

Adjusting an ESP Course to Students' Needs in Tertiary Education: a Case Study Vilma Pranckevičiūtė, Zita Zajankauskaitė

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Abstract. English for Specific Purposes (ESP) is one of the predominant approaches to language teaching in tertiary education, as it is directed towards the specific needs of the particular specialty students.

The paper deals with the role of needs analysis and materials evaluation adjusting ESP courses to the needs of students in tertiary education. Students' needs analysis is a reference base for both the development of a new ESP course and alterations of an existing ESP course in the changing environment and demands for English language skills. Teaching materials determine the content of the course and affect teaching methods, students' motivation, vocabulary and language functions taught. The evaluation of teaching materials allows the teacher to constantly improve the ESP course, to better adjust it to the changing needs of students.

The theoretical considerations are supported by a survey of students' needs and their evaluation of teaching materials. The results of the survey reveal whether the students' needs are met in the ESP course they have attended. The implication of the survey results is that the most topical students' needs, such as the development of productive skills, and especially speaking skills, do not change over time. Students' evaluation of the tailor-made ESP coursebooks is also presented, as well as some suggestions to make the ESP courses more attuned to students' needs.

Key words: *ESP course, needs analysis, materials evaluation, teaching materials, tailor-made materials.*

Introduction

English for Specific Purposes has become a *typical* approach to English language teaching and learning in tertiary education. The reasons for this are that ESP learners are usually adults. They have already mastered some knowledge of English and are learning the language needed in a particular domain, occupation, or vocation in order to acquire professional skills and to perform particular job-related functions.

According to Hutchinson and Waters (1992), *learners know specifically why they are learning a language* and it is the *awareness of a need* that ESP distinguishes for. Thus, they see students' needs analysis as a key point in the development of an ESP course as this approach of language learning is student-centered.

Students' needs are undergoing a constant change due to the permanently varying socio-economic situation in the labour market that dictates the needs. Thus, it is critical to follow these changes and react to them.

As Kaunas University of Technology (KTU) students' needs of English and their attitude towards ESP teaching materials written by non-professional authors have not been researched sufficiently at KTU, it is essential to explore this issue in more detail, so that the ESP course could be improved further after receiving the feedback. Although the study has been performed at KTU, its insights could be valuable to the other institutions of higher education as well, since ESP still remains the most widely used approach to teaching English in Lithuanian higher education institutions.

Research aim is to analyze how the ESP approach to English language teaching meets the students' needs and

how the students' needs can be employed for the adjustment of the ESP courses with regard to students' evaluation of their needs and teaching materials.

Research objectives are to survey the role of needs analysis in the adjustment of an ESP course, to explore the students' needs of English and to find out whether they change over time, to investigate whether the ESP teaching materials at KTU meet the students' needs.

The research methods used were the analysis of literature and the results of the survey. A questionnaire was administered to two groups of students — bachelor and doctoral ones — and the students had to evaluate their future or present needs for English language, to assess their present skills of English as well as to express their needs for certain types of skills. In addition, bachelor students had to evaluate the materials they had had in their ESP courses.

The results of the survey provided an opportunity to formulate some recommendations for further improvement of the ESP courses.

Characteristic Features of an ESP Course

ESP is a well-researched approach to the English language teaching and learning.

According to Carter (1983 in Gatehouse 2001) there are three features common to ESP courses:

- a. *authentic material;*
- b. *purpose-related orientation;*
- c. *self-direction.*

- a. As Morrow (1977, p.13) defines, an authentic text is a stretch of real language, produced by a real speaker or writer for a real audience and designed to convey a real message of some sort. For Moore and Lorenzo (2007), *one of the prime requisites of the authenticity is genuine communication: the text must convey a message*. Authentic texts are widely used by both CLIL and ESP course designers as they have proved to be effective teaching materials. Authentic materials enable students to face the professional language they will deal with in the real labour world and react to it in authentic ways. Students in tertiary education usually are proficient enough to cope with the complexities of the language authentic materials entail and to grasp the meaning of the specific texts, because they are related to the field of their studies. As Hutchinson and Waters (1992) state, the use of authentic materials increases students' motivation to learn.
- b. Purpose-related orientation is another feature common to ESP course. It refers to the simulation of communicative tasks required of the target setting, for example, student simulation of a conference, involving the preparation of papers, reading, note-taking, and writing (Carter 1983 in Gatehouse 2001).
- c. Finally, self-direction is characteristic of ESP courses as *ESP is concerned with turning learners into users* (ibid). In order for self-direction to occur, the learners must have a certain degree of freedom to decide when, what, and how they will study. This freedom is a key feature of another trend in language learning — the autonomous learning which is *characterized by particular procedures and relationships between learners and teachers*, when *learners take control over their learning* (Benson et al., 2001). The autonomous learning is especially recommended for foreign language learning due to varying levels and abilities of the learners.

Swales (1990) considers five conceptions to be the foundations, or basic principles of ESP. He uses the term *enduring conceptions* to refer to them. These five conceptions are: *authenticity, research-base, language/ text, need and learning/ methodology*.

According to Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998), the key stages in ESP are needs analysis, course design (and syllabus), materials selection (and production), teaching and learning, and evaluation.

Needs Analysis

The role of needs analysis in any ESP course is undoubtedly undisputable. It is the first stage of a course design, and it provides relevancy for all course design activities.

Needs analysis was firmly established in 1970s, when the course designers acknowledged the learners' purposes (instead of specialist language) as the essential driving force behind ESP.

ESP is an approach to language teaching in which all decisions as to content and method are based on learner's reason for learning, Hutchinson and Waters (1992) state.

ESP instruction is derived to meet learners' needs, Strevens (1980) agrees.

Different scholars distinguish different types of needs.

Brindley (1989 in Robinson 1991) speaks about *objective* and *subjective* needs. *Objective* needs include all factual information about the learner: language proficiency, language difficulties, and the use of language in real life. *Subjective* needs include cognitive and affective needs of the learner in language learning: confidence, attitudes, and expectations. Robinson (1991) mentions *perceived* (prescribed) and *felt* needs.

Hutchinson and Waters (1992) distinguish *target* needs (*what the learner needs to do in the target situation*) and *learning* needs (*what the learner needs to do in order to learn*). *Learning* needs include *language items, skills, strategies, subject knowledge, etc.*, i.e., *how people learn to do what they do with language* (ibid). However, all these needs seem to be complementary.

Speaking about target needs Hutchinson and Waters (1992) introduce the terms *necessities* (*what the learner needs to do in order to learn*), *lacks* (the gap between the existing learner's knowledge and the necessities he has) and *wants* (what the learner feels he/ she needs). Sometimes there may be a conflict between learners' necessities (as perceived by the teacher) and their wants: *it is quite possible that the learners' view will conflict with the perceptions of other interested parties: course designers, sponsors, teachers* (Hutchinson and Waters, 1992). The task of the teacher is to find some sort of compromise between these conflicting forces and design a course both useful and interesting for the target learners, as the learners' motivation is an important issue that should never be neglected.

According to Robinson (1991, p.8–9) needs analysis consists of *Present situation analysis (PSA)*, the aim of which is to find out the students' English proficiency level and the language requirements at the beginning of the course and *Target situation analysis (TSA)*, aiming to identify the students' language requirements regarding the target situation. Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998) add one more to the mentioned above: *Language situation analysis (LSA)*, concerning subjective, felt and process-oriented needs. According to them, TSA deals with objective, perceived and product-oriented needs, PSA analyses strengths and weaknesses in language skills and learning experience, while LSA is concerned with language use, i.e., *what people do with a language* (ibid).

One of the greatest contributions of ESP to language teaching has been its emphasis on careful and extensive needs analysis for course design (Johns, 1991). However, when *students become more involved with the course, their attitudes and approach may change* (Robinson, 1991, p.15). As the needs analysis is of great significance for the course, (teaching materials, teaching, learning) it should be an ongoing

process. Long (2005) mentions four reasons for performing needs analysis:

1. to determine the relevance of the material to the learners' situation;
2. to justify the materials in terms of relevance for all parties concerned (learner, teacher, administration, parents);
3. to account for differences in learner needs and styles;
4. to create a syllabus which will meet the needs of the learners as fully as possible within the context of the situation.

Jordan (1997) divides the needs analysis into *deficiency analysis* (it is concerned with the necessities the learner lacks), *strategy analysis* (seeks to establish the learners' preferences in terms of learning styles and strategies, or teaching methods) and *means analysis* (examines the *constraints* — local situation — to find out the ways of implementation of a language course).

According to Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998), the needs analysis encompasses a detailed description of learners needs: the tasks and activities the learners are/ will be using English for, personal information about learners, cultural information about the students, their current language skills, their perceived language needs, etc. It is the needs analysis which establishes the *what and how* of the course, thus, it is essential while designing the course and setting the goals and objectives.

Clear understanding of goals and objectives will help the teacher to be sure what materials to teach, and when and how they should be taught. The course objectives, according to Ellis and Johnson (1994, p.221), are the goals of a course in English as indicated by the needs analysis and expressed in terms of what the learner should be able to do.

Harsono (2007) claims, that the learners' needs can be identified by the teachers from the target learners. They can be formulated as teaching objectives by the institutions, where the learners study, turning them into syllabus. Introducing learners' needs into syllabus makes the needs more specific.

There may be different ways of finding information about students needs. The main data collection methods are questionnaires, interviews, observations, discussions, assessment (Dudley-Evans and St. John, 1998, p.132).

The data received on the basis of needs analysis allow the practitioner not only to set the objectives for the ESP course, but also to choose the best approach to language teaching. The needs analyses and the evaluation of the course give the teacher a possibility to revise the course and to make necessary changes in it to suit students' interests and needs, to better adjust the present ESP course, to foresee the future goals, as well as to make the next ESP course more appropriate and relevant.

Evaluation of Teaching Materials

In a teaching/ learning situation, both teaching and learning materials are used. Learning materials include the materials a student uses to learn. These might be completely different materials than those provided by a teacher. A student can attend additional English classes or study individually, using his own learning materials the teacher is unaware of.

Teaching materials are all materials used in the teaching process, respectively. These might include textbooks, supplementary materials a teacher offers his/ her students, online materials, tailor-made materials, etc.

In this paper, teaching materials are considered to be the ESP coursebooks that have been tailor-made by the University lecturers to suit the professional target needs of the students.

The evaluation of teaching materials is closely related to students' motivation and their needs, thus affecting the efficiency of the course. *Materials provide a stimulus to learning. Good materials do not teach: they encourage learners to learn* (Hutchinson and Waters, 1992, p.107).

According to Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998), *evaluation in ESP situations is concerned with the effectiveness and efficiency of learning; with achieving the objectives*. It encompasses both assessment and evaluation of students' achievements, as well as reaching the goals and objectives of the course. Materials should assist achieving the goals and objectives and correspond to the criteria for their selection.

Materials evaluation is often classified according to the time when it takes place. Cunningsworth (1995) and Ellis (1997) propose three types of materials evaluation: predictive or pre-use evaluation, in which the future or potential performance of a textbook is examined, in-use evaluation, designed to examine the currently used textbook, and retrospective or post-use evaluation, enabling the improvement of the given textbook for subsequent use.

Robinson (1991) in fact presents the same stages of materials evaluation naming them *preliminary* (before an ESP course), *summative* (at the end of the course), and *formative* (during the course).

Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998) suggest paying more attention to formative evaluation, which takes place during the course, so that the course could be modified according to the students' needs. However, they point out that *summative evaluation is valuable for durable courses* (ibid.) ESP courses in tertiary education are of such a nature.

Alderson and Waters (1983) point out that *all those who share the learning process* should carry out the materials evaluation. Robinson (1991) mentions the tools to carry out the evaluation: questionnaires, interviews, checklists, observation, grading scales, and records. Naturally, as the evaluation of the teaching materials and the students' needs are closely connected, they share the same tools.

Ellis and Johnson (1994, p.115) point out that the choice of materials has a major impact on what happens in the course. This impact is demonstrated on the following three levels:

- It *determines what kind of language the learners will be exposed to and, as a consequence, the substance of what they will learn in terms of vocabulary, structures, and functions;*
- It *has implications for the methods and techniques by which the learners will learn;*
- *The subject of or content of the materials is essential component of the package from the point of view of relevance and motivation.*

The selection of ESP materials should thus above all depend on the needs of the learners in relation to their future or present jobs: that is, materials should focus on the appropriate topics and include *tasks and activities that practice the target skills areas* (ibid).

Vičič (2011) also offers not to forget the fact that ESP is predominantly student-centered, and *consequently students' consideration should be at the top of the list of selection criteria.*

According to Lewis and Hill (2003), students' considerations include the following:

- Will the materials be useful to the students?
- Do they stimulate students' curiosity?
- Are the matters relevant to the students and their needs?
- Are they fun to do?
- Will the students find the tasks and activities worth doing? (adapted from Lewis and Hill, 2003, pp.52–53)

Another important criterion that should be taken into account when selecting the materials is *the level of language knowledge students have already acquired and the target level they will need to communicate successfully in their jobs* (Vičič, 2011). Hutchinson and Waters (1992) point out that *Materials should also function as a link between already learnt (existing knowledge) and new information.* Thus, the present and target language levels cannot be too far away.

The aforementioned ideas for choosing ESP materials and, consequently, for their evaluation, can be shortlisted in five criteria (adapted from Wallace, 1992):

1. Adequacy — the materials should be of the appropriate language, age, level.
2. Motivation — they should present content which is interesting and motivating for students' work. It aims at students' effectiveness, interest and pleasure of work.
3. Sequence — it is important if there is some relation to previous texts, activities, topics not to miss the sense of a lesson.

4. Diversity — they should lead to a range of classroom activities, be a vehicle for teaching specific language structure and vocabulary and promote reading strategies.
5. Acceptability — they should accept different cultural customs or taboos.

To sum up, materials evaluation helps an ESP practitioner to adjust the teaching materials to the learners' needs and their level of proficiency, as well as to keep them motivated. An ESP practitioner has three options in adjusting the coursebooks to the needs of the learners: first, to omit the texts and tasks or to supplement them; second, to offer changes to the coursebooks s/he uses, or, third, even to develop new tailor-made materials if students' needs are very special. This may be called the implementation-evaluation-correction cycle that allows the best adjustment of an ESP course to students' needs.

Results and Discussion

To investigate whether ESP course meets the students' needs and to make sure if the needs change over time, two groups of students have been interviewed in writing: a group of bachelor students and a group of doctoral students.

The first sample comprised 25 full time second year students who studied ESP in the faculties of Telecommunications and Electronics, Civil Engineering and Architecture, and Electrical and Civil Engineering at Kaunas University of Technology in 2010, 2011, and 2012.

Students were asked to identify their knowledge of General English and ESP needs and to evaluate only the coursebooks they were learning from during their ESP course, to the exclusion of supplementary materials. All bachelor students had used ESP coursebooks written by the English language lecturers of the University. Only three ESP coursebooks were evaluated while conducting the research.

The questionnaire was administered after the ESP course. It entailed four open-ended questions and six questions requiring ranking the alternatives.

In order to define the future needs of the students and to check whether the needs of ESP students change in the long run, the qualitative survey was carried out by interviewing 7 doctoral students of Kaunas University of Technology in writing. The assumption was that the ESP future needs of bachelor students' were the present needs of doctoral students who had had more work and academic experience as well as different English language learning experience. Thus, the doctoral students' lacks and needs of English skills could differ as well. This might show the influence of experience on the needs of the students. The doctoral students were given a much shorter questionnaire consisting of the first 4 questions, with two additional questions in the beginning.

Bachelor Students' Survey

Answering the question *What do you need English for?*, students pointed out the following reasons: English is necessary for their speciality, (present or future) jobs, communication,

watching TV and the search of information. 5 students claimed that they needed English for reading articles for studies of other subjects. All students regarded English as important and necessary.

The next question was *How do you evaluate your present knowledge of English?* As it can be seen from Table 1, students were better at receptive (listening and reading) skills, but not so good at productive ones (speaking, writing). The writing skills were the least developed.

Table 1. Bachelor Students' Self-evaluation of Their English Knowledge.

Skill	Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory	Good	Very good	Excellent
Listening	1	3	13	5	3
Speaking	2	12	7	3	1
Reading	1	4	15	4	1
Writing	5	10	4	2	1

Students were also asked to allot the time of a lecture (in percent) for the activities which develop reading, writing, listening, speaking, grammar and vocabulary skills (see Table 4). They were expected to regard the skills they devoted more time for as more important. The students allotted most time for speaking (30 %) and grammar (18 %) activities. Vocabulary and writing activities were also regarded as important (13 %). According to the students, the least lecture time should be spent on reading and listening (11 % and 15 %, respectively). Students must have allotted the time with regard to their need for productive skills. However, they did not give much time for developing writing skills, possibly regarding them as an individual activity or hoping to cope with writing tasks, because they do not require dynamism.

The following question was *Which way of learning do you prefer? Why?* The students preferred learning in groups (20 students) to individual learning (5 students). 2 students differentiated vocabulary and reading tasks as the ones that have to be done individually. The preference of group learning may reflect the respondents' need to develop listening and speaking skills, since group activities are essential for their development. The reasons for the preferences were: fun to learn together; possibility to share ideas and communicate; opportunities to develop speaking skills and ask for advice.

As for the expectations the students had towards the ESP course, it is worth noting, that even 72 % of the students had expectations to improve General English (e.g., communication skills) and only 28 % of them mentioned the need to expand the vocabulary of their speciality. This might indicate insufficient knowledge of General English of some students and suggest an idea that the ESP course should be focused not only on teaching specific language, but it should also provide some

general practice in developing all skills, with the emphasis on the productive skills students lacked most.

The answers to the question *Did the teaching materials for ESP satisfy your needs?* are provided in Table 2. All students were satisfied with speciality English. General English needs were met less successfully, which is quite natural, as these skills were not the aim of the ESP coursebooks. It can be concluded, that professional knowledge is presented well enough in the ESP courses at the University. As for the improvement of General English skills, students at Kaunas University of Technology who get low scores in a language placement test are offered Remedial English courses to deepen their knowledge of General English before starting an ESP course. However, despite that fact that most of these students understand the need and importance of improving General English skills, many of them, who would need the Remedial English, do not choose or attend the courses, because they are elective ones and have no assigned credits. Meanwhile, the students hope to improve all skills of GE together with their speciality course, and they come straight to an ESP course of C1 level. However, one-semester course would be clearly too short for such an expanded syllabus. Assigning some credits to the Remedial courses would greatly increase students' motivation.

Table 2. Evaluation of Students' General and Professional Needs.

Needs	Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory	Good	Very good	Excellent
Professional English needs	-	-	-	17	8
General English needs	-	4	6	15	-

Students were asked to grade the characteristics of the coursebook they used in their ESP course from 1 – *unsatisfactory* to 5 – *excellent*.

They evaluated the coursebooks positively. The characteristics of the coursebook material related to specialty knowledge (“materials provide useful speciality knowledge”, are *authentic* and *arranged consistently*) received the highest evaluations. This indicates excellent work of the coursebook authors, who succeeded in selecting the authentic materials and arranging them so, that the texts seem to be coherent and useful, despite the fact that the authors are not specialists in the professional areas the coursebooks deal with. However, the students start their studies of speciality subjects only in the third year, and the second year students had to study both, professional content and the language, in their ESP course. Therefore, their decisions on the consistency and usefulness of the coursebooks content could be misleading. CLIL (content-language integrated learning) could be a good way out in this situation. At present situation students do not feel confident in their professional area (nor do the lecturers of English). Although having succeeded in producing

effective ESP coursebooks, the lecturers of English face a challenge to convey high quality content knowledge in a wider context. Their cooperation with specialists of the professional fields would be a good solution. This cooperation may take numerous forms, from advice to simultaneous teaching. Hyland (2002) proposes the idea of a very narrow specialization referring to the conception that students tend to learn only things they really need, i.e., narrow specialization English, and it should be taught cooperating with subject teachers. However, as Liubinienė (2010) points out, the CLIL practice requires the reorganization of the study process, which is quite complicated. Aquilar and Rodriquez (2012) define *the most usually identified benefits* of CLIL, such as *oreign language learning (particularly improvement in receptive skills), multicultural competence and a positive (emotional/ affective) attitude towards foreign language learning*. As it has been mentioned earlier, the students lack productive skills more than the receptive ones. Therefore, CLIL could be a good aid in teaching a foreign language, but not a replacement of ESP courses in tertiary education as the students' needs for productive skills would not be met.

The lowest evaluation was given for the motivational power of the texts and tasks; nevertheless, only 12 % of students evaluated this aspect negatively. This characteristic had also the greatest distribution of the rankings — the students valued it the most controversially.

Table 3. ESP Coursebook Evaluation.

Characteristics of ESP coursebook materials	1	2	3	4	5
Interesting	-	4	5	16	-
Motivating	3	3	4	14	1
Providing useful speciality knowledge	-	3	-	21	1
Developing English language skills	-	-	3	6	16
Understandable	-	-	2	18	5
Authentic	1	-	5	4	15
Materials arranged consistently	-	2	6	3	14
Various	-	-	8	13	4
Enough various tasks	-	-	-	23	2

The lack of motivation might have been due to the lack of impact, that according to B. Tomlinson (1998, pp.7–21) can be achieved through a variety of factors, such as:

- a. *novelty (e.g., unusual topics, illustration and activities);*
- b. *variety (e.g., breaking up the monotony of the unit routine with unexpected activity; using many different text types taken from many different types of sources; using a number of different instructor voices on a CD);*
- c. *attractive presentation (e.g., use of attractive colours, lots of white space; use of photographs);*

d. *appealing content (e.g., topics of interests to the target learners; topics which offer the possibility of learning something new, engaging stories, universal themes; local references);*

e. *achievable challenge (e.g., tasks which challenge the learners to think).*

Possibly, some of the factors, such as an attractive presentation of teaching materials, have been neglected in the ESP coursebooks in order to make the coursebooks cheaper. The students who were not motivated to study their profession might have also found the content not appealing.

The students valued the amount of tasks in the coursebook especially positively: even 92 % of students thought there were enough of them and they were quite various. This implies that the authors managed to foresee the possible difficulties quite exactly and chose the tasks successfully.

The results of the answers to the question *Did the ESP coursebook help you to improve the skills mentioned?* are presented in Table 4. Students graded the answers from 1 – *unsatisfactory* to 5 – *excellent*. Column 6 in Table 4 contains information about the answers to the question *What percentage of class time would you allot for the skills?*

Table 4. The Improvement of Language Skills by Means of ESP Coursebook. Time Allotted to the Development of the Skills.

Skills/ class time for activities, %	1	2	3	4	5	6
Vocabulary	-	-	-	21	4	13
Grammar	-	3	17	4	-	18
Reading		-	17	4	4	11
Writing	-	-	20	5	-	13
Speaking	-	-	10	10	5	30
Listening	3	4	18	-	-	15

As Table 4 shows, students improved vocabulary skills most. However, in their opinion, it would not be worth spending much class time on the development of these skills, as it is an individual activity. The development of speaking skills was assessed the most controversially. Only 5 students evaluated the improvement of speaking skills *excellent* and 20 of them marked it as *good* or *very good*. One of the possible reasons might have been students' different background of General English and their different level of speaking skills. Students with the best speaking skills usually tend to dominate during speaking practices.

Answering the questions *What percentage of tasks was useful and worth doing? What were the greatest advantages and drawbacks of the coursebook?* students regarded approximately 78 % of the tasks in the coursebook as worth doing. The advantages, in students' opinion, were interesting and various tasks, useful and informative texts which were related to students' professional area. Students' opinions towards grammar tasks (which were not abundant in the course books) were contradictory. Some students (5 out of

25) missed grammar tasks, while the other 9 students pointed out that there was an optimal number of them, they were useful and helped to increase fluency. The rest 11 students did not regard grammar tasks as important in an ESP course.

In general, grammar issue is rather controversial, as the communicative approach to language teaching, which is so popular nowadays, does not recommend spending time on grammar tasks. Possibly, due to such an approach to grammar already at secondary schools, some students at tertiary education lack grammar skills and miss grammar: 56 % of students stated they needed it. This controversy possibly indicates a different level of students' proficiency. It also shows the importance of grammar even in the ESP course and suggests the idea that the essential points of it, related to the teaching materials, should not be neglected, so that the students who need to refresh their grammar skills could have more practice on them in the professional context of an ESP course.

Speaking about the drawbacks, a lack of creative writing and oral communicative activities was mentioned. An opinion that tasks should be sequenced differently was also expressed.

The opinion of one student can conclude the analysis of the bachelor students' coursebook evaluation: *There can not be an ideal coursebook because each student has different knowledge of English.*

Doctoral Students' Survey

Answering the first question *When and where did you learn ESP?* only two of the students stated that they had had an ESP course; the others had learnt English for Specific Purposes individually, by reading articles, memorizing sentence structures, working with dictionaries, etc.

The second additional question was: *What course books or other material did you use for learning ESP?* One respondent used an ESP coursebook, another one pointed out a dictionary as a means for learning English, the other respondents mentioned scientific publications and articles as learning materials.

The respondents needed English for their studies: to search for information, to write articles and present the results of their research, to participate in conferences, deliver presentations. 5 respondents needed English at work, mainly for communication orally and in writing (e-mails, speaking with clients, and participation in events) and 2 respondents expected to use it at work in the future. Naturally, the doctoral students were more precise naming the activities in which they might use English, but both groups of the students regarded English skills as necessary for their studies and present or future job.

Doctoral students thought their reading skills were the best. Certainly, they have to read a lot for their studies, and they have been practicing this skill most. The poorest skills were in writing – 4 respondents evaluated them as *satisfactory* and 1 as *unsatisfactory*. Doctoral and bachelor students' skills

evaluation shows that both groups lack productive skills, with writing skills being the poorest. It is known that receptive skills are acquired faster than productive ones, and productive skills require a greater mastery of the language, which the students lack. Speaking requires greater dynamism, while writing needs greater grammatical accuracy and better language skills than speaking, since minor mistakes, that can be left unnoticed in speech, are obvious while writing a text.

Table 5. Doctoral Students' Evaluation of their English Knowledge.

Skill	Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory	Good	Very good	Excellent
Listening	-	3	4	-	-
Speaking	-	4	2	1	-
Reading	-	2	3	1	1
Writing	1	4	1	1	-

Table 6 represents the answers to the question *Which language skills do you need to develop?*, which were graded from 1 (least important) to 6 (most important).

Table 6. Language Skills That Students Need to Develop.

Skills/ Evaluation	1	2	3	4	5	6
Vocabulary	1	1	2	-	3	-
Grammar	1		1	3	-	2
Reading	-	5	-	1	1	-
Writing	1	-	1	4	1	-
Speaking	2	-	-	-	3	2
Listening	1	1	-	2	1	2

In the doctoral students' opinion, they needed to develop speaking and grammar skills most. The need for the same skills is obvious in the survey of bachelors' questionnaire. The need to develop reading skills is the lowest, possibly due to their extensive practice in reading professional texts for their studies.

Both, doctoral and bachelor students, evaluated their productive skills lower than the receptive ones, and both groups of students claimed that their most topical need was speaking, while they needed grammar as a means to improve their fluency. The similarity of English language needs for the development of the same language skills despite different experience in English language learning indicates that the needs to develop language skills do not change in the long run. However, bachelor students allotted only 13 % of class time for vocabulary tasks, while doctoral students regarded them as important. This fact indicates the positive outcome of the ESP courses the bachelors have had.

Pointing out their learning style preferences, 5 out of 7 respondents chose an individual language learning style, and two preferred learning in groups or in pairs. It is worth noting, that the two groups of students had different learning style preferences: bachelors preferred group work, while doctoral students were in favour of an individual learning style. An assumption could be made that the doctoral students had been studying English individually for a long time and did not feel comfortable in a group work or did not regard it beneficial, as they had not had effective group activities in their ESP learning practice. Since the doctoral students studied English at tertiary level, the situation has changed a lot: all students of KTU have an ESP course as a part of the curriculum in their bachelor studies, and the respondents have had the experience of group activities in the ESP due to the communicative approach to ESP teaching at tertiary education. Thus, learning style preferences seem to depend on the learning experience the students have had.

Conclusions

An overview of literature reveals the importance of needs analysis and teaching materials' evaluation as the determining factors for adjusting an ESP course to students' needs. Insights into teaching materials evaluation reveal their significance to the course design, implementation, and their relation to the students' needs.

The survey findings indicate that:

All students are motivated to learn English as they regard it as important means of communication, both for studies and professional life.

The results of doctoral and bachelor students' survey show that the needs for the development of particular English skills do not change much over time despite their different background and experience in English learning practices. The differences occur in the need for vocabulary development and in learning style preferences, both of them being conditioned by different English learning experience the students have had.

Both groups of students felt a lack of productive skills, with speaking being the top priority. Grammar was regarded as important, as the means to enhance the fluency.

The teaching materials mostly satisfied the students' needs for professional English and met the goals set for the ESP courses: they were authentic, interesting, various, understandable, presented consistently, providing useful speciality knowledge. However, ESP teaching materials were not very motivating. The possible reasons are an insufficient impact of teaching materials on the students or a lack of interest in their speciality studies.

As the survey was conducted referring to the results obtained from the summative evaluation of teaching materials and students needs were assessed after the course, the further study of the adjustment of the ESP courses to students' needs could be based on the analysis of the dynamics of students'

needs during the course, conducting preliminary, formative and summative evaluations of the students' needs, wants, and lacks and comparing the results. The research in order to evaluate ESP coursebook materials, referring to the principles of materials development, and matching the results of the analysis with the students' approach could also be beneficial.

Referring to the survey results, the following recommendations and future improvements could be made:

The ESP courses should encourage the use and, consequently, the development of productive skills. Presently, the content of the highly specialized ESP course is directed more towards the development of receptive skills; therefore, the ESP courses should also include tasks with more general content, to foster productive skills.

The inclusion of supplementary grammar activities related to the speciality into ESP teaching materials would be an advantage for more than a half of the learners.

Due to the insufficient motivational power of the ESP teaching materials some ready-made materials with more powerful visual impact could be included into an ESP course as well.

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Specialiosios anglų kalbos kurso pritaikymas studentų poreikiams aukštojoje mokykloje: atvejo analizė

Santrauka

Specialiosios anglų kalbos kursas – vienas dažniausiai taikomų būdų anglų kalbai mokytis aukštojoje mokykloje, nes jis yra labiausiai orientuotas į konkrečios specialybės studentų poreikius. Straipsnyje aptariama studentų poreikių analizės bei mokomosios medžiagos vertinimo svarba. Studentų poreikių analizė – tai duomenų šaltinis ne tik naujo specialios paskirties anglų kalbos kursui kurti, bet ir esamam kursui tobulinti. Studentų poreikiai lemia mokomosios medžiagos parinkimą, o ši, savo ruožtu, – kurso turinį, mokymo metodus, studentų motyvaciją. Mokomosios medžiagos vertinimas leidžia nuolat tobulinti anglų kalbos specialiams tikslams kursą, jį vis labiau pritaikant prie besikeičiančių studentų poreikių. Straipsnyje pateikiama KTU studentų anglų kalbos poreikių analizė bei jų nuomonė apie turėtą specialiosios anglų kalbos kursą. Pabandyta pažvelgti, ar studentų anglų kalbos poreikiai kinta laikui bėgant, svarstoma, kaip specialiosios anglų kalbos kursą būtų galima labiau pritaikyti prie studentų poreikių. Straipsnyje remiamasi anketų rezultatų analize bei tyrėjų studijomis apie poreikių bei medžiagos vertinimo reikšmę rengiant specialiosios anglų kalbos kursą.

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