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FOSTERING STUDENT POLICE OFFICERS' CREATIVITY IN LANGUAGE EDUCATION

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Abstract. Introduction. The modern issues of global developmental trends require contemporary police officers to become more cognizant and more responsive to the emerging needs of human safety in the constantly changing environment. Education provides student police officers with the appropriate skills and competences for innovation based on creativity. Contribution of language education to the enhancement of student police officers' creativity becomes particularly important for innovation as an engine of the human safety development in the context of economic, cultural and educational globalization. **Aim of the study** is to elaborate hypothesis for further studies on fostering student police officers' creativity in language education. **Materials and methods.** The search involves a process of analyzing the meaning of key concepts and empirical study conducted in Latvia in 2005-2006. **Results.** The study shows a potential model for development. **Conclusions.** In order to foster student police officers' creativity in language education it is necessary to promote English for Specific Purposes studies as a favourable learning environment with the emphasis on peer-learning which supports successful use of language in a multicultural environment.

Key words: language education, language learning, creativity

Introduction

The modern issues of global developmental trends emphasize "a prime importance in sustainable development that is to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (Zimmermann 2003: 9). Thus, sustainable personality is a person who sees relationships and inter-relationships between nature, society and the economy (Rohweder 2007: 24). In other words, this is a person who is able to develop the system of external and internal perspectives, and in turn this developing the system of external and internal perspectives becomes a main condition for the sustainable personality to develop. For instance, the concern of Latvia, namely, to increase its welfare whereas the most valuable resources of a government are its population's dreams and expectations (Volkova, 2006) for the creative economics, demonstrates the significance of

developing the system of external and internal perspectives for the development of humans, institutions and society.

The approach of the development of the system of external and internal perspectives highlighted in Figure 1 (Ahrens, Zaščerinska 2010: 181) is applicable to the present research on fostering student police officers' creativity in language education.
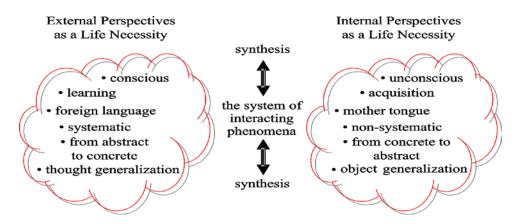

Figure 1: **Development of the system of external and internal perspectives**

The subject-content structure of the system of two perspectives, namely, external and internal, is highlighted in Figure 1 by Ahrens and Zaščerinska (Ahrens, Zaščerinska 2010: 181).

For the process of the individual sustainable development the unifying phase of external and internal perspectives is emphasized by Čehlova (Čehlova 2002: 9) as depicted in Figure 1.

The methodological foundation of the present research is formed by the System-Constructivist Theory based on (Maslo 2006: 39) Parsons's system theory (Parsons 1976: 9-30) on any activity as a system, Luhmann's theory (Luhmann 1988: 1-14) on communication as a system, theory of symbolic interactionalism (Mead 1973; Goffman 1977) and theory of subjectivism (Groeben 1986).

The System-Constructivist approach to learning introduced by Reich (Reich 2005) emphasizes that human being's point of view depends on the subjective aspect: everyone has his/her own system of external and internal perspectives as shown in Figure 1 that is a complex open system, and experience plays the central role in a knowledge construction process (Maslo 2007: 39).

Aim of the study is to analyze fostering student police officers' creativity in language education and to elaborate hypothesis for further studies.

The search for language education for fostering creativity involves a process of analyzing the meaning of key concepts, namely, *language education and language learning*. Moreover, the study demonstrates how the key concepts are related to the idea of *creativity*. The study shows a potential model for development indicating how the steps of the process are related following a logical chain: language education → language learning → language learning and creativity → creative language learning → empirical study in a multicultural environment.

1. Theoretical Framework

Language education or the languages of education is an overarching concept for language as a subject, language across the curriculum and foreign languages (Aase 2006: 4) thereby developing the system of external and internal perspectives.

Language education is formed by a stable understanding of the unity of all language pointed out by Robbins (Robbins 2007: 49), namely, language as a subject, language across the curriculum and foreign languages, that are linked, united in various ways, forming a whole (Robbins 2007: 51), thereby developing the system of external and internal perspectives. Language education is based on language development and, consequently, learning.

The process of language development coincides with the creative process (Мельникова 2003: 263). Moreover, language learning as the basis of language education is a creative process (Surkova 2001: 303). Thus, language learning is an opportunity for creativity.

The search for language learning reveals that language education following the traditional stimulus-response model based on behaviorism lead to the learner-centred approach. Hence, creative language learning in language education based on the Theory of the zone of proximal development (Vigotskis 2002: 202-275) and quasi-autonomous development (Цукерман, Елизарова, Фрумина, Чудинова 1993: 35) is provided by English for Specific Purposes studies as the quasi-autonomous zone (Zaščerinska 2009) where an individual is located between his/her levels of actual and proximal development being able to

implement a certain activity, for example, to use his/her communicative competence, at a certain level with other's particular assistance (Цукерман, Елизарова, Фрумина, Чудинова, 1993: 35) that implies peer learning (T. Myllet, R, Gluck, 2004, p. 7).

2. Research Design

The present research was conducted during the implementation of English for Specific Purposes studies in the *English as a foreign language* course within the education program *Police work* with the qualification *Rank and file police officer* of Police Academy of Latvia in 2005-2006 to examine efficiency of English for Specific Purposes studies for the development of student police officers' communicative competence in order to promote the quality of studies. Its topicality is determined by ever-increasing flow of information in which an important role is laid to the communicative competence to get information and gain experience. The research question is as follows: has the educator's contribution been efficient to promote the development of students' communicative competence?

The aim of the *English as a foreign language* course is to improve students' communicative competence for the participation in international research activities widening the students' social experience, namely, experience in social interaction and cognitive activity.

The subjects of the present research are 22 respondents, namely, two language educators and 20 student police officers. The group consisted of 14 males and six females which is a typical representation to the proportion of male and female students in the police in Latvia. The age of the sample was from 18 to 25. The respondents represent different upbringing backgrounds and diverse educational approaches (Gulbe 2008: 79). 15 respondents had certain expectations from the *English as a foreign language* course, which were demonstrated in the answer to the question why they had chosen to participate in this study. The use of communicative competence in the studies was one of the answers. English is a foreign language for all the students in the group. In accordance with the students' self-evaluation the levels of English for Specific Purposes in the pre-survey are presented as follows:

- one student gained Level 1 (very low),
- four students reached Level 2 (low),

- eight students had Level 3 (critical),

- three students obtained Level 4 (average) and

- four students took Level 5 (optimal).

The students' mother tongues considered to contribute to the successful foreign language learning and to become an instrument of bringing the students together more closely under certain conditions, namely, appropriate materials, teaching/learning methods and forms, motivation and friendly positioning of the language educator (Abasheva 2010: 431) are as follows: Latvian for 14 students and Russian for six students.

Moreover, the paradigm shift from focusing on macro-cultures to micro-cultures (family culture, school culture, class culture, professional culture, gender culture, culture of interest groups, political groups/parties, generation) leads to a new perspective: people behave being influenced by identification with different groups, not only one group (Dirba 2007: 108). Thus, the group of 20 student police officers is multicultural.

An explorative research has been used in the research. The study consisted of the following stages: exploration of the contexts of language education for fostering creativity in Latvia through thorough analysis of the documents, analysis of the students' evaluation, data processing, analysis and data interpretation and analysis of the results and elaboration of conclusions and hypothesis for further studies.

3. Findings of the Empirical Study

The findings of the present research allow drawing conclusions on the efficiency of English for Specific Purposes studies applied to enhance the communicative competence of 20 student police officers.

Regarding *quality assurance* it is evident that the students' communicative competence has been enriched, namely,

- one student from Level 1 (very low) to Level 3 (critical),

- one student from Level 2 (low) to Level 3 (critical),

- three students from Level 2 (low) to Level 4 (average),

- one student from Level 3 (critical) to Level 4 (average),

- five students from Level 3 (critical) to Level 5 (optimal),

- two students from Level 3 (critical) to Level 6 (high),

- one student from Level 4 (average) to Level 5 (optimal),
- two students from Level 4 (average) to Level 6 (high),
- one student remained at the same Level 5 (optimal) and
- three students from Level 5 (optimal) to Level 6 (high).

The students have gained their social experience for the development of the communicative competence, and, thus, the social experience changed into the means of gaining new opportunities and advantages. Irrespective of levels in the students' initial language capacity and different combination of languages, English for Specific Purposes studies have become an effective means of acquiring social experience by the students and has served as a motivating factor to continue language learning in order to improve their communicative competence. The provided support for students, namely, English for Specific Purposes studies, resulted in the improved students' communicative competence.

Regarding *effectiveness of the educator's contribution to the students' communicative competence* it is evident that the students widened their experience in interaction thereby developing the system of external and internal perspectives with the implementation of English for Specific Purposes studies. Most of the students' expressions of the self-evaluation of the research results are positive. Hence, the students' social experience and attitude are positive. That shows that experience and environment influence the studies and the communicative competence.

Data validity has been provided by the method and data triangulation whereas the validity of the qualitative evaluation research has been shown by the use of the mixed methods' approach to the data processing and analysis. Validity and reliability of the research results have been demonstrated by involving other researchers into the empirical study in several stages of the conducted research. As well as the external validity has been revealed by the international co-operation, namely, working out this paper in co-operation with the international colleagues and this paper's positive assessment by the international colleagues on the basis of co-operation between the universities, participation in doctoral workshops given by the international colleagues, presentations of the research in a group of doctoral students and use of individual consultations given by Western researchers. Therein, the researchers' external evaluation validates the findings of the present research on English for Specific Purposes studies for the development of students' communicative competence.

Thus, the conclusion can be drawn that the implementation of English for Specific Purposes studies enhances students' communicative competence.

Hence, English for Specific Purposes studies for the development of students' communicative competence influences and determines the students' success or failure for acquiring tertiary language education and profession as illustrated in Figure 3.
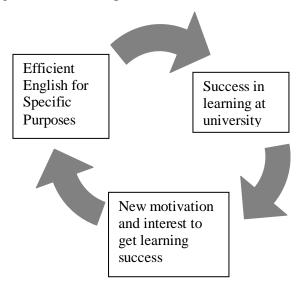

Figure 3: **Successful use of English for Specific Purposes studies in language education**

Thus, efficient English for Specific Purposes studies provide student's personal experience in interaction as a condition for creation of new knowledge:

- if students' social experience in social interaction and cognitive activity is supported by English for Specific Purposes studies, students better attain the development of the communicative competence, and

- if students' needs are met and a support system is created that would secure their social experience in social interaction and cognitive activity, students demonstrate better results of the communicative competence.

The present research has *limitations*. A limitation is the empirical study conducted by involving the students and educators of one tertiary institution. Therein, the results of the study cannot be representative for the whole country. As well as the empirical study marks the opportunities of the development of students' communicative competence. Nevertheless, the results of the research may be used as a basis of fostering creativity of other tertiary

institutions. If the results of other tertiary institutions had been available for analysis, different results could have been attained. There is a possibility to continue the study.

Conclusions

The theoretical findings of the research allow drawing conclusions that English for Specific Purposes studies provide many interesting opportunities for fostering creativity as the basis of innovation within the knowledge triangle of education, research and innovation.

English for Specific Purposes studies for fostering creativity based on the Theory of the zone quasi-autonomous development (Цукерман, Елизарова, Фрумина, Чудинова 1993: 35) reveal the paradigm shift, namely, from the learner-centred approach to the peer-centred approach.

The following hypothesis for further studies is put forth: in order to foster creativity in language education it is necessary to promote English for Specific Purposes studies as a favourable learning environment with the emphasis on peer-learning which supports successful use of language in a multicultural environment.

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