

Designing an effective English for Special Purposes course for The High Institute of Administrative Services students based on their potential job language needs

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Abstract: This study aimed at analyzing the language needs for students of the High Institute of Administrative Services at workplace, Target Situation Analysis (TSA). Language needs at work place will be defined and compared to the current English language-training program applied in the institute to suggest more improvement by utilizing the most recent ESP theories in needs analysis particularly in target situation analysis TASA. To analyze the language needs at workplace the researcher developed a questionnaire current training program applied defined and evaluated in terms of effectiveness and productivity for student's future. after conducting a pilot surveying by distribution thirty-five questionnaires to students graduates from the institute at their work places the results were carefully studied to determine areas need more clarifications and questions need to be restructured to avoid ambiguity. A final revised questionnaire was built and distributed again to the same study samples. The questionnaire consists of 12 questions to elicit information about current training program nature, in terms of pre-training preparations, while training and post training methods and techniques, to determine whether the training program was designed to meet job language requirements and whether the training program is up to date to meet those requirements. The linguistics required at work place is determined by allocating some of the questionnaire's questions to provide for linguistics components needed at work place.

Keywords: Target situation needs. Present situation needs. Needs analysis, ESP.

1. INTRODUCTION

In the introduction, we will review terms relevant literature on theoretical aspects and terms related to ESP and its definitions in general and Target Situation Analysis (TAS) in particular. A number of scholars has defined English for specific purpose (ESP) and each definition has contributed to bring people to a workable definition, which seems to be yet unreachable. Some Scholars defined ESP in terms of what it is not rather than in terms of what it really is.

Mackay and Alan Mountford (1978:2) define ESP as the teaching English for "clearly utilitarian purpose". The purpose they refer to is defined by the needs of the learners, this purpose is varying since it could be academic, occupational, or scientific.

Dudley Evans and St John (1998) define ESP in terms of its absolute and variable characteristics by relying on the modifications specified and stated by Strevens' on his original definition of ESP. They stated absolute characteristics as the basic needs of language related directly to job and variable characteristics as helping factors that support learning and training in order to achieve target situation needs and requirements.

Hutchinson and Waters define ESP as an approach to language learning not as a product. They state that ESP is not a particular kind of language or methodology, but rather an approach to language learning in which all decisions in related to content and method are based on the learner's reason for learning. Hutchinson and Waters (1987:18) provide more definitions in terms of what ESP is not, first "ESP is not just a matter of Science words and grammar for Scientists, Hotel words and grammar for Hotel staff and so on." (ibid, p.18). Second ESP is not different in kind from any other form of language teaching. Efficient methods of learning should be applied even though the contents are different. Despite the fact that the content may be different, there is no reason to suppose that the processes of learning should be different from that exist in General English. Furthermore Pauline Robinson (1991, pp. 2-3) defined ESP depending on three different points; students goal from learning and their needs and finally their age (she stated that they should be adult).

Dudley-Evans and St John mentioned that each of Strevens , Hutchinson and Waters, Robinson's definitions have strengths and weaknesses, they thought Strevens' definition is much comprehensive but, referring to content as an absolute characteristic could be confusing since it may confirm the false impression that ESP is always and necessarily directly related to subject content. They have postulate a revised definition of absolute characteristics. They agreed in some areas with Strevens like; the designing of ESP course should be according to what students need and the appropriateness of the language and that the content should be related to the occupations and activities.

Problem statement

The problem, which this paper evaluating could be widely, exist in our education systems notably that education of outputs directly related to work. Most of our plans for such types of education or training lacks careful analyzing of work needs and requirements to align such learning outcomes with potential work needs. Thus, this study designed to deal with this issue, the study base on a questionnaire, which examine The High Institute of Administrative Services Graduates works needs and analyzing current training programs in the High Institute of Administrative Services to determine on the bridge between job language requirements and training programs of English language.

Questions of the study

1. Does the current English language program at the High Institute of Administrative Services designed according to the principles and measures of ESP course designing?
2. Does the English language training programs are designed according to students' actual needs?

Does the English language program designers at the High Institute of Administrative Services incorporate work market needs when designing such programs?

Significance of the study

This study could help syllabus designers in the High Institute of Administrative Services in designing appropriate training programs according to the actual needs of the students. Furthermore, this study can be a guide in developing teaching materials for English training program in order to upgrade the performance of the institute's graduates.

Hypothesis of the study

Research Hypothesis: this study hypothesizes that English language course and training process in the institute is not sufficient to meet language needs at work place due to the nature of course taught and the lack the application of needs analysis methods.

Population of the study

The population of this study covers all students of the institute whether graduated or still receive training in the institute.

Samples of the study

The study samples included 50 on-the-job who have graduated from the institute and 15 students who are still receiving training in the institute.

2. DATA COLLECTION TOOLS

In order to collect the data for this study a questionnaire is developed and distributed to the study samples in two phases; firstly, a pilot questionnaire distributed and after editing and clarifying, all questions a final questionnaire distributed to collect the data for the study. The questionnaire seeks information about the curriculum currently taught, the competence level of students and to what extent the curriculum sufficiently serve the purpose of teaching English for secretary. In a broader sense, the questionnaire seeks information about why the High Institute of Administrative Services students receive English language training and to what extent the current training program helps achieving the target goals. The information received from the questionnaire served to great extent the purpose of this study.

To analyze target situation needs (work needs) present situation should be analyzed, for this purpose a short diagnostic test was used as a tool to collect data about students current English language competence .The test was divided to four sections to evaluate students' level in the four language skills. A part of the questionnaire was dedicated to find out about the students evaluation of the current English Language program.

For target situation, analysis a questionnaire was used to collect data from in-service staff (graduates from the institute). The first section of the questionnaire covers participants demographic information; The second section was provided for collecting data of the staffs' opinions on current English language training and to what extent it's sufficient and their perception the importance of the four English language skills at workplace and the importance of some language functions at workplace. Section 3 was provided to collect data about English language output to find out to what extend does the training objectives meet the workplace language needs. Part 4 allocated to collect graduates point of view on the gap between current training programs of English language and workplace language needs. The target of the questionnaire was to seek information based on the theoretical framework of the study, which covers TSA (Target Situation Analysis), LSA (Learning Situation Analysis). The questions of the questionnaire is designed to provide answers to the questions and hypothesis of the study.

Validity of the Questionnaire

To ensure the validity of the questionnaire, the researcher has consult some experts in teaching and training field about the appropriateness of questions and whether such questions help achieving the purpose of the study in terms of collecting information help achieving the purpose of the study. The pilot questionnaire has helped in a great deal in avoiding ambiguity and make final questionnaire as clear as possible.

Reliability of the Questionnaire

The researcher used Crombach Alpha to ensure the reliability of the questionnaire. The questionnaire was distributed to 50 subjects and after one week from the collection of the first test a second test was conducted by redistributing the same questionnaire to the same subjects and the result was as follow.

Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	65	100
	Excluded	4	0
	Total	61	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.929	61

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Descriptive and analytical method have been adopted. Data collection instruments is a questionnaire. The following is a description of the four components of the questionnaire and scoring criteria:

Part 1: Demographic Data

Three questions addressed demographic data – the participant's gender, age, and education.

Part 2 : English skills and training.

In this part, questions were formulated to collect information trainees background and skills in English language as perceived by them, evaluation of their current English language training.

Part 3: English language difficulties and needs at workplace

Two main questions with more than 15 items addressed the trainees need and difficulties they encounter at workplace.

Part 4: learning needs and suggestions

This part has more than 13 questions designed to elicit information from trainees about the learning environment they prefer.

Liker five- point scale with close-ended questions was used in the questionnaire. Some open –ended questions were also used in the questionnaire. Scoring criteria used for closed questions were:

*Very good = 1 , Good = 2 , Fair = 3, Poor = 4, Very poor = 5

* Strongly agree= 1 , Agree=2 , Undecided = 3 Dis agree = 4 , Strongly disagree 5

*Very important =1 , Important = 2, Average =3, Less than average=4, least important=5.

Needs analysis:

Designers of the ESP syllabus insist that the needs of the learners should be specified before any other step. So needs analysis is the first step towards designing an ESP course, no doubts that these needs are the key for any further work, i.e. right from the beginning, an ESP objectives should be specified as accurately as possible (Mackey and Mountford, 1978: 10). Knowing these needs enable the course planner to narrow down the area of use and usage. In other words, defining needs help a lot in providing right materials and right teaching methods.

Target Situation Analysis (TSA)

The term "Target situation analysis" was introduced by Chambers(1980).

Target situation analysis is a form of needs analysis, which focuses on identifying the learners' language requirements in the occupational or academic situation they are being prepared for. Target situation has been defined by Hutchinson and Waters in terms of Necessities, Lacks and Wants. One of the most prominent works in analyzing target situation needs is John Munby's communicative needs process (1978) (CNP). CNP provided a highly set of procedures that help in defining accurately the target situation needs. This model contains a detailed set of procedures for discovering target situation needs. Munby's overall model is made up in a very detailed way that almost everything about the learner and the target situation is evaluated. It is important to note here that this model analyzes the four skills (listening, reading, speaking and writing). He describes TSA as a "communication in the target situation" (p. 29). He clarifies "... it goes into the target situation, collects and analyze the data in order to establish the communication that really occur - its function, forms and frequencies and provides a basis for selecting the long-range aims of the course .In fact, many researchers in the field of TSA followed Munby's model. Most subsequent target needs analysis research was based on it for the reason that it offers comprehensive data banks and target performance" (Robinson, 1991:8) .Munby's model contains controversial issues; it will be helpful to shed some light on it. The aim of this model is to find as thoroughly as possible the linguistic forms a prospective ESP learner is likely to use in various situations in his target-working environment. The outcome of the processing data by means of Munby's model is, as Hutchinson and Waters (1987) say, "What the learner needs to know in order to function effectively in the target situation" (p. 54). However ,the model consists of two stages: communicative needs processor (CNP) and the Interpretations of the profile of NA derived from CNP in terms of micro-skills :Perceptual skills, summarizing skills, study reference skills ... etc., and micro Functions: suggestions, interruptions, contradiction, justifications ... etc. The CNP Is set out under eight variables that "affect communication needs by organizing Them as parameters in a dynamic relationship to each other (Munby, 1978:32) .The CNA operates by looking at its 'input' - the

foreign language participant And information concerning the participant's identity and language. In other Words the learner's personal details - age, gender, nationality etc., are fed into the CNP.

4. DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Data collected from participants will be in the section analyzed and discussed to clarify to what extend do the hypothesis of this paper are correct and to pave the path for further studies in this area. Data analysis presentation will be supported by tables as well as some graphs for more clarification.

Analyzing structure will base on the organization of the questionnaire, so information provided here are as per the questionnaire organization.

Table 1: Participants Gender

Gender	Number	Percentage
Women	45	69.2%
Men	20	30.8%

Table 2: the importance of English language functions relating to work

Statement	Not important	Slightly Important	important	Very important	Mean	Std. Deviation	Level of importance
	Number	Number	Number	Number			
Understanding work related terminologies	0	1	20	44	3.31	0.859	Very important
Understanding English different dialects	25	20	20	0	2.4	0.264	Not important
Understanding inquires of English speaking customers	0	0	0	65	4	0.984	Very important
Using English related to my work	0	0	0	65	4	0.984	Very important
Introducing oneself and duties	20	10	10	25	3.5	0.826	Important
Ability to offering help	30	5	15	15	2.5	0.265	Not important
Asking for personal information	0	0	20	45	3.9	0.985	Very important
providing general instructions in English	0	30	25	10	2.9	0.789	Important
Reading reports and letters	0	0	20	45	4.0	0.998	Very important
Writing letters and reports	0	0	30	35	3.6	0.89	Very important
Writing meetings minutes	0	0	50	15	3.9	0.96	Very important
Writing emails	0	0	50	15	3.6	0.96	Very important
Filling official documents	0	0	60	5	3.9	0.95	Very important
Offering verbal help to customers	10	5	40	10	3.5	0.87	Important
Answering telephone	0	0	30	35	3.9	0.96	Vert important

Table 3: The importance of English language at workplace

Statement	Not important	Slightly important	Important	Very important	Mean	Std. Deviation	Level of importance
	Number	Number	Number	Number			
	%	%	%	%			
Listening	2	3	22	58	3.60	.676	Very important
	2.4	3.5	25.9	68.2			
Speaking	2	6	24	53	3.51	.734	Very important
	2.4	7.1	28.2	62.4			
Reading	1	9	22	53	3.49	.734	Very important
	1.2	10.6	25.9	62.4			
Writing	6	8	26	45	3.29	.911	Important
	7.1	9.4	30.6	52.9			

As per this table, all of the participants believe that listening, speaking and reading are very important, writing is considered to be important; this could be because they always use a computer programs or a specialized system for their routine work.

Table 4: Evaluation of the Current English language training program as perceived by the graduates

Statement	Strongly disagree	no agree	agree	Strongly agree	Mean	Std. Deviation	Level of agree/disagree
	Number	Number	Number	Number			
	%	%	%	%			
Training courses we received helped us a lot at work	50	7	0	7	3.60	.676	Strongly disagree
	87	6.5	0	6.5			
Training courses were designed according to what is required at work	40	20	2	3	3.51	.734	Strongly disagree
	80	18	1	1			
Training courses are revised periodically according to labor market studies	45	15	3	53	3.49	.734	Strongly disagree
	80	18	1	1			
I am familiar with training needs analysis process- exams, tests, surveys ...etc.	50	15	0	0	3.29	.911	Strongly disagree
	7.1	9.4	30.6	52.9			

In this table the institute graduates evaluate the English training course program in terms of preparation, studies and implementation, it is clear that the majority or the students evaluate the training program negatively; since most of them agree that English training has nothing to do with their job and these course do not help them prepare sufficiently for their future job.

5. DISCUSSIONS

As illustrated above, and as the high institute of administrative service graduates perceive, the English training course should be designed according to their actual needs and should incorporate job language requirements in the designing stage. In other words we can say an effective training needs analysis should be applied before starting any training in

English language, and here in this paper we suggest the Target Situation Analysis as a best mean of evaluating the actual needs of students since it includes all linguistics and personal needs that will face the graduates at work place.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STUDY

This paper recommends to ensure the quality and the efficiency of the English training Program the application of the proper training needs analysis scheme in the High Institute of Administrative Service in Kuwait. More papers and studies could be conducted in this regard to provide more scientific approaches to achieve adequate training for English language.

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