

# ESP NEEDS FOR DIGITAL EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF VIETNAMESE UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

NHU CẦU ESP CHO GIAO TIẾP ĐỐI NGOẠI SỞ:  
NGHIÊN CỨU SO SÁNH SINH VIÊN ĐẠI HỌC VIỆT NAM

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**Abstract** - In the context of global integration, this study adopts an English for Specific Purposes (ESP) perspective to examine Vietnamese university students' English communication needs for digitally mediated external professional communication. Participants comprised two groups: language-based majors (Business English, Tourism English, E-commerce English) and non-language-based majors (International Relations, International Studies, Oriental Studies). Grounded in ESP needs analysis theory (necessities/lacks/wants), the study employed a convergent mixed-methods design with 120 undergraduates. Findings reveal shared communicative necessities across disciplines, proficiency-differentiated competence gaps ( $B1 > B2$ ,  $|d| = .54$ ), and coherent instructional priorities centred on pragmatic risk control, simulation-based pedagogy, and genre scaffolding. The study informs discipline-sensitive and proficiency-differentiated ESP curriculum design for digital-era professional communication.

**Key words** - English for Specific Purposes; needs analysis; digital external communication; professional English

## 1. Introduction

In the context of global integration, Vietnamese university graduates are increasingly expected to communicate in English for cross-border professional engagement [1], [2]. The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated a shift from face-to-face to digital institutional communication [26], routinising digital genres - professional emails, virtual meetings, social-media posts, and online stakeholder management - in entry-level professional roles. Within English for Specific Purposes (ESP), this evolving target situation calls for renewed needs analysis grounded in the tripartite framework of necessities, lacks, and wants [3]: the linguistic and pragmatic competencies required by target situations, the gap between learners' current competence and those demands, and learners' subjective priorities.

Needs analysis has long been recognised as the cornerstone of ESP curriculum design, ensuring alignment with authentic professional tasks rather than generalised language objectives [4], [5]. Empirical studies across Asian higher-education contexts suggest that intermediate-proficiency learners (B1-B2 under CEFR standards) often experience gaps in pragmatic competence, negotiation discourse, and real-time spoken interaction [10], [11]. In the Vietnamese context, where ESP programs are expanding across disciplines such as Business, Tourism, E-

**Tóm tắt** - Trong bối cảnh hội nhập toàn cầu, nghiên cứu này áp dụng góc nhìn Tiếng Anh cho Mục đích Chuyên biệt (ESP) để khảo sát nhu cầu giao tiếp tiếng Anh của sinh viên đại học Việt Nam trong giao tiếp đối ngoại chuyên môn số. Đối tượng gồm hai nhóm: chuyên ngành ngôn ngữ (Tiếng Anh Thương mại, Du lịch, Thương mại điện tử) và phi ngôn ngữ (Quan hệ Quốc tế, Nghiên cứu Quốc tế, Đông phương học). Dựa trên lý thuyết phân tích nhu cầu ESP (nhu cầu/thiếu hụt/mong muốn), nghiên cứu sử dụng thiết kế hỗn hợp đồng quy với 120 sinh viên. Kết quả cho thấy các nhu cầu giao tiếp cốt lõi dùng chung giữa các ngành, các khoảng thiếu hụt năng lực khác biệt theo trình độ ( $B1 > B2$ ,  $|d| = 0,54$ ), và các mong muốn giảng dạy tương đối thống nhất, tập trung vào kiểm soát rủi ro trong giao tiếp, dạy học dựa trên mô phỏng và hỗ trợ từng bước theo thể loại văn bản. Nghiên cứu cung cấp cơ sở cho việc thiết kế chương trình ESP theo chuyên ngành và theo trình độ, phù hợp với giao tiếp chuyên môn số.

**Từ khóa** - Tiếng Anh Chuyên ngành; phân tích nhu cầu; giao tiếp đối ngoại số; tiếng Anh chuyên môn

commerce, and International Studies, systematic identification of communicative needs is essential for curriculum alignment with labour-market realities.

The comparison between language-based and non-language-based majors adopted here reflects a curriculum-level distinction. Language-based programmes (Business English, Tourism English, E-commerce English) are organised around English as the primary medium of professional formation. Non-language-based programmes (International Relations, International Studies, Oriental Studies), while requiring English proficiency, are principally organised around disciplinary content [5]. This curriculum-focus criterion grounds the comparative rationale.

The present study responds to the need for data-informed curriculum reform by conducting a needs analysis of Vietnamese university students across these two disciplinary clusters. It investigates perceived target needs (necessities), competence gaps (lacks), and instructional priorities (wants) for digital external professional communication.

The study addresses the following research questions:

**RQ1.** What target English communication needs (necessities) do Vietnamese students in a public university perceive for external communication and digital diplomacy?

**RQ2.** What perceived 'lacks' do students report, and how do these differ by disciplinary grouping (language-based vs. non-language-based) and proficiency (B1 vs. B2)?

**RQ3.** What 'wants' do students prioritize for ESP classroom instruction?

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1. ESP Needs Analysis: Necessities, Lacks, and Wants

Needs analysis constitutes the epistemological foundation of ESP [4], [5]. Hutchinson and Waters' [3] tripartite model - necessities, lacks, and wants - remains the most influential analytical framework. Subsequent scholarship positions needs analysis as an iterative, evidence-based process embedded throughout curriculum development [12], [13]. Long [12] advocates task-based needs analysis grounded in real-world communicative events; Brown [13] emphasises triangulation across quantitative and qualitative instruments for validity.

Needs are socially situated and dynamically shaped by workplace transformations. As global labour markets evolve, communicative demands increasingly involve digital genres, intercultural interaction, and multimodal literacy [5]. Contemporary ESP needs analysis must therefore extend beyond traditional correspondence and oral-presentation skills to emerging digital communicative ecologies.

### 2.2. ESP in Digital Professional Communication

Contemporary external professional communication is increasingly hybrid, with online and offline engagements intersecting and public-facing messaging scaling rapidly across networks [6], [7]. From an applied-linguistics perspective, this foregrounds genre knowledge (what counts as an acceptable post or email), pragmatic routines (apology, refusal, mitigation), interactional resources for synchronous online meetings (turn-taking, clarification, summarising), and multimodal text-image competence [8], [9]. Needs analysis provides a principled route to translate the abstract notion of 'digital professional communication' into teachable and assessable language competencies.

### 2.3. Disciplinary Orientation and Proficiency as Sources of Needs Variation

ESP research consistently demonstrates that communicative needs vary across academic disciplines [5]. Business communication emphasises negotiation and persuasive framing; international-relations discourse foregrounds diplomatic terminology, policy argumentation, and intercultural sensitivity. Empirical findings indicate that language-based majors often report stronger grammatical competence but continue to experience gaps in pragmatic and domain-specific communication [11]. Non-language-based majors may face structural constraints - limited contact hours, reduced exposure to authentic English input - that shape their perceived lacks.

Proficiency level further mediates perceived difficulty. Research on pragmatic development indicates that intermediate learners (B1-B2) frequently struggle with

refusals, disagreements, and negotiation due to limited pragmatic repertoire and processing constraints [10]. Real-time listening in digital environments poses additional challenges when speech rates are rapid and multimodal cues are limited.

Recent Vietnamese ESP needs analyses across higher-education contexts have documented similar profession-specific patterns [29], [30]. The methodologically strongest recent regional work triangulates learner perception with employer/stakeholder data and authentic workplace tasks [31]. The present study is more limited in scope - single-site and learner-perception only - and is positioned as a complementary local exploration. Studies that systematically compare language-based and non-language-based majors within digitally mediated ESP remain scarce.

## 3. Research Methodology

### 3.1. Research Design

This study employed a convergent parallel mixed-methods design, in which quantitative and qualitative data were collected during the same phase, analyzed separately, and subsequently integrated for interpretation [14]. The rationale for adopting a mixed-methods approach lies in the multidimensional nature of ESP needs analysis. While quantitative measures enable the systematic examination of patterns in perceived necessities and lacks across groups, qualitative data capture learners' subjective priorities and contextualized experiences - dimensions central to the "wants" construct in ESP theory [12], [13].

A convergent design is particularly appropriate when the objective is triangulation and complementarity [15]. In the present study, survey data quantified students' perceived communicative needs and competence gaps, whereas open-ended responses provided explanatory depth regarding anticipated difficulties and pedagogical preferences. The integration of these strands strengthens construct validity by allowing cross-validation of findings across methodological paradigms.

### 3.2. Participants and Context

One hundred twenty undergraduate students from a public university in Vietnam participated in the study. The institution offers both language-focused majors and internationally oriented non-language majors, providing an appropriate context for examining disciplinary variation in ESP needs. A purposive sampling strategy ensured disciplinary diversity across the two programme clusters at the same institution, enabling systematic comparison while controlling for institutional culture.

Participants were grouped into two disciplinary clusters: Language-based majors - Business English, Tourism English, and E-commerce English; Non-language-based majors - International Studies, International Relations, and Oriental Studies.

Such grouping aligns with prior ESP research emphasizing disciplinary culture as a determinant of communicative expectations and genre conventions [5]. Students self-reported English proficiency levels aligned

with the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR), primarily B1 and B2. Proficiency stratification is theoretically justified, as intermediate learners often display uneven development in pragmatic and interactional competence [10]. Of these,  $n = 60$  students self-identified as B1 and  $n = 60$  as B2 based on self-reported CEFR proficiency. Data were collected during the first semester of the 2025–2026 academic year (October–November 2025).

Participants were second-year undergraduates, reflecting the institutional English curriculum trajectory at the time of data collection: non-language-based majors (International Studies, Oriental Studies, International Relations) had completed English courses at B1.1–B1.4 level, while language-based majors (Business English, Tourism English, E-commerce English) were concurrently enrolled in B2.1–B2.2 courses. The absence of C1-level students is therefore a deliberate feature of the sampling design: the study targets the transitional B1–B2 band where communicative gaps in professional and digital contexts are most salient and pedagogically actionable.

Participation was voluntary, and responses were anonymized to ensure ethical compliance and reduce social desirability bias. The study adhered to institutional ethical guidelines concerning informed consent and confidentiality.

### 3.3. Instrument

#### 3.3.1. Questionnaire Development

The survey instrument was developed based on established frameworks in ESP needs analysis [3], [4] and task-based needs-assessment principles [12]. It operationalised two primary constructs: Target Needs (Necessities, 10 items) and Perceived Lacks (Competence Gaps, 10 items, including one reverse-coded sufficiency item). Items reflected communicative tasks associated with digital external professional communication: professional email protocols; contract negotiation discourse; participation in virtual meetings; social-media message design; explanation of data and visuals; networking and public engagement; short-form professional writing; pragmatic routines (refusals, apologies, disagreement); multimodal communication; and listening to international online discussions. Representative items included, for Target Needs, "I need to write professional emails to foreign partners in English" (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree), and for Perceived Lacks, "I struggle to respond politely to complaints or disagreement in English." A full list is provided in Appendix A. All items were rated on a 5-point Likert scale, which is widely recognised as appropriate for attitudinal and perception-based constructs in applied linguistics research [16].

#### 3.3.2. Validity Considerations

Content validity was established through a four-member expert panel (two ESP/applied-linguistics specialists, two international-communication specialists, all with  $\geq 10$  years' experience in ESP or professional communication) followed by pilot testing with  $n = 16$  B1–

B2 undergraduates from both disciplinary clusters. The panel rated each item for construct alignment, disciplinary appropriateness, linguistic clarity for B1–B2 learners, and potential ambiguity. Cognitive debriefing with pilot participants identified unfamiliar terminology (e.g., 'multimodal'), and wording was adjusted accordingly (e.g., parenthetical examples such as 'text + image/infographic'). Two items were revised for wording precision, and three items were refined to reduce double-barreled phrasing; redundant items were merged while preserving task-domain coverage. Construct validity rests on the a priori subscale structure aligned with the necessities/lacks distinction [3]; the absence of confirmatory factor analysis is acknowledged as a limitation.

#### 3.3.3. Reliability

Internal consistency reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha, a widely used index for evaluating scale coherence [17]. An alpha threshold of  $\geq .70$  was adopted as acceptable for exploratory research [18]. The reverse-coded item was recoded prior to reliability computation to maintain directional consistency.

### 3.4. Data Analysis

#### 3.4.1. Quantitative Analysis

Quantitative data were analysed using SPSS-compatible procedures. Analyses included descriptive statistics (means, standard deviations), internal-consistency reliability (Cronbach's alpha), independent-samples t-tests comparing language-based vs. non-language-based majors and B1 vs. B2 proficiency groups, and one-way ANOVA across the six individual majors. Effect sizes were reported using Cohen's  $d$  for t-tests and  $\eta^2$  for ANOVA, in line with recommendations for reporting practical significance alongside statistical significance [19], [20].

#### 3.4.2. Qualitative Analysis

Open-ended responses were analysed using reflexive thematic analysis following Braun and Clarke's six-phase framework: familiarisation, initial coding, theme generation, review, definition, and reporting [21], [22]. This approach allows both deductive mapping to ESP task categories and inductive identification of emergent learner priorities. Open-ended questions were completed by  $n = 120$  participants. Coding and theme development were conducted by the first author as a reflexive process; consistent with reflexive thematic analysis, no inter-rater reliability was calculated. The researcher's positionality as an insider within the institutional context was acknowledged through memoing and iterative review of coding decisions to mitigate overfamiliarity. Themes were subsequently mapped onto ESP task domains (e.g., negotiation, multimodal presentation, online listening, pragmatic routines) to ensure theoretical coherence with the needs-analysis framework.

## 4. Results

### 4.1. Reliability

Internal consistency reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha [17]. Following conventional

benchmarks ( $\alpha \geq .70$  acceptable;  $\geq .80$  good), both subscales demonstrated satisfactory reliability [18].

Target Needs (10 items):  $\alpha = .835$

Perceived Lacks (10 items; after reverse-coding the sufficiency item):  $\alpha = 0.821$

These coefficients indicate good internal consistency and suggest that the items within each construct measured coherent underlying dimensions. The reverse-coded item was recoded prior to reliability estimation to ensure scale directionality and prevent artificial attenuation of alpha [18].

The reliability indices support the construct validity of the two subscales and justify subsequent group comparisons.

## 4.2. Group Comparisons

### 4.2.1. Disciplinary Grouping (Language-based vs. Non-language-based)

Descriptive statistics by disciplinary grouping are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Descriptive Statistics by Disciplinary Grouping

Group	n	Target Needs (M ± SD)	Lacks (M ± SD)
Language-based	60	3.70 ± .74	2.77 ± .79
Non-language-based	60	3.69 ± .66	2.99 ± .76

Higher scores indicate greater perceived importance (Target Needs) or greater perceived competence gaps (Lacks).

Levene's test indicated homogeneity of variance ( $p > .05$ ). An independent-samples t-test revealed no statistically significant difference in overall Target Needs between language-based and non-language-based students,  $t(118) = .12$ ,  $p = .907$ ,  $|d| = .02$ .

The effect size ( $d = .02$ ) falls well below Cohen's threshold [19] for a small effect ( $d = .20$ ), indicating a negligible practical difference. Thus, students across disciplinary groupings appear to converge in their perception of the importance of English for external communication and digital diplomacy tasks.

For Perceived Lacks, non-language-based students reported slightly higher gaps ( $M = 2.99$ ) than language-based students ( $M = 2.77$ ), but the difference did not reach statistical significance,  $t(118) = -1.54$ ,  $p = .127$ ,  $|d| = .28$ .

Although statistically non-significant, the effect size ( $d = .28$ ) approaches the lower bound of a small effect [19]. This suggests a modest tendency for non-language-based majors to perceive greater communicative constraints, a pattern that may warrant further investigation in larger samples.

Consistent with recommendations in contemporary quantitative reporting, the interpretation prioritizes effect magnitude rather than relying solely on p-values [20].

### 4.2.2. Perceived Lacks by Disciplinary Grouping and Proficiency

Proficiency-based comparisons revealed a more differentiated pattern.

For Target Needs, no statistically significant difference emerged between B1 and B2 students ( $p > .05$ ), indicating that perceived communicative importance remains stable across intermediate proficiency bands.

However, for Perceived Lacks, B2 students reported significantly lower gaps than B1 students:

• **B1:**  $M = 3.01$

• **B2:**  $M = 2.61$

Levene's test indicated homogeneity of variance ( $p > .05$ ).  $t(118) = 2.63$ ,  $p = .010$ ,  $|d| = .54$ .

The effect size ( $d = .54$ ) represents a medium effect according to Cohen's conventions [19], suggesting meaningful practical significance. This finding aligns with research on pragmatic and interactional development, which indicates that increased proficiency is associated with greater confidence and reduced perceived difficulty in real-time and formal communication contexts [10].

Importantly, while higher proficiency reduces perceived gaps, it does not diminish recognition of communicative necessity. This distinction reinforces the theoretical separation between *necessities* and *lacks* in ESP needs analysis [3].

## 4.3. Differences Across Majors

A one-way between-groups ANOVA examined differences among the six individual majors. For Target Needs, the omnibus test was non-significant,  $F(5, 114) = 0.91$ ,  $p = .479$ ,  $\eta^2 = .038$  - a small effect [19]; perceived communicative necessity for digital-era external communication is widely shared across disciplinary pathways. For Perceived Lacks,  $F(5, 114) = 2.08$ ,  $p = .073$ ,  $\eta^2 = .084$ ; the omnibus test was non-significant, so no post-hoc comparisons are interpreted. The effect-size estimate is reported descriptively for transparency and to inform sample-size planning in future work; it is not interpreted as evidence of between-major differences.

## 4.4. Instructional Wants

Thematic analysis of open-ended responses ( $n=120$ ) identified five coherent instructional want-clusters: (1) risk-sensitive pragmatic control (tone management, politeness in complaint-handling); (2) simulation-based learning under time pressure; (3) authentic listening practice with diverse accents; (4) genre-scaffolded writing (B1: templates → B2: portfolios); and (5) platform-aware multimodal communication. A proficiency-sensitive pattern was evident: B1 learners prioritized scaffolded production (phrase banks, guided role-play), while B2 learners sought authentic complexity (diplomatic genres, crisis messaging, portfolio assessment). Taken together, necessities, lacks, and wants converge on a coherent instructional profile: digitally mediated external communication tasks require ESP courses that integrate pragmatic training, simulation-based interactional practice, and genre-scaffolded writing within a proficiency-differentiated framework.

## 5. Discussion

The present findings provide empirical support for the continuing relevance - and necessary expansion - of the ESP needs analysis framework in digitally mediated professional contexts. By examining students' perceived *necessities*, *lacks*, and *wants* in relation to external communication and digital diplomacy, this study contributes to a more nuanced understanding of how communicative competence is conceptualized in contemporary higher education.

### 5.1. Shared Communicative Necessities Across Disciplines

Across disciplinary groupings, students strongly endorsed the importance of English for professional email communication, virtual meetings, reporting, negotiation, and social-media engagement. The absence of significant differences between language-based and non-language-based majors on Target Needs suggests a shared recognition that English functions as a strategic resource in international professional communication. This convergence aligns with the foundational ESP principle that curriculum design should be anchored in authentic communicative events and target situations [3], [4] and resonates with Hyland's view that ESP must be grounded in disciplinary and professional discourse communities [5]. The high endorsement of digital tasks reflects broader transformations in professional communication: contemporary international engagement increasingly unfolds through platform-mediated channels characterised by immediacy, brevity, and audience interactivity [6], [7], [26].

### 5.2. Differentiated Lacks: Pragmatics, Real-Time Listening, and Multimodality

Perceived gaps clustered in three interrelated domains. Difficulty with pragmatic routines supports a substantial body of research demonstrating that pragmatic competence develops unevenly and often lags grammatical proficiency [10], [11]. Refusals and disagreements are particularly sensitive to sociocultural norms, making them challenging in international contexts. In digital external communication, where messages may be publicly archived and circulated, pragmatic miscalibration can carry reputational risks [6]. Students also reported difficulty understanding rapid online spoken discourse, aligning with research indicating that listening in digital environments involves processing high speech rates, diverse accents, reduced redundancy, and limited contextual scaffolding [23]. Given that international collaboration frequently relies on synchronous communication technologies [7], [26], listening competence becomes not merely receptive but interactional. Finally, difficulty combining text and visuals points to a shift toward multimodal literacy. Kress [8] argues that contemporary meaning-making is inherently multimodal, requiring competence in orchestrating linguistic, visual, and spatial resources; in digital professional communication, infographics and visually framed narratives are central to persuasive messaging. Traditional text-focused ESP instruction may insufficiently prepare learners for these demands.

### 5.3. Proficiency-Driven Gaps and Pedagogical Implications

A particularly notable finding is that proficiency (B1 vs. B2) was a more consistent correlate of perceived gaps than disciplinary grouping. While majors did not differ significantly on perceived necessities, B1 students reported substantially greater competence gaps than B2 students, with a medium effect size. This pattern is consistent with research on interlanguage pragmatics indicating that intermediate learners often struggle with processing constraints, lexical access, and pragmatic flexibility in real-time interaction [10]. Theoretically, it reinforces the conceptual distinction between necessities (externally imposed communicative demands) and lacks (learner-internal capacity gaps) [3]: communicative demands remain relatively stable across proficiency bands, while the ability to meet those demands varies with proficiency.

Pedagogically, the findings support a dual-layered differentiation model. For B1 learners, instruction may incorporate functional language frames, structured role-play, guided email templates, and staged simulations to reduce cognitive load [12]. For B2 learners, tasks can approximate authentic complexity - crisis-response messaging, spontaneous debate, and data-driven storytelling. Such differentiation aligns with task-based and needs-based pedagogy [12], [24]. The five convergent instructional priorities identified in the qualitative analysis - pragmatic risk control, simulation-based practice, authentic listening, genre-scaffolded writing, and platform-aware multimodal communication - are consistent with prior research on explicit pragmatic instruction [10], [28] and with task-based ESP design principles advocating that pedagogical tasks mirror authentic communicative demands [12], [24]. Genre-scaffolding wants reinforce the foundational ESP argument that learners require staged progression from controlled templates to authentic professional genres [3], [5]. Collectively, these findings support a dual-layer ESP module design: discipline-sensitive content combined with proficiency-differentiated scaffolding, delivered through blended, collaborative formats.

## 6. Conclusion

This study extends ESP needs analysis into the domain of external communication and digital diplomacy, demonstrating that Vietnamese university students perceive strong English-language necessities for digitally mediated international engagement. While disciplinary grouping did not significantly differentiate perceived necessities, proficiency level (B1 vs. B2) was meaningfully associated with perceived competence gaps. Qualitative analysis of learner wants revealed a coherent instructional direction emphasizing simulation-based tasks, genre scaffolding, and proficiency-differentiated pathways.

The most salient instructional targets include pragmatic competence in formal contexts, real-time listening comprehension, and multimodal communication. These findings reinforce the theoretical distinction between *necessities* and *lacks* in ESP [3] and highlight the

importance of integrating digital communicative ecologies into syllabus design.

By proposing a differentiated ESP module that combines discipline-relevant content with proficiency-sensitive scaffolding and simulation-based pedagogy, the study contributes to the ongoing reconceptualization of ESP in digitally networked professional environments. In doing so, it positions needs analysis not merely as a diagnostic tool but as a strategic bridge between higher education curricula and evolving global communication practices.

Also, there are several limitations. First, the cross-sectional design captures perceptions at a single time point. Longitudinal research could track developmental shifts in perceived needs and competence over the course of an ESP module, thereby examining how instruction mediates change.

Second, the reliance on self-report measures introduces potential discrepancies between perceived and actual competence. As noted in language assessment research, perception does not always correlate with performance [25]. Future studies should incorporate task-based performance measures, such as email-writing assessments, negotiation simulations, and rated multimodal presentations.

Third, the operationalization of “digital diplomacy” in this study was domain-general. More granular analysis by platform (e.g., X/Twitter, LinkedIn) and genre (crisis communication, campaign messaging, policy briefing) would enable sharper syllabus specification and genre-based pedagogy.

Finally, expanding the sample across institutions and regions would enhance generalizability and allow exploration of institutional culture as an additional moderating variable.

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## APPENDIXES

### Appendix A: Questionnaires

#### PART A: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Major:  Business English  Tourism English  E-commerce English

International Studies  International Relations  Oriental Studies

English Proficiency Level:  B1  B2

**PART B: TARGET NEEDS (Adapted from ESP Needs Analysis Framework – Hutchinson & Waters; Cowling 2007) Scale (Likert-5):**  
*1 = Strongly Disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Neutral 4 = Agree 5 = Strongly Agree (10 items)*

1. Communicative Necessities English is essential for my future role in external or international communication.
2. I will need English for negotiations (e.g., contracts, agreements, cooperation).
3. English is necessary for managing social media content related to promotion or international communication.
4. I need to understand diplomatic terminology (e.g., bilateral, multilateral, memorandum of understanding).
5. English is important for preparing global reports and presentations.
6. I will need English for participating in virtual meetings (e.g., Zoom, Teams).
7. I need to write professional emails to foreign partners in English.
8. I need English to explain data, charts, or visual information to international audiences.
9. I may need to translate short professional texts between Vietnamese and English.
10. English is necessary for professional networking (e.g., LinkedIn, conferences).

**PART C: PERCEIVED LACKS (Perceived Gaps in Competence) Scale (Likert-5):** *1 = Strongly Disagree; 2 = Disagree; 3 = Neutral; 4 = Agree; 5 = Strongly Agree (10 items)*

11. My current English level sufficiently prepares me for diplomacy-related communication.

12. (R) I feel weak in writing short professional posts (e.g., tweet-style diplomacy).
13. I struggle to use polite language in negotiation contexts.
14. I have difficulty understanding international podcasts or online discussions.
15. I struggle to respond politely to complaints or disagreement in English.
16. I am not confident in combining text and visuals effectively in English (multimodal communication).
17. I feel anxious when speaking English in formal international settings (e.g., summits, forums).
18. My vocabulary related to international relations or protocols is limited.
19. I find it difficult to communicate clearly in real-time online chats in English.
20. My English is insufficient for specialized international communication tasks.

(R = reverse-coded item)

#### Appendix B: OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS (WANTS)

1. What are the top three English communication skills you believe you need most for your future career? Why?
2. Can you describe a specific situation in which you might face difficulties using English in international communication?
3. What types of ESP classroom activities would help you improve your English for external communication? (e.g., simulations, case studies, role-play, social media writing, debate, translation tasks, etc.)
4. How would you prefer digital diplomacy or international communication to be taught in your English courses? (e.g., project-based learning, online tasks, collaborative projects, guest speakers, blended learning, etc.)

Do you have any additional suggestions for improving English training for your major?