Tasks for the Transition: A Needs Analysis to Determine Bangladeshi High-school Students' English Needs at University

Todd McKay

Instructor, Department of Educational Services, St. George's University, Grenada, West Indies

Abstract

In Bangladesh, high school students have trouble doing English tasks when they enter university due to their high school's medium of instruction and their need for both English *and* academic skills. One way to prepare students for university is to develop programs around tasks they will do at university. This study documents three phases of a needs analysis to design a summer English program for students at Notre Dame College (NDC) in Bangladesh. The three phases identified where students would need English when they graduate, tasks they would need to do, and situations in which they would do those tasks. In Phase 1, teacher interviews and student questionnaires revealed where students would need English. In Phase 2, to get a sense of situations and tasks in which students would need English, I interviewed teachers, spoke with students, and observed classes at four universities. In Phase 3, to understand how relevant situations, tasks, and media were to more students, questionnaires were given to 240 students across universities. Results were situations, tasks, and commonly-used media for developing the NDC curriculum.

Keywords: needs analysis, MOI, task-based language teaching

Introduction

In Bangladesh, many high school students have trouble doing English tasks at university. Although English is mandatory through high school, students have difficulty giving presentations, writing essays, and emailing their professors in English. Several factors make it hard for high school students when they enter university, where English is prevalent. First, the medium of instruction (MOI) varies from one high school to the next; some are Bangla-medium institutions that follow the National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB) curriculum, whereas others are English-medium institutions that follow different curricula (Hamid, Jahan, & Islam, 2013). Second, students need English skills to perform certain tasks successfully and *academic* skills too (Khan & Ivy, 2015).

One way to prepare students for English and academic challenges is to design programs around university-level English tasks. This study reports on the first three phases of a needs analysis (Long, 2005) that was carried out from 2014-2016 to design a summer English program for students at Notre Dame College (NDC) in Dhaka, Bangladesh. The needs analysis was carried out to determine which tasks at university were done in English; those tasks would then form the basis for the NDC summer English program's curriculum. Short-term English programs designed around university-level English tasks can prepare high school students, regardless of their high school's MOI (Murtaza, 2016), for both the English and academic challenges at university.

Background literature

Task-based language teaching

This study falls within task-based language teaching (TBLT). Specifically, since the purpose of this needs analysis is to identify *real* university English tasks to create the curriculum for the NDC

summer program, I adopt a strong form of TBLT (see Long, 2015). In this section, I define "task" and "TBLT," discuss the role of experiential learning in TBLT, and then review the core components of TBLT; "needs analysis" is one of TBLT's core components.

"Task" and "TBLT" have different definitions. I adopt Long's (1985) definition of "tasks," as "the hundred and one things people *do* in everyday life, at work, at play, and in between. 'Tasks' are the things people will tell you they do if you ask them and they are not applied linguists" (p. 81). Almost anything can be a task, such as completing a form or using a supermarket's self-checkout lane, as long as it is part of learners' everyday lives. "TBLT" is an approach to language education where those everyday tasks are at the heart of a program (Long, 1985; Norris, 2009). In other words, in a TBLT program, tasks are at the heart of class activities, the curriculum, goals and objectives, teaching and learning materials, and assessment.

Experiential learning is a key feature of TBLT. In an experiential approach to language education (Dewey, 1933), the experience of *doing* a task helps students learn both the task and the language they need to carry it out. The task and the language are linked; because they are linked, the NDC summer program can prepare Bangladeshi high school students to complete university English tasks by *doing* those tasks with students. By doing those tasks, students will also acquire the language they need to carry them out. Experiential learning is a cornerstone of TBLT programs.

A strong TBLT program has several core components. Components include needs analysis, task selection and sequencing, materials and instructional development, teaching, assessment, and program evaluation (Davis & McKay, 2018; Norris, 2009). When each of these components is based on tasks that are relevant to students' lives, they function together as a whole program that is designed to help them meet their needs and deliver a learning experience for them (Norris, 2016). When any one of these components is missing, the capacity of the program to help students meet their needs is diminished.

The needs analysis is the most crucial component in a strong TBLT program. If a needs analysis is not carried out to identify tasks that students need to do with language, then there is less glue to keep the program together to help students meet their needs. Needs analysis involves using different data-collection methods and different sources to triangulate those tasks that are most relevant to learners' lives (Long, 2005). After a needs analysis, educators have a set of real-world tasks to design, develop, or update their programs.

Needs analysis

Needs analysis is the most relevant program component for this study. A needs analysis can be carried out to analyze different types of needs, using different data-collection methods and information sources to find out what those needs are. In the context of TBLT, the most appropriate type of needs analysis is a *task-based* needs analysis (Long, 2005). Here, I describe different types of needs analyses. I then discuss task-based needs analysis and needs analyses done in Bangladesh.

Needs analyses can be done to identify different types of needs. In language programs, there is usually a direct relationship between type of need and a program's curriculum design. A type of need might include communicative functions for a program built around the four skills. However,

for a content-based program, the type of need would be the content. The type of the needs analysis depends on aspects of the language program, including stakeholders' beliefs about language learning.

In TBLT, the most appropriate type of needs analysis is a *task-based* one. Task-based needs analysis came about with Long's (2005) "Second Language Needs Analysis." Long discusses the importance of triangulating tasks by using multiple data-collection methods and sources of information to learn what those tasks are. For example, instead of jotting down their own ideas about what first-year undergraduate students at university need English for, EFL teachers might conduct focus groups and interviews with first-year students. Additionally, teachers might administer questionnaires to professors who teach first-year courses. Based on information obtained through the multiple data-collection methods and sources, the teachers have a rich body of evidence about first-year university students' tasks.

In Bangladesh, there are few published needs analyses, and none has been task-based. Two needs analyses done in Bangladesh are worth highlighting. First, English in Action (EIA) conducted a series of baseline studies to gather information they could use to guide their English programming (EIA, 2009). In one of these studies, EIA examined people's motivation for learning English; researchers developed two questionnaires and orally administered them to thousands of teachers and students in primary and secondary schools. Second, the NCTB did a needs analysis to update their national English curriculum (NCTB, 2012). The needs analyses reported in these studies are problematic in two respects. First, it is unclear how questionnaire items were created or where they were taken from. Second, the types of needs being analyzed were communicative functions associated with the four skills. These needs analyses are of limited use for TBLT programs.

Study purpose

The purpose of this study is to document the first three phases of a task-based needs analysis, carried out from 2014-2016, to design a summer English program for students at NDC in Dhaka, Bangladesh. Specifically, phases correspond to three of the phases outlined by Van Avermaet and Gysen (2006) for doing needs analysis (p. 44; see Figure 1). This study documents the following three phases: language-use domains (Phase 1) and language-use situations and tasks (Phase 2–3).
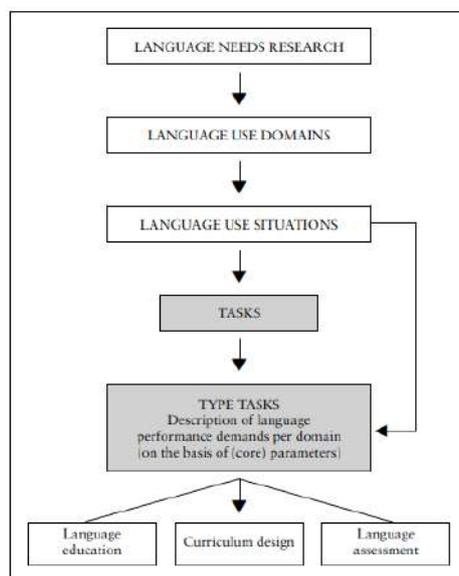
Figure 1: Van Avermaet and Gysen's (2006) outline for a task-based needs analysis

Each of the three phases is distinct. The *language-use domain* is where students need to use language (e.g., the workplace). *Language-use situations* refer to specific situations in a domain for which language will be used (e.g., emailing students and reviewing lecture material with them). *Tasks* and *task types* break language-use situations down further. *Tasks* for reviewing lecture material might include comprehension questions for students, writing legibly on a whiteboard, and giving practical examples to illustrate concepts. *Task types* are sets of similar tasks (see Oxford, 2006).

Phase 1
The purpose of Phase 1 was to identify the domain where NDC students would need to use language. Although I suspected that private and public universities would be the most relevant language-use domain for high school students, additional evidence was needed to support the development of a summer English program around tasks. Therefore, Phase 1 consists of the following two data-collection methods and sources: interviews with NDC teachers and questionnaires given to NDC students.

Methodology

Research questions
Phase 1 was guided by five research questions (RQs). The RQs seek to elicit information about tasks, how frequently tasks are carried out, reasons for which NDC students need English, where students report they will need English in the future, and where students were using English. These five RQs are listed below.

RQ1.   What are the tasks for which NDC students need English?
RQ2.   How frequently are these tasks carried out?

RQ3.   What are the reasons for which NDC students report needing English?

RQ4.   Where do students report needing English in the future?

RQ5.   Where do NDC students use English now?

Data-collection methods

Two data-collection methods were used in Phase 1. Methods were interviews (with teachers) and questionnaires (given to students). Data-collection methods were developed in an iterative way; I used information that I learned from teacher interviews to guide the development of items on the student questionnaire. Each method is discussed below.

The first method was interviews with NDC teachers. I developed an interview protocol and an interview guide to keep interviews on track. The protocol had multiple sections, detailing the purpose of the interview, timing and location, materials and equipment needed, questions, and opening and closing statements. Information from the interview protocol was then built into an interview guide, which I kept on hand during interviews. The interview guide has different columns of questions, with questions in different columns being asked depending on an interviewee's answers to prior questions.

The second method was a questionnaire. Questionnaire items were developed based on information obtained from teachers. The questionnaire had five sections: bio-data, future English use, reasons for English use, current English use, and task and task-frequency identification. The format of items varied by section, consisting of short-answer, Likert-type, and selected-response items.

Data-collection sources

There were two data-collection sources in Phase 1. Sources were Bangladeshi students and teachers at NDC. Interviews with teachers were conducted first, followed by the administration of questionnaires to students in an intact class. More information about teachers and students follows.

Teachers were the first source of information about where students would need to do English tasks. Five English teachers at NDC were interviewed. These teachers had been teaching English for 7-20 years, were skilled English users, and included self-identified male and female teachers. I contacted these five teachers to ask if they would participate in an interview because I knew them; I taught English at NDC for about eight months as a Fulbright English teaching assistant. L1-Bangla teachers of English at NDC were the first source.

The second source about students' task-based needs were NDC students. About 130 students from an intact English class in grade 11 (Arts group) were given the questionnaire. Most students identified as Bangladeshi, but some identified as members of minority groups (e.g., Tripura and Garo). Students were 14-18 years old. Most students lived in Dhaka to attend NDC but were from other parts of the country; at the time of completing the questionnaire, students had lived in Dhaka from six months to eighteen years. Twenty-two students claimed to speak languages other than Bangla.

Procedures

Procedures for conducting interviews and handing out questionnaires can each be broken into two processes. The two processes include preparation and administration processes. Preparation and administration for interviews are discussed first, followed by the preparation and administration of questionnaires to students.

Preparing for the interview with NDC teachers involved multiple steps. First, once the interview protocol and guide were developed for interviews with teachers, I piloted the interview guide by interviewing three English-speaking Bangladeshis. Second, after finalizing the interview guide, several English teachers at NDC were contacted by phone or email to ask if they would participate in an interview. Third and finally, times and dates for interviews were scheduled for whenever was most convenient for teachers.

The "administration" of the interview had multiple steps. First, at scheduled interview dates and times, I Skyped teachers. Second, after small talk, I thanked teachers for their time, explained why they were being interviewed, and asked their permission to record the call. I also told teachers that information they shared about students' needs would be confidential and that the interview would last about 30 minutes. Third, I interviewed teachers. Finally, a day or two after the interview, I transcribed the Skype audio and reviewed the transcription for teacher responses that I could use to develop the student questionnaire.

Student-questionnaire preparation involved multiple steps. First, responses from teachers to questions in the interview guide were developed into a questionnaire. Second, I piloted the questionnaire with five, L1-Bangla individuals to get their feedback. Third, as a result of the L1-Bangla participants' feedback, I learned that some Bangladeshi students might not know how to respond to Likert-type items. Therefore, in the next step, when the questionnaire was given to the Arts group of students, the teacher was asked to review how to respond to Likert-type items with them. Fourth, the questionnaire was handed out to students. Finally, students who chose to respond put their completed questionnaires and signed consent forms into the teacher's mailbox; questionnaires were returned to the research assistant, who then scanned and emailed them to me.

Analyses and software

Interview and questionnaire data were analyzed in several ways. First, interview transcriptions were analyzed in Evernote by coding responses to interview questions with different colored highlighting. Data from transcriptions were then translated into questionnaire items. Second, questionnaire data were analyzed by calculating frequency and descriptive information for students' responses and by summarizing comments to open-ended questions. Due to a restriction of space, only frequency and descriptive information are presented, but I encourage anyone to look at students' comments in the "Phase1.csv" Excel spreadsheet at the website (https://sites.google.com/site/toddhavilandmckay/).

Frequency and descriptive information from student questionnaires were analyzed in R (R Core Team, 2018). To present responses to Likert-type items, I used the Likert package (Bryer & Speerschneider, 2016). While the raw data are available in an Excel spreadsheet at the website, I decided to use R so that others could reproduce my tables with the R syntax.

Results

The results from Phase 1 are presented in two sections. First, I talk about the number of student questionnaires that were returned and analyzable. Second, I discuss the frequency and descriptive information from student questionnaires. Readers are encouraged to inspect the raw data (see website).

Out of the 130 questionnaires given to students, 89 were returned (return rate = 68%). Out of the 89 returned, 8 were excluded for different reasons. Some of the excluded questionnaires had only bio-data sections filled out. For others, response patterns were confusing. For example, on one returned questionnaire, only 3 of 28 Likert-type items were responded to; thus, I could not tell if no response meant "Not at all" or something else.

I discuss results from the questionnaire in the order questions appear on the questionnaire. Specifically, I discuss results to the following questions: "Where will you need English in the future?" (Section II), "Why are you learning English?" (Section III), "How often do you use English in the following settings?" (Section IV), and "Outside of school and homework, how often do you use English in the following situations?" (Section V). Responses to the last question (Section V) are about tasks.

Students' responses to "Where will you need English in the future?" are shown in Figure 2. To help interpret trends in responses, I added a horizontal line at $y = 40$ because 40 is about half the number of completed questionnaires received from students. Although some students will use English with their family, at Open University, in the army, or in diploma courses (short certificate programs), quite a few think they will need to use English as part of their studies at National University, at private or public universities in Bangladesh, and if they go abroad for travel, or to pursue a degree outside Bangladesh. Many Arts-group students see themselves needing English for higher education.
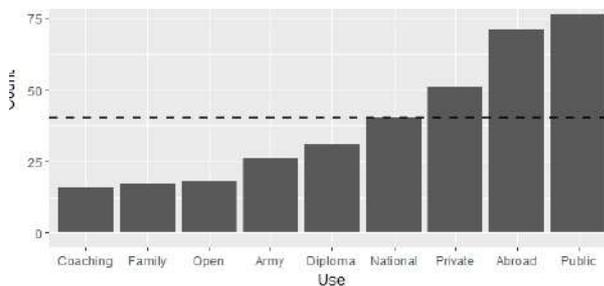

Figure 2. "Where will you need English in the future?"

Students' responses to the "Why are you learning English?" question are shown in Figure 3. Based on these responses, 30-40 students are learning English to get their high school degree and pass the HSC exam, and many are learning English to read textbooks, get a good job in the future, and to get a university degree. Thus, these responses also indicate that students see themselves needing to use English at university.
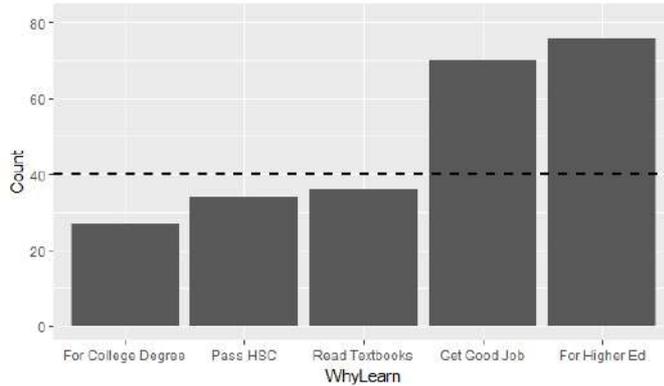
Figure 3. "Why are you learning English?"

Students' responses to the "How often do you use English in the following settings?" question are shown in Figure 4. Responses indicate that about half of the students use English "somewhat frequently" in NDC classes, but the other half does not. Students also do not use English much on campus outside of class, at home, or with friends. These results are not surprising because Bangla is the dominant language for most students and members of students' families.
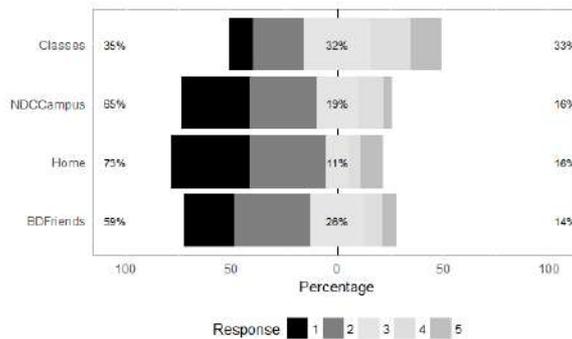

Figure 4. "How often do you use English in the following settings?" ("1" = 'Not at all' and "5" = 'Very often')

Finally, students' responses to "Outside of school and homework, how often do you use English in the following situations?" are in Figure 5. Most students in Bangladesh do not have laptops or desktop computers, but smartphones are everywhere; therefore, it is not surprising to see that tasks include browsing the Internet, watching TV or movies, sending text messages (SMS), and using Facebook (FB). Eyeballing tasks towards the bottom of Figure 5, it seems that students use English much less frequently for job-related tasks, such as using LinkedIn, applying for jobs, putting together a resume, or giving a talk or speech. Students also use English less frequently for some communication tasks, like talking on Skype or sending emails, probably because much of their communication takes place via phone call or text. Responses in Figure 5 give a sense of the tasks that high school students use English for.
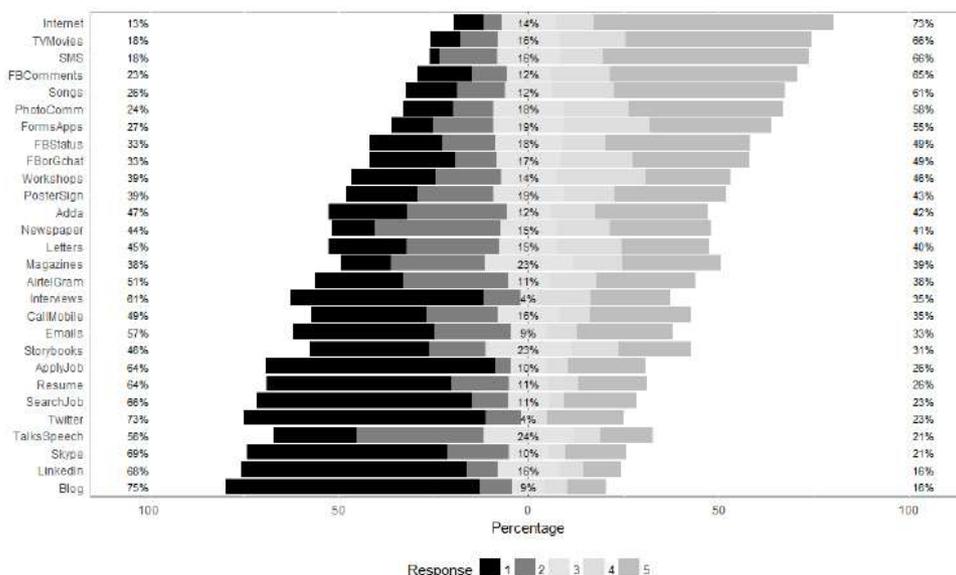
Figure 5. "How often do you use English in the following situations?" ("1" = 'Not at all' and "2" = 'Very often'

In summary, Phase 1 results offer insight into why, where, and how NDC students use English. Most students think they will need English to continue learning at university, and that is why most of them are learning English. Students use English in classes at NDC but not much outside of class. The tasks they do use English for seem to be those they can do with their smartphones, including texting and communicating on social media. Results also indicate that students see university as a domain where they will need English when they graduate.

Phase 2

In Phase 1, the most frequent English tasks involve social media and their smartphones, and the university is where they indicated they would need English. Therefore, I had two goals in Phase 2: (1) get an *initial* sense of the situations in which high school students would need to use English and the tasks they would need to do at university, and (2) identify commonly used media at university. Situations, tasks, and media could then be integrated into the NDC summer English program. To meet both goals, I interviewed university teachers, observed university classes, and spoke with university students at two public and two private universities. I discuss data-collection methods, sources of information, procedures, and analyses. This section concludes with a set of situations, tasks, and commonly used media.

Methodology

Research questions

Phase 2 was guided by three RQs. Each of the three RQs corresponds to each type of information I was trying to elicit in this phase: information about situations, tasks, and commonly used media. These three RQs are listed below.

RQ1.   In what situations do students need to use English when they enter university?
RQ2.   Within each situation, what are specific tasks students need to do at university?
RQ3.   What types of media (if any) are most commonly used at university?

Data-collection methods

There were three data-collection methods in Phase 2. Methods included interviews (with teachers), focus group discussions (with students), and classroom observations. To keep interviews and focus groups on track, I used another semi-structured interview guide. Questions on the guide covered (1) demographic information; (2) how English was used by students in classes, at other places on campus outside of class, and in other areas of students' lives; and (3) with foreigners and students' peers. I took freehand notes when I observed classes as long as doing so did not disrupt teachers.

Data-collection sources

There were two sources of information in Phase 2. Sources were faculty and students at each of the four universities. Faculty members included both part-time and full-time employees. Students who participated in focus groups were those enrolled in these faculty members' classes. Students had different MOI backgrounds. Faculty and students were teaching or learning in lower-level courses. At each of the four universities, I obtained information about situations, tasks, and commonly used media from faculty and students in English and non-English courses. Non-English courses included environmental science, history, pharmacy, and public administration courses.

Procedures

The procedures I followed at each university for interviews, focus groups, and classroom observations were all similar. In this section, I talk about how I recruited faculty and students from the four universities. Next, I go over the procedures I followed for interviews, classroom observations, and focus groups. Finally, I talk about how data were assembled for analysis.

Several steps were involved in recruiting faculty and students at universities. I would contact a faculty member by phone or email, explain the study's purpose, clarify that none of my work was being done to evaluate teaching or learning, and ask if we could meet in person to talk about the needs analysis more. During the meeting, I answered the faculty member's questions about the needs analysis, explained what participation would entail, and gave them consent forms to review and sign. Lastly, I told faculty members that I would make my notes available upon request.

Several steps were involved for the teacher interview. The interview usually took place either immediately before or after the class I was invited to observe. Right before starting the interview, I asked the faculty member's permission to record the interview and take notes, I showed them the interview questions, and I explained that no identifying information was being collected. At the end of the interview, which lasted about 30 minutes, I showed the faculty member my notes and thanked them for their help.

Next, I followed several steps in observing classes. Usually, after initial contact, the faculty member would tell me the date and time for a regular class they wanted me to observe. I would walk with the faculty member to the class or would arrive early to class on my own. In most cases, I sat at the back of the classroom during class; during the last five minutes of class, I introduced myself

to students and explained what I was doing there. In some cases, the faculty member asked me to introduce myself at the beginning of class and answer a few questions. After class, I showed my handwritten notes to the faculty member.

Procedures for recruiting students for focus groups varied. I requested students' participation in focus groups when I introduced myself before or after a classroom observation. However, some faculty members insisted on selecting students for focus groups themselves. I tried to ensure that students were recruited in a particular way for focus groups, but sometimes faculty members made decisions that would have been inappropriate for me to challenge. I met students in groups of about 4-10, sometimes right after class but sometimes at a later date. I met with groups in empty classrooms on students' home campuses. Before the focus group discussion, I talked about the purpose of the needs analysis, set "ground rules" for discussion, and reviewed the consent form with them. I also told students that I spoke Bangla, so they could switch between English and Bangla if they wanted to. Right before asking questions, I asked students' permission to start recording, explaining that no identifying information would be collected. After the 30-minute focus group discussion, I thanked students for their help.

Finally, to prepare to analyze the data, all interview and focus-group recordings were transcribed in a Word document. Classroom observation notes, along with backup notes from focus groups and interviews, were typed in Word. All documents were uploaded to NVivo for analysis and coding; in total, 34 documents were uploaded.

Analyses

I analyzed all the data from interviews, focus groups, and classroom observations in NVivo. After uploading documents to NVivo, I scanned them for emergent themes (see Mackey & Gass, 2015). "Themes" were tasks and commonly used media. Once individual tasks were identified, they were grouped according to situation. Situations, tasks, and commonly used media could then be used to create the NDC summer English program's curriculum (see Van den Branden, 2016).

Results

I discovered multiple English tasks and situations that students need English for at university. I was also able to pinpoint several commonly used sources of media that students and faculty members use at university. Although I do not present the results of the qualitative analysis in detail, please see the NVivo source and node reports at the website.

During the analysis, I started by identifying different tasks that students need English to do at university; these tasks were then grouped into situations. Situations are listed in the left-hand column in Table 1. The number of English tasks that students need to do in each of those ten situations varies, ranging from three to nine tasks per situation. To design the NDC program's curriculum, situations can be used to create lesson units, and individual classes within units can be structured around a situation's tasks.

Table 1. Situations and tasks at the university level

Situations tasks	Sources	Refs
Applying for a job	*7*	*11*
answer questions about job fit	2	3
create a CV or resume	4	4
fill out job applications	1	1
greet people	3	3
Debating issues	*3*	*3*
counter others' arguments	1	1
express ideas and points of view	1	1
summarize key information	1	1
Delivering presentation or speech	*18*	*35*
answer audience questions	1	3
create PPT slides	2	3
introduce yourself and classmates	1	3
prepare poster	2	4
present information to an audience	16	20
critique your own presentation	1	1
research information on websites	1	1
Initiating university life	*10*	*18*
fill out admission form	3	4
fill out library form	1	1
navigate university webpages	1	1
read orientation materials	1	1
read university prospectus	1	1
speak spontaneously on a topic	6	7
write admission essay	1	1
Managing course logistics	*15*	*27*
access class info on FB	6	7
access class info on Google Classroom	1	1
check e-mail from faculty	1	1
post on class FB page	1	1
read notice boards	8	9
remind faculty to take class	1	2
send an SMS to faculty	1	1
send apology e-mail to faculty	1	1
send e-mail to faculty	4	4
Opening a bank account	*2*	*4*
communicate with tellers	2	2
fill out account slip	1	1
fill out transaction slip	1	1
Participating in club activities	*12*	*18*
access online materials	1	1
club activities	11	13

create print materials	1	1
greet potential staff and sponsors	3	3
Reading and understanding print instructions	*3*	*6*
read doctors' prescriptions	2	2
read print instructions	1	2
read product information	2	2
Understanding a course lecture	*20*	*41*
answer questions	6	6
ask questions	5	5
provide explanation to the class	2	2
read the textbook	7	10
read PPT slides	5	5
take notes	9	9
watch films or YouTube videos	4	4
Writing an essay	*5*	*7*
access academic journals	2	2
brainstorm ideas for essay	1	1
read academic journals	1	2
write a short essay	1	1
write a thesis statement	1	1

Note. "Sources" are the number of documents uploaded to NVivo, and "Refs" is the total number of individual references about tasks and media across documents.

I also identified media that was commonly used at university. The list of media is shown in Table 2. Knowing what media is commonly used at university is helpful in designing the NDC summer English program; by using these media in the program, students will, hopefully, have an easier time using them when they enter university. Therefore, knowing what media is commonly used at university will be helpful in creating educational materials.

Table 2. Commonly used media at the university

Media	Sources	Refs
Movies	17	22
Music	10	13
TV series	6	6
YouTube videos	12	19
News (paper, TV)	13	23
Novels or books	1	1
Diary	2	2
Blog	4	5

Phase 3

In Phase 3, my goal was to examine the extent to which information about situations, tasks, and commonly used media from Phase 2 were relevant to the lives of a larger group of university students. Therefore, in Phase 3, I developed a questionnaire and gave it to 239 students at private and public universities to fill out. Before discussing students' responses to the questionnaire, I discuss the data-collection method (the questionnaire), student sources, procedures, and analyses.

Methodology

Research questions

Phase 3 was guided by two RQs. Because data were collected from only a handful of teachers, students, and classes in Phase 2, I wanted to get a sense of how relevant that information was to the lives of a larger group of students. Therefore, Phase 3 was guided by the following RQs:

RQ1.   To what extent do the situations and tasks identified in Phase 2 pertain to the larger student body?

RQ2.   To what extent are the forms of media identified in Phase 2 used by the larger student body?

Data-collection method

To help answer RQs 1 and 2, a questionnaire was developed. The questionnaire was a paper questionnaire, which was developed from the information about situations, tasks, and commonly used media learned in Phase 2. Here, I discuss how items were developed from the information in Phase 2, the structure of the questionnaire, and my reasons for typing the questionnaire in English and not in Bangla.

An important aspect of the questionnaire was how items were developed from information in Phase 2. On the questionnaire, situations were question stems, and tasks were listed as items beneath the question stem (see Table 3). Students were asked to indicate how important English was for doing those tasks on a scale of 1–5. In this way, information about situations, tasks, and commonly used media learned in Phase 2 were developed into a paper questionnaire for a larger body of university students.

Table 3. Moving from qualitative tasks and situations to questionnaire items

Applying for a job	When **applying for a job**, how <u>important</u> is English to…	Not important				Very important
answer questions about job fit	1. answer questions about job fit?	1	2	3	4	5
create a CV or resume	2. create a CV or resume?	1	2	3	4	5
fill out job applications	3. fill out job applications?	1	2	3	4	5
greet people	4. greet people?	1	2	3	4	5

A second aspect of the questionnaire was its structure. There were three sections on the questionnaire: demographic, situation + tasks, and media sections. Questions in the demographic section were about students' academic year, major, age, dominant language, hometown, MOI, and time spent in an English-speaking country. Questions about commonly used media asked students to indicate how frequently they used different media. Finally, questions in the situation + tasks section asked students to indicate how important English was for doing certain tasks at university.

I chose to type the questionnaire in English for three reasons. First, English is the MOI at universities in Bangladesh; although students differ in their English use, all students are used to reading and writing in English to take exams, read PowerPoint slides, and follow lectures. Second, I translated the questionnaire from English to Bangla before giving it to university students, but some translations were strange because many academic terms are used in English anyway. Third and finally, although many students know the Bangla for academic terms more commonly used in English, some students from English-medium backgrounds are unfamiliar with the Bangla for *academic* terms. Therefore, I typed the questionnaire in English.

Data-collection sources
Sources of information were undergraduate students. About 60 students from each of the same two public and private universities I discussed in Phase 2 completed the paper questionnaire (N = 239 in total). Students' average age was 21 years. Students were studying many different subjects. Of the 239 students who completed the questionnaire, 149 were male and 90 were female, 89 were from outside of Dhaka, and 38 were from English MOI backgrounds.

Procedures
There were two sets of procedures for the paper questionnaire. Prior to handing out the questionnaire to students, I piloted it with two Bangladeshi peers. After a few minor revisions, I handed the questionnaire out to students at each of the four universities by visiting their university cafeterias at lunchtime. Universities did not have a student listserv. I printed stacks of questionnaires, went to a university cafeteria, approached students sitting in groups, explained who I was and what I was doing, and then asked them if they had five minutes to complete the questionnaire. If they said "Yes," I gave them questionnaires and sat with them while they completed them so that they could ask me questions if they had any. I was able to get 239 questionnaires from students in three days.

Analyses

Frequency and descriptive information from questionnaires were analyzed in R (R Core Team, 2018). To present responses to Likert-type items, I used the Likert package (Bryer & Speerschneider, 2016). Raw questionnaire data and the R syntax are available at my website. In the results section, I discuss responses for the commonly used media first followed by responses to situations + task sections.

Results

In this results section, I discuss responses to two sections of the questionnaire. Since I gave an overview of students' profiles above, here I discuss students' responses to the commonly used media section and the situation + tasks sections of the questionnaire. Students' responses to each section are discussed next.

Responses to the commonly used media section are in Figure 6. University students most frequently use English when watching YouTube videos, listening to music, and watching movies. Students' responses indicate that they are split in their use of English to read and watch the news, watch TV, and read novels and books. Few students use English when writing in their diaries or on online blogs. These responses are helpful in two ways: they indicate media commonly used by university students and provide additional evidence in support of using some media for the NDC program's educational materials.
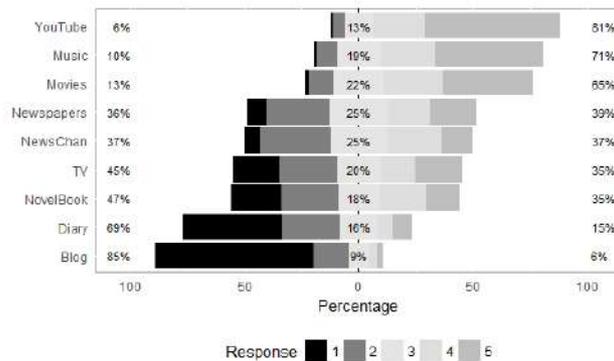
Figure 6. Responses to "How often do you use English in the following situations?"
("1" = 'Not at all' and "5" = 'Very often')

The next set of sections students responded to were the situation + tasks sections of the questionnaire. Only one situation, "Participating in club activities," was not added to the questionnaire because I learned that few students participate in clubs at university. My discussion of students' responses to the situation + task sections of the questionnaire are broken down into two sub-sections: overall trend in responses and two exceptions to the trend.

There is a trend in students' responses to the nine situation + tasks sections. Patterns of responses for each situation + task section are shown in Figures 7–15 ("1" = 'Not at all' and "5" = 'Very often'). Students' responses across all figures show that students think English is overwhelmingly important for doing most of the tasks listed in the questionnaire. The overall trend in students'

responses is a trustworthy indication of how important English is for many university-level tasks; thus, these situations and tasks are a great starting point for developing course units and individual lessons for the NDC summer program.
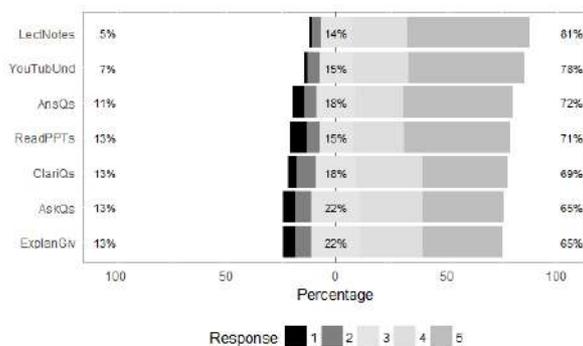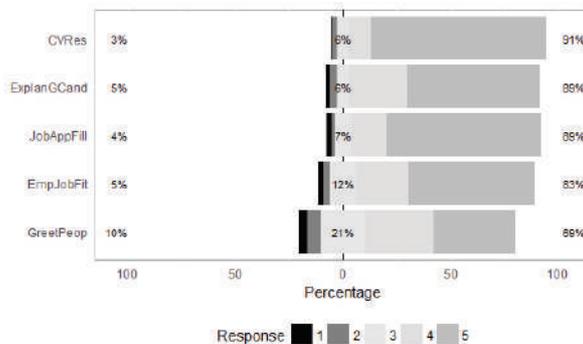

Figure 7. "Understand a course lecture"
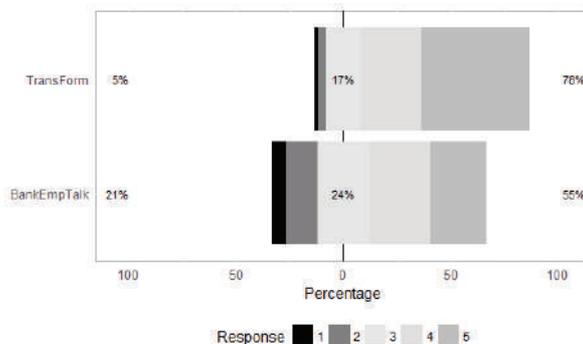

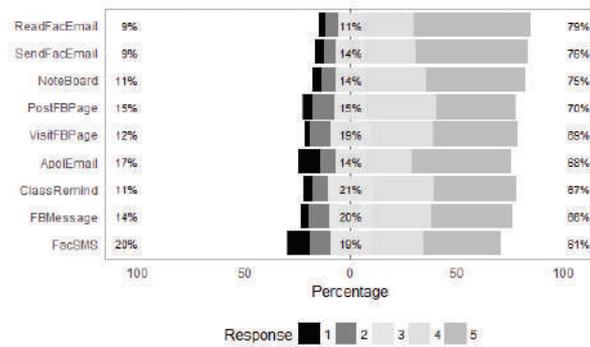Figure 8. "Applying for a job"

Figure 9. "Open a bank account"

Figure 10. "Manage course participation"
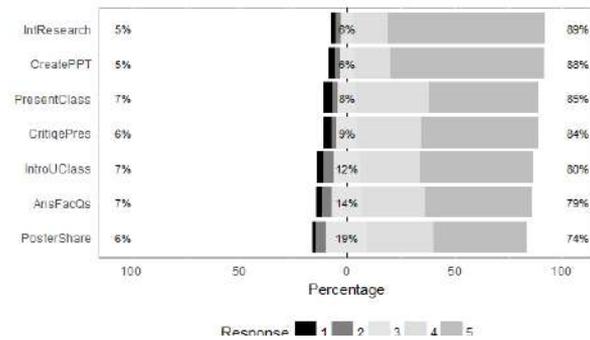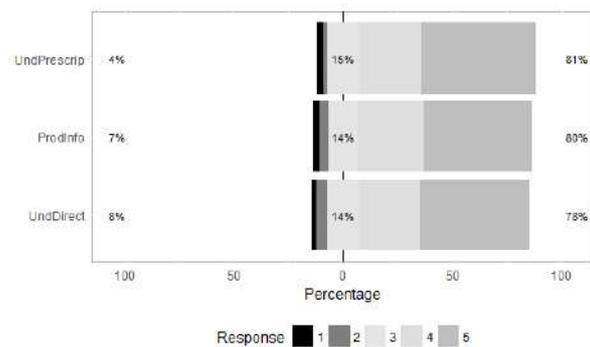

Figure 11. "Give a speech or presentation"

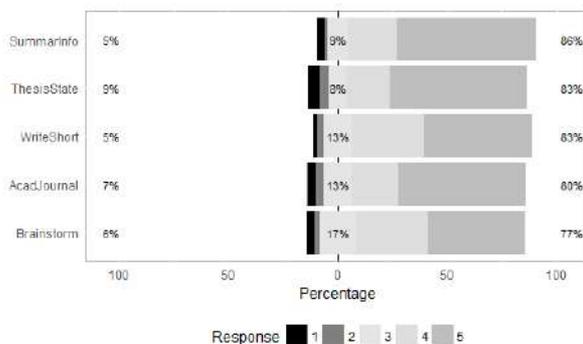Figure 12. "Read instructions"
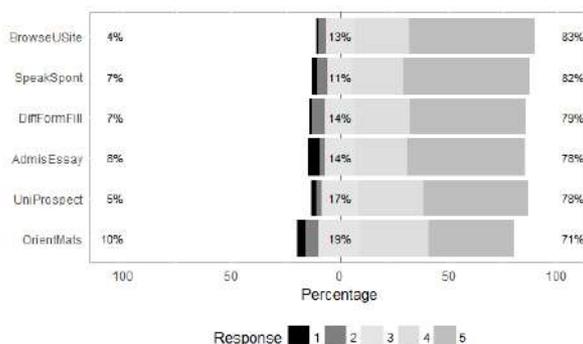
Figure 13. "Writing an essay"
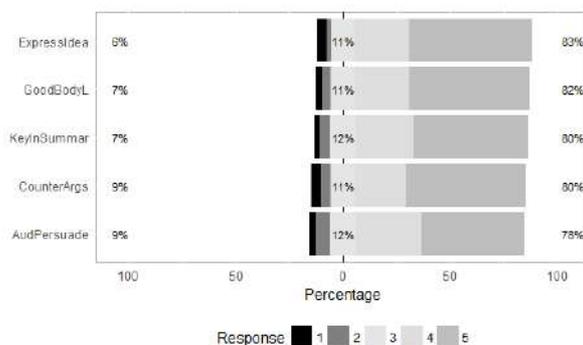

Figure 14. "Starting at university"

Figure 15. "Debating issues"

There were two exceptions to the trend in responses. First, for the "Open a bank account" situation, students noted that English was not so important when talking with employees at the bank (*BankEmpTalk*); when speaking with bank employees, students probably use Bangla. Second, for the "Manage course participation" situation, 20% of students noted that English was not so

important for sending text messages to faculty (*FacSMS*) because students probably rarely do that to begin with. There were just two exceptions to the overall trend.

Discussion and conclusion

This needs analysis makes an important contribution to the TBLT literature. Few *task-based* needs analyses have been published in language education. This needs analysis adds to the body of task-based needs analyses by Van Avermaet and Gysen (2006), González-Lloret (2003), and Huh (2006), among others; more published task-based needs analyses means more real examples of how educators can better align program goals and objectives with students' needs.

This needs analysis makes three important contributions to ESP work in Bangladesh. First, English educators in Bangladesh are increasingly aware that high school students are having trouble doing tasks in English when they graduate and enter university (Khan & Ivy, 2015); therefore, a task-based summer program could prepare students for both English *and* academic tasks they will need to do at university. Second, most high school students in Bangladesh need to take the SSC and HSC exams; these exams are high-stakes exams, so the teaching and learning of SSC/HSC content is prioritized over the English and academic skills students will need in their future studies (Tahereen, 2014). A task-based program could help high school students orient themselves to university life after having spent so much time focused on national exams. Finally, scholars have noted that differences in students' abilities to use English and English-medium (or MOI) policies at the university level may intensify divisions between students, and between students and faculty (Sultana, 2014); therefore, a task-based summer program could help put students on equal footing by preparing all of them to succeed in their academic work.

This study also contributes to the push to improve research methodology and data-sharing in applied linguistics. First, Cumming (2014) recommends making "a full description of the research, preferably including the raw data, available to other researchers" (p. 14); all data and materials from this study are openly available. Second, I make this study's materials and data available so that all results can be replicated. Third, although R is used less frequently than SPSS or Excel by many applied linguistics (Loewen et al., 2014), by making R syntax available, communication among the research community can be improved (Mizumoto & Plonsky, 2016).

Finally, the most important contribution of this study is to the NDC summer English program. Although many components of a language program need to work together to deliver a learning experience that will help meet students' needs, a needs analysis is a good starting point for developing a "defensible curriculum" (Brown, 1995, p. 36). I reported on the systematic collection of information about the tasks students need to do with language when they enter university so that all future steps in the design and development of the NDC summer program would be geared towards meeting students' needs.

Limitations

This study has several limitations. First, doing research in Bangladesh is a blessing and a curse. For Bangladeshis, it is considered an honor to participate in research (see Hamid, 2010), making it easy to recruit participants. However, I cannot ignore my role as a Western researcher, which no doubt

biased findings because I was able to gain access to research sites and people that would have been difficult for others to access. Second, results of this needs analysis might be less relevant for other programs. Task-based English programs are contextualized because they are developed around the needs of the students enrolled in them. While the findings of this needs analysis can be useful for designing other programs, stakeholders at other programs should look into additional tasks that might be relevant to the lives of the students in their programs.

References

Brown, J. D. (1995). *The elements of language curriculum: A systematic approach to program development*. Boston, MA: Heinle & Heinle Publishers.

Bryer, J., & Speerschneider, K. (2016). Likert: Analysis and visualization of Likert items. R package version 1.3.5.

Davis, J. McE., & McKay, T. H. (2018). *A guide to the useful evaluation of language programs*. Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press.

Dewey, J. (1933). *How we think: A restatement of the relation of reflective thinking to the educative process*. Boston, MA: Henry Holt.

EIA [English in Action]. (2009). *Socio-linguistic factors: The motivations and experiences of school students, teachers, and adults in the community*. English in Action, Dhaka. Retrieved from http://www.eiabd.com/eia_oldsite/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=160&Itemid=61

González-Lloret, M. (2003). Designing task-based CALL to promote interaction: En busca de esmeraldas. *Language Learning & Technology*, *7*(1), 86-104.

Hamid, M. O. (2010). Fieldwork for language education research in rural Bangladesh: Ethical issues and dilemmas. *International Journal of Research & Method in Education*, *33*(3), 259-271.

Hamid, M. O., Jahan, I., & Islam, M. M. (2013). Medium of instruction policies and language practices, ideologies and institutional divides: Voices of teachers and students in a private university in Bangladesh. *Current Issues in Language Planning*, *14*(1), 144-163.

Huh, S. (2006). A task-based needs analysis for a business English course. *Second Language Studies*, *24*(2), 1-64.

Khan, R., & Ivy, T. I. (2015, January). INSPIRE DEWS focus group findings. In Proceedings of INSPIRE DEWS seminar: Developing student writing. Paper presented at INSPIRE DEWS International Conference: Inspire to Write. University of Dhaka, Dhaka (2-15).

Loewen, S., Lavolette, E., Spino, L. A., Papi, M., Schmidtke, J., Sterling, S., & Wolff, D. (2014). Statistical literacy among applied linguists and second language acquisition researchers. *TESOL Quarterly*, *48*(2), 360-388.

Long, M. H. (1985). Input and second language acquisition theory. In S. M. Gass & C. G. Madden (Eds.), *Input in second language acquisition* (pp. 377-393). Rowley, MA: Newbury House.

Long, M. H. (2005). *Second language needs analysis*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Long, M. H. (2015). *Second language acquisition and task-based language teaching*. Malden, MA: John Wiley & Sons.

Mackey, A., & Gass, S. M. (2015). *Second language research: Methodology and design*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Mizumoto, A., & Plonsky, L. (2016). R as a lingua franca: Advantages of using R for quantitative research in applied linguistics. *Applied Linguistics*, *37*(2), 284-291.

Murtaza, A. (2016). Students' perceptions of English language instruction (EMI) at a private university in Bangladesh: A survey. *Language in India*, *16*(11), 1.

NCTB [National Curriculum and Textbook Board]. (2012). National curriculum 2012 (English, Classes VI–X). Retrieved from http://www.nctb.gov.bd/cmp/curriculum/English1440352774.pdf

Norris, J. M. (2009). Task-based teaching and testing. In M. H. Long and C. J. Doughty (Eds.), *The handbook of language teaching* (pp. 578-594). West Sussex, UK: Blackwell Publishing Ltd.

Norris, J. M. (2016). Language program evaluation. *Modern Language Journal, 100*(S1), 169-189.

Oxford, R. L. (2006). Task-based language teaching and learning: An overview. *Asian EFL Journal*, *8*(3), 94-121.

R Core Team (2018). R: A language and environment for statistical computing. R Foundation for Statistical Computing, Vienna, Austria.

Sultana, S. (2014). English as a medium of instruction in Bangladesh's higher education: Empowering or disadvantaging students? *Asian EFL Journal*, *16*(1), 11-52.

Tahereen, T. (2014). Testing based language teaching in Bangladesh: Does it promote or impede learning? *TESOL International Journal*, *9*(1), 83-103.

Van Avermaet, P., & Gysen, S. (2006). From needs to tasks: Language learning needs in a task-based approach. In K. Van den Branden (Ed.), *Task-based language education: From theory to practice* (pp. 17-46). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Van den Branden, K. (2016). Task-based language teaching. In G. Hall (Ed.*), The Routledge handbook of English language teaching* (pp. 238-251). New York, NY: Routledge.