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A NEEDS ANALYSIS ON THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE NEEDS AMONG BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION STUDENTS: BASIS FOR CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

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ABTRACT

This analysis aimed to analyze Kapalong College of Agriculture, Sciences and Technology Business Administration students regarding their language proficiency level so as to uncover specific gaps in their skills and to develop an appropriate language curriculum that very well suits their academic and career endeavors. It employed a combination of methods, the standardized proficiency tests and a deep interview format used to assess the skills of students under the four macro areas of listening, speaking, reading, and writing for mixed methods studies. The quantitative data then analyzed using descriptive statistics for measuring proficiency levels, while qualitative data from the insights of students indicate perceived learning challenges and preferences. Based on such findings, the study recommended the infusion of realistic and task-based activities capturing real-world business scenarios, into the English syllabus. In addition, it proposes a specialized syllabus for Business Administration students focusing on business writing, professional oral communication, and critical reading of financial and legal texts. This study provides an empirical basis for the implementation of a contextualized language program designed to improve students' workplace readiness.

KEYWORDS: *Language Needs Analysis, Business Communication, Language Proficiency, Curriculum Development, English for Specific Purposes (ESP)*

RATIONALE

Language proficiency pervades all aspects of academic and professional success for students of Business Administration, as it enables them to effectively participate in key workplace activities such as drafting business correspondence, conducting meetings, delivering presentations, and interpreting technical reports. As Garcia and Santos (2022) emphasize, students lacking in the four macro-skills, listening, speaking, reading, and writing are often unprepared to thrive in dynamic, fast-paced global business environments that demand clarity, persuasion, and professionalism. In support of this, Alavi and Taghizadeh (2020) argue that traditional language instruction often fails to reflect the communicative realities of professional settings, leading to a mismatch between academic preparation and real-world expectations. Furthermore, Sari and Prastyo (2021) states about the value of English for Specific Purposes (ESP), noting that when language instruction is contextualized to authentic business scenarios, students develop not only linguistic competence but also strategic communication skills essential for the workplace. Thus, aligning language instruction with the demands of business communication is a critical step toward equipping future professionals with the competencies needed to succeed in their chosen field.

Globally, recent studies have underscored a persistent gap between business students' language proficiency and the communicative expectations of the professional world. In Vietnam, the study "Business English Communication Needs of Vietnamese Students in Job Interviews and Workplace Settings" found that students struggled to express their ideas during interviews and public speaking tasks, which they believed negatively affected their employment opportunities (Nguyen, 2021). Similarly, in Thailand, the study "Thai Business Students' Oral Communication Skills in English Problems and Needs" revealed that although students performed well academically, many lacked the confidence and competence to deliver oral presentations effectively in English, reflecting inadequate preparedness for authentic business interactions (Suksawas, 2020). In Indonesia, the study conducted by Susanti and Nurweni (2021) entitled "The English Communication Needs of Business Administration Students" highlighted that learners had difficulty interpreting technical documents and participating in negotiation or telephoning tasks, primarily due to limited exposure to workplace-relevant language input.

In the Philippines, the gap between language proficiency and workplace communication needs among business students is also well-documented. In Bicol, the study titled "Assessing the Written Business Communication Skills of Bicol University Business Students" by Buenaventura and Cortez (2021) found that students had limited vocabulary and struggled with writing professional correspondence. In Northern Mindanao, Delos Reyes and Manlapaz (2023), in their study "Oral Communication Challenges of Business Students in Northern Mindanao: A Basis for Instructional Enhancement," revealed

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that learners encountered difficulties in delivering impromptu speeches and formal proposals due to anxiety and a lack of oral presentation training. Meanwhile, in Metro Manila, Rivera and Francisco (2022), through their research "Analyzing the Business English Competence of Tertiary Students in a Private University in the NCR," reported that students faced challenges in drafting formal business reports and memos, indicating a mismatch between classroom instruction and industry communication demands.

At Kapalong College of Agriculture, Sciences, and Technology (KCAST), Business Administration students exhibit similar struggles in language use. Based on internal diagnostic tests and instructor observations, students encounter difficulties in composing business reports, engaging in business-related dialogues, and comprehending complex texts such as contracts and case studies. These challenges can undermine both academic success and job readiness. Therefore, a thorough language needs analysis is urgently needed to create a curriculum that addresses these issues through context-specific language learning strategies tailored for Business Administration students (KCAST Institutional Report, 2023).

Although previous needs assessments were conducted at KCAST, they primarily examined general or skill-specific areas rather than addressing the comprehensive communicative demands of Business Administration students. *"The English Language Needs of Business Administration Major in Financial Management Focusing on Reading Skills"* (De Vera et al., 2024) assessed reading proficiency among BSBA students but did not extend to listening, speaking, or writing. Another study, *"Language Learning Strategies and Anxiety among English Major Students: A Convergent Parallel Design"* (Flores & Escandallo, 2024), shed light on strategy use and anxiety in English majors, yet its insights were not directly applicable to business communication. Moreover, *"A Sequential Explanatory Approach on the Relationship Between Social Literacy and Student Engagement as Mediated by English Speaking Skills"* (Escandallo & Baradillo, 2024) highlighted speaking competence in English majors, but without offering ESP-focused curriculum implications. Also, there are studies conducted in the same locale (Botohan et al., 2024; Edrada et al., 2024; Escandallo 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 informative, these studies stop short of examining all four macro-skills, listening, speaking, reading, and writing in the context of BSBA students. Therefore, this research seeks to bridge that gap by conducting a focused needs analysis that will serve as a foundation for designing a specialized language syllabus tailored to the real-world communication demands of Business Administration students at KCAST.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What is the level of language proficiency in terms of the four macro skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) among Business Administration students at KCAST?
2. What are the insights of the Business Administration students regarding their language proficiency levels based on the results and findings?
3. What are the inputs of Business Administration students for designing a language syllabus aimed at developing business communication skills?
4. Based on the results, what language-specific syllabus can be proposed to develop the language proficiency of Business Administration students?

NEEDS ANALYSIS

A. Purpose of the Needs Analysis

The purpose of the Needs Analysis was to determine the specific language skill gaps of Bachelor of Science in Business Administration students at Kapalong College of Agriculture, Sciences and Technology (KCAST), with the aim of crafting a tailored language curriculum that addressed these gaps. The study focused on the four macro skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing, which were essential for academic success and future employment in the business sector. Through the data collected from surveys and interviews, the researchers aimed to identify both the strengths and weaknesses in students' English proficiency and analyze the contextual needs they faced in their learning environment.

By conducting the needs analysis, course designers became better equipped to develop modules that were relevant, functional, and aligned with students' academic and professional goals. This process ensured that the curriculum was not generic but highly contextualized, offering lessons and activities that directly connected with students' real-life communicative tasks. The results of the analysis contributed to the development of a more responsive English curriculum that supported students in acquiring critical business communication skills such as drafting reports, negotiating deals, and delivering presentations with clarity and confidence.

B. Target Population

The target population of the study consisted of second-year Bachelor of Science in Business Administration students enrolled at KCAST. A total of 40 students participated in the study, representing a range of language proficiency levels, academic performance, and exposure to English both inside and outside the classroom. These students were selected through purposive sampling, considering their level of English instruction and projected needs for workplace communication. The researchers administered a structured questionnaire to 100 participants to gauge their perceived language abilities and actual usage of English across different domains. In addition, a subset of students was randomly chosen for semi-structured interviews to provide deeper insights into their learning experiences and expectations. This combination of data sources allowed for a comprehensive understanding of the students' needs and informed the subsequent development of a language-specific curriculum aimed at improving their communicative competence in business contexts.

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C. Framework of the Target Situation Analysis

1. Why Was the Language Needed?

Language was an essential tool for communication in business, serving as the foundation for effective interactions in academic, professional, and social settings. Business Administration students needed to be competent in English to succeed not only in classroom discussions and assessments but also in future workplace tasks such as client negotiations, professional correspondence, and networking. English, as the global language of commerce, was indispensable in preparing students for international business engagements and cross-cultural communication.

The study recognized the importance of reading skills in enabling students to comprehend financial reports, interpret legal texts, and evaluate case studies. By identifying the students' specific challenges in reading and other macro skills, the researchers sought to develop a curriculum that bridged the gap between current student capabilities and the demands of the business world.

2. How Was the Language Used?

The language was used in various academic and professional contexts. Academically, students were expected to read business articles, answer case study questions, participate in oral recitations, and write formal documents like reports and feasibility studies. Professionally, English was essential in written communication such as emails, memos, and business letters, and in oral communication during interviews, meetings, and presentations. Students also used the language informally in peer discussions, student forums, and online platforms related to their field of study. Hence, the ability to use English effectively across these contexts was critical, and a language-specific curriculum needed to simulate real-life business communication scenarios that promoted functional language use.

3. What Were the Content Areas?

The content areas focused primarily on Business English, emphasizing reading business texts, writing formal correspondence, understanding industry-specific vocabulary, and improving oral communication for meetings and negotiations. Additionally, content was drawn from the students' existing business subjects such as Marketing, Accounting, and Management, where English was commonly used as the medium of instruction.

Practical topics such as writing business reports, preparing resumes, conducting interviews, and delivering proposals were also included. These areas aimed to develop both general communicative competence and job-specific language skills necessary for internships and future employment in local or international business environments.

4. Where Was the Language Used?

Language was used in a range of environments, both within and beyond the academic setting. On-campus, students needed English in classrooms, group discussions, oral presentations, and written assignments. Off-campus, they encountered situations that demanded competent English communication, particularly during on-the-job training, internships, and professional meetings.

In their future workplaces such as offices, marketing firms, banks, or international companies were expected to interact with colleagues, clients, and supervisors using formal business English. Social settings such as business networking events, community outreach, and digital platforms also required fluency and adaptability. This comprehensive scope emphasized the need to align the curriculum with the actual language demands students would face in these varied contexts.

D. Framework of Learning Needs Analysis

1. Why Were the Learners Taking the Course?

The students from the BSBA program took the English for Specific Purposes (ESP) course because it was a required component of their curriculum. Although enrollment was mandatory, many students recognized the importance of English for their future careers, especially in business-related fields. English served as a medium for formal communication, documentation, marketing strategies, and customer engagement. The learners acknowledged that proficiency in English would enhance their ability to interact professionally with clients, draft persuasive business reports, and present proposals effectively in both local and international contexts (Sari & Prastyo, 2021).

2. How Did Learners Learn?

Business Administration students demonstrated diverse learning preferences. Many reported learning best through interactive discussions, hands-on activities, and real-world applications of content. Traditional lectures were common but often led to decreased engagement. Learners preferred dynamic methods such as group presentations, simulations, business role-playing, and multimedia-enhanced lectures. These approaches helped retain their attention, stimulate critical thinking, and promote active involvement. A learner-centered approach with collaborative tasks and case-based learning proved to be more effective (Yunita & Sofwan, 2020).

3. What Resources Were Available?

Several resources were accessible to BSBA students to support their language development. ESP-trained teachers served as the primary resource, offering expertise in tailoring lessons to business contexts. They utilized Business English textbooks, digital platforms, authentic materials like company brochures, and case studies relevant to marketing and finance. While there were limitations in up-to-date or localized materials, students still benefited from library resources, online articles, business news, and peer collaboration, which helped bridge classroom learning with real-world language use (Rahmawati, 2021).

4. Who Were the Learners?

The learners were second-year BSBA students at KCAST. They came from diverse personal and academic backgrounds, with varying degrees of exposure to English. Most had foundational knowledge of English, typically applied in academic reading and minor writing tasks. Their primary academic interests were in business-related subjects such as sales, marketing, and management, where English was

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occasionally required. However, many viewed English as a secondary concern, resulting in limited confidence and motivation in using the language proficiently (Ismail et al., 2021).

5. Where Did the ESP Course Take Place?
The ESP course was conducted in the college's classrooms, which were expected to provide a conducive learning environment. Suitable venues included proper lighting, ventilation, comfortable seating, and minimal disturbances. A quiet and organized space supported concentration and classroom interaction. The inclusion of multimedia tools such as projectors, speakers, and internet access further enhanced instruction, especially for language classes where clarity and audibility were crucial (Aulia & Putri, 2022).

6. When Did the ESP Course Take Place?
The ESP course was ideally held regularly and consistently, either on a daily basis or in scheduled sessions throughout the week. Frequent exposure to English was vital for retention and fluency development. A consistent schedule allowed learners to practice all four macro skills and apply them contextually. Even outside class hours, students were encouraged to use English informally and through supplementary tasks to support immersion and practice (Manik & Hutagaol, 2021).

E. Methods of Needs Analysis
A mixed-method approach was employed to understand the language needs of second-year BSBA students. This involved both quantitative and qualitative tools namely questionnaires and interviews to ensure triangulation and a deeper understanding of the learners' competencies and needs (Nguyen & Walkinshaw, 2020).

i. Questionnaire
A researcher-made questionnaire was developed to determine students' proficiency and challenges in English for Academic Purposes. This tool was essential in quantifying data that supported curriculum development and highlighted language skill gaps (Afzal, 2020).

ii. Interview
To complement the questionnaires, semi-structured interviews were conducted with ten randomly selected participants. The interviews explored learners' experiences, preferences, and expectations, including their motivation for taking the course, access to learning resources, preferred learning environments, and challenges related to vocabulary and comprehension. This qualitative approach offered valuable insights essential for ESP course design (Hamid et al., 2021).

F. Procedure of the Needs Analysis
The procedure for conducting the Needs Analysis was systematically organized. The class conducting the research was divided into small groups assigned to different BSBA sections to gather data.

The researchers developed a comprehensive questionnaire aligned with the field of Business Administration and the core language skills. The instrument had four sections: Listening (15 items), Reading (15), Writing (15), and Speaking (15). One hundred students were purposively selected to respond. Selection was based on availability and willingness, ensuring ethical considerations.

Following the survey, ten respondents were randomly chosen for interviews. Semi-structured questions focused on motivation, academic/workplace English use, and learning preferences, aligned with Target Situation and Learning Needs Analyses frameworks (Basturkmen, 2020).

Survey responses were tabulated, and interview transcripts were thematically analyzed to identify patterns and themes. Findings helped determine learners' needs, wants, and lacks and served as the basis for a revised language-specific syllabus (Liyanage & Walker, 2021).

G. Data Collection
The data collection process was carefully planned. Researchers visited classrooms of first-, second-, and third-year BSBA students at KCAST. Upon gaining consent and explaining the study's purpose, they distributed printed questionnaires to the 100 respondents. Each section's data collection was done in a single session to ensure consistency and minimize external influence (Nguyen, 2021).

i. Questionnaires
The researcher-made questionnaire was the primary tool for identifying students' proficiency and difficulties in English. It effectively quantified trends and revealed group challenges, making it useful for curriculum planning.

ii. Interview
Ten students were randomly selected using a non-probability sampling technique. Interviews covered both Target Situation and Learning Needs themes. Each lasted 5–10 minutes and responses were transcribed, categorized, and coded. Themes identified from interviews enriched the survey data and revealed learning preferences and suggestions for improvement (Mochizuki et al., 2021).

This mixed-method approach ensured that both numerical data and personal insights informed the design of a contextualized curriculum tailored to the communicative needs of BSBA students (Alavi & Taghizadeh, 2020).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This section presents the findings and insights derived from the quantitative and qualitative phase of the study. To get the level of students' macro skills, the researchers utilized excel's capabilities in organizing, calculating, and visualizing data allowed for systematic examination, helping to identify key trends and insights relevant to the needs analysis of Business Administration students. By leveraging its functions, the study was able to present meaningful results that contribute to understanding the essential macro skills required for success in the field.

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Levels of Language Proficiency in Terms of the Four Macro Skills

To address the first research question, the researchers utilized a custom-designed questionnaire tailored to the context of the study. The questionnaire focused on students' macro skills, with indicators covering listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

Table 1
Level of Language Proficiency in terms of Reading Skills

Item	Mean	Description
1	93	Very High
2	88	High
3	61	Average
4	54	Average
5	51	Average
6	57	Average
7	45	Low
8	64	Average
9	56	Average
10	61	Average
11	83	High
12	77	High
13	72	High
14	76	High
15	74	High
Overall Mean	**67.47**	**Average**

Table 1 presents an assessment of students' reading proficiency. The macro skill evaluated is reading, which received a mean score of 67.47. This score falls within the "Average" range, indicating that students demonstrate a moderate level of competence in reading comprehension. The interpretation provided states that the reading skills of Business Administration students are satisfactory. This suggests that students are generally capable of understanding and interpreting written texts relevant to their academic and professional studies. However, while the skills are adequate, they may not be sufficient for more complex analytical tasks such as critical reading of case studies, business reports, or technical documents. Moreover, the item with the highest score is item number 1, which received 93 correct answers and 7 incorrect answers. On the other hand, the item with the lowest score is item number 7, with 45 correct answers and 55 incorrect answers.

The study of Muti'ah et al. (2023) also shows the average reading skills of students, as measured in the study, resulted in an overall score of 66.3, categorized as "Sufficient." This indicates that students may need more support and practice in creative thinking and their application of knowledge when it comes to reading. To add, the study of Yusniar and Purnamalia (2024) provided a statistical basis for understanding the relationship between reading motivation and comprehension skills. An average reading skill level might be inferred from the overall trends observed in the data, where students with average scores still show a positive correlation with their motivation levels.

Table 1.1
Level of Language Proficiency in terms of Speaking Skills

Item	Mean	Description
1	73	High
2	51	Average
3	47	Low
4	84	High
5	57	Average
6	61	Average
7	71	High
8	77	High
9	61	Average
10	62	Average
11	55	Average
12	81	High
13	66	Average
14	79	High
15	75	High
Overall Mean	**66.67**	**Average**

Table 1.1 presents an evaluation of students' speaking proficiency. The assessment focuses on the macro skill of speaking, which yielded a mean score of 66.67. This score falls under the "Average" category, suggesting that the students possess a moderate level of speaking ability. The interpretation indicates that the level of speaking skills among Business Administration students is satisfactory. While this implies that students can communicate adequately in academic and professional contexts, it also highlights the need for further enhancement. Moreover, the item with the highest score is item number 4, which received 84 correct answers and 16 incorrect answers. Then again, the item with the lowest score is item number 3, with 47 correct answers and 53 incorrect answers.

To support this result, the study of Telaumbanua et al. (2024) an average speaking score of the students. The studnts' overall mean score on speaking skills was 51. This score indicated that many students were struggling to meet the minimum competency standards required for their level of English proficiency. To improve the average speaking skills of students, Ningroom and Mandarani (2024) suggests incorporating platforms like TikTok. TikTok can significantly enhance student engagement and motivation. The study found that using TikTok helped seventh-grade students improve their English speaking skills, with average scores increasing from 58.67 to 68.67 after the intervention. This suggests that social media can serve as a contemporary and engaging tool for language learning.

Table 1.2
Level of Language Proficiency in terms of Writing Skills

Item	Mean	Description
1	84	High
2	82	High
3	63	Average
4	59	Average
5	66	Average
6	74	High
7	47	Low
8	65	Average

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9	68	Average
10	60	Average
11	57	Average
12	62	Average
13	70	High
14	68	Average
15	53	Average
Overall Mean	**65.20**	**Average**

Table 1.2 business administration students' writing proficiency level is rated as "satisfactory," with a mean score of 65.20. This indicates that while students demonstrate a reasonable level of competence in business writing, there is still ample room for improvement, particularly in areas such as formal reporting, persuasive communication, and professional correspondence. Writing is a fundamental skill in the business world, influencing how professionals convey ideas, present data, and engage with clients and stakeholders. A satisfactory rating shows that students possess basic writing abilities, but refining their proficiency could significantly enhance their effectiveness in professional settings. Moreover, the item with the highest score is item number 1, which received 83 correct answers and 17 incorrect answers. On the other hand, the item with the lowest score is item number 7, with 47 correct answers and 53 incorrect answers.

The study of Nurasiah and Nurmeta (2023) and the study of Manatad and Escandallo (2024) showed an average mean score of students before their intervention was 67.26. This score was categorized as "quite capable" in terms of writing skills which means that student writers need improvement in their writing abilities. In addition, the study of Anaktototy et al. (2024) and Rosas and Escandallo (2024) showed that the average score of writing skills among college students is influenced by a combination of motivation, literacy engagement, cognitive abilities, language skills, and the nature of instructor feedback. Addressing these factors could help improve writing proficiency and overall score

Table 1.3
Level of Language Proficiency in terms of Listening Skills

Item	Mean	Description
1	96	Very High
2	49	Low
3	24	Low
4	49	Low
5	53	Average
6	78	High
7	83	High
8	37	Low
9	56	Average
10	56	Average
11	57	Average
12	53	Average
13	68	Average
14	55	Average
15	54	Average
Overall Mean	**57.87**	**Average**

Table 1.3 assesses the writing skills of Business Administration students, revealing an average score of 65.20, which is interpreted as "satisfactory." This suggests that students possess a fundamental grasp of writing but may need further refinement to enhance their proficiency in business communication. Writing is an essential skill in the corporate world, affecting how professionals craft reports, proposals, and emails that convey clear and persuasive messages. While the satisfactory rating indicates a basic competency, advancing their skills could significantly improve their ability to express ideas effectively in professional settings. Moreover, the item with the highest score is item number 1, which received 96 correct answers and 4 incorrect ones. Conversely, the item with the lowest score is item number 3, with 24 correct answers and 76 incorrect answers.

To support this result, the study of Latip et al. (2022) confirms that students showed a moderate level of listening self-efficacy, with a positive correlation between their self-efficacy beliefs and metacognitive awareness of listening strategies. The average scores indicated that students partly agreed with their metacognitive awareness of listening strategies. To add, the study of Andas et al. (2023) suggests that educators should consider incorporating blended learning approaches in their teaching strategies to improve listening skills among students. This strategy could lead to better educational outcomes in language learning contexts.

Macro Skills	Mean	Description
Reading	67.47	Average
Speaking	66.67	Average
Writing	65.20	Average
Listening	57.87	Average

The mean scores of students in each of the four language macroskills which are reading, speaking, writing, and listening, as well as the qualitative descriptions that go with them are shown in the table. According to the data, every skill is in the "Average" category, indicating a performance level that is satisfactory. Reading has the highest mean score of 67.47 out of the four, indicating that it is the most advanced ability. The next two skills that show satisfactory proficiency are speaking (mean score of 66.67) and writing (mean score of 65.20). In contrast to the other skills, listening has the lowest mean score (57.87), suggesting that although it is still within the acceptable range, it might need more specialized teaching assistance. Overall, the results suggest a generally adequate level of competence across all macro skills, with particular attention needed to strengthen listening abilities.

Insights of the Students on the Results and Findings of their Language Proficiency

To answer this research question, in-depth interviews (IDIs) were conducted with selected Business Administration students. Probing questions were used to explore their reflections and insights on the results of their language proficiency, particularly in the areas of listening and speaking. The students openly shared their experiences, challenges, and realizations regarding their performance in the language proficiency test and how these relate to their current academic practices and communication needs. From their responses, five

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major themes emerged: (1) distractions and environment affect listening, (2) relevance of listening in business contexts, (3) personal efforts toward improvement, (4) interconnectedness of listening and speaking, and (5) lack of confidence in speaking English. These themes and their supporting statements are presented in Table 2.

Table 2

Themes and Supporting Statements on Students' Insights on the Results and Findings of Their Language Proficiency

EMERGING THEMES	SUPPORTING STATEMENTS
Distractions and Environment Affect Listening	✓ "One would be the environment because there are some rooms in KCAST that is noisy and loud. Also, the availability of gadgets since we can use it anytime in our class, we tend to have this temptation." (IDI 1) ✓ "There are many factors. First, my attention span—sometimes I get easily distracted, especially during long discussions. Second, background noise, particularly when there are many people in the classroom or during online classes." (IDI 6) ✓ "Distractions and lack of exposure to varied English audio materials can contribute to weaker listening proficiency." (IDI 9) ✓ "Some of the factors that affect my listening skills include frequent distractions like social media, which can easily take my attention away from lectures or discussions." (IDI 8 ✓ "In our Business Administration course, the pacing is really fast there are many lectures, group discussions, and presentations. It's easy to lose focus, especially when you're taking notes or have a lot on your mind." (IDI 5)
Relevance of Listening in Business Contexts	✓ "Yes, just like in group presentations or business meetings—if there's someone who isn't really listening, they tend to repeat questions or make mistakes in the task. In finance discussions, if you miss a deadline or an important figure, the consequences can be serious. We can clearly see that poor listening affects work and professionalism." (IDI 4) ✓ "During business meetings or presentations. If you don't know how to listen carefully, you might misunderstand financial reports or instructions." (IDI 7) ✓ "Listening to teammates' ideas is crucial for collaboration. If someone doesn't listen well, they might miss important information, which can affect the project's success." (IDI 10) ✓ "As a Business Administration student, listening is extremely important especially during group presentations or negotiations. If you don't know how to listen well, you'll miss key points or instructions. This can really affect decision-making and teamwork." (IDI 8 ✓ "I've experienced that if I don't focus during business meetings, I lose track of financial discussions and proposals, which can lead to misunderstandings. In class, if I don't listen carefully to the professor's lecture, I struggle to analyze financial case studies and risk failing the activity." (IDI6)
Personal Efforts Toward Improvement	✓ "To improve my listening skills, I would practice active listening by focusing on what the speaker says without distractions. I could also take notes during lectures or discussions to help remember important points. Joining study groups can provide opportunities to listen and engage with others." (IDI 10) ✓ "I believe this step will help improve listening skills: practice listening skills, take notes, seek feedback, ask clarifying questions, and be patient." (IDI 2) ✓ "I plan to engage regularly with English audio materials relevant to business and participate in group discussions and role-plays." (IDI 9) ✓ "I'm willing to practice active listening by listening to business podcasts or watching videos about finance in English. I'll also practice note-taking while watching, then summarize what I've heard. I can also try speaking English with friends or classmates to enhance both my listening and speaking skills." (IDI 7) ✓ "To improve, I'm willing to practice more. I'd like to join speaking activities, attend workshops, and read or listen to English podcasts. I also want to enhance my vocabulary so I can be more confident in conversations." (IDI 8)
	✓ "If your listening skills are poor, speaking also becomes difficult. I'm not confident using certain words if I don't understand how they are used in conversation. Sometimes I'm afraid to make mistakes, so I don't want to speak at all. I also lack exposure to English speaking in business settings, which makes it harder for me to improve my speaking skills." (IDI 6) ✓ "The difficulty likely stems from the close relationship between listening and speaking skills. If listening comprehension is weak, it naturally affects speaking ability because speaking requires understanding context, vocabulary, and pronunciation patterns." (IDI 9) ✓ "The difficulty in improving speaking skills might come from not listening well. If my listening skills are low, I may not understand how to respond properly or how to structure

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Interconnectedness of Listening and Speaking	my thoughts when speaking. This can create a cycle where poor listening leads to poor speaking." (IDI 10) ✓ "Many of us still lack confidence in speaking English. We're often afraid of making mistakes, especially in formal or business settings. Our vocabulary is also limited, which makes it difficult to express our thoughts clearly." (IDI 7) ✓ "If I don't focus during business meetings, I lose track of financial discussions and proposals, which can lead to misunderstandings." (IDI 6)
Lack of Confidence in Speaking English	✓ "Many of us still lack confidence in speaking English. We're often afraid of making mistakes, especially in formal or business settings. Our vocabulary is also limited, which makes it difficult to express our thoughts clearly." (IDI 07) ✓ "Sometimes I'm afraid to make mistakes, so I don't want to speak at all. I also lack exposure to English speaking in business settings, which makes it harder to improve my speaking skills." (IDI 06) ✓ "The difficulty in improving speaking skills might come from not listening well. If my listening skills are low, I may not understand how to respond properly or how to structure my thoughts when speaking." (IDI 10) ✓ "I think the low score in speaking techniques is due to a lack of exposure and confidence. We actually know what to say, but because of shyness or fear of being judged, it becomes difficult to express ourselves." (IDI 08) ✓ "We feel pressured, especially when everything has to be said in English." (IDI 08)

Table 2 presents the lived insights of Business Administration students regarding their language proficiency, particularly in listening and speaking. A prominent theme that emerged was how distractions and the learning environment affect listening. Students shared that external noise, classroom conditions, and digital distractions like social media reduce their ability to focus during discussions or lectures. These environmental challenges led to difficulty in processing and retaining spoken information. This aligns with Al-Shehri (2020) who found that noise and digital device usage significantly impair listening comprehension and concentration in university students. Similarly, Singh and Singh (2022) highlighted that students' cognitive load increases in noisy or technology-dense classrooms, reducing their attention span and retention. These studies reinforce the idea that learning environments greatly influence listening efficiency, especially in settings requiring sustained attention.

Another key theme identified was the relevance of listening in business contexts, where students expressed the real-world importance of accurate and active listening in meetings, presentations, and teamwork. They explained how missing key information during financial discussions or collaborations could negatively impact decision-making and group outcomes. This observation supports the findings of Almurashi (2021), who emphasized the critical role of listening in business English, especially in high-stakes interactions like negotiations or corporate planning. Additionally, Wang and Feng (2023) argue that listening proficiency in professional settings enhances communication accuracy, reduces workplace errors, and improves overall organizational effectiveness. These studies confirm that listening skills are not only academic assets but also essential professional competencies.

The theme personal efforts toward improvement revealed how students are motivated to develop their listening and speaking skills through self-initiated strategies like active listening, note-taking, and consuming English media. They shared that these personal practices help them overcome challenges and build confidence. This reflects the findings of Rahimi and Vahidi (2021), who showed that learners who engaged in self-directed language activities, including regular exposure to authentic English input, experienced measurable gains in comprehension. Furthermore, Fitria and Ermawati (2022) found that students practicing metacognitive listening strategies like summarizing, asking questions, and reflecting improved their academic performance. These findings emphasize that students who take ownership of their learning can overcome skill gaps through deliberate, consistent practice.

Students also discussed the interconnectedness of listening and speaking, noting that difficulties in understanding spoken English often lead to problems in speaking confidently and clearly. They shared that without understanding pronunciation, vocabulary, or context from listening, their responses become hesitant or inaccurate. This is supported by Lee and Hwang (2021), who argue that listening and speaking are interdependent language skills and that deficiencies in one often lead to limitations in the other. Additionally, Chen and Chang (2023) found that integrated listening-speaking instruction improves fluency and accuracy more effectively than teaching each skill separately. These studies highlight the need for holistic teaching strategies that reinforce both receptive and productive language use.

Furthermore, students expressed a lack of confidence in speaking English due to fear of mistakes, limited vocabulary, and pressure in formal settings, which often discouraged them from participating. Many reported anxiety when asked to speak in class or during group work. This emotional barrier to communication is reflected in the findings of Putri and Sari (2021), who found that fear of negative evaluation significantly reduces students' willingness to speak in English classes. Likewise, Tran and Hoang (2024) emphasize that limited speaking opportunities and high-pressure settings can reinforce language anxiety, which lowers oral performance and classroom engagement. These studies confirm that addressing

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confidence and emotional safety in language learning is essential for encouraging student participation.

Lastly, these themes offer a rich understanding of how Business Administration students perceive their English language proficiency. Despite facing challenges such as distractions, time constraints, and lack of confidence, students show a strong willingness to improve their skills through active learning and self-regulated strategies. They also demonstrate an understanding of the real-world applications of English in business settings, which motivates them to develop not just their language ability but also their professional communication. These findings echo those of Abad and Abad (2024), who emphasize that contextual relevance, supportive environments, and personal agency are vital in sustaining student motivation and academic success, especially in evolving learning setups.

Research Question No. 3

To answer this research question, the researchers conducted in-depth interviews (IDIs) and focus group discussions (FGDs) with Business Administration students. The discussions explored students' recommendations and ideas for creating a more relevant and effective English language syllabus tailored to their program. Participants were encouraged to express what language components and activities they believe would be useful in preparing them for real-world business situations. Their responses revealed five major themes: (1) emphasis on business communication, (2) real-world application of English skills, (3) development of listening skills, (4) practical and career-relevant content, and (5) need for increased confidence and reduced anxiety. These themes and the supporting statements are summarized in Table 3.

Table 3
Themes and Supporting Statements on Students' Input for Designing a Language Syllabus to Develop Business Communication Skills

EMERGING THEMES	SUPPORTING STATEMENTS
Emphasis on Business Communication	✓ "To attract my co-students specially BSBA course to listening, it would be business communication wherein they would be apply it business industry." (IDI–02) ✓ "If I were to design an English language curriculum for Business Administration students, I would include Business Communication because it is very important. This would help enhance our skills in email writing, professional etiquette, and delivering presentations." (IDI–06) ✓ "I would design a curriculum that includes business communication skills covering emails, reports, presentations, and negotiations to develop practical language use." (IDI–09)
Real-World Application of English Skills	✓ "If I were to design an English program for Business Administration students, I would definitely focus on listening skills. In business, it's essential to understand what is being said whether in meetings, presentations, or conversations with clients." (IDI–04) ✓ "The program would include role-plays, listening to business podcasts, and note-taking activities to practice real-life listening." (IDI–04) ✓ "These are all real-life skills and are extremely helpful, especially when dealing with clients or in our future jobs." (IDI–07)
Development of Listening Skills	✓ "If I were to design an English program for Business Administration students, I would definitely focus on listening skills. In business, it's essential to understand what is being said—whether in meetings, presentations, or conversations with clients." (IDI–05) ✓ "Listening and speaking workshops focused on active listening, note-taking, and public speaking in business contexts." (IDI–09) ✓ "To improve listening skills, I would incorporate practice using real-world materials such as business news and interviews." (IDI–08)
Practical and Career-Relevant Content	✓ "If I were to design an English curriculum for Business Administration students, I would focus on practical and career-relevant communication skills like Business Vocabulary, Email Etiquette, and Presentation and Public Speaking." (IDI–08) ✓ "If I could design an English language program for Business Administration, I would include topics like effective communication, negotiation skills, and public speaking. These skills are essential for success in business." (IDI–10) ✓ "These are all real-life skills and are extremely helpful, especially when dealing with clients or in our future jobs." (IDI–07)
Need for Increased Confidence and Reduced Anxiety	✓ "Many of us still lack confidence in speaking English. We're often afraid of making mistakes, especially in formal or business settings." (IDI 07) ✓ "Sometimes I'm afraid to make mistakes, so I don't want to speak at all. I also lack exposure to English speaking in business settings…" (IDI 06) ✓ "We feel pressured, especially when everything has to be said in English." (IDI 08)

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The first of the emerging themes from the students' insights is the emphasis on business communication. A majority of the participants said that if they were to create an English program for students in Business Administration, they would integrate business communication skills like writing e-mails, presentation-giving, and appropriate professional etiquette. They think that these are necessary in the corporate world and will benefit them when they work for corporations or are in business for themselves. The students also indicated that being taught how to write reports, generate business proposals, and negotiate are all needed to achieve success in the workplace. This confirms that business students should learn English in terms of actual communication applied in the business world and not solely grammar and vocabulary. It is in relation to research which indicates English communication skills to enable one to be a success in the workplace and must be instructed according to actual business tasks and demands (Al-Mahrooqi & Denman, 2020). This is also supported by Geng and Wang (2023), who explained that students become more prepared for real jobs when English classes include tasks like writing professional emails, preparing reports, and giving formal presentations. They believe that teaching English this way gives students a strong advantage when they enter the business world.

The second theme to emerge from the feedback is English skills application in real life. Students proposed that English lessons should have activities that can be applied in real life, e.g., role-playing, listening to business podcasts, and conversational practices that might occur in meetings or job interviews. They think these activities will make them accustomed to the way English is actually spoken and applied in business. They also said that knowing clients and business talk is very essential for their future careers. This topic indicates that students desire English classes to be practical, not theoretical. It reflects the belief that students learn more effectively when the lessons relate to their day-to-day experience and working environments in the future. This is confirmed by a study which discovered that teaching employing real-life situations makes the learners become more motivated and well-equipped to apply English in the workplace (Huthaily & Alqahtani, 2021). Chen and Li (2022) further noted that when students are engaged in activities that mimic actual business experiences such as mock interviews or simulated meetings, they feel more confident and motivated. These activities also facilitate better retention and application of what they learn in actual situations.

The third theme is the enhancement of listening skills. From the students, it is very crucial to be a good listener in business, they opined. They explained that knowing what people say when attending meetings, in client meetings, or while giving a presentation is an important aspect of communication. Some of the participants added that English courses should have listening exercises with business news, interviews, and podcasts so that they may better comprehend spoken English. Some also mentioned that they would do workshops on active listening and public speaking to enhance both their listening and speaking. This indicates that the students recognize how crucial it is to listen to English in actual usage. This idea is supported by a study that shows listening is one of the most important language skills for business students, and that using real audio materials can help learners build confidence and understanding (Zhang & Zhan, 2022). Ahmed and Nordin (2023) also shared that students improve their listening skills more effectively when they are exposed to real audio content, like business interviews or podcasts. These materials also make students better acquainted with the way English is actually used at work, and this enhances both their knowledge and confidence.

The fourth theme is practical and career-relevant content. Students reported that if they were designing an English curriculum, they would make sure to include lessons that are practical for their future careers. These are business jargon, public speaking, negotiation, and writing emails. They feel that these skills are not only essential for acing subjects but also for succeeding in their professional lives. Some students further stated that they can showcase themselves better in job interviews or in running businesses if they know how to communicate properly in professional environments. This topic evidently reveals that students desire English classes that will make them better and more confident professionals. It touches on a study which states that English courses must align students' future career paths and involve genuine communication tasks to equip them for the job market (Ismail & Hussin, 2021). Rizwan and Iqbal (2022) also discovered that students become more motivated and learn better when the subjects are related to their prospective careers. When they learn skills such as writing business letters or negotiating agreements, they understand how the learning applies to their objectives, making them more serious about learning.

The last theme is the demand for greater confidence and decreased anxiety. The research also indicated that students have a strong desire to feel more confident and less nervous when communicating in English. Most of them expressed that they are too scared of committing errors, particularly in formal or business contexts. Due to this fear, some students prefer not to communicate at all. Others said that they feel stressed when English is the sole language used in classroom or presentation environments. Such pressure, added to the fact that they have not had much experience with speaking English outside of the classroom, will make them even more anxious and resistant to speaking. These experiences demonstrate that affective variables such as fear, anxiety, and inexperience can decrease students' participation in speaking. Providing a classroom environment in which students feel free to practice without fear of reprisal can gradually help students overcome their anxiety and become more confident. If students feel comfortable and have frequent opportunities to speak, they tend to develop their communication skills in the long run (Bautista and Cruz, 2021). Li and Su (2020) further clarified that when students feel comfortable speaking up and not afraid to make errors, they are more likely to communicate in English. Classrooms in which the students are able to have open discussion and receive encouragement in that way enable students to overcome fear and gradually build confidence in speech.

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CONCLUSION

This study assessed the English language proficiency of Business Administration students at Kapalong College of Agriculture, Sciences and Technology (KCAST) in terms of the four macro skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The results revealed that students demonstrated an overall average level of proficiency. Among the four skills, reading emerged as their strongest area, with a mean score of 67.47, suggesting that students were relatively comfortable in understanding written texts such as business articles, documents, and manuals. In contrast, listening had the lowest mean score of 57.87, indicating a significant weakness in comprehending spoken English in both academic and professional contexts. Speaking and writing skills also showed room for improvement, particularly in the areas of clarity, fluency, and appropriateness for workplace settings. These findings served as the basis for developing a language-specific syllabus that directly addresses students' weaknesses. The proposed syllabus includes thematic modules on business writing, oral presentation, active listening, and professional correspondence. It integrates simulation tasks such as mock meetings, business negotiations, and report writing ensuring that the learning content mirrors actual workplace situations and supports gradual development of all four macro skills in meaningful, real-life contexts.

The students' insights regarding their language proficiency levels provided a deeper understanding of the challenges they face in using English effectively. Through in-depth interviews, students identified several barriers that affect their language performance, particularly in listening and speaking. Many reported struggling with environmental distractions and limited opportunities to engage in authentic English communication. A recurring concern was the lack of confidence when speaking in English, which they attributed to poor listening comprehension and minimal practice in interactive settings. Students expressed a desire for more practical and engaging language learning experiences that go beyond traditional classroom instruction. They emphasized the need for activities that mirror real-world situations, such as meetings, presentations, and business negotiations, where accurate and fluent communication is essential. These insights underscore the importance of providing more targeted and experiential learning strategies that build confidence and competence simultaneously.

In response to the third research question, students offered input for designing a business-specific language syllabus. They recommended a strong focus on real-world business communication tasks, including writing emails, composing memos and reports, and delivering persuasive presentations. They also emphasized the need to improve listening and speaking through practice-based activities such as role-plays, dialogues, and workplace simulations. Furthermore, students proposed integrating content on business vocabulary, etiquette, and industry-specific communication strategies that would be useful in interviews, meetings, and collaborative environments. Their suggestions highlight a desire for a more applied, career-relevant approach to language instruction, one that prepares them to communicate confidently and professionally in the business world.

Based on the results and student feedback, a language-specific syllabus was proposed to develop the language proficiency of Business Administration students. The syllabus is grounded in English for Specific Purposes (ESP) principles and aims to bridge the gap between academic instruction and professional demands. It is structured around progressive modules that build competencies in listening, speaking, reading, and writing through context-based learning. Key features include interactive lessons on business correspondence, oral presentation skills, business vocabulary acquisition, and simulated business tasks. The syllabus also incorporates authentic materials such as emails, reports, and case studies to expose students to real workplace language. With regular formative assessments, performance-based tasks, and integrated speaking-listening activities, this syllabus seeks to foster both linguistic competence and workplace readiness, making it a practical and responsive curriculum tailored to the communication needs of future business professionals.

RECOMMENDATION

Based on the results of the study, it is recommended that the proposed ESP syllabus—designed specifically for Business Administration students—be adopted and implemented. This syllabus incorporates realistic, task-based activities and authentic business scenarios aimed at strengthening the four macro skills, particularly focusing on the areas where students showed lower proficiency, such as listening and speaking. In addition, several measures are recommended to support the continuous development of students' language skills. First, regular workshops should be conducted to enhance active listening, note-taking, and vocabulary development. Second, multimedia resources such as business-related podcasts, video simulations, and recorded presentations should be utilized to expose students to real-world language use. Third, peer-led speaking activities and business role-plays must be integrated into classroom practices to build students' confidence in using English in formal settings. Fourth, writing tasks should focus on business-specific outputs such as reports, proposals, and professional correspondence to align with workplace communication standards. Fifth, language support services such as English clinics, tutorial sessions, and pronunciation drills should be made available to offer additional practice and guidance. Lastly, faculty development programs should be encouraged to train instructors in effective strategies for delivering ESP content in engaging and contextually appropriate ways.

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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.