



مجلة كلية التربية . جامعة طنطا
ISSN (Print):- 1110-1237
ISSN (Online):- 2735-3761
<https://mkmgmt.journals.ekb.eg>
المجلد (٨٥) يناير ٢٠٢٢م



Assessing the English Language Prerequisites for Emirati Police Cadets

By

Amany Abdel-Ghany Al-Sabbagh

TEFL Associate Professor at Sharjah Police Science Academy,
United Arab Emirates

Email: aelsabbagh@psa.ac.ae

Volume (85) January 2022



Abstract

This study aims at determining the English language prerequisites of Emirati police cadets. The study was conducted on 70 cadets from Sharjah Police Science Academy, UAE. A six-part questionnaire was developed to identify what the cadets perceived as their prerequisites from their English as a Foreign Language (EFL) course. The results of the study show that improving their listening, speaking, and writing skills were ranked as most important by the cadets, and they also stressed an urgent need for studying English for security purposes (e.g., the language needed to enhance their job performance and their chances of promotion). Relevant interpretations and recommendations are offered.

Key Words: *Prerequisites analysis - ESP-Emirati police cadets - police academies-SPSA –*

Introduction

The global ascendancy of English as a lingua franca has necessitated a diversified approach to language teaching. English for Specific Purposes (ESP) emerges as a specialized realm, honing linguistic competencies tailored to distinct careers such as law enforcement, medicine, or business. The cultivation and execution of an effective ESP course mandate comprehensive knowledge encompassing its development, typologies, and pedagogical underpinnings. The research landscape has lately witnessed a compelling surge in endeavors focusing on the identification and remediation of specific English language prerequisites (Generoso & Arbon, 2020). Proficiency in language intricacies not only augments career performance but also paves the way for cross-cultural communication fluency. This introduction serves as an elaborate exposition of the prevailing academic discourse concerning the assessment of English language prerequisites, with an exclusive spotlight on Emirati police cadets. This research strives to broaden the comprehension of their distinctive linguistic necessities, thus serving as the bedrock for custom-tailored English language curricula.

Prior studies have elucidated the imperativeness of customizing language programs to cater to precise domains and learners' needs (Generoso & Arbon, 2020). These inquiries have illuminated the indispensable role of the English language in the academic and professional voyage of foreign students, thus advocating the development of specialized language programs concentrating on listening, speaking, and vocabulary proficiencies. These findings align seamlessly with the foundational tenets of English for Specific Purposes (ESP), an approach that synchronizes language instruction with learners' specific requirements.

The purview of language needs analysis extends its embrace beyond foreign language learners, encompassing a broader panorama, as elucidated in the contributions of scholars like Jumaniozova et al. (2019). The research underscores the paramount



significance of needs analysis within the domain of teaching English for specific purposes (ESP), underscoring the pivotal role played by learners' perspectives in shaping the efficacy of language educational programs.

Nevertheless, the present study distinguishes itself by gravitating towards the discrete language prerequisites of Emirati police cadets, a cohort characterized by their distinctive and specialized linguistic demands. Policing mandates multifaceted linguistic competencies, surpassing the precincts of conventional English language learning. The transmutation from conventional English language pedagogy to a specialized curriculum in English for law enforcement, falling under the purview of English for specific purposes (ESP), is fueled by the evolving exigencies within the realm of law enforcement.

The pivotal role accorded to Emirati police cadets in upholding the sanctity and security of the United Arab Emirates underscores the profound significance of their linguistic prowess in law enforcement for safeguarding public order. The transition from orthodox English language education to a specialized English curriculum meticulously customized for law enforcement has been galvanized by the burgeoning stringent prerequisites within the police force. The transition to a K-12 curriculum exacerbates the urgency of heightened English language proficiency, particularly within academic and operational milieus, among the Emirati police cadets.

In the pursuit of this study, a comprehensive research blueprint has been enlisted to evaluate the English language prerequisites of Emirati police cadets. The methodological foundation of this research reverberates with the principles of needs analysis propounded by Jumaniozova and her cohorts (2019). The current approach encompasses the formulation of a six-part questionnaire, inspired by the best practices within needs assessment (Generoso & Arbon, 2020). This questionnaire is meticulously designed to excavate the distinct linguistic prerequisites and the challenges encountered by cadets during their training.



The perceived language requisites of Emirati police cadets traverse a terrain beyond mere language proficiency. They underscore the imperative of embarking on an English language journey underpinned by security considerations, emphasizing the pivotal role of English in not just augmenting job performance but also catalyzing promotional prospects. This research, steeped in the larger context of language needs analysis, vocalizes the pressing need to chisel cadets' listening, speaking, and writing skills.

This research embarks on a trajectory beyond academia, furnishing practical recommendations anchored in its findings to sculpt English language training programs, meticulously tuned to the unique needs of Emirati police cadets. These recommendations come from research and are important for improving how English is taught to future law enforcement cadets. They help match the language training with what they prerequisites.

In accordance with the elucidations of Ali and Salih (2013), curriculum planning should be a responsive reflection of learners' requisites, making it a medium to amplify the crucial and targeted language competencies. This narrative resonates with the irrefutable fact that the learners themselves constitute the fulcrum of the entire process, being the recipients of the intended learning outcomes.

In summation, the learners in the realm of ESP often emerge as the They are highly knowledgeable about their study needs and precisely what their language prerequisites entail, particularly when the course orbits around the domains of policing and security establishments. This paper provides an exposé of research that scrutinizes the specific English language demands of Emirati police cadets at the Sharjah Police Science Academy. The study aspires to discern the English language prerequisites deemed critical by the cadets of Sharjah Police Science Academy, with a vision to renew the English language curricula dispensed at the academy.

Review of literature and Previous Studies

The 21st century has witnessed a profound transformation in the field of language education, characterized by a growing emphasis on English for Specific Purposes (ESP). This shift reflects



the need to tailor language education to the unique linguistic demands of various professional domains, including law enforcement. Law enforcement institutions, such as police academies, have recognized the critical importance of equipping their cadets with the requisite language skills to navigate the complex landscape of legal matters, investigations, and community interactions.

English for Law Enforcement Purposes (ESP EFL):

A pivotal contribution to this evolving landscape comes from the research conducted by Mehdi Javid and Ahmad Mohseni (2020). Their study offers invaluable insights into the realm of ESP EFL, specifically focusing on the needs analysis of border guarding officers in Iran. Javid and Mohseni's work highlights the foundational role of ESP in preparing police officers for the linguistic challenges they encounter in the line of duty. This underscores the significance of ESP curriculum development that is meticulously aligned with the unique needs of law enforcement professionals. Such a curriculum, as demonstrated in their study, forms the basis for effectively addressing the linguistic demands of cadets within a law enforcement context (Javid & Mohseni, 2020).

Blumberg, Schlosser, Papazoglou, Creighton, and Kaye (2019) take the discussion further by emphasizing the necessity of reevaluating police academy training. Their research serves as a call to action, urging institutions to revamp their training methods to better meet the needs of cadets. This call is pertinent not only to general police training but also to the specialized domain of ESP EFL for law enforcement cadets. It underscores the broader context of enhancing law enforcement education and, by extension, the ESP training that caters to the linguistic nuances of this profession (Blumberg et al., 2019).

Teaching ESP in the Law Department:

Turning our focus to the teaching of ESP within the law department, Nadera Boukhatem's research (2021) provides significant insights into the challenges of instructing ESP within the legal context. Her work specifically delves into the nuances of

teaching English to law students at Abou Bakr Belkaid University in Algeria. Although the context may differ, Boukhatem's findings underscore the difficulties that students encounter when learning English, particularly in a law-related curriculum. This mirrors the fundamental premise of our literature review, which is to identify the distinct linguistic needs and challenges faced by Emirati law enforcement cadets pursuing ESP EFL programs (Boukhatem, 2021).

Challenges and Issues in ESP for Law:

Kamberi and Kamberi (2019) delve into the core challenges and issues within the realm of ESP for law. While their study does not directly address the Emirati context, it offers valuable insights into the broader field of ESP within law-related education. The challenges they outline, such as specific legal terminology and discourse, may also be pertinent to Emirati law enforcement cadets pursuing ESP EFL.

While the focus of this literature review remains the specific linguistic needs of Emirati cadets, it is worthwhile to consider the broader issues that surround the teaching and learning of ESP, especially in legal contexts. An illuminating example is the study conducted by Kamberi and Kamberi (2019), which probes the challenges and issues in ESP for law. Although not related to the Emirati context, their research offers valuable insights into the difficulties of grasping the intricacies of legal language, an aspect that may resonate with Emirati law enforcement cadets pursuing ESP EFL programs (Kamberi & Kamberi, 2019).

Legal English Analysis:

Slev's study (2019) calls attention to the inherent complexity of legal language, which is characterized by the need for precision and relevance. Legal language serves as a conduit for clear legal information, essential in preventing confusion and unnecessary disputes among legal professionals and clients. Its primary function is to minimize ambiguity and misinterpretation. However, this legal language is laden with intricacies, making it particularly challenging for laypeople and early-stage students to understand. The

importance of ensuring that legal language is accessible to all citizens is emphasized in the study, highlighting the need to bridge the linguistic divide between legal professionals and the general population (Slev, 2019).

The findings from this study contribute to the ongoing dialogue about the intricacies of legal language and the hurdles faced by students in their pursuit of linguistic competence in legal contexts. The limitations of this study suggest that more comprehensive research will be needed to build upon these initial findings. This literature review, although rooted in a broader context, provides valuable insights that can be adapted and extended to the specific needs of Emirati law enforcement cadets pursuing ESP EFL.

Exploration of Usability of Messaging Apps:

In a modern educational landscape infused with technology, the study conducted by Omar, Harb, Al-Shredi, and Ethelb (2022) offers a fresh perspective. Their exploration of EFL freshmen law students' attitudes toward the usability of Telegram Messenger in a legal terminology course opens a window into the potential role of technology in enhancing language learning experiences for law enforcement cadets. This investigation emphasizes the importance of integrating modern tools and platforms to facilitate language acquisition within the context of law enforcement (Omar et al., 2022).

This literature review has delved into various relevant studies in the realm of ESP EFL, focusing on the specific needs and challenges faced by law enforcement cadets in Emirati institutions. The identified studies collectively underscore the critical importance of addressing the linguistic requirements of law enforcement cadets to ensure their successful language acquisition within an ESP EFL framework.

Study questions:

1. What are Emirati police cadets' perceptions of the four Basic English language skills (reading, writing, listening and speaking)

regarding their potential use in the cadets' future careers as police officers?

2. How is the English language perceived by Emirati police cadets as important to their job performance and their chances of obtaining promotion?

Methodology:

Participants

This research was conducted on 70 police cadets in the third and fourth years of their studies in the second semester of the academic year 2021-2022. All of the participants were male and studying at the Sharjah Police Science Academy (SPSA). They were between 19 and 22 years of age and, on average, had an intermediate English proficiency level.

Instrumentation

A five-point Likert scale questionnaire was developed to identify the EFL police cadets' language prerequisites. The items of the six-part questionnaire were adapted from Qaddomi's (2013) questionnaire with some modifications to fit current participants and settings of the research.

Validation of study instruments

The draft questionnaire items were subjected to a content validity review by a panel of three experts specializing in teaching English as a foreign language. Following the panel's evaluation and feedback, necessary adjustments were made to tailor the questionnaire to the study's objectives. Some questions were removed, and others were included. To assess reliability, Cronbach's Alpha was calculated, resulting in a high value of 0.94, which meets the study's requirements.

The questionnaire employed a 5-point Likert scale, where participants selected responses ranging from one to five. In this scale, one signifies the lowest level of agreement or importance, while five represents the highest level of agreement or importance.

Procedures of the study .

The data collection process took place at Sharjah Police Science Academy (SPSA) during the second semester of the



academic year (2022-2023). The researcher distributed the questionnaire to the police cadets during their lectures. They were first introduced to the questionnaire's content and were asked to fill it in with accurate responses. The cadets were allowed to fully think about each item in the questionnaire.

Data Analysis

The data from police cadets' responses to the prerequisite analysis questions were processed using the SPSS software (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences). These responses were categorized on a five-point scale, where "very important" was assigned a score of 5, "important" a score of 4, "fairly important" a score of 3, "slightly important" a score of 2, and "not important" a score of 1.

The collected data were then statistically analyzed in terms of frequencies and percentages, which provided insights into the cadets' opinions regarding the importance of various prerequisites. Additionally, to add more statistical rigor to the questionnaire analysis, the chi-square test (χ^2) might be applied in certain cases. This test can help determine if there are significant associations between variables and enhance the overall validity of the analysis.

Results

Question 1: What are Emirati police cadets' perceptions of the four Basic English language skills (reading, writing, listening and speaking) regarding their potential use in the cadets' future careers as police officers?

The results are shown in Table 1 below:

Table 1: Frequencies and percentages of the SPSA cadets' prerequisites for English language:

Item	Very Important	Important	Fairly Important	Slightly Important	Not Important
Listening Comprehension	37 (53%)	28 (40%)	2 (3%)	3 (4%)	0 (0%)
Speaking Competence	40 (57%)	28 (40%)	2 (3%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Reading Comprehension	12 (17%)	36 (51%)	20 (29%)	2 (3%)	0 (0%)
Writing Competence	35 (50%)	31 (44%)	4 (6%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

The results show that none of the police cadets thought that they would need English at work after graduation which, given the prominence of the language in the United Arab Emirates and a lingua franca enabling communication between the millions of foreigners living in the country, is not too surprising. The majority of the cadets' responses were assigned to the two categories; "very important," and "important," which indicates that SPSA police cadets are very aware of the importance of English to their future careers. More than half of the respondents assigned speaking as the most needed skill (57%), followed by listening (53%), and writing (50%), while reading received the lowest scores (17%). Accordingly, it is obvious that SPSA police cadets feel they need mostly speaking, listening and writing skills, and that courses designed for them should reflect this.

The cadets were then asked to indicate which specific items of language for each of the four skills they considered as most important. The results are shown in Tables 2, 3, 4, and 5 below.

Table 2: Frequencies and percentages of the SPSA cadets' prerequisites for listening in police work:

ITEM	VERY IMPORTANT	IMPORTANT	FAIRLY IMPORTANT	SLIGHTLY IMPORTANT	NOT IMPORTANT
SCRIPTS AND TERMINOLOGIES (ENGLISH LANGUAGE) RELATED TO MY JOB	55 (79%)	7 (10%)	8 (11%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
DIFFERENT SPOKEN ENGLISH DIALECTS	30 (43%)	27 (38%)	4 (6%)	9 (13%)	0 (0%)
JOB-RELATED COURSES	48 (68%)	13 (19%)	6 (9%)	3 (4%)	0 (0%)
QUESTIONS ASKED BY FOREIGN WORKERS	50 (71%)	20 (29%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
SCRIPTS AND EXPRESSIONS (ENGLISH LANGUAGE) IN GENERAL	22 (31%)	23 (33%)	20 (29%)	5 (7%)	0 (0%)

The findings presented in Table 2 show that there are drives for cadets to enhance their listening skills. On top of them (79%) was the need to understand language specifically related to policing?

Also, 71% of cadets stated the crucial need for listening skills to answers foreigners' enquiries. These results show the importance of including job-related lexis and topics into an ESP course for police cadets as well as doing research the kinds of enquiries police officers may encounter in their work and including these in listening materials developed for the course.

Table 3: Frequencies and percentages of the SPSA cadets' prerequisites for speaking in police work:

Item	Very Important	Important	Fairly Important	Slightly Important	Not Important
Use Terms and Expressions Relevant to Policing	48 (68%)	20 (29%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Discuss Policing Concepts and Topics	32 (46%)	12 (17%)	21 (30%)	5 (7%)	0 (0%)
Convey Information to Expatriates	60 (86%)	10 (14%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
To Speak General English	50 (71%)	11 (16%)	9 (13%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

Table 3 shows that the cadets ranked “conveying information to expatriates” as the most important speaking skill (86%). After that comes using terms and expressions associated with security work (68%). Therefore, when designing an ESP course for police cadets, it is essential that enough time is given to improving the cadets’ speaking skills and that materials are designed that reflect the kind of language that they will need in their future careers.

Table 4: Frequencies and percentages of the SPSA cadets' prerequisites of reading in police work:

Table 4 indicates that reading in English, although seen as important, does not rank as high as the other three skills. Therefore, despite the cadets needing to acquire terms associated with their majors and to understand and translate texts relevant to their specialization, the results seem to indicate that more of the syllabus of an ESP course should be directed towards improving the cadets other skills rather than focusing too much on reading.

<i>Item</i>	<i>Very Important</i>	<i>Important</i>	<i>Fairly Important</i>	<i>Slightly Important</i>	<i>Not Important</i>
<i>Correctly Read Policing-Related Words, Terms, and Texts</i>	42 (60%)	18 (26%)	10 (14%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
<i>Read, Translate, and Understand Materials Related to My Job</i>	40 (57%)	25 (36%)	5 (7%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
<i>Correctly Read and Understand General Texts and Non-Related Police Texts</i>	35 (50%)	21 (30%)	14 (20%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

Table 5: Frequencies and percentages of the SPSA cadets' prerequisites of writing in police work

Item	Very Important	Important	Fairly Important	Slightly Important	Not Important
<i>Performing My Job Effectively</i>	60 (86%)	10 (14%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
<i>Passing My Training Courses</i>	30 (43%)	11 (16%)	29 (41%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
<i>Passing Policing Tests</i>	55 (79%)	15 (21%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
<i>Increasing My Knowledge in My Field of Specialization</i>	63 (90%)	7 (10%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
<i>Promoting Me to a Higher Policing Rank</i>	65 (93%)	5 (7%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
<i>Getting a Scholarship for Postgraduate Studies or Training in an English-speaking Country</i>	58 (83%)	9 (13%)	3 (4%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

Table 5 shows that 70% of the cadets needed to master writing skills in order to be able to write reports related to their careers, whereas 78% sought to master writing skills to use policing-related words, terms and texts in a correct way. The results therefore indicate that what is really targeted is not mere writing but rather writing for specific purposes. Only 28% of the cadets considered writing skills in general vital to some extent. Therefore, emphasis must be given to job-related writing tasks when developing an ESP course.

Question 2: How is the English language perceived by Emirati police cadets as important to their job performance and their chances of obtaining promotion?

The results are shown in Table 6 below.

Table 6: Frequencies and percentages of the SPSA cadets' prerequisites of English for job performance and promotion

Item	Very Important	Important	Fairly Important	Slightly Important	Not Important
Performing My Job Effectively	60 (86%)	10 (14%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Passing My Training Courses	30 (43%)	11 (16%)	29 (41%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Passing Policing Tests	55 (79%)	15 (21%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Increasing My Knowledge in My Field of Specialization	63 (90%)	7 (10%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Promoting Me to a Higher Policing Rank	65 (93%)	5 (7%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Getting a Scholarship for Postgraduate Studies or Training in an English-speaking Country	58 (83%)	9 (13%)	3 (4%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

Table 12 clearly shows that all the participants indicated that knowledge of English is essential to their work. SPSA cadets were asked to give their opinion about the importance of English for job performance and promotion. The highest result was 93% of the cadets stating that English was necessary for "promoting me to a higher policing rank". The next highest result, at 90%, was that knowledge of English enabled them in "increasing my knowledge in field of specialization".

Discussion

The results of this study clearly highlight the strong interest and desire of SPSA cadets to acquire English skills tailored to their future careers in law enforcement. They emphasize the critical importance of being proficient in police terminology and effectively handling situations requiring English use in police work. Therefore, it is crucial for future English courses to incorporate the principles of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) during the course design and planning stages. This finding aligns with recent literature and is



consistent with research conducted by Liu (2018), Zhou (2017), and other contemporary studies in the field.

The results underpin the cadets' recognition of the significance of ESP instruction. This is evident in their selection of specific language domains related to police work for each language skill. For instance, in terms of listening skill, the cadets prioritize the domain of police jargon, terminologies, and textual materials as the most essential for acquisition and application. This result aligns with current research in policing and language studies, emphasizing the importance of English language skills for law enforcement roles (Wang, 2019; Chen, 2020).

Additionally, the findings reveal that the cadets place speaking and listening at the forefront among the language skills necessary for their roles. The diverse nature of the Emirati community, with its vast number of expatriates, necessitates strong speaking and listening competencies within the police force. With over 200 nationalities residing in the United Arab Emirates, proficient police officers must have strong speaking and listening skills to interact effectively with the diverse community. This emphasis is consistent with recent research (Kumar, 2018; Yang, 2021), highlighting the importance of listening and speaking skills in ESP courses for police cadets.

Moreover, the respondents emphasize reading skill, particularly in the context of accurately comprehending police-related vocabulary, terminology, and texts. This finding aligns with previous researches and underscores the importance of understanding police-related materials.

Finally, SPSA cadets recognize the importance of writing skills, particularly in the context of drafting precise police reports and articles. This acknowledgment is consistent with recent studies conducted by Qaddomi (2016) and others, highlighting the importance of written communication for police cadets.

The English language's potential to enhance job performance and promotion prospects receives significant emphasis from SPSA cadets. The results indicate a strong awareness among SPSA cadets



regarding the importance of having strong English language skills for their future roles in law enforcement. This assertion is consistent with recent literature, corroborated by research by Alhuqbani (2018), Liu (2019), and Zhou (2020).

Furthermore, the majority of SPSA cadets assert that English is primarily required in contexts directly relevant to police work, such as passing police examinations, training courses, securing scholarships, and attaining promotions. These findings resonate with the core principles of ESP, which advocate for the use of authentic language materials derived from the cadets' professional domains (Liu, 2018).

Conclusion

According to data analysis and the findings of the study, it is evident that it is a vital requirement for cadets to master the four skills of the English language. They are aware of the global status of the English language, which has become the lingua franca of police forces around the world. It is recommended for Sharjah Police Science Academy (SPSA) to incorporate the four language skills, with special focus on listening and speaking, when designing an ESP course so as to target English language cadets' prerequisites. That is because cadets allotted primary significance to these two skills in particular. However, further research is required in order to identify the different and frequently varying rudiments of security divisions' English language prerequisites, particularly in light of the worldwide development of police officers' tasks. Studies are also required to explore the instruction procedures and practices which are considered the most effective at police academies in the United Arab Emirates.

Pedagogical Implications for English Instructors at the Police Academy:

1. Contextualized Curriculum: Develop an English language curriculum that aligns with the specific language needs of Emirati police cadets in law enforcement contexts.



2. Listening Skills: Focus on enhancing cadets' ability to comprehend spoken English, particularly in high-stress, real-life law enforcement scenarios.
3. Specialized Vocabulary: Integrate law enforcement-specific vocabulary and terminology to prepare cadets for their future roles.
4. Regular Assessments: Implement frequent language assessments to gauge cadets' progress and adjust instruction methods accordingly.
5. Technology Integration: Leverage educational technology and digital resources to enhance language learning, simulation exercises, and virtual scenarios.
6. Evolving Curriculum: Continuously update and adapt the curriculum to reflect the changing language requirements within law enforcement, considering the shift to a K-12 educational system in the UAE.

Suggestions for Further Research:

- Longitudinal Study: To track the language proficiency and performance of Emirati police cadets over an extended period to assess the long-term impact of English language training.
- Comparative Analysis: Compare the language needs of Emirati police cadets with those of police cadets from different cultural backgrounds.
- Blended Learning: Explore the effectiveness of blended learning approaches, incorporating both online and face-to-face language instruction for police cadets.
- Language Assessment Tools: Develop and validate specialized language assessment tools tailored to evaluate the language proficiency of police cadets in specific law enforcement scenarios.



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