

Needs Analysis for Corporate LSP Programs: A Case Study of the Use of Best Practices

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Abstract

The present case study follows best practices in needs analysis to improve a customer service training program for EFL Spanish speakers. Data was obtained from a semi-structured interview, administered to a course designer, and survey and group interview, directed to eleven customer service representatives and their trainer. This study was conducted in three stages. The first stage analyzed and detailed the best practices regarding the conduction of needs analysis on available literature. The second stage was an interview with a curriculum designer and expert in the field. This stage aimed to identify the best practices in conducting needs analyses in second language acquisition course design, specifically language for specific purposes. The last stage focused on a needs analysis that included the best practices resulting from the analysis of the literature and the data obtained from the interview experts. Results showed that, in corporate curricula, modifications must match learners' needs to improve curriculum effectiveness. Failure to do so may result in inefficiencies in the curriculum. The researchers conclude that appropriate needs analysis and the use of best practices are imperative to improve the acquisition of a language.

Análisis de las necesidades de los programas empresariales de Idiomas con Fines Específicos (LSP, por sus siglas en inglés): un estudio de caso sobre el uso de buenas prácticas

Resumen

El presente estudio de caso sigue las buenas prácticas en el análisis de necesidades para optimizar un programa de capacitación en servicio al cliente para hispanohablantes del Inglés como Lengua Extranjera (EFL, por sus siglas en inglés). Los datos provienen de una entrevista semiestructurada con un diseñador curricular y datos de una encuesta y una reunión grupal de once representantes de servicio al cliente y su capacitador. Este estudio se realizó en tres etapas. En la primera etapa se analizaron y detallaron las buenas prácticas en cuanto a la realización de análisis de necesidades en la bibliografía disponible. La segunda etapa consistió en una entrevista con un diseñador curricular y experto en la materia. Esta etapa tuvo como objetivo identificar las mejores prácticas en la realización de análisis de necesidades en el diseño de cursos de adquisición de segundas lenguas, específicamente Idiomas con Fines Específicos. La última etapa se centró en un análisis de necesidades que incluyó las mejores prácticas resultantes del análisis de la literatura y los datos obtenidos de la entrevista al experto. Los resultados mostraron que, en los planes de estudio de las empresas, las modificaciones deben ajustarse a las necesidades de los alumnos para mejorar la eficacia de los planes de estudio. De lo contrario, se pueden producir ineficiencias en el plan de estudios. Los investigadores concluyen que el análisis adecuado de las necesidades y el uso de las mejores prácticas son imprescindibles para mejorar la adquisición de una lengua.

INTRODUCTION

A solid language program is designed to meet learners' needs, especially in the corporate world. To achieve this goal, curriculum developers have a key step to follow: a needs analysis. Needs analysis is the systematic gathering and analysis of data to determine possible gaps present in current curricula and the desired new curricula. Oftentimes, this process is overlooked to the detriment of the desired outcomes in any specific program of study. Needs analysis is part of best practices in curricular development since it involves the discovery of important aspects related to the creation or evaluation of syllabuses and the search of processes that are relevant for decision-making for the creation of a solid design. Thus, the aim of this study is to find out which best practices in needs analysis can be followed to delineate solid

student learning outcomes for a customer service course.

This study was done in three steps. The first step was the search for best practices in needs analysis through available literature. The second step established a foundation for the needs analysis process by interviewing an expert on curriculum design. The third step presented the application of the previous stages by carrying out a needs analysis following those best practices. By the end of this paper, it is expected that readers gain understanding on the relevance and impact of carrying out needs analysis and which steps might be followed to obtain sound results. The following sections are an account of the process and outcomes of this investigation.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Because the present study is on a relative new area of research in Costa Rica, we provide an overview of Language/English for Specific Purposes (LSP/ESP), the process of conducting needs analysis for contextualization, and previous studies conducted in similar settings.

Language/English for Specific Purposes (LSP/ESP)

English has become an essential language for global communication, especially in the corporate world. The use of this language as a *lingua franca* is the result of world development. Hutchinson and Waters (1987) state that such changes started to take relevance in 1945, after World War II in the technology and commerce fields, and the emphasis was placed on real-life use of the language. The authors state that basing course objectives on the immediate needs of the learners became the cornerstone of ESP (p. 7).

In Gollin-Kies, Hall, and Moore (2015) view, although LSP goes beyond English for Academic Purposes, English for Vocational Purposes, English for Business or Professional Purposes, English has become the language people use, no matter their tongues, to communicate worldwide. For them, globalization has played a significant role in language learning, teaching, and researching. Therefore, LSP has become essential since it focuses on the development of specific language skills according to the learners' needs.

Basturkmen (2010) makes clear that language for specific purposes courses set out to teach according to the immediate needs of students by focusing on the language and communication skills to function effectively in their workplaces. Thus, language for specific purposes courses' main goal is to develop learners' communicative competence to perform their job-related tasks successfully.

In the Costa Rican context, Aguilar-Sánchez (2005) states that because of the necessity of using English with the tourism industry, the country saw the importance of offering opportunities for citizens to become communicatively competent and make it possible for them to work in other contexts such as national and international companies. The author explains

that English as a Foreign Language and English for Specific Purposes have been gaining ground in national business and academic settings since 1994. This contextualization of Costa Rican language needs is further supported by Mora-Sequeira and Argueta-Díaz (2024) by stating that English has become an approach that helps the Costa Rican population satisfy the demands in the tourism sector. According to the researchers, most tourists come from the USA and expect that people speak English. Therefore, the linguistic need of a bilingual population for these settings is visible.

We now turn to the definition of needs analysis and previous studies on the imperative of conducting such analyses before the construction of sound course designs.

NEEDS ANALYSIS

Definition

Brown (2016) defines needs analysis as the systematic collection and analysis of all information necessary for defining and validating a defensible curriculum (p. 4). He also states that necessary information focuses on qualitative and quantitative data that is gathered from different stakeholders, and that a defensible curriculum means one that satisfies most of the language learning and teaching requirements of the students and teachers within the context of the particular institution involved in such a way that it can be successfully defended on behalf of and accepted by all stakeholder groups (p. 4). Flowerdew (2013) further defines needs analysis as "the 'how' and the 'what' of a course" (p. 325), and Hyland (2006) explains that it as a dynamic and ongoing process and as an umbrella term that embraces many aspects, incorporating learners' goals and backgrounds, their language proficiencies, their reasons for taking the course, their teaching and learning preferences, and the situations they will need to communicate in (p. 74). We can translate these definitions to the LSP context to mean that curricular designers build programs with the data collected, analyzed, and appropriately triangulated to carefully provide learners with tools that will help them achieve their linguistic goals to perform better in specific contexts.

Importance

Dudley-Evans and St John (1998) mention that conducting a needs analysis is the cornerstone of Language for Specific Purposes (LSP) curricula, and that it leads to a focused course design. For Basturkmen (2010), any course design, including LSP, must undergo a stage in which curricular designers identify not only the target situation analysis or the tasks and activities for which learners are or will be using English but also the present situational context (the current language skills), the gaps that may exist between the current and target situations, learner's needs, wants, and lacks, and the means by which the course will be delivered (p. 18). Brown (2016) states that needs analysis is the process of identifying language forms that students ultimately need to use in the target language. He argues that needs analysis is the systematic collection and analysis of all subjective and objective information necessary to define and validate curricular purposes. Brown (2016) asserts that this process must be completed to satisfy the language learning requirements within the context of any institution that influences the learning and teaching situation. Similarly, Macalister and Nation (2019) present needs analysis as the procedure that helps the curricular designer discover the needs, lacks, and wants. Iwai et al. (1999) describe the significance of needs analysis as being the collection of information of the learners' needs which serve as the framework for curriculum development. Similarly, Huhta, Vorgt, Johnson, Tulkki, & Hall . (2013) present it as the importance of considering how the individual interacts in the contexts and situations of their field of action. Lastly, Abdirakhimova (2025) mentions that every needs analysis must seek to highlight the skills that learners "require for their professional and academic success" (p. 154) since it will enable them to use the language confidently in real-life situations.

The Search for Best Practices

Previous studies have explored the application of different practices in needs analysis for curricular design. We have selected two ways in which they can be applied. The first is when needs analysis is used before the creation of any curricular proposal and the second when it is used as evaluation of existing curricula.

Aysu and Özcan (2021) conducted a needs analysis as a first step to develop a curricular proposal that would be based on future needs of students of tourism and hotel management at a vocational school in Turkey. As a first step, the authors cite the needs analysis process to understand the needs of their population. The researchers administered a questionnaire in Turkish and semi-structured interviews to students, graduates, content experts, and employers. The authors listed a set of needs for language subskills (speaking, writing, listening, and reading) gathered from the triangulation of the data collected during the process. The results matched previous studies they reviewed in the same area and supported the needs they collected (pp. 321-322). The authors recommended setting up goals and objectives that accurately encompass the needs of potential learners enrolling in an English for Specific Purposes (ESP) course for tourism and hotel management.

Moreover, Zohoorian (2015) conducted a study where needs analysis was used to evaluate existing curricula. The author compared the current English course being taught at the time of research to the needs of the students who enrolled in that course. The author reports that 66 students answered a learning needs questionnaire, which was constructed with four sections related to language skills, specifically speaking, writing, listening, and reading. Following the filing of the questionnaire, participants were asked to participate in a semi-structured interview to identify the perceived needs and priorities of English language learners. The author concluded that the English course being taught and the materials being used were in contradiction to the students' needs, wants, and lacks since the reading tasks were not as important as the speaking skill for them to perform accurately (p. 63).

Like Zohoorian (2015), Miller et al. (2020) conducted a needs analysis with the same objective on established curricula. They aimed at determining the needs of Japanese university students who intended to study abroad. The study focused on revising a curriculum for a content-based English for Academic Purposes (EAP) course. The authors report that the program focused on reading/writing and speaking/listening skills although the program instructors were encouraged to use content of their choice to teach these skills (p. 3).

The researchers also report that the autonomy given to teachers to decide on content areas resulted in little organization across the classes and levels (p. 3). The authors found that learners identified this situation as disadvantageous because some content was not fully studied. To examine the existing situation and the target situation of the population, the authors developed a new curriculum based on the backwards needs analysis design principle (Wiggins and McTighe's, 2001, in Miller et al., 2020, p. 7). They conducted the process by collecting students' TOEFL scores, course enrollment patterns, and experiences and grades while studying abroad. Researchers also asked instructors and stakeholders to provide data regarding their experience and recommendations for improvement of the courses. Miller et al. used the data collected to propose the implementation of a new curriculum. Results of the evaluation process revealed that learners' TOEFL language proficiency scores increased; however, the cause of the increase could not be identified from the data collected (p. 16). The authors report that faculty members encountered difficulties while developing the proposed curriculum due to lack of faculty training, short preparation time, and evaluation (pp. 18-20).

Badilla-Ramos (2023) conducted a NA at Universidad Nacional, Costa Rica. The objective was to identify the necessities, lacks, and wants of undergraduate students who were studying Geographic Sciences with emphasis on Land Use Planning. In her study, Badilla-Ramos (2023) started by stating the objectives of the NA to carry them out. Subsequently, she delimited the sample of the study and explained who the participants were. Then, she applied a diagnostic assessment to determine the English proficiency level the participants had to develop the curriculum. Lastly, the researcher used five data collection instruments to gather information for the course design. In her study, not only did she show the process of conducting a needs analysis, but she also presented an overview of the curriculum.

After reviewing the literature, we are able to identify three best practices that can guide our quest for more contextualized ones. The first is the necessity of conducting the needs analysis process when starting any curricular design. The second one is that the needs analysis must gather the needs and wants of all stake-

holders related to the curriculum to be designed. The third one is that needs analyses can be used as the first step in building new curricular projects or as assessment tools for the improvement of existing programs.

Based on these best practices and the review of the previous literature, and in our quest for more best practices in the application of needs analyses, we attempt to answer the following questions:

1. What is the role of a needs analysis in LSP curriculum design?
2. Which aspects are important to consider when conducting a needs analysis?
3. How does previous knowledge of best practices affect the needs analysis process?

Although generic in nature, we try to find answers to these questions in a specific context, corporate Costa Rica.

METHODOLOGY

To answer the research questions, a multi-tier research process was designed. The first stage focused on researching the best practices on needs analysis which resulted in the previous literature review. The second stage comprises an interview with an expert in the field of Applied Linguistics while the third stage incorporates the conduction of a needs analysis for a customer service English course. The expert was interviewed following Creswell's approach to discovering the discourses and themes at work in the construction of identities and interpretations at a particular point in time. These last two stages allowed a more in-depth analysis of the topic through the collection of data related to other best practices and their application to test their efficacy. For the purposes of this work, this section is divided into participants' involvement, instruments' description, and procedures that comprise the methodology applied.

Participants

Applied Linguist/Curricular Designer

This participant has a Ph.D. specialization in Applied Linguistics, and, at the time of the interview, he had

been teaching English and preparing language teachers for more than twenty years. He was also involved in developing several programs that included language for specific purposes programs nationally and internationally.

Customer Service Department

A group of eleven customer service representatives and their manager working for a Costa Rican multinational company participated in this study. These people required a customer service training program to achieve the company standards when interacting with customers. To comply with these standards, participants were asked to voluntarily be involved with the needs analysis process.

Participants came from different places around Costa Rica that included urban and rural areas. Their ages ranged from 19 to 33 years old. They have between 5 months to 5 five years of experience. Their educational background is diverse, ranging from a minimum educational degree of high school diploma to bachelor's and master's degrees in different areas such as English teaching, business administration, and political sciences. Participants claimed to have learned English in school, high school, and language institutes through private lessons, talking to English native speakers, listening to music, and watching movies in English.

The Manager

The team manager has worked in the department for five years. He provides assistance on training and general guidance regarding customer service performance. He mentors and develops reports through data-driven analysis of employees. He also oversees seven support specialists whose tasks are focused on customer service for self-publishing authors to offer their products.

INSTRUMENTS

Due to the multi-tier nature of the present study, two sets of instruments were created for collecting data. The first one was used with the curriculum designer in search of best practices. The second set was designed following the best practices established by the course developer and those found in the literature. These in-

struments were used for conducting the needs analysis. It should be noted that the development of these instruments followed a sequential structure where the result of one instrument generated feedback to be considered for the succeeding documents.

Set 1: Semi-structured Interview for the Course Developer

This semi-structured interview contained 48 items. All items were based on specific areas, such as field development, type of courses, training experiences, teaching functions, linguistics, specific competences, LSP challenges, teaching variables, and design and application of a needs analysis. Each of the topics was supported by follow-up questions. Both the main questions and the follow-up questions were based on previous literature on needs analysis and the process conducted.

Set 2: Instruments for the Needs Analysis

Employee Survey. The survey administered in this study contained eight questions. They were constructed to gather demographic information, such as their hometown, academic background, and duties and responsibilities at their working department.

Team Manager Interview. This interview contains sixteen questions. Six questions focused on the stakeholders' expertise, four on the difficulties employees face when performing tasks, and the last six on the strategies the company implements to improve the employees' performance.

Group Interview. We developed an online interview containing 5 items. Items were based on specific areas, such as field development, type of courses, training experiences, teaching functions, linguistic and specific competences, ESP challenges, teaching variations, and design and application of a needs analysis. All questions asked followed the best practices derived from the literature review and the interview with the curricular developer.

English Language Diagnostic Test. The company administers the Pearson's Versant English Test (VET), which is used to measure (1) potential workers' communicative skills and (2) common job tasks. We did not have access to the results of the assessment ad-

ministered to the employees because of institutional policies. Therefore, we researched the components of the evaluation and created a similar diagnostic instrument to determine our participants' English proficiency level. The results of this instrument were crucial for establishing a baseline of the participant's proficiency level, defining course objectives, and identifying their needs, wants, and lacks.

Regarding the design, the first part of the instrument consisted of a speaking section in which participants had to record an answer to a hypothetical problem in the form of a model phone call. This exercise evaluates their speaking ability alongside their listening comprehension. The second part included the writing of an email in which participants had to solve a hypothetical customer problem. This exercise evaluates their written ability alongside their reading comprehension. Both scenarios match employees' routine tasks and assignments at their position.

To determine the English proficiency level in-service employees had at the onset of the needs analysis, a checklist was used to tally the results of the diagnostics test. The descriptors incorporated in the checklist were chosen in accordance with the documents provided by the company (i.e., job descriptions and in-service tasks) and the Common European Framework of Reference (CERF). This instrument included the following: Overall oral interaction, overall oral production, overall phonological control, overall reading comprehension, overall written interaction, overall written production, and prosodic features.

Member Checking. This is a technique used in qualitative research to validate the results of the needs analysis with input from the participants. An email was sent with the outline results from the needs analysis. Participants expressed their agreement with the results while providing comments. Furthermore, the validation served to design Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) that suited learners' target language needs.

PROCEDURES

Search for Best Practices

To identify best practices, the researchers first interviewed the course developer to determine the necessary processes for conducting a successful needs analysis. Then they analyzed the needs of a group of employees working at an international publishing department. This department provides a service for self-publishing books. The team manager and the employees provided the necessary information to design the student learning outcomes (SLOs) that stated what learners need to be able to do by the end of the training.

Ethics and Validity

For the present study, we followed three main steps to comply with ethics and validity. First, all participants of the study voluntarily agreed to be recorded. Second, researchers guaranteed confidentiality to all participants. The audios and videos were shared among us. We stored the recordings on the hosts' local device with the local recording option.

Employee Selection Process

The manager reports that all participants took the Pearson's Versant English Test (VET) prior to our interventions. As they become established members of the team, employees take training sessions to become familiar with their responsibilities. Multitasking skills become essential to accomplish their metrics. All participants underwent a selection process to be hired.

English Proficiency

All participants received via email the English Language Diagnostic Test. They submitted their recorded spoken answer through Padlet. This is a free learning managing system or platform which allows for assessments to be deployed to a group. All individual answers were kept private. Conversely, the written part of the instrument was collected via Google Forms. The form was sent via email, contained the prompts, and they submitted their written responses through it. All answers were kept confidential.

Group Interview

The group interview was carried out via a Zoom online video call. The instrument was sent via email to the participants ahead of the meeting date and time. Answers were contrasted with existing information provided by the company, such as job description, technical vocabulary frequently used in the company, and descriptions of job-related tasks.

Needs Analysis

The needs analysis followed best practices to determine the present situation analysis, the target situation analysis, and the gap analysis. The information gathered facilitated the curricular proposal.

Data Analysis

All data were analyzed following the best practices identified in the earlier stages of this investigation and those found in the relevant literature.

RESULTS

This section brings together the data gathered from previous stages and instruments. First, the four major best practices when conducting needs analysis from the curricular designer's interview are outlined. Second, the needs analysis data is presented following the previous best practices. Lastly, a discussion and analysis of these results is shared alongside the needs analysis's SLO's and return on investment.

Best Practices for Curricular Design

From the curricular designer's interview, the researchers identified four outcomes. The first one is related to needs analysis. For the curricular designer, it is necessary to identify the needs and wants of the population since these features will determine the design of the course and its development. Furthermore, it is crucial to identify the language proficiency level of the participants to help them use the language confidently. He suggests that this identification allows the curricular developer to contextualize what the needs, wants, and lacks are before deploying the course. For the interviewee, it is advisable to explain the design of the course to the stakeholders before administering since

they might get the wrong idea of what the course is about because they will want their 'wants' to stand out. Sometimes, clients do not understand that the needs and wants are different. This situation demotivates the population prompting the attrition rate to increase (interview, June 4, 2021).

A second outcome stemming from the curricular developer's interview recommends having the LSP practitioner collecting the information by using different data collection methods, such as formal and informal interviews with the target population, arranging meetings with the stakeholders, and conducting an environmental analysis to help in the determination of the needs, lacks and wants. During the data collection process, the course developer recommends asking questions, such as "What is happening? Who is the population? Where is it located? Did they get any other LSP course before? What worked or did not work?" (interview, June 4, 2021). In the course developer's opinion, the role of LSP practitioner is to conduct the corresponding research, gather the evidence, and justify the proposal, which we take as a specific best practice in course development.

A third outcome is that LSP practitioners must be prepared for unpredictable changes that occur during the course implementation process. As an example, the course developer proposed that stakeholders would ask the course designer to start co-teaching with people who might have a different expertise. This scenario can generate a conflict between both parties regarding the development and content of the course. Thus, problems must be predicted, faced, and solved before deploying the course for the benefit of all stakeholders.

The fourth outcome identified is the return of investment (ROI). The curricular designer strongly suggests that course developers must focus on creating a professional network to promote professional growth. According to the course developer, "if you give a good product [the course], people will call you and hire you. That is an opportunity to be known as professionals" (interview, June 4, 2021). The results suggest that the ROI will be focused on professional growth.

Needs Analysis: Customer Service Department

English Level

Regarding their English level, Table 1 shows the results obtained from the English language diagnostic test administered by the researchers.

Table 1. English Proficiency Level based on the Results of the English Language Diagnostic Test and Diagnostic Checklist

Name	Skill				
	Oral interaction/production	Phonological control	Reading comprehension	Written interaction/production	Prosodic features
Participant A	C1	C1	C1	C1	C1
Participant B	B2+	B2	B2	B2	B2
Participant C	C1	B2	B2	B2	C1
Participant D	C1	C1	C1	C1	C1
Participant E	B2+	C1	- ¹	- ¹	B2
¹ Not enough data to determine an English proficiency level due to lack of participation.					

The results showed that writing and speaking are the two main skills employees use to communicate effectively at their workplace. The official VET learning objectives (Pearson, 2020, p. 5) for a position of “office clerk,” which are similar to the task performed by the participants, state that an employee must score between 49 and 55 from a scale from 10 to 90 regarding speaking, listening, reading, and writing. This score range is equivalent to a B1 English level according to CERF. Results from Table 1 categorized employees’ English proficiency from B2 to C1; thus, we determined that the participants’ English level is higher than what it is expected for their position. Moreover, these results support decisions regarding student learning outcomes and materials for the course design.

Profile

When this study was carried out, the customer service department was composed of eleven staff members: one general manager and ten customer service employees distributed in different tiers of assistance. Nevertheless, seven people participated during the application of initial instruments and only five employees remained at the end of the study.

Results of the needs analysis showed that customer service representatives needed to answer questions to provide customer service, communicate effectively in spoken and written form with customers, understand and solve problems related to the service they

provide, and utilize the necessary technological devices to ensure quality customer service experience. For him,

The most common tasks where they have problems are to become multitasking because it requires handling emails and receiving calls sometimes. Not in all call centers they do not do this, only take calls or emails. The time they start doing both, it becomes a challenge. (interview, October 1, 2021).

Present-situation analysis

After analyzing the data obtained from the team manager interview and the group interview, results suggested that customer service representatives need to show understanding of different dialects (e.g., Indian English) since communication was often hindered due to unfamiliarity with other accents, vocabulary, and cultural issues. Participants described difficulty using synonyms to describe technical vocabulary to the customers. The manager stated that

the customer service representatives sometimes do not know how to explain things. Listening is necessary to be reinforced. They take calls from India, UK, USA, Latin Americans. It is difficult to engage. They need to get used to different accents. Techniques or skills to develop when they do not understand the message, they can ask again, paraphrase to make sure they un-

derstood what the customer said or wrote. (interview, October 1, 2021)

These linguistic barriers are similar to the ones yielded by the English language diagnostic test and the subsequent evaluation of customer service representatives' linguistic abilities through the diagnostic checklist.

Situation Analysis Gap

Results showed a gap between the linguistic knowledge the participants must have and the linguistic knowledge they do have. It focused on three main aspects: It was necessary (a) to provide direct answers or solutions to customers using standard grammatical structures and job-related vocabulary; (b) to understand and paraphrase messages from English speaking countries outside of the US; and (c) to be able to describe concepts or use synonyms to communicate with native speakers of other dialects for a better understanding of the customers is a linguistic necessity. Failing to address this lack of intelligibility between employees and linguistically diverse customers creates an obstacle to providing efficient customer service.

DISCUSSION

Results in this study highlight the importance of four salient best practices in conducting needs analysis. First, all curricular designers must conduct needs and environmental analysis to gather the information before implementing a course as suggested by Brown (2016) who explains that emphasizes that curricular designers must first conduct thorough needs and environmental analyses before implementing a course. These two components are foundational to ensure that the course aligns with the real-world needs of learners and the specific context in which they will use the target language. Second, as soon as the curricular designer identifies the needs, they should start developing a curricular proposal to meet those needs. Hyland (2006) makes it clear that needs analysis is a dynamic, continuous process that includes various factors, such as learners' goals and backgrounds, their language proficiency, motivations for taking the course, their teaching and learning preferences, and the communication situations they will encounter. Clear student learning outcomes must be explained

and communicated to avoid any motivation problems in the process. Third, the course developer must know the constraints that they could face along the way as the curricular designer explained. He suggests that practitioners must be ready to handle unforeseen changes that may arise during the course implementation process. Fourth, the course developer should create a professional network to build different opportunities and prestige for staff and to promote professional growth, which will translate into better and improved LSP curricula. The focus should be the idea that ROI is not merely a financial metric but includes **professional growth** as a key component of success.

The administration of both qualitative and quantitative instruments allowed gathering outcomes that reflected the needs of the target population, and it endured the validation process. For example, the results obtained from the survey and the individual interview conducted in the present needs analysis corroborated the findings from the group interview. In addition to this, the analysis and gathering of qualitative and quantitative data facilitated the confirmation of the results. Participants expressed the 'want' of improving their understanding of accents from Indian English, Australian English, and British English, and it was supported by the four administered instruments. As a result, the triangulation process carried out in the present study has demonstrated that participants need to improve their English proficiency level to offer appropriate customer service.

The overall outcomes of the needs analysis showed that administering instruments with clear objectives is indispensable for gathering suitable results. All the instruments focused on the needs, wants, and lacks participants were facing. This is sustained by the administration of a variety of instruments covering different angles and perspectives of the needs analysis process. Even though not all 11 participants provided data for all instruments, participants (seven at the beginning stages and five at the end) actively provided relevant information. They emphasized their needs in terms of language comprehension because providing service in a phone call requires improving listening skills and cultural awareness. Another positive aspect was that strategies to create direct connections with the participants were improved. Since the team manager was the only means of communication, the ana-

lysts had to create an instrument where the participants shared, with the appropriate permission, their email address. This action facilitated data collection.

Our needs analysis allowed us to propose the following Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) for the development of a customer service training ESP course:

1. By the end of the course, customer service representatives in training will be able to apply linguistically diverse customer service vocabulary when speaking with native speakers on the phone according to standardize requirements described in their job description.
2. By the end of the course, customer service representatives in training will be able to show an improved comprehension of linguistically diverse discourse when providing customer service through calls by following the standard requirements described in their job description.
3. By the end of the course, customer service representatives in training will be able to handle linguistically diverse interactions on phone calls by addressing the customer's requests and by providing solutions that meet the job requirements.

As a result of carrying out a needs analysis following the best practices suggested by the theory and curricular designer, it is possible to answer the questions set at the beginning of this paper. *What is the role of a needs analysis in LSP curriculum design?* The main objective is to ensure that the course aligns with the specific language requirements by identifying the language skills and competencies to help workers perform effectively. It also helps course designers develop courses that are defensible, relevant, targeted, and context specific. The second question was *Which aspects are important to consider when conducting a needs analysis?* When conducting a needs analysis for an LSP curriculum, several aspects are crucial to ensure that the course is tailored to the learners' needs, such as the learners' characteristics, the language skills required, context, stakeholders' input, and the learning environment. And the last question was *How does previous knowledge of best practices affect the needs analysis process?* There are clear effects on carrying out a needs analysis based

on best practices; for example, it ensures the application of effective collection techniques. Moreover, it contributes to recognizing key aspects of course design, leading to more focused needs analysis. In addition, it helps course designers anticipate challenges to address them during the needs analysis if they take place.

Return on Investment

The return on investment can be summarized as the improvement of customer service representatives' English proficiency level that includes linguistically diverse registers, which will prompt an improved performance, which, in turn, meets the required standards that the company has regarding the position. Thus, it will create a more stable pool of bilingual customer service representatives, which will create benefits with an upward trend.

CONCLUSIONS

By following a strict and clear needs analysis, it was evident that following best practices should be a must when developing LSP curricula. While creativity, problem solving, and impromptu decision-making are known skills in curricular designers, following proven theoretical and experiential recommendations from needs analysis experts is another crucial skill needed to ensure a smooth LSP curricular endeavor that benefits all stakeholders. This case study with customer service representatives in training exemplifies how to follow best practices and establish solid foundations for LSP curricular development that can be used in similar settings. One of the main limitations of the present work is the lack of direct communication with the participants of the study due to the training nature of their work relationship. A second limitation we encountered is the low engagement of participants with the data collection process. This may be attributed to company policies and the management of the company's private data, and the information that the department was able to share was limited and scarce. The goal of the present study was to conduct a needs analysis following best practices; therefore, all subsequent steps of developing an LSP course to be offered to the company were out of scope of this study. Future research on needs analysis best practices for LSP course development

may be used in the academic field to provide more informed theories, tools, and proven techniques on how to guarantee high quality curricula, especially LSP in corporate settings. The LSP field will benefit from the publication of case studies that follow best practices. Finally, needs analyses play a vital role in curriculum design by ensuring learner-centeredness, alignment with educational goals, resource optimization, enhancing motivation and engagement, and facilitating evaluation and continuous improvement. They help create a curriculum that effectively meets the learners' needs, promotes meaningful learning experiences, and supports the overall educational objectives. This investigation contributes to the current knowledge on needs analysis, specifically in LSP for corporate settings, by identifying best practices, skill gaps and the type of training needed to fill those gaps, as well as prioritizing skills with the main purpose of designing sound language curricula.

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