

## THE IMPORTANCE OF NEEDS ANALYSIS IN TEACHING ESP

**Jumaniyozova Nuriya Axmedovna,**  
EFL teacher, Tashkent State University of Law  
**UZBEKISTAN**  
j.nurxon@mail.ru

**Shamsiddinova Manzura Gapporovna.,**  
Associate professor, Tashkent State University of Law  
**UZBEKISTAN**  
manzshams@mail.ru

**Ametova Oyshajon Rozmatovna,**  
EFL teacher, Tashkent State University of Law  
**UZBEKISTAN**  
aishaametova0914@gmail.com

&

**Fayzulloeva Chevar Gayrat qizi**  
EFL teacher, Tashkent State University of Law  
**Tashkent, UZBEKISTAN**  
chevarfayzulloeva@mail.ru

### ABSTRACT

Needs analysis aims to present learners' wants, needs and lacks prior to organizing a course. According to Burksaitiene (2008) needs analysis is the key to collect insider's view of the ESP situation (p.330) and the views of chosen learners are of utmost importance. Dudley –Evans (2001) also stated that the main aim of the ESP course is to meet the explicit needs of the learners. It is deemed as a learner-centered approach that develops learners' language capacity to be successful on their job sphere or academic needs. A needs analysis is an essential and primary stage which helps to identify the learners' needs, desires and prerequisites. Furthermore, it identifies their language background, preferences in a bid to design successful and effective course. Indeed, we intended to carry out this needs analysis in the realm of law. The data will be gathered via questionnaire. Analyzing the data, the main objectives of this course will be set in order to achieve the viable outcomes.

**Keywords:** needs analysis, objectives, questionnaire, law, CLT, TBT, authentic materials, EAP, process-oriented.

### INTRODUCTION

Initially, the educational setting we are involved in is University of Law which is considered as an EAP context. This University is specialized in preparing lawyers in different spheres such as criminal law, civil law, state law and business law. The module is called "English for lawyers" and it is divided into EGP and ESP. Furthermore, for this analysis mainly 2<sup>nd</sup> year group is targeted which entails 12 Uzbek students. More precisely, there are 4 female and 8 male learners who are at the age of 21 and 22. In fact, the level of most students is pre-intermediate and intermediate. As for their language proficiency most of them have been learning English for 4 or 5 years and some have already held IELTS certificate. As compared to other skills they are much better at speaking and writing since they are required to write essays, letters and summaries.

The objectives of this intended course are the followings: by the end of the course learners will be able to learn

- ✓ basic principles of law
- ✓ legal language in court
- ✓ how to write legal documents and make presentations.

The course is intended to be conducted for two months and each lesson will last for 80 minutes in the morning shift. The classes will be conducted twice a week and learners need mainly speaking and writing skills due to their realm. However, all the skills will be integrated in some lessons since they will have to read some legal documents or cases in order to analyze and listen to the clients and their complaints. In a bid to meet their needs and objectives CLT and TBT methods will be used in the course as they include more interactive activities. Lastly, for this very course some legal books, authentic materials, legal documents, videos and PPTs will be used. Most of the materials are available in the institution and there is a good internet access which enables us to download and use some materials during the class.

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Saragih (2014) states that needs analysis is vitally important in designing teaching materials for English for Specific Purposes (p. 59). Therefore, after gathering enough data regarding learners' needs, wants and wishes this intended course syllabus was made including selected materials and technologies. As it is the course for lawyers, all the materials, methods and assessment were relevantly chosen for this realm. Unlike EGP, ESP is more goal-driven, and it requires appropriate methodology for specific learners (Woodrow, 2018, p.53). For these particular learners mostly, CLT, TBL and community learning were chosen in this syllabus, because community learning enables them to be more involved in discussions and group works, whereas with the help of CLT they are more likely to be interested towards the classes through making presentations, role-plays, online games and etc. Woodrow (2018) also points out that TBL mostly focuses on the target language to complete meaningful tasks and in this course learners are more benefited via carrying out various writing tasks, such as letters, cases and responses to contracts. Furthermore, legal terminology is the core of their sphere which allows them practice different legal documents and act in court. Via these approaches they can easily learn and apply the new words in real life. As speaking and writing (apart from other skills) are the targeted skills these methods are well-suited to achieve this aim.

Choosing appropriate materials and textbooks is quite challenging for the course designer since ESP context is limited, but they are very important too. Dudley-Evans & St.John (1998) believe that ESP materials are the good sources of language, learning support and for reference. Also, they are motivating and engaging for learners (p.53). That is why, published, authentic and adapted materials were included in this intended course. Firstly, three published ESP books were introduced as they entail a myriad of necessary information, intriguing tasks and help desks for students. Through using these textbooks they will learn and practice concurrently. Secondly, some authentic materials were also given in the syllabus, such as videos, episodes from movies and real case situations. As Wong, Kwok & Choi mention they are the bridge between the classroom and outside world (1995: 322). These materials enable them not only to be aware of the theories but also practice in real life. Moreover, some materials were adopted in order to suit learners' needs (rubrics). It is assumed that all of these primary & supplementary materials and technologies will be very essential to achieve the objectives of the course.

## METHODOLOGY

For this needs analysis questionnaire will be the main tool to gather necessary information and it intends to represent their needs, desires and lacks before starting the course. A questionnaire is deemed as a deductive procedure and it is a good method of collecting initial data (Long, 1985, p.331). Firstly, we observed their English classes, current methodology and students' involvement. According to this observation the questionnaire was prepared in order to find out their further needs. The questionnaire included 10 questions regarding their preferable learning techniques, skills, methodology, challenges and evaluation within the course. It is assumed that having finished this course learners will gain some competence in both law and English.

According to the objectives of the course our learners can already write essays in different topics, formal letters and summaries for cases. In their first year students weren't able to write them and their speaking was also somehow unsatisfactory, but with the help of English instructors, textbooks and appropriate syllabus they managed to enhance their knowledge. However, nowadays the students of Law University are inclined more to learn legal language which is used in court and how to make an effective presentation to the audience and write various types of legal documents. All of them are considered as weak points of these very students. Hutchinson and Waters (1987) state that target needs are goal-oriented, whilst learner needs are process-oriented (p.327). The learners of this University mostly require ESP for lawyers, more specifically EAP and during this course our target is to teach them how to write legal documents, use appropriate language in court, make a convincing speech and prepare an effective presentation. Furthermore, the course also provides them with the opportunity of acquiring new legal terms which are commonly used in their realm. These are what the students need to know, because without them these learners will not achieve their goals and they cannot be professionals.

As Lynne Flowerdew (2013) points out needs analysis focuses on the techniques of collecting and assessing information relevant to the course (329). For this reason with our team we decided to conduct our needs analysis with the help of questionnaire and observation since they are more effective and reliable. The initial stage entails class observation. In this phase we are about to observe learners and teachers as well as the materials. Secondly, they will be given a designed questionnaire which includes several questions regarding their needs and desires. In the next stage, we quickly collect the data of all the students prior to analyzing and making some comparisons.

Indeed, the students' wants are almost the same with their needs as all of them are willing to be a competent specialist in their sphere and they would like to improve their knowledge and all skills in English, but as for their needs they are more required to practice writing and speaking as opposed to other skills because legal documents should be written formally without errors and they have to acquire persuasive speaking skills in a bid to talk to their clients and in court.

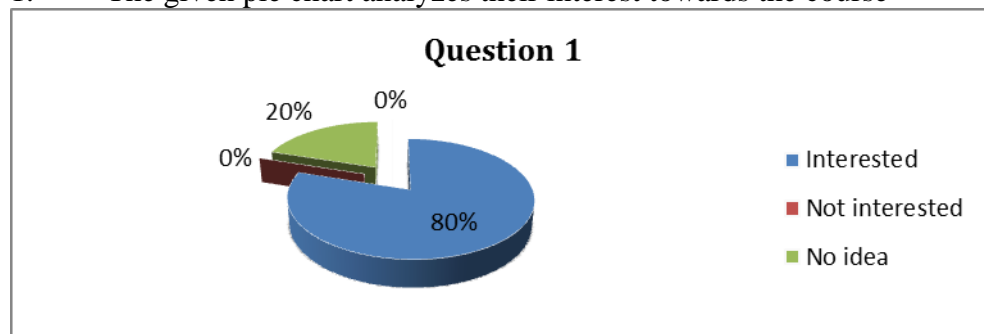
## RESULTS

Undoubtedly, all the learners eagerly answered the questions and it became easier to analyze the gathered data. In fact, almost all of them are willing to have this course since they need English in their sphere and have a lucrative job in the future. Most of them think that their sphere requires more writing and speaking as they deal with various documents and speak to clients. Besides, group or pair work is more preferable for them in order to ease the learning process and writing legal & cases, making presentations and using appropriate legal language are the prerequisites. Obviously, all of them have certain difficulties in their writing & speaking

and in terms of writing choosing proper words and writing accurately are the main challenges, while in speaking they mostly face the difficulties in fluency, using a variety of words and assurance. Also, both kinds of assessment are going to be applied based on their answers.

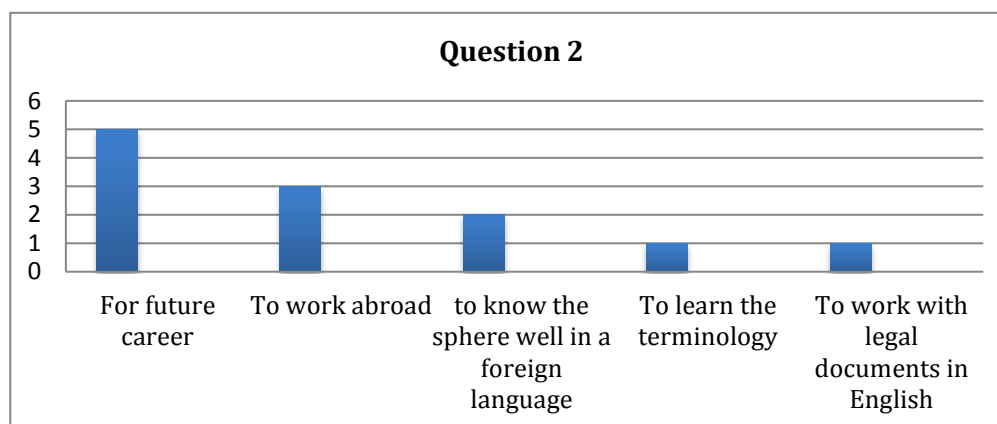
## DISCUSSION

1. The given pie chart analyzes their interest towards the course



As it is shown that the majority of learners (80%) would like to attend the course, whereas the only 20 % have not decided yet and chose the “no idea“ option. It means that most of them agree with starting this ESP course.

2. For the second questions the learners responded differently since it was an open-ended questions and the most repeated answers were “ for my future career” , “ to work abroad as an international lawyer“ and “ to know my sphere well in a foreign language too“. Others replied that they need this course in order to know the legal terminology, to learn how to work with legal documents and etc.... The following diagram illustrates this information.



3/6.  
When it comes to question 3 and 6 it is

evident that most students (70 %) have willingness to enhance their writing & speaking within and after the course, whereas other rest (30 %) preferred vocabulary & grammar and reading respectively. With these results, integration of all skills will be used in this course, but more emphasis will be put on speaking and writing. Secondly, as for the best learning style visual and kinesthetic learners accounted for almost 65% and roughly 35 % are auditory learners. Therefore, it would be beneficial if all types of styles were utilized.

Obviously, almost the half of the students require writing legal documents & cases and four of them need to learn how to use appropriate legal language, whilst others also mentioned reading reports and making presentations. Hence, these topics will be equally covered in the syllabus according to learners' wishes.

5/10. The fifth and tenth questions were asked about the methodology and assessment they prefer to be applied. Apparently, 8 of them would prefer group work, whereas two chose to work in pairs and other two are for individual learning. Interestingly, none of them wanted to have a lecture style. Also, both types of assessment will be used since nearly all of them chose both types of assessment.

In question 7 the answers varied. For instance, four of them responded that they would like to have more writing & speaking tasks in their field, two would rather more role-plays regarding the topics, and other two mentioned about presentations and videos. Besides, some prefer vocabulary and grammar tasks in the syllabus as well. For this reason, all of these types of tasks will be included in the potential syllabus.

8/9. Both of these questions are regarding the difficulties they frequently come across in speaking and writing. In fact, in terms of speaking most of them (75 %) have challenges in using a wide range of vocabulary, speaking fluently and confidently, while others chose other options. In writing the usage of proper words and writing accurately (grammar) are the main problems (80 %)

## CONCLUSION

All in all, due to the results of questionnaire, the objectives of the course have been improved and course syllabus will be designed more appropriately taking the students' desires into consideration. Burksaitiene (2008) claims that alternative approaches and assessment have become common practice in many educational settings (p. 155). Therefore, taking all the above mentioned results and students' wishes into account, we believe that this very intended 6-sessioned ESP course will definitely benefit those particular learners since it is based on the needs analysis.

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