

# European Journal of Linguistics

(EJL)

Aligning English Instruction with Beni City Higher Education Agronomy  
Students' Academic and Professional Needs: A Needs Analysis Study



CARI  
Journals

## Aligning English Instruction with Beni City Higher Education Agronomy Students' Academic and Professional Needs: A Needs Analysis Study

<sup>1</sup>Prof Tembue Zembele wa Ololo, PhD, <sup>2</sup>Kakule Kavulikirwa Edmond, M.Ed.,  <sup>3</sup>Prof. Kambale Muhyana Baha Innocent, PhD, <sup>4</sup>Prof. Malala Tambue David, PhD

<sup>1,3</sup>Bukavu Teacher Training College

Department of English and African Culture

<sup>2</sup>Oicha Teacher Training College

Department of English and African Culture

<https://orcid.org/0009-0008-4741-2455>

<sup>4</sup>Bukavu Teacher Training College

Department of Pedagogy and Psychology

*Accepted: 5<sup>th</sup> May, 2026, Received in Revised Form: 12<sup>th</sup> May, 2026, Published: 23<sup>rd</sup> May, 2026*

### ABSTRACT

**Purpose:** This study investigates the English language needs and expectations of agronomy students in higher education in Beni City. It aims at determining whether students' needs are primarily general linguistic or academic and professional in nature, with the ultimate goal of informing English for Specific Purposes (ESP) syllabus design.

**Methodology:** A Needs Analysis Approach was adopted, combining quantitative and qualitative data collection tools. Questionnaires were used to elicit students' perceived needs, expectations and target language use situations. The study involved agronomy students across three academic years.

**Findings:** The findings reveal that agronomy students strongly expect English courses to support academic reading, scientific report writing, field-based communication and interaction with agribusiness and international stakeholders. These needs are predominantly academic and professional rather than general or grammar-focused. Failure to address these needs leads to low engagement and extrinsic motivation.

**Unique Contribution to Theory, Policy and Practice:** The study contributes to ESP theory by reaffirming the centrality of learners' felt needs in syllabus design. At the policy level, it challenges the continued use of General English curricula in specialized programs. Practically, it provides empirical evidence to guide the development of needs-based English courses for agronomy students.

**Keywords:** *English for Specific Purposes (ESP), Needs Analysis, Agronomy Students, Academic English, Professional Communication, Syllabus Design*

**JEL Codes:** *I21, I23, A22, J24, Z13*



## INTRODUCTION

### Background

In contemporary higher education, English plays a central position as a global lingua franca of science, technology and professional communication. As noted by David Crystal (2003, pp. 67-70), English has become the dominant language of international communication, particularly in academic and scientific domains. It serves as a primary medium for accessing scholarly publications, participating in academic discourse and engaging with global professional communities. In scientific disciplines such as agronomy, where innovation, sustainability and technological advancement are driven by global collaboration, proficiency in English is no longer optional but essential. According to Ken Hyland (2016, pp. 13-18), academic success in specialized fields largely depends of learners' ability to understand and produce discipline-specific texts. Therefore, agronomy students rely on English not only to read scientific articles but also they rely to it to interpret technical manuals, document experimental findings and communicate with diverse stakeholders in agricultural development.

Recent research further reinforces the centrality of English in agricultural education and professional practice. Arias-Contreras and Moore (2022, pp. 98-101) demonstrate that agronomy students require English to perform key academic and field-based tasks, including reading articles, writing reports and engaging in professional communication. In the same vein, Hajar and Trastuti (2021, pp. 5-8) emphasize that students in agricultural programs face specific linguistic demands that General English courses often fail to address. These findings highlight the growing recognition that English proficiency in this field must be aligned closely with discipline-specific needs.

Moreover, the demands placed on agronomy graduates extend beyond general language competence to include mastery of specialized terminology and communicative practices. The concept of English for Specific Purposes (ESP), as developed by Tom Hutchinson and Alan Waters (1987, pp. 8-9), emphasizes the importance of tailoring the language instruction to learners' academic and professional contexts. In line with this perspective, Ken Hyland (2022, pp. 205-208) argues that ESP has evolved to address increasingly specialized communicative needs across disciplines. In agricultural education, ESP enables students to engage with authentic materials such as research articles, field reports and technical documents. Supporting this view, Sobirova (2025a, pp. 169-170) highlighted that authentic materials significantly enhance the learners' ability to connect classroom knowledge with real-world agricultural communication.

Despite the recognized importance of English in agronomy and the growing emphasis on ESP, there remains a persistent mismatch between English language instruction and the students' actual needs. In many higher education contexts, English courses continue to follow a General English curriculum that prioritizes grammar, isolated vocabulary and decontextualized exercises. Jack Richards (2015, pp. 52-55) notes that such traditional approaches fail to develop

communicative competence required in real-life situations. This concern is echoed in recent studies. For instance, Arias-Conteras and Moore (2022, pp. 102-104) report that many agricultural students feel unprepared to use English in professional contexts. On his part, El Ouardi (2021, pp. 7-10) identifies significant gaps between classroom instruction and workplace communication requirements in agricultural engineering programs.

This misalignment can be attributed, in part, to insufficient Needs Analysis and limited integration between language instruction and disciplinary content. Tony Dudley-Evans and Maggie Jo St John (1998, pp. 121-123) emphasize that effective ESP programs must be grounded in a thorough analysis of learners' target situations. Recent empirical studies support this claim. Hajar and Triastuti (2021, pp. 9-12) demonstrate that needs-based ESP materials significantly improve learners' engagement and performance. In the meanwhile, Zhang (2021, pp. 6-9) shows that blended ESP courses can enhance both accountability and learning outcomes when aligned with students' professional needs.

Furthermore, the evolving nature of agriculture is characterized by technological innovation, climate change challenges and global market integration. It demands a more dynamic and context-sensitive approach to language education. Henry Widdowson (2003, pp. 89-92) argues that the language teaching should be closely linked to real contexts of use. In line with this perspective, Pavlenko (2024, pp. 3-6) identifies emerging trends in ESP, including digital learning environments, task-based instruction and interdisciplinary approaches. In the agricultural domain, Dragoescu et al. (2024, pp. 2-4) further highlight the importance of integrating language learning with scientific content to prepare students for real-world professional communication. In addition, Sobirova (2025b, pp. 76-77) underscores the growing role of ESP in enhancing employability and global competitiveness among agricultural graduates.

In light of these considerations, the present study is grounded in the recognition that effective English instruction for agronomy students must be context-driven, needs-based and aligned with professional realities. Addressing the gap between General English teaching and specific linguistic demands of agricultural studies is crucial for improving students' academic performance, employability and capacity to contribute to global agricultural development. By exploring this gap and proposing more targeted instructional approaches, this research seeks to contribute to the ongoing discourse on improving ESP implementation in higher education, particularly within the field of agronomy.

### **Research Problem**

Agronomy students in Beni City demonstrate limited engagement and motivation in English courses, despite acknowledging the importance of English for their future careers. This paradox suggests a disconnection between what is taught and what students actually need and expect from English instruction. The absence of systematic Needs Analysis in syllabus design contributes to

this gap. As a result, agronomy students are predominantly and extrinsically motivated. Grades are their main driver. Their intrinsic motivations remain limited. There is a clear mismatch between exam success and real communicative ability.

### **Research Questions**

*Main Question:* What motivates the first to third-year agronomy students to learn English and how dominant are extrinsic motivations compared to intrinsic ones?

*Secondary Questions :*

1. To what extent does agronomy students' English exam performance reflect their actual use of English and communicative competence outside the classroom?
2. What is the overall level of agronomy students' English language skills and how are these skills related to their motivation and English use outside the school?

### **Research Hypotheses**

*Main Hypothesis:*

Null Hypothesis: There is no significant difference between extrinsic and intrinsic motivation among agronomy students learning; grades are not their primary motivation.

Alternative Hypothesis: Agronomy students are significantly more extrinsically motivated than they are intrinsically motivated to learn English, with earning grades as their primary motivation, while intrinsic motivations such as communication, professional use and cultural openness remain limited.

*Secondary Hypotheses :*

1. Secondary Hypothesis 1

Null Hypothesis: There is no significant relationship between English exam performance and students' actual communication competence; exam success accurately reflects real-life English use.

Alternative Hypothesis: There is a significant misalignment between English exam performance and actual communicative competence, with many agronomy students succeeding in English exams despite limited English use outside the academic settings.

2. Secondary Hypothesis 2

Null Hypothesis: Intrinsic motivation and exposure to English outside the classroom have no significant relationship with agronomy students' English language skills namely reading, speaking, writing, and listening.

Alternative Hypothesis: Low intrinsic motivation and limited English exposure outside the classroom are significantly associated with weak English language skills, particularly in reading

agricultural texts, speaking fluently and writing while listening comprehension remains moderate in classroom contexts.

### Research Objectives

*Main Objective:* To identify the dominant motivations namely extrinsic and intrinsic motivations of the first to third agronomy students in learning English.

*Secondary Objectives :*

1. To examine the relationship between agronomy students' English exam performance and their actual use of English and communicative competence outside the classroom.
2. To assess the overall level of agronomy students' English language skills and explore how these skills relate to students' motivation and English exposure outside the school.

### LITERATURE REVIEW

Hutchinson and Waters (1989, p. 19) argue that ESP is defined as an approach to language teaching in which all decisions as to content and method are based on learners' reasons for learning. It means that Needs Analysis is foundational to ESP design and practice because it identifies why learners need English and what language features are essential. In her comprehensive work on ESP course development, Basturkmen (2010, p. 137) explicitly states that: '*Needs Analysis has long been argued to be the cornerstone of ESP...*' illustrating the central role of Needs Analysis in defining ESP course content and structure. On his part, Brown (2016) wrote about Needs Analysis in ESP. He presented Needs Analysis as so central that without it, ESP cannot exist effectively, which parallels the idea of it being foundational to the field.

Early ESP scholars emphasized that language courses should be designed around learners' reasons for learning rather than predefined linguistic content. Hutchinson and Waters (1987, pp. 55-56) describe '*necessities... what the learner has to know in order to function effectively in the target situation*' and stress that ESP course design is grounded in what the learner needs to do rather than on predetermined linguistic content. Dudley-Evans and St John (1998) argue that Needs Analysis is interrelated with course design, materials, teaching/learning, assessment/evaluation, highlighting that course design must respond to learners' situational and subjective needs. Finally, Munby 1978, pp. 1-2) emphasizes specifying course content-based directly on learners' communication needs, i.e. their reasons and purposes for learning rather than on preselected linguistic criteria.

Later frameworks introduced the concept of felt needs, referring to learners' own perceptions and expectations. This is the case of Berwick (1989, pp. 48-62). He explicitly distinguishes felt needs from perceived needs in the context of language programme planning, describing felt needs as the learners' own expressed needs : '*...he distinguishes between the 'felt' needs of the learner and the 'perceived' needs of the authority...*', where felt needs refer to what learners themselves

express as their needs in contrast to externally defined needs. Next, Nunan (1988, pp. 42-53) discusses the importance of including learners' own expressed needs in syllabus or curriculum design, recognizing that learners' perceptions, what they feel they need, should inform course decisions alongside external or expert judgements. Finally, Brindley (1989, pp. 63-78) identifies different dimensions of needs and acknowledges subjective and learner-related aspects of Needs Analysis, which are close in meaning to felt needs as learners' expectations, wants and cognitive-affective needs that should be considered in curriculum design. Therefore, research consistently demonstrates that when learners' felt needs are ignored, motivation becomes extrinsic and superficial. In contrast, needs-based instruction enhances relevance, engagement and learning outcomes.

Students in agricultural and scientific ESP contexts reveal recurring learner needs, including reading research articles, writing reports, presenting findings and communicating with international professionals. For instance, Chatsungnoen (2015) investigated the English language skills needed in academic and occupational contexts in the area of food science and technology...Reading and translation were the most needed skills in their academic context, whereas speaking and listening were considered the most needed skills in the occupational context. Next, El Ouardi and El Fatihi (2021, p. 7) said that Moroccan agricultural engineering students reported difficulties with productive skills mainly speaking and writing. This indicates that they need to develop these skills for their studies and future occupations. Finally, Nduwimana and Louis (2021, pp. 105-116) confirmed that students need English language for their studies while reading scientific texts and searching on the internet. Students also displayed strong preference for speaking skill and group activities. However, many programs continue to prioritize grammar-based instruction, leading to dissatisfaction and limited language transferability.

Therefore, the present study builds on Needs Analysis Theory by empirically examining agronomy students' expectations and linking unmet needs to motivational outcomes. The literature consistently positions Needs Analysis as the foundation of English for Specific Purposes, emphasizing that ESP course design should be guided by learners' reasons for learning and the communicative tasks they perform in academic and professional contexts. Early and later ESP scholars alike highlight the importance of moving beyond predefined linguistic content toward needs-based instruction that integrates objective, situational and felt needs.

Empirical studies in agricultural and scientific ESP contexts further demonstrate recurring learner demands, particularly in reading research literature, writing reports, presenting findings and communicating with international professionals. Despite this evidence, many ESP programmes continue to prioritize grammar-based instruction, resulting in limited relevance, reduced learner engagement and weak transferability of skills.

The present study builds on the theoretical and empirical foundation above. It examines agronomy students' expectations. It also investigates how unmet needs shape motivational outcomes, with the aim of informing more responsive and effective ESP course design.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN**

### **Research Design**

The study employed a descriptive Needs Analysis design, integrating quantitative and qualitative methods. Hutchinson and Waters (1987, pp. 53-65), Dudley-Evans and St John (1998, pp. 121-125) and Long (2005, pp. 19-26) declare that when descriptive Needs Analysis integrates quantitative and qualitative methods, it yields a holistic and empirically grounded understanding of learners' needs, capturing both the scope of language demands and learners' contextualized experiences. This design was chosen to capture both measurable trends and in-depth learner perspectives.

### **Sampling**

The sample consisted of agronomy students from the first to third academic years in higher education institutions in Beni City. It is exhaustive. Nworgu (1991, p. 71) specifies that the sampling frame must be an exhaustive list of all elements in the population to ensure that every member has an equal opportunity for selection. The elements making up this sample are those that are actually investigated. They stood at 412 respondents among which 409 received, completed successfully and handed in back the questionnaire under the control of the Chiefs of sections and Deans of faculties.

### **Methods**

The present study used structured questionnaires. They were employed, as Hutchinson and Waters (1987, pp. 53-65), Dudley-Evans and St John (1998, pp. 121-125) and Long (2005, pp. 19-26) maintain, to systematically capture agronomy students' English language needs and expectations across all three academic years, allowing comparable, empirical data on the scope and relative importance of academic and professional language requirements.

### **Techniques of Data Collection**

The present study used questionnaires focusing on students' perceived reasons for learning English in agronomy, their motivation to speak English in relation to exam results, preferred skills and target language use situations. Such questionnaires are widely recommended by scholars in Applied Linguistics and Second Language research, including Dörnyei and Taguchi (2009, pp. 1-10), Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2018, pp. 471-505) and Zhang (2022, pp. 1-5). These scholars maintain that properly designed questionnaires can serve as an effective data-collection technique to investigate learners' attitudes, motivations, skill preferences and language-use contexts.

## Techniques of Data Analysis

Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics. These data were computed to provide an overview of participants' responses across the key study variables. Researchers calculated frequencies and percentages to identify general trends. This technique applied to questions evaluating the proportions of respondents regarding their reasons for learning English, frequency of speaking English outside the school, succeeding English exams, estimated time spent speaking English outside the classroom and different contexts in which they use the English language.

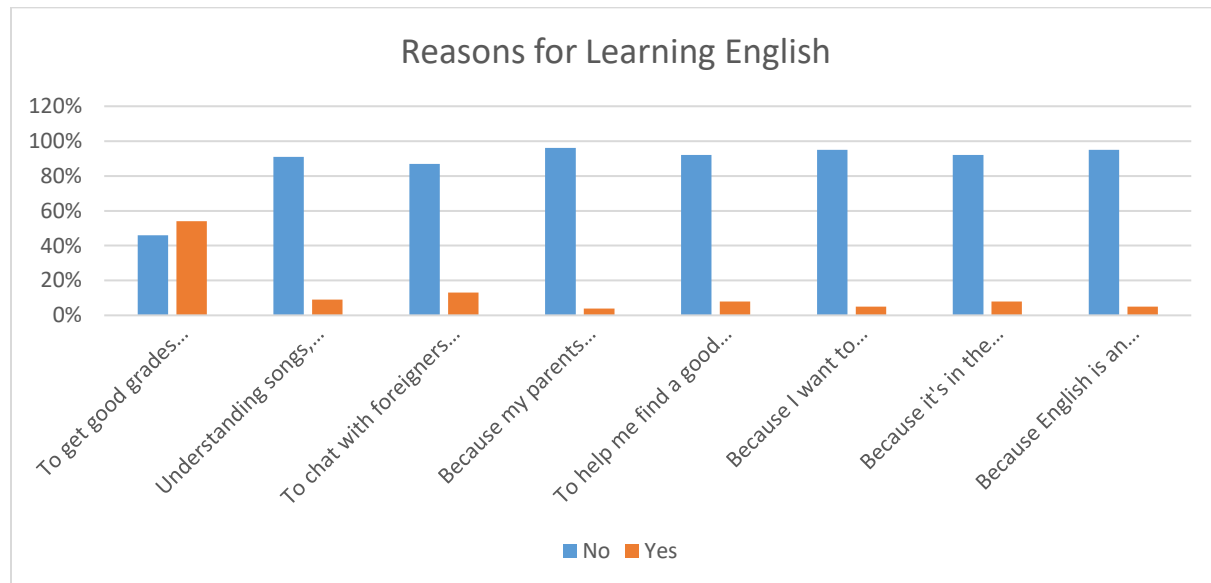
## DATA PRESENTATION

This section presents answers of agronomy students who are primarily motivated to learn English for grades. They are characterized by limited engagement in social, professional or cultural contexts and most rarely speak English outside the school. Their English proficiency is low to moderate, with the greatest difficulties in productive skills, speaking ( $M = 3.44$ ) and writing ( $M = 2.79$ ), while receptive skills, particularly listening ( $M = 3.00$ ), are slightly stronger. These findings highlight a gap between exam-driven learning and practical language use, underscoring the need for ESP instruction that integrates communicative, task-based activities with agronomy-specific content.

### 1. Questions about 1st to 3rd year agronomy students' motivations in learning English

Out of 409 respondents, 54% confirmed to learn English to earn grades. Very few students learn English for understanding media (9%), socializing (13%), traveling (5%), future jobs (8%) or openness to foreign cultures (13%). Only 4% reported learning English because their parents want them to do so. Finally, 8% mentioned learning English because it is in the school curriculum. The bar chart 1 below gives more light on the discussed situation above.

Bar chart 1: 1st to 3rd agronomy students' motivations in learning English

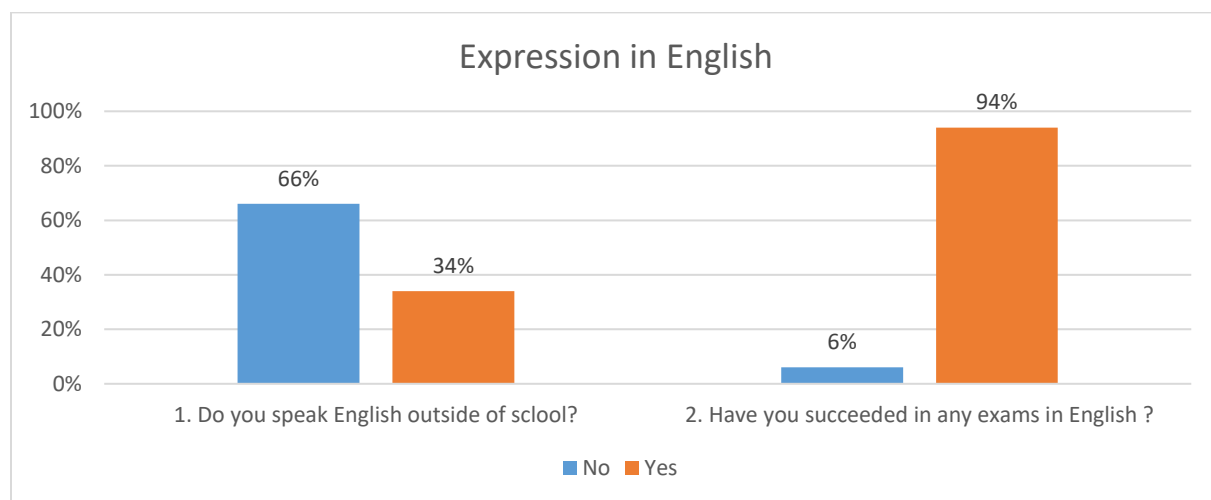


Source : Primary data 2024

2. Questions evaluating whether respondents' English expression matches their exam performance

Out of the sample size of 409 respondents, 270 students (66%) do not speak English outside the school and 34% speak English outside the school. Next, 26 students (6%) did not succeed in the English exams. Yet, 383 students (94%) reported to have succeeded English exams. The bar chart 2 below shows the situation clearly.

Bar chart 2: English expression matching English exam results

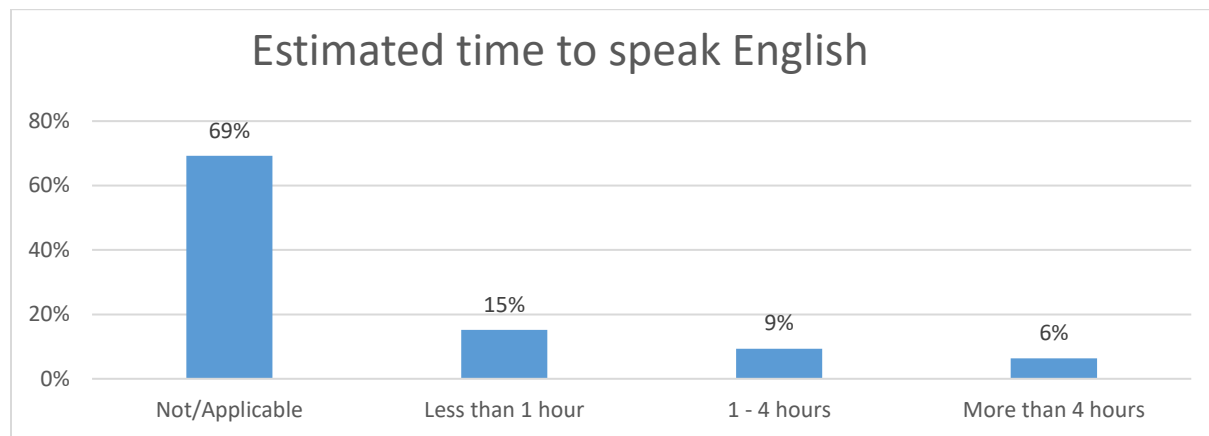


Source : Primary data 2024

### 3. Question about 1st to 3rd year agronomy students' estimation of English speaking outside of school

Out of the total sample of 409 respondents, 283 respondents (69.2%) could not estimate their English speaking time. They rarely speak English outside the school. While 62 respondents (15.2%) speak English out of the school for less than 1 hour per week, 38 respondents do it between 1 and 4 hours per week and 26 respondents (6.4%) speak it more than 4 hours per week. The bar chart 3 below highlights this situation clearly.

Bar chart 3: 1st, 2nd and 3rd year agronomy students' estimated time to speak English outside of school



Source : Primary data 2024

### 4. Question about 1st to 3rd year agronomy students' reading skills for agricultural English texts

The study used a Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5 (1 = never, 2 = rarely, 3 = sometimes, 4 = often and 5 = very often) to measure students' reading skills in agricultural texts. It revealed that the first to third year agronomy students rarely read agricultural texts quickly to understand the general idea (MS = 2.64, SD = 1.262). They sometimes read agricultural texts slowly to understand every detail (MS = 3.20; SD = 1.151). They rarely understand the main points if agricultural texts (MS = 2.71, SD = 1.120) and rarely guess the meaning of unfamiliar words (MS = 2.50, SD = 1.170). The agronomy students' reading skills have the total mean score of 0.889. These data are presented clearly in the table 1 below.

**Table 1: The first to third year agronomy students' reading skills for agricultural English texts**

	Mean Score	Standard Dev	Verbal Interpretation
Do you read agricultural texts quickly to understand the general idea?	2.64	1.262	Rarely
Do you read agricultural texts slowly to understand every detail?	3.20	1.151	Sometimes
Do you understand the main points of English agricultural texts?	2.71	1.120	Rarely
Can you guess the meaning of unfamiliar agricultural words?	2.50	1.170	Rarely
Overall reading skills for agricultural texts	2.89	.889	Rarely

Source : Primary data 2024

#### 5. Questions about 1st, 2nd and 3rd year agronomy students' speaking skills

Using a 1-5 Likert scale (1 = never, 2 = rarely, 3 = sometimes, 4 = often, 5 = very often), students reported that they rarely speak English during class (MS = 2.71, SD = 1.100). They sometimes fear making mistakes when speaking (MS = 3.39, SD = 1.299) and have at the same level difficulty of speaking with other people (MS = 3.42, SD = 1.171) as well as pronouncing words (MS = 3.61, SD = 1.024). The students' speaking skills have a total mean score of 3.44 and a standard deviation of .715. This information is shown in the table 2 below.

**Table 2: The first to third year agronomy students' speaking skills**

	Mean Score	Standard Dev	Verbal Interpretation
Do you speak English during class?	2.71	1.100	Rarely
Are you afraid of making mistakes when speaking?	3.39	1.299	Sometimes
Do you have difficulty speaking with other people?	3.42	1.171	Sometimes
Do you have pronunciation difficulties?	3.61	1.024	Sometimes
Overall speaking skills	3.44	.715	Sometimes

Source : Primary data 2024

#### 6. Questions about students' English writing performance and frequency of using correct elements namely word order, vocabulary, paragraph organization and expressing ideas clearly

The data reflects students' responses to how frequently they apply essential writing skills in English on a five-point scale: 1 = never, 2 = rarely, 3 = sometimes, 4 = often and 5 = very often.

The first, second and third agronomy students' answers prove that they struggle moderately with sentence structure (Rarely,  $MS = 2.70/SD = 1.202$ ). They have limited vocabulary (Rarely,  $MS = 2.62/SD = 1.039$ ). Students have significant challenges in structuring logical paragraphs (Rarely,  $MS = 2.57/SD = 1.151$ ) and find it difficult to express their thoughts clearly and coherently in English (Rarely,  $MS = 2.68/SD = 1.120$ ). The overall writing score (Rarely,  $MS = 2.79/SD = .898$ ) indicate rare application of correct writing skills. The table 3 below illustrates the information above.

**Table 3: The first to third year agronomy students' English writing performance and frequency of using correct writing elements**

	Mean Score	Standard Deviation	Verbal Interpretation
Do you use the correct word order when writing in English?	2.70	1.202	Rarely
Do you use the appropriate vocabulary?	2.62	1.039	Rarely
Do you organize your paragraphs correctly?	2.57	1.151	Rarely
Do you express your ideas correctly?	2.68	1.120	Rarely
Overall writing mean score using correct writing elements	2.79	.898	Rarely

Source : Primary data 2024

7. Questions about 1st, 2nd and 3rd year agronomy students' perceptions of how often they understand English in different listening contexts

The data show that students' perceptions of how often they understand English in different learning contexts. Responses were measured on five-point scale ranging from 1 (never) to 5 (very often). Higher scores indicate greater frequency of understanding/listening comprehension. They highly understand the message even though comprehension of messages from videos ( $MS = 2.64$ ,  $SD = 1.221$ ) is low. Comprehension sometimes occurs when the teacher speaks in English ( $MS = 3.18$ ,  $SD = 1.112$ ) and at a similar level when classmates speak in English ( $MS = 3.14$ ,  $SD = 1.213$ ). Students' English understanding in different listening contexts has a mean score of 3.00 and a standard deviation of 0.917. The table 4 below illustrates the declarations above.

Table 4: The first, second and third year agronomy students' perceptions of how often they understand English in different listening contexts.

	<b>Mean Score</b>	<b>Standard Deviation</b>	<b>Verbal Interpretation</b>
The class CD (videos)?	2.64	1.221	Rarely
When the teacher speaks in English?	3.18	1.112	Sometimes
When your classmates speak in English?	3.14	1.213	Sometimes
Overall understanding skills in different contexts	3.00	.917	Sometimes

Source : Primary data 2024

### DATA ANALYSIS

The analysis of the first, second and third agronomy students' motivations in learning technical English shows a predominantly extrinsic, performance-based motivation. In this context, success is primarily measured by marks rather than practical use or personal interest. This fact suggests that students do not strongly connect English learning to personal interest, real-life communication, or long-term benefits. Even family pressure is not a major factor. Few students recognize mandatory school instruction as a primary motivation. This pattern is possibly due to lack of engagement in English learning process in a country where French is the medium of instruction and English is learnt only as a school subject.

The analysis of answers concerning questions evaluating whether respondents' English expression matches their English exam performance results in showing that the majority of students (66%) rarely or never practise English outside the classroom. This indicates limited exposure to real-life or authentic English communication. Only the minority (34%) use English in daily life. These evidences suggest low integration of English in social or informal contexts. In addition, the analysis uncovers the fact that a high pass rate (94%) shows that students perform well academically. They demonstrate comprehension and mastery of English concepts tested in exams. The 6% who did not pass are a small minority. It implies an overall adequate academic proficiency in English to the detriment of English language use.

Therefore, there is discrepancy between academic success and practical English use. Students succeed in exams but do not frequently use English outside the school. Consequently, their fluency, oral skills and real-world communication competence remain limited.

The analysis of the amount of time the first to third year agronomy students spend speaking English outside the academic setting reveals a striking imbalance in language use. A substantial majority of the respondents (69.2%) reported that they either rarely or never engage in English communication beyond the classroom. This great proportion suggests that students have very

limited exposure to authentic language practice in real-life contexts, which is widely recognized as a crucial factor in developing communicative competence.

In contrast, only little proportion of the students (6.4%) indicated that they use English extensively outside the school. This small percent highlights a significant gap between formal instruction and actual language use, implying that only a few students benefit from sustained practice that could reinforce their linguistic skills.

Briefly, these findings point to a lack of regular engagement with English in informal environments, which may hinder the development of fluency, confidence and functional language proficiency. The results therefore underscore the need for pedagogical interventions that encourage increased use of English beyond the classroom, such as task-based activities, exposure to English media and opportunities for authentic communication.

The analysis of 1st-3rd year agronomy students' reading strategies shows that the mean score of 2.64 for reading quickly for the general idea means that the students rarely to sometimes use skimming strategies. This low mean suggests that most students struggle to read agricultural texts quickly. It indicates weak global comprehension skills of technical texts. The high SD (1.262) reveals large variation among students' answers. Some students regularly use skimming strategies and others almost never do so.

The highest mean score of 3.20 among the items related to reading slowly to understand every detail indicates that students sometimes to often read slowly and carefully understand every detail. It suggests a stronger preference for intensive reading. This may be so because students lack confidence in faster reading strategies and vocabulary knowledge. The SD (1.151) still shows some variation in students' skill of using intensive reading, but the skill is generally stronger.

Students are only at the 'sometimes' level for understanding the main points of agricultural texts (Mean score = 2.71). This means that general comprehension of agricultural English remains challenging. The SD (1.120) indicates moderate variation among students.

Guessing meaning of unfamiliar agricultural words (Mean score = 2.50) is the lowest individual skill. Students infer word meaning from contexts 'rarely to sometimes'. This weak score shows limited vocabulary knowledge, poor ability to use context clues and heavy reliance on dictionaries and teacher explanations. The SD (1.170) shows varied ability across the group of students hardly guessing of unfamiliar words.

The overall reading strategies mean score of 2.89 is just below 3. This means that students' reading skills are moderate but not strong. They are somewhere between 'rarely' and 'sometimes' confident. There is significant room for improvement in reading strategies and vocabulary. The SD (.889) is lower than individual items, meaning that the group is more consistent at the global level than in specific sub-skills. In simple words, participants generally demonstrated this skill rarely to sometimes, with moderate variability across responses.

The mean score for speaking rate was 3.44 (SD = 0.715) indicating that, on average, participants fall between ‘sometimes’ and often in demonstrating the target level of speaking fluently. It suggests a moderate degree of fluency among the respondents, where students are able to produce spoken English with a certain level of regularity, though not yet at a consistently high or fully automatic level. In other words, while fluency is present, it remains uneven and still developing.

The relatively low standard deviation (0.715) further indicates that responses are closely clustered around the mean, reflecting a notable level of homogeneity among participants. This consistency suggests that the observed speaking rate is not limited to a small subgroup of students but it is instead characteristic of the majority.

Taken together, these results point to a shared immediate level of speaking fluently across the sample. However, the fact that the mean does not reach the higher end of the scale implies that students may still experience occasional hesitation, pauses or difficulty maintaining a steady flow of speech. This highlights the need for targeted instructional strategies aimed at strengthening automaticity and increasing opportunities for sustained oral practice, both within and beyond the classroom.

The analysis of writing uncovers that all mean values range between 2.57 and 2.79. This falls in the ‘rarely’ category. It indicates that most of the students do not frequently apply correct writing conventions when composing English texts. The correct word order (2.70) proves that students struggle moderately with sentence structure. This disability is possibly due to interference either from their first language or from limited grammar mastery. The appropriate vocabulary (2.62) means that limited vocabulary affects clarity and precision, expressing an acute need for more vocabulary enrichment activities. The paragraph organization (2.57) has the lowest score; suggesting that students have significant challenges in structuring logical paragraphs with topic sentences and supporting ideas. Expressing ideas correctly in the written form (2.68) shows that students sometimes find it difficult to express their thoughts clearly and coherently in English. The overall writing mean (2.79) is slightly higher than individual scores. Yet, it still indicates rare application of correct writing skills. Finally, the SD values range from 0.898 to 1.202, revealing moderate variation in responses. It means that some students perform slightly better, but the overall trend remains weak writing performance.

The analysis of listening in different contexts unveils the highest, moderate, lowest comprehension contexts, overall listening comprehension and variability. Students more often understand the lecturer slightly than their classmates when he speaks English (3.18). Classmates speaking in English (3.14) is slightly lower than teacher comprehension. This evidence indicates that peers’ English is slightly harder to cope with. The class CD/videos score of 2.64 shows that students report more difficulty understanding audio-visual materials. The overall listening comprehension mean of 3.00 reflects that students sometimes understand English in listening

situations. It reveals a moderate overall listening skill. That is to say, the participants only occasionally exhibit strong listening and understanding abilities. Finally, the standard deviations are relatively high for individual contexts (1.112-1.221). It shows a considerable variability in students' experiences. The overall SD is lower (0.917), suggesting that the average listening ability is more consistent when aggregated. Then, there are differences within the group. This fact indicates that while some demonstrate higher comprehension, others struggle to consistently follow or interpret spoken input. This finding suggests a need for differentiated listening practice or institutional emphasis.

## **FINDINGS**

The findings indicate that agronomy students' motivation to learn technical English is predominantly extrinsic and performance-based, with the emphasis placed on examination results rather than practical application or personal interest. English learning is weakly associated with real-life communication and neither family influence nor compulsory instruction constitutes a strong motivational factor.

Despite a high academic pass rate (94%), most students rarely or never use English outside the classroom, revealing a marked discrepancy between academic achievement and practical language use. Speaking and listening skills are moderate but inconsistent, with comprehension varying across contexts and greater difficulty reported with audio-visual materials. Writing skills are generally weak across all assessed areas, particularly paragraph organization, vocabulary use and clarity of expression.

Overall, the results suggest that limited exposure to authentic English use constrains the development of communicative competence, despite adequate academic proficiency.

## **DATA DISCUSSION**

The extrinsic motivation namely grades earning predominates the mind of the first to third agronomy students in Beni higher education. This encourages short-term academic performance. Yet, it is less effective for developing communicative competence, fluency and lifelong learning habits. In addition, the low intrinsic and instrumental motivations such as social interaction, media comprehension, travel and career prospects suggest that they are not fully aware of the utility of English. Or else, teachers do not give students opportunities to connect classroom learning with real-life use. Finally, for having low motivation for personal or social reasons, students lack a minimal self-initiated practice outside the school. Even if students achieve good grades, they may struggle with oral fluency, listening comprehension or real-life English use. Teachers need to incorporate authentic tasks, media, social interaction and future-oriented goals to make learning more meaningfully.

The first to third agronomy students do not practise English orally outside the school because they lack English-speaking environment and social pressure. Then, they develop a limited interest

in English courses. They focus on exam-oriented learning rather than practical use. Despite high exam success, students lack confidence or opportunities to speak English outside the academic settings. Surely, classroom learning alone is insufficient for developing communicative competence. Therefore, for authentic English learning engagement, lecturers need to encourage extracurricular activities in English, such as conversation clubs, debates or online peer discussions. They are expected to integrate real-life communication tasks into curriculum notably presentations, role-plays or project-related learning. Then, they provide students with opportunities for listening and speaking practice through media such as podcasts, videos or English-language apps.

The vast majority (69.2%) of the first to third year agronomy students rarely or never uses English outside the school. As a result, they lack opportunities or confidence to use English in everyday conversations. Yet, this is essential for developing fluency and communicative competence. The small fraction (6.4%) that uses it extensively may benefit from increased fluency and interest in English due to frequent exposure to the spoken English.

The discussion about agricultural texts reading suggests that students rely on slow, detail-oriented reading, weak faster reading strategies and agricultural texts main points' comprehension. The highest score (3.20) shows they feel more comfortable reading slowly. It indicates limited vocabulary, difficulty to recognize agricultural terms quickly, lack of exposure to technical English texts and fear of missing important information. The score of 2.64 reveals difficulties in quickly identifying main ideas, structure and overall message. This fact slows reading efficiency. It affects exam performance or field-related tasks where quick reading is important. Even when students read intensively, understanding remains moderate (2.71), reflecting complex vocabulary, long technical sentences and cultural unfamiliarity with some concepts. The lowest score (2.50) on guessing word meanings shows poor mastery of context clues. Yet, it is essential for professional in agriculture since agricultural texts often contain scientific terms, Latin-based names and technical procedures. This evidence makes comprehension more difficult when there is explicit teaching of technical vocabulary and its practical usage.

The mean score of 2.89 shows that most students fluctuate between 'rarely' and 'sometimes'. This means that consistent reading habits are low. The moderate standard deviation (0.889) indicates that while some participants have reasonable reading fluency, others lag behind. This points to uneven development in that skill area, thus highlighting the need for targeted reading interventions or instructional support.

The debate about speaking centers on a mean score of 3.44 for speaking rate. It suggests that the research participants concerned generally exhibit moderate fluency, falling between 'sometimes' and 'often', indicating a considerable level of comfort with speech pace among students. The relatively low standard deviation (SD = 0.715) highlights consistency in the responses. It suggests that most participants have comparable speaking rates. This may imply that

while fluency is not fully mastered, it is not a major area of concern for the majority of students. There is a way to think that speaking difficulty could be due to limited practice opportunities, anxiety or lack of confidence in oral communication and insufficient interaction in English outside the classrooms. Writing and spelling challenges may result from limited exposure to correct forms, lack of regular feedback and difficulty of applying grammar and vocabulary knowledge in practice. Listening appears easier possibly, because students are exposed to English input through class exercises. Grammar rules are learnt in a more structured and predicable way, which may make them appear easier to students as well. It goes, *mutatis mutandis*, that lecturers need to use educational strategies that increase interactive speaking activities, use dictation and spelling games to improve accuracy and integrate vocabulary and grammar practice within writing and speaking tasks.

The English writing proficiency among students is low: They disclose limited control of fundamental writing skills such as grammar, vocabulary and structural knowledge of the language. The rare use of correct word order and appropriate vocabulary indicates that students may focus more on content than on accuracy. Or else, they lack consistent writing practice. The weak paragraph organization suggests limited training in academic writing conventions and lack of exposure to well-structured English texts. The rare ability to express ideas clearly implies both linguistic and cognitive challenges; students may understand the agronomic ideas conceptually but struggle to translate it into coherent English sentences. The overall writing mean of 2.79 supports the idea that while students attempt writing tasks, their English language control is insufficient for effective academic or technical writing. The variability in scores ( $SD = 0.898$ ) indicates that while some participants may possess stronger writing proficiency, a substantial proportion of them did not. This reflects uneven development in writing competency within the group.

The discussion about listening and understanding English in different contexts turns around skill development insight, recommendations and some implication. Students' overall listening comprehension is moderate. It indicates a need for more focused listening practice. Using CD/videos need to consider pre-listening activities, subtitles or guided comprehension questions. The teacher should encourage more student-student dialogues. He is expected to guide students during the dialogues performance to boost confidence. He is also advised to expose students to a variety of accents, speeds and topics to improve real-world listening skills. This implies that listening comprehension is context-dependent: Structured input from teachers is easiest, while multimedia input is most challenging. Therefore, instruction should scaffold listening activities from the lecturer-led to peer-to-peer and finally autonomous multimedia comprehension.

In short, the study shows that agronomy students are primarily driven by extrinsic, exam-oriented motivation, which supports academic success but limits communicative competence and long-term language development. Limited intrinsic and instrumental motivation, combined with scarce opportunities to use English outside the classroom constrains fluency, confidence and real-

life language use. Although, listening and grammar benefit from structured instruction, writing and oral communication remain weak due to insufficient practice and authentic exposure.

To address these gaps, English instruction should move beyond exam preparation and incorporate authentic communicative tasks, such as presentations, role-plays and project-based learning. Lecturers are encouraged to promote extracurricular English activities, integrate media-based input and create interactive learning environments that connect classroom instruction with real-world language use.

### **Overall Check**

The analysis of the collected data demonstrates that the research questions, hypotheses and objectives of this study have been effectively achieved.

Regarding the main research questions, the findings clearly show that agronomy students are predominantly extrinsically motivated, with more than half of the respondents (54%) learning English primarily to earn grades. The intrinsic motivations such as communication, professional use and cultural openness remain limited. This evidence directly confirms the main hypothesis and fulfills the main objective of identifying students' dominant motivations.

Concerning the first secondary question, the results reveal a significant misalignment between exam performance and actual communicative competence. Although a very large majority of students (94%) succeeds in English exams, most of them (66%-69%) rarely or never use English outside the classroom. This result strongly validates the corresponding hypothesis and meets the objective of examining the relationship between exam success and real-life language use.

With respect to the secondary question, the findings indicate that students' overall English proficiency remains low to moderate, with notable weaknesses in productive skills such as speaking ( $M = 3.44$ ) and especially writing ( $M = 2.79$ ), while receptive skills like listening ( $M = 3.00$ ) are comparatively stronger. These results, combined with limited English exposure outside the school and low intrinsic motivation, confirm the hypothesized relationship between motivation, language use and skill development, thereby achieving the final objective.

In short, the study provides consistent empirical evidence that exam-oriented learning, low intrinsic motivation and limited real-world language exposure are key factors underlying students' insufficient communicative competence. Thus, it justifies the need for more communicative and needs-based ESP approach in agronomy.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### Conclusion

This Needs Analysis study demonstrates a clear misalignment between current English instruction and the academic and professional needs of agronomy students in Beni City. Although students achieve high pass rates in English examinations, their motivation is predominantly extrinsic and exam-oriented. Students' actual use of English outside the classroom remains limited. The findings reveal significant weaknesses with authentic academic and professional language tasks such as reading scientific texts, writing reports and communicating in field or international contexts. Shortly, the persistence of General English and grammar-focused instruction fails to foster communicative competence, intrinsic motivation or transferable language skills required for agronomic studies and future careers. Therefore, Needs Analysis emerges as an essential tool for aligning English courses with learners' real-world goals.

### Recommendations

Based on these findings, it is recommended that higher education institutions in Beni City replace General English courses with needs-based English for Specific Purposes (ESP) syllabuses tailored to agronomy provided in this study. English instruction should prioritize academic and professional tasks, including reading research literature, writing scientific reports, oral presentations and field-based communication. Lecturers should integrate authentic, learner-centered activities such as project-based learning, role-plays, case studies and the use of agricultural media and audio-visual materials and do regular Needs Analysis to avoid the principle 'one-fits-all syllabuses'. They should also strengthen collaboration between language teachers and agronomy specialists.

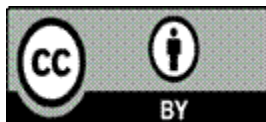
Additionally, institutions should promote extracurricular English opportunities; such as conversation clubs, seminars and online exchanges to increase exposure and intrinsic motivation and institutionalize Needs Analysis in syllabus development. Finally, assessment practices should move beyond grammar and exams to include performance-based evaluation that reflects students' real communicative competence and professional language use. It means that English courses for agronomy programs should adopt ESP principles. Then, future studies should evaluate the impact of needs-based syllabuses through longitudinal research.

## REFERENCES

- Arias-Contreras, Carolina Fabiola and Moore, Paul J. (2022). 'The role of English language in the field of agriculture: A needs analysis', *English for Specific Purposes*, 65, pp. 95–106.
- Basturkmen, H. (2010). *Developing Courses in English for Specific Purposes*. Palgrave Macmillan.

- Berwick, R. (1989). 'Needs Assessment in Language Programming: From Theory to Practice'. In R.K. Johnson (ed.) *The Second Language Curriculum*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 48–62.
- Brindley, G. (1989). 'The Role of Needs Analysis in Adult ESL Programme Design'. In R.K. Johnson (ed.) *The Second Language Curriculum*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 63–78.
- Brown, J.D. (2016). *Introducing Needs Analysis and English for Specific Purposes*. Abingdon: Routledge
- Cohen, L., Manion, L. & Morrison, K. (2018). *Research Methods in Education*. (8th ed.) Abingdon: Routledge.
- Crystal, David (2003). *English as a Global Language*. (2nd ed.) Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Dörnyei, Z. & Taguchi, T. (2009). *Questionnaires in Second Language Research: Construction, Administration, and Processing*. New York: Routledge.
- Dragoescu, Alina et al. (2024). 'ESP Teaching/Learning Strategies Applied to English for the Life Sciences', *Research Journal of Agricultural Science*, 56(1), pp. 1–6.
- Dudley-Evans, T. and St John, M.J. (1998). *Developments in English for specific purposes: A multi-disciplinary approach*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 121–125.
- El Ouardi (2021). 'ESP Needs Analysis of Agricultural Engineering Students', *International Arab Journal of English for Specific Purposes*, 4(1), pp. 1–15.
- Hajar, Ibnu and Triastuti, Anita (2021). 'A Needs Analysis of ESP Materials for Agriculture Students', *Indonesian Journal of English Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics*, 6(1), pp. 1–15.
- Hutchinson, T. and Waters, A. (1987). *English for specific purposes: A learning-centred approach*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 53–65.
- Hyland, K. (2006). *English for Academic Purposes*. Routledge.
- Hyland, K. (2016). *Teaching and Researching Writing*. (3rd ed.) London: Routledge.
- Hyland, K. (2022). 'English for Specific Purposes: What is it and where is it taking us?', *ESP Today*, 10(2), pp. 202–220.
- Long, M.H. (2005). *Second Language Needs Analysis*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 19–26
- Munby, J. (1978). *Communicative Syllabus Design*. Cambridge University Press.

- Nation, I. S. P. (2013). *Learning Vocabulary in another Language*. (2nd ed.) Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Nunan, D. (1988). *The Learner-Centred Curriculum: A Study in Second Language Teaching*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Pavlenko, O. (2024). 'Teaching English for Specific Purposes: Exploring Emerging Trends', *European Science*, 28, pp. 1–10.
- Richards, Jack C. (2015). *Key Issues in Language Teaching*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Sobirova, Mukhlisa (2025). 'Linguodidactic Features of Authentic Materials in Agricultural English for Specific Purposes', *American Journal of Language, Literacy and Learning in STEM Education*, 3(9), pp. 168–171.
- Sobirova, Mukhlisa (2025). 'The importance of ESP in Teaching English to Students of the Agricultural Sector', *International Journal of Science and Technology*, 2(4), pp. 76–78
- Tomlinson, Brian (2013). *Developing Materials for Language Teaching*. (2nd ed.) London: Bloomsbury.
- Widdowson, Henry G. (2003). *Defining Issues in English Language Teaching*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Zhang, Rui (2021). 'Blended course evaluation in the context of English for Specific Purposes: Accountability and development', *SAGE Open*, pp. 1–12.
- Zhang, Y., (2022). A Systematic Review of the Validity of Questionnaires in Second Language Research. *Education Sciences*, 12(10), pp.1- 5



2026 by the Authors. This Article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>)