

Investigating the Challenges Faced by Students in General English Courses at the University Level: A Case Study of Almergib University, Faculty of Arts and Sciences, Messalata

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Abstract (English)

This quantitative research explores challenges encountered by students in General English courses at Almergib University's Faculty of Arts and Sciences, Messalata. Specifically, the study aimed to examine the course's impact on students' motivation, language proficiency, and self-directed learning(autonomy); identify the most challenging aspects for students; examine the influence of teaching methods, resources, and the learning environment; determine if differences exist based on gender, field of study, or study type; explore faculty perceptions on the necessity of English instruction; and lastly evaluate the alignment of existing courses with the departments educational needs. Quantitative data were collected via closed-ended questionnaires administered to 120 students and teachers across departments.

Key findings indicate that students struggle particularly with speaking and listening skills. Although teachers recognize English's academic importance, they expressed dissatisfaction with the current course, noting student challenges in reading and writing academic texts. Both Humanities and Applied Sciences groups favored increased course time, but statistical analysis highlighted differing needs, with Applied Sciences teachers finding the courses misaligned. The study underscores the urgency of curriculum reform, technology integration, extended English programs, and alignment of curricula with academic and career needs.

Key words: English Language Learning (or EFL Learning), Challenges, General English Courses, Curriculum, Teaching Methods

الملخص (العربية)

تتناول هذه الدراسة الكمية التحديات التي يواجهها طلاب مقررات اللغة الإنجليزية العامة بكلية الآداب والعلوم بجامعة المرقب. هدفت الدراسة إلى تحديد هذه التحديات، وتقييم تأثير المقرر على دافعية الطلاب وكفاءتهم، ودراسة العوامل المؤثرة (كطرق التدريس والبيئة)، وتحليل الفروق بين المجموعات الطلابية وتصورات أعضاء هيئة التدريس حول المقرر ومواءمته لاحتياجات الأقسام. تم جمع البيانات باستخدام استبيانات وزعت على 120 طالبًا ومدرسًا. أظهرت النتائج صعوبات لدى الطلاب، خاصة في مهارتي التحدث والاستماع، وعدم رضا المدرسين عن المقرر الحالي وضعف الطلاب في القراءة والكتابة الأكاديمية. كشف التحليل عن تباين في الاحتياجات بين تخصصي الإنسانيات والعلوم وعدم مواءمة المقرر لمتطلبات العلوم. تؤكد الدراسة على ضرورة الإصلاح الشامل للمنهج، دمج التكنولوجيا، وزيادة مدة البرنامج، ومواءمته مع المتطلبات الأكاديمية والمهنية. كلمات مفتاحية: تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية، التحديات، طلاب الجامعة، مقررات اللغة الإنجليزية العامة، المناهج، طرق التدريس.

1. Introduction

The widespread of English around the world has transformed it into an international lingua franca making it an essential tool for succeeding academically and professionally (Crystal, 2003). So much so, Graddol (2006) claims that proficiency in English is not just an advantage but a necessity for those looking for global academic success as well as international job seeking.

The importance of English in higher education cannot be overemphasized. According to Nunan (2003), English proficiency has a strong correlation with academic achievement and employability. The role of EFL education has increased as universities globally offer programs in English, and the job market requires English communication skills.

Therefore, and due to its principal importance, it was of an urgency to delve into the process of teaching English at University level and explore whether there are any difficulties and challenges encountering both teachers and students at the aforementioned stage. By investigating the situation and analyzing current practices through a comprehensive review of literature and case studies from various global contexts, this research seeks to contribute to the ongoing topic on optimizing EFL teaching at the university level in general and at Almergib University- the Faculty of Arts and Sciences- Messalata in particular.

2. Background on English Teaching at the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, Messalata - Almergib University:

At the Faculty of Arts and Sciences in Messalata, Almergib University, the teaching of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) is designed to meet the different needs of students from varied academic backgrounds, all of whom are native Arabic speakers. The student body includes those majoring in sciences like chemistry and biology, as well as humanities such as Arabic language and Islamic studies. Although these students have diverse academic specializations, they all take in a General English course, making it more challenging to meet the varying needs of different disciplines.

2.1. Semester System Course (ENI - English 1)

Table 1: General English Course Description- Semester System

Category	Details
Content	Grammar: Parts of speech, nouns, verbs, pronouns, articles, adjectives, and tenses (Present Simple, Past Simple, Present Continuous, Past Continuous, Present Perfect). Reading and Listening: Academic-themed reading passages and listening audio files at an elementary level.
Duration	Total Weeks: 16 weeks. Weekly Hours: 2 hours of lectures (total of 2 hours per week). Total Hours: Approximately 32 hours of instruction.
Goals	1. Enable students to master English in writing and reading. 2. Help students understand and communicate in English to broaden their perspectives. 3. Enable students to connect with the world and access global references.

	4. Promote the dissemination of knowledge, culture, and Islamic teachings through English.
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2.2. Annual System Course (English 1 - General Year)

Table 2: General English Course Description- Annual System

Category	Details
Content	<p>Grammar: Similar to the semester system, covering parts of speech, nouns, verbs, pronouns, articles, adjectives, and tenses (Present Simple, Past Simple, Present Continuous, Past Continuous, Present Perfect).</p> <p>Reading and Listening: Academic-themed reading passages and listening audio files at an elementary level.</p> <p>Exams: Two midterm exams and a final exam.</p>
Duration	<p>Total Weeks: 30 weeks (full academic year).</p> <p>Weekly Hours: 2 hours of lectures (total of 2 hours per week).</p> <p>Total Hours: Approximately 60 hours of instruction.</p>
Goals	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Enable students to master English in writing and reading. 2. Help students understand and communicate in English to broaden their perspectives. 3. Enable students to connect with the world and access global references. 4. Promote the dissemination of knowledge, culture, and Islamic teachings through English.

2.3. Key Differences:

Table 3: Comparison between semester and annual systems

Category	Semester System	Annual System
Duration	16 weeks (one semester)	30 weeks (full academic year)
Total Hours	Approximately 32 hours	Approximately 60 hours
Pacing	More condensed, covering material in a shorter time frame	Spreads content over a longer period, allowing for more in-depth study and practice

The two courses have a lot in common as they both are designed to develop students' proficiency in English grammar, reading, writing, and listening. Additionally, they both seek to improve students' ability to communicate effectively in English and equipping them to engage with global knowledge and resources. Additionally, the courses promote cultural and religious understanding through the use of English. However, the only main difference between the two systems is the duration as the semester system is supposed to cover almost the same contents in half the period as the annual system.

The landscape of English language teaching and learning at the university level in Libya poses unique challenges, especially within the Faculty of Arts and Sciences at Almergib University, Messalata. It is worth noting that Arabic is the students' native language; in

addition, English classes are conducted in a monolingual Arabic-speaking environment with limited exposure (only 2 hours per week).

3. Research Questions

- 1) How does the English course influence students' motivation, language proficiency, and self-directed learning?
- 2) Which aspects are the most challenging to students?
- 3) How do teaching methods, classroom resources, and the learning environment affect students' English learning outcomes?
- 4) Are there any statistically significant difference among the groups in the previous aspects in terms of students':
 - a) Gender
 - b) Field of study (Humanities vs Sciences)
 - c) Type of study (Annual system vs semester system)
- 5) How do faculty members across different departments perceive the necessity of integrating English language instruction within their curricula?
- 6) To what extent do educators in different academic departments evaluate the alignment of the existing English language courses with their educational objectives?

4. Objectives

This research aims to achieve the following objectives:

1. To examine how the English course impacts students' motivation, language proficiency, and self-directed learning.
2. To identify which aspects of the English course are the most challenging for students.
3. To study how teaching methods, classroom resources, and the learning environment affect students' English learning outcomes.
4. To determine if there are statistically significant differences among student groups (in terms of gender, field of study - Humanities vs Sciences, and type of study - Annual system vs semester system) regarding the previously mentioned aspects (challenges, outcomes, etc.).
5. To explore how faculty members across different departments perceive the necessity of integrating English language instruction within their curricula.

5. Methodology

The researcher has utilized a questionnaire submitted to 130 students in order find out the perceived effect of the courses on students in addition to the applied teaching methods and equipment used during teaching the course. Only 94 copies were returned at a response rate 72%. The questionnaire was mostly close-ended five-Likert scale items with an open-ended item inquiring whether students had had any difficulty during or after the course and if there were any to mention them.

Moreover, another close-ended questionnaire was administered to teachers in other departments within the same faculty in order to explore their attitudes towards the importance of teaching English within their curricula as well as their satisfaction levels

with the current program. 30 copies were distributed but only 22 copies were returned at a response rate of 73%.

As to the analysis of the two questionnaires, both descriptive and inferential statistical analyses were applied to get a summary of the data and to look for any generalizable findings.

It is worth noting that the study covers both disciplines (Humanities and sciences).

6. Literature Review

The existing literature related to the topic at hand is rich and had been extensively studied; nonetheless, there had not been sufficient studies in the Libyan setting especially, Almergib University.

Baghli (2014) conducted an observational study exploring challenges in ESP teaching in Algeria at the undergraduate level. The study employed qualitative observations to analyze students' behavior, classroom interaction, and teaching practices. The findings revealed that while most Algerian students were motivated to learn English, their proficiency levels varied, and their speaking skills were best described as 'average.' Additionally, the use of the native language (Arabic and French) was frequent during classes to ensure comprehension. Although group and pair work aimed to foster speaking in English, students often reverted to Arabic and French, likely due to their limited English vocabulary.

In a different context, Borjian (2015) carried out a study investigating the challenges facing students when learning English at university in Mexico. The researcher administered a questionnaire to 76 Mexican English university teachers. The study concluded that the largest obstacle was students' attitude and motivation, as many students expressed disinterest or perceived English as too difficult. Moreover, the study shed light on other hurdles such as the focus on grammar over communicative competence and a shortage of highly proficient English teachers. In addition, the study reported students had limited access to English outside the classroom, and negative views towards the US also played a role for some students.

Similarly, Abuklaish (2014) conducted a study in Libya with a different focus, investigating the needs of undergraduate students at Sebha University. The study utilized questionnaires, classroom observations, and semi-structured interviews to gather data. The findings revealed that students generally had low English proficiency, with most being beginners. Moreover, students expressed a preference for smaller classes, while the study also highlighted unclear objectives for ESP courses and a lack of effective teaching methodologies.

Building on these findings, Aburkhis (2018) examined the challenges faced by ESP teachers of medicine at the University of Tripoli. The study employed a mixed-methods approach, utilizing classroom observations, semi-structured interviews with teachers, and a questionnaire administered to 15 ESP teachers. Several difficulties were identified, including a lack of specialized knowledge in the subject matter, inadequate resources and materials, a lack of visual aids, overcrowded classes ranging from 100 to 130 students,

insufficient time allocation, limited teacher training, and the reliance on traditional teaching methods with minimal student interaction or group work.

In comparison, Zhou (2022) conducted a study in China exploring the difficulties facing Chinese students in English-medium higher education programs employing a mixed-methods approach relying on online questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. The study found that students reported having greater difficulties in productive skills, particularly writing academically, while in speaking, their biggest obstacle was confidence. On the other hand, the difficulties related to reading were reading comprehension, while in listening, it was accent-related. The study also discussed the existence of institutional language supports in the form of preparatory language programs and self-access learning centers. However, the program lacked structural support, as content teachers often offered ad-hoc support in the form of code-switching to Chinese and using multilingual materials.

In a more recent study, Missoum (2023) conducted a comprehensive meta-analysis exploring challenges faced by ESP teachers in Algeria. The study gathered data from 55 existing studies on ESP teaching in the country, synthesizing their research designs, data collection methods, and findings to identify recurring themes. The study identified several challenges, including unrealistic expectations for ESP teachers to design and deliver syllabi without adequate support and training, especially when lacking sufficient subject-matter knowledge. Other challenges included a lack of resources, insufficient training in ESP teaching methodologies, learners with low proficiency in English, and low learner motivation resulting from a perceived lack of relevance.

Similarly, Zarzah (2024) conducted a study investigating the challenges faced by faculty deans at Almergib University. The study used both descriptive and inferential statistics. The study found that the most pressing challenges faced by deans included the lack of clear criteria for evaluating performance, the scarcity of conferences and workshops affecting teachers' performance, poor campus facilities, and a lack of equipment, laboratories, and infrastructure.

7. Data analysis

7.1. Students Questionnaire

The questionnaire was distributed to 130 students in the faculty, however, only 94 copies were filled with a response rate of 72%. The questionnaire scored a high internal consistency score at Cronbach's Alpha of 0.84 which is deemed as good indicator of the questionnaire reliability (Datatab, n.d.).

Table 4: Students' questionnaire Cronbach's Alpha internal consistency measure

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.843	15

The sample consisted of 94 students, the majority of the sample were female students counting for 91% of the sample and only less than 10% were male students.

The following pie chart illustrates an almost-equal distribution of students enrolled in annual (50%) and semester-based (49%) academic systems, with only 1% of responses missing or unclear. This indicates that the sample taken from the population is from departments with a diverse range of academic calendars.

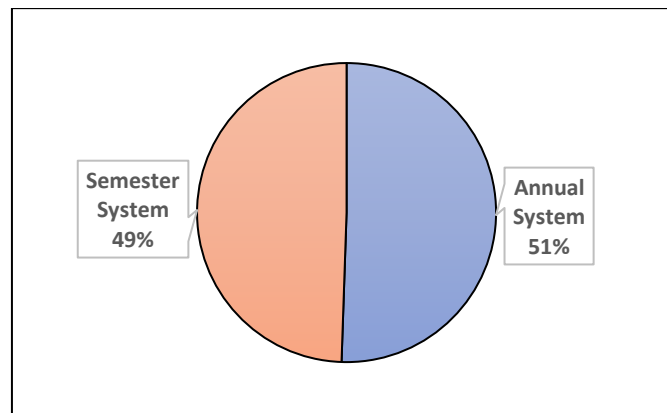


Figure 1: Type of study system

Additionally, regarding the division in term of discipline type, the "Field of Study type" pie chart demonstrates that respondents from Applied Sciences comprise the majority of participants (63%), whereas Humanities students represent 36% of the sample. A small percentage (1%) of responses were blank or unclear. This unequal distribution mirrors the composition of the student population, where Applied Sciences have a larger student body compared to Humanities within the faculty. Nonetheless, this proportionate representation guarantees that the study captures the perspectives of both fields.

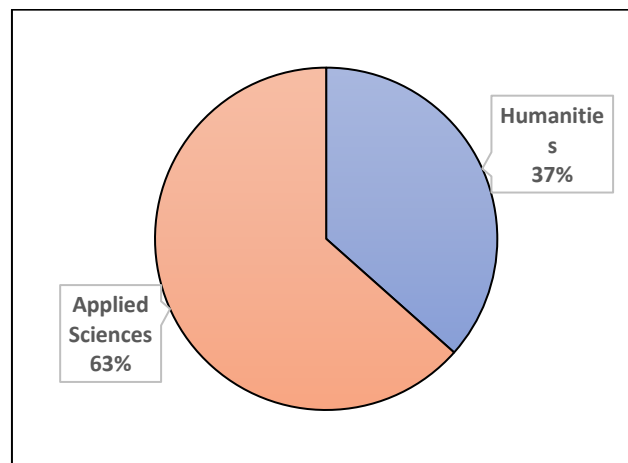


Figure 2: Fields of Study

7.1.1. The impact of the course on students' motivation, and autonomy

The following horizontal bar graph shows the responses to the statement, "The impact of studying the subject on their desire to learn English." A clear majority of respondents (36) reported that they "Agree" and (8) reported strongly agree with the statement, indicating a positive impact on their desire to learn English. The "Disagree" and "Strongly disagree"

responses are also notable, however, with 20 participants selecting the disagree option and 11 opting for the later. Whereas, the "Neutral" category accounts for 19 responses.

According to Zarzah (2024), it is possible to quantify the boundaries of each liker scale item to give a summary of the responses as following:

Table 5: Five-Likert scale items data boundaries

Likert Scale item	Starting point	Ending point
Strongly Agree	0	1.8
Agree	1.81	2.6
Neutral	2.61	3.4
Disagree	3.41	4.2
Strongly Disagree	4.21	5

As the exact middle point is three representing the clear-cut neutral point, and with an average score of 2.89, the data indicates a slight leaning towards agreement, supporting the observation that many participants felt the subject positively influenced their desire to learn English.

Table 6: The impact of studying the subject on their desire to learn English

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
The impact of studying the subject on their desire to learn English	94	1.00	5.00	2.8936	1.18656

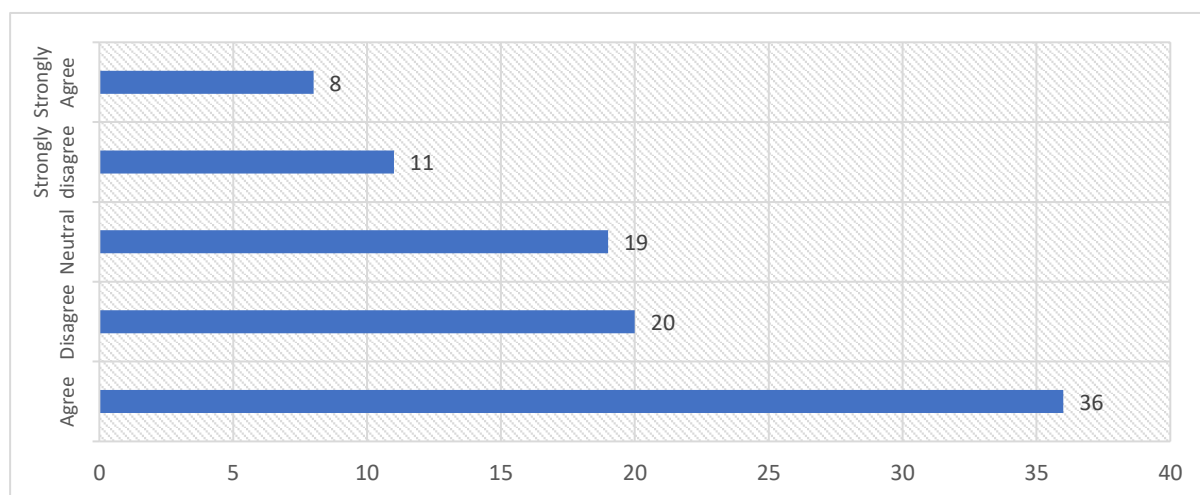


Figure 3: The impact of studying the subject on their desire to learn English

Moreover, as to the effect of the course on acquiring vocabulary, the following horizontal bar graph displays responses to the statement, "My vocabulary has increased considerably

after taking the course." A considerable number of respondents (39) "Agree" or "Strongly Agree" with the statement accounting for more than two fifths of the sample, while a slightly smaller number (31), almost the third, remain "Neutral." Whereas "Disagree" and "Strongly Disagree" responses account for 23 constituting the smallest proportion less than 25%.

Following the same table, Table 5, the average score of 2.80 indicates a slight tendency towards agreement, suggesting that many participants perceived an increase in their vocabulary after the course.

Table 7: My vocabulary has increased considerably after taking the course

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
My vocabulary has increased considerably after taking the course	93	1.00	5.00	2.8065	.94706
Valid N (listwise)	93				

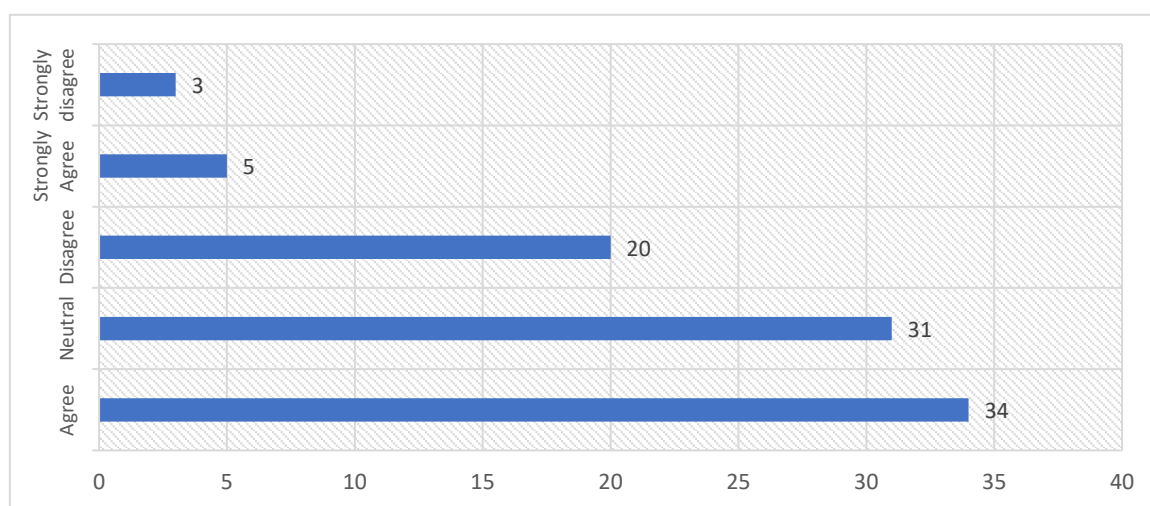


Figure 4: My vocabulary has increased considerably after taking the course

However, despite the good effect of the course on both motivation and vocabulary, it seems that the course was not very good at helping students improve their speaking skills. The following horizontal bar graph presents responses to the statement, "Now I can speak English fluently after taking the course." A significant majority of respondents (51), more than the half, "Disagree" or "Strongly Disagree" with the statement, while 24 selected "Neutral." Only 14 respondents opted for "Agree" or "Strongly Agree" responses

The average score of 3.57 indicates a tendency towards disagreement, suggesting that most participants did not feel they could speak English fluently after the course.

Table 8: Now I can speak English fluently after taking the course

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation

I can speak English Fluently now after the course	89	1.00	5.00	3.5730	1.01004
Valid N (listwise)	89				

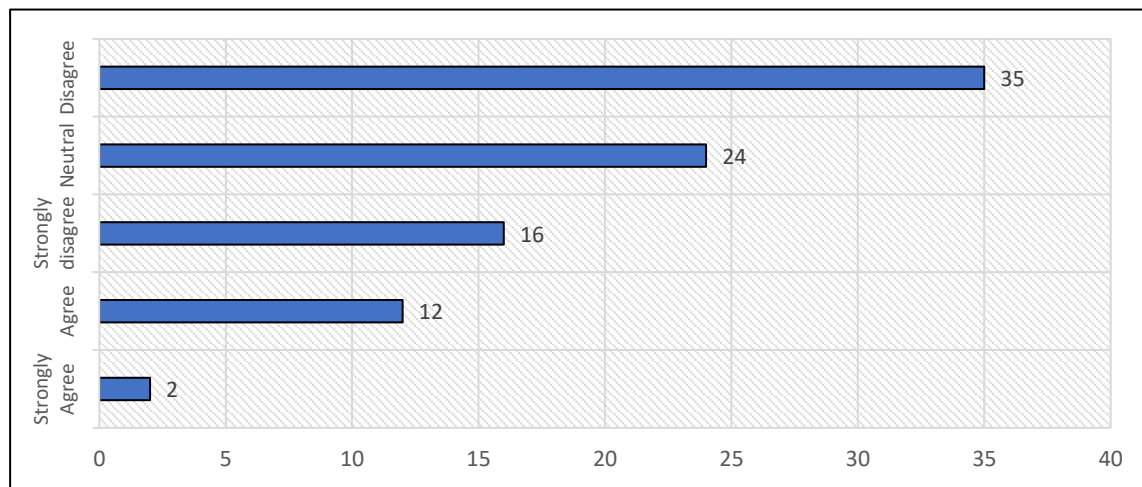


Figure 5: Now I can speak English fluently after taking the course

Regarding the efficiency of the course at equipping students with the language necessary to navigate different sources such online Multimedia outlets such YouTube, Figure 6 illustrates responses to the statement, "Now, I can understand educational lectures in English in my field on platforms like YouTube." A significant portion of respondents (45) "Disagree" or "Strongly Disagree" with the statement which accounts for 48% of the sample, indicating difficulty in understanding such lectures. Although relatively less, agreeing responses are also notable, with 27 participants, almost a third, selecting agreement options. On the other hand, the "Neutral" category accounts for 20 responses constituting less than a quarter of the sample.

The mean score of 3.29 indicates a slight tendency towards disagreement, suggesting that many participants did not feel they could readily understand English educational lectures in their field on platforms like YouTube.

Table 9: Now, I can understand educational lectures in English in my field on platforms like YouTube.

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Now, I can understand educational lectures in English in my field on platforms like YouTube.	92	1.00	5.00	3.2935	1.12453
Valid N (listwise)	92				

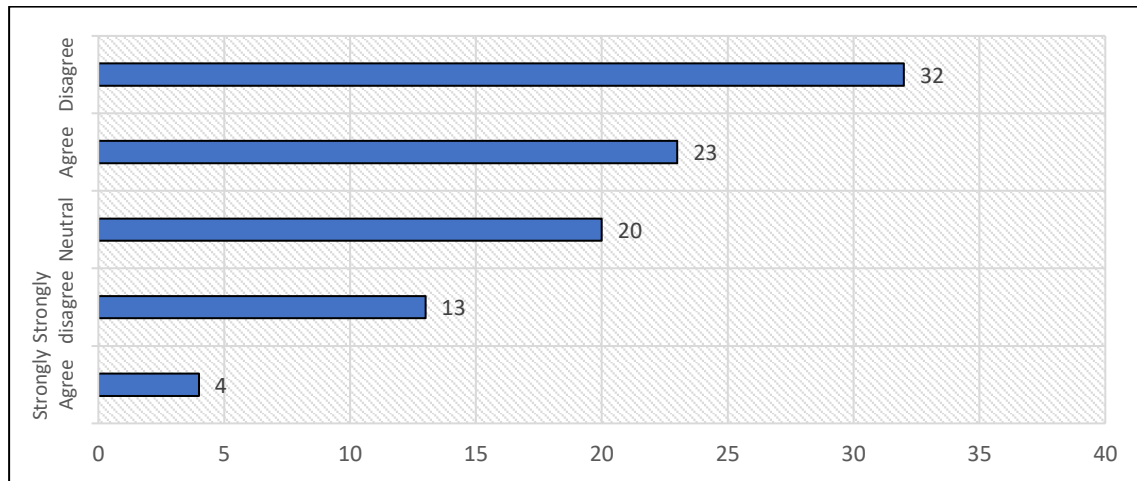


Figure 6: Now, I can understand educational lectures in English in my field on platforms like YouTube.

7.1.2. Students' attitudes towards teaching methodology, materials and technology integration

Regarding the perceiving of teaching methodology as enjoyable and interesting, Figure 7 displays responses to the statement "The teaching method was enjoyable and engaging." A significant number of respondents (39) selected agreement options, accounting for 42% of responses, whereas disagreement options were also significant albeit relatively less (24) almost a quarter.

The mean score of 2.83 indicates a slight tendency towards agreement, suggesting that many participants found the teaching method enjoyable and engaging.

Table 10: The teaching method was enjoyable and engaging.

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
The teaching method was enjoyable and engaging.	92	1.00	5.00	2.8370	1.20691
Valid N (listwise)	92				

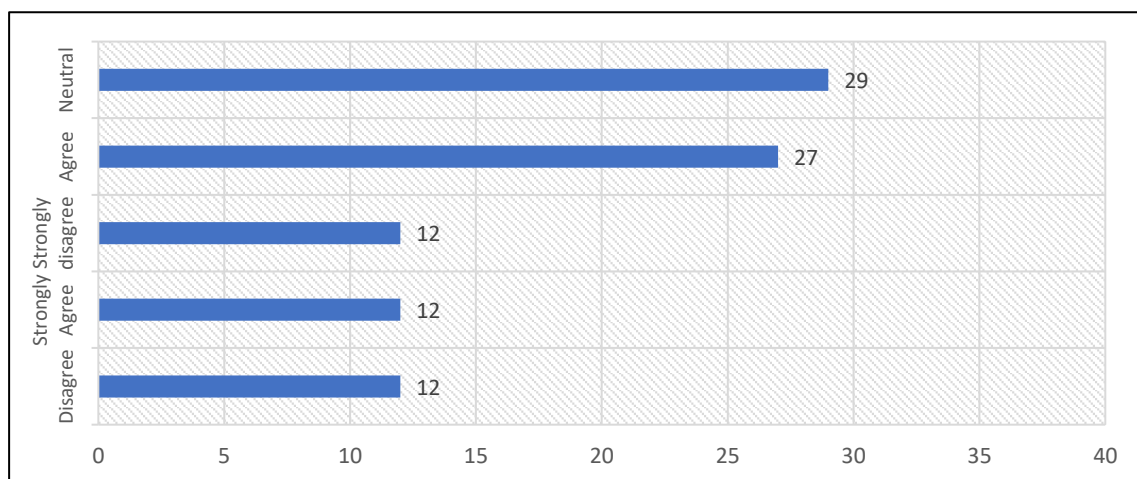


Figure 7: The teaching method was enjoyable and engaging.

On another level, with regard to the preparedness of the learning environment, Figure 8 illustrates responses to the statement, "The classroom was well-equipped for language learning." An alarmingly significant number of respondents (62) opted for disagreement options constituting almost two thirds. Only 16 responded with agreement accounting for less than a fifth 15%.

The mean score of 3.7527 indicates a tendency towards disagreement, suggesting that many participants did not perceive the classroom as well-equipped for language learning.

Table 11: The classroom was well-equipped for language learning.

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
The classroom was well-equipped for language learning.	93	1.00	5.00	3.7527	1.17636
Valid N (listwise)	93				

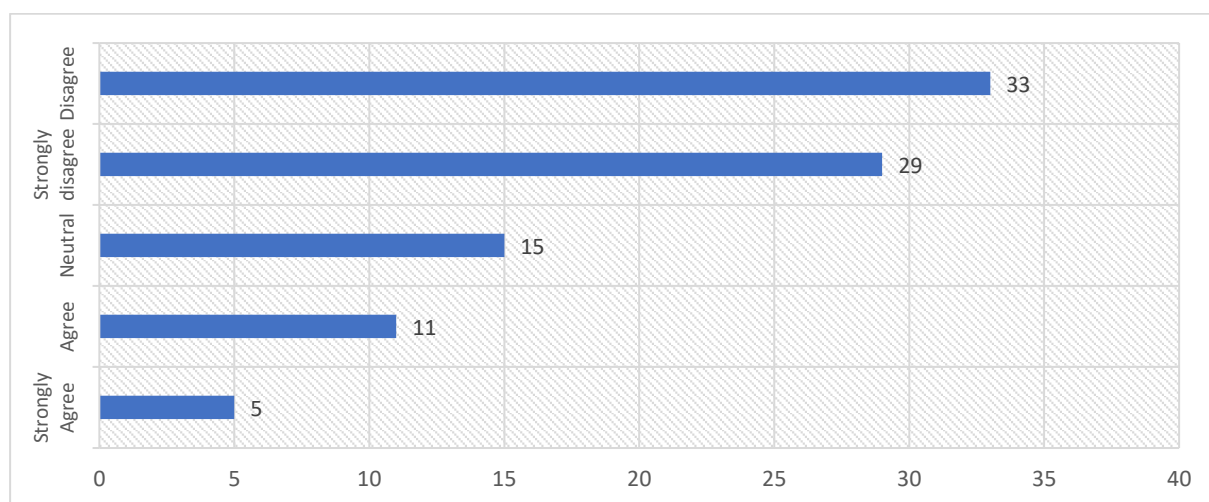


Figure 8: The classroom was well-equipped for language learning.

Another alarming finding is students' responses to the question regarding the use of technology in classroom. A staggering 67% of students reported that such equipment was never used while teaching. Figure 9 illustrates the students' responses.

Table 12: The professor used many technological tools, such as a projector and speakers, while delivering the lesson.

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
The professor used many technological tools, such as a projector and speakers, while delivering the lesson.	93	1.00	5.00	4.3011	1.20493

Valid N (listwise)

93

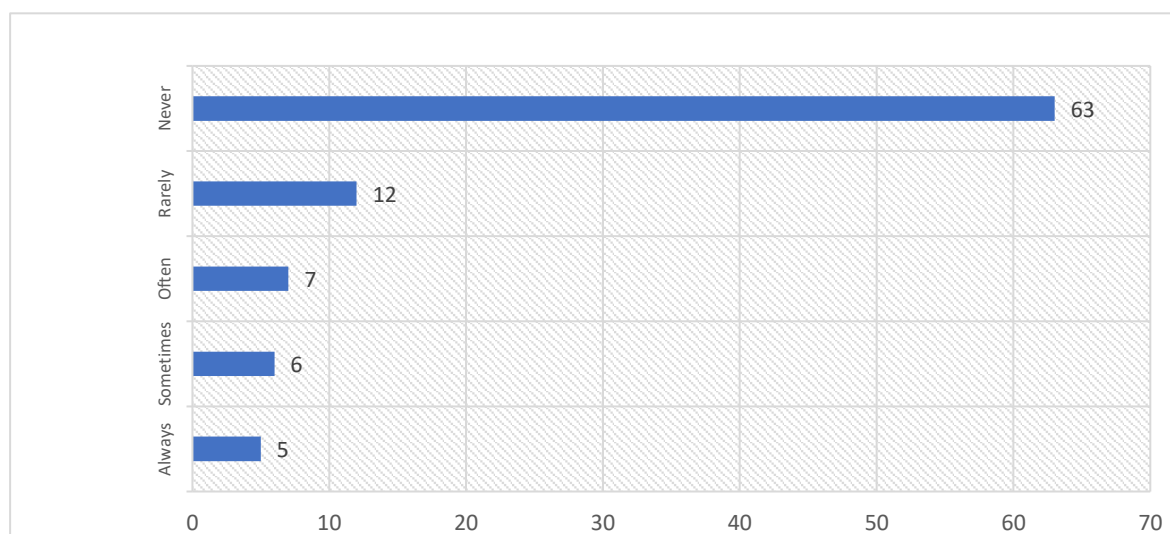


Figure 9: The professor used many technological tools, such as a projector and speakers, while delivering the lesson.

To give a summary of the students' responses to the questions with frequency items, it is possible to use the following table:

Table 13: Frequency Item boundaries

Frequency Item boundaries	Starting point	Ending point
Always	0	1.8
Often	1.81	2.6
Sometimes	2.61	3.4
Rarely	3.41	4.2
Never	4.21	5

The mean score of 4.30 suggests that, on average, participants perceived the professor as rarely or never using technological tools during lessons. This could indicate a potential lack of integration of technological tools in teaching, or possibly a variance in the perception between the professor and the students regarding what constitutes "technological tools."

Another negative finding is the students' responses to the item "*The professor gave us the opportunity to practice our speaking skills in small groups.*" More than a third reported to never have been given the chance to practice this skill despite its apparent importance and its being one of the main objectives of the course. The other responses were varied but a conclusion can be drawn through resorting to the mean score which was 3.516 suggesting that, on average, participants perceived the professor as rarely or sometimes providing opportunities for small group speaking practice. This suggests a potential lack of emphasis on small group speaking activities in the teaching method.

Table 14: The professor gave us the opportunity to practice our speaking skills in small groups.

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
The professor gave us the opportunity to practice our speaking skills in small groups.	93	1.00	5.00	3.5161	1.36424
Valid N (listwise)	93				

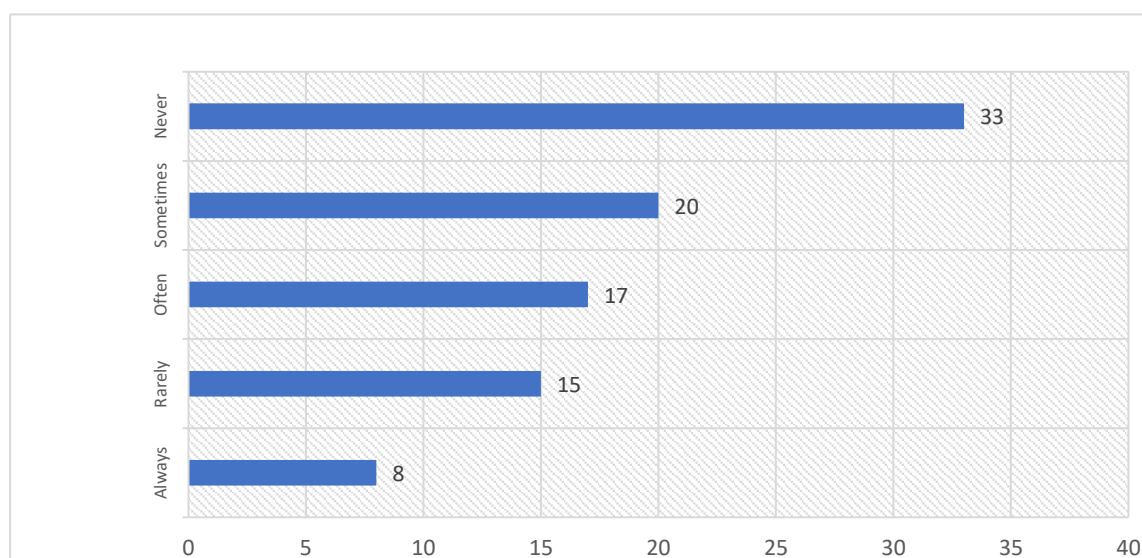


Figure 10: The professor gave us the opportunity to practice our speaking skills in small groups.

Last but not least, another essential skill seems not to be given emphasis according to the students' responses. Figure 11 illustrates students' responses to the item "The professor trained us in listening skills by having us listen to lectures and conversations in English." A staggering 49% of the students chose never, while more than a fifth opted for rarely.

Moreover, the mean score of a sharp 4, unfortunately, suggests that, on average, participants perceived the professor as rarely or never providing training in listening skills through lectures and conversations. This suggests a potential lack of emphasis on listening skill training through lectures and conversations in the teaching method.

Table 15: The professor trained us in listening skills by having us listen to lectures and conversations in English.

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
The professor trained us in listening skills by having us listen to lectures and conversations in English.	93	1.00	5.00	4.0000	1.24237
Valid N (listwise)	93				

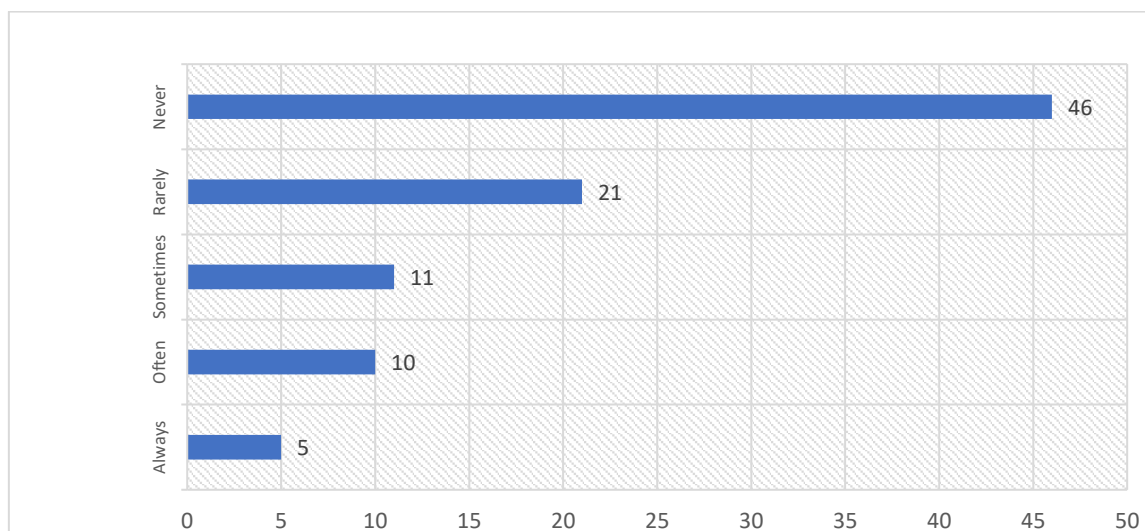


Figure 11: The professor trained us in listening skills by having us listen to lectures and conversations in English.

7.2. Inferential statistics

Going back to the research question number 4, whether factors such as gender, department, the field of study, type of study, and the academic year had any statistically significance on the other variables.

As to gender, the academic year, or whether the student had taken intensive course or not, they had no statistically significance on any of the other variables. However, when considering the type of study schedule and the field of study (Humanities vs. Applied Sciences), a Mann-Whitney U test conducted at a 0.05 significance level revealed a statistically significant difference between the two groups (Humanities vs Sciences) regarding their perception of the number of students as an obstacle. The effect size was found to be moderate ($r=-0.36$). Students in sciences found that the over-crowdedness of classes more frequently posed a problem.

Hypothesis Test Summary				
	Null Hypothesis	Test	Sig.	Decision
1	The distribution of The number of students posed an obstacle towards language learning. is the same across categories of Field of Study.	Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test	.000	Reject the null hypothesis.

Asymptotic significances are displayed. The significance level is .05.

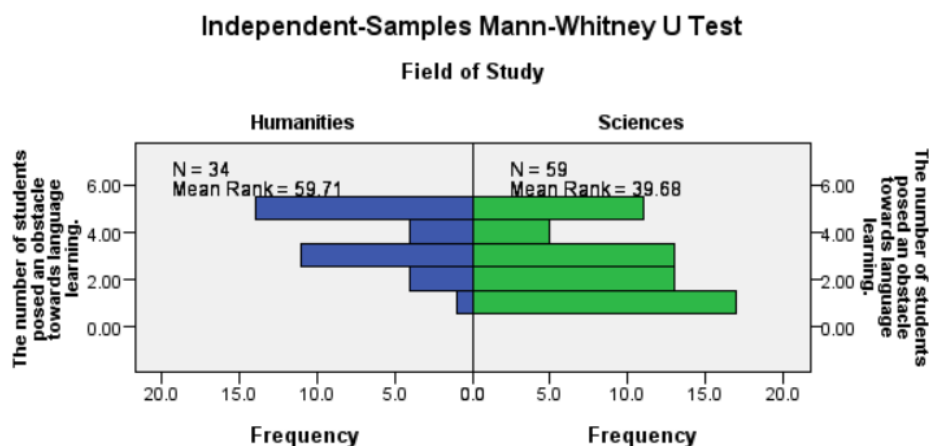


Figure 12 Mann-Whitney U test for the perception of students' number as an obstacle across two fields of study

7.3. Teachers' Questionnaire

7.3.1. Descriptive statistics

The questionnaire was distributed to 30 teaching staff members within the faculty and 22 copies were returned at a response rate of 73%.

The questionnaire investigated the satisfaction levels of other department teachers on the current General English course program and their aspirations and needs. The sample was diverse in terms of gender, qualification, departments, field of study.

The vast majority of teachers agree or strongly agree with the statement that 'English is essential for my students' academic success.' However, and as to the currently applied program, teachers showed dissatisfaction with their students' level of English, their ability to read and write academically as *Figure 13, Figure 14, and Figure 15* demonstrate below:

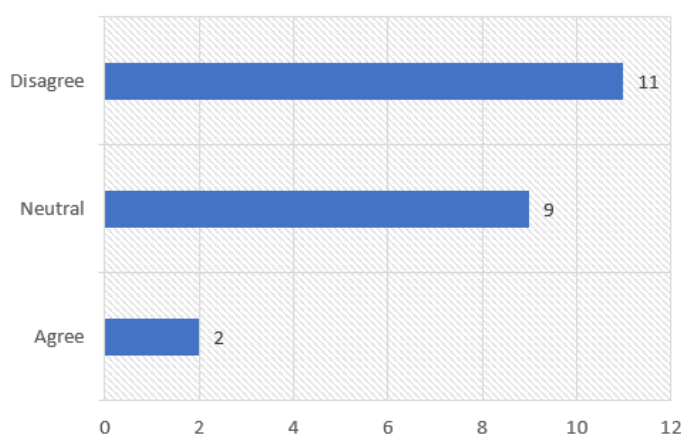


Figure 13: My students have a good level of English

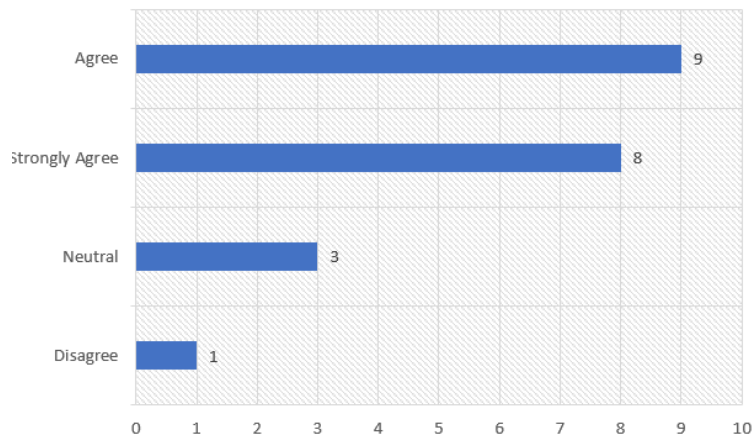


Figure 14: My students have a difficulty with reading academic texts

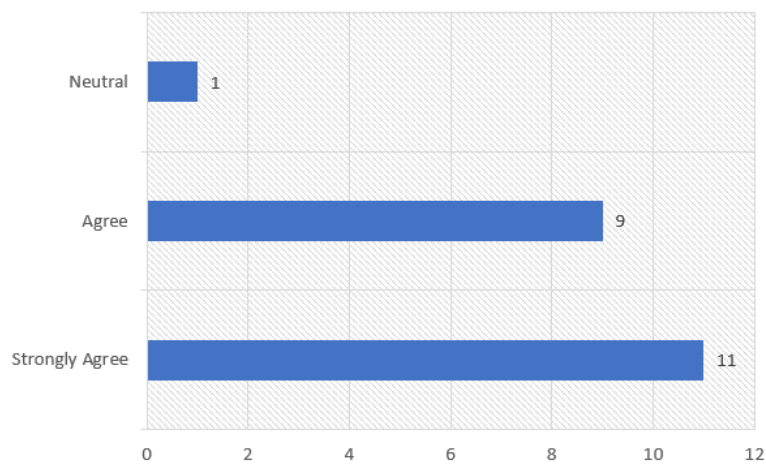


Figure 15: My students have a difficulty with writing academic texts

In addition, the majority of teachers opted for agreement options (Agree and Strongly Agree), (13) accounting for more than a half of the sample, with the need of increasing the allocated time for the course as Figure 16 shows below

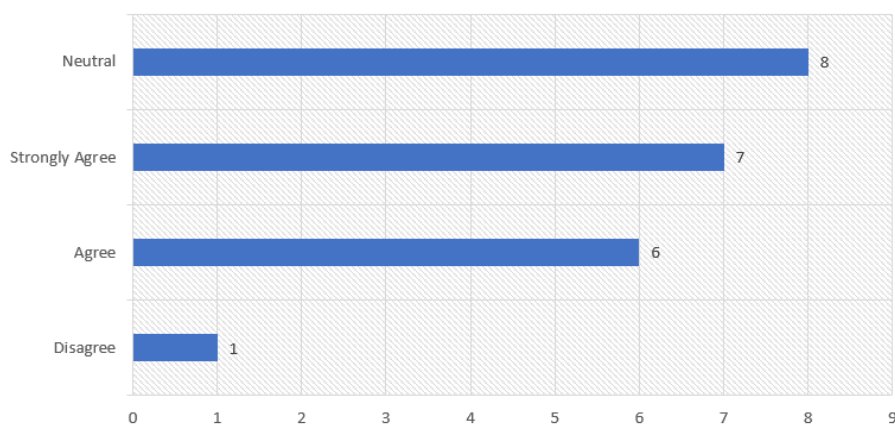


Figure 16: Allocated time to English courses should be increased

7.3.2. Inferential statistics

In examining whether statistically significant differences exist across departments, fields of study, and study formats, the study found a notable disparity in satisfaction levels between the humanities and the sciences regarding the current program. Specifically, the results indicate that satisfaction with the program's ability to meet departmental requirements differs, with the sciences reporting lower satisfaction levels. This conclusion was drawn using the Mann-Whitney U test at a 0.05 significance level.

14	The distribution of The current General English course meets the needs of my students is the same across categories of Type of study.	Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test	.049 ¹	Reject the null hypothesis.
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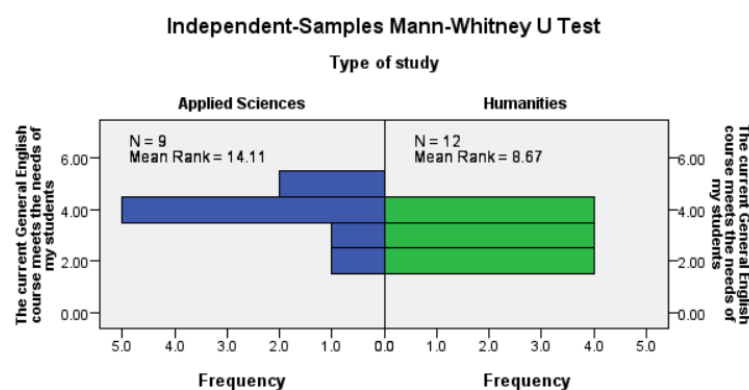


Figure 17: Mann-Whitney U test to test the difference between Humanities and Sciences regarding the satisfaction level to the current program

8. Main findings and Recommendations

As to the 1st research question, *see page 18*, the course had a fairly positive impact on students' motivation to learn English and vocabulary acquisition. Nevertheless, students reported limited improvement in both speaking fluency and ability to understand educational lectures in English (e.g., on YouTube). The study also highlighted a lack of self-directed learning and student disinterest and in some cases indifference.

With regard to 2nd research question, *see page 18*, the study has found that students struggled most with speaking and listening skills. They also reported difficulties understanding educational lectures in English and a lack of opportunities for small group speaking practice and listening skill training. Furthermore, students perceived the learning environment as poorly equipped for language learning and reported rare use of technology in teaching.

Regarding the 3rd research question, *see page 18*, the findings suggest that old-fashioned, teacher-centered methods, outdated materials, inadequate classroom resources, and an absence of technology integration has negatively affected student learning. In addition, students reported that overcrowded classrooms further hindered effective teaching and student participation.

With regard to the 4th research question, *see page 4*, the study has found no statistically significant differences in terms of gender or academic year. However, a statistically significant difference was found between Humanities and Applied Sciences students regarding their perception of class size as an obstacle, with Applied Sciences students finding it more problematic.

Penultimately, regarding 5th research question, *see page 4*, the study has found that most faculty teaching staff members across different departments acknowledged the importance of English for students' academic success. Still, they expressed dissatisfaction with students' current English proficiency levels, mainly in reading and writing academic texts. There was a strong agreement on the need for increased course time.

Finally, with regard to 6th research question, the study revealed that significant differences in satisfaction levels were found between Humanities and Sciences departments regarding the alignment of the General English course with their needs. Sciences faculty reported lower satisfaction levels.

9. Recommendations:

1. The study suggests implementing interactive, student-centered teaching methods, including small group work, the use of authentic materials, and self-directed learning strategies to foster student accountability.
2. Increasing technology integration is crucial, so teaching materials should be updated and classroom facilities upgraded to provide effective learning.
3. The study advocates for founding multi-year English programs with more weekly hours to guarantee continued language development.
4. Teachers should receive training in modern, technology-enhanced teaching methodologies to stay up-to-date with educational best practices.
5. It is recommended to reduce class sizes.
6. The provision of institutional support is essential, which includes improving facilities, updating materials, and allowing greater administrative flexibility.
7. Finally, fostering collaboration between English teachers and other departments is encouraged to meet the different needs of diverse departments.

10. Conclusion

This study revealed significant challenges in General English courses at Almergib University, including overcrowded classes, and limited instructional time. Students reported inadequate focus on communicative skills and technology integration. Additionally, teachers believe insufficient foundational knowledge and institutional support further hinder effective language learning. The study recommends comprehensive curriculum reform and improved resources to foster better speaking and listening skills and meet academic and professional demands.

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