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Needs Analysis for ESP Courses in the Context of a Private University of Bangladesh

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
	This study thoroughly analyses the requirements of English as a Second Language (ESL) courses offered at Green University of Bangladesh with a focus on the specific linguistic demands of students who are majoring in Engineering, Business, and Computer Science. One hundred students and five instructors participated in the research, which employed a mixed-methods approach to analyse both quantitative and qualitative data collected using questionnaires, focus group discussion, interviews, and diagnostic tests. When comparing student needs with what is taught in ESP programs, the findings reveal a significant gap, particularly in the areas of academic writing, oral communication, and technical terminologies. Students, especially those having backgrounds in Computer Science and Engineering (CSE) and Electrical and Electronics Engineering (EEE), voiced concerns about the difficulty of technical language and public speaking, while teachers emphasized on the importance of expanding students' specialist vocabulary and providing more hands-on communication activities. Despite the importance of industry standards and real-world applications as per students' academic and professional performance, the research states that the current ESP curriculum falls short in meeting these demands. More hands-on activities and specialist content, together with better preparation for educators to lead specialized language courses, are two ways that the curriculum may be improved to better suit these needs. The paper highlights the need of tailoring ESP courses as per the needs of students in different disciplines and suggests curriculum modifications to prepare students for the global job market.

Keywords: English for Specific Purposes, Needs Analysis, Technical Vocabulary, Academic Writing, Curriculum Reform, Green University of Bangladesh, Real-world Application, Teacher Training |

1. Introduction

The acronym "ESP" stands for "English for Specific Purposes," a method of tailoring the English language curriculum to meet the unique requirements of students majoring in a particular discipline. While GEDs cover a lot of ground, ESPs are tailored to meet the specific communication needs of students and professionals in the fields like Computer Science, Engineering, and Business. ESP in higher education is becoming more important in nations where English is used as a language of instruction and employment because of the rising need for English competence worldwide, focused in these sectors.

Private universities in Bangladesh are crucial because they provide students with the specialized training they need to compete in the global employment market. At Green University of Bangladesh, students majoring in

Business, Computer Science, or Engineering are required to have excellent command of English language in order to thrive in their studies and careers. There is a lack of study on whether ESP programs successfully meet students' individual language requirements, even if these courses are available.

The purpose of this research is to identify the language needs of Green University of Bangladesh's student body across academic departments in order to better tailor ESP programs to meet their demands. Its goal is to take stock of the present ESP curriculum, figure out what works and what does not, and then make adjustments as needed. This investigation is based on the following research questions:

1. What are the specific English language needs of students at Green University of Bangladesh?
2. How effective are current ESP courses in meeting these needs?
3. What improvements can be made to the ESP curriculum?

2. Literature Review

Overview of ESP

A subfield of ELT, English for Specific Purposes (ESP) trains students to utilise the language in contexts relevant to their chosen academic or occupational major. According to Hutchinson and Waters (1987), ESP was developed to meet the demands of specialised language training in a variety of academic and occupational fields. Unlike General English classes, which concentrate on more generalised language abilities, ESP courses are tailored to provide learners with the linguistic tools they need to participate in content-specific discourse, technical writing, and professional communication.

Since its beginnings, the discipline of ESP has shifted its emphasis from reading comprehension and technical writing to more generalised abilities like hearing, speaking, and intercultural communication in certain circumstances (Liu and Hu, 2021). An analysis of the evolution of English as a Second Language (ESL) during the last 40 years by Yang, Xu, and Swales (2023) highlights the growing significance of integrating language and content of English-medium universities. These changes reflect the increasing need for experts in several disciplines who can communicate well in English.

Context of ESP in Bangladesh

There has been a recent uptick in the importance of ESP in Bangladeshi universities due to the widespread use of English as a medium of instruction and a vital competency for many occupations. The responsibility of educating students for the global job market, where fluency in English is often required, falls mostly on private colleges. To be successful in academic institution and in the workforce, students in Bangladesh need to have strong English language abilities, yet many of them struggle to do so. Despite the abundance of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) classes, research by Mahbub (2018) shows that students majoring in technical disciplines often have their language demands unmet, leaving them with gaps in their skills.

The different language origins of students in Bangladeshi higher education further complicate the function of English as a Second Language (ESL). Many students may have had minimal exposure to English before enrolling in university. Therefore, it is crucial to investigate how well ESP classes address the linguistic demands of these students. According to Gaffas (2019) and others, it is crucial to know how students feel about ESP classes in order to design programs that help students overcome language barriers and be ready for the real world.

Green University's Context

Green University of Bangladesh is a private institution that has been around since 2003 and offers a variety of degree programs in the fields including Business Administration (BBA), Computer Science and Engineering (CSE) and Electrical and Electronics Engineering (EEE). The institution is devoted to providing students with the knowledge and abilities they need to succeed in today's globally interconnected world, where proficiency in English is crucial for professional advancement. To prepare the students for achieving success in a wide range of academic disciplines, Green University provides English as a Second Language (ESL) courses.

Although ESP courses are offered at Green University, there is no evidence to suggest that they are beneficial to students. The university's diverse student population, which includes individuals from a variety of linguistic and educational backgrounds, presents unique challenges for effective ESP programs. Also, there is a growing need for employees with excellent English communication skills since more and more businesses are becoming global. Because of this, the need for ESP programs tailored to academic and professional requirements has become more apparent.

Our study seeks to address these gaps by conducting a comprehensive needs analysis of Green University's students. By analysing the current situation of ESL programs and investigating the specific language challenges that students face, the study aims to assist the institution in better preparing its students for the global workforce.

3. Methodology

Mixed-Methods Approach
This study adopts a mixed-methods approach to analyze the English language needs of students at Green University of Bangladesh. Both quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques are used to gather comprehensive insights into the linguistic challenges students face and their experiences with the existing ESP curriculum. Quantitative data, collected through surveys and diagnostic tests, identifies proficiency levels and specific language needs, while qualitative data, obtained through interviews and focus group discussion, provides more detailed perspectives from students and faculty members.

Quantitative Analysis
The quantitative component involves a survey administered to 100 students across three key departments: Business Administration (BBA), Computer Science and Engineering (CSE) and Electrical and Electronics Engineering (EEE). This sample size ensures that the data is collected from a range of academic backgrounds, allowing the study to reflect the diversity of the student body. The survey assesses students' current English proficiency, specific language needs in academic and professional contexts, and the challenges they face. The main focus areas include technical vocabulary, academic writing, oral presentation skills, and participation in discussions.

In addition to the survey, a diagnostic English proficiency test is administered to the same 100 students. This test evaluates skills in writing, reading, speaking, and listening to identify specific areas of weakness, such as difficulties with technical writing or oral communication. The data collected from the survey and diagnostic tests is analyzed using descriptive statistics and cross-tabulations to identify trends and patterns across different academic disciplines.

Qualitative Analysis
For the qualitative component, a purposive sample of 10 students from the 100 surveyed is selected for in-depth interviews. This group includes students from the Business Administration (BBA), Computer Science and Engineering (CSE) and Electrical and Electronics Engineering (EEE) departments to ensure diverse representation. The interviews focus on the students' personal experiences with the ESP courses, their language difficulties, and their views on the relevance of the course content to their academic and professional needs.

Additionally, 5 faculty members involved in teaching the ESP courses at Green University are interviewed to gather their perspectives. Faculty members discussed the challenges they face in teaching ESP, their observations of student needs, and suggestions for curriculum improvement. These interviews provide valuable insights into the effectiveness of the current ESP offerings.

Two focus groups are also conducted, each consisting of 5 students from different academic disciplines. The focus groups encourage cross-disciplinary discussions, allowing students to share their experiences with the ESP curriculum, discuss the challenges they face, and propose ideas for improvement.

Data Collection
Data collection occurs in three phases: survey distribution, diagnostic testing, and interviews/focus group discussion. Surveys and diagnostic tests are conducted in classroom settings to ensure a high response rate. Interviews and focus groups are semi-structured, allowing participants to freely express their thoughts while focusing on key research areas.

The quantitative data is analyzed using statistical software to identify patterns in students' language proficiency and needs. The qualitative data is analyzed using thematic analysis to uncover recurring themes related to language challenges, curriculum relevance, and areas for improvement.

4. Results and Findings

Demographic Profile of the Participants
The sample size for this study consisted of **100 students** from Green University of Bangladesh, selected from three key departments: Business Administration (BBA), Computer Science and Engineering (CSE), and Electrical and Electronics Engineering (EEE). These departments represent a significant portion of the academic programs at the university, where English language proficiency is crucial for both academic success and future professional endeavors. The student sample included a balanced mix of gender and age groups, offering a diverse demographic profile to ensure that the findings accurately reflect the language needs of students from different backgrounds.

A total of **63%** of the participants were male, with **37% female**, reflecting a common trend of gender distribution in technical and business-related programs. The majority of participants were within the **age range of 21-25 years (81%)**, which aligns with the typical age of undergraduate and early postgraduate students. This age group often encounters significant language challenges as they transition from academic settings to professional environments. The distribution across departments was fairly even, with **35% each from BBA and CSE**, and **30% from EEE**, ensuring a well-rounded understanding of the language needs across these fields.

Table 1: Demographic Profile of Participants

Demographic Category	BBA (%)	CSE (%)	EEE (%)	Total (%)
Gender				
- Male	20 (57%)	25 (71%)	18 (60%)	63%
- Female	15 (43%)	10 (29%)	12 (40%)	37%
Age Range				
- 18-20 years	10 (29%)	5 (14%)	4 (13%)	19%
- 21-25 years	25 (71%)	30 (86%)	26 (87%)	81%
Total Participants	35 (100%)	35 (100%)	30 (100%)	100%

Table 1 summarizes the demographic characteristics of the student sample. This diverse representation ensures that the results of this study take into account the varied backgrounds of students, helping to identify both common and department-specific language challenges.

Quantitative Results

The analysis of the survey and diagnostic test data reveals several key trends in students' language proficiency and specific needs across departments. The data gathered from 100 students highlights the areas where students from different academic disciplines face the most significant challenges in using English effectively for academic and professional purposes.

Table 2: Percentage of Students Struggling with Key Language Skills

Language Skill	BBA (%)	CSE (%)	EEE (%)
Technical Vocabulary	40	48	55
Academic Writing	35	38	45
Oral Presentations	28	32	48
Reading Comprehension	22	25	30

Table 2 illustrates that a substantial number of students, particularly from EEE and CSE, face challenges in technical vocabulary and oral communication. These skills are critical for both academic success and future employment, especially in fields where technical and specialized language is frequently used. Engineering students reported the highest percentage of struggles, with **55%** indicating difficulties with technical vocabulary and **48%** reporting challenges with oral presentations. The students of Computer Science and Engineering were followed closely behind, suggesting that more emphasis on developing these skills within the ESP curriculum is needed.

Table 3: Proficiency Levels in Academic Writing by Department

Proficiency Level	BBA (%)	CSE (%)	EEE (%)
Advanced	18	15	12
Intermediate	60	58	50
Beginner	22	27	38

Table 3 shows that the majority of the students across departments fall into the intermediate level for academic writing proficiency. However, a notable percentage of the students in EEE (38%) and CSE (27%) are still at the beginner level, which indicates a need for additional support, especially in the development of formal writing skills such as report writing, academic papers, and technical documentation. BBA department has a higher proportion of students at the advanced level (**18%**), suggesting that students in this field may have better preparation or more opportunities to practice academic writing.

Table 4: Proficiency in Oral Presentation Skills by Department

Proficiency Level	BBA (%)	CSE (%)	EEE (%)
Advanced	22	20	15
Intermediate	55	60	65
Beginner	23	20	20

In Table 4, the majority of the students are found to be at the intermediate level for oral presentation skills. However, engineering students, in particular, face challenges, with **65%** reporting intermediate proficiency but still struggling with confidence and clarity in delivering technical presentations. This indicates that while they are functional communicators, they need further training to refine their presentation skills to meet professional standards.

Qualitative Insights

The qualitative data collected from student interviews and focus groups, as well as faculty feedback, offer deeper insights into the specific language challenges that students encounter, and how well does the current ESP curriculum reports the needs.

Table 5: Key Themes from Student Interviews and Focus Groups

Theme	Frequency of Mention (%)
Difficulty with Technical Terms	60
Issues with Oral Communication	45
Lack of Real-World Application	40
Need for More Field-Specific Content	55

Table 5 highlights the main themes that emerged during student interviews and focus groups. **60%** of the students expressed difficulties with understanding and using technical terms, particularly those from Engineering and Computer Science backgrounds, where technical language is more prevalent. **45%** of the students mentioned issues with oral communication, citing a lack of confidence in delivering technical content during presentations. Additionally, **40%** of the students felt that the current ESP curriculum lacked real-world application, calling for more practical exercises that align with industry practices.

Table 6: Faculty Feedback on Current ESP Curriculum

Feedback Theme	Frequency of Mention (%)
Need for Specialized Vocabulary	65
Gaps in Practical Communication Skills	55
Insufficient Focus on Industry Standards	50
Challenges in Curriculum Adaptation	45

Faculty feedback, summarized in Table 6, mirrors the concerns raised by students. **65% of the faculty** members emphasized the need for more specialized vocabulary instruction, particularly in technical fields. **55%** of the faculty members also noted that students lacked practical communication skills, suggesting that more real-world communication tasks should be integrated into the curriculum. Furthermore, **50%** of the faculty members pointed out that the curriculum does not align closely enough with industry standards, indicating a need for a curriculum review and update to reflect well about the professional demands students will face after graduation.

Comparison of Current Curriculum with Needs

The analysis of both students' and faculty members' feedback reveals significant gaps between the current ESP curriculum and identifies language needs of students, as shown in Table 7.

Table 7: Gaps Between Current ESP Curriculum and Student Needs

Area of Need	Current Curriculum Coverage (%)	Identified Need Coverage (%)
Technical Vocabulary	40	65
Practical Communication Skills	45	70
Field-Specific Writing Instruction	50	60
Real-World Application Exercises	30	55

Table 7 highlights that while the current ESP curriculum provides moderate coverage in areas such as field-specific writing instruction and practical communication skills, it falls short in addressing technical vocabulary and real-world application exercises. **Only 40%** of the curriculum covers technical vocabulary, while **65%** of the students indicated that this was a critical area of need. Similarly, **real-world application exercises** are underrepresented in the curriculum, with only **30%** coverage, compared to **55%** of the students who expressed a desire for more practical, hands-on learning experiences.

The combined results from quantitative and qualitative data demonstrate that the students, particularly in EEE and CSE, face considerable challenges in areas such as technical vocabulary and oral communication. These challenges are further reinforced by faculty feedback, which emphasizes the need for specialized vocabulary training and more practical communication tasks that better align with industry requirements. The comparison between the current ESP curriculum and identified student needs highlights several key gaps, particularly in addressing the specific language demands of technical fields. Enhancing the curriculum by incorporating more field-specific content, specialized vocabulary instruction, and practical exercises will better equip students with the language skills needed for academic success and professional readiness.

5. Discussion

Several important insights into the present status of ESP courses at Green University of Bangladesh are revealed by the findings of this research. The results are in line with current tendencies in ESP research that highlight the need for technical students to get specialised language training. It is recommended by Hutchinson and Waters (1987) that ESP courses are customised to address the unique requirements of students in each academic field. Finding major discrepancies between the present ESP curriculum and students' real language needs—especially in the domains of technical vocabulary and practical communication skills—this research lends credence to that claim.

The difficulties encountered by Green University students are typical to those encountered in other settings. According to Liu and Hu (2021), ESP has expanded its emphasis from reading comprehension and technical writing to more generalised abilities like public speaking and understanding other cultures. Technical vocabulary and oral presentations are areas that are undeveloped in the current ESP curriculum, according to this research. Students, particularly those in the EEE and CSE departments, struggle with these areas. Also, the results are in line with those of Yang, Xu, and Swales (2023), who highlight the increasing need for linguistic and content integration at universities that use English as their medium of teaching. This integration is especially important at Green University since students are getting ready to join a global workforce that has to be able to communicate well and technically in English.

The unique context of Green University, with its diverse student population and focus on BBA, CSE, and EEE, highlights specific language requirements that differ from those in other fields. Mahbub (2018) notes that many students in Bangladesh face challenges in acquiring field-specific English skills, and this study confirms that observation. Students in technical fields, particularly engineering, reported significant difficulties with technical vocabulary, which is critical for understanding academic materials and communicating effectively in professional settings. Additionally, the lack of real-world application exercises within the curriculum, as noted by both the students and the faculty members, suggested a disconnect between academic learning and industry demands. This finding aligns with Gaffas (2019), who emphasizes the importance of aligning ESP curricula with the practical needs of students in their future careers.

The faculty feedback gathered in this study underscores the need for curriculum reformation at Green University. A majority of faculty members indicated that the current ESP courses do not adequately address the industry-specific language skills that have been required for success in technical fields. This finding is consistent with the observations of Petraki and Khat (2022), who highlight the challenges of designing ESP courses that meet the evolving demands of the global job market. To address these gaps, faculty members recommended the inclusion of more specialized vocabulary modules and an increased focus on practical communication tasks, such as presentations and group discussions. These recommendations are also supported by Belcher (2004), who emphasizes the needs for ESP programs to be flexible and responsive to the specific linguistic and professional needs of students in different fields.

In light of these findings, it is clear that Green University must take steps to improve its ESP curriculum to better align with the needs of its students. This includes enhancing the coverage of technical vocabulary, incorporating more field-specific content, and integrating practical exercises that mirror the real-world scenarios. The importance of teacher training in ESP cannot be overlooked either, as faculty members must be equipped with the skills that are necessary to deliver specialized content effectively. By addressing these areas, Green University can better prepare its students for the linguistic and professional challenges they will face in their careers, ensuring that they are competitive in the global job market.

Recommendations: The study offers few suggestions for improving the ESP curriculum based on the findings. These could include:
o   Introducing more specialized vocabulary modules for different disciplines.
o   Increasing practical communication tasks like presentations and group discussions.
o   Enhancing teacher training for ESP instructors.

6. Conclusion

The needs analysis of ESP courses at Green University of Bangladesh reveals critical gaps between the current curriculum and the specific language needs of students in fields such as EEE, CSE and BBA. Quantitative data shows that students struggle with technical vocabulary, academic writing, and oral communication, particularly in delivering presentations and understanding specialized terminologies. Qualitative feedback from both students and faculty members further highlights the insufficiency of the curriculum in aligning with the real-world applications and industry standards, echoing broader ESP research trends that call for more specialized, field-specific language instruction. Faculty members emphasize the need for curriculum reform, particularly through the inclusion of more specialized vocabulary modules and practical communication tasks, such as presentations and group discussions. Additionally, there is a strong call for real-world application exercises that mirror the professional environments students will encounter after graduation. The findings align with Hutchinson and Waters (1987), who argue that ESP must be tailored to the specific needs of learners in different disciplines, and the results of this study reinforces the need for targeted reforms. Furthermore,

enhancing teacher training for ESP instructors is essential to ensure faculty members are equipped with the skills to deliver effective, and specialized content. As global industries continue to demand professionals who can communicate proficiently in both technical and general contexts, it is critical for Green University to prioritize these curriculum updates. Addressing these gaps will better equip students with the language skills they need to succeed in both local and international job markets, while ensuring that the university remains competitive in delivering relevant, high-quality education. Looking forward, further research could assess the long-term impacts of these curriculum changes, providing valuable insights into how ESP programs can continue to evolve to meet the changing demands of the global workforce.

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