

## **NEEDS ANALYSIS OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE SECONDARY HOTEL STUDENTS IN JORDAN**

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**ABSTRACT:** *This study aimed to identify the English language needs for secondary school students' hotel stream in 2012/2013 in Jordan. More specifically, it attempted to address the following question: What are the English language needs of the hotel stream students in Jordan? The sample of the study consisted of 146 students, 27 teachers from schools of the Ministry of Education and 24 hotel employees in Jordan. A questionnaire was developed by the researcher and addressed to the students, teachers and employees. The findings of the study revealed that there are some real special English language needs and interests for the students in hotel stream in Jordan, these needs motivate students to learn and build their self-confidence toward the learning process. It is recommended that curriculum designers make use of the resulting identifying these needs and to conduct similar studies for other secondary streams in Jordan and in other countries.*

**KEYWORDS:** ESP: English for specific purposes. AMRA: A text book for teaching general English to the secondary students in Jordan. C. N. P.: Communicative Needs Processor in Munby' Model.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Teaching and learning foreign language programs are mostly related to English as an international language. English has become the most important language of communication in the world. Teaching English as a foreign language has a long history in many countries and has spread to almost all Arab countries. English is important nowadays because of its international character and because of its widespread use as a means of communication and as a vehicle which facilitates further progress in other subjects. Students' proficiency in English has not been encouraging, as it neither corresponds to their needs or aspirations, nor justifies the amount of money being spent on teaching English in Jordan.

Teaching English as a Foreign Language in Jordan is still inadequate .No serious decisions have been taken in this field so far. The Ministry of Education and other institutions can do much to exploit the English language into a productive tool in many sectors, notably scientific and technical institutions, vocational schools, the hotel field, in business, banking, finance, and all sectors forming the basis of the Jordanian economy. Integrating ESP should at least occur in two major sectors, notably tourism and hotel service field. They represent a backbone of the Jordanian economy and certainly require English. Accordingly it is imperative to direct the attention to these two rich labor markets.

The significance of the present study is firstly because it is an immediate response to the urgent needs of the ESP field in Jordan. Secondary, it is in line with modern trends

in teaching English as a foreign language. Finally, to the best knowledge of the researcher, producing and implementing ESP unprecedented attempt in our country.

## **THEORETICAL UNDERPINNING**

### **Need Analysis**

Curriculum specialists believe that the breakdown of curriculum into components and sub-processes is of vital importance since it simplifies and organizes a process as complex as curriculum design (Hutchinson, Waters, 1987, Nunan, 1985). The first component in such a procedure is the needs assessment that is, obtaining data, followed by needs analyses that are, assigning value to those data (Graves 1996). Therefore, the first issue to elaborate on is the needs of the students.

If needs are clear, the learning aims can be expressed more easily and the language course can become motivating. If the learners' needs are not taken into account, the course will be based on unstable or irrelevant material, will disillusion the students with the value of instruction or their capacity to learn the language, and will lead to low motivation (Mackay, Mountford, 1978). To put it simply, the needs assessment provides the researcher with the base on which to build new knowledge. By using what the students know to be conveyed (Swale, 1985).

Needs analysis to many people is limited to ESP, to the point that it becomes nearly synonymous with ESP. As a matter of fact, needs analysis is found outside ESP. In other words, any educational course should be based on needs analysis to guarantee success.

Needs analysis is usually performed first; then data analysis is used to provide the particular language skills that students will use and the activities students will eventually complete.

Munby's Communicative Syllabus Design (1978) is a famous work dealing with needs analysis for English language teaching. Munby presented a series of procedures to identify the expected needs in English. The first is called the "Communicative Needs Processor," which consist of a series of questions related to the variables in communication, such as the subject matter, the participants, and means of communication. Such variables help pinpoint the specific needs of the learners in the target language. The other is "a profile of needs," which highlights students' needs in the target language; hence, the program designer has only to take these needs into consideration when specifying the elements of the proposed ESP program.

Numerous articles and studies deal with students' or learners' needs in English for specific purposes. For example Tawfiq (1977) studied the language needs of Iraqi undergraduate medical students doing their preliminary year in the Kufa Faculty of Medicine at Al-Mustansiriya University in Iraq. Another study was conducted by Johns (1981); it aimed to determine which skills (reading, speakers' success at the university level.

Albakrawi, Hussein (2005) designed a computerized ESP program for hotel students. The findings of the study revealed that the program had a measurable effect on the English proficiency of the experimental group.

The nature of the course design stages and the syllabus, materials, methodology, and evaluation will be influenced by the target ESP learning situation and the target situation. At the same time each stage will influence and be influenced by other stages. Therefore, course design is a dynamic process.

As needs and resources change and develop into adjusted forms, the course design will have to respond to these necessary changes and developments through feedback channels which are already defined.

ESP should be activated in contexts where modernization is the target objective. Jordan now has all reasons to adopt it.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Population**

The population of this study consisted of forty six sections, all of them Jordanian first secondary class students / hotel stream for the academic year 2012/2013. These students are between seventeen and eighteen years old. It is assumed that they have had similar opportunities for learning English because of the centralized nature of the education system in Jordan. Their teachers hold a minimum of a B.A. in English. The total number of students in the population in the first secondary class/ hotel stream is 1370.

### **Sample**

The sample for the study consisted of three groups; the first is for needs assessment, consisting of one hundred and forty six male students, twenty seven teachers teaching/ hotel stream and twenty four employees from local hotels.

The student sample was selected from the first secondary class sections affiliated with the following schools: Ali Al-Sharari Secondary School, Houfa Al-Mazar Secondary School, Sama Al-Rosan Secondary School, Dier Abi Saeed Secondary School, Ramtha Secondary School, and North Shouneh Secondary School. All of these schools are run by the Ministry of Education.

All students were General Basic School graduates of public schools. Taking into account that the majority of the Basic schools graduates were over sixteen years old. The researcher can infer that general education did not provide them with the skills necessary to get a good job. Another thing which should be taken into account is that all students were adults to some extent.

The needs assessment describes here did not stop with the information gathering and analyses. During the study, the students mentioned new needs, which were taken into account. For example, a student said that he would like help in writing C.V. for a job in a hotel.

Table 1 shows the distribution of the students sample according to directorate, numbers, schools and the percentage.

**Table (1): Distribution of the Students Sample according to numbers and Schools**

No.	School	Directorate	Number of students	Percentage
1	Ali Al-Sharari	Irbid/1	26	18.05%
2	Houfa Al-Mazar	Irbid/2	24	16.6%
3	Sama Al-Rosan	Bani Kananeh	24	16.6%
4	Deir Abi Saeed	Al-Kora	22	15.27%
5	Ramtha	Ramtha	25	17.36%
6	Nourth Shouneh	North Al-Aghwar	23	15.97%
<b>Total</b>			<b>146</b>	<b>100%</b>

The teachers were chosen from the following schools: Ali Al-Sharari, Houfa Al-Mazar, Sama Al-Rosan, Deir Abi Saeed, Ramtha, and North Shouneh.

**Table (2): Distribution of the Teachers sample according to numbers and schools**

No.	School	Directorate	Number of teachers	Percentage
1	Ali Al-Sharari	Irbid/1	6	22.3%
2	Houfa Al-Mazar	Irbid/2	5	18.3%
3	Sama Al-Rosan	Bani Kananeh	4	14.8%
4	Deir Abi Saeed	Al-Kora	4	14.8%
5	Ramtha	Ramtha	4	14.8%
6	Nourth Shouneh	North Al-Aghwar	4	14.8%
<b>Total</b>			<b>27</b>	<b>100%</b>

The employees were randomly chosen from the following relevant institutions and hotels: Aphia Hotel in Irbid, Toledo College in Irbid, Jerusalem Hotel in Amman, and Marina Hotel in Aqaba.

**Table (3): Distribution of the Employees Sample in Comparison to the Total Number of Employees**

No.	Hotel or Institution	Employees	Percentage
1	Aphia Hotel	3	12.5%
2	Toledo College	3	12.5%
3	Toledo Hotel	4	16.7%
4	Jerusalem Hotel	6	25%
5	Marina Hotel	5	20.8%
6	Al-Joude Hotel	3	12.5%
<b>Total</b>		<b>24</b>	<b>100%</b>

### **Data Collection Procedures**

The questionnaire technique was selected for the needs assessment, but before designing and developing the items of the questionnaire, the researcher reviewed the literature on how to develop the items in needs assessment studies. In an effort to become acquainted with the curriculum for the English for hotel purposes course, the researcher consulted recommended books used in some private institutes for hotel training in Jordan. Needs analysis, was a proper way to provide the relevant information needed to design an English-for-hotel purposes program. The questionnaire consisted of 47 items and was addressed to students, teachers, and employees.

### **Instruments of the Study**

The students' questionnaire was distributed to 146 students chosen from the secondary schools which include hotel stream. The students evaluated themselves and expressed their real needs. The means and the frequencies of the items on the questionnaire were calculated. Most of the skills consisted of four, five, or six sub-items.

The teachers' questionnaire was distributed to 27 teachers chosen from the secondary schools which include hotel stream. The researcher used the same procedure in the students' questionnaire for analyzing the teachers' questionnaire.

The employees' questionnaire was distributed to 24 employees and experienced employees chosen from the hotels and hotel establishments in Jordan. The researcher also used the same procedure of the students and teachers' questionnaire for analysis the job-holder's questionnaire. The results of the three questionnaires of the study were then compared with each other.

### **FINDINGS**

The following are the opinions and suggestions of the twenty seven hotel stream English language teachers, twenty four hotel employees, and several students.

1. Most of the sample members welcomed this study and suggested different programs or curricula for teaching ESP and for other secondary vocational streams.
2. The (majority) of the sample members expressed lack of knowledge about ESP.
3. The majority of the sample members agreed with designing ESP texts with topics related to the students' needs, so as to familiarize the students with the vocabulary used in their future jobs and that will also enable them to have ability in understanding concepts in their study.
4. Most of sample members called for emphasizing all language skills.

The results that are related to the needs analysis in this study reflect true needs in hotel ESP learning, which form the basis of any proposed ESP program. The study showed that the listening exercises needed are: listening to one person talking and listening to orders and instructions. In real-life situations, hotel receptionists and other hotel workers listen to one person at a time and normally receive orders from

clients. Trainees at vocational hotel classes usually listen to one person during academic classes; that person is usually their teacher or their trainer.

In speaking, the results also showed that the speaking-related activities should include: two persons talking (conversation) and one person addressing a group (lecturing, giving instructions to a group). These and other forms are reflections of the main speaking activities that usually occur in hotels and restaurants and even in academic classes at vocational schools oriented toward hotel training.

In reading, the results pointed out that the reading activities that most vocational hotel ESP learners need in their educational or occupational life includes reading advertisements, instructions, brochures, lists and tables.

The language functions identified by the study cover most workplace needs. At hotels and restaurants, clients tend to be treated informally. Greeting and complimenting them are a basic rule for successful business. Advising clients and explaining hotel services are usually an essential part of the job for hotel employees that will make clients comfortable. Waiters at restaurants also should be willing to listen and receive orders from clients.

The results of the analysis of the questionnaires of the study and personal observations showed that students were more enthusiastic than teachers and employees for the language sub-skills and functions suggested in the program. But teachers were more enthusiastic than employees about the activities proposed in the new program. Such enthusiasm for a new vocational ESP curriculum leads to three observations about the secondary school students/ hotel stream:

- a. The current general EFL curriculum (AMRA) does not meet the needs and interest of secondary school students / hotel stream.
- b. The same students are dissatisfied with the current general EFL curriculum (AMRA).
- c. The proposed ESP computerized program is important in meeting hotel trainees' needs and interests.

Teachers and students showed greater interest in hotel-specific ESP materials than employees for secondary school students / hotel stream, and other vocational streams. The results may be due to the following:

- a. Teachers and students are more directly influenced by the present ESP study.
- b. Most English teachers are not adequately trained to teach ESP courses in context. This encourages the introduction of relevant ESP materials for this specialization. Still, writers should incorporate real content (topics and themes) that relate to hotel subject.

The procedure followed with needs assessment as the starting point and an evaluation questionnaire as the second. The need showed that ESP teachers should acquire a scientific approach to language teaching and should experiment with new techniques and procedures based on the learners' language needs. This requires

cooperation with employees, subject teachers, other ESP teachers, and institutional administrators in order to provide the necessary resources.

## **DISCUSSION**

### **Languages Needs are examined from the Point View of Students, Teachers and Employees**

In this category, language needs are examined from the point view of students; teachers at the secondary schools of hotel stream, and employees in hotels in Jordan. In these questionnaires, the students, the teachers, and employees were asked to rank the language needs in terms of need for students' success in future jobs. The Open question asked to order the four language skills according to their importance for the hotel stream students.

Most of the English language needs presented in the questionnaire were approved by the sampled students, teachers, and employees. These needs are divided into four main categories.

As for the most prominent needs that teaching materials should mostly have, the top areas of English uses in the abovementioned needs included the following:

- a. There should be listening exercises in which trainees practice listening to one person talking, as well as other exercises in which trainees practice listening to orders and instructions and then carry them out.
- b. Teaching materials should include speaking exercises in which two persons have an informal conversation. Other activities in which one person addresses more than one person should also be included.
- c. Reading texts should include as exercises instructions, advertisements, articles, brochures, lists, tables, and notes.
- d. There should be writing exercises for writing lists, instructions, writing notes, and applications.

As it is clear from the answers to the open question in the questionnaire the four basic language skills are ordered in importance as the follows:

- Speaking
- Listening
- Writing
- Reading

Although speaking is the most highly evaluated skill by the sample members, material writers should not ignore the other skills. The way the four skills are ordered above suggests that they should be activated and focused on in a Secondary Hotel ESP syllabus proportional with each skill's rank.

Students agreed that the most needed skill for success in future hotel job is speaking, and they felt that writing and listening ranked next to speaking and was followed by reading which was ranked last while the teachers arranged the language skills in a different order: listening, speaking, writing, and then reading.

Table 4 ranks the sub-skills within the listening and speaking skills from the point of view of hotel stream students, teachers and employees.

**Table (4): Ranking of the listening and speaking sub-skills from the sample members' point of view**

NO.	Sub-skill	Mean
6	To apologize when needed	3.54
13	To understand what clients order at a restaurant.	3.45
8	To explain the available hotel services	3.37
25	To describe the view of the hotel and the advantages of the hotel rooms	3.30
11	To understand what other say about one's work	3.26
19	To tell the types of hotel rooms	3.25
7	To ask for permission leave	3.25
14	To speak and communicate on the phone about hotel services	3.24
9	To understand the clients' wishes	3.23
12	To express the procedures of hotel reservation	3.19
1	To introduce himself	3.18
3	To understand what colleague says about the details of work	3.15
17	To express oneself in embarrassing situations	3.15
4	To discuss what a client wants	3.07
5	To understand what is said in payment and checking out contexts	3.06
18	To give a brief account of the available hotel services	3.04
16	To understand audio or video films about hotel duties	3.02
20	To give a brief oral account of the historical places in Jordan	3.02
2	To speak about hotel jobs	2.96
15	To ask for repetition or explanation when needed	2.81
22	To mention the ingredients of some dishes	2.78
23	To tell the cost of hotel services	2.76
10	To ask the clients' about their countries, place and duration of residence	2.72
24	To organize agreements for banquets	2.63
21	To compare different hotel prices and services	2.43

Table 4 indicates the most important oral sub-skills (listening and speaking skills). All members of the students sample emphasized listening to instructions and to the orders of hotel clients. Table 6 also shows that the apologizing and understanding what clients order are the most needed and the top sub-skills within the listening and speaking skills.



Table 5 shows ranks the sub-skills within writing skill from the point of view of sample members, students, teachers and employees.

**Table (5): Ranking of the writing sub-skills from the sample members' point of view**

NO.	Sub-skill	Mean
44	To write a report about the hotel to a travel agency	2.83
41	To write a short letter to the boss on personal matters	2.79
46	To fill in a hotel reservation form	2.66
36	To write detailed c.v.	2.62
37	To fill in related bills and receipts	2.58
40	To write some points in order to discuss them with the boss	2.58
42	To compose a written order to the subordinates	2.58
35	To fill in an application form	2.54
38	To write a short report about the work	2.50
43	To write complaints about the work to the boss	2.45

Table 5 shows the most needed sub-skills within writing: writing lists and hotel applications received the highest degree of evaluation and importance in writing area. Most of the sampled members in the three categories emphasized positively writing curriculum vitae, as well as filling in applications.

**Table (6): Ranking of the reading sub-skills from the sample members' point of view**

NO.	Sub-skill	Mean
27	To read the clients' orders', reservation and memos	3.08
26	To read hotel circulars and memos	3.04
33	To read the hotel advertisements	2.95
36	To read related booklets	2.91
28	To understand the related terminology	2.79
32	To understand hotel instructions	2.75
31	To read simple related internet literature	2.66
29	To read related journals and papers	2.58
34	To read about other nations' cultures	2.43

Table 6 ranks the sub-skills within the reading skill. Reading instructions is the most emphasized sub-skill among the reading sub-skills. However, other reading sub-skills, such as reading advertisements, brochures, lists, and articles, were also emphasized by the sample members. There were no significant differences between the responses of the three sample groups.

## IMPLICATION TO RESEARCH AND PRACTICE

The new trend in syllabus design reflects the similarity in the responses of all three groups-students, teachers and employees. Thus, any proposed hotel ESP program may emphasize the language skills and sub-skills identified in this study and ESP

courses for other secondary vocational streams should do likewise. The only difference would be in the choice of content to suit the specialization

In general, course designers and curriculum developers can make use of the results of this study in order to materials, for vocational students in general and hotel students in particular, through ascertaining the English language skills and functions that these students may need for their education or for their future jobs and emphasizing the use of English language, especially for vocational schools to help students mastering the language.

## CONCLUSION

1. Emphasizing topics and themes which are related to students' needs and interests and compatible with their background, experience, and abilities motivates students to learn and encourages them to build self-confidence and positive attitudes learning to increase English proficiency.
2. hotel –stream learners may modify what they acquire in hotel ESP Materials to be used in general English. This is because hotel ESP language is relevant to general English. Materials are much relevant to general English especially in structure and some vocabulary which play a central role in designing ESP courses.
3. The literature related to ESP supports the claim of its being communicative in nature. The communicative movement leads directly to the development of ESP. Thus, the strong innate communicative ESP courses enhance language acquisition.

## FUTURE RESEARCH

Based on the results of the study, this study may draw the attention of the scholars, educationalists and course designers to conduct similar studies for other classes and levels and other specializations in order to make the results more valid and more widely applicable.

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