

English Needs Assessment Survey for International Students of Technology at the Budapest University of Technology and Economics in Hungary

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Abstract

Regular language instruction informed by needs assessment has been a widespread phenomenon in Teaching English as a Foreign language (EFL). In higher education (HE) institutions teaching English for Academic Purposes (EAP) based on research has also been a widely accepted trend. Nowadays the increasing number of international students in the Hungarian HE scenario has prompted faculties to support the development of students' language skills systematically. As one such institution, the Centre for Modern Languages (CML) at the Budapest University of Technology and Economics (BME) designed a questionnaire survey systematically to research the language needs of its international students of technology after having come across some anecdotal mismatches across faculties in the perception of the students' level of knowledge. International students of technology, their EFL teachers and their subject matter instructors were surveyed on how important they think certain language skills are for the students to succeed in the academic scenario. The results show that skills such as identifying main points in texts, summarising information in speech and in writing, or asking for clarification - all of pertain to the recognition or formation of structural elements in written and spoken texts - are seen as most important by the stakeholders. The results now inform the refreshment of course design and materials development at CML. Limitations are discussed together with future research recommendations, such as the need to thoroughly investigate non-linguistic issues influencing learning achievements, which may include cultural differences in learning strategies or learner-teacher expectations.

Keywords

EAP, needs analysis, international students, higher education, research-based language education

1 Introduction and context

The internationalisation of higher education is a European Union goal, and by extension also a Hungarian one. In 2020, of all 21,836 enrolled students at the Budapest University of Technology and Economics (BME) 2291 (12%) were from abroad (Molnár, 2021). They were either fee-paying or Erasmus exchange students, or were here on scholarships. The latter include, among others, the Stipendium Hungaricum Scholarship (SH) launched in 2013 by the Hungarian government to promote cultural and economic relations between Hungary and other countries around the world outside the EU by offering opportunities for full-time programmes at the bachelor, master or doctoral levels in Hungary (Lannert, 2018). There was an 80% increase in the number of SH international students from 2016 to 2020, mostly from the regions of Asia, Africa, the Middle

East and South America at BME (Molnár, 2021). In 2020, more than 50% (1,400) of all international students studied at BME on an SH scholarship (Molnár, 2021).

The Centre for Modern Languages (CML) has provided general and specific language instruction to BME students for 20 years in several languages in addition to managing state accredited language proficiency exams in Hungary in several languages. The courses offered can be divided into:

1. elective general language courses for 0 credit for Hungarians,
2. compulsory elective specialised credit courses for Hungarian students,
3. elective and compulsory specialised credit courses for Hungarian and international students.

In fall 2021, there were 560 international students enrolled at CML in courses available for them, 258 in the compulsory English credit courses and 302 on elective specialised ones. Only 49 of those were students of economics and not of technology.

The compulsory English credit courses for international students at CML were developed at the request of some technology faculties due to the growing international student body at BME. Some of these courses last one semester, some four, depending on what the faculty's requests are. In fall 2021, 246 international students of the faculties of Chemical Engineering (VBK), Electrical Engineering and Informatics (VIK), Civil Engineering (ÉMK), and Mechanical Engineering (GPK) were enrolled in a compulsory credit course at CML at the preparatory, bachelor and master level, not counting PhD or part time students. In contrast, in 2015 only 113 students were enrolled in compulsory English courses.

With the growing student body, the experience and insight of both English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers and faculty instructors also grew, but the two groups formed divergent opinions of the students. Language teachers perceived that students had solid enough language skills, whereas anecdotally faculty instructors appeared to perceive that the students did not actually have a suitable level of knowledge for academic studies despite fulfilling the admission requirements of language knowledge with international language exam certificates or equivalent study reports from the relevant secondary school systems (Furka, 2021; Study in Hungary). Therefore, a systematic investigation was planned to uncover the discrepancy and establish research-based English language skills development (for the whole planning phase see Furka (2021)). This is in line with the field of teaching English in higher education (Akyel and Ozek, 2010; Hyland, 2014; Purpura and Graziano-King, 2004; Rao, 2014) which values language teacher expert opinion, but favours the inclusion of thorough needs analyses before designing and implementing syllabi.

2 Theoretical background

Student needs analysis (NA) research stems from the emergence of the idea of communicative competence (Hymes, 1972) being the goal of language teaching, which has influenced course design (Dubin and Olshtain, 1986). This in turn has led to the production of various types of syllabi serving the needs of particular students in particular contexts (Umam, 2016), resulting in the differentiation

among *necessities*, *lacks* and *wants* (Dickinson, 1987), the identification of *target* and *learning needs*, and the establishment of *present situational analysis* and *target situational analysis* for target language use (Dudley-Evans and St John, 1998). Brown (2009) states that "NA is the systematic collection and analysis of all information necessary for defining a defensible curriculum. [...] the information [...] includes all subjective and objective information, and any other types of information that turn out to be appropriate in the particular NA" (Brown, 2009:pp.269–271).

The fact that international students at English speaking universities have proven to require further assistance and support in their linguistic skills to be able to successfully complete their studies despite performing well in high level international language exams (Jordan, 2001) has been a well-known fact since the 1960s. The research field of English for Academic Purposes (EAP), which is "the communication skills in English which are required for study purposes in formal education systems" (Jordan, 2001:p.169), has been flourishing ever since (Gillett, 1996; Gillett and Wray, 2006; Hamp-Lyons, 2011; Hyland, 2014; Jordan, 2001) and has recognised the need for special focus to be given to teaching English to higher education students including native speakers, regardless of their high level of general linguistic competence (Lea and Street, 2000; Hyland, 2009 cited in Hyland, 2014:p.393). The reason is that EAP has specific characteristics, such as interpersonality, a specific discourse community (Swales, 1990 cited in Hyland, 2014:p.395), special genres, and cultural and disciplinary variations of literary practices, which are all different from general English (Hyland, 2014). Within EAP there is further distinction between general academic English courses (EGAP) versus discipline-specific English courses (ESAP) courses, EGAP being at the forefront in contexts where students from several fields e.g. Humanities, Law, and Science are taught together and involves general study and languages skills pertaining to Higher Educational settings (Dudley-Evans and St John, 1998). On the other hand, ESAP is taught to students from the same discipline. The distinction is warranted due to the conventions of the different fields as to what constitutes knowledge, how it is obtained and how it is supposed to be structured (Kuteeva and Negretti, 2016 cited in Xia, 2021:p.7). However, due to institutional constraints (Gillett, 2013) or to avoid conflicts with content area teachers (Dudley-Evans and St John, 1998 cited in Xia, 2021:p.8) only EAP courses are managed instead of ESAP.

Needs analysis (NA) research in EAP or ESAP for international students of technology is existent but not extensive (Akyel and Ozek, 2010; Balaei and Ahour, 2018; Briana and Mutia, 2019). In addition, in Hungary EAP research with regards to international students in the higher education system is sparsely investigated, not only for students of technology, but also in general (Lannert, 2018). Some work has been done on Hungarian higher education students of English studies, investigating areas such as needs-based syllabus design (Sárdi, 1997), autonomous beliefs and behaviors (Édes, 2008), preparedness for university studies (Doró, 2011), or academic writing (Prescott, 2008). Nonetheless, only Lannert (2018) seems to focus on international students in a review of scholarship students in Hungary, presenting a research niche for CML when considering course design development for international students of technology studying in Hungary.

3 Methods

The research approach and design were participatory action research (Burns, 2011; Creswell, 2007; Crookes, 1993, Nunan, 2013) and grounded theory (Glaser and Strauss, 1967) determined by the contextual factor of ongoing instruction, where the cyclical yearly augmentation of the curriculum based on anecdotal evidence from faculty instructors together with specific student needs were observed and relied on in the planning of the survey (Furka, 2021).

Thus, the needs analysis for the international students of technology in this particular higher education context was designed to:

1. have an EAP-focus,
2. be a target-situation analysis "to seek information on the language requirements learners face in learning a specific type of language" (Brown, 2009:p.272),
3. be a deficiency analysis to try and "account for learners' current wants and needs and their target situation deficiencies or lacks" (Brown, 2009:p.272).

The latter aspect was held important to distinguish between language needs vs. possible situation needs (Brown, 2009:p.273), a potential source for the instructors' anecdotes. Hyland (2009) emphasises there are subject specific cultures that students and lecturers need to be aware of, and Yamazaki (2005) emphasises there are nation specific cultures that influence the learning and teaching process. Thus, the survey intended to answer the research question of what students, instructors and language teachers think

are the most important communicative events and skills that students need in English in order to successfully fulfill the requirements for their degrees.

3.1 Instrument design, participants, data collection, and data analysis

In the pilot phase of the NA (Furka, 2021), a perceived usefulness questionnaire with convenience sampling for international students (Dörnyei and Taguchi, 2010) was used to gain insight into what language elements and skills might need to be included or left out of the course. Additionally, theoretical reflection (Bryman, 2012) through the literature review, and a series of informal, unstructured interviews with EFL teachers were carried out based on non-probability purposive saturated sampling (Dörnyei and Csizér, 2011; Bryman, 2012) where the selection priority was the experience of having taught international students. Finally, faculty instructors and/or staff responsible for international student education were asked to respond to a five-question e-mail in a roll of convenience and snowball sampling (Dörnyei, 2007). The questions aimed to identify main categories of communicative events to identify the target situational elements (Dudley-Evans and St John, 1998) in the context. The final instruments were designed bearing these findings in mind. It was also decided to focus only on the linguistic needs of the students (as opposed to the non-linguistic needs of the target situation, such as learning styles) relying on the communicative events of Munby's (1978) processor widely used in EAP (Gillett, 1989).

The student questionnaire (see Appendix A) was divided into two sections. The first addressed "learner situation" in 17 questions, and intended to uncover sufficient information on previous language learning, intercultural educational experience and relevant personal background. The second section aimed at identifying the perceived importance of target language use in the four skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing in an academic environment. The items included questions such as whether listening to and following instructions, or reading to discover the writer's position are important on a scale of 1–4, 1 being not important and 4 being very important.

The faculty instructor questionnaire (see Appendix B) was also split into two main sections, the first collecting information on professional background and the second on the target communicative events that their students might need to perform, grouped into the four

main skills of speaking, listening, reading and writing. The items were taken from a needs analysis created for higher education students in IT (Briana and Mutia, 2019). They asked how important teachers think certain skills, such as understanding lectures or small group discussions, taking notes of lectures, or understanding main points of readings are for their students to master on a scale of 1–6, one being the least important and 6 being the most important. The scaling of the student and faculty instructor questionnaire was intentionally left different, assuming less awareness on the students' side of the learning processes than on the instructors' sides.

The EFL teacher questionnaire (see Appendix C) was also divided into two main sections. The first one aimed to identify relevant professional background. Then they had to decide how important certain skills were for the students based on their language teacher experiences at BME. The skills and language teaching topic areas were taken from the evaluation survey answers collected from 2019–2020 from students (Furka, 2021), and included items as "writing e-mails", "listening practice", or general and specialised vocabulary, and as narrow as "punctuation", "paragraph writing", or "phrasal verbs" on a scale of 1–6 of importance, 1 being not important and 6 being very important.

The questionnaires were filled out in the spring of 2021 through convenience sampling (Dörnyei and Taguchi, 2010). 112 students of Electrical Engineering and Chemical Engineering having attended BME for at least two semesters answered the questionnaire out of the 246 who could be asked based on the Code of Studies of BME. Emails requesting to fill out the questionnaire were sent to instructors teaching international students via the deputy deans or employees responsible for international students at faculties. Out of the 961 instructors teaching international students, 126 faculty instructors of Electrical, Chemical, Mechanical, and Civil Engineering, and Natural Sciences responded, and six EFL teachers who were teaching international students at the time. Data analysis of descriptive statistics, frequencies and inter-item correlations were carried out with SPSS version 20.0 (IBM Corp., 2011).

Cronbach alpha for the student questionnaire is 0.907, for the instructor questionnaire 0.936, and the language teacher questionnaire 0.907. These indicate the reliability of the questionnaires. The inter-item correlation results had about 7% of items above 0.6 for the student version, 10% for the instructor version, and 20% for the EFL teacher version, which also indicate reliability and that the items measure distinct constructs.

4 Results

4.1 Student questionnaire results

76.8% of the respondents come from countries where English is not an official language, 72.3% of them are male and the majority (68.8%) are between the ages 19–22. The three main faculties attended by respondents are Civil Engineering (32.1%), Chemical Engineering (27.7%) and Electrical Engineering and Informatics (18.8%). 71.4% of respondents had 2 semesters at BME already, 65.2% of them studied English for more than 8 years, 49.1% within official school instruction, 41.1% in language schools or with private teachers, and 9.8% on their own. 78.6% did not spend more than three months in an English speaking country before coming to BME, 66.1% had an international language exam prior to admittance, and 49.1% thought further English studies were unnecessary.

In the analysis of skills all percentages refer to the number of respondents choosing the highest point on the scale, in this case 4 out of 4 unless otherwise stated. The listening skills at the macro level showed that 72.4% of respondents say that they are more than fairly important (3 and 4 on a scale of 4), but only 41% of all respondents answered with a maximum point for each of the listening skills items on the micro-level. The least important was *listening to and following instructions* (53.6%), and the most important was *listening to explanations of problems* (71.4%).

Speaking skills at the macro-level showed that 26.8% of students thought of all six items very important, with 70.5% thinking the six items were between very important and fairly important (3 and 4 on a scale of 4). The least important skill was that of *making suggestions*, with 42% labelling it very important. The most important was *asking for clarification and discussion* with 64.3% labelling it very important.

As to reading skills at the macro-level, only 22.3% of students deemed all eight skills in the questionnaire very important, but 49.1% thought they were between fairly important and very important (3 and 4 on a scale of 4). The remaining answers are widely scattered along the scale. The least important skills seem to be *library skills* (31.3%) and *reading to discover the writer's position* (38.4%), and the most important was *reading and understanding examination questions* (71.4%).

For writing skills at the macro-level, only 25% of students think writing is of utmost importance. Altogether 58% percent of the student body think writing skills are fairly or very important (3 and 4 on a scale of 4). The remaining 42%, however, has widely sporadic scores.

The least important skill was *writing instructions* (38.4%), whereas the most important was *writing relevant and correct answers* (63.4%).

The last question "*What else would you need in order to have a successful academic life at BME (not necessarily with regards only to English)?*" was answered by 98 out of 112 students. 32.3% said they need more socialising in the form of clubs, study groups and extracurricular activities. 18.8% said they need to change their attitude to perform better, 11.5% would need more assistance in the form of more English study materials, senior student or teacher assistance, or psychological assistance. 10.4% of students mentioned that teachers need to change their attitudes to be more helpful, open and kind, 8.3% mentioned the flow of information and administration should be upgraded, and 5% mentioned dorm life as a source of problems, as well as 5% the fact that they have to work to supplement their scholarship to support themselves.

4.2 Faculty instructors questionnaire results

Among the faculty instructors, the majority of respondents come from the faculties of Mechanical Engineering (30.2%), Civil Engineering (23.8%), Electrical and Engineering and Informatics (21.4%), Chemical Engineering (15.1%), and Architecture (9.5%). Almost half of the respondents (46.8%) have been teaching international students for more than 10 years, and one third (33.3%) less than five. Most respondents (35.7%) teach international students two 90-minute lessons per week, about one fifth of them (26.2%) one lesson, 16.7% three lessons, 8.7% 4 lessons, 1.6% five lessons, 3.2% six lessons, and 7.9% another number of lessons. 83.3% of instructors hold lectures, 55.6% of them hold practicals (or seminars according to some terminology), and 36.5% of respondents hold laboratory lessons as well as 56.3% of respondents hold consultations with international students.

In the analysis of skills all percentages refer to the number of respondents choosing the highest point on the scale in this case 6 out of 6 unless otherwise stated. Listening skills for students at the macro level showed that only 6.3% of respondent instructors think that all listed listening skills are of utmost importance, but 61.8% think listening skills are highly important (5 and 6 on a scale of 6). *Understanding main points* (68.3%), *listening to lectures* (64.3%), *listening to small group discussions* (50.8%) and *taking notes effectively* (42.1%) were rated most important. The least important skill was *understanding informal language and slang* (16.1%).

Speaking skills at the macro-level showed that only 0.8% of respondents thought that all speaking events are of utmost importance, and 24% thought that they are very important (5 and 6 on a scale of 6). The most important skill for students is identified as *asking for clarification* (47.6%), *understanding lengthy spoken explanations* (36.5%), *formulating coherent arguments in speech* (34.9%), and *communicating with teachers and leaders appropriately to the situation* (34.9%). Half of the respondents (48.5%) thought that the least important is *pronouncing words, expressions and sentences with proper pronunciation* (7.1%), together with *public speaking* (6.3%).

For reading skills at the macro-level, the same sporadic answer pattern can be detected with only 2.4% saying that all listed items are of utmost importance, but 27.1% think they are very important (5 and 6 on a scale of 6). The most important reading skills were *reading texts slowly in order to understand the details* (50%), *identifying the main points of the text* (47.6%), and *understanding specific vocabulary and terminology* (43.7%). Finally, *understanding the structure of texts* (29.4%) was ranked high. The least important skills were *reading texts quickly to identify the content in general* (13.5%) and *assessing the author's position on the topic* (12.7%).

As to writing skills at the macro-level, 29.6% think writing skills are of utmost importance and very important (5 and 6 on a scale of 6) but 76.7% think the writing skills are more important than not (4, 5 and 6 together on the scale of 6). The most important writing skill was identified as *summarising factual information in writing* (46.8%), *taking notes of lectures* (41.3%), *synthesising information from more than one source* (35.7%), *using appropriate vocabulary for studies* (31.7%), and *developing facts, ideas and topics in writing in sufficient details* (27%). The least important was *writing case studies* (21.4%) and *using correct punctuation and spelling* (10.3%).

67% said that if students "knew better English", they would be able to perform better at the required level in their studies, but 13% thought it was not up to language skills, and 17% could not decide. When asked about other language needs student might need, they listed the problems of run-on sentences, the passive structure, and formal style issues. The minimum level of B2 speaking skills were mentioned, as in their experience this was not the case despite entry requirements. They also highlighted the need for the students to learn the characteristics of Hungarian culture concerning letter writing practices requiring more formal language than English. One teacher mentioned the

issue of strong accents being problematic, i.e., hindering understanding, and one brought up the issue of handwritten Latin letters being unintelligible in some tests. Yet, the most important skill highlighted was listening and note taking, as it was felt that without understanding lectures students cannot even know what to ask about for help.

As to any other insights and comments instructors might have, some were self-critical, implying that instructors' language skills could do with an update and/or improvement. It was also suggested that subjects and/or faculties should provide an ESP dictionary for the students to assist them in picking up professional terminology. A further area of difficulty for the teachers was the lack of feedback from students who generally do not let the instructors know whether they understand the material or not.

4.3 EFL teacher questionnaire results

Among the EFL teachers, 66.6% (four teachers) have been teaching international students for less than two years, one teacher more than five years, and one teacher more than 10 years. Three teachers have two 90 minute-lessons per week, two teachers four times per week, and one teacher has two 135 minute-lessons with them. Teachers could not decide whether students would perform better if they had better English, some suspect that it might be not only up to language skills. The six teachers taught altogether approximately 180–200 students at the time of the survey.

The language teacher questionnaire had items that were created with their expert knowledge in mind, as well as with regards to the perceived usefulness questionnaire from the pilot phase (Furka, 2021), thus terminology in the questionnaire was less specific or detailed. Due to the small number of respondents, percentages are not given.

The most important issues were identified as *note taking*, *listening*, *writing formal emails summarising ideas*, *outlining a text*, *describing object and processes*, *reading longer texts*, *presentation skills*, *connecting sentences*, *paragraph writing*, *specialised vocabulary*, and *general vocabulary*. *Thesis writing* and *grammar* are thought important, but whether due to the context, the language teacher attitude or rather than anything else, is difficult to decide.

Less important were *describing graphs and diagrams*, *punctuation*, *verb tenses*, *conditionals and relative clauses*, as well as *giving instructions*, and *everyday conversation*. The need for *phrasal verbs* together with *general guidelines about Hungary and the academic environment* are considered fairly important but not a key issue from an EFL teaching point of view.

The analysis yielded five macro skills, *listening* (listening, pronunciation, note taking), *speaking* (summary + outlining + describing objects + graphs + presentation skills + speaking + everyday conversation), *reading* (reading longer texts + academic vocabulary + specific vocabulary + grammar), *writing* (emails + summary + outlining + punctuation + thesis), and *grammar* (tenses + conditionals + relative clauses + phrasal verbs + grammar). Out of the five categories, the most important were *listening*, *speaking* and *writing* with approximately 83% importance, and *reading* with 76.4%. *Grammar* items were considered 62.8% important, making this factor the least important from the language teachers' perspective for international students.

5 Discussion

The three questionnaires resulted in three sets of overlapping skills important from the point of view of students, instructors and language teachers, which answer the research question of what students, instructors and language teachers think are the most important communicative events and skills that students need in English in order to successfully fulfill the requirements for their degrees. These skills are *listening to explanations of problems*, *asking for clarification*, *discussion*, *reading and understanding examination questions*, *writing relevant and correct answers*, *understanding main points*, *listening to lectures*, *listening to small group discussions*, *taking notes effectively*, *understanding lengthy spoken explanations*, *formulating coherent arguments in speech*, *communicating with teachers and leaders appropriately to the situation*, *reading texts slowly in order to understand the details*, *identifying the main points of the text*, and *understanding specific vocabulary and terminology*, *summarising factual information in writing*, *synthesising information from more than one source*, *writing formal emails*, *describing object and processes*, *reading longer texts*, *presentation skills*, *connecting sentences*, *paragraph writing*, *specialised and general vocabulary*.

At first this seems to be quite a long list, however, there is a pattern. The skills of *listening to explanation of problems*, *understanding main points*, *listening to lectures*, *reading a text to understand the details*, *identifying the main points*, *understanding lengthy spoken explanations*, and *reading longer texts* are all connected to identifying the rhetorical and logical structure of the given text, whether written or spoken. In addition, *summarising factual information*, *paragraph writing*, *synthesising information from more than one source*, *connecting sentences*

and *presentation skills* are also skills that require not only identifying, but also producing structure, and its linguistic representations. Furthermore, *listening to explanations of problems, writing relevant and correct answers, listening to small group discussions, or taking notes effectively* are also skills that require the ability to identify the rhetorical and logical building blocks of thoughts, ideas and argumentation. Finally, even though *asking for clarification* was marked very important by both students and instructors, yet it does not come up separately with EFL teachers, it is also a skill that cannot be performed without understanding structure, logic and identifying the missing elements one needs to ask about.

To sum up, the skills that students, instructors and language teachers seem to think of as highly necessary for successful higher education are the receptive and productive skills of detecting and creating structure, which might only be partially connected to the linguistic levels of competence. This would support the special nature of EAP Hyland (2014) mentions as not being connected to international exam levels and why even native speakers need practice in it (Lea and Street, 2000; Hyland, 2009 cited in Hyland, 2014:p.393). The identified skills seem to belong to the top level structure (Dickson et al., 1995; Meyer et al., 1980), a type of reading strategy which is an exceptionally effective retrieval mnemonic, or text structure strategy (Dymock, 2005; Simonsen, 2004), and higher order thinking skills, the latter of which claims that information should not only be retained, but also transferred (Brookhart, 2010), that is, it should be worked with in a new context to achieve something new. Thus, all three theories concern themselves with building and manipulating implicit rhetorical structure. It is this rhetorical schema (Weaver and Kintsch, 1991) or macrostructure (Pearson and Fielding, 1991) that appears to be the common ground for the skills found important in this particular study.

Although it is argued that combining ideas in a particular thought pattern might be done differently in various languages (Kaplan, 1966), however, it seems that the world of academia has expectations in its proceedings that require a certain type of logical representation, and not only because the *lingua franca* and the dominant language seems to be English within this realm (Altbach, 2007). If that logical form is not there, if that expectation is not fulfilled, one cannot get initiated into the in-group of the discourse community (Swales, 1990).

A possible solution to help both EFL teachers and faculty instructors in the curriculum design and materials development would be to include practising summarising

learning materials by students through specific teaching techniques and/or methods, such as scaffolding, planning classroom discussion time, or consciously teaching higher order thinking skills, such as building background knowledge, classifying things in categories, arranging items along dimensions, making hypotheses, drawing inferences, analysing things into their components, or solving problems (Collins, 2014). Another possibility would be to have closer cooperation between faculties and EFL teachers by the faculty instructors choosing specific study materials to be studied in the English lessons from the point of view of text structure.

6 Conclusion, limitations and future research

The present research endeavour aimed to identify skills that are necessary for the successful fulfilment of higher education studies for international students of technology in Hungary at BME, stemming from anecdotal evidence of the students not having "enough English" to perform according to expectations on the faculty instructors' side, but having a stable enough foundation from the point of view of EFL teachers. The questionnaire survey of students, faculty instructors and EFL teachers uncovered a number of skills that were found highly important in their views, the common ground of which seems to be rhetorical schemata or macrostructure of texts and higher order thinking skills. The findings firstly explain the anecdotal discrepancy between how EFL teachers and instructors see the linguistic abilities of students, as they can be explained by the different nature of their instruction, the EFL teachers' inherently being bottom-up, focusing on the building blocks of form rather than content, whereas the faculty instructors' being top-down and interested primarily in content rather than form (Field, 1999). Secondly, the results also provide a starting point for the curriculum overhaul of the English courses for international students at BME. Finally, they also highlight the importance of explicitly informing students for the need of EAP and macrostructure instruction, even if they are considered native speakers, in order to prevent motivational plummets and the unwillingness to cooperate in English lessons (Dörnyei and Ushioda, 2010).

Limitations of the research include the type and time of data collection. The data collection coincided with the worldwide COVID-19 pandemic which created peculiar, remote teaching situations. This feature of the time period might have influenced responses in ways that could not be controlled for. Secondly, the survey nature meant working from self-reported data which might have

been influenced by response and/or social desirability bias (Dörnyei, 2007). Although the specific wording of the questionnaire items (how important x or y is for your/the students' success in their studies) was used in order to focus on target situation requirements, respondents still might answer according to what they think they should be answering instead of their real thoughts on the matter. Thirdly, although the 112 student responses were out of the 246-member target population of students attending compulsory English courses, which is an almost 50% response rate, possible bias cannot be excluded due to the fact that the final respondents belonged to two faculties, and were reached through convenience sampling. Finally, the qualitative nature of the analysis and the interpretation might hinder future comparison to other databases.

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- Therefore, it is highly advised to supplement the questionnaire data with that of focus group interviews to provide further insight into the investigated questions (Creswell, 2007) and provide as full description as possible of the case in question (Bryman, 2012).
- Future research firstly will be carried out through interviews with students and faculty instructors in order to uncover further, non-linguistic elements of situational needs of international students at BME, as the different cultural background of students and instructors potentially influences both the learning and teaching processes (Airey, 2012; Lynch, 1994). Furthermore, additional work might be done in devising a set of materials aimed at developing rhetorical schemata analysis and higher order thinking skills in the English lesson for international students at BME.
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Appendix A

English for Studies Needs Assessment Survey Questions for International Students

Background

1. What is your country of origin?
2. What is your gender?
3. What is your age?
4. Which Faculty do you attend at BME?
5. If other, please specify what your relationship with the university is:
6. How long have you been studying at BME?
7. If other, please specify:
8. At what age did you start learning English?
9. How long have you been learning English?
10. How did you learn English?
11. If other, please specify:
12. Have you ever spent more than 3 months in an English speaking country before coming to BME?
13. If yes, how many years altogether have you spent in an English speaking country before coming to BME?
14. What kind of international language exam have you got in English?
15. If you have an international language exam, what was your result?

16. Do you think you need English lessons to help you with your studies?
17. If yes, what do you need help with in general?

For your academic success, how important are the following in LISTENING (1-4, not important at all - very important)

1. listening for general understanding and specific points to remember
2. listening to and following instructions
3. listening to explanations of problems

For your academic success, how important are the following in SPEAKING (1-4, not important at all - very important)

1. asking for clarification
2. oral presentation from notes/without notes
3. discussion
4. discussion of topics from previous lectures or related topics
5. making suggestions
6. oral presentations of work

For your academic success, how important are the following in READING (1-4, not important at all - very important)

1. reading handouts and board/overhead projections (OHP)
2. reading intensively (for details and deep meaning)
3. reading for main information - skimming
4. reading for specific assignment oriented information - scanning
5. reading to discover and assess writer's position
6. library skills
7. reading and understanding examination questions
8. following instructions

For your academic success, how important are the following in WRITING (1-4, not important at all - very important)

1. taking notes that can be re-constituted
2. writing reports
3. writing instructions
4. writing in support of work
5. selecting and organising information for reports and essays
6. describing theories, practices and trends
7. writing evaluative reports/essays on theories, practices and procedures
8. writing relevant and correct answers

What else would you need in order to have a successful academic life at BME (not necessarily with regards only to English)?

Please write down any other comments you might have

Appendix B

English for Studies Needs Assessment Survey

Questions – Instructors

Background

1. Which Faculty do you teach at? (Electrical Engineering, Chemical, Civil, Mechanical, Architecture, Economics and Social Sciences, Natural Sciences, Transportation and Logistics)
2. How long have you been teaching international students?
3. How many lessons (1 lesson = 90 minutes) do you have with international students per week?

4. In what form do you teach them? You can choose more than one: lecture, seminar, practice, lab, consultation, others.

In this section you have to choose how important you think the items connected to Speaking Skills are for students on a scale between 1 to 6 where 1 is not important at all and 6 is of utmost importance.

1. Giving oral presentations
2. Pronouncing words correctly
3. Asking for clarifications
4. Giving formal speeches/presentations (student conference, state exam, conference, presentation in lessons, etc.)
5. Participating effectively in discussions and argumentation
6. Communicating effectively with peers in small group discussions, collaborative projects, or out-of-class study groups
7. Describing objects or procedures in speech
8. Formulating coherent arguments in speech
9. Pronouncing words, phrases, and sentences with proper intonation and stress patterns
10. Communicating with teachers and leaders appropriately to the situation
11. Communicating fluently
12. Participating in interviews (e.g. job interviews, scholarship etc.)
13. Participating in meetings
14. Engaging in public speaking
15. Summarizing factual information, ideas and topics in speech
16. Developing facts, ideas and topics in speech in sufficient detail
17. Addressing people in appropriate tone and style

In this section you have to choose how important you think the items connected to Listening Skills are for students on a scale between 1 to 6 where 1 is not important at all and 6 is of utmost importance.

1. Listening to small group discussions
2. Listening to lectures
3. Listening to large group discussions or debates
4. Understanding lengthy spoken explanations
5. Understanding informal language (friend, everyday expressions and slang)

6. Understanding main points
7. Taking notes effectively

In this section you have to choose how important you think the items connected to Reading Skills are for students on a scale between 1 to 6 where 1 is not important at all and 6 is of utmost importance.

1. Reading a text quickly in order to establish a general idea of the content
2. Reading a text slowly in order to understand the details of the text
3. Looking through a text quickly in order to locate specific information
4. Identifying the meaning of unknown words in a text
5. Understanding text organization
6. Understanding specialist vocabulary in a text
7. Reading for author's viewpoint
8. Reading critically
9. Identifying the main points of the text

In this section you have to choose how important you think the items connected to Writing Skills are for students on a scale between 1 to 6 where 1 is not important at all and 6 is of utmost importance.

1. Describing objects or procedures in writing
2. Formulating coherent arguments in writing
3. Summarizing factual information in writing
4. Using correct punctuation and spelling
5. Structuring sentences and paragraphs
6. Using appropriate vocabulary for studies
7. Developing facts, ideas and topics in writing in sufficient detail
8. Adopting appropriate tone and style
9. Evaluating and revising your writing
10. Paraphrasing texts
11. Lecture note-taking
12. Writing coherent long texts
13. Writing case studies
14. Writing introductions and conclusions
15. Writing references and citations
16. Synthesizing information from more than one source

What is your impression: if students "knew better English", would they be able to perform better at the required level in their studies?

Please write down any other language needs, insights, comments you might have:

Appendix C

English for Studies Needs Assessment Survey

Questions – Language teachers

Professional background

1. How long have you been teaching international students?
2. How many hours per week do you teach them?
3. What do you think, if they knew English better, would they perform better in their studies according to the expectations?
4. What could we do to help them further?

The following items were collected from students of diverse faculties in their after-course feedback to the question what they think they should learn more of in the lesson. IN YOUR EXPERIENCE what do incoming international students need and to what extent? Mark them from 1-6 where 1 means not important and 6 means very important.

1. Verb tenses
2. Writing e-mails
3. Note-taking
4. Listening practice
5. Summarizing practice
6. Outlining a text or listening
7. General vocabulary
8. Specialized vocabulary
9. Describing objects and processes
10. Graphs and diagrams – describe, understand
11. Reading longer texts
12. Academic vocabulary
13. Punctuation
14. Thesis writing
15. Presentation skills
16. Conditionals
17. Relative clauses
18. Phrasal verbs
19. Sentence connections
20. Paragraph writing
21. Speaking skills
22. Pronunciation
23. Grammar in general
24. Everyday conversation
25. General guidelines about Hungary and the academic environment
26. Instructions

Other language elements, other insights comments: