

Fine Arts Students' Needs Analysis in the Learning of English as a Foreign Language: a Case Study

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Abstract

It has been shown that needs analysis is important while dealing with ESP in the teaching / learning process. This study wanted to find out and analyze the real needs of students for the sake of improving ELT at the Académie des Beaux-Arts / Kinshasa. Thanks to the qualitative research, this study has been concentrated on the analysis of learners' needs in the learning of English as foreign language. One hundred students of G1, G2 and G3 of plastic arts and the two instructors of the English language at the Académie des Beaux-Arts have been questioned through interviews, and also documentary sources helped to collect data. It is necessary to tackle the learners' needs analysis in order to establish and integrate learners' expectations on the proposal of a new content of English related to their field. The findings have shown that the majority of learners wished that visual and handling materials focused on their daily expectations such as drawings, pictures, sketches, artistic tools, conversations related to arts domain, might be incorporated in the content of their course.

Keywords: plastic arts, students' needs, needs analysis, foreign language, content designing.

Résumé

Il a été démontré que, lorsqu'on aborde l'Anglais de spécialité dans le processus de l'enseignement et de l'apprentissage de l'anglais, l'analyse des besoins est importante. Cette étude voulait découvrir et analyser les vrais besoins des étudiants en vue d'améliorer l'enseignement de l'anglais à l'Académie des Beaux-Arts / Kinshasa. Grâce à la recherche qualitative, la présente étude s'est concentrée sur l'analyse des besoins des apprenants dans l'apprentissage de l'anglais comme langue étrangère. Cent étudiants de G1, G2 et G3 des arts plastiques et les deux enseignants de la langue anglaise de l'Académie des Beaux-Arts ont été questionnés à travers des interviews, et aussi les sources documentaires ont permis la collecte des données. Il est nécessaire d'aborder l'analyse des besoins des apprenants afin d'établir et d'intégrer les attentes des étudiants sur la proposition d'un nouveau contenu de l'anglais en rapport avec leur domaine. Les conclusions ont montré que, la majorité des apprenants souhaitent que les matières visibles et manipulables basées sur leurs attentes journalières telles que les dessins, les images, les croquis, les outils artistiques, et les conversations en rapport avec le domaine des arts, puissent être incorporées dans le contenu de leur cours.

Mots clés: arts plastiques, les besoins des étudiants, analyse des besoins, langue étrangère, conception du contenu.

1 Introduction

Artistically, or in teaching situations "plastic is a malleable material used by an artist to create a work of art. Plastic arts are (design, painting, sculpture, architecture, and minor arts) that banal description, "arts of space," (Christin, 2020). As far as our present work is concerned, a student of art or an artist is viewed as a person who is registered after paying his tuition in art program to perform artistic competences and to create works of art. Thus, this work aims at finding out the real needs of students of art colleges, especially those of the Académie des Beaux-Arts/Kinshasa. This is the Reason why, it is useful to design a relevant content for an adequate textbook. In addition, the selection of adequate material to teach students requires English for Specific Purposes. "Generally, the students study English not because they are interested in the English

language or English culture as such, but because they need English for study or work purposes” (Robinson, 1991:2).

- *Statement of the problem*

What gave impetus to this work remains my experience as teacher at the Académie des Beaux-Arts/Kinshasa. In spite of my theoretical knowledge about the methodological and teaching principles that govern the communicative principles approach, after pre-investigation, it has been noticed that fifty percent of students poorly attend the class. This situation led me to undertake an investigation in order to find out the real needs of the learners through a research process on needs analysis. “It is a systematic approach to identifying social problems, determining their extent, and accurately defining the target population to be served and the nature of their service needs” (Rossi, et.al., 1998). The most important question is to know what the students of the Académie des Beaux-Arts/Kinshasa need to study in English class related to their domain so that adequate English class content can be designed for them.

- *Purpose of the study*

The purpose of this qualitative study was to find out and analyze the real fine arts students’ needs in the English learning related to their field. Through the interview administered to the learners and instructors, this study aims to make a proposal of a new content after discovering learners’ needs. The results of the present paper can be helpful to highlight the learners’ real needs concerning their English class.

2. Literature review

It is important to mention that, from the 1960's ESP has become one of the most important branches of Applied Linguistics in general, and of Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) in particular. The evidence that can explain its vitality and expansion is the emergence of English as a world language. This is the reason why the necessity to deal with the different teaching situations and needs required. “Some people described ESP as simply being the teaching of English for any purpose that could be specified ; others, however, were more precise describing it as the teaching of English used in academic studies or the teaching of English for vocational or professional purposes” (Anthony, 1997). “ESP is generally used to refer to the teaching of English for a clearly utilitarian purpose” (Mackay and Mountford 1978:2). That is to say that English should be taught to achieve specific language skills using real situations, in a manner that allows them to use English in their future profession, or to comprehend English discourse related to their domain of speciality (Mackay and Mountford 1978: 2). In ESP, “language is learnt not for its own sake or for the sake of gaining a general education, but to smooth the path to entry or greater linguistic efficiency in academic, professional or workplace environments”(Basturkmen, 2006: 18). ESP helps learners to build up the needed abilities for the sake of using them in their future career.

- *Esp genesis*

“The origins of teaching Language for Specific Purposes (LSP) can be traced as far back as the Greek and Roman empires” (Dudley-Evans and Johns, 1998:1). “The history of LSP goes back to “at least half a century” ” (Stevens, P. 1977). “ESP was not a planned and coherent movement, but rather a phenomenon that grew out of a number of converging trends” (Hutchinson and Waters 1987: 6). “...we can identify three main reasons common to the emergence of all ESP” (Ibid, 1987: 6). We have: The demands of this new world, a revolution in Linguistics and a new focus on the learner. “After 1945, the New World knew an age of massive and unprecedented growth in all the activities especially the economic, technical and scientific ones dominated by two divergent forces, inexorably it engenders a demand for an international language, and this responsibility was accredited to English for various reasons” (Lamry, C.E. 2016). Thus “..., it created a new generation of learners who knew specifically why they were learning a language...” (Hutchinson and Water 1987: 6). “Aiming at fulfilling the daily needs which consisted in the comprehension of the simplest brochure or manuals to most complicated genres of discourses as law texts and scientific articles . Some linguists, being aware of the world changes, began to focus their studies on the ways in which language is used in real situations” (Lamry, C.E. 2016).

ESP characteristics

ESP approach is a recognizable activity of English Language Teaching (ELT) with some specific characteristics. Dudley-Evans and St. Johns' (1998) tried to apply a series of characteristics, some absolute and variable, to outline the major features of ESP.

Absolute Characteristics:

- ESP is defined to meet specific needs of the learners;
- ESP is centered on the language (grammar, lexis, register, skills, discourse and genre) appropriate to these activities.

Variable Characteristics:

- ESP may be related to or designed for specific disciplines;
- ESP may use, in specific teaching situations, a different methodology from that of General English (Dudley-Evans & St. John, 1998:4).

It is noticed that the absolute characteristics are specific to ESP because learners' needs are in central importance when designing language activities. "ESP is seen as an 'approach' to teaching, or an 'attitude of mind' " (Dudley-Evans & St. John, 1998).

• *The difference between ESP and EGP*

"There is no difference between the two in theory; however, there is a great deal of difference in practice" (Hutchinson and Waters 1987). ESP stands on facts about language nature, learning, and teaching. It is often contrasted with General English. ESP is *learner-centered* where learners' needs and goals are of supreme value, whereas English for general purposes **approach** is *language-centered*, and cover all the language skills and the cultural aspects of the English speaking community. As far as the the ESP is concerned after identifying and analyzing the specific learning needs, learners learn "English en route to the acquisition of some quite different body of knowledge and set of skills" (Robinson 1990: 6). "Further distinction between General English courses and ESP is that, learners of the latter are mainly adult with a certain degree of awareness concerning their language needs" (Hutchinson & Waters 1987). "Whereas, General English courses are provided to pupils as compulsory module at schools, their unique purpose is to succeed in the examinations" (Lamry, C.E. 2016). "General English Language teaching tends to set out from a definite point to an indeterminate one, whereas ESP aims to speed learners and direct them through a known destination in order to reach specific objectives" (Basturkmen, 2006).

• *Learners' challenges in the learning of English in the Democratic Republic of the Congo*

A Challenge is a new or difficult task that tests somebody's ability and skill (Sally, W. and Collin, M. 2005:231). Challenge is a problem faced by human being capacity. Finding a solution to this problem is one of the greatest challenges encountered by scientists today. Grammatical aspects were observed and being challenged by French-speaking students. The Congolese students misused the English past tense in speech and writings. "English has the simple past tense, whereas French does not have this tense" (Hawkins et al 1996) quoted by (Baba, T. et al.2015). "Past tense is used to express an action or condition that has passed already" (Yaber and Yaber 2004) cited by (Baba, T. et al. 2015). The example of this misuse: "There were no papers to write a letter or a phone to sent message in a brupt way" (Baba, T. et al. 2015). The correct way is to *sent* a message rather than to *send* a message. Here, the challenge is due to the French language influence to the target language, English. Students have the difficulty to use their French background as an academic support, their French language rules. "In order to solve this problem, language scholars must introduce a special English grammar course that focuses on the differences and similarities between English and French grammar. Such a program will be more likely to develop DRC students' level of grammatical competence and their language performance" (Mwaku, S.K. 2018). Punctuation is another challenge encountered by Congolese students. They use certain punctuations incorrectly in their written works. Sometimes they do not use punctuation marks in quizzes and assignments. The result of this situation is the meaning change. Punctuation is used to make meaning intelligible in the words, sentences, and texts. This challenge is observed in the written work of French-speaking Congolese students. The results of these challenges show that learners' level of grammatical competence is not strong enough. Many studies reveal the importance of the mastering of grammar that is used as a medium of instruction.

3. Methodology

The researcher's intent will be to assess and analyze the responses from participants through their shared feedback and experiences (Awilda Hernandez, 2022). Thus, Creswell and Poth (2017) quoted by Awilda (2022) argued that the goal of qualitative inquiry in social environments was to find common themes in the responses of the study participants. I am interested in this qualitative research to know how fine arts learners perceive English class compared to their needs.

Population sample and participants

In qualitative research, the target populations are clearly identified for the purposes of a research study (Mc Millan & Schumacher, 2010). The population is the collection of units about which data items, the survey or the observation will be conducted. These units can refer to people, schools, houses... In this study the population referred to people (students) of G1, G2 and G3 of Plastic Arts Section, at the Académie des Beaux-Arts/ Kinshasa. This population to which the survey was administered was made up of two groups:

1. The target population or scope of the research. In my case, the target population is defined in terms of the content; I mean all the students of G1, G2 and G3 of Plastic Arts.

2. Concerning the coverage or the **sample** of the population, I have selected one hundred students in their intact group from the three groups or classes. So, the sample consisted of 100 students who responded to the survey which is enough for the present study. Thus the selected sample was made of males and females. These are the given results in the tables below:

Table 1: Distribution by gender

The variable **gender** is inserted in the table then the accounted frequency is 85 for male representing 85% and the frequency 15 for female representing 15%.

Gender	Frequency	%
Male	85	85
Female	15	15

It can be deduced from the above table that the sample of students had more male participants than female.

Table 2: Distribution by age range

Age range	Frequency	Percentage
-20	18	18
20 - 24	63	63
25 – 29	12	12
No answer	7	7

Participants were grouped into age ranges of: twenty years old or less, twenty to twenty-four years old, twenty-five to twenty-nine years old. The frequencies are headed by twenty to twenty-four years old having sixty-three participants representing 63% before and after treatment.

- *Instruments*

For the purpose of collecting data about the students' needs, I have used interview, surveys and documents analysis. The interview included a variety of questions such as open - ended questions and multiple choice questions. The survey has sought background information from the participants. The open-ended questions sought more details and better comprehension of fine arts students' expectations regarding the learning of English as foreign language.

- *Triangulation*

Open-ended responses, background information and documentary data identified by the research works were triangulated. Lincoln and Guba (1986) quoted by Awilda (2022) claimed that triangulation of data improves

the trustworthiness of a qualitative study as it includes multiple sources of data. As far as this research is concerned, the information provided from interview, survey and documents analysis were compared and verified in order to get the trustworthiness of the results.

- *Data collection*

Data on fine arts students' needs analysis were collected from February 25 to March 25, 2021. The interview protocol consisted of open-ended questions allowing respondents to express themselves in their own words, while the multiple-choice questions were designed to collect information on participants' background (Awilda, 2022). In addition, multiple forms of collecting data were used also in this qualitative research. Such as: observation, interview, and written documents in other words, anything goes in order to answer my research question.

- *Data analysis*

Tables were used to present the information by using codes.

4. Results

Findings

In order to respond to the question in which fine arts students need to learn English related to their domain, the findings have shown that a proposal of new English class content should be designed. Such results have been interpreted on the light of pedagogical principles and theories.

- *Interpretation of data about students' preferences in their English course*

The figure 14 confirmed that the majority of students representing 28% said that the most important skill they need to develop in the English course is speaking. It is deduced that the majority of respondents representing 44% refuse to be blocked by the language gap, reason why they like to learn English as a language but not as a subject. The majority of students representing 44% needed a laboratory in English language teaching. The suggested contents for students were accepted by the majority of them representing 50% expressing that: in G1, English students should learn more about tools, pictures, drawings, expressions, sketches, texts, and grammar related to the plastic arts field; from G2 to L2, English course should be taught focusing deeply on artistic materials or tools, drawings, texts, magazines or books related to the arts domain, conversations and debates concerning the artists' professional life. The majority of students representing 40% needed that the English class should have a connection with other courses and workshops. It is noticed that, the majority of respondents representing 32% agreed to create an English club at the ABA to give learners the opportunity to improve their English skills.

- *Interpretation of data from students about English course content*

It has shown that, the majority of respondents representing 40% agreed that the Basic English artistic terms may be integrated in their English course. They accepted that the English class ought to be compulsory. As far as the English lab is concerned, the majority of students representing 44% needed a laboratory in English language teaching. The contents suggested for students by themselves were accepted by the majority of them representing 50%. 40% of students needed that the English class might have a connection with other courses and workshops.

- *Interpretation of data about lecturers' recommendations*

It could be deduced that, both instructors agreed that ESP practitioners should collaborate for the success of English Language Teaching. They claimed that ESP course are quite well taught in their institute, the DRC Ministry of Higher Education should work intensively for ESP, and the number of ESP course hours should be increased.

5. Discussion / conclusions / Recommendations

The discussion in this point is concerned with the interpretation of the research questions compared to the tested and verified hypothesis. "Generally, the students study English not because they are interested in the English language or English culture as such, but because they need English for study or work purposes" (Robinson, 1991:2). Unfortunately, fine arts learners of the Académie des Beaux-Arts found that, their

English class content does not really correspond to their study or work purposes as artists. That is the reason why, this study was conducted to find out and analyze students' needs and finally to make a proposal of a new content to fit learners' needs or expectations in the learning of English related to the plastic arts domain.

- *Limitations*

This research had found many limitations such as method, financial, transportation and time challenges. This study aimed to question large number of learners and instructors unluckily they were taken. This situation could make a limitation of learners and instructors' participation.

- *Future research*

The future research on English curriculum evaluation at fine arts school of Kinshasa is warranted. Learners expressed their own opinions to enrich the current content that will fit their expectations. The reason why, the proposal of a new content is designed for them, since the current one, is limited and needs some improvements. The future research on curriculum evaluation will essentially be explored since it will examine the implementation of the current content compared to its objectives. The present results indicate some weaknesses. Further research should be done in-depth to evaluate the current English curriculum.

6. Conclusion

The findings of this study have shown that, after learners' needs analysis, the majority of them wished that visual and handling materials focused on their daily expectation such as drawings, pictures, sketches, artistic tools, conversations related to arts domain ,might be incorporated in the content of their course. The lack of English laboratory is also a handicap to their learning process. It is worth creating an English club at the ABA to give learners the opportunity to improve their English skills. A number of available respondents, the time, financial support and research method constitute the limitations of this study. The future research will require more time and good financial support.

- *Suggestions and Recommendations*

There is poor attendance in English class because learners' real needs or expectations are not actually known and taken into consideration by the teachers. In what concerned the Content Based Instruction (CBI), the teachers are recommended to adapt their local materials to the authentic ones, until the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) students become proficiently advanced-higher (Tshitenge, T.B. 2018). Thus, (Ngwaba, B. 2020) a student is somebody who does not know. The reason why, the teacher should be more pragmatic; that is to say, knowing how to say, to know, and to do things. The government should offer scholarships to the teachers to raise ELT, and reinforce collaboration with English speaking countries for the sake of improving practitioners' awareness through seminars, conferences, trainings etc.

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Appendix 1: Art students' interviews questions

1. Please, fill the blank spaces:

a) The initial of your names

b) Your college (name)

Private public

c) Your ageand your sex: M F

d) Your telephone number (if possible)

2. What is the most important skill you need to develop in the English course?

3. How do you find the number of hours provided for English class per classes?

4. Are you familiar with same artistic terms in English?

5. Do you like the Basic English artistic terms integrated in your English course?

6. Do you want English class must be obligatory?

7. Do you have a laboratory for your English language teaching?

8. How do you want English be taught from G1 to G3 and what materials to incorporate?

9. Does your English class have correlation with other artistic courses and workshops?

10. Do you like an English club be created at the Académie des Beaux-Arts?

Appendix 2: Current English course content

3rd undergraduate

Introduction

- Warming up/Motivation
- Greeting /salutations.
- Saying the date and time in English.
- The why of English / the aim of English.
- The status of English.

Chapter 1: general view on:

- Using W-Questions.
- Classroom Expressions /Commands/Requests.
- My relatives.
- Spelling words in English, English Alphabet and Phonetics.
- Grammar Focus on: the parts of speech, synthax, articles.

Chapter 2: doing things in English

- Meeting and greeting.
- Asking for personal information.
- Apologizing.
- Asking for and giving permission.
- Shopping.
- Writing formal letters in English.

Chapter 3: English for career connection

A. graphic arts

Kinds: a) interior architecture b) visual communication

B. plastic arts

- a) Ceramics b) metal c) painting d) sculpture

The proposal of the new content designed for the English class according to learners' needs

3rd undergraduate

Introduction

- Warming up/Motivation.
- Greeting /salutation.
- Saying the date and time.
- The why of English / the aim of English
- The status of English

Chapter 1: general view on:

- Using W-Questions
- Classroom Expressions /Commands/Requests
- My relatives.
- Spelling words, English Alphabet and Phonetics.
- Grammar Focus on: The parts of Speech, Syntax and Articles.

Chapter 2: doing things in English

- Meeting and greeting.
- Asking for personal information.
- Apologizing.
- Asking for and giving permission.
- Shopping.
- Writing formal letters.

Chapter 3: English for career connection

Painting

- How to draw a landscape.
- Steps to draw a countryside landscape.
- The parts of human being skeleton.

Sculpture

- What is the purpose of a statue?
- The different types of sculptures.

Conservation and restoration

- Equipment and tools.
- Art books and book repair.

Graphic arts

- Introduction.
- Techniques of creation
- Purposes
- Artistic profession sectors grouped in graphic arts