Needs Analysis for University EFL Learners Majoring in Business English: A Scoping Review of Research and Practice

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Abstract

In the context of international economic integration, Business English (BE) has played an increasingly significant role in business settings because BE is considered as a global communicative means, helping business transactions happen effectively among economies all over the world. In Vietnam, BE has been used more and more in trade transactions because Vietnam's economy has explosively developed and Vietnam has expanded its international trade relations over the last ten years. The aim of the paper is to analyze and synthesize the needs analysis for EFL learners majoring in Business English globally. The results of the paper help higher education in Vietnam see the importance of needs analysis in ESP, needs analysis approaches, theoretical frameworks including target situation analysis (TSA), present situation analysis (PSA), learning situation analysis (LSA), then evaluate existing materials or coursebooks and adapt to create better universities' curricula to meet the linguistic requirements in the workplaces in Vietnam.

Keywords: Need analysis, EFL learners, Business English, ESP, Vietnam

1. Introduction

In the context of international economic integration, Business English (BE) has played an increasingly significant role in business settings because BE is considered as a global communicative means, helping business transactions happen effectively among economies all over the world. In Vietnam, BE has been used more and more in trade transactions because Vietnam's economy has explosively developed and Vietnam has expanded its international trade relations over the last ten years. First of all, it can be observed that Vietnam has signed many free trade agreements (FTAs). According to the Official Website of the International Trade Administration (ITA), until September 2020, Vietnam has achieved thirteen FTAs in effect and is currently negotiating more FTAs. Noticeably, Vietnam became the 150th member of the World Trade Organization in 2007; signed a Bilateral Trade Agreement (BTA) with The United States in 2000; the ASEAN Free Trade Area (AFTA) with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in 1995; The Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) in 2016; and an FTA with the European Union in 2019. With the growing trade relationship, Vietnam has been a reputable trading partner attracting foreign capital investment.

Additionally, Vietnam's economy has witnessed an explosive development recently through the growth rates of the gross domestic product (GDP) over the last ten years. According to the General Statistics Office of Vietnam, the GDP rates rose steadily from 5.25% (2012) to 7.02% (2019). According to news issued on February 15th 2022 on the Vietnam News online newspaper, despite the negative impact of the Covid-19 epidemic causing the decreases in Vietnam's GDP (2.91% (2020) and 2.6% (2021)), the World Bank and other international organizations expressed optimism for Vietnam's economy and optimistically estimated the GDP to rise by 5.5% in 2022, and 6.72% in 2023. Therefore, Vietnam's stable development helps Vietnam become a reliable economic partner of many countries, which makes BE become necessary to do business effectively in Vietnam.

Therefore, with more FTAs and foreign cooperation strategies, Vietnam has developed and become a reliable partner of many countries recently. As a result, the demand for BE is high in Vietnam. Enterprises want to employ staff with both professional knowledge and good BE communication skills to do business cost-effectively. Similarly, undergraduates themselves realize the importance of English because they want to contribute to the success of their businesses.

Many universities in Vietnam grasp the high demand for BE, so BE courses are designed to equip students with business language knowledge. However, in reality, many graduates are still having difficulties using specialized English in the workplace, which is hindering their job promotion. According to a survey by the Vietnamese Department of Higher Education issued on the Hanoi News online newspaper in 2015 about situations of English requirements meeting of university graduates, about 49.3% of students met the requirements of employers, 18.9% did not meet, and 31.8% needed further training, which means over half of the graduates did not meet the English requirements. This is a worrying situation because many graduates are still not well equipped with English language for them to use English in the workplace.

In teaching English at universities, a BE course is categorized as an English for specific purposes (ESP) course. ESP is defined as "the role of English in a language course or program of instruction in which the content and aims of the course are fixed by the specific needs of a particular group of learners" (Richards & Schmidt, 2010, p. 198, as cited in Brown, 2016, p. 4). In other words, ESP provides specialist English language that is required by a particular group of language users for them to communicate successfully for an identified purpose in a specific context. According to Brown (2016), ESP can be split into two main categories, namely, English for academic purposes (EAP) and English for occupational purposes (EOP). The former refers to specialized English taught in the university such as Science and Technology, Social Sciences, and Humanities; whereas the latter consists of English courses designed for some specific occupations such as hotel receptionists, medical professionals, constructors, and so forth. However, there is another way to classify ESPs. ESP is also divided into three categories: "academic (general EAP, discipline-specific), professional (business, technology, law, and professional purposes), and vocational (entry level and field-specific)" (Huhta, 2010, as cited in Brown, 2016, p. 8). Thus, BE can belong to EOP. It can also pertain to EAP if it focuses more on academic skills than business skills. In BE courses, learners should be equipped with specialist language knowledge to help them communicate effectively in an international business environment. This specialist language knowledge should derive from the linguistic requirements in workplace situations which may be in the form of language skills and specialized knowledge.

The identification of language needs in the workplace is essential and contributes to the design and effectiveness of the ESP course, especially that of BE. In ESP, this identifying process is called needs analysis. Needs analysis is defined as a process of identifying the needs for which a group of learners requires a language and arranging these needs according to priorities. This process employs both objective and subjective data (Richards et al., 1992 as cited in Jordan, 1997). Needs analysis can be understood as a procedure of collecting and analyzing both objective and subjective information on a specialist language requested by a particular group of learners or language users. As a result, an ESP course developer uses of the findings of the needs assessment to design a specific course. Therefore, needs analysis is extremely important to an ESP course.

Needs analysis plays an essential role in ESP (Gollin-Kies et al., 2015; Brown, 2016; Hutchinson & Waters, 1987; Brown, 1995, Long, 2011). However, needs analysis in Vietnamese universities is often not carried out in an appropriate manner, usually only through informal teacher-student exchanges (Duong, 2007), which can make the course not very effective. Furthermore, In Vietnam, there is little research on the needs analysis for BE students.

Understanding the importance of BE in the economic integration context and the importance of needs analysis in ESP, and the shortage of research on BE needs analysis in the Vietnamese context, this study aims to analyze and synthesize the needs analysis for EFL learners majoring in Business English globally. The results of the paper help higher education in Vietnam see the importance of needs analysis in ESP, needs analysis approaches, theoretical frameworks including target situation analysis (TSA), present situation analysis (PSA), learning situation analysis (LSA), then evaluate existing materials or coursebooks and adapt to create better universities' curricula to meet the linguistic requirements in the workplaces in Vietnam.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Definition of English for Specific Purposes

English for specific purposes (ESP) is defined as the English language in an English course whose content and aims are established by the particular needs of a specific group of learners (Brown, 2016). More inclusively, ESP is understood as English with certain linguistic features that are requested by a specific group of learners to serve particular needs in their professional fields. "Tell me what you need English for and I will tell you the English that you need" became the most significant foundation of ESP (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987, p.8).

The most essential aim of language for specific purposes (LSP) in general and English for specific purposes (ESP) in particular is to help learners use specialist English professionally and confidently in particular contexts in a specialized group of people for specific purposes. The learners can graduate to membership of their professional organizations. ESP establishes, maintains, and enhances the group value and self-identification in a field-specific setting (Gollin-Kies et al., 2015). In other words, in a professional workplace, those who know English for specific purposes can understand and communicate efficiently in their professional fields. Therefore, ESP helps them and their organizations make successful transactions confidently in their workplace.

From the above-mentioned definitions, it can be concluded that ESP is a professional discipline catering to learners who need specialist English knowledge to communicate effectively in specific circumstances in a particular professional setting.

2.2 Definition of Needs Analysis

Brown (1995) defines needs analysis as:

> "the systematic collection and analysis of all subjective and objective information necessary to define and validate defensible curriculum purposes that satisfy the language learning requirements of students within the context of particular institutions that influence the learning and teaching situation. (p. 36)"

Brown (2016) also illuminates three key concepts related to needs analysis. First, "stakeholders" are individuals having a stake or interest in the curriculum, namely teachers, administrators, students, members of a particular profession, etc. "A defensible curriculum" refers to a program satisfying most of the demands of trainers and learners within a certain setting so that it can be approved by all stakeholder

groups. "The necessary information" for validating a curriculum encompasses any qualitative and quantitative evidence from all appropriate stakeholder groups.

Needs analysis is defined as the process of profiling and evaluating of the necessities of certain linguistic features by specific language users in a particular context (Gollin-Kies et al., 2015). Needs analysis is described as the process of identifying particular requirements for a language in a particular context for a specific purpose. Needs assessment includes both subjective and objective evidence such as the information from questionnaires, tests, interviews, observations (Richards & Schmidt, 2010, as cited in Brown, 2016). Through these definitions, needs analysis can be understood as the process of gathering and analyzing the data about the linguistic needs of language users in order to meet the linguistic requirements of a professional group for specific purposes in a particular setting.

2.3 The Importance of Needs Analysis in ESP

Gollin-Kies et al. (2015) stated that "needs analysis is often referred to as the most important part of the language for specific purposes" (p. 84) and "if there is no needs analysis, there is no ESP" (Brown, 2016, p. 5), or "it is the awareness of a target situation in needs analysis- a definable need to communicate in English- that distinguishes the ESP learner from the learner of General English" (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987, p. 54). According to Gollin-Kies et al. (2015), needs analysis is a set of steps purposefully designed to identify specific themes and linguistic aspects used by particular people in specific contexts. These contents are integrated into a course of language for specific purposes. Obviously, in order to design a specialized goal-oriented course, an ESP teacher needs to perform language needs analysis regularly to meet urgent language needs in a particular field. A needs analysis comprising "target situation analysis", "present situation assessment", "learning situation analysis" is a starting point of every ESP course and plays an extremely crucial role in English for specific purposes course design.

First of all, "target situation analysis" indicates the linguistic necessities of the ESP practitioners in the target workplace; "present situation assessment" delineates learners' current levels, needs, and wants; and "learning situation analysis" examines the existing curriculum and syllabus, materials, pedagogic methodologies, ESP instructors, favorite materials, and the expected ESP program. These investigations help to improve the existing curriculum and syllabus, and make the current ESP course more engaging, effective, and relevant to the needs of all stakeholders.

Secondly, triangulation of data sources helps the needs assessment be more objective and the curriculum and syllabus be more worthwhile. Since an awareness of need is a matter of perception which may be different from one person to another, which means the learners' views might conflict with the perspectives of other interested stakeholders, namely teachers, course designers, employers, etc. (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987). Therefore, language needs should be analyzed on the base of triangulation of data sources to validate the results of needs evaluation.

Thirdly, needs analysis conducted in the middle of the course helps teachers know whether the current syllabus is suitable for students to timely adjust the syllabus with more relevant materials and better instructive approaches. Similarly, performing a needs analysis at the end of the course aims to know how well the learners' needs were addressed, so that instructors can learn from past experience and improve the course as well as the teaching methods to prepare well for the next course.

Moreover, instructors can use needs analysis to update the curriculum and syllabus so that students can acquire new knowledge in constantly changing socio-economic conditions, such as e-commerce, e-marketing, etc. (Gollin-Kies et al., 2015; Hutchinson & Waters, 1987). Thus, needs analysis makes the course more attractive, beneficial, and cost-effective and helps learners to become more confident in the workplace in terms of language skills and specialized knowledge, as well as skills to handle problems in workplace situations.

In spite of the benefits mentioned earlier, needs analysis has several shortcomings. Firstly, needs analysis is relatively time-consuming for teachers to design the content, assemble the evidence, and evaluate the results. Secondly, this process may yield incomplete outcomes due to the constant changes in learners' needs and the complexity of social and political conditions. For instance, there is a considerable limitation in access to information as in the case of the incomplete cooperation of stakeholders for information provision. Moreover, needs analysis is not a once-for-all activity due to the complexity of needs and constant changes in socio-economic situations, so needs analysis should be an ongoing process where its findings should be continually checked and re-assessed. Although needs analysis has some drawbacks, this process is one of the most important stages of ESP training, and it offers the stakeholders so many practical benefits. Therefore, its advantages outweigh its disadvantages and follow-up needs analyses should be conducted.

There have been many authors who expressed the importance of needs analysis in English for specific purposes (ESP) (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987; Gollin-Kies et al., 2015; Brown, 2016; Long, 2011). Also, there have been implications and recommendations for curriculum or syllabus revisions generated from language needs analyses, particularly Business English needs analyses because of increases in BE requirements, especially in the context of international and regional economic integration over the last few decades (Li, 2014; Guiyu & Yang, 2016; Cowling, 2007). Although these studies of the BE needs of students differ considerably in terms of theoretical frameworks for needs analysis, research methodologies and results, these pieces of research contribute to clarifying the language needs of BE major students and make the BE courses more beneficial to meeting the language needs in their actual workplaces.

2.4 Needs Analysis Approaches- Theoretical Frameworks

2.4.1 Target Situation Analysis (TSA)

Some studies have attempted to use John Munby's (1978) needs analysis model of to examine the students' linguistic needs and make

some suggestions for the ESP curriculum or syllabus (Li, 2014; Guiyu & Yang, 2016). In Munby's model of specifying communicative competence (MSCC), a "communicative competence specification" for syllabus design is constructed from a "profile of needs" generated from an analysis of parameters of "Communication Needs Processor" (CNP) provided by a participant. Munby is famous for his CNP, which contains eight communicative parameters used to determine the target language needs of any group of learners. These parameters include 4 non-verbal and four verbal ones. There are four non-verbal input parameters: first, "purposive domain" referring to a specific sociocultural field for communicative purposes (a type of ESP, for an occupational or educational aim); second, "setting" involving physical conditions (a school or workplace) and psychosocial settings (noisy, demanding, etc.) of a workplace; third, "interaction" revealing participant's role-set or key participants of communication; finally, "instrumentality" indicating the medium, mode, and channel of communication (written or spoken, receptive or productive; on print or face-to-face channels). The non-verbal ones are input for subsequent verbal ones. There are four verbal variables: first, "dialect" referring to regional or non-regional language (British English, American English, or standardized English); second, "communicative events" including macro-events (general situations, with a list of themes) and micro-event (detailed cases in a general situation, with lists of lexical items, forms, and patterns); third, "target level" of the participant leading to further moves via this process; finally, "communicative keys" revealing the attitudinal-tones on each side of a communication or formality of communication (communicative relationship between student-teacher or customer-waiter). Therefore, the CPN is an important foundation for the next stages of MSCC namely, needs profiling, language skills selection, and target syllabus specification for a syllabus design procedure.

Obviously, Munby's model lays the foundation of how to collect learners' language needs and develop communicative competence specifications for syllabus design through eight communicative parameters. According to Munby (1978), TSA means an investigation into language necessities to meet language requirements in the target workplace. However, many critics have criticized Munby's (1978) model. *First,* "by taking the analysis of target needs to its logical conclusion, Munby's model shows the ultimate sterility of a language-centered approach to needs analysis" and "what the CNP procedures is a list of the linguistic features of the target situation. But there is much more to needs than this" (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987, p. 54). This model focuses too much on TSA, which indicates what a learner needs to do in the workplace circumstance, but needs analysis embodies other aspects such as learning situation needs, which refer to what a learner does to learn. In other words, in additional to the language-centered approach, the learning-centered approach should be taken into account in a needs analysis. *Second*, in Munby's model, the variables were not hierarchically ordered in their importance and there was not a clear reference to syllabus design based on a needs analysis, which made the relationship between this model and its application opaque (Mead, 1982 as cited in Gollin-Kies et al., 2015). Therefore, even though Munby's model was a watershed in ESP progression at that time, the model still has some shortcomings which make it unrealistic and difficult to use. Its disadvantages were fixed by Hutchinson and Waters' (1987) model.

Some other researchers have used the needs analysis model of Hutchinson & Waters (1987) on the TSA (Li, 2014; Guiyu & Yang, 2016; Wu, 2012). According to Hutchinson and Waters (1987), target needs comprise "necessities", "lacks" and "wants". Target situation is defined as "what knowledge and abilities the learners will require in order to able to perform to the required degree of competence in the target situation" (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987, p.60). "Necessities" are understood as the language requirements of the target situations. Understanding these expected language demands helps to equip the learners with the linguistic aspects that are of the utmost importance to function effectively in the target situations. "Lacks" are the gap between "necessities" and the learners' existing language proficiency levels. Whether or not the learners need instructions about a specific target situation will depend on how well they can do it already, so the "lacks" are the disparity between the target proficiency level and the existing one of the learners. "Wants" are learners' subjective expectations, which are not directly related to the objective needs perceived by the ESP instructors and other stakeholders. Hutchinson and Waters (1987) considered an ESP course as a journey, the "lacks" as *the starting point,* the "necessities" as *the destination,* the "learning needs" as *the route* to go from the starting point to the destination. In a TSA framework proposed by Hutchinson & Waters (1987), the key ideas are the reason why the language is needed (study, work, training, etc.), the content areas (commerce, medicine, engineering, etc.), the place where the language is used (in own country or abroad; on telephone, meetings, alone, etc.), and the partners in English conversations (native speakers or non-native speakers; customers, superior or subordinates).

Therefore, target needs are understood as what language aspects learners need to master in the frequently-encountered target situations in the workplace. TSA is a collection of the information about the goals and target circumstances in the target workplace from various stakeholders.

The strength of the TSA model is that it clearly illustrates target situations in the workplace which is the direction for the final product of the ESP course that learners expect to achieve. The weakness is that this model does not identify the current status of learners, and learning methods for them to be able to acquire the language. According to Hutchinson & Waters (1987), "The TSA can give a general direction, but we must choose our route according to the vehicles and guides available (i.e. the learning conditions), the existing roads within the learner's mind (i.e. their knowledge, skills, and strategies)" (p.62). This shortcoming of the TSA model can be addressed through the two models mentioned below: the Present situation analysis model (PSA) for "the existing roads" and the Learning situation analysis model (LSA) for "the learning route".

2.4.2 Present Situation Analysis (PSA)

In order to conduct a present situation analysis, some studies were grounded in the present situation analysis model developed by Hutchinson and Waters in 1987 (Li, 2014; Guiyu & Yang, 2016; Wu, 2012). According to these two authors, present situation analysis

(PSA) specifies learners' linguistic competence levels, self-reflection on their motivations, or teaching methods from the first outset of their language courses, and scrutinizes their language strengths and weaknesses.

To discover present needs in a real context, data sources in PSA comprise three main sources, namely learners themselves, the language-training establishment, and the "user-institution" such as the workplace, sponsoring organization, prospective employer's company, etc. Some data collection methods are surveys, questionnaires, interviews (Richterich & Chancerel, 1977, p.80, as cited in Jordan, 1997, p.24). In Hutchinson & Waters' framework (1987), the main ideas are the learners' current language proficiency levels, background knowledge, language strengths and weaknesses, etc.

Despite illustrating current English proficiency, strengths and weaknesses of learners at the beginning of the course, PSA does not represent workplace situations that learners need to master and approaches to language learning. These items are revealed by the TSA and LSA models.

2.4.3 Learning Situation Analysis (LSA)

Hutchinson and Waters (1987) asserted that "the project, is guided in terms of its general orientation by the target situation, but its specific content is a response to the learners' learning needs" (p.61). These two authors advocated a "learning-centered approach" and sharply distinguished between this approach and the "learner-centered approach". The "learner-centered" approach indicates that learning is completely identified by the learners, which probably does not truly exist, while learning-centered approach means that learning is considered as a procedure of negotiation between the learners and the community comprising instruction, syllabus, methodologies, materials, etc. They also made a critical distinction between language learning needs and target language needs. Target needs are what the learner needs to do in the target situation such as necessities, lacks, and wants; whereas learning needs are what the learner needs to do in order to learn. The accommodation of learning needs may make an ESP course more satisfying and effective. Also, understanding these learning needs facilitates ESP acquisition. Therefore, LSA was added to the needs analysis procedures in some research (Li, 2014; Guiyu & Yang, 2016; Wu, 2012). In Hutchinson and Waters' LSA framework (1987), the core contents are how learners learn (their learning background, concept of teaching and learning, methodology, techniques alienate them), sources (attitude, professional competence, content subject knowledge of teachers, materials, aids, opportunities for out-of-class activities), who learners are (personal information, their already-known knowledge, their interests, learning and teaching styles they are used to), and where and when the course take places, etc.

The strength of TSA is to show future workplace situations in which learners use specialist English, which is the course's destination ("the necessities"), by answering why learners study the course, and what contents they achieve by the end of the ESP course. PSA reveals learners' current level of English proficiency, strengths and weaknesses at the starting point ("the lack"), and its key questions such as what learners' English proficiency levels, strengths, and weaknesses are. These answers focus on the "what" and "why". However, the weakness of the TSA and PSA is that they cannot answer clearly the questions of the "how" such as "How do learners do to make up for the shortfalls from the starting point to reach the determined destination?", "How do learners learn the target content effectively?". These shortcomings are addressed in detail in the LSA.

In short, by scrutinizing the three types of needs analysis and their strengths and weaknesses, it can be clearly seen that TSA investigates learner's target goals and situations of ESP course, whereas PSA examines the existing language competencies of the learners. LSA, on the other hand, illuminates how learners learn to achieve the planned learning outcomes. Therefore, to design an effective BE course, a combination of the three needs analysis models is extremely necessary because of their complementation and clarity. The summary of the strengths and weaknesses of the three theoretical frameworks is shown in table 1.

Table 1. The strengths and weaknesses of three theoretical frameworks (TSA, PSA, LSP)

Theoretical framework	Need analysis	Key points
TSA	Strengths	- Shows final situations in the workplace that learners want to achieve.
	Weaknesses	- Not identify the current level and learning methods of learners to be able to acquire the language. These disadvantages are resolved with the PSA and LSA models.
PSA	Strengths	- Expresses current English proficiency, strengths and weaknesses of learners at the beginning of the course.
	Weaknesses	- Not show workplace situations that learners need to master and approaches to language learning, how learners can learn. These issues are elucidated with the TSA and LSA models.
LSA	Strengths	- Shows how learners learn to achieve expected learning outcomes.
	Weaknesses	- not show learners' proficiency levels and the target situations in details. These shortcomings are addressed with the TSA and PSA models.

2.5 Various Findings of Previous Studies

Many studies on language needs investigations for BE major students and proposals for a curriculum or syllabus have been conducted over the past decade. There are varying findings on the language needs of business students and a suggested curriculum or syllabus to accommodate BE needs in real economic settings.

Regarding learning motivation, research participants revealed that they chose BE courses mainly because of their personal interests, which was an intrinsic motivating factor (Zhang, 2013; Li, 2014; Guiyu & Yang, 2016). Other rationales included exam passing or future work,

which were extrinsic motivations. One-third of the students did not have a clear motivation when choosing to study BE course (Li, 2014). Learning BE to become international business professionals was one of the motivations for students to learn BE, although the percentage of students choosing this reason was quite low (Zhang, 2013). However, a rather high percentage (70-90%) chose to study BE because of professional requirements and personal preferences (Li, 2014; Guiyu & Yang, 2016; Wu, 2012; Wenzhong & Cheng, 2013).

In terms of the need for practice in real-life-like situations, BE practitioners indeed needed to practice BE in real-life situations. Some practical skills that students needed were: formal and informal communication skills, presentations, small talks, telephone conversations, and negotiations (Mancho-Barés & Llurda, 2013; Capková & Kroupová 2017; Cowling, 2007; Wu, 2012; Wenzhong & Cheng, 2013). Additionally, they needed to learn problem-solving and leadership skills (Mei & Siraj, 2013; Liton, 2015). In local business representatives' perspectives, BE was frequently used in sales departments in activities such as customer-relationship development, commercial foreign transactions, etc. (Mancho-Barés & Llurda, 2013). Some of the preferred topics were: finance and banking, management, marketing and advertising, intercultural communication, etc. (Capková & Kroupová 2017; Wenzhong & Cheng, 2013). These are pragmatic situations and practical business themes to meet stakeholders' needs in the workplace, which the learners wanted to practice in the BE courses.

Regarding language skills, the needs for business communication with an emphasis on listening and speaking skills dominated in most of the studies. Oral communication and accurate specialist term use, oral fluency and oral accuracy were the linguistic aspects particularly noticed by stakeholders (Mancho-Barés & Llurda, 2013; Capková & Kroupová 2017; Guiyu & Yang, 2016; Poedjiastutie & Oliver, 2017). Oral and auditory abilities are pivotal to a successful career in most business areas. That is the reason why these two communicative skills are given top priorities.

In terms of the need for reading and writing skills in business, the teachers thought the students needed to improve in all four language skills; however, the students wanted to improve their speaking and writing skills in both formal and informal styles. The employers expressed concerns about the business students' listening, speaking, and writing skills (Wu, 2012); whereas speaking and writing in business were essential (Capková & Kroupová, 2017). This view coincided with that of the teachers expressed in questionnaires in Liton's (2015) study. Despite not being noticed as much as listening and speaking skills, reading, and writing skills are also essential in some company positions and certain business situations.

Regarding cultural knowledge, multiple identities such as professional identities, gender identities, cultural identities, and institutional identities that were relevant to BE used in complicated ways. These identities were invaluable variables contributing to needs analysis and BE courses (Zhang, 2013). From the viewpoint of professionals, cultural content was meaningful because they must pay international guests a visit or travel to foreign countries on a business trip (Cowling, 2007). Cultural content such as some cultural characteristics, customs, etiquettes, table manners, etc. was a necessary component in the ESP course and was also strongly advised to be included in the ESP syllabus design (Stojković, 2015). Globalization and international economic integration have made specialized English and BE extremely essential because specialized English and BE supports stakeholders to work effectively. Cultural knowledge allows stakeholders to achieve their goals in a particular discourse community. In business, understanding the culture of business partners helps entrepreneurs succeed in business deals. Therefore, the identities of culture, company, and profession are also essential in needs analysis and are also an important part of BE.

Concerning course curriculum, most stakeholders were not satisfied with the existing curriculum. This dissatisfaction was due to the out-of-date instructive materials, too much theoretical content, impractical content, lack of authentic circumstances in the target professional settings, inappropriate pedagogical techniques, and lack of intercommunication (Li, 2014). The students desired a course encompassing linguistic skills, economic concepts, cross-cultural understanding (Li, 2014; Capková & Kroupová 2017; Wu, 2012).

Regarding the materials, equal proportions between the number of students appreciated the original English edition and those who valued the English version with a translation of challenging concepts in the mother tongue because these materials are time-effective (Li, 2014). Guiyu & Yang (2016) showed that expected materials should be practical, targeted, updated, interesting and focusing on communication. Regarding specialist vocabulary, Liton (2015) pointed out that most of the trainers were content with business lexical items. Terminology was considered important and should be intensified in the BE curriculum in universities in Spain and Czech Republic (Mancho-Barés & Llurda, 2013; Capková & Kroupová 2017). Many studies showed the BE curriculum or syllabus was lacking situational lessons. A more pragmatic curriculum and syllabus should be designed to overcome this problem (Mancho-Barés & Llurda, 2013; Capková & Kroupová 2017; Cowling, 2007; Wu, 2012; Wenzhong & Cheng, 2013; Mei & Siraj, 2013; Liton, 2015). Hence, the curriculum and syllabus should be tailored appropriately in agreement with the learners' necessities in the workplace.

For BE teachers, many stakeholders in Asia (China and Indonesia) expected the lecturers with more experience in both English pedagogical methods and business knowledge (Li, 2014; Poedjiastutie & Oliver, 2017). For students whose motivation has not been determined, BE trainers should support students with positive perspectives towards BE learning for career progress, which was mentioned in the study on BE needs analysis in Spain (Mancho-Barés & Llurda, 2013). Thus, language teaching skills are pivotal to BE course and pedagogical methodologies of instructors and business-related knowledge are highly important in a BE course.

Some favorite classroom activities of students were simulations, group discussion, oral reports, role-play, games (Li, 2014). Almost all of them craved practice in real-life situations to know how to use specialized English terms accurately. Besides, experiential activities in groups were expected. Regarding the language used in BE teaching, the students chiefly preferred to learn in English with the teacher's elucidation in the mother tongue for ambiguous economical concepts (Li, 2014; Mancho-Barés & Llurda, 2013). Although they were

third-year students of foreign language specialization and business professionals, BE was really not effortless to comprehend, especially in special cases, so they needed explication in their mother tongue from their instructors.

The summary of the findings of these articles in terms of essential aspects is shown in table 2.

Table 2. The summary of the findings in terms of important aspects

Aspect	Focus more on the following contents	author
Business situations	presentations, small talks, telephoning, negotiations	Capková & Kroupová 2017; Cowling, 2007; Mancho-Barés & Llurda, 2013; Wenzhong & Cheng, 2013; Wu, 2012.
Topics	finance, management, marketing	Capková & Kroupová 2017; Wenzhong, Cheng, 2013.
Skills	Listening, and speaking	Capková & Kroupová 2017; Guiyu & Yang, 2016; Mancho-Barés & Llurda, 2013; Poedjiastutie & Oliver, 2017.
	Writing	Capková & Kroupová 2017; Liton, 2015; Wu, 2012.
Course	more linguistic skills, and economic concepts	Capková & Kroupová 2017; Wu, 2012.
Materials and syllabus	more situational, and pragmatic content	Mancho-Barés & Llurda, 2013; Capková & Kroupová, 2017; Cowling, 2007; Wu, 2012; Wenzhong & Cheng, 2013; Mei & Siraj, 2013; Liton, 2015
Lecturers	more pedagogic, and business knowledge	Li, 2014; Poedjiastutie & Oliver, 2017

It can be observed that research on language needs analysis has been performed in many countries around the world. *In Europe*, 139 graduates and 54 employers in the Czech Republic participated in Capková and Kroupová's (2017) study through questionnaires showed that graduates were weak at verbal communication, terminology, listening and writing; their interests were informal conversations, telephoning, negotiation in sectors, namely banking, management, marketing, etc. This study would have provided a clearer picture of language needs if the research had included a qualitative research method to explore the reasons for the students' weaknesses. Similarly, 6 local business representatives and 130 BE students in a Spanish university took part in Mancho-Barés and Llurda's (2013) mixed-method research and revealed that the English level required by the business representatives was B2, the officially required level at university was B1 for graduates; whereas students' self-reported evaluation showed students' English competence was A2 for speaking and B1 for reading skills which were two essential skills emphasized by business professionals. It was recommended that the BE course should have included more oral exchanges and BE tasks to enhance oral fluency and accuracy, as well as practice in business terminology.

In Asia, there have been more language needs analyses. First, in China, BE needs analyses were conducted in several studies. In the empirical study of Guiyu and Yang (2016), 226 BE undergraduates (from freshmen to the-final-year students) from Guangdong University through questionnaires pointed out the problems and current circumstances of BE program in China. They found the teaching materials did not take full account of their career-oriented language needs, and they expected the materials to include practical business knowledge and to be more updated, focused, gripping, concentrating on communication development. This status quo of BE program was also mentioned in other previous Chinese studies (Li, 2014; Zhang, 2013; Wenzhong & Cheng, 2013; Wu, 2012). In Liton's (2015) study, via questionnaires, 30 teachers from many Asian countries like Malaysia, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Yemen, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia thought that ESP course curriculum should be redesigned to develop listening, speaking, and writing skills more (77% respondents); and Business terminology should be applied as if learners could use these terms in their future workplace (87% respondents). These two Asian studies only used a quantitative method, mixed-method research would have provided more obvious and convincing information on language needs. Cowling's (2007) research in Japan on designing the syllabus, based on needs analysis via both questionnaires and interviews, revealed speaking skills in telephoning, daily conversations, and negotiations needed improving most and authentic materials were necessary. This situation was like that in a Malaysian university (Mei & Siraj, 2013), an Indonesian tertiary institution (Poedjiastutie & Oliver, 2017) since learners wanted oral skill practices, practical work, hands-on experience, and more simulations due to a shortage of internship time. Furthermore, needs analyses were not conducted properly in Japan and Sudan (Cowling, 2007; Mohammed, 2016), which negatively affected the ESP course's quality.

The summary of the findings of these articles in terms of geographical areas is shown in table 3.

Table 3. The summary of the findings of these articles in terms of geographical areas

Continent	Countries	Findings	Authors
Europe	Spain	Stakeholders needed more oral exchanges, terminology	Mancho-Barés & Llurda, 2013.
	the Czech Republic	They needed to improve oral, auditory, writing skills; small talks, telephoning, negotiation in areas such as banking, management, marketing	Capková & Kroupová 2017.
Asia	China	In the teaching materials, they needed more communicative situations; updated, focused	Guiyu & Yang, 2016; Wenzhong & Cheng, 2013; Wu, 2012; Zhang, 2013.
	6 Asian countries: Malaysia, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Yemen, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia	More oral, auditory, writing skills, workplace situations	Liton, 2015.

Japan	They almost needed practical work, authentic materials	Cowling, 2007.
Malaysia		Mei & Sira, 2013.
Indonesia		Poedjiastutie & Oliver, 2017.
Sudan		Mohammed, 2016.

These research findings predominantly identified the language needs of BE learners to accommodate the real-world language demands and expressed the inappropriateness of the BE curriculum at their universities with workplace situations in a highly competitive manpower market (Mohammed, 2016; Guiyu & Yang, 2016; Capková & Kroupová, 2017; Cowling, 2007; Mancho-Barś & Llurda, 2013; Li, 2014; Wenzhong & Cheng, 2013; Wu, 2012; Poedjiastutie & Oliver, 2017; Liton, 2015). The existing ESP courses did not include sufficient situational lessons associated with target professional settings. The inappropriateness of course design was revealed by the fact that specialized English and BE programs were not tailored suitably to language needs in the workplace.

3. Findings

The demand for BE courses in Vietnam is very urgent to equip learners with the linguistic knowledge and business skills to do business successfully in international business settings, which is the reason why BE is important and BE subject is taught in many universities in Vietnam. Although English, especially BE, plays an essential role in the context of global economic integration, the problem is that many Vietnamese graduates are still facing difficulties using English and not meeting language requirements in the workplace. Thus, in Vietnamese universities, to generate an effective ESP course, ESP needs, especially BE needs should be thoroughly analysed to meet linguistic requirements in the workplace.

Many needs analyses, which were conducted in many countries around the world as mentioned in part 2.5, arrived at different results on BE needs. Especially, there were differences in the order of priorities of language skills, the need for practice in workplace-related situations, curriculum, or syllabus design, etc. Some stakeholders thought that productive skills overweighed receptive ones; whereas others gave priority to listening and writing skills rather than other skills to succeed in business transactions. However, in Vietnam, there has been little research on BE needs analysis. Duong (2007) compared the language needs analyses between Vietnam and New Zealand via the interviews with teachers, students, and administrators and the observations of 4 classes in both countries. This author concluded that New Zealand's needs analyses were notably focused and meticulously conducted, compared to Vietnam's ones. In Vietnam, needs analyses were just informal teacher-student exchanges and teachers' subjective experiences and observations. There has been a lack of effective needs analyses for ESP programs in Vietnam, which causes inconsistency in Vietnamese teachers' perspectives on language needs, leading to insufficient accommodation for the language needs and ineffective language learning in Vietnamese universities. Thus, further research on BE needs analysis should be performed carefully at this time.

4. Conclusion, Implications, and Future Research

Reviewing some literature helps arrive at some obvious conclusions. First, in the context of global economic integration, the demand for BE courses is increasing, but many graduates are still facing difficulties using English and are not meeting language requirements in the workplace. Second, to meet language requirements, a needs analysis is essential for a BE course to provide specialist knowledge suitable for workplace situations, based on material evidence from the needs analysis. Beside the importance of needs analysis, there are some drawbacks of needs analysis such as a time-consuming process, incomplete outcomes produced, a constant reassessment. Third, based on the three frameworks (TSA revealing expected workplace situations, PSA indicating present English proficiency levels of learners, LSA showing how learners can learn to achieve expected learning outcomes), there have been many studies on the needs analysis conducted around the world with various priorities of needs; however, in Vietnam, there has been little research on BE needs analysis. Finally, needs analyses in Vietnam were too simple and unsystematic (Duong, 2007). Therefore, more research on BE needs analysis should be realized carefully.

There have been different priorities of BE needs among the countries. The findings of this paper have important *implications* since they provide deeper insights into the three needs analysis frameworks (TSA, PSA, LSA) to carry out BE needs analyses. Second, this holistic review offers invaluable information for the course syllabus design to satisfy career-oriented language needs in the workplace. Understanding the three theoretical frameworks on needs analysis can help university lecturers, researchers, course designers have a holistic look at BE needs analysis to carry out needs analysis effectively.

Since there has been little research into BE needs analysis in Vietnam, more future research should aim to analyse the needs of BE students in Vietnamese universities to accommodate the English requirements in the workplace more effectively.

Informed consent

Obtained.

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The Publication Ethics Committee of the Sciedu Press.

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