well prepared presentation.	
45	Talking for few minutes about a topic I am familiar with.	
46	Participating in a conversation or a discussion in English.	
47	Stating and supporting my opinion.	
48	Responding to questions orally.	
49	Orally summarizing information I have read or listened to.	
50	Answering exam questions correctly.	

If you have other linguistic needs, please write them down.

Thank You.

تحليل الاحتياجات اللغوية لطلبة الصف الحادي عشر لتحديث برنامج اللغة الانجليزية

استبانة طالب

عزيزي الطالب،

يهدف هذا الاستبيان الى تقصى الاحتياجات اللغوية للطلبة الدارسين لمادة اللغة الانجليزية بالصف الحادي عشر بالمدارس الحكومية بسلطنة عمان. أرجو التكرم بالإجابة عن أسئلة الاستبانة المرفقة، وستكون كل المعلومات التي ستدلون بها في طي الكتمان. علماً بأن النتائج لا علاقة لها بالتقويم نهائياً.

إن الإجابة عن هذه الاستبانة لن تأخذ أكثر من خمسة عشر دقيقة من وقتك الثمين رغم أنها تبدو طويلة إلا أني قد طبقتها مسبقاً وجاءت في هذا المدى.
وتقبلوا خالص الشكر والتقدير ......

سعيد حمد راشد الساعدي

الجزء الاول:

معلومات عامة	(✔)	
الجنس:	☐ذكر	☐أنثى
نوع المدرسة:	☐أساسي	☐عام
المنطقة:		
هل قمت بدراسة اللغة الانجليزية بأحد المعاهد الخاصة أو الصيفية؟	☐نعم	☐لا

الجزء الثاني:
برأيك لماذا تحتاج إلى تعلم اللغة الانجليزية؟
في الجدول التالي اربع اسباب لتعلم اللغة الانجليزية، ارجو ترتيبها من 1 الى 4 وفق أهميتها لديك، (رقم 1 هو الأكثر أهمية و رقم 4 الأقل أهمية).

	الترتيب
للحياة اليومية	
لإكمال الدراسات العليا	
للحصول على وظيفة جيدة	
للنجاح في امتحان الثانوية العامة	

أرجو ترتيب المهارات وفق أهميتها لديك، **(رقم 1هو الأكثر أهمية و رقم 4 الأقل أهمية).**

المهارة	الترتيب
القراءة	
الكتابة	
الاستماع	
التحدث	

اقرأ العبارات التالية بتمعن، واكتب الرقم المناسب بجانب كل عبارة

1- موافق   2- غير متاكد   3- غير موافق

العبارت	الرقم
تعد الانجليزية أفضل مادة لدي.	
منهج اللغة الأنجليزية الحالي يرضي احتياجاتي اللغوية	
ما نقوم به في الصف يعد مملاً	
أحب الطريقة التي تدرس بها الإنجليزية بالصف.	

الجزء الثالث
الرجاء كتابة رقم الاجابة المناسب بجانب كل عبارة

دائماً	أحياناً	غالباً	نادرا	أبداً
5	4	3	2	1

عندما أدرس اللغة الإنجليزية تكمن الصعوبة في:

	الفقرات	
	فهم الأفكار العامة عند قراءتي بالانجليزية.	1
	فهم كيفية ترابط الأفكار مع بعضها في نص باللغة الانجليزية.	2
	فهم الرسوم والاشكال البيانية في نص علمي.	3
	فهم مفردات اللغة وقواعدها.	4
	فهم أهم الأفكار في أي نص.	5
	تنظيم الأفكارو المفاهيم المهمة في فقرة انجليزي.	6
	تذكر الأفكار الرئيسية عند قراءتي فقرة باللغة الانجليزية.	7
	استنتاج معاني الكلمات الجديده من السياق ومعرفتي السابقه.	8
	استخدام المكتبة والانترنت للحصول على المعلومات التي أبحث عنها.	9
	فهم النص وبشكل جيد للاجابة عن الاسئلة التي تليه.	10
	التفريق بين العبارات التي تحتوى حقائق والتي تحمل وجهة نظر.	11
	استخدام القاموس للبحث عن المعاني.	12
	استنتاج معاني المصطلحات من السياق.	13
	فهم نص ما بالانجليزية بالسهولة التي افهم بها النص بالعربية.	14
	تلخيص معلومات قرأتها أو إستمعت إليها.	15
	تنظيم ما اكتب ليفهم القارئ أفكاري الرئيسية.	16
	تدعيم ما اكتب بالامثلة والادلة والبيانات.	17

		18	أخذ ملاحظات توضح النقاط المهمة.
		19	كتابة مقال بالصف عن موضوع محدد.
		20	التعبير عن نفسي وبشكل جيد كتابياً.
		21	التعبير عن الأفكار والحوارات بفاعلية.
		22	الاستعمال الصحيح للقواعد والمفردات والإملاء وأدوات الترقيم.
		23	ترتيب الفقرات في المقال.
		24	إنشاء جمل واضحة دون أي غموض أو لبس.
		25	ترجمة بعض المفاهيم والأفكار من العربية إلى الإنجليزية.
		26	تدعيم الفقرة بالأدلة اللازمة.
		27	ربط الموضوع الذي أكتبه بمعلوماتي وخبراتي السابقة.
		28	كتابة مقدمة وخاتمة جيدة لمقالي.
		29	كتابة استبيان باللغة الانجليزية.
		30	كتابة سيرة ذاتية باللغة الانجليزية.
		31	التوضيح كتابياً لمحتوى الرسوم والاشكال البيانية والجداول.
		32	كتابة تقرير عن حدث ماضي.
		33	تنقيح أعمالي الكتابية وأعمال الآخرين من أخطاء النحو واسلوب الكتابة.
		34	كتابة رسالة طلب عمل.
		35	كتابة تقرير عن التجارب العلمية في المختبر.
		36	كتابة فقرة من ملاحظات.
		37	كتابة تصور عن خطط مستقبلية.
		38	فهم الفكرة الرئيسية لاي محادثة أو درس
		39	ربط بين ما أسمعه باللغة الانجليزية مع ما اعرفه سابقاً.
		40	فهم اتجاهات أو أفكار المتكلم حول ما يقوله.
		41	فهم العلاقة بين الأفكار التي أستمع اليها.
		42	تذكر النقاط المهمة بعد الاستماع لنص إنجليزي.
		43	إيضاح ما اقول عندما اتحدث إلى الآخرين.
		44	تقديم عرض معد بشكل جيد
		45	التحدث لدقائق قليلة عن موضوع مألوف لدي.
		46	المشاركة في محادثة أومناقشة باللغة الانجليزية.
		47	طرح رأيي وتدعيمه بالادلة.
		48	الاجابة عن الاسئلة شفهياً.
		49	التلخيص شفهياً لمعلومات قرأتها أو أستمعت اليها.
		50	الاجابة عن أسئلة الاختبار بشكل صحيح.

إذا كان لديك إحتياجات لغوية أخرى، نرجو تدوينها أدناه.

شكرا جزيلا ....

LANGUAGE LEARNING NEEDS ANALYSIS FOR THE REFORM OF THE OMANI GRADE 11 EFL PROGRAM

Teachers' Questionnaire

Dear English Language teachers,

This questionnaire investigates the related English language needs of students studying in grade 11 of public schools in the Sultanate of Oman. I hope that you will answer it. Your honest response is very important. The information you give is absolutely confidential. The results would not affect you in any way. It would not take you more than fifteen minutes from your precious time. It might look long, but I have tried it before and it was in this time frame.

Thank you in prompt for your cooperation.

Saeed Hamed Al-Saadi

buabdullah5@hotmail.com
PhD student
Faculty of Education
University of Malaya

Section 1:

General Information	*Put (✓) in to the correct box.*	
Gender:	☐ Male	☐ Female
School type:	☐Basic	☐General
Years of Experience		
Graduation University		

Section 2:
Why do you think students need to learn English?

The following table have four reasons for learning English. Please rank them according to their importance to your students **(Rank 1 as the most important and 4 as the least important).**

Reason	Ranking
For daily life	
To complete higher studies	
To find a good job	
To pass the General Diploma exam	

Please rank the following language skills according to their importance to them **(Rank 1 as the most important and 4 as the least important**).

Skills	Ranking
Reading	
Writing	
Listening	
Speaking	

Read the following statements and write in your most suitable number next to each statement

1- Agree   2- Neutral   3- Disagree

Statements	No.
The current English curriculum satisfies my students' language needs	
What we usually do in class is boring	
I like the way English is taught at school	

Section 3:
Please, Read the below statements carefully then <u>write the suitable number</u> next to each statement.

Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**

When students study English, they find difficulty in:

No	Statement	
1	Understanding general ideas when reading in English.	
2	Understanding how the ideas in an English text relate to each other.	
3	Understanding charts and graphs in a scientific text.	
4	Understanding English vocabulary and grammar when I read.	
5	Understanding the most important point in a text.	
6	Organizing the important ideas and concepts in an English text.	
7	Remembering major ideas when they read an English text.	
8	Figuring out the meaning of new words by using the context and my background knowledge.	
9	Using the library and internet to Find information that they are looking for.	
10	Understanding an English text well enough to answer questions about it later.	
11	Differentiating between statements of facts and statements of opinion.	
12	Using a dictionary to find out meanings.	
13	Inferring meaning of terms from a text.	
14	Understanding an English text as easily as an Arabic one.	
15	Writing a summary of information they *read or* listened *to.*	
16	Organizing their writing, so that the reader can understand their main ideas.	
17	Supporting their writing with examples, evidences and data.	
18	Taking notes that demonstrate the main points.	

19	Writing an essay in the class on an assigned topic.	
20	Expressing themselves well in writing.	
21	Expressing ideas and arguments effectively.	
22	Using correct grammar, vocabulary, punctuation and spelling.	
23	Sequencing paragraphs in the article.	
24	Structuring clear statements without any ambiguity or vagueness.	
25	Translating some concepts and ideas from Arabic to English.	
26	Incorporating data and illustration in their writing.	
27	Relating the topic they write to their knowledge and experience.	
28	Writing a good introduction and a conclusion to their article.	
29	Writing a questionnaire in English.	
30	Writing curriculum vitae CV in English.	
31	Explaining in writing the content of graphs, tables, charts and diagrams.	
32	Writing a report about an action in the past.	
33	Editing my own or others' papers for grammar and style problems.	
34	Writing a letter of application.	
35	Writing a report on scientific projects done in a laboratory.	
36	Writing a paragraph from notes.	
37	Writing a proposal about future plans.	
38	Understanding the main idea of a conversation or a lesson.	
39	Relating information they hear in English to what they already know.	
40	Understanding the speaker's attitude or opinion about what he or she is saying.	
41	Understanding the relationships among ideas they listen to.	
42	Remembering the most important points after listening to an English text.	
43	Making themselves clear when speaking to others.	
44	Delivering a well prepared presentation.	
45	Talking for few minutes about a topic they are familiar with.	
46	Participating in a conversation or a discussion in English.	
47	Stating and supporting their opinions.	
48	Responding to questions orally.	
49	Orally summarizing information they have read or listened to.	
50	Answering exam questions correctly.	

Please, If you have other linguistic needs which are not mentioned above, please write them down.

Thank You,,,

Interview script with "Head of department A"

22/6/2010

Ministry of education, Oman

Researcher   As has been explain to you previously that one of the most important targets of the current study is to conduct a national survey of the Omani grade11 students needs in the English language and from there some implications for reforms and changes will be proposed and suggested for the improvement of grade 11 English language program. The first question is what are the goals and objectives of the current English language program in grade 11 in Oman?

Chair
supervisor   Well, in order to talk about grade 11, I need to bring us back down to cycle 1, I'm sorry to say this, because if the foundation of the schooling system is not right at the very start of the schools of the life time of the students within the school then it is like building a house without a proper foundation. In my opinion, this is what is happening with students in schools in Oman. First of all, the foundation of developing literacy and motor skills needs to be far more attention in cycle 1 and cycle 2.

Researcher   Literacy and motor skills?

Chair
supervisor   Yes Literacy, motor skills, visual discrimination and various different areas that one need to equip child with. In order for that child to be able to function confidently in the language, what should be happening, we should introduce early childhood centers in the country which are available for parents not like the kindergartens, which the parents pay for. The governments need in my opinion to

invest quiet considerably in early childhood centers because if those parents and children have access to those centers, then we can ensure that children get proper foundation through the early childhood centers and through the kindergartens which would be attached to governments?

Researcher From which age you suggest that should happen?

Chair supervisor Well, I'm talking from 3 years of age 4 and 5 years. Now, back to UK or Ireland that would be 3 years programs in some countries it is a 2 years programs, but at least if those are functioning in line with what best practice internationally then we could be assured that children would have learned and practiced a proper motor skills in order to be able to hold pencils and to know directions to be able to have that kind of skills we cannot push children into reading or writing. Children have different abilities and different readiness at certain ages. Some children are ready before others, but unfortunately throughout our schools, at the ministry of education children are treated as one bloke, all doing the same things at the same time. So, we really do need them to tackle the learning environment of the school, because that our learning environment does not faster a love of learning.

We look at the curriculum that they are doing, but they are all doing the same thing at the same time. They may be working in groups, but what is the point of working in groups if students are doing the same thing at the same time. They might as well be sitting in rows. The whole idea behind group work is to differentiate materials according to the needs and the learning styles of the students. And unfortunately within our system as I see it we have a top down approach rather than a combined bottom-up top-down approach. We are not taking in consideration our students learning style and our student's needs. Also we need our teachers to be trained from a very early stage and this is something that I'm very disappointed with in

that the Ministry of Education has allowed our teachers to be trained by Ministry of Higher Education. I'm sorry to say, but that is something important to be mentioned. I think Minority of Education should be training its own teachers for basic education at cycle 1. We should have class teachers at cycle 1 and in having class teachers in cycle 1, we are ensuring that students can learn different subject at different times according to their needs. We could have for example, one group working in mathematics another group may be conducting a science investigation another group within the same class could be doing literacy work with the teacher. Actually, It is a whole approach to education that honestly I feel is not taking it to consideration the students' needs and working where the students are at, not facilitating differentiation and is not supporting the students in terms of literacy and numeracy, so that when they get to grade 11, to come back to your question, our students in grade 11 all of them without exceptions should be able to read to write at least should be taking about an ILTS Band (4.5 level). They should be all of them because we must have our strugglers, but again we do not have facilities and place for our strugglers.

We do not have the resources either in terms of materials, because that everybody is stoked to the one book rather than having a syllabus framework, as we have in private schools we have a syllabus framework and the teacher can teach to the actual syllabus framework to the learning outcomes using different material which will address the needs of the students.

Researcher	How can this be achieved during the usual process of teaching in the Ministry's schools Since they are guided and limited by the teacher book?
Chair supervisor	Really teachers are working in straight chaket in government schools. I can only be talking about in term of English language teacher. I cannot talk about other

subjects, assuming it is replicated to other subjects. First of all, I have yet to come across. I have seen the curriculum framework, I mean it is a very loose curriculum framework and I do not know if any of the teachers is actual having a copy of this documents. Certainly any of whom I have asked do not have.

Researcher   It seems that they are not allowed to have a look at it.

Chair   Well that is not right either, why are teachers not allowed to have it. For an
supervisor   example, in private schools, all have a copy of the syllabus framework from KG to grade 12. Also teachers have their input into that as well through various ways and that is not only for English, but true for the math and science subjects.

Parents and children are happier having books, but we have a very shorten school year in Oman, which is unacceptable. Secondly, we have this heavy curriculums, which is the whole emphasizes is at the teacher finishing this curriculum and this is completely contradictory. What is important is what the students learn and how they are learning not whether the book has been covered.

Ok you can teach and finish the book, but how do you know whether your students have actually learned what in the book. And the whole approach at the Ministry of Education and the case of supervision as well and also educational evaluation is that none of us toady really has been working from where the students are at. The supervisors need to go in and see how the students are and what are they learning.

Researcher   To this pint, have you encountered any systematic study or investigation of the students needs in Oman?

Chair   No I haven't
supervisor

Researcher   Since you became a chief supervisor in Oman have you been involved in similar projects?

Chair supervisor	No.
Researcher	So, how do you think the current Omani curriculums have been developed where no investigation about the students needs existed?
Chair supervisor	Well, my understanding is that "experts" drew up a curriculum framework. I did teach the course books in Oman and I have to say I enjoyed working with it. The (OWTE) and (English for Me) my understanding is that were drown bias expert in Oman and then from that material were written. And then after the material were written and distributed people were asked to comment on that. To the best of my knowledge students have not been involved in that process.
Researcher	What about teachers?
Chair supervisor	Teachers were involved and I do remember getting units to comment on after they were written.
Researcher	What about before writing the materials?
Chair supervisor	No, no
Researcher	For the time being, to what extent do you think that the skills and the sub skills developed in the current English language course book meet the student's needs? Have they succeeded in meetings their goals?
Chair supervisor	Well, if they have, why we have such problems with English language in the country? It is not entirely the teacher fault, and it is not entirely curriculum fault either. I think it is the way how the whole house is been built. And this is why I keep in coming back to the foundation and if the foundation is not correct and if teachers are not allowed to be creative and not allowed to have their input into the curriculum.

However, I'm of the opinion that we have to look at the way English is taught how it is taught? What resources are there to support it? And to get the students feedback not only to the curriculum, so we need everyone to be involved in the process.

I'm quite concerned because we have industry and businesses complaining bitterly about our outcomes in terms of English language. Many of our students have to go through intensive language programs catered for those below band 2 specially if joining universities or collages after 12 years of studying English.

Researcher   So, do you agree with the fact that our schools graduated are academically and linguistically under prepared to complete their higher education?

Chair   Yes. And we have to say to ourselves why is this happening?

supervisor   We have different elements for this, we have the foundation program is no in place, we do not have reading schemes in place, we do not test reading as in reading score as in yearly bases and compare them with the child age. And what if studying in another company, will they be expected to get to that particular stage. These are the areas to be addressed.

We also need to look at the way teachers are trained or not trained as the case might be. And we need to get teachers to training into the system much earlier than used to be.

We also need to look at the teachers and their carrier or professional development. An unfortunate development on the part of the Ministry of Education and I realized the pressure on the Ministry, but you cannot let go of the expatriate good teachers and bring on teachers from a verity of colleges outside of Oman and people who have been trained as English teachers in the medium of Arabic, whose IELTS band is 2.5 or 3.5, some of who you cannot actually do any feedback with them in

English because they do not understand you. They cannot also fallow their English supervisors either.

Different areas need to be worked on, also the learning environment in our schools. Go and sit in our schools, they like a sanitized hospitals. Where is the celebration of the students' work? Where is the pride in being a student in our classrooms? You do not see work displayed around the school walls or in the classrooms themselves, because people are more concerned about maintenance and keeping the walls clear, rather than celebrating students work to develop a sense of pride in our students and giving students responsibilities for their own classrooms, their own school, and their own learning environment.

 I think number of areas that are really in need to be addressed, because they are quit critical. You see for an example, the boy schools are not doing well behind girl. We have issues of leadership, but in terms of the curriculum, we need to look at what the boys are interested in and gear the curriculum and how boys learn, which is different in many ways to how girls learn. We need to address that in the curriculum and we need to have a range of subjects for boys and girls.

Unless we get teacher training right, unless we get leadership right, unless we get the school environment right, unless we get resources right and unless we get supervision an educational evaluation right. I'm sure there is something I have not thought of, but it is the way the school wok as well. Students themselves are not giving responsibilities in schools. Why aren't students responsible for their school, for the way the school is kept for cleanness for organizing the students into different houses? Have competition. Have their school different. Why does not their school look different? They are like cycle 1 schools. Why do not they have common room where they can set and relax. This can be a psychological shift for

them. Get them involved in the school budget. Use these as learning experiences. There are many opportunities for learning within the school environment.

Using the opportunities to let students get hand on experience in doing things themselves. Get students organize the school timetable instead of getting somebody else for doing it. Let them manage the school. Let them be involved in these different tasks. How much will they learn from sitting down working in the timetable with an adult along with them? Think about all the skills they will learn if students were allowed and engaged in running the shop, ordering, collecting the money, bring it to the bank, learning all the bank procedures let them be responsible about cleaning their classroom and school. I guarantee you the school will be much better kept. let them manage the car park. These are all learning opportunities for life that are lost in our school

Researcher   Let us now give more focus to the language skills. If you are asked o rank the language kills (listening, speaking, writing and reading) according to their importance and priorities to grade 11 students. How would you rank them? And this is to be put in the English language course book in grade 11.

Chair   Different students will have different needs. It is very important to pare in mind
supervisor   speaking and presentation because baring in mind that quite a number of our students will find themselves looking for work abroad or work with foreign companies, so it is very important that they are able to speak fluently, and the listening comprehension skills. The priority to me will be the speaking and listening. It is also depend on what track they are hoping to move to. If we are going to have students who are going to do their study in medicine or engineering; they will need basic reading skills as well. So it is the question of balance.

In many occasion these students will be representing their countries giving

presentation about their country. They are our selling forces. How countries view Oman as an investment opportunity, will very much depend on the outcomes of grade 11 and grade 12. And at the movement, I as potential investor would be saying to myself well if I will take in any of grade 11 or 12 students I have to start teaching them English from scratch. The outcomes of grade 11 and 12 are so poor. Whereas if I was to go to a country like Swaziland or Singapore as an example. I look at the outcomes of the educational system there and I think yes there is an excellent command of English. These will all be added as attributes to the investor who hope to invest in these countries.

Researcher   I'm giving you 4 different purposes of students in grade 11, you have to rank them according to their important to the students. The choiceness are (to pass deplume exam, to get a better job, to continue their study and for general life reasons).

Chair supervisor   Students are much geared toward the exams, and with some students English has bad impression. They have to learn, but they do not want to do so. Very view students in my opinion and there is no study done in this to the best of my knowledge, who would turn around and say that they are studying English for life reasons. I think the majority of them care about the exams results.

Researcher   During the first part of the interview, you provided some useful thoughts on how to improve the current program and also you raised some suggestion for developing the English language program in grade 11, especially when talking about interdicting early childhood education, do you want to add to that point in term of the demands and challenges?

Chair supervisor   Well, in term of literacy development, they have introduced the Macmillan readers and they have increased the periods from 5 to 7 , however I'm of the opinion that we need a proven reading schemes, which is Macmillan is not, we need a proven

reading schemes like the Oxford reading schemes or the Collin big cats. I'm a particular fun of the Oxford reading schemes because I have used it here in the country with the struggling readers and it has a wealth of resources both book format and IT to support student literacy development. We really need in order to improve literacy teachers need to actually have the student read every single day and this come back then to how we can approach it, and I have seen teachers doing this in different ways both in international schools or bilingual schools. Some teachers like doing it early morning by having students sitting in circles and they give that extra time either in the early morning or during brake time or like to come to an arrangement with other teachers to use their time. Sometimes at the start of every lesson they have circles, whereby you engage students in the creation of their own texts, which the students then learn to read and understand. Also we need a system focusing on phonics like the jolly phonics in private schools. We need all the foundation skills in place then the phonics. Then we need to address the reading every single day, it has to be done on a daily daises.

Researcher   From which year you suggest it should start?

Chair   From Kindergarten

supervisor

Researcher   Is it applicable to grade 11?

Chair   Yes, of course. When I took over my grade 12 boys, I had boys who were getting

supervisor   620 on the TOFEL with boys who had 0 skills in English. What I had to do was I had to break the class into 2 groups. I allowed boys with good English to choose up materials they want to do. They taught themselves and they were completely independent. Then I have another group of students with 0 skills in English. We would all of us start everyday did basic skills in handwriting and then with the

group with 0 skills we actually did phonics and decoding strategies every single day. And by the end of the year they did very well in the government examination even though they had 0 skills at the beginning.

Researcher   Since you got the opportunity to experience and supervise private and public schools in Oman. What lessons we might draw from successful private schools to the public schools?

Chair
supervisor   Leadership, the person who is the principle or the leader of the school. That person needs to be extremely well trained not only in best practices from around the world, but also they have to be exposed to the best practices around the world. They have to be highly committed to individuals who have deep understanding on best practice, who can coach and mentor teachers, who can raise the level of education entertainment in the school, who can involve and engage everyone in insuring the school achieve the best outcomes possible. And who also has the ability to involve businesses and local agencies and parents in developing and supporting the school by providing resources to the school. Leadership is one of the crucial factors in successful school.

Also in terms of the English teachers they have deep understanding of how students learn and they keep up-to-date with the latest strategies for engaging all kind of students. They differentiate the learning materials to meet the students' needs. They also are patient about literacy in terms of reading and numeracy. They have a way of making the students interested on what they are learning. They are also hard working. They see education as a vocation not as a 7 to 2 job. Teaching is not that. This is what we have to inculcate into our teacher all over the country. It is not a job it is a vocation.

Those schools that are particularly good defiantly have invested in resources. They

have reading schemer in place, they have IT resources, and very importantly they work to a framework. Their teachers have a copy of that framework; they know where they are heading. They knew where the previous teacher has stopped. They know what they are expected to achieve and what is expected from the coming teachers. Yes they may have a course book, but the teachers and the students have the freedom to dip into the other materials and interoperate and deliver the material in the way that they have identified as most suited to their students learning style taking into consideration the students' needs as well. These schools would have support in place. Qualified people who are trained to take students out of class give they support

Researcher What type of support do you mean?

Chair Special educational need support. Who can identify why learning is not happening.
supervisor What they can do with the parents and the main class teacher to support that students.

Researcher Is this applicable to grade 11 students?

Chair Yes, most definitely. Special educational need support is important in all stages.
supervisor We have many people working in position in the Ministry of Education who have been put in that job without proper training in place to equip them to actually deliver the proper outcomes.

Also where the training has come from? We at the Ministry should have ensured that those given the responsibility to write course books for all subjects should have been trained by specialist in their field in writing curse books. Oman can offered to get the best people and experts to tarin our Omanis on how should we go about writing course books. I do not think that it is acceptable to identify teachers in schools or supervisors and then expect them to join such a critical department and

	ask them to be involved in writing material which are going to be in place for the whole country for a number of years to come without a lead team whom themselves have been trained to a very high level.
Researcher	Thanks I think this is very logical and essential. How can we make use of the same experience in evaluation?
Chair supervisor	Many of our private schools have gone to examination board. They linked themselves to many examination boards. For example at Cambridge language program they have a whole program for English for math and science and IT, which have been delivered to a number of our private bilingual schools. As part of that they have assessment tests at the end of grade one, two, three, four, five and six, which are conducted internally in grade one to five, but actually at grade six it is a common test that is conducted all over the world.
Researcher	Do they follow continuous assessment?
Chair supervisor	No, actually they are fallowing a companied approach of continuous assessment plus tests. Then at grade 6 it is an international test whereby you can see how well your school have done compared to the whole world. And most importantly they do provide needs analysis of students. For example, certain students could have done well in listening and writing, but not so well in reading. Therefore they would say that these students need more training in some skills more than others and hat help more in differentiating the learning instructions to students. Or a particular class needs more training on a certain type of questions. Then they use this as a stepping stone for the choking point leading on to the ITCSE whether it is a first or a second language. Fallowing on that, same schools opt to stay with Cambridge and other would join other international programs.
Researcher	Well, is this applicable to grade 11 students? Do you see there a space for doing

this in the Ministry of Education?

Chair supervisor   My dream would be to see in different region in Oman (2 schools from each region) as an initial project fallowing Cambridge English program and having the possibility to be exposed to and to achieve the standards that other students in all other parts of the world are achieving because my concern is that our standard of education is very low and that our outcomes would not match the level of excellent outcomes of other countries. We have a serious and national problem and we cannot afford with such a young generation to have such a disaffected youth who because of poor education outcomes cannot get better education or cannot go oversees to get jobs because of poor education outcomes

Researcher   By the end of the day, thank you for your patience and the very valid comments and contributions during this interview.

Interview script with Regional English language Supervisor A

20/5/2010

Ministry of education

Oman

Researcher I believe you have already got an idea about the intent of the current study.

I'm giving you 4 different purposes for students to learn English in grade 11, s

you have to rank them according to their important to the students. The choices

are (to pass deplume exam, to get a better job, to continuo their study and for

general life reasons).

Supervisor Omani students from my experience are learning English mainly to pass the

general diploma exam.

For daily life	2
To complete higher studies	4
To find a good job	3
To pass the general diploma exam	1

Researcher If you are asked o rank the language kills (listening, speaking, writing and

reading) according to their importance and priorities to grade 11 students. How

would you rank them? And this is to be put in the English language course book

in grade 11?

Supervisor .

Reading 3

I think more focus should be given to the productive skills then

Writing 2

to the receptive skills speaking and writing

Listening 3

Speaking 1

Researcher	According to your view, how do you understand the purpose of the current English language program in grade 11 of post basic education schools?
Supervisor	The purpose is to give student more opportunity to communicate in English, so students can easily write and read in English.
Researcher	To what extent is the current English program in grade 11 has achieved its goals?
Supervisor	I don't think that the goals are met yet. Students' needs are not met. Students cannot put in their opinions clearly. They cannot use English as they are expected to do so. Teachers are restricted with their course book, so they do not have the time to give more focus.
Researcher	Do the skills provided in grade 11 meet the students' demands and needs?
Supervisor	Yes if they are taught in a proper way, but teachers are not thinking on how to involve the students to their class. Their main concern is just to deliver the lesson with less chance for students to practice their English. Teachers need to be trained on how to facilitate their course book.
Researcher	As teachers and supervisors do we need to analyze the students' needs? Is it important to study the students' language learning needs? How can it be done?
Supervisor	Yes, it's important. We have to study them to meet and match the objective of the course.
Researcher	To this pint, have you encountered any systematic study or investigation of the students needs in Oman?
Supervisor	No, rarely it is studied.
Researcher	How do you think a NA study should be done?

Supervisor	Using some questionnaires to students and teachers to find out about the students needs and also using interviews.
Researcher	How could the current EL program be improved in order to be more efficient in fulfilling its purpose?
Supervisor	EL program can be improved by introducing some changes such as, reducing the amount of material presented in the course book, so teachers can cover it with in the academic year.
	Teachers should be given more freedom to design their own material and also to use extra curricula material to meet their students' needs. Teachers should not be restricted rather use and design different material to meet their students needs. They should be encouraged to come with their own creativity.
Researcher	Can they change the material or the tasks in their course book?
Supervisor	Yes they can
Researcher	Is it acceptable?
Supervisor	No it is not acceptable
Researcher	In addition to the length of the content and teacher freedom, what other suggestion?
Supervisor	If there is a chance, it is better to gather all people concerned about English in Oman to discuss and evaluate the current practice to come out with developmental findings.
Researcher	What are the barriers, if any, that can handicap the development?
Supervisor	Is that we are putting new ideas without piloting them before applying them in the schools. Schools and teachers are fed up with the immediate changes in their daily routine.

Researcher   In short answers, are you satisfies with the current English language program in

grade 11?

Supervisor   To some extent yes.

Researcher   It is been my pleasure to meet you today and thank you for all the fruitful

discussion we had during the interview.

Map of Sultanate of Oman

Syllabus for grade 11A

	Reading	**Grammar**	**Vocabulary**	**Listening and Speaking**	**Writing**
Unit 1 Communi-cation	recognise topic sentences in a paragraph recognise supporting information in a paragraph review parts of speech	present simple and present continuous Wh-questions	communication and telecommunicatio n recognise synonyms which, who, where in defining clauses	make suggestions listen for specific information SMS language non-defining pronouns – some, any, n	write an informal email write a formal email review the 'writing route'
Unit 2 Lost and Found	edit a written text recognise irrelevant information read for specific information	past simple, past continuous and past passive	archaeology, trade, inventions, processes guess words from context synonyms categorise words	ask for information justify an opinion categorise adjectives rank a list of options order a list	write about a process paragraph cohesiveness sequence stages in a process recognise written instructions review text editing
Unit 3 Travellers and Tourists	read for specific information sequence paragraphs within a text intensive reading	present continuous/g oing to/ will + won't Future plans and predictions	holidays and travel emphatic adjectives synonyms and antonyms	make and respond to suggestions role play: make a presentation	write a holiday postcard write a description of a tourist resort recognise abbreviations
Unit 4 Innova-tion	infer meaning from context coherence in a text – word chains	probably/ma y/might/defi nitely degrees of probability	medicine, technology and science word building – prefixes (science and technology) word building parts of speech – suffixes	give advice listening for gist and specific information time expressions	write a letter or email of complaint
Unit 5 We are What we Eat	multiple choice comprehension questions	too much/too many/too few/too little/enough/ not enough/too	food, health and diet word building – suffixes	give an opinion, refute an opinion and offer a different opinion discuss advantages and disadvantages	link words together in a written text write an essay

Syllabus for grade 11B

	Reading	**Grammar**	**Vocabulary**	**Listening and Speaking**	**Writing**
Theme 1 World Breakers	read gapped phrases and sentences in a variety of text types	use comparative and superlative adjectives -er/est + than; not as ... as; more/less ... + than	use vocabulary connected to sports, games, natural features, illnesses and diseases word building	use question tags listen for specific information	use non-defining relative clauses write a short profile or biography
Theme 2 All the World's a Stage	read and answer true/false questions	past simple + ago present perfect + for and since	use vocabulary connected to music, dance, theatre, film, tv -ed/-ing adjectives	state, agree and disagree with opinions listen for general and specific information	write a film review
Theme 3 Connections	find references in sentences find topic links within paragraphs	present perfect + yet, already, just, and still	use vocabulary connected to memory and brain functions, volunteering, and friends	give and respond to advice listen for general and specific information	write an application letter
Theme 4 Planet Earth	find topic links between paragraphs in a written text	zero conditional first conditional	use vocabulary connected to animals and the natural world words building - prefixes	use different expressions for giving an opinion listen to spoken texts for specific information listen to spoken texts for general information	link ideas together in written texts in a variety of ways write an essay introducing contrasting arguments
Theme 5 Transitions	read for text cohesiveness read for specific information	modals of obligation and prohibition	use vocabulary connected to weddings	listen to longer spoken texts for specific information making personal plans and resolutions	review text editing write a festival report

Specific Objectives for Grades 11-12

1. Reading
Learners should be able to read a variety of text-types and genres such as:
- magazine articles
- short stories
- newspaper articles
- instructions
- rules
- informational texts
- e-mails
- charts
- notes.

Learners should be able to select appropriate reading strategies when reading for different purposes by:
- previewing and predicting
- generating focus questions
- reading for specific information (scanning)
- reading for main ideas (skimming)
- guessing meaning from context.

Learners should be able to:
- use strategies to improve reading speed and effectiveness.
- make effective use of dictionaries.

2. Listening
Learners should be able to:
- understand and respond to extensive and complex listening texts such as monologues and dialogues.

- Understand and respond to different types of discourse such as:
  - Conversation
  - Narratives
  - Descriptions
  - Academic lectures
  - Interviews.

- Select appropriate listening strategies when listening to different purposes by:
  - Previewing and predicting
  - Generating focus questions
  - Listening for specific information
  - Listening for gist
  - Guessing meaning from context.

3. Speaking

Learners should be able to:

- improve communicative fluency and accuracy.
- initiate and take part in different types of spoken discourse:
  - conversation
  - transactional discourse
  - discussions
  - presentations.

- recognize and produce common idiomatic and conversational expressions.
- use functional language to carry out practical transactions in everyday life by:
  - asking for and giving information
  - giving an opinion
  - disagreeing with an opinion
  - making suggestions
  - clarifying information.

- use English for social communication.
- monitor self speech for accuracy and appropriateness.

4. Writing

Learners should be able to:

- improve their fluency and accuracy in writing a variety of texts.
- employ strategies appropriate to the different stages of the writing process:
- take notes from written and oral sources
- plan, organize and write outlines
- write drafts
- revise
- edit and proofread
- use higher-order organizational skills in writing.
- compose original written texts in a variety of genres:
- write academic essays
  - compare and contrast essays
  - cause and effect essays
  - pros and cons essays
- write summaries
- write formal letters
- write informal letters
- write biographies
- write narratives
- write advertising proposals
- write academic reports
- write postcards
- use knowledge of textual cohesion:
  - conjunctions
  - pronoun reference

5.   Learning and Social Skills

Learners should be able to:

- co-operate with others in pairs and group work.
- demonstrate the ability to work independently.
- sequence events and processes.
- compare and contrast information.
- apply prior knowledge.
- classify and categorize given information.
- rank, list and order given information.
- monitor and reflect on their own learning.
- infer meaning from context.
- reason deductively and inductively.

In addition to the linguistic objectives, there are also a range of non-linguistic objectives embedded in the curriculum.

6.   Learning Strategies

Developing lifelong, independent learning strategies is an important objective of the curriculum. The learning materials provide opportunities for students to become familiar with self-help strategies, the appropriate use of a range of resources for independent learning, and reflection and monitoring strategies.

7.   Critical Thinking Skills

Critical thinking is integrated fully into the curriculum. Higher order thinking skills, such as clarification and inference, are explicitly taught in the two grades.

8.   Study Skills

Study skills are a key feature of the curriculum to help students become more self-directed. Basic study skills such as dictionary skills, library and research skills, paraphrasing, referencing and accurate citation of sources are built into class materials. Students learn general planning and organisational skills and self-monitoring skills in addition to more specific organisational skills. For example, students are encouraged to plan, draft, check and re-draft pieces of writing until they are satisfied with a final draft.

9.   Culture

English is presented as an international language that provides a means of communicating with other users of English, both inside and outside Oman.

10.   International perspectives

The themes and topics of the curriculum provide an international outlook and cover a range of issues which have a global impact. Students are encouraged to reflect on these issues and relate the subject matter and its implications on their own, specifically Omani, experience.

11.   Vocational

Many of the themes used link either directly or indirectly to the various vocational fields that many of the students enter. Examples of these are the hospitality industry and the retail industry. Many of the language functions that are reviewed or newly introduced are transferable across a variety of vocational fields.

12. Cross-curricular

Many of the themes are linked to other subject areas of the school curriculum, such as Science and Technology and the Social Sciences. Language and concepts introduced in one subject are recycled, reviewed and extended in the other subject areas. For example, science concepts taught in Science classes are revisited in English, adding English terminology to the Arabic vocabulary already introduced.

13. Self-Study

There is an optional two-page spread concluding each unit, which teachers can opt to assign as self-study or for early finishers.

The content of *Across Cultures* focuses on facts about other countries and aspects of peoples' lives that students might find both interesting and useful, particularly if they plan to visit or study abroad. Students are provided with guided activities to help them make cross-cultural comparisons.

Reading for Pleasure, found in each unit, introduces students to a range of text-types and genres, covering a wide-range of topics.

There are no detailed activity notes provided for these pages in the Teacher's Books.

Appendix K

Screen Plot Diagram Showing the Eigenvalues of the Questionnaires Items.
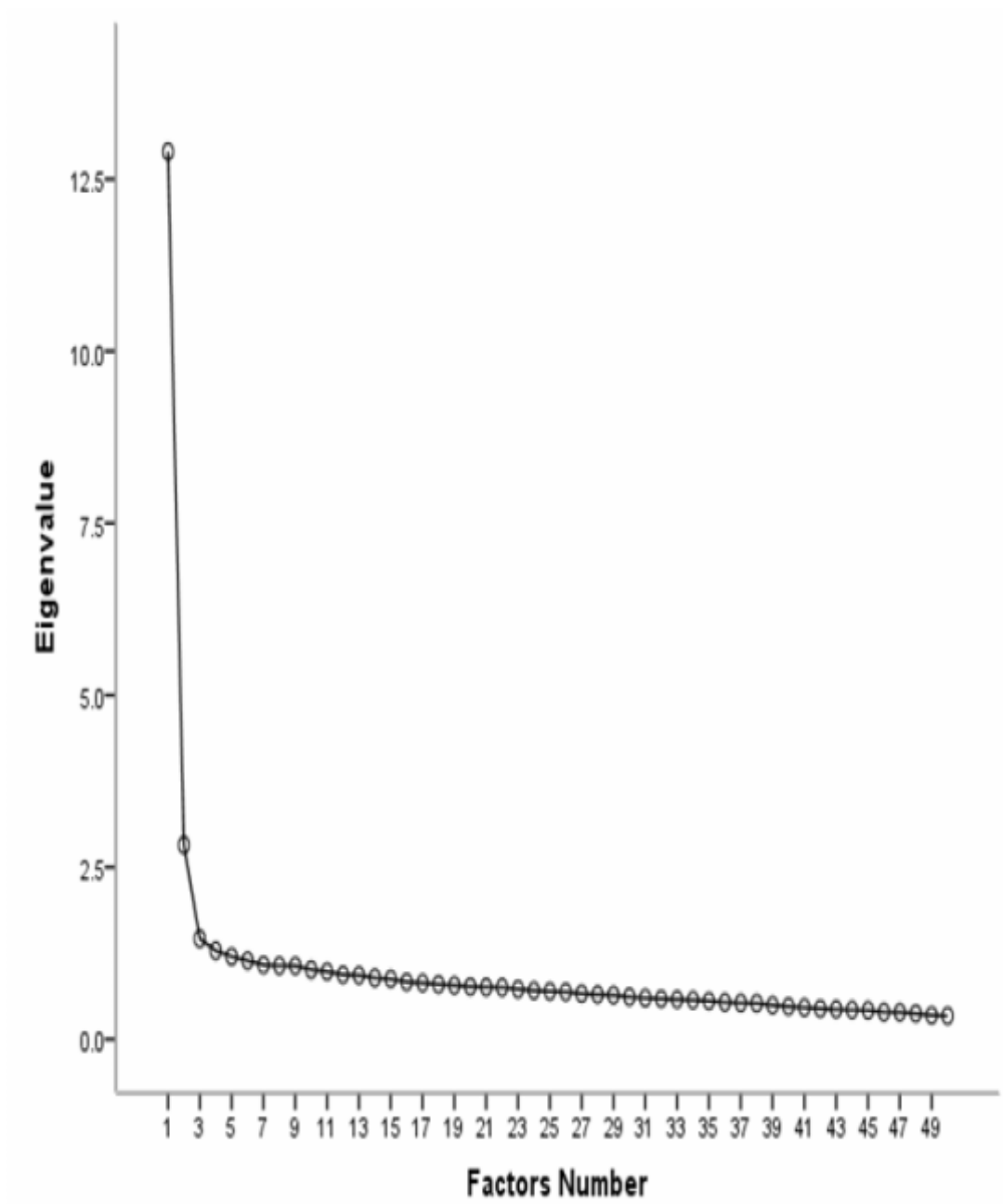
Factors Loading for Factor Analysis With Varimax Rotation of the Questionnaire

Items	Scale Factors			
	F1	F2	F3	F4
Q1	.636			
Q2	.633			
Q3	.481			
q4	.507			
Q5	.521			
Q6	.519			
Q7	.431			
Q8	.393			
Q9	.372			
Q10	.422			
Q11	.520			
Q12	.380			
Q13	.520			
Q14	.378			
Q15	.428			
Q16		.600		
Q17		.472		
Q18		.492		
Q19		.451		
Q20		.406		
Q21		.365		
Q22		.321		
Q23		.313		
Q24		.335		
Q25		.374		
Q26		.472		
Q27		.426		
Q28		.451		
Q29		.719		
Q30		.532		
Q31		.418		
Q32		.424		
Q33		.542		
Q34		.623		
Q35		.759		
Q36		.548		
Q37		.432		
Q38			.624	
Q39			.602	
Q40			.579	
Q41			.564	
Q42			.478	
Q43				.544
Q44				.457
Q45				.549
Q46				.474
Q47				.349
Q48				.546
Q49				.516
Q50				.435