AN EXPLANATORY PROCESS OF DESIGNING AN EFFECTIVE SYLLABUS FOR AMBULANCE PRACTITIONERS

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Annotation. This work describes the importance and the steps of the research conducted in teaching English to Ambulance Service workers. The research aimed to identify the needs of medical practitioners and design a syllabus that could help them to improve their language skills for specific purposes. Triangulated needs analysis revealed the needs, demands, and aims of the target population. Based on the findings of the research, an ESP course and syllabus were designed.

Key words: needs analysis, target population, design, syllabus, questionnaire, communicative, assessment

The core objective of the research was to tailor an ESP course and syllabus targeted to medical workers – Ambulance physicians who were to be employed as a special brigade to mainly treat foreigners. The group consisted of 24 students, being half of the practitioners who were enrolled in training in the USA Ambulance Association Program for developing countries. The conducted needs analysis revealed the core needs of the language learners, their strength, and weaknesses. Stemming from the results of Needs Analysis of the target population, 6 session syllabus was designed, including the skills and topics which learners found to be covered.

The needs analysis was conducted within one week period in The Central Ambulance Service of the Republic of Uzbekistan which possesses a special ambulance brigade for foreign citizens and tourists. In this context ambulance workers needed to be trained and taught EOP as a significant professional requirement and anticipation of participating in qualification enhancement program in

a foreign country. As Long (2005) proposed instead of referring to "a one-size-fits-all approach" three-phased multimethod needs analysis of identifying current and future L2 needs was utilized. The approach involved collecting information from "published and unpublished literature, teachers, learners, applied linguists, domain experts and triangulated sources" (Flowerdew, 2013). To obtain more accurate data Hutchinson and Waters (1987) suggested elaborately scrutinizing the present situation which aimed to derive information about learners' current linguistic knowledge and their preferences. Analysis commenced with phase 1- "analysis of the present situation", which was consisted of a preliminary questionnaire, unstructured interviews, and empirical observations of the target population. This stage assisted to reveal valuable information about learners' "lacks", "wants", serving as diagnostic purposes. The stage was based on task-based needs analysis and targeted to define what learners do in their workplace, what their duties are, and how they accomplish them (empirical observations). Unstructured interviews with domain experts of the field revealed more aspects of target discourse and "static, product-oriented analysis" (Flowerdew, 2013). Long (2005) postulated that "unstructured interviews with domain specialists would seem a good method to use initially for deriving categories for follow-up survey questionnaires or structured interviews".

Based on data collected in Phase 1, for Phase 2 – "target situation analysis" (Flowerdew, 2013) it was designed an electronic questionnaire including 5 open-ended and 10 multiple-choice questions on Google Docs and structured interviews consisting of 4 profession-related and 4 language-related questions. According to Richards (2001) questionnaire is one of the effective ways to retrieve a large amount of decision-making information concerning problems of the target population and determining objectives of the course. "To gain insider view to ESP situation" and gather more sufficient data further prolonged engagement of empirical longitudinal observations of the setting was maintained as the third phase of needs analysis. The phase included "means and environment analysis", "considering the factors of the situation in which the course will be used and how the course should take account of them" (Macalister, 2010). Hence, examining the environment in which the course

was to be run, the target learner's workplace and equipment, as well as existed materials, were significant primary features to consider in designing the syllabus. The findings explored that the target students particularly needed to enhance the following skills:

- Communication skills as a doctor-patient relationship
- Clinical and consultation language skills
- Professional and ethical language skills
- Foundation language of medical terms
- Language for Diagnostic purposes
- Verbal and non-verbal pragmatic behavior

The placement test conducted at the initial stage showed that the majority of learners had a pre-intermediate level of grammar and lexical resource, however, having challenges in speaking and listening skills which was on an elementary level. Stemming from the results of the needs analysis, the lessons were planned to be conducted using Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), Task-based learning (TBL), Corporative Learning, and Problem Solving Learning. Cook (2002) stated that unlike EGP learners ESP learners need more communication and authentic tasks which they will be able to use outside the classroom in their field of profession. Thus, CLT is the method that can benefit ESP learners, fostering learners' ability to communicate in the target language, prioritizing acquisitions of semantic notions, social functions as well as linguistic structures. According to Nunan (1989), ESP lessons should include methods and tasks which "can stand alone as fundamental units and require comprehension, production, manipulation or interaction in authentic language paying more attention to meaning rather than form". CLT and TBL demand learners work in pairs or in groups "to transfer and negotiate meaning in situations", engage in role-plays, and require class activities that consist of authentic tasks and materials constructed for non-pedagogic purposes (Celce-Murcia, 2014). In terms of PBL, this approach is particularly appropriate for medical workers to accomplish tasks based on their field, as making a diagnosis, the ways of instructing, giving advice or reassuring patients, discussing cases, and striving to mitigate occurred

problems. According to Barrows (1986), PBL challenges students to learn how to be engaged in collaborative group work, negotiate how to tackle problems of real-life situations. The designed syllabus offers input and output tasks based on authenticity – role plays, DCTs, discussions, and simulations, primarily being directed to improve the target group's communicative skills and vocabulary. As regards materials, they were selected considering learners' needs and the framework of Dudley-Evince & St John (1998). They presented a real language, provided more exposure to the real language, being reliable, challenging, simultaneously stimulate cognitive processes, "offered new ideas and information" (considering learners' experience and knowledge), "included input which could be used outside the learning environment", take into account learner needs and learning strategies, fostered learner autonomy and motivation (PLAB tests, authentic videos from YouTube, articles from Scientific American, Quizlet, eJOY, BBC learn English and, etc.). The syllabus includes authentic video and reading materials "which involve learners' prior knowledge, interest, and curiosity" (Breen, 1985), and subsequently, can generate more fruitful language acquisition in tune with real-life language – the main need of ESP students. Tomlinson (2012) postulated that chosen course books ("English in medicine", Cambridge University Press & "Good practice: Communication skills in English for Medical Practitioner", Cambridge University Press, 2011) should fulfill practical needs, save time, being developed by experts in the field, be well-designed and organized. Selected books are up-to-date and offer the exact vocabulary and exercises which, assist the target students. The other significant materials chosen are case studies, which integrate language and subject learning, as well as introduce variety in the ESP class (Sierocka, 2014). Dudley-Evans & St. John (1998) highlight the core objective of cases as to introduce learners some aspect of "real-life scenario which they might apply to integrate knowledge, skills, theory, and experience".

The sessions incorporate eclectic use of technology (the applications and online platforms Quizlet, eJOY, and SeeSaw; online PLAB tests, online magazines, and YouTube videos) to increase teaching efficacy. Arno-Marcia (2012) pointed out that "technology assists learners independently organize their learning process" and

increases learners' intrinsic motivation to acquire the target language. Hamilton (2007) suggested using different types of IT tools of software during the classes. As he mentioned the combination of technology with skills students will need to make learning valid and authentic. In the ESP context, IT tools ought to be used for "content and topic visualization, as well as for vocabulary learning" (Krajka, 2015). The syllabus included many activities with the applications Quizlet, eJOY aimed to enhance learners' listening and vocabulary.

One of the sessions of the syllabus discusses the topic of pragmatic behavior which was also identified as the field of interest of the target population which needs analysis revealed. Designed socio-pragmatic awareness-raising materials and tasks are to help students to avoid pragmatic failures. Ishihara & Cohen (2010) pointed out that it is significant for language learners to acquire contextual factors, i.e. social status, distance, intensity, and the magnitude of politeness or directness.

The syllabus comprises formative, summative, alternative assessment, self-assessment as well as peer evaluation. Formative assessment is provided by a teacher and a peer or it might be conducted as a collaborative assessment. In most of the sessions, formative assessment plays a crucial role, since it provides more "crucial information for teachers" (Brown, 2010) and is the foundation of good summative assessment. Including the alternative type of assessment helps to obtain more information about learners' weaknesses, focuses on process, and requires using real-life contexts or simulations, holding more positive washback and a high degree of validity and authenticity (Brown, 2010). Similarly, peer assessment and self-assessment increases learner-centeredness and boosts learner confidence and intrinsic motivation. Created summative assessment at the end of the session possesses a high rate of content validity as it tests what has been acquired, practiced, and taught within the lessons. Suggested Analytical rubric is reliable to obtain overall information about learners' linguistic competencies, and gives a chance to provide useful "feedback to teaching and learning" (Green, 2010).

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