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Oleksandra Palka**ANALYSIS OF LANGUAGE NEEDS
FOR EFFECTIVE ESP SYLLABUS DEVELOPMENT****Analiza potrzeb językowych w trakcie tworzenia skutecznego programu nauczania języka angielskiego do celów zawodowych**

Ukraiński Uniwersytet Katolicki, w celu podwyższenia poziomu zawodowego i akademickiego studentów studiów magisterskich Wydziału Pedagogiki Społecznej, prowadzi kurs języka angielskiego do celów zawodowych. Opracowanie skutecznego programu edukacyjnego rozpoczyna się od analizy potrzeb językowych studentów, na podstawie wywiadów i ewidencjonowania obserwacji, umożliwiających ustalenie niezbędnych dla nich umiejętności w zakresie rozumienia, stosowania oraz przedstawienia informacji zawodowej. Zadanie nauczyciela polega na udostępnieniu studentom koniecznych narzędzi, parametrów oraz zasad prowadzenia kursu, a także na nadaniu studentom, posiadającym bardziej gruntowną, niż on, wiedzę dotyczącą swojego przedmiotu, możliwości dodania, przez ekspertów i specjalistów, nowej treści do prowadzonego kursu. Taki materiał powinien być również zgodny z współczesną praktyką językową. W procesie badawczym potrzeb studentów, niezwykle ważne jest rzetelne przygotowanie pytań do ankiet. Powinny one zawierać odniesienie do przyszłego zawodu oraz oczekiwania studentów wobec proponowanego kursu.

Słowa kluczowe: język angielski dla celów zawodowych (ESP), potrzeby studentów, program kursu

Actuality of the Problem

Based on the changes occurring in different spheres of Ukraine's modern social life, the nation's entities of higher education face a demanding need for supporting their future professionals by offering them a competitive training system. Not only does such a system provide these future professionals with competing knowledge, but it also serves as a method to solve urgent tasks required of building and advancing the democratic Ukrainian state. However, such an implementation is made possible with the condition of developing qualitative professional knowledge incorporating important foreign languages skills as an attribute of the future professional's intellectual development, as well as is respected as a condition of his/her success in their professional careers.

As D. Crystal stresses in his study *English as a Global Language*, "A language has traditionally become an international language for one chief reason: the power of its people – especially their political and military power"¹. English is considered to be a tool of communication between people of different cultures in different communicative contexts and it opens the door of various professional fields, social pedagogy including.

Analysis of recent research and publications on the problem

During the last 30 years, the field of English language teaching has radically changed. The attention of course-planners has shifted to teaching English for more specialized purposes that enable professionals to achieve success in their professional environments. In 1987, T. Hutchinson and A. Waters, both founders of the ESP method, provided evidence concerning the importance of teaching English for specific purposes in their study entitled *English for Specific Purposes: A learning-centered approach*. They listed the following reasons to explain the situation:

- (1) The economic power of the United States in the post-war world;
- (2) A revolution in linguistics: whereas traditional linguists described the features of language, revolutionary scientists focused on the ways in which language is used in real communication;
- (3) And learner-centered or learning-centered approaches in the language teaching process².

These reasons have led to an increased interest in investigating the most effective ways to improve the ability of professionals to use English in their

¹ D. Crystal, *English as a Global Language*, Cambridge 2003, <http://catdir.loc.gov/catdir/samples/cam041/2003282119.pdf>, s. 14.

² T. Hutchinson, A. Waters, *English for Specific Purposes: A learning-centered approach*, Cambridge 1987.

work environments (L. Louhiala-Salminen³, N. Edwards⁴, F. Li So-mui and K. Mead⁵).

ESP main development stages

D. Carver⁶ in 1983, suggested that English can be used:

- (1) As a restricted language;
- (2) For Academic and Occupational Purposes;
- (3) And with specific topics.

In 1988, P. Strevens defined the ESP absolute and variable characteristics as follows:

- (1) Designed to meet the specified needs of the learner;
- (2) Related in content, themes and topics to particular disciplines, occupations and activities;
- (3) Emphasized on language appropriateness, concerning syntax, lexis, discourse, semantics, and etc.;
- (4) Analytical of discourse – for example: comparing the characteristics of written English with the characteristics of spoken English;
- (5) And not taught according to any pre-ordained methodology⁷.

Again in 1998, Dudley-Evans and M. J. St. John⁸ revised the former 1988 definition of ESP as stated above by P. Strevens, and determined its absolute characteristics to be the following:

- (1) Defined to meet the specific needs of the learner;
- (2) Makes use of the underlying methodology and activities of the disciplines it serves;
- (3) And based on the professional's language skills encompassing grammar, lexis, and register in discourse and fruitful of terminology and constructs specific to the genres appropriate to the professional's topics, themes and respective activities.

Therefore, collectively and in summary, we can say that according to the above mentioned scientists, ESP variable characteristics prove that the method:

- (1) May be related to or designed for specific disciplines;

³ L. Louhiala-Salminen, *The business communication classroom vs reality: what should we teach today?*, "The ESP Journal" 1996, Vol. 15 (1), pp. 37–51.

⁴ N. Edwards, *Language for business: effective needs assessment, syllabus design and materials preparation in a practical ESP case study*, "The ESP Journal" 2000, Vol. 19, pp. 291–296.

⁵ F. Li So-mui, K. Mead, *An Analysis of English in the Workplace: The Communication Needs of Textile and Clothing Merchandisers*, "The ESP Journal" 2000, Vol. 19, pp. 351–368.

⁶ D. Carver, *Some Propositions about ESP*, "The ESP Journal" 1983, No. 2, pp. 131–137.

⁷ P. Strevens, *ESP after twenty years: A re-appraisal*, [w:] *ESP: State of the Art* (1–13), ed. M. Tickoo, SEAMEO Regional Language Centre, Singapore 1988.

⁸ T. Dudley-Evans, M.J. St. John, *Developments in ESP: A multi-disciplinary approach*, Cambridge 1998.

- (2) May be used in specific teaching situations as a different methodology for teaching general English;
- (3) Is likely to be designed for adult learners, either at a tertiary level institution or in a professional work situation;
- (4) May be also designed for learners at secondary school levels;
- (5) Is generally designed for intermediate or advanced students;
- (6) And most courses may assume some basic knowledge of the language system; however this can only be used at the level of general English language beginners.

Thus, with every theoretical point mentioned above and for the purpose of this study, we developed the *Syllabus of English for Academic and Occupational Purposes*. This syllabus is intended for students of Social Pedagogy at the Ukrainian Catholic University and emphasizes use of the latest authentic materials practiced in the said field.

Student needs analysis

In order to determine the needs of students in social pedagogy, we conducted interviews with them and provided them with questionnaires developed by Helen Basturkmen⁹ and designed to identify their specific learning difficulties. Furthermore, the obtained information was then analyzed for the purpose of selecting their most urgent issues and struggle areas; this data was then used to organize an improved teaching and learning program. The purpose of this analysis was intended to understand the knowledge gap areas currently practiced in the program syllabus; based on our findings, the syllabus was changed in accordance with the reformed aim of the ESP course. It is important to note here, that while analyzing these students' needs, we focused on the collected data that concerned students' needs for language knowledge in their study and professional activities.

The analysis was made with two methods:

- (1) Qualitative, including: interviews, class observations, research of students' materials, samples, and etc.
- (2) And quantitative, such as: structural surveys.

Let us consider what main parts the research interviews that were performed for this study consisted of. They were as follows:

- (1) *Participant's form*: date of filling and interviewee's personal data such as: position, department, courses passed, and etc.;
- (2) *Communicative needs diagnosis*: important tasks to be solved, difficulties to overcome, urgent language skills and teaching methods used;
- (3) *Course expectations*;
- (4) *Supplementary information*.

⁹ H. Basturkmen, *Refining Procedures A Needs Analysis Project at Kuwait University*, Forum online October – December 1998, Vol. 36, No. 4, <http://dosfan.lib.uic.edu/usia/E-USIA/forum/vols/vol36/no4/p2.htm>.

Students were interviewed before their courses started, in order to formulate the key issues of the ESP course beforehand. This provided time for ESP syllabus-planners to improve their curriculum, offering students the skills and knowledge they expected and needed. By these improvements, we remedied the concerns students addressed they had pertaining to activities, events and operations they would be made to conduct in English during the span of their future careers.

Our research has been proven by Kristen Gatehouse's findings, who in her article *Key Issues in English for Specific Purposes (ESP) Curriculum Development*, states,

...I have reached the conclusion that there are three abilities necessary for successful communication in a professional target setting...The first ability required in order to successfully communicate in an occupational setting is the ability to use the particular jargon characteristic of that specific occupational context. The second is the ability to use a more generalized set of academic skills, such as conducting research and responding to memoranda. ...The third is the ability to use the language of everyday informal talk to communicate effectively, regardless of occupational context¹⁰.

The important circumstance of a successful analysis of students' needs is an accurate choice of questions posed in the questionnaire. In other words, these questions must be formulated clearly and precisely and any term used must be clear to all questionnaire participants. It is also necessary questions cover students' present field of study and future professional activities, as well as highlight tasks based on the nature of their language skills, language difficulties, and ESP course appreciation.

The obtained information was used to make:

- (1) A list of language or language activity tasks:
 - a) *Writing tasks* including essays, tests, descriptions, projects, article abstracts, diploma abstracts, and notes on lectures;
 - b) *Reading tasks* including professional literature or fiction, tests, instructions, and etc.;
 - c) *Listening tasks* including lectures in English by guest lecturers, questions/ answers skills seminars, oral instructions and explanations;
 - d) *Oral speech tasks* including discussions and presentations;
- (2) A list of proposed methods of teaching;
- (3) And a list of questions to appreciate the ESP course.

It is also reasonable to use the students' native language in the questionnaire. For our questionnaire form in Ukrainian, please see *Appendix 1*.

In case the ESP teacher has the opportunity to visit classes of General English, then observation protocols will also positively influence future curricu-

¹⁰ K. Gatehouse, *Key Issues in English for Specific Purposes (ESP) Curriculum Development*, "The Internet TESL Journal", October 2001, Vol. VII, No. 10, www.khae-service.com, <http://iteslj.org/Articles/Gatehouse-ESP.html>.

lum. For our observation protocol in Ukrainian, please see *Appendix 2*. For the questionnaire and the protocol in English, please refer to the article by H. Basturkmen¹¹.

The profound analysis of students' demands in the Master Degree Program for Social Pedagogy Studies made it possible to compose a syllabus that met their needs both academically and professionally, covered their professional field and prepared students to different academic tasks. The following topics to be learnt and discussed were included into the syllabus on the request of students, namely: "Social Pedagogy", "Social Pedagogue's Qualifications", "Problems of 'Youth' for Youth Work", "Pregnant or Parenting Teens", "State Orphanages in Ukraine", "Non-state Orphanages in Ukraine", "Street Children in Eastern Europe", "Children and Families Service", "Conflicts" *etc.*

While studying the topic of *Social Pedagogy* students consider it as the theory and practice of holistic education and care (education of *head* (cognitive knowledge), *heart* (emotional and spiritual learning), and *hands* (practical and physical skills), as a "function of society" that reflects how a given society at a given time thinks about education and upbringing, about the relationship between the individual and society, and about social welfare for all the society members. For social pedagogues generally work within a range of different settings, from early years through adulthood to working with disadvantaged adult groups as well as older people, our students learn theories and concepts from related disciplines, such as: *sociology, psychology, education, philosophy, medical sciences, and social work*. They enrich themselves with main terms, definitions, principles, and methods of the discipline they have chosen as their specialization and related ones in English.

The second topic of the course deals with *social pedagogy as a discrete discipline* with its own educational qualifications. Future social pedagogues study a combination of theoretical, practical, and professional subjects and skills and undertake practice placements where the students learn how to develop reflective capacities that might enable them to respond to different and changing practice situations. They learn to become generalists: while they are the main staffing group in some services, such as nurseries and school age childcare, they also work in a complementary role alongside other professions such as teachers, social workers, doctors and nurses.

For one of the main tasks of a social pedagogue's professional activity is to promote the welfare of children in need, during our course the special attention is paid to *the range of services that protect children and support families* who may be experiencing difficulties. The next topic focuses attention on services that provide support and appropriate involvement to children in need or at risk of abuse, to children who can't be looked after by their families (this includes adoption, fostering and residential care); to children who are disabled or affected by the

¹¹ H. Basturkmen, *op. cit.*

disability of another person (assistance in the home, including the provision of specialist equipment if required, short breaks away from home for a child, access to an activity scheme that provides social and recreational opportunities during school holidays etc).

Similar to other academic disciplines, social pedagogy is a degree-level qualification (higher education) of usually 3.5 – 4 years, but there are different education routes to qualify as a social pedagogue, which vary from country to country. Our students express a huge interest in studying the experience of different European, American and Asian countries in order to compare the work with clients there and in Ukraine, and to obtain proper training and *skills for work in settings such as: adult education, community organizing, dis/ability programs, youth and sports programs, peace education, environmental education, religious organizations, health education, civic education* etc. The texts on these and other problems are included into the syllabus to reinforce students' theoretical knowledge.

Today there is a tendency to talk about young people in three negative linked ways – as thugs, users and victims. As thugs they attack older (and sometimes, younger) people, steal cars, vandalize estates, and disrupt classrooms. As users they take drugs, smoke, drink alcohol and care only for themselves. As victims they cannot find work, receive poor schooling. Knowing the situation and being eager to change it our students insisted on including such a topic into their syllabus. For a social pedagogue it is very important to realize that troublesome behaviors associated in this way with young people are not uniquely theirs. Such an approach cannot be taken up by those who want to rebuild youth work and the youth service. The text we used to study the problem is based on *youth problems* in the U. K. It is full of necessary words and phrases and supplies students with the information that helps them to balance with a concern for democracy and justice in their future work.

The syllabus also includes the texts on such topics *as state orphanages in Ukraine and other residential institutions for children* (group homes, children's homes, refuges, rehabilitation centers, night shelters, or youth treatment centers), their poor functioning with the lack of basic hygiene, indifference towards the children, the physically and mentally retarded condition of the children, the poor condition of the buildings. Students read and discuss the material *on non-state orphanages in Ukraine* that are setting up all over the country by different non-state organizations and private persons. Such children's homes might serve as a model for the whole of Ukraine in future.

Orphanages are no longer a part of the North American adoption process. They have been replaced with smaller institutions called *Residential Treatment Centers, Group Homes or with foster families*. In order to introduce the positive American experience in Ukraine we have to study how the above mentioned institutions function. Thus, from the text on a residential treatment center (RTC)

students find out that it is a live-in health care facility providing therapy for existing problems. Different RTCs work with different types of problems, and the structure and methods of RTCs varies. While working on the text about a group home, students learn that children enter this alternative type of institutionalized residences because of a parental inability to control their behavior or because of parental abuse, abandonment or neglect. Many group homes have a therapeutic or treatment component. Group homes may receive funding from state or federal sources, or they may be privately funded by religious organizations or donations from various groups. Some group homes receive a mixture of federal, state and private funding. Group homes usually house children over age five and provide temporary shelter for emergency situations or long-term shelter for hard-to-place children, such as teenagers or large sibling groups. This knowledge might be applied by future specialists in their practical activity.

Our students know numerous problems of *street children in Ukraine* for they are working with them as volunteers. Homeless children in Ukraine typically sleep in manholes or basements, under bridges or on top of hot water pipes. Homeless young people often inhale glue or inject cold and flu medicine as ways of taking drugs. Young people turn to inhaling glue as the fumes suppress feelings of cold and hunger and produce auditory and visual hallucinations. Violence, sexual abuse and drug addiction are common among this group of children. Many of them are at high risk for HIV due to the large number sharing needles and engaging in unsafe sex. Students' practical knowledge, as far as the ways of the above mentioned problem's solution are concerned, is greatly enriched with the theoretical knowledge they obtain from authentic articles on the problem in English.

The practice reveals the growth of *the problem of pregnant or parenting teens* all over the world, Ukraine including. In this aspect the experience of the U.S.A., that still leads the fully industrialized world in teen pregnancy and birth rates, is of great importance to our students. Teen pregnancy costs the American society about \$40 billion a year. There are nearly half a million children born to teen mothers each year. Most of these mothers are unmarried, and many will end up poor and on welfare. For young parents there are various programs, both through local governments and private organizations that can provide housing and other services. Studying these programs during our course students may adapt them to Ukrainian reality and create the national system of assistance to this category of clients in the future through the formation of maternity group homes or transitional housing system.

The text on *social pedagogues' work in the school grounds*, bringing together a child or young person's home and school life, is also included into the syllabus. From it the students learn to provide early assistance and intervention to children and their families when social or family circumstances are causing the child to struggle with education, health or social development. The aim is to see

safe, healthy and socialized children with a strong sense of identity, who are fully engaged in school.

To be ready to take a course on *Conflicts Management* in English our students learn texts on conflicts' terminology and definitions, their dynamics and management. They also practise in a conflict *analysis* (they examine critically all elements of a conflict structure as well as the noticeable interaction of those elements); in conflict *diagnosis* (they integrate and interpret all information collected in the analysis phase, and try to place the conflict within a system of conflict categories); in *decision towards intervention* while defining strategy and identifying method to use for a particular conflict; and in *intervention into the conflict*; in *realization of final control observations*.

In general, the texts cover the main topics future social pedagogues are interested in and enrich their professional vocabulary greatly. During the course they are prepared to read and get access to the latest information in the field and use it in their diploma papers or in other scientific papers, to listen to presentations, and communicate with their colleagues throughout the world in English. Students are offered a list of different questions to be discussed after the work on texts.

We try to develop our students' writing abilities by following certain strategies and practicing various patterns that help to reflect upon the aspects of writing and the ways of its mastering. During the course we master important linguistic features of English academic discourse and review some general essential language points. We do our best in developing a command of formal style that is extremely important for nonnative speakers wishing to cope with conventions of English academic discourse.

For summarizing is an important part of writing academic papers we include the rules for writing summaries of texts into our syllabus taking into consideration certain requirements, namely: the summary has to be a condensed coverage of the source text, written in writer's own words and neutral manner, the name of the author, the title of the text and its main idea has to be mentioned at the beginning of the summary, other ideas have to be logically connected with the main one, the writer has to satisfy the requirements set to summary's length.

Conclusion

The results of both questionnaires and observations have made it possible to create a syllabus representative of the needs of students. According to the demands voiced by students, the class priorities should be both developing listening and writing skills. Our study has also made evident that students expect to complete the following ESP course tasks: listening to lectures and presentations, discussing presentations, projects, abstracts, and practicing annotation writing, reading special literature for professional growth, and etc.

The only problem we faced during the developed ESP Syllabus realization was limitation of the latter in time: in our case only 30 academic hours. Therefore, this is the main reason why we had to monitor students' needs as *changing* during their process of studying.

Appendix 1

ОПИТУВАННЯ(QUESTIONNAIRE)

I. Особисті дані

1. Стать (підкресліть)

чоловіча _____ жіноча _____

2. Факультет (впишіть) _____

3. Досвід вивчення мови до навчання у закладі:

_____ Вивчав(ла) мову у середній загальноосвітній школі.

_____ Вивчав(ла) мову у середній спеціалізованій школі.

_____ Вивчав(ла) мову приватно.

_____ Інше(конкретизуйте) _____

4. Яка рідна мова (впишіть)? _____

5. Коли використовуєте (плануєте використовувати) англійську мову?

_____ Для навчання

_____ Для спілкування

_____ Інше (конкретизуйте) _____

II. Мовні потреби у навчальному закладі

1. Які із чотирьох мовних вмінь та навиків з англійської мови, на вашу думку, найважливіші для успішного навчання та отримання фаху у даному навчальному закладі? Проставте цифру від 1 до 4, де 1 позначає найважливіші вміння.

_____ навик читання

_____ навик аудіювання

_____ усне мовлення

_____ письмо

2. Обведіть ту цифру, яка, на вашу думку, відповідає важливості вміння виконувати вказані нижче завдання для вашого навчання та майбутньої професії, де цифра 1 = дуже важливо, 2 = важливо, 3 = не важливо

Читання

підручників	1	2	3
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статей у професійному журналі	1	2	3
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посібників з експлуатації (використання)	1	2	3
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роздаткового матеріалу з проф. предмета	1	2	3
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інструкцій з виконання дом.завдань/проектів	1	2	3
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конспектів	1	2	3
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інше(вказіть) _____

Письмо

оцінювання	1	2	3
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опис проектів (коротко)	1	2	3
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конспектування	1	2	3
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відповіді на питання вправ підручника	1	2	3
інше (вказіть) _____			
Аудіювання і усне мовлення			
слухання лекцій	1	2	3
“питання/відповідь” сесії на заняттях	1	2	3
слухання усних презентацій	1	2	3
сприйняття усних інструкцій	1	2	3
участь у дискусіях	1	2	3
постановка питань	1	2	3
проведення усних презентацій	1	2	3
інше (вказіть) _____			

3. Оцініть ваші знання англійської мови у вказаних нижче видах діяльності.

1 = добрі 2 = задовільні 3 = незадовільні

Читання	1	2	3
Письмо	1	2	3
Усне мовлення	1	2	3
Аудіювання	1	2	3
Граматика	1	2	3
Загальна лексика	1	2	3
Професійна лексика	1	2	3

III. Навчання англійської мови

Висловіть свою думку щодо процесу викладання англійської мови у навчальному закладі. Вам пропонується обвести цю цифру, яка відповідає вашому розумінню (1 = погоджуюся повністю, 2 = погоджуюся, 3 = не погоджуюся):

потрібно збільшити кількість навчального часу	1	2	3
зміст навчального курсу цікавий	1	2	3
більше акцентувати на вивченні загального курсу	1	2	3
більше акцентувати на вивченні курсу ESP	1	2	3
більше уваги приділяти усному мовленню	1	2	3
повністю задоволений курсом	1	2	3
добрі знання мови потрібні для успіху у роботі	1	2	3
більше акцентувати на майб. професійних потребах	1	2	3
курс англійської мови найменш важливий курс	1	2	3
курс англійської мови найлегший	1	2	3
задоволений викладацькою роботою	1	2	3
вивчення англійської мови допомагає у навчанні	1	2	3
інше (вказіть) _____			

Дякуємо!

Appendix 2.

ПРОТОКОЛ СПОСТЕРЕЖЕНЬ (OBSERVATION PROTOCOL)

Дата: _____

Час: _____

Курс: _____

Факультет, відділення: _____

П.І.Б. особи, яка проводить спостереження: _____

Тип заняття: _____

I. Навчальна діяльність

A) Подайте приблизний розподіл часу у відсотках для різних видів діяльності _____

Б) Вкажіть, які форми і методи вистані на занятті:

- _____ монолог (викладач)
- _____ дискусія (студент зі студентом)
- _____ пояснення
- _____ викладач ставить питання студентам
- _____ студенти ставлять питання студентам
- _____ обговорення у малих групах
- _____ робота у малих групах
- _____ презентації
- _____ інше

II. Навчальні засоби

Вкажіть, що використовувалося на занятті

- _____ картки для індивідуальної роботи (візьміть зразки)
- _____ таблиці
- _____ текст на дошці
- _____ довідкова література
- _____ медіа засоби (відео, аудіо, інтернет)
- _____ інше

III. Діяльність студентів

- _____ конспектує
- _____ ставить питання
- _____ відповідає на поставлене запитання
- _____ пояснює
- _____ коментує
- _____ приймає участь у дискусії
- _____ Інше

Запишіть зразки висловлювань студентів _____

IV. Труднощі студентів

Вкажіть, які мовні труднощі студентів ви спостерігали на занятті, їхня природа, ступінь, причина.

V. Висновок _____