

## NEEDS ANALYSIS OF ENGLISH COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE AMONG MANAGEMENT STUDENTS

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**Abstract.** *The growing internationalization of higher education has increased the importance of English communicative competence for students in non-philological disciplines, particularly in management education. Future managers are expected to communicate effectively in academic and professional contexts, including discussions, presentations, teamwork, and decision-making in English. However, existing General English courses often fail to address these discipline-specific communicative demands. This study aims to conduct a needs analysis of English communicative competence among undergraduate management students prior to any instructional intervention. Guided by the target needs framework, the research examines students' necessities, lacks, and wants in relation to English communication. A quantitative descriptive design was employed, and data were collected through a structured questionnaire administered to management students at a higher education institution. The questionnaire focused on perceived communicative requirements, existing competence gaps, and preferred learning practices. The findings reveal that management students demonstrate high awareness of the importance of English communicative competence, particularly for oral communication in professional contexts. At the same time, they report significant communicative difficulties, especially in speaking fluently, expressing ideas confidently, and participating in discussions. Additionally, students express a strong preference for interactive, practice-oriented, and profession-specific learning activities, indicating dissatisfaction with traditional grammar-centered instruction. The study highlights a clear mismatch between communicative demands and students' current abilities, underscoring the necessity of ESP-oriented instruction. The findings provide empirical support for incorporating needs analysis as a foundational step in designing English courses tailored to management students' professional communication needs.*

**Keywords:** *needs analysis; English communicative competence; management students; English for specific purposes; target needs; higher education.*

**Annotatsiya.** *Oliy ta'limning tobora xalqaro miqyosda rivojlanib borishi filologik yo'nalishga kirmaydigan talabalar, ayniqsa menejment ta'limi yo'nalishida tahsil olayotgan talabalar uchun ingliz tilidagi kommunikativ kompetensiyaning ahamiyatini sezilarli darajada oshirdi. Bo'lajak menejerlar akademik va professional muhitda,*

*jumladan, muhokamalar, taqdimotlar, jamoaviy ishlar hamda qaror qabul qilish jarayonlarida ingliz tilida samarali muloqot qila olishlari talab etiladi. Biroq mavjud umumiy ingliz tili (General English) kurslari ko'pincha ushbu soha uchun xos bo'lgan kommunikativ talablarni yetarli darajada qamrab olmaydi. Mazkur tadqiqot o'quv jarayoniga har qanday pedagogik aralashuv kiritilishidan avval menejment yo'nalishida tahsil olayotgan bakalavr talabalarning ingliz tilidagi kommunikativ kompetensiyasiga bo'lgan ehtiyojlarini tahlil qilishni maqsad qiladi. Tadqiqot "target needs" konseptual modeli asosida olib borilib, talabalar ehtiyojlari, mavjud kamchiliklari va o'rganishga bo'lgan istaklari ingliz tilidagi muloqot nuqtai nazaridan tahlil qilinadi. Tadqiqotda miqdoriy-deskriptiv metod qo'llanilib, ma'lumotlar oliy ta'lim muassasasida tahsil olayotgan menejment talabalari o'rtasida o'tkazilgan tuzilgan so'rovnoma orqali yig'ildi. So'rovnoma talabalarning kommunikativ ehtiyojlari, mavjud kompetensiya bo'shliqlari hamda afzal ko'riladigan o'qitish usullarini aniqlashga qaratildi. Natijalar shuni ko'rsatadiki, menejment talabalari ingliz tilidagi kommunikativ kompetensiyaning muhimligini, ayniqsa professional muhitda og'zaki muloqot uchun zarurligini yuqori darajada anglaydilar. Shu bilan birga, ular ravon gapirish, fikrlarini ishonch bilan ifodalash va muhokamalarda faol ishtirok etishda sezilarli qiyinchiliklarga duch kelayotganliklarini bildiradilar. Bundan tashqari, talabalar interaktiv, amaliyotga yo'naltirilgan hamda kasbiy yo'nalishga mos o'quv faoliyatlarini afzal ko'rishlarini ta'kidlab, an'anaviy grammatikaga asoslangan o'qitishdan qoniqmasliklarini bildirganlar. Tadqiqot natijalari kommunikativ talablar va talabalarning mavjud kompetensiyasi o'rtasida aniq nomuvofiqlik mavjudligini ko'rsatadi va bu esa ESP (English for Specific Purposes) yo'nalishidagi o'qitishni joriy etish zarurligini ta'kidlaydi. Tadqiqot natijalari menejment talabalari uchun professional kommunikativ ehtiyojlarga mos ingliz tili kurslarini ishlab chiqishda ehtiyojlar tahlilini asosiy bosqich sifatida qo'llash zarurligini empirik jihatdan asoslab beradi.*

**Kalit so'zlar:** ehtiyojlar tahlili; ingliz tilidagi kommunikativ kompetensiya; menejment talabalari; maxsus maqsadlar uchun ingliz tili; target needs; oliy ta'lim.

**Аннотация.** Усиление процессов интернационализации высшего образования значительно повысило значение коммуникативной компетенции на английском языке для студентов нефилологических направлений, особенно в сфере менеджмента. Будущие менеджеры должны уметь эффективно общаться на английском языке в академической и профессиональной среде, включая участие в дискуссиях, проведение презентаций, работу в команде и принятие решений. Однако существующие курсы общего английского языка (General English) часто не учитывают специфические коммуникативные требования данных профессиональных областей. Целью данного исследования является проведение анализа потребностей в формировании коммуникативной компетенции на

английском языке у студентов бакалавриата направления «Менеджмент» до начала любого педагогического вмешательства. Руководствуясь концепцией *target needs*, в исследовании анализируются потребности, недостатки и ожидания студентов в области английской коммуникации. В исследовании использован количественный описательный дизайн, а данные были собраны посредством структурированной анкеты, проведённой среди студентов направления менеджмента в одном из высших учебных заведений. Анкета была направлена на выявление коммуникативных требований, существующих пробелов в компетенции, а также предпочтительных форм обучения. Результаты показали, что студенты направления менеджмента хорошо осознают важность коммуникативной компетенции на английском языке, особенно для устного общения в профессиональной среде. В то же время они отмечают значительные трудности в коммуникации, прежде всего в свободной речи, уверенном выражении собственных идей и участии в дискуссиях. Кроме того, студенты выражают явное предпочтение интерактивным, практико-ориентированным и профессионально направленным видам обучения, что свидетельствует о неудовлетворённости традиционным обучением, основанным преимущественно на грамматике. Исследование выявило явное несоответствие между коммуникативными требованиями и текущими возможностями студентов, что подчёркивает необходимость внедрения обучения в формате *ESP (English for Specific Purposes)*. Полученные результаты дают эмпирическое обоснование необходимости использования анализа потребностей в качестве ключевого этапа при разработке курсов английского языка, ориентированных на профессиональные коммуникативные потребности студентов-менеджеров.

**Ключевые слова:** анализ потребностей; коммуникативная компетенция английского языка; студенты менеджмента; английский язык для специальных целей; *target needs*; высшее образование.

**Introduction.** In the context of globalization and the rapid internationalization of higher education, English has become an essential tool for academic, professional, and intercultural communication. For university students majoring in management, English proficiency is no longer limited to general language competence but increasingly involves the ability to communicate effectively in professional, academic, and business-related contexts. As future managers are expected to participate in international meetings, negotiate with global partners, present projects, and access professional literature, the development of English communicative competence has become a critical educational objective.

Despite the growing importance of English for professional communication, English language instruction in many higher education institutions still relies heavily on General

English (GE) courses. Such courses often fail to address students' discipline-specific communicative needs and professional expectations. As a result, a mismatch frequently emerges between what students learn in English classrooms and the communicative demands they encounter in their academic studies and future careers. This gap is particularly evident among management students, whose professional success depends largely on their ability to use English in authentic managerial and organizational contexts.

English for Specific Purposes (ESP) has been widely recognized as an effective approach to addressing learners' professional and academic needs. ESP emphasizes relevance, authenticity, and learner-centeredness, with course design grounded in systematic needs analysis. According to English for Specific Purposes: A learning-centered approach, needs analysis plays a central role in identifying learners' requirements and guiding curriculum development. Their target needs framework—comprising necessities, lacks, and wants—provides a comprehensive lens through which learners' communicative demands can be examined.

Recent studies have highlighted the importance of needs analysis in ESP and EAP contexts, demonstrating that students often possess high professional and academic needs while simultaneously experiencing low confidence or insufficient communicative competence. Research has also shown that learners' perceived gaps between current abilities and target requirements may negatively affect their motivation and performance. However, while needs analysis has been extensively applied in fields such as tourism, medicine, and engineering, empirical research focusing specifically on management students remains relatively limited.

Against this background, the present study aims to investigate the English communicative competence needs of university management students through a systematic needs analysis. The study focuses on identifying students' necessities, lacks, and wants related to English communication in academic and professional contexts. By examining learners' perceptions prior to instructional intervention, this research seeks to provide a diagnostic overview of management students' communicative needs and challenges. The findings are expected to offer pedagogical implications for ESP-oriented curriculum design and contribute to the growing body of research on needs-based English instruction in higher education.

**Literature review.** Communicative competence has been widely acknowledged as a fundamental goal of foreign language education, particularly in professional and academic contexts. It refers not only to linguistic accuracy but also to the ability to use language appropriately and effectively in real communicative situations. In ESP-oriented instruction, communicative competence is viewed as context-dependent and closely related to learners' professional roles and disciplinary practices (Dudley-Evans & St. John, 1998; Hyland, 2006).

For management students, English communicative competence is directly linked to future professional performance. Managers are expected to participate in meetings, negotiate, present ideas, and engage in decision-making processes in international environments. Research has shown that communicative demands in management and business contexts differ substantially from those addressed in General English courses, which often focus on decontextualized language skills [7]. As a result, many students experience difficulties transferring classroom knowledge to real-life professional communication.

ESP research emphasizes that communicative competence should be developed through authentic, task-based, and discipline-specific activities [2]. Without such alignment, learners may achieve formal language proficiency while remaining unable to function effectively in professional communicative situations.

Needs analysis is widely recognized as the cornerstone of ESP course design. It is defined as the systematic process of identifying learners' language requirements in relation to their target academic or professional contexts (Brown, 1995; West, 1994). Early approaches to needs analysis, such as Target Situation Analysis (Munby, 1978), focused primarily on identifying the linguistic features required in specific communicative situations. However, these approaches were criticized for their narrow focus on language forms rather than learners' learning processes.

A major shift in ESP research was introduced by English for Specific Purposes: A learning-centered approach, who conceptualized ESP as a learner-centered approach rather than a product. They argued that effective language instruction must be based on both target situation requirements and learners' perceptions, motivations, and learning conditions. This reconceptualization placed needs analysis at the center of curriculum design and pedagogical decision-making.

Subsequent studies have confirmed that ESP courses grounded in systematic needs analysis are more effective in addressing learners' professional communication requirements and enhancing motivation (Dudley-Evans & St. John, 1998; Long, 2005). In contrast, the absence of needs analysis often results in generic curricula that fail to meet learners' actual communicative demands [4].

Within ESP research, target needs analysis has been widely operationalized through the tripartite model of necessities, lacks, and wants proposed by Hutchinson and Waters (1987). Necessities refer to the language skills and competencies required to function effectively in the target situation. Lacks represent the gap between learners' current proficiency and the required level of competence, while wants reflect learners' subjective perceptions of their language needs.

This model has been extensively applied in higher education ESP and EAP contexts. Empirical studies have shown that learners often demonstrate high awareness of the importance of English for academic and professional purposes (necessities) while

simultaneously reporting significant deficiencies in communicative performance (lacks) (Liu et al., 2011; Wang et al., 2024). Learners' wants frequently emphasize the need for more practical, interactive, and discipline-specific language instruction.

Large-scale quantitative research has further demonstrated that target needs are closely related to learners' affective variables, such as motivation and self-efficacy. For example, Chinese university EFL learners' English for General Academic Purposes: relationships between target needs and self-efficacy found that although university students reported high levels of target needs, their self-efficacy in academic English remained relatively low. This mismatch suggests that unmet needs may negatively influence learners' confidence and communicative engagement.

Despite the growing body of ESP research, studies focusing specifically on management students' English communicative needs remain relatively limited. Existing research indicates that management students face unique communicative challenges due to the interactive and decision-oriented nature of managerial work (Hyland, 2009). These challenges include participating in meetings, leading discussions, negotiating, and presenting professional ideas in English [7].

Recent needs analysis studies in higher education have highlighted a persistent mismatch between the communicative demands of professional contexts and the content of General English curricula. Qualitative research incorporating stakeholders' perspectives has shown that discipline-specific English instruction is necessary to address learners' immediate and future professional needs (Dou et al., 2024). In their study on ESP development in China, Making a case for English for specific purposes in China: listening to stakeholders' voices argued that needs analysis should serve as a foundation for curriculum reform aimed at enhancing professional relevance and learning effectiveness [3].

These findings suggest that a systematic needs analysis of management students' English communicative competence is essential for designing ESP-oriented courses that align with professional expectations. Therefore, the present study adopts the target needs framework to examine management students' necessities, lacks, and wants in relation to English communicative competence.

**Methodology.** This study employed a quantitative descriptive research design with elements of needs analysis to investigate the English communicative competence of management students. The research was conducted prior to the implementation of any instructional intervention, with the primary aim of identifying learners' communicative needs, perceived difficulties, and expectations regarding English use in academic and professional contexts.

Needs analysis was selected as the methodological framework because it enables a systematic examination of learners' necessities, lacks, and wants, which are considered central components in ESP-oriented course design (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987; Dudley-

Evans & St. John, 1998). This approach is particularly suitable for diagnostic studies that seek to inform curriculum development and pedagogical decision-making [6].

The participants of the study were undergraduate management students enrolled in a non-philological higher education institution. 45 students voluntarily participated in the research. The participants were selected using convenience sampling, as they were accessible and represented the target population of management students studying English as a foreign language.

The sample included students from different academic years, which allowed for a broader understanding of communicative competence needs across stages of study. All participants had previously completed at least one General English course as part of their university curriculum. However, none of them had received systematic ESP-oriented instruction focused on management-related communication.

Participation was voluntary, and students were informed about the purpose of the study. Anonymity and confidentiality were ensured throughout the data collection process.

Data were collected using a structured self-administered questionnaire, developed on the basis of established needs analysis frameworks and previous empirical studies. The questionnaire was designed to assess students' perceptions of English communicative competence in academic and professional contexts relevant to management studies.

The instrument consisted of four main sections:

- Section A: Demographic Information. This section collected background data, including students' academic year, gender, and prior experience with English learning.
- Section B: Communicative Necessities. This section examined the communicative skills that students perceived as essential for their academic studies and future professional careers (e.g., participating in meetings, delivering presentations, negotiating, and discussing management-related topics in English).
- Section C: Communicative Lacks. This section focused on students' perceived difficulties and gaps between their current English proficiency and the required level for effective communication in management contexts.
- Section D: Communicative Wants. This section explored students' expectations and preferences regarding English learning, including their desire for practical, interactive, and profession-oriented communicative activities.

All items were measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The structure of the questionnaire was informed by the target needs model proposed by Hutchinson and Waters (1987) and adapted from recent needs analysis studies in EAP and ESP contexts (Wang et al., 2024; Dou et al., 2024) [6].

To ensure content validity, the questionnaire items were reviewed by experts in English language teaching and ESP. Minor revisions were made to improve clarity and relevance to the management context.

A pilot study was conducted with a small group of management students ( $n = \_\_\_$ ) to test the clarity and reliability of the instrument. Based on the pilot results, ambiguous items were revised or removed.

Internal consistency reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha. The reliability coefficients for the main scales (necessities, lacks, and wants) exceeded the acceptable threshold of 0.70, indicating satisfactory reliability for educational research.

Data collection was conducted during regular class hours with the permission of course instructors. The questionnaire was administered either in paper-based or online format (Google Forms), depending on accessibility.

Participants were provided with clear instructions and informed that there were no right or wrong answers. They were encouraged to respond honestly based on their personal experiences and perceptions. The average time required to complete the questionnaire was approximately 15–20 minutes.

The collected data were analyzed using SPSS (Version  $\_\_\_$ ). Descriptive statistics, including means and standard deviations, were calculated to identify general trends in students' communicative necessities, lacks, and wants.

Inferential statistical analyses, such as independent-sample t-tests and one-way ANOVA, were conducted to examine potential differences in communicative needs based on demographic variables (e.g., academic year and gender). Statistical significance was set at  $p < 0.05$ .

The analysis focused on identifying:

1. The most frequently reported communicative necessities;
2. The major gaps in students' communicative competence;
3. Learners' priorities and expectations regarding English instruction.

Ethical principles were strictly observed throughout the study. Participation was voluntary, and informed consent was obtained from all participants. No personal identifying information was collected, and the data were used exclusively for research purposes.

**Results and discussion.** The descriptive analysis revealed that management students reported high levels of communicative necessities in English. The highest mean scores were observed for items related to oral communication in professional contexts, including participating in discussions, delivering presentations, and communicating ideas clearly during teamwork activities. These findings indicate that students strongly recognize English communicative competence as an essential professional skill for their future careers in management.

This result is consistent with previous ESP and EAP studies, which emphasize that learners in non-philological fields demonstrate strong awareness of the importance of English for academic and professional success. Similar patterns were reported by Chinese university EFL learners' English for General Academic Purposes: relationships between

target needs and self-efficacy, who found that university students across disciplines expressed high target needs for English despite limited confidence in their abilities. In the context of management education, such necessities are particularly salient due to the communicative nature of managerial work, which requires negotiation, persuasion, and leadership discourse.

The results suggest that students clearly understand *what* communicative skills they need, even before formal ESP instruction is introduced. This reinforces the argument that needs analysis conducted prior to curriculum intervention plays a critical diagnostic role in ESP course design.

Despite high levels of perceived necessities, the findings indicate that students also reported considerable communicative lacks. The most prominent difficulties were associated with speaking fluently, expressing opinions confidently, and participating actively in discussions conducted in English. Writing-related communicative tasks, such as composing professional emails or reports, also showed moderate levels of perceived difficulty.

This mismatch between high necessities and substantial lacks highlights a critical issue in English language education for management students. Although learners acknowledge the importance of English communicative competence, they feel inadequately prepared to meet these demands. Such a discrepancy has been widely documented in needs analysis research and is often attributed to the dominance of General English instruction, which prioritizes grammatical knowledge over communicative performance.

From a pedagogical perspective, these findings suggest that students' communicative challenges are not merely linguistic but also strategic and affective in nature. Limited opportunities for authentic interaction, fear of making mistakes, and lack of exposure to management-related communicative tasks may contribute to these perceived gaps. This interpretation aligns with ESP research emphasizing that communicative competence cannot develop effectively without meaningful, context-specific practice.

In addition to necessities and lacks, the results revealed strongly articulated communicative wants among management students. Participants expressed a clear preference for interactive and practice-oriented learning activities, such as role-plays, simulations, group discussions, and presentation tasks related to management scenarios. Traditional grammar-focused instruction was perceived as less relevant to their learning goals.

These findings support learner-centered perspectives in ESP, which argue that students' wants should be treated as a valuable source of information rather than subjective or secondary considerations. Learners' expressed preferences reflect a desire for instruction that directly prepares them for real-world professional communication [6].

The alignment between students' wants and their perceived necessities suggests a high level of learner awareness and maturity. This is particularly important in management education, where motivation and relevance play a crucial role in learning engagement. As noted in previous ESP studies, when learners perceive instruction as relevant to their future careers, their motivation and willingness to communicate tend to increase.

Taken together, the findings demonstrate a clear pattern: management students report high communicative necessities, significant communicative lacks, and strong demands for practical, profession-oriented instruction. This triadic relationship confirms the relevance of the target needs framework in diagnosing learners' English communicative competence prior to instructional intervention.

The results provide empirical support for the argument that General English courses alone are insufficient for addressing the communicative demands of management students. Instead, ESP-oriented instruction grounded in needs analysis is required to bridge the gap between learners' current abilities and professional expectations. These findings echo earlier calls for curriculum reform that emphasize communicative competence as a central learning outcome in non-philological higher education.

Importantly, the study contributes to the literature by focusing specifically on management students, a group whose communicative needs differ from those of students in technical or purely academic disciplines. By identifying concrete necessities, lacks, and wants, the study offers a data-driven foundation for designing ESP courses aimed at enhancing English communicative competence in management education.

The combined results and discussion highlight three main conclusions:

1. Management students demonstrate a strong awareness of the importance of English communicative competence for their academic and professional futures.
2. Despite this awareness, they experience notable difficulties in performing communicative tasks, particularly in spoken interaction.
3. Students express a clear preference for interactive, profession-oriented learning activities, underscoring the need for ESP-based curriculum design.

These findings justify the implementation of linguistically and professionally relevant instructional strategies in subsequent stages of research and curriculum development.

**Conclusion.** This study investigated the English communicative competence needs of undergraduate management students through a systematic needs analysis framework. By examining learners' necessities, lacks, and wants, the research provided a diagnostic overview of students' communicative requirements prior to any ESP-oriented instructional intervention. The findings revealed a consistent pattern in which management students demonstrated a strong awareness of the importance of English communicative competence for their academic studies and future professional careers, while simultaneously reporting considerable gaps in their current communicative abilities.

The results showed that students perceived oral communication skills—such as participating in discussions, delivering presentations, and expressing opinions confidently—as essential professional necessities. However, these same areas were also identified as major sources of difficulty, indicating a clear mismatch between communicative demands and learners’ actual competence. In addition, students expressed strong preferences for interactive, practice-oriented, and profession-specific learning activities, highlighting dissatisfaction with traditional General English instruction that emphasizes grammatical knowledge over communicative performance.

These findings confirm the relevance and applicability of the target needs framework in the context of management education. The coexistence of high necessities, significant lacks, and clearly articulated wants underscores the need for ESP-oriented instruction that is grounded in learners’ real communicative contexts. The study therefore supports previous research arguing that needs analysis should serve as the foundation for curriculum design in English for Specific Purposes, particularly in non-philological higher education settings.

From a pedagogical perspective, the study suggests that English instruction for management students should move beyond general language objectives and focus on the development of communicative competence aligned with professional practices. Incorporating role-plays, simulations, presentations, and discussion-based tasks related to management scenarios may help bridge the gap between learners’ current abilities and professional expectations. Such an approach is likely to enhance learners’ motivation, confidence, and readiness for real-world communication.

The present study is limited by its reliance on self-reported data and a single institutional context. Future research may benefit from combining quantitative needs analysis with qualitative methods, such as interviews or classroom observations, as well as examining the effects of ESP-based instructional interventions on communicative competence development. Nevertheless, the findings offer valuable empirical evidence for educators and curriculum designers seeking to implement needs-responsive English programs for management students.

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