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A NEEDS ANALYSIS ON THE ENGLISH LANGAUGE NEEDS AMONG AGRICULTURE STUDENTS: BASIS FOR CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

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ABSTRACT

This study focused on analyzing the English language needs of Bachelor of Science in Agriculture students majoring in Horticulture and Animal Science at Kapalong College of Agriculture, Sciences, and Technology (KCAST). The primary goal was to assess their proficiency in the four macro skills such as listening, speaking, reading, and writing and to develop a syllabus to address identified gaps. A mixed-methods approach was used in the conduct of this study involving 100 student respondents through structured questionnaires and in-depth interviews with ten randomly selected participants. Results revealed that students exhibited high proficiency in listening (79%), average proficiency in speaking (67%), low proficiency in reading (49%), and very low proficiency in writing (32%). Meanwhile, qualitative data supported these findings, with students expressing challenges in vocabulary use, sentence construction, and confidence in both speaking and writing. In response to these deficiencies, an English for Agriculture syllabus is proposed that focuses on four macro-skills that will help agriculture students in enhancing their English proficiency, that is tailored to agriculture-related tasks. It is recommended that the program will be integrated into the existing curriculum alongside measures such as interactive speaking activities, the use of authentic agricultural materials, regular feedback, and digital learning tools to further enhance language skills. These interventions aim to improve communication competence among agriculture students, which is essential for both academic success and future professional engagement in the agricultural sector.

KEYWORDS: *Needs Analysis, Language Proficiency, Agriculture Students, English for Agriculture, English for Specific Purposes (ESP)*

INTRODUCTION

Language skills comprise the abilities necessary for communication, both in writing and speaking. These skills include the four macro skills, namely reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Each of these plays a crucial role for agriculture students, as they must understand and use specialized vocabulary relevant to their field of expertise (Putra & Saleh, 2021). Since agriculture includes specialized branches such as horticulture and animal science, each field requires a unique set of technical terms. In horticulture, possessing strong language skills is vital for understanding technical terms, which are essential for engaging in critical thinking and problem-solving related to plant health and growth (Fajardo & Sarmiento, 2022). For animal science students, these skills are equally important, as they facilitate effective communication with farmers and veterinarians, allowing them to share knowledge, research findings, and best practices in animal care and production (Cahyono & Mutiaraningrum, 2023).

In Punjab, Pakistan, Arshad et al. (2019) found that agricultural students experienced a decline in reading habits due to modern digital technologies such as mobile phones and social media. Most students accessed the internet at home, but nearly half were unable to read for pleasure because of academic assignments and sports activities, resulting in only about two hours of reading. Similarly, Sari et al. (2024) reported that freshmen in the Agricultural Department faced difficulties with English proficiency, particularly in grammar and vocabulary. These students lacked confidence and experienced laziness, which hampered their comprehension of agricultural journal articles. In the United States, a study by Ruth and Emmert (2019) at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign examined how the beliefs of freshmen in agriculture influenced their expectations regarding writing skills. The findings showed that while students recognized the practical value of writing, they were neutral about its intrinsic value and apprehensive about writing. Nevertheless, they believed they could succeed in writing despite having limited practice. In Indonesia, Prasetianto and Maharddika (2024) identified common difficulties among agriculture students in essay writing, including challenges in generating ideas, vocabulary limitations, and poor grammar, which emphasized the need for writing guidance. Furthermore, Rodchamnan et al. (2022) found that Thai agriculture students struggled with listening due to limited exposure, unfamiliar vocabulary, and difficulties understanding different accents. Their low confidence and lack of practice further impacted their listening skills, suggesting the need for focused practice and vocabulary-building strategies. Similar findings were echoed by Asati et al. (2023) and Pujosusanto et al. (2025), who emphasized the role of skill

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development programs in addressing these gaps in language proficiency.

In the Philippines, distance learning posed significant challenges for students, particularly in the agricultural sector. For example, in Masbate, students pursuing agricultural studies struggled with completing assignments due to limited reading comprehension and a lack of engagement with learning materials (Salvador, 2024). These difficulties were compounded by the remote nature of their education, which limited opportunities for direct instruction and practical application. Similarly, a study in Cavite found that agriculture students often had minimal exposure to agritourism and essential agricultural concepts beyond the classroom. This limited exposure resulted in inadequate hands-on experience with farm-based recreational and educational activities, which are critical for their professional growth and understanding of the agricultural field (Anjani, 2019). Furthermore, a study conducted at Tarlac Agricultural University revealed prevalent writing issues among students. Reytas (2021) analyzed 620 writing errors in students' descriptive texts and categorized them into four major areas: cohesion (53 errors), grammar (238 errors), mechanics (285 errors), and diction (44 errors). Common errors included issues with subject-verb agreement, punctuation, and vocabulary use, indicating widespread challenges in both language proficiency and effective communication. These findings were supported by Caybot-Plaza (2019), who also observed consistent weaknesses in grammar and mechanics among agriculture students' written outputs.

In the context of this study, Agriculture students, particularly those from the Horticulture and Animal Science departments at Kapalong College of Agriculture, Sciences, and Technology (KCAST), are currently facing significant challenges in their language skills specially in writing. Many students struggle to generate ideas and construct coherent sentences, often demonstrating difficulty in recognizing and applying proper subject-verb agreement. This lack of writing proficiency not only hinders their academic performance but also limits their ability to communicate effectively specially in written forms. Given the increasing need for competent communication skills in the agricultural sector, whether for writing reports, preparing project proposals, or writing letters relevant to their fields, there is an urgent need to address these deficiencies. Thus, focused study is therefore essential to identify the specific challenges and language proficiency needs faced by these students and to develop targeted interventions aimed at improving their writing skills and overall language proficiency.

In connection to that, the researchers identified three related studies conducted at Kapalong College of Agriculture, Sciences, and Technology that highlight the English language needs of students. The first study, *"The English Language Needs of Agriculture Undergraduate Students Focusing on Reading Skills"* by Edrada (2024), found that students struggled with key themes and specialized vocabulary, though it focused solely on reading skills. The second, *"Demystifying the Indigenous College Students' Learning of English as Determined by Their Language Learning Motivation"* by Permangil (2024), revealed that motivation significantly enhances English proficiency; however, it did not specifically address the learners' language needs in Agriculture program. Lastly, the study by Escandallo et al. (2024), *"The English Language Needs of Bachelor of Science in Business Administration – Marketing Management Second-Year Students Focusing on Reading Skills"*, emphasized the importance of strong reading skills for academic success but did not delve with other macro-skills. Also, there are studies conducted in the same locale (Botohan et al., 2024; De Vera et al., 2024; Sodoy et al., 2024; Watin et al., 2024) but all just focused with reading skill and not all the four macro skills. While these studies provide valuable insights, the present study differs by conducting a comprehensive needs analysis that examines the specific English language needs particularly in listening, speaking, reading, and writing of Agriculture students majoring in Horticulture and Animal Science at KCAST. This broader approach aims to identify the students' needs, lacks, and wants across all four macro skills to create a designed syllabus in English language that can be adapted in the curriculum of Agriculture program.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What is the level of language proficiency in terms of the four macro skills among BSA students?
2. What are the levels of language proficiency in terms of the four macro skills among Office Administration students?
3. What are the insights of the students based on the results and findings of their language proficiency?
4. Based on the results, what syllabus can be proposed as essential program to develop the language proficiency of the students?

NEEDS ANALYSIS

A. Purpose of the Needs Analysis

The purpose of this Needs Analysis was to assess the specific writing challenges faced by agriculture students at KCAST, particularly in the Horticulture and Animal Science programs. It identified gaps in writing proficiency, such as difficulties in idea generation, sentence construction, grammar, and cohesion. This analysis provided essential insights into the students' language learning needs. The results enabled course designers to create a syllabus that directly addressed language proficiency gaps, ensuring that instructional materials and activities were tailored to the students' specific needs and capacity.

B. Target Population

The needs analysis was conducted among students of Kapalong College of Agriculture, Sciences and Technology who were enrolled in the Bachelor of Science in Agriculture program, majoring in Animal Science and Horticulture. These students served as both the subjects and respondents of the study. The researchers selected a sample of 100 students to answer a structured questionnaire developed specifically for the study. To gain deeper insights, a random sample of students was also selected for interviews. This approach ensured a diverse range of perspectives, allowing the researchers to clearly identify the students' educational needs, challenges, and areas requiring further emphasis and improvement.

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B. Framework of the Target Situation Analysis

1. Why is the language needed?

Communication was mostly dependent on language, so it was essential for agriculture students to develop their language proficiency, particularly those specializing in animal science and horticulture. Strong language abilities were essential for both their academic work and future employment, whether they were collaborating with people, exchanging ideas, or presenting research. Since effective writing was necessary for finishing assignments and doing well in classes, this analysis focused on assisting students in developing their writing skills. The ultimate objective was to enhance their general communication abilities, which were essential for success in both professional and academic contexts.

2. How will the language be used?

In context, Agriculture majors in Animal Science and Horticulture utilized language in a variety of contexts, including academic and professional settings, through speaking, reading, and writing. As in their regular experiences with others, these students used their language skills to communicate successfully. These abilities were also put to use in their particular professions while conducting interviews, writing reports, or producing professional documents like research papers, project proposals, and summaries of fieldwork. Their success in the classroom and in their future careers depended on their ability to communicate effectively.

3. What will the content areas be?

The content areas for agriculture students specializing in Animal Science and Horticulture centered on English and other courses requiring proficient English communication. Their field-specific subjects, like farm management, agricultural communication, and documentation of animal care, were also covered in these sections. To ensure that students could succeed in both academic and practical settings, the language content helped them prepare for real-world scenarios where they needed to use their language abilities to communicate with clients, coworkers, and professionals in the agriculture industry.

4. Where will the language be used?

The Agriculture students majoring in Horticulture and Animal Science utilized the language in class, group projects, and presentations. In their professional settings, such as meetings with farm management, technical training sessions, research presentations, and correspondence with clients, veterinarians, or agricultural technicians, the language was also crucial. Additionally, these language skills helped them become more proficient in the language, improve their grammar, and enhance their communication skills, all of which were essential for their day-to-day work in agricultural settings, as well as for creating technical reports, field documentation, and communicating with agricultural industry stakeholders.

C. Framework of Learning Needs Analysis

1. Why are the learners taking the course?

The course was taken by students majoring in Horticulture and Animal Science because it was a required part of the Bachelor of Science in Agriculture curriculum. Despite being a mandatory course, they acknowledged the importance of English as an essential tool for successful communication in academic and professional settings. Since it improved their capacity to speak effectively and clearly with stakeholders, clients, researchers, and coworkers, fluency in English was important in their line of work. Strong communication abilities were essential for jobs in agribusiness, extension services, farm management, and agricultural research. As a result, they considered the course to be crucial training for professional advancement and practical agriculture industry interactions.

2. How do learners learn?

The best learning occurred when students in agriculture, especially horticulture and animal science, combined academic knowledge, real-world application, and hands-on involvement. They effectively absorbed information through lectures, practical fieldwork, lab tests, and case studies that mirrored actual farming methods. Many students preferred hands-on activities that allowed them to apply theory in real-world agricultural, plant cultivation, and animal husbandry situations. Group projects and peer conversations were examples of collaborative learning that improved their comprehension by promoting the sharing of knowledge and experiences. Deeper learning and knowledge retention were also supported by the use of technology, such as educational videos, multimedia tools, and online agricultural databases. Through a combination of hands-on learning and online tools, students gained the knowledge and abilities necessary to succeed in horticulture, animal science, and other allied agricultural fields.

3. What resources are available?

A variety of learning resources were accessible to Horticulture and Animal Science students who were enrolled in the Bachelor of Science in Agriculture program. The experience of teachers who had undergone in-depth training in teaching English for Specific Purposes (ESP), specifically for the agricultural industry, was one of the most valuable resources. These instructors offered advice that was tailored to the particular requirements of aspiring horticulturists and animal scientists. Students used textbooks, workbooks, and other textual resources created especially for agricultural communication, in addition to the assistance of their instructors. The learning experience was further improved by digital resources, including e-books, online learning environments, and multimedia content. Academic performance was also greatly aided by peer cooperation, computer lab access, and library resources.

4. Who are the learners?

The students were first to third year Horticulture and Animal Science majors at Kapalong College of Agriculture, Sciences, and Technology, pursuing a Bachelor of Science in Agriculture. They came from different backgrounds and had an adequate understanding of English. Since crop production, livestock management, and sustainable farming were their main areas of interest, their studies were focused on agricultural practices and communication within the framework of their field. They acknowledged the value of English in technical and professional agricultural contexts, but because it was only a minor subject in their curriculum, their knowledge of the language and attitudes toward it were still limited.

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5. Where will the ESP course take place?

The English for Specific Purposes (ESP) course for students in the Bachelor of Science in Agriculture program with a major in Horticulture and Animal Science took place in a well-organized and supportive setting. The classroom was organized, well-ventilated, and set up appropriately for interactive and hands-on instruction in order to encourage concentrated learning.

To guarantee that students could properly hear and comprehend lectures and conversations, it was free from distracting outside sounds, such as traffic or noisy surroundings. For students to actively participate, fully connect with the course material, and acquire the communication skills required for their future responsibilities in agriculture—particularly in managing crops, livestock, and allied agricultural enterprises—a quiet, organized setting or conducive learning environment was essential.

6. When will the ESP course take place?

The ESP (English for Specific Purposes) course for Horticulture and Animal Science majors in the Bachelor of Science in Agriculture program was ideally provided often, if not daily. Regular exposure to English helped students better grasp its real-world applications, particularly in scientific and agricultural settings. Learners gradually improved their fluency and confidence through consistent practice, which helped them communicate successfully in situations like technical writing, research presentations, farm consults, and agricultural conferences. By continuing their studies, students improved their skills in horticulture and animal science-related subjects and more readily incorporated the language into their academic work and future jobs.

E. Methods of Needs Analysis

The instruments used in conducting the Needs Analysis were divided into four categories: reading, listening, speaking, and writing test questionnaires, as well as interviews.

i. Questionnaire

A questionnaire was developed by the researchers as the main instrument for the requirements analysis in order to thoroughly evaluate students' English for Academic Purposes (EAP) proficiency. A total of 100 questionnaires were distributed and used to evaluate the respondents' speaking, writing, listening, and reading skills. Its goal was to measure their strengths and weaknesses. By using this valuable data, the study was able to identify their academic English needs and develop learning resources and pedagogical approaches appropriate to their proficiency level.

ii. Interview

Out of the 100 respondents, ten students were randomly selected by the researchers to take part in the second tool, an interview. The researchers asked these individuals a series of questions to gain a better understanding of their specific needs, preferences, and shortcomings. The interview was conducted to collect qualitative data that supported the questionnaire results and helped in designing a course that specifically addressed the students' academic English needs. This approach ensured a more customized and flexible course design based on the direct feedback and experiences of the selected participants.

F. Procedure of the Needs Analysis

The needs analysis began with the administration of an aptitude test to BS Agriculture students majoring in Horticulture and Animal Science. The test was designed to assess their existing English for Academic Purposes (EAP) skills, specifically in the four main areas: reading, writing, speaking, and listening. Once the students completed the test, the researchers verified and marked their answers. The results were then systematically organized to prepare for further analysis.

After obtaining the scores, the data were arranged into individual tables per skill. This organization allowed for easy identification of the students' strengths and weaknesses in each specific area. The structured presentation of results made it possible to determine the students' levels of proficiency and identify where additional support was needed.

Following the analysis of the test data, the researchers selected several participants for one-on-one interviews. These interviews gathered personal insights into the students' learning experiences, preferences in using English, and the challenges they faced in acquiring the language.

With the students' consent, the interviews were recorded and transcribed for further analysis. The qualitative data gathered from these interviews enriched the test findings, offering a deeper understanding of the English learning needs of Agriculture students.

The final phase integrated data from both the aptitude tests and the interviews. Based on this comprehensive analysis, the researchers developed a proposed syllabus. This syllabus was specifically designed to address the identified gaps and enhance the existing curriculum. It included targeted and relevant content aimed at improving the students' English skills across reading, writing, speaking, and listening, with a focus on practical application in the fields of Horticulture and Animal Science.

G. Data Collection

In order to perform the needs analysis, the researchers visited the designated classrooms. One hundred respondents were given the questionnaires. After completion, feedback was requested, and the results were presented in tables for clarity and coherence.

i. Questionnaires

The 60 statements that comprised the questionnaire were distributed among the four primary concerns. The researchers confirmed and interpreted the findings after the respondents had submitted their answers. The responses were categorized using the Likert scale, with each option receiving a unique score: strongly disagree, disagree, neither agree nor disagree, agree, and highly agree. Following that, each category's scores were added up and tabulated.

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ii. Interview

For private interviews, ten students were selected at random. To create a clear, consistent, and detailed representation of the qualitative data, the researchers carefully reviewed and summarized their responses. These responses complemented the overall analysis and contributed to a better understanding of the needs of students.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

To find the answer to the first research objective, the researchers developed a test questionnaire to suit the context of the study. The set of questionnaires dealt with the macro skills in the English language, which are Reading, Listening, Writing, and Speaking.

Level of Language Proficiency in terms of the Four Macro Skills

This section presents the quantitative results of the study, focusing on the English language proficiency of agriculture students at KCAST across the four macro skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The analysis was conducted using descriptive statistics, including means, standard deviations, and frequency counts, to interpret the data collected from the needs analysis survey.

Table 1
Level of Language Proficiency in terms of Listening Skills

Listening	Mean	Description
1	94%	Very High
2	82%	High
3	77%	High
4	78%	High
5	54%	Average
6	68%	Average
7	81%	High
8	81%	High
9	80%	High
10	84%	High
11	75%	High
12	84%	High
13	86%	High
14	77%	High
15	79%	High
Overall Mean	**79%**	**High**

Listening. In terms of listening, Agriculture students demonstrated an overall mean score of 79%, which is interpreted as "High." This suggests that they possess a strong ability to comprehend spoken language, which is an essential skill for processing lectures, technical discussions, and field instructions in agricultural contexts. The highest score of 94% in this area highlights students' capacity and ability to grasp detailed information effectively, while the lowest score of 54% indicates occasional challenges in specific listening tasks. Thus, this proficiency enables them to absorb and comprehend complex content such as crop management protocols and instructions, environmental policies, and technological updates crucial to their field of work.

Recent researches have investigated listening comprehension skills among students in agriculture and related fields. According to Puspita and Suswanto (2023), they examined non-English major college students and found that the use of authentic listening materials, such as audio and video media, effectively enhanced students' listening comprehension. In another study, Ismail (2020) analyzed the development of listening comprehension models using social media and reported differences in students' listening abilities, indicating that there are some students facing challenges in certain listening tasks. Additionally, Humeniuk et al. (2021) studied agrarian engineering students and demonstrated that exposure to authentic materials like TED Talks contributed to improvements in listening comprehension and speaking skills, emphasizing the importance of tailored instructional approaches to support student learning.

Table 2
Level of Language Proficiency in terms of Speaking Skills

Speaking	Mean	Description
1	87%	High
2	82%	High
3	77%	High
4	74%	High
5	81%	High
6	49%	Low
7	46%	Low
8	76%	High
9	79%	High
10	71%	High
11	63%	Average
12	72%	High
13	48%	Low
14	50%	Average
15	50%	Average
Overall	**67%**	**Average**

Speaking. The overall mean score for speaking was 67%, categorized as "Average," suggesting moderate proficiency in oral communication. The highest item scored 87%, showing students' potential in certain speaking tasks, while the lowest was 46%, highlighting areas needing improvement. Agriculture students' speaking skills are critical for articulating ideas, presenting projects, and engaging with diverse stakeholders such as farmers, researchers, and policymakers. Weaknesses in this area may limit their ability to effectively communicate complex agricultural concepts and solutions, which are essential in their professional development.

Recent studies have examined the proficiency of agriculture students and revealed a range of results highlighting the need for further development. In the study of Khan et al. (2023), and Escandallo and Baradillo (2024), it is reported that agriculture students generally hold positive attitudes toward learning English and exhibit a desire to enhance their proficiency across language skills, including speaking. However, differences in their performance were observed.

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Similarly, Al-Saadi and Al-Garadi (2021) found that vocational students demonstrated moderate speaking proficiency with strengths in certain tasks but notable challenges in others. Furthermore, Arshad (2024) emphasized the critical role of English proficiency in facilitating communication among diverse agricultural stakeholders and enabling effective participation in international markets and knowledge exchange. Collectively, this highlights that improving speaking skills is essential for agriculture students to effectively communicate ideas and engage successfully in both academic and professional settings.

Table 3
Level of Language Proficiency in terms of Reading Skills

Reading	Mean	Description
1	30%	Low
2	48%	Low
3	48%	Low
4	54%	Average
5	20%	Very Low
6	30%	Low
7	64%	Average
8	25%	Very Low
9	53%	Average
10	68%	Average
11	70%	High
12	68%	Average
13	83%	High
14	29%	Very Low
15	51%	Average
Overall	**49%**	**Low**

Reading. Agriculture students had an overall mean of 49% in reading, interpreted as "Low," indicating significant challenges in comprehending academic texts, technical manuals, and research articles. The highest score of 83% reflects areas where students excel, while the lowest score of 20% points to substantial gaps in reading comprehension. Strong reading skills are necessary for agriculture students to keep pace with evolving research, policies, and practices, and to ensure they are prepared to apply theoretical knowledge in practical contexts.

In the study of agriculture students' reading skills, several recent studies have highlighted the challenges faced in reading comprehension. Khan et al. (2023) reported that while agriculture students generally exhibited a positive attitude toward English language learning, their proficiency across key language skills, including reading, was uneven, with some students excelling and others struggling to comprehend academic texts. Meanwhile, Hajar and Triastuti (2021) emphasized the need for English for Specific Purposes (ESP) materials tailored to agriculture, noting that effective comprehension of technical and academic materials requires targeted instruction and support. Furthermore, Arshad (2024) discussed the significance of English proficiency, including reading comprehension, for engaging with international research, policies, and practices in agriculture.

Table 4
Level of Language Proficiency in terms of Writing Skills

Writing	Mean	Description
1	20%	Very Low
2	26%	Very Low
3	27%	Very Low
4	31%	Low
5	46%	Low
6	37%	Low
7	35%	Low
8	24%	Very Low
9	35%	Low
10	39%	Low
11	32%	Low
12	20%	Very Low
13	34%	Low
14	25%	Very Low
15	47%	Low
Overall	**32%**	**Very Low**

The overall mean for writing was 32%, classified as "Very Low," signaling a considerable weakness in written expression. The highest item scored 47%, and the lowest was 20%, indicating widespread difficulties in writing tasks. For agriculture students, effective writing skills are crucial for producing reports, research papers, field documentation, and professional communications. Weak writing proficiency limits their ability to document and communicate findings clearly, which is essential in both academic and professional agricultural contexts.

In a study conducted by Salvador (2024) and Manatad and Escandallo (2024), first-year agriculture students at Catanduanes State University were examined and found that many struggled with writing competence influenced by limited exposure to print media and varying levels of motivation. In another study, Kurgatt (2021) conducted a needs analysis at Egerton University in Kenya, revealing that agriculture students faced difficulties with academic writing due to unfamiliarity with writing conventions and insufficient instructional support. Additionally, Yunus et al. (2023) and Rosas and Escandallo (2024) observed that students exhibited a wide range of proficiency levels in paragraph writing, from advanced to fundamental deficiencies, necessitating targeted support across all skill levels. These studies highlight the need for more focused instructional interventions and writing practices to enhance writing proficiency among agriculture students.

Table 5
Summary Table of the Four Macroskills

Macroskills	Overall Mean	Decription
Listening	79%	High
Speaking	67%	Average
Reading	49%	Low
Writing	32%	Very Low

Level of Language Proficiency on terms of Four Macro-skills among BSA Students

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This section presents the qualitative results of the study, focusing on the agriculture students' perspectives and experiences in developing their English language skills across the four macro skills. The data was gathered through in-depth interviews. Thematic analysis was employed to identify recurring themes, patterns, and insights, which provide a deeper understanding of the students' challenges, needs, and expectations. These findings complement the quantitative data and offer a comprehensive view of the students' language proficiency gaps and desired learning support.

The major themes and supporting statements for research question number 1 were presented in Table 6. Participants had their responses to their own experiences and observations. From the answers of the participants, four major themes emerged: (1) Reading as a Dominant Strength Due to Familiarity and Academic Practice; (2) Challenges in Speaking English; (3) Understanding Strengths and Weaknesses in English Proficiency; and (4) Receiving Support from English Materials and Peers.

Table 6

Themes and Supporting Statements on the level of language proficiency in terms of the four macro skills among Bachelor of Science in Agriculture

Emerging Themes	Supporting Statements
Reading as a Dominant Strength Due to Familiarity and Academic Practice	• *Honestly, I think I am more proficient in reading. I feel comfortable because I can take my time to read and understand the text. If I don't understand it the first time, I can always go back and review it. I think I developed this skill because I enjoy reading articles online and textbooks, especially when preparing for class discussions. (IDI-02)* • *I feel most confident in reading, possibly because I spend a lot of time reading textbooks and research papers on agriculture. I can understand written texts well, especially when the topic is familiar. Working on research writing for my thesis has also helped improve my reading skills. (IDI-06)* • *I am strongest at reading. We often read research papers, so I have had a lot of practice understanding written material. I concentrate on the main ideas rather than getting caught up in every single word. (IDI-08)*
Challenges in Speaking in English	• *The most challenging part for me is speaking, especially during presentations. Sometimes I have difficulty forming sentences on the spot. There are also moments when I struggle with pronunciation or choosing the right word. I feel pressured, especially when I'm in front of classmates and professors. (IDI-01)* • *For me, it is a limited vocabulary, especially when it comes to scientific or technical terms, and a lack of confidence in speaking, especially during presentations. (IDI-02)* • *I faced some difficulties during our coursework and class activities. These included not understanding the technical vocabulary in Animal Science. In addition, I had trouble expressing my ideas clearly in English, both in writing and speaking. I also felt nervous or shy when I needed to speak in front of others in English. (IDI-05)* • *Speaking is really difficult for me, especially during recitations or reports. I struggle to organize my thoughts, and I also feel shy because I might make mistakes in grammar or pronunciation. Writing can also be challenging when I have to explain technical terms in agriculture. (IDI-06)* • *I found difficulties when it comes to oral recitation, like generating ideas and the constructing of words. (IDI-07)* • *Speaking is hard, like in presentations. I can not always find the right words and worry about mistakes, so I don not talk as much. (IDI-08)*
Understanding Strengths and Weaknesses in English Proficiency	• *Overall, I think I am doing okay, but there's still a lot of room for improvement. I can understand and explain concepts, but I still need to work on fluency and confidence, especially in speaking. In terms of writing, I know how to construct sentences and use technical terms, but sometimes I am not that strong when it comes to vocabulary. My listening skills are okay, as long as I am familiar with the topic or if it is clearly discussed. (IDI-01)* • *I would describe my overall ability to use English effectively for academic and professional tasks in Horticulture as good, although there is still room for improvement. I am confident in my reading and writing skills; however, I would like to improve my speaking and listening abilities. (IDI-03)* • *It is just moderate. I can understand and write, but my fluency is still quite lacking, especially when presenting or explaining. I think I really need more practice in speaking and writing to be ready for future jobs, especially when it comes to communicating with clients or stakeholders. (IDI-06)*

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Receiving Support from English Materials and Peers	• *That is why I try to prepare early. I read the materials in advance before class so I am already familiar with the content. I also use online resources like YouTube or Grammarly to improve my grammar and vocabulary. Sometimes, I also ask for help from friends or classmates if I'm really not sure.. (IDI-01)* • *For me, I use bilingual and ask instructors or peers for clarification. I also practice English through reading and note-taking. Some of us also use Merriam-Webster or online tools and apps for translation to better understand. (IDI-02)* • *To cope with challenges in understanding or using English, I usually review notes and recordings, seek clarification from instructors or peers, and practice speaking and writing in English through online resources and group discussions. (IDI-03)* • *Usually, I read the materials in advance before class so I am familiar with the terms. I also have a dictionary app so I can easily look up unfamiliar words. If needed, I ask my classmates or even search online to better understand the concept.(IDI-06)*

The responses in Table 6 revealed four primary themes about the language proficiency of Agriculture students. First, reading emerged as a dominant strength, largely due to frequent academic exposure through textbooks, research articles, and thesis writing. Students expressed confidence in understanding written content, particularly when the topics were familiar. Second, students highlighted significant challenges in speaking English, especially during spontaneous communication like presentations and class recitations. They struggled with pronunciation, sentence formulation and vocabulary often feeling anxious and self-conscious. Third, students demonstrated a clear understanding of their individual strengths and weaknesses. While they felt fairly competent in reading and some writing tasks, they acknowledged the need for improvement in fluency, vocabulary, and confidence, particularly in speaking and formal writing. Lastly, a fourth theme emerged showing that students actively seek support through English materials and peer assistance.

Reading emerged as the strongest skill among BS Agriculture students due to their constant engagement with subject-specific texts such as manuals, scientific journals, and academic modules. Their familiarity with content-area reading materials significantly contributed to their comprehension skills, especially with agricultural vocabulary and text structures. Moreover, recent studies by Khalifa and El-Sayed (2020) confirm that frequent exposure to discipline-related texts enhances learners' ability to decode and comprehend technical language. Similarly, Nguyen and Gu (2022) argue that academic reading in English fosters improved cognitive processing and critical understanding, particularly in content-heavy programs like agriculture.

In contrast to reading, BS Agriculture students continue to face considerable challenges in speaking English, primarily due to limited exposure to conversational practice and anxiety over pronunciation and grammar errors. As a result, they often experience difficulty articulating ideas during presentations, discussions, and recitations. In support of this, recent research by Juhana (2022) highlights that speaking anxiety remains a significant barrier to oral proficiency, especially in technical fields where accuracy is emphasized. Furthermore, Mulyani et al. (2021) found that insufficient interaction in English-speaking contexts and fear of being judged hinder students' willingness to speak.

On the other hand, agriculture students demonstrated a balanced yet developing English proficiency. They showed greater confidence in reading and writing, while also acknowledging the need for improvement in speaking and listening. For instance, they are often able to comprehend academic texts and construct written outputs using appropriate technical vocabulary. However, challenges remain in achieving fluency, especially in delivering spontaneous speech or engaging in academic discussions. Moreover, their listening skills tend to rely heavily on the familiarity of the topic and the clarity of delivery. This pattern aligns with the findings of Syafryadin and Rido (2020), who noted that receptive skills often develop earlier due to consistent academic exposure. Similarly, Alavi and Taghizadeh (2021) emphasized that identifying such skill-specific gaps plays a critical role in designing responsive instructional strategies.

In the last theme, agriculture students actively seek support through various English materials and peer collaboration. Frequently, they prepare by reviewing course content in advance and using digital tools such as grammar applications, dictionary apps, or translation platforms to reinforce vocabulary and comprehension. Moreover, students rely on bilingual resources and often consult instructors or classmates for clarification when they encounter difficulties. This collaborative approach, combined with self-directed strategies like note-taking and online learning, helps strengthen their language proficiency. In line with this, Fatimah and Santiana (2020) emphasized that the integration of digital learning tools enhances student engagement and supports independent language acquisition. Additionally, Astuti and Sofwan (2021) found that peer-assisted learning fosters confidence and deeper understanding, especially in English for Specific Purposes contexts.

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Table 7
Insights of Agriculture Students based on the Results and Findings of their Language Proficiency

Emerging Themes	Supporting Statements
Clarity and Pace of the Speaker Affect Listening Comprehension	• *I think my strength in listening is when the speaker is clear and organized, especially if they present with visuals. However, my weakness is when there is a lot of slang or if the speaker talks fast because I get lost in the flow. (IDI-01)* • *I understand that I am good at listening when the speaker talks slowly and clearly, especially if the topic is something I already know. However, I find it difficult to follow when the speaker uses fast speech or unfamiliar English words. (IDI-05)* • *I am okay with listening as long as the speaker is clear and speaks slowly, especially if the topic is familiar. However, if the speaker talks quickly or has an accent, I find it difficult to keep up with what they are saying. (IDI-06)*
Difficulty in Formulating and Expressing Ideas Clearly in English	• *The most challenging part for me is forming my ideas into clear sentences. Sometimes, I get confused with grammar or I become self-conscious about my accent. I also feel pressured during impromptu speaking because there is no chance to prepare. (IDI-01)* • *When speaking English, I find it challenging to articulate my thoughts clearly and accurately, particularly when discussing complex horticultural concepts. (IDI-03)* • *Impromptu speaking is challenging. I have a hard time making sentences on the spot, and I get very self-conscious about whether my grammar and pronunciation are correct. Sometimes, I also struggle to choose the right words. (IDI-06)* • *When speaking english I find it challenging the way I communicate like the choice of my words, the deliberation of thoughts and ideas with appropriate grammar and accent. (IDI-07)*
Difficulty with Vocabulary and Formal Tone, Especially in Technical Writing	• *Writing can be hard when it comes to organizing ideas and grammar. Sometimes I overthink how to start my sentences or what words to use. Also, making it sound professional and formal is a challenge for me. (IDI-01)* • *About the difficulties in writing, I am having a hard time when it comes to using correct grammar and sentence structure, like sometimes I paused for a while because of confusion and unable to generate ideas. I do not also fully know in organizing my ideas clearly that maybe, others will find my writing as confusing. Also, using appropriate words for technical topics in Animal Science, I still not master them. Though, I am very willing to learn. (IDI-05)* • *Writing is challenging because sometimes I do not know how to structure paragraphs. I also tend to overthink whether my grammar is correct or if my tone is formal enough. It is also hard to express my ideas when the terms are too technical. (IDI-06)*
English Communication Skills are Crucial for Career Opportunities	• *Of course, I believed that my English skills are very important in my future career in Animal Science or depending on the job that I will take temporarily, because I need to read manuals and research papers or write reports or proposals in my field for promotion or group tasks. Also, in communicating with people in the industry in the formal settings, I need to speak in English. If my English will improve, I wll be more confident in applying for jobs and sharing my knowledge professionally and to my co-workers. (IDI-05)* • *It has a big impact. If I am not confident communicating in English, it becomes very difficult to present at conferences, write reports, or deal with foreign clients in the agriculture industry. I really hope we get more opportunities to practice. (IDI-06)* • *For me, strong english skills can lead to success in academic settings and open doors to more job opportunities and career advancement. (IDI-07)*

Table 7 presents insights into the specific difficulties and perceptions students have regarding their English language skills. Four major themes emerged. First, students emphasized that listening comprehension is heavily influenced by the speaker's clarity and pace. Clear articulation and slower delivery improved their understanding, while rapid speech and unfamiliar accents caused confusion. Second, students reported difficulty in formulating and expressing ideas clearly in English, especially in impromptu speaking situations, due to limited vocabulary, grammatical uncertainty, and pressure to perform. Third, many students struggled with using appropriate vocabulary and maintaining a formal tone in technical writing,

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particularly when writing about complex agricultural topics. Lastly, students recognized that strong English communication skills are essential for career advancement, as these are required for writing reports, engaging in professional discussions, and seizing job opportunities in both local and international agricultural sectors.

In the first theme, listening comprehension among Agriculture students is significantly influenced by the clarity and pace of the speaker. Specifically, many students shared that they were able to follow and understand better when the speaker spoke slowly, used clear pronunciation, and provided visual aids. However, fast-paced speech, heavy accents, and the use of slang or unfamiliar vocabulary often made it difficult for them to follow the discussion. This highlights how delivery style greatly affects comprehension, especially in technical contexts like agriculture, where accurate understanding is critical. Furthermore, Khalid and Bashir (2022) assert that speech delivered at a moderate pace significantly improves ESL learners' ability to process information. Similarly, Rosnani and Hashim (2021) found that students benefit more from structured and simplified speech, as it aids concentration and reduces cognitive overload.

The second theme revealed that Agriculture students face difficulty in formulating and expressing ideas clearly in English, especially during impromptu speaking situations. In particular, they often struggle with organizing thoughts, choosing appropriate vocabulary, and maintaining grammatical accuracy. Moreover, pressure from public speaking, self-consciousness about pronunciation and accent, and anxiety over making mistakes further hinder their ability to communicate effectively. This challenge becomes more evident when discussing technical concepts related to horticulture or animal science, where precise and confident expression is crucial. As emphasized by Azlan and Eng (2020), limited vocabulary and fear of negative evaluation significantly affect students' oral communication performance. In addition, Farooq and Yasmin (2021) pointed out that grammatical limitations and lack of confidence are major barriers in second language oral proficiency.

The third theme reveals that students in Agriculture experience difficulty with vocabulary and maintaining a formal tone, especially in technical writing. To begin with, they struggle to select appropriate academic and field-specific terms, which is crucial when writing about specialized topics. Moreover, organizing thoughts coherently and using correct grammar remains a significant challenge. These issues are often heightened when students are required to produce professional documents such as reports, research papers, or project proposals. As emphasized by Al-Khasawneh (2020), students with limited academic English experience tend to have difficulty expressing their ideas clearly and formally. In addition, Zare and Almasi (2022) found that vocabulary limitations and poor grammatical control adversely affect the quality of student writing.

The final theme highlights the essential role of English communication skills in unlocking career opportunities for students majoring in Animal Science and Horticulture. In particular, students recognize that proficiency in English allows them to effectively engage in professional tasks such as writing proposals, reading research, and presenting at conferences. Moreover, the ability to speak English fluently boosts their confidence in formal interactions, such as communicating with clients, co-workers, or international stakeholders. This observation aligns with findings by Oktavianti and Fitrawati (2022), who noted that strong English communication skills are instrumental in increasing employability and professional competence among agricultural graduates. Similarly, Habók and Magyar (2021) emphasized that language proficiency significantly enhances job readiness and provides students with broader access to global networks and career growth.

Proposed Syllabus as Program to Develop the Language Proficiency of the of the Students

English for Agriculture

The proposed syllabus is designed to enhance the English language proficiency of Bachelor of Science in Agriculture students majoring in Horticulture and Animal Science by focusing on the four macro skills: reading, listening, speaking, and writing. As an interpreted syllabus, it functions as a teacher syllabus, which allows instructors the flexibility to modify and adapt the materials and activities to suit the specific needs and contexts of agriculture students, provided that the overall goal of improving field-related English communication is met.

The course content is anchored on the findings of the needs analysis, which identified common language challenges among agriculture students. These include difficulties in articulating technical concepts, limited exposure to formal vocabulary, and struggles with organizing and delivering both written and spoken outputs in academic and professional settings. To address these issues, the syllabus emphasizes the practical application of English in agriculture-related tasks.

The learning activities embedded in the syllabus are contextualized and experiential, encouraging students to apply language skills in situations that simulate real-world agricultural communication. These activities include guided writing exercises, structured group discussions, reading comprehension of agriculture-based texts, listening tasks based on instructional audio-visual content, and oral presentation practices. All tasks are designed to reflect common scenarios in agricultural education, extension services, and industry engagement.

In addition, the syllabus aims to strengthen communication competencies that are vital in agriculture, such as interpreting technical texts, preparing written outputs, engaging in collaborative discussions, and presenting information clearly and confidently. To support these goals, the syllabus promotes the development of a writing portfolio, integrates collaborative work, and fosters digital literacy using modern tools and multimedia resources. Through this structured, relevant, and responsive approach, the syllabus ensures that students are well-equipped to meet the academic and workplace communication demands of the agricultural field.

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CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the needs analysis conducted among BSA students majoring in Horticulture and Animal Science at Kapalong College of Agriculture, Sciences, and Technology (KCAST) revealed significant variations in English language proficiency across the four macro skills. Quantitative data showed that students demonstrated high proficiency in listening, with an overall mean score of 79%, indicating a strong ability to comprehend spoken English. Speaking skills were rated average at 67%, highlighting moderate fluency and confidence in oral communication. However, students faced major challenges in reading with a mean of 49%, categorized as low and specially in writing, where the mean score was only 32%, classified as very low.

These findings were supported by qualitative insights from interviews, where students cited difficulties in forming ideas, sentence construction, grammar use, and expressing themselves clearly specially during presentations and written activities. While reading was seen as a relative strength due to exposure to academic materials and other forms of practices, there is an urgent need to improve their productive skills, particularly in writing. In response to these findings, an English for Agriculture course was proposed. This syllabus targets key areas such as grammar, sentence construction, and cohesion, and includes agriculture-themed writing tasks, peer feedback, and practical exercises. The program aims to build foundational writing competence and better equip students for the communication demands of their academic and professional agricultural roles.

RECOMMENDATION

In response to the identified gaps in English language proficiency among Bachelor of Science in Agriculture students, particularly in writing and oral communication, this study proposes the development of a contextualized and interactive syllabus tailored to the specific needs of learners in Horticulture and Animal Science. The proposed syllabus integrates field-relevant learning activities aimed at enhancing the four macro skills—reading, listening, speaking, and writing—with particular emphasis on practical applications within agricultural contexts. Core instructional tasks such as writing farm reports, summarizing technical manuals, composing research abstracts, and delivering oral presentations are included to simulate real-world agricultural scenarios. These activities aim to make language learning more meaningful, relevant, and applicable to students' future roles in farming, agribusiness, research, and extension work.

Additionally, the curriculum is designed to emphasize real-life communication tasks that mirror day-to-day functions in the agricultural field. Tasks such as preparing field documentation, conducting simulated farm consultations, writing agricultural proposals, and interpreting field data support students in developing practical competence in professional communication. Structured opportunities for peer collaboration, group reporting, and scenario-based learning further enhance learner engagement and contextual application of English skills.

Consistent use of feedback mechanisms and reflective assessments—such as self-assessment, peer review, and guided revisions—enables students to monitor their progress and identify areas for improvement. This approach supports not only grammatical accuracy and vocabulary development but also fosters self-confidence, critical thinking, and learner autonomy. Aligning instructional strategies with the academic and occupational needs of agriculture students ensures a motivating and purposeful learning environment that promotes sustained engagement and skill growth.

To further support students' language development, the proposed syllabus promotes the use of student-centered, interactive approaches. These include mock interviews with agricultural stakeholders, collaborative writing tasks, oral defenses of farm plans, and role-plays that simulate real communication situations in agricultural settings. Peer interaction, guided practice, and task-based learning are incorporated to improve fluency, coherence, and content mastery. Formative assessments and constructive feedback are integral to ensuring students' steady progression in using English effectively.

Furthermore, the Agriculture curriculum may adopt and adapt this proposed syllabus by modifying its content, instructional strategies, and assessment methods to best suit the learners' proficiency levels, field specialization, and learning styles. Such adaptability ensures that the course remains responsive to the dynamic needs of agricultural education while preparing students to meet the communication demands of both academic and industry environments.

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AUTHORS' NOTE

The study used a researchers made test questionnaire to gather data and information as to the current level or status of the students' language proficiency concerning the four macro skills including reading, writing, speaking, and listening. This questionnaire is vital as it served as the basis for the present situation analysis of the students who are the respondents and participants of the study. Also, this test questionnaire underwent a validation process which includes the checking of its content and construct reliability. In addition to this, the output of the study is course syllabus which is a specialized curriculum for language teaching based on the results and findings of the study. However, due to the limited number of words to be included in the study, these important documents are not included. Meanwhile, if you wish to ask for a copy of the test questionnaire and specialized syllabus, feel free to contact the researchers at their specified email address given above of this article. Thank you.