

An Overview of Needs Analysis in the Field of English for Specific Purposes: Some Case Studies in the Occupational Sector

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Abstract

This paper aims at providing a theoretical overview of the significance of 'Needs Analysis' (henceforth, (NA)) as a cornerstone in designing ESP courses. First, it summarises the most frequently used definitions of ESP and its main sub-divisions. Then, it reviews the history and development of NA, the notion of needs analysis in ESP setting and some important components of needs analysis process. The most influential models in NA are presented briefly, beginning with Munby's model (1978) which paved the way for course designers to design effective courses in different specific areas needed by learners and workers at the workplace. The purpose of this paper is two-fold: 1) to present some previous case studies related to different occupations in different countries that have focused on the needs of the situational settings; 2) to explore the most effective methods to conduct needs analysis in occupational settings.

Keywords:

Needs Analysis - English for Specific Purposes - English for Occupational Purposes - English for Academic Purposes.

نظرة عامة حول تحليل الاحتياجات في مجال اللغة الإنجليزية لأغراض خاصة وبعض دراسات الحالة في القطاع المهني

الملخص

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى تقديم لمحة نظرية حول مفهوم « تحليل الاحتياجات » باعتبارها الركن الأهم في تصميم / تخطيط دروس اللغة الإنجليزية لأغراض خاصة». ويلخص هذا البحث بداية تعريفات «اللغة الانجليزية لأغراض خاصة» الأكثر استخداما وأقسامها الفرعية الرئيسية, ثم يستعرض تاريخ وتطور مفهوم «تحليل الاحتياجات» عموما, وفي اللغة لانجليزية لأغراض خاصة بشكل خاص وبعض المكونات الرئيسية لعملية تحليل الاحتياجات. كما تم عرض النماذج الأكثر تأثيرا في تحليل الاحتياجات بشكل مختصر, بدءا من نموذج مانباي (1978) الذي مهد الطريق لمصممي الدروس لتصميم دروس فعالة في مختلف المجالات المتخصصة التي يحتاجها المتعلمون والعمال في مكان العمل. الغرض من هذا البحث يتمثل في كل من 1- عرض عدد من الدراسات السابقة المتعلقة بمهن متنوعة في بلدان مختلفة والتي ركزت على الاحتياجات في أماكن العمل؛ 2) استكشاف الطرق الأكثر فعالية لإجراء تحليل الاحتياجات في البيئات المهنية.

الكلمات المفاتيح:

تحليل الاحتياجات - لغة التخصص - الإنجليزية للأغراض المهنية - الإنجليزية لأغراض أكاديمية.

Un aperçu sur l'analyse des besoins dans le domaine de l'anglais de spécialité et études de cas dans le secteur professionnel

Résumé

Cet article vise à fournir un aperçu théorique sur l'analyse des besoins en tant qu'élément principal pour l'élaboration des cours d'anglais langue de spécialité pour des besoins bien spécifiques. L'auteur présente dans une première étape les définitions les plus importantes de l'anglais de spécialité et ses principales subdivisions. Ensuite, l'auteur passe en revue l'histoire et le développement de l'analyse des besoins au niveau de l'anglais de spécialité et certaines composantes principales du processus d'analyse des besoins. Les modèles les plus influents de cette analyse sont présentés, en commençant par le modèle de Munby (1978) qui a ouvert la voie aux concepteurs de cours dans différents domaines spécifiques nécessaires aux apprenants et aux travailleurs dans le secteur professionnel. Cette recherche a un double objectif: 1) présenter quelques études de cas précédents relatives à différentes professions dans différents pays et qui se concentrent sur les besoins dans le milieu de travail 2) découvrir les moyens les plus efficaces pour analyser les besoins dans des environnements professionnels.

Mots clés:

Analyse des besoins - Anglais de spécialité - Anglais sur objectifs professionnels
- Anglais sur objectifs académiques.

Introduction

During the past 20 years, English has acquired a unique status among the other languages of the world in that it is acknowledged as a global language. The dramatic increase in different aspects of science and the growth of international business led to the establishment of industries, multinational companies and agencies. Consequently, there was a need for a business language to enable people among countries world-wide to be up to date with the rapid advances in the field of business and to communicate with people from different cultures; English was that language. Nowadays, everyone needs to have a good command of the English language either academically or occupationally and the importance of teaching English for Professional Purposes is increasing. As a result, the beginning of a well established movement from simply teaching English as a Second/Foreign Language (ESL/EFL) to teaching English for Specific Purposes (ESP) was strongly apparent by the 1960s to meet the communication needs of a new category of people willing to learn English not for prestige or pleasure but rather as a key to success in different academic or occupational settings.

In fact, ESP courses vary from one area to another as each area needs to enrich and develop specific skills and neglect others on a global scale. In this vein, Munby (1978: 02) points out that *“ESP courses are those where the syllabus and materials are determined in all essentials by the prior analysis of the communication needs of the learners.”* In other words, these courses are designed to meet learners’ communication needs by introducing practical English language with a special focus on language used in specific situations in order to overcome the problems that they may encounter in their career.

To decide which skills are essential for a group of students or employees, needs analysis is an inevitable must that should not be underestimated as it is acknowledged to be the corner stone of ESP in the new revolution of science, technology and business (Dudley Evans & St John, 1998: 121). Based on the previous discussion, our research is grounded on the following question:

What are the methods used in conducting needs analysis in the occupational sector?

1. English for Specific Purposes (ESP)

From the early 1960’s, ESP emerged as a term and as one of the major areas of EFL teaching. It became increasingly aware that General English did not meet the specific needs of learners. This new approach is specially designed

for people who are learning English so that they will be able to use it in specific practical situations. As a matter of fact, ESP is a new discipline that calls for a new learner-centred approach to English language teaching. The term describes language programs designed for individuals who are learning with an identifiable purpose and clearly specific needs. According to Kennedy and Bolitho (1984: 3), “*ESP is based on an investigation of the purposes of the learner and the set of communicative needs arising from these purposes.*” In other words, ESP is learning and learner oriented through the analysis of the communication needs of the learner.

Tracing the historical background of ESP, Hutchinson and Waters (1987: 6) identify three reasons for the emergence of ESP. First of all, by the end of the Second World War in 1945, English imposed itself to be learnt by different people at that time. It became a common language of exchange among people worldwide resulting in a great demand of a ‘*Brave NewWorld*’. The second reason that led to the emergence of ESP was a revolution in linguistics. Indeed, the 1970s oil crisis resulted in a new relationship between the West and the oil rich countries and therefore the use of English as the medium of this communication. Moreover, a new idea started to emerge in the study of language: from describing the features of language and the rules of English grammar to a new focus on the ways in which language is used in real communication because the English language can be used in a variety of situations and contexts.

Another reason was more close to Psychology than to Linguistic, i. e., the shift from teacher-centeredness to learner-centeredness. The general new tendency was a great focus on the learner. As learners use different learning strategies, skills and styles, the main attention was given to the ways in which learners acquire language and the differences in the ways language is acquired rather than focusing on the methods of language learning. Strevens (1980) explains that “*special purpose English teaching is determined by the requirements of the learner rather than by external factors.*”

As a matter of fact, many definitions of ESP are proposed by different scholars. Therefore, to know what this term really means, various interpretations relevant to the ESP context should be presented. ESP is described simply as teaching English that is used in specific areas, i. e., Academic Studies or Professional Purposes. This new approach is specially designed for adult learners who are learning English to communicate appropriately and to perform particular job-related functions.

According to Mackay and Mountford (1978), ESP is a form of teaching

English for a utilitarian purpose that is defined with reference to some occupational requirements such as for telephone operators, civil airline pilots, in vocational training programs, such as for hotel and catering staff, technical trades, some academic or professional study such as Engineering, Medicine, or Law. Moreover, Robinson (1991) describes ESP as a type of ELT (English Language Teaching) and defines it as “Goal Oriented Language Learning”. Johns and Salmani (2015), in their turn, add that ESP is most effective when it is relevant to adults’ academic and professional contexts.

Despite the several definitions of ESP, no one could describe ESP in a couple of sentences because the term is extremely complicated. As Strevens (1980) points out, *“it is not easy to produce a definition of ESP which is simple and water weight.”* All in all, what the majority of ESP studies agree upon is that ESP is an approach which uses needs analysis as the basis for curriculum development. It is considered as an umbrella term embracing a number of sub-divisions and it is often divided up into two main sub-branches: English for Academic Purposes (EAP) and English for Occupational Purposes (EOP). In this context, the demand for ESP continues to increase and expand throughout the world.

2. Situating EAP and EOP

Within the field of English for Specific Purposes, English for Occupational Purposes is traditionally seen as the counterpart of English for Academic Purposes (EAP). Based on Hutchinson and Waters’ classification (1987) in the ‘Tree of ELT’, EAP and EOP are stemmed from three major ESP areas: English for Science and Technology (EST); English for Business and Economics (EBE); and English for Social Studies (ESS). Each of the areas is further divided into two main branches: English for Academic Purposes (EAP) and English for Occupational Purposes (EOP). Accordingly, EAP for the EST branch is ‘English for Medical Studies’; whereas, EOP for EST branch is English for technicians. EAP for the EBE branch is ‘English for Economics’; whereas, EOP for EBE branch is ‘English for Secretaries’. EAP for the ESS branch is ‘English for Psychology’; whereas, EOP for ESS branch is ‘English for Teaching’.

Another taxonomy placed EAP and EOP as direct branches derived from ESP: (a) English for Occupational Purposes with courses for professional and pre-work purposes and (b) English for Academic Purposes with courses in study programs mainly for the areas of Science and Technology, Law, Medicine, and Business (Dudley- Evans and St. John, 1998).

English Language Teaching goes from general to specific courses. Thus, learners need a good foundation before attempting to accomplish demanding job tasks in a foreign language. Dudley- Evans and St. John (1998) state that although EOP can be taught to beginners, the norm is to wait until they acquire the basic command of the language. Furthermore, the strong demands on the learner in an EOP course may add some stress to the heavy workloads training participants usually have to carry. Therefore, it is advisable to begin training at the low-to- high intermediate level so that specific work-related goals are to be attained.

Hutchinson and Waters (1987) indicate that there is not a clear cut distinction between EAP and EOP on the basis of the considerations that people can work and study simultaneously, and that it is also likely that in many cases the language learnt for immediate use in a study environment will be used later on when the student takes up, or returns to a job. This explains Carver's rationale for categorizing English for Academic Purposes and English for Occupational Purposes under the same type of ESP (1983). Consequently, it appears that the end purposes of both EAP and EOP are the same, i. e., employment. However, despite the end purpose of EAP and EOP is the same, the means adopted and taken to reach the end is very different indeed. Last but not least, Belcher (2006: 138) acknowledges that English for Academic and Occupational Purposes refer to the academic needs of students and personnel in any academic field or workplace related to the English Language.

Obviously, the only difference that exists between EAP and EOP lies in the nature of the learner. The learner in an EAP context is a student while in an EOP context he/she is an employee.

3. Needs Analysis in the Realm of ESP

The main aim of ESP is to prepare a target group of learners to use English in different academic settings and fields including economics, politics, medicine, professional (people of different professions such as engineers), or workplace (like hotel receptionists and technicians). Designing specific courses to each one of these categories cannot be done and performed without a process called needs analysis or needs assessment.

Numerous scholars widely agreed that the term 'Needs' refers to what learners or workers need to learn in order to perform a specific task appropriately and effectively either academically or occupationally. In fact, NA has a vital role in the process of designing and carrying out any language course being English for Specific Purposes (ESP) or General English course (GE) and its centrality has

been acknowledged by several scholars and authors. The idea of focusing on learners' needs originated in the 1970s resulting from the interest in the design of language courses that could satisfy individual and social needs. It becomes the key stage in ESP and its development evolves in association with the teaching of Languages for Specific Purposes. According to Robinson (1991: 7), "*NA is generally regarded as critical to ESP, although ESP is by no means the only educational enterprise which makes use of it.*"

Moreover, Hutchinson and Waters (1987: 53) argue that any language course should be based on NA as it is fundamental to course design. In line with these definitions, Dudley-Evans and St John (1998: 126) stress three aspects of needs analysis. They state:

First, needs analysis aims to know learners as people, as language users and as language learners. Second, needs analysis study also aims to know how language learning and skills learning can be maximized for a given learner group. Third, needs analysis study aims to know the target situations and learning environment so that data can appropriately be interpreted.

In this respect, Robinson (1991: 8) suggests that NA is not just for determining "*what and how of a language of teaching.*" He also suggests that NA study should be repeated so that it can be built into the formative process. This would lead to rich database of the views and opinions of learners, subject-specialists and above all ESP practitioners about the English language. The main sources for needs analysis are the learners, people working or studying in the field, clients, employers or ESP researchers. Clearly, being aware of the needs of the learners influences not only the content of the language course but also what potential can be exploited through such course.

The task of an ESP course is to identify learners' needs and design a course around them. Obviously, the role of NA in any ESP course is indisputable. According to Johns (1991), NA is the crucial first step to designing and developing a language course, producing materials for teaching and learning, developing language tests, and providing validity and relevancy for all course design activities. That is why most scholars emphasise the primacy of NA in designing or evaluating a language course. It aims at finding out the effectiveness of a course or a programme to ensure the course's continuous improvement (Tsouand Chen, 2014). In fact, NA began along with the development of the Communicative Approach and has gone through multiple developments and stages in the 1970s and 1980s. More recently, Paltridge and Starfield (2013)

have argued that NA refers to the techniques for collecting and assessing information relevant to course design and therefore establishing the how and what of a course. Through the use of NA, we can collect more data about our learners and then we can modify our teaching methodologies, and in this way we can say that NA is a continuous evaluative process. All in all, needs analysis is often referred to as a key stage and/or as a basis of ESP. It is an inseparable part of any ESP programs and should not only be considered as a pre-stage for the design of language courses. In fact, it is an on-going process and as evaluation, it can be used to design, improve and implement language programmes.

3. 1. Background of Needs Analysis

From the early 1960's, the process of needs analysis has been acknowledged in language teaching and learning. Its importance is widely discussed by ESP subject specialists as it is considered as a major area of interest within the field of ESP. West (1994: 68) provides a brief overview of the origin of needs analysis. In his article, the term was first introduced in 1920 as a medium for determining the needs of the general language learners who studied English simply for the sake of knowing English. As a result, it did not seem very relevant to ESP at that time and what is meant by NA has been also gradually changing.

During the 1970's, NA as a term re-emerged again through the intensive studies conducted by the Council of Europe Modern Languages Project. It primarily concentrated on analysis of the use of a target language in specific situations. Its return is closely associated with the emergence of ESP in the 1970s. Furthermore, as a research field, the ESP movement of the 1970s espoused needs analysis as its guiding principles. Hutchinson and Waters (1987) sum up the spirit of the period when they describe Munby's (1978) Communication Needs Processor as "*a watershed and a coming of age for ESP.*" Thus, NA had begun along with the development of the Communicative Approach and went through multiple developments and stages in the 1970s and 1980s.

Dudley-Evans & St John (1998: 125) point out that the needs analysis process involves the following features and aspects: Professional information about the learners (target situation analysis and objective needs); Personal information about the learners; English language information; Learners' lacks; Language learning information; Professional communication information about the learners' professional information; Aim of the course and information about the environment in which the course will be run.

3. 2. The Models of Needs Analysis

Many scholars acknowledged the centrality of the needs analysis process such as Munby (1978), Hutchinson and Waters (1987), Robinson (1991), Dudley-Evans and St John (1998) and so many others. As a result, multiple models of needs analysis are suggested and implemented to analyse the needs of a particular group; so that it would be easier to produce a more efficient syllabus for the students or workers. In what follows, an overview of the different approaches to NA will be given.

3. 2. 1. Communicative Needs Processor (CNP)

In fact, “communication needs processor” is believed to be the opening model of a new era in ESP research. It is the most well-known model to the fact that it becomes an unavoidable reference point. In his model, Munby (1978) presents a detailed set of procedures for discovering target situation needs. His model is highly workable as an effective model for defining the content of purpose-specific language programs. Further, within this model, Munby proposes a profile of communication needs that consists of communicative events (e. g., discussing everyday tasks and duties), purposive domain (e. g., educational), medium (e. g., spoken), channel of communication (e. g., face-to-face), subject content and level of English ability required for the communication. Then, the communication needs are developed into a specific syllabus.

This model can be used to specify valid target situations. Furthermore, teachers of English, especially those concerned with the teaching of ESP, highly use this approach to the analysis of needs and follow the model for specifying communicative competence. Although Munby’s model paved the way for more advances in the field of ESP, it is criticized as being complex and time consuming. Consequently, several models to needs analysis appear to take learners’ present needs or wants into consideration.

3. 2. 2. Deficiency Analysis

The second major model of NA proposed by Richterich and Chancerel (1980) is known as deficiency analysis or present situation analysis (PSA) or lacks analysis. It tries to identify what learners are like at the beginning of it so that the sources of information are the students themselves. In other words, this model enables the researcher to determine learners’ lacks by looking to their actual level of proficiency. According to Allwright (1982), the approaches that are concerned with learners’ present needs or wants may be called analysis of learners’ deficiencies or lacks. It keeps learning needs in mind from the

beginning. For a PSA, Richterich and Chancerel (1980) suggest the following three sources of information:

- The students themselves;
- The language teaching establishment;
- The user-institution.

Within this model, it was suggested that using more than one or two data collection methods such as interviews and attitude scales would be effective. As a result, this approach has received less criticism.

3. 2. 3. Learning Needs Analysis (Strategy Analysis)

This approach focuses on learning styles and the strategies that the learners use to learn a language. It focuses on ‘how’ to learn rather than ‘what’ to learn. It tackles the strategies used by learners in order to learn another language. According to West (1998), this approach attempts to establish how the learners wish to learn rather than what they need to learn. As mentioned earlier, TSA and PSA do not deal with the learners’ views of learning. Within this field, Allwright (1982) was the first to make a distinction between needs (the skills which a student sees as being relevant to himself or herself), wants (those needs on which students put a high priority in the available and limited time), and lacks (the difference between the student’s present competence and the desired competence).

3. 2. 4. Means Analysis or Constraints Analysis

Means analysis is suggested as a new approach to NA which seeks to adjust language courses to local situations in order to make them workable. It attempts to investigate the considerations that Munby’s model excludes. Therefore, this approach provides information about the environment in which the course will be run and therefore attempts to be integrated in ESP course by considering the resources available, the teachers, the teaching methods and students’ actual attitudes and many other factors are taken into account within this approach.

3. 2. 5. Pedagogic Needs Analysis

Since there is an awareness of the fact that different types of needs analyses are not exclusive but complementary and that each of them provides a piece to complete the next model of NA, ‘Pedagogic Needs Analysis’ was suggested by West (1998) as an umbrella term to cover deficiency analysis, strategy analysis and means analysis. West (1994) points out that the main shortcoming of target NA which is collecting data about the learner. ‘Pedagogic Needs Analysis’ as a new approach sought to collect data from the learner and the learning

environment through the use of different instruments. To conclude, this model encompasses all the aforementioned approaches to needs analysis in addition to including some broad issues of language policy.

In view of the above, NA is an essential process for collecting information about the needs and situations of a particular group. Accordingly, researchers should be invited to know the models and the effective instruments to conduct needs analyses. Therefore, the next subsection reviews some NA research case studies carried out in various occupational settings in Algeria and around the world through the use of different methodologies and sources.

4. Some Previous Case Studies about English at the Workplace and the Methodology of NA

In today's high-powered workplace, employees must be able to communicate effectively and appropriately using English at the workplace with their clients through face-to-face conversations, emails, reports, meetings, etc. Scholars have agreed on the importance of communication skills and they divide it into three categories: written communication which includes letters, emails, memos, intranet articles, meeting minutes; oral communication that is used frequently during a working day, including speaking to colleagues and members of the public, attending conferences and meetings, delivering presentations and having telephone conversations and finally non-verbal communication that includes body language, posture, eye contact and even how to dress. To ensure the quality of employees and industries in terms of communication, studies must be done.

This section is devoted to tackle the main studies that are conducted in different workplace settings through the use of different instruments. In this respect, it is widely agreed that in addition to curriculum development and materials design for language teaching, selecting adequate information-gathering instruments and using multiple sources and methods (triangulation) for needs analysis proved to be of great importance for the workplace. Furthermore, job site observations, job description manuals, tape-recording of conversations in the workplace, surveys, specific questions and so many other methods can greatly help in collecting information about the language requirements of a job.

In Algeria, Reguieg (2012) has investigated the English language communicative needs of front office staff working at Gourara Hotel in Timimoun graduating from training centres after their two-years training.

To explore the hotel clients' satisfaction with receptionists' performance,

questionnaires are distributed and structured interviews are conducted to collect data in order to answer two main research questions:

1. To what extent are clients satisfied with the front desk staff English language use?

2. Which receptionists' language use needs to be improved?

The results indicate that clients are satisfied with service quality of the hotel receptionists. However, at the level of speaking and listening performance, foreign clients were not satisfied with the employees' communicative skills. There was a huge gap between customers' expectations and perceptions. Based on the results, the researcher presents some implications that may contribute to teaching English to hotel receptionists.

Jasso Aguilar (1999) carries out a study in a hotel in Waikiki (Hawaii) in order to investigate the perspectives of maids and to identify whether the maids perceive the tasks and language needed to perform their job effectively or not. Jasso Aguilar's study was based on the following research questions:

- Is language needed to perform the task?
- Do maids perceive this need?
- To what extent does the lack of language affects the maid's performance?
- Which are the needs and wants of both the maids and the institutional representatives?

To answer the above questions, qualitative methods, including observation, unstructured interviews and questionnaires in English are used for analyzing the vocational English-language-instruction needs of hotel maids. The population of this study is a large number of maids that are Chinese, Korean, and Vietnamese women. The main aim is to figure out to what extent the lack of language abilities and competencies might have a negative effect on their performance and to identify the needs and wants of both the maids and the institutional representatives using triangulation of sources and methods. To achieve the goal, observations with tape-recording and note-taking, unstructured interviews and written questionnaires are used. As far as the sources are concerned, she used multiple sources: housekeepers, supervisors and staff members.

Participant observation proved to be the most useful method as it showed that there is little interaction with guests and that some tasks force predictions were incorrect. On the other hand, the questionnaire provides little information about language and task. Moreover, similar answers were indicated and 66% of the participants stated that there are no communication problems. In addition to that, many questions were left unanswered. To sum up, Aguilar's work showed

the value of using multiple sources and methods for identifying employees' needs. Participant observation proved to be crucial not only for familiarizing the researcher with the tasks and language involved in the maids' work, but also for identifying more sources, and triangulation allowed identification of the most reliable ones.

To bridge the gap between workplace communicative needs and curriculum development of business English course, Crosling and Ward (2002) investigate the needs and uses of oral communication in the workplace. A survey questionnaire was distributed to business graduate employees to figure out the importance and frequency of oral communication and the people with whom they communicate orally. Based on the employees' replies and comments in the open ended section in the survey, it is clear that the results supported the view that oral communication pervades the workplace and thus business graduate employees strongly need such communication. Furthermore, the majority of employees indicated that it is often oral communication that distinguishes between a high performer and an average performer. One respondent mentioned that their partners are always asking why some graduates do not even have basic skills and confidence in answering phones and talking to clients.

In fact, most oral communication happens in their own company as they also communicate with staff in other departments of their company, but sometimes and to some extent they communicate with employees in other companies. The most oftenly used forms of oral communication are listening, following instructions and informal conversations. Additionally, meetings are perceived as important for their job endeavour. The findings raise several issues in relation to communication in the workplace for a successful professional career in Australia. In general, students require additional communication skills, including issues related to cross-cultural, gender, and group communication as well as to think critically.

In his part, Al-Khatib (2005) investigates the use of English by tourism and banking personnel in Jordan. The main concern of this investigation was to analyse the target needs of the subjects in two workplaces. All the participants are university graduates. His work is an attempt to examine the communication needs of the personnel in the workplace by shedding light on their attitudes toward English and the use of English in the workplace in addition to their perceptions of needs, wants and lacks. The participants in this study consist of thirty senior personnel who are equally distributed by type of work. A questionnaire, interviews and analysis of authentic workplace texts were undertaken under five

main headings: 1. Workers' needs and use; 2. Workers' wants; 3. Workers' lacks and 4. Workers' attitudes.

The results showed that more than 90% of documentation in the travel agencies is conducted in English, whereas only 60% of the in-bank work is conducted in the language. In addition, in-office interaction in both places of work is conducted mostly in both languages, though both types of workers use Arabic much more often than English. Further, travel agency workers use English much more than their banking counterparts. Concerning the needs, the majority of the respondents prefer getting information themselves, improving listening skills and their ability in speaking skill. As far as the language attitude is concerned, the executives in both workplaces showed a great deal of desire to employ the language as an instrument for achieving multi-purpose activities. All in all, the results of Al-Khatib have shown that the workers' perceptions of their needs, wants and lacks are greatly affected by their attitudes toward English. Indeed, Al-Khatib's work is informative because it finds the ways of motivating workers and suggests activities that trainees prefer. In this vein, ESP practitioners can design courses that suit the needs of the concerned groups.

In Malaysia, Kassim and Ali (2010) identify the most important English communicative skills needed by 65 engineers in ten multinational chemical companies so that self-developed questionnaires are distributed. The results revealed that English is important for them in meetings, internal and external networking and for problem solving. Furthermore, speaking and writing skills found to be more important than listening and reading skills. They concluded that conducting a needs analysis is essential to identify the most important communication skills and communicative needs of a particular group. In this way, language practitioners and syllabus designers can design suitable work-related content of workplace settings as the basis activities.

A similar study is carried out by Stevens (2011) who conducted a study entitled "What communication skills do employers want? Silicon Valley recruiters respond". The main purpose of this study was to analyze if Silicon Valley employers are satisfied with the communication skills of newly hired college graduates. The responses of 104 Silicon Valley employers were analysed. The results indicated that communication skills are in demand in the workplace so that successful careers require the ability to communicate effectively both in speaking and writing and in several areas, including the use of vocabulary and self-expression. However, employers were less than satisfied with overall communication skills of their new hires. In this light, it was suggested that

students must receive more training in both oral communication and written communication skills. Additionally, employers pointed out the great need for using electronic media, such as e-mail and Power-point to facilitate the job. Obviously, Stevens' work seems to suffer from methodological problems in conducting NA because he utilized only one method of data collection, namely a questionnaire.

Conclusion

Today's world is witnessing a dramatic increase in different aspects of science, education, economics and technology which has led to more demands and challenges. This revolution results in adopting the English language as a global language. Therefore, there is a call for the need to develop English language communicative skills on a global scale and for the need to be able to communicate appropriately in different settings either academically or occupationally particularly in the Third World Countries.

As a matter of fact, ESP appears as a new approach in ELT and it is widely used over the last three decades. In this vein, the term NA was largely established during the 1970s by the Council of Europe in the field of ESP and communication has become a sociological encounter that must be treated and studied rather than a process of exchanging words and ideas. It is worth mentioning, at this level, that this paper sheds light on NA process as one of the major aspects of ESP to reach a better understanding of the term as it is the most important step in designing ESP courses.

The review of some previous case studies at the workplace highlighted through the above literature makes it amply clear that needs analysis with its various approaches and instruments should be used and selected by researchers on the basis of contexts and conditions of teaching and learning in Algeria in order to overcome the communication problems related to English language use especially in the occupational sector. In this respect, pre-service and in-service training for employees are suggested for improving the needed skills toward more effective and competent rendering of service in addition to enhancing the qualifications and professionalism of employees. In fact, industries vary from one to another as each industry needs to enrich and develop specific skills and neglect others on a global scale. The researcher should use multiple sources and methods to collect more valuable information when conducting a needs analysis.

To sum up, the researchers being mentioned in this article have offered a number of works and articles bringing out new insights and approaches from different theoretical perspectives about the workplace, workers and different

tools that are employed to figure out the communicative needs of particular groups. Indeed, works about job requirements in terms of the English language needs should be mended rather than ended particularly in Algeria as they play important roles in workers' employers' and administrators' success in their fields of work and business environments.

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