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Conducting an EOP Needs Analysis: A Case of Pre-service Cabin Crew

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Abstract

Since English for Specific Purposes (ESP) programs have been one significant component of university and vocational schools, being informed of academic and professional language needs of the learners seems incredibly vital. This study aimed at exploring the pre-service flight attendants' English language needs from their own perspectives along with their teachers' at an aviation school. In order to accomplish this purpose, the data was collected from two different sources, including a needs analysis questionnaire in addition to semi-structured interviews with 120 learners and 20 English teachers. Results of the data analysis revealed that both learners and teachers indicated Communicative skills, Speaking, and Listening skill among the first most important skills/sub-skills in learning English; furthermore, poor Speaking and Listening Comprehension skills were reported as the learners' weaknesses by both groups of participants. The obtained data also declared that both groups considered Understanding and Making Conversations, as well as Writing for Practical Purposes among the most concentrated aspect of the main language skills. Additionally, there were not any significant differences between the importance of English skills among learners and teachers, indicating that they perceived English skills and sub-skills quite similarly. The findings could be a great bonus to material developers as well as teachers instructing to-be cabin crew members.

Keywords: Cabin Crew Member, ESP, Flight Attendant, Language Needs, Needs Analysis

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1. Introduction

Growing English language use in certain jobs as well as academic and professional contexts has urged the language teaching field move further to step toward English for Specific Purposes (ESP) from the fundamental General English (GE) (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987). ESP is primarily concerned with teaching and learning English by people who require language and apply it to perform professional and or academic tasks. Hutchinson and Waters (1987) were among the pioneers who initiated the early phases of ESP development which described the requirement for communicating in target content performance. Several scholars including Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998), and Johns (1991) developed divisions of ESP as English for Academic Purpose (EAP) and English for Occupational Purposes (EOP) in their tree of English Language Teaching. The fundamental issues behind this development could be addressing the learners' needs at heart.

According to Strevens (1977), ESP is required where the context needs specific type of teaching for one particular job, subject matter, or goal. He further supports the significance of taking into consideration learners' needs in a course/ material development, since he believes in the correlation between the learners' future success and the relevance of courses/ materials to their own needs (Strevens, 1977). As a result, in order to develop a course or material, thorough care needs to be employed to administer needs analysis (NA) without which the whole process would be deceptive while purely based on perception and insights of any other than the learners themselves. (McDonough, 1984; Widdowson, 1984). Furthermore, Holmes and Celani (2006) believe in the significance of context-specific NA learners' needs differ from one target context to another.

There have been a large number of empirical research studies on needs analysis of ESP students (Jasso-Aguilar, 2005; Long, 2005; Mazdayasna & Tahririan, 2008**).** In these studies, the researchers were to explore the real needs of the learners in order to come up with the most suitable course or materials for them. Even though pre-service flight attendants as to-be-beholder of an international customer care job possess their own specific needs and wants, there has not been much attention paid to investigation of this group's needs. Hence, ESP, (in better words, EOP), courses for this group of learners could not much be in line with their real needs, lack and wants. Consequently, the learners might end up becoming desperate learning language and achieving lower than expected. Moreover, the teachers would feel similarly since what they were trying to instruct might not able to help the learners achieving their goal as enhancing their language proficiency, thus they would not gain much satisfaction through their instruction. Hence, the present study aimed at exploring the real needs,

lacks and wants of EOP learners as pre-service flight attendants which could be the foundation of the most appropriate syllabus and curriculum addressing this group of learners' real needs. Thus, this study was attempting to take the first step in informing the ESP practitioners in this field regarding what pre-service cabin crew members need, lack and want, since there was a lack of literature on Needs Analysis in Iran and even Middle East regarding the cabin crew members. The obtained data could have specific contributions for ESP material developers and teachers in this domain.

Having covered the purpose of the study in addition to the statement of the problem**,** the present study sought to answer the following questions:

1. What are the EOP needs of pre-service cabin crew members from their point of view?
2. What are the EOP needs of pre-service cabin crew members from the point of view of EOP teachers?
3. Is there any statistically significant difference between pre-service cabin crew members and EOP teachers' perception of importance of English to cabin crew members?

Based on the last research question, a null hypothesis appeared as "there was not any significant difference between the learners' and teachers' perceptions regarding the importance of English to cabin crew members".

2. Literature Review

There have been various perspectives in defining and recognizing needs throughout the history of English language teaching. Following is a brief summary of scholars' works regarding needs and needs analysis. In this vein, Hutchinson and Waters (1987), one of the pioneers of this concept, discriminated between target needs, comprising necessities, lacks, and wants, and learning needs while Berwick (1989) identified perceived needs as the needs determined by researchers and felt needs as the needs required by language learners. According to Brown (2006, p.102), needs analysis is defined as "the systematic collection and analysis of all subjective and objective information necessary to define and validate defensible curriculum purposes that satisfy the language learning requirements of students within the context of the particular institutions that influence the learning and teaching situation". Brown's (2006) approach to needs analysis involved the discrimination of between situation needs and language needs. However, Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998) presented a very broad categorization of needs. Their approach to needs analysis contained learners' personal and professional information, their lacks, language learning needs, language information about target contexts, as well as communication in target needs. Finally, Hyland (2006) described 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).

2.1. English for Specific Purposes (ESP)

ESP has become a significant and pioneering movement within the field of English language teaching for more than six decades (Dudley-Evans & St. John, 1998). Hutchinson and Waters (1987) believe that ESP as an approach to language teaching bases all the decisions made about the subject matter, content and even approaches and methods on why a learner learns a language. McDonough (1984) defines ESP "language programs designed for groups or individuals who are learning with an identifiable purpose and clearly specifiable needs" (p. 105). Since the definition clearly expresses, needs constitute one fundamental component of ESP. As Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998) inserted that needs can be regarded as a key stage in ESP, other primary stages include "syllabus design, selection and production of materials, teaching and learning, and evaluation" (p. 125).

Basturkmen (2010) also made a great distinction between English for General Purposes (EGP) and English for Specific Purposes (ESP) and further she asserts that ESP teaching can largely be divided into three main areas which reflect the range of circumstances in which ESP teaching takes place, including English for Academic Purposes (EAP) entailing academic needs of the learners (for instance, English for law studies), English for Occupational Purposes (EOP) which refers to needs and training of a work place (for instance, English for flight attendants), and English for Professional Purposes (EPP) which associates with teaching English to engineers, executives, doctors, etc.

In ESP instruction, there are a number of prominent factors, selection of teaching methods as well as teaching techniques depend on (Nunan, 2004; Richards & Rogers, 2001). According to Richards and Rogers (2001), such factors include learners' linguistic and communicative needs, specificity of the texts applied in the present and target contexts, learners' learning methods and strategies, in addition to context of the specific language teaching context.

2.2. Significance of Needs Analysis (NA)

According to Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998), what comprises the foundation of an ESP course is how the language needed by learners and their learning contexts is addressed. Since it is mainly about specific group of learners, it must be geared to their needs. What coordinates these issues is Needs Analysis (NA) (Dudley-Evans & St. John, 1998). They also defined needs as the reason(s) for which a student is learning English, which could be

differed from their learning aims like continuing study or doing research project in English-speaking contexts. Thus, Need Analysis is assumed as the cornerstone of any steps taken in ESP, including course design, materials development (Dudley-Evans & St. John, 1998). Richards (2001) also put a huge emphasis on the importance of Needs Analysis in developing a valid foundation to set goals and objectives, designing curricula and teaching materials, in addition to evaluating and modifying training programs.

Fatihi (2003) describes needs analysis as a process employed to identify and facilitate the design of a suitable curriculum, with relevant teaching-learning and management objectives, so as to ensure learning in an environment that closely simulates real-life situations.

Needs analysis is so significant that it needs to be considered as the very first key step in curriculum development. Therefore, anytime such a prominent is not given much care, the output would be regarded as a mismatch between learners' and curriculum developers' insights regarding about students' real needs. Whenever such a procedure takes place, this curriculum can found a powerful establishment for teaching (Berwick, 1989).

Outstanding researchers and experts in ESP field (Dudley-Evans & St. John, 1998; Hutchinson & Waters, 1987; Long, 2005; Robinson, 1991) highlighted the huge significance of conducting an in-depth Needs Analysis ahead of making any decisions regarding any movements in ESP since learners have various forms of needs for which they need to learn a language for different purposes. As a result, language teaching is broadly required to be thoroughly geared to the learners' needs and wants (Brindley, 1989; Widdowson, 1984).

2.3. Needs Analysis for English for Occupational / Academic Purposes

There have been several prominent attempts with different orientations in NA for the occupational / academic purposes (Long, 2005; West, 1994). According to Long (2005, p.1), "No language teaching program should be designed without a thorough analysis of the students' needs". Long (2005) took in to account different methodological issues in learner needs analysis and included different sources for NA, and various methods of NA, ending up a rich number of tasks, language, functions and forms.

Mazdayasna and Tahririan (2008) assessed English learning needs of Iranian undergraduate students of nursing and midwifery through interviews and questionnaires. They concluded that majority of ESP courses in Iran had been performed without any evaluation of learners' needs and without any consultation with experts including specific teachers as well as applied linguists.

Rostami and Zafarghandi (2014) investigated the needs and wants of chemistry students in Iran by administering an NA questionnaire distributed among 90 chemistry students and 20 teachers. The researchers were looking for the importance of English in their studies as well as their future job, the most required areas of English and their feedbacks regarding the EAP program improvement.

Aliakbari and Boghayeri (2014) conducted an NA study on Iranian architecture students and graduates and investigated their opinions about their lacks and wants as well as their ESP course effectiveness and materials through a researcher- made questionnaire. They came to this conclusion that in order to be able to offer more efficient ESP course for students, some modifications were truly required.

Nemat and Mojoudi (2016) assessed the present as well as target situation language needs of Iranian undergraduate students of mechanical engineering through applying an NA questionnaire and semi-structured interviews. According to the results, the students seemed to have difficulties with most of the language skills and sub-skills, and additionally they were not much satisfied with their ESP courses and they were in favor of modifying them.

Jasso-Aguilar (2005) assessed the needs of hotel maids applying different sources, methods as well as triangulations. Svendsen and Krebs (1984) identified language needs of a central supply technicians and hospital transporters. Gilabert (2005) conducted a study to identify English language needs of journalists using varied forms of sources and methods.

Lestari (2017) conducted a study regarding pre-service cabin crew members' needs which revealed that speaking should be given prime importance in a course book for to-be cabin crew members.

Cornwall and Srilapung (2013) also worked on English communication needs of Thai Airways senior cabin crew members and found that 12 language skills were important and 2 others were considered very important to improve communicative skills in English.

As it can be observed exploring ESP needs of learners either at universities or vocational settings, even in workplaces has been the concern of many researchers in the field of language teaching.

3. Method

3.1. Participants

Two groups of participants were involved in the present study, which are as follows: pre-service flight attendants, taking an EOP course, and English language teachers, teaching EOP course for cabin crew. 120

randomly selected pre-service flight attendants from 3 different aviation schools, who were going to join EOP courses for flight attendants, formed one group of the participants of the present study. They were all young male and female individuals, with Persian as their mother tongue, aged between 19 and 28 years old, who were all placed at the intermediate level of general English. The other group involved 20 English teachers working at one aviation school. They all had 5 to 25 years of experience teaching EOP courses for pre-service cabin crew. Their selection was motivated by the fact that they were always in touch with students and could determine their needs by assessing and evaluating their abilities in using English in different aspects and contexts. They would also be liable to notice the difficulties that students faced while learning EOP.

3.2. Instruments

3.2.1. Needs Analysis Questionnaire

The needs analysis questionnaire applied in this study was based the Aeineh and Rezapour's (2014) NAQ. This questionnaire was divided into two major parts and contained 19 questions. The first part included one category about the importance of English skills and sub skills with 9 questions based on a 4-point Likert scale (1. Not important to 4. Very important). The second part with 3 categories of (i) assessment of EOP learners' weaknesses and (ii) their needs and (iii) recommendations to improve the English curriculum contained 10 questions, all nominally oriented. Needs analysis questionnaire helped the researcher partly to figure out the needs, lacks and wants of the cabin crew from the point of view of both the learners as well as the teachers instructing them.

3.2.2. Reliability and Validity of Needs Analysis Questionnaire

In order to be able to apply Needs Analysis Questionnaire, assessing the reliability and validity of this instrument seemed vital, as it was going to be applied in a new context. Cronbach's alpha reliability index of NAQ showed the high score of 0.84 which demonstrated high reliability as a good proof to ensure the practicality in the context. Furthermore, to assure the validity of this questionnaire, exploratory factor analysis was run to explore the underlying constructs of this questionnaire. The obtained findings with the accuracy of 42% revealed three factor-solutions.

3.2.3. Semi-structured Interviews

In order to demonstrate strengthened data regarding the needs of pre-service flight attendants as EOP learners, in addition to analyzing the obtained data out of the questionnaires quantitatively, it seemed essential to hold semi- structured interview sessions with both groups of participants, i.e., randomly selected learners and teachers. In order to come up with practical

questions in the field of needs analysis, the setting of the questions have been drawn from the applied questionnaire in this study, as well as the other questionnaires and interview session held in other studies. Moreover, the interview questions were checked by 2 experts in the field of English language teaching. Having accomplished the interview sessions, the Persian responses were translated to English by the researcher which was checked by a bilingual expert as the professor of translation at a university later to confirm it.

3.3. Procedure

As this study was going to probe the needs of pre-service flight attendants, this research study has gone under following phases to achieve its aim. Initially 20 teachers of an aviation school and 120 randomly selected pre-service flight attendants from 3 different aviation schools helped the researcher in part to perform the needs analysis, which was probing the needs, lacks and wants of that group of learners by taking the needs analysis questionnaire. In advance to this phase of the study, the questionnaire was checked by its reliability and validity. Before finding the reliability of this questionnaire using SPSS, it was thoroughly checked by 2 educational experts, 1 Ph.D. holder in education and 1 in psychology, to provide their feedbacks regarding face reliability and validity of it. Thus some wordings of the questionnaire needed to be altered as they could not express the points clearly, as well modified to be applicable in the present study context. In addition, the last 2 questions of the questionnaire were removed to be responded by the learners as they had not ever taken the course by that time. The reliability of the NA questionnaire, as measured by internal consistency, was found to be pretty satisfactory (Cronbach $\alpha = 0.84$). Having administered the NA questionnaire on 2 groups of participants, in order to strengthen the obtained data out of the questionnaires, 5 more and 5 less experienced teachers as well 20 randomly selected learners were invited to join the semi-structured interview sessions with the researcher to elaborate more on the learners' needs. The whole sessions were recorded with the interviewees' permission to enable the researcher to transcribe and code the responses later.

According to the first two research questions posed, both quantitative (statistics) and qualitative (semi-structured interviews) research types were applied and for the sake of last research question and its hypothesis, quantitative research type was applied. This paper presented the obtained data through triangulated sources regarding learners' needs in an EOP course for flight attendants. According to Long (2005, p. 28), "triangulation is a procedure long used by researchers…. working within a qualitative or naturalistic tradition to help the credibility of their interpretation of those

data." It can include comparisons among two or more various sources, theories, methods or investigators.

Thus, the researcher adopted a mixed methods research design. "Mixed methods research is a procedure for collecting, analyzing, and mixing quantitative and qualitative data at some stage of the research process within a single study in order to understand a research problem more completely" (Ivankova & Creswell, 2009, p. 156). The fact is that the supplementary results of a mixed methods study could produce a better, more obvious picture of the subject or concerns being investigated, developing the scope and width of the study (Dornyei, 2007). According to Richards (2001), both forms of research designs, quantitative and qualitative are required for collecting data as each serves various goals and could be applied to complement one another. Therefore, mixed methods approach needed to be used in this study in order to strengthen the design of it, as learners' needs, lacks, wants, likes and dislikes needed to be revealed through different sources and methods and consequently, different data collection instruments had to be applied.

To convey the qualitative phase of the study, the basic qualitative research design, i.e., basic interpretive study was employed. Such study provides descriptive accounts with the purpose of figuring out a phenomenon applying data which could be collected in different forms like interviews, observations, document analysis, thinks aloud, and any other related methods (Ary, Jacobs, Razavieh, & Sorensen, 2010).

3.4. Data Analysis

Since this study incorporated responding the research questions quantitatively as well as qualitatively, the obtained data needed to be analyzed differently. For the quantitative phase, having collected the required data, it was analyzed applying Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Furthermore, for the sake of qualitative phase, the interview responses were audio recorded for the upcoming transcribing, coding and interpreting.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Results

4.1.1. Analysis of Research Question Number 1 and 2

As it was discussed in the procedure section, the first 2 research questions were analyzed quantitatively as well as qualitatively, which is as follows:

4.1.1.1. Quantitative Analysis of Research Question Number 1 and 2

To answer the first question, the obtained data through the responded needs analysis questionnaire by the learners was analyzed statistically and the analysis is presented here via 2 parts. The reason behind this is the varied nature of the questions presented on different parts of the questionnaire.

The first part of the needs analysis questionnaire included 9 questions about the importance of English skills and sub-skills in the learners' future job, in other words the learners' needs as a cabin crew member. The responses were analyzed and as follows:

Table 1

Results of the ANOVA about Learners' Perception of their Needs

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	294.025	8	36.753	104.930	.000
Within Groups	374.081	1068	.350		
Total	668.106	1076			

ANOVA was applied to find out the differences between the means of the skills (Table 1), to show the significant differences between the means of each response item, which was followed by a Scheffe Test to express the priorities of the skills, demonstrated by the learners, Table 2 displays such results.

Table 2 demonstrates how the learners perceived their own language needs and how they prioritized them. As the table suggests, the order of skill and sub-skills reported by the learners are as follows: 1. *Communicative skills*, 2. *Speaking skill*, 3. *Listening skill*, 4. *Pronunciation*, 5. *Vocabulary*, 6. *Cultural Literacy*, 7. *Reading Skill*, 8. *Grammar* and finally 9. *Writing Skill*. The skills and sub skills categorized by the learners as their needs are depicted more clearly in Figure 1.

Following learners' perceptions about their needs, teachers' perceptions about learners' needs are discussed here. The same procedures were followed to figure out teachers' perception. Tables 3 and 4 display the ANOVA and Scheffe Test results which demonstrate the possible significant differences between the means of the needs, as well as the priorities of them.

According to Table 3, Anova displays the significant difference between the means of each response item. Later, a Scheffe Test was applied to express the priorities of the skills demonstrated by the teachers this time, which was presented through Table 4.

Table 2

Results of the Learners' Scheffe Test about their Needs

Needs	N	Subset for alpha = 0.05				
		1	2	3	4	5
Writing	120	2.2250				
Grammar	120		2.7750			
Reading	120		3.0000	3.0000		
Cultural Li.	120			3.1500		
Vocabulary	117				3.5128	
Pronounce.	120				3.6250	3.6250
Listening	120				3.6750	3.6750
Speaking	120				3.7750	3.7750
Communicate.	120					3.9250
Sig.		1.000	.374	.871	.165	.053

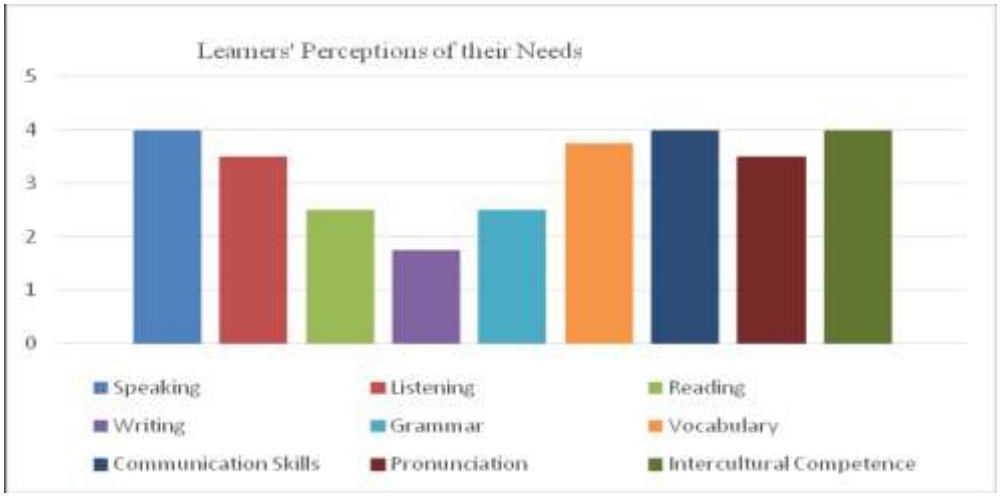

Figure 1. Learners' Perceptions of their Needs

Table 3

Results of the ANOVA about Teachers' Perception of Learners' Needs

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	136.844	8	17.106	66.253	.000
Within Groups	44.150	171	.258		
Total	180.994	179			

Table 4

Results of the Teachers' Scheffe Test about Learners' Needs

		Subset for alpha = 0.05		
Needs	N	1	2	3
Grammar	20	1.5000		
Writing	20	1.7000		
Reading	20		2.7000	
Pronunciation	20			3.4000
Vocabulary	20			3.5000
Cultural Li.	20			3.7000
Speaking	20			3.7500
Listening	20			3.8000
Communicative	20			3.9000
Sig.		.991	1.000	.296

Table 4 displays how the teachers perceived the learners' language needs in addition to how they prioritized the skills and sub-skills they required. According to the data presented on the table, the order of skill and sub-skills reported by the teachers are as follows: 1. *Communicative skills*, 2. *Listening skill*, 3. *Speaking skill,* 4. *Cultural Literacy*, 5. *Vocabulary*, 6. *Pronunciation*, 7. *Reading Skill*, 8. *Writing skill* and finally 9. *Grammar*. Chart 2 demonstrates teachers' perceptions of learners' needs more clearly.

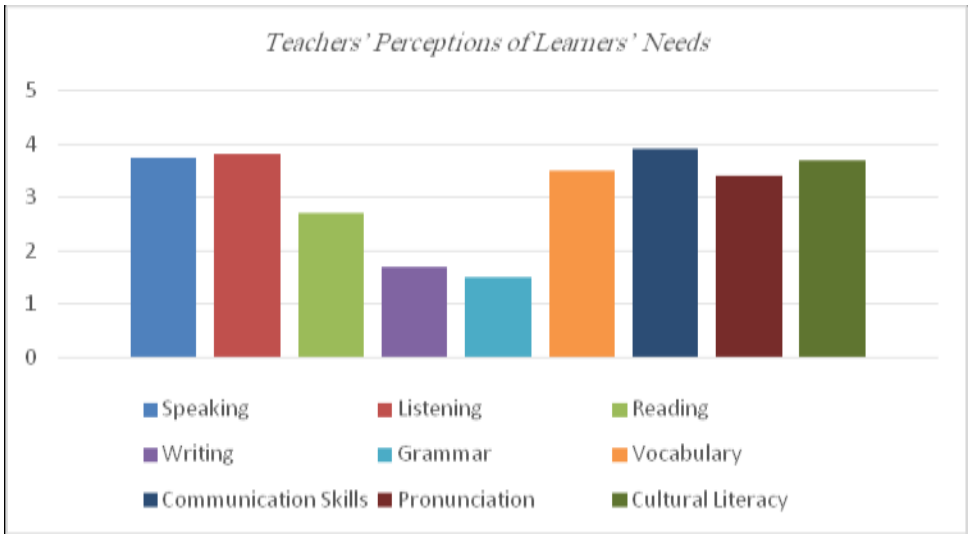

Figure 2. Teachers' Perceptions of Learners' Needs

To be able to find out how learners and teachers respond to the second part of the questionnaire, Table 5 is drawn to expose the answers more clearly.

Table 5

Descriptive Analyses of Learners' & Teachers' Responses to Question 10-19

Question	Learners		Teachers	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
10 Weaknesses in Learning English	263	100	100	100
Limited Vocabulary	54	20.53	15	15
Poor pronunciation	18	6.84	6	6
Poor Writing	20	7.63	10	10
Poor Speaking ability	72	27.37	20	20
Poor Grammar	18	6.84	10	10
Poor Reading comp.	9	3.42	8	8
Poor Listening Comp.	72	27.37	18	18
Poor Cultural Literacy	-	-	13	13
11 Medium of Instruction	120	100	20	100
Completely English	54	45	12	60
Mostly English	57	47.5	8	40
Both English & Persian	9	7.5	0	0
12 Emphasis of Reading	120	100	20	100
Reading articles	72	60	5	25
Reading Comprehension	22	18.33	10	50
Translation skills	7	5.8	0	0
Reading English books	19	15.83	5	25
13 Emphasis of Listening	120	100	20	100
Understand conversations	65	78	14	70
Related documents	25	30	3	15
Understanding presentation	12	10	1	5
Improving Pronunciation	5	6	2	10
14 Emphasis of Speaking	120	100	20	100
Making Conversation	93	77.5	18	90
Participate in Conferences	3	2.5	0	0
Making Presentation	9	7.5	0	0
Class Discussion	15	12.5	2	10
15 Emphasis on Writing	120	100	20	100
Writing for Practical Purposes	48	40	11	55
Doing Projects	24	20	3	15
Writing Research	12	10	0	0
Improving Spelling	36	30	6	30
16 Relevance of English Material with the course	120	100	20	100
Yes	75	62.5	16	80
No	45	37.5	4	20

Table 5 Continued.

17	Learning Preference	120	100	20	100
	Pair work	65	54.16	11	55
	Small Groups	30	25	6	30
	Whole Class	25	20.83	3	15
18	Changing the Curriculum	-	-	20	100
	Yes	-	-	18	90
	No		-	2	10
19	If Yes to Number18, in What Way	-	-	25	100
		-	-		
	Material Change	-	-	18	72
	Time Increase	-	-	4	16
	Focus on Final Exam			3	12

Table 5 presents the data obtained from the responses made by the learners and teachers to questions 10 to 19. There were several items for which learners and teachers answered pretty similarly; however; some items were perceived differently by these 2 groups of participants. Though thorough details of the gathered data will be presented in the discussion section later, a brief explanation of the obtained data is discussed here. Regarding the learners' weaknesses, Item number 10, both groups selected *Poor Speaking Skill*, while learners selected *Poor Listening Comprehension* equally, too. While learners preferred the course to be run as mostly English, teachers preferred Completely English course time (Item 11). Learners reported Reading Related Articles to their Jobs as the focus of Reading skill, whereas teachers reported Improving Reading Comprehension (Item 12). Regarding items 13, 14, and 15, both groups selected Understanding Conversation, Making Conversation, and Writing for Practical Purposes while they were talking about Listening, Speaking and Writing skill respectively. Both learners and teachers agreed that the English material needed to be relevant to the course (Item 16), additionally both of them preferred Pair Work as their preferable learning style (Item 17). As it was mentioned before, Items 18 and 19 were just responded by the teachers, as the learners had not yet taken the EOP course at that time. Thus, the teachers were in favor of chaining the curriculum (Item 18) and their main reason behind it was they were happy with the material (Item 19).

4.1.1.2. Qualitative Analysis of Research Question Number1 and 2

4.1.1.2.1. Qualitative Analysis of Research Question 1

As it was mentioned before, to strengthen the obtained data through questionnaires, semi-structured interviews were held with 20 randomly selected learners, which are presented below. The first interview question

was: '*What is expected from a flight attendant to be proficient in terms of language proficiency, could you elaborate on this?'*

As Table 6 suggests, all the interviewees reported that *Communicative skills* as well as *Speaking skill* are completely needed by a flight attendant, while *Listening skill, Pronunciation, Vocabulary* and other skill/sub-skills are mostly required by them, too. The obtained data was in line with the data from the NA questionnaire.

The responses to the next posed interview question, '*What is missing in EOP learners which may hinder their language comprehension or production?'* are displayed in Table 7.

Table 6

Results of the First Interview Question with the Learners

	Total number of participants	Comm. Skills	Speak.	Listen.	Pron.	Vocab.	Others
Number of Participants	20	20	20	18	15	10	10
Percentage of Participants	100%	100%	100%	90%	75%	20%	20%

Like how they reported their weak areas in language learning in the questionnaire, all the selected learners found *Poor Speaking skill* and *Listening Comprehension* as their weakest areas. While some of them also reported they were suffering from *Limited Vocabulary*. 40% of them also reported that they had problem in other skill/ sub-skill.

Table 7

Results of the Second Interview Question with the Learners

	Total number of participants	Poor Speaking	Poor Listening	Limited Vocabulary	Others
Number of Participants	20	20	20	15	8
Percentage of Participants	100%	100%	100%	75%	40%

'What are your preferred learning styles to eliminate or lessen your deficiencies?' formed the next interview question, the results of which are demonstrated through Table 8.

Table 8

Results of the Third Interview Question with the Learners

	Total number of participants	Mostly English	Completely English	Both
Number of Participants	20	12	7	1
Percentage of Participants	100%	60%	35%	5%

According to Table 8, while most of the learners were in favor of English as *most of the time* spent in a course, 35% of them were happy if *all the time* was spent in English. Interestingly, 1 out 20 interviewees were happy with *both English and Persian language* as medium of instruction.

The following table displays the results of the fourth interview question with the learners, *'What are your preferred learning techniques to eliminate or lessen your deficiencies?'*.

Table 9

Results of the Fourth Interview Question with the Learners

	Total number of participants	Working in/ with		
		Pairs	Small Group	Whole Class
Number of Participants	20	**15**	10	8
Percentage of Participants	100%	**75%**	50%	40%

Table 9 demonstrates that while 75% of the learners informed *Pair Work* as their preferred learning technique, around half of them were in favor of either *Small Group* / *Whole Class*.

The last interview question with the learners was '*How do you express the nature of your needs in different skills or sub skills'.* Table 10 shows the results of this question.

Table 10

Results of the Last Interview Question with the Learners

	Total number of participants	Understand Conversation	Make Conversation	Read Articles & Books	Watch Movies	Improve Spelling
Number of Participants	20	20	20	15	12	10
Percentage of Participants	100%	100%	100%	75%	60%	50%

Based on the obtained data out of next interview question, all the respondents reported that needed English in order to *Make and Understand Conversations*. 75% of them needed English to *Read Articles and Books*, 60% *to Watch (relevant) Movies* and 50% to *Improve their Spelling*. All the obtained data was in line with the data gained out of the NA questionnaire.

4.1.1.2.2. Qualitative Phase of the Research Question 2

This section deals with the responses made by the teachers in the semi-structured interviews with them. It is worth mentioning that all the interview sessions were held in English, recorded, transcribed and coded

later. Teachers were asked 2 main questions, '*What is expected from a flight attendant to be proficient in terms of language proficiency, could you elaborate on this?',* and *'As an EOP teacher for pre-service flight attendants, what do you require to concentrate more to enable them to achieve more success in their future job?',* the responses of which are briefly displayed in the next tables.

Table 11

Results of the First Interview Question with the Teachers

	Total number of participants	Speaking & Comm. Skills	Listening	Intercultural Competence	Vocab. & Pronunciation
Number of Participants	10	10	10	8	7
Percentage of Participants	100%	100%	100%	80%	70%

As Table 11 suggests, all the teachers believed a flight attendant is expected to be proficient in *Speaking, Listening and Communicative skills*, whereas 80% of them asserted that they are required to be proficient in *Intercultural Competence* and 70% emphasized on the flight attendants' proficiency in *Vocabulary* and *Pronunciation*.

Table 12

Results of the Second Interview Question with the Teachers

	Total number of participants	Listen to Conv.	Make Conv.	Read Articles & Books	Watch relevant Movies
Number of Participants	10	10	10	8	6
Percentage of Participants	100%	100%	100%	80%	60%

Based on Table 12, all the interviewees believed that in order to help the pre-service flight attendants achieve more success in their future job, they tended to concentrate more on how to assist them *Make* and *Understand Conversations*, *Read (relevant) Articles and Books* (80%) and *Watch Relevant Movies* (60%).

4.1.2. Analysis of Research Question 3

To answer research question 3, the learners' needs were required to be assessed by both the learners themselves next to the teachers, and any possible significant differences between the two were calculated. To achieve this, an independent sample T-test was run to figure out if a significant

difference was observed among this concept from the point of views of the 2 groups of participants or not, in addition any possible differences between the learners' and teachers' responses were found by running independent sample T-tests item by item. Table 13 demonstrates the run independent sample T-test for the whole concept of needs.

According to the above table, the obtained T (2.038) was not significant at P<0.05 (Sig. = 0.053), which indicates that EOP learners and teachers perceived the importance of English skills similarly. Thus, the null hypothesis stating "there was not any significant difference between the learners' and teachers' perceptions regarding the importance of English to the cabin crew members" **was not rejected** (though with a very small difference). Such a result indicates that even though significant differences could not be observed, there were some significant differences observed among the importance of some skills/sub-skills form the point of view of learners' and teachers'. The following table depicts the difference between the participants' responses to each question one by one.

Table 13

Independent Sample T-test, Whole Responses

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
								95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
	F	Sig.	t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	31.785	.000	2.439	1255	.049	.16193	.06638	.03170	.29216
Equal variances not assumed			2.038	216.430	**.053**	.16193	.07945	.00534	.31852

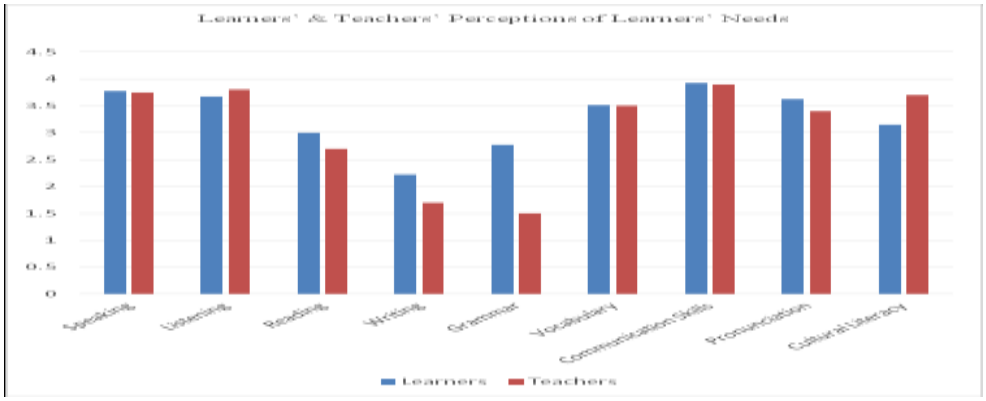

Figure 3. Learners' & Teachers' Perceptions of Learners' Needs

According to Table 14, learners and teachers perceived the EOP needs of a pre-service flight attendant similarly and no significant differences were observed among the importance of *Listening, Reading, Vocabulary, Communication skills,* and *Pronunciation* ($p>0.05$). However, the table suggests that the 2 groups of participants perceived the importance of *Speaking, Writing, Grammar,* and *Cultural literacy* significantly differently ($p< 0.05$). Figure 3 depicts such similarities and differences much more clearly.

Table 14

Independent Sample T-test, Item by Item

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
									95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
			Sig.	t	df	ig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
1	Equal variances assumed	45.457	.000	2.392	138	.018	.25	.094	-.410	-.039
	Equal variances not assumed			5.878	119	.000	.25	.038	-.300	-.149
2	Equal variances assumed	1.873	.173	1.050	138	.296	.75	.119	-.360	.110
	Equal variances not assumed			-867	22.8	.395	.75	.144	-.423	.173
3	Equal variances assumed	.070	.792	-1.9	138	.058	-.300	.156	-.010	.610
	Equal variances not assumed			-2.46	33.5	.019	-.300	.121	.052	.547
4	Equal variances assumed	2.978	.087	-2.87	138	.005	-.72	.182	.163	.886
	Equal variances not assumed			-4.11	39.8	.000	-.72	.127	.266	.783
5	Equal variances assumed	4.399	.038	-6.267	138	.000	-1.07	.203	.87	1.67
	Equal variances not assumed			-9.09	40.84	.000	-1.07	.140	.991	1.55
6	Equal variances assumed	.463	.497	-.097	135	.923	-.012	.132	-.248	.27
	Equal variances not assumed			-.102	27	.919	-.0128	.125	-.244	.270
7	Equal variances assumed	.562	.455	-.382	138	.703	-.0250	.065	-.104	.154
	Equal variances not assumed			-.343	23.9	.735	-.0250	.072	-.12	.17
8	Equal variances assumed	12.137	.001	1.801	138	.074	.0750	.124	-.02	.47
	Equal variances not assumed			1.419	22.3	.170	.0750	.158	-.10	.55
9	Equal variances assumed	.203	.653	4.368	138	.000	.2500	.125	-.79	-.30
	Equal variances not assumed			4.754	27.6	.000	.250 0	.115	-.78	-.31

4.2. Discussion

4.2.1. Discussion of Research Question 1 and 2

The first and second research questions dealt with the learners' needs analysis, including their perception regarding importance of English in their future job (i.e., their needs as a cabin crew member), their weaknesses, learning preferences and strategies, as well as their most required areas of English form learners' and teachers' point of view. To do so, the needs analysis questionnaire was responded by 2 groups of participants, i.e. 120 learners and 20 teachers. Regarding the needs of learners, learners and teachers were predominantly agreed about the importance of English language skills and sub-skills, though there were some differences about their priorities which will later be discussed more in discussion of research question number 3. As the importance of English, through questions 1 to 9 on the NA questionnaire, was assessed by a 4-point liker scale, 1 as *not important*, 2 *somewhat important*, 3 *important*, and 4 *very important,* the following findings were obtained: learners perceived i) *Communicative Skills* (M= 3.925), ii) *Speaking* (M= 3.775), iii) *Listening* (M= 3.675), iv) *Pronunciation* (M= 3.625), v) *Vocabulary* (M= 3.5128), vi) *Cultural Literacy* (M= 3.150), vii) *Reading* (M= 3.00), viii) *Grammar* (M= 2.775) and ix) *Writing* (M= 2.225), while teachers perceived i) *Communicative Skills* (M= 3.90), ii) *Listening* (M= 3.80), iii) *Speaking* (M= 3.75), iv) *Cultural Literacy* (M= 3.70), v) *Vocabulary* (M= 3.50), vi*) Pronunciation* (M= 3.40), vii) *Reading* (M= 2.70), viii) *Writing* (M= 1.70), and) ix) *Grammar* (M= 1.60). Such approximately close means indicate that the 2 groups of participants were familiar with the job of a flight attendant concerning language use, for one thing as learners had passed the operational specific courses about this job and on the part of teachers, as they had been flying quite a lot and the fact that they have taught this course quite a lot, too. These findings seem to be similar to Eslami (2010) in terms of limited Vocabulary, and need for enhancing learners' ability in Speaking and Listening comprehension. The significance of the *communicative* and *speaking skills* in the occupational target context revealed in this study is in line with the findings in other workplace contexts (Lestari, 2017; Prachanant, 2012) in which face-to-face speaking daily activities are found as the most needed tasks, including daily fundamental language functions like greeting and welcoming, in addition to EOP, like serving, directing and helping passengers. Unlike Zhang (2009) who found knowledge of *grammar* and *vocabulary* as the cornerstone aspects of English language learning, teachers and learners found them as not very important sub-skills of English (as the fifth and ninth priority among nine items). Besides, *reading* was not found important in a cabin crew's job as both teachers and learners gave it not a better position than seventh, which does not agree with the NA study conducted by Adzmi, Bidin, Ibrahim, and

Jusoff (2009) demonstrating that the ESP teachers found *reading* as the most important skill which needs to be learned by the learners and consequently their ESP course focus needed to be on *reading*.

Following the first part of the questionnaire, the second part dealing with the weaknesses of learners starts with question number 10. The questionnaire directed the respondents to answer this question in such a way that more than one answer could be accepted. Therefore, 263 responses were adopted from 120 learners. According to Figure 3, the most problematic areas in learning English were *poor listening and speaking ability* of the learners (each 27.37%), on the other hand out of 20 teachers responding to this question, 100 responses were gathered, and *poor speaking ability* (20%) was declared as the most problematic area of learning according to the teachers and *poor listening comprehension* (18%) came next in this list. This sounds expected as English is used as a foreign language in Iran and language learners acceptably find it really challenging. Ramadhani (2017) conducted a methodology on teaching speaking to EFL learners based on ESP material as he believed the EFL learners were shy and afraid to talk, even in front of the class with just their teacher and classmates available. In addition to the presented response items, one item was left anonymous, as to be filled by the respondents, if any problematic area was missing, thus, 13 teachers inserted *poor cultural literacy* to the list of the response items, which displayed another challenging aspect of learning of the learners diagnosed by the teachers. The obtained data about the high levels of the learners' speaking and listening difficulties in the present study is consistent with some other studies in the ESP context (Khamkhien, 2010; Srabua, 2007) as speaking and listening were evaluated as the most difficult skills for ESP learners. The reason behind it seems to be due to the limited communication and exposure to native English speakers in Iran and other Asian contexts and the fact that English is a foreign language and English courses are the only contexts (next to the learners' own involvement with English speakers through social media) enabling the learners with opportunities of practicing English (Haddam, 2015). Another possible explanation for the learners' speaking and listening difficulties is the lack of confidence in communicating in English. This finding was in line with the work of Wei and Zhou (2002) which asserts the fear of Thai learners to be considered by their classmates as show-off, which could explain why they are reluctant to speak English. Similar causes of this could be the stress and anxiety of learners to speak in English. Fariadian, Azizifar, and Gowhary (2014) conducted a study to investigate the relationship between stress and English speaking ability among Iranian EFL learners. The findings reveal that stress and anxiety in English learning has a significant negative correlation with English speaking scores of the learners.

Following with the third part of the questionnaire, beginning with question number 11, it was shown that 57% of learners preferred *mostly English* as the medium of instruction, while 60% of teachers were in favor of *completely English*. It looked obvious, as some of learners claimed in their interview sessions that just in case of misunderstanding and not comprehending, they would like to be able to speak Persian, and receive the responses in Persian, too. As expected, the students' perceptions of their needs very often were related to their perceived difficulties. Finding of this study supports other NA findings (e.g. Mazdayasna & Tahririan, 2008) regarding the fact that the obtained data from the learners' NA questionnaire, as well as interviews revealed that most of the learners and teachers found similar English difficulties and needs in specific areas of language learning, like *reading related articles about the future job*, *understanding conversations* and *making conversations*. While 60% of learners claimed to need Reading Skill to be able to *read related articles about the future job*, 50% of teachers thought their learners needed this skill to *improve their reading comprehension* in general. This could be because of not much interest on part of the learners (as young generation) regarding Reading Skill and it showed that they might require this skill to be updated about their job, to be promoted later. Both learners (78%) and teachers (70%) believed that *understanding conversations* was the most required area in Listening Skill, as a flight attendant needs to comprehend the requests and questions of the passengers clearly to be able to respond later. Learners (77.5%) and teachers (90%) agreed that *making conversations* was the most significant reason Speaking Skill needs to be emphasized. As the nature of a flight attendant job is a customer care type which involves talking and taking care of the passengers. As it was clarified before, Writing Skill was about the least important skill to the eyes of both learners and teachers, which could show the flight attendants really do not need such a skill to learn. Thus, 40% of learners and 55% of teachers believed the learners needed *writing for practical purposes* as the focus of Writing Skill in the class. This study was in line with Basturkmen's (1998) study in which she stated that writing was not very significant for ESP students. 62.5% of learners and 80% of teachers responded *yes* to the question of the Relevance of Materials to their Course, which shows that the majority of participants were in favor of learning and instructing the relevant material about aviation, specifically cabin and cabin crews. Surprisingly 54.16% of learners and 55% of teachers were in favor of *pair work* in Learning English, which might prove they had the experience of better learning while they worked two by two. The last 2 questions of the questionnaire were not needed to be responded by the learners as they did not take part in EOP course, yet. However, teachers answered these 2 questions and 90% of them were *for* changing the curriculum for pre-service flight attendants and 72% of them believed in *material change* (the obtained data

from the course book evaluation checklist which will be discussed later would confirm this). This could be about the deficiency of the current book instructed at the training center, as the majority of teachers were in favor of curriculum alteration because of the course book.

4.2.2. Discussion of Research Question 3

As it was asserted before, research question number 3 dealt with any possible differences between learners' and teachers' perception of importance of English in a flight attendant's job. According to the obtained data through T-test, learners and teachers had similar perceptions about the learners' need in their future job, as $p>0.05$. Unlike several other studies (Ferris, 1998; Robinson, 1991), the present study did not display that the teachers' perceptions of the learners' needs did not essentially match those of the learners. In other words, in this study very few discrepancies in the teachers' and learners' perceptions of the EOP needs of pre-service flight attendants were noticed.

The present study validates Richards' (2001) importance of needs analysis performance, "…makes use of both subjective and objective information (e.g. data from questionnaires, tests, interviews, observation) and seeks to obtain information on: a) the situations in which a language will be used (including who it will be used with), b) the objectives and purposes for which the language is needed, c) the types of communication that will be used (e.g. written, spoken, formal, informal), and d) the level of proficiency that will be required" (p.354). The obtained data also underlines the significance of implementing NA in ESP contexts (Bojovic, 2006; Jasso-Aguilar, 2005) in order to be able to design teaching materials and methods accordingly. Besides, according to Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998), the current study emphasized the ESP (EOP) teachers' role as a highlighted factor in the present and target context.

5. Conclusion and Implications

There have been a large number of studies in which the researchers tended to determine the ESP needs of the learners either in academic or professional contexts. However, there was not such a study on exploring the EOP needs of pre-service flight attendants accomplished in Iran (though, there have not been many globally, either). Hence, the present study was to assess the real needs, wants, lacks, as well as learning preferences of pre-service cabin crew members through a mixed-method research design. Thus, the learners with cooperation of their teachers assisted the researcher to meet her aim in this study. Initially, they took the Needs Analysis Questionnaires, and then selectively participated in semi-structured interviews with the researcher to strengthen the validity of the obtained data. Generally, there was not much disagreement between the learners and teachers regarding their

perceptions of importance of English in their jobs, most required areas of their language use, and their learning preferences.

As a result of both quantitative and qualitative phases of this study, both groups of participants displayed the importance of communicative skills as well as listening and speaking skills in the job of a flight attendant, whereas grammar, reading and writing skills were their least significant skill and sub-skills. Mainly, that could be due to the nature of this job as a flight attendant in which communication is incredibly highlighted in this customer-care type of career. Furthermore, they demonstrated that watching and reading relevant movies as well as books and articles, enhancing reading comprehension, next to making and understanding conversations were required to be the focus of the main four language skills in learning English.

In addition, this study can have implications for both ESP practitioners and learners. Needs Analysis can be motivating to the learners as they feel their vision and needs are taken seriously to assist them in finding what they need in a curriculum as well as learning teaching material in such a way that both learners and teachers can both benefit from. ESP learners are recommended to be more active and take the responsibility of their learning by discussing their wants and preferences and if they confront any possible deficiencies, speak up rather than complaining about the inappropriateness of the course, course book or curriculum. Moreover, NA can be appreciated by the teachers as it provides them with a clear understanding of their learners' needs, lacks, and wants which can help them to adopt techniques, strategies and curriculum to enhance their learners' learning. Moreover, such understanding can be fruitful for the teachers, stakeholders as well as material writers to develop specifically required material for that group of learners.

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