Introduction: What is Needs Analysis?

Whereas English for General Purposes (EGP) traditionally does not specify needs, ESP is distinguished by its high awareness of needs (Hutchinson and Waters, 1987). Conducting needs analysis is *"the corner stone of ESP and leads to a much focused course"* (Dudley- Evans and St. John, 1998: 122). It is an important first step in course design as it involves the process of establishing the *what* and *how* of a course. This *what* and *how* inquiry is further explained in the words of (Basturkmen, 2010),

> *Needs analysis in ESP refers to a course development process. In this process the language and skills that the learners will use in their target professional or vocational workplace or in their study areas are identified and considered in relation to the present state of knowledge of the learners, their perceptions of their needs and the practical possibilities and constraints of the teaching context. The information obtained from this process is used in determining and refining the content and method of the ESP course (p.19).*

The following section details the different types of needs quoted above.

1) **What is meant by Needs in ESP? What are the different Needs Types?**

To specify what needs represent, a wide range of definitions exist in the ESP literature. Hutchinson and Waters (1987: 54- 63) view needs as '*the ability to comprehend or to produce the linguistic features of the Target situation*'. They propose two types of needs which are *'target needs'* and *'learning needs'*. **Target needs** are defined as "what the learner needs to do in the target situation" (Hutchinson and Waters, 1987:54). Under target needs the following question can be posed:

- Why is the language needed (for work, study, etc.)?

- How will the language be used (through telephone conversation, writing reports, etc.)?

- What will the content areas be (medicine, etc.)?

- Who will the learner use the language with (Native speakers/Non-native speakers, customers, colleagues)?

- Where will the language be used (overseas conference, meeting abroad)?

- When will the language be used (in parallel with ESP course, afterwards)?

Target needs are broken down into three categories: **necessities, lacks** and **wants**. Necessities are considered to be *"what the learner has to know in order to function effectively in the target situation"* (p. 55). Lacks are defined as the gaps between what the learner knows and the necessities (p. 56). **Wants** are described as *"what the learners think they need"* (Nation, 2000: 2).

Learning needs emphasise what *'learners need to do in order to learn'* or simply how they wish to learn (West, 1994). Learning needs appears under other, more global terms such as Brown's (2016: 23) individual differences analysis. Hutchinson and Waters (1987) suggest asking some questions to analyse learning needs, such as 'Why are the learners taking the course?'; 'How do the learners learn?'; 'Who are the learners?' etc. These questions refer to numerous factors, including learners' socio-cultural background, learning background, age, gender, background knowledge of specialised contents, background knowledge of English, attitudes towards English, etc.

Berwick (1989) and Brindley (1989) propose other need concepts: **perceived vs. felt needs; product vs. process oriented** interpretations**; and objective vs. subjective needs**. '**Perceived needs**' are from the perspective of experts while **'felt needs'** are from the perspective of learners (Berwick, 1989). In the **product-oriented** interpretation, learner needs are viewed as the language that learners require in target situations. In the **process-oriented** interpretation, the focus is on how individuals respond to their learning situation, involving affective and cognitive variables which affect learning (Brindley, 1989). Finally, **objective needs** are investigated prior to a course, whereas **subjective needs** are addressed during the course. According to Brindley (1989), objective needs can be derived from various kinds of *factual* information about learners, their real-life language use situations, their current language proficiency and difficulties. Subjective needs can be derived from information concerning their affective and cognitive factors such as personality, confidence, attitudes, learning wants, learning expectations, and learning strategies. Here, needs in the product-oriented interpretation are similar to the concepts of target needs (Hutchinson and Waters, 1987). Needs in the process-oriented interpretation, can be combined with learning needs.
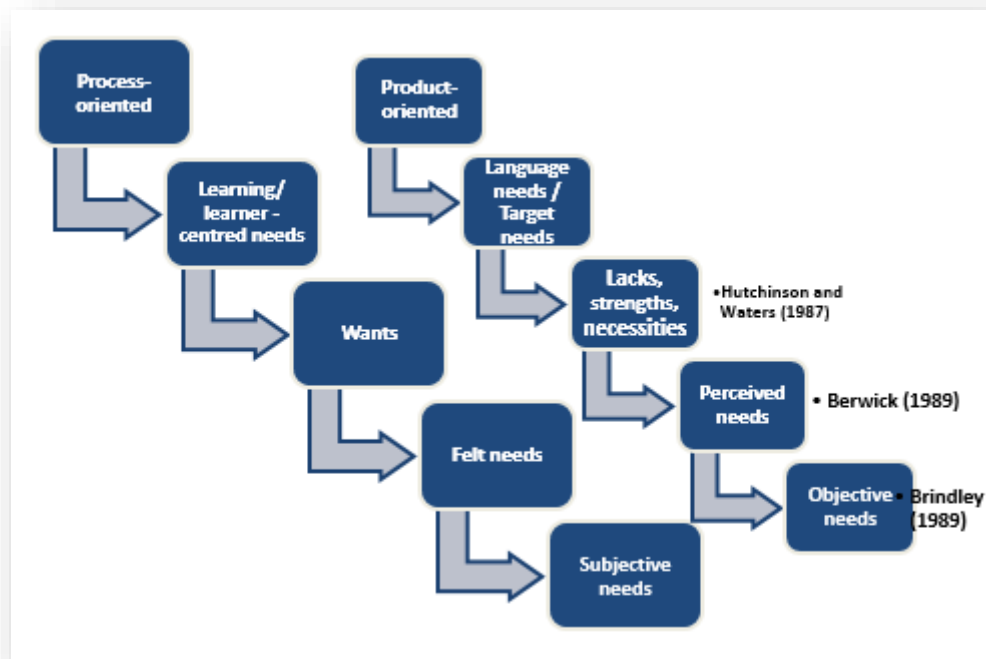
Teacher's Needs Concepts Comparative Diagram

2) NA Approaches

Dudley Evans and St John (1998) propose the following needs analysis approaches:

a) Target-situation analysis (TSA)

TSA reveals what the learner has to know in order to function effectively in the target situation. eg, a businessman may need to know about letters, know how to speak at sales conferences, be able to read catalogues, etc. In Target Situation Analysis studying the situations in which the language is used, or "Survival language skills", provides a guide as to what language to teach (product-oriented approach).

b) Present situation analysis (PSA)

PSA seeks to identify how the students' level is at the start of their language course, looking into their strengths and weaknesses. Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998: 124) state that PSA estimates strengths and weaknesses in language, skills and learning experiences. There are three basic sources of information: the students themselves, the language-teaching establishment, and the students' place of work. For each of these,

an ESP practitioner seeks information regarding their respective levels of ability; their resources; and their views on language teaching and learning. In practice, one is likely to seek and find information relating to both TSA and PSA simultaneously. Thus, needs analysis may be seen as a combination of TSA and PSA

c) Learning Situation Analysis (LSA)

Learning Situation Analysis refers to subjective, felt and process-oriented needs. LSA also directs what learners want to learn. Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998) state that LSA means effective ways of learning the skills and language. According to them, LSA also refers to why learners want to learn. They elucidate that subjective and felt needs are derived from insiders and correspond to cognitive and affective factors. Therefore, 'to feel confident' is a subjective/felt need. They also explain that process-oriented needs originate from the learning situation. Hence an ESP course has to consider learner/learning needs while designing the syllabus and choosing the methodology by taking into account the interests and concerns of the learners. Otherwise, it will create contradictions which will negatively affect ESP students' perceptions of the course.

d) Means Analysis

Dudley-Evans and St John (1998: 124) contend that Means Analysis has first been coined by (Holliday and cook, 1982, cited in Dudley-Evans et al., ibid) to look at the environment in which the course will be run. It considers *'what realistically the ESP course and teacher can offer'* (Basturkmen, 2010: 19). Means analysis takes into consideration the socio-economic context (facilities, equipment, materials, cultural attitudes that may affect teaching, teacher proficiency in English, their training and teaching ability) in which the language course is to take place. All these inform the course content and teaching-learning procedures. Only, means analysis is only constructive when it addresses the 'what works well' approach, highlighting the favourable conditions rather than the obstacles to appropriate ESP course implementation. Capitalising on the environment strengths contributes to the credibility of the NA investigation together with the ensuing sound pedagogical suggestions (or revisions) for an appropriate ESP programme content.

Dudley-Evans and St John's (1998:125) proposed a holistic, current concept of Needs Analysis, a combination of:

> A- TSA and objective needs;
> B- Wants, and subjective needs;
> C- PSA or learners' current skills and language level;
> D- Learners' gaps, i.e., the gap between C and A;

E- Language learning needs or LSA

F- Language Information about A, Professional or Target communication that is, which genres, language and skills do learners need to master, i.e., via linguistic/discourse/genre analysis;

G- Learners' needs/expectations from the course;

H- How the course will be run or implemented, i.e., Means Analysis

Dudley-Evans and St John (1998: 125) propose many NA constituents. Their understanding of *Language information about learners* reflects *present situation analysis*, that is, what the learners' current skills and language use are, including their strengths (what they already know) and weaknesses (what they do not yet know). In parallel, *professional information about learners* mirrors Target Situation Analysis (TSA) or objective needs as it looks at the target tasks that the learners (will) use English for in the target situation. Still being part and parcel of TSA, knowledge of *how to communicate in the target situation* projects an interest into the way *'language and skills are used in the target situation'* (Dudley-Evans and St John (ibid: 125). This means the use **direct methods**, including discourse analysis, genre analysis and even corpus linguistics, to examine authentic discourse samples. As to the learner status of informants, *personal information about learners* deals with factors which may affect their previous learning experiences, their attitudes to English, or their learning expectations (which is typically the same as the previously mentioned *wants*, or *subjective needs*).

Lacks consist of the difference between the professionals' current skills and language use as compared to objective or target needs indicated by TSA. Likewise, information about *learning needs*, concern *'the effective ways of learning the skills and language'* (ibid.) as informed by the informants current language use (PSA). Finally, *learners' needs from the course* (that the question 'what do you need from the course?' concretises) is another dimension of NA that, according to Dudley-Evans and St John (ibid: 127), complements the general question 'what do you need English for?' in providing information about short term course needs that are necessary for skills and language development. Finally, *environmental situation* enquires about the situation in which the course will be run (means analysis).

Having thus far dealt with the different concepts of needs from prominent scholars, it is of note how the unique information of each one of them acts in complementarity with the others. Conversely, relying on some types of needs at the expense of others renders the needs inquiry an incomplete enterprise leading to ill-informed ESP course.

3) NA Methodology

Hutchinson and Waters (1987) stress the use of multiple methods of data collection – such as questionnaires, interviews, observation, and informal discussions with employers, learners and others involved – to deal with the complexity of target needs.

The objective needs should act as the starting point in course design and after learning has begun. Methods such as surveys, group discussion, interview, communication awareness activities and learning contracts can be used to assess needs as they arise and are expressed. Information on learners' ability to use English, his or her subjective needs are necessary in order to make decisions on matters such as class placement and learning mode.

Dudley-Evans and St John' (1998: 132) posits that the main sources and methods of NA are as follows

For needs analysis the main sources are:	The main data collection methods for needs analysis are:
• the learners • people working or studying in the field • ex-students • documents relevant to the field • clients • employers • colleagues • ESP research in the field	• questionnaires • analysis of authentic spoken and written texts • discussions • structured interviews • observations • assessments

Jordan (1997:29) is of the opinion that the stakeholders (that is all those who are directly or indirectly concerned with English training (Dudley-Evans and St John, 1998: 130)) in needs analysis are the student, the course designer and teacher, the employer/sponsor and the target situation. The type of needs expected from each of them is detailed below:

A. Student/learner:– present, current, subjective, felt, learning needs, learner-centred, wants/likes, lacks, present situation analysis (PSA) and process-oriented skills/needs (objective needs with senior/ex-learners).

B. Course Designer and Teacher: purposes/objective needs- perceived needs, process-oriented, PSA, learning-centred.

C. Employer/Sponsor: objective needs/demands – product-oriented, PSA and TSA

D. Target Situation: (Subject/department) needs – target, future, objective, target-centred, goal-oriented needs, aims, necessities, TSA, language/genre/discourse analysis.

From the above sources, it is of note that current NA conceptions grant more attention to the insider perspective highlighting the specific purpose or target language use, that learners with experience, domain experts or authentic discourse samples provide. At the same time, NA is also informed by data deriving from the learners' status of target groups, giving likewise more importance to their voice (wants, learning or training needs). Such insider account cannot be provided by outsiders like language experts, ESP practitioners or applied linguists, whose views used to prevail in the first beginnings of ESP. While the latter are sources of other types of needs (i.e., language needs), it is for this same reason that triangulation of sources is necessary, depending also on what aspects the needs analyst wants to investigate.

4) What do ESP practitioners do with Needs Analysis results?

The outcome of a needs analysis should be a list of goals and objectives for the parties involved, which should inform course content, materials and teaching activities, as well as testing and evaluation strategies. The objective needs should act as the starting point in course design. Also, information on learners' ability to use English, his or her subjective needs are all necessary in order to make decisions on matters such as group division and learning mode. However, Hutchinson and Waters (1987) and Belcher (2009) recommend that needs analysis be checked constantly in an on-going process to assess needs whenever they are expressed. Whereas pre-course NA is used to determine types of appropriate course content and materials, during the course, NA assures that learner and course goals are being met, and allows for necessary changes. At the end of the course NA is used for assessing progress and planning future directions for learners and the course.

TD Tasks related to the Unit of Needs Analysis in ESP

5) Make an internet search to know about the contribution of Munby's (1978) communicative needs processor in identifying TSA?

Key

Munby (1978) proposed a set of questions to discover the **target situation needs** and obtain a communicative profile containing the **skills** and the **linguistic** forms needed in the target situation. Some of these questions are *Why is the language needed?; How will the language be used? What will the content areas*

be? Who will the learner use the language with? Where will the language be used? When will the language be used?. (student can elaborate on these questions depending on the amout of information s/he found).

6) **What further needs analysis types/concepts does James Dean Brown (2016) propose in his book 'Introducing Needs Analysis and English for Specific Purposes' (selected pages under attachment)**

Brown's (2016) Eleven NA Options
Target situation use analysis
Target situation linguistic analysis
Target situation learning analysis
Present situation analysis
Gap analysis
Rights analysis
Means analysis
Language audits
Individual differences analysis
Classroom learning analysis
Classroom teaching analysis

Students will elaborate on each item based on teacher-provided reading material.

7) **Find out about Basturkmen's (2010: 19) own classification of NA types. Are there any similarities with Dudley-Evans and St John's (1998:125) current concept of NA?**

•	**Target situation analysis**: Identification of tasks, activities and skills learners are/will be using English for; what the learners should ideally know and be able to do.

•	**Discourse analysis**: Descriptions of the language used in the above.

•	**Present situation analysis**: Identification of what the learners do and do not know and can or cannot do in relation to the demands of the target situation.

•	**Learner factor analysis**: Identification of learner factors such as their motivation, how they learn and their perceptions of their needs.

• **Teaching context analysis**: Identification of factors related to the environment in which the course will run. Consideration of what realistically the ESP course and teacher can offer.

Key

- **Target situation analysis**: the same as Dudley-Evans and St John's (1998:125) TSA.
- **Discourse analysis**: the same as Dudley-Evans and St John's (1998:125) Language Information about TSA
- **Present situation analysis**: the same as Dudley-Evans and St John's (1998:125) PSA.
- **Learner factor analysis**: synonymous to Dudley-Evans and St John's (1998:125) Wants, and subjective needs.
- **Teaching context analysis**: synonymous to Dudley-Evans and St John's (1998:125) F concept, professional situation language and skills information identified through linguistic, genre analysis.

8) **Conduct a small learning needs analysis with your classmates, then report your findings to the class about the following (questions sample taken from Niemiec's (2016) questionnaire) (Niemiec's (2016) article are sent to student as email attachment together with the assignment).**

How much do you like the following learning styles? (Answer with **a lot, a little, not at all**)

Working with other students in pairs and small groups.	When the teacher corrects students' mistakes anonymously.
Working alone in class.	When I correct my mistakes
Teaching only by the teacher & no activities by the students.	Learning with the use of tapes/CDs/ Video films in the classroom.
When the teacher is strict and controls the lesson.	Learning English grammar and the rules of correct English.
When the teacher facilitates and encourages learning.	When the teacher moves around the class and helps individual students.
When the class follows a textbook closely.	When we have translation exercises.
When the teacher gives tests and homework.	When I can choose other students to work with.
When the teacher makes explanations in Polish.	When I see the text rather than just listen to it.
When the teacher makes explanations in English.	Discovering answers by myself rather than just giving me the answers by the teacher.
When the teacher corrects all my mistakes immediately.	

9) **Brainstorm the different sources of NA data as well as the various data collection method and try to choose the most suitable methods for each source (orientation 7c, Dudley-Evans and St John's (1998:132).**

Key (orientation 7c, Dudley-Evans and St John's (1998: 270)

Existing ESP research	research analysis
Colleagues	discussion, record keeping
Learners, ex-learners	questionnaires, structured interviexs, tests
Working personnel	observation
Clients, employers	structured interviews, discussion

10) Brown (2016: 16) provides a four needs viewpoints: *the democratic view, the discrepancy view, the analytic view, and the diagnostic view.* **Try to link them with the types of needs previously dealt with**

Here are his own definitions of these needs views

The democratic view entails '*whatever most people want*'
The discrepancy view refers to '*whatever is missing*'
The analytic involves whatever logically comes next, that is *'the learning processes developed as a reaction to gaps and lacks'*
The diagnostic view concerns *'whatever will do the most harm if missing'*

Key

The democratic view --------------→wants, wishes, desires
The discrepancy view -------------→ lacks, gaps
The analytic view ------------------→learning process-oriented needs
The diagnostic view----------------→necessities

11) Other needs concepts have mushroomed. This is the case of Vandermeeren's (2005), Benesch's (2001) recent concepts. Find out about them. (Teacher providing the reading materials via email attachment)

Key:

Based on occupational settings, **Vandermeeren's (2005)** distinguishes between five types of foreign language needs. They are proposed below.

- **Objective need** (indicated by objective need indicators, e.g. turnover in a certain market). Empirical data suggestive of such a need consist of the frequency of interactions with foreign business partners.
- **Subjective need** (indicated by informant's subjective perceptions of foreign language need). It is illustrated by a top manager's ideal about how competent his staff *should* be in a foreign language.
- **Unconscious need** (indicated by the subtraction of subjective need from objective need). For instance, when a sales manager states that his department *does not need* English while foreign business partners are in permanent contact with them.
- **Subjective unmet need** (indicated by informants' perceptions of unmet foreign language need). These are instances of difficulties and lacks experienced with foreign language usage.
- **Objective unmet need** (indicated by the subtraction of foreign language use from objective need). This type of need is evident from the managers' claim that their departments *do not use* English whereas in reality they do.

Vandermeeren's concept of 'subjective needs' does not forcibly replicate the former views of needs just dealt with, in the sense that they represent an employer's ideal rather than the employee learner's wants. Whereas his 'subjective unmet need' goes with earlier terms such as lacks or weaknesses, his 'objective unmet needs' signal a mismatch between objective needs indicators and employer's needs perception. This being said, even though the present research will not faithfully embrace - all of -these concepts, explicating them nevertheless, shows the plethora of understandings that exist in the literature with regards to needs.

Benesch's (2001, cited in Upton, 2012) Rights Analysis

Rights analysis is a concept that appeared only recently with Benesch's (2001, cited in Upton, 2012) contention that needs analysis should be reread as 'rights analysis'. This added critical perspective on needs focuses, for instances, on the way members of the target professional community or higher education members exercise or resist power relationships. In EAP settings, another instance of such a critical work concerns how students are against the policy suggested by administrators, hence, the ESP programme. However, of interest to the present research is how the 'learner perspective' in NA is gaining momentum in Rights analysis. In this vein, Upton (2012) argues against solely focusing on target needs that people in power provide. Instead, he views that power relationships have to be equally tackled by contrasting the *'privileged members'* (i.e., employers, teachers, or administrators) with the *'novices'* (i.e., employees or students) perspectives (p. 23).

Likewise, taking the learner perspective - into account instead of solely seeking to meet the employer's or institutional interests - contributes to their empowerment,

> *There is growing recognition of the importance of 'empowering learners' to more actively participate in identifying and addressing their language learning and language using needs*. (Upton, 2012: 24, emphasis added).

Hence, empowering learners takes effect in current ESP NA research by considering their own views (i.e., learning needs, expectations, and wants). This shift of vision in ESP research rational as Belcher (2009: 3) states, signals a certain *"motivation to help those especially disadvantaged by their lack of language needed for the situations they find themselves in, hope to enter, or eventually rise above"*. This critical perspective that reflects the learners' right to have their voice heard in ESP research carries another understanding to the concept of learner needs. Finally, many scholars precisely recommend that such a *critical perspective* (i.e., viewing needs analysis in terms of rights analysis) be joined to other - of the afore-mentioned - needs perspectives in ESP needs enquiry for a complete understanding of the learner's needs.

12) Article Review (Task sent via eMail)

Answer the following questions by following the links below (43 Needs analysis research articles):

- What types of needs were investigated? Why?
- What/who were the main sources of NA?
- What data collection tools were used?
- What did the author do with the results (pedagogical implications)?

Key

Students' answers depend on the research scope and context.

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