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RESEARCH PAPER

ESP Needs Analysis of Productive Skills: A Case Study of Engineering Students

¹Dr Khalid Ahmed*, ²Saadia Ali and ³Afaq Khan

1. Associate Professor, Department of English, University of Central Punjab, Lahore, Pakistan
2. M. Phil Scholar, Department of English, University of Central Punjab, Lahore, Pakistan
3. M. Phil Scholar, Department of English, University of Central Punjab, Lahore, Pakistan

| ***Corresponding Author** | khalid.ahmed@ucp.edu.pk |

ABSTRACT

This study investigated the needs of English language writing and speaking proficiency skills from the learners' perspective for effective professional communication of the engineering students from school of engineering, University of Management and Technology, Pakistan. Need analysis is an on-going process at every stage of language teaching and learning. The self-assessment by each student is considered as important as assessment by teachers. Very few studies conducted about the needs and language problems of the engineering students in Pakistan. This study used a close ended questionnaire of 20 items. It was developed to elicit the opinion of 100 engineering students. The analysis shows that the leaners predicted in need analysis that they would be required to use English language in professional settings including but not limited to official correspondence, face to face interactions, and field works during meetings and social interactions. The finding of this need analysis is a useful guide to the existing language class contents and the pedagogies to develop more effective English language and communication course for the engineering students.

| **KEYWORDS** | ESP, Learner-Centered Approach, Need Analysis, Professional Communication, Self-Assessment |

Introduction

English has achieved the position of an international language due to its profound influence in many areas of life. The most significant transformation has occurred in education. English is an essential course at various levels of education in Pakistan, which proves the claim. English is the international language of communication in international relations, politics, business, and commerce. As a result, it is used as the official language of Pakistan and as a medium of instruction in educational institutions**.** According to Ellis and Johnson, knowledge of a common language is a requirement given how urgently people need to communicate today. Competitive demands for economic and technological growth from government, industry, and businesses, both national and worldwide, necessitate the use of an effective and understandable language within that economy and technology which is English now." So, it is not surprising at all that local companies, now-a-days, prefer those candidates to be their employees who have good command over written and spoken English. Keeping this need in view, our students want to learn correct English to be prepared for having a high aptitude in the job market. This puts a great responsibility on the teachers as well. We have to get our students advance to the level of correct spoken and written English. There are two coursers that are taught to the engineering students at the University of Management & Technology in which the first one is known as English Reading and Composition that helps them improve their reading and writing skills while the other one is known as Business Communication or Advanced English Communication that helps them improve their writing and speaking skills. So, in order to develop their

capacity to write and speak English fluently, it is crucial to recognize their learning necessities. Westerfield describes that the evaluation of the extensive needs of an organization and instruction resides at the heart of an efficient and well-designed English for Specific course. According to Gilleard (2002), the demand for cross-cultural work has expanded significantly, necessitating engineers' proficiency in foreign language learning such as intrapersonal, and interpersonal communication, especially in organizational, and behavioral communication. It can be seen that Pakistani official language is English, and also widely used as a second language for many natives in the country.

English for Specific Purposes Background and Development

English holds the title of an official language and a medium of teaching in Pakistani institutions. The curriculum which is used for English at the official level is outdated, however the private institutions of teaching and learning are making efforts to develop it. There is a report about the teaching of a language in which the University Grants Commission (1982) said that English is one of the most important languages in the world which is widely used for education, technology, and international communication, especially it is used as an important second language for various nations in the form of national and regional language. The report went on to say about the Pakistani future of English language:

The language of technology and worldwide communication would be English in the future. English is being widely used like a worldwide lingua franca which is crucial for international communication. No nation can get any benefit in the world by studying English thoroughly, and Pakistan would be considered too stupid, if not suicidal in order to waste all the benefits we already have got as prior understanding of English." (UGC 1982:14)

As a global language, English exchanges information via science and technology. For the academic and professional success of engineering students, English is considered crucial, according to the previous researchers in the field in which the first ones are known as Basturkman, 1998; Pritchard & Nasr, 2004. The next researchers are Joesba & Ardeo, 2005; Sidek 2006; Hui, 2007; and the other researchers are known as Venkatraman & Prema, 2007). Pritchard and Nasr (2004) emphasized on the notion and they stated that the engineering and science students need English, because it is has become the international language of science. It is also considered an important tool for the students who need to be proficient in professional texts that are written in English. Similarly, the international language of science and technology is English according to Joesba and Ardeo (2005). There is a fact that the engineering students have to be aware of is that they will always find the engineering books, handbooks, journals and papers in English. In addition to that, they said that they were all included in the lists of their reading.

Need Analysis in ESP

Needs analysis is described by Ellis and Johnson (1994) as a method for compiling a thorough report on learner needs. There are some specific purposes for what the learners have to use language such as the sort of language that needs to be used, next the beginning or initiating level and the other is the level that has to be achieved are the main topics. The sources of knowledge can include the employees of the company, the teachers, and the students themselves. It will open the door for future training program modifications.

Bachman and Palmer (1996) shares that needs analysis involves a methodical collection of particular knowledge about the necessities of language learners and analyzing

of the results for purposes of language syllabus design". According to Graves (2000), conducting a needs analysis is a continuous and systematic process that involves learning about the expectations and wants of the students, drawing conclusions from that knowledge, and then modifying the course so that it can meet those conclusions. The planning and execution of any language course, whether it is an ESP or general English course, depends around needs analysis. In his 1980 article, Chambers attempted to clarify this concept and gave it an acronym (TSA) known as Target Situation Analysis.

Richterich and Chancerel (1987) initiated an acronym (PSA) Present Situation Analysis. The educational facility, the user-institution, such as a workplace, and the students themselves serve as the information sources in this method (Jordan, 1997). Hutchinson and Waters (1987) supported the learning-centered approach in which the needs of the learners are of extreme importance. If the analyst wishes to track what language learners do, LSA is going to inform them what the learner has to do for learning. (1987, Hutchinson and Waters) It is evident that they favor a method that places more emphasis on the process than on the outcome or the final product.

Learner Centered Approach

Language instruction clearly shifted in the 1970s and 1980s in favor of a learner-centered methodology. The rise of communicative teaching techniques, which focused on using language for real-world communication and modifying language education to meet learners' needs, was a defining factor in this change (Savignon, 1997). By switching to a more student-focused approach, this signified a divergence from the conventional teacher-centered approaches (such as those promoted by Nunan in 1988 and Tudor in 1996).

Nunan (1988) emphasized that communicative language learning was the primary cause of this change towards learner-centeredness. It challenged students to participate actively in debates, seek understanding, and independently create meaning (Breen & Candlin, 1980). The essential tenet of the learner-centered method is that when students are conscious of their own needs and requirements, they learn better and more effectively.

As a result, the method of creating language curricula changed from a top-down strategy in which educators selected what should be covered in a course to one that involved more cooperation between teachers and students. This cooperation included the design, delivery, and assessment of language-learning programs (Nunan, 1988). Teachers started to evaluate students' requirements and learning preferences in order to choose appropriate course materials and pedagogical strategies.

However, it's critical to recognize that not all learners, particularly young or inexperienced students, can proactively choose their preferred learning styles. As a result, the degree of participation in conversations about course design varies depending on the characteristics of each learner (Nunan and Lamb, 1996). Teachers in this situation must be flexible in their techniques, have a wide variety of teaching tools at their disposal, and be able to adjust to the specific needs of each student.

Educational institutions should offer a variety of resources and support to meet the unique requirements of students in order to successfully execute a learner-centered curriculum (Tudor, 1996). This method acknowledges that effective language instruction necessitates a dynamic relationship between teachers and students in order to maximize the learning experience for everyone.

Literature Review

In ESP, need analysis has been the most studied subject. This subject has been the subject of numerous global studies. These studies were conducted to assess the needs of students in various academic subjects.

Soranastaporn (1993) conducted a study that looked at the crucial prerequisites, difficulties, and requirements for teaching and mastering the English language to nursing students in Thailand. The Nursing College Division, which is governed by the Office of the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Public Health, oversaw the conduct of this study. The study's findings showed that both teachers and nursing students had positive attitudes about English and desired more English classes. Reading comprehension needs to improve for both teachers and pupils. Teachers want their pupils to practice reading and writing, but students want to practice speaking and listening.

Holliday (1995) examined the English language requirements for a Middle Eastern oil corporation. The study's objectives were to assess the language requirements of national personnel, recommend a broad curricular structure for language training programs, and offer execution steps for course design and trainer preparation.

Chia (1999) carried out a study on the English language needs for medical college students and faculty members in Taiwan with the intention of highlighting the existence of specific English language requirements within the medical industry. In addition to gathering feedback from respondents on the importance of using the English language in their academic endeavors and future employment, the inquiry included ideas for creating an English language program. The results highlighted students' interest in taking an introductory English language course in their first year of college with a focus on improving their listening abilities. The desire for long-term English language instruction was shared by instructors and students alike.

Edwards (2000) carried out need assessment research to identify the language requirements of German bankers with the intention of creating a specific English for Specific Purposes (ESP) course for bank staff. The study included questions regarding four essential linguistic abilities. It was required of course participants to respond to a survey about their institutional and individual goals. In addition, the manager of the bank's language division was questioned. The students' earlier educational histories were discovered thanks to the questionnaire. The most important areas of improvement were writing abilities and particular business terminologies related to the banking industry. Plans and teaching methods for the ESP course were then developed.

Kormos (2002) looked into the linguistic preferences of English majors in Hungary. Students majoring in English language instruction, English literature, and TESOL during a two-year period took part in the study. The study found that students only used the English language for academic purposes and predicted that their future careers would require them to share their opinions, read digital texts, interact with people who don't speak English as their first language, write emails, and translate both spoken and written English.

Cook (2006) used a case study approach to investigate if the objectives of adult ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) students and adult migrants learning English in the UK are comparable. The findings showed that the approaches taken to meet their needs, such as tailored learning plans, fall short in taking into account the real-world difficulties that ESOL learners have on a daily basis. Immigrant ESOL students are unable

to completely realize their potential as English language users, workers, and future citizens because of the social integration requirements.

Cowling (2007) carried out a needs analysis (NA) to create a series of intense English language courses for a significant Japanese industrial company. This case study demonstrated the value of efficient NA techniques. The findings highlighted the need for careful preparation and execution because syllabus production in this setting frequently turns to be more complex than what the body of literature on syllabus design suggests.

Read (2008) worked on a research project named "Exploring Academic Language Requirements via Diagnostic Evaluation." This study looked into several laws governing university admissions in New Zealand. The Diagnostic English Language Needs Assessment (DELNA) and the strategies employed to convey its findings were the study's main areas of interest. The study also looked at how students and faculty at universities are given this information. The outcomes demonstrated how unique DELNA is in comparison to other academic English language assessments. Students could not be expelled from university based on their test scores, and it did not serve as a screening tool for admittance to universities. Students are placed in particular courses within an English for Academic Purposes (EAP) program that is required, taking into account their skill level and particular areas that need improvement. This process goes beyond simple placement.

Samawathdana, (2009) learned about the demands, issues, and desires of the multilingual pupils at Winit Secondary School in Thailand. The study's findings indicated that the learners' four conversational skills needed to be improved. Speaking during the discussion and the presentation was difficult for the students. They also had trouble writing, especially when it came to creating intricate and compound statements. Since they planned to study at universities in the future, they wanted to be able to use English specifically for academic purposes.

Channa, Engchuan and Tirataradol (2013) took into account the requirements, issues, and preferences of English-speaking engineering students at Pakistan's Quaid-e-Awam University of Engineering, Science, and Technology. This study was done to build ESP courses for QUEST in several engineering fields.

Ali (2019) conducted a study on the ESL Motivation orientation of Pakistani ESL students from Public and Private sector schools in Lahore city. The data shows that promotion is the most powerful orientation of ESL learners from public schools while the private schools learners mostly show intrinsic motivation of positive attitude or interest to affiliate with English natives. Ali et. al (2021) investigated the impact of WhatsApp as an important learning tool of education in Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL) of Pakistani ESL learners of grade 8. The results of the study show that the performance of learners in experimental group was significantly better than the learners in controlled group.

Amanat (2022) studies the role of gender English language teaching practices at BS level in Pakistan. The research was qualitative in nature based on structured observations. The results show that both sexes used various strategies to teach but female found to apply more strategies as compared to males. Ahmed (2023) studied the development of Pakistani ESL Learners pragmatic competence in classroom settings. The research was conducted by using quasi-experimental research design. The results obtained by comparing pre-test with post-test shows that pragmatic competence's instructions to Pakistani ESL learners is fruitful in classroom settings.

Material and Methods

Participants

The Participants come from the School of Engineering at the University of Management & Technology's two functional departments of industrial and mechanical engineering and electrical engineering, respectively. 100 individuals total from both departments were evenly dispersed (50+50), in this study.

Research Instrument

For this study, the research instrument was a questionnaire with 20 closed-ended questions in English. It is an adaptation of Hossain's (2013) study. The questionnaire is divided into three sections: Target Situation (questions 1 through 6), Present Situation (questions 7 through 13), and Context Situation (questions 14 through 20). The respondents are required to select an answer from a variety of questions. However, for a select few questions, they have the choice to weigh many options.

Data Analysis

The frequency of the participants' perspectives regarding their needs and desires for improving their writing and speaking English were taken into account as data for this research study.

Results and Discussion

The format of the questionnaire is shown below, with each question broken down into individual sections along with the percentage of responses received from each choice.

Target Situation Analysis of the ESP learners

The first part (1-6) of the questionnaire was designed to inquire about the Target Situation Analysis of the participants.

Table 1: Demographics of Respondents

a) Age:	18-21 98%	22-25 2%	26-29 0%	30+ 0%	
b) Sex:	Male 91%	Female 9%			
c) English proficiency Level:		Average 42%	Good 51%	Very good 6%	Excellent 1%

According to the data gathered in response to the first question, a large proportion of undergraduate students (98%), and the majority of them (91%) were males. It was discovered that (51%) of them reported to have a current good level of English language proficiency, while (42%) thought it was on the average level.

Table 2
Immediate purposes to learn advance English communication

Study 37%	Research 5%	Social purposes 17%	Travel 4%	Job/study abroad 33%	Other 4%

In response to the second question, (37%) felt the greatest need to acquire advanced English communication for study purposes, while (33%) felt the greatest need to learn for job/study abroad objectives. Meanwhile, a small percentage (17%) desired to learn for social reasons.

Table 3
The maximum possible use of language in professional career

Medium	Speaking 18%	Writing 2%	Both skills 80%
Channel	Telephone 4%	Face to face 41%	Professional correspondence 55%

Furthermore, the majority (80%) chose both speaking and writing abilities as a medium of language for prospective need in future professional career advancement, while (55%) chose professional correspondence and others (41%) chose face-to-face communication as a channel of language demands.

Table 4
The field of study of the participants

Subject	Engineering 94%	Commerce 1%		Others 5%
Level	Technician 18%	Field Worker 27%	Management 33%	Others 22%

Following that, the vast majority of them (94%) realized that the course material's content must be in the discipline of engineering. However, there was a diverse trend toward the level of the contents, with (33%) preferring management level, (27%) preferring field work, and (18%) preferring technician as per their future intentions for working levels.

Table 5
The domain of language use

Physical setting	Office 53%	Hotel 1%	Field 37%	Workshop 9%
Human Context	Alone 10%	Meetings 83%	Demonstrations over phone 7%	
Linguistic Context	Home country 37%		Abroad 63%	

In terms of language use, the majority (53%) understood they should learn about language use in offices, while the second largest (37%) wanted to learn for field language demands. In Human Context, (83%) wanted to prepare for language use in meetings. Furthermore, (63%) recognized the need to study for use in foreign nations, whilst (37% desired to learn for indigenous requirements) because English is the official language of Pakistan.

Table 6
The usual domain of language use

Time	Concurrently in English language courses 60%		Subsequently after course 40%		
Frequency of use	Always 14%	Very often 25%	Moderately 42%	Little 15%	Rarely 4%

In response to the final question in this section, (60%) individuals chose to use language while they were studying, while (40%) thought it would be useful in their daily lives once they had finished their studies.

Present Situation Analysis of the ESP learners

The second part of the questionnaire (7-14) was concerned about the Present Situation Analysis of the ESP learners.

Table 7
Current level of English in writing and speaking

Writing	Average 32%	Good 50%	Very good 14%	Excellent 4%
Speaking	Average 52%	Good 39%	Very good 7%	Excellent 2%

The half of the population (50%) considered themselves good in writing skill while (32%) rated it as average. On the other hand, in the speaking, majority (52%) said that they were good, however, in view of (39%) it was average.

Table 8
Competence in writing and speaking skills

Writing	Composing a grammatically well-formed sentences 22%	Creating well-organized paragraphs 14%
	Free hand writing 60%	Cohesive, coherent and analytical writing 4%
Speaking	Can speak with grammatically well-formed sentences 18%	Can communicate in contextually relevant content 33%
	Can speak fluently without care of grammar 42%	Can speak in context with proper intonation patterns and fluency 7%

The majority of the students (60%) identified "Free hand writing" as a strong area of writing ability, according to their comments. Similarly, the majority of those who reported having good speaking skills (42%) stated they could do so without worrying about grammar, while the second-highest percentage (33%) indicated they tended to speak in context.

Table 9
Weakness in speaking and writing skills

Writing:	Can't write grammatically correct sentences 38%	Can't compose a well-organized content 26%
	Can't write in free hand 7%	Can't compose a cohesive, coherent and analytical writing 29%
Speaking	Can't communicate with grammatical correctness 43%	Can't create contextually relevant content while speaking 12%
	Can't maintain fluency in speaking 30%	Can't speak in context with intonation and fluency 15%

They identified three areas of weakness in their writing ability: (38%) the inability to write grammatically correct sentences; (29%) the inability to create coherent, analytical writing; and (26%) the inability to create well-organized content. Similar results were seen in the area of speaking ability, where the majority (43%) cited the inability to communicate

in grammatically acceptable ways, followed by 30% who cited speaking fluency as their main shortcoming.

Table 10
Background in Professional/Business Communication

Do not have any idea 14%	Yes 23%	No 63%

Further, the majority (63%) of the respondents negated to have any background of their professional or business communication.

Table 11
The languages related job skills your lacking

Job application and Resume Writing and job Application 18%	Job interview 23%	Presentation in the meeting 35%	Technical Writing 24%

A significantly highest grade (35%) was given to the deficiency in presentation in meetings when it came to the lack of vital job abilities. The remaining (24%) acknowledged the lack of technical writing.

Table 12
Self-rating of past experience of language learning

Average 30%	Good 46%	Very good 15%	Excellent 9%

Afterwards, the highest (46%) thought that their past learning experiences were good while (36%) considered them an average.

Table 13
Stimulus for choosing English communication course

To improve business communication skills 63%	To enhance technical writing skills 14%	To develop a job interview skill 11%	To develop presentation skill 12%

As a result, when asked why they were taking the English language communication course, the majority (63%) chose to improve their corporate communication skills.

Context Situation Analysis of the ESP learners

The last part of the questionnaire (7-20) comprises of the context situation analysis of the ESP learners

Table 14
Delivery of Instructional material

Have no idea 16%	Traditionally face to face 26%	On-line and 17% multimedia based	Not only face to face, but also using internet and multimedia presentations with sound system 41%

In response to the first question in this area, (41%) participants preferred that the instructional materials be provided not just face to face, but also via internet and multimedia presentations with sound system, while (26%) preferred it in a traditional face

to face mode. The survey's second highest grade (22%) in this category was for 'Writing grammatically correct phrases.

Table 15
Facilities to be provided in the English communication classes

Conventional Classrooms with white boards 24%	Multimedia with availability of sound system 11%	Both Internet and multimedia facilities including the sound system 20%	The room must be equipped with beautiful and relevant charts, posters, and other relevant material etc. There should also be multimedia and sound system available. 45%

To respond to the following question, the highest rating (45%) for the physical setting of the English language communication classroom was that such rooms must be supplied with beautiful and relevant charts, posters, and other relevant material, etc. A multimedia and acoustic system should also be present.

Table 16
The role of class attendance

Have no idea 10%	Class attendance must be mandatory 27%	Class attendance must be mandatory and a part of course evaluation 42%	Class attendance must be optional 21%

Regarding the attendance policy, the majority of students (42%) favored making it mandatory and requiring it to be included in the evaluation of the course, while students (27%) demanded that it be required to pass the course but not be included in the evaluation.

Table 17
The appropriate semester for the enrollment of language course

During 2nd -4th 75%	During 5th -7th 13%	During 8th -10th 3%	Last 9%

The majority of the participants (75%) wanted to enroll in one of these courses during the second through fourth semester.

Table 18
Material should be included in the course

Video tapes, CDs/DVDs, Textbooks, instruction/equipment manuals, or other such material which is used for training any new skills 30%	Materials should be job oriented including but not limited to samples, charts and work forms, research articles written by students and students' assignments. 15%
Website based materials like dialogues, or business which can easily be accessed through websites, vodcasts or pod-casts 8%	Combination of all these 47%

The majority of survey respondents (47%) indicated that they would like to use a combination of all the options that were given in response to this question. However, a good portion of respondents (30%) indicated that they would prefer to use video tapes, CDs/DVDs, textbooks, instruction/equipment manuals, or other similar materials that are used to train any new skills.

Table 19
The adequacy of class-room resources

Yes, they are 70%	No, they aren't 7%	No idea 23%

The majority of the participants (70 percent) expressed satisfaction with the teaching resources that were on hand.

Table 20
Most feasible class time

During early hours of the day? 59%	At noon time or in the evening 23%	During afternoon or evening 6%	Any time 12%

In response to the final survey question, the majority (59%) said it would be convenient if it happened in the morning, while (23% asked that it happen in the afternoon or evening).

Conclusion

The participants have had 12 years of exposure to the English language. However, they expressed a lack of confidence in their ability to speak English because, in their perspective, their prior communication experience was not in a professional or business setting. Despite this, they showed a strong desire to enhance their learning experience by expressing their needs and preferences through the survey. Their primary reason for learning advanced English communication was to prepare for higher education and employment both domestically and overseas. Therefore, having a strong command of the English language would be advantageous for them both while pursuing engineering degrees and thereafter, when they would primarily engage in management or fieldwork. They foresaw the requirement for the use of the English language in formal settings, including correspondence, face-to-face conversations, and fieldwork in meetings and social situations. They considered the improvement of both skills speaking and writing simultaneously for their professional growth. However, they claimed their current writing skills was better as compared to speaking. In writing, mostly viewed free hand writing as their strength, while ability to write grammatically correct sentences as their weakness. In speaking, majority said that speaking fluency without the care of grammar as their strength, whereas speaking with grammatical correctness as their deficiency.

Participants expressed a strong desire to take this course in both the traditional (face-to-face) and modern (AV advertising, gamification, and other such resources) formats. They stated a desire for amenities like Internet connectivity, multimedia tools, audio systems, and a variety of other resources in the classroom. Educators should use visual aids like posters, maps, and charts to make teaching new vocabulary and grammar easier. As a result, they believed that the available resources—such as the whiteboard, multimedia projector, OHP, etc.—were insufficient. There was also an urge for the employment of multiple sources and techniques during the process of material collection, selection and evaluation. The participants, for instance, wanted their resources to gather information from the websites, textbooks, recorded materials (CDs), and other online learning platforms. In order to fully utilize these resources, the teachers must also be adequately taught. The students urged that there be an attendance requirement. Students also expressed a preference for early morning class times, with the course being offered between the second and fourth semester of their degree. The idea that the technique of need analysis is not just used in language teaching or language learning but is frequently seen as an essential component in the field of ESP, where it plays a large role in designing courses to meet particular needs, served as the inspiration for this study.

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