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Design of an ESP course for Pottery Artisans and Traders of Guaitil, Guanacaste

Diseño de curso IFE para personas artesanas y comerciantes Guaitil, Guanacaste

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Abstract

This article shows the result of the implementation of an ESP course designed for Chorotega pottery artisans and traders in Guaitil, Guanacaste. The project included the analysis of needs, wants and lacks of the target population as well as the curricular design and implementation of the program. After the needs analysis was implemented, it was determined that the population required English for Occupational Purposes, that the main need was to carry out an effective communication with English-speaking tourists, and that the use of a semi-technical vocabulary and an adequate register in the business context focusing on oral and auditory macro-skills were required. The content of the course included three units developed in fourteen weeks under the ESP methodology and the Task-Based Approach with a population of six participants. After comparing the performance of each participant between the initial diagnostic test and a competence test administered at the end of each unit, it was found that the population achieved the objectives proposed to a great extent. Based on the results, it can be determined that the population made significant progress, considering that each participant advanced from two to three levels according to the measurement instruments used to assess their competence.

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Key words: English, foreign language, language instruction, university extension

Resumen

El presente artículo muestra el resultado de la implementación de un curso IFE diseñado para personas trabajadoras de la artesanía Chorotega en Guaitil, Guanacaste. El proyecto incluyó el análisis de necesidades, deseos y carencias de la población meta, y el diseño curricular e implementación del programa. Después de aplicar el análisis de necesidades, se determinó que la población requería inglés con fines ocupacionales, que la principal necesidad era llevar a cabo una comunicación efectiva con turistas angloparlantes, y que se requería utilizar un vocabulario semi-técnico, así como el uso de un registro adecuado en el contexto de negocios enfocando las macrodestrezas oral y auditiva. El contenido del curso incluyó tres unidades desarrolladas en catorce semanas bajo la metodología ESP y el enfoque por tareas (Task-Based Approach) con una población de seis participantes. Después de comparar el desempeño de cada participante entre el examen diagnóstico inicial y un examen de competencia realizado al final de cada unidad, se encontró que la población alcanzó los objetivos propuestos en gran medida. Basados en los resultados, se puede determinar que la población tuvo un avance significativo, considerando que cada participante progresó entre dos y tres niveles según los instrumentos utilizados para evaluar su competencia.

Palabras clave: Inglés, lengua extranjera, aprendizaje de lenguas, extensión universitaria

Introduction

The demand for an English-proficient labor force has notably arisen in Costa Rica in the last decades, particularly to cope with the tourism and business fields in which English is considered the lingua franca. Thus, the English for Specific Purposes (ESP) approach has emerged as an alternative to satisfy current demands. In effect, tourism-related activities play a major role in the local economy as mentioned by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD, 2020):

> In 2018, tourism directly employed 157 000 people, corresponding to 6.6% of total employment. Tourism is the most important source of foreign exchange in the country, contributing CRC 2.2 trillion in 2018 (...). By far, the largest source market for overseas visitors in 2018 was the United States with 1.3 million tourists (41.9% of total share). (p. 325)

As stated previously, the major and most common group to visit Costa Rica is from the United States; therefore, English is expected to be widely spoken by individuals who work in this industry. This reality is no different in Guanacaste; the population under study belongs to Guaitil, Santa Cruz. Tourists are attracted by the genuine pottery production and trading which makes it the most important economic activity of the region and the main source of income of families. In addition, this activity represents an enduring tradition that has been preserved and developed into an art that contains great wealth from Chorotega heritage.

The present study comprises an account of the most relevant notions of an ESP program as established by accredited scholars. In addition, it aims at determining the degree to which the objectives of the course were achieved and how it influenced participants' outcomes by answering the questions that follow.

General question. To what extent were the goals of the course English for Pottery Artisans and Traders of Guaitil accomplished in regard to the use of register and semi-technical vocabulary?

Specific question. To what extent did the use of register and semi-technical vocabulary in the achievement test improve in relation to the diagnostic test in unit one, unit two, and unit three?

Literature Review

Although ESP has grown as a major force used in specialized fields, in Costa Rica, the approach is still gaining recognition. According to Gamboa Aguero and Rodríguez Rodríguez (2021), "this approach started in 2006 and 2007 due to the requirements that the country began to face in the labor market" (p. 127). Therefore, research under the ESP umbrella is not abundant in the country. While there is lack of evidence about an ESP research addressing the population under study in Costa Rica, valid data and theory were integrated in the present work.

In the first place, the present review examines background information regarding ESP, English for Occupational Purposes (EOP) and Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) approaches.

The second section deals with online learning using technologies in the context of remote education as it was the means for carrying out the course. Finally, both linguistic and non-linguistic aspects included in the objectives of the course syllabus, which represent the core aspects under study, are addressed in the last part of this review.

Key Approaches: Background Information

The importance of learning English as a foreign language is commonly discussed as a means to access more job and educational opportunities in the country and around the globe. Therefore, English for Specific Purposes has emerged as an alternative to meet those demands. ESP has evolved to become one of the most prominent approaches for teaching the language worldwide as it is recognized as a tool to develop communicative competence. Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998) describe ESP main concerns as "preparing learners to communicate effectively in the task prescribed by the study or work situation" (p. 1). In addition, Hutchinson and Waters (1987) refer to its principle as "tell me what you need English for and I will give you the English you need" (p. 8). An ESP program, therefore, is built considering the needs and the purposes for which English is required for a particular population.

In order to carry out ESP instruction, it is necessary to analyze the learners' needs, wants, and lacks throughout the implementation of a needs analysis (assessment). Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998) refer to these three aspects:

A. [Needs] professional information about the learners: the tasks and activities learners are/will be using English for.
B. [Wants] personal information about the learners: factors which may affect the way they learn such as previous learning experiences, cultural information, reasons for attending the course and expectations of it, attitude to English.
C. [Lacks] English language information about the learners: what their current skills and language use are. The gap between C and A. (p. 125)

These premises are an essential part of the process, and it is significant to analyze them prior to instruction as they shape the route to follow. "ESP cannot be predetermined in a social/educational vacuum; they need to be prepared in response to specific contextual factors" (Viana et al., 2018, p. 2). This position entails that the instruction will be tailored to satisfy learners' real necessities of the language in a specific context considering their professional or vocational requirements. Whether it is used for any of those areas, the syllabus is designed to fulfill work-related needs as it is the case of EOP instruction.

Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998) mentioned that one of the ESP branches is EOP, which focuses on language for the workplace. Rico-García and Fielden Burns (2020) claim that this syllabus "deals with courses specifically designed to help professionals evolve in their work and to facilitate learning of linguistic skills connected with their job needs" (p. 12). This kind of instruction stipulates the nature of the skills needed to carry out the different tasks

in their work routines. Business English (BE) falls under the umbrella of EOP; a more specialized approach focused on business environments.

Business English or English for Business Purposes (EBP) is "concerned mainly with adult learners working or preparing to work in a business context" (Dudley-Evans & St. John, 1998, p. 53). EBP programs are designed for particular needs aimed at meeting learners' job demands. In this sense, participants play a central role as they "bring business knowledge and skills to the language learning situation" (Dudley-Evans & St. John, 1998, p. 56). The most effective way in which this instruction takes place is through vivid experiences by implementing tasks likely to take place in working environments to promote effective communication.

In order to provide daily working scenarios within the classroom setting, it is pertinent to include the Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) framework together with an ESP approach. Richards et al. (2003) refer to TBLT as "a teaching methodology in which classroom tasks constitute the main focus of instruction (…). The syllabus in TBLT is organized around activities and tasks rather than in terms of grammar or vocabulary" (as cited in Shehadeh, 2012, p. 156). The purpose of this framework is to develop the skills required for effective communication in a sequenced and student-centered cycle. To achieve this intention, Shehadeh (2005) proposes that tasks should be "goal-oriented, content-focused, [have] a real outcome, and reflect real-life language use and language need" (as cited in Shehadeh, 2012, p. 156). As stated by the author, this approach pays close attention to the use of authentic language and tasks that can be meaningful to learners as they are likely to be transferred to real life situations.

The combination of ESP and TBLT have long been used in varied settings with the purpose of achieving the principles they comprise. Through time, these approaches have been adjusted to the particularities of the context in which they take place. One of the most important changes is related to their implementation in virtual education.

An EOP Course in the Context of Remote Education

World events have shaped human activities in general, and education is not exempt from it. Because of the sanitary pandemic caused by COVID-19 in 2020, education changed drastically which increased online instruction, and the use of diverse remote and technological tools. Regarding this type of instruction, Elkins and Pinder (2015) define online learning or e-learning as "any course or structured learning event that uses an electronic medium to meet its objectives" (para. 2.). In this context, e-learning changed the traditional classroom dynamics as digital tools, online platforms, and devices transformed both the teaching and learning processes.

Despite the challenges produced by the world sanitary crisis, education experienced adaptations which provided rich and robust opportunities to guarantee continuity through online learning and teaching. As for any programs, adjustments were successfully implemented in the EOP program under study in order to satisfy the learners' requirements.

Key Linguistic and Non-Linguistic Aspects Addressed in an EOP Course

The needs analysis carried out with the target population revealed the requirement of tackling both linguistic and non-linguistic features for complying the students' needs, lacks and wants. As a result, the aspects addressed in the objectives of the program are the use of semi-technical vocabulary and the use of register. The latter comprises the degree of formality and the amalgamation of non-verbal communication when interacting with customers in the workplace.

The term 'Register' was coined by Reid (1956), and it was originally used to describe the potential of human language to adjust itself to distinct social situations; register theory heaved into view in the research field ever since (as cited in Giménez-Moreno & Skorczynska, 2013). Linguists have proposed different definitions to the term, including Biber and Conrad (2005) who claim the following:

> Varieties defined in terms of general situational parameters are known as registers. We use the label register as a cover term for any variety associated with a particular configuration of situational characteristics and purposes. Thus, registers are defined in non-linguistic terms. (p. 175)

The previous definition refers to a spectrum of registers rather than just a single parameter since individuals show stylistic variations depending on the context and on the form of communication. Another relevant aspect focuses on the non-linguistic features of the term, which refer to the speaker's intention, the topic, the relationship between the sender and receiver, and the conditions under which the interaction in the act of communication takes place (Biber & Conrad, 2005). Therefore, the notion of register can be regarded as a general term for the shift and variety of language determined by situational characteristics.

There have been attempts to determine different levels of registers, all of them governed by the degree of formality or informality involved. A well-accepted classification was built by Joos (1967) who surpassed that conventional dichotomy and found associations between various styles: frozen, formal, consultative, casual, and intimate. In the business environment, particular styles such as the formal and the consultative are more likely to intersect. For the purpose of this work, the consultative and the formal style will be referred.

Based on the previous arguments, it can be acknowledged that interlocutors switch over the language code based on the interaction faced; hence, the language chosen is likely to take on different levels of formality. According to Invine (1979), formal communication is a structured, orderly and often controlled style for conveying ideas (as cited in Liu, 2013). Thus, the language used in formal contexts contains a high level of predictability which offers fewer chances for confusion when interlocutors interact. In addition to formality, human language contains a range of characteristics that interact in the communication process and go beyond the written and spoken language. A remarkable feature is related

to the way interlocutors use their body in social situations, particularly in spoken settings.

Physical behavior and expressions are underlying to human communication and along with words, they transmit a message; therefore, body language cannot be disregarded when teaching an EOP course. According to Busà (2015), "(…) non-verbal language is largely culture specific and needs to be learned through exposure to communication in society (…) for its important role in communication and to prevent misunderstandings that might arise in cross-cultural communication" (p. 84). As elucidated by the author, body signals are acquired spontaneously within specific cultural groups and are inherent to discourse.

For the aforementioned reasons, it is fundamental to address the importance of non-verbal communication to enhance interaction. This is especially fundamental in environments where individuals interact with people from different cultural backgrounds who may interpret a different message from the one intended. Body language includes various actions that are integrated when interacting with people face to face. According to Dumbravă and Akoronka (2009), "—the basics of body language include: body posture, head gestures, facial expressions, handshake, eye contact, [and] smile" (p. 252). Therefore, non-verbal communication is largely what is shown to individuals in social exchanges, so learners should be trained about it in order to use it adequately in their workplace.

Along with the non-linguistic aspects addressed above, there is a core aspect included in the present work based on the needs found out in the early stage of the study: the use of an adequate vocabulary for working environments. The acquisition of vocabulary is an underlying part of language communication as established by Richards and Renandya (2002) who describe it as "a core component of language proficiency [that] provides much of the basis for how well learners speak, listen, read, and write" (p. 255). Therefore, it is key to determine the lexicon to be focused on a course or program for the purpose of encouraging an effective communication.

Although not straightforwardly established, the ESP field makes a distinction among core vocabulary, technical vocabulary, and semi-technical vocabulary. Jordan (1996) refers to the first category as a comprised set of words likely to be encountered regularly with a consistent incidence within the language. Regarding the second type, Schmitt (2010) states that "Technical words or phrases are those which are recognizably specific to a particular field. They range from items which are unique to the field and do not occur elsewhere (…)" (p. 77). In this sense, the asset of such specialized terminology may not represent a substantial challenge to learners as such lexical items are monosemic. In order to focus on the aims of this study, semi-technical vocabulary will be thoroughly examined.

In contrast to the process of gaining technical vocabulary, the teaching and learning of semi-technical vocabulary is considered more intricate since in this category words are likely to have one or more meanings in the day-to-day context, but a different one in a particular ground. Baker (1988) refers to it as "[…] a whole range of items which are neither highly technical and

specific to a certain field of knowledge nor obviously general in the sense of being everyday words which are not used in a distinctive way in specialized texts" (p. 91). Due to the polysemic feature contained in this category, the semi-technical words addressed on a course or program under the ESP umbrella should be carefully selected and endorsed in a contextualized setting.

Context, therefore, plays a central role in acquiring language sharply. Hence, the terminology should be thoroughly planned with the purpose of accurately choosing from the many possibilities available. The opportunity of gaining focused vocabulary in a meaningful context may encourage learners' motivation and confidence to communicate accurately.

Methodology

The present study applied a mixed method which is a research approach whereby both quantitative and qualitative data are gathered. This method "involves the collection, analysis, and integration of quantitative and qualitative data in a single or multiphase study" (Hanson et al., p. 224 as cited in Hesse-Biber, 2010, p. 3). This approach was preferred because it has sustained, vigorous and valid outcomes; moreover, researchers have access to varied data compilation and instruments for analysis rather than restricting themselves to one method. In addition, Hesse-Biber (2010) argues that the triangulation process involved in a mixed method enhances the validity of research findings as it diminishes bias and generalizations of individual methods, and it also brings the possibility to employ breadth and depth in a particular study.

The process to carry out this research included two phases: a diagnostic stage conducted in 2020 and the execution of an online fourteen-week course implemented from March to June 2021. These stages comprised the design of the instruments for gathering data which applied both quantitative and qualitative focus. The analysis of the outcomes was quantitative-oriented as participants' performance was analyzed based on the scoring obtained from the tests administered and were exhibited in tables. In addition, it was qualitative-oriented as to determine the degree of advancement of the target population; in this case, speech samples were analyzed to validate its progress.

The course was taught by two instructors in the roles of teacher and assistant. Weekly synchronous lessons lasted 2 hours via a video conferencing tool. In addition, students were assigned asynchronous work-related tasks to reinforce the class content using a free education platform. The development of the classes included content related to the unit being implemented together with feedback about the students' performance in the tasks assigned in the platform.

Participants and Group Profile

The population included in this study were artisans and traders of the Chorotega pottery tradition from the community of Guaitil, Santa Cruz, Guanacaste. The selection process criteria included three requirements only: participants had to be over fifteen years old, be directly or indirectly

related to the production of ceramics, and/or they had to be involved in the trading of the pottery. Factors such as academic background and gender were considered irrelevant to the decision-making process of the course design. However, these details were addressed in the instruments administered for contextualizing the population.

From the participants selected, seventeen decided to take part of the process and sixteen carried out the diagnostic test administered before the course started. From those ones, only ten applicants started the program, but four dropped out before week four. At the end, only six participants completed the fourteen-week program effectively. The target population had been in contact with either the production or trading of the local pottery from four to forty years; all of them learned the tradition from relatives, and their ages ranged from twenty-five to sixty years.

Based on the information collected at the early stages, three different levels were assigned to learners: proficient, low-proficient and non-proficient. It is critical to mention that these levels were not assigned on a global scale but according to the results obtained from the contents evaluated per unit. That is to say, every student was assigned a proficiency level based on his or her performance in every task from the diagnostic test.

In this way, it was found that for Task 1 representing Unit 1, most students were diagnosed as low-proficient and proficient; only two were classified as non-proficient. In the second task from Unit 2, most examinees were positioned between non-proficient and low-proficient; only one was labeled as proficient. This panorama took a turn in the task for Unit 3 which was the most challenging. In this case, most testees were categorized as non-proficient.

In the case of one person labeled as proficient in the parameters used for this study, it was found that the participant was able to communicate in English using an interlanguage and had a vast knowledge in the field. However, this person had areas of improvement in the use of semi-technical vocabulary and the use of an appropriate register. The ones with a low-proficient level had basic knowledge of general English but any in the field. The remaining three had no experience at all with the language or the register suitable to work in the ground.

Needs Analysis

Needs analysis is the basis of English for Specific Purposes as it indicates the course to follow at any particular program. In this respect, Dudley-Evans and St. John, (1998) mention that "Needs analysis is the process of establishing the what and how of a course" (p. 121). As explained before, the analysis carried out prior to an ESP course sets the foundation to make informed decisions in the design of a focused program. It is key to highlight that this early stage places learners in a central position as they contribute with essential information that helps designers bridge the gap between what they know, what they are able to do and what they need.

As needs analysis is a cornerstone in the course shaping, this section includes the procedures and instruments administered as well as a general description of the needs, wants, and lacks

found out in the early stages of the program design. This phase included contacting key informants, designing and administering instruments, and analyzing the data collected.

The first contact interviewed was the president of the Integral Development Association (Asociación de Desarrollo Integral-ADI) who provided researchers with a list of potential participants and served as the main means for communicating with the population. After this initial interview, a focal group with four members of the community was held. During the face-to-face meeting, artisans and leaders of the community contributed with important information about participants' needs, wants and lacks.

In addition, the target population was contacted, and a focal group was carried out via videoconference in two different sessions. During these virtual meetings, attendants provided the research team with key information about their expectations and requirements, and this information was the basis for designing subsequent instruments. Additionally, during these sessions, the potential participants were informed about generalities of the course, the selection criteria, and the stages required before enrolling in the program.

Considering the information gathered, researchers created two questionnaires with the purpose of collecting further details necessary to design the diagnostic test and the content of the program. The first instrument was related to the participants' academic background, working experience, and prior knowledge of English. The second one aimed at finding out the possibilities for students to enroll in a virtual course. It is important to clarify that a face-to-face instruction was not allowed due to the COVID- 19 pandemic restrictions established in the country in 2020. Once the questionnaires were administered and results analyzed, the rest of the instruments—including semi-structured interviews, observation sheets and the diagnostic test—were constructed.

Regarding the needs of the population, all the participants worked in producing or selling Chorotega pottery. The data collected from the instruments administered showed their interest in learning English from a program tailored to the artisans and sellers' requirements. For this reason, researchers concluded that students' needs are occupational.

Table 1 shows data gathered from the focal groups, the semi-structured interviews, the observations and the questionnaires that were administered during the initial stages. The information was organized based on participants' urges considering the stakeholders and potential participants contributions.

Table 1
Participants' needs regarding the language

Needs identified by stakeholders through semi-structured interviews and focal groups.	**Needs identified by the target population through a semi-structured interview and an observation.**	**Needs identified by the target population through a questionnaire.**
1. Communicating with clients in a polite but friendly way. 2. Providing information about the production of local pottery in oral form. 3. Explaining different processes about the stages involved prior, during and after finishing a piece. 4. Selling products orally. 5. Promoting sales in oral form by accurately describing, informing, and specifying features of ceramic.	1. Communicating with customers politely in oral form. 2. Giving specific information about products in oral form. 3. Describing the different processes involved in the production of ceramic. 4. Describing the tradition and family/community involvement in the production and sale of ceramic. 5. Responding orally to face-to-face interactions. 6. Negotiating with clients over product prices.	1. Communicating with clients politely and formally. 2. Understanding and responding to face-to-face conversations. 3. Explaining the process to get and treat raw materials. 4. Describing the processes to make and finish a piece. 5. Persuading customers to purchase and negotiating over products. 6. Describing the family tradition in the production and sale of ceramic. 7. Explaining the designation of origin. 8. Giving instructions to customers to make a piece of ceramic.

The information collected through the instruments showed that the different participants agreed on the same needs. The instruments showed preference for oral tasks about topics related to describing and explaining different processes involved in the pottery production; selling and persuading clients to purchase pieces, negotiating over the price; and expressing ideas about the family tradition and particular features of the ceramic of Guaitil. Participants also exhibited their predilection for listening activities, especially related to understanding and responding to face-to-face interactions, which go hand in hand with the oral production addressed as crucial.

In relation to the wants of the population, participants expressed that

their personal expectations are communicating effectively for expressing and understanding face-to-face conversations with clients. They mentioned their desire to be able to respond accurately to customers' spontaneous questions and to clarify information when required. Participants also highlighted speaking as the main skill to be focused; however, they recognize that it is closely related to the development of the listening skill. Reading was not established as an urgency, and writing was not included in the instruments as it was not pointed out as a necessity in their field.

The topics addressed by the participants emphasized aspects related to the local practices and the habits inherited, the processes involved in the stages for producing ceramics, pottery production as a family enterprise and the way to earn their livelihood, the knowledge about the tools and methods learned from relatives, among the most important. Regarding the methodology for class activities, they preferred ludic activities, role playing, audiovisual support, pair and group work instead of individual performances, and planned oral presentations.

Finally, regarding the lacks, the information gathered from the instruments administered led the research team to infer that even though the population has a clear idea of their urgencies, aspects such as the use of semi-technical vocabulary was not addressed as a key point as they perceive they have sufficient lexicon in their mother tongue to get their message across. However, their perception might not be realistic as there are particular words that must be used in the specialized field that they did not use in the diagnostic phase.

Another aspect that was disregarded has to do with the little understanding about the foundations of the tradition as inherited from a millenarian art. Even though they pointed out that their knowledge has been transmitted from generation to generation, they have not received formal instruction about their own history. Therefore, it was found that they lack a clear understanding of the background information about the Chorotega legacy, which was reported as a frequent topic of interest for tourists. In addition to the aspects pointed out before, the research team detected that reading had to be integrated to the other two skills in which students exhibited interest. It was chosen as the main means to cover topics related to history and to the description of the processes carried out in their field.

Instruments and Procedures

In order to collect the required data, seven different instruments were administered during the entire process. The qualitative instruments combined a face-to-face focal group with stakeholders, an online focal group with artisans and traders, face-to-face semi-structured interviews, and observations. The quantitative instruments used included online questionnaires, an online diagnostic test, and an online achievement test per unit.

The first instrument was a face-to-face focal group with four community leaders. This one-hour session included an introduction from researchers, presentation of objectives, the questions and discussion, and the conclusion. The discussion included 10 open-ended

questions to consider different aspects and to contextualize their perception of needs, wants, and lacks regarding an English course for the population, and their opinions, concerns and questions.

After this first encounter, the focal groups were conducted through the use of an online conference platform; this group was divided into two. These meetings consisted of three different parts: presentation and objective, discussion and questions, and conclusion. In total, fifteen questions helped researchers to collect participants' points of view about occupational tasks, strategies to communicate with foreigners, previous experiences with customers, and their expectations regarding the course.

After the focal groups, the semi-structured interviews and observations were carried out. Researchers visited three different workshops as arranged by the president of ADI. Interviews were administered to two traders and one artisan; these consisted of 10 questions related to the different processes about the ceramic. Two of the interviews were conducted in the workshops where researchers were able to observe and gather information regarding the characteristics and tradition behind raw material collection, treatment, tools used, and production of pieces. In addition to this, interviewees shared valuable information about the steps to create a small pottery piece and details of their everyday activities that involve interacting with foreign visitors.

Furthermore, two questionnaires were administered to the participants using an online tool. They were asked to fill out the questionnaire during a five-day period, and it would take around 15 minutes to answer. The first questionnaire was related to their perception of needs, lacks, and wants. It consisted of four different parts; the first part gathered personal and occupational information. The second part was destined to know their previous experiences with the language and training. The third part addressed their priorities regarding the use of the language in their field. The last part of the questionnaire inquired about their perception of language knowledge and tasks that they are able to carry out in English. The second questionnaire was administered under the same conditions as the first one. This instrument aimed at getting information regarding their access to the internet and devices, digital basic knowledge, and prior information about technological resources available to them to take remote instruction.

Moreover, the diagnostic test was designed from the information collected in the previous instruments. This test consisted of three different parts; the first part was regarding the origin of the pottery tradition. The second one addressed the location, extraction and preparation of the raw materials. In regard to part three, it contained details about the pottery making and its finishing processes. This diagnostic test was administered through an online meeting platform; the instructions and situations were shown and explained to participants prior to testing them.

During the test, each participant had to carry out a short conversation with one of the researchers in the role of a tourist asking for information about their tradition and products. For reliability, researchers used a bank of questions to start and guide all the conversations. Each participant was expected to use their prior knowledge

to answer each question in the target language. Each interaction was expected to be done from five to seven minutes, but if the examinee did not complete the period, follow up questions from the bank were asked.

In general, the diagnostic test took approximately twenty-five minutes per person. For every section, examinees were notified a minute before the time was over in order to finish their ideas. Researchers assigned an overall language level per task from the ones established based on the rubrics designed for this purpose in the skills of speaking and listening.

In addition to this, participants were administered an achievement test after each unit. These tests used similar situations included in the diagnostic test as described earlier, and all the conversations were recorded. In terms of validity and reliability, the procedures, time, modality, follow up questions, rubrics, and others were the same administered in the diagnostic test. The purpose of this achievement test was to find out the extent to which participants progressed in relation to the content addressed in every unit after the corresponding treatment. In all the tests, examinees were asked to include a formal greeting, to develop the specific content of the unit, to answer the tourist's spontaneous questions, to incorporate adequate register and semi-technical vocabulary from each unit, and to end the conversation with a formal farewell.

Results and Discussion

The needs analysis carried out prior to course design shed light on the requirements for the population as explained in the previous section. For the purpose of this study, the concept of register is understood as the degree of formality in speech that works together with non-verbal language employed by interlocutors when interacting in spoken settings. Regarding semi-technical vocabulary, it is treated as high-frequency words likely to be used with a consistent incidence in the language employed in specific work-related situations. In relation to the tasks included in the diagnostic and achievement tests, they required the application of formal customer service in face-to-face interactions; examinees were expected to include the content of every unit along with an adequate use of register and semi-technical vocabulary.

Diagnostic and Achievement Tests 1: Use of Register and Semi-Technical Vocabulary

In every task for both the diagnostic and the achievement examinations, students were required to include specific content from every unit as well as the other requirements detailed before. In the case of Unit 1, they were asked to carry out a conversation in which they had to help customers purchase a piece by providing them with contextualized information about the Chorotega heritage, the origin of the tradition, and details about local families' pottery business.

In these particular tasks in both tests, register was treated as the integration of formality and politeness, together with the implementation of communication strategies such as formal greetings like handshaking, bowing, and waving the hand. In addition, they were instructed to put into practice active listening; in this sense, they

learned lexical chunks and expressions such as "Really" "Interesting" "Please, tell me more" to show interest during the conversation. In addition, semi-technical vocabulary was treated as the recurrent words used in the description of a pottery piece, the language applied in the contextualization of the information about the Chorotega pottery heritage and the family business history, roles, and benefits. Table 2 compares students' performance in regard to the two aspects addressed in both the diagnostic and the achievement test through the use of the descriptors included in the rubrics employed.

Table 2

Outcomes obtained from the Diagnostic Test, Part 1 and the Achievement test 1 regarding the use of register and semi-technical vocabulary.

Student	Formality		Semi-Technical Vocabulary	
	DT	AT	DT	AT
1	G	E	G	VG
2	G	E	G	VG
3	A	G	A	VG
4	P	G	G	E
5	A	A	A	A
6	G	VG	G	G

Note. DT= Diagnostic test, AT= Achievement Test, E= Excellent (4) VG= Very Good (3), G= Good (2), P= Poor (1), A= Absent (0)

Table 2 shows progress in most testees in the aspects examined in both tests. In general, in the diagnostic test most students used familiar expressions such as "Welcome" and "Good afternoon", and they could describe a product using basic language. However, some of them used informal or impolite expressions such as "Hi" or "What do you need?" when addressing a customer. Moreover, most of them failed in introducing themselves and welcoming clients, and no one gave a formal farewell. Regarding the language expected, they gave superficial descriptions of the tradition and family business framework but missed details such as the origin of the Mesoamerican

influence in their pottery, and the establishment and preservation of the tradition in Guaitil. In the case of two students, even though they tried, they were not able to carry out the task under the conditions established.

In the achievement test, the majority of participants progressed two to three levels in the scale used. All examinees exhibited advancement in the use of non-linguistic features and carried out the task successfully. It is clear that after the treatment, they were able to use polite and formal expressions for greetings and giving farewells in the business context, and integrated communication strategies throughout the interaction. In this case, they incorporated lexical chunks such as "Welcome to my shop" "What can I do for you today?" "Is there anything else I can do for you?". They also used specific vocabulary to describe their products. For example, words like "intangible" "heritage" "deities" "designation of origin" and "polychromatic" were incorporated in their detailed descriptions.

Finally, there are two salient cases that require further explanation. The first is participant number 5. This person scored "Absent" in both tests because the examinee expressed not being prepared for carrying out the task even after the corresponding treatment. In a follow up session, the testee mentioned feeling afraid of using the language. Regarding participant number 6, this person kept at the same level in the scale and evidenced very little advancement comparing both tests. This person was diagnosed as proficient and seemed not to be totally engaged during the lessons of the unit. Therefore, the improvement shown was mostly related to the use of formality and politeness rather than to the incorporation of the lexicon desired.

Diagnostic and Achievement Tests 2: Use of Register and Semi-Technical Vocabulary

In Unit 2, participants were asked to detail contextualized information about the location and extraction of the raw materials as well as the preparation process carried out for making a piece. In the case of the diagnostic and achievement tests administered in this unit, register was understood as the integration of formality and courtesy with the implementation of formal titles such as "Ma'am" "Sir" and "Miss", and expressions like "Of course," and "My pleasure". It also included clarification as the communication strategy in phrases like "Let me explain a little bit more about…", "For example" and "Regarding your question…". In addition, semi-technical vocabulary was treated as the frequent words used in the description of the extraction, treatment and preparation of raw material used for making pottery. Table 3 compares students' performance in regard to the criteria evaluated in both tests through the rubrics employed.

Table 3

Outcomes obtained from the Diagnostic Test, Part 2 and the Achievement test 2 regarding the use of register and semi-technical vocabulary.

Student	Formality		Semi-Technical Vocabulary	
	DT	AT	DT	AT
1	P	E	G	E
2	G	E	G	VG
3	A	G	A	VG
4	G	VG	G	VG
5	A	G	A	G
6	VG	E	G	VG

Note. DT= Diagnostic test, AT= Achievement Test, E= Excellent (4) VG= Very Good (3), G= Good (2), P= Poor (1), A= Absent (0)

Comparing students' performance in both instruments, it is noticeable that they had a significant degree of advancement regarding the aspects evaluated after the treatment. It is relevant to mention that in the diagnostic test, most of the participants showed a general understanding of register. They used basic greetings and farewells without making the distinction between formal and informal expressions; for example; they used "Hi," "Bye," and "See you". Some other testees did not even answer when the tourist greeted them. Finally, two of the participants did not use any of the expressions expected. However, in the achievement test, testees showed progress in their use of an adequate register in the occupational context. One of the participants excelled in this aspect as this person went from "Poor" to "Excellent". In addition to this, two of the participants went from "Absent" to "Good" and were able to incorporate expressions such as "What can I do for you?", "Welcome to my workshop", "It's my pleasure". "Is there anything else I can do for you?," and "You're welcome."

In terms of the use of semi-technical vocabulary in the diagnostic test, four participants out of six were able to provide some general information related to these processes. One participant was able to give a more accurate description of the process; for example, the person mentioned "we use the mortar and pestle, and we sift the clay". However, most of them expressed that they did not have the particular

vocabulary to talk about the topic accurately. One of the examinees commented that this task was frustrating because although this person was not an artisan, he or she mentioned knowing the process in Spanish but did not have the words in English to carry out the task fully. Some of them resorted to speaking Spanish to fill the gaps in the conversation. For instance, they said "the clay and sand mix [amasado, se patea] before [se hace la pieza]". Another participant mentioned "Go to the place with [palas] y [picos], cut in the [lugar en la tierra] for the extraction of the clay, sand and the [óxidos]." Other two participants were not able to carry out the task at all.

In the case of the use of semi-technical vocabulary in the achievement test, some examinees in general showed improvement ascending from "Good" to "Very Good" or "Excellent" in the scale of the instruments administered. The most salient examples are participants 3 and 4 who ascended from "Poor" to "Good" or "Very Good." In general, individuals showed a remarkable improvement in the use of semi-technical vocabulary regarding the content addressed in the unit. For example, they used expressions such as "Our pottery is made from raw materials that come from the earth." "The materials are clay, curioles or oxides and iguana sand." "The clay is found in San Vicente, is a nearby town of Guaitil… the clay is found in a private property…" Participants also implemented the particular vocabulary related to the tools and steps needed in the processes, which are the ones they struggled with before treatment. For instance, they expressed "They need to use a digging bar and a shovel, and they extract these materials with these tools." "They need to dry and pulverize [the clay] with a mortar and pestle" and "It is pulverized and sifted."

Definitely, the end of the second unit marked a meaningful difference in participants' progress; they seemed more confident and willing to learn new content if compared to the first unit. It is remarkable how the use of register and semi-technical vocabulary turned into a more natural and accurate strategy for testees.

Diagnostic and Achievement Tests 3: Use of Register and Semi-Technical Vocabulary

Unit 3 required examinees to explain the stages involved in the whole process and particular techniques needed to create different pottery pieces—including shaping, drying up, polishing, designing, and firing. In these tasks in both tests, register was treated as the integration of formality and politeness in face-to-face interactions, and the use of communication strategies were required to interact, ask for opinions, and show agreement and disagreement. Moreover, semi-technical vocabulary was addressed as the habitual words used in the description of the stages to create pottery pieces. Table 4 compares students' degree of advancement in regard to the aspects evaluated in both tests through the use of the rubrics employed.

Table 4

Outcomes obtained from the Diagnostic Test, Part 3 and the Achievement test 3 regarding the use of register and semi-technical vocabulary.

Student	Register		Semi-Technical Vocabulary	
	DT	**AT**	**DT**	**AT**
1	A	E	A	VG
2	A	E	A	VG
3	A	E	A	VG
4	P	G	P	VG
5	A	G	A	G
6	G	E	G	VG

Note. DT= Diagnostic test, AT= Achievement Test, E= Excellent (4) VG= Very Good (3), G= Good (2), P= Poor (1), A= Absent (0)

The results obtained in the diagnostic test clearly evidenced that the more complex the units became, the harder it was for testees to carry out the test successfully. In brief, four out of six examinees scored "Absent" in the scale as they were not able to do the task assigned. They mentioned phrases like "I don't know the words" and "I don't know the process". One participant tried, but provided a vague description of the shaping process only and, basically, resorted to Spanish with very few English words required for the descriptions.

The only person that gave a more accurate account of the processes was participant number 6. This person has worked as an artisan for more than thirty years and knows flawlessly the procedures involved in creating this art. However, this examinee has used an interlanguage that lacks accuracy, especially in terms of the semi-technical words required such as "kneading" "carving" and "wedging". For example, in the description of tools used, the testee mentioned that "a mold made of clay" is required instead of using a more accurate expression like "clay bat". Another example was the use of the expression "I mix the clay to make it soft" instead of "I knead the clay to make it pliable". It can be argued that these ideas may be understood by English speakers, but they lack accuracy in the terms needed to describe the processes precisely.

In addition to the aforementioned examples, some descriptions given by this person were unclear or incomplete, like "I use a piece of wood to help me"

instead of "I use a piece of wood to keep the clay steady on the bat." On the other hand, regarding the use of register, the examinee did not incorporate variety in the greetings and leave takings and was not able to negotiate. When the evaluator took the role of a tourist and asked for a discount, the examinee just laughed and said energetically "No." This shows that even though this participant had a lot of experience and had learned to communicate with tourists in English, the language used was not accurate and lacked politeness for the business context.

Regarding the use of register in the achievement test, participants showed a significant improvement in its use. Most individuals moved from the "Absent" or "Poor" categories to "Good" and "Excellent." In addition to this, they used expressions learned during the lessons such as "Welcome to my shop," "How can I help you today?" and "You came to the right place."

In terms of semi-technical vocabulary, this unit represented more difficulty in comparison to previous ones due to the specificity of the lexicon required in the processes. Even though all participants showed improvement, it is significant to mention that they did not excel the evaluation criteria. For instance, five of the examinees moved from "Absent" or "Poor" to "Good" or "Very Good." but none obtained "Excellent." Regarding participant 6, this person went from "Good" to "Very Good" showing an improvement in the semi-technical vocabulary used but did not achieve the maximum score either.

Some of the expected words related to the processes that were used successfully are shown in the following examples: "The first step is to wedge the clay to get rid of air bubbles," "They [air bubbles] will expand when firing the piece in the kiln and it will break," "The corn cob is for removing fingerprints and the excess of clay," "Some artisans use a pottery wheel, others use a clay dish," "Artisans use quarts or a stone, most of them are inherited from their ancestors." These expressions show that the examinees mastered the vocabulary addressed in the unit to a great extent; they were able to integrate these terms naturally in their descriptions.

Examinees progressed mostly in aspects related to an adequate use of register and formality. Since they had already had a process in the two previous lessons, their experience may have influenced their performance in the last test. However, most of the semi-technical vocabulary addressed in the last unit was unfamiliar for them, including the person with the most experience, as novel terms were incorporated. In addition, the last unit was not only complex in terms of the language addressed but also in relation to the extension and detail involved in the different stages of pottery making. In general, it can be summarized that despite the challenges, there was a significant degree of advancement in the task derived from Unit 3.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The analysis carried out in the previous section shows that the treatment students received in the fourteen-week program substantially increased their awareness and knowledge regarding the use of register and semi-technical vocabulary in the occupational context.

In addition, the course designed for the target population guaranteed the fulfillment of the needs, wants, and lacks identified in the earlier stages as it was shown in the analysis held.

When comparing the results from the tests related to the first unit, it is noticeable that although the contents were more familiar and less challenging, students could develop the functions, skills, lexicon, and the register addressed in the first unit successfully. This proves that the input received complied with the requirements and objectives established. Nevertheless, it is noteworthy to mention that, during the first lessons of the unit, some degree of reluctance to learn new content was perceived, especially on the part of the most experienced artisans. For this reason, the results show little progress in some participants in regard to the incorporation of semi-technical vocabulary, but a significant progress was detected in relation to register.

Regarding the contents evaluated in Unit 2, it can be concluded that despite this being more challenging than the first one, participants achieved the objectives included in the unit to a significant extent. It is clear that when students reached the second unit after three weeks of instruction in Unit 1, the content learned previously shaped their attitude and understanding of the new input. Overall, it can be determined that students' performance in the second unit was the most remarkable as the outcomes from both examinations show the most significant progress in the scale used to evaluate them. Instruction favored the progression of participants' competence in terms of register and semi-technical vocabulary. It is evident that they achieved an efficient usage of both aspects in their performances with more confidence and willingness.

In the case of Unit 3, the objectives were achieved to a significant extent although it represented the most complex one considering the novelty of the lexicon addressed and the length. Regarding register, students excelled their mastery of an adequate use in their occupational field as this aspect was included across the program. Thus, when they finished the last unit, they had already assimilated the strategies focused to develop the skills required to communicate using an adequate verbal and non-verbal language progressively. On the other hand, they showed difficulties to manage the required lexicon consistently as the contents were less familiar, more elaborated, and extended. In other words, a significant improvement of the contents evaluated was noticeable if the outcomes are compared to the diagnostic phase. Despite their progress, they did not assimilate the language as naturally as they did previously.

Recommendations

The experience throughout the course was meaningful both for the research team and for the participants. However, the circumstances in which it was developed, increased the level of complexity since virtual instruction, along with the conditions of the population, affected to some extent the teaching and learning processes. The access to platforms and to a stable connectivity was challenging because of the location of the community and due to a detected technological gap, which produced reluctance among the

senior. These circumstances forced the research team to provide technical instruction about the tools needed for the course, which was time consuming. For this reason, it is highly recommended to prioritize face-to-face instruction with similar populations as well as to use printed material.

In addition, the promotion of the program was done hand in hand with leaders of the community; however, due to the amount of time and work devoted to developing the course, and the fact that only six participants completed it, it is advisable to choose carefully the means to advertise similar programs in order to impact a bigger population. Moreover, considering the quality of the material designed, it is recommended to develop a second or more stages for the same population or to replicate the very same program with a different group from the field.

Finally, as the last unit was the most challenging for the population, it is advisable to consider dividing its content into more lessons so that participants can practice and assimilate the input more easily, especially regarding the use of semi-technical vocabulary.

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