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# Teaching English for Tourism in order to Cater to the Specific Requirements of English majors at Ho Chi Minh City University of Industry and Trade

Nguyen Thanh Hien 

*Faculty of Foreign Languages, Ho Chi Minh City University of Industry and Trade, Ho Chi Minh City, Viet Nam*

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## Abstract

*This study looks at what students need in English for tourism classes at Ho Chi Minh City University of Industry and Trade (HUIT). It shows that there are three ways to do a needs analysis: target situation analysis (TSA), present situation analysis (PSA), and holistic analysis. As part of this study, the author polled 180 students online to find out what HUIT English majors need for their English for tourism learning. The results show that the students think they need to work on being able to communicate better in English and learning more about tourism. They plan to include more project work to give students more chances to use the language in real life. The results from this study can be used to modify the present ESP courses to meet the needs of students learning English for tourism at HUIT.*

**Keywords:** Needs analysis; TSA; PSA; Holistic analysis; English for Tourism; ESP material.

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**Correspondence author:** Nguyen Thanh Hien

**Email:** [hienntanh@huit.edu.vn](mailto:hienntanh@huit.edu.vn)

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## 1. Introduction

Teaching English for Specific Purposes (ESP) began in the 1960s when foreign students came to the UK to study a specialty (Starfield, 2013). Through the development process, the teaching of ESP has also changed a lot. There are more branches of ESP. English for Academic English focuses on students who want to learn English before entering a specific specialty. English for Occupational Purposes focuses on the language used for work purposes. The concept of professional English emerged after English training was extended to many professions and specialties rather than being limited to academic purposes (e.g. academic English EAP) or in-depth specialties (e.g. Law English). In addition, the current comprehensive perspective on ESP teaching (Marjatta Huhta, Karin Vogt, Esko Johnson and Heikki Tulkki, 2013) emphasizes teaching ESP in context and use rather than in a specific profession. This new view is based on the fact that an individual can have many different social roles involving many different areas at the same

time. For example, if an accountant, who has an in-depth training in accounting, works in a healthcare company, he has to understand some medical terms. At the same time, when this accountant travels abroad or receives guests, he may also need to be able to communicate in some travel-related situations. This new perspective is of interest to teachers and researchers, and a lot of documents, new programs, are built on this perspective (Vu, 2015). The ASEAN Economic Community was publicly started in December 2015. It made it easier for countries to work together and gave people from all ASEAN countries access to more jobs. The State's policy, Decision No. 2080/QĐ-TTg, which came out in 2017, said that the goal was "to improve the ability to use foreign languages to meet the needs of learning and work" (Chính Phủ, 2017). It also said that teachers should "push for integrated language teaching in other disciplines and teaching other subjects (such as mathematics and sciences, specialties...) in a foreign language." At the moment, though, most foreign language training is focused on reaching the goal of entry level 4 for English Majors (on a scale of six levels). So, English for Occupational Purposes doesn't get much attention, especially for students whose major is English. To increase the competitiveness and integration ability for English language students at HUIT, this study aims to understand the need for training and teaching English for Tourism at HUIT. A lot of domestic studies have been done and are still being done during this time period that can help researchers with their research. In 2015, the Department of Tourism, University of Social Sciences and Humanities - National University of Hanoi, prepared a lecture in Tourism English for students. However, this study has only stopped within the scope of one school and has not conducted a comparative study with the program content and evaluation targets according to the newly issued six-level language competence standards. Thus, taking into account both international research trends, social circumstances and the new research and teaching situation in Vietnam, it is necessary to conduct research to assess the need to update the teaching content of ESP for English-language students choosing to study English Tourism. From there, this study establishes the basis for programming, selection of teaching materials and evaluation so that this fits the trends in professional English teaching in the world and is linked to the real needs.

This study seeks to answer two questions:

1. *What need analysis methods are being used to build the ESP program?*
2. *What are the requirements of English majors at HUIT for learning English for Tourism?*

## **2. Literature Review**

Currently, there are a number of different perspectives depending on the concept of needs and the purpose of the person performing need analysis. Need analysis is based on the target situation (Target

Situation Analysis-SA), present situation analysis based on the current situation (Present Situation Analysis-PSA) and holistic needs analysis method.

### **2.1 Target Situation Analysis (TSA)**

This need analysis method has been used to teach ESP for a long time. Because of this, each field or job should have a number of different languages and general languages (Tom Hutchinson , Alan Waters, 1987). By this definition, need analysis looks at the "specific languages or styles" (West, 1997) that are used in a certain field and in certain communication settings. This point of view links the study of demand to the growth of ideas that explain language. At first, need analysis was just a way to count how often certain grammar and word traits were used. Barber (1962) looks at the recognizable traits of scientific writing, and Herbert (1965) looks at the framework of technical English. English lessons were made by Ewers and Latorre (1969) by looking at how sentences and texts are put together. Some people have said that these studies are flawed because they focus too much on the form of language, the usefulness of the readings, and the number of words used. There are also writers who question whether the same set of words and grammar can be used in different types of writing, so it's not possible to say for sure if the words and grammar are typical of a certain field (Starfield, 2013).

In later works, language analysis at a level above the sentence was used to get around this problem. Lackstrom, Selinker, and Trimble (1973), Wilkins (1976) and Munby (1978) were some of the authors who looked at the uses and ideas of language in a certain area. In fact, Selinker (1979) looked at a piece of writing in the student's field and decided what it all meant. Munby's (1978) study is one of the most important ones on need analysis right now. The writer suggests a way to look at a specialty's communication needs, such as communication events, which should be used to build the course plan and its material. Scientists study target language analysis because they think that learning a language is more fun and useful if the lessons are related to what the person is interested in Nunan and Lamb (1996), Brindley (1989), and Starfeld (2013). So, the target situation-based need analysis is only concerned with finding out what language features are unique to an area of study.

In the need analysis method, demand analysis is focused on specific events with set numbers. This way of teaching sets up a connection between teaching language and making people use it in real life. After that, the writers give these needs new names, like vital needs (Tom Hutchinson , Alan Waters, 1987) and objective needs (Brindley, 1989). It was Munby's study in 1978 that made the most important addition. It proved the importance of need analysis in designing ESP programs and introduced important ideas like situation, function, and context (West, 1997) and (Starfield, 2013). Thus, even in the later stages of development of ESP, registry analysis and discourse analysis continued to be developed and helped to clarify spoken and written texts in English. In the need analysis group based on the target situation, we can name several types of research such as specialized text analysis, speech analysis, and genre style analysis.

(genre analysis). Another example of target-situational need analysis is the language audit that was developed in the 1980s. This methodology analyzes language use needs from both a language text and a social perspective and can provide metrics of language use requirements in a branch or at a higher level in order to make proposals for changes to a new system in the future. Language auditing differs from the analysis of language needs on a large scale, and this is also the weakness of this method (West, 1997). Later, when researchers are more interested in learning and learners, needs-based current-situation analysis (PSA) appears.

## **2.2 Present Situation Analysis (PSA)**

Growing in the 1980s, PSA was designed to overcome the weaknesses of TSA. This need analysis methodology is based on the argument that TSA will not be sufficient to help teaching be effective because there are many other factors involved in the teaching process such as learners, teachers, the technique of teaching and the learning environment; these factors also need to be considered along with whether or not the language is used or carried out independently. West (1997) stated that the needs analysis studies conducted during this period extend into a broader scope beyond language. This phase introduces various novel forms of need analysis, including evaluating the extent of learning and identifying areas of learning that require improvement, doing strategic analysis of learning, and studying the learning environment and conditions (refers to the process of examining and evaluating something in detail).

Need analysis based on the level of apprenticeship carried out in the early '80s. This method assumes that for a language learner, there is a gap between the current language capabilities and the requirement to use the output. The need analysis needs bridge analysis will be aimed at identifying the gap that is missing. This view was also influenced by studies of learners who suggested that learners would learn better if they were placed in the same group with similar qualifications, and the teaching material would be chosen based on the ability of the group. Therefore, the purpose of need analysis is to determine the level of apprenticeship and the language levels that learners need to go through in order to the desired level. West (1997) noted that the results of these two important activities of the need analysis based on the current situation would be a list of language use needs in the target environment and a level division to determine the priority order of those needs in teaching. Some examples of using this method include the study of the system of units developed in English teaching by Yates (1977), and the study by Bheiss (1988) of the need for English for nursing students. However, the method is still considered by researchers to be too simple and mechanical and to avoid mentioning some areas that are difficult to measure. (Berwick, 1989) . Some of the other factors involved in the learning process, such as the teaching method and context, are not taken into account. To overcome this weakness, another research approach that is concerned with the current situation is the strategy analysis and the teaching environment (means analysis).

Technical analysis is concerned with the methodology used in the course that is constructed from the need analysis of the learner. The methods here may include both your teaching methods and the methodology of the game. In addition, studies concerned with students' choices on group size, homework, in- and out-of-class learning, methodology, error correction, use of audio and visual material, and evaluation methodology are also considered technical analysis studies (Brindley, 1989); (Jordan, 1997) (D. Nunan, 1996). The study is based on the idea that learners will learn more effectively when their desires, opinions, and motives are taken into account to enhance their autonomy. These methods of research make a certain contribution to the conduct of the course. The first is to establish a link between previous learning experience and current learning. The second is to predict the difficulties and conflicts that may occur when some of the learners' preferred methods are considered "ineffective or inappropriate" by teachers (Jordan, 1997), thus creating an exchange mechanism for teachers and learners to better understand each other. (Belcher & Lukkarila, 2011; West, 1997). However, the concrete steps for students and teachers to have a common voice as well as the mechanisms for conflict resolution have not been well studied. Long (2005) asks the question for needs analysis involving teachers and learners, "So who's the right one? Who's in charge of designing the course?" (p. 30).

With the same interest in language teaching, environmental analysis focuses more on contextual factors such as classroom culture, management culture, and facility and resource management. Examples of typical studies of this method are by Holliday & Cook (1982) in the context study of ESP teaching and Holliday (1984) in the study of classroom culture. These studies help to personalize teaching and find effective factors in the context of teaching. Despite the methods and factors that have been identified in environmental analysis, this is still an area that has not been studied much, and in fact, there is no single study that can look at all the diverse teaching contexts.

Thus, both TSA and PSA help people better understand the language used by different groups and the context of teaching. Let's take a look at the example. The method of determining the level of the learner can be considered the starting point. Analysis of the language used in the destination environment. Technical analysis is the analysis of transport and environmental analysis, which is looking at the journey of the journey (West, 1997). Depending on the purpose and scope of the research we can choose to focus on. While Language need analysis can identify vocabulary, patterns, and styles for a professional or academic field, and provide teaching content for courses, Currently, need analysis is better informed about the desire and the way the learner wants to experience to a level of language use in the target situation.

However, when considering a learner from the perspective of social relationships and the potential need to use language in a variety of different contexts, the limitation of these two approaches is that it does not identify the needs of all contexts of individual language use that may be needed. So, then, how will the need analysis be performed?

### **2.3 A holistic perspective (holistic analysis)**

One point that needs to be clarified is that the holistic perspective in demand analysis is not a completely new approach compared to the two methods mentioned above. Belcher (2006) considers this to be the second generation of needs analysis. Claiming in the 2013 Cambridge publisher's book on need analysis (Marjatta Huhta, Karin Vogt, Esko Johnson and Heikki Tulkki, 2013), David Hall commented: "The sociological and comprehensive view [of the need analysis] is innovative, but it is consistent with the previous need analysis viewpoints, i.e. it covers two areas that are carried out simultaneously: one is the analysis of language use, style, communication events and the other is the social and individual-oriented research to identify needs and build courses" (p. 4, translator).

Thus, the first field is similar to TSA. The difference is that this approach emphasizes the "complete text", associated with the usage and user of the text and the context of use. The unit for analysis is a language activity, a communication task in a work or study-related situation. For example, when analyzing a bank card situation, this method will learn who is involved in the conversation, the complete conversation, how to use it, and the structure of the conversation. The second area deals with the nature of participation and collaboration in the need analysis process. There are a lot of people involved in the need analysis process like learners, teachers, training units, societies and people who conduct the need analysis. An important feature of this method is its comprehensiveness. It considers a learner as an individual with multiple social roles and relationships. Therefore, in order to be able to understand the complexity of the needs of the parties, the need analysis method usually uses qualitative research (Norton & Toohey, 2011). The results of the comprehensive need analysis are profiles of communication and language skills.

Through the above analysis, we can see three main need analysis perspectives: Target Situation Analysis (TSA), Present Situation Analysis (PSA), and Holistic need analysis. There are two parallel patterns that appear in these methods: analyzing language use needs and analyzing participants' motivational needs and desires. When building a specialized course, need analysis is essential and educators can carry out need analysis from any point of view, depending on the purpose and priorities set. Norton & Toohey (2011) asserted that in order to design a course it was necessary to analyze both the needs of learners, environmental factors and the appropriate teaching principles. Therefore, it can be stated that if people only focus on need analysis using the target language, we can overlook the needs and other factors that influence the course. With the desire to improve ESP tourism teaching, to meet the academic needs of English majors in this specialty, this study will focus on needs analysis of English majors at HUIT. The figures are mainly based on surveys of students.

### **3. Methodology**

This study uses two mixed methods: Quantitative and Qualitative ones. These two methods are conducted in sequence. First of all, the author reviewed the ESP training experience in the world, conducted

an analysis of the program and teaching materials of the Tourism program at HUIT. On that basis, the researcher created a questionnaire to find out about the students' ESP Tourism training needs (Dornyei & Taguchi, 2010). The main research tool is an online questionnaire. The questionnaire consists of 13 questions (both closed and open questions). The purpose of the questionnaire is to focus on learners and the teaching environment for the ESP. Specifically, the purpose of the questionnaire is summarized in Table 1. The questionnaire was made online using the Google form survey tool. The survey table is formatted so that each individual can only answer the questions once. The data of the questionnaire is analyzed and described and synthesized into tables or corresponding contents.

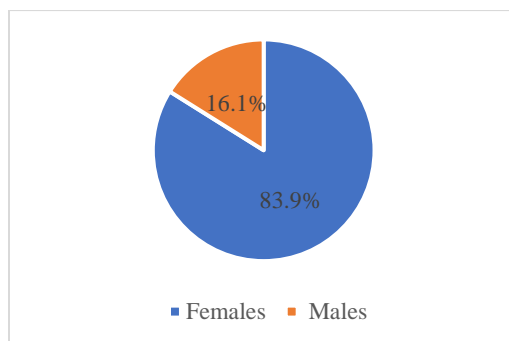
*Table 1. Summary of questions to learn about the ESP training needs of English majors at HUIT*

Questions	Question types	Purpose
1,3,4	Multiple choice	General Information
2	Open questions	General Information
5-8	Multiple choice	Multiple choice Learners Information (English level, current English skills)
9-12	Multiple choice	English teaching environment (duration, teachers, facilities, activities outside the classroom, internship opportunities, communication opportunities)
13	Open questions	Student Proposals

## 4. Findings

### 4.1 Summary of research data

The questionnaire was conducted online and sent to English-speaking students at HUIT. We got 180 votes. Of the total number of students, 83.9% were female students and 16.1% were male students as shown in Figure 1.



*Figure 1. Participants' genders*

Students participate in research at different stages of the program. Third-year students were the majority (66.6%), then second-year (25.5%), first-year (6.7%) and at least fourth-year (1.2%) students (Figure 2).

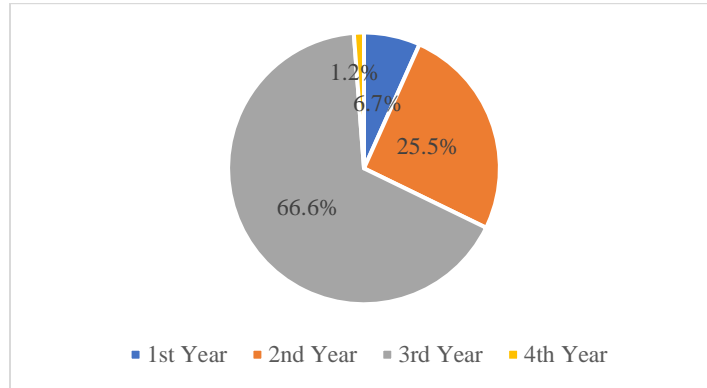


Figure 2. Summary of student data for years

Thus, it is possible to see students studying at different stages of the program, which can lead to differences in English experience and level. In terms of English learning experience, most students have studied from 5-10 years (67.2%), and more than 10 years (32.8.3%). The next section will give a more detailed analysis of the student's ESP Tourism learning needs.

**4.2 Student's ESP learning needs**

When analyzing the needs of English majors, the researcher focuses on analyzing their current level and language competence, their attitude to the specialized English courses taught at the school.

When asked about their current level of English, the students assessed their level according to the Vietnamese Six-Level Framework for Foreign Languages. The results are quite varied (Figure 3).

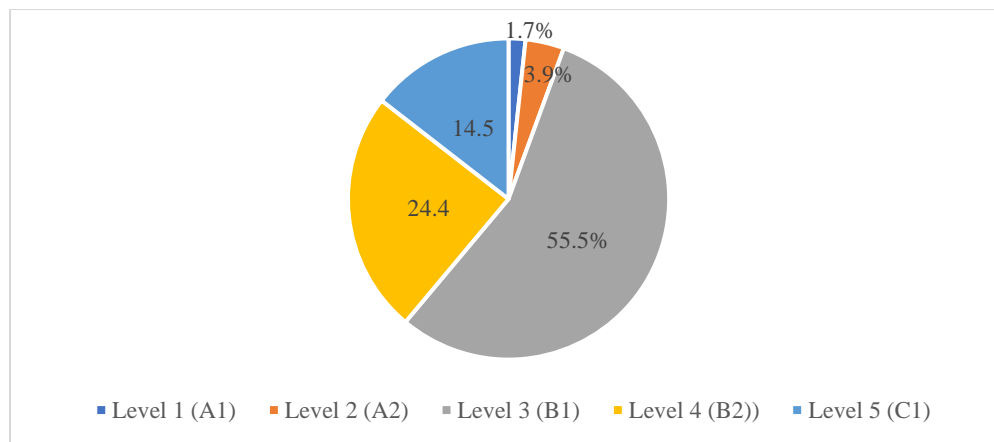


Figure 3. Self-assessment of students in English according to the Vietnam Foreign Language Competence Framework



Accordingly, the majority of students have a level of English at level 3 (lower than the standard output requirement for the specialty block is 55.5%). It is worth noting that the percentage of students who reach the fourth and fifth grades is also relatively high (38.9%), and these students may be qualified the standard output requirement for English majors. About 5.6% of students still rated themselves as second-level and first-level. (Figure 3).

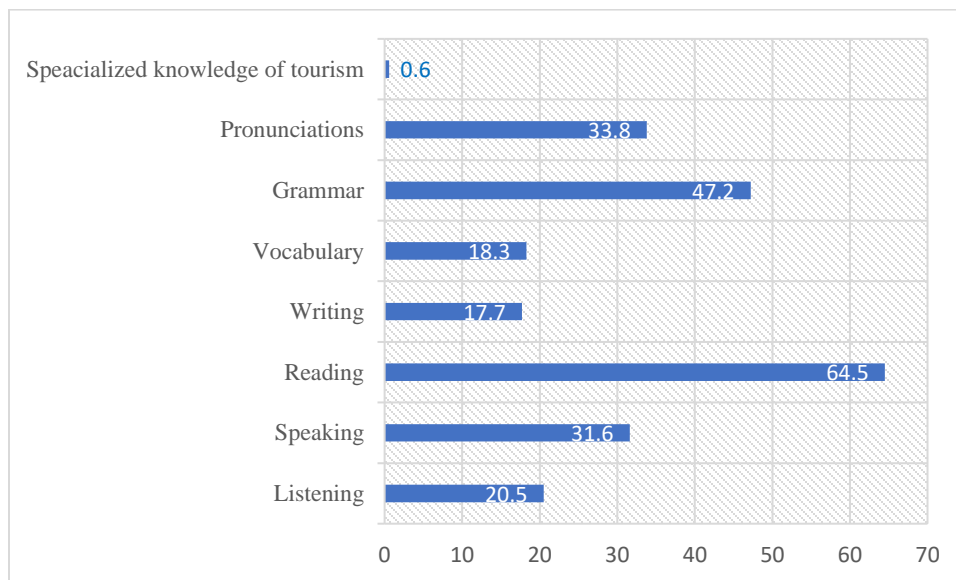


Figure 4. Student assessment of good knowledge and skills

Writing and vocabulary skills are less perceived by students than by other languages. It's worth noting that only one student out of 180 respondents said they had good specialized knowledge of tourism. Similarly, when asked about weak skills and knowledge, 68.3% of students said their tourism expertise was weak. This should be taken into account when designing and choosing the right ESP teaching method for students.

Table 2. Learners' evaluation of teaching ESP at HUIT

No.	Items	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Mean
1.	Teachers with good language skills	11	12	109	48	3.08
2.	Teachers with good pedagogical skills	8	12	115	45	3.09
3.	Teachers with good travel expertise	8	15	107	50	3.11
4.	Curricula and teaching materials fully serving the teaching	8	16	120	36	3.02
5.	Curriculum and teaching materials updated	6	30	112	32	2.94

6.	Subject content to meet the needs of the subsequent work	5	27	110	38	3.01
7.	You are satisfied with your course	8	42	110	20	2.79
8.	You have the opportunity to use English outside the classroom	7	40	104	19	2.64
9.	Students in less than 50	25	19	78	58	2.94
10.	Timetables are arranged accordingly	9	31	101	39	2.94
11.	Good facilities for learning ESP	13	39	99	29	2.80
12.	You would like to add leaning hours to ESP	13	33	87	47	2.93

The results showed that learners had high ratings for teachers, the content of the subject, the number of students in the classroom and the hours of class (2.94/4.0). Meanwhile, students underestimated the up-to-date curriculum, the opportunity to use English outside the classroom and facilities. This leads to a low overall rating of 2.79/4.0. Similarly, in the final question about the student's proposal to improve the quality of the course, the student gives a variety of opinions. The researcher conducted an analysis and grouped the answers and obtained some of the following proposed groups (Table 3).

Table 3. Summary of student proposals for teaching ESP Proposal Number of proposals

Proposals	Number of proposals
Curriculum Update	5
Foreign teachers	9
Increase communication in English	17
Increased practical activity	25
Increasing input requirements	1

Overall, the proposals are not much and are rather focused on increasing practicality, increasing communication opportunities, updating curriculum content and proposing increased English entry requirements or increasing English communication. There's no proposal for teachers.

### 5. Conclusion

In conclusion, the research shows that there are some key results on the current level of apprenticeship and the desires of learners when performing ESP courses at school. First, the level of learning varies. There are students with language skills equivalent to level 4, 5 (B2 or C1), while there are students who are only at level 2. This suggests that building an ESP course for students in Vietnam may not follow a single route. For a group of students with a lower level of English proficiency, consideration should be given to the level of specialization involved in order to reduce the pressure on the learner as they must at the same time both the language objectives and the specialized knowledge objectives (Coyle , Hood, & Marsh, 2010). For a group of students with good language skills, the program needs to include more specialized content to

enhance their understanding of the subject rather than simply providing vocabulary for the subject. Secondly, students have the desire to change some of the content and methods of teaching ESP to enhance practicality and practical communication skills. This is quite consistent with Huta and other authors' recommendations (2013) on applying target communication situations to need analysis and teaching ESP to learners. Although some of the above recommendations were made in this study, we found that in order to change the content of specialized foreign language courses, we need to carry out further analysis of the actual teaching situation in the classroom to learn the teaching methods of teachers, from which we can choose the appropriate teaching-learning methods along with improved content, changing according to the needs of learners. At the same time, we also compare the content of the curriculum with actual work requirements in order to find situations and projects that are highly practical and effective.

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