

Importance of needs analysis in ESP classroom

Khazratova Zukhra Mamaraimovna

Senior Teacher, Uzbek State World Languages University, Uzbekistan

Received: 11 December 2024; **Accepted:** 13 January 2025; **Published:** 15 February 2025

Abstract: The significance of needs assessment in ESP is examined in this paper. Since this is the initial stage of education, it is crucial to use the right techniques and resources to assess students' requirements. The analysis's findings will help teachers develop lesson plans and learning objectives that are suited to their students' requirements, desires, and weaknesses. Needs analysis should therefore be given greater space because the rest will always be highly challenged if we do not employ the first principle to develop and produce exceptional materials. All new teachers should begin their year by using needs analysis on a small scale before determining what is best for both themselves and their students.

Keywords: ESP, needs analysis, target learner.

Introduction: English for Specific Purposes (ESP) is teaching and learning English as a second or foreign language in a certain field.

Over the past three decades, English for Specific Purposes (ESP) has grown to be a successful field. (Ramirez, 2015). Its primary goal as a learner-centred approach has been to meet the target learners' unique requirements to meet their aspirations for employment or other professional opportunities. The differences between ESP and "general English" ESP and general English courses, and ESP and general English assessments have long been discussed. Although there has historically been a separation between the two, this distinction has blurred in light of recent publications (Bachman and Palmer, 1996). Regarding validity and impact, most language evaluation experts currently concur on the same measurement concepts (Douglas, 2010). Therefore, "English for specific purposes is a term that refers to teaching or studying English for a particular career (like law, medicine, journalism or business) in general". (International Teacher Training Organization, 2005). The fact that "learners know specifically why they are learning a language" (Hutchinson and Waters, 1992) is a great advantage on both sides of the process.

In addition, ESP has a few variable features, including the following:

- ESP is specifically related to or designed for a particular discipline;
- ESP may be used in a particular teaching context or even in a different methodology from general English;
- ESP is probably intended for adult learners, either in a professional work setting or at a postsecondary educational institution;
- On the other hand, students in high school can be taught it. High school kids may also be the target audience for ESP in some situations;
- ESP is typically intended for intermediate or advanced students;

Most ESP courses presume a certain level of language system expertise, but novices can also use them.

The most crucial factor to consider is that ESP seems more challenging for teachers than General English. This typically occurs when a teacher must learn and study the jargon of a certain profession that he is either ignorant of or may comprehend in general but not sufficiently to instruct. The instructor must thoroughly

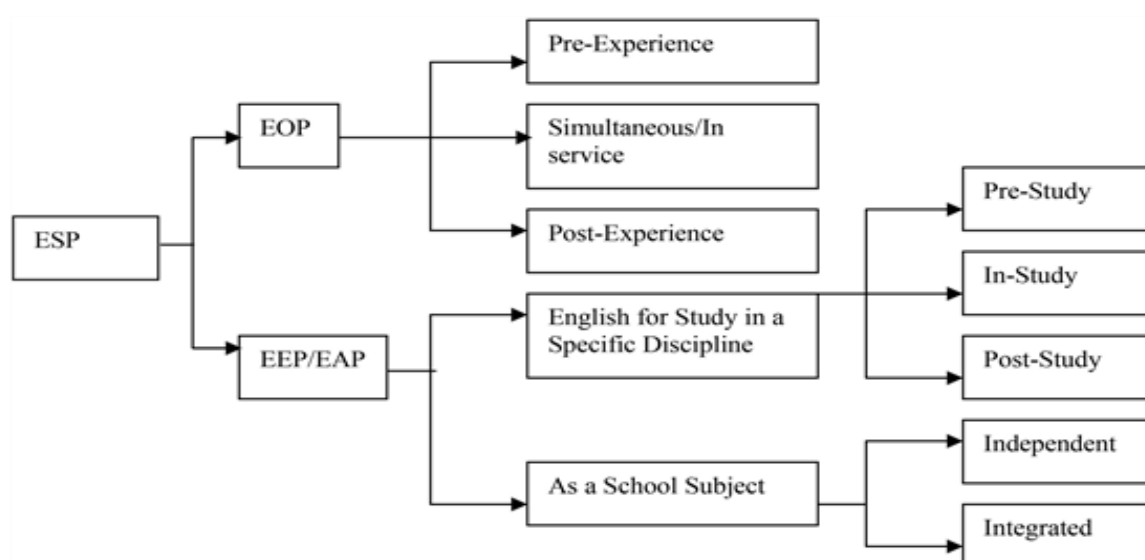
prepare and perform research for the ESP course to be ready for any difficulty that may arise in class. However, since he is an authority in the subject, the teacher does not need to study before instructing a general English class. This contrasts with the usual class preparation.

Needs Analysis in ESP Context

These days, more and more English language programs are being developed, whether at the tertiary level or in private institutions. Consequently, they implemented the ESP technique in their existing courses (See Figure 1). The goal of these training programs is to give students English language skills that will benefit them in the classroom and at work. As a result, many students' poor English language skills provide a challenge to job seekers. To help students from many academic disciplines complete ESP programs that will enable them to succeed in their future careers,

numerous institutions have adopted a methodical approach. In considering this, educators and ESP practitioners are searching for ways to apply the ESP method in a variety of English language programs that have been created for distinct fields. Teachers create and develop resources from commercial texts for teaching English for special purposes along with materials that are intended for teaching English for general use, or they compile a variety of materials into handouts to create ESP programs for English language courses. Consequently, a significant disparity exists between the language that the pupils learn and the language that they need. Project work is capable of filling this gap (Fried-Booth, 1986). Each activity should provide ESP students with chances to practice and improve their language skills. The language-learning task appears more achievable with the help of a helpful program.

Figure 1. The experience-based classification of ESP



According to Hutchinson and Waters (1987), there are two different kinds of needs. The first is target needs, which are the tasks that students must perform in the intended scenario. Three classes can be used to further categorize target demands. The first lesson discusses needs, or what pupils must know in order to function in the intended scenario. The gap between what pupils already know and what is required in the target circumstance is referred to as the “lacks” class. Lastly, wants are utilized to describe what pupils believe they need. Learning needs are the second category of needs put out by Hutchinson and Waters.

When evaluating the unique needs of the students, we encounter the phrase “needs analysis” which has evolved throughout the years. Needs analysis was used to evaluate the learners’ communicative needs and the methods for accomplishing particular learning goals

during the early years of ESP (the 1960s and early 1970s). These days, requirements analysis jobs are much more complicated, to gather data about the students and establish the ideal setting and circumstance for ESP research. According to Duddley-Evans and St. John (2009), the modern idea of requirements analysis consists of eight elements that are categorized into five major domains, such as:

- ✓ analyzing the target setting and the goal demands (such as the tasks and activities that students will engage in using English);
- ✓ analyzing language, discourse, and genre—that is, understanding how language and abilities are employed in the intended contexts;

- ✓ subjective needs analysis, which looks at the goals, resources, and subjective needs of students—things that influence how they learn, like expectations, prior learning experiences, and the reasons they are taking the course;
- ✓ present scenario analysis to determine the present language and skill levels of learners; meaning analysis, which includes details regarding the setting in which the course will be conducted.

According to Brown, needs must be expressed in terms of goals and objectives. These can then be used as the foundation for creating assessments, resources, instructional activities, and evaluation techniques (The components of a language curriculum: A methodical approach to program building (Brown, J., 1995). According to Robinson's criteria (Robinson, 1991), ESP courses are typically taught to adults in uniform classrooms based on the work or specialized studies that the students are engaged in, and they are typically limited by a time frame within which their goals must be accomplished.

The process of developing a course is referred to as needs analysis in ESP. During this process, the language and skills that the students will use in their intended professional or vocational setting or their academic fields are identified and taken into account in light of their current level of knowledge, their perceptions of their needs, and the practical opportunities and limitations of the teaching environment. The data gathered from this procedure is used to decide on and improve the ESP course's methodology and content.

In the ESP literature, there are many different definitions of what needs are. According to Hutchinson and Waters, needs analysis represents "the capacity to understand or generate the linguistic characteristics of the target situation". They suggest "target needs" and "learning needs" as the two categories of needs (Hutchinson and Waters, 1987).

Additional need ideas are put out by Berwick (1989) and Brindley (1989), including objective versus subjective needs, product versus process-focused interpretations, and perceived versus felt needs. Experts view "perceived needs", but learners view "felt needs" (Berwick, 1989). The language that students need in the intended contexts is considered to be the learner's needs in the product-oriented interpretation.

Vandermeeren (2005) makes a distinction between five categories of foreign language needs based on

occupational contexts. The following is a suggested list:

1. A market's turnover rate is one example of an objective need indicator.
2. One piece of empirical evidence supporting this demand is the frequency of contacts with international business partners.
3. The informant's subjective impressions about the requirement for a foreign language reflect subjective needs. A top manager's ideal for his employees' proficiency in a foreign language serves as an example.
4. When subjective and objective needs are subtracted, unconscious need is revealed. For example, when a sales manager claims that his department does not require English, although they have ongoing communication with foreign business partners.
5. Perceptions of unmet foreign language needs by informants imply subjective unmet needs. These are examples of flaws and challenges encountered when using a foreign language.

Because it reflects an employer's goal rather than the desires of employee learners, Vandermeeren's concept of "subjective needs" does not forcefully mirror the earlier interpretations of needs just dealt with.

Although his "objective unmet needs" indicate a discrepancy between objective needs indicators and the employer's needs perception, his "subjective unmet need" is associated with earlier terminology like lacks or shortcomings. Nevertheless, although the current study will not fully embrace all of these ideas, describing them nonetheless demonstrates the wide range of perspectives on needs that are found in the literature.

Successful course design can be aided by an understanding of the needs of the learners. Therefore, the goals of the needs analysis are as follows:

- identifying the language skills that a learner needs;
- assessing whether an existing course meets the needs of potential students;
- identifying which students most need training in a given language skill;
- identifying students' deficiencies;
- identifying students' wants and expectations;
- gathering data regarding a specific issue that learners are facing.

In summary, the findings of the needs analysis assist us as teachers in evaluating the student's needs in terms of language proficiency, their future professional requirements, and their language skills deficits. We can

only choose a set of materials that satisfy the demands of the students after assessing their needs and establishing the goals of the language course. Thus, needs analysis serves as the basis for developing instructional materials, curricular content, and strategies that might boost students' motivation and achievement.

To use English, students find it very helpful to investigate the scientific subjects they are studying, especially ESP. With their exceptional command of the English language, students can comprehend the contents of reference books, the internet, scientific publications, and other information sources that employ the language. Additionally, as proficiency in English will be very helpful when applying for jobs, students should work on their English in preparation for their future professional careers. Considering the significance of English for students, it is necessary to design English courses and research programs that meet their demands.

CONCLUSION

The term "ESP" describes any English language instruction given to non-native speakers of the language for a specific purpose or during professional or academic pursuits. With the same goal, the expert is the result of his research to establish such conceptions. In conclusion, when compared to English for general purposes, ESP helps students build their understanding of their future problems, whether they be academic (when they choose their study career) or professional. The academic and professional English languages are thus included in ESP.

REFERENCES

- Bachman, L. and A. Palmer (1996). *Language testing in practice*, Oxford University Press.
- Berwick, R. (1989). "Needs assessment in language programming: From theory to practice". In R. Johnson (Ed.), *The second language curriculum*, 48–62. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Brindley, G. (1989). "The role of needs analysis in adult ESL programme design". In Johnson (ed.), *The second language curriculum*, 63-78.
- Brown, J. (1995) *The elements of language curriculum: A systematic approach to program development*, New York: Heinle & Heinle Publishers.
- Douglas, D. (2010). *Understanding Language Testing*, Hodder Education: London.
- Fried-Booth, D. L. (1986). *Project Work*. Oxford, England: Oxford University Press.
- Hutchinson, T., Waters, A. (1987). *English for specific purposes: A learning-centred approach*. Cambridge,

UK: Cambridge University Press.

Ramirez, C. G. (2015). *English for Specific Purposes: Brief History and Definitions*. *Revista de Lenguas Modernas*, 23, 379-386.

Robinson, P. (1991). *ESP today: A practitioner's guide*. Hertfordshire: Prentice Hall International (UK) Ltd. The Government of RNM –English version