

## ***Preliminary Analysis of Management Master's Students English Needs: Considerations for English for Specific Purposes Problem Based Course Design***

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### ***Abstract***

*This study aims at analysing the English language needs of 45 Master's Management students in the Department of Management, Faculty of Economics, Commerce and Management at Farhat Abbas University –Setif 1-. To meet the research aim, a questionnaire was designed according to the needs analysis framework suggested by Dudley-Evans and St John (1998) focusing on target needs analysis, present situation analysis, and learning situation analysis. In the light of results, the majority of Master's students noted that ESP course is significant and beneficial for both their academic studies and for their professional future careers. However, the results revealed the participants' dissatisfaction with the different ESP course components due to the absence of clear course objectives in addition to the mismatch between course content and learners' needs. Therefore, students' low proficiency level in English productive skills, especially speaking skills, necessitates reconsideration of the instructional practices of the ESP course and requires considerable focus on the students' needs and spoken communicative aspects of the target language.*

**Keywords:** English for Specific Purposes, Needs Analysis, Business English, Course Design

### ***Résumé***

*L'analyse des besoins d'apprenants est une étape essentielle dans l'enseignement de l'anglais pour buts spécifiques (ESP). Cette étude cherche à examiner les besoins en langue anglaise de 45 étudiants de Master en Management au Département de Gestion de la faculté d'Economie, de Commerce et de Gestion de l'Université Farhat Abbas - Setif-1. Un questionnaire a été conçu selon l'approche développée par Dudley Evans et St John (1998) couvrant des aires comme : Analyse de la Situation Cible (TSA) ; Analyse de la Situation Présente (PSA) ; et Analyse des besoins d'apprentissage (LSA). L'analyse des données a indiqué que la plupart des étudiants ont noté l'importance de l'anglais dans leur domaine d'étude académique et leur future carrière, cependant, les résultats obtenus ont aussi révélé l'insatisfaction des participants au programme d'anglais et ses composants à cause de l'inadéquation entre le contenu du cours et les besoins des apprenants. Par conséquent, le faible niveau des étudiants dans les compétences de production, en particulier les compétences d'expression orale, nécessite de repenser des pratiques éducatives et une attention particulière aux aspects communicatifs des compétences ciblées.*

**Mots-clés :** ESP (Anglais des Buts Spécifiques), Analyse des Besoins, Anglais des Affaires, Elaboration de programme

### **المخلص**

يعتبر تحليل احتياجات المتعلمين خطوة أولى وأساسية في تدريس اللغة الإنجليزية لأغراض خاصة. وتهدف هذه الدراسة إلى تحليل احتياجات تدريس اللغة الإنجليزية لـ 45 طالب ماستر تخصص إدارة الأعمال في قسم الإدارة، كلية الاقتصاد، التجارة والإدارة في جامعة فرحات عباس - سطيف - 1. وقد تم تصميم الاستبانة وفقاً لإطار تحليل الاحتياجات التي اقترحها دادلي إيفانز وسانت جون (1998) مع التركيز على تحليل الاحتياجات المستهدفة وتحليل الوضع الحالي، وتحليل حالة التعلم. في ضوء ما تم العثور عليه، وقد نوّه معظم الطلاب بأهمية اللغة الإنجليزية في مجال دراستهم الأكاديمية ومستقبلهم المهني، ومع ذلك كشفت النتائج عن عدم رضا المشاركين عن البرنامج ومحتوياته المختلفة بسبب عدم وجود أهداف واضحة، بالإضافة إلى عدم التوافق بين محتوى الدروس واحتياجات المتعلمين. ولذلك فإن مستوى الكفاءة المنخفضة للطلاب في مهارات الإنتاج، وخاصة مهارات التحدث يستلزم إعادة النظر في الممارسات التعليمية ويحتاج إلى تركيز كبير على الجوانب التواصلية للمهارات المستهدفة.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** الإنجليزية للأغراض الخاصة، تحليل الاحتياجات، اللغة الإنجليزية للأعمال، تصميم المناهج

## ***Introduction***

Due to the noteworthy changes that have been recently taking place in the organization of Algerian economic growth, the English language has become a necessary tool for communication. Accordingly, the professional profile of a modern qualified employee should include appropriate communication skills and acceptable English language proficiency to cope with the modern competitive global work arena. In the process of educating future employees, special emphasis on English for Specific Purposes (ESP), henceforth becomes necessary. Given the prevalent importance of Business English (BE) communication, its learning and teaching seem to be a challenging task for Algerian learners whose goal is effective communication. In the same concern, business students, specifically management students need a specific set of communicative language skills for their success in education and career. Due to globalization, international organizations are voicing their concerns about the need for better communication skills among students of Business. Therefore, English for Business Purposes courses should be tailored to suit the requirements of the evolving needs of the workplace.

### ***1.1. Statement of the Problem***

Algeria is trying to integrate ESP courses into tertiary studies to respond to the growing demand for English. However, business students consider the English course as necessary but not linked to what they believe to be their genuine study program. Furthermore, the latter is still teacher centred limited to teaching subject related lexis and language structure ignoring the specific needs and interests of learners. This often leads to low and poor learners' performance when they use English in their future profession. In response to this situation, ESP teachers should take into considerations learners' needs. Besides, they should apply innovative approaches which help to develop not only students' ability to communicate properly in English but also to promote their professional skills. To meet these expectations,

NA henceforth aims to gather sufficient factual information about the students' perceived English-language needs prior to the start of an English course. According to Kennedy and Bolitho (1984, p.2), "once a learner's needs have been defined, in terms of why he wishes to learn English and the kind of English he will have to use, this information can be used as a guideline for the content of a course suited to his particular interests and needs". Therefore, NA for business students is expected at the beginning of the ESP course to be ready to function effectively in their future workplaces technically and linguistically.

### ***1.2. Aims of Research***

The present study aims at analysing the English language needs of Master's students in the Department of Management Sciences at Farhat Abbes -Setif 1- University, Algeria, in order to investigate students' perceptions of the current ESP course and to identify the students' perceptions of their academic and future work needs as regards English language learning. This is done in order to help teachers to design an appropriate ESP course and raise awareness of educationalists in Algeria to draw a clear policy to ensure successful implementation of ESP courses. The main enquiries that were addressed in the present investigation are as follow:

### ***1.3. Research Questions***

- 1) What are the difficulties facing Master's students regarding the learning of English?
- 2) What are Management students' perceptions regarding their English language needs?
- 3) Is the ESP course delivered in Management Department at Sétif-1- University adequate to satisfy the Master students' needs?
- 4) Based on Needs Analysis results, what type of ESP course might fit these students' requirements?

## ***2. Literature Review***

### ***2.1. English for Specific Purposes***

ESP emerged as an answer to the social demand associated with prosperous business

environment. From the early 1960's, ESP has grown to become one of the main areas of English language Teaching (ELT, henceforth), especially at tertiary education, since it is directed towards meeting specific needs of the particular learners. Accordingly, Hutchinson and Waters (1987) define ESP as an approach to language teaching in which all decisions concerning the content and method are principally based on the learner's reasons for learning. In fact, ESP movement has shown a slow but steady growth over the past decades. According to Hutchinson and Waters (1987, p.6): "ESP was not a planned and coherent movement, but rather a phenomenon that grew out of a number of converging trends."

The emergence and growth of ESP then was brought about by a combination of three main factors: the demands of a brave new world, a revolution in linguistics, and focus on the learner. Therefore, the reason that led to the emergence of ESP was the development in language theory which put much emphasis on learner's specific needs (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987, p. 8). ESP refers to "the area of inquiry and practice in the development of language programs for people who need a language to meet a predictable range of communicative needs" (Swales, 1992, p. 300). That is to say, ESP has been developed in response to learners' communicative needs in specific scientific fields in academic or professional settings. The dominant areas in ESP are Business English (BE) and English for Academic Purposes (EAP, henceforth) and course design issues need to take into account the target learning needs of ESP students. In the same line of thought, Zhang (2013, p.72) states: "ESP is a goal-oriented and well targeted instruction system, which stresses the combination of English language learning and specific purposes of professional learning."

## 2.2. *Needs Analysis and Business English*

As the main focus of ESP is the learner and his needs, the importance of NA in any ESP course is undoubtedly undisputable (Songhori, 2008). It is considered as a prerequisite in any course design (Richterich & Chancerel, 1980). Needs analysis is part of main four absolute characteristics of ESP and

is referred to as "needs assessment". In Strevens's definition (Johns & Dudley-Evans, 1991, p. 116), NA refers to a set of activities involved in gathering information that will serve as the basis for developing an ESP course that will meet the learning needs of a particular group of learners. According to West (1994, p.1), NA is a process to identify "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".

Concerning Business English (BE), the identification of needs is a prerequisite for the BE course designers. In this respect, Dudley-Evans & St John (1998, p.2) note that "Needs Analysis may indeed be even more fundamental to Business English than to English for Science and Technology, as the learners' needs may vary much more." Likewise, in ESP, rigorous analysis of the linguistic features of the designated situation should be carried out in BE. The identified features, accordingly, will form the BE course. Brieger (1997, cited in Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998, p.58) claims that: "Needs analysis for Business English will set out to identify the range of general and specialist language knowledge required, together with general and professional communication skills." In other words, the data collected include the language application information, communicative skills, and the cognition of the teaching objectives of the learners, working institutions and societies.

## 2.3. *Models of Needs Analyses*

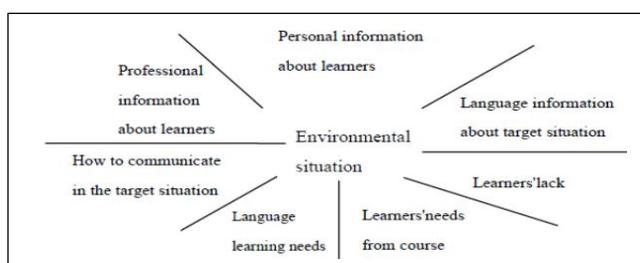
According to Long (2005, p.1), 'just as no medical intervention would be prescribed before a thorough diagnosis of what ails the patient, so no language teaching program should be designed without thorough needs analysis'. NA is considered as one of the key stages in ESP since it provides relevancy for ESP course design process (Jackson, 2004; John, 1991; Dudley-Evans & St. John, 1998). Richterich and Chancerel (1980) put forward some significant aims of NA: to identify elements which will lend themselves to training, to establish the relative importance, and to find out what is

indispensable, necessary, or just desirable. NA aims at clearly demonstrating the objectives, goal, content, teaching learning methods and evaluation procedures for designing the syllabus of the course (Cowling, 2007; St. John, 1996). According to Dudley-Evans and St John (1998), needs were seen as a distinct language item of grammar and vocabulary. At its earlier stage, NA was mainly concerned with linguistic and register analysis (Songhori, 2008). Despite of the various models of NA, only four models are gaining much recognition by scholars. Each model can identify language needs from a particular perspective. The four models are Munby's Target Situation Analysis (1978), Allwright's Present Situation Analysis (1982), Hutchinson and Waters' model (1987) and Dudley-Evans and St. John's Model (1998). The present study follows Dudley-Evan and St John's model since it combines many approaches. Besides, it is appropriate for the objectives of this study which sheds light on every aspect that is relevant to Master's Management students' needs. This model can be viewed as the most comprehensive model for an investigation of ESP needs.

### 2.3.1. *Dudley-Evans and St John's Model of Needs Analysis*

Dudley-Evans and St John (1998) established a model for Business English courses which contain a number of aspects illustrated in the following:

**Figure 1:** *Model of Needs Analysis*



### ***Dudley-Evans and St John's Model of Needs Analysis 1998, p.125***

The model, developed by Dudley-Evans & St John (1998) on language needs, is practical and pragmatically covering all aspects of language, such as TSA (Target Situation Analysis), PSA (Present

Situation Analysis), LSA (Learning Situation Analysis) and other important considerations. In the model, professional information includes the tasks and activities in which learners are using or will be using English for. This is the Target Situation Analysis and the objective needs of the learners. However, personal information includes concerns about the factors that might affect the way in which learners approach learning tasks, cultural background, attitude to English, or even their reasons and expectations for taking the course. this can be considered as the learners' subjective needs, that include learners' wants, means and strategies. The English language information about the learners' proficiency in language skills and language use which characterize learners is their current skills and language uses; this part belongs to the Present Situation Analysis. This analysis is the effective way to assess the learners' lack, which is the gap between "the English language information about the learner's" and "professional information about the learners".

The main concern of the Present Situation Analysis is the current language proficiency of the learners. Learning needs Analysis seeks to find out the effective ways of learning the language and skills providing remedy for the lacks. Professional communication information concerns the way how the language and skills are used in the target situation. As the learners' needs and attitudes may change during the course, NA is recommended to be conducted all along the process of the course.

### 2.4. *Procedures of Needs Analysis*

Needs analysis is a useful tool to investigate learner's needs, but it is not an easy task. As Hyland (2007) argued the use of systematic means to define the specific sets of skills, texts, linguistic forms, and communicative practices that a particular group of learners must acquire is central to ESP. Thus, NA results help in designing syllabi and materials and underlining their pragmatic engagement with occupational, academic, and professional realities. When conducting NA, a variety of procedures can be

used and the type of selected procedures will determine the required information (Richards, 2001).

According to Mohammadi and Nacer (2013, p.1016), in order to conduct Needs Analysis, a comprehensive framework has been proposed by Brown (2009) who explains the stages of a Needs Analysis. His framework consists of three major stages with ten steps:

***A. Get ready to do NA***

1. Define the purpose of the NA
2. Delimit the student population
3. Decide upon approach (es) and syllabus (es)
4. Recognize constraints
5. Select data collection procedures

***B. Do the NA research***

6. Collect data
7. Analyse data
8. Interpret results

***C. Use the NA results***

9. Determine objectives
10. Evaluate the report on the NA project

From the overall findings of the analysis, the researcher attempts to draw implications about the learners' language needs, and finally explains the limitations of the study.

***2.5. Previous Studies on Needs Analysis***

As mastery of English has become an essential requirement for communication in professional settings, ESP courses have been essentially approved worldwide to satisfy the specific needs of the learners in both academic and professional contexts. A plethora of research in NA that has been undertaken in different disciplines with different frameworks; in the present study, some key studies in Business English context are reviewed and discussed.

Zughoul and Hussein (1985) conducted a Needs Analysis study as an attempt to examine the perceptions of both students and staff members in different disciplines. The findings indicated that the students stressed developing the ability to communicate in various forms includes written, oral, audio-visual and graphic presentations. In the same

vein, Basturkmen (1998) carried out NA research to identify students' needs, in seven departments at Kuwait University. The obtained results revealed that engineering students gave great importance to English academic needs.

Besides, Taillefer (2007) conducted a research in which he investigated the professional English language needs of French economics students intending to pursue different professions in the future. Despite their different professional aims, the findings of skills-based questionnaire revealed that an overall high level of English language proficiency was required, mainly in oral communication. Likewise, Kim (2006) carried out a NA study for non-science and non-engineering East Asian graduate students. The results identified individual, small group discussions and whole class discussions as the most frequently required oral classroom tasks for developing listening and speaking skills. Concerning writing skills, Bacha and Bahous (2008) conducted a research to investigate the business students' writing needs at the Lebanese American University. The obtained results indicated the written language ability of the business students and stressed on the improvement of the writing proficiency level in order to cope with the different writing types needed in various target situations.

In professional settings, Cowling (2007) conducted a NA research on a large Japanese heavy-industry company and found content, skills, topic and task based syllabus as the immediate requirement to design a course for intensive workplace course. Furthermore, Crosling and Ward (2002) in their study aimed to determine the importance and frequency of oral communication in the workplace. The obtained results revealed that oral communication in the workplace was highly frequent and important within a company's own department such as work-related discussion. Consequently, participants recommended that the teaching of presentation skills at tertiary level was important in order to equip the students with the oral communicative demands of the workplace.

The major findings of these studies revealed that the majority of the offered BE courses may have not been implemented based on Need Analysis; thus, there would be a gap between the teaching of Business English and the actual communicative target needs. Finally, the process of Needs Analysis may help to contextualize ESP courses according to participants' needs in terms of appropriateness and effectiveness in different settings.

### ***3. Research Design and Methodology***

#### ***3.1. Participants***

The participants in this study were 45 first year Master's students from the Department of Management Sciences in Commerce, Economics and Management Faculty at Farhat Abbas University of Sétif 1. They enrolled in their academic programmes during the first semester of the 2017-2018 academic year, and specializing in "Human Resources Management". They were divided in two groups that consisted of (23) and (22) students respectively.

#### ***3.2. Data Collection Tool***

There is a shared agreement on the variety of the methods used to collect data in NA. For example, Basturkmen (2010), Chen (2009), Brown (2009), Long (2005), Richards (2002), Graves (2000), and Dudley-Evans and St John (1998) agreed that NA can be conducted using questionnaires, observations, interviews, and tests. The necessary collection procedure tool for the present study is the one through which the research questions can be answered, and it can give a full description and deep understanding of the phenomenon of ESP in the Algerian context. Therefore, questionnaire seems to be the appropriate means for such examination because they are used to gather information on a larger scale (Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998; Graves, 2000). Moreover, questionnaires are useful in collecting data from a large number of people. They can cover questions, which interviews and meetings cannot.

##### ***3.2.1. Design of the Questionnaire***

The students' questionnaire aims at eliciting information on students' perceptions concerning their

language needs, their current language difficulties and competencies, and their language competencies in particular skill related to the target situation with a view to giving implication to Business English course design. The questionnaire is designed according to Dudley-Evans and St John's model (1998) for needs analysis. Before distributing the questionnaire, a focus group discussion was done with participants, who were asked about their opinions about the current ESP course and their expectations from it. In addition to some information about the teaching materials, teaching methods and classroom activities in the courses had been obtained and the information is very important for the design of the questionnaire and was paid special attention to. An adapted needs analysis questionnaire was distributed to the students to investigate the student's situational needs. It was consisted of four sections: personal information, Present Situation Analysis (PSA), Target Situation Analysis (TSA), and Learning Situation Analysis (LSA). Personal information section seeks students' age, gender and learning background. PSA seeks students' current language proficiency level, deficiencies and strengths as well appropriateness of current English course. TSA aims to find out about the learners' needs at the end of a language course and the target level performance. LSA investigates preferred learning styles and strategies of learners, assessment methods as well as the applied teaching and learning methods. The questionnaire consists of a set of multiple choices and an open-ended question to be answered by the participants. In an Attempt to guarantee the reliability of the findings and insure the validity of the results, the questionnaire was pilot-tested with 12 students and the final version was distributed to whole sample.

##### ***3.3. Data Collection and Analysis***

All the participants were given a brief overview of the objectives of the study, the way of answering and the length of time given for answering the questionnaire. The students were assured that their answers would be kept confidential and their grades would not be affected by their answers in any way. Furthermore, they were informed that they were

not compelled to participate in the research or to declare their names. After the administration of the questionnaire, the collected data were analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). For answering the research questions of the study the results were compared and contrasted. Having collected the responses of the participants, the analyses consisted of descriptive statistics including frequencies and percentages. A process of analysing and interpreting the results is to be conducted in the following section to depict the present status of ESP course in Management Department at -1- university and the English language needs that students are aiming to meet.

#### 4. Data Analysis and Interpretation

##### 4.1. Personal Information

In the survey questionnaire, (45) Human Recourses Management (HRM) Master Students participated. There were (12) male and (33) female students ranging in age from (23) to (35) years old.

*Table 1:* Students' English Proficiency Level

	Very weak		Weak		Acceptable		Good		Very good	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
<b>Speaking</b>	16	35,55	19	42,22	06	13,33	04	08,88	00	00,00
<b>Writing</b>	11	24,44	09	20,0	15	33,33	10	22,22	00	00,00
<b>Reading</b>	00	00,00	05	11,11	22	48,88	11	24,44	07	15,55
<b>Listening</b>	02	04,44	13	28,88	18	40,00	08	17,77	04	08,88
<b>Grammar</b>	06	13,33	07	15,55	17	37,77	11	24,44	04	08,88
<b>Pronunciation</b>	06	13,33	10	22,22	22	48,88	07	15,55	00	00,00
<b>Vocabulary</b>	04	08,88	09	20,0	19	42,22	07	15,55	06	13,33

Concerning the use of English in their studies, the majority of the participants (80%) claimed that they used English in their discipline. The third question was devised in order to know the main medium Management students used in their discipline. The results showed that (21) participants (46,6%) reported that the written form was the most used in their studies, whereas only (4) participants (08,88%) reported the use of spoken form.

The fourth question aimed to explore students' proficiency level in different language areas as shown in table (1). Accordingly, findings indicated that

All participants' mother language is Arabic, the majority of the participants (77,77%) studied English over than (10) years. The majority (86,66%) of the participants are still students, while (13,33%) of the participants work in private and public companies as managers or assistant managers.

##### 4.2. Present Situation Analysis (PSA)

PSA explores to find out the current language proficiency of the students when the language course begins and their strengths and weakness (Robinson, 1991; Songhori, 2008).

###### 4.2.1. The Status of English in the Current Course

The first question in this part was about the overall level of proficiency in English; the results indicated that there was a significant number of students, with a percentage of (57,77%), who claimed to have medium level and have an "Average" capacity at English language skills.

participants reported an acceptable (average) English proficiency level in different language skills (48,88%) in reading, (42,22%) in vocabulary, (40,0%) in listening, (37,77%) in grammar. Results also indicated that the top three language areas students reported to have low (weak or very weak) proficiency level were speaking (77,77%) in the first rank, then Writing (44,44%) and finally pronunciation in the third rank (35,55%). However, the skills in which participants claimed high proficiency level (good and very good) were: reading (40%), followed by grammar (33,33%) and then listening (28,88%).

#### 4.2.2. Students' Attitudes towards the Present ESP Course

Question (5) in the students' questionnaire sought to determine learners' attitudes towards the present ESP course and its components.

Concerning the ESP course satisfaction, table (1) shows that (24) (53.33%) out of (45), participants were not satisfied with the current English course at the department of Management which was possibly due to the absence of language needs identification

right from the beginning and the lack of clear course objectives. Besides, (22) participants (48,88%) showed dissatisfaction with the amount of lessons and (23) participants (51,11%) were not satisfied with the course quality and level. Furthermore, learners' attitude towards students' participation was fairly the same as number and level of activities. (20) participants (44,44%) were not satisfied with the classroom participation which was the outcome of the lack of motivation on the one hand and the low level of students on the other hand.

Table 2: Students' Level of Satisfaction with the

Course Components	Very satisfied		Satisfied		Partially satisfied		Not Satisfied		Undecided	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
I am satisfied with the current English course	00	00,00	07	15,55	12	26,66	24	53,33	02	04,44
Quantity of lessons	00	00,00	08	17,77	15	33,33	22	48,88	00	00,00
Quality of lessons	00	00,00	06	13,33	13	28,88	23	51,11	03	06,66
Students' participation	03	06,66	08	17,77	12	26,66	20	44,44	02	04,44
Number and level of activities	02	04,44	06	13,33	13	28,88	20	44,44	04	08,88
Schedule (class time and duration)	03	06,66	10	22,22	09	20,00	22	48,88	01	02,22
Productive skills are stressed in this course	00	00,00	07	15,55	13	28,88	25	55,55	00	00,00
Receptive skills are stressed in this course	06	00,00	26	57,77	07	15,55	03	6,66	02	04,44
Materials used (printed, audio, video, internet)	03	06,66	07	15,55	12	26,66	13	28,88	00	00,00
Teacher's method and style of teaching	05	11,11	05	11,11	10	22,22	21	46,66	03	06,66

#### 4.2.3. English Course Components

As well as the number and the level of activities, participants reported their dissatisfaction about the quantity as well as the quality of language activities and tasks; this was probably due to the fact that these activities did not match their requirements.

Another cause of the participants' dissatisfaction about the English teaching at the department of Management was the time allocated for the course which was one hour and a half, only, per week. About (48,88%) of the respondents claimed that it was the real reason of their disappointment, and the main obstacle to reach a considerable level in the foreign language.

The only satisfying English course component was the emphasis on the receptive skills (reading and listening) where (26) (57,77%) participants reported

their satisfaction about the current course in terms of developing reading and listening skills abilities. However, (25) (55,55%) respondents were displeased with the emphasis on the productive skills (writing and speaking), the latter were seemingly neglected due to the nature of teaching methodology where the teacher played the main role in the classroom.

As far as the materials used in the current English course is concerned, (28,88%) of participants demonstrated dissatisfaction that may be because they do not reflect their needs or they are not updated and most often printed based materials that did not motivate them. While (12) (26,66%) participants were fairly satisfied about the used materials and that may be due to the link between their field of speciality with the content of materials. Finally, the teaching methodology remained one of

the major problems for about (46,66%) of the students, who expressed their dissatisfaction with the teacher centeredness and their desire for teaching

methodology that should take into account their needs and learning styles.

**Table 3:** Students' Language Learning Priorities

	Strongly Agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
To use correct grammar	15	33,33	18	40	05	11,11	09	20,00	00	00,00
To expand my vocabulary	08	17,77	17	37,77	05	11,11	09	20,00	06	13,33
To improve my pronunciation	16	35,55	21	46,66	04	08,88	04	08,88	00	00,00
To improve my reading skill	12	26,66	13	28,88	03	06,66	17	37,77	00	00,00
To improve my writing skill	12	26,66	19	42,22	06	13,33	05	11,11	00	00,00
To become a fluent speaker	30	66,66	13	28,88	00	00,00	02	04,44	00	00,00
To improve my listening skill	11	24,44	14	31,11	06	13,33	10	17,77	04	08,88

### 4.3. Target Situation Analysis

Target Situation Analysis (TSA) is a kind of needs analysis that mainly focuses on students' needs at the end of a language course (Robinson, 1991). In this section, the students target needs are demonstrated.

#### 4.3.1. Students' Language Learning Target Situation

A slightly higher percentage that of participants who answered "very interested" (57,77%) and "interested" (31,11%) in taking a needs based ESP course. Besides, the next question has been devised to know the target for studying English. The results revealed that (100%) of respondents reported that they needed English for work context. Out of (45), (41) participants (91,11%) assumed that their goal was to pursue their academic studies; whereas (33) (73,33%) of participants said that they needed it for the sake of communication in social and private life. These results showed the great impact of the English language on the Master's students' professional career. Students consider English as a prominent language to be taken into consideration as their target needs for their future life.

#### 4.3.2. Students' Language Learning Skills Priorities

In the following, students were asked about their English language priorities. The results in table

(3) indicated that out of (45), (43) participants (95,55%) prioritized the ability to improve their speaking and conveyed a comprehensible message in English. (31) (68,88%) participants said that improving the writing skill was their learning primacy. Improving listening and reading skills were the priority of (25) (55,55%) participants. Concerning the other areas of language, the majority of participants (about 70%) gave much importance to improve their pronunciation and grammar; whereas, vocabulary was less emphasized by percentage of (55,55%). Students' learning priorities seemed to lie in improving the productive language skills, especially the speaking skills. The latter is one of the communicative pillars of language that help learners carry and sustain oral communication.

#### 4.3.4. Sub Skills Importance as Perceived by Students

Participants' answers to the question "How much importance do you give to these types of language skills?" were categorized and classified into four categories according to the language skills: reading, writing, speaking, and listening. In this question, students were also asked to rate the importance of some abilities of each of the four skills. Concerning reading skill, the suggested reading abilities that were considered by the participants as important: were (57,77%) of the answers were the ability to read discipline-related documents, such as: books and articles. Besides, (55,55%) of the

participants needed to acquire the ability to read understanding the meaning of technical and academic vocabulary.

As far as the writing skill abilities are concerned, the highest percentage (51,11%) of the answers was devoted to improving the ability to write reports and articles. Additionally, a significant percentage of (44,44%) was devoted to develop the ability to integrate technical and academic vocabulary in their writing.

Almost all the suggested speaking skill abilities were considered by the majority of participants as being either important or very important. The majority of the students, with a percentage of (91,11%), needed to improve the skills necessary to speak fluently with clarity and correctly pronounce words and sentences. Furthermore, the percentage of (80%) was about the importance to participate, to give presentation in discipline-related activities, in addition to the ability to ask and answer questions related to the discipline. Respectively, a percentage of (80%) opted for speaking in conferences and seminars. Finally, (64.44%) of the answers were about speaking with foreign visitors.

Concerning listening sub-skill, (66,66%) of the answers concentrated on the ability to understand general conversations or specific topics. Furthermore, (46,66%) needed to develop the ability to understand discipline related lectures and lessons. Moreover, (44,44%) of the answers provided from students emphasized the ability to understand presentations and reports.

#### **4.4. Learning Needs Analysis**

Generally, Learning Needs refers to what students need to do in order to learn the language. According to Hutchinson and Waters (1987, p. 61), an influential needs analysis should cater for students' preference to learn and the learning situation. Thus, this section covered learning needs of Master students in management. This section aims at providing information on the effective ways of learning the language according to the students' views. In line with what was mentioned earlier, results revealed that the current English language course was not based on

Management students' language needs. Thus, the highest percentage of the respondents voiced negative views towards the effectiveness of the ESP course as shown in table (4) above.

#### **4.4.1. Pattern of Preferred Learning Styles and Methods**

Previously, the majority of students expressed dissatisfaction with the time devoted to English course. Master students at the Department of Management have expressed varied wishes concerning the amount of time per week during which they want to study English. The majority of participants (66,66%) proposed that two sessions (4 hours per week) of English would be convenient. The next question intended to find out students' preferred learning styles. The participants had different learning styles that affected their grouping preferences. The responses revealed that (21) participants (46,66%) opted for "small size group" because it was probably useful particularly in large classes since it provided more opportunities for practice to all learners to practice the language simultaneously.

Concerning students' preferred learning methods to be used in the classroom, the two top options selected were (91,11%) for learning the language through solving problems related to their field and 60% for project work. Regarding students' preference of teaching/learning activities, the majority of participants preferred oral activities where students were involved in oral tasks such as presentations (42) (93.33%), problem solving (39) (86,66%), discussions (38) (84,44%), and role play (30) (66,66%).

#### **4.4.2. Pattern of Preference for the Role of ESP Teacher**

The following question attempts to ask students about their preferences concerning their roles in the classroom compared to the teacher's during the English language lesson., it can be seen that 38 (97.6%) of the participants *strongly agreed and agreed* that the teacher should be a facilitator who helps and guides students to learn and does not

control everything. 36 students (76%) also *strongly agreed and agreed* that they preferred to actively participate in the learning process. It seems that students were accustomed to be taught using traditional materials; accordingly, they showed were motivated to use new materials in the English language lessons.

#### **4.4.3. Learning Preferences in Language Materials and Assessment**

In this section, results showed that most participants strongly agreed or agreed with all the types of materials. The majority of (39) (86,66%) participants preferred the integration of "ICTs" in ESP lectures, (38) (84,44%) of participants chose "instruction/equipment manuals" that were related to their field of study, while (35) (77,77%) of participants opted for "videotapes" as the needed type of materials to develop their language skills.

As far as the type of assessment is concerned, the majority of 38 participants (84,44%) preferred both "end of term assessment" and "continuous assessment". Comparing the two types, (35) (77,77%) students referred "end of term assessment" over "continuous assessment" with percentage of 48,88%. It seems that students were accustomed to be evaluated at the end of each semester; accordingly, they may have found that continuous evaluation is an efficient method leading to better academic achievement.

### **5. Discussion**

The main aim of the present study was to investigate how Master's students of Management perceived the English language needs in the Department of Management Sciences at Farhat Abbes-Setif 1- University. Generally, NA is the process of conducting preliminary research for identifying and analysing the language needs of ESP learners. In this vein, many studies (Hutchinson and Waters, 1987; Nunan, 1989; and Dudley-Evans and St-John, 1998) have supported that an ESP course should be based on the results of a thorough NA to determine and fill the learning gaps and meet the necessities of ESP students. According to Hutchinson and Waters

(1987, p.53): "If learners, sponsors and teachers know why the learners need English, that awareness will have an impact on the content of the course and on the positive side, what potential can be exploited." In other words, the content of the ESP course can be adapted according to why learners need it, which will result in a teaching and learning process that is centered on these needs.

As far as PSA is concerned, Dudley-Evans and St-John (1998, p.125) state that "PSA estimates strengths and weaknesses in language, skills, learning experiences." The findings revealed that students estimated the overall English language level to be average. However, the students declared themselves to be suffering from English learning difficulties, which make them perform poorly in an English class. These are similar to the findings of many studies where the low language proficiency of learners affected negatively the ESP courses (Shi, Corcos, & Storey, 2001; Tsao, Wei, & Fang, 2008). In fact, the top three language areas students reported to have low proficiency level are speaking in the first rank, then writing and finally pronunciation in the third rank. In spite of their urgent needs to improve speaking skill, the majority of participants acknowledged their weaknesses in it such as taking part in class discussion, asking and responding to questions. As a matter of fact, these difficulties might be due to the insufficient time and lack practice during the lectures; another reason behind such poor level in speaking skill was their weak English background in oral production due to the nature of ESP course content. Similarly, Jackson (2004) revealed that ESP learners faced difficulty in handling with ESP course due to the weak level in English speaking skills; namely participating in class discussion, asking and replying to questions, and listening comprehension.

According to Basturkmen (2006, p.06), "ESP has functioned to help language learners cope with the features of language or to develop the competencies needed to function in a discipline, profession, or workplace". In the light of what has been found, the majority of Master's students noted that ESP course is significant and beneficial for both;

their academic studies and most importantly for their professional future careers. In this vein, Flowerdew and Peacock (2001) stated that English for Academic Purposes aims to aid learners to study, conduct research, and teach in the target language, whereas, English for Occupational Purposes, as Kim (2008) noted, improves learners' performance in their future occupational settings and places extra emphasis on the manner they learn a language for effective communicative situations in work-related contexts.

Statistically, almost all the named skills were considered as important to be acquired. However, there was an overwhelming agreement among management students in perceiving productive skills to be number one in terms of needs more than receptive ones. When coming to determine the most needed skill, the speaking skill is taken as a crucial one which would benefit the students' future professional careers. This implies that the participants take the English language speaking skills development as a serious matter. Additionally, students prioritised English language speaking sub-skills to be of a paramount importance that the students have to master in order to function effectively in the target situation; such as giving presentations, asking and answering questions, speaking in conferences and seminar. Consequently, the majority of the participants in the present study had the perception that the speaking skills should be given priority when designing an ESP course. In addition, the results indicated that writing, listening as well as pronunciation should also be taken into consideration to improve their English language proficiency in the target situation. In this respect, Dudley- Evans and St John (1998) noted that spoken communication in Business English is of a paramount importance especially for professional purposes, though written communication is the most reliable in doing a research.

In order to determine the effectiveness of a language course, the learners' attitude and expectations ought to be examined (Nunan, 1989, p. 176). As far as Nunan's claim is concerned, even though Master's students of Management tended to

be enthusiastic and motivated to learn English, the majority of them show signs of dissatisfaction on the current ESP course in terms of various components. The findings indicated that students were not satisfied with the current ESP course because they confronted with several problems such as insufficient English language productive skills practice, students' low achievements, and the inadequacy in the quality and the quantity of delivered ESP lessons in terms of content and materials. Most importantly, insufficient practice on speaking and pronunciation was reported to be the most challenging reason for their failure in ESP learning. In addition to the mismatched teaching materials and methodology since most of the lectures and activities focused on terminology, translation, and grammar on top of the absence of updated aids during the lectures. In the same line of thoughts, many studies denoted the challenges related to the inadequacy of ESP course content in terms of methodology, activities and materials (Ferris & Tagg, 1996a/b, Gatehouse, 2001; and Bacha & Bahous, 2008). These findings advocated the difficulties that students encountered as mentioned previously, thus, it can be inferred that there is an urgent need for having a renewed ESP course to meet management students' English language needs.

Content description, methodological and pedagogical concepts can be comprehensively developed through NA findings (Cowling, 2007). Based on the results of Learning Situation Analysis, the obtained data demonstrated that the traditional teaching approach is fully practised in the ESP classroom at management department, while there is no existence of communicative language teaching, though needs analysis revealed that students devoted a particular attention to active interaction in ESP classroom. Practical suggestions for reforming existing ESP course and classroom teaching practices should be based on communicative methods of English language learning. In this respect, Gatehouse (2001) claimed that ESP is defined as a learning-centred approach; accordingly, it is the teachers' task to identify the changes in learners' needs and then to tailor the ESP course by integrating four language

skills into their lessons, thereby making subject content knowledge accessible and communicative to students' target needs. That is to say, designing and tailoring an ESP course which integrates speaking skills is of paramount importance in the present study since management students' responses were highly weighted towards their desire to improve their spoken communication in English in the target situation. Henceforth, a Problem Based Learning (PBL) course is probably a most suitable method for Master's students in Management Department at Setif 1 University because it can include professional-based oral presentations, specialised vocabulary activities, audio-visual aids, ICTs and authentic course materials and topics relevant to students' area of specializations. Furthermore, language teaching strategies such as problem solving, discussions, and debates could also help improve the ESP students' speaking skills proficiency in the English language. Many scholars advocated the pedagogical significance of PBL in learning the target language because learners develop their language learning through authentic and contextualized involvement in the language use (Abdullah, 1998; Kosel, 2002). The nature of PBL environment in small groups increases speaking opportunities and brings out different opinions and contributions to the subject under study smoothly and effectively. Finally, in PBL context,

learners' role is shifted to be more dynamic in the classroom and have the ability to plan for their own studies and the dominant learning style in which they are actively involved is group work in the classroom.

### *Conclusion*

In conclusion, an ESP course based on needs analysis can be regarded as highly effective in enhancing Management students' performance and promoting their achievement in target situations. The current study's NA survey revealed the participants' target academic and professional requirements in addition to the several deficiencies they encounter in ESP course. Besides, students' low proficiency level in English productive skills necessitates reconsideration of teaching speaking skills and demands considerable focus on the communicative aspects of the target skills. Therefore, thoughtful decisions in terms of teachers' experience and methods of teaching in addition to the involvement of learners in the process of course design are required. The obtained results indicated that the participants need a flexible approach to ESP course design which provides practice in speaking skills. To address this issue, a problem-based instructional treatment will be introduced and experimentally conducted to ascertain its effectiveness in stimulating students' speaking skills performance.

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