
Poster Presentation

Active English for Police – Course Design & Survey Results

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This paper presents a genre-based approach to a university course in Japan instructing police officers and students who are interested in pursuing a career in law enforcement. It will discuss how the principles of ESP (English for Specific Purposes) were used to create a unique course to teach two different groups of a specific discourse community. The PAIL (*purpose, audience, information, and language*) framework was applied during the needs assessment and course development to create a course that would achieve the goals of both groups of participants. A brief description of the course design and content, ESP principles as they were applied to this course, and a survey from participants on their learning outcomes are presented.

ESP Principles

ESP in second language teaching primarily focuses on teaching language required by members of a specific discourse community to achieve a goal or outcome. A general view is that, “ESP is an approach to language teaching in which all decisions are based on the learner’s reason for learning” (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987, p. 19). Within ESP, there are many branches and pedagogical techniques that can be used to address the specific learning needs, more than the general needs (Basturkmen, 2010). Although the roots of ESP stem from research focused on written material, the current situation is that most oral English communication in the world is done by non-native English speakers, and it is evident in the development of English as the lingua franca. This realisation has refocused some ESP research to concentrate more on speaking (Paltridge & Starfield, 2014). With this idea in mind, the newly created course Active English for Police

described below is an example of how the principles of ESP help participants achieve desired learning outcomes and develop oral English competency.

For countries where English is not an official language, police officers need to develop essential English communication skills to interact with international visitors and residents. In Jordan, Aldohon (2014) found that by far the most serious problem faced by police is the inability to communicate with English-speaking tourists. Japan faces a similar problem, and the Kyoto police force is addressing this issue through an ESP-based course. The course is called Active English for Police. It is taught at an intermediate level (TOEIC score of approximately 450-550). The course was created through a joint program between a private university in Japan and the Kyoto police force. It is intended to offer university students the unique opportunity to learn police genre English with police officers and to develop the English communication skills of police officers to address three main goals.

The first goal is to develop English skills of police officers as they deal with the increasing volume of foreign tourists visiting Kyoto each year. For instance, the number of visitors reached a high of 19,737,409 in 2015 (Japan National Tourism Organization, 2016), more than four times the figure at the turn of the century. Based on this growth, the Japan Tourism Agency (2016) expects the number of tourists coming to Japan to reach 40,000,000 by the year 2020. The second goal is to provide the Kyoto police force with the English skills required to interact with the growing population of foreign residents within Kyoto. The number of foreign residents in Japan rose to 2,232,189 in 2015, up 5.2 percent from the previous year (The Ministry of Justice, 2016). The third goal is to create original and practical materials that the police can use in class while learning and for reference and review after they have completed the course.

The PAIL acronym (Noguchi, 1998) was used as part of the needs analysis during the design of the course. PAIL represents *purpose, audience, information,* and *language*, and this functioned as a guide for the course development and content selection. The *purpose* of the course content was to develop police confidence and ability to communicate with foreign tourists and foreign residents in Kyoto. It was also intended to help prepare students by providing them with

specific language content that would assist them in a career with the police service. The *audience* for this course consisted of police officers who needed to improve their English communication skills and students who wanted to pursue a career with the police service. The *information* that was required focused on specific topics such as giving directions, conducting home visits, completing accident reports, and completing lost and found reports. The *language* included specific vocabulary that the police would use on a regular basis, for example, imperative and interrogative statements.

The Course

To create such a unique course, an analysis was conducted of existing texts designed for law enforcement English and interviews with the translation department of the Kyoto police force. According to Hüttner, Smit, and Mehlmauer-Larcher (2009), small corpora can provide clear advantages to ESP-focused contexts by choosing genre-specific samples. From the textbook analysis, a list of specific vocabulary and language content were identified. Two English as a second language textbooks designed for law enforcement were reviewed to create a small corpus of police genre vocabulary. The first book came from the Kyoto Prefectural Police headquarters and was a phrase book consisting of common English with Japanese translations used by police officers (Tachibana, 1991). The second textbook reviewed was *Career Paths – Police* published by Express Publishing (Taylor & Dooley, 2011). Through this process of textbook analysis and interviews, five topics were identified as critical, and should be covered within program: giving directions, lost and found, questioning people, accidents and incidents, and home visits.

The course was conducted during the spring and fall terms of 2016. It consisted of one 90-minute class per week for 15 weeks. It focused on providing participants with communicative-based tasks designed to give them the opportunity to use new target language as much as possible. As mentioned by Carver (1983), one of the key characteristics of ESP is the use of authentic material; therefore, the worksheets and other tasks employed actual police material whenever possible. These included materials such as lost and found

forms, maps of Kyoto, and accident reports.

The course was divided into three main assignments: vocabulary quizzes, role plays, and a group presentation. The participants completed five vocabulary quizzes with ten items per quiz. Each quiz consisted of listening comprehension, vocabulary meaning, and correct vocabulary usage. Next, participants presented five role-plays that allowed them to use new vocabulary and phrases. The role-play situations included lost and found, giving directions, home visits, accident reports, and questioning. Each role-play was conducted in groups of two to three and lasted three to five minutes. They were assessed based on comprehensibility, vocabulary use, and solution to the situation. Finally, participants gave a 15-minute group presentation in English to demonstrate what they had learned from the course. The assessment for the course was broken down as follows: participation 30%, role plays 25%, quizzes and homework 25%, and the final presentation 20%. This percentage allocation was to encourage participation and put sufficient emphasis on the two most practical elements of the course, vocabulary and role-plays.

Survey & Observations

To help determine the efficacy of the course design and content, a short survey was created and administered to 21 participants (13 police officers and 8 university students) from the spring and fall terms in 2016. All 21 participants replied to it. Participants were given questions with a choice of Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, or Strongly Disagree. The survey was designed to target two main constructs. The first construct was that of perceived value in the course, and the second construct was that of willingness to participate. There were also three open-ended questions intended to identify positive and negative aspects of the course and to solicit general comments and feedback. See Appendix for a list of the questions asked in the survey. The results of the survey showed a positive response overall to the course and the content (see Table 1).

Additional evidence for the success of this course thus far can be seen in written comments by both police and student participants. For example, one participant wrote “I especially liked role plays, because I got a chance to use

Table 1
Active English for Police – Participant Survey Responses

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Q1	7	14	0	0
Q2	10	11	0	0
Q3	18	3	0	0
Q4	16	5	0	0
Q5	18	3	0	0
Q6	11	10	0	0
Q7	18	3	0	0
Q8	14	7	0	0
Q9	20	1	0	0
Q10	15	5	1	0
Q11	10	11	0	0
Q12	14	7	0	0
Q13	18	3	0	0

natural English”. Another participant wrote, “The role play was good for me to use new vocabulary, practice English, and communicate with other students.” These samples represent the vast majority of comments; however, one comment that seemed negative mentioned that “having an equal number of university students and police officers in the class would help balance out the classroom.”

In addition to the survey, general classroom observations made during the role-plays and other classroom activities proved insightful. First, since participants were a mix of university students and police officers, they were hesitant to interact and communicate due to the varied ages and social differences between the two groups. The instructor anticipated this and designated the first three classes to breaking the ice between the two groups via general English communicative activities that encouraged group interaction and discussion. For example, student-

police pair work warm-up activities, mixed small-group discussions with short in-group presentations, and various games played as a whole group.

Another insight relates to how non-Japanese people react during police interactions in Japan. Many non-Japanese tourists and residents are very fearful of or distrust police in their own country and therefore are very hesitant and nervous when dealing with the police anywhere. The friendly relationship that exists between the police and the public in Japan is not common in other countries. In class, both university students and police officers showed great interest in the difference between Japanese and non-Japanese reactions to police interactions in Japan. The general consensus was that Japanese people are more comfortable dealing with the police because the police are friendly and have such a strong community presence. In addition, when asked if they would be comfortable interacting with a police officer in another country, most said they would, based on their experiences in Japan.

Conclusion

In this paper, a brief description was presented of an English course designed around the principles of ESP to meet the needs of the Kyoto police force. The course, Active English for Police, was created to address the specific needs of two different groups of learners from a single discourse community. The first group were university students interested in a career in law enforcement, and the second group were police officers with the Kyoto police force who interact regularly with foreign people in English. Results from the survey and classroom observations demonstrated that participants enjoyed the course content. As the course develops over time, further refinement of content and materials should help to ensure the future success of courses such as Active English for Police.

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Author bio

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APPENDIX

Survey Questions

Likert Scale Questions (*Strongly Agree – Agree – Disagree – Strongly Disagree*)

1. This class was at my English level.
2. The role-plays were good for practicing new vocabulary.
3. I enjoyed coming to this class.
4. I think the final project was interesting.
5. The vocabulary list was helpful for police English.
6. I could understand the English used by the teacher.
7. The warm-up activity “Taboo” was very helpful.
8. The 5 units were good for police English.
9. The activities done in class were interesting.
10. The worksheets and handouts were helpful for me.
11. I was comfortable speaking English in front of other students.
12. I learned a lot of police English form this course.
13. I would recommend this class to a friend / co-worker.

Open Ended Questions

1. What did you like the most about this class?
2. What did you not like about this class?
3. Please write any other comments that you think will improve this class.