

# Needs Analysis of Students of Tourism English

Kyunghee Choi

Hanyang Women's College

## Abstract

This paper discusses the results of needs analysis of freshman students who study tourism English. A number of ESP researchers have agreed that as language in different context varies, methods and contents of second language teaching should vary to meet the needs of learners in specific situations (Gatehouse, 2001; Hutchinson & Waters, 1987). The main purpose of the study is to find out what tourism major students of a two-year college want to learn in their tourism conversation classes and what ways can help them to achieve better results in acquiring their degree, licenses and getting a job. The study is conducted on three groups of students with the use of questionnaire surveys in the beginning and the end of the semester. One group consists of 120 students of three regular day-time classes, another 40 students of a night class and the other 40 students who work during the day for their regular jobs. The paper compares and discusses the results of needs analysis of three different groups. It suggests what content areas should be included in tourism English courses and how they should be taught. The paper discusses such details as: what the students want to do after graduation; what should be taught during the next two years in accordance with their aims of getting a job; how much they are motivated to learn English; what they think their levels of English proficiency are; what skills of English they think they need to improve; and whether what the teacher plans to teach matches what they want to learn.

## 1. Introduction:

The purpose of this presentation is to discuss the results of needs analysis of freshmen who study Tourism English in Hanyang Women's College. Since I started teaching in the Department of Tourism in Hanyang Women's College in March this year, my major interest has been teaching English for specific purposes. A number of ESP researchers have argued that as language in different context varies, methods and contents of second language teaching should vary to meet the needs of learners in specific situations (Gatehouse, 2001; Hutchinson & Waters, 1987). Different from four year colleges and universities, two year colleges have limited time to help students prepare for a job they want. The English courses they have to take during the two years are mainly concerned with tourism English except one taught by a native English speaking teacher who teaches English for everyday life. As a novice teacher of Tourism English, I've been thinking what the students with a tourism major think they lack, want and need in learning English. And I have been wondering what kind of jobs they want in the future, whether the English courses they are taking fit the future jobs they want, what content areas of English should be added or deleted in order to help them to get a better job, and in what ways the teaching methods of English should be modified.

In order to design an English curriculum that meets the needs of students, we also have to consider needs of both educational institutions and workplaces that may hire them. For the

improvement of the ESP curriculum, I suggest that three different kinds of needs analysis are prerequisite. The needs are 1) the needs of learners; 2) the needs of employers; and 3) the needs of curriculum designers and teachers. First, we have to find out what our students want. We should inquire and analyze their needs. Second, we also need to learn what qualifications workplaces and employers want from newly recruited employees and what criteria they use to judge and select them. Third, we also need to consider what teaching environment including English teaching policies and principles we have in the department and in the school. Sometimes conflicts and frustrations among these professionals may hinder them from coming up with an agreement in designing courses. This presentation as part of a bigger study that is planned to analyze all three needs mainly focuses on the students' needs and discusses the results of their needs analysis.

## **2. Literature Review**

Before introducing my study, I need to review a little bit of literature, to discuss the definition of 'needs' that have been much studied and talked about by many researchers interested in Needs Analysis and ESP. They have suggested a plethora of terms to define 'needs.' The terms include objective and subjective needs (Brindley, 1989), perceived and felt needs (Berwick, 1989), target situation/goal oriented needs and learning needs, product-oriented and process-oriented needs (Brindley, 1989), and necessities, wants and lacks (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987).

Brindley (1989) suggests that if the needs are derived by outsiders from the facts, from what is known and can be verified, then they are objective and perceived needs. For instance, if students learn English to fulfill their requirements for graduation, then their needs to study English are objective and perceived. On the other hand, if the needs are derived by insiders and correspond to cognitive and affective factors such as 'to become confident' or 'to help oneself more capable in one's school or workplace' then the needs are subjective or felt needs. Product-oriented needs are compatible with target situation or goal-oriented needs while process-oriented needs correspond to learning situation. In other words, product-oriented needs derive from the goal or target situation while process-oriented needs derive from the learning situation. Dudley-Evans and St John (1998) suggest that objective, perceived, and product-oriented needs correspond to a target situation analysis (TSA) and subjective, felt, and process-oriented needs correspond to a learning situation analysis (LSA). They suggest one more analysis that is a present situation analysis (PSA). A present situation analysis is intended to suggest what learners already know. Thus the analysis can be used to find out what they lack. A TSA deals with objective, perceived and product-oriented needs of learners; an LSA discusses subjective, felt and process-oriented needs; and a PSA estimates strengths and weaknesses of learners in language, skills, and learning experiences.

Hutchinson and Waters (1987) suggest similar yet different definitions and classifications concerning 'needs.' They use three terms to explain 'needs' such as 'necessities,' 'wants,' and 'lacks.' They define 'necessities' as the type of need determined by the demands of the target

situation, that is, what the learner should know in order to work effectively and efficiently in the target situation. Hutchinson and Waters argue that to identify necessities alone is not enough to understand ‘needs.’ Since in ESP major variable to be considered is particular learners, we also need to know what learners want and lack. We need to find out what learners actually view their needs are. Their needs may conflict with the needs perceived by course designers and teachers. As course designers, we also need to evaluate what learners already know. The target proficiency needs to be matched against the existing proficiency of learners. The gap between the two can be referred to as learners’ lacks. A necessities analysis corresponds to a TSA, a target situation analysis suggested by Dudley-Evans and St John (1989), a wants analysis corresponds to an LSA, a learning situation analysis, and a lacks analysis corresponds to a PSA, a present situation analysis. However, different from Dudley-Evans and St John’s categorization, Hutchinson and Waters argue that ‘there is no necessary relationship between necessities as perceived by sponsor or ESP teacher and what the learners want or feel they need.’ They view necessities, wants, and lacks in two different perspectives: one is perceived by course designers, that is an objective viewpoint and the other perceived by learners, that is a subjective viewpoint. In order to explain the differences in perspectives, Hutchinson and Waters use a diagram (Figure 1) suggested by Richard Mead (1980) in discussing motivation of students taking ESP courses in the faculties of Medicine, Agriculture and Veterinary Science at a university in the Middle East. These students of the Agriculture and Veterinary Faculty were not motivated by their subject-specific texts. They did not want to study these subjects. They wanted to become medical doctors, but there were not enough places in the Medical Faculty to accommodate them all. As you can in the wants of Figure 1, the teachers perceive that students want to succeed in agricultural or veterinary studies but the students want to undertake medical studies.

In my study, I suggest that we need to add one more viewpoint. That is an objective perspective by potential employers. As I mentioned earlier, most of the students in two year colleges are known to pursue career after graduation, and therefore there is limited time to equip them with skills, knowledge, and capabilities the workplaces that they want require. In order to help them to get jobs they want, we need to know what qualifications the workplaces ask for and how such qualifications are applied to evaluate and recruit more capable employees.

**Figure 1: Necessities, wants, and lacks**

	Objective (i.e. as perceived by course designers)	Subjective (i.e. as Perceived by learners)
NECESSITIES	The English needed for success in Agricultural or Veterinary Studies	To reluctantly cope with a ‘second-best’ situation
WANTS	To succeed in Agricultural or Veterinary Studies	To undertake Medical Studies

LACKS	(Presumably) areas of English needed for Agricultural or Veterinary Studies	Means of doing Medical Studies
-------	---	--------------------------------

As Figure 2 suggests, employers' perception of necessities, wants, and lacks also has to be analyzed. However, in this presentation as the first step in a bigger study, I want to analyze students' subjective perception of their necessities, wants, and lacks. Objective viewpoint perceived by course designers and teachers, and that by employers have further to be studied in the future. When these two other perspectives are taken into consideration, we may come up with a better ESP curriculum.

**Figure 2: Necessities, wants, and lacks of three perspectives**

	Subjective (i.e. as perceived by learners)	Objective (i.e. as perceived by course designers)	Objective (i.e. as perceived by potential employers)
NECESSITIES	Foreign language ability; English; TOEIC; ECT		
WANTS	communicative English used in hotels		
LACKS	speaking; grammar		

### 3. The study

#### 3.1. The participants

The participants in my study are the freshman students who took English Conversation for Tourism in the spring semester of the academic year 2005. Along with this course, most of them also took Tourism English and Language Laboratory Practice. English Conversation for Tourism taught by a Korean teacher focuses on teaching practical English conversation used in hotel and catering industry. Tourism English taught by another Korean teacher deals with various issues concerning tourism industry, and some tips on taking job interviews and writing resumes. However, it mostly focuses on reading and understanding articles concerning such issues of tourism. Language Laboratory Practice is a conversation course in which the native speaking teacher teaches them to speak everyday English along with some basic knowledge and practice on English structures. Figure 3 shows the number of participants who answered in the first questionnaire conducted in the beginning of the semester and the second questionnaire at the end of the semester.

**Figure 3: Numbers of participants in the first and second questionnaires**

	1 <sup>st</sup> Questionnaire	2 <sup>nd</sup> Questionnaire
Class A	45	45
Class B	38	41
Class C	41	35
Class I	33	35
Class P	39	36
	196	192

### 3.2. The methods

The students answered two questionnaires; one in the beginning of the semester and the other at the end of the semester. Some contents and types of questions of the two questionnaires overlap and some are different. They both include open and closed questions. The types of closed questions used in the questionnaires are list, ranking and scale. The first questionnaire mainly deals with questions asking what students feel they lack and questions concerning what they think they want. In the second questionnaire, along with some questions concerning lacks and wants, some questions related with necessities are included.

### 3.3. The analysis

#### 1) Lacks

Question 1: I like English.

This question was asked both in the first questionnaire and the second questionnaire. More students selected (4) in the second questionnaire. Their preference toward English has increased (A, B, C:  $p = 0.186$ ; A – P:  $p = 0.94$ ). However, the increase is not statistically meaningful. The evening students do not show much difference.

**Figure 4: Question 1 – I like English (1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> questionnaire)**

Classes	1 <sup>st</sup> Questionnaire		2 <sup>nd</sup> Questionnaire	
	(3)	(4)	(3)	(4)
A, B, C	53	42	39	56
I, P	30	20	29	19
A – P	83	62	68	75

Question 2: I am good at English.

This question was also asked twice; first in the beginning of the semester and second at the end of the semester. The number of students who selected (3) increased while the number of students who selected (1) decreased in the second questionnaire. This indicates that their confidence in English has increased (A – P:  $p = 0.001$ ). The increase is statistically meaningful. In the second questionnaire, 67 students selected reading as the area they are good at while 26 students selected listening.

**Figure 5: Question 2 – I am good at English (1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> questionnaire)**

Classes	1 <sup>st</sup> Questionnaire			2 <sup>nd</sup> Questionnaire		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(1)	(2)	(3)
A, B, C	35	60	31	19	60	44
I, P	28	33	9	18	35	14
A – P	63	93	40	37	95	58

Question 3: I am poor in English.

The number of students who selected (5) decreased while the number of students who selected (3) increased. This result corresponds to that of Question 2 (A – P:  $p = 0.006$ ). In the first questionnaire, 85 students selected speaking as the area they are poor at while 79 students selected grammar. In the second questionnaire, 66 students selected grammar and 52 students selected speaking. It is another sign that they have become more confident in English, especially speaking English.

**Figure 6: Question 3 – I am poor in English (1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> questionnaire)**

	1 <sup>st</sup> Questionnaire			2 <sup>nd</sup> Questionnaire		
	(3)	(4)	(5)	(3)	(4)	(5)
A, B, C	27	60	33	32	55	20
I, P	12	32	25	14	31	21
A – P	39	92	58	46	86	41

## 2) Wants

Question 4: I want to be good at English.

In the first questionnaire, 112 students selected speaking as the skill they most want to be good at and 27 selected grammar. In the second questionnaire, 134 students selected speaking while 18 selected grammar and 15 selected listening.

**Figure 7: Question 4 – I want to be good at English (1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> questionnaire)**

Classes	1 <sup>st</sup> Questionnaire	2 <sup>nd</sup> Questionnaire
	(5)	(5)
A, B, C	107	117
I, P	58	51
A – P	165	168

Question 5 – I want to get a job after graduation.

This question was asked only in the first questionnaire. 110 students wanted to get jobs in hotels. 106 students wanted jobs related with tour agencies, tour guides, and tour interpreters. 85 students wanted jobs in airline companies. The students wrote down more than one job they want.

**Figure 8: Question 5 – I want to get a job after graduation (1<sup>st</sup> questionnaire)**

Classes	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
A, B, C	1	6	19	38	68
I, P	0	4	11	23	49
A - P	1	10	30	61	117

Question 6 – I want to get a job in the following area.

In the 1st questionnaire, a number of students showed an interest in travel agencies, tour interpreters, tour guides. In the 2nd questionnaire, only 16 students ranked jobs related to travel agencies and tour guides the first.

**Figure 9: Question 6 – I want to get a job in the following area (2<sup>nd</sup> questionnaire)**

Classes	Hotel	Airline	Travel agency	Office work	Transfer	Others
A, B, C	38	31	11	4	28	10
I	8	4	3	2	11	9
P	12	8	2	1	4	9
I, P	20	12	5	3	15	18
A - P	58	43	16	7	43	28

Question 7: I want to get a license or licenses related with tourism after graduation.

This question was only asked in the 1st questionnaire. When asked what kind licenses they wanted, 59 students wanted licenses related with tour conductors, tour guides and tour interpreters while 40 students wanted licenses related with hotels.

**Figure 10: Question 7 – I want to get a license or licenses related with tourism after graduation (1<sup>st</sup> questionnaire)**

Classes	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
A, B, C	1	0	7	42	79
I	0	1	2	10	19
P	0	1	2	21	14
I, P	0	2	4	31	33
A - P	1	2	11	73	112

Question 8: I want the English Conversation for Tourism class to include contents related to the following jobs.

This question was asked only in the 2<sup>nd</sup> questionnaire. 80 students wanted the course to include contents related with hotel industry, 33 students airline jobs and 28 students jobs concerning travel agencies.

**Figure 11: Question 8 – I want the English Conversation for Tourism class to include contents related to the following jobs (2<sup>nd</sup> questionnaire)**

Classes	Hotel	Airline	Travel agency	Office work	Transfer	Everyday English	Others
A, B, C	58	26	11	1	14	14	2
I, P	22	7	7	5	26	26	1
A – P	80	33	28	6	40	40	3

Question 9: I want to transfer to a four-year college or university after graduation.

This question was only asked in the 1<sup>st</sup> questionnaire. Quite a number of students are interested in transferring to a four-year college or university.

**Figure 12: Question 9 – I want to transfer to a four-year college or university after graduation (1<sup>st</sup> questionnaire)**

Classes	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
A, B, C	7	27	50	38	21
I, P	2	16	31	17	6
A - P	9	43	81	55	27

Question 10: I want to learn the following foreign language most.

This question was only asked in the 2<sup>nd</sup> questionnaire. Most of the students wanted to learn English as expected. Some 37 students also wanted to learn Japanese.

**Figure 13: I want to learn the following foreign language most (2<sup>nd</sup> questionnaire)**

Classes	English	Japanese	Chinese	Others
A, B, C	85	24	10	2
I, P	56	13	1	1
A – P	141	37	11	3

Question 11: I think the current curriculum offered by the department of tourism is compatible with my future goal.

This question was asked twice; first in the beginning of the semester and second at the end of the semester. In the 2<sup>nd</sup> questionnaire, the students became more unsatisfied with the current curriculum (A – P:  $p = 0.000$ ). 94 students wanted more classes of English, dealing with TOEIC, grammar, communicative skills. 17 wanted Chinese language classes, and 14 wanted classes with more practical aspects than theories



**Figure 14: Question 11 – I think the current curriculum offered by the department of tourism is compatible with my future goal (1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> questionnaire)**

Classes	1 <sup>st</sup> Questionnaire					2 <sup>nd</sup> Questionnaire				
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
ABC	2	3	38	84	3	2	27	59	29	6
IP	0	2	11	35	19	3	14	28	13	3
A-P	2	5	49	119	22	5	41	87	42	9

### 3) Necessities

Question 12: In order to get a job I want, I think the following is more important than the other.

164, the majority of the students think foreign language ability is more important and necessary than knowledge related with work.

**Figure 15: Question 12 – In order to get a job I want, I think the following is more important than the other (2<sup>nd</sup> questionnaire)**

Classes	Practical knowledge related with work	Foreign language abilities
A, B, C	16	107
I, P	17	57
A – P	33	164

Question 13: In order to get a job I want, I think the following foreign language is more important and necessary than the others.

176 students, the majority of the students topped English as the most important and necessary foreign language in order to get a job they want.

**Figure 16: Question 13 – In order to get a job I want, I think the following foreign language is more important and necessary than the others (2<sup>nd</sup> questionnaire)**

Classes	English	Japanese	Chinese	Others
A, B, C	110	7	4	0
I, P	66	5	1	0
A – P	176	12	5	0

Question 14: I think the following is the reason for me to study English.

This result contradicts that of Miller (2001). The participants in his study showed that they study English to use in everyday life. 232 freshmen and sophomores recognized a need for speaking skills and they wanted to improve communicative skills for everyday uses. However, in my study, 162 students indicated that they learn English for work and academic purposes. This reflects work-oriented attitude of the students of tourism in the two-year college.

**Figure 17: Question 14 – I think the following is the reason for me to study English (2<sup>nd</sup> questionnaire)**

Classes	For everyday life	For work and academic purposes	For others
A, B, C	8	112	2
I, P	16	50	7
A – P	24	162	9

Question 15: In order to get a job I want, I think the following class is the most important and necessary than the others.

In answering this question, many of them selected ECT as the most important among the English classes they took in the first semester.

**Figure 18: Question 15 – In order to get a job they want, I think the following class is the most important and necessary than the others (2<sup>nd</sup> questionnaire)**

Classes	ECT	TE	LLP
A, B, C	106	1	23
I, P	62	4	6
A – P	168	5	29

Question 16: If two more classes, they are TOEIC and Basic English Structure classes, are added to help me to get a job I want, I think the following class is the most important than the others.

For this question, 103 students selected TOEIC as more important class than the others. This reflects the fact that many business sectors including tourism industry recruit their new employees based on the scores of TOEIC

**Figure 19: Question 16 – If two more classes, such as TOEIC and Basic English Structure classes, are added to help me to get a job I want, I think the following Class is the most important than the others (2<sup>nd</sup> questionnaire)**

Classes	TOEIC	Basic English Structure	ECT	TE	LLP
A, B, C	73	21	21	0	6
I, P	30	28	15	1	1
A – P	103	49	36	1	7

Question 17: After I get a job I want, I think the following class is the most important and helpful for my future job.

For this question, many think that ECT is the most helpful course for their job after they are hired.

**Figure 20: Question 17 – After I get a job I want, I think the following class is the most important and helpful for my future job (2<sup>nd</sup> questionnaire)**

Classes	TOEIC	Basic English Structure	ECT	TE	LLP
A, B, C	31	11	60	0	20
I, P	19	14	32	1	7
A - P	50	25	92	1	27

### 3.4. The discussion

#### 1) Lacks

The questionnaire survey reveals that the students feel that they lack knowledge on English grammar and also communicative abilities. However, after the first semester, they became more confident in speaking English.

#### 2) Wants

The students' desire to improve speaking English is very strong. Their preference for English, especially speaking English, is very strong. They learn English for future jobs rather than to use in everyday life. They are most interested in jobs in hotels, then, airlines, and then travel agencies. Thus they most want to learn communicative English used in hotels. Some students are also interested in transferring to a four-year college.

#### 3) Necessities

The students think foreign language ability is more important than professional knowledge of work in getting a job and English is the most important language in workplaces. They learn English for future jobs rather than to use in everyday life. Among the three English courses they took, they found ECT most helpful and important. Along with the three courses (English Conversation for Tourism, Tourism English, and Language Laboratory Practice), if two other courses, one is for TOEIC and the other for basic English grammar, are added, they think TOEIC is the most important for them to get a job. Once they get a job, they feel that ECT is more useful for their work.

### 4. Implications

More English classes especially dealing with communicative English used in hotels and other

tourism related fields should be offered. We must analyze the contents and teaching methods of each course. A TOEIC class should also be offered for their job search. We need to find out what potential employers and supervisors think that their newly recruited employees should be equipped with. We need to compare the results with those found in this study. We have to take both results into consideration when designing our curriculum. We also have to consider what course designers and insiders of the department of tourism think our students lack, want and need. We should be most concerned with what and how we can do to help our students to become more confident in their English.

## References

- Berwick, R. (1989). Needs assessment in language programming: from theory to practice. In R. K. Johnson (Ed.), *The second language curriculum*. (pp. 48-62). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Brindley, G. P. (1989). The role of needs analysis in adult ESL program design. In R. K. Johnson (Ed.), *The second language curriculum*. (pp. 63-78). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Dudley-Evans, A & St John, M. J. (1998). *Developments in English for specific purposes: a multi-disciplinary approach*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hutchinson, T. & Waters, A. (1987). *English for specific purposes*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Jasso-Aguilar, R. (1999). Sources, methods and triangulation in needs analysis: a critical perspective in a case study of Waikiki Hotel maids. *English for Specific Purposes*, 18, 27-46.
- Mead, R. (1980). Expectations and sources of motivation in EAP. In C. Kennedy (Ed.), *English language research journal No. 1*. University of Birmingham.
- Miller, L. S. (2001). Needs analysis in a university English conversation program. *English Teaching*, 56, 113-139.
- Yogman, J. & Kaylani, T. (1996). ESP program design for mixed level students. *English for Specific Purposes*, 15, 311-324.