

## A Needs Analysis of the EFL Curriculum Based on Hutchinson and Waters' Learning Needs Model

تحليل احتياجات مناهج اللغة الإنجليزية كلفة أجنبية بناءً على نموذج احتياجات التعلم لهاتشينسون

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ملخص

يُعدّ تحليل الاحتياجات عنصرًا أساسيًا في تصميم مناهج اللغة الإنجليزية كلفة أجنبية (EFL) يُعدّ تحليل الاحتياجات عنصرًا أساسيًا في تصميم مناهج اللغة الإنجليزية كلفة أجنبية (EFL) إذ يضمن التوافق بين المحتوى التعليمي والاحتياجات اللغوية الفعلية للمتعلمين. وعلى الرغم من أهميته، إلا أن الدراسات التجريبية التي تناولت مدى انعكاس مناهج اللغة الإنجليزية كلفة أجنبية في جامعات إقليم كردستان لاحتياجات المتعلمين لا تزال محدودة. تتناول هذه الدراسة تحليل احتياجات المتعلمين في مناهج اللغة الإنجليزية كلفة أجنبية في جامعات كردستان، وذلك من خلال منهجية تحليل الاحتياجات. وتعتمد الدراسة على نموذج هاتشينسون وووترز (1987) للنهج المتمحور حول التعلم، مع التركيز على تحديد احتياجات المتعلمين ونقائصهم ورغباتهم فيما يتعلق بالتعلم مدى الحياة. وقد طُبّق تصميم بحثي كمي لجمع البيانات من طلاب السنة الرابعة في ثلاث جامعات مختلفة، حيث تم اختيار عينة عشوائية قوامها 150 طالبًا. وتُظهر نتائج الدراسة أن متعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلفة أجنبية الأكراد في جامعات كويا وصلاح الدين ورايرين يُبدون احتياجات تعليمية كبيرة وتفضيلات تعليمية قوية. مع ذلك، فإن أوجه القصور الملحوظة لديهم طفيفة. فقد أقرّ الطلاب بضرورة ملحة لتحسين مهاراتهم اللغوية الأساسية، لا سيما في الكتابة والتحدث والنطق والاستماع والقراءة. وأبلغ الطلاب في الكليات الثلاث عن مشكلات مماثلة تتعلق بالقواعد والمفردات وفهم المتحدثين الأصليين. ولم يُظهر التحليل أي اختلافات جوهرية على مستوى الجامعة. وهذا يشير إلى أنهم يتشاركون متطلبات لغوية وعقبات تعليمية متشابهة. ونتيجة لذلك، يُشير ذلك إلى ضرورة إدخال تعديلات على المناهج الدراسية لتلبية هذه المتطلبات المشتركة بشكل أفضل.

### ABSTRACT

Needs analysis is a fundamental and essential component of effective English as a Foreign Language (EFL) curriculum design, as it ensures careful alignment between instructional content and learners' actual linguistic needs. Despite its importance, limited empirical research has systematically examined the extent to which university-level EFL curricula in the Kurdistan region adequately reflect learners' needs. This study investigates learners' needs analysis in the EFL curriculum in universities in Kurdistan. seeking to provide evidence-based insights for curricular improvement. This study investigates learners' needs within university curriculum through a needs analysis approach. Specifically, this study utilizes Hutchinson and Waters' (1987) Learning-Centered Approach Model, concentrating on the identification of learners' necessities, deficiencies, and desires concerning lifelong learning and the development of language. A quantitative research design was implemented carefully to collect data from fourth-year students across three distinct universities, with a sample size of 150 students selected randomly to ensure representativeness. The study's results show that Kurdish EFL learners at Koya, Salahadin, and Raparin Universities express significant and clearly learning demands and strong learning preferences. However, their perceived deficiencies are only modest. Students recognized a significant need to enhance their fundamental language abilities, notably in writing, speaking, pronunciation, listening, and

reading. Students at all three colleges reported similar issues with grammar, vocabulary, and comprehending native speakers. The analysis showed no significant differences across the university. This suggests that they share similar language demands and learning obstacles. As a result, it implies that curriculum changes are needed to better meet these shared requirements.

**KEYWORDS: Needs Analysis, Wants, Lacks, Needs, EFL Curriculum**

### 1. Introduction

One of the basic assumptions of curriculum development is that a sound educational program should be based on an analysis of learners' needs. Needs analysis has a significant role in the process of designing and carrying out any language course, whether it be English for Specific Purposes (ESP) or general English course, and its centrality has been acknowledged by several scholars and authors (Munby, 1978; Richterich and Chancerel, 1987; Hutchinson and Waters, 1987; Berwick, 1989; Brindley, 1989; Tarone and Yule, 1989; Robinson, 1991; Johns West, 1994; Allison et al. (1994); Seedhouse, 1995; Jordan, 1997; Dudley-Evans and St. John, 1998; Iwai et al. 1999; HampLyons, 2001; Finney, 2002, 1991) .There have been numerous definitions and efforts by education stakeholders and specialists to develop approaches to describe learner needs. Needs analysis is “the process of establishing the what and how of a course” (Dudley-Evans and St John 1998, p. 121). Previous studies on needs analysis have been conducted in various educational contexts and countries. Overall, these studies consistently revealed mismatches between learners’ actual language needs and the content of existing English curricula, highlighting gaps in skill development, lack of context-specific materials, insufficient focus on learners’ professional or academic goals, and the need for learner-centered curriculum design. Many of these studies emphasized the importance of aligning instructional materials with learners’ real communicative needs and stakeholders’ expectations. However, despite the extensive research conducted internationally, no systematic needs analysis has been carried out within the EFL curriculum in the Kurdistan context. Therefore, the present study differs from previous research by investigating learners’ learning needs analysis within the EFL curriculum in Kurdish. To achieve this, the study poses the following research questions

1- What are the actual needs of Kurdish EFL learners?

2- What are the lack and wants of learners’ needs in EFL curriculum?

### 2. Evolution and definitions Need Analysis

The term ‘analysis of needs’ was first used in the field of language teaching by Michael West that came up with the idea of ‘needs’ to describe what language learners will need to be able to do in the target situation and how they could best learn the language during their time learning it in a survey report published in 1926 (White, 1988). In 1960s, it became an important part of ESP course creation; over the next few decades, needs analysis got very little, if any, attention. The main reason for this is that the traditional view of language structure continued to have an impact on the field of English language teaching (ELT). This led to the idea that mastering these structurally related parts of language, such as grammatical units and lexical items, was the point of learning a second or foreign language. (Richards and Rodgers, 1986, p. 17). The notion of ‘needs analysis’ reemerged in the field of applied linguistics in 1970s due to a comprehensive study conducted by the Council of Europe team. Their research concentrated on developing an innovative approach for instructing adult learners in primary European languages across Europe. Needs analysis or needs assessment is an integral part of language curriculum development. It provides the basis for lesson planning, syllabus design, materials evaluation and development, and instructional design and assessment development. The most frequently quoted definition for needs analysis is from Brown (1995) and to Iwai et al. (1999), needs analysis is the activity of the information-gathering process. Importantly, the information collected from a needs analysis helps determine what needs to be supplemented for curriculum development (Alderson & Scott, 1992; Coleman, 1992; Mackay & Bosquet, 1981; Palmer, 1992), for curriculum change or improvement (Snow & Brinton, 1988), and for material development hence it is considered to be an integral and indispensable part of systematic curriculum design. These resources can guide the curriculum developers and teachers in establishing and improving the specific goals and contents of the curriculum as well as helping them select tasks and activities appropriate to the established goals. Benesch (2001, p.72) argues that needs analysis is strongly related to the goal of learning, while Hutchinson and Waters (1991) consider learning needs as the needs of learners required during the learning process. Needs analysis is the most important step in making a successful learning system and process that will help you reach your learning goal (Kusni, 2013; Poedjiastutie and Oliver, 2017; Rokhyati, 2013). It finds out about the learner's general traits and skills, as well as their weaknesses and strengths in terms of the classroom setting. According to Mahbub & Fauzi (2018), needs analysis is an important starting point in

designing programs, materials, syllabus, etc. to suit student needs. Needs analysis is very necessary to determine learning objectives which will later be used to develop materials, learning activities, and evaluations (Lestari, 2014). Information about the needs of students can be used to develop the curriculum and teaching materials which in turn lead to the development of more motivating and useful programs (Crookes & Schmidt, 1991 Dooley, 2010). Furthermore, needs analysis greatly facilitates the educational organizations and the educators to develop learner-centered teaching materials, selecting the appropriate teaching methods, and making fair assessments. The use of needs analysis makes the language teaching more target oriented and effective. Needs analysis can be done at any time of the language programme. If it is carried out at the beginning of the course, it may provide the instructor with the information about what the learner brings to the course; if it is done during the course, the instructor may have a general overview of what has been accomplished through this course and what the learner wants and needs to know in the future. The educators want to find the specific needs and interests learners will be further motivated to learn. From above theories, it can be concluded that needs analysis is defined as a specific ground for a future development of the educational activities of a particular group of learners. Previous research has looked at learners' demands in EFL environments. One of them is in the title of "EEP Students' Needs Analysis Based on the Learning-Centered Approach" was conducted in 2020. The data demonstrated that students' ESP requirements were highly linked to occupational pressures. In terms of needs, the majority of participants emphasized the significance of increasing their English skills, especially speaking and writing abilities, in order to complete professional responsibilities such as customer contact, emails, and meetings. Students noted a lack of business-related vocabulary, fluency, grammatical issues, and confidence in real-world job circumstances. Learners reported a significant preference for more practical, job-oriented English resources and activities that represent genuine working circumstances. Overall, the findings show a disparity between the existing ESP program and the students' real target language requirements. Another study entitled "Needs Analysis of English Material for 10th Grade Students in office Automation and governance department" was conducted by Ainan Salsabilla, Santi Andriyani, Andra Andriawan, Meli Indah Sugiarti in (2022). This study used a descriptive qualitative approach to investigate the English language demands of tenth-grade students studying Office Automation and Governance at a Vocational High School. Data were gathered using English examinations, questionnaires, and interviews. The findings highlighted two major issues: first, the teaching materials lacked innovation and creativity; second, the textbook content did not address the specific needs of students in the Office Automation and Governance program. Another study titled "Students' Needs Analysis in Learning General English A Case at A German Education Study Program" was conducted by Wenda Marlin Kakerissa, Nenden Sri Lengkanawati in (2022). It was a qualitative study at Pattimura University in Ambon, Indonesia, that used a semi-open questionnaire to investigate the General English demands of students in the German Language Education Program. Based on Hutchinson and Waters' paradigm, the study discovered that students required information on everyday life, education, culture, and adolescent difficulties, with daily life being the most important. They liked news articles and exhibited a strong desire to learn public speaking and resume writing for future employment. A paucity of vocabulary was a significant impediment to all language skills. The study underlined the need of personalized materials and more practice in improving learning results. Furthermore, "The Learning Needs Analysis of English for Specific Purposes (ESP)" was conducted by GUO Hui in (2017). The majority of students who do not major in English lack the English language proficiency required for their future employment, according to a survey conducted at Qingdao University of Science and Technology. 78% of respondents said they were unprepared to utilize English professionally. The current curriculum does not address the specialized language requirements of various occupational fields and places an excessive amount of emphasis on generic English. Students are looking for ESP classes that emphasize real-world, career-related communication skills. Gürlér and Konca's study, "Lacks, Necessities and Wants of Prospective English Teachers in ELT Departments: A Needs Analysis and Sustainability" (2023, Turkey), investigated the lacks, necessities, and wants of prospective English teachers in ELT departments from both insider and outsider perspectives, using Target Situation Analysis. The study collected qualitative data through interviews with teacher trainers and senior students from 14 universities, revealing significant lacks in practical training, professional qualifications, and intrinsic and extrinsic teaching needs. Key necessities for effective teaching were identified as practical, occupational, internal, and external requirements, while participants also expressed strong wants for pedagogical, linguistic, individual, and structural support.

### **3. Hutchinson and Waters' Model of Needs Analysis**

### 3.1 Target Situation Analysis (TSA)

The target situation refers to the context in which language learners will utilize the language they are acquiring (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987). The target situation refers to the context in which language learners will utilize the language they are acquiring. Hutchinson and Waters, 1987. Target Situation Analysis (TSA) is a form of needs analysis that primarily concentrates on the requirements of students upon completion of a language course (Robinson, 1991). To (Bocanegra-Valle (2016 p.563) TSA is what learners should know in target context. Nation and Macalister (2009) state that the primary goal of target needs analysis is to investigate the course's goals and content. It guarantees that the course material is appropriate and relevant. The target needs can also be divided into two categories: existing knowledge and required knowledge, as well as subjective and objective need. A learning-centered approach was advocated by Hutchinson and Waters (1987). They had distinguished between the learner-centered approach and the learning-centered approach. The learner-centered approach is found on the premise that the learner is entirely responsible for the learning process, whereas the learning-centered approach views learning as a complex negotiation between the individual and society. Learning needs, on the opposite hand, are how learners learn the language. Learning needs are about the learners' motivation of learning the language, the way they like to be told, the available resources, the time and place the course will occur and therefore the learners' personal information. This approach encompassed the teaching syllabus, methods, and materials. The needs analysis model for the learning-centered approach is initially proposes by Hutchinson and Waters (1987). The two components of needs analysis in the model are learning needs and target situation needs. The "necessities," "lacks," and "wants" are examples of target needs. Hutchinson and Waters (1987) identified three facets: Necessities: Necessities are "what the learner has to know in order to function effectively in the target situation. For students to succeed in a specific discourse community domain, they must first acquire the necessary language, information, and discourse. Lacks: Lacks are the "necessities the learner lacks". These are the language, knowledge, and discourse that learners are already familiar with and must acquire in order to effectively function within the target discourse community domain. Wants: Wants deal with "what the learners want or feel they need". This includes students' opinions on the matter, their desires, motivation, attitudes, and interests, as well as their individual motivations for learning and learning preferences. The goal of this perception or felt need is to acknowledge the active responsibilities that students play in identifying their needs.

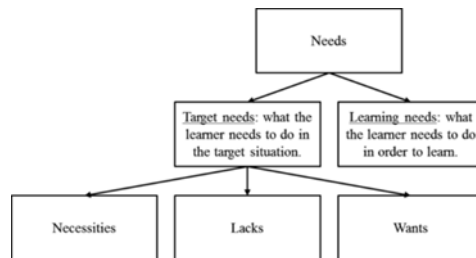


Figure (1) Hutchinson & Waters' (1987) Classification of Needs Analysis

### 3.2 Present Situation Analysis

Richterich (1977) comes up with the Present Situation Analysis (PSA) method, which is not the same as the goal situation analysis. Target Situation Analysis, on the other hand, looks at the learner's goals, which is necessary for making a course plan that helps them reach those goals. Present position Analysis (PSA), on the other hand, examines the learner's current position and identifies the gap between the present and the target. According to (Chamber 1980, Robinson, 1991) PSA investigates students' language proficiency at the start of a language course, as well as their strengths and weaknesses. The same idea is supported by Dudley-Evans & St. John which assert that PSA evaluates strengths and weaknesses in language, abilities, and learning experiences. Bocanegra-Valle (2016 p.563) defines PSA as the capabilities of learners about their current goal demands.

### 3.3 Subjective Needs and Objective Needs

Nunan (1988) divided needs analysis into two groups: "subjective" needs and "objective" needs. He advised teachers to figure out what the students' objective needs are by looking at their personal information. With this information, the teacher can choose or make a good lesson plan. Subjective needs come from the students themselves and affect how they are taught and what they are taught. Objective needs and subjective needs were another way to group different types of needs. These ideas were put forward by Brindley (1989) and Robinson (1991). Subjective needs are those that can be figured out from "factual information" about learners, like how well they spoke the language in class, how hard they thought it was for them, and how much they needed to use language in real life (Brindley, 1989). So, objective needs are those that can be found by looking at clear,

observable information about the situation, the learner, the language they need to learn, and their current level of skill and proficiency (Brown, 1995). Teachers can identify learners' objective needs by analyzing their biographical information, including age, gender, nationality, marital status, educational background, previous language courses, current language proficiency, linguistic patterns, challenges with learning foreign languages, and current or future career. The method of evaluating objective needs ought to incorporate this information.

Subjective needs, on the other hand, refer to learners' language learning cognition and emotional needs. It relates to learners' needs based on their "affective and cognitive factors". Brindley (1989) identifies characteristics such as learners' personality, self-confidence, cognitive styles, expectations, and self-esteem that impact their learning process. Graves (2000) posits that some information regarding the learners should be obtained in order to evaluate their subjective requirements. For instance, the learners' expectations for the language course and themselves, the targeted culture, the language, and their attitudes toward learning.

#### **4. Significance of Needs Analysis**

Needs analysis has been used in the field of language instruction for two or three decades. Richards (1990) considers Needs Analysis as 'fundamental' to the planning of general language courses and in language curriculum planning Needs Analysis can be utilized as a means to a number of things. It is a requirement in all course designs (Richerich and Chancerel, 1987). "It is also regarded as one of the most important steps of ESP, alongside syllabus design, material selection and production, teaching and learning, and evaluation. (Dudley-Evans and St John, 1998, p 125). Information on needs can be used for designing a new language program and/or evaluating an existing program. NA aligns teachers' and learners' agendas by exchanging information on learners' needs. Learners' needs guide the teachers to select the appropriate tasks or content, while teachers' statements of goals and objectives provide a better understanding of the purpose of instruction by the learners (Nunan, 1988). Needs analysis is an important aspect of producing content and organizing classes for language teachers because it assists with a variety of tasks. It assists students in determining the language abilities required to do specific tasks or achieve specific objectives, such as those required by sales managers, tour guides, or college students. Furthermore, it examines to determine if a present course fulfills the needs of its students well and assists in determining which kids in a group might need extra support with key language skills. It is crucial to focus on the needs of the learner. Richards believed that needs analysis should play a significant role in foreign language curriculum development. Before creating a course curriculum or policy, the appropriate staff should do a needs analysis. Similarly, Shu (2004) believes that needs analysis should be prioritized in the current curriculum formulation and design for foreign language education.

##### **4.1. Selecting and Optimizing Teaching Materials**

The first use of requirements analysis is in the selection and optimization of educational materials. Through needs analysis, teachers will discover about their students' basic knowledge, abilities, learning attitudes, and emotions. All of these things influence students learning. Basic knowledge helps teachers choose educational materials that are appropriate for the students' current levels. For example, if the class is at a lower level, the teaching materials should be easy and include some general understanding of life. The first choice is to use teaching materials that pique the learners' interest. Present ability requires the instructor to pay attention to what the pupil can and cannot do, and then the teacher selects things that can bridge the gap.

##### **4.2. Identifying Student Deficiencies and Optimizing Learning Objectives**

Setting educational objectives is an important aspect of instructional design. Learning objectives should be determined not just based on teaching content, but also on student analysis. Each learner has unique qualities that contribute to varying levels of learning. Analyzing the needs of various students is one technique to determine why they are at different levels. Teachers should identify the various challenges and demands of pupils at different levels. For example, top students require more challenging assignments to increase their talents in all areas, but backward pupils face learning difficulties due to psychological and family circumstances; therefore, teachers should identify these students' learning needs.

##### **4.3 Giving Guides to Design Teaching Activities and Methods**

Teaching activities are essential components of classroom instruction. Teachers create a variety of instructional activities to fulfill the goals of teaching and learning. According to Yang and Huang (2007), instructional activities should be humanistic and tailored to students' particular needs and learning styles. Some students prefer individual learning, while others prefer group work or teacher-directed learning. Then, the teacher can use a range of activities to fulfill the students' requirements.

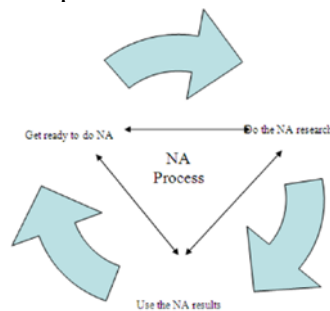
##### **4.4 Evaluating Teaching Effectiveness from Students' Needs**

Teaching evaluation is the assessment of teachers' "teaching" and students' "learning" in order to determine the achievement of teaching objectives. Teaching assessment not only helps students understand and enhance their own learning, but it also helps teachers improve their teaching. Because instructional objectives are created by an examination of students' needs, evaluation should also focus on whether students' needs are addressed. Hutchinson and Waters clearly state that 'tell me what you need English for and I will tell you the English that you need' (1987: 8). To put it another way, English adapts to meet the needs of its students. As a result, needs assessment is critical for the practice of specific-purpose teaching (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987). In other words, it helps teachers determine what specific language pupils require to succeed in their courses (Johns, 1991). Furthermore, it enables teachers to assess and improve students' existing difficulties and weaknesses while also empowering their strengths and skills (Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998).

### 5.Procedures for Conducting Needs Analysis

Conducting an effective NA is crucial for lifelong learning. Needs Analysis is a pivotal and must-used instrument (as guidance and evaluation of the course) in language teaching. It ensures that a course is both pertinent and enjoyable for the students. This is such a fundamental requirement that it is worthwhile to devote significant consideration to the needs analysis process (Nation and John Macalister P. 32). In order to become aware of students' needs, it has proved to be an effective tool. Needs analysis can be done in a number of ways, and the type of information gathered frequently depends on the method chosen. Since it is probable that any single source of information will be incomplete or partial, a triangular approach (i.e., the collection of information from two or more sources) is recommended (Jack C. Richards, p. 59). The needs assessment should be conducted using a specific series of steps. The results of your needs assessment will be reliable and beneficial if you employ methods and processes that have been demonstrated to be highly valid and reliable (Witkin & Altschuld, 1995). Data that is solely collected from learners is insufficient to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the program. Furthermore, administrators, instructors, graduates of the course, and material developers also furnish information regarding students' requirements (Long, 2005). It is also important to look for viewpoints different than the learners' own in order to obtain objective information. Two categories of source groups can be used to gather information on needs: audience groups, such as teachers and students, who are immediately impacted by the NA findings, and resource groups, such as parents and potential employers, who can offer knowledge on the target group (Brown, 1995). Brown (1995) divided the methods and tools used to collect NA data into six groups: tests, observations, interviews, meetings, surveys, and existing information. Brown (2009) describes the stages of a complete NA. This framework consists of ten general stages.

Figure (2) Brown's (2009) NA Process Description



Stage (1) Define the purpose of the NA: Since the beginning, different points of view have been put forward as to why doing NAs is important. Brown (2001) uses Stufflebeam et al. (1985) to talk about four ideas that led to the goal of doing NAs into learning. These are them:

1. Discrepancy philosophy: The gap between what students can do with language now and what they will need to be able to do with language in the future.
  2. Democratic philosophy: The needs favored by the majority of stakeholders engaged in the language education process.
- Stage (2) Delimit the student population: To practice NA effectively, it is important to limit the scope and focus of the study's participants. Generally speaking, the scale determines how broad the NA should be. It can range.
- Stage (3) Decide upon approach(es) and syllabus(es): When people talk about approaches and curricula, they can disagree about what and how students should learn in a certain language school (Brown, 1995). form-based processes to ones that are based only on conversation. Content or the course outline can be structured, functional, task-based, or any other type. (Long and Crooks, 1992; White, 1988; Wilkins, 1976)

Stage (4) Recognize constraints: It is not the language itself that makes it hard to do NAs; it's the context in which the language program is being run or will be run. Richards (2001), who gave it the proper name "situation analysis,". In this part of the needs, the situational factors that affect the course are looked at. We mostly have to work within the limits set by the students, the teachers, and the circumstances. However, we have to deal with a lot of problems, such as social, cultural, political, and economic ones. Stage (5) Select data collection procedures: Due to the practical and organized nature of needs analysis, the methods used to gather information must be right for the situation in mind. Stage (6) Collecting data: it is more important to ask the right questions in Needs Analysis (NA) than to get replies. Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998) say that asking questions that aren't important can cause confusion and too much data that is hard to analyze. Analysts may not know what to ask at first, but it's important to focus on the right questions if they want to get useful replies. The Communicative Needs Processor (CNP), which Munby created in 1978, helped shift the focus to how language is used in real life. According to Brown (1995), Long (2005), and Nation & Macalister (2010), the different ways to collect data are either quantitative (like tests) or qualitative (like interview). Stage (7) Analyzing data: it makes sense that how data is looked at will depend on the type of data itself. Based on the two ends of the continuum between quantitative and qualitative study methods. Brown (2004) offers similar standards that can be used to compare the quality of the two camps. These are dependability, believability, confirmability, and transferability for the first group and reliability, validity, replicability, and generalizability for the second. Brown (2009, p. 282) says that "NA procedures lend themselves to qualitative rather than quantitative research methods" for the most part. Because of this, the needs analyst's quality is at least as good as the data's quality. Stage (8) Interpreting results: The needs analyst figures out what the results mean at this stage of NA. Once more, though, the needs analyst must do their best not to misunderstand what they find. Using outside help, like from experts in the field, would be good for. But there are traps everywhere, especially when it comes to reading bias. Still, the data must be checked, checked again, and compared to the other sources and criteria during cross-validation. Stage (9) Determining objectives: Once the interpretation is done, it's time to spell out the goals so that the material is more useful. By making the course material fit the needs of each student, it will be more interesting, useful, effective, and time-efficient. Stage (10) Evaluating the report on the NA project: The final stage of a needs analysis is to evaluate the NA based on the resulting report. Typically, the report should describe the circumstance, learners, underlying theory, data collecting, techniques, and the analytical side of the equation. The findings are discussed in terms of the benefits for various participants and stakeholders.

## 6. Methodology

### 6.1 Research Design

For this study, a quantitative research technique was used to understand the phenomena by collecting numerical data and analyzing it using statistical methods (Aliaga & Gunderson, as quoted in Muijs, 2004). Quantitative research is based on deductive reasoning or deduction (Sekaran & Bougie, 2010) and employs a variety of quantitative analysis techniques, ranging from providing a simple description of the variables involved to establishing statistical relationships between variables through complex statistical modelling (Saunders et al., 2009).

### 6.2. Place and Time of Research

The research was conducted among three universities in Kurdistan in name of Koya university, Raparin university and Salahadin university. The questionnaire was administered in person to the students during the class time. The time frame was from first of November 2025 till 20th of January 2026. All statistical computation is applied using statistical method (SPSS 24). The data has been coded, tabulated, and presented in a descriptive form. The statistical procedure that was applied to determine the results of the present.

### 6.3 Participants of the Research

The data was obtained from the 4th grade students at Koya university. The number of the participant were chosen randomly among four-year student. The number of the students were 150 students from male and female. The number of females participating in this study was 114, constituting 76.0% of the total respondents, while males made up only 36 of the total participants which equated to 24.0%. Therefore, female participation in this research study was significantly greater than that of male respondents. Very highly significant ( $P < 0.000$ ), High significant ( $P < 0.001$ ), Significant ( $P < 0.05$ ) Non-significant ( $P > 0.05$ ) The questionnaires items have been scaled by five levels of Likert scales as the following patterns; scaled by five levels of Likert scales and scored respectively as follow: Table 1

Scales	Scores	Weight average (mean) for	Level
Strongly disagree	1	1.0-1.79	Very low
Disagree	2	1.8-2.59	Low
Neutral	3	2.6-3.39	Moderate
Strongly agree	4	3.4-4.19	High
Agree	5	4.2-5.0	Very High

### 6.5 Reliability

The alpha Cronbach was used to get the result of the reliability of the participations. Thus, alpha Cronbach's value is equal to (0.822) as shown in table 2 below. Table (2)

Methods	Result
Alpha Cronbach	0.822

Consequently, it is the very trustworthy survey. The response of the respondents' opinions about that this questionnaire seeks to investigate the perceived needs, in English language curriculum. it includes 15 questions, and students are kindly requested to select only one option for each statement, whichever best matches their views. Each item is rated using a five-point Likert scale (ranging from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree). It will be presented and analyzed according to the results of the analysis with the appropriate programs, and related to the means, standard deviations and Relative importance.

### 6.6 Needs

#### 6.6.1. Necessities

Necessities are about what the English needed in order to communicate in their workplace or the target situation for their job at the time. In order to answer that, the writer asked. Tabel (3) Learners needs

Learners Needs	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Mean	S.D	RI	Results
	Fr.	Fr.	Fr.	Fr.	Fr.				
	%	%	%	%	%				
I need to improve my English reading skills.	12	7	19	63	49	3.87	1.16	77.4	High
	8.00	4.67	12.67	42.00	32.67				
I need to improve my English writing skills	13	6	26	58	47	3.80	1.18	76.0	High
	8.67	4.00	17.33	38.67	31.33				
I need to improve my English listening skills.	11	6	26	59	48	3.85	1.14	77.0	High
	7.33	4.00	17.33	39.33	32.00				
I need to improve my pronunciation and English-speaking skills to sound more natural.	11	8	25	46	60	3.91	1.20	78.2	High
	7.33	5.33	16.67	30.67	40.00				
I need extra support (e.g., tutorials, workshops) to meet curriculum expectations.	9	11	55	50	25	3.47	1.05	69.4	High
	6.00	7.33	36.67	33.33	16.67				
<b>Total</b>	56	38	151	276	229	3.78	1.15	75.6	High
	7.47	5.07	20.13	36.80	30.53				

Note/ Weight average (mean) for 5point Likert scales: (1.0-1.79: V.Low), (1.8-2.59 : Low), (2.6-3.39: Moderate), (3.4-4.19: High), (4.2-5.0: V. High), Fr: Frequency , S.D : stander deviation and RI : Relative importance

## 2. Lacks

Lacks are the gap between "necessities" and what the learner already knows, which is the current proficiency of the learners. students have been asked these question so as to know their lacks of English language.

Table (4) Learners lack

Learners Lacks	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Mean	S.D	RI	Results
	Fr.	Fr.	Fr.	Fr.	Fr.				
	%	%	%	%	%				
I struggle to understand native English speakers	13	14	56	42	25	3.35	1.13	67.0	Modera
	8.67	9.33	37.33	28.00	16.67				
There is a gap between my current proficiency level and the target level	17	10	55	54	14	3.25	1.09	65.0	Modera
	11.33	6.67	36.67	36.00	9.33				
My grammar needs improvement	16	8	48	46	32	3.47	1.20	69.4	High
	10.67	5.33	32.00	30.67	21.33				
I lack vocabulary needed for academic discussions	21	12	38	56	23	3.32	1.24	66.4	Modera
	14.00	8.00	25.33	37.33	15.33				
My previous English language experience does not match the existing curriculum	25	16	60	32	17	3.00	1.20	60.0	Modera
	16.67	10.67	40.00	21.33	11.33				
<b>Total</b>	92	60	257	230	111	3.28	1.17	65.6	Modera
	12.27	8.00	34.27	30.67	14.80				

Note/ Weight average (mean) for 5point Likert scales: (1.0-1.79: V.Low), (1.8-2.59 : Low), (2.6-3.39: Moderate), (3.4-4.19: High), (4.2-5.0: V. High), Fr: Frequency , S.D : stander deviation and RI : Relative importance

## 3.Wants

In order to find out the subjective needs or what the learners want to learn, the students asked these questions:

Table (5) Learners want

Learners Wants	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Mean	S.D	RI	Results
	Fr.	Fr.	Fr.	Fr.	Fr.				
	%	%	%	%	%				
I would like to be more communication-focused activities in the classroom.	8	6	38	47	51	3.85	1.10	77.0	High
	5.33	4.00	25.33	31.33	34.00				
I would like to develop a more creative or professional writing style	3	8	31	66	42	3.91	0.94	78.2	High
	2.00	5.33	20.67	44.00	28.00				
	10	3	32	52	53	3.90	1.12	78.0	High

I would to sound more natural when I speak English.	6.67	2.00	21.33	34.67	35.33				
I would like to participate in more group discussions and speaking activities in English	7	3	29	60	51	3.97	1.02	79.4	High
	4.67	2.00	19.33	40.00	34.00				
I would like to be interactive activities that make learning English enjoyable and motivating	6	5	32	63	44	3.89	0.99	77.8	High
	4.00	3.33	21.33	42.00	29.33				
<b>Total</b>	34	25	162	288	241	3.90	1.03	78.0	High
	4.53	3.33	21.60	38.40	32.13				
Note/ Weight average (mean) for 5point Likert scales: (1.0-1.79: V.Low), (1.8-2.59 : Low), (2.6-3.39: Moderate), (3.4-4.19: High), (4.2-5.0: V. High), Fr: Frequency , S.D : stander deviation and RI : Relative importance									

### 7. Data for Analysis

The data collection procedures started from first of November 2025 to 20th of January 2026 All statistical computation is applied using statistical method (SPSS 24). The data has been coded, tabulated, and presented in a descriptive form. The statistical procedure that was applied to determine the results of the present.

### 8.Results and finding

The need analysis was conducted to find out the learners' target needs based on Hutchinson and Waters needs analysis. The focus was on the necessities, lacks. This study aimed to investigate university students' lacks, wants, and needs in the context of higher education in Kurdistan. It focused on identifying gaps within the existing curriculum in order to determine areas that require pedagogical and curricular enhancement.

1. Necessities: As presented in Table 3, the Learners' Needs dimension recorded an overall weighted mean of 3.78 with a standard deviation of 1.15 and a relative importance of 75.6%, reflecting a high level of perceived learning needs among the participants. Regarding response patterns, 30.53% of the respondents selected Strongly Agree, while 36.80% indicated Agree. In contrast, 20.13% of the participants provided neutral responses, whereas lower proportions reported Disagree (5.07%) and Strongly Disagree (7.47%) with the statements included under this dimension. An examination of the data presented in the table reveals that the statement "I need to enhance my pronunciation and English-speaking skills for a more natural-sounding speech" was perceived as the most important by the respondents, as evidenced by the highest weighted mean ( $M = 3.91$ ), standard deviation ( $SD = 1.20$ ), and relative importance (78.2%). This result indicates a strong perceived need for the improvement of oral communication and pronunciation skills. In contrast, the statement "I need additional assistance (e.g., tutorials or workshops) to fulfill the curriculum requirements" received the lowest rating among the items, with a weighted mean of 3.47 ( $SD = 1.05$ ) and a relative importance of 69.4%. Despite this comparatively lower rating, the item remained within the high range, suggesting that supplementary academic support continues to be a relevant need for the

2. Lack: The Learners' Lacks dimension, as shown in Table 4, had a relative importance of 65.6% and an aggregate weighted mean of 3.28 ( $SD = 1.17$ ). This suggests that learners' English language abilities are perceived as moderately deficient. 14.80% of the respondents selected Strongly Agree, 30.67% selected Agree, and 34.27% indicated a neutral position with respect to the response distribution. Conversely, 8.00% of the participants reported Disagree and 12.27% reported Strongly Disagree, which further indicates a moderate level of perceived deficiencies in English language proficiency. The statement "My grammar needs improvement" had the highest relative importance ( $RI = 69.4\%$ ), with a mean score of 3.47 and a standard deviation of 1.20. This suggests that the respondents perceived grammar as the area of greatest deficiency. Conversely, the statement "My previous experience learning English does not align with the current curriculum" was assigned the lowest relative importance ( $RI = 60.0\%$ ), with a mean of 3.00 and a standard deviation of 1.20. Consequently, it was classified as a moderate level of perceived deficiency.

3. Wants: The Learners' Wants dimension, as illustrated in Table 5, exhibits a high overall level, with a combined weighted mean of 3.90 (SD = 1.03) and a relative importance of 78%. This suggests that learners have a strong desire to enhance their English learning processes. The response distribution was as follows: Strongly Agree (32.13%) was selected by the greatest number of respondents, followed by Agree (38.40%). Neutral responses were provided by 21.60% of participants. Conversely, a relatively small proportion of respondents (3.33%) or Strongly Disagree (4.53%) with the statements included under this dimension, indicating a generally optimistic stance toward the improvement of English language learning practices. The degree of value or significance that a specific item is assigned is known as Relative Importance (RI). The statement "I want to participate in more group discussions and verbal activities in English" received the highest rating based on RI, with a mean of 3.97, a standard deviation of 1.02, and a RI of 79.4. This suggests that learners are particularly enthusiastic about participating in additional speaking-focused and collaborative activities as part of their learning process. In contrast, the statement "I would like to see more activities focused on communication in the classroom" achieved the lowest RI among the items, with a mean of 3.85 and a standard deviation of 1.10. Nevertheless, this item also falls within the high-level category, indicating that learners consistently prioritise communicative activities in their English language learning.

### 9. Findings

The findings of the study show that Kurdish EFL learners demonstrate statistically significant levels of needs, wants, and lacks in learning English, with results exceeding the neutral midpoint at the 5% significance level. This indicates that students have a strong need to improve their English language skills for academic purposes. In addition, the students expressed clear wants for more interactive and communication-based learning activities, suggesting that they prefer practical and engaging methods of instruction. The results related to lacks reveal that students are aware of noticeable gaps in their current English proficiency, particularly in skills required for effective communication and academic study. Overall, these findings suggest that students' perceived weaknesses, learning preferences, and academic language requirements are closely connected, highlighting the need for curriculum and teaching approaches that address all three aspects

### 10. Discussion

The results indicate that Kurdish EFL learners at Koya, Salahadin, and Raparin Universities have high learning needs and strong learning preferences, while their perceived lacks is at a moderate level. Students clearly indicated a strong need to improve their main language skills, particularly writing, speaking, pronunciation, listening, and reading. High mean scores across all three universities confirm that these needs are shared by the majority of the students. However, learners reported moderate levels of difficulty in areas such as understanding native speakers, grammar usage, vocabulary development, and connecting their previous language knowledge with the current curriculum. These challenges were consistent across the three universities and were not perceived as severe. Statistical results showed no significant differences among Koya, Salahadin, and Raparin Universities, suggesting that Kurdish EFL learners experience similar challenges and have similar expectations regardless of institutional context. Overall, the findings indicate a common pattern of linguistic needs and learning experiences among Kurdish university EFL learners, indicating the necessity for curriculum adjustments that more effectively address these shared needs.

### 11. Conclusions

In order to enhance the curriculum, the research reveals the needs of students and the challenges they encounter. The students' Target Situation Needs Analysis (Brown, 2005; Li, 2014) which has three subcategories: lacks, necessities and wants (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987; Li, 2014) was used to find answers to the research questions. Finally, this investigation concludes that Kurdish EFL students at Koya, Salahadin, and Raparin Universities experience analogous learning obstacles and have similar language requirements. Despite the fact that students made clear preferences for enhancing essential language skills particularly writing, speaking, pronunciation, listening, and reading and expressed strong learning demands, their perceived deficiencies were only moderate. There were no statistically significant differences identified, and all three universities reported common difficulties related to grammar, vocabulary, and comprehending native speakers. These results indicate that the current EFL curriculum fails to adequately address the shared needs of learners, underscoring the need for curriculum revision and more needs-based instructional practices.

### 12. Suggestions for Future Research

This research offers significant insights into the needs, wants and lacks of Kurdish EFL learners; nevertheless, it is limited to students from certain colleges and relies on a quantitative questionnaire. Subsequent study may

broaden the sample to include more areas or educational tiers, concentrate on certain language competencies, use qualitative or mixed-method methodologies, and investigate the effects of curricular modifications according to learners' recognized need. This research only examined students from certain grade levels or academic stages. Future research may include students from various grade levels or academic programs to investigate if learners' requirements, desires, and deficiencies alter throughout educational stages.

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