

**AN ANALYSIS OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE SKILLS NEEDS AND PROBLEMS AMONG THE
HOTEL AND RESTAURANT MANAGEMENT PRACTICUM STUDENTS IN BATANGAS PROVINCE.
BASIS FOR AN ESP CURRICULUM DESIGN**

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ABSTRACT

Batangas Province is known as one of the most popular tourist destinations in the Philippines. It is home to many beaches, diving spots and varied tourist attractions. This makes Batangas a haven for hotels, restaurant, and tour services as it is frequently visited by local and foreign entities. This also makes the demand for higher quality of hotel services and staff adept in using the English language. Thus, Higher education institutions find ways to address this clamor is for competitive and communicatively competent graduates. This research investigated and analyzed the English language skills needs, problems and on how well their present academic curricula address them. The skills measured were on listening, speaking, reading, writing, grammar and vocabulary. A total of 99 Hotel and Restaurant Management college students who are presently undergoing their practicum in different hotels in Batangas Province. It was found out that the language skills needs are very high and the problems encountered by the students are moderate and the schools highly address these needs. However, the schools still need to realign their curriculum as they do not precisely address the highly needed skills and problems.

Keywords: Curriculum design, Communicative competence, English skills, Needs Analysis

INTRODUCTION

Communication is the basic attribute of human life and language is the main tool of human communication. Initially, this communication was within societies and communities at local level but it took a new dimension as people from various societies, communities and nations started interacting with each other.

Presently, English is the language of international economic system. It is a language which has secured a place for itself alongside local languages in multilingual communities and is also learnt by all classes of the society. Its acquisition can guarantee the availability of opportunities to employment, travelling, higher education, and even better life. Most of these people live in countries where English is required for external purposes: to communicate and do business with people in other countries, and to catch up with the advances in the field of business. In addition, English is used as a means to transfer thoughts and cultures and to create good relationships between people in different countries. As a result, English has become an international language and is widely used as a medium for understanding and exchanging ideas among people all over the world.

Nowadays, the role of English is important for tourism industry as a means to communicate, negotiate, and execute transactions with tourists by tourism employees. It is an ample indication that English is being used as a lingua franca in all spheres of international activity and it can be claimed that, internationally English has developed a 'special role that is recognized in every country. Regarding all this fact, it can be seen mandatory for students of numerous fields of study to learn English. It can help them to easily communicate with other peoples around the world, having

access to the new-developed scientific knowledge of other countries and, as a result, having a better practical life.

Since tourism industry is one of the fastest-growing businesses in the Philippines, it plays an important role in the Philippine economy. Furthermore, Filipinos who are graduates of Hotel Management and tourism courses are in-demand abroad because of their natural hospitality and superb caring ways. In the focal setting of the study, Batangas Province is known as one of the most popular tourist destinations near Metro Manila. It is home to the famous Taal Volcano, one of the Decade Volcanoes, and Taal Heritage town, a small picturesque town that has ancestral houses and structures dating back to the 19th century. The province also has many excellent beaches and diving spots including Anilao in Mabini, Sombrero Island in Tingloy, Ligo Island in Bauan, Matabungkay in Lian, Punta Fuego in Nasugbu, serene beaches in Calatagan and Laiya in San Juan.

Furthermore, Batangas City has the second largest international seaport in the Philippines after Metro Manila. The identification of the city as an industrial growth center in the region and being the focal point of the CALABARZON program resulted to the increasing number of business establishments in the city's Central Business District (CBD) as well as numerous industries operating at the province's industrial park. This makes Batangas a haven for hotels, restaurant, and tour services as it is frequently visited by local and foreign entities. Such visits also make Batangas' economy growing.

The Problem

Many education institutions in the Batangas province, both government and private offer undergraduate level hotel and restaurant management courses in which embedded is the study of English related to tourism business for students who intend to work in tourism or hospitality industry after graduation.

These English courses are involved with the language which is associated with host-guest interaction in the service business, termed as the language of hospitality is often formal, though it very much depends on the level of acquaintance among the participants themselves.

In line with this, the demand for further development of the services is getting higher. The reason behind is its great potential as an industry in generating income and creating jobs. Part of the clamor is for the graduates Hotel and Restaurant Management and Tourism students to achieve fluency, accuracy, and communicative communication ability. People who work in the international tourism and service industry have the opportunity to use the target language on a daily basis. That said, the fossilization of incorrect forms must be avoided. Naturally, professional, polite, service language must be mastered and maintained.

It is generally accepted that English is regarded as a foreign language in the country especially in Batangas where people uses deeply seated Tagalog and accent. Commonly, Batanguenos study English only at schools to communicate with speakers of the language or read texts using the target language. Batanguenos rarely use English in their daily life. As a result, they face problems when communicating with foreigners who speak English.

Similarly, the HRM and tourism students in the province face a major problem when they are in contact with foreign tourists. Their usual problems are using inappropriate words and expressions in speaking, being unable to understand foreign accents, having inadequate vocabulary in reading, and lacking grammar knowledge in writing. This may be explained that not all tourist employees can speak English fluently. Some may use English like a native speaker while others may be able to use a little English or cannot communicate with the language at all. Therefore, it is possible that the tourism employees cannot comprehend and listen to a variety of English accents accurately, choose the appropriate words and expressions, use correct grammar when they speak, read and write about tourism.

This reality supports Prachanant (2012) who indicated that the problems of English language skill included: listening skill speaking fast and speaking with a different accent by native and nonnative English speakers, speaking skill vocabulary shortage, reading skill having a shortage of vocabulary words including technical words, and writing skill poor grammar usage. Added to this are the different individual characteristics or personality that also contributes to language problems.

Clearly, the learning of other subjects is quite different from language learning. The risk of losing language skills is quite high and individuals inside and outside of schools must make great effort continue to improve. In a professional setting, such as in the international tourism and service industry, this is essential.

Although these tourism students are trained to use English in real situations using the syllabus written by the experts of this field, a formal need analysis to help determine the requirements of the English course for tourism employees has barely been conducted. English has so far been taught without systematical survey of needs. There still many institutions who maintain the instruction of general English as an academic subject rather than focusing on the purpose of teaching the language.

It result to the core dilemmas where English teachers find themselves in a situation where they are expected to produce a course that exactly matches the needs of a group of learners, but are expected to do so with no, or very limited, preparation time. In the real world, many English instructors and English for Specific Purposes developers are not provided with ample time for needs analysis, materials research and materials development. Therefore, the syllabus is not based on the real needs of tourism employees as it should be. It seems inevitable to carry out a formal needs analysis tourism employee in using English across the country and abroad.

Rationale

This study, therefore, attempted to analyze the English language needs and problems faced by HRM and Tourism students in selected higher education institutions in Batangas. The findings of this study will then serve as a guideline to develop or expand the existing English for HRM and Tourism courses at the higher education Institutions across Batangas in order to develop more effective English for HRM course in the future. Furthermore, identifying the needs and appropriate teaching materials for tourism students will produce satisfied customers as well as plenty of professional fulfillments in the future for those committed to doing a good job. Keeping this in view, it is felt that English courses offered at collegiate institutions should target on skills related to job needs and job functions to ensure that the learners are well equipped with the required skills in order for them to perform at the workplaces. This where this study is posited.

Methodology

The study utilized the Descriptive Survey research method for this study because it aims to describe an existing phenomenon and its associations or relationships between things. Descriptive studies, in which the researcher interacts with the participant, may involve surveys or interviews to collect the necessary information. The present study aimed to know what are the present needs and problems of the HRM student regarding their English skill as well as the relevance of the present curriculum with the aforesaid variables- thus the Descriptive form of research.

Participants

The participants of this study comprised Ninety-nine (99) Fourth Year Hotel and Restaurant Management students from 3 prominent schools in Batangas. They are selected as respondents since they have firsthand knowledge of the language requirements in different hotels and restaurants. Another reason was that they have already taken their basic English subjects. This

qualification ensured that the participants understand the nature of the topics being asked in the questionnaire.

Instrumentation

A survey questionnaire was used as the main data-gathering instrument for this study. Some contents of the questionnaire were adapted from *Thawatchai Tangniam's study entitled An Analysis of English Language Needs for Thai Airways Ground Staff*. Other parts of the questionnaire were made using relevant literature as basis.

The questionnaire is divided into four main sections: the profile of the HRM learners; their present needs and problems with regards to the English skills of listening, Speaking, Reading, Writing, Grammar and Vocabulary. The last part is the question as to whether these language skills needs and problems are addressed by their present English language curriculum.

The questions were structured using both completion type and in the Likert format. In this survey type, five choices are provided for several statements in line with the English skills needs being measured. The choices represent the level each respondent has on the given statements. The sample scale below was used to interpret the total responses of all the respondents for every survey question by computing the weighted mean:

Symbol	Range	Interpretation
5	4.20 – 5.00	Very High
4	3.40 – 4.19	High
3	2.60- 3.39	Moderate
2	1.80 – 2.59	Low
1	1.00-1.79	Very Low

The Likert survey will be the selected questionnaire type as this will enable the respondents to answer the survey easily. In addition, this research instrument will allow the research to carry out the quantitative approach effectively with the use of statistics for data interpretation.

To ensure the validity of the questionnaire, the draft version constructed by the researcher was modified and revised based on the suggestion of the two English instructors and one statistics expert. After that, a pilot study was carried out to test the effectiveness and to improve the language appropriateness of the questionnaire. The 15 subjects of the pilot study were requested to fill out the questionnaire, to give their comments on the content and wording, and to give suggestions on items that should be added or excluded.

The Problem

Below are the research questions answered in this study.

1. What is the profile of the HRM Practicum student respondents in terms of:
 - 1.1. gender,
 - 1.2. language spoken,
 - 1.3. personal factors affecting English language learning?
2. How do the HRM practicum students assess their level of English skills needs?
3. What is the students' level of assessment on the encountered problems regarding their English skills?
4. To what level do the present school curriculum addresses the needs and problems encountered by the HRM Practicum students?

5. Is there a relationship between the respondents profile and their assessment of problems.

Results and Discussions

1. Profile of the Respondents

Table 1. Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	39	39.4
Female	60	60.6
Total	99	100

It is shown in Table 1 that most of the respondents (60.6%) were female and 39.4% were male.

Table 2. Language Spoken

Language Spoken	Frequency	Percentage
English	2	2.0
Tagalog	28	28.3
Both	69	68.7
Total	99	100

Table 3 indicates that majority of the respondents (68.7%) speaks both English and Tagalog, 28.3% of them speaks Tagalog while 2.0% speaks English

2. Level of Needs, Problems and Problem Addressed by the Present Curriculum

Table 2.1
The Level of Needs, Problems, and Problem Addressed in the Present Curriculum in Terms of Listening Skill

Listening Skill	Level of Need				Level of Problem				Level of Problem Addressed in the Present Curriculum Rank			
	Mean	SD	Rank	Interpretation	Mean	SD	Rank	Interpretation	Mean	SD	Rank	Interpretation
Listening to and understanding what customers want	4.43	.85	2	Very High	3.04	1.17	3	Moderate	3.60	1.08	2	High
Listening to customers complaints	4.47	.85	1	Very High	3.05	1.13	2	Moderate	3.58	1.09	3	High
Listening to customers satisfaction	4.36	1.03	3	Very High	2.98	1.25	5	Moderate	3.64	1.18	1	High
Listening to personal details and information	4.23	1.07	4	Very High	2.86	1.12	6	Moderate	3.52	1.15	4.5	High
Listening to conversations by phone	4.03	1.16	6	High	3.01	2.22	4	Moderate	3.52	1.18	4.5	High
Listening to foreign accents	4.10	1.01	5	High	3.08	1.15	1	Moderate	3.42	1.08	6	High
Total	4.27	.81		Very High	3.00	.96		Moderate	3.54	.98		High

Legend:4.21 - 5.00 *Very High*3.41 - 4.20 *High*2.61 - 3.40 *Moderate*1.81 - 2.60 *Low*1.00 - 1.80 *Very Low*

N=99

Tables 2.1 to 2.6 contains the respondents assessments of their level of need, problems and how these problems are addressed by the present curriculum.

Table 2.1 shows HRM respondents the four most significant listening activities that the respondent deemed very highly needed to be learned. These were on listening to customers complaints (means score 4.47), listening to and understanding what customers want (means score 4.43), listening to customers satisfaction ((means score 4.36) and listening to personal details and information (means score 4.23).

The composite mean of 4.27 showed that listening skill are very highly needed skills which one must learn to be an effective HRM employee.

In continuation, all the respondents indicated that they find moderate (mean score 3.00) difficulty with regards to their problems in listening. However, they find listening to foreign accents (mean score 3.08) and listening to customer complaints (mean score 3.05) to be the hardest to deal with.

When asked if the present curriculum addressed their present listening problems, they indicated that the curriculum highly responds to their problems as indicated in the mean score of 3.54. Moreover, they assessed that the present curriculum taught them most on listening to customers satisfaction (mean score 3.64) and listening to and understanding what customers want (mean score 3.60).

The above needs assessment showed how important listening skills are in the hotel and restaurant industry. For most of the positions in this industry, general human interactions are essential for guest service experience. In a service industry, clear, engaging, persuasive communication is vital, yet the ability to write well is becoming a rare talent. Staff should make eye contact, initiate conversation, exude confidence and approachability and must have great listening skills. There is an emotional intelligence that developed by really listening to people, feeling their pain, and removing their ego from the equation with an open willingness to help them solve their problem.

Table 2.2
The Level of Needs, Problems, and Problem Addressed in the Present Curriculum in Terms of Speaking Skill

Speaking Skill	Level of Need				Level of Problem				Level of Problem Addressed in the Present Curriculum Rank			
	Mean	SD	Rank	Interpretation	Mean	SD	Rank	Interpretation	Mean	SD	Rank	Interpretation
Answering interviews by future employers	4.24	1.05	5	Very High	3.08	1.08	2	Moderate	3.57	1.25	8	High
Welcoming and greeting	4.24	1.11	5	Very High	2.93	1.36	7	Moderate	3.48	1.15	16	High
Inquiring about customers' needs and Decisions	4.22	1.07	8	Very High	2.98	1.28	4	Moderate	3.49	1.16	15	High
Making polite requests	4.52	3.08	1	Very High	2.82	1.40	16	Moderate	3.64	1.19	5	High
Providing and explaining about room details and facilities	4.21	.97	9	Very High	2.79	1.20	12	Moderate	3.65	1.13	4	High
Offering assistance	4.18	1.06	10	High	2.82	1.29	16	Moderate	3.51	1.19	14	High
Giving customer directions	4.23	1.09	7	Very High	2.96	1.33	5	Moderate	3.44	1.21	17	High
Refusing politely	4.07	1.09	15	High	2.92	1.49	8.5	Moderate	3.87	3.93	1	High

Suggesting travel information (eg restaurants, traditions, tourist attractions transportation etc.	4.26	1.02	3	Very High	2.99	1.19	3	Moderate	3.56	1.11	9	High
Conducting conversations by phone	4.10	1.04	14	High	3.23	3.24	1	Moderate	3.59	1.21	6.5	High
Apologizing when mistakes occur	4.24	1.25	5	Very High	2.82	1.34	16	Moderate	3.53	1.16	11	High
Explaining the reason for mistakes	4.35	1.03	2	Very High	2.92	1.28	8.5	Moderate	3.52	1.10	12.5	High
Negotiating for mutual understanding	4.10	1.07	17	High	2.85	1.20	13	Moderate	3.55	1.15	10	High
Clarifying questions and confirming messages	4.16	1.06	11	High	2.95	1.42	6	Moderate	3.86	4.13	2	High
Pronouncing English consonant and vowel sounds	4.14	1.03	12	High	2.88	1.10	10	Moderate	3.59	1.10	6.5	High
Speaking with appropriate word stress	4.05	1.04	16	High	2.87	1.17	11	Moderate	3.66	1.09	3	High
Speaking politely according to grammar rules and social etiquette	4.13	1.14	13	High	2.84	1.19	14	Moderate	3.52	1.03	12.5	High
Total	4.20	.88		Very High	2.92	1.05		Moderate	3.52			High

Legend: N=99 4.21 - 5.00 Very High, 3.41 - 4.20 High, 2.61 - 3.40 Moderate, 1.81 - 2.60 Low, 1.00 - 1.80 Very low

According to table 2.2, the respondents found it very highly needed (composite mean score 4.20) to develop their speaking skills. Specifically, they needed to be trained more on making polite requests (mean score 4.52), explaining the reason for mistakes (mean score 4.35) and suggesting travel information (e.g. restaurants, traditions, tourist attractions transportation etc. (mean score 4.26).

At the same time, the respondents attested that find moderate problem or difficulty (composite mean score 2.92) on all aspects of speaking but they attested that conducting conversations by phone (mean score 3.24) answering interviews of future employees (mean score 3.08) and suggesting travel information (e.g. restaurants, traditions, tourist attractions transportation etc. (mean score 2.99) proved to be most difficult.

One common problem identified with this result is that these activities are highly interactional and would require the respondents to speak and respond immediately. However, this proves to be a problem given the language barriers which are any differences in language like slang, jargon, translations, dialects, or semantics. Since the hotels have different background of guests which sometimes they use their own style of language. Linguistic and cultural differences can be the barrier of communication. It creates the problem for receiver to complete or understand the language used by the transmitter.

As to whether these problems are addressed by the present curriculum, the respondents rated it at a high level (composite mean score 3.52). Primarily addressed were the activities on refusing politely (3.87), clarifying questions and confirming messages (mean score 3.86) and on speaking with appropriate word stress (mean score 3.66).

Table 2.3
The Level of Needs, Problems, and Problem Addressed in the Present Curriculum in Terms of Reading Skill

Reading Skill	Level of Need				Level of Problem				Level of Problem Addressed in the Present Curriculum Rank			
	Mean	SD	Rank	Interpretation	Mean	SD	Rank	Interpretation	Mean	SD	Rank	Interpretation
Reading customers travel documents	4.14	.95	1	High	2.95	1.06	3	Moderate	3.38	1.16	3.5	Moderate

Reading business letters and faxes	4.07	.94	2	High	3.01	.99	2	Moderate	3.38	1.18	3.5	Moderate
Reading information from the internet	4.05	1.01	4.5	High	2.87	1.08	4	Moderate	3.40	1.16	2	Moderate
Reading E-mail	4.02	1.00	6	High	2.81	1.14	5	Moderate	3.82	4.25	1	High
Reading brochures and tourism magazines and journal	4.05	1.06	4.5	High	2.73	1.10	7	Moderate	3.26	1.23	7	Moderate
Reading minutes of meeting	4.06	1.10	3	High	3.19	3.22	1	Moderate	3.27	1.25	6	Moderate
Reading news and official information issued by the company	4.00	1.15	7	High	2.79	1.15	6	Moderate	3.36	1.21	5	Moderate
Total	4.05	.89		High	2.91	1.06		Moderate	3.41	1.25		High

Legend:

N=99

4.21 - 5.00 Very High

3.41 - 4.20 High

2.61 - 3.40 Moderate

1.81 - 2.60 Low

1.00 - 1.80 Very Low

As presented in in Table 2.3, the respondents attested that they highly need to develop their Reading skills as reflected in the composite mean of 4.05. Separately, they emphasized the need on reading customers travel documents (mean score 4.14) and on reading business letters and faxes(mean score 4.07).

The respondents find these two as highly needed because aside from they are the primary situations which they should attend to, these oftentimes are also the common cause of delay for successful check-ins. There are a lot of processes here and practices vary from each hotels. Examples of these are checking for passports or IDs, reservations, refunds if any, check-in times, itineraries, contact details and scans of key travel documents and a whole lot more that it really requires the front office staff to be keen on reviewing these documents.

As for the problems encountered, the respondents acknowledged that they are moderately affected by the problems in reading skills as highlighted in the composite mean of 2.91. They emphasized the problem in reading minutes of meetings (mean score 3.22) and reading business letters and faxes (3.01). These are probably due to minimal exposure to these activities because as practicum students, they are barely allowed to handle documents like these yet because of the confidentiality and technical nature in handling the aforesaid documents.

Furthermore, they assessed that these present problems are highly addressed by the present curriculum but the concentration however was more on reading e-mails (mean score 3.82) and reading information from the internet (mean score 3.22) which doesn't seem to address their present problems encountered. While these two are very important reading skills for hotel and restaurant staff, they must learn more other fields in the job which requires their reading skills.

Table 2.4
The Level of Needs, Problems, and Problem Addressed in the Present Curriculum in Terms of Writing Skill

Writing Skill	Level of Need				Level of Problem				Level of Problem Addressed in the Present Curriculum Rank			
	Mean	SD	Rank	Interpretation	Mean	SD	Rank	Interpretation	Mean	SD	Rank	Interpretation
Writing application letters	4.11	1.02	3	High	2.92	1.14	2	Moderate	3.65	1.24	1	High
Writing business letters in appropriate formats	4.18	.97	2	High	2.88	1.13	3	Moderate	3.62	1.18	2	High

Writing daily reports	3.96	.97	6	High	2.73	1.13	6	Moderate	3.45	1.18	3	High
Writing messages for customers	3.89	1.11	7	High	3.09	3.23	1	Moderate	3.34	1.13	6	Moderate
Taking note of telephone messages	4.06	.98	4	High	2.74	1.16	5	Moderate	3.37	1.23	5	Moderate
Writing memos	4.64	5.20	1	Very High	2.78	1.11	4	Moderate	3.43	1.21	4	High
Writing appropriate e-mails for customers	4.01	1.05	5	High	2.64	1.04	7	Moderate	3.31	1.27	7	Moderate
Total	4.12	1.21		High	2.82	1.10		Moderate	3.45	1.07		High

Legend:

N=99

4.21 - 5.00 Very High

3.41 - 4.20 High

2.61 - 3.40 Moderate

1.81 - 2.60 Low

1.00 - 1.80 Very Low

Table 2.4 shows that among the HRM respondents the two most significant writing activities that the respondent deemed highly needed to be learned were on writing memos (mean score 4.64) and writing business letters in appropriate formats (mean score 4.18). The composite mean of 4.12 showed that writing is a highly needed skill which one must learn to be an effective hotel employee.

In continuation, all the respondents indicated that they find moderate (mean score 3.45) difficulty with regards to their problems in writing. However, they find writing messages for customers (mean score 3.09) and writing application letters (mean score 2.92) to be the hardest to deal with.

When asked if the present curriculum addressed their present listening problems, they indicated that the curriculum highly responds to their problems as indicated in the mean score of 3.45. Moreover, they assessed that the present curriculum taught them most writing application letters (mean score 3.64) and writing business letters in appropriate formats (mean score 3.62).

The reason behind these is that Business Correspondence as a subject is considered to be part of their English 2 subject and thus being given only a short amount of time to be learned.

Table 2.5

The Level of Needs, Problems, and Problem Addressed in the Present Curriculum in Terms of Grammar Skill

Grammar Skill	Level of Need				Level of Problem				Level of Problem Addressed in the Present Curriculum Rank			
	Mean	SD	Rank	Interpretation	Mean	SD	Rank	Interpretation	Mean	SD	Rank	Interpretation
Knowing and accurately changing the tense (e.g. Present tense, past tense, future tense)	4.15	1.05	1	High	2.93	1.12	1	Moderate	3.75	1.09	1	High
Knowing and using appropriate nouns	4.11	1.10	2	High	2.87	1.21	2	Moderate	3.54	1.26	3.5	High
Knowing and using appropriate articles and prepositions (eg. A, an, the, In, on, at)	4.05	1.13	4	High	2.81	1.11	4	Moderate	3.60	1.22	2	High
Knowing and using proper modal verbs (eg. Can could, should, shall at al)	4.04	1.11	5	High	2.82	1.17	3	Moderate	3.54	1.21	3.5	High
Knowing and using appropriate adjectives and adverbs	4.07	1.10	3	High	2.76	1.08	5	Moderate	3.53	1.30	5	High
Total	4.08	1.00		High	2.84	1.04		Moderate	3.59	1.14		High

Legend:

N=99

4.21 - 5.00 Very High
 3.41 - 4.20 High
 2.61 - 3.40 Moderate
 1.81 - 2.60 Low
 1.00 - 1.80 Very Low

Table 2.5 shows the significant grammar skills which the respondents assessed as highly needed as reflected in the composite mean of 4.08. Emphasis is placed on knowing and accurately changing the tense (e.g. Present tense, past tense, future tense) mean score (4.15) and on Knowing and using appropriate nouns (mean score 4.11).

The reason behind these results is that HRM uses technical terms and activities specific for this field and thus students considered them highly needed to be learned.

Interestingly, the respondents attested that they have moderate problems on their grammar skill as reflected in the composite mean of 2.84. Highlighted as moderate cause of problems is placed on knowing and accurately changing the tense (e.g. Present tense, past tense, future tense) mean score (2.93) and on knowing and using appropriate nouns (mean score 2.87).

The respondents further confirmed that their problems are highly attested in the present curriculum as reflected in the composite mean of 3.59. Importance is given on knowing and accurately changing the tense (mean score 3.75) (e.g. Present tense, past tense, future tense) and on knowing and using appropriate articles and prepositions (eg. A, an, the, In, on, at) (mean score 3.75).

The reason behind is that the generic syllabus includes in it the study of grammar rules as part of its enrichment activities. The learners' ability to speak comprehensibly in the target language is certainly influenced by the knowledge of English vocabulary and the knowledge of the rules which govern words' combination. It is very important to have a luggage of lexis in the learner's linguistic repertoire, but what is more important is to have the capacity to put these words together in a combination that enables the speaker to convey the intended meaning.

Table 2.6
The Level of Needs, Problems, and Problem Addressed in the Present Curriculum in Terms of Vocabulary Skill

Vocabulary Skill	Level of Need				Level of Problem				Level of Problem Addressed in the Present Curriculum Rank			
	Mean	SD	Rank	Interpretation	Mean	SD	Rank	Interpretation	Mean	SD	Rank	Interpretation
Knowing and using vocabulary related to tourism industry	4.81	5.18	1	Very High	3.02	1.13	1	Moderate	3.51	1.20	3	High
Knowing and using vocabulary related to transportation	4.23	.95	2	Very High	3.00	1.18	2	Moderate	3.47	1.15	6	High
Knowing and using vocabulary related to food	4.18	.99	4.5	High	2.92	1.09	6	Moderate	3.52	1.13	2	High
Knowing and using vocabulary related to accommodation	4.18	1.00	4.5	High	2.95	1.17	4	Moderate	3.55	1.14	1	High
Knowing and using vocabulary related to festivals and holidays	4.06	.98	6	High	2.98	1.10	3	Moderate	3.48	1.09	4.5	High
Knowing and using vocabulary related to giving directions	4.14	1.01	3	High	2.93	1.12	5	Moderate	3.48	1.15	4.5	High
Total	4.35	1.62		Very High	2.97	1.04		Moderate	3.50	1.07		High

Legend:

N=99

4.21 - 5.00 Very High

3.41 - 4.20 High
2.61 - 3.40 Moderate
1.81 - 2.60 Low
1.00 - 1.80 Very Low

According to table 2.6, the respondents found it very highly needed (composite mean score 4.35) to develop their vocabulary skills. Specifically, they needed to be trained more on knowing and using vocabulary related to tourism industry (mean score 4.81) and on knowing and using vocabulary related to transportation (mean score 4.23).

In addition, the respondents attested that find moderate problem or difficulty (composite mean score 2.97) on all aspects of speaking but they attested that knowing and using vocabulary related to tourism industry (mean score 3.02) and on knowing and using vocabulary related to transportation (mean score 3.00) proved to be most difficult.

As to whether these problems are addressed by the present curriculum, the respondents rated it at a high level (composite mean score 3.50). Primarily addressed were the activities on Knowing and using vocabulary related to accommodation (3.55), Knowing and using vocabulary related to food (mean score 3.55). These findings could probably be attributed to the fact that majority of the hands on activities implemented in schools were on food and beverage handling, cuisine and that of hotel room accommodation and management. Fewer activities were concentrated on travel and transportation.

The problem with language learning not only boils down to the linguistic nature of the target language but more so on the psychological aspect of language learning which is considered to be a personal problem on the part of the respondents. They attested that they are moderately affected by the personal problem of language learning as reflected in the composite mean of 2.92. Specifically, their common problem is on the interference from the mother tongue (Tagalog) particularly in pronunciation syntax and idiomatic usage (3.03) and on lack of opportunity to use English in the daily life (2.96).

These problems can be readily observed during the event of language transfer from their native language to the target language. The complication in transfer is that the old first language structures interfere with the process of foreign language learning, either helping or inhibiting it. Transfer is the influence resulting from similarities and differences between the target language and any other language that has been previously (and perhaps imperfectly) acquired. If structures in the second language are similar to those of the first language, then learning will take place easily; however, if 50 structures are realized differently in the first and the second language, then learning will be difficult.

As reflected on the table, the respondents have difficulty on the structural factors of language transfer. Structural factors leading to both types of transfer include those similarities and differences which occur at the level of the formal structure/ the linguistic system of the two languages. As observed, when there are many similarities between L1 and L2, positive transfer occurs and when there are fewer similarities, negative transfer occurs.

The limited events of language contact or usage prove to be an enormous factor in the respondents' language learning. There is limited exposure to the target language thus leading to scarcity of target language practice. Concerning the influence of social context, the English language learner would learn better if he is brought to the context of the English.

However, there other factors to be considered in language learning which include the psychological aspects. Among these are the respondents anxieties which is a serious problem facing students in using the foreign language. Many researchers have shown that anxiety in the foreign language classroom is a real communication barrier, and any student who has experienced this has

poor class participation or even refusing to speak in front of audience in the classroom. Shyness and fear of making mistakes where at a certain level, where even good achievers and can express their ideas in the target language, they may feel themselves linguistically inferior and ashamed to talk. This is because of the fear of making mistakes in front of their employers and colleagues. These students prefer not to speak at all and remain silent despite their interests (Segueni, 2005).

Lack of Interest is also a problem where sometimes, individuals do not like to speak because of many reasons. One of these reasons may be that the teacher does not present the lesson well, or the lesson is very difficult to be grasped. The role of the teacher here is to facilitate the tasks for his/her students and to help them to overcome feelings of insecurity and lack of interest. The teacher can reach that by creating a positive atmosphere in the classroom and telling students that we learn from our mistakes. Littlewood (1981) says in this domain: "this atmosphere depends to a large extent on the existence of personal relationships which do not create inhibition, but are supportive and accepting."

Lastly, the respondents assessed that these personal problems on language learning are also moderately addressed (composite mean 3.38) in the curriculum. Highly addressed among the problems are on Interference from the mother tongue (Tagalog) particularly in pronunciation, syntax and idiomatic usage (mean score 3.56) and on unchallenging English subjects (mean score 3.42). These are reflected through the use of English all throughout the different subjects taught and the different language programs implemented.

Table 2.7
Relationship between Personal Problems and English Language Skills

	Listening	Speaking	Reading	Writing	grammar	vocabulary
Correlation Coefficient	.470**	.629**	.604**	.683**	.727**	.760**
Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000

Reccomendations

1. The HRM Department. They need to realign their curriculum based on the priority needs of the students using the findings of this study as basis. To do this, a curriculum review together with the dean, HRM and English teachers must sit together and discuss priority skills needed to be developed and include it in their curriculum revision. Principles of constructivism and cooperative learning are the best models to follow when they decided to revise their curriculum.
2. The HRM Students. Their language learning are affected by social, cultural and individual factors which can only be addressed by improving initiative, motivation and desire to learn English. Having this, they must really help themselves by participating actively in discussions and activities which requires the use of English.
3. The Higher Education Institutions. They should continue finding best practices that would improve the English skills of the students. They may use the findings of this study as basis or may push for more research-based curricular modification in order to maintain excellence in their craft as producers of quality graduates.
4. Future Researchers. The study revealed that personal problems significantly affect the language skills of the students. They may conduct further studies using socio-cultural context, sociolinguistic and strategic competencies as variables for language learning in order to understand further the personal factors affecting the students language learning

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