

Teaching English to Cadets in Police Colleges and Academies in the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf: Theory and Practice

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Abstract

Within the theory and practice of English for Specific Purposes, this study attempted to compare and contrast the teaching of English to police cadets in police colleges and academies in the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf. The participant police colleges were King Fahd Security College in Saudi Arabia, Kuwait Police College, Qatar Police College, and Dubai Police College. Data was collected through analyzing the policy of these colleges in teaching English to their police cadets as displayed on their websites and in their official documents. The analysis of the results indicated that these police institutions vary in the way they introduce English to their would-be-police officers. Overall, English courses and teachings are not in line with the theory and practice of English for Specific Purposes. These colleges did not base their English teaching on their police cadets' needs and the situations in which they will possibly use English. The results also showed that teaching English is traditional in that English is still taught as a subject in the curriculum, which makes instructions and practice limited in terms of the hours taught. The study concludes with recommendations that can be used by these colleges to improve the teaching of English to their police cadets.

Key Words: English for Specific Purposes, Needs Analysis, Police Cadets, Police Colleges

Introduction

A great number of studies have been published about teaching English for Specific Purposes (ESP) since its first emergence in the early 1960s, and since then it has become "a vital and innovative activity within the Teaching of English as a Foreign or Second Language movement" (Dudley-Evans and Maggie, 2002, p. 1). ESP emerged as a result of three major factors: (1) the growing global demand for a means of communication as a result of the scientific and technical evolution that followed the Second World War; (2) the shift from studying the formal features of language use to the communicative aspects of language use; and (3) the recognition of the importance of meeting the learners' needs and interests for learning a foreign language (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987).

Although ESP appeared in the early 1960s as a new trend in language teaching, definitions of it in the literature are relatively late in time. For example, Mackay and Mountford (1978, p. 2) defined ESP as "generally used to refer to the teaching for a clearly utilitarian purpose. This purpose is usually defined with reference to some occupational requirements . . . or vocational training program . . ., or some academic or professional study." They emphasized two important aspects of ESP: teaching a language is utilitarian in that it is carried out to achieve predetermined goals and these goals are directly related to a specific setting of knowledge or work (e.g., business, medicine).

Hutchinson and Waters (1987, p. 19) defined "ESP is an approach to language teaching in which all decisions as to content and method are based on the learner's reason for learning." They described ESP teaching as learner-centered since it is based on the learners' reason to learn a foreign language.

Strevens (1988) defined ESP by making a distinction between its absolute characteristics and variable characteristics. He argued that absolute characteristics of ESP teaching include four aspects: (1) it is designed to meet specified needs of the learner; (2) it is related in content to particular disciplines, occupation and activities; (3) it is centered on the language appropriate to those activities in syntax, text, discourse, semantics, etc., and analysis of the discourse; (4) it is designed in contrast with General English. In comparison, variable characteristics of ESP includes two aspects: (1) ESP may be, but not necessarily, restricted to the language skills to be learned, e.g. reading only; and (2) ESP is not taught according to any pre-ordained methodology.

Robinson (1991) defined ESP according to two criteria and a number of characteristics. The two criteria are: (1) ESP is goal-directed and (2) ESP courses are based on the results of the learners' needs analysis which should specify what they will use English for. The characteristics involve the limited time period in which the ESP course objectives should be achieved and the homogenous classes of adults in terms of the work or specialist studies the learners are engaged in.

Ten years later, Dudley-Evans and St John (1998) modified Strevens' (1988) definition of ESP to include: (1) Absolute characteristics: a) ESP is designed to meet specific needs of the learner; b) ESP makes use of the underlying methodology and activities of the disciplines it serves; and c) ESP is centred on the language (grammar, lexis, register), skills, discourse and genres appropriate to these activities. (2). Variable characteristics: a) ESP may be related or designed for specific disciplines; b) ESP may use, in specific teaching situations, a different methodology from that of general English; c) ESP is likely to be designed for adult learners, either at a tertiary level institution or in a professional work situation; it could be used for learners at secondary school level; d) ESP is generally designed for intermediate or advanced learners; and e) Most ESP courses assume basic knowledge of the language system, but it can be

used with beginners. Dudley-Evans and St. John have removed the absolute characteristic that 'ESP is in contrast with General English' and added other variable characteristics. They emphasized that ESP is not necessarily related to a specific discipline. They argued that ESP is likely to be used with adult learners although it could be used with young adults in a secondary school setting. Like Hutchinson and Waters (1987), Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998) maintained that ESP should be seen as an 'approach' to teaching.

Unlike ESP, English for General Purposes (EGP) refers to contexts such as the school where learners' needs and interests cannot be readily determined. EGP provides a broad basis rather than a detailed and selective specification of goals like ESP (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987).

However, there is an overlapping relation between ESP and EGP. Widdowson (1983) listed several distinctive features of the two types of teaching. The most important EGP features are: 1. the focus is often on education; 2. as the learners' future needs are impossible to predict, the course content is more difficult to select because it is too general; 3. the content in the syllabus should have a high surrender value. In contrast, the most relevant ESP features are: 1. the focus is on training; 2. as English is intended to be used in specific vocational contexts, the selection of the appropriate content is easier; 3. it is important for the content in the syllabus to have a high surrender value, most relevant to the vocational context; 4. the aim may be to create a restricted English competence.

The learners and their purposes for learning English constitute the major difference between ESP and EGP. ESP learners are usually adults, who are familiar with the English language. They are highly motivated because the language course is based on their needs and interests. They are learning English so as to communicate professional information and to perform job or study-related functions. Therefore, ESP courses make use of needs analysis to determine which language skills are useful for the learners to be able to accomplish certain professional tasks. ESP courses are centered on the learners' context and subject matter. The English language is taught as a subject related to the learners' real needs in a particular field of human activity (e.g., nursing, tourism). The learners immediately use English in their employment context. They are highly motivated as they are aware of their specific purposes for learning English (Alhuqbani, 2008; Qaddomi, 2014).

In contrast with ESP, the age of EGP learners varies from children to adults. EGP courses are mostly focused on language structure and general reading and vocabulary. These courses are responsible to the general language acquisition. EGP helps students to deal with any subject-matter course. It gives them the ability to generate more language skills that may help them use English in any undefined setting. EGP courses deal with various topics and each of the four skills (listening, speaking, reading, writing) is equally introduced. No needs analysis is required in EGP due to its general purpose.

ESP in Police context

A few ESP studies have been conducted in police context, mostly in Arabic contexts. The majority of these studies focused on assessing the English language needs of police cadets and officers. For example, Abo Mosallem (1984) investigated the English language needs of 150 Egyptian police officers in ten police departments: Passport, Special Security, Airport Security, Tourist Police, Traffic Police, Criminal Investigation Division, Public Relations, Interpol, State Security, and police stations. He used a questionnaire to collect data. The officers' needs for language skills and sub-skills varied as a result of their police departments. However, these departments gave priority to speaking and listening skills, except the Interpol Police Department

which gave priority to reading and writing skills. The majority of the officers (83.2%) indicated that acquiring English would help them perform their jobs in an efficient way. Abo Mosallem suggested a common core course which concentrated on the four language skills, with more emphasis on listening and speaking. But, he did not elaborate on how this core course would be implemented in the ten departments to meet the terminal objectives of each police department and the officers' English background.

Similarly, Alhuqbani (2008) assessed the English language needs of 103 Saudi police officers on the job through a need analysis questionnaire. Overall, the results showed that the police officers had never been trained on how to use English for police purposes. The results showed that the officers' security sectors affected the frequency of using English in the workplace. Officers in the Passports sector used English more frequently than the other officers in the other sectors due to the nature of their work which requires frequent contact with foreigners. The findings also showed that the majority of the officers ranked listening and speaking as the most important skills to their jobs, similar to Abo Mosallems' findings. Moreover, the study showed that almost all the officers indicated that understanding all what is said to them in English as the most difficult aspect of English use which reflects their weakness in English comprehension. Since the number of officers in some sectors was very small, Alhuqbani's findings need to be verified with larger samples of officers in each security sector.

In another police study, Khamkaew (2009) used a questionnaire and interviews to identify the language needs and problems in English listening and speaking skills of 30 Metropolitan Police Officers working at counter service at Chana Songkram Police Station. Overall, the findings showed that police officers lacked the necessary listening and speaking skills which help them perform certain communicative tasks such as giving information and directions; and therefore they needed training in these two skills. The participants indicated that the main listening problems were the different English accents and the difficulty to get the main idea. Speaking problems included difficulty in producing basic expressions, complete sentences, and pronouncing English vowel sounds.

In a recent study, Alhuqbani (2013) investigated the academic English needs of 42 officers working at KFSC. The participants' military ranks ranged from 1st lieutenants to lieutenant colonel. The analysis of the questionnaire showed that the officers did not receive training on how to use EAP, and the language materials in the English courses they had completed were not consistent with their perceived academic English needs. The officers showed awareness of the graduate requirements that await them; that is, they rated some academic skills such as writing proposals and theses as the most important skills they need to develop.

Qaddomi (2013) identified the English language needs of 91 cadets at Al Istiqlal University in Palestine. He adapted Alhuqbani's (2008) questionnaire with some modifications. The findings revealed that the cadets' English proficiency level was intermediate with apparent weakness in listening and speaking which were identified by the cadets as the most important skills to their police jobs. The results also indicated that the most difficult aspect of English use facing the cadets was following English conversations of natural speed. Qaddomi's findings are consistent with Alhuqbani's (2008) findings.

In another recent study, Alhuqbani (2014a) investigated the English language needs of a random sample of 223 police cadets studying at King Fahd Security College in Saudi Arabia. The cadets selected speaking and listening as the most important skills and studying English for security purposes. The cadets need ESP more than those domains of English for general purposes. They showed a high level of awareness of their need for English as a means of

communication with foreigners residing in Saudi Arabia. That is, the majority of the cadets stressed the importance of English to convey information to foreigners and answer their questions. There was a significant difference for the cadets' university major (science vs. humanities) on the domains of needs per skill. The science group rated the listening domains of understanding the various spoken English dialects, job related lectures and symposiums in English and questions raised by foreign workers as the most needed skills. Communicating with speakers who speak different English dialects was found to be the most difficult of English use followed by understanding English conversations of natural speed and the use of ESP. Understanding and responding to all what is being said in English almost received the same level of difficulty. Difficulty in using English because of cultural differences was found to be the least difficult aspect of English. There was no significant differences between the two groups (humanities vs. science) in terms of their expectations of the difficult aspects of English use, which may suggest that all cadets expected to have difficulty in using the six domains of English uses as illustrated in Table 6 above.

Other studies focused on investigating the motivations and attitudes of police cadets and officers toward learning English. Alhuqbani (2009) studied the motivation and attitudes of 206 police officers in the workplace in Saudi Arabia. He used a questionnaire to collect data. The results showed that the officers were more instrumentally motivated to learn English. Officers with the rank of captain were more instrumentally motivated to learn English than those officers with the ranks of lieutenant, major and lieutenant colonel. They also were more integratively motivated to learn English than lieutenants and majors. Captains had more positive attitudes than majors toward learning English. It is not clear why officers with the rank of captain were more instrumentally and integratively motivated to learn English. A possible interpretation is that captain officers are usually given scholarships to study abroad after spending their early years in their security sectors. For example, officers at KFSC are only allowed to have scholarships to study abroad when they become captains. Officers in the sectors of Public Security, Passports and King Fahd Security College were more instrumentally motivated to learn English than officers in the Prisons sector.

In a small-scale study, Alqurashi (2011) explored the motives and attitudes of 24 Saudi police officers toward learning English as a foreign language. The results showed that Saudi police officers had different motives for learning English, but they in general were motivated to learn it for communication purposes. The participants had negative attitude toward the six-month English course they were having at the Security Training City of Public Security because of several factors such as its long duration and location. Alqurashi called for shortening the current English course to a 3-month English course and administering it a local university. Alqurashi's findings need to be taken with caution because of the small number of participants he employed and the methodological defects in the survey which only included five open questions.

Alhuqbani (2014a) examined the motivation and attitudes of 223 police cadets studying at King Fahd Security College in Saudi Arabia. The analysis of the results showed that there is a significant correlation between almost all the instrumental and integrative motivation variables, which may suggest that both types of motivations are integrated and contribute to English learning. With regard to the cadets' attitudes toward English learning, statements describing negative attitudes toward the English culture did not statistically correlate with the other statements that constitute the cadets' positive attitudes toward English learning, which confirmed their positive attitudes toward both English learning and its culture. The significant correlations

between the cadets' English perceived needs and their instrumental motivations supported the argument that ESP learners study English for utilitarian purposes.

In a more recent study, Qaddomi (2014) examined the motivation and attitudes of 381 Palestinian security personnel toward learning English as a Foreign Language in workplace. The findings showed that Palestinian security personnel had high integrative motivation and instrumental motivation but the former was higher. The results also indicated that their personnel attitudes toward English learning and its culture were positive. There were no significant differences in motivation; whereas there were significant differences on the culture domain for those who had less than 5 years time in service. The results showed that there were significant differences in Palestinian security personnel motivation, attitudes toward learning English and native speakers' culture due to proficiency level in English. Intermediates showed high motivation whereas beginners scored higher on attitudes toward learning English, native speakers' culture.

Only one study focused on ESP course evaluation in police context. Alhuqbani (2014b) evaluated the teaching of English to police cadets at KFSC. The participants included three groups of stakeholders: six English teachers, sixteen former police cadets and 122 current police cades. Data collection instruments included a set of three short questionnaires and observation. The analysis of the results showed that the ESP course and teaching at KFSC is ineffective and inappropriate due to administrative and methodological factors. The current ESP course lacks the major principles associated with the teaching of English for specific purposes such as meeting the police cadets' actual needs and turning these needs into operational objectives that can be tested. Administratively, the three groups of stakeholders expressed their dissatisfaction with the course duration and timing.

It follows from the discussion in the literature above that ESP is an approach to language teaching in which everything is related to the language course (e.g., content selection, learning objectives, method of teaching, testing, etc.) should be clearly based on learners' needs and interests. This requires that teaching should be both goal-oriented ("what the learner wants to do with the language at the end of learning") and process-oriented ("what the learner needs to do actually to acquire the language") Dudley-Evans and St John (1998, p. 122). The review of ESP studies in police context showed that these studies, except Alhuqbani's (2014), concentrated on assessing learners' needs, motivation and attitudes and said nothing about how English teaching is implemented in police institutions. It is not clear whether police colleges and academies in the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf (CCASG) adapt ESP as an approach to teaching English to their police cades and officers. Hence, this study is conducted to find out how English is introduced to police cadets in the CCASG.

Significance of the study

Since this investigation was conducted with an aim to improving the teaching of English at police colleges and academies in the CCASG, it is hoped that it will benefit the police cadets greatly in their future professional communication. It will also be of assistance to their ESP facilitators in developing a learner-centered curriculum and delivering instructions accordingly. Furthermore, it will guide the police colleges and academies in the CCASG to realize the needs for reorganizing the current facilities for ESP courses in terms of the police cadets' needs and demands.

Research questions

This study attempted to answer the following three research questions:

1. What type of English do police colleges and academies in the CCASG teach to their police cadets?
2. How many hours of English teaching do police cadets receive in these colleges and academies?
3. What are the pedagogical implications of the research findings to the teaching of English to police cadets at police colleges and academies in the CCASG?

Method

Participants

The participant police colleges and academies were four: King Fahd Security College (KFSC) in Saudi Arabia, Kuwait Police College, Qatar Police College (QPC), Dubai Police Academy (DPA).

Data collection procedures

Data was collected through analyzing the policy of these colleges in teaching English to their police cadets as displayed on their websites and in their official documents.

Results and discussion

Type of English

The analysis of the results indicated that these police institutions vary in the way they introduce English to their would-be-police officers. Overall, English courses and teachings are not in line with the theory and practice of ESP. For example, these police colleges and academies did not base their English teaching on their police cadets' needs and the situations in which they will possibly use English, which is a clear violation of one of the most important principles of ESP theory. According to ESP advocates (e.g., Dudley-Evans & St. John, 1998; Hutchinson & Waters, 1987; Robinson, 1991) meeting the learner's needs is an important aspect of ESP theory and practice since all subsequent decisions (e.g., content selection, learning objectives) are based on it. For example, Randel (1991, p. 73) stressed the importance of needs analysis and maintained that ". . . without it any syllabus writer or course designer is addressing a vacuum."

As shown in Table 1, DPA is the only college that offers two different types of English courses to its cadets: EGP and ESP. The DPA teaches its cadets EGP in the first two semesters and then introduces ESP to its cadets. It focuses on teaching English for legal purposes since the curriculum is heavily based on legal studies. The review of its policy and program of study shows that there is no concentration on teaching English for police purposes. Moreover, the two English legal courses are based on reading texts and it seems that they are not based on the actual needs of the police cadets.

Table 1. *Type of English in the CCASG'S police colleges and academies*

Police College/Academy	Course Type	
	EGP	ESP
DPA	EGP 1-2	English for Legal Purposes 1-2
KFSC	None	English for Security Purposes

KPC	EGP 1-2	None
QPC	EGP 1-2	None

With regard to KFSC, the college introduces English for security purposes to its police cadets. There is a special textbook titled "English for Security Purposes" 2nd edition assigned to the police cadets. This special course focuses on reading police texts and terminology related to police work in Saudi Arabia. It also has police dialogues related to certain police situations such as traffic accidents and robbery investigation. According to Alhuqbani (2014b), the college changed its English course several times. In the 1990s, the college used to teach English for police purposes. From 2000 to 2009, the college replaced the police special course with EGP. Since 2009 the college has been teaching English for security purposes.

In contrast to DPA and KFSC, both KPC and QPC teach EGP to their police cadets. There is no indication in the study program plan of these two colleges that shows ESP is used or will be used later in the program. It seems that the two colleges still view teaching English as a general subject in the curriculum which is one of the general requirements that police cadets must take before graduation. They seem to be unaware of the importance of meeting the language needs of their would-be-police officers to learn English for police purposes to efficiently perform their police tasks. Previous studies in police context (e.g., Abo Mosallem, 1984; Alhuqbani, 2008; Qaddomi, 2013) found that police cadets and officers voiced their need to learn English to meet their police job requirements.

Quantity of English instructions

The analysis of the results showed that English is taught as a subject in the curriculum which makes it limited in the number of hours allocated to its teaching. As shown in Table 2 below, DPA has the highest number of hours allocated to English teaching. DPA allocates 4 hours for EGP and 4 hours for ESP distributed equally over four semesters.

Table 2. Hours of English instructions in the CCASG'S colleges and academies

Police College/Academy	Number of hours			
	EGP	Duration	ESP	Duration
DPA	4	2 semesters	4	2 semesters
KFSC	-		2	9 weeks
KPC	6	2 semesters	-	-
QPC	6	2 semesters	-	

KFSC has the lowest number of hours allocated to teaching English to its police cadets. It only has two hours of English instructions per week. The duration of this course is only 9 weeks. KFSC replaced its two-semester academic year with a new plan of study in which the academic

year is divided into three quarters with each consisting of 9 weeks. Two hours per week seems to be inadequate to teach English for police purposes at KFSC, especially that police cadets have varying degrees of English proficiency (Alhuqbani, 2014a).

Finally, both QPC and KPC teach EGP for six hours distributed equally across two semesters: three hours in semester 1 and like them in semester 2.

In ESP, language courses usually last for a short period of time, but are so condensed in hours. The findings of this study indicate that police colleges and academies in the CCASG vary in the duration of English instruction from nine weeks to a whole semester. However, the total number of hours in these periods of time is not adequately condensed since police cadets study English for two or three hours per week among other different subjects. For example, KFSC police cadets study English for security purposes for two hours per week for only 9 weeks, with a total of 18 hours. This is unrealistic since police cadets need ample time to learn and practice English (Alhuqbani, 2014b).

Conclusion and implications

To conclude, this study attempted to briefly explore the type and amount of English instructions used in four of the CCASG's police colleges and academies, namely King Fahd Security (KFSC), Dubai Police Academy (DPA), Qatar Police College (QPC) and Kuwait Police College (KPC). The results indicated that these police colleges and academies vary in the way they introduce English to their would-be-police officers. Overall, English courses and teachings in these police institutions are clearly not in line with the theory and practice of ESP. That is, they did not base their English courses and teachings on their police cadets' needs and on the situations in which the cadets will possibly use English, which is a clear violation of one of the most important principles of ESP theory. Moreover, teaching English at these police institutions is traditional in that English is still viewed and taught as a subject in the curriculum, which in fact makes instructions and practice limited in terms of the hours taught.

The findings of this study and other previous ESP studies in police context and other contexts bear important implications to the teaching of English at CCASG's police colleges and academies. Some of these implications can be summarized in the following points.

1. CCASG's police colleges and academies need to be aware of the importance of establishing their English courses to meet the requirements of police jobs. Needs analysis is the cornerstone in any ESP program (Hutchinson & Water, 1987). A questionnaire can be used to collect data systematically about the police cadets' English needs and their previous English background. All concerned parties in the teaching process of English at these police institutions (e.g., cadets, teachers, administration, etc) should take part in the questionnaire in order to fully come up with a clear picture of the needs of all parties concerned (Richterich, 1983). In addition, a detailed description of the police cadets' future police tasks can help a lot in the development of a special course for police cadets and officers.
2. After identifying the English needs of the police cadets and other concerned parties, learning objectives should be formulated and developed to reflect these needs. This means that both needs analysis and learning objectives should be carried out at the same as prerequisite to the designing of the ESP course (Aldossari, 1999). In this regard, Cunningsworth (1983, p. 50) emphasizes that " . . . from the learner's needs we

translate a set of operational learning objectives by which we can help the learner accomplish his purpose."

3. The content selection for the ESP course should meet the learner's needs and reflect the ESP course objectives. The content selection should also take into account the learner's level and the course duration, and include only those language items and skills specified as necessary by needs analysis (Aldossari, 1999; Strevens, 1988).
4. The results of this study have shown that practice of English in the CCASG's police colleges and academies is very limited since its included in the curriculum as a general subject. The activities and exercise in the ESP course should be based on the police cadets' needs and interests as revealed by the needs analysis to stimulate them to learn English. The language activities and skills that have no relevancy to the cadets' needs should not be included in the ESP course (Aldossari, 1999).
5. Unlike EGP, ESP is "accountable teaching. ESP learners and sponsors are investors in the ESP course and they want to see a return on their investment of time and/or money" (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987, p. 144). English teaching at the CCASG's police colleges and academies should have certain evaluation and testing requirements to assess the learners' performance at some points in the course. These police institutions need to adapt both formative and summative evaluation to identify any possible problems with their English teaching.

Finally, this study emphasizes the need for more research related to English teaching in the CCASG's police colleges and academies. Future research should be carried out at CCASG's police colleges and academies to determine the strengths and weaknesses of their current English courses. Research also should be conducted to identify the languages needs and interests of police cadets and officers in the CCASG's police institutions. This research can be done either individually by each police institution or collectively through the Police Unification League of the country of CCASG. Findings then can be distributed to the police administration in each CCASG. Furthermore, research is desired to find out the principles involved in the design of an ESP program for each police college/academy in the CCASG which incorporates the police cadets' needs, as identified by a needs analysis. Research is also needed to Investigate the teaching methods and techniques that can be best used efficiently at police institutions in the CCASG.

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