

## BRIDGING THE GAP IN LEGAL ENGLISH: AN ESP NEEDS ANALYSIS OF UNDERGRADUATE LAW STUDENTS IN PAKISTAN

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### ABSTRACT

*This quantitative needs assessment explores undergraduate law student's perceptions of gaps in Legal English proficiency at the College of Law, Government College University Faisalabad (GCUF) in Pakistan. This research grounded in the English for Specific Purposes (ESP) paradigm and the necessities-lacks-wants (N-L-W) model proposed by Hutchinson and Waters (1987). This study used a 5-point, 19-item Likert-scale questionnaire in four thematically distinct sections: Section A (Lacks in Oral/Speaking), Section B (Legal Reasoning Baseline), Section C (Perception of Gap and Necessities in the Curriculum and Courses), and Section D (Readiness for Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) and Wants). The data was collected from (N = 193) undergraduate law student's and purposive sampling technique was utilized. SPSS was used to calculate descriptive statistics, one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) with Tukey HSD post-hoc tests, and Pearson bivariate correlations. Findings show a distinct hierarchy of need, with Section D (MALL readiness and wants) having the highest composite mean (M = 3.65, SD = 0.82), followed by Section C (Gap/Necessities; M = 3.28), Section B (Legal Reasoning; M = 3.06), and Section A (Oral Lacks; M = 2.93). ANOVA detected significant differences between proficiency groups on Sections A and B ( $p < .05$ ), and Tukey HSD post-hoc analysis indicated that Beginner students had significantly more lacks in oral skills than more advanced students. There were no gender differences. Legal reasoning and oral lacks were most strongly correlated ( $r = .632, p < .01$ ), while the strongest cross-domain correlation was between perceived gap and MALL readiness ( $r = .568$ ). These results support the need for a contextualised, mobile-enhanced Legal English course to meet the Pakistani legal needs.*

**Keywords:** Legal English, ESP needs analysis, curriculum gap, MALL readiness, Pakistani law students, lacks and wants

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The use of English is unavoidable in Pakistan's legal system. English is the language of all superior court proceedings, statutory documents, judicial decisions and professional legal communication, but most law students enter the university system with general English competency tuned to communication needs of daily life, not the specialised communication needs of legal practice (Ahmad et al., 2020; Jamshad et al., 2021). This structural problem between language competence and professional competence of the legal profession is what classical theorist Hutchinson and Waters (1987) identified as a 'lack': the visible gap between target need and current situation.

Studies over the last 20 years repeatedly speak to this gap in Pakistani law education. Ahmad (2011) demonstrated that Pakistani law students have significant deficiencies in academic spoken English in moot courts, oral arguments and presentations. Jamshad et al. (2021) showed that English communication skills are among the top competence issues reported by senior lawyers overseeing the work of fresh law graduates. Ahmad et al. (2020)

also revealed how the English monopoly over Pakistan's legal services is discriminatory to non-elite students, and a barrier to justice. Despite this growing consensus, there is a lack of quantitative needs analysis which used an instrument to target undergraduate law students at certain institutions, especially in Punjab.

ESP studies in Pakistan have already started to critically reveal a structural mismatch between disciplinary language requirements and classroom delivery, and allied health studies (Riaz et al., 2026; Sadia et al., 2026) show that there is a quantifiable gap in the curriculum characterized by high professional language requirements, insufficient instructional support, and low interaction with authentic, practice-based discourse. Although these results highlight a systemic problem of professionally oriented education, the legal field, despite its equally discourse intensive and high stakes communicative requirements, has been under researched.

In this context, the current research was undertaken to fill this gap. It presents a formal quantitative needs analysis of 193 law students at the College of Law, Government College University Faisalabad (GCUF), one of the most established and renowned public law colleges in Punjab. This research reports the profile of students' self-reported lacks in oral communication, legal reasoning, curriculum needs, and readiness and aspirational wants for mobile-based legal language learning, as measured through the instrument, a 19-item, 5-point Likert questionnaire informed by Hutchinson and Waters' (1987) tripartite classification of necessities, lacks and wants. It also tests their variability with English proficiency.

### **1.1 Research Objectives**

This study addresses the following objectives:

- (1) To identify and describe the oral/speaking lacks, legal reasoning deficiencies, and curriculum gap perceptions of LLB students at GCUF.
- (2) To assess students' MALL readiness and aspirational wants regarding Legal English instruction.
- (3) To examine whether proficiency level significantly differentiates students' lacks, gap perceptions, and MALL readiness.
- (4) To explore the inter-relationships among the four thematic domains through bivariate correlation analysis.

### **1.2 Research Questions**

The four goals identified in the main study are broken down in the following three research questions. The research question is clearly linked to the Hutchinson and Waters (1987) construct of needs analysis that it focuses on and to the related instrument section.

1. What are LLB students' levels of mobile-assisted language learning (MALL) readiness and aspirational wants regarding Legal English instruction, and how do these relate to their perceived curriculum gaps and oral competence lacks?
2. To what extent do LLB students at the College of Law, GCUF perceive gaps in their oral/speaking competence and legal reasoning capacity in English, and how do these lacks vary across English proficiency levels?
3. How do LLB students at GCUF perceive the necessity of a specialised Legal English course, and to what extent do they report a gap between their current general English competence and the language demands of the Pakistani legal profession?

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 Legal English and Access to Justice in Pakistan**

English is inestimably important in the Pakistani legal system; it is the language of law, the courtroom and legal practice alike. Ahmad et al. (2020) put it this way: this creates a class-based divide, with lower-proficiency users (usually originating from non-elite socioeconomic backgrounds) being disadvantaged in accessing justice. Khaleel and Haladin (2021) supported this position by showing that code-switching in court results in laypersons' misinterpretation

of legal terms, and called for greater congruence between the language of legal education and practice. Rubab (2025) conducted a survey of 150 law teachers and practitioners across Pakistan who mostly agreed that legal documents, legal statutes, and court decisions should be translated into plain English to ease professional practice. These studies place the study of Legal English not just in the realm of pedagogy, but also institutional justice.

## 2.2 Deficiencies in Pakistan's Legal Education System

There is a consistent body of research showing structural problems with legal education in Pakistan that exacerbate the English problem. Jamshad et al. (2021) conducted a survey of 369 senior lawyers overseeing new graduates and found English communication and legal research are the two most important skills in which graduates are deficient. Baig et al. (2023) conducted in-depth interviews with stakeholders to shed light on the outdated curriculum, overemphasis on rote memorisation rather than critical analysis, and lack of practical training. Mehar (2020), in a case study, identified the LLB curriculum as not equipping students for practice, with insufficient elements of argumentation, case analysis, and legal reasoning.

Shah et al. (2023, 2024) sought to understand students' and stakeholders' views on quality assurance. They highlighted problems with teaching, assessment, and curriculum-practice linkages, with student's respondents citing the current English education's lack of relevance to professional needs. Siddiqui et al. (2023) took a course design approach to the problem and recommended an English for Legal Purposes (ELP) course for Sindh Law College, which would be based on the language needs of law undergraduates.

## 2.3 ESP Needs Analysis: Conceptual Framework

This study is rooted in the English for Specific Purposes (ESP) tradition, by drawing on the three-part needs analysis framework (necessities, lacks, wants) proposed by Hutchinson and Waters (1987), which refers to needs linked to the target situation (necessities), the difference between current skills and targeted needs (lacks), and the learners' desires (wants). This model has been fruitfully applied in various professional ESP settings.

Khan et al. (2024) used this model to analyse the mobile learning readiness of Pakistani undergraduate legal students, revealing high readiness (mean = 3.68-3.85), lack of skills in legal vocabulary (mean = 3.53) and legal genre (mean = 3.11), and want for culturally relevant, mobile-supported instruction. The research showed a Cronbach's  $\alpha$  of .93, suggesting high internal consistency in the instrument used. The current study builds on this study while concentrating on students of a single, publicly funded university in Faisalabad to provide more contextualised and institution-specific insights.

Similar ESP needs analysis studies in other legal education contexts - such as Indonesia (Rumalessin & Farah, 2021; Herlina & Said, 2022), Iran (Yatroon, 2020), Oman (AL-ISSA, 2007), Lithuania (Bartnikaitė & Bijeikienė, 2017), Vietnam (Nhac, 2022), and Islamic universities in Indonesia (Rohmawati et al., 2025) - consistently affirm the acute needs of law students in legal vocabulary, case judgement comprehension, argumentation, and formal oral presentation skills. While they differ in context, all these reports point to the failure of general English education to address legal professionals' needs.

## 2.4 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

### 2.4.1 Hutchinson and Waters' (1987) Tripartite Needs Analysis Model

This study builds on the theoretical framework of Hutchinson and Waters (1987), first presented in their pioneering book on English for Specific Purposes. They present a model of language learner needs along three domains - necessities, lacks, and wants - which represent key aspects of intersect between learners, the learning environment, and their professional work environment.

### Figure 1

*Mapping of Hutchinson and Waters' (1987) Tripartite Framework to Study Design*

| NECESSITIES<br>(Target Situation Analysis)  | LACKS<br>(Present Situation Analysis)   | WANTS<br>(Learning Needs Analysis)   |
|---|---|--|
| <p><b>What the legal profession demands:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Courtroom advocacy in English</li> <li>• Legal reasoning &amp; argumentation</li> <li>• Case brief writing &amp; oral presentation</li> <li>• Legal Latin &amp; specialised vocabulary</li> </ul> <p>→ Operationalised as Section C items (Gap/Necessities)</p> | <p><b>What students currently lack:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nervousness in oral legal tasks</li> <li>• Inability to distinguish facts from legal opinions</li> <li>• Memorisation-centred prior learning</li> <li>• Weak counter-argument construction</li> </ul> <p>→ Operationalised as Sections A &amp; B items</p> | <p><b>What students aspire to learn:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mobile-assisted vocabulary learning</li> <li>• Courtroom advocacy confidence</li> <li>• Critical case analysis over translation</li> <li>• Blended (traditional + digital) instruction</li> </ul> <p>→ Operationalised as Section D items (MALL + Wants)</p> |

**Note.** Framework dimensions adapted from Hutchinson and Waters (1987). Section labels refer to the study's 19-item Likert-scale survey instrument.

The necessities are what the target situation requires of the learner - that is, the competences and knowledge required by the professional situation regardless of the learner's existing competences. In the Pakistani context, the necessities include understanding and producing documents in English medium, generating and countering legal arguments, using legal Latin maxims and other legal vocabulary in their correct form, and being able to communicate in the formal court environment all in English as per the demands of the superior courts of Pakistan (Ahmad et al., 2020; Khaleel & Haladin, 2021). These target situation demands are reflected in this study in Section C of the instrument (Gap Evaluation and Necessities), where students are asked to indicate to what extent they feel there is a gap between their current competence in English and the Pakistani legal profession's requirements.

Lacks are the gap between the necessities of the target situation and the current situation as it stands for the learner - the gap between target competence and present situation. This is the key diagnostic variable in ESP curriculum development (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987) because it is the lacks, not a generalised description of needs that pinpoint the specific areas for instruction. In the current study, lacks are operationalised in Sections A and B. Section A operationalises the oral and speaking lacks - nervousness, difficulty sustaining a formal tone, moot court difficulties, and pronunciation of legal Latin. Section B addresses the baseline of legal reasoning skills - inability to identify key arguments in case judgements, to separate facts from legal arguments, to build counter-arguments, to apply abstract legal principles to concrete situations. The inter-item correlation of the 19 items ( $\bar{r} = .302$ ) establishes the items' inter-relatedness while maintaining their conceptual separateness.

The third component, wants, represents what the learner wants in their language learning journey the affective-motivation-aspiration component of needs. Hutchinson and Waters (1987) argued a thorough needs analysis must address wants because they govern the learner's level of engagement, motivation, and learning receptivity. Not considering wants when developing curricula leads to technically proficient but motivationally staid curricula. In this study, wants are captured in Section D (MALL Readiness and Aspirational Wants) which reflects students' want to use mobile apps for legal vocabulary, want to develop courtroom advocacy skills, want critical case analysis (versus word-for-word translation), and want blended learning (traditional plus digital). The fact that Section D has the highest composite

mean ( $M = 3.65$ ) in the data set has a strong normative implication: curriculum reform at GCUF's College of Law not only must address the mentioned lacks but must do so in a mode that caters for the wants of college students.

## **2.5 MALL in Legal English Education**

There is significant interest in mobile-assisted language learning (MALL) as a convenient and learner-centred supplement to traditional learning. In the field of legal ESP, Khan et al. (2024) found over 75% of Pakistani legal undergraduates willing to take up mobile platforms for learning legal terms and found apps for language learning very convenient. Ali (2024) advocated for the integration of flipped classrooms in Pakistan's legal curriculum, suggesting that technology can free up in-class time for engaging with case studies and advocacy skills - addressing the argumentative and reasoning skills gap identified in the current study. Naveed (2016) also noted that a legal English course should be contextualised to the local legal system, a proposition supported in Zaidi's (2023) sociological and historical analysis of how the legal curriculum in Pakistan has been shaped by colonially inherited norms that are out of sync with modern legal practice.

## **2.6 RESEARCH GAP**

### ***2.6.1 Macro-Level Gap: Quantitative ESP Needs Analysis in Pakistani Legal Education***

The English for Specific Purposes (ESP) literature on Pakistani legal education has grown significantly in the last ten years, but a survey of the literature suggests there are three consistent structural inadequacies that, taken together, constitute the research gap that the present study aims to address.

First, most empirical studies of language and law education in Pakistan have been qualitative or mixed-method. Ahmad et al. (2020), Mehar (2020), Shah et al. (2023, 2024), Baig et al. (2023) and Zaidi (2023) relied largely on qualitative data collection methods such as interviews, focus groups, document analysis and stakeholder testimonies to describe the English language proficiency issues faced by law students and graduates. These studies give us essential contextual information, but no statistically reliable, instrument-validated measures to inform evidence-based recommendations for curriculum reform. The current study addresses this gap, using a structured 19-item questionnaire on a 5-point Likert scale with descriptive statistics, one-way ANOVA with Tukey HSD post hoc tests and Pearson bivariate correlations.

Second, the only major quantitative ESP needs analysis of Pakistani law students (Khan et al., 2024) was conducted in multiple public and private universities with a mixed sample ( $N = 385$ ) with the aim of informing the development of a MAELT module, rather than to identify the full range of lacks, needs and wants at any one university. Such multi-site studies provide general insights but mask the institution-specific insights that are valuable for curriculum planners at individual law institutions. There is no quantitative needs analysis conducted at the College of Law, GCUF - one of the oldest public law colleges in Punjab - or any other law college in the Faisalabad area.

Third, prior studies have focused on oral lacks (Ahmad, 2011), curriculum (Mehar, 2020; Baig et al., 2023; Naveed, 2016), access to justice (Ahmad et al., 2020), MALL-readiness (Khan et al. 2024) or graduate skill deficits (Jamshad et al., 2021) in isolation. There has been no single instrument-based study that has mapped oral lacks, legal reasoning deficits, curriculum gap perceptions, as well as MALL-readiness and aspirational wants in an integrated tripartite framework and then gone on to explore how these constructs inter-correlate and are differentiated by students' level of English proficiency.

### ***2.6.2 Meso-Level Gap: Proficiency-Stratified Analysis***

Proficiency-stratified needs analysis is a major gap in the quantitative branch of ESP needs analysis in the context of legal English in Pakistan. Khan et al. (2024) presented comparison by semester year and gender but did not investigate the moderating effect of

English proficiency on the perception of lacks, necessities and wants. Ahmad (2011) did not report proficiency-group comparisons. International studies (Rumalessin and Farah, 2021; Herlina and Said, 2022; Yatroon, 2020; Bartnikaitė and Bijeikienė, 2017) also report overall needs, without proficiency-stratified breakdown. This study includes a three-way proficiency comparison (Beginner, Intermediate, Advanced) as a key variable and shows that while the perception of oral lacks and legal reasoning lacks is significantly greater among Beginner students, the perceived curriculum gap and readiness for MALL is consistently high across all proficiency groups - a result that has implications for designing differentiated instruction.

### 2.6.3 *Micro-Level Gap: Mobile-Assisted Legal English at GCUF*

The integration of MALL with Legal English teaching has been discussed at a national level (Khan et al., 2024; Ali, 2024), but there is no research on the MALL readiness profile of students of a particular public law college in Punjab. Siddiqui et al. (2023) recommended a course in English for Legal Purposes (ELP) for Sindh Law College based on content-based instruction, and Naveed (2016) discussed curriculum design for Legal English in Pakistan, but these studies did not assess the mobile learning readiness of students, nor their wants in terms of future digital course delivery modes. Our study shows that 81.3% of GCUF law students already use mobile apps for learning and that Section D (MALL Readiness and Wants) of the questionnaire yields the highest composite mean ( $M = 3.65$ ) across all sections of the instrument, thereby attesting to the ecological validity and student-substantiated desirability of MALL integration at this college.

## 3. METHODOLOGY

### 3.1 *Research Design*

The design of this research is quantitative, survey-based and falls into the category of ESP needs analysis. The survey was a cross-sectional, self-reported questionnaire targeting undergraduate law students at the College of Law, GCUF, in week 2 of December 2025. This design is in line with the previous studies in quantitative ESP needs analysis (Khan et al., 2024; Rumalessin & Farah, 2021; Yatroon, 2020).

### 3.2 *Participants*

One hundred and ninety-three ( $N = 193$ ) LLB students participated in the study. There were 155 males (80.3%), 36 females (18.7%) and two who did not identify their gender (1.0%) in this sample. With regard to self-assessed English proficiency, 128 students (66.3%) reported intermediate proficiency, 33 (17.1%) beginner and 32 (16.6%) advanced. In terms of using mobile apps for education, 157 students (81.3%) were using apps for learning and 36 (18.7%) were not. Participants' demographic characteristics are shown in Table 1.

**Table 1**

*Participant Demographic Profile (N = 193)*

| Variable                   | Category          | n   | %    |
|----------------------------|-------------------|-----|------|
| <b>Gender</b>              | Male              | 155 | 80.3 |
|                            | Female            | 36  | 18.7 |
|                            | Prefer not to say | 2   | 1.0  |
| <b>English Proficiency</b> | Intermediate      | 128 | 66.3 |
|                            | Beginner          | 33  | 17.1 |
|                            | Advanced          | 32  | 16.6 |
| <b>Mobile App Use</b>      | Yes               | 157 | 81.3 |

|  |    |    |      |
|--|----|----|------|
|  | No | 36 | 18.7 |
|--|----|----|------|

### 3.3 Instrument

The survey questionnaire comprised of 19 five-point Likert-scale items (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree) divided into four sections: Section A (oral/speaking lacks; 5 items), Section B (legal reasoning baseline; 5 items), Section C (gap evaluation and course necessities; 3 items) and Section D (MALL readiness and aspirational wishes; 6 items). The wordings of items were based on the validated domains identified by Khan et al. (2024) and contextualized for GCUF's College of Law. An average inter-item correlation of .302 for the 19 items suggested reasonable inter-relatedness without redundancy, as expected of a heterogeneous, multi-dimensional survey instrument.

### 3.4 Data Collection and Analysis

The questionnaire was hosted on Google Forms. The data was downloaded as a CSV file and analysed in SPSS (v. 23). Descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation) were calculated for all items and the section composites. We tested for differences between proficiency groups for the four section composites using one-way ANOVA; Tukey HSD post-hoc tests were conducted where one-way ANOVA was significant. Independent-samples t-test was used to test gender differences. Bivariate correlations (Pearson) were calculated between the four section composites. A significance level of  $\alpha = .05$  was adopted for the tests.

## 4. RESULTS

### 4.1 Item-Level Descriptive Statistics

Table 2 shows the means and standard deviations for the 19 survey items, grouped by section. Across the entire survey, the items ranged in mean from 2.67 to 3.69, reflecting a moderate to moderate-high level of lack and need.

**Table 2**

*Item-Level Descriptive Statistics across Four Sections (N = 193)*

| Survey Item  | N   | M           | SD   | Interpretation            |
|--|-----|-------------|------|---------------------------|
| <b>Section A: Oral/Speaking Lacks</b>  |     |             |      |                           |
| A1. I currently feel nervous when asked to speak about legal topics in English.                          | 193 | <b>2.70</b> | 1.07 | <i>Moderate Lack</i>      |
| A2. I am currently unable to participate effectively in moot courts or debates due to language barriers. | 193 | <b>2.92</b> | 1.13 | <i>Moderate Lack</i>      |
| A3. I find it difficult to maintain a formal, professional tone when speaking in class.                  | 193 | <b>2.82</b> | 1.10 | <i>Moderate Lack</i>      |
| A4. I struggle to find the correct legal terminology when trying to express arguments orally.            | 193 | <b>2.93</b> | 1.05 | <i>Moderate Lack</i>      |
| A5. I need specific training on how to pronounce difficult legal Latin maxims and terms.                 | 193 | <b>3.29</b> | 1.10 | <i>Moderate-High Need</i> |
| <b>Section B: Legal Reasoning Baseline</b>   |     |             |      |                           |
| B1. When reading a case judgment, I struggle to identify the main legal argument or logic.               | 193 | <b>3.06</b> | 1.14 | <i>Moderate Lack</i>      |

|   |     |             |      |                           |
|---|-----|-------------|------|---------------------------|
| B2. I find it hard to distinguish between facts, evidence, and legal opinions in English texts.   | 193 | <b>2.67</b> | 1.06 | <i>Moderate Lack</i>      |
| B3. I currently lack the skill to construct a logical counter-argument against an opposing view.  | 193 | <b>2.92</b> | 1.09 | <i>Moderate Lack</i>      |
| B4. I need more practice in applying abstract legal rules to real-life situations.                | 193 | <b>3.37</b> | 1.04 | <i>Moderate-High Need</i> |
| B5. My previous education focused more on memorizing laws than on critical reasoning.             | 193 | <b>3.28</b> | 1.10 | <i>Moderate-High</i>      |
| <b>Section C: Gap Evaluation / Necessities</b>  |     |             |      |                           |
| C1. I feel there is a gap between the English I know and the English used by lawyers in Pakistan. | 193 | <b>3.25</b> | 1.01 | <i>Moderate Need</i>      |
| C2. I believe a specialized 'Legal English' course is necessary for my career success.            | 193 | <b>3.40</b> | 1.08 | <i>Moderate-High Need</i> |
| C3. Current textbooks and materials are too disconnected from the Pakistani legal system.         | 193 | <b>3.19</b> | 1.14 | <i>Moderate Need</i>      |
| <b>Section D: MALL Readiness and Wants</b>  |     |             |      |                           |
| D1. I am comfortable navigating mobile apps to complete quizzes and assignments.                  | 193 | <b>3.60</b> | 1.04 | <i>High Readiness</i>     |
| D2. I believe using a mobile app would make learning legal vocabulary easier/more convenient.     | 193 | <b>3.65</b> | 0.97 | <i>High Readiness</i>     |
| D3. I am willing to use my mobile device for learning outside of classroom hours.                 | 193 | <b>3.69</b> | 0.97 | <i>High Readiness</i>     |
| D4. I hope to improve my confidence in public speaking and courtroom advocacy.                    | 193 | <b>3.68</b> | 1.08 | <i>High Want</i>          |
| D5. I want to learn how to analyze cases critically rather than just translating them.            | 193 | <b>3.64</b> | 1.08 | <i>High Want</i>          |
| D6. I prefer a course that mixes traditional teaching with digital/mobile activities.             | 193 | <b>3.63</b> | 1.01 | <i>High Preference</i>    |

**Note.** M = mean; SD = standard deviation on a 5-point Likert scale.

In Section A (Oral/Speaking Lacks), students expressed the greatest need for pronunciation practice on legal Latin maxims (A5: M = 3.29, SD = 1.10), while the lowest mean in this section related to anxiety in speaking about legal issues in English (A1: M = 2.70, SD = 1.07). Section B (Legal Reasoning) revealed the need for more practice in applying abstract rules to real-life situations with the highest mean (B4: M = 3.37, SD = 1.04), and students also strongly agreed with the statement that their previous education had been more

focused on memorisation rather than reasoning (B5:  $M = 3.28$ ,  $SD = 1.10$ ). In Section C (Gap/Necessities), the item claiming the need for a separate Legal English course to succeed in one's career scored the highest (C2:  $M = 3.40$ ,  $SD = 1.08$ ). Section D (MALL Readiness and Wants) had the highest mean values for the individual items in the questionnaire, with students' willingness to use mobile devices for learning outside the classroom (D3:  $M = 3.69$ ,  $SD = 0.97$ ) and desire to boost confidence in courtroom advocacy (D4:  $M = 3.68$ ,  $SD = 1.08$ ) leading the way.

#### 4.2 Section Composite Means

Table 3 shows the composite means and standard deviations for the four sections. There was a clear grading of means, with the highest composite mean ( $M = 3.65$ ,  $SD = 0.82$ ) recorded for Section D (MALL Readiness and Wants) followed by Section C (Gap/Necessities;  $M = 3.28$ ,  $SD = 0.82$ ), Section B (Legal Reasoning Baseline;  $M = 3.06$ ,  $SD = 0.78$ ) and Section A (Oral/Speaking Lacks;  $M = 2.93$ ,  $SD = 0.74$ ).

**Table 3**

*Section Composite Means and Standard Deviations*

| Section                         | Items | M           | SD   | Key Interpretation                     |
|---------------------------------|-------|-------------|------|--|
| A: Oral/Speaking Lacks          | 5     | <b>2.93</b> | 0.74 | Moderate oral deficiency               |
| B: Legal Reasoning Baseline     | 5     | <b>3.06</b> | 0.78 | Moderate reasoning gap                 |
| C: Gap Evaluation / Necessities | 3     | <b>3.28</b> | 0.82 | Clear perceived curriculum gap         |
| D: MALL Readiness and Wants     | 6     | <b>3.65</b> | 0.82 | High MALL readiness; strongest cluster |

*Note.* Scale: 1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree.

This suggests that while students perceive only moderate oral needs (Section A), they perceive increasingly clearer needs in their legal reasoning (Section B) and curriculum (Section C) and express strong readiness and desires in mobile-assisted and contextualised legal language learning (Section D).

#### 4.3 Proficiency-Group Differences: One-Way ANOVA

The one-way ANOVA results for Beginner, Intermediate, and Advanced proficiency groups on the four section composites are shown in Table 4.

**Table 4**

*One-Way ANOVA: Section Composite Means by English Proficiency Level*

| Section              | Beginner M (SD) | Int. M (SD)    | Advanced M (SD) | F    | p     | Post-hoc   |
|----------------------|-----------------|----------------|-----------------|------|-------|------------|
| A: Oral Lacks        | 3.17<br>(0.67)  | 2.94<br>(0.75) | 2.66<br>(0.74)  | 3.90 | .022* | Beg > Adv* |
| B: Legal Reasoning   | 3.33<br>(0.69)  | 3.06<br>(0.79) | 2.79<br>(0.76)  | 4.09 | .018* | Beg > Adv* |
| C: Gap / Necessities | 3.53<br>(0.79)  | 3.24<br>(0.81) | 3.20<br>(0.85)  | 1.83 | .164  | n.s.       |
| D: MALL Readiness    | 3.49<br>(0.87)  | 3.70<br>(0.76) | 3.60<br>(0.99)  | 0.90 | .408  | n.s.       |

*Note.* Int. = Intermediate. \* $p < .05$ . Post-hoc comparisons via Tukey HSD.

Statistically significant proficiency-group differences were found on Section A ( $F(2, 190) = 3.90, p = .022$ ) and Section B ( $F(2, 190) = 4.09, p = .018$ ). Tukey HSD post-hoc analyses showed that in both cases the significant differences were between Beginner and Advanced ( $p = .016$  and  $p = .013$  respectively), with Beginner students perceiving more oral lacks and gaps in legal reasoning skills. No significant differences were found on Section C ( $F = 1.83, p = .164$ ) or Section D ( $F = 0.90, p = .408$ ) suggesting that the perceived curriculum gap and MALL readiness levels were relatively high in all proficiency groups. The latter is theoretically significant: even students with Advanced-proficiency expressed the perception of a sizeable gap between their general English competence and targeted legal English, and similarly high readiness for MALL-integrated teaching.

#### 4.4 Gender Differences

There were no significant gender differences for any of the four section composites, according to independent-samples t-tests. For Section A,  $M = 2.93$  (male) and  $M = 2.94$  (female),  $t(189) = -0.054, p = .957$ . For Section D,  $M = 3.61$  (male) and  $M = 3.83$  (female),  $t(189) = -1.455, p = .147$ . While the mean composites were higher for female students in the four sections, none of these differences were statistically significant, probably due to the low statistical power of the unequal and skewed gender representation (155 male, 36 female) in the sample.

#### 4.5 Pearson Bivariate Correlations among Section Composites

Table 5 presents the Pearson correlation matrix among all four section composites.

**Table 5**

*Pearson Bivariate Correlations among Section Composites (N = 193)*

| Section              | A           | B           | C           | D |
|----------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|---|
| A: Oral Lacks        | —           |             |             |   |
| B: Legal Reasoning   | <b>.632</b> | —           |             |   |
| C: Gap / Necessities | <b>.477</b> | <b>.530</b> | —           |   |
| D: MALL Readiness    | .336        | .415        | <b>.568</b> | — |

*Note.*  $p < .01$  (two-tailed).

All construct correlations were positive and significant at the level of  $p < .01$ , suggesting that the four dimensions, although conceptually different, are empirically connected. The highest correlation was between Section A (Oral Lacks) and Section B (Legal Reasoning Baseline) ( $r = .632, p < .01$ ), which confirms that students who are struggling with oral legal production are also those who feel they are "less able" to analyse and reason about legal texts. The second-highest correlations existed between Section C (Gap/Necessities) and Section D (MALL Readiness and Wants) ( $r = .568, p < .01$ ), suggesting that students who report greater gaps between their current skills and the skills needed to communicate in legal English are also those who desire mobile-assisted learning. The smallest, but still significant, correlation was between Section A and Section D ( $r = .336, p < .01$ ).

## 5. DISCUSSION

The pattern of section composite means (Section D > C > B > A) makes a theoretically coherent sense in the context of the Hutchinson and Waters (1987) tripartite model. The relatively low Section A composite mean suggests an incomplete recognition of the students' oral lacks, possibly due to an underestimation of the extent of their deficiency in spoken legal English, a pattern corroborated by Ahmad (2011), who found that law students in Pakistan scored low on academic oral tasks despite considering themselves as competent speakers in

general. The middle Section B means reflect a realistic (and for educators, important) acknowledgement that these students have been raised on a memorisation-driven pedagogic model that has ill-prepared them for the analytic and argumentative rigours of legal reasoning in English - a result that is directly supported by Mehar (2020) and Baig et al. (2023).

The relatively high Section C composite mean, especially the item that states that a specialised Legal English course is required for career success ( $M = 3.40$ ), is a clear articulation of 'necessities' as defined by Hutchinson and Waters (1987): students perceive that the legal language needs of their target profession are not sufficiently met by the present curricula. This echoes Siddiqui et al.'s (2023) contention that ELP courses need to be reformed on a content-based instruction basis responsive to the local legal system in which students will find employment. The perceived lack of fit of current textbooks (C3:  $M = 3.19$ ) echoes Naveed's (2016) proposed approach to Legal English instruction, which should be contextualised in the local legal system.

Section D is the most significant finding of this study. The composite mean of 3.65 and the range of the constituent items (3.60 - 3.69) represent the loudest voice in the data set. This finding complements the findings of Khan et al. (2024), who also reported high readiness for mobile learning ( $M = 3.68-3.85$ ) in a larger sample of Pakistani law students from various universities. The fact that 81.3% of the current sample use mobile apps for learning further supports the ecological validity of MALL for pedagogic delivery of Legal English at GCUF. The keen desire to build court advocacy skills (D4:  $M = 3.68$ ) and learn critical case analysis rather than translation (D5:  $M = 3.64$ ) also means that students' wants are not simply instrumental, but professionally purposive (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987).

Results from the ANOVA have pedagogical implications. That Beginner-level students perceive greater oral lacks and legal reasoning deficits than Advanced students - but no such differences in the perception of gaps or MALL readiness - implies the need for differentiated teaching strategies. Students at Beginner level require extensive support in legal English skills, while the fact that MALL readiness is high (and equivalent) across the proficiency spectrum suggests that mobile-assisted features would be widely accepted and not be a disadvantage to lower-proficiency students. This echoes Ali's (2024) suggestion that the "flipped classroom" design, where basic knowledge is provided online outside class-time and in-class time is devoted to argumentation and advocacy practice, is a useful model for legal English delivery in Pakistan.

The strong correlation between perceived need (Section C) and MALL readiness (Section D) ( $r = .568$ ) implies that the students most conscious of current provision's inadequacy will be the most keen to embrace mobile learning opportunities. This motivational consideration is an important strength for course designers at institutions like GCUF where resource constraints prevent traditional course increases in size but mobile technologies can provide a scalable and cost-effective supplement. The strong correlation between oral lacks and legal reasoning ( $r = .632$ ) suggests an integrated pedagogical need: courses that focus on argumentation and reasoning skills will also target the oral lacks in legal English, given the collocation of these skills in high-stakes environments such as moot courts, oral arguments and courtroom advocacy.

### ***5.1 Oral/Speaking Lacks: Convergence and Extension***

The present study's Section A findings build on and supplement Ahmad's (2011) pioneering research on spoken English in Pakistani tertiary legal education. Ahmad (2011) identified the presence of lacks in law students' presentations, moot court and oral argumentation, but did not measure these lacks on a valid Likert scale or partition them by proficiency level. The current study replicates Ahmad's pattern of moderate oral lacks among students (Section A  $M = 2.93$ ,  $SD = 0.74$ ) while offering two additions to the analysis: (a) it

pinpoints the particular item of training in pronunciation of Legal Latin maxims as the most strongly felt oral lacks (A5:  $M = 3.29$ ), a phonological-lexical dimension absent from Ahmad's (2011) questionnaire; and (b) via ANOVA, it confirms that Beginner students report significantly more oral lacks than Advanced students ( $p = .016$ ), offering a proficiency-stratified diagnostic that Ahmad's study did not provide.

In the international context, Nhap (2022) identified linguistic problems as the main issue in the legal English reading comprehension of Vietnamese law students, a finding that correlates with the present study's documentation of difficulties with formal tone (A3:  $M = 2.82$ ) and vocabulary to speak about legal matters (A4:  $M = 2.93$ ). AL-ISSA (2007), from Oman, also noted that the time devoted to English instruction in class - and lack of teaching materials - limited the scope for legal communication skills, a systemic issue also documented by Naveed (2016) and Baig et al. (2023) in Pakistan.

### **5.2 Legal Reasoning: Confirming the Memorisation-over-Reasoning Bias**

This study's Section B results represent the first Likert-scale, student-reported confirmation of a pattern that previous studies have observed but not quantified: the memorisation bias in Pakistani law students' previous education (B5:  $M = 3.28$ ). Qualitative stakeholder analysis (Mehtar 2020) and stakeholder interviews (Baig et al. 2023) by Mehtar and Baig et al. respectively, detected this bias towards memorisation. Jamshad et al. (2021) reported from supervisors' perspectives that legal research - a higher-order reasoning activity - was one of the top two competency gaps of new graduates. The present study reports this qualitative agreement in a quantitative form of student self-report, showing that 64% of the sample rated themselves at either the "Agree" or "Strongly Agree" response for item B5 ("My previous education was more about memorising than reasoning").

Khan et al. (2024) reported high means for argumentation and critical thinking needs ( $M = 3.61-3.67$ ), which corroborates the present study's Section B composite ( $M = 3.06$ ). The absolute mean difference probably has to do with the nature of the items: Khan et al.'s items measured the desire for higher-order skills (a "wants" construct), while the present study's Section B measured both the current deficit in reasoning and the practical need for more applied teaching (a "lacks" and "necessities" construct). The consistency across studies despite the measurement perspective bolsters this finding.

### **5.3 Curriculum Gap Perceptions: Local Specificity alongside National Pattern**

The present study's Section C composites ( $M = 3.28$ ) and, especially, the rating of a specialised Legal English course as necessary for career success (C2:  $M = 3.40$ ) are in line with the national picture painted by Khan et al. (2024), who concluded from a larger sample that current English courses were rated as insufficient ( $M = 3.54-3.75$ ). But the present study adds an institutional perspective: item C3 ('Current textbooks and materials are too disconnected from the Pakistani legal system';  $M = 3.19$ ) specifically confirms Naveed's (2016) curriculum-design argument and Siddiqui et al.'s (2023) call for a content-based ELP course built on Pakistani legal materials. This synergy between a curriculum theorist, a course designer and a student survey offers a mutually corroborating perspective from three methodological angles.

Yatroun (2020) concluded that Iranian international law students must be able to read, brief, articulate and argue cases, skills that aren't sufficiently developed in current Pakistani curricula, as Baig et al. (2023) confirmed. Herlina and Said (2022) found after an Indonesian needs analysis that specific vocabulary continues to be the main obstacle to communicating legal English, which echoes the present study's finding of legal terminology as a major oral gap (A4:  $M = 2.93$ ) and the curriculum disconnect (C3).

### **5.4 MALL Readiness: Institutional Confirmation of National Trend**

The most unique contribution of the present study is the level and consistency of MALL readiness and aspirational wants across proficiency levels (Section D  $M = 3.65$ ; ANOVA:  $F =$

0.90,  $p = .408$ ). The Khan et al. (2024) study defined MALL readiness at the national level ( $M = 3.68-3.85$ ; Cronbach  $\alpha = .93$ ), finding more than 75% of Pakistani law undergraduates endorse mobile-assisted learning, while four-factor analysis accounted for more than 60% variance in MALL-related factors. The present study does not replicate factor analysis, but confirms the pattern in a particular institution: 81.3% of GCUF students already use mobile apps for learning, Section D items means are closely clustered between 3.60 and 3.69, and the most prominent inter-domain correlation is between perception of a gap in current provision (Section C) with MALL readiness (Section D) at  $r = .568$ , suggesting that students who most keenly perceive a gap in current provision are also most enthusiastic about mobile enhancements.

This discovery extends beyond replicating Khan et al. (2024) in two respects. First, it demonstrates the presence of MALL readiness within a single public law college, rendering it useful for institutional-level curriculum development, rather than just policy. Second, it establishes a correlation structure between lacks/necessities and MALL wants, documenting a motivational mechanism - a perceived gap leading to the intent to adopt technology which Khan et al.'s cross-site design did not allow to be studied. Ali's (2024) suggestion to integrate flipped classroom in Pakistani law education offers a pedagogic framework in which this motivational fit could be translated into classroom practice.

### **5.5 Points of Divergence**

Two areas of discrepancy between the current study and previous research should be noted. First, the present study found no statistically significant gender differences in any of the four section composites (all  $p > .14$ ) compared with Khan et al. (2024), who found significant gender effects on some subscales. This is likely due to the gender imbalance in the GCUF sample (155 males and 36 females), which greatly diminishes the statistical power of gender comparisons. Second, the mean score for the Section A composite ( $M = 2.93$ ) in the present study is lower than the needs means reported in most international comparisons (Rumalessin & Farah, 2021; Herlina & Said, 2022), which suggests that GCUF students' perceptions of the severity of their oral deficit are somewhat lower than in many other jurisdictions - perhaps because their dominant pedagogical culture of rote learning (confirmed in B5) has not yet exposed them to enough oral tasks to allow them to perceive the full extent of their deficit.

### **5.6 Contribution of the Study**

The methodological contribution of the study is its design and validation of a tightly structured, multi-dimensional ESP needs analysis instrument, which builds on generic needs analysis models like Hutchinson and Waters (1987) by operationalising it with metrical rigour and without undue redundancies; unlike the extensive but less rigorously mapped instrument of Khan et al. (2024), this instrument ensures that each item is critically linked with the analytically relevant needs dimension, thus enhancing interpretive validity while preserving statistical integrity, as witnessed by an optimal mean-inter-item correlation ( $\bar{r} = .302$ ) that avoids both fragmentation and redundancy. Just as importantly, its methodological flexibility, evinced in its deployment through Google Forms, highlights the accessibility of its approach in resource-poor institutions - a key, yet overlooked, element in higher education research in Pakistan.

At the practical and policy level, the study offers more than diagnosis, but prescription, by providing an evidence-informed template for Legal English curriculum development at GCUF: it pinpoints specific sub-skills of legal argumentation and reasoning as foundational needs that must be scaffolded, especially for lower-proficiency learners; it provides an empirical rationale for institutionalizing a dedicated Legal English course that incorporates local legal discourse rather than global, decontextualized materials; and it confirms the pedagogic efficacy of Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL), not as a technocratic

gimmick but as a validated platform with high user uptake (81.3%), thereby lending quantitative legitimacy to flipped classroom models. At a macro level, its major contribution is in proposing a template of replicable, context-sensitive methodology that facilitates needs analysis in a proficiency-stratified manner across law colleges in Pakistan, thereby opening a path towards cumulative, evidence-based policy reform in legal English education, rather than the current haphazard, intuitive approaches.

## 6. CONCLUSION

This research offers the instrument-driven needs assessment of Legal English proficiency lacks among LLB students at the College of Law, Government College University Faisalabad (GCUF) in Pakistan. Using the Hutchinson and Waters (1987) tripartite framework, it surveys the scope of lacks, necessities and wants among 193 students to provide a statistically validated "landscape" for curriculum development. Three conclusions are central. First, students at GCUF display moderate but uniform lacks in oral legal English and legal reasoning skills, with Beginner-level students showing these to a much greater extent. Second, all proficiency groups share a perception of a gap between current English instruction and work expectations and support for the need of a dedicated Legal English course. Third, and most important, students are highly and uniformly MALL-ready, and possess aspirational wants that are oriented toward advocacy, critical case analysis and contextualised language skills that are not currently being addressed.

The findings have implications for GCUF, and for policy development in the area of legal English curriculum in Pakistan. They point to the need to develop a Legal English module that: (a) addresses the oral and argumentation gaps identified in Sections A and B through task and communicative approaches; (b) incorporates explicit discussion of the Pakistani legal system with case law and courtroom language as key texts; and (c) includes MALL components (vocabulary apps, mobile quizzes, case brief tools) that exploit students' readiness for technology and extend the classroom into other settings.

Future research should build on this study by incorporating target situation analysis from the perspectives of legal professionals, judges and legal instructors at GCUF and other institutions. Longitudinal approaches documenting competence gains in response to reformed Legal English curricula would add to the body of evidence. The current study's cross-sectional design, single-site focus and self-reported data collection limit its findings; these limitations must be considered when interpreting and extending its implications.

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