
THE NEEDS ANALYSIS OF LITHUANIAN POLICE PATROL OFFICERS TO IMPROVE PROFESSIONAL ENGLISH

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Abstract. The paper investigates the problems that Lithuanian patrol officers encounter while communicating with foreigners in English in their work. It describes a study investigating the perceived English for Specific Purposes (ESP) needs of part-time students who work as Police Patrol (PP) officers in different Lithuanian cities. In this research the language learning strategies that patrol officers used are examined, the difficulties they face in communicating with foreigners are revealed, and suggestions for a remedial ESP training course are presented to meet the patrol officers needs for professional development.

Keywords: needs analysis, English for Specific Purposes, professional development.

INTRODUCTION

In Lithuania tourism has potential to continue growing every year which contributes to the country's economic growth. According to the Lithuanian Department of Statistics in 2013, accommodation establishments received 1.2 million foreign tourists. Compared to 2012, their number grew by 12.7 per cent¹. Lithuanian State Department of Tourism estimates that in 2013 Lithuania was the second in Europe by foreign visits growth. In order to respond to the needs of foreign visitors, police concentrate most of their patrols (vehicular and foot) to tourist and highly-populated areas. The tourism service has been oriented to the provision of services for international tourists who are either native English speakers or speakers of English as a second language². English, nowadays, is the main contender for the position of world lingua franca and not many people would disagree with its vital role playing as a global language to break the foreign language barrier and to communicate³. Tourism and culture centres in Lithuania have signed the agreement on cooperation with Chief Police

¹ Statistics on Accommodation Services. Available at: www.verslilietuva.lt/files/.../tourism [accessed 18/08/2014].

² Tourism in Lithuania. Available at: <http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/sectors/> [accessed 24/09/ 2014].

³ Crystal, D. (2000). The Cambridge encyclopedia of language. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, p.359.

Commissariats⁴. The appearance of such agreements was determined by similar appearance in different European countries. Police patrols help every guest of the city who appeals for help. The PP officers have full responsibility for tourists' safety as well as for offering general services. They assist foreign tourists in various ways, and English is a dominant means of communication. With regard to PP officers' functions and responsibilities to deliver good service and to provide the utmost safety for the international tourists, communicative English competence is considered the prior requisite. However, English competence of patrol officers is often insufficient for fulfilling their tasks. The explanation for this problem is that undergraduate students who participated in this research had already studied professional English in the first course. Unfortunately, they have forgotten the language during other years of study. That is why the PP officers who are in direct contact with foreigners have moderate problems communicating in English. Enhancing effective communication between patrol officers and foreign tourists is a worthwhile goal because the quality of communication may result in increased satisfaction on the part of the foreigners. The satisfaction is likely to result in more foreign tourists' arrival and longer visits.

This study **aims** to identify the needs of PP officers with the hope of providing appropriate communication skills, needed at the workplace.

The **tasks** of the research are the following:

- 1) to explore the problems experienced by patrol officers when communicating with foreign tourists in English;
- 2) to investigate the language learning strategies used by patrol officers;
- 3) based on the needs analysis, present suitable ESP training course suggested by PP officers.

With regard to data collection two types of **research methods** – questionnaire and interview – were employed.

A THEORETICAL OVERVIEW. NEEDS ANALYSIS

Today, a few disagree with Grant and Stanton⁵ that assessment of students' needs has an undeniable position in education and that it helps to diagnose students' problems. In addition,

⁴ Turistams padės policijos patruliai. Available at: <http://www.delfi/news/daily/hot/turistams> [accessed 02/10/2014].

⁵ Grant, J. and Stanton, F. (2000). The Effectiveness of Continuing Professional Development. Edinburgh.

Bagdonas⁶ supports the idea that determining the needs of language learners is the first step in designing curriculum.

One of the fundamental principles of language learning is that teaching programmes should be responsive to learners' needs. A needs analysis (NA) is a process of finding out as much as possible about effective communication in the learners' current and future domain of language use. The information about the learners' perceived difficulties is definitely useful in establishing the course goals⁷.

All ESP courses are based on a perceived need of some sort⁸. According to Robinson⁹, there are two key defining criteria of ESP. Firstly, ESP is goal directed, the learners learn English because they need it for work purposes. Secondly, it is developed based on a NA which intends to get the exact details of what learners really need.

The formal concept of NA was largely established during the 1970s by the Council of Europe in the field of ESP¹⁰ although the term "analysis of needs" first appeared in India in the 1920s¹¹. Defining NA is an often argued point as "the very concept of language needs has never been clearly defined and remains at best ambiguous"¹². However, in broad terms NA can be described as identifying "what learners will be required to do with the foreign language in the target situation and how learners might best master the target language during the period of training"¹³. The focus is on the learner. The needs of the learners have to be taken into account to make the students reach the intended language level. As it is indicated by Nunan¹⁴, "rather than fitting students to courses, courses should be designed to fit students".

PARTICIPANTS AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The respondent group included 52 part-time students from Mykolas Romeris University, Public Security Faculty, majoring in Law and Police Activities who had been in service for

⁶ Bagdonas, A., Jankauskaitė, I.(2012). Studentų poreikiai ir lūkesčiai:besimokančiųjų nuomonių analizė. VI tarptautinės-mokslinės-praktinės konferencijos straipsnių rinkinys. Kaunas, 2012/6.

⁷ Bilbokaitė, R.,Liukinevičienė, L. (2010). Studijų kokybės vertinimas:studentų poreikiai studijų procesui. Šiaulių universitetas.Jaunųjų mokslininkų darbai, 2010, Nr.2(27).

⁸ Hutchinson, T., and Waters, A.(1994). English for specific purposes: A learner-centered approach. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

⁹ Robinson, P. (2001). ESP Today: A Practitioner's Guide. Hertfordshire: Prentice-Hall.

¹⁰ Richterich, R. (1983). Case Studies in Identifying Language Needs. Oxford: Pergamon/Council of Europe.

¹¹ White, R.V. (1988). The ELT Curriculum: Design, Innovation and Management. Oxford: Blackwell.

¹² Richterich, R. (1983). Case Studies in Identifying Language Needs. Oxford: Pergamon/Council of Europe, p.2.

¹³ West, R. (1994). Needs Analysis in Language Teaching, 27/1,p.1.

¹⁴ Nunan, D. (1988). The Learner-centered Curriculum. Cambridge University Press, p.18.

more than five years. The study was carried out in the academic year 2013/2014. The participants worked as patrol officers in Kaunas, Klaipėda, Alytus and Vilnius Police Patrol Districts spending most of their time patrolling along roads and streets.

In order to acquire an overall picture of PP officers' needs, a questionnaire about the use of language learning strategies was completed by all the respondents. The questionnaire was constructed by the researcher based on the survey by Evans and Morrison¹⁵ and in accordance with the standards for surveys in Social Sciences¹⁶. The questionnaire used in the study was a two parts questionnaire designed to collect data on the subjects. The first part of the questionnaire asks for the information on the Direct Language Learning Strategies. The 2nd part concerns the Indirect Language Learning Strategies. To explore issues related to the PP officers' communicative English competency interviews were conducted with the PP officers to elicit their responses to English communication and to obtain the information of the nature of a desirable English training course for PP officers.

PROBLEMS OF PP OFFICERS IN COMMUNICATING IN ENGLISH WITH FOREIGNERS

The daily work of PP officers is not exactly the same as that of police in other departments where there is very little contact directly with foreign visitors. One of the main duties of PP officers is to deliver good service and protection of foreigners coming to Lithuania. Effective use of the English language is very important in fulfilling daily tasks. At the moment PP officers experience some deficiencies in English vocabulary when dealing with the foreign visitors, and their listening and speaking skills are indicated as the most difficult skills to master.

The respondents shared their ideas that it was often difficult for them to accomplish their jobs due to language barriers in terms of the wide diversity of accents that were most difficult to understand. Not only were the different accents problematic, but the speed of utterances and colloquialisms also affected the listening skills of PP officers. These variables also have a negative impact on the speaking skills of PP officers. The tables 1 and 2 represent the PP officers' communication skills based on interviewed research participants' responses.

¹⁵ Evans, S. and Morrison, B.(2011). The First Term at University: Implications for EAP. *ELT Journal*, 65(4), pp.387-397.

¹⁶ Dornyei, Z. (2003). *Questionnaires in Second Language Research:Construction, Administration, and Processing*. New York:Erlbaum.

Writing and reading skills were considered less problematic by most of the study participants because they are less used routinely in communication with foreign visitors.

Table 1. Students Perceptions of Difficulties while Listening

Listening skills	Responses
1. Idea recognition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - getting main ideas quickly(57.7%) - somewhat confused(43.8%) - unable to comprehend(12.1%)
2. Detail understanding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - understanding somewhat(78.8%) - understanding almost all(49.1%)
3. Compensatory strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - asking for repetition(74.2%) - guessing(65.7%) - asking for help(37.8%) - avoid communication partially(28.0%)

The findings in Table 1 show that more than half (57.7%) of the respondents perceived themselves to understand quickly the main idea of the messages the foreigners communicated. Most officers (78.8%) reported that they were able to understand some details presented by the foreign visitors whereas almost half of them (49.1%) said that they could understand almost all details. Compensatory strategies asked by the respondents to overcome these listening obstacles mostly involved asking for speech repetition (74.2%), guessing (65.7%), asking someone else to help (37.8%), and partially avoiding communication (28.0%).

Table 2. Students Perceptions of Difficulties while Speaking

Speaking skills	Responses
1. Vocabulary use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - simple (72.4%) - appropriate (64.4%) - inadequate (43.4%) - unable to retrieve (28.7%)
2. Sentence structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - simple (62.3%) - good (38.1%) - confusing (24.4%)
3. Compensatory strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - circumlocution (65.5%) - body language (54.8%) - getting help (26.2%) - avoiding communication partially (16.7%)

The study results show that in regard to speaking skills, most respondents agreed that they generally used simple (62.3%) and appropriate words (64.4%). It is noticeably that as many as 62.3% of the participants recognized that they had spoken English in easy and simple structures. More than half of the respondents could overcome the speaking difficulties by

using body language (54.8%). Roundabout expressions to describe or explain a single concept¹⁷ were used by 65.5% of the respondents.

LANGUAGE LEARNING STRATEGIES

To develop language skills, learners are encouraged to employ learning strategies. Language learning strategies (LLS) are specific actions, behaviours, steps, or techniques. Strategies are tools for the self-directed involvement necessary for developing communicative ability. LLS can be classified into two groups: Direct strategies (Memory, Cognitive, and Compensation) and Indirect strategies (Metacognitive, Affective, and Social)¹⁸.

The research results reveal the frequent use of English learning strategies that PP officers usually use to learn language and apply it in daily work. The questionnaire consisted of six above mentioned strategies (see Figure 1).

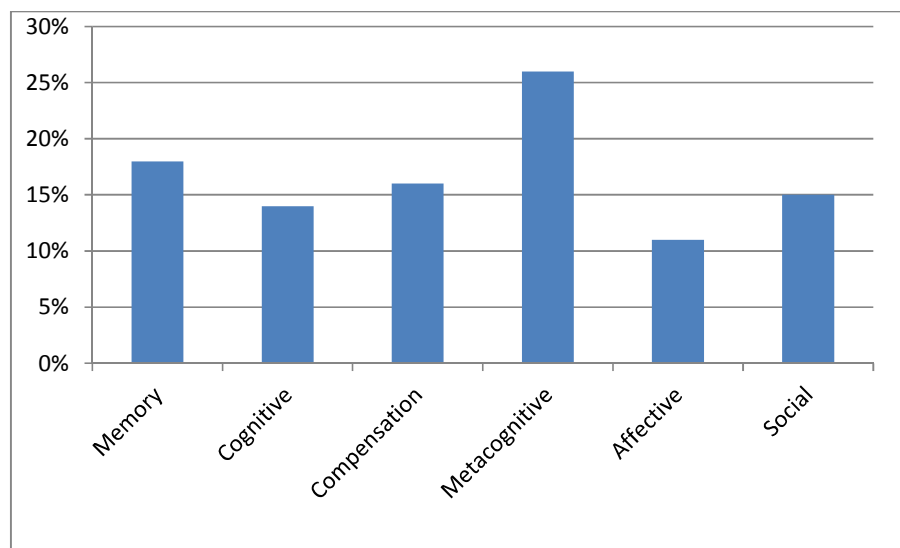


Figure 1. Language learning strategies employed by PP officers

As it is seen in Figure 1 Metacognitive learning strategies were reported by PP officers as the most frequently used (26%) while Affective strategies were reported by 11% of the respondents as being used the least. The possible explanation is that Metacognitive strategies, which allow learners to control their own cognition by using functions such as centering,

¹⁷ Oxford, Rebecca L.(1990). *Language Learning Strategies: What Every Teacher Should Know*. New York: Newbury House.

¹⁸ Ibid.

arranging, planning, and evaluating¹⁹, were used the most frequently because PP officers had their personal goals for improving English to carry out their daily tasks. Consequently, PP officers planned and organized their language tasks, sought practice opportunities and self-evaluated. On the other hand, Affective strategies, which refer to such concepts as self-esteem, attitudes, notification, anxiety, culture shock, and risk-taking²⁰, were employed the least. This suggests that PP officers are influenced by high anxiety, negative feelings, or underestimated their own ability which can restrict progress of their English language development. The study results show that PP officers have self-doubt, the lack of self-confidence and self-encouragement in their proficiency. To overcome this hindrance according to Oxford²¹ it is necessary to provide increased amount of naturalistic communication by teaching students to use Affective strategies.

TRAINING COURSE TO DEVELOP ENGLISH LANGUAGE SKILLS SUGGESTED BY PP OFFICERS

After analysing the respondents' opinions it was evident that the majority of PP officers called for the content to be useful for the tourist police's work. Thus, the desirable content should include conversation, commonly used phrases, vocabulary related to cultural aspects, current events, politics and history. Moreover, legal terminology and expressions about criminal acts, preliminary inquiry is also considered to be very important.

Regarding preferences for teaching methods, interactive classroom activities using multimedia, such as role-play, simulations, acting out incidents that officers may expect to face during their careers are of great interest to PP officers.

Concerning the course duration, the PP officers wanted the course to be intensive (40 hours) because of shift work and frequent emergency situations which occur in their work and can cause interruptions to attendance.

CONCLUSIONS

In order to prepare students to communicate in English in professional situations it is necessary to identify the actual and concrete needs of students.

¹⁹ Oxford, Rebecca L.(1990). *Language Learning Strategies:What Every Teacher Should Know*. New York:Newbury House.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid.

This research study was the first one to analyse the English communication skills and needs of part-time students who work as PP officers in different cities of Lithuania.

The respondents were asked to self-evaluate their current English communication skills, English learning strategies and give suggestions for effective remedial ESP training course. Information was obtained through questionnaire and interviews.

Summing up the above-mentioned passages of research results, it can be stated that PP officers' communication skills were found to be limited in speaking and listening abilities. The limitations were compensated by compensatory strategies that helped to overcome problems. Metacognitive strategies which allow learners' to control their own cognition were reported by PP officers as the most frequently used while Affective strategies were reported as being used the least. The interviews clearly reflected the need of the PP officers for a beneficial ESP training course. The respondents' suggestions for remedial English language course covered the content, teaching methods and course duration.

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LIETUVOS POLICIJOS PATRULIŲ POREIKIŲ TOBULINTI PROFESINĘ ANGLŲ KALBĄ ANALIZĖ

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Santrauka

Profesinės anglų kalbos kursas – vienas dažniausiai taikomų būdų mokyti(-is) anglų kalbos aukštojoje mokykloje, nes jis yra labiausiai orientuotas į konkrečios specialybės studentų poreikius. Studentų poreikių analizė – tai duomenų šaltinis ne tik naujam profesinės anglų kalbos kursui kurti, bet ir esamam kursui tobulinti.

Siekiant išsiaiškinti, kokius bendravimo su užsieniečiais anglų kalba poreikius turi ir ko siekia policijos patruliais dirbdami iššestinių studijų studentai, buvo atliktas tyrimas. Jame dalyvavo 52 Mykolo Romerio universiteto Viešojo saugumo fakulteto Teisės ir policijos veiklos iššestinių studijų IV kurso studentai, mokėsi profesinės anglų kalbos I kurse.

Respondentai įsivertino dabartinius bendravimo anglų kalba gebėjimus, nurodė mokymosi strategijas, kurias naudojo besimokydami profesinės anglų kalbos I kurse ir pateikė pageidaujamą sunkumų bendraujant anglų kalba sprendimų būdą – korekcinį profesinės anglų kalbos kursą.

Apibendrinus anketos ir interviu rezultatus galima teigti, kad patruliais dirbančiųjų studentų komunikavimo (klausymo ir kalbėjimo) anglų kalba gebėjimai yra labai riboti. Besimokydami anglų kalbos I kurse dauguma studentų naudojo metakognityvines strategijas, tuo tarpu labai svarbias afektyvines strategijas pasirinko mažiausias respondentų skaičius. Respondentai pageidavo korekcinio kurso, kad, besimokydami aukštesniuose kursuose, ir/arba baigę studijas turėtų galimybę tobulinti profesinės anglų kalbos žinias savo Alma Mater. Pristatydami norimą kursą policijos patruliais dirbdami studentai nurodė kurso turinį, trukmę ir mokymo(-si) metodus.

Sėkmingai įgyvendinta tyrimo dalyvių poreikių analizė galėtų padėti dirbantiems studentams pakartoti, patobulinti primirštas profesinės anglų kalbos žinias, taptų įrankiu studijų kokybei gerinti.

Pagrindinės sąvokos: poreikių analizė, specialiosios paskirties anglų kalba, profesinis tobulėjimas

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