CHAPTER FOUR

SOCIOLINGUISTIC PROFILE OF LANGUAGE NEEDS AT AMU
Sociolinguistic Profile of Language Needs at AMU

INTRODUCTORY

The earlier chapters furnish sufficient evidence to the fact that India by now owes more than a century old history of English language teaching and that a lot of energy has already been spent to streamline the effectiveness of ESL programmes. Yet a sense of descontentment is very often expressed by various sectors of the society, and even by teachers and learners. ESL pedagogy to most of them is overlaid with underachievement. One major cause for this pedagogic insufficiency is the language policy-planning which in India, as in most Third World countries, is largely a 'top down' process, often without the feedback from the classroom level, a level at which both teachers and learners are always in a position to observe the extent of mismatch between policy and provision, or between curriculum and socio-linguistic reality around it. To such a situation Aligarh Muslim University is no exception. As in other universities, here too, one can easily find that a typical school-leaving student, invariably coming from vernacular-medium schools, joins the university with a limited knowledge of English, though he/she has been studying the language for the last nine or ten consecutive years.
Besides, even a good number of undergraduates in the Department of English (those who opt for English as their Main (Honours) subject) often fail to show adequate proficiency in the language.

OBJECTIVES

The ESL insufficiency in the performance of most students requires an in-depth investigation as it relates to inadequate negotiation of intention between ESL decision-makers and the linguistic needs of students. It is generally pointed out that much of the greater part of ESL curriculum shows a mismatch between its content and the actual needs of learners. This mismatch underlines the need for ESP (English for Specific Purposes) Courses. Though recently AMU has introduced an ESP curriculum in its professional courses like Diploma Engineering, B.Sc. Engineering, Law, etc., it has not yet been able to achieve the desired aims. To overcome this underachievement, a detailed identification and analysis of students' needs is one primary way of providing substantial basis for decision-makers in designing more effective ESL programmes. That is, once the assessment of learners' need is made and learning aims are defined, the nature of curriculum may in turn be determined by these needs and aims.
The present study aims at profiling students' and faculty perception of the linguistic needs regarding the use of English for academic purposes at AMU.

METHODOLOGY

The Methodology involves the following four components:
1. The Questionnaire,
2. The Sample,
3. Findings, and
4. Discussion.

The Questionnaire:

Two questionnaires -one for student and the other for the faculty - were developed and operated for the present study. These questionnaires were developed on the basis of those designed by Zughoul and Hussein (1985) and by The Curriculum Development Cell, IIT, Kanpur (NEST Folder 2).

The faculty questionnaire (FQ) consists of 30 questions: The first three (items 1-3) of which intend to elicit biographical details; the fourth (item 4) question enquires about the language(s) provided by the university as medium(s) of instruction; the next eleven (items 5-15) focus on the general use of the English Language in academic practice; four questions (items 16-19) relate to
faculty - perception of the students ability and proficiency in the English language; eight questions (items 20-27) try to infer the linguistic needs; and the last three questions (items 28-30) seek faculty's opinion regarding planning ESP Courses.

Like the faculty questionnaire (FQ), even the student questionnaire (SQ) carries 30 items: the first seven items (1-7) relate to the biographical details; item no. 8 asks about the medium(s) of instruction as provided by the university; the next eight questions (items 9-16) elicit data on language use; five items (17-21) infer students' perception of their language ability; seven items (22-28) focus on the language need; and the last two (items 29-30) reflect upon the existing courses.

Broadly the two questionnaires (FQ & SQ) intend to infer three major areas of investigation:

1. extent of the use of English at AMU,
2. perception of students' language ability as perceived by faculty and students; and
3. perception of language needs.

The items in the questionnaires are not arranged to sequentially follow these areas of investigation. Rather, they are arranged in a broken sequence in order to obviate the possibility of stereotyped bias in response. These questionnaires were distributed
to two samples, students and faculty respondents with a covering letter assuring that the information obtained will be used for the sole purpose of research and the confidentiality of the information and sources will be strictly observed.

2. THE SAMPLE

The faculty sample consisted of 100 teaching staffs in the faculties of Arts, Social Sciences, Life Sciences, Natural Sciences, Commerce, Engineering, and Law. This questionnaire was randomly distributed to the teaching staffs from the rank of lecturers up to Professors. In the Faculty of Arts, the Language departments (like English, Hindi, Persian, Sanskrit, Urdu, Arabic, Modern Indian Languages, etc.) have been consciously excluded because they use their respective language medium of instruction. Of the two sets of questionnaire prepared, the first set (FQ) was served to the faculty sample. The faculty-wise distribution of this sample (S1) is as follows:

S1 (Faculty Sample)
N-100

---1. Arts (N=15)
---2. Social Science (N=15)
---3. Commerce (N=15)
---4. Life Science (N=15)
---5. Natural Science (N=15)
---6. Engineering (N=15)
---7. Law (N=10)
The second set of questionnaire (SQ) was distributed randomly in almost proportionate number among 800 undergraduates enrolled in the same faculties as mentioned above. This sample (S2) comprised nearly 15.2% of the student population enrolled in the first and second years of the academic session 1994-95. Like faculty sample here too no respondent was selected from the language departments in the Faculty of Arts. The questionnaire was distributed with equal proportion of 100 students per faculty. But since the faculties of Arts, Social sciences, Life Sciences and Natural Science in the university do not have co-education, 100 girl-respondents were chosen from the Abdullah Women's College, which is affiliated to AMU and where undergraduate teaching are carried out for girls separately. The data thus collected was tabulated and it's frequency and means were calculated manually. The break up of the student sample is given below:

S2 (Student Sample)  
N=800

---1. Arts [N=150 (100 boys+50 girls)]
---2. Social Science  
[N=150 (100 boys + 50 girls)]
---3. Commerce [N=100]
---4. Life Science [N=100]
---5. Natural Science [N=100]
---6. Engineering [N=100]
---7. Law [N=100]
3. FINDINGS

The findings of the present study are categorized under the following three sub-heads:

1. The extent of the use of English as viewed by students and faculty at AMU;
2. Perception of students language abilities as viewed by students themselves and faculty; and
3. Perception of language needs as viewed by students and faculty.

1. Extent of the Use of English

Under this head, we shall infer the extent of the use of English at the university level through an investigation of the actual use of English in the classroom. Comparisons and contrasts of the students' versus faculty members' responses will also be made.

The findings of the two questionnaires will be analysed under separate headings:

a) The Faculty Response

b) The Students' Response

a) The Faculty Response

Items 5-15 in the FQ are meant to elicit the extent of the use of English at AMU. Table 1 (See page ), based on responses to item 5, (What language do you
use for classroom instruction?) relates to the question of medium of instruction as used by the faculty members. Though AMU allows for a choice among three languages - i.e., English, Hindi, and Urdu - as media of instruction and examination for undergraduates, table I reveals that English is the most dominant medium of instruction. The figures (in percentage) are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>97%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hindi</td>
<td>02%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urdu</td>
<td>01%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The majority of respondents (97 out of 100) state that they use English as a medium of instruction. Only a negligible number, 02 and 01 respondents mentioned, respectively, for Hindi and Urdu. In the faculties of Social Sciences, Life Sciences, Natural Sciences, and Engineering 100% of the respondents claimed for English as the medium of instruction. For other faculties the figures are as follows:

**Arts Faculty,**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>93.33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urdu</td>
<td>06.66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hindi</td>
<td>00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Commerce**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urdu</td>
<td>00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hindi</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculties</td>
<td>Arts</td>
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<td>-----------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hindi</td>
<td>00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urdu</td>
<td>01</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

F = Faculty Sample  
S = Student Faculty
Table 2 (See page ), covering 4 questions (items 8, 10-12) on the FQ, gives a summary of the actual use of English as viewed by the faculty members. Under item 8, (How often do you present the course-content in English?) the majority favours English. The figure says:

97% - 'Always'
03% - 'Sometimes'
00% - 'Rarely'
00% - 'Never'

Item 9 (If English is not normally the language of classroom instruction, do you prefer the use of technical terms in English?) was drafted for those respondents who mark other than 'Always'. As in the above figure, 03 respondents mark 'sometimes' for the presentation of the course content in English under item 8. In response to item 9, 100% (i.e. 3 out of 3) prefer the use of technical terms in English, even if English is not used by them for classroom instruction.
In item 10, (How often the classroom discussion with students is conducted in English?) to the query regarding the classroom discussion with students,

93% - 'Always'
2.6% - 'Sometimes'
0.4% - 'Rarely'
0.0% - 'Never'

Regarding the use of reference books in English under item 11, (Do you encourage students to read reference books in English?) the response is as follows:

98.4% - 'Always'
1.6% - 'Sometimes'
0.0% - 'Rarely'
0.0% - 'Never'

For the use of English in sessionals, tests etc. in item 12 (Do you ask your students to write reports, sessionals and test answers in English?)

98.8% - 'Always'
1.2% - 'Sometimes'
0.0% - 'Rarely'
0.0% - 'Never'

Items 6-7, and 13-15 reflect the faculty views regarding such issues as the use of English, the availability of texts in English, and suitability of English language for teaching, etc. Under item 6 (Are the text-books of your discipline available in
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>S</th>
<th>S</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>S</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>S</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>S</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>S</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>S</th>
<th>F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Queses</td>
<td>Never</td>
<td>Rarely</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>Always</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Summary of English Language use</td>
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<td>Table 2</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Notes:**
- F = Faculty Questionnaire
- S = Student Questionnaire
- Taking examinations in English
- Writing reports, sessions and tests in English.
- Reading reference books in English.
- Classroom discussion in English.
- Presentation of course content in English.
English?), 100% of the respondents affirm the availability of text-books in their respective disciplines. In item 7 (Do you think knowledge of English is crucial for your students to pass the course(s) you teach?), 73% consider English to be crucial for passing the courses.

In item 13 (Do you think that informal use of regional language in the classroom can help the average or weak students to comprehend the subject better?), quite a good number of respondents (78.9%) say 'Yes' to the query. But in item 14 (Do you think that your discipline can be taught as efficiently in a regional language as in English?) the major chunk (i.e. 92.6%) negate the view. For 'a mix of English and regional language as a suitable medium of instruction' under item 15, a small section (13%) of the respondents agree to it. The rest (87%) outrightly negate the concept.

b) The Student Response:

Items 9-16 in the SQ aim at inferring data on the students' use of the English language at the undergraduate level in AMU. Table I (on page ), based on responses to item 9 (What language is mostly used by the teachers for classroom instruction?) on the SQ, relates to the language used for the classroom instruction as viewed by the students. Students' mentioning of English, Urdu and
Hindi in item 8 (What language(s) do(es) the university provide as Medium(s) of instruction for undergraduates in your discipline?) shows that they are aware of the fact that the university provides for choice from the three languages as a medium of instruction and examination at the undergraduate level. The response to item 9 (in percentage) is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>97.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hindi</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urdu</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It means that the majority of respondents, 782 out of 800, say that English is 'mostly used by the teachers for classroom instruction'. A negligible number, 13 respondents mentioned Hindi, and 5 referred to Urdu. In the faculties of Life Sciences, Natural Sciences and Engineering, 100% of respondents claimed for the use of English as medium of instruction. Responses in the rest of the faculties are as given below:

**Arts Faculty**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>94.66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hindi</td>
<td>04.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urdu</td>
<td>01.33%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Social Sciences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>98%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hindi</td>
<td>01.33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urdu</td>
<td>00.66%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Commerce

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hindi</td>
<td>03%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urdu</td>
<td>01%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Law

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>97%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hindi</td>
<td>02%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urdu</td>
<td>01%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 (Please see page ), covering four questions (items 10-13), presents the students' response to the actual use of English. Regarding 'use of English for classroom discussion' in item 10, the respondents reflect the frequent use:

- 95% - 'Always'
- 4.5% - 'Sometimes'
- 0.5% - 'Rarely'
- 0.0% - 'Never'

In item 11 regarding 'the use of reference books in English', the response comes almost closer to the earlier one:

- 93.5% - 'Always'
- 5.5% - 'Sometimes'
- 0.6% - 'Rarely'
- 0.3% - 'Never'
To item 12 regarding 'use of English for sessional tests', the response runs as follows:

- 95.25% - 'Always'
- 3.62% - 'Sometimes'
- 0.87% - 'Rarely'
- 0.25% - 'Never'

For item 13 regarding 'use of English for examinations', the response comes closer to the above figure:

- 97.87% - 'Always'
- 1.62% - 'Sometimes'
- 0.25% - 'Rarely'
- 0.25% - 'Never'

Item 14 (If English is not normally used by yo for examinations, do you prefer the use of technical terms in English ?) is to be marked by those respondents who donot mention 'always' in item 13. The total number of such respondents in item 13 is seventeen -13 for 'sometimes'; 02 for 'Rarely', and 02 for 'Never'. 100% of these respondents claim that even 'if English is not normally used by them for examinations, they prefer the use of technical terms in English.

Items 15 & 16 gather students' views regarding 'informal use of regional language' and 'its efficiency', respectively. A good number of respondents (486 out of 800) in item 15 affirm the
utility of 'informal use of regional language in the classroom to understand the subject better'.

Regarding the efficiency of a regional language in item 16, 672 respondents out of 800 (i.e. 84%) suggest that their subjects cannot be taught as efficiently in a regional language as in English.

2. PERCEPTION OF LANGUAGE ABILITY AS VIEWED BY STUDENTS AND FACULTY

a) The Faculty Response

Items 16-19 on the Faculty Questionnaire (FQ) aim at eliciting the faculty's perception of the students' general proficiency in English and their (students') ability in specific language skills such as 'Listening Comprehension', 'Speaking', 'Reading, and 'Writing'. To the general query in item 16 'if the students, that they teach, are able to cope with instructions given in English', the respondents, in general, seem to be contented with the learners' ability. The data shows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>78.2%</td>
<td>'To a large extent'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.7%</td>
<td>'To some extent'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1%</td>
<td>'With difficulty'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0%</td>
<td>'Not at all'</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In response to item 17 (Do you think your students are proficient enough to understand courses taught in English?) too, 86 out of 100 respondents (i.e.
86%) assure that their 'students are proficient enough to understand courses taught in English'. But when they (86% respondents) are asked to evaluate their (students') proficiency, the respondents appear to be quite critical, because the majority mark the students' proficiency as 'Average':

- 61.6% - 'Average'
- 31.3% - 'Good'
- 6.9% - 'Very Good'
- 0.0% - 'Weak'

A more elaborate response of the faculty regarding the students' language abilities in different language skills can be viewed in item 18 (please evaluate the abilities of your students in different language skills.) The response is given below. (please see Table 3 on page ):

**Listening Comprehension**

- 06% - 'Very Good'
- 42% - 'Good'
- 38% - 'Mediocre'
- 09% - 'Weak'
- 05% - 'Very Weak'

**Speaking Skill**

- 01% - 'Very Good'
- 11% - 'Good'
- 43% - 'Mediocre'
- 37% - 'Weak'
- 08% - 'Very Weak'
Reading Skill:

- 07% - 'Very Good'
- 33% - 'Good'
- 49% - 'Mediocre'
- 08% - 'Weak'
- 03% - 'Very Weak'

Writing Skill:

- 03% - 'Very Good'
- 08% - 'Good'
- 57% - 'Mediocre'
- 29% - 'Weak'
- 03% - 'Very Weak'

In item 19, when the respondents were asked about the skill-area where they find their students the most deficient, they express,

- 59% - 'Writing'
- 32% - 'Speaking'
- 07% - 'Reading'
- 02% - 'Listening Comprehension'

b) The Student Response

Items 17-21 aim at assessing student perception of their own language abilities. Their response to this aspect, in general, show a high rating of the abilities - a sort of self-praise rather than self-assessment. In response to item 17 (How far are you able to with instruction through English?), for instance, the majority claim that they are
Table - 3
Perception of Language abilities (skill - based) as viewed by students and Faculty.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item No.</th>
<th>Skills</th>
<th>Very good</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Medium</th>
<th>Weak</th>
<th>Very weak</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>F</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 on FQ and 19 on SQ</td>
<td>Listening</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>17.7%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>45.8%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Speaking</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>8.7%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>49.1%</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>24.2%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>54.6%</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>41.6%</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

FQ = Faculty Questionnaire
SQ = Student Questionnaire
F = Faculty Sample
S = Student Sample
sufficiently able to cope with instruction through English:

- 89% - 'To a large extent'
- 08% - 'To some extent'
- 03% - 'With difficulty'
- 00% - 'Not at all'

Under item 18 (Do you think you are proficient enough to understand courses taught in English?), 92% of the respondents (736 out of 800) think that they are proficient enough to understand courses taught in English. When the above respondents are asked to evaluate their proficiency, they rate themselves in the following manner:

- 12% - 'Very Good'
- 56% - 'Good'
- 30.2% - 'Average'
- 1.8% - 'Weak'

Table 3 (see page ), based on item 19 (Evaluate your abilities in different language skills) on SQ, reflects students' perception of their abilities. The figure in percentage is given below:

**Listening Comprehension:**

- 17.7% - 'Very Good'
- 45.8% - 'Good'
- 34.6% - 'Mediocre'
- 1.3% - 'Weak'
- 0.5% - 'Very Weak'
Speaking:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8.7%</td>
<td>'Very Good'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49.1%</td>
<td>'Good'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35.1%</td>
<td>'Mediocre'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.6%</td>
<td>'Weak'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3%</td>
<td>'Very Weak'</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Reading:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>24.3%</td>
<td>'Very good'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>54.6%</td>
<td>'Good'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.7%</td>
<td>'Mediocre'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.3%</td>
<td>'Weak'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.1%</td>
<td>'Very Weak'</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Writing:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11%</td>
<td>'Very Good'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41.6%</td>
<td>'Good'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38.5%</td>
<td>'Mediocre'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td>'Weak'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.7%</td>
<td>'Very Weak'</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In item 20 (In which skill are you most deficient?), the given percentage find themselves the most deficient in the following order of skills:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Skill</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>53%</td>
<td>'Writing'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38.9%</td>
<td>'Speaking'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.6%</td>
<td>'Reading'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.5%</td>
<td>'Listening'</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Regarding their slower improvement, the respondents reveal as follows:

- 57% - 'Speaking'
- 38.6% - 'Writing'
- 3.9% - 'Reading'
- 0.5% - 'Listening Comprehension'

3. Perception of Language Needs as viewed by students and faculty

The Faculty Response

Eight items (20-27) on the PQ bring forth the faculty perception of learners' language needs. In item 20 (which of the following English language skills, do you think, is more important for your students than the others?), the respondents were asked to rank the four language skills -Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing -by assigning numbers 1-4 to each of these skills according to importance (1 being the most important and 4, the least important). Table 4 (see page ), based on this item, carries the 'score' and 'mean' for each of the four language skills. On the basis of faculty preferential ranking, the four skills can be organised in the following order:

1. 'Writing:'
2. 'Speaking:'
3. 'Reading:' and
4. 'Listening Comprehension:'
Table - 4
Scores and Means of each skill by Faculty and Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language Skills</th>
<th>Faculty</th>
<th>students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Score</td>
<td>Mean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Listening</td>
<td>392</td>
<td>3.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Speaking</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>1.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Reading</td>
<td>282</td>
<td>2.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Writing</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>1.54</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The responses of each respondent were tallied, added up and then divided by the total number of respondents to get 'mean' and 'score' for each of the skills. Here the lower is the mean, the more important is the skill.
The next four items (21-24) aim at inferring needs of specific sub-skills within each of the four language skills. Even for these items, respondents had to rank the given sub-skills from 1 to 4 or 5 (depending on number of sub-skills given) according to importance. Table 5 (see page ) is a summary of faculty's ranking of these sub-skills. They ranked the 'Listening' sub-skills in the following manner:

1. to follow and understand class lectures
2. to understand lectures to take notes
3. to understand questions raised by other colleagues and to follow classroom discussion
4. to understand radio and T.V. programmes

The ranking of Speaking sub-skills is as follows:

1. to speak intelligibly
2. to raise questions in classroom
3. to present oral reports
4. to speak with foreigners

Regarding Reading sub-skills order of preference goes like this,

1. reading text-books
2. reading newspapers and magazines
3. reading reference books
4. reading to understand tests
5. reading journals.
For Writing subskills:

1. writing test-answers
2. writing class-notes
3. writing class-notes
4. writing report and sessional tests
5. writing business letters and filling out forms
6. writing personal letters.

Items 25-27 intend to collect faculty response regarding continued use and need for the English language in students academic and practical life. In item 25, for instance, the figure for 'the need of English as the language of communication in the students practical life' is as follows:

- 37% 'Highly'
- 58% 'Moderately'
- 05% 'Minimally'
- 00% 'Not at all'

Under item 26, the majority shows that the students are oblivious of the need for English beyond their academic career:

- 19% 'Yes'
- 73% 'No'
- 08% 'Not sure'

Conclusively, the majority affirm in item 27 that English should be retained as the medium of instruction in the university:

- 92% 'Yes'
Table - 5
Faculty and Student Rating of language subskills

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skills and Subskills</th>
<th>Faculty</th>
<th>Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>Rating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Listening Comprehension:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a: to understand questions raised by other</td>
<td>3.75</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>students/colleagues and to follow class -</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>discussion.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b: to understand lectures in order to take</td>
<td>1.56</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>notes.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c: to follow and understand class-lectures</td>
<td>1.45</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d: to understand radio and T.V. programmes</td>
<td>3.24</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Speaking:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a: to raise questions in the classroom</td>
<td>1.89</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b: to speak intelligibly</td>
<td>1.10</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c: to speak to foreigners</td>
<td>3.60</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d: to present oral-reports in classroom</td>
<td>3.41</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Reading:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a: reading to understand tests.</td>
<td>4.74</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b: reading text - books</td>
<td>0.71</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c: reading newspapers and magazines</td>
<td>2.07</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d: reading professional journals</td>
<td>5.05</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e: reading reference books</td>
<td>2.43</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Writing:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a: writing personal letters.</td>
<td>4.56</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b: writing business letters and filling out</td>
<td>4.10</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>forms.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c: writing class-notes</td>
<td>1.41</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d: writing test answers</td>
<td>1.11</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e: writing reports and sessional papers.</td>
<td>3.82</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
05% 'No'
03% 'Not sure'

The last three items (28-30) on the FQ relate to the faculty views on the issues related to syllabus-design. Under item 28, for instance, all, except 6 faculty members who are 'not sure' suggest that the English language course should have a bearing on the students' optional subjects. Keeping this aspect in mind, perhaps more than 90% respondents (95% in item 29 and 93% in item 30) welcome the view that Subject-teachers' interaction with language-teachers at various stages of language teaching, e.g. Curriculum planning, syllabus design, etc. as a viable strategy for making language teaching more useful to the students. In items 29 and 30 nobody, outrightly, negates the above view. Of course 5% in item 29 and 7% in item 30 appear to be 'not sure'.

The Student Response

Like the FQ, even the students had to make the preferential ranking of the language skills and subskills according to their needs under items 22-28. Table 4 (See page 131) based on item 22, reflects the following arrangement of skills according to their needs:
1. Writing.
2. Speaking
3. Reading
4. Listening Comprehension.

Following the same instruction as that on the FQ, students' ranking of the 'subskills' (items 23-26) are arranged in Table 5 (See page 134). They ranked the Listening Comprehension subskills as:

1. to follow and understand class lectures
2. to understand lectures to take notes
3. to understand questions raised by other colleagues and to follow class-discussion
4. to understand radio and T.V. programmes

The Speaking subskills are ranked as follows:

1. to speak intelligibly
2. to raise questions in the classroom
3. to present oral reports
4. to speak with foreigners

For Reading subskills the ranking is as below:

1. reading text-books
2. reading newspapers and magazines
3. reading to understand tests
4. reading reference books
5. reading journals
Regarding writing subskills

1. writing test-answers
2. writing class-notes
3. writing report and sessional papers
4. writing business letters and filling out forms
5. writing personal letters

Items 27-28 expect students' views regarding need for English in their practical life and its continued use as medium of instruction. A major bulk of respondents mention 'moderate' need for English in their practical life, in the given figure.

- 29.8% - 'Highly'
- 59.8% - 'Moderately'
- 10.4% - 'Minimally'
- 0.0% - 'Not at all'

In item 28 (Do you think English should be continued as the medium of instruction in the university?), the respondents in general, reflect a continued need for English as the medium of instruction:

- 87.2% - 'Yes'
- 12.7% - 'No'
- 0.0% - 'Not sure'

Apart from the above specific investigations of the specific language needs in the form of skills and sub-skills, the last two items (29-30) on the SQ elicits student views regarding the existing English
language programme and their expectation. Under item 30, for instance, the majority of students reveal that the compulsory course in English offered by the Department of English, can improve their proficiency level only 'to some extent'. The figure is as follows:

33% - 'Yes'
59% - 'To some extent'
08% - 'No'

But in item 29, 87% of the respondents enthusiastically suggest that the 'compulsory' English course offered by The Department of English should have a direct bearing on their 'optional' subjects. While nobody says 'No', only a small number, but significant, 13% mentioned 'to some extent' for the above query.

4. Discussion:

The present survey was conducted as a first step towards the identification of the needs of English at Aligarh Muslim University. The findings received will be discussed under the same heads as above:

1. Extent of the use of English as viewed by student and faculty.

Responses of the students and faculty members collected through the two questionnaires - FQ and SQ
- indicate that English is the most dominant language in the actual classroom situation, though a little room for native languages too is revealed by a negligible number of respondents. The majority of them confirm that knowledge of English is a decisive factor for success at the university level, and that English is the most dominant medium of instruction among the three - English, Urdu and Hindi - as provided by the University (Table I). Maximum courses are taught and tested in English and have English text-books. Assessing the actual classroom interaction (Table II), it can be argued that the classroom teaching and discussion is conducted mostly in English. Even for taking class-notes, reading of reference materials and taking examinations, English plays the central role. These responses were furnished by those who agree that they use English. But what about those who 'rarely' or 'never' make use of English for classroom interaction? Does it mean that they strictly make use of their native language? The data for such respondents reveal the general pattern, practised in most of Indian universities, that the technical terms are used in English and explanations are made in native languages. Table I shows that it is only in Arts, Social Sciences, Law and Commerce that a meagre percentage of students make use of native languages. Among faculty respondents just one in the
Arts faculty, out of one hundred in overall total, says so. This phenomenon is typical mainly of students in these faculties due to two reasons: first because a good number of students in these faculties come from socially, economically and educationally backward sections and so they take time in switching over to English. And secondly, due to the provision in the Arts and Social Sciences faculties that a student must opt for two subjects from his/her own faculty and one from the other faculty (depending on the Main subject). For instance, a student in Arts faculty carrying all languages as subjects may opt for two languages (i.e. may be Hindi main and Sanskrit as a subsidiary) to make a combination of three subjects. Thus their response to English use drops down in percentage. It reflects that even the choice of subjects for combination determines the language use. Despite these facts it can be affirmed that though there is room for native languages, English remains to play an overwhelming role in the general set up of educational at the Aligarh Muslim University.

The majority of students and faculty agree that their disciplines cannot be taught as efficiently in a regional language as in English. However, they warmly support the informal use of regional
language. Even the new theories of language acquisition convince us that in the Indian situation bi-lingual mode could prove to be quite effective for linguistically weaker students. The fact that teachers do use a regional language along with English as and when necessary make us believe that formal acceptance of bi-lingual teaching may give a better understanding of the subject and an improvement in their performance as well as the language skills.

2. Perception of the students' language ability as viewed by students themselves and the faculty.

A comparison of student and faculty perception of language ability reveals that while the students tend to exaggerate their own abilities, the faculty are quite critical about them. On the basis of their own ability students arrange the four skills as 'Good' and 'Very good' in the following order:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skills</th>
<th>Students</th>
<th>Faculty</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Listening comprehension</td>
<td>63.5%</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Speaking</td>
<td>57.8%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Reading</td>
<td>78.8%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Writing</td>
<td>52.6%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6: Students and Faculty perception of Language Ability in the four skills as 'Good' and 'Very Good'.
The above table is suggestive of students' self-appraisal and faculty's critical attitude. Comparatively the faculty percentage is lower. Likewise we can view the percentage of response estimating the skills as 'Weak' and 'Very Weak' in the following table: (In comparison to the student response, the faculty percentage goes up.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skills</th>
<th>Students</th>
<th>Faculty</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Listening comprehension</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Speaking</td>
<td>6.9%</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Reading</td>
<td>3.1%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Writing</td>
<td>8.8%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7: Student and Faculty perception of Language Ability in the four skills estimated as 'Weak' and 'Very Weak'.

Even if the above perceptions are supposed to be honest it becomes evident in the latter course of discussion that students are least proficient in the most needed skills. So far self-appraisal is concerned, students feel more comfortable in boasting of their abilities in 'Reading' and 'Listening Comprehension'. Because these skills are hardly dealt with or evaluated by teachers in the classroom or even in the examinations. Students make a seemingly realistic response when enquired of their abilities in 'Speaking' and
'Writing' skills. The aforesaid statement can be verified when the rise and fall in percentage in Table 6 and 7 is observed. It is better to observe, for instance, the responses for 'Very weak' and 'Very good' (see table 3). For 'Reading' and 'Listening Comprehension' less than one percent (1%) students confess to be 'Very weak', and 17.7% and 24.2% students claim to be 'Very good'. Personal experiences as a teacher of any subject makes one realise that the above responses are far removed from reality. For 'Speaking' and 'Writing' skills 8.7% and 11% claim to be 'Very good', and 8% and 3% respectively, accept as being 'Very weak'. Thus we see that students exaggerate their abilities only in those skills, like 'listening comprehension' and 'Reading', which are much neglected by the curriculum. But they reflect realism in 'Speaking' and 'Writing' because an assessment of these skills through written and oral examinations make them realise their weaknesses.

Students' ability in different skills find a concrete shape in response to item 19 on the FQ and item 20 on the SQ. Both faculty and students come to a consensus that students are most deficient in 'Writing' and 'Speaking'. The responses can be viewed neatly in the following table.
The table shows that students are most deficient in those two skills which are the main means of communication. The present section on 'Perception of language abilities', thus, conveys that both the faculty and students are somehow contented with the existing abilities, but they are not unaware of their deficiencies.

3. Perception of Language Needs as viewed by faculty and students.

Table 4 clearly shows that both faculty members and students agree that the most needed skill is 'Writing'. The order of preference in which they arrange the four skills is as follows:

1st Priority - 'Writing'
2nd Priority - 'Speaking'
3rd Priority - 'Reading'
4th Priority - 'Listening comprehension'
This arrangement is quite convincing especially in a country where English has got to perform a role of paramount importance and carries a prestige attached to it. Apart from this careerism involved in education, especially when economy is liberalised and multi-nationals are being welcomed in India, expects that the communication skills (writing' and 'speaking') be given primacy over reception skills ('Reading' and 'Listening Comprehension'). If this priority-wise arrangement of skills is observed in accordance with the item 19 (on FQ) and item 20 (on SQ), as discussed in the earlier section, shows that students are most deficient in the most-needed skills. The above hierarchy of language-skills needs (mainly students' response) can be justified also on the view that students are mainly 'examination-oriented'. Since in India, examination means written tests, so the respondents give primary position to 'Writing' skill. 'Speaking' attains the position of second most needed skill by both students and faculty because an inability to express themselves in English orally put students at a disadvantage as compared to those whose spoken English gives the added opportunity in an ESL context. 'Reading' and 'Listening Comprehension' get the third and the fourth position on the priority list. Personal talks with the respondents during data-collection reflected two major aspects regarding these skills.
One, that 'Reading' as a skill is misunderstood by a good number of respondents (mostly students). To them Reading meant simply fluent and loud reading of the text with or without any understanding of it; secondly teachers' experiences and their honest exposition of the fact that students in general, feel restless in listening to the lectures, unless the topic is interesting and motivating. Students show themselves to be least concerned to the 'Listening comprehension'. For the arrangement of the last two skills, some teachers (when asked by the researcher) argued that 'Writing' and 'Speaking' are the skills which determine one's degree of learning and so they should be given primacy.

Categorization of various sub-skills according to importance by both students and faculty members in Table 5 convey that the learning of English carries functional motives. A careful look at Table 5 clearly reflects that both sets of respondents are more or less in full agreement as to ranking the sub-skills of the four broad skills, with a minor exception in the arrangement of 'Listening' and 'Speaking' sub-skills. Under 'Listening comprehension' while students rank item 23.a (ability to understand questions raised by other students/colleagues and to follow class discussion) as third the faculty (in 21.a) gave it the forth
position. Likewise, item 25.a (Reading to understand tests) is ranked third by students, but it (23.a) is given fourth position by the faculty members. So we find a variation in ranking of sub-skills only at the lower levels, while there is a complete agreement for the top-ranking sub-skills. Low-ranking of such sub-skills as 'understanding radio and TV programmes'; 'Speaking with foreigners'; 'reading journals'; and 'writing personal letters' by the students reflects their lack of personal initiative for exposure to the actual language use. And such a response by the faculty members suggests possibly their confinement to lecture-based classes. The same aspect may be one of the reasons for the faculty in giving top priority to the skills like 'understanding class lectures'; 'speaking intelligibly'; 'reading text-books' and 'writing test answers'. Students' response in giving these sub-skills the first preference determines that their immediate concern is to get through the examinations.

Responses to the remaining items in both the questionnaires propose indirectly a change in the existing syllabus by bringing in a coordination between the language teacher and the subject-teacher. In item 30 on SQ, for instance, 59% of students say that the existing language programme can improve their proficiency level 'to some
extent'. That means they expect 'an effective programme for improving their language abilities, for which they suggest in majority that the compulsory English course should have a direct bearing on their optional subjects. Even the faculty members in general, suggested the same and the majority believed that a cooperation between the language-teacher and the subject-teacher can be a viable strategy for making language teaching more useful to students. The common welcoming attitude by both sets of respondents to these items, perhaps, suggests that the best source for students to get acquainted with and trained in a language is through continuous exposure to the authentic texts of their own interest.

SUMMING UP

Such an attempt to survey the needs for the English language at Aligarh Muslim University unfolds a situation which is quite common for the whole nation. Though English is being used as the medium of instruction, a small percentage of students are proficient enough in 'Writing' and 'Speaking' (the first two most needed skills) in comparison to 'Reading' and 'Listening Comprehension' (the two most neglected ones). An attempt in finding out the reason for such a phenomenon expects a proper
investigation into the very process of curriculum planning. In other words, the present findings question the very process of the existing curriculum planning. The present study, thus, furnishes the ground reality by investigating the actual language use and needs as viewed by students and faculty, premised on which, more effective language programmes can be developed in order to bridge the gap between the curricular aim and the socio-linguistic needs around it.