

---

# A Practical Needs Analysis in the Context of Uzbekistan: A Guide to TEFL Syllabus Modification

---

*Inoyatova Rushana Rustam qizi*

*English language teacher, Kokand University, Kokand, Uzbekistan*

---

**Abstract:** This paper is a report on analyzing learner needs. The aim of this study is to examine needs as well as strengths and weaknesses of the learner in the English language, to examine which way to teach and to give right guidance and support in academic studies by developing appropriate syllabus. Needs analysis is becoming a vital factor which assists to improve the present curriculum and learning atmosphere. This assessment can contribute to the EFL teachers' understanding of the practicality and sample methods of conducting needs analysis. It was decided that the best tools for this investigation were interview, questionnaire, proficiency test and free essay. The paper presents the findings of the study.

**Keywords:** curriculum, syllabus, proficiency test, learner needs, learning style, questionnaire, essay, Richards' Triangular approach, instrumental motivation.

---

## Introduction

Learning a second language is an individual cognitive process, and teacher should take into consideration the learners' needs, interests, learning styles and other affective factors so as to achieve success in delivering knowledge. Becoming aware of learner needs is crucial due to the fact that it serves as "an orientation toward the teaching learning process" and as a bridge in the form of dialogue between learners and teachers/curriculum developers [Graves 2000: 52]. For instance, if the topics in the syllabus are not appealing and only forty percent of the material is acquired by the learner, then the course may not address the learner's needs appropriately.

The institution chosen for this study is the language center called "Path of Education" located in Namangan region. The instructors plan curriculum for each course (ranging from beginner to upper-intermediate) which last for three or four months depending on the speed rate of learner groups. Besides, there is a special yearly curriculum for applicants preparing for national university exams. The groups are disciplined according to the proficiency level and age of the learners. When an interested learner visits here to get acquainted with the conditions, they take a multiple-choice test based on grammar and vocabulary, and then they are placed into the relevant group. The administration also organizes admission for larger groups once in every season. One of the distinctive features of this language center is that it possesses institutional policy which allows teachers to take students for trips around the entertaining places and relaxing meadows along the Syrdarya River every month.

Each course consists of thirty-six lessons that take place three times a week. The duration of classes is one hour and a half, which equals to 90 minutes. The restriction of the number of students is up to fifteen. But in the IELTS group, it is limited with 8 learners and the first lesson is considered as free trial. According to availability of the instructors, mini-groups

with two or three students are offered on request. After the thirty-sixth lesson, students sit an examination which proves they are eligible to get a certificate of completion. Students who get at least 70% are acknowledged as passed to the next stage/level of the language course. Lessons are conducted mostly in Uzbek and Russian except high levels (upper-intermediate and IELTS) which require English only. In addition to the course books such as Open Mind and Straightforward, various handouts are widely used.

### **Learner Profile**

The first participant of this analysis is a 19-year-old Uzbek female named M. S. (contracted for privacy). She has just entered the University of World Languages and is a freshman. Her proficiency level of English is intermediate. She has been studying English for two years in formal education of academic lyceum. Moreover, she had English classes at public secondary school. The participant speaks Uzbek (L1), Russian (L2) and English (FL). The learner does not require special attention due to her healthy mental and physical capabilities. She learns English as a foreign language with instrumental motivation. Because she intends to participate in a student exchange program which the university authority provides opportunity to accomplish second year of bachelor's study abroad. Thus she needs to become a fluent user of the English language before she reaches her sophomore year. She studies in Russian class.

The second participant is T. K. (contracted for privacy) who is an 18-year-old female. Her nationality is Korean. She is also a first-year student of the same university. The level of her English is upper-intermediate. Her learning process lasted for three years at a language center besides five years of English study at school (grades 5-9). This participant is multilingual as she can speak Russian (native), Uzbek (second language), English (foreign language) and Korean (foreign language). She does not hold any learning disabilities or behavioral disorders. According to her response during the interview, it became clear that she is inspired by both instrumental and integrative motivation. Her aim is, after collecting a sufficient amount of money on her own, to immigrate to the US where her relatives live. Meanwhile, she is interested in acquiring English at the level of advanced user with the purpose of working for an international hotel as an interpreter. She studies in the group whose education language is Russian.

### **Data collection**

For this needs analysis, four types of research tools were utilized so that the analysis be more detailed and effective. Firstly, an interview was taken from the participants. During the interview, background information of the learners was exerted. For instance, name, profession, languages, hobby, purpose of learning the language, learner styles and suchlike. By this way the learners' general outlook was studied. Interview with Participant 1 was done face-to-face; with Participant 2 it was online call. Voice recorder was used to save the interview. The transcript of the interview was given in Appendix II.

Secondly, questionnaire was provided which was devoted to determine the learners' academic abilities and needs. It consists of five parts including self-evaluation, preferred activities, expectations from the course, and feelings about learning English. I focused on identifying suitable learning styles and strategies that were welcomed by the participants. Furthermore, purpose of learning English, ever used textbooks and available time were identified. Sample blank form of the questionnaire was provided in Appendix III.

Thirdly, both participants took proficiency test online that lasted 16 and 18 minutes at <https://learnenglish.britishcouncil.org/online-english-level-test>. The test contains twenty-five multiple-choice questions. Besides, Test results can be found in Appendix IV. Last method

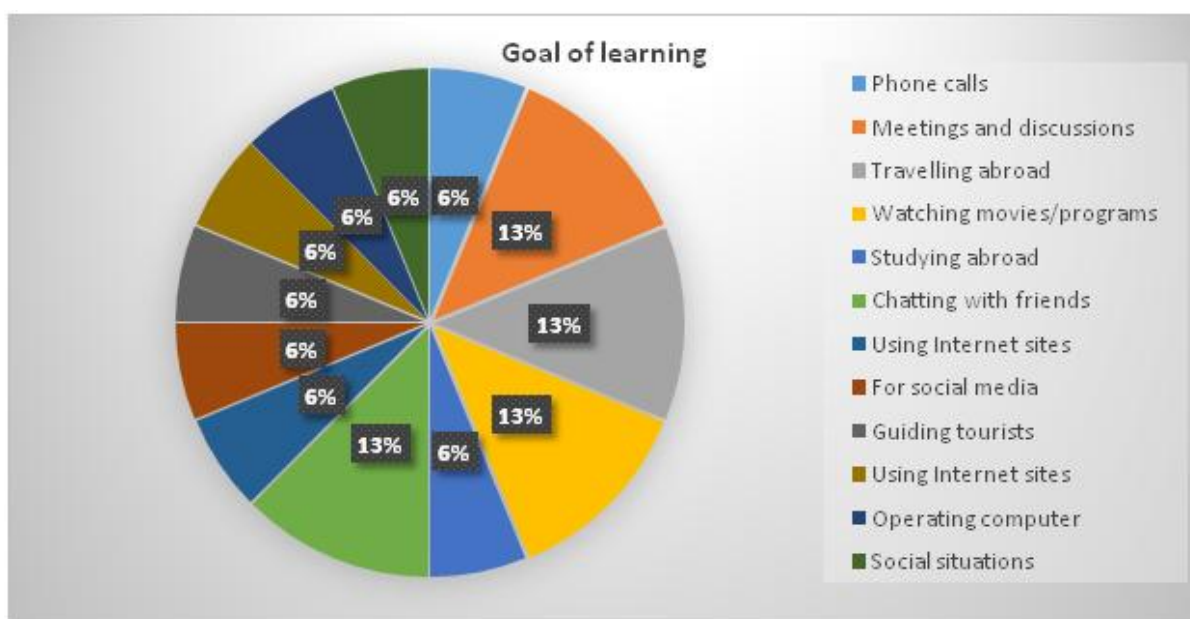
tool was essay. The participants' writing skills and horizon were analyzed through a free-topic essay. Both learners sent their graded essays written in the course. See Appendix V.

**Findings and analysis**

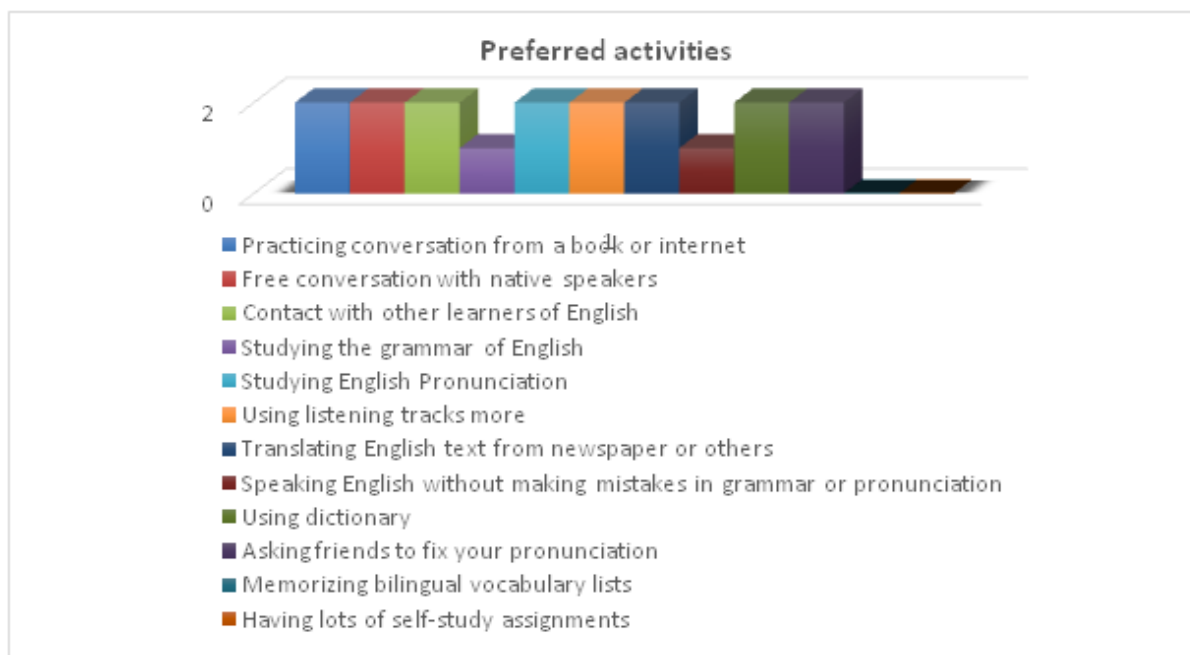
I followed Richards' Triangular approach [Erickstad 1998: 33] (interview, test score, student's writing) to study learners' needs. According to the questionnaire, the first participant (Mukhtasar) considers reading and vocabulary as her strong points, and speaking and writing as her weak points. She counted two most effective textbooks, Vocabulary for IELTS and Destination, which she has used so far. The second learner (Tanya) stated that she is good at listening and grammar, but bad at reading and writing. The most helpful books for her were Destination and Murphy.

Some of the goals of the learners are the same, but to some points they differ. Their purpose of learning English is illustrated in Diagram 1. As can be seen from the diagram, options such as meetings and discussions, travelling abroad, chatting with friends and watching movies/programs in English were dominant in the purpose of the learners. 13% segments depict that both participants chose these goals while 6% segments mean one participant aligned as her goal. It is found out that learners have more instrumental motivation than integrative motivation.

*Diagram 1*



Next vital feature to analyze is preferred activities. The results of this section of survey is depicted in Diagram 2. The participants found these two activities as the least useful: memorizing bilingual vocabulary lists, and having lots of self-study assignments. In fact, practicing with authentic materials like newspapers or websites, pronunciation and listening more are fancied.

*Diagram 2*

In Questionnaire Part 3, expectations from the course were discussed. The learners' view of English is positive. They pointed out that although English is a difficult language, it has rich vocabulary and is amazing. In class, as the learners indicated, they would like the teacher to practice before teaching new grammar rules, fix diction mistakes, and not to speak native language. As available time for class, Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday 4 pm was assigned. Problems with proficiency have been easy to notice. Participant 1 often forgets to use "to be" in speaking whereas Participant 2 showed quite rich vocabulary and firm grammar knowledge. Participant 1 has high self-esteem which was expressed during the interview. She estimates her level is upper-intermediate, almost close to advanced, but in reality, her speech and proficiency test result indicated intermediate. Meanwhile, Participant 2 asked me to rate her level depending on her essay and test. I analyzed essays (draft, checked by the teacher) provided by the participants and came to conclusion that Participant 1 needs organizational skills of essay writing while Participant 2 has already achieved appropriate content and communicative design.

In terms of learning styles, I had to give thorough explanations during the interview as neither of them was aware. Participant 1 stated that she has a tendency to learn better when she reads the material with illustrations from which I learnt she is a visual learner. Participant 2 chose third option that she enjoys learning when she draws a mind map or gets involved physically in activities such as role plays. It was clear that she is a kinesthetic learner. Simultaneously, Participant 1 told she always keeps a small copybook with her and jots down interesting new words or phrases when she hears it, then explores it later in the dictionary. She also writes questions in her notebook whenever she is studying out of class so that she remembers to ask from the teacher. The strategy preferred by Participant 2 was cooperation and peer teaching. Every time she learns some grammar rule, she tries to explain it to her course mates, by this way she improves her knowledge and getting thankful comments encourages her, as she told.

Learners' personality traits were observed during the interview and test time. Both of them are sociable extraverts as they behave freely without shyness or embarrassment even when they do not know the student researcher and took time to answer the interview questions. Participant 1 has good creativity while Participant 2 has adaptability traits. For instance, the

interview took place in a noisy environment (outside the learning center) and they participated not discerning the distraction. Creativity appeared in their essays which include precise, oriented and original ideas.

### Conclusion

To sum up, this study has been beneficial for my future application of needs analysis of learners. In this report, I explored two adolescent learners' needs, learning styles, strategies and other features which can be useful in further works like syllabus design. Although learning styles may slightly differ (visual and kinesthetic), their personality traits are alike (extraverts). As they are at high intermediate level, they have gained sufficient knowledge on grammar and vocabulary to communicate with other speakers of English. However, I found out that these learners need to work on their speaking, mainly pronunciation, and writing skills. The reason is that they both mispronounced some words (phonemic distinctions) during the interview which made me difficult to understand and showed lack of apprehension in essay writing. Thus, if I were the teacher, I would try to engage them in mostly listening activities to enhance their diction and conduct writing classes to teach how to organize ideas in orderly paragraphs. They also rose immense curiosity to speaking activities more for the reason that they both plan to live abroad for the period of at least one year. Furthermore, taking their motivational and language needs into account, in the lessons I would insert topics of travel, social gatherings, study abroad and phone calls; make them acquainted with formal and semi-formal discourse (as they showed interest in international meetings as well as online chatting); play extracts from movies and discuss foreign newspapers such as New York Times and The Metropolitan, or TV news and talk shows to better speaking by correcting the learners' pronunciation and provide authentic vocabulary. As they are visual and kinesthetic extravert learners, I would devote effort to presentations, role plays, real-life dramas, graphic organizers, photo essays, flowcharts and other activities and tools.

### References

1. Erickstad, J. Richards' Meaning of Meaning Theory. University of Colorado at Boulder, 1998. – 33 p.
2. Graves, K. *Designing language courses: A guide for teachers*. Boston, MA: Heinle and Heinle Thomson learning, 2000. – 52 p.
3. Mickey Rogers, Joanne Taylore-Knowles & Steve Taylore-Knowles. Open Mind (Pre-Intermediate, Student's Book B1+). – London 2019: Macmillan Education, 109 p.
4. Needs analysis questionnaire [Электронный ресурс]. Retrieved from [сайт]. URL: [https://www.academia.edu/4680620/NEEDS\\_ANALYSIS\\_QUESTIONNAIRE\\_FOR\\_ENGLISH\\_LEARNERS](https://www.academia.edu/4680620/NEEDS_ANALYSIS_QUESTIONNAIRE_FOR_ENGLISH_LEARNERS)
5. Online proficiency test [Электронный ресурс]. Retrieved from [сайт]. URL: <https://learnenglish.britishcouncil.org/online-english-level-test>