AN INVESTIGATION INTO ESAP NEEDS OF IRANIAN BA STUDENTS OF LAW

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Abstract

English for Specific Academic Purposes (ESAP) uses the results of needs analysis for curriculum development and materials production. ESAP courses should be based on students' academic needs. Consequently, the present study investigated the English language needs of Iranian undergraduate students of Law. Participants included 218 undergraduate students, 33 graduate students, and 10 content teachers of Law (for short, content teachers) from three universities in Karaj, Iran. Data were collected quantitatively, using researcher-made questionnaires. IBM SPSS (version 22) was used to analyze the data. Statistical tests including Mann Whitney U and Kruskall Wallis were used to analyze the data. The results of questionnaire analyses showed that "general vocabulary", "technical vocabulary", and "using general bilingual English-to-Persian dictionaries" were regarded as the most important target needs, and "grammar", "pronunciation", and "guessing the meaning of the words from suffixes and prefixes" were perceived as the present needs of BA students. The results of data analyses revealed statistically significant differences among the responses of BA students, MA students, and content teachers regarding target needs. Follow-up post hoc analyses showed that the differences lay between BA students and content teachers as well as between MA students and content teachers. Further analysis of data showed statistically significant differences of present needs between BA students and content teachers. The findings of this study suggest that the development of ESAP courses for BA students of law should draw on more general English of BA students of law, enabling them to develop reading skills to fully understand legal academic English texts.
Keywords: ESAP, needs analysis, present needs, target needs

1. Introduction

A distinction is usually made in applied linguistics between English for general purposes (EGP) and English for specific purposes (ESP) (Basturkmen, 2010). EGP is very general in nature, aiming at enabling language learners to communicate ideas accurately and fluently; ESP, however, generally refers to "the teaching and learning of English as a second or foreign language where the goal of the learners is to use English in a particular domain" (Paltridge & Starfield, 2013). In the words of McDonough (1998), ESP, more specifically, "describes language programs designed for groups or individuals who are learning with an identifiable purpose and clearly specifiable needs" (p. 105). As this definition explicitly shows, needs lie at the very heart of ESP.

Needs analysis (NA) refers to the process during which researchers collect, analyze, and assess various sources of information to cater for the special needs of ESP learners (Gea-Valor, Rey-Rocha, & Moreno, 2014; Huhta, Vogt, Johnson, & Tulkki, 2013). Central to the development of ESP courses (Serafini, Lake, & Long, 2015), NA is the first stage in ESP course development which is conducted to determine the content and methodology of a course (Flowerdew, 2013). Other stages in ESP course design, including syllabus design, materials development, materials production, and evaluation, build heavily on NA (Dudley-Evans & St. John, 1998).

The significance of NA as a principal stage in course design is widely acknowledged in the literature (Basturkmen, 2013; Long, 2005; Long, 2015; West, 1994). Richards (2001), for example, highlighted the importance of NA in providing a reliable and valid basis for setting goals and objectives, developing syllabuses and teaching materials, as well as evaluation and renewal of programs. Hamp-Lyons (2001) asserted that "needs analysis is fundamental to an EAP approach to course design" (p. 127). As Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998) neatly put it, "needs analysis is the corner stone of ESP and leads to a very focused course" (p. 122). Further, when the needs of learners are identified, more precise objectives and goals for their language programs can be determined (Brown, 1995). Target needs, for example, tell us about "the tasks and activities learners are/will be using English for" (Dudley-Evans & St. John, 1998, p. 125) to enable them to operate well in

real-life situations. Present needs also help researchers to identify what language learners already know so that the researchers will be able to deduce what their lacks are, knowing about language learners "strengths and weaknesses in language, skills, and learning experiences" (p. 124).

Since needs play a central role in ESP programs, this study examined the academic needs of undergraduate students of law. The examination of the needs was conducted quantitatively, using three questionnaires administered to three groups: BA students, MA students, and content teachers in law. The researcher was particularly interested in identifying target needs and present needs which these students may require. In the following section, the researcher defines NA as it is commonly used in ESP, discusses the various types of needs, and summarizes some of the latest empirical studies on NA.

1. Literature Review

2.1 NA in ESP

NA has a relatively long and distinguished history in ELT programs. West (1994), for example, traced the history of needs analysis back to 1920s in India when for the first time "analysis of needs" (p. 1) appeared. West, however, noted that NA was not used for over 50 years, adding that "the term returns to central prominence with the advent of ESP, for which needs analysis has become a key instrument in course design" (p.2). Formal investigation of NA as a methodological tool in ESP, however, dates back to the 1970s when for the first time ESP researchers employed it to examine target needs of ESP learners (Johns, 2013). NA, however, has become increasingly sophisticated over the years, not necessarily limited to the mere linguistic analysis of certain text types.

Researchers have defined NA in a variety of different ways. In about three decades ago, Richterich (1983) asserted that "the very concept of language needs has never been clearly defined and remains at best ambiguous'' (p. 2). As early as 1980s, Chambers (1980) argued that "needs analysis should be concerned primarily with the establishment of communicative needs and their realizations, resulting from an analysis of the communication in the target situation" (p. 2). This definition is very narrow, primarily limited to settings in which language occurs. Adopting a materials

development approach, Basturkmen (2010) defined needs analysis as "a course development process [in which] the language and skills . . . . are identified and considered in relation to the present state of knowledge of the learners, their perceptions of their needs . . . . and constraints of the teaching context" (p.19). Basturkmen was quick to comment that NA is both objective and subjective. In an extended definition of NA, Hyland (2006) proposed that

> Needs analysis refers to the techniques for collecting and assessing information relevant to course design: it is the means of establishing the how and what of a course. It is a continuous process, since we modify our teaching as we come to learn more about our students, and in this way it actually shades into evaluation – the means of establishing the effectiveness of a course. (p. 74)

Various approaches to NA have been offered. Paltridge and Starfield (2013) listed the following approaches: target-situation needs analysis, present situation needs analysis, deficiency analysis, strategy analysis, means analysis, and task-based needs analysis. Target-situation needs analysis is the earliest approach to NA which holds that needs analysis should be centered on linguistic needs of ESP learners who require to operate well in real-life settings (Spence & Gi-Liu, 2013). Present situation needs analysis refers to the language learners' current skills, proficiencies and ambitions as well as their language use (Dudley-Evans & St. John, 1998; Hyland, 2006). Deficiency analysis refers to the combined target situation analysis and present situation analysis, implying that we "start from the target situation and design the curriculum around the gap between the present abilities of the target trainees and the needs of the situation in which they will find themselves at the end of the training program" (West, 1994, p. 10).

Unlike the previous three approaches to needs analysis, strategy analysis moves beyond linguistic needs and probes into the analysis of underlying mechanisms and skills which enable language learners to compensate for their linguistic deficiencies (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987). Means analysis refers to the "information about the environment in which the course will be run" (Dudley-Evans & St. John, 1998, p. 125). Finally, Long (2005) proposed task-based needs analysis as the unit of analysis which "provide[s] a more reliable

source of data than those produced by language teachers and applied linguists
. . . . reflect[s] the dynamic qualities of the target discourse, thus revealing
more than static, product-oriented text-based analyses" (Paltridge & Starfield,
2013, p. 328).

2.2 Needs in ESP

Researchers define needs in a wide variety of ways. Very broadly defined,
needs refers to various sources of information to help ESP learners (Serafini,
et. al. 2015). Needs was initially conceived as a linguistic term to be
synonymous with register (West, 1994). Needs, however, is now a much
broader concept. Hyland (2006), for example, defined needs as "actually 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. 76). In similar vein, Flowerdew (2013) concluded that
"needs, thus, are often complex, difficult to sort out, and may require a variety
of responses in that there are often 'competing needs and vested interests in
defining and meeting [students'] needs'" (p. 341). Such definitions of needs
emphasize the multi-faceted nature of needs embracing linguistic,
communicative, and learning dimensions.

Needs are divided into several groups. Hutchinson and Waters (1987)
distinguished between target needs, including necessities, lacks, and wants,
and learning needs. Berwick (1989) distinguished between perceived and felt
needs, with perceived needs conceived as those identified by researchers and
felt needs as those wanted by language learners. Brindley (1989) also made a
similar distinction, describing needs as objective and subjective. Brown's
(1995) dichotomy between situation needs and language needs was also
helpful. According to Brown, "situation needs are related to administrative,
financial, logistical, manpower, pedagogic, religious, cultural, personal, or
other factors that might have an impact on the program" (p.40), whereas
language needs refer to information about target linguistic behaviors which
include details about the circumstances in which language will be used.

Needs are not necessarily limited to such binary distinctions. Richterich
and Chancerel (as cited in Paltridge & Starfield, 2013) introduced present

needs which include the information the ESP learner possesses now and the information he or she needs to know at the end of a period of instruction; information about the language teaching environment; and personal information about the learners. Drawing on types of needs in previous studies, Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998) offered a very broad classification of needs, including personal information about learners, professional information about learners, language information about target situations, learners' lack, learners' needs from course, language learning needs, and communication in target needs. Today, task-based needs, which primarily focus on multiple sources and methods to collect credible data, are gaining in popularity (Long, 2005; Long, 2015).

Needs in ESP are examined in different ways. Research methods in ESP are "overwhelmingly qualitative, with an emphasis on analysis of written discourse" (p. 27), as Gollin-Kies (2014) empirically demonstrated. Long (2005) divided methods of collecting needs in ESP into two main groups: inductive and deductive. Inductive methods are necessarily qualitative and include expert opinions, participant and non-participant observations, unstructured interviews, learner diaries, and document analysis, whereas deductive methods are quantitative and include questionnaires, tests, and rating scales. Since needs have become increasingly sophisticated, researchers these days use a combination of inductive and deductive methods.

2.3 A selective review of empirical studies on needs and NA

Numerous studies on NA have been conducted in Iran and elsewhere in order to investigate language learners' specific needs in a variety of contexts. Some of these NA studies are summarized below. The summary is divided into two main parts: The first five paragraphs describe the studies done on NA in different countries in the world. The next six paragraphs summarize the studies on NA in Iran. Some of these studies have examined perception and attitudes of stakeholders about needs in different disciplines. Some others have investigated the effect of needs on courses. Finally, some studies have comparatively analyzed needs between groups of stakeholders.

One of the early studies on needs was that of Chia, Johnson, Chia, and Olive (1998) who investigated the perception of 394 medical college students

and 20 faculty members toward English language needs of medical students in Taiwan. The study elicited the respondents' opinions on (1) the importance of English language use in students' studies and their future careers, (2) basic English skills needed in a freshman English course, and (3) suggestions for the development of an English language curriculum. Results revealed that English was perceived as an important need for academic life and future career of medical students. Students wanted a basic English language course which regarded listening as an important skill to master.

Like Chia, et al., Kaewpet (2009) analyzed the communication needs of Thai students majoring in Civil engineering. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews from 25 stakeholders including employers, ESP teachers, civil engineers, civil engineering lecturers, and ex-civil engineering students of technical English courses. The results indicated that four communicative tasks should be included in the technical English course for civil engineering students. In addition, the researcher proposed more ESP courses for engineering students and conducting more NA studies.

Liu, Chang, Yang, and Sun (2011) also explored English as a foreign language (EFL) college students' needs in English for General Purposes (EGP) and English for Specific/Academic Purposes (ESP/EAP) courses in terms of their perceptions of three subcategories of needs—necessities, wants, and lacks. The data were collected through a questionnaire administered to 972 EFL college students in six universities in Taiwan. The findings showed that the students had different perceptions of necessities, wants, and lacks in in EGP and ESP/EAP courses. Also, there were discrepancies between the students' perceptions of needs and the actual courses they took, which highlight the importance of understanding needs as a complex, multiple, and conflicting concept.

Although Cowling's (2007) study was on needs, he examined the effects of a systematic multiple-source needs analysis on Japanese workers' English courses in Japan. The focus of this study was on English for Occupational Purposes (EOP) and the findings showed that great care should be exercised in the planning and execution stages of syllabus and curriculum design which is often far more complex than described in the syllabus design literature. As this piece of research suggests, NA is effective, but it is highly context-based.

In one of the most recent studies, Staples (2015) examined the linguistic needs of internationally educated nurses (IENs) working in the U.S. One hundred and two nurse-patient interactions (52 IENs and 50 USNs) were collected and analyzed for lexico-grammatical features. Results revealed that USNs used particular lexico-grammatical features more frequently, such as past tense and various stance features (e.g., certainly adverbs such as maybe and kind of) which play an important role in creating rapport with patients and in providing more patient-centered interactions. The findings provided implications for IEN training programs, as well as English for Medical Purposes (EMP) courses for nursing students and other medical professionals.

Iranian researchers have also addressed NA. The following six paragraphs summarize the studies Iranian researchers have carried out.

In a large-scale study, Shahini and Riazi (2001) carried out a study on the needs of students to compare and contrast the present and target situations in EAP courses at Shiraz University. The participants included 2,030 students and 150 instructors from all majors except for English language majors and data were collected through a questionnaire. The findings revealed that the needs of undergraduate students were significantly different from those of graduate students. For undergraduate students, reading and having a good command of technical vocabulary were the most important needs while graduates believed that writing and conversation skills were important. In addition, participants complained about the general English textbooks which were inadequate, and too much attention was paid to grammar and form.

Similarly, Khanjani (2005) investigated the present and target needs of Science students at Guilan University. The participants were 240 BSc students in Chemistry, Biology, Mathematics, and Physics. Moreover, 20 MSc students from the same fields and 20 ESP teachers took part in the study. Two researcher-made questionnaires, a structured interview and a GEP test, were employed as data collection methods. The results indicated that there was a significant relationship between perceptions of learners and instructors. Moreover, communicative and oral abilities were regarded as important needs.

Like Shahini and Riazi, as well as Khanjani, Atai and Mohamadzadeh (2007) investigated the present as well as target needs of graduate students of

Humanities in four universities. They elicited data from 245 graduate students of Humanities, 14 PhD students, 25 ESAP instructors, and 20 content teachers. The findings of the research suggested that the most significant needs of the students were comprehension of lectures in subject-specific seminars in English, subject-specific vocabulary knowledge in English, and use of the Internet to do research in subject-specific areas. The students complained about the limited time of the course, much emphasis on translation, and lack of EGP courses. Also, the students reported their need for improving in reading general English texts, translation from English to Persian, and taking notes in subject-related seminars.

One year later, Shoja (2008) investigated the present and target academic English needs of Iranian undergraduate students of Computer Engineering at three universities in Tehran. The participants of the study were 260 undergraduate students, ESAP instructors, content teachers as well as graduate students. The findings indicated that written skills and language components were important. The undergraduate students had difficulty with some sub-skills of reading, writing, speaking, and listening. Moreover, general English proficiency levels of students was low, and they needed more general English than highly specific academic English.

In a very careful study, Atai and Nazari (2011) conducted a study to assess target and present reading comprehension needs of EAP students of Health Information Management (HIM) through a triangulated approach involving a wide range of sources and measures. Participants included 15 content teachers, 10 EAP teachers, 15 graduate students, and 180 undergraduate students majoring in HIM at three major medical universities in Tehran. Instrumentation included four questionnaires, a General English Proficiency (GEP) test, self-assessment, semi-structured interviews, and non-participant observations. The results revealed that 'skimming texts', 'using bilingual general dictionaries', 'scanning texts', 'knowledge of HIM terminologies', 'guessing meanings of words', and 'understanding main ideas' were perceived as either 'important' or 'very important' to students' success by all the participants. Also, findings indicated that undergraduate students' GEP, in general, and reading comprehension, in particular, were lower than what was required in the EAP course.

Finally, Hejazi (2013) assessed the academic English needs of Iranian postgraduate Psychology students. The participants included 343 postgraduate Psychology students, 22 content teachers, and 13 ESAP teachers from seven major Iranian universities in different provinces. The problems faced by different stakeholders included low level of general English proficiency, lack of well-qualified ESP teachers, absence of a coherent curriculum, lack of up-to-date ESP methodology and ESP books, lack of audio-visual aids and real situations in Iran to use specialized English in psychology.

In short, academic English language needs analysis studies have been done in different disciplines in Iran and elsewhere, including English language wants of medical college students, needs of process integration engineers, needs analysis of writing courses for tourism, needs analysis of Physical Education students, students of Humanities, students of Computer Engineering, medical students, students of Health Information Management, and Psychology students. Some of these studies investigated present and target academic English language needs of students across different disciplines.

Analyses of learners' needs can offer a number of advantages. First, NA reveals whether some language skills, or components, should be given priority over some others in ESP programs (Serafini, et. al., 2015). Second, the results of NA may highlight the weaknesses in currently practiced ESP courses and methodology, thereby contributing to some necessary changes in the contents of ESP textbooks in undergraduate programs and leading to curriculum renewal (Gea-Valor, et. al., 2014). Third, in-depth analysis of learners' needs may help ESP practitioners to refine their teaching methods, paying closer attention to the actual needs ESP learners may expect to be met (Basturkmen, 2013). These benefits of NA have prompted researchers to conduct empirical studies to identify various types of needs ESP learners may need to operate well in present and target situations.

The present researcher used a different discipline and three groups of stakeholders—BA students, MA students, and content teachers—to collect, analyze, and assess the needs. The present study, therefore, examined present and target academic English language needs of Iranian undergraduate students

of Law. Following this overarching goal, the following research questions were formulated:

1. What are the present and target academic English language needs of Iranian undergraduate students of Law?
2. Do target needs differ significantly according to undergraduate students, graduate students, and content teachers?
3. Do present needs differ significantly according to undergraduate students and content teachers?

2. Method

3.1 Participants

Three groups participated in this study. They included 218 BA students of law, 33 MA students of law, and 10 content teachers of law from three universities in Karaj, including Islamic Azad University, Payame-Noor University, and Kharazmi University. The content teachers, except for one, were Ph.D. holders in Law, with two to seven years of teaching experience at university. All participants were randomly selected through cluster sampling during 2014-2015 academic year to ensure sample representativeness. A profile of the participants is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. A profile of participants

	Number	Gender		University			Level of Education		
B.A students	218	Male	Female	I	Kh	P[a]	1	2	3[b]
		104	114	134	44	40	46	58	114
MA students	33	16	17	33					
Content teachers	10	2	8	6	2	2			

[a]I, KH, and P stand for Islamic Azad University, Payame-Noor University, and Kharazmi University, respectively. [b]1, 2, and 3 stand for sophomore, junior, and senior, respectively.

3.2 Design of the study

In this study, a triangulated design was used. Three types of triangulation in this study included method triangulation, location triangulation, and participant triangulation (Brown, 2014; Long, 2005). Content analysis,

observation, and interviews were used to develop the questionnaires, hence method triangulation; data were collected at three different sites, hence location triangulation; and three types of participants were used, hence participant triangulation.

3.3 Instruments

To identify the present and target academic needs of BA students of Law, three questionnaires were used. More information about these questionnaires is given below.

3.3.1 Questionnaire development

To develop the needs analysis questionnaires for the three groups of participants, the researcher went through several stages. First, the contents of questionnaires were determined according to the relevant literature as well as some available questionnaires on NA, especially those by Atai and Shoja (2011), Atai and Nazari (2011) and Mazdayasna and Tahririan (2008). Second, the researcher conducted a document analysis related to the field of Law at B.A level in Iran to investigate the purpose of technical English courses. The researcher content analyzed two documents. The first document entitled "rules for universities to develop courses" detailed the broad objectives of the courses. The second document by the name of "guidelines and syllabus for BA students of law" outlined the objectives for the courses BA students needed to pass. Third, ten ESAP classes were observed and audio-recorded for two weeks. The researcher carefully observed the participants and teachers' behavior in each class and took notes. Furthermore, some informal unstructured interviews were conducted with some BA students of each class regarding their needs. Also, the researcher conducted semi-structured interviews with all 10 content teachers (See appendix on the journal's webpage).

Based on the theories of NA, review of literature, and the previous stages, the researcher designed the first layout of the questionnaire. The first draft of the questionnaire for three groups of participants was designed and submitted to the subject specialists to check the content relatedness, clarity, and wording of the items. As a result, some items were modified, added, or removed.

Furthermore, in a pilot study, the main questionnaire was administered to 50 undergraduate students of law at Kharazmi University. Cronbach's alpha (to be presented below) was run to check the reliability of the questionnaire. Finally, three versions of NA questionnaires were developed for BA students, MA students, and content teachers, respectively. The final versions of the three questionnaires were administered to the participants.

The questionnaire for BA students included three main sections. In the first section, students were asked about the demographic information including their university gender, age, and educational level, and number of passed ESP courses. The second section consisted of 18 Likert-scale items regarding students' target needs in reading, writing, listening and speaking as well as language components, with four levels from 1 (Not Important) to 4 (Very Important).The third section included 22 Likert-scale items with four levels from 1 (I cannot do this at all) to 4 (I can do this on my own), with the aim of asking the participants to self-assess their abilities regarding BA students' present needs.

The questionnaire for MA students had two sections. The first section included the MA students' demographic information. The second section asked the MA students about the importance of English language skills and components for their academic success at BA level, consisting of 18 Likert-scale items regarding BA students' needs in reading, writing, listening, and speaking as well as the most important English language components with four levels from 1 (Not Important) to 4 (Very Important) to investigate the students' target needs. Since the MA students had passed technical English courses at BA level and were familiar with the field, they could provide a good picture of target needs of BA students of Law.

Like the questionnaire for BA students, the questionnaire for content teachers included the same sections as described for BA students' questionnaire.

3.3.2 Reliability and validity of the questionnaires

To obtain the reliability of the questionnaires, the researcher used Cronbach's alpha to estimate the reliability coefficient for target needs subscale, present

needs subscale, and the whole scale. The results were satisfactory as presented in Table 2 below.

The questionnaires were given to four content teachers to check the content, clarity, format, and relevance of the items. Consequently, some ambiguous, irrelevant, and faulty items were either modified or omitted. Thus, content validity was confirmed.

Table 2. Alpha coefficients for needs

Scales	Number of items	Alpha coefficients
Target needs subscale (Section B)	18	.864
Present needs subscale (Section C)	22	.883
Combined present and target needs subscales (Sections B and C)	40	.896

3.4 Data analysis procedures

The results of questionnaires were analyzed quantitatively for the first research question, using descriptive statistics including absolute frequency (F) and relative frequency (%) of the items. To investigate the second research question, Mann Whitney U was used. To investigate the third research question, Kruskal Wallis were used. IBM SPSS, version 22, was used to do the statistical analyses.

4. Results

The first research question asked about the present and target academic English language needs of Iranian BA students of Law. The results of questionnaires are presented in the following tables.

Table 3. BA students of law's target needs

	Items	Not Important		Rather Important		Important		Very Important	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
1	Reading subject specific texts	19	8.8	68	31.2	75	34.4	56	25.7
2	Reading English articles	59	27.1	80	36.7	44	22.5	27	12.4
3	Writing homework	53	24.3	74	33.9	66	30.3	24	11
4	Tacking class examination	40	18.3	75	34.4	63	28.9	40	18.3
5	Comprehending English lectures	39	17.9	62	28.4	78	35.8	37	17

	Items	Not Important		Rather Important		Important		Very Important	
6	Knowledge of grammar	42	19.3	62	28.4	61	28	52	23.9
7	General vocabulary	12	5.5	38	17.4	56	25.7	111	50.9
8	Technical vocabulary	20	9.2	48	22	53	24.3	96	44
9	Pronunciation	14	6.4	50	22.9	81	37.2	70	32.1
10	Using general dictionary (E to P)	18	8.3	66	30.3	82	37.6	50	22.9
11	Using general dictionary (P to E)	34	15.6	63	28.9	78	35.8	40	18.3
12	Using technical dictionary (E to E)	37	17	55	25.2	72	33	51	23.4
13	Translating technical texts (E to P)	16	7.3	59	27.1	75	34.4	66	30.3
14	Translating technical texts (P to E)	37	17	73	33.5	71	32.6	33	15.1
15	Using internet to do research	32	14.7	62	28.4	72	33	50	22.9
16	Writing e-mails to teachers and field experts	74	33.9	66	30.3	54	24.8	21	9.6
17	Asking questions in conferences related to the field	76	34.9	58	26.6	50	22.9	28	12.8
18	Note-taking from lectures related to the field	81	37.2	67	30.7	39	17.9	28	12.8

According to Table 3, "general vocabulary" (50.9%) and "technical vocabulary" (44%) were regarded as Very Important by the majority of the students. Further, "using general bilingual English-to-Persian dictionaries" (37.6%), "pronunciation"(37.2%), "Using general bilingual Persian-to-English dictionaries" (35.8%), "comprehending English lectures" (35.8%), "reading subject specific texts" (34.4%), "translation from English to Persian" (34.4%), "using technical dictionary from English to English" (33%), and "using the Internet to do research" (33%) were regarded Important by the most of undergraduate students. "Reading articles" (36.7%), "taking class examination in English" (34.4%), "writing homework" (33.9%), "translation from Persian to English" (3.5%), and "grammar" (28.4%) were viewed Rather Important by majority of the BA students. The items 16, 17, and 18 were considered Not Important for BA students.

Table 4. BA students of law's present needs

	Items	I Can't		Not Good		Good, Need Improvement		I think I Can	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
1	Reading subject specific texts	31	14.2	116	53.2	64	29.4	6	2.6

	Items	I Can't		Not Good		Good, Need Improvement		I think I Can	
2	Reading English articles	86	39.9	92	42.2	29	13.3	7	3.2
3	Writing homework	57	26.1	84	38.5	61	28	13	6
4	Tacking class examination	53	24.3	90	41.3	64	29.4	9	4.1
5	Comprehending English lectures	88	40.4	96	44	25	11.5	6	2.8
6	Knowledge of grammar	54	24.8	98	45	55	25.2	8	3.7
7	General vocabulary	16	7.3	99	45.4	83	38.1	16	7.3
8	Technical vocabulary	42	19.3	114	52.3	49	22.5	11	5
9	Pronunciation	17	7.8	96	44	76	34.9	27	12.4
10	Using general dictionary (E to P)	18	8.3	73	33.5	82	37.6	44	20.2
11	Using general dictionary (P to E)	28	12.8	67	30.7	83	38.1	38	17.4
12	Using technical dictionary (E to E)	43	19.7	94	43.1	53	24.3	25	11.5
13	Translating technical texts (E to P)	48	22	86	39.4	64	19.4	17	7.8
14	Translating technical texts (P to E)	69	31.7	104	47.7	37	17	7	3.2
15	Skimming	50	22.9	100	45.9	56	25.7	11	5
16	Scanning	52	23.9	107	49.1	49	22.5	9	4.1
17	Using internet to do research	38	17.4	78	35.8	79	36.2	21	9.6
18	Writing e-mail to teachers or field experts	88	40.4	94	43.1	27	12.4	6	2.8
19	Understanding relations within and between sentences in subject specific texts	79	36.2	93	42.7	33	15.1	9	4.1
20	Guessing meaning of words from suffixes and prefixes	36	16.5	94	43.1	69	31.7	16	7.3
21	Asking questions in conferences related to the field	101	46.3	84	38.5	21	9.6	5	2.3
22	Note-taking from lectures related to the field	98	45	86	39	26	11.9	4	1.8

Table 4 shows responses of BA students for present needs. As Table 4 shows, the majority of BA students regarded their skills at "using Internet to do research" (36.2%), "using general dictionary from Persian to English" (38.1%), and "using general dictionary from English to Persian" (37.6%) as

Good, Need Improvement. Moreover, the majority of the students said that they were Not Good at items 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 12, 13, 14, 15, 18, 19, and 20. In items related to "asking questions in conferences related to the field" and "note-taking from lectures related to the field", the majority of the students, (46.3%) and (45%), stated that they were not able to ask questions in conferences and take notes from lectures .

Table 5. Graduate students of law's perception regarding BA students' target needs

	Content of Items	Not Important		Rather Important		Important		Very Important	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
1	Reading subject specific texts	1	3	12	36.4	9	27.3	11	33.3
2	Reading English articles	11	33.3	8	24.2	11	33.3	3	9.1
3	Writing homework	11	33.3	13	39.4	3	9.1	6	18.2
4	Tacking class examination	10	30.3	9	27.3	7	21.2	7	21.2
5	Comprehending English lectures	10	30.3	12	36.4	5	15.2	6	18.2
6	Knowledge of grammar	7	21.2	8	24.2	9	27.3	9	27.3
7	General vocabulary	1	3	12	36.4	6	18.2	14	42.4
8	Technical vocabulary	2	6.1	5	15.2	11	33.3	15.	45.5
9	Pronunciation	4	12.1	8	24.2	13	39.4	8	24.2
10	Using general dictionary (E to P)	2	6.1	7	21.2	14	42.4	10	30.3
11	Using general dictionary (P to E)	5	15.2	12	36.4	16	30.3	6	18.2
12	Using technical dictionary (E to E)	8	24.2	9	27.3	8	24.2	8	24.2
13	Translating technical texts (E to P)	3	9.1	6	18.2	11	33.3	13	39.4
14	Translating technical texts (P to E)	8	24.2	9	27.3	8	24.2	8	24.2
15	Using internet to do research	4	12.1	6	18.2	12	36.4	11	33.3

	Content of Items	Not Important		Rather Important		Important		Very Important	
16	Writing e-mails to teachers and field experts	7	21.2	11	33.3	11	33.3	4	12.1
17	Asking questions in conferences related to the field	13	39.4	8	24.2	11	33.3	1	3
18	Note-taking from lectures related to the field	11	33.3	10	30.3	11	33.3	1	3

Table 5 shows responses of MA students regarding BA students' target needs. The majority of MA students believed that "technical vocabulary" (45.5 %), "general vocabulary" (42.4%), and "translation from English to Persian" (39.4%), "grammar" (27.3%) are Very Important for academic success of the BA students. Moreover, most of them regarded "using general dictionary from English to Persian" (42.4%), "pronunciation" (39.4%), "using Internet to do research" (36.4%), "reading scientific articles" (33.3%), "writing email" (33.3%), and "note-taking from lectures" (33.3%) as Important. About "writing homework" (39.4%), "reading subject specific texts" (36.4%), "using general dictionary from Persian to English" (36.4%), "comprehending English lectures" (36.4%), "translation from Persian to English" (27.3%), and "using technical dictionary from English to English" (27.3%), most of MA students chose Rather Important. Most of MA students regarded "asking questions in seminars" (39.4%), "reading articles" (33.3%), "note-taking from lectures" (33.3%), and "taking class examinations" (30.3%) as Not Important.

Table 6. Content teachers' perception regarding BA students' target needs

	Items	Not Important		Rather Important		Important		Very Important	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
1	Reading subject specific texts	0	0	1	10	0	0	9	90
2	Reading English articles	1	10	2	20	3	30	4	40
3	Writing homework	2	20	0	0	5	50	3	30

	Items	Not Important		Rather Important		Important		Very Important	
4	Tacking class examination	2	20	5	50	3	30	0	0
5	Comprehending English lectures	2	20	3	30	3	30	2	20
6	Knowledge of grammar	0	0	2	20	3	30	5	50
7	General vocabulary	0	0	0	0	3	30	7	70
8	Technical vocabulary	0	0	0	0	0	0	10	100
9	Pronunciation	1	10	3	30	2	20	4	40
10	Using general dictionary (E to P)	1	10	0	0	6	60	3	30
11	Using general dictionary (P to E)	0	0	0	0	4	40	6	60
12	Using technical dictionary (E to E)	0	0	1	10	3	30	6	60
13	Translating technical texts (E to P)	0	0	0	0	4	40	6	60
14	Translating technical texts (P to E)	1	10	1	10	5	50	3	30
15	Using internet to do research	2	20	3	30	5	50	0	0
16	Writing e-mails to teachers and field experts	2	20	3	30	5	50	0	0
17	Asking questions in conferences related to the field	1	10	4	40	3	30	2	20
18	Note-taking from lectures related to the field	4	40	1	10	2	20	3	30

Table 6 shows responses of content teachers regarding BA students' target needs. As Table 6 indicates, content teachers regarded "technical vocabulary" (100%), "general vocabulary" (70%), "reading subject specific text" (90%), "translation from English to Persian" (60%), "using general dictionary from Persian to English" (60%), "using technical dictionary from English to English" (60%), "grammar" (50%), "pronunciation" (40%), and "reading articles" (40%) as Very Important. Further, they considered "using general

dictionary from English to Persian" (60%), "translation from Persian to English" (50%), "writing homework" (50%), "using Internet to do research" (50%), and "writing email to teachers" (50%) as Important. Moreover, content teachers mentioned that "taking class examination" (50%) and "asking questions in seminars" (40%) are Rather Important. Finally, they wrote that "note-taking from lectures" (40%) is Not Important in BA students' academic success.

Table 7. Content teachers' perception regarding BA students' present needs

	Items	They Can't		Not Good		Good, Need Improvement		I think They Can	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
1	Reading subject specific texts	4	40	4	40	2	20	0	0
2	Reading English articles	8	80	2	20	0	0	0	0
3	Writing homework	5	50	5	50	0	0	0	0
4	Tacking class examination	7	70	3	30	0	0	0	0
5	Comprehending English lectures	8	80	2	20	0	0	0	0
6	Knowledge of grammar	1	10	7	70	2	20	0	0
7	General vocabulary	0	0	3	30	7	70	0	0
8	Technical vocabulary	3	30	3	30	4	40	0	0
9	Pronunciation	1	10	7	70	2	20	0	0
10	Using general dictionary (E to P)	0	0	3	30	7	70	0	0
11	Using general dictionary (P to E)	3	30	4	40	3	30	0	0
12	Using technical dictionary (E to E)	5	50	1	10	4	40	0	0
13	Translating technical texts (E to P)	4	60	3	30	1	10	0	0
14	Translating technical texts (P to E)	8	80	2	20	0	0	0	0
15	Skimming	3	30	7	70	0	0	0	0
16	Scanning	5	50	5	50	0	0	0	0

	Items	They Can't		Not Good		Good, Need Improvement		I think They Can	
17	Using internet to do research	5	50	5	50	0	0	0	0
18	Writing e-mail to teachers or field experts	6	60	4	40	0	0	0	0
19	Understanding relations within and between sentences in subject specific texts	2	20	6	60	2	20	0	0
20	Guessing meaning of words from suffixes and prefixes	3	30	7	70	0	0	0	0
21	Asking questions in conferences related to the field	6	60	4	40	0	0	0	0
22	Note-taking from lectures related to the field	6	60	4	40	0	0	0	0

Table 7 shows responses of content teachers regarding BA students' present needs. As Table 7 reveals, it can be realized that most of content teachers regarded BA students' abilities for "general vocabulary" (70%), "using general bilingual English-to-Persian dictionaries" (70%), "technical vocabulary" (40%) as Good, Need Improvement. The majority of content teachers believed that B.A students are Not Good at "grammar" (70%), "pronunciation" (70%), "skimming" (70%), "guessing the meaning of the words from suffixes and prefixes" (70%), "understanding relations within and between sentences" (60%), "writing homework" (50%), "using internet to do research" (50%), "scanning" (50%), "reading subject specific texts" (40%), and "using general dictionary from Persian to English" (40%). Regarding "reading scientific articles" (80 %), "comprehending English lectures" (80%), "translation from Persian to English" (80%), "taking class exams" (70%), "asking question in seminars" (60 %), "note- taking" (60%), "writing email" (60 %), "writing homework" (50%), "using the Internet to do research" (50%), "scanning" (50%), "using technical dictionary from English to English" (50%), "reading subject specific texts" (40%), "translation English

to Persian" (60%), most of teachers believed that undergraduate students "Can't" do these skills, sub-skills, and components.

To answer the second research question about whether target needs differ according to undergraduate students, graduate students, and content teachers, a Kruskal Wallis Test was run. The results of descriptive and inferential statistics are presented in Table 8 and Table 9, respectively.

Table 8. Results of descriptive statistics for the third research question

	Group	N	Mean Rank
Target needs	BA students	218	121.17
	MA students	33	117.00
	Content teachers	10	179.85
	Total	261	

According to Table 8, the content teachers have the highest mean rank (mean rank = 179.85), followed by the BA students (mean rank = 121.17). The lowest mean rank (mean rank = 117.00) belongs to MA students. These mean ranks describe the direction of the differences between these three groups, showing which group is higher. In order to see whether the differences among the mean ranks among these three groups are statistically significant, the Kruskal Wallis test was run. The results are presented in Table 9.

Table 9. Results of inferential statistics for the second research question

	Target needs
Chi-Square	6.815
Df	2
Asymp. Sig.	.033

As shown in Table 9, A Kruskal-Wallis Test revealed a statistically significant difference in target needs across three different groups (BA students, $n = 218$, MA students, $n = 33$, Content teachers, $n = 10$), $\chi2_{(2, 245)} = 6.815$, $p = .033$. This implies that these three groups perceived target needs differently.

To locate the differences among the three groups, three follow-up post hoc Mann-Whitney U tests were run, yielding the following results. First,

descriptive statistics are presented in Table 10, and next inferential statistics are given in 11. Table 10 shows the differences among the mean ranks of the three groups, comparing each pair separately. Table 11 indicates where exactly these differences are statistically significant.

Table 10. Descriptive statistics for Mann-Whitney U test on target needs

	Group	N	Mean Rank
Target needs	BA students	218	118.56
	MA students	33	114.55
	Total	251	
	Group	N	Mean Rank
Target needs	BA students	218	104.10
	Content teachers	10	154.95
	Total	228	
	Group	N	Mean Rank
Target needs	MA students	33	19.45
	Content teachers	10	30.40
	Total	43	

Table 11 shows comparisons between BA students, MA students, and content teachers. As shown in Table 11, the differences between the mean rank of BA students (mean rank =118.56, $n = 218$) and that of MA students (mean rank =114.55, $n = 33$) were not statistically significant ($U = 3219$, $z = -.315$, $p = .753$). However, the mean rank of BA students (mean rank = 104.10, $n = 218$) and that of content teachers (mean rank =154.95, $n = 10$) were statistically significant ($U = 525.500$, $z = -2.560$, $p = .010$), as were the mean rank of MA students (mean rank =19.45, $n = 33$) and that of content teachers (mean rank =30.40, $n = 10$) ($U = 81.000$, $z = -2.418$, $p = .016$).

Table 11. Follow-up, post hoc inferential statistics for target needs

Target needs as perceived by BA students and MA students	
Mann-Whitney U	3219.000
Wilcoxon W	3780.000
Z	-.315
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.753
Target needs as perceived by BA students and content teachers	
Mann-Whitney U	525.500
Wilcoxon W	21028.500
Z	-2.560
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.010
Target needs as perceived by MA students and content teachers	
Mann-Whitney U	81.000
Wilcoxon W	642.000
Z	-2.418
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.016

To answer the third research question about whether perceptions of BA students and content teachers differed on present needs, a Mann Whitney Test was run. The results of descriptive and inferential statistics are presented in Table 12 and Table 13.

Table 12. Results of descriptive statistics for the third research question

	Group	N	Mean Rank
Present needs	BA students	218	102.13
	Content teachers	10	49.06
	Total	228	

According to Table 12, the undergraduate students had the higher mean rank (mean rank = 102.13) and the lower mean rank (mean rank = 49.06) belonged to content teachers. In order to see whether the differences between the mean ranks between these two groups are statistically significant, the Mann Whitney U test was run. The results are presented in Table 13.

Table 13. Results of inferential statistics for the third research question

	Present needs
Mann-Whitney U	356.500
Wilcoxon W	392.500
Z	-2.555
Asymp. Sig.(2-tailed)	.011

A Mann-Whitney U Test revealed a statistically significant difference in the perception of undergraduate students (*mean rank* = 102.13, *n* = 218) and that of content teachers regarding present needs (*mean rank* = 49.06, *n* = 10), $U = 356.500$, $z = -2.555$, $p = .011$).

5. Discussion, Conclusion and Implications

The present study used a quantitative approach to examine the present and target needs of BA students of law. The results of questionnaire analysis showed that although BA students, MA students, and content teachers unanimously believed that general vocabulary and technical vocabulary were two target needs for BA students of law to acquire because they were regarded as very important, they did not necessarily agree on the other skills and components. There were statistically significant differences among the responses of these three groups regarding target needs. This finding is in keeping with Atai and Nazari (2011), Shahini and Riazi (2001), and Khanjani (2005). Atai and Nazari (2011), for example, found statistically significant differences among the perceptions of stakeholders regarding the reading target needs of health information management (HIM) students. The findings of this study also support the assertion by Atai and Shoja (2011) that "as for target needs of students, it seems that curriculum developers and syllabus designers have neither identified nor defined them operationally in order to formulate specific objectives for the corresponding program" (p. 13).

The results of questionnaire analysis also showed that both BA students and content teachers regarded "using general bilingual English-to-Persian dictionaries" as the ability which needs improvement; however, statistically significant differences were found between the responses of these two groups on present needs. This finding is not in line with Shoja (2008), who found that BA students and content teachers shared similar ideas regarding students'

present needs in computer engineering. However, this finding supports that of Shahini and Riazi (2001) who found statistically significant differences among the responses of various stakeholders. One possible explanation why such differences do exist relates to the view that content teachers may have a better understanding of undergraduate students' present needs. Further, due to low language proficiency and ineffective content knowledge, undergraduate students may not know what constitutes their current needs, or they may have a mistaken idea about these needs.

Except for "Writing e-mails to teachers and field experts", "Asking questions in conferences related to the field", "Note-taking from lectures related to the field", the analysis of perception of BA students showed that knowledge of vocabulary, using dictionaries, pronouncing words, reading English sources, translating English legal texts into Persian, comprehension of lectures given in English, using the Internet to do research, and knowledge of grammar were perceived as very important, or important, to BA students of law. The first point worthy of discussion is that these target needs primarily concern reading skills students of law should know. These students seem not to possess sufficient knowledge of reading skills and strategies to tackle the content they are to encounter. Prioritization of reading skills over other skills and components in ESAP classes for BA students of law may have the added benefit that these students may save time, investing only in those areas they feel they need to improve for their academic success.

One reason why students of law attach so much importance to reading skills may relate to the setting in which they are studying. Iran is an EFL setting, in which students are not exposed to the English language. As a result, these students do not hear much English, conferences in which these students are able to present their work in English are very rare, and content classes are in Persian. A second possible reason may concern what their teachers require them to do. Although ESAP at Iranian Universities is centered on primarily reading skill, the majority of ESAP teachers ask students to translate some pages in these ESAP classes. Translation is a very complex skill, requiring a very good command of source language and target language, a large number of general and technical words, and knowledge of grammar. Mastering

reading skills helps students of law to better understand the text they want to translate.

To help students of law to become autonomous readers, EAP textbook developers should invest in the areas these students think are important to know. EAP textbook developers can use more academic, than highly specialized legal, texts to design relevant tasks to tap into knowledge of vocabulary, grammar, and translation. The tasks may clearly ask students to practice techniques about how to use dictionaries, how to use the Internet to find information, how to read English legal texts, and how to use grammar related to law. ESP practitioners should also explicitly teach students these strategies in ESAP classes because research has shown that students may not understand the salience of skills and strategies when their consciousness is not raised (see Brown, 2007, for a full review).

The findings of this study showed that perceptions of needs may vary between BA students and content teachers. The needs which may be perceived as very important or important to BA students may seem rather important or unimportant to content teachers. One issue which can be discussed is the effect of current context and practice on the perception of needs. Content specialists teaching technical English courses in law hold a different world view deeply rooted in the discipline they teach. They are not trained in language, and their primary focus in these classes is on content than language. Common practice in ESAP classes at Iranian universities is that students of law should be familiarized with technical content in English they do not encounter in their regular courses taught in Persian.

The findings of this research attest to the necessity of taking into consideration the GE level of undergraduate students in all steps of ESAP curriculum development. As Atai and Nazari (2011) asserted, "it seems that the EAP program designers and textbook writers at Iranian universities lost sight of students' GEP level on entrance to EAP courses" (p. 38). Fortunately, a program is now underway in SAMT to address more general language needs of EAP students. This program attempts to revise the existing EAP books currently taught at Iranian universities for technical English courses. The primary objective of the program is to develop new EAP books to help EAP students to develop reading skills. The new template for developing new EAP

textbooks explicitly states that "we build on the premise in the current EAP reading research holding that learners should be provided with ample opportunities in EAP textbooks in order to develop reading skills and strategies" (The New Template for Developing EAP Textbooks for SAMT, n.d., p. 1).

Some limitations need to be recognized in this study. The first limitation in this study has to do with quantitative investigation of needs. Adding a qualitative component provides a more complete picture of needs. A second limitation is that the sample size in this study was relatively small. In survey studies, larger sample sizes yield more accurate results when randomization and representativeness are used.

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Appendix: Interview Questions with Content Teachers

1. What are the most important language skills and components required by undergraduate students of law?

2. What teaching activities do you do in your classes?

3. In your opinion, should ESAP courses be oriented more towards ESP or general English? Why?

4. Is the number of credits devoted to ESAP course at the undergraduate level of law adequate?

5. How much do the students' GEP levels affect their successes in EAP courses?

6. Who should handle EAP classes? Content teachers or EFL teachers?

7. What are the major language problems and difficulties that law undergraduates face?

8. What are the major problems and challenges of teaching and learning ESP in Iran?