

Meeting English Language Learners 'Needs

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Receipt date: 06/09/2019; Acceptance date: 17/11/2019; Publishing Date: 30/06/2020

Abstract. Needs analysis has long been the cornerstone of English for specific purposes (ESP). It has a vital role in the process of teaching, whether for ESP or general English course. The current study was conducted with the master-one students (2016/2017) of computer-science at the department of mathematics/Computer-Science at the University of Ahmed Draia (Adrar). It aimed at investigating the English language needs of these students by focusing on identifying their needs and discovering the most important needs they needed. It started with providing a general revue of the literature related to the concept, conducting a piloting study to collect data through a section of methodology, analyzing data and then drawing a general conclusion concerning the specific needs of these students. Therefore, the results revealed that the students 'needs were necessary to communicate whether in their environment or outside in order to improve their skills regarded as most important and which are Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing. Finally, the students 'level of proficiency in ESP was above average in all the skills.

Keywords. ESP; Needs analysis; Educational needs; Students 'level; Proficiency.

Résumé . L'analyse des besoins a longtemps été la pierre angulaire de l'anglais à des fins spécifiques (ESP). Il a un rôle essentiel dans le processus d'enseignement, que ce soit pour l'ESP ou le cours d'anglais général. L'étude actuelle a été menée avec les étudiants de master-one (2016/2017) d'informatique du département de mathématiques / informatique de l'université d'Ahmed Draia (Adrar). Il visait à étudier les besoins linguistiques de ces étudiants en anglais en se concentrant sur l'identification de leurs besoins et la découverte des besoins les plus importants dont ils avaient besoin. Il a commencé par fournir une revue générale de la littérature liée au concept, mener une étude pilote pour collecter des données à travers une section de méthodologie, analyser les données et ensuite tirer une conclusion générale concernant les besoins spécifiques de ces étudiants. Par conséquent, les résultats ont révélé que les besoins des élèves étaient nécessaires pour communiquer que ce soit dans leur environnement ou à l'extérieur afin d'améliorer leurs compétences considérées comme les plus importantes et qui sont l'écoute, la parole, la lecture et l'écriture. Enfin, le niveau de compétence des élèves en ESP était supérieur à la moyenne dans toutes les compétences.

Mots-clés. ESP; Analyse des besoins; Besoins éducatifs; Niveau des étudiants; Compétence.

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1. Introduction

Needs analysis, also known as needs assessment is critical for ESP as well as in communicative language teaching. It is instrumental in discovering, evaluating, and implementing learners 'needs.

Sanghori, M.H. (2008, p.2) mentioned that” The term needs analysis generally refers to the activities that are involved in collecting information that will serve as the basis for developing a curriculum that will meet the needs of a particular group of studies. Iwal et al. (1999).”

On the other side and according to West (1994) as cited in Capkova, H. &Knoupava, J. (2017, p.1)” Needs analysis are what learners will be required to do with the foreign language in the target situation, and how learners might best master the target language during the period of training.”

1.1.Literature Review

The concept of needs analysis is a criterion of a paramount importance adopted in ESP.

Robinson, P. (1991, p.3) explained” An ESP course is based on a needs analysis, which aims to specify it is that students have to do through the medium of English. Thus, the question is: what is meant by the word needs”.

1.2. Definition of the Term. “Needs”

The term needs can convey different meanings so that it is understood differently by the learners dueto their involvement in devising the ESP courses. It has a variety of definitions.

According to Dakhmouche, F.R. (2008, p.26), Robinson, H. gave a definition in which she distinguished different categories of needs, the “Objective” versus the “Subjective” needs; the needs “Perceived “by the teachers/ authorities versus or opposed to “Learning needs”

Nevertheless, Brown, J.D. (2009, p.16) defined needs analysis as the systematic collection and analysis of all information necessary for defining a defensible curriculum.

On the other hand, some scholars from ESP fields went further introducing new expressions such “Target situation” & “Target need”

“A needs analysis which focuses on students ‘needs at the end of a language course can be called a target situation analysis” Robinson, P. (1991, p.8)

“Target needs are the “Product” of a target situation analysis”

Dakhmouche, F.R. (2008, p.27)

2. Methodology

The current paper of research process was conducted with the master-one students of computer-science at the department of mathematics/computer-science at the University of Ahmed Draia (Adrar) of the academic year (2016/2017), in which the most important students ‘needs were unveiled and which attempts to establish the reliability and validity of these students’ needs.

2.1.Data Collection Method. This chapter details the methodology used to study the needs analysis required by the sample, focusing on the four language skills such Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing. It describes:

- The population

- The procedure used to conduct this research
- The analysis of the results
- The conclusion

The population targeted was limited to the master-one students (2016/2017) of the computer-science at the department of mathematics/computer-science at the University of Ahmed Draia (Adrar) in south west of Algeria.

The participants were **25**, having received a full oral explanation concerning the process, their free participation, the right to withdraw at any time and for any reason, and their answers will be treated anonymously.

The purpose of this study is to understand and clarify the most important needs analysis of the sample judged as most important for current curriculum and even their career.

Therefore, the most meaningful source of data is the questionnaire, which comprises 31 items divided into 4 sections like:

- Self-analysis
- Language priorities
- Language skills
- Interest and Importance

The instrument used in this work aimed to qualify an evaluation of the most important needs analysis of the sample.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Reliability Statistics

SPSS reliability analysis was run in order to check the reliability of the 31 items mentioned in the questionnaire.

Cronbach's alpha coefficient was used to investigate and demonstrate the internal consistency and homogeneity of the questionnaire.

Data collection tool should score not less than **0.60** to be considered reliable and for **0.80**, Cronbach's alpha is highly reliable.

So, taking into consideration that the acceptable reliability for an instrument is at least **0.60**, then our study is reliable and Cronbach's alpha equals **0.92**.

(See Table: 1)

Table (1): Reliability Statistics

| Case Processing Summary | | | |
|---|-----------------------|-----------|--------------|
| | | N | % |
| Cases | Valid | 25 | 92.6 |
| | Excluded ^a | 2 | 7.4 |
| | Total | 27 | 100.0 |
| a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure. | | | |

| Reliability Statistics | |
|------------------------|------------|
| Cronbach's Alpha | N of Items |
| .929 | 31 |

3.2- Correlation between Items

In order to specify the relationships between the different variables investigated, SPSS was applied and Pearson correlation coefficient was run.

Table (2):Correlations between Items

| | | Speaking | Listening | P/A | G/V | G/W | Presentatio |
|---|---------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| Speaking | Pearson Correlation | 1 | .824** | .833** | .761** | .736** | .818** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 |
| | N | 25 | 25 | 25 | 25 | 25 | 25 |
| Listening | Pearson Correlation | .824** | 1 | .898** | .874** | .843** | .862** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 |
| | N | 25 | 25 | 25 | 25 | 25 | 25 |
| P/A | Pearson Correlation | .833** | .898** | 1 | .912** | .839** | .862** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | .000 | | .000 | .000 | .000 |
| | N | 25 | 25 | 25 | 25 | 25 | 25 |
| G/V | Pearson Correlation | .761** | .874** | .912** | 1 | .844** | .856** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | .000 | .000 | | .000 | .000 |
| | N | 25 | 25 | 25 | 25 | 25 | 25 |
| G/W | Pearson Correlation | .736** | .843** | .839** | .844** | 1 | .840** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | | .000 |
| | N | 25 | 25 | 25 | 25 | 25 | 25 |
| Presentatio | Pearson Correlation | .818** | .862** | .862** | .856** | .840** | 1 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | |
| | N | 25 | 25 | 25 | 25 | 25 | 25 |
| **. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). | | | | | | | |

Table (2) shows a strong correlation of the following items: Speaking, Listening, Pronunciation/Accent, General Vocabulary, General Writing, and Presentation.

As a result, good positive correlations were found between all the items, which indicates that all the participants involved in this research achieved high results.

2.4.Descriptive Statistics Analysis

a) Language Priorities:

Table (3): Language Priorities

| b) Please mark your priorities | Not important | Important | Very important |
|----------------------------------|---------------|--------------|----------------|
| To become a more fluent speaker | *00 **00% | *03 **12% | *22 **88% |
| To expand my general vocabulary | *01 **04% | *03 **12% | *21 **84% |
| To improvemylistening | *01 **04% | *06 **24% | *18 **72% |
| To improvemypronunciation | *01 **04% | *07 **28% | *17 **68% |
| To improvemyreading | *01 **4% | *11 **44% | *13 **52% |
| To improvemywriting | *00 **00% | *04 **16% | *21 **84% |
| To improve my English Test score | *00 **00% | *01 **04% | *24 **96% |

* = Number of answers

** = Percentage of answers

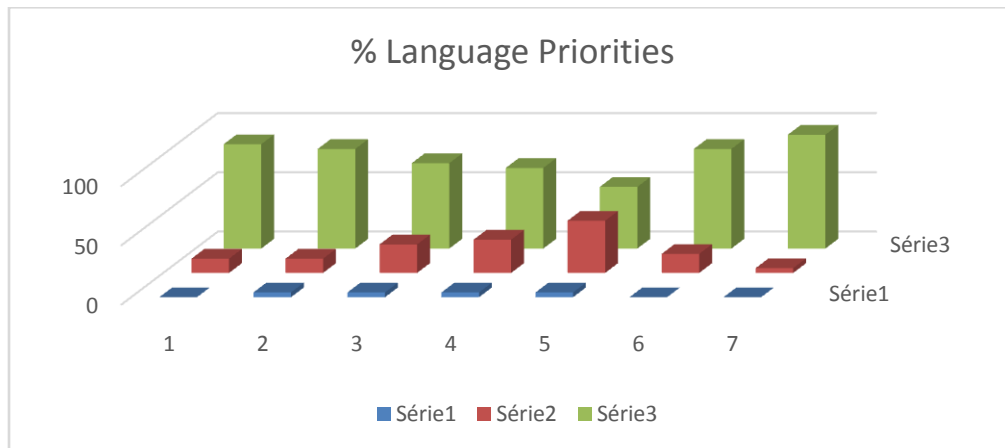


Fig (1): Percentage of Language Priorities.

Serie 1=Not Important **Serie 2**=Important **Serie 3**=Very Important

Table (3): It is noted in this section that the majority of the sample (96%) showed great needs of a paramount importance to improve their English test score, but also it is important for them (88%) to become very fluent speakers, to expand their general vocabulary and their writing skills (21%), while (18%) need to improve their listening skill, (17%) their pronunciation, and (13%) their reading competency.

b) Language Skills:

• Reading Skill :

Table (4): Reading Skill

| Reading: mark your priorities | Not important | Important | Very important |
|-------------------------------|---------------|--------------|----------------|
| Computer Science | *00 **00% | *01 **04% | *24 **96% |
| General Science | *06 **24% | *05 **20% | *14 **56% |
| Non-Scientific | *10 **40% | *14 **56% | *01 **04% |

* = Number of answers

** = Percentage of answers

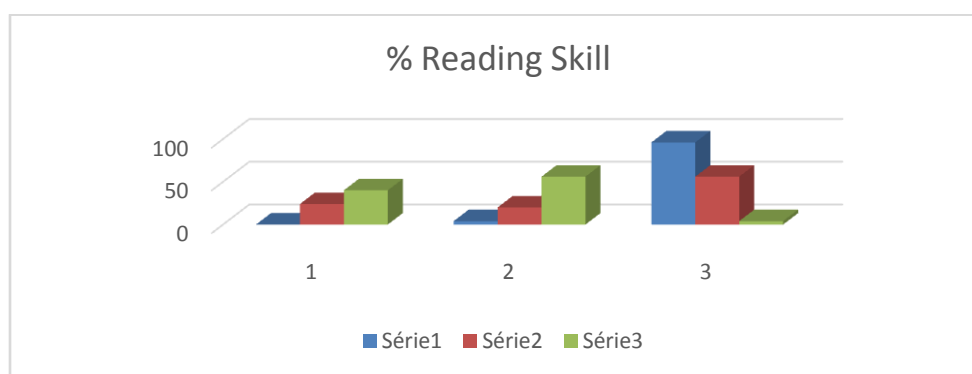


Fig (2): Percentage of Reading Skill.

Serie 1=Not Important **Serie 2**=Important **Serie 3**=Very Important

Table (4): Concerning reading skill. The students declared that reading English language for computer science (96%) and general science (56%) are their needs of very important importance, while (14%) of them, reading for non-scientific purpose is also important.

• Speaking Skill :

Table (5): Speaking Skill

| Speaking: mark your priorities | Not important | Important | Very important |
|--------------------------------|---------------|--------------|----------------|
| Speaking to colleagues | *01 **04% | *13 **52% | *11 **44% |
| Speaking on the phone | *10 **40% | *11 **44% | *04 **16% |
| Taking part in conferences | *12 **48% | *08 **32% | *05 **20% |
| Giving presentations | *07 **28% | *12 **48% | *06 **24% |
| Talks | *09 **36% | *14 **56% | *02 **08% |

* = Number of answers

** = Percentage of answers

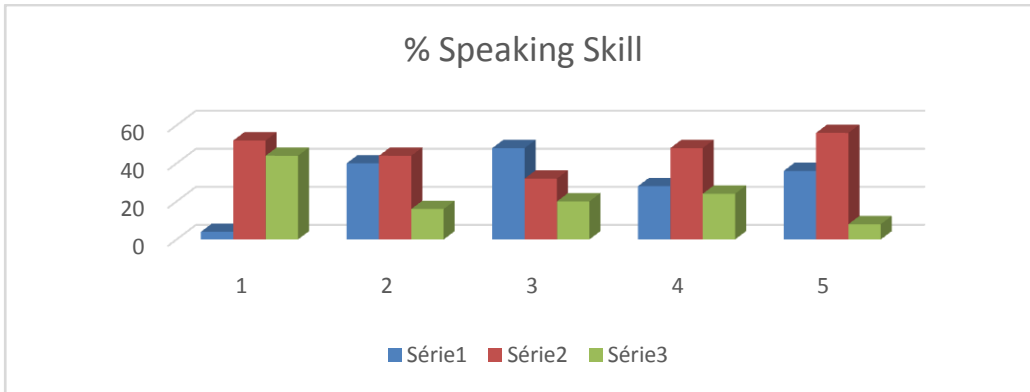


Fig (3): Percentage of Speaking Skill

Serie 1=Not Important **Serie 2**=Important **Serie 3**=Very Important

Table (5): All the participants declared that the speaking skill is important, so that to talk together (56%) or with colleagues (52%), to give presentations in English language (48%) or to speak on phone (44%), and to take part in conference (32%).

• **Writing Skill :**

Table (6): Writing Skill

| Writing:mark your priorities | Not important | Important | Very important |
|------------------------------|---------------|--------------|----------------|
| E-mails | *01 **04% | *05 **20% | *19 **76% |
| Notes | *05 **20% | *11 **44% | *09 **36% |
| Summaries (of articles) | *11 **44% | *12 **48% | *02 **08% |
| ResearchPapers | *09 **36% | *14 **56% | *02 **08% |

* = Number of answers

** = Percentage of answers

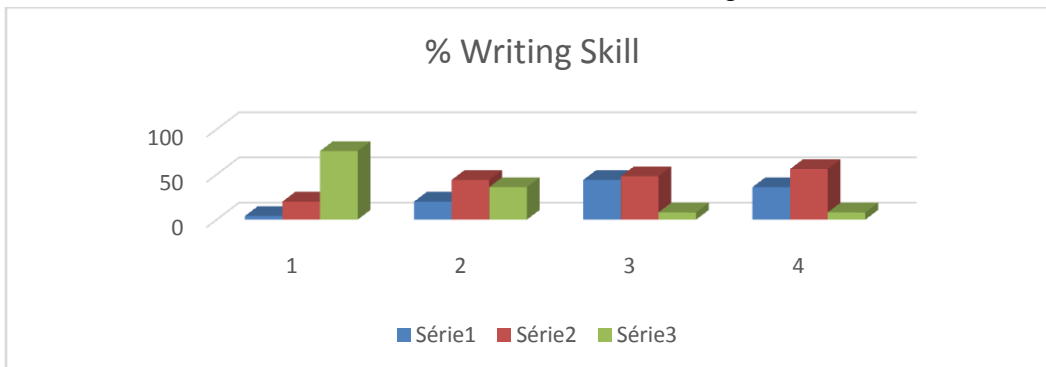


Fig (4): Percentage of Writing Skill

Serie 1=Not Important **Serie 2**=Important **Serie 3**=Very Important

Table (6): In this section of writing skill, the students mentioned that learning to write in English is for them of a paramount importance in order to write and send e-mails (76%), while this skill is important so that to write research papers (56%), summaries for articles (48%) or to take notes (44%).

- **Listening Skill :**

Table (7): Listening Skill

| Listening: mark your priorities | Not important | Important | Very important |
|---------------------------------|---------------|--------------|----------------|
| Instructions | *00 **00% | *18 **72% | *07 **28% |
| Presentations | *00 **00% | *18 **72% | *07 **28% |
| Lectures | *00 **00% | *07 **28% | *18 **72% |
| Teacher talk | *00 **00% | *04 **16% | *21 **84% |

* = Number of answers

** = Percentage of answer

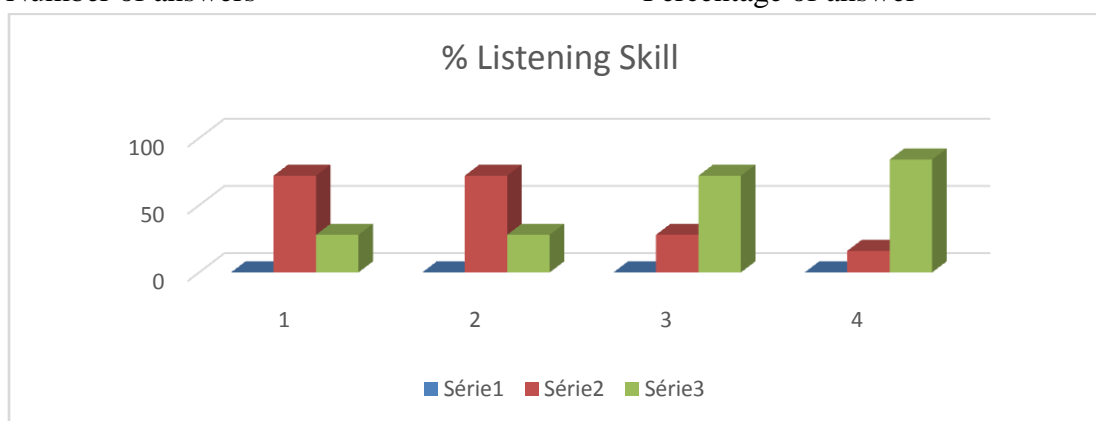


Fig (5): Percentage of Listening Skill

Serie 1=Not Important **Serie 2**=Important **Serie 3**=Very Important

Table (7): Student declared that developing their listening skill is very important to listen to teacher talk (84%) and lectures (72%), but important to give presentations (72%) or to get instructions (72%).

Conclusion

Our current study attempted to investigate the needs analysis of the master-one students (2016/2017) of Computer-Science of the department of Mathematics/Computer-Science at the University of Ahmed Draia (Adrar).

It sought to clarify the answers to the following questions:

- Why do these students need English language?
- What are the most important skills needed?

For the first question, the results showed that our sample needs English language to improve their English test scores, to become more fluent and to expand their general vocabulary. On the other hand, they require it to improve all their language skills.

For the latter question, the participants revealed that all language skills are needed, so that, reading skill is very important to have in order to read computer science, and even general science. Speaking skill was also regarded very important by the students to speak with colleagues, on phone, in conferences or to give presentations. Our sample declared that writing skill is very important too, which helps them to write e-mails, research papers and to take notes. On the other side, listening skill is needed by our sample in order to have lectures or to listen to teachers' talks.

Therefore, the four English language skills: Reading, Speaking, Writing, and Listening are required by all students for their everyday life and further for their career.

In addition, all the sub-skills were regarded as important.

Finally, the results disclosed that the level of proficiency of the participants was above average in all skills and the correlations between all skills were very significant at the level of 0.01 (see **table: 2**).

CONCLUSION.

Needs analysis is critical for course designers, and has become critical in understanding the learners' intended purposes that should not be ignored. It is also the cornerstone for the specific English courses. The aim of needs analysis is to be sensitive to the requirements and demands of the learners.

It has been mentioned in some studies that there is an awareness of the fact that different types of needs analysis are not exclusive but complementary and each one provides a piece to complete the other.

Sanghari, M.H. (2002, p.22) revealed" Today, needs analysis should not be (and is not) of concern only within the field of ESP, but also that of general English, because the needs analysis of the learners is of paramount importance in any language process."

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Appendix:01**NEEDS ANALYSIS QUESTIONNAIRE**

The aim of this questionnaire is to fully understand the English needs of the master-one students of computer-science at the department of Mathematics/Computer science at the University of Ahmed Draia (Adrar).

Please kindly, take the time to fill in the following questionnaire and place your check marks on each scale. Remember, this is not a test and there are no right or wrong answers. The “right” answer is the one that is true for you. Be sure to make only one check mark on each scale.

Full Name:

1. Self-Analysis:

Not do well 1→2→3→4→5do well

| English Proficiency Level | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|
| Speaking | | | | | |
| Listening | | | | | |
| Pronunciation/Accent | | | | | |
| General Vocabulary | | | | | |
| General Writing | | | | | |
| Presentation | | | | | |

2. Language priorities:

| Please mark your priorities | Not important | Important | Very important |
|----------------------------------|---------------|-----------|----------------|
| To become a more fluent speaker | | | |
| To expand my general vocabulary | | | |
| To improve my listening | | | |
| To improve my pronunciation | | | |
| To improve my reading | | | |
| To improve my writing | | | |
| To improve my English Test score | | | |

3. Language skills :

| Reading: mark your priorities | Not important | Important | Very important |
|--|----------------------|------------------|-----------------------|
| Computer Science | | | |
| General Science | | | |
| Non-Scientific | | | |
| Speaking: mark your priorities | Not important | Important | Very important |
| Speaking to colleagues | | | |
| Speaking on the phone | | | |
| Taking part in conferences | | | |
| Giving presentations | | | |
| talks | | | |
| Writing: mark your priorities | Not important | Important | Very important |
| E-mails | | | |
| Notes | | | |
| Summaries (of articles) | | | |
| Research Papers | | | |
| Listening: mark your priorities | Not important | Important | Very important |
| Instructions | | | |
| Presentations | | | |
| Lectures | | | |
| Teacher talk | | | |

4. Interest and Importance:

A) Are you interested in taking English course that focuses on “Scientific

English”?

Yes, very much

Not much

Not interested at all

B) How important do you think “Scientific English” is in comparison

English for General Purposes (EGP)?

More important than EGP

As important as EGP

Less important than E