
PERCEIVED DIFFICULTIES IN E-LEARNING DURING THE FIRST TERM AT UNIVERSITY

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Abstract

Purpose—the focus of this article is to explore difficulties that are encountered by students during the first term at university. It is well known that students can have various problems in learning English and make mistakes in grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation. The native language of a learner affects learning and using English. Speaking and e-listening are the skills that are more common on an everyday basis than reading and writing. Moreover, these skills are more difficult to master. English vocabulary presents another problem for language learners. Albeit, at the university level students study English for Specific Purposes (ESP), in other words, the foreign language for their future profession, and they might face particular difficulties in their studies of ESP.

Design/methodology/approach—the research paper adopts the qualitative research approach. The questionnaire on learner perceptions of difficulties in e-learning was administered to students of three different specializations. Students' self-assessments of achievements or failures were analysed.

Findings. The results indicated that perceptions of difficulties to adapting to university studies depended on their chosen specialization. The findings show that undergraduates of all three investigated specializations encounter the same difficulties, but to a different degree. In other words, there are no significantly specific difficulties due to the complexity of the professional vocabulary that students must learn. The ratings of Psychology, Social Work and Public Policy and Management students reveal higher mean values and wider range of Standard Deviations than reported by other researchers (Berman, Cheng, 2001). The results obtained imply that Lithuanian learners are more positive than their foreign counterparts. Computations of Pearson's correlations coefficients demonstrate that there are some good correlational relationships within each specialization.

Research limitations. A limited number of respondents might raise a question of the reliability of the findings and require a further study into the issue. The respondents in this research were students of three different specializations, namely, Psychology (68), Social Work (26) and Public Policy and Management (52), who study ESP at the Faculty of Social Policy at Mykolas Romeris University in Vilnius, Lithuania.

Practical implications. The respondents were asked to indicate the degree of difficulty they had with the ESP language skills on the Likert's scale ranging from "very difficult" (1) to "very easy" (5). The analysis of the responses by a means of the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software suggests that despite the limited number of the respondents, the results may be extended beyond the studied samples.

Originality/Value. The value of this study encompasses the statistical processing of the responses, which should prove whether the findings are reliable or not.

Keywords: English for Specific Purposes, productive and receptive language skills, difficulties in learning, different specializations, e-listening, e-learning.

Research type: research paper.

1. Introduction

It is well known that e-learning of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) presents a considerable challenge for undergraduate students worldwide. The aspects of academic communicative competence, such as reading, e-listening, writing and speaking skills, are crucial to students' successful progress through the syllabus.

This article explores the language related problems that are encountered by the students during the first term at university. The findings were obtained from 1) the survey of responses of respondents of three different specializations, and 2) self-assessments of undergraduates experience. The survey covered the difficulties that students faced in the transition from secondary schools to university studies by emphasizing the skills of writing, reading, e-listening and speaking. Our questionnaire was designed after Evans and Morrison (2011), who investigated the opinions of undergraduates during the first term at university.

This paper aims to investigate students' attitudes to the ESP activities at a tertiary level and drawing conclusions about their strengths and weaknesses in English depending on the specialization.

The objective of the research is to explore the difficulties in learning ESP that students encounter during the first term at university.

The research methods used: a survey of student perceptions of various class activities; statistical treatment of students' responses using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences software (SPSS) in order to establish the level of significance for the 3 samples of participants, and analysis of self-assessments of achievements.

The respondents in this research are students of three different specializations, who study psychology, social work and public policy and management at the Faculty of Social Policy at Mykolas Romeris University, Vilnius, Lithuania.

2. Literature Review

Learning receptive and productive skills presents a number of problems to students mainly due to the language complexity (Harmer, 2001). In reading and listening it includes sentence length and the number of unfamiliar words, which play part in comprehensibility. Another factor might be previous unsuccessful experiences that frustrate and demotivate learners. The teacher's job is to persuade learners who have low expectations of success to change negative attitudes into optimistic viewpoints (Harmer, 2001:208).

The learning of productive skills of speaking and writing is closely linked with the receptive skills of listening and reading. There are a number of reasons why language production is difficult. First of all, learners must have the knowledge of appropriate vocabulary and learn to perform the tasks of communication spontaneously (Harmer, 2001:259). In spoken production speakers need to use connected speech, common lexical phrases, show non-verbal means of interaction in face-to-face communication and be able to structure their speech and reformulate ideas.

The important features of language instruction include formal evaluation of learning outcomes, learner self-assessment of success or failure, monitoring learners' accomplishments and giving feedback. Integration of self-assessment encourages learners to be autonomous, can increase motivation and raise awareness of language (Black and William, 1998). The study by R. Berman and L. Cheng (2001) focused on skills that were perceived difficult by 53 undergraduates. The most difficult language area was the productive skill of speaking — the Mean is equal to 2.83. The difficulty rating for listening was 2.26, and the least difficult was reading with the Mean of 2.22. The productive skill of writing is significantly more difficult than the receptive skills, with the Mean ratings of 2.42. It should be emphasized that the statistical significance of the data was set at the level of $p < 0.05$ (95%). As all the Means are under 3 in this research, it implies that undergraduates perceive all items to be 'somewhat difficult' in accordance to the formulation of the survey.

One of the authors has been investigating the self-assessment issues since 2003. Two important facts emerged in the first published paper on reading and writing problems (Kavaliauskienė, 2003): learners' reading rates in English are low, and writing/reading involves translating ideas from English into mother tongue and vice versa. The comparative data of longitudinal research into learner self-assessment in 2004 (Kavaliauskienė, 2004) and 2008 (Kavaliauskienė, 2008) were also reported. There were 300 students involved in this study. Learners' preferences included difficulties in speaking — 65 per cent of respondents, and writing vocabulary tests — 15 per cent of respondents. Self-assessment of written work (Kavaliauskienė, 2008) indicated the following problem areas: vocabulary — 49 per cent of respondents, comprehension of a text sentences — 56 per cent of respondents. It was concluded that students were able to assess their performance successfully and objectively. Moreover, students supported the idea that self-assessment was the essential component of quality learning because it encouraged students to analyse their own progress and improve language skills.

The language-related difficulties encountered by the undergraduates during the first term at university were analysed by Evans and Morrison (2011). Their data were from two sources: a large-scale questionnaire survey completed by 3,009 first year students and an interview-based longitudinal study of the experiences of 28 undergraduates at Hong Kong Polytechnic University. The findings reveal that the students' principal sources of difficulty were writing, reading and subject-specific vocabulary. The concrete results scored on a Likert scale are as follows (Evans, Morrison, 2011): 1) using specialist vocabulary — the Mean value is 2.48; 2) speaking accurately — the Mean value is 2.41; 3) academic writing — the Mean value is 2.64; 4) reading skills were slightly better — the Mean value is 2.83, while 5) following a discussion scored 3.06.

The students who are currently in their first year at university belong to the Generation Y which is often referred to as the Internet Generation (Reilly, 2012). Generation Y is identified as confident and technologically advanced (Lancaster and Stillman, 2002). According to Reilly (2012), the examination of Gen Y is on the rise at universities. However there is a gap in the English language teaching literature on their learning difficulties.

This paper focuses on investigating students' self-assessment of the ESP activities at tertiary level and drawing conclusions about their strengths and weaknesses in English depending on the chosen specialization.

3. Respondents and Data Collection

The research was conducted at Mykolas Romeris University, Vilnius. The participants were students specializing in Psychology, Social Work and Public Policy and Management and studying English for Specific Purposes. In this research, there were 68 students of psychology, 26 students of social work and 52 students of public policy and management. The students entered the university after having studied general English at secondary schools. The design of the ESP courses for each specialization

reflects the students' needs in professional language. The courses were adjusted to the requirements for a Bachelor degree. The level of proficiency is B2 or C1 according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. The amount of time spent by students in the second language classes was 8 hours per week for one term, which amounts to about 110 hours of English instruction. The data were collected through administering a survey that was designed following the survey by S. Evans and B. Morrison (2011) and in accordance with the standards for surveys in Social Sciences (Dornyei, 2003). The questionnaire was administered to all respondents, and the analysis of responses was conducted. The obtained data were statistically processed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software, interpreted and described further on.

4. Research Methodology

The findings presented below were obtained from two sources: 1) a questionnaire survey completed by three samples of respondents, and 2) students' self-assessment of ESP skills. The questionnaire covers aspects of reading, writing, e-listening and speaking by following the ideas of S. Evans and B. Morrison (2011) that were relevant to our respondents. It was designed in accordance with the accepted standards of constructing surveys (Dornyei, 2003). The relevant part of the questionnaire consists of 8 statements, to which students responded on a 5-point Likert's scale ranging from 1 (very difficult) to 5 (very easy). Statistical processing of the findings by means of the Software Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) included the following computations: frequencies of responses, Cronbach's Alpha coefficients of reliability, the Means and Standard Deviations for the responses of three samples of respondents of different specializations, and Pearson's correlation coefficients to determine whether there are any correlations between the studied samples. Self-assessment has been employed as a way of encouraging participants to reflect on their learning experience, achievements or failures. Students' weblogs contain their reflections — self-assessment of performance in various activities such as making Power Point Presentations, writing tests on specialist vocabulary definitions, participating in discussions on professional issues and communicating ideas clearly and fluently.

5. Statistical Procedure

Statistical processing by a means of Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) allows checking how comparable and reliable the data are. Internal consistency reliability is usually estimated by computing Cronbach's Alpha coefficient. According to Dornyei (2003), results are reliable if the value of Cronbach's Alpha coefficient is at least .70, which is acceptable in most Social Science research situations. Next step in correlational analysis is to compute Pearson's correlation coefficients, which

interpret the degree of relationship between the samples. In order to determine whether a correlation coefficient shows a real relationship, it is necessary to determine the probability of its being significant, i.e. the value of *Sig p*. Statistical significance with *p* values of .01 or .05 indicates that it is meaningful. Once statistical significance has been established, the meaningfulness of the correlation coefficient depends on its magnitude. A correlation coefficient can range between a negative one (–1.00) and a positive one (+1.00). Positive coefficients indicate direct relationships, while negative coefficients indicate inverse relationships. If a correlation is close to one, either positive or negative, it indicates a very strong relationship, while coefficients that are near zero show a very weak relationship.

6. Results and Discussion

This section reports the students' responses and analyses the key points that emerged. The respondents were asked to indicate the degree of difficulty they had with the ESP language skills on the Likert's scale ranging from "very difficult" (1) to "very easy" (5). For the sake of clarity in visual displays of the data, the positive responses (easy and very easy) and the negative responses (very difficult and difficult) have been added up. However, neutral responses have also been accounted for in the statistical treatment. Thus, further on the discussion will be focused on the analysis of positive and negative responses. In order to visualize the differences in the respondents' perceptions, the frequencies of positive responses in percentage are plotted in Chart 1 and of negative responses in Chart 2. The bottom parts of columns in both Charts represent the responses by the students of Psychology (PS), the middle parts show the responses of Social Work (SW) students, and the upper parts of columns display the responses of Public Policy and Management (PPM) students.

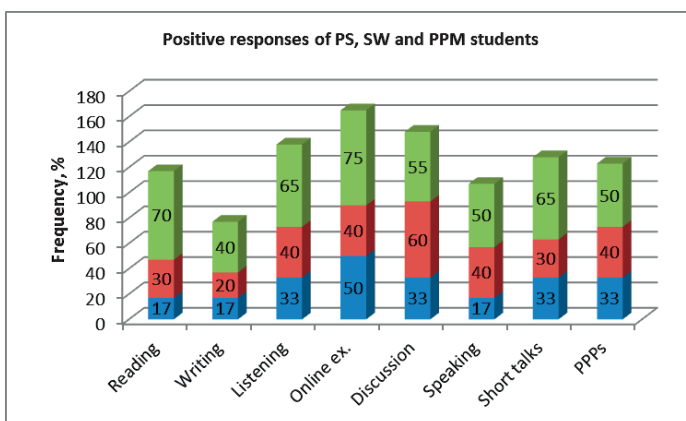


Chart 1. Positive responses to the survey statements. Blue sections show responses of Psychology (PS) students; red sections show responses of Social Work (SW) students; green sections show responses of Public Policy and Management (PPM) students

As it is seen in Chart 1 and Chart 2, the most difficult is a skill of writing — the second column in Chart 2, and a skill of speaking — the 6th column in Chart 2, while reading (1st column in Chart 1), listening (the 3rd column in Chart 1), online exercises (the 4th column in Chart 1) and participation in discussions (the 5th column in Chart 1) are considered quite easy. Short talks and Power Point Presentations (PPPs) are ready-made speeches, i.e. prepared at home and delivered in front of the class, are also assessed positively, i.e. easy or very easy. However in order to analyse the differences between responses thoroughly it is essential to process the data statistically. This part of the research is to be described further on.

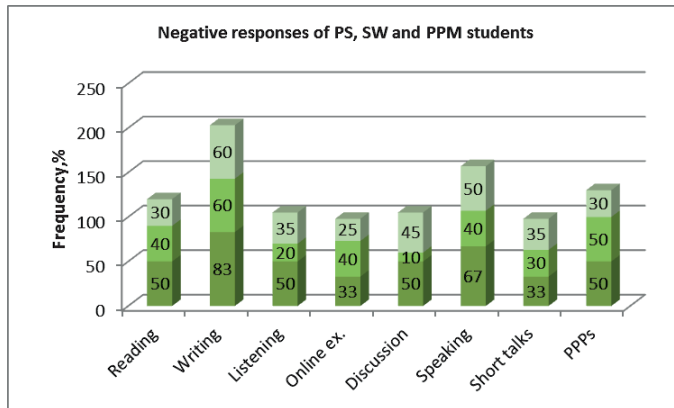


Chart 2. Negative responses to the survey statements. Bottom sections show responses of Psychology (PS) students; middle sections show responses of Social Work (SW) students; upper sections show responses of Public Policy and Management (PPM) students

It may be seen in Chart 3 that there are no significant differences in the Means between the three specializations. The mean values vary from the lowest of 2.14 to the highest of 3.23. The data on the Means by Evans and Morrison (2011) are from 2.41 to 3.06 and the range is more narrow.

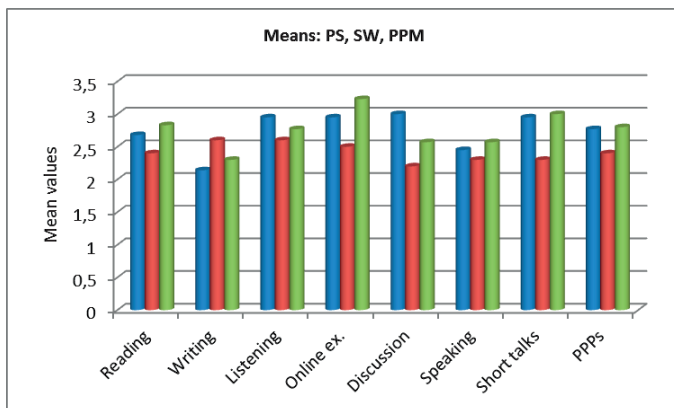


Chart 3. The Means of the responses. The 1st columns (blue) show the responses of Psychology (PS) students, 2nd columns (red) — the responses of Social Work (SW) students, 3rd columns (green) — the responses of Public Policy and Management (PPM) students

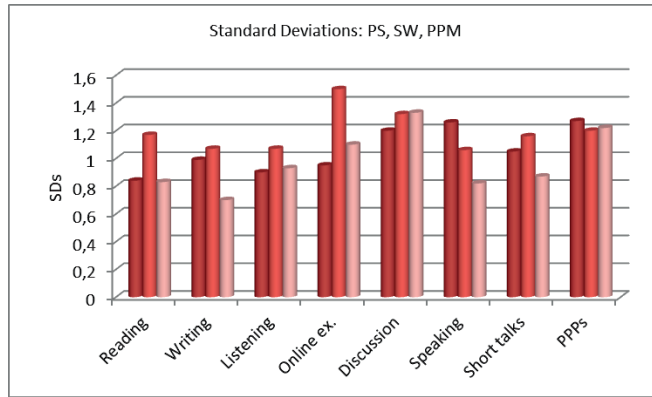


Chart 4. The Standard Deviations (SDs) of the responses. 1st columns show the responses of Psychology (PS) students, 2nd columns — the responses of Social Work (SW) students, 3rd columns – the responses of Public Policy and Management (PPM) students.

Chart 4 displays the Standard Deviations (SDs) for each specialization. It is important to highlight that SDs vary within the wide range from 0.63 to 1.42, i.e. the upper limit is equal to more than double lower limit. These findings are significant because they indicate the scatter of the mean values from the average. There was no information on SDs in the article by Evans and Morrison (2011), therefore we have been unable to compare the differences. However, we have been able to compare our data with the self-assessed difficulties in language skills that were reported by R. Berman and L. Chang (2001). The results are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Self-assessed difficulties in language skills: our data (PS, SW, PPM) versus data from R. Berman and L. Cheng (2001)

Skills↓	Psychology (PS) specialization Means & Standard Deviations		Social work (SW) specialization Means & Standard Deviations		Public Policy & Management (PPM) specialization Means & Standard Deviations		R. Berman and L. Cheng (2001) data Means & Standard Deviations	
Listening	2.95	0.90	2.60	1.17	2.77	0.94	2.26	0.78
Reading	2.68	0.84	2.40	1.17	2.83	0.83	2.22	0.71
Speaking	3.00	1.20	2.30	1.06	2.57	0.82	2.83	0.91
Writing	2.14	0.99	2.60	1.07	2.30	0.70	2.42	0.84

It is obvious from Table 1 that the ratings of PS, SW and PPM students are higher than obtained by R. Berman and L. Cheng (2001) except for the skill of writing by PS students, which is equal to 2.14 and is very low. Moreover, the scatter of the Means in our samples, which is demonstrated by the values of SDs, is also wider.

As it has already been mentioned, the responses in Chart 1 and Chart 2 were processed statistically. The values of Cronbach’s Alpha coefficient are equal to 0.909 for positive and 0.838 for negative responses, which is considered acceptable in most Social Science research situations, so the obtained results are interpreted as reliable. The normality of responses was checked by computing Kolmogorov-Smirnov Tests for all samples. In all cases, test distributions are found to have been normal. This satisfies the condition for computation of Pearson’s correlation coefficients *rho*. Pearson’s coefficients *rho* were computed for each specialization and between the different specializations. Correlation coefficients for the responses **within** each specialization are essential in order to check if they are consistent. Computations of responses **between** different specializations are important to find out whether there are any relationships between samples. The results in Table 2 show Pearson’s coefficients *rho* and Significance levels *Sig. p* computed **within** each specialization.

Table 2. Pearson’s correlation coefficients rho and significance levels Sig. p (positive responses 2-tailed) **within** each specialization. *Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (95%).
 ** Correlation is significant at 0.01 level (99%)

Respondents → Statements ↓	PS sample	SW sample	PPM sample
1. Reading course book texts is very easy/easy	0.428* 0.047	0.669* 0.034	0.383* 0.037
2. Writing definitions is very easy /easy	0.227 0.30	0.753* 0.012	0.415* 0.023
3. Listening is very easy/easy	0.439* 0.041	0.845** 0.002	0.581** 0.001
4. Doing online exercises is very easy/easy	0.801* 0.031	0.941** 0.000	0.634** 0.000
5. Participation in discussions is very easy/easy	0.789** 0.000	0.783* 0.016	0.581** 0.001
6. Speaking impromptu is very easy/easy	0.789** 0.000.	0.965** 0.000	0.551** 0.002
7. Short talks are very easy/easy	0.673** 0.001	0.730* 0.016	0.498** 0.005
8. Making Power Point Presentation is very easy/easy	0.673** 0.001	0.869** 0.001	0.285 0.13

Table 2 shows that there are some correlations **within** each specialization at high probabilities either 95 per cent (*Sig p* = 0.05) or 99 per cent (*Sig p* = 0.01). However, if the values of correlation coefficients do not exceed 0.6, it means that although correlations exist, they are weak. Highlighted in green are rather small values of *rho*, so even right values of *Sig p* (0.05 or 0.01) do not make the correlational relationships strong. The highlighted results in yellow display the fact that no correlation exists for the statement

“2. Writing definitions is very easy/easy” in PS sample and for the statement “8. Making PPP is very easy/easy” in PPM sample, because the values of Pearson correlation coefficients are too small: 0.285 and 0.227, respectively, and the probabilities do not reach the minimum value of 95 per cent, they are equal to 87 per cent and 70 per cent, respectively.

Table 3. Pearson's correlation coefficients ρ and significance levels $Sig. p$ (positive responses 2-tailed) between two samples.
**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (99%)

Respondents → Statements ↓	PS vs. SW samples
4. Doing online exercises is very easy/easy	1.000** 0.000
5. Participation in discussions is very easy/easy	1.000** 0.000
6. Speaking impromptu is very easy/easy	1.000** 0.000

Table 3 shows Pearson's correlations coefficients ρ and significance levels $Sig. p$ between two specializations, PS versus SW. There are very good correlations between the responses for three statements at the probability of 99 per cent. It means that the findings can be applied to other samples outside the investigated ones. However, no correlations were detected between other samples, i.e. PS versus PPM and SW versus PPM, so these findings are not included in Table 3. Therefore, it can be concluded that the latter results might be due to chance and cannot be extended beyond the studied samples. ANOVA analysis has not been applied due to the absence of correlations between PS versus PPM and SW versus PPM samples. The reasons for absent correlations between these samples are not clear and more research is needed to clarify this issue.

Students' Self-Assessment

Here are a few passages from students' weblogs to exemplify how they self-assess their performance and feel about important activities to improve language skills (Kavaliauskienė, 2012).

<http://jbrukauskaite.blogspot.com>

My performance in vocabulary definition tests was not as good as I expected. Although I have prepared for the tests but maybe there was not enough time spent to study the definitions. It was also hard because I had to learn a subject in English when I don't know it well in Lithuanian and some of the definitions were too complex.

The topics of short talks were very interesting, so it was a pleasure to prepare for them. I felt more comfortable presenting my short talks in front of the class than presenting my presentation.

<http://kdaugelaite.blogspot.com>

I liked online exercises from the course book because the themes of listening were really interesting. Also it was not very difficult for me. I think it is a very good way to revise ESP modules.

Speaking impromptu in class was hard for me because I felt not so good when I needed to speak in front of the class. Speaking is generally hard for me, but during the semester my speaking skills got better and now I am very pleased with my success.

<http://jgasiukeviciute.blogspot.com>

Speaking impromptu in class was the hardest task, because I'm not used to speaking in the English language without preparation. But I think that this class activity was helpful and my speaking skills have improved.

<http://ajarutyte.blogspot.com>

I like making PPPs. It was interesting to search for nice pictures, interesting information and it would be good to do it in Lithuanian language. But it was a difficult job for me. Also it requires a lot of time, because you must know all information in order to answer the audience questions.

<http://vdaknys.blogspot.com/>

Tests on ESP vocabulary definitions were my biggest problem. Personally I think they are not very motivational, I had problems studying for them, they require a lot time to spend just on reading them and repeating them in mind. On definition tests I did not perform well in comparison to other tasks. Online listening practice tasks were quite thoughtful and I enjoyed doing them. They were done very professionally, were easy to listen and to understand. I enjoyed the information given by the speakers, and found it very useful for overall knowledge. My own performance on these tasks was satisfying at the least. Short talks were very disappointing due to lack of questions from the students, because the students were not listening very well and were not able to ask nor answer any questions. Personally I enjoyed talking and I am very happy with my performance.

<http://abakaityte.blogspot.com/>

Traditional listening to cassettes was very difficult. I can't even understand why. Maybe the reason is that traditional listening contained difficult themes, used vocabulary and pronunciation. So I had to concentrate hard while listening to the recordings.

<http://kbareikyte.blogspot.com/>

Speaking impromptu in class was the most difficult activity for me, because I thought that my speaking skills are not so good and also sometimes I didn't have enough time to think what I want to say. Besides this, I can't overcome my fear speaking in front of the audience.

Summing up the above-mentioned passages of self-assessments from the students' weblogs, it may be stated that problematic skills remain writing and speaking. However,

students' perceptions of their achievements are positive, which is essential for improving language skills in the future.

7. Conclusions

The hypothesis for the present study was the notion that students' difficulties depend on their chosen specialization. The findings show that the undergraduates of all three investigated specializations encounter the same difficulties but to a different degree. In other words, there are no significantly specific difficulties due to the complexity of professional vocabulary that students must learn. The ratings of Psychology, Social Work and Public Policy and Management students reveal higher mean values and wider range of Standard Deviations than reported by other researchers (Berman, Cheng, 2001). These results imply that Lithuanian learners are more positive than their foreign counterparts. Computations of Pearson's correlations coefficients demonstrate that there are some good correlational relationships within each specialization. According to Table 2, good correlations are found for the statements 4, 5 and 6 for the Psychology sample of the respondents, and for the statements 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8 for the Social Work sample of the respondents. These computations imply that the obtained results are not due to chance and may be extended beyond these two samples. However, no good correlations are detected within the Public Policy and Management sample, which means that these findings are due to chance. Moreover, there are just a few reliable correlations **between** Psychology and Social Work samples. No correlations are found between PS versus PPM and SW versus PPM samples. The causes of absent correlations remain unsolved, so more research is needed to resolve this issue.

Appendix. Questionnaire "The First Term at University"

- Reading course book texts is
 - 1) very difficult, 2) not difficult, 3) not sure, 4) easy, 5) very easy.
- Writing definitions of ESP terms is
 - 1) very difficult, 2) not difficult, 3) not sure, 4) easy, 5) very easy.
- Listening to cassette or online recordings is
 - 1) very difficult, 2) not difficult, 3) not sure, 4) easy, 5) very easy.
- Doing online exercises (MC or Gap Fill) is
 - 1) very difficult, 2) not difficult, 3) not sure, 4) easy, 5) very easy.
- Taking part in discussions is
 - 1) very difficult, 2) not difficult, 3) not sure, 4) easy, 5) very easy.
- Speaking impromptu in front of the audience is
 - 1) very difficult, 2) not difficult, 3) not sure, 4) easy, 5) very easy.
- Presenting short talks is
 - 1) very difficult, 2) not difficult, 3) not sure, 4) easy, 5) very easy.
- Making Power Point presentations is
 - 1) very difficult, 2) not difficult, 3) not sure, 4) easy, 5) very easy.

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UNIVERSITETO PIRMO KURSO STUDENTŲ SUNKUMAI MOKANTIS SPECIALYBĖS KALBOS ELEKTRONINĖJE APLINKOJE

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Santrauka. *Studentai su anglų kalba specialiesiems tikslams elektroninėje aplinkoje susipažįsta jau pirmaisiais mokslo metais, t. y. anksčiau nei su savo specialybės dalykais. Studentų lingvistinę kompetenciją lemia daug veiksnių. Žinoma, kad įvairiuose pasaulio universitetuose profesinę anglų kalbą (ESP) studijuojantys studentai susiduria su daugeliu sunkumų. Viena iš priežasčių yra ta, kad anglų kalbos tarimas, leksikos vartosena bei gramatinės struktūros kelia studentams nemažai problemų. Taip pat gimtosios kalbos įgūdžiai turi įtakos anglų kalbos vartojimui. Dažniau pritaikomi e. klausymo ir kalbėjimo įgūdžiai nei skaitymo*

ar rašymo, kuriuos yra sunkiau įsisavinti. Kadangi universitetinėse profesinės užsienio kalbos studijose studentai mokosi savo būsimos profesijos kalbos, anglų kalbos specialybės žodymas, kurio dėka studentai gali gerai suprasti dėstomo dalyko esmę, yra dar viena rimta problema.

Straipsnyje analizuojami sunkumai, su kuriais studentai, studijuojantys profesinę anglų kalbą Mykolo Romerio universitete, susiduria pirmo semestro metu. Tyrime dalyvavo Socialinės politikos fakulteto trijų specializacijų, psichologijos (68), socialinio darbo (26) ir viešosios politikos ir vadybos (52), pirmo kurso studentai. Anglų kalbos kursas atspindėjo studentų profesinės kalbos poreikius ir atitiko socialinių mokslų bakalauro laipsnio reikalavimus, nustatytus ES dokumente „The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages“. Studentų lygis buvo B2 ir C1.

Sudarant apklausos anketas, buvo remtasi Evans ir Morrison (2011) parengtomis anketomis, kurias mokslininkai naudojo tyrinėdami universiteto pirmo semestro studentų nuomonę apie sunkumus, mokantis užsienio kalbų. Naudojant Linkerto penkių balų skalės sistemą respondentų atsakymai svyravo nuo (1) „labai sunku“ iki (5) „labai lengva“.

Šio darbo tikslas išsiaiškinti, ar sunkumai, su kuriais susiduria Mykolo Romerio universiteto pirmo kurso studentai, priklauso nuo pasirinktos specializacijos. Žinoma, kad mokymo(si) kokybei didelę reikšmę turi studentų savianalizė. Straipsnyje analizuojama studentų pasiekimų ir nesėkmių savianalizė. Savianalizės tyrimus viena iš autorių pradėjo dar 2003 m.

Ribotas respondentų skaičius gali įtakoti rezultatų tikrumą, todėl reikėtų tolesnių studijų. Gauti anketos atsakymai, statistiškai apdoroti naudojant SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) programinį paketą, dažnai rodo, kad nepaisant riboto respondentų skaičiaus, rezultatus galima taikyti didesnėse respondentų grupėse.

Tyrimo rezultatai parodė, kad sunkumai, prisitaikant prie universitetinių studijų, priklauso nuo pasirinktos specializacijos. Pagrindinė šių tyrimų išvada, kad visų trijų tirtų specializacijų pirmo kurso studentai susiduria su tais pačiais sunkumais, bet skirtingu laipsniu. Kitaip sakant, nėra reikšmingų specifinių sunkumų dėl specialybės žodyno, kuri studentai turi išmokti, sudėtingumo. Lyginant užsienio tyrinėtojų ir mūsų tyrimų rezultatus galima daryti išvadą, kad lietuviai studentai yra labiau pozityvūs vertinant savo profesinės kalbos įgūdžius nei užsienio studentai.

Reikšminiai žodžiai: profesinė anglų kalba, produktyvūs ir receptyvūs kalbos įgūdžiai, mokymosi sunkumai, įvairios specializacijos, e. klausymas, mokymas(is) elektroninėje aplinkoje.