1/ Definition of needs analysis:

ESP courses set out to teach the language and communication skills that specific groups of language learners need or will need to function effectively in their disciplines of study, professions or workplaces. Because ESP focuses on teaching specific language and communication skills, ESP course design usually includes a stage in which the course developers identify what specific language and skills the group of language learners will need. The identification of language and skills is used in determining and refining the content for the ESP course. It can also be used to assess learners and learning at the end of the course. This process is termed « needs analysis »

2/Types of needs :

We can make a distinction between **target needs** (i.e. what the learner needs to do in the target situation) and **learning needs** (i.e. what the learner needs to do in order to learn)

Target needs:

Target needs involve the identification of *necessities, lacks* and *wants*

A/Necessities:

Necessities are the type of need determined by the demands of the target situation; that is , what the learner has to know in order to function effectively in the target situation (where language is going to be used). For example, a businessman or woman might need to understand business letters, to communicate effectively at sales conferences, to get the necessary information from sales catalogues and so on. he or she will presumably also need to know the linguistic features_ discoursal, functional, structural, lexical which are commonly used in the situations identified.

The following example of this procedure is adapted from Munby (1978), and it shows the necessities for a learner who works as a head waiter in a hotel:

Communication activities	Related micro_ function	Language forms
Attending to customers' arrival	Intention Prohibit Direct	I will bring the menu I am afraid we are full/ closed Please, follow me/ will you sit

		here please.
Attending to customers' order	Suggestive Advise	May I suggest the ……………? May I recommend the …………..?

B/ lacks :

Lacks refer to what the learners do not know or cannot do in English. According to Jordan 1(997), lacks are defined as the gap between the existing language proficiency of the learners and the one required at the end of the language course.

C/ Wants:

As discussed before, what distinguishes ESP from general English is an awareness of need, awareness is a matter of perception, and perception may vary according to one's standpoint. Learners may well have a clear idea of the necessities of the target situation: they will certainly have a view as to their lacks. But it is quite possible that the learners' views will conflict with the perceptions of other interested parties; course designers, sponsors, teachers. The example below illustrates this:

Karl Jensen is a German engineer who has a frequent and important need to read texts in English. He also needs to talk to overseas colleagues occasionally, for example, at the annual planning conference. The company he works for is a multi-national company and the operating language for communication outside national boundaries is English, although the majority of workers are non native speakers. By any quantitative analysis Karl Jensen's need is for reading, because it is a much more frequent activity for him. But he feels a far stronger need to spend his time in the English class improving his oral competence. Why? The answer lies in the way in which he identifies his own personality with the use of a foreign language. He reads in private and at his own speed: he can use a dictionary, if he wants. But when he is speaking, his pride is on the line: his English competence (or lack of it, as he sees it) is exposed for all to see and he is under pressure to participate at a speed determined by the discourse. Therefore, Karl Jensen sees his greatest need as being the improvement of his oral proficiency.

This example clearly explains the importance of investigating the wants of learners to avoid conflicts between teachers' perceptions and learners' perceptions toward their needs ; in this example, one may think that the most important skill that needs to be developed is reading, since it is the most frequent activity that Karl Jensen is supposed to perform at work. However, Karl considers developing his speaking skill as more important than reading even though speaking is not a frequent activity in his profession. His perception is quite different from that of the course designer and it reflects his own personality because for him his inability to speak fluently in speaking events may hurt his pride, so he prioritizes the development of speaking over reading.

So wants are described as **'Subjective Needs'** which are related to learners' motivation, readiness and attitudes to what they want to learn.

Learning needs:

Learning needs show how **the students will be able to move from the starting point (lacks) to the final destination (Necessities).** Hutchinson and Waters (1987) claim that it is naive to base a course design simply on the target objectives, and that the learning situation must also be taken into account. They added that the target situation alone is not reliable indicator, and that the conditions of the learning situation, the learners' knowledge, skills, strategies, motivation for learning, the setting and the time load are of prime importance.

Once the learners' needs are identified, the ESP course designer can move on to the following step that is, syllabus design. As maintained by Munby (1978) who says: " syllabus specification in ESP can only take place after the prior and necessary work has been done on needs."