

Analyzing English Language Learning Needs among Airline Apprentices in Sri Lanka

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Abstract

English for Specific Purposes (ESP) has gained enormous popularity in the field of second language teaching during the past few years. Needs analysis is considered a major requirement in English for Specific Purposes (ESP) courses for syllabus design and materials development. The purpose of this study was to find the difference between perceived and actual English language learning needs among the Airline apprentices in Sri Lanka. Even though there are plenty of Airline courses for Apprentices in Sri Lanka, no any English course for Airline apprentices to be found. Consequently most of the apprentices who join this job just after A/L struggle to deal with the sudden language shift from their mother tongue to English. This sudden language shift has become a challenge to achieve their career goals. Therefore, this study has used qualitative and quantitative instruments such as: semi-structured interview with the experts and likert scale questionnaires respectively, to find out the needs of apprentices in designing an ESP course. The sample population of the study consisted of five experts and sixty apprentices who are related to the Airline industry. The findings of the questionnaire were analyzed under five headings: personal background, general opinions about using English language skills, identifying English skills based on a priority basis, identifying course material needs & identifying course activities with learning preferences. This analysis is aimed at identifying the manner in which how English communicative skills can be incorporated with the use of authentic materials and resources in pursuing their career goals. The findings of the study will contribute to develop an ESP course for Airline apprentices based on their needs in Sri Lanka. Further, this study also provides valuable implications for ESP course designers.

Keywords - ESP, Airline, Apprentices, Needs-Analysis, English