A NEEDS ANALYSIS OF THE SPEAKING SKILLS OF ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS AT A LOCAL PUBLIC AGENCY

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ABSTRACT

Working in an environment of handling English speakers from local community or multi-nationality seems to be a very pressing situation for employees who were not proficient in their communication skills particularly in English speaking skills. In today's globalized work contexts, it has become an essential requirement to be able to communicate effectively when performing daily job activities. This study investigates the needs in English speaking skill of the enforcement officers of a large Local Public Agency (LPA). This study also explores the problems of English speaking skills faced by the officers with English speaking clients. In addition, this study also analyses the type of communication strategies used by the officers to cope with their English speaking problems. In responding to the research objectives, a questionnaire was distributed to 100 officers working in four different sections of the enforcement unit. All the officers were the front liners of the LPA and have direct handling with English speakers either from the local communities or foreigners. Interviews were conducted in two sessions; the first session was held randomly with officers from different units in the LPA and the second session with a different set of pre-selected ten officers using structured open-ended questions. In addition, fieldwork observations were also performed to provide additional data to the research. Findings revealed that the officers were in need of English language training courses to strengthen their proficiency and to overcome their problems in English speaking skills. It was also discovered that the officers use various kinds of strategies to understand and to respond confidently whilst avoiding unnecessary misunderstanding or miscommunication during oral activities. The result of this study would benefit the management, stakeholders and the officers in terms of recognizing the importance of good speaking skills and for the agency's training planner to design tailor-made courses that are specific to the needs of the enforcement officers in particular.

ABSTRAK

Bekerja dalam persekitaran berhadapan dengan penutur bahasa Inggeris dari masyarakat tempatan atau berbilang kewarganegaraan menjadi satu situasi yang agak tertekan bagi pekerja yang kurang mahir dalam komunikasi berbahasa Inggeris. Dalam konteks kerja global hari ini, ia telah menjadi satu keperluan yang penting untuk berkomunikasi dengan berkesan ketika melakukan aktiviti kerja harian. Kajian ini akan menyelidik keperluan dalam kemahiran bertutur dalam berbahasa Inggeris oleh pegawai penguatkuasa agensi tempatan Awam (LPA). Kajian ini juga meninjau masalah kemahiran bahasa Inggeris yang dihadapi oleh pegawai semasa berkomunikasi dengan pelanggan yang berbahasa Inggeris. Di samping itu, kajian ini juga menganalisa jenis strategi komunikasi yang digunakan oleh pegawai-pegawai untuk menangani masalah berbahasa Inggeris mereka. Bagi menjawab objektif kajian, soal selidik telah diedarkan kepada 100 pegawai yang bekerja di empat bahagian yang berbeza dalam unit penguatkuasaan. Semua pegawai merupakan barisan hadapan LPA dan mempunyai hubungan langsung dengan penutur bahasa Inggeris sama ada dari masyarakat tempatan ataupun warga asing. Temubual telah dijalankan dalam dua sesi; sesi pertama diadakan secara rawak dengan pegawai dari jabatan yang berbeza dan sesi kedua bersama sepuluh pegawai yang di pilih dengan menggunakan soalan-soalan terbuka yang telah disediakan. Di samping itu, pemerhatian di tempat kerja luar juga telah dijalankan untuk menyediakan data tambahan untuk kajian. Hasil kajian menunjukkan bahawa pegawai LPA amat memerlukan kursus bahasa Inggeris untuk mengukuhkan penguasaan mereka dan untuk mengatasi masalah mereka dalam kemahiran bertutur. Hasil juga telah mendapati bahawa pegawai menggunakan pelbagai jenis strategi untuk memahami dan untuk bertindak balas dengan yakin sambil mengelakkan sebarang salah erti atau salah faham semasa aktiviti interaksi. Hasil kajian ini akan memberi manfaat kepada pihak organisasi, pihak berkepentingan dan pegawai-pegawai dari segi mengiktiraf kepentingan kemahiran bertutur yang baik dan untuk perancang latihan membentuk kursus yang khusus direka khas untuk keperluan pegawai-pegawai penguatkuasa.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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LIST OF SYMBOLS AND ABBREVIATIONS

LPA   :   Local Public Agency

ESP   :   English for Specific Purposes

NA   :   Needs Analysis

CS   :   Communicative Strategy

MEPS   :   Malaysian Electronic Payment System

ATM   :   Automated Teller Machine

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1   Background of the Study

Crystal (2004) stated that almost a quarter of the world population is competent or fluent in English. Millions of people from all over the world have English as their mother tongue language with Africa and Asia being the next largest continents who adopts English as their second language. English was also recognized as the language of science, business, technology and the language of international communication (Boonkit, 2010). Jeharsae (2012) indicated that English was labelled as the international business language and people has to become proficient in English in order to establish a common language with people from all walks of nationality.

In Malaysia, the official language is Bahasa Malaysia. In upholding its official language and adding to its position in the international world, Malaysia has strengthened its communication language by adopting the English language into its education system as its second language acquisition and executing its usage into the workforce setting. This has brought a rapid progress of acquiring good English proficiency skills among Malaysians. According to the 2016 English Proficiency Index (EF EPI), Malaysia was ranked 12th in the worldwide ranking after Singapore who was in 6th place. Malaysia and Singapore were noted for their "High" English proficiency. The ranking has brought along high expectation of the world that Malaysia may be the right hub for businesses to venture, as a language in communication plays an important role in exchanging of

information and dealings. This has prompt employers, in particular, the private sectors to include English as its vital employment requirement in their workforce recruitments.

In keeping up with the rising trend in the global market, the needs in acquiring English proficiency is very significant. Many private sector employers prefer to hire job seekers with the high level of English language proficiencies, considering that the main tool of business communication in the private sector is English. The fact that, the essential requirement for new recruits to have good English proficiency skills, would benefit the employer in the long run as they do not have to burden their expenditure on English proficiency training. For the public sector, although Bahasa Malaysia is their official language in communication and correspondences which are in line with the government policy, their staff have always been encouraged to acquire English, particularly at the workplace. With the rapid flooding of foreign business investors contributing to the Malaysia's economic growth, the public sectors need to aggressively increase their staff proficiency level, especially, their speaking skills.

In recent years, the public sectors had increased their allocations for training programs with the expectation that it would help in enhancing the staff English proficiency skills to a higher level. However, it did not materialize positively as the English training provided was not exactly helpful to most of the staff as the training modules were not within their needs and they were still struggling to overcome their lack of English proficiency skills especially in speaking skills when dealing with English speaking clients.

Based on discussions and findings from the local public agency (LPA), staff selected to attend training were subjected to nomination or recommendation by their respective department and not by their needs or problems. According to the public sector staff training entitlement, each staff will have an entitlement of 7 days hours of training in a year.

The staff will have to spread out their entitled hours for training which they have to complete before the year end. Training will depend on the training planner or the human resource department in determining the kinds of training to offer. Training provided to staff were mostly on soft skills such as motivational skills, time management, stress management, team building and training related to computer software applications. Most training provided were on a one-time basis and were not consistently held for instance on a monthly or yearly basis.

1.2 The Role of a Public Enforcement Agency

The role of a public enforcement agency is to implement the law enforcement regulated by the agency, control and maintain the safety and property of the agency, prepare and provide rescue and relief in natural disasters and floods; and to manage the administrative affairs of the enforcement department. The responsibilities of an enforcement officer of a public agency are extremely varied and depending on the zone or unit that there are assigned to. Each zone or unit may have different duties and responsibilities. The enforcement officers' main focus in their responsibilities is to enforce the laws and regulation as stipulated by the agency. Other main duties include investigation on matters related to the validity of licenses for business and industrial premises, trading outlets, advertisements, site building constructions, entertainment outlets, matters related to vehicles (parking, summons, tow, traffic offenses), natural disaster special task force and managing the administrative duties of the agency. They also carry the position of community liaisons to promote public safety among the community. They would generally work out of office and would only report to the office for a specific period of time.

1.3   Statement of Problem

The Local Public Agency (LPA) is committed to providing high-quality products and services to its community and building a positive reputation to its name.

In recent years, the migration of English speaking communities has contributed rapidly to the population rate within the district of the LPA. This has brought a concern to the LPA since their main official communication language is Bahasa Malaysia and henceforth, they had anticipated that their workforce may have problems in English proficiency skills. Due to the fact that most of the workforce of LPA are Malays, they lack English language communication skills. In particular, their enforcement officers who have to deal directly with the community on a daily basis, have problems in their speaking skills. They have been attending training provided by the company but these training offered were not specifically catered to their needs for their jobs. Based on several discussions with the Head of LPA, it is found that so far there is no study done to identify the needs and problems of the workforce on their English proficiency level. Training offered did not specifically emphasize on the exact needs of the target staff and the programs were usually conducted in Bahasa Malaysia. Even when a few training which was conducted related to English proficiency skills, there were only offered to a specific category of staff. This could probably be one of the reasons why the officers were not able to expand their English proficiency. Their most concern was on English speaking skills as these were basic requirements of the enforcement officers when dealing with English speakers in their everyday job tasks. The Head of LPA also pointed out that most of the problems encountered by the officers when handling English speaking clients were probably in inaccuracy in pronunciation, accent, intonation and grammar. On the other hand, an in-depth research in the needs and problems of the officers in English

proficiency may provide a more accurate picture, could ascertain factors in designing a specific English training tailored for the enforcement officers. Moreover, this study will also explore the different types of communication strategies used by the officers in coping with their problems.

1.4   Research Objectives

This research study has the following objectives:

1. To identify the needs in English speaking skills of the LPA enforcement officers.

2. To investigate the problems in speaking encountered by the enforcement officers when dealing with English speakers.

3. To explore the different types of communication strategies used by the enforcement officers in coping with problems in speaking.

1.5   Research Questions

The following research questions will guide the study:

1. What are the needs in English speaking skills of the LPA enforcement officers in performing their duties when handling English speaking clients?

2. What are the problems in English speaking skills of the LPA enforcement officers when dealing with English speaking clients?

3. How do the enforcement officers cope with their speaking problems by using different types of communication strategies?

1.6   Significance of the Study

This study has its significance based on several reasons. LPA is a big government agency and is responsible for a large population of multi-nationality of local, non-local and native English speakers. Since a majority of the LPA clients were mainly English speakers, this probably could be a logical reason for the staff to be competent in their speaking skills to

cater to the needs of their clients. LPA was aware of the situation and several English training were offered to their staff. However, the training was not applicable to everyone in LPA as it was limited to certain category of staff and does not seems to cater to their needs and problems.

The results from this study will offer valuable information to the LPA enforcement officers in recognizing their needs and problems in English speaking skills when handling English speakers at their workplace. It will also be beneficial for LPA to realize the needs and problems of their employees. In addition, the findings will also contribute to the designing of a specific training module specially catered for the officers.

1.7   Scope of the Study

This study highlights on the LPA enforcement officers' needs and problems in English speaking skills and the strategies used when handling English speaking clients. Questionnaires were distributed to 100 enforcement officers working in four different units of the LPA. All selected participants for this study were the front liners of LPA.

1.8   Definition of Terms

Definitions used by researchers and practitioners often vary. Accordingly, the definition of terms used in this study are defined as follows:

1.8.1   **English for Specific Purposes (ESP)** is an approach to language teaching based on learners' reason for learning. Learners have different needs and interests that would influence their motivation to learn and would support the development of courses that is relevant to the learner's needs and interest, as stated by Hutchinson and Waters (1987).

1.8.2   **Needs Analysis** is a course design process where it identifies the specific language and skills of what learners need. This will provide specific information for course developers to determine and refine the content of an ESP course. According to the ESP

journal, there were several notions by researchers on needs analysis in ESP. From the opinion of Chambers (1980), needs analysis should be apprehensive with the communicative needs of learners and their comprehensions, following from a study of the communication in the target situation. Dudley-Evans and St John (1998) extended the notions of needs analysis to a broader concept. It covers the professional and personal information of the learners, English background of learners, learner's lacks, language learning information, the outcome of the course and the process of the course. West (1994, pp. 70-1) however uses a metaphor of a journey in describing the elements involved in needs analysis.

1.9 Chapter Summary

In this chapter, the background of the study, statement of the problem, research objectives, research questions, significance of the study and scope of the study were presented and concluded with the definition of terms used in this study.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1   Introduction

This chapter will highlight relevant literature related to the current study, which is basically on needs analysis. Reviews of previous research studies in the related area are also included. Apart from this, the chapter provides an overview of the theories that undergird ESP research, framework used for Needs Analysis and some explanation on Communication Strategies.

2.2   Speaking Skills

In learning any language, there are four basic skills that need to be covered; speaking, reading, listening and writing. Even though the four skills are interconnected, speaking skill is considered the most important but difficult. Speaking has the ability to put words together to reproduce thoughts, opinions, and feelings. It is always considered as easy for someone who has the fluency but for those who are not fluent, speaking can be very challenging. In this study, the focus on speaking is because the target respondents need this skill for their work purposes as they deal with clients. However, before describing the skill further, an overview of the English language situation is given below to provide the context of the study.

2.2.1   English Language in Malaysia

English language has a strong foothold in Malaysia as its second language and has positively penetrated in the national education system, businesses and also the media.

The three major races in Malaysia are the Malays, Chinese and Indians. The Chinese and Indians have their own dialects which are not labelled as foreign languages but are considered the languages of Malaysia. Malaysia adopted Bahasa Malaysia as its official language, as Malay being the majority population in Malaysia. When the British colony came to the country, their culture, language and beliefs tag along. After Independence in 1957, Bahasa Malaysia is the official medium of instruction in schools. When the global advancement in science and technology became the world focus in the economy context, Malaysia began to give English an uplift and an aggressive surge in the education and business industry as a second language. Malaysia has developed into a fast expanding nation with a large involvement of foreign investors paving their way into the business corridor of Malaysia. Though English was still as a second language, the employment industry has set its employment requirement to include English as a compulsory requirement to potential candidates. Undeniably, English has become the household language of many countries in the world.

A move to improve the competency of English language among Malaysian students, Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin (Sarban, 2013) had proposed English language subject be set as a compulsory pass subject for all major examination. This is as a transformation of language importance, not only on employment field but the education curriculum of Malaysian Education System. Malaysians are exposed to the English language since their primary school until they completed their secondary level that gave a total number of 11 years of English education in a school setting. Therefore, it was anticipated that they should be able to master their English language before they set their foot in the career world. However, this did not materialize as even after their formal education setting,

when they step into the tertiary level, they were still not able to master their English language.

2.2.2   Speaking Skill Problems

Speaking is the main means of human communication. Lazaraton (2001) states that to be able to communicate effectively, one has to know the given language. However, he also mentions that English is a difficult language to learn as it can only be accomplished through an interaction process with at least one interlocutor. Therefore, this demands the presence of factors involving monitoring and understanding the other speaker, own ability to contribute, produce impact and monitoring its effect. To manage the oral communication, according to Lindsay & Knight (2006), learners need to develop their interaction ability, accuracy and fluency and able to balance their communicative skills in different contexts based on their level of knowledge.

On the other hand, not everyone has the same communicative abilities for the same particular context. Nunan (1988), believes that a language is a communication tool rather than in the set of phonological, grammatical and lexical items.

Speaking is an action used in uttering sounds for audible communication. Speaking skills is considered as an active process in oral communication where a message is decoded by a listener in their mother tongue language into the process of receiving, interpreting, evaluating and responding the message in the English language. According to Bygate (1987), emphasis on speaking as a skill in first and second language where learners should be able to speak with confidence throughout their daily basic transactions. However, in the context of this study, the enforcement officers of LPA were lacking in their speaking skills that lead to problems in their communication activities. These problems arise as according to Brown (2001) "spoken language proficiency involves being able to produce fluently and accurately, autonomous utterances which are appropriate to the context of

the speech situation". Most common problems identified are sounds, stress and intonation, an organization of speech, syntax and vocabulary. In addition, according to Hojat and Afghari (2013), problems in speaking skills also revolve around linguistic and non-linguistic factors such as grammar, vocabulary, pragmatic variables and motivation factors.

2.2.3 Relevant Related Studies

There were several studies steered by previous researchers in investigating the needs and problems of English speaking skills. The following studies look into the problems of speaking skills in a different context and setting but using the same tool in collecting the data which is the questionnaire.

A related study by Nawanin (2012) explores the needs analysis on English language use in Tourism Industry where it focuses on 40 tourism employees from five international tour companies. Questionnaire was used as its tool in collecting data which later were analysed by frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation. Results of the findings show that out of the four skills of proficiency, speaking was considered to be the most important skill required by the participants of the study. The most crucial area that requires good English speaking skills were giving information, providing services and offering help. Also discovered, were the most affected problems which comprise of understanding foreign accents, vocabulary and grammatical rules.

Aldohon (2014) conducted a study to analyze the needs, functions and problems of the 46 target participants from the Jordanian Tourist Police at their workplace. A questionnaire was used as the instrument tool in collecting data. Results reveal that speaking seems to be their top priority and subsequently followed by listening, reading and writing. Majority of the participants seems to have problems in their English language functions which are providing services, general conversation, answering

questions and solving problems. In addition, other problems encountered were using inappropriate English in speaking, lexis shortage and the inability of using proper grammatical rules in their writing.

Related research was also conducted by Khamkaew (2009), exploring the needs and problems of English speaking skills of the Metropolitan Police Officers of Chana Songkram Police Station. Data collected from the questionnaire were analyzed and the result shows that the main communication problems encountered were more on comprehending a variety of English accents, listening basic expressions, grammar, pronunciation and intonation. On the other hand, the officers seem to prefer training be conducted by a combination of local and native English speakers.

Charunsri (2011) explores the needs and problems of front office staff in hotels in Chinatown in using of English language skills at their workplace. The study also collected their data by questionnaire distributed to 60 staff but only 50 were correctly completed and collected for data analysis. The result shows that speaking skill was the most major skill that the staff needed to enhance in keeping up to the demands in dealing with foreign customers. In addition, the result of the study also benefits the management in identifying the needs and problems of the staff thus allowing them to design a proper and effective English training courses for the staff.

To conclude, it is not an easy task for non-native speakers to speak English as their second language. Difficulties in English speaking skills may not just rely on the grammatical aspects or the unfamiliar accent of the speakers but rather it has more to do with the level of confidence and communicative competence of the speaker. Referring to the above related studies, problems identified were mostly on pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, accents and self-confidence.

2.3   English for Specific Purposes (ESP)

English for Specific Purposes (ESP) as defined by Hutchinson and Waters (1987) is an approach and not a product, which needs to be seen as a method of learning and teaching based on specific reasons for learning. ESP is based on the needs of the learners where the content is related to a specific discipline or occupation. This particular approach has a limited time period, and its objectives have to be achieved within that time (Robinson, 1991). The field ESP was further extended by Hyland (2008) who proposes that the focus on specific language, skills and genres be given more in-depth study in particular disciplines. To add on, Bhatia (2011), another proponent of ESP, concedes that the field includes integrating discursive competence, disciplinary knowledge and professional practices.

According to Crystal (2004), it was not the linguistic system that makes English popular, in fact, it was the power of people speaking the language that contribute to its global status. Hutchinson and Waters (1987) says that the ESP approach of teaching English to learners is based on what they already know and why they want to learn the English language in the context of their target situation. This later bring in the existence of ESP that act as the subcomponent of language teaching with its own specific approaches in developing curriculum, pedagogy and research. Also, Dudley-Evans (1998) emphasized that ESP main focus is needs analysis, text analysis and to prepare learners with the ability to communicate in the English language effectively in the context of their situation. The emergence of ESP was meant to meet the specific objectives and needs of learners' in learning English language (Amirian & Tavakoli, 2009). In addition, Basturkmen (2006) also states that ESP focuses on the reason why learners' need the language skill and in the context of either academic or work setting. To implement the ESP approach, needs analysis is the key role in determining which language skills are needed by learners and from there the syllabus is designed accordingly (Zuhoor, 2016).

Since English has achieved its global recognition, many countries in the world have adopted English to be their official language or as its second language. Malaysia with no exception has included English as its second language in the education system and business transactions, with Bahasa Malaysia remaining as its official language. In 1991, Tun Dr. Mahathir Mohamad introduced the Vision 2020 where he envisioned that Malaysia need to be a fully developed nation by the year 2020, especially in the business and corporate sectors. Having English as the second language, Malaysia is seen to be a potential hub for international markets. Therefore, realizing the importance of the language in building ties with the global market, local businesses and organizations were quick to take the initiative to improve the command of English among their manpower. ESP courses were in demand to develop the fluency of English language since the approach taken by ESP was intended to accomplish the demand of learners who needed to learn English for a specific purpose.

Streven (1988) had defined and characterized ESP and later this was revised and fine-tuned by Dudley-Evan and St John (1998) as shown in the following figure:

Streven (1988)		Dudley-Evan and St John (1998)	
Absolute	Variable	Absolute	Variable
1. Designed to meet specific learner's needs 2. Content of disciplines and occupations 3. Language-centred 4. Contrast with General English	1. Restricted to specific learning skill 2. Methodology based on specific needs	1. Designed to meet specific learner's needs 2. Methodologies and activities used based on specific discipline 3. Language-centred	1. Designed for specific purposes 2. Specific teaching situations and methodology different from General English 3. Designed for adult learners 4. Generally for intermediate and advance learners

Table 2.1   Comparison of ESP characteristics by Streven (1988)
and Dudley-Evan and St John (1998)

Dudley Evans and St John's modification of Streven's definition emphasized on the two criteria of absolute and variable characteristics. For the absolute characteristics of ESP, it has to meet specific learner's needs, methods and activities used revolved on the specific discipline and must to be language-centered. As for variable characteristics, ESP is designed for specific purposes, specific teaching situations, and not the same methodology with general English, designed for adult intermediate and advanced learners.

2.4   Needs Analysis

Needs analysis of language teaching were first applied by Michael West in the 1920s in his attempt to study how people should learn English. The English language needs study involves recognizing the overall and specific language needs by establishing the aims, purposes and content in language programs that focus on common factors in specific needs (Richard & Rogers, 1986). Needs analysis were used in surveys to classify general and specific problems experienced by a target group. Later language Needs Analysis were established from the works of Nunan (1991), Backman and Palmer (1992), and

Brown (1995) as a set of instrument, methods and processes in gathering of specific information in identifying the specific needs of a particular target group.

According to Richard (2001), "needs" is a condition of the opinion of those making the judgment that reflects dissimilar values and interests. However, according to Braine (2001), even though linguists have not come to terms on the actual definition, they do agree that the definition may possibly be influenced by external factors such as employment, time and diverse cultural approaches when conducting needs analysis. Basturkmen (2010) mentions that there are important elements to consider in needs analysis, in particular; *who is the course for? What will it focus on? What will the syllabus contain? What are the types of instruction and materials? And how can the course be evaluated?* Belcher (2004) states that needs assessment must be conducted before attempting ESP course design. Strevens (1988) claims that language chosen for ESP is rather selective than general and are limited to learners' needs. On the other hand, designing and evaluating ESP courses has to be from the choice of which skills the learners' need.

According to Richards et al (1992), there are three purposes of needs analysis which are as follows:

1. Information used for review and evaluation of existing training modules to help in designing a specific program that caters to the target group.

2. Identifies the actual general or specific language needs to achieve goals, objectives and the purpose of a program.

3. Provide the appropriate contents in designing an accurate program.

The English language needs study emphasizes on the common factors of language program or specific needs where it will gather information pertaining to the language needs of specific learners (Fahmongkolchai, 2011). According to Tarone and Yule

(1989), English language needs study is an important tool in recognizing the areas that needs improvement in the learners' English language skills before designing any course for English language learners.

2.4.1 Models of Needs Analysis

Researchers have recognized the four models of needs analysis where each model was able to identify language needs from different perspectives.

1. Target Situation Analysis (TSA)

Robinson (1991) declares that TSA is a model that emphasizes on the learners' needs at the end of a language course whilst according to Hutchinson & Waters (1987), TSA is a situation where learners use the language they learned and apply it in their workplace. TSA is a requirement mainly for Business English course designers. Information collected for TSA covers the language application information, communicative skills, objectives of learners needs, working environment and cultures. Only with TSA, course designers are able to design an accurate syllabus for learners' to achieve their objectives and needs.

2. Present Situation Analysis (PSA)

Compared to TSA where it focuses only on the learners' target needs, PSA instead investigates the learners' present situation and identify the gap between the present and the target. PSA will also explore learners' motivation status during learning and their perception of the process of learning. Robinson (1991) states that PSA studies the learner's strength and weakness when commencing their language course. PSA allows ESP trainers to detect what the learners' lack.

3.   Learning-centered Approach Model

Hutchinson and Waters (1987) initiated the learning-centred approach of need analysis which consists of two components: target situation and learning needs. This study focusses on the target situation which comprises of the elements of "necessities", "lacks" and "wants".

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                    ┌─────────────────────────┐
                    │     TARGET NEEDS        │
                    │ Hutchinson & Waters (1987)│
                    └─────────────────────────┘

  ┌──────────────────┐  ┌──────────────────┐  ┌──────────────────┐
  │   Necessities    │  │      Lacks       │  │      Wants       │
  │ Where English    │  │ What people do not│  │ Learner's insight on│
  │ language is a    │  │ know and need to │  │ what they need and│
  │ requirement in a │  │ improve for effective│ desire          │
  │ target situation that│ communication in a│  │                  │
  │ allows smooth flow│  │ target situation. │  │                  │
  │ of communication │  │                  │  │                  │
  │ activites        │  │                  │  │                  │
  └──────────────────┘  └──────────────────┘  └──────────────────┘
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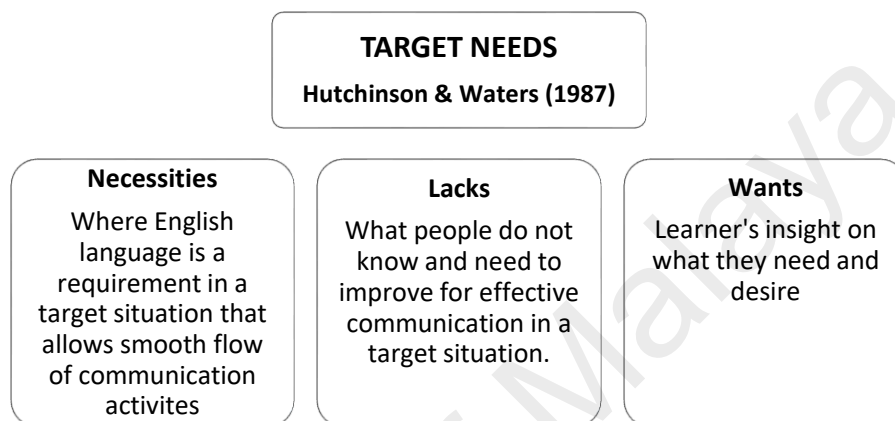
Figure 2.1   Target Needs by Hutchinson & Waters (1987)

The above figure illustrates the target situation needs as seen by Hutchinson & Waters (1987). The element of necessities are needs regulated by the target situation demands where learners have to equip themselves with the knowledge to be part of the target situation. Learners will first observe the situation and analyse the component parts of the target situation before participating. This will allow a smooth interaction for activities. The second element is the Lacks. It refers to the existing language proficiency of the learners and the skills they need to enhance in their proficiency. The gap in between is known as the learner's lacks. The final element is the Want where it relates to what the learners need to upgrade or to enhance their existing proficiency level. They are aware of the necessities and the lacks, however, each learner may have their own individual wants to be based on their specific situation.

4. Dudley-Evans and St John Model

Dudley-Evans and St John (1998) had formulated a model for ESP needs analysis focusing on the learner's "what" and "how" in taking up a course. The formulated model of ESP needs analysis were defined in seven characteristics which are as follows:-
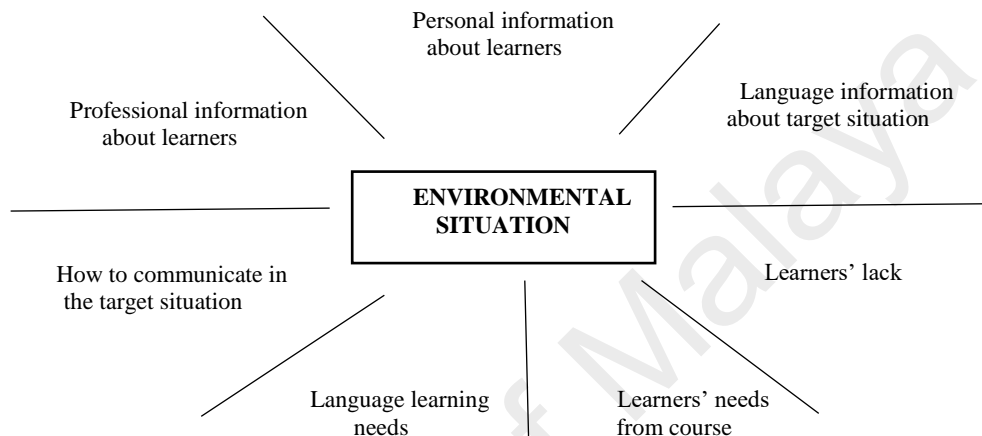
Figure 2.2   Dudley-Evans & St John's Model of Needs Analysis

- *Professional Information* about learners; provide data on the task and activities that learners use or will use in TSA.

- *Personal Information*; shows factors that may contribute to the way learners' learn, for example, their background learning experiences, culture, attitude towards the language, their justifications and outlooks of the course. Also known as the learners' subjective needs that include their wants, means and strategies.

- *Language Information* is about target situation that fills up the gap between TSA and PSA where it provides information on their present abilities and language practices.

- *Learners Lack* seeks information on the current level of learners' language proficiency and factors that they need to enhance their proficiency.

- *Language Learning Needs* to look at the effective ways or techniques in learning the language and the abilities to cover the lacks.

- *Learners' needs from course* emphasize on the learners' specific needs requirement from the course and their expectation of the course

- *How to communicate in the Target Situation* focuses on how language and skills are applied in the target situation.

2.4.2   Basturkmen Framework of Needs Analysis

In addition to the above model, Basturkmen (2010) has another similar explanation on the process of needs analysis where she introduced a simplified version of five steps prior to Dudley-Evans and St John (1998) eight steps of the process, as "it is easier to understand".
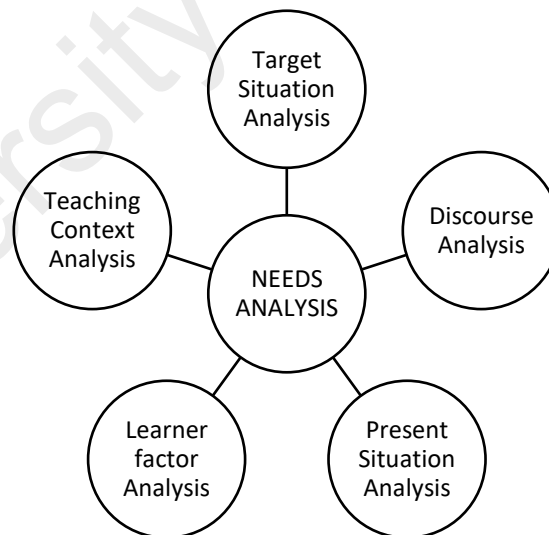
Figure 2.3   Needs Analysis Process by Basturkmen

Five steps process of Needs Analysis introduced by Basturkmen (2010) are:

1.   **Target Situation Analysis**

To recognize tasks, activities and skills learners supposed to know and able to apply at their workplace.

2.   **Discourse Analysis**

To look into the language used in TSA and the description of the language skills the learners supposed to know in their work.

3.   **Present Situation Analysis**

To ascertain learners' present knowledge or skill acquired as demanded in TSA. Information gathered may provide the gap in learners' needs, wants and lacks. The data may be collected by way of questionnaires, interviews and observations.

4.   **Learner Factor Analysis**

To identify learners' preference in learning the language, their motivation state, how they learn and their perceptions of their needs.

5.   **Teaching Context Analysis**

To determine the setting of the language course, the condition of the venue and other related facilities that may contribute to the language learning. The environment plays an important role in ESP course and trainers' ability in running the course.

2.4.3   Relevant Related Studies

Several studies were conducted to explore the needs and problems of English speaking skills in various different context and situation.

Alharby (2005) in his study on ESP target situation needs analysis on English communicative needs as perceived by health professionals in the Riyadh area, investigates the extent of English used by medical professionals and the perception of health professionals in their English language education during their college days. Finding shows that the medical professional uses a lot of English language in their work and they perceived that reading and listening (receptive skill) were more important in their job tasks as compared to speaking and writing (productive skills) as they deal with large medical manuals that were only available in the English language. Nevertheless speaking skill is considered as important. However, the differences in percentages between the two skills were too close to make a positive conclusion. Therefore, the result concluded that their English proficiency acquired during their college days were inadequate for them to perform their tasks in the medical field.

In a related research study with a different set of participants and setting, Sangsook (2007) investigated the needs of English communication skills for employees of Bangkok Produce Merchandising Public Company Limited. Due to the company being a public listed entity, there was large foreign involvement in their business activities that requires employees to have good English speaking skills. Despite the fact that training were provided by the company, the employees still did not improve in their skills. Therefore the result of the study shows that training provided were not within the needs of the employees and the module created were not specifically for the employees to apply in their job tasks. The employees were in need of specific training that may help in performing their daily duties.

Chistian and Krahnke (2004) investigates non-native English speaking students in US colleges and universities. The result shows that the students' need listening and reading most importantly compared to speaking and writing. However, their most difficult skills were English speaking skills followed by listening skills.

Maniruzzaman (2004) conducted a need analysis on the English problems of Bengali EFL learners where the result shows that they were having problems in their English speaking skills in particular with pronunciation. The problems were contributed by the influence of their mother tongue Bengali language consonants which has far similarity from many aspects with English consonants.

As adopted by Fahmongkolchai (2011), there are three important purposes highlighted when conducting language needs study. The first purpose is to ascertain the wide range of data for the process of planning and creating language courses. Second is to emphasize on the purposes and content of the courses from collected information in identifying specific language needs of learners. The final purpose is on the findings of the study that may serve as an essential basis for course developers in recognizing the learners' language needs before establishing its objectives, specific selection of syllabuses, proper content and appropriate teaching methods that are appropriate to the learners.

For the collection of information, different tools may be applied such as questionnaires, interviews and observations. However, using questionnaires seems to be popular in language needs study. In addition, the questionnaire must be pilot tested to verify its validity before using it for the main study. Questionnaire seems to be very useful in gathering information, not only it provides the required information but it can also collect various aspects of opinions, feedback and even suggestions from participants of the study. Even when conducting an interview, the questionnaire can be used as a guideline when seeking relevant answers related to the study so that information gained will not side track from the main objectives of the study. Once information collected and analyzed, the findings may be used to develop accurate language course with a specific technique for the benefit of the learners.

2.5   Communication Strategy (CS)

Learning a second language is not an easy task to achieve especially for non-native speakers. Learners with inadequate linguistic resources will often come across with communication problems. In order to overcome the inadequacies, learners' will use the CS to express themselves and to interpret meaning according to the target situation. CS also act as a means of filling the gap between learners' ability and what learners intend to express (Bialystok & Frohlich, 1980). Described by Canale & Swain (1980) that CS refers to the ability of learner using strategies in different ways and means of solving communicative problems. However, there are many other different yet significant definitions of CS have been suggested by several researchers.

2.5.1   Definition of Communication Strategies

CS defined by Tarone, Cohen and Dumas (1976), as a "*systematic attempt*" for the learner to convey and interpret the message in the target language. In 1980, Tarone further expands the definition from an interactional perspective, by relating it to "mutual attempt" by interlocutors to agree on the meaning in the situation. The strategies used by the learner is to fill up the gap between the interlocutors' knowledge in their target language. Compared to Coder (1981), suggests that CS as a "working definition of communication strategies" referring it as a "*systematic technique*" used by learners to overcome their problems in speaking when facing difficulty in expressing his meaning in the target situation.

Faerch and Kasper (1983) describe CS as "potentially conscious plan" where a learner needs to express himself in order to achieve a particular communicative goal. From the psychological perspective, CS is basically, methods used by second language learner's own mental response to communication problem and not responses by the learner and the

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interlocutor. Similar to Bialystok (1990) refers CS as an alternative method of expressing the intended meaning when faced with difficulty in communication.

Dornyei (1995) suggests that CS is a "wide range of communication-enhancing devices". Learners may benefit from the specific teaching of CS that covers the aspect of verbal and non-verbal means of coping with problems that take place in everyday communication activities. By developing the ability to use specific CS, learners may improve their communicative proficiency and compensate their target language insufficiency (Bialystok, 1990; Dornyei, 1995).

2.5.2 Taxonomies

There are several taxonomies on communication strategies by prominent researchers. Some of the taxonomies are as presented below.

2.5.2.1 Tarone Taxonomy

The taxonomy was constructed prior to the research by Tarone, Cohen and Dumas (1976). Tarone (1980) further produced a new look on the definition of communication strategies as "mutual interaction between interlocutors to agree on a meaning in situations where linguistic and sociolinguistic does not seem to be collective". With the new definition, CS were seen as "an effort in connecting linguistic knowledge gap between two interlocutors" compared to her earlier definition of "systematic attempt".

Tarone (1981), further developed the five main communication strategies based on her latest CS definition.

Table 2.2   Tarone (1981) Taxonomy of Communication Strategies

1. Paraphrase

a)	Approximation	Use of a single target language vocabulary item or structure, which the learner knows is not correct, but which shares enough semantic features in common with the desired item to satisfy the speaker. *Eg. Pipe for waterpipe*
b)	Word Coinage	The learner makes up a new word in order to communicate a desired concept. *Eg. Airball for balloon*
c)	Circumlocution	The learner describes the characteristics or elements of the object or action instead of using the appropriate target language (TL) item or structure. *Eg. when referring to a waterpipe, a learner said, "She is, uh, smoking something. I don't know what's its name. That's, uh, Persian, and we use in Turkey, a lot of."*

2. Borrowing

a)	Literal Translation	The learner translates word for word from the native language. *Eg. He invites him to drink, for "They toast one another"*
b)	Language Switch	The learner uses the native language term without bothering to translate. *Eg. Balon for balloon*
3.	**Appeal for Assistance**	The learner asks for the correct term. *Eg. "What is this? What called?"*
4.	**Mime**	The learner uses non-verbal strategies in place of a lexical item or action. Eg. Clapping one's hands to illustrate applause
5.	**Avoidance**	

2.5.2.2 Faerch and Kasper Taxonomy

Faerch and Kasper (1983) expanded CS by including the terms of **reduction strategies** (learners' effort in avoiding problem) and **achievement strategies** (learners' attempt to achieve solution).

Table 2.3   Faerch and Kasper (1983) Taxonomy

1.   Reduction Strategies

a)   Formal reduction strategies   avoidance of L2 rules of which the learner is not certain or which cannot be assessed.

b)   Functional reduction strategies   avoidance of certain speech acts, avoidance or abandoning certain topics

2.   Achievement Strategies

a)   Compensatory strategies   <u>**Non-cooperative strategies**</u>

i) L1/L3 based	-	code-switching
	-	inter/intra-lingual
	-	inter-lingual transfer
ii) IL based	-	substitution
	-	paraphrase
	-	word-coinage
	-	restructuring
iii) non-linguistic	Eg. Mime/gesture	

<u>**Cooperative Strategies**</u>

i)   direct appeal

ii)   indirect appeal

b)   Retrieval strategies   i)   waiting

ii)   using semantic field

iii)   using other languages

Faerch and Kasper (1983) taxonomies seem to have much similarity with Tarone (1977) where both seems to provide general categories in avoidance and cooperative strategies that also refers to word-coinage and code switching.   Their categories fall into achievement strategies with the exception of Tarone's avoidance category.   Further remarks by Cook (1996), Faerch & Kasper's psychological strategies and Tarone's social communicative strategies provide ways in coping with the problems of communication in a second language.

2.5.2.3 Corder Taxonomy

Corder (1978) suggests message adjustment strategies and resource expansion strategies. Message adjustment strategies are mainly focusing on risk-avoidance where the learner will modify his strategy at his disposal whilst resource expansion strategies increases learner's means to achieve his communicative objectives. This includes avoidance, message abandonment, semantic avoidance and message reduction. Resource expansion encompasses borrowing, code switching and paraphrase. The figure below illustrates Corder (1978) taxonomy.

Table 2.4   Corder (1978) Taxonomy

1.	**Message Adjustment Strategies**	a)	topic avoidance
		b)	message abandonment
		c)	semantic avoidance
		d)	message reduction
2.	**Resource Expansion Strategies**	a)	borrowing
		b)	code-switching
		c)	paraphrase/circumlocution

2.5.3   Oral Communication Strategies

Nakatani (2006) proposed Oral Communication Strategies (OCS) study which provides support to language learners to compensate for their deficiency in language fluency and negotiation meaning in situations that may cause a communication breakdown. OCS initial attempt was to study how learners are able to identify their use of OCSs. It was mainly focuses on the strategic behaviours learners use when dealing with communication difficulties throughout their interactional activities. How do we explore the strategic behaviours demonstrate by the learners? With this in mind, Nakatani (2006) developed

a questionnaire designed at exploring the use of OCS by using factor analysis. Factor analysis is to identify the number of factors in strategies that learner use when coping with speaking problems. This questionnaire is known as Oral Communication Strategy Inventory (OCSI). OCSI basically aims at evaluating learners' use of OCS in their actual communicative tasks for statistical analysis. Information collected from the questionnaire is able to explore the comparison between the high and low proficiency group.

Nakatani (2006) developed questionnaire comprises of two parts. The first part is for listening problems and the second part is for speaking problems. Listening problems consist of seven categories comprises of *negotiation for meaning while listening, fluency-maintaining, scanning, getting the gist, non-verbal strategies while listening, less active listener and word oriented.* For speaking problems it consists of eight categories identified as *social affective, fluency-oriented, negotiation for meaning, accuracy-oriented, message reduction, non-verbal strategies, message abandonment and attempt to think in English.* Since this study is focusing on speaking skill, the following are elaborations for each factor in the speaking problems.

1. *Social Affective Strategies* refers to learners' affective factors in social contexts where they try to control their anxiety to let a smooth flow of oral communication.

2. *Fluency-Oriented Strategies* relates to the fluency of communication when learners focuses on the rhythm, intonation, pronunciation and clarity of their speaking to increase listeners' understanding. Learners tend to be careful in their message so as to avoid any wrong messages to their interlocutors.

3. *Negotiation for Meaning While Speaking Strategies* represents an important skills learners' need in coping with their speaking problems. Learners will use

this strategy to maintain the flow in their interaction in order to avoid any communication breakdown.

4. *Accuracy-oriented Strategies* relates to the effort of trying to speak English like the native speaker. This learner would always correct their grammatical accuracy immediately whenever they notice mistakes in their speech.

5. *Message Reduction and Alteration Strategies* relates to learners using this strategies by reducing the original message, simplifying their utterances and using familiar expressions, may give them the confidence in avoiding any communication breakdown.

6. *Non-Verbal Strategies* represents learners using this strategies to achieve their communication goal. Learners use eye contact, gestures and other non-verbal expressions when they find it difficult to execute messages verbally.

7. *Message Abandonment Strategies* refers to learners giving up in their communication when face with difficulties to communicate by abandoning messages, incomplete message and seek help from others to complete the conversation.

8. *Attempt to think in English* relates to learners effort of thinking in English when involve in English communication activities. However, only learners with high proficiency tend to employ this strategies.

Utilizing the above CS strategies for speaking problems, may provide opportunities of experience to the target language and allow smooth flow of conversation hence encourage positive participation of interlocutors in communication activities.

2.5.4   Relevant Related Studies

In communication, fluent speaking skills play an important factor as we speak for different purposes such as getting the necessary information, understanding a certain situation and even for negotiation. Without comprehending the input correctly, misinterpretation or misunderstanding may occur, as a result, the objective of communication may most likely not be achieved. Therefore, non-native speakers find it difficult to acquire English as a foreign language or second language when it involves difficulty in understanding foreign accent and the unfamiliar way of pronunciation. Somsai & Intaraprasert (2011) state that when a situation of interlocutors having different native languages, communicative goals may be hard to achieve. According to Bygate (2002), even with good proficiency skills, applying communicative strategies may enhance communication effectiveness.

Chanawong (2007) studied oral communication strategies used by first year medical students using questionnaire adopted by Nakatani (2006) where eight types of strategies were applied. The result shows that among the eight strategies listed, the most common strategies used by the students was circumlocution. It was a strategy dealing with indirectness of speech or using different words to relate to the same meaning.

A research by Uztosun & Erten (2014) studied the influence of English proficiency on the use of communication strategies by Turkish EFL students. The results demonstrated the use of particular strategies by the participants in a specific context mostly on the use of fillers, self-repair and self-repetition. In addition, the result also shows that proficiency level does influence the use of strategies by participants when there were some important differences found in message reduction, topic-avoidance and mime where only students with high proficiency were able to apply the strategies.

The study of Jeharse (2012) investigates the English oral communication problems and strategies used by Thai employees in an International Workplace to communicate with native and non-native English speaking customers. The study also looks into signs of significant differences between strategies used with native and non-native customers. The result shows that the most common strategies used was approach customer directly, asking for an explanation, paraphrasing and generalization. Furthermore, there were no significant differences found between strategies used.

In conclusion, communication strategies are techniques that are considered to be very operative in helping interlocutors cope with their problems in oral communication especially when English is considered as a second language. It can either solve problems or enhance effectiveness in communication activities and ensure smooth flow in interaction activities between speaker and listener. According to Kirkpatrick (2007), good flow and shared communication is an added major communicative objective.

2.6   ESP Course Design

An ESP course is defined by Richard and Schmidt (2010) as "a language course where the content and the aims of the course is based on a specific need of a particular group of learners". For this study, an ESP course is designed based on the needs of the enforcement officer of LPA.

According to Dudley-Evans and St John (1998), ESP emphasizes the language which is required by the needs of the learners in their specific work. ESP is an approach to language teaching where contents and method of the language course are based on learner's reason for learning (Hutchinson and Waters, 1987). The information on learner's needs can be collected by ways of questionnaires, survey, interviews, attitude scales, job analysis, content analysis, observation and informal discussions with target participants, staff and management.

With accurate findings of English language needs in the target group of learners, it would be easier to determine the content of a language program that will meet the specific needs (Munby, 1978).

Hutchinson and Waters (1987) suggests a learning-centred approach for the designing of an ESP course. Bell (1981) has produced a commonly-used diagram by researchers in designing ESP language syllabus.
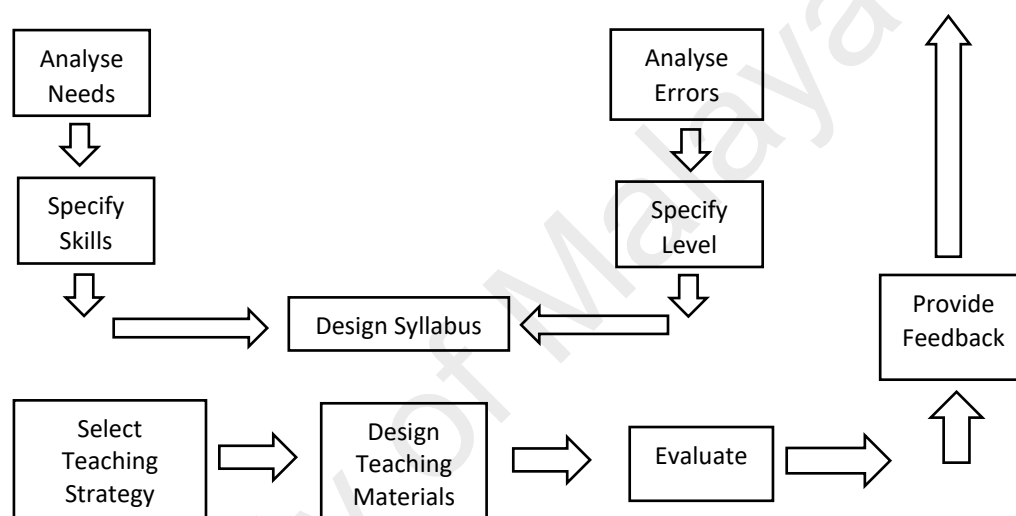
Figure 2.4   ESP Language Teaching Syllabus Design (Bell, 1981)

The process on the left side (Analyse Needs, Specify Skills) – external requirement of students. Right side (Analyse Errors, Specify Level) – present competence of students. Bottom line (Select Teaching Strategy, Design Teaching Material, Evaluate) – educational philosophy. Focus for this study is the left side: Analyse Needs, Specify Skills and Design Syllabus.

Dudley-Evans and St John (1998) mentioned that needs analysis being the core of ESP for a specific language course and the perception of learner needs is often interpreted in two ways:-

1.   *Goal-oriented* **definition of needs** refers to learner's wants of the language at the end of the course.

2.   ***Process-oriented* definition of needs** refers to learner's needs to acquire the language.

The first interpretation was commonly used and recognised, but to adapt to the current global teaching and learning contexts, ESP courses have to include both interpretation of learner's needs in aligning to their existing working situations.

According to Dudley-Evans and St John (1998), an ESP course designer should look into the following questions prior to planning a course design.

1.   Duration: intensive or extensive

2.   Assessment: is it necessary?

3.   Aims of course: immediate needs or delayed needs

4.   Teacher as provider or facilitator

5.   Broad or narrow focus

6.   Specific or common core material

7.   Homogeneous or heterogeneous

2.6.1   Types of Syllabi
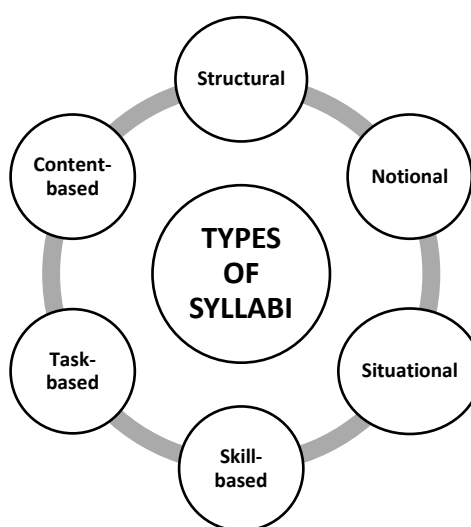
Figure 2.5   Types of Syllabi (Hutchinson and Waters, 1987)

There are six types of syllabi as proposed by Hutchinson and Waters (1987). There are as follows:

1. **Structural Syllabus**

    A collection of forms and grammatical structures such as noun, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, question and so on.

2. **Notional Syllabus**

    A collection of functions or notions such as informing, agreeing, apologizing and requesting.

3. **Situational Syllabus**

    A collection of real or imaginary situations in which language occurs or is used. The primary purpose of this syllabus is to teach the language that occurs in the situations.

4. **Skill-based Syllabus**

    A collection of specific abilities that may play a part in using language. The primary purpose is to learn the specific language skills and to develop more general competence in the language.

5. **Task-based Syllabus**

    A series of complex and purposeful tasks that learner wants or need to perform with the language they are learning such as applying for a job, talking with a customer or getting information from the telephone.

6.   **Content-based Syllabus**

The primary purpose is to teach some content or information using the learning language. An example, a science class taught in the language the learner need or want to learn. While doing this, the teacher is making an adjustment to make the subject more comprehensible.

A learner-centred approach is adopted in the course design of this study. This approach provides an opportunity for the language learner to use and understand the language themselves. The learners will be aware of the different functions of the language and will be able to apply in a problem situation. Taghizadeh (2013) highlighted the advantages of using learner-centred approach; learners are provided with multiple ways of confronting problems using language learned, learners can compare and contrast ideas and notions when handling a problem, learners can use schemata or prior knowledge and experience, learners are able to draw a connection between what they acquire and what they already know, learners are able to articulate their ideas to others, learners are able to communicate without any hesitation through collaborative learning and learners are more interested in the learning process because of the interactions with others in the activities offered in the curriculum.

2.7   Chapter Summary

This chapter has presented the literature review relevant to the research issues. This chapter discusses the topic of Speaking Skills, English for Specific Purposes (ESP), Needs Analysis, Communication Strategy (CS) and ESP course design.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

3.1   Introduction

This chapter describes the methodology employed in this study and will include the explanation of the research procedures and process.

3.2   Research Design

This research uses the mixed methods design. This is a combination of both *qualitative* and *quantitative* method.

A mixed method is a procedure for collecting, analysing and mixing both qualitative and quantitative methods in a single study (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). When using only one type of either method (qualitative or quantitative), it may not provide sufficient answer to the research problem or solutions to the research questions. According to Creswell (2009), researchers uses this method to develop a better understanding from one method to another and also confirm the findings from different data sources. Combining both qualitative and quantitative data will give a powerful mix in the research study (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The advantages of using a mixed methods approach are very significant to this study. It allows the researcher to capitalise the strengths of the method and enable a variety of perspective for a more comprehensive understanding (Creswell, 2009).

To further enhance the research method, Creswell (2009) develop a *triangulation* approach where it refers to a combination of two or more theories, data sources, methods or investigators in one study or a single phenomenon to congregate on a single study,

thereby increasing the validity and utility of the findings. Triangulation is basically a strategy to improve the validity and reliability of the research. Creswell (2009) states that the three- points triangles are the two sources (qualitative and quantitative) of the data and the phenomenon. This study uses the concurrent triangulation using both qualitative and quantitative approaches.

The qualitative approach is used to collect comprehensive information on a specific phenomenon happens in the population. Creswell (2009) emphasises the use of narrative approach in gathering data from information on experiences reported and interpreting the meaning. The narrative approach is a term used to encompass the study of the experiences of a single individual and exploring the learned meaning of those individual experiences. In this study, a semi-structured interviews are used to provide deeper insight on the challenges encountered by the enforcement officers in their speaking problems. According to O'Neill (2011), semi-structured interviews allows the researcher to envision respondents' behaviour, their experiences and opinions.

The quantitative approach, instead is more commonly used for assessing behaviour, knowledge, opinions and attitudes of respondents by way of survey questionnaire (Cooper and Schindler, 2006). A questionnaire is a highly structured data collection instrument designed to elicit specific information from a larger sample in a short period and is cost effective.

Adopting the triangulation approach uses data from the qualitative and quantitative method, provides a more vital information for this study. The qualitative collects in-depth information as well as to validate the findings on the needs and speaking problems through the semi-structured interviews. Nakatani and Goh (2007) suggests using triangulation approach for research related to communication strategy.

3.3 Research Instruments

The research instruments for collecting data were the questionnaire, interview and field observation. For the quantitative part, a questionnaire was constructed and developed based on discussions with some of the participants, expert's opinion, a variety of previous research and journals related to needs analysis of English speaking skills. The qualitative aspects are the interview. The study also uses interview data and observation data to support the data collection for the study.

3.3.1 Questionnaire

The key instrument in identifying the needs and speaking problems of the enforcement officers of LPA was a survey questionnaire (refer to Appendix A). The questionnaire consists of both close-ended and open-ended questions. The questionnaire was developed based on mechanisms used by Dudley-Evans and St John (1998), Basturkmen (2010), and O'Neil (2011). Except for questionnaire in identifying the communication strategy used by the enforcement officer, the study adopted the method of Oral Communication Strategy Inventory (OCSI) developed by Nakatani (2006).

3.3.1.1 Contents of the questionnaire

The questionnaire was divided into six parts. The first part of the questionnaire consists of general information which was necessary to collect data on the demographic background of the respondents. Questions comprise of the gender, age range, the length of working, educational background and their current department. The second part of the questionnaire covers the aspect of the respondents' English educational background that will provide data of their proficiency level, usage of English in their workplace and the English skill that they find most problematic. The third part of the questionnaire was designed to provide data to answer the first research question. The questions were created and modified specifically based on discussions with some of the respondents from their

actual job functions and real scenarios. The fourth part of the questionnaire was designed to answer the second research question. The data collected from this part were important in identifying their specific problems in English speaking skills. The fifth part comprises of strategies used in coping with the speaking problems. The data collected will answer the third research question of the study. The questions were based on related research by Nakatani (2006) but some of the strategies were reconstructed according to the information collected from the respondents of this study. The sixth part of the questionnaire was designed to identify the English language training needs of the LPA enforcement officers. The data collected will provide additional information for the training planner of the company in designing precise modules according to the specific needs of the LPA Enforcement officers.

The questionnaire was earlier piloted with 10 enforcement officers. The purpose of the pilot study was to check on the reliability and validity of the questionnaire. Based on the result of the pilot test, some of the sentences were reconstructed and ambiguous words were replaced to provide better comprehension by the enforcement officers.

3.3.2 Interview Process

To further understand and validate the information from the questionnaire, two different interview sessions were conducted with two sets of different participants. The first interview session was done randomly with officers from different units in the LPA. Interview was conducted in a casual manner to allow an easy environment for the officers to share their experience and information. This interview session uses semi-structured questions but using the questionnaire as a guideline.

The second interview session was more organized and planned. Using structured open-ended interview questions, a different set of ten participants were pre-selected by the Head of the Enforcement Unit to participate in the interview.

3.3.3 Observation

As an added value to the collection of data, information was also collected under two different parts of observation. The observation data were collected from the counter service section whilst the second observation data were from fieldwork activities conducted randomly in various locations that cover the aspect of enforcement duties within the vicinity of LPA jurisdiction.

3.4 Respondents of the Study

The respondents of the study were 100 enforcement officers working in four different units in LPA. There are from the units of Zoning, Traffic/tow, PANTAS (Fast Action Team) and Administration. They were the most suitable respondents for the study as they are the front liners of the organization and are directly responsible for handling customers comprises of local and non-local communities. As at 2016, LPA has a total of 291 enforcement officers. However, for this study, only 100 officers were allowed to participate considering all enforcement officers were working on shift hours and it was difficult to group them together. However, the number of participating officers were considered to be a sufficient figure for the study.

3.5 Research Procedures

An appointment was earlier set with the Head of Enforcement Unit to discuss the purpose and objectives of the study. A few meetings with the management and officers of LPA were held prior to elicit more information on the problems of the enforcement officers.

Permission was granted to proceed with the study and was assured of full assistance from the management and staff throughout the process of the research.

3.5.1   Questionnaire Survey

The initial questionnaire was designed in English and translated into Bahasa Malaysia, were distributed to the participants (a different set of participants for the main study), for the purpose of pilot testing. The participants prefer to answer questions using the Bahasa Malaysia version of the questionnaire. The purpose of the pilot testing was to ensure that the wording, design and the content were understandable and do not contain any ambiguity. Data were collected on the same day. Comments and reviews by participants was noted and taken into consideration. The expert's opinion was also recorded and noted to ensure that the questionnaires were on the right track.

Before constructing the questionnaire, the background history of the LPA and the functions of the enforcement unit were studied. A few discussions were held with the Head of the Unit for the purpose of eliciting information on the overall background and the responsibilities of the officers in the unit. Later a casual interview was also held with some of the participants to get more related information that would strengthen the data. In addition, several related research, journals and articles pertaining to needs analysis, problems in speaking skills; and strategies in oral communication were also reviewed. The information collected were later used to provide as a guideline in the initial construction of the questionnaire.

To ensure the reliability and validity content of the questionnaire, it was reviewed and edited according to the advice of the experts. This is to ensure that the questionnaire were in good order before it can be used in the main study. The comments and advice from the experts and the information collected from the pilot project had drawn to the progress

of the final draft of the questionnaire which was later be considered reliable as the instrument in data collecting for the main study.

The questionnaire was administered and executed. 100 questionnaires were distributed with another 10 extra copies as additional (the possibility of any spoilt copy). The time duration in answering the questionnaire were not more than 30 minutes. According to Dornyei (2003), answering the questionnaire in second language research should not exceed a 30 minute completion limit. The questionnaire was collected by batches as most of the participants work on shift hours. An officer was assigned to monitor the process. Out of the 100 questionnaires only 95 were successfully completed, in good order and collected for analysis.

3.5.2 Interview

A meeting was held with the Head of Enforcement Unit to seek approval for interview sessions to be conducted at their premises with some of the officers. It was requested that the identity of the participants for the interview to be anonymous. Once approval granted, the researcher was allowed to approach randomly any officers that are available at the workplace of LPA for the first interview session. Participants chosen are from different units and have direct link with handling English speaking customers. However, for the second interview session, the Head of the Unit decide to do the selection based on the related areas of responsibilities and relevant to the objectives of the study. The second interview participants comprises of higher-rank officers of LPA. Each interview session takes not more than 10 minutes. The first interview session was conducted in an allocated workspace and was done individually. The second interview session was held at different location according to the specific officer's workstation but within the premises of LPA. Data were recorded, transcribed and translated whenever another language were used.

3.5.3 Observation

For this purpose, the researcher also seeks approval from the Head of the Enforcement Unit before conducting any observation. The researcher decides to conduct observation from two different settings. The first setting is from the counter service section and the second from fieldwork activities. There were some interactions involved throughout the observations in the two settings.

For the first setting, the researcher stationed herself among the customers of LPA at the counter service unit and observed the reactions and responses of the officers when handling their customers. The observation procedures were performed around an estimation period of 3 weeks on a span of not more than an hour on different days.

The second setting requires more time as the researcher had to be in different areas/location and different time to have quality observations. There were times when there were no activities recorded. Observations for this setting takes an estimation of 2 months with at least not less than 2 hours at each location.

Information was recorded, transcribed and translated for the purpose of providing stronger data in the findings of this study.

3.6   Data analysis

This section discusses the methodology used in data analysis. The results are presented in Chapter 4.

3.6.1 Questionnaire analysis

Data from the quantitative survey were analysed using Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 20. A descriptive statistic such as frequencies and percentages were used to summarise the data.

The results of the questionnaire were interpreted, categorized, tabulated and calculated into the statistical values. A five-point Likert scale was used to score the levels of English needs, problems on speaking skills and the strategies used in coping with the problems. The following scale was used to specify the level of responses based on the criteria of Rensis Likert (1932).

Scale	Need	Problem	Strategy
5	Most Important	Always	Always
4	Important	Usually	Usually
3	Moderate	Sometimes	Sometimes
2	Slightly Important	Seldom	Seldom
1	Least Important	Never	Never

To support the results of the questionnaire, data from the interview and observation were discussed and analysed.

3.7 Chapter Summary

This chapter discusses the research design adopted for this study, research instruments, respondents for the study, research procedures, ethical considerations in data collection and the method in data analysis. The following chapter will present the results and findings in relation to the research problems.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.1   Introduction

This chapter presents the report on the data analysis and findings addressing each of the research questions.

4.2   General Information on Respondents

The analysis derived from the data collected for Part I of the questionnaire on general information of the respondents.

Table 4.1   General Information of the respondents

	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	71	74.70%
Female	24	25.30%
Age Range		
20 -30 years	27	28.40%
31- 40 years	32	33.70%
41- 50 years	21	22.10%
Above 50	15	15.80%
Working experience with LPA		
Less than 1 year	3	3.16%
1 - 3 years	12	12.63%
4 - 6 years	17	17.90%
More than 6 years	63	66.31%
Education Background		
Certificate (PMR / SPM)	81	85.26%
Diploma	11	11.58%
Degree	3	3.16%
Current Department		
Administration / Management	11	11.59%
PANTAS (Fast Action Team)	16	16.84%
Traffic / Tow	14	14.73%
Unit / Zoning	54	56.84%

As shown in the table above, the gender population of respondents for this study comprises of 74.70% male and 25.30% female. A majority of the LPA officers are dominated by the male gender. This is probably due to the nature of the LPA work. Enforcement officers duties do not only cover handling of public complains and normal checks, but also there are rough job operations or cases that require force and strength that only male officers are allowed to handle. Therefore, the males represent a high percentage of the participating respondents in this study.

Under the age group range, the survey shows that 28.40% of the respondents are in the 20-30 age group. Others are in the range of 31- 40 (33.70%), 41-50 (22.10%) and above 50 years (15.80%). The age range of 31 to above 50 represents the highly trained officers who have extensive professional skills in their job functions. This group are therefore those with a background in military training. Based on the interview data, the findings reflect them as a highly diligent group, as compared to those whose age range from 20 to 30. This latter group has less working experience in the area of enforcement and it seems that they require a lot of training and motivation when performing their duties.

For the duration of time in service, a majority of the respondents (85.26%) belong to "long service" with LPA. This is an advantage for the study as with experience, these officers are able to provide indepth responses regarding their needs and problems. In addition they are able to share some specific strategies used in coping with their English speaking problems.

85.26% of the respondents have obtained a certificate level of education, which means they have completed the lower secondary education (PMR – Lower Secondary Assessment) and intermediate secondary (SPM – Malaysian Certificate of Education) level. Other respondents have diplomas (11.58%) and degrees (3.16%). In the past, the

criteria for candidates applying for a job in the enforcement unit with some military or police force background experience, were given the added preference compared to candidates with higher qualification but with no experience. However, LPA now prefers their officers to have both the requirement of strong experience exposure and with good academic qualification. In the current department segment, the findings reveal that a majority of the respondents (56.84%) are attached to the unit/zoning department. Other respondents are with the administration/management department (11.59%), PANTAS (16.84%) and traffic/tow department (14.73%). The high percentage from the unit/zoning department are probably due to its wider job responsibilities that cover various aspects of multi-tasking scope, which concerns issues related to building premises, advertisement, licensing, traders and other general duties.

4.3   English Language Background

In Part II of the questionnaire, the respondents were asked to reveal information about their English language background. The results are as follows:-

Table 4.2   English Language Background

	Frequency	Percentage
Have you ever studied English besides the formal education		
Yes	55	57.90%
No	40	42.10%
What is your level of English proficiency?		
Very good	3	3.16%
Good	9	9.47%
Fair	45	47.37%
Poor	30	31.58%
Very poor	8	8.42%
Usage of English language at the workplace per week?		
More than 50%	3	3.16%
40%	10	10.53%
30%	38	40.00%
20%	25	26.32%
10%	14	14.74%
Never	5	5.26%

Which English skill is the most difficult?		
Listening	15	15.79%
Speaking	72	75.79%
Reading	5	5.26%
Writing	3	3.16%

The above table shows respondents' English language background knowledge that they had acquired either from their early academic formal education only or if they had attended other English courses to enhance further their existing knowledge.

In the first question, the respondents were asked if they had ever studied English besides their formal education. The result shows that slightly more than half of the respondents (57.90%) have attended English courses after their formal education as an initiative to strengthen their English proficiency. However, the remaining 42.10% revealed that they were complacent with their existing level of proficiency and were not keen to spend their money on external English courses. Therefore, they would only depend on internal training offered by the management to improve their command of the language. Nevertheless, they expressed their desire to attend English courses which can help strengthen their speaking abilities and build their confidence level, especially when interacting with English speaking clients. Due to the fact that external English courses are very costly, their expectation is that the company provides them with in-house training programs that would help develop their speaking skills.

In question 2, the respondents were asked to state their level of English proficiency. The findings reveal that 47.37% consider themselves as having *fair* level of English proficiency while others belong to varying levels. Information gathered during the interview and observation shows that most of the respondents assumed that by knowing how to read, write and understand English, they considered themselves to be in the *fair* category. However, during interaction, it was obvious that they were not able to converse well and were even quite reluctant to speak in English, and chose to continue speaking in

Malay. There were a lot of fillers and code switching involved during the process. Nevertheless, they agreed that they were badly in need of training, in particular for speaking skills, and this will specifically cater to their needs and boost their confidence level when interacting with others.

Question 3 seeks information on how often the officers use English language at the workplace. The result shows that only 3.16% of respondents uses more than 50% of English in their workplace. Followed by 10.53% (usage 40%), 40.0% (usage 30%), 26.32% (usage 20%), 14.74% (usage 10%) and 5.26% has no usage of English at the workplace. On the other hand, an interesting fact emerged from the interview and observation data and it is that those who has a smaller percentage of usage are those who have direct access in handling English speaking clients, especially during counter service duties. When faced with the difficulties in using English to converse, they would typically redirect the clients to another officer who has better English. The reasons cited were that they do not have the ability to speak well with the clients. This attitude may have contributed negatively to their image to their clients, that they are not competent enough in handling the services. This may probably also be why they use less English at work every week. However, they appear adamant in expressing their desire to have training that would help upgrade their level of speaking skill. They further propose that if given the opportunity in enhancing their speaking skills by attending more English courses, they would be able to handle their clients confidently without having to redirect them for others to handle.

In question 4, the respondents were asked to specify which skill they find most difficult in their English proficiency. As shown in Table 4.2, a majority of the respondents (75.79%) rated that speaking skill seems to be their *most difficult* problem in mastering English, while 15.79% indicated that listening is *difficult*. Only 5.26% marked reading and 3.16% marked writing. In the context of LPA's operations, their reading materials

and documents are mainly in Bahasa Malaysia as this is the official language of use. Their main priority when performing their duties were more in speaking as they usually require an impromptu reaction in dealing with clients who are English speakers. It is apparent that the study is on the right track in emphasizing on the issue of problems in speaking skill.

4.4   English Speaking skills Needed

In Part III, the results of the data collected from the questionnaire will provide the answers to the first research question: *"What are the needs in English speaking skills of the LPA enforcement officers in performing their duties when handling English speaking clients?"*

Data from the questionnaire survey and interview sessions were used to answer the above question. Respondents were asked to reveal information about their needs in English speaking skills. The results are based on eight type of functions with its own different characteristic. Each response in this section uses the scale of "*Most Important, Important, Moderate, Slightly Important and Least Important*".

Table 4.3 – Function: Greeting

	Frequency	Percentage
1) Introduce yourself		
Most Important	0	0.00%
Important	33	34.74%
Moderate	27	28.42%
Slightly Important	23	24.21%
Least Important	12	12.63%
2) Introduce your partner		
Most Important	0	0.00%
Important	16	16.84%
Moderate	32	33.68%
Slightly Important	25	26.32%
Least Important	22	23.16%

The table above illustrates the results as perceived by the respondents on the function of "Greetings" which comprises of two items as listed in the questionnaire. Results were tabulated and analysed according to each listed item.

Under the item "Introduce yourself" the result shows that 34.74% of the respondents consider this item as *important*. 65.26% of the respondents consider it as *moderate, slightly important* and *least important*. Based on the interview data, it appears that the officers were not necessarily required to introduce themselves during their rounds. However, depending on certain situations, there were occasions when they were required to introduce themselves only, as a form of formality or necessity.

The second item "Introduce your partner or officer" shows that only 16.84% of the respondents regard it as *important*. A bigger number, 33.68% find it *moderate*, 26.32% choose only *slightly important* and 23.16% opt for *least important*. According to them, they only introduce their partners during major operations or special events when a superior officer accompanies them to observe certain cases. They felt that it was easier to perform the first item as they would normally need to just mention their names or point at their name tags. Compared to the second item, they find it quite stressful especially when they have to do the introduction in English as they need to do a proper introduction with the correct sentence structure to avoid unnecessary embarrassment in particular when introducing a superior officer.

Table 4.4 – Function: Offering Assistance

	Frequency	Percentage
1) Do you need any help?		
Most Important	0	0.00%
Important	4	4.21%
Moderate	13	13.68%
Slightly Important	51	53.68%
Least Important	27	28.42%

2) Do you know how to use the parking machine?

Most Important	1	1.05%
Important	64	67.37%
Moderate	20	21.05%
Slightly Important	7	7.37%
Least Important	3	3.16%

3) Do you know that this is not a public parking zone?

Most Important	0	0.00%
Important	45	47.37%
Moderate	28	29.47%
Slightly Important	18	18.95%
Least Important	4	4.21%

Table 4.4 tabulates the result under the function of "Offering Assistance" which comprises of three items as described by the respondents. The first item "Do you need any help" reveals that just slightly more than half of the respondents (53.68%) consider the item as *slightly important* and with only 4.21% regarding it to be *most important*. Others opt the *moderate* category (13.68%) and *least important* (28.42%). This is probably an indication that most of the respondents were aware of the importance of offering assistance as part of their job specification and it is their responsibility to serve their clients. However, the officers appear to have difficulty when offering assistance to English speakers and frequently they would only offer assistance when required because of their lack of English proficiency.

For item "Do you know how to use the parking meter machine?" shows a very high response, as 67.37% of the respondents indicate that this is an important part of their work. Other respondents find that this item has minimal effect on their job. This may be due to the fact that most of them probably handle only traffic matters. Based on the interview data, the officers encountered this situation very often with foreign clients who do not know how to use the parking meter machine. Hence when they are required to

explain to the users who speak only English, the officers are not able to express themselves confidently. Local agencies from different districts in Malaysia may not have the same standard parking system which sometimes tend to confuse users. Some districts enforce the coupon system and users pay according to the amount of time they need the parking while some other districts still use the pay and display method that requires clients to use the parking meter machine. The process of explaining how to use the parking meters seems to be a difficult task for the officers. Therefore, to avoid any unnecessary pressure in organising or constructing English sentences, the officers would request clients to follow them to the machine and demonstrate how to use the parking machines, thus avoiding the use of complex language structures or difficult vocabulary.

In the last item "Do you know how to use the parking coupon?" illustrates 47.37% of the respondents claim that this is an *important* item. 29.47% indicate *moderate*, 18.95% *slightly important* and 4.21% as the *least important*. Based on interview and observation data, this is a routine task. However they have encountered some foreign clients who are not familiar with the local parking system or these users are reluctant to abide with the regulations and tend to ignore the system. In this case, the officers would try to help them by giving information in simple English. However, most often it ends up with the officers resorting to the use of gestures and body language to help them convey the message.

Table 4.5 – Function: Giving Explanation

	Frequency	Percentage
1) Rules on allocated parking lot		
Most Important	0	0.00%
Important	55	57.89%
Moderate	22	23.16%
Slightly Important	16	16.84%
Least Important	2	2.11%

2) Time duration for parking

Most Important	0	0.00%
Important	47	49.47%
Moderate	21	22.11%
Slightly Important	23	24.21%
Least Important	4	4.21%

3) Specific vehicles lot e.g. cars, motorbike, taxis, ambulance

Most Important		
Important	2	2.11%
Moderate	51	53.68%
Slightly Important	23	24.21%
Least Important	17	17.89%
	2	2.11%

4) Summons

Most Important	0	0.00%
Important	51	53.68%
Moderate	23	24.21%
Slightly Important	17	17.89%
Least Important	4	4.21%

5) Towing

Most Important	0	0.00%
Important	53	55.79%
Moderate	19	20.00%
Slightly Important	21	22.11%
Least Important	2	2.11%

6) Traffic direction

Most Important	0	0.00%
Important	50	52.63%
Moderate	18	18.95%
Slightly Important	25	26.32%
Least Important	2	2.11%

7) Construction site regulations

Most Important	0	0.00%
Important	52	54.74%
Moderate	18	18.95%
Slightly Important	23	24.21%
Least Important	2	2.11%

8) Advertisement according to specifications

Most Important	0	0.00%
Important	51	53.68%
Moderate	17	17.89%
Slightly Important	25	26.32%
Least Important	2	2.11%

9) Business permit/license

Most Important	0	0.00%
Important	54	56.84%
Moderate	14	14.74%
Slightly Important	25	26.32%
Least Important	2	2.11%

Nine items are listed under the function of "Giving Explanation/Information" and the results for each item are analysed and tabulated. For the first item "Rules on allocated parking lot" shows 57.89% of respondents indicating it as *important*. 23.16% opt for *moderate* while 18.95% find it *less important* as a job function. From the result and interview data collected, this situation appears not to be as significant for their job. This is probably due to the fact that in some busy areas where business outlets are located, such as banks and eateries, there are allocated parking lots for their customers. As such the officers need not have to deal with the users. In cases where users ignore the rules although there are signages, then the officers may have to offer some explanation to help the users understand the rules. However, having to give an explanation in English is not an easy task for the officers and they would prefer to go for the basic rules, using the simplest English possible, one that within their level of proficiency. They also often resort to the use of gestures and with local uses, they also code switch.

In the second item "Time duration for parking" shows that the scale *Important* has its highest ranking from 49.47% of the respondents. *Moderate* and *slightly important* comes from 46.32% respondents and 4.21% respondents finds it to be *least important*. Based on the interview and observation data, this item appears to be the norm, and officers are able to provide basic explanation to the users. However, depending on the situation and the extent of parking time limit, the officers would usually indicate to the users if they have exceeded the time limit either by way of gesture or with simple English. Sometimes

they would either issue a summons or give a first time warning without explanation. This probably may save them the anxiety of trying to give their explanation in English.

The third item "Specific vehicle lot e.g. cars, motorbikes, taxis" shows 53.68% of respondents regarding the item as *important*. 42.11% of the respondents consider this item as *moderate* or *slightly important* while 2.1% opt for the *least important*. Based on the interview and observation data, giving advice in this segment by the officers is an important factor in ensuring zero abuse of specific parking lot by clients. There were times when officers could not manage to offer a clear explanation to the users so they would refrain from doing so, to avoid any possibility of embarrassment in their pronunciation and speaking abilities.

The fourth item "Summons" shows 53.68% of the respondents regarding it as an *important* item in their job, especially for those in the traffic unit. 42.11% indicate it as *moderate* and *slightly important* while only 4.21% considers it as *least important*. Issuing of summons has to follow guidelines specified by LPA and the officers need to be equipped with the knowledge of the procedures before action can be taken. There are both local and foreign clients who are sometimes unaware of the regulations. Even though the officers realize the importance of this issue, they would somehow try to avoid giving explanation to the English speakers. As an alternative, they would instruct the clients to lodge any enquiries to the office, and this strategy is one of avoidance.

Under the fifth item "Towing", 55.79% of respondents point out that this item is *important*. 42.11% rate it as *moderate* and *slightly important* while 2.11% as *least important*. Based on the interview and observation data, the issue of "Towing" are mainly due to illegal parking in prohibited areas, which obstructs traffic flow. It seems that the officers have difficulty in explaining to clients in English when explanation is needed as to why their vehicles are being towed and this would prompt the officers to refer to either

their superiors or peers who would later help them to solve the problem. They were aware of the content of the situation but found it hard to express themselves in English.

For the sixth item "Traffic direction", 52.63% of the respondents indicate this it is *important* in their job. On the contrary, 18.95% considers it to be *moderate*, 26.32% as *slightly important* and 2.11% as *least important*. Based on the interview data, the officers have some difficulties in delivering their explanation in English especially when clients request for reasons for traffic diversion. They are not able to give a good explanation as they find it hard to deliver in English. Usually they would probably prefer to explain by gestures like ushering them to follow directions, with no explanation.

Under the seventh item "Construction site regulations" which represent regulations on construction sites which must be adhered to by contractors in accordance to LPA's by-laws, 54.74% of the respondents find it *important*. The remaining respondents indicate *moderate* to *least important*, and this is probably due to the fact that "construction site regulation" is not directly related to their job scopes. Based on the interview data, for every registered contractor who intend to have any building project within the LPA district, they would have to follow the rules and regulations stipulated for site work before starting their projects. Most regulation manuals are written in Bahasa Malaysia. For this reason, the officers find it difficult to give explanations in English especially when it involves foreign contractors. Giving correct explanation and information are very crucial since contractors can only proceed with their projects subject to LPA's approval. Therefore, this item would usually be managed handled by the officers who have a higher command of English so that they can relate correct information and ensure that proper guidelines are clearly understood.

For the eighth item "Advertisement according to specifications", half of the respondents (53.68%) regard it as *important*. The remaining respondents have rated as *moderate* to *least important*. This shows that half of the respondents have direct contact with this job specification. Based on the interview data, the advertisement specification manual is also in Bahasa Malaysia. When clients seek for further explanations in English, the officer do face difficulties in delivering the information as they have to translate some of the terms in the specification manual into English. Even for local English speaking clients, the officers have to use code switching and body language to get the message across.

For the final item "Business permit/license", 56.84% of the respondents regard it *important*. Based on the interview data, matters concerning business permits or licenses carry a larger scope of explanation, pertaining to application, requirement, process, fees and other related information. Depending on the issues, the officers would explain to the clients on the basic requirements but later they have to redirect theses clients to other officers who have a better command of English to follow up on the matter. Problems usually arise when they have to answer to queries at the site premises and they are no peers to help them with their communication problems. These problems arise probably due to their low proficiency level when they were not able to cope with expressing and speaking confidently in English especially when giving explanation or information. Therefore, this often cause misunderstanding and misinterpretation.

Table 4.6 – Function: Giving Advice

	Frequency	Percentage
1) Please follow the displayed guidelines		
Most Important	0	0.00%
Important	42	44.21%
Moderate	23	24.21%
Slightly Important	30	31.58%
Least Important	0	0.00%

2) Please do not double park and obstruct traffic in any way

Most Important		
Important	0	0.00%
Moderate	51	53.68%
Slightly Important	25	26.32%
Least Important	18	18.95%
	1	1.05%

3) Please remove your car from this area immediately

Most Important	0	0.00%
Important	50	52.63%
Moderate	19	20.00%
Slightly Important	26	27.37%
Least Important	0	0.00%

4) This is a clamping zone. Do not park in this area

Most Important	0	0.00%
Important	57	60.00%
Moderate	13	13.68%
Slightly Important	25	26.32%
Least Important	0	0.00%

5) Please display your parking coupon on the dashboard

Most Important	55	57.89%
Important	23	24.21%
Moderate	10	10.53%
Slightly Important	7	7.37%
Least Important	0	0.00%

Under the function of Giving Advice, there are five items listed. Result for each item were analysed and tabulated.

For item 1 "Please follow the displayed guidelines" result illustrate that 44.21% of the respondents ranked the item as *important*. 24.21% says it was *moderate* and 31.58% finds it *slightly important*. Guidelines on sign boards in public areas are displayed in Bahasa Malaysia but located in certain prime areas only. An example is where signboards are placed at parks or undesignated open areas that restrict any kinds of business activities, and whoever violates the rules will be subjected to penalty. When any illegal business activity is seen in those areas, the officer would advise traders before any penalty is

imposed. This usually involves local small traders. However, there are situations where foreign traders also conduct the illegal trade and the officers have to reprimand them. However the foreign traders are non- native English speakers, neither can they speak good English so communication problems arise. The officer would sometimes try to advise them in simple English and if this doesn't work, they would use body language or gestures to get across their message. This is one of the ways the officers cope with their communication issues.

In item 2 "Please do not double park and obstruct traffic in any way" the result shows 53.68% of the respondents ranked it as *important*. 26.32% and 18.95% says it was *moderate* and *slightly important* respectively. Only 1% prefer it to be *least important*. Based on the interview data and observations, this situation often occurs during week days at peak hours in busy industrial areas. Also during special big events such as during sports tournaments, or national celebrations and state official events, massive traffic occurs. Officers will always be on the move to ensure efficient traffic flow. However, there will be some obstacles when people tend to double park their vehicle blocking other cars and causing traffic interruptions. Problems will arise when drivers are foreigners and officers face difficulty in giving advice in English.

For item 3 "Please remove your car from this area immediately" has over 50% respondents (52.63%) ranked it as *important* and this may be considered as a strong indication that this item covers a large portion of the respondents' job scope. There are times when clients were quite reluctant to listen to instruction and the officers had to advise them slowly and professionally. However, often arguments ensues due to misinterpretation of meaning and misunderstanding of the situation. For example, a foreign client parked his car by the road side with a "no parking" signboard nearby. An officer approached him and advised him using simple English like "sorry sir no parking here" several times and used hand gestures to indicate to the client to remove his car from

the area but was misunderstood by the client who thought that the officer will issue a summons to him for parking. When the client raised his voice, demanding for a reason as to why he cannot park his car (speaking in unfamiliar accent), the officer misinterpreted the client's reaction, thinking that the client was getting aggressive and refused to leave the area. This is when a second officer intervened and sorted the situation out amicably.

For item 4 "This is a clamping zone, Do not park in this area" the result displays a majority of the respondents (60.0%) ranked it as an *important* item with 40.00% of other respondents choose *moderate* and *slightly important*. In this situation, the officers have difficulty in advising English speaking client not to park their car at the clamping zone or they will be subjected to their car being towed to the LPA's store where the client will be asked to pay a compound fee before the car can be released to the client. Generally, the officers will issue a summon ticket to the client and advise them to read the instructions as written on the ticket. This probably would save time for the officers from giving them verbal advice or explanation. This action is most likely due to their lack of self-confidence and poor speaking skills.

Under item 5 "Please display your parking coupon on the dashboard" the result illustrates a majority (82.11%) of the respondents find it to be an *important* item. According to the respondents, clients would sometimes tend to take things lightly when parking in paying public parking lots. There were times when they parked their car without paying any parking ticket. When the officers approach them, they would normally say that either they were not aware or they had forgotten to display it on the car dashboard. The officer would advise them on the importance of displaying the parking coupon to avoid any summons being issued. Taking into consideration that foreign clients may not be aware of the local parking systems, the officers would take the time to advise and instruct them to obey the laws. However, based on the observation data, the officers have difficulty in

delivering their message accurately. They would use body language and hand gestures more often compared to verbal interaction.

Table 4.7 - Asking Information

	Frequency	Percentage
1) Personal details e.g. name, nationality, address		
Most Important	0	0.00%
Important	2	2.11%
Moderate	8	8.42%
Slightly Important	54	56.84%
Least Important	31	32.63%
2) Any problems/issues e.g. business permit/licence		
Most Important	0	0.00%
Important	3	3.16%
Moderate	11	11.58%
Slightly Important	58	61.05%
Least Important	23	24.21%

Under the function "Asking Information", the above table presents the result for each item listed under this category.

The first item "Personal details e.g. name, nationality, and address" result indicates that a slightly more than half of the respondents (56.84%) find it to have a slight impact on their job performance. Other respondents ranked this item as *important* (2.11%), *moderate* (8.42%) and *least important* (32.63%). Based on the interview data, the officers would often or almost try to avoid asking information on personal details unless necessary. If they need to get personal information, they would prefer giving them some related forms and direct the clients into filling it up. This, according to the officer, would save time and also reduce embarrassment on their part, due to their low level of proficiency. From the interview script, one of the high ranked officers (Officer 4) said, "*I have poor proficiency in English. Sometimes it's quite embarrassing when my staff ask me to help them with English speaking clients*". Hence the strategy used by the officers is to resort to asking a fellow colleague who can speak better English to manage the situation.

The second item "Any problems/issues e.g. business permit/license" shows the result of over 61.05% of the respondents ranked it as *slightly important* compared to 3.16% for i*mportant*, 11.58% for *moderate* and 24.21% for *least important*. However, even though most of the respondents find this item to be *slightly important*, that does not necessarily suggest less significance in their job functions. Based on the interview data, this item normally occurs at the counter service when walk-in clients would file a complaint or seek clarification on their related issues and also during visits at the business premises.

To support the officers on duty in handling the situation, printed forms were provided and this may ease their job of asking for information from clients. Nevertheless, the problems may ensue when more information were required from clients and officers have difficulty in expressing themselves in English. Supported by data from the interview with Officer 3 *"My English is not sufficient at all and I have problem in expressing myself when talking to English speaker"* This clearly indicates that even the higher rank officer has similar problem of expressing themselves.

Table 4.8 – Function: Giving Feedback

	Frequency	Percentage
1) You have to submit an official complaint with the office.		
Most Important	0	0.00%
Important	2	2.11%
Moderate	14	14.74%
Slightly Important	47	49.47%
Least Important	32	33.68%
2) We will check on the progress of your complain.		
Most Important	0	0.00%
Important	2	2.11%
Moderate	18	18.95%
Slightly Important	54	56.84%
Least Important	21	22.11%

3) We are aware of the situation and will inform the party
concern.

Most Important	0	0.00%
Important	2	2.11%
Moderate	21	22.11%
Slightly Important	48	50.53%
Least Important	24	25.26%

4) Please let us know if you need any other assistance.

Most Important	0	0.00%
Important	2	2.11%
Moderate	23	24.21%
Slightly Important	51	53.68%
Least Important	19	20.00%

5) This matter is still under progress.

Most Important	0	0.00%
Important	2	2.11%
Moderate	14	14.74%
Slightly Important	49	51.58%
Least Important	30	31.58%

6) We will take immediate action on your problems.

Most Important	0	0.00%
Important	1	1.05%
Moderate	17	17.89%
Slightly Important	51	53.68%
Least Important	26	27.37%

7) Our officer will look into your complain.

Most Important	0	0.00%
Important	1	1.05%
Moderate	12	12.63%
Slightly Important	53	55.79%
Least Important	29	30.53%

8) Please follow the procedures correctly.

Most Important	0	0.00%
Important	2	2.11%
Moderate	10	10.53%
Slightly Important	60	63.16%
Least Important	23	24.21%

The above table reveals the results under the function of Giving Feedback with eight items as listed in the questionnaire. Result for each item were tabulated and analysed.

All eight items seem to have a consistently high response under the ranking *slightly important* whilst other ranks seem to show almost the same number of lower responses. All the items usually takes place during fieldwork and interaction by phone.

For the first item "You have to submit an official complaint with the office" the result shows that almost half of the respondents (49.47%) find this item to have *slight importance* and may have slight impact in their job. However, this could possibly be due to the nature of their duties whereby they would normally direct clients to lodge their complaint with the customer service counter. According to the officers, clients sometimes would approach them on the field to voice out their complaints. The officer attends to them by listening and taking note of the information shared. However, the officer finds it difficult to reply to their request or give any feedback and took the standard action of requesting clients to file their official complaint with the office by filling up the related complaint form. The officer finds this as the best method as accurate information from clients will then be recorded in written form and would save the officers from recording any misappropriate or misleading information. This is also confirmed by Officer 6 from the interview who says *"My problem is handling the local non-native clients. I may have fair level of fluency but sometimes I am at a loss for words when handling this group of clients".* Therefore, this probably justify that they need to enhance their speaking skills in their attempt at handling verbal request from their clients.

Under the second item "We will check on the progress of your complain" shows 56.84% of respondents ranked it as *slightly important*, 2.11% for *important*, 18.95% for *moderate* and 22.11% for *least important*. Based on the interview data, this usually occurs at the

counter service. Occasionally, officers appear to use the same "standard" feedback to client's enquiries. The practice of uttering the same sentence when giving feedback seems to be a habit for the officers, which probably reflects not only their lack of speaking skills but also their lack of confidence when handling enquiries from English speaking clients. According to Officer 9 "*I find it hard to have any interaction with them as I do not have the confidence to speak in English*". As supported by the above interview statement from Officer 9, this probably shows that their level of confidence seem to have high influence in their speaking skill.

In third item "We are aware of the situation and will inform the party concern" shows that 50.53% of respondents ranked it as *slightly important* whilst only 2.11% says that it is *important*, 22.11% finds it *moderate* and 25.26% says that is *least important*. This item requires officers to know the correct person in charge and are updated on the specific situation before giving any feedback. However, there are cases where officers receiving calls from English speaking clients where the officers were not able to comprehend messages received and would normally hand over the call to another officer who will take over the call.

In item four "Please let us know if you need any other assistance" the result reveals 53.68% of the respondents agreed that it has *slight importance* in their job. Only 2.11% finds it to be *important*, 24.21% as *moderate* and 20.00% as *least important*. Based on the interview data, only officers with good English proficiency would give this feedback to clients as they were able to handle the situation better. Supported by the interview statement from Officer 8 "*my fluency in English is quite low and I find it hard to have interaction activity especially when attending to English speaking clients. Therefore I would always seek help from someone who has better English proficiency to handle them*". This item needs someone who has good English speaking skills as they may be able to respond towards clients' enquiries effectively.

In fifth item "This matter is still under progress" the result shows 51.58% of the respondents chooses this item as *slightly important*, only 2.11% says that it is *important*, 14.74% for *moderate*, and 31.58% for *least important*. Based on interview and observation data, this is a way of cutting short a conversation and to avoid further interaction with clients. They were times when listening becomes a problem in particular when it involved slang or accents, and the officer handled the situation by repeating the same sentence to the clients as a means of coping with their low proficiency.

For the sixth item "We will take immediate action on your problems" the result displays slightly more than half of the respondents (53.68%) seems to rank it as *slightly important*, only 1.05% responded for important, 17.89% for *moderate* and 27.37% for *least important*. Based on the interview data, Officer 9 seems to agree that "*before taking any action on any issues, it is very important that we understand the right message and deliver accurate message as well*". Therefore, officers on duty would usually take note of details from clients before giving any feedback. Every detail taken has to be correct and precise. However, problems arise when clients uses slang or accent that were not familiar to the officers. They would usually pick up some of the familiar keywords and understand the message through some intuition. Often this resulted in misinterpretation and misunderstanding of the real problem. Also agreed by Officer 10 that "*it is very important to be careful and precise when taking statements from clients in order to avoid any future misinterpretation or misunderstanding*".

Looking at the seventh item "Our officer will visit you to look into your complaint" result indicates that 55.79% responded with *slightly important*, only 1.05% for *important*, 12.63% for *moderate* and 30.53% for *least important*. In this scenario, according to the respondents, the officer would first look into the client's complain file and if necessary

will use the above sentence. If the client insist on more information, matters will usually be redirected to a superior officer with better command of English to handle the situation. This is probably the reason why this item was ranked high.

For the eighth item "Please follow the procedures correctly" shows a majority of the respondents (63.16%) ranked it as *slightly important*, 2.11% as *important*, 10.53% for *moderate* and 24.21% for *least important*. Procedures represent the official regulations used as guidelines to clients and must be observed strictly. This could probably be the reason why it was ranked as *slightly important* by the majority because they only have to refer to the printed procedures without having to explain further. However, when the clients started asking the officer to explain further on some of the procedures, the problem begins. During observation at the counter service, the officers respond with a lot of fillers and hesitation when giving feedback to the clients.

To sum up, based on the data collected, the respondents are aware of the important aspect of the items listed in their routine function. However, they prefer to take the easy way out by using the fixed script commonly used and even push away matters for other officers to handle. They resort to this as an escape route, to cover up for their lack of speaking skills, especially when trying to give feedback to the clients in proper spoken English.

Table 4.9 – Function: Giving Directions

	Frequency	Percentage
1) Explaining Directions		
Most Important	0	0.00%
Important	50	52.63%
Moderate	4	4.21%
Slightly Important	33	34.70%
Least Important	8	8.42%
2) Describing Landmarks		
Most Important	0	0.00%
Important	52	54.70%
Moderate	32	33.70%
Slightly Important	7	7.40%
Least Important	4	4.20%

3) Explaining locations		
Most Important	0	0.00%
Important	56	58.90%
Moderate	21	22.10%
Slightly Important	12	12.60%
Least Important	6	6.30%

The above table reveals the results of the three items under the function of giving directions. Each item were tabulated and analysed individually.

For item "Explaining Directions", 52.63% of respondents opt for the item as an *important* aspect in their job. This is probably due to their standard duties of directing and controlling traffic for certain areas and situation. For that reason, they often encounter difficulty in expressing themselves when clients request for explanation, for example when diverting traffic to a different direction. According to the officers, they would often try to ignore or avoid the interaction, instead they choose to use gestures without the verbal explanation.

In the second item "Describing landmarks" this often occurs when handling clients who are mostly foreign tourists. The result shows that a majority of the respondents (54.70%) find it to be *important* whilst others say it is *moderate* and *least important*. This item is a routine occurrence for the respondents in particular, when they are on field duty. They often encounter tourists approaching them asking for information to certain landmarks. The situation normally occurs without prior notice and the officers are caught off guard.

The third item "Explaining locations" shows that 58.90% of the respondents find it as *important* compared to others who felt that this item is *moderate, slightly important and least important* in their work. For example, a tourist ask for the nearest Automated Teller Machine (ATM) that has the Malaysian Electronic Payment System (MEPS) services in

the area. The officer would try to give information or directions to the location but have difficulty in expressing themselves well in English. The officers seem to struggle in their verbal explanation and resort to hand gestures to express their message.

Table 4.10 – Function: Describing Situation/Event

	Frequency	Percentage
1) What happened?		
Most Important	4	4.20%
Important	53	55.80%
Moderate	12	12.60%
Slightly Important	23	24.20%
Least Important	3	3.20%
2) When did it happened?		
Most Important	7	7.40%
Important	52	54.70%
Moderate	11	11.60%
Slightly Important	23	24.20%
Least Important	2	2.10%
3) How did it happened?		
Most Important	5	5.30%
Important	48	50.50%
Moderate	16	16.80%
Slightly Important	22	23.20%
Least Important	4	4.20%
4) Did you lodge a report with the authority?		
Most Important	0	0.00%
Important	51	53.70%
Moderate	13	13.70%
Slightly Important	6	6.30%
Least Important	25	26.30%
5) Do you have permit to organize this event?		
Most Important	0	0.00%
Important	47	49.50%
Moderate	17	17.90%
Slightly Important	22	23.20%
Least Important	9	9.50%

6) Is your license still valid?

Most Important	0	0.00%
Important	6	6.30%
Moderate	15	15.80%
Slightly Important	43	45.30%
Least Important	31	32.60%

In the function Describing situation/event, it comprises of six items as listed in the questionnaire. Results for each item were tabulated and analysed.

The result for items 1 to 3 show that over 50% of the respondents says that the items are *important* to them while the other respondents have lesser percentage for other rankings. This could probably be due to the fact that every officer is responsible for getting information from clients on any incident or events that take place. Based on the interview and observation data, the overall results of the above items revolved in an almost similar situation. Officers were required to record every detail on the happenings of an incident correctly and accurately. However, when an incident happens that involved English speakers, the officers seem to have anxiety in handling the situation. There were times when they had problems in understanding the information given by the clients, so they just pick up some familiar words and decipher the rest of the information by guessing details from the situation in context. This inappropriate manner in handling a situation do cause sometimes lead to problems and misinterpretation.

In item "Did you lodge a report with the authority?" also shows slightly more than half of the respondents (53.70%) find that the item has an important impact on their job performance. Other responses are 13.70% for *moderate*, 6.30% for *slightly important* and 26.30% for *least important*. There are certain restriction of authority that are not within the control of LPA. The officers of LPA may only have limited rights to act on certain situation therefore if the client has lodged a report with the authority such as the police, then the officers of LPA may not be able to take charge of the situation. However,

if the situation is within the authority of LPA, then matters will be handled by the officers where officers are expected to guide clients where necessary, especially on a lodging report with the authorities concerned. Based on the interview data, there were incidents that involved foreigners who have no knowledge on how to lodge a report over an incident. When the officers approached them to ask if they have lodged the incident with any authority, the problem of understanding begins. The officer faced difficulty in grasping the information from the foreigners when words spoken with unfamiliar slang and accent are used. Interview statement from Officer 7 seems to share his opinion that "*especially for non-native clients, they have their own way of speaking English which I find it difficult to understand and with my low level of fluency, it gave me a real hard time to understand and respond to their message*".

For item "Do you have permit to organize this event?" shows 49.50% of the respondents find it to be important, 17.90% for *moderate*, 23.20% for *slightly important* and 9.50% for *least important*. When organizing any event within the vicinity of LPA authority, organizers are required to follow the specified rules and regulations. LPA will issue a temporary permit for organizers to set-up for their event. It is the duty of the LPA officers to do their checks on the event organizers to ensure that they have the legal permit and is valid. Based on the interview data, there were events by foreign organizers in collaboration with local companies. When applying for permits, the organizers must furnish details of the event and other related information. The officer would have to understand their intention and purpose of the event before approving their permit application. In this situation, an officer who have good English proficiency were required to attend to the matter as a step to avoid any unnecessary misunderstanding or misinterpretation if handled by officers with low proficiency.

In item "Is your license still valid" the result shows that 45.30% of the respondents find that it is *slightly important*, 6.30% says it as *important*, 15.80% for *moderate* and 32.60%

for *least important*. Based on the interview data, officers will have their scheduled routine checks on the validity of business license in all business outlets located within the LPA areas. There are times when the officers did their rounds when they discovered some of the business premises' licenses have expired. The officers would request the premise owner to explain why their license was not renewed on time. Some owners who are locals, have foreigners as their workers that speak some English but no Malay. This presented a challenge to the officers as they face difficulty understanding their explanation. They would sometimes give a simple and quick advice to the clients by asking them to go to the office to renew their license immediately. This is also done by using gestures and body language, so as to avoid having more interaction in English with the client.

4.5   Problems in English Speaking Skills among LPA officers

The analysis derived from the data collected for Part IV of the questionnaire and responses from the interview sessions are used to answer research question 2: *What are the problems in English speaking skills of the LPA enforcement officers when dealing with English speaking clients?*

Part IV consists of 18 listed problems, which is organised in table form, with only two problems instead of 18 in one table. This is for the purpose of a clear presentation of analysis and findings of Part IV.

Table 4.11   Problems in English Speaking Skills (1 & 2)

	Frequency	Percentage
P1) I avoid handling English speaking clients		
Always	20	21.05%
Usually	53	55.79%
Sometimes	13	13.68%
Seldom	6	6.32%
Never	3	3.16%

P2) I evade from English conversation activities		
Always	18	18.95%
Usually	56	58.95%
Sometimes	10	10.53%
Seldom	5	5.25%
Never	6	6.32%

In this section, for item P1, slightly more than half of the respondents (55.79%) indicate that they would usually avoid handling English speaking clients.

This is followed by 21.05% seems to *always* prefer avoidance, 13.68% *sometimes*, 6.32% *seldom* and 3.16% *never* avoid handling English speaking clients. This seems inevitable as the feedback from the interview shows that they prefer avoiding rather than having to face the possibility of any embarrassment or misinterpretation that may probably occur. The officers admitted that they have problems when clients speak in unfamiliar foreign accents. This includes trying to comprehend some unknown word which they are not familiar with. However, looking at the frequency of *seldom* (6.32%) and *never* (3.16%), it shows that there are some respondents who would challenge their ability in speaking, despite their lack of fluency, by not avoiding but rather attending to the clients willingly. For instance, based on observation, an officer who does not have good English speaking skills was approached by a foreign English speaking client that need direction to a location. The officer put on a positive attitude while trying his best to understand the client's accent and managed to respond to her needs even though he used "broken" English to communicate. He even admitted to the client saying *"I am sorry my English not good but I try help if I can, yes?"* Some fillers were used, involving body language and a lot of wrong pronunciations, nevertheless they managed to get the communication going and understood each other. This officer claims that he always test his ability in English speaking and try to break his own fear of speaking out. However this example

does not represent other respondents who prefer to avoid handling of English speaking clients.

In item P2, the result produces a higher percentage, with 58.95% of the respondents choosing to evade from participating in English conversation activities. Other responses indicate that 18.95% *always* evade, 10.53% admit to evading *sometimes*, 5.26% *seldom* and 6.32% *never* evade from participating in English conversation activities. According to a majority of the respondents, they have very high anxiety whenever they are in the circle of a conversation that involve English language. They expressed their concern that their lack of confidence and low proficiency skills have contributed to their fear of English conversation activities. They were quite concerned about producing inaccurate grammatical sentences in conversation and most of all, do not want to create unnecessary embarrassment. Therefore, they took the stand of shying away from any incidences that require participation in English conversation activities at their workplace.

Table 4.12   Problems in English Speaking Skills (3 & 4)

	Frequency	Percentage
P3) I have trouble gathering speaker's intention through conversation		
Always	55	57.89%
Usually	21	22.11%
Sometimes	15	15.78%
Seldom	2	2.10%
Never	2	2.10%
P4) I have problem understanding when listening to foreign accents		
Always	52	54.74%
Usually	33	34.74%
Sometimes	7	7.36%
Seldom	2	2.11%
Never	1	1.05%

The result for item P3 shows that slightly more than half of the respondents (57.89%) *always* have problems in understanding speaker's intention through conversation, 22.11% *usually* experience the situation, 15.78% *sometimes* face the problem, while only 2.11% *seldom* and 2.11% *never*. Based on the interview data, the respondents were not able to grasp the speaker's intention possibly due to the unfamiliar words used in the conversation. There were times when they tend to perceive the speaker's intention according to their own understanding which later led to misinterpretation of the whole situation.

Item P4 also shows a similar trend as in P3. 54.74% of the respondents *always* have difficulty in understanding foreign accents, followed by 34.74% who ranked it as *usually*, 7.36% as *sometimes*, 2.11% as *seldom* and only 1.05% as *never*. This could probably be due to the fact that, officers are not familiar with the various foreign accents or slangs that they encountered when handling foreign clients and found it difficult to comprehend the message conveyed.

Table 4.13   Problems in English Speaking Skills (5 & 6)

	Frequency	Percentage
P5) I don't understand speaker's needs when speaking on the phone		
Always	31	32.63%
Usually	42	44.21%
Sometimes	11	11.68%
Seldom	6	6.32%
Never	5	5.26%

P6) I fear of wrong pronunciation		
Always	24	25.26%
Usually	51	53.68%
Sometimes	16	16.85%
Seldom	3	3.16%
Never	1	1.05%

The result for item P5 shows 32.63% of respondents *always* encounter the problem of not understanding the callers' needs on the phone, 44.21% *frequently* have the problem, 11.58% *sometimes*, 6.32% *seldom* and 5.26% *never* encounter such problem. For this item, the respondents' main focus were to be attentive in listening to the words spoken by the caller, however, when listening through the phone with a receiver who have low proficiency level of English often results in misinterpretation or misunderstanding. Based on the interview data, the officers often have had bad experiences in identifying their clients' needs when dealing with conversation through the phone. This has resulted in officers capturing information according to their own perception and filling in a report for that is inaccurate. Interview transcript from Officer 3 seems to have the same problem "*clients speaking English with unfamiliar accents sometime sounds weird to me and it is very difficult to understand them. So I would normally respond according to the context of situation and try to respond in simple English until the clients understand despite my low proficiency level*".

For item P6, slightly more than half of the respondents (53.68%) *frequently* experienced the problem, compared to others with 25.26% (*always*), 16.85% (*sometimes*) and 3.16% (*seldom*) experienced such problem whilst 1.05% (*never*) encountered this problem. The respondents were not willing to take the risk of speaking up for fear of using the wrong pronunciation. According to Krashen's theory (1982), one of the factors in acquiring a second language, speakers should focus towards communicative act and not the form of

their utterances. By practicing to speak English frequently it would certainly encourage

their fluency.

Table 4.14   Problems in English Speaking Skills (7 & 8)

	Frequency	Percentage
P7) I feel embarrass to speak because of my low proficiency level		
Always	53	55.79%
Usually	23	24.21%
Sometimes	12	12.63%
Seldom	5	5.26%
Never	2	2.11%
P8) I have difficulty in understanding English sentences		
Always	3	3.16%
Usually	12	12.63%
Sometimes	22	23.16%
Seldom	55	57.89%
Never	3	3.16%

As for item P7, the result clearly shows that more than half of the respondents (55.79%)

were very conscious of their own sensitivity and their lack of speaking skills prevents

them from speaking up.   Those who chose *usually* comprised 24.21%, *sometimes*

(12.63%), *seldom* (5.26%) and *never* (2.11%).   Based on the interview data, the

respondents most likely preferred to distance themselves from any English conversation

activities probably for fear of wrong word pronunciation and feeling intimidated with

their low proficiency level.

In item P8, the result shows that most of the respondents (57.89%) falls under the ranking

of *seldom*, followed by 3.16% (*always*), 12.63% (*usually*), *sometimes* (23.16%) and *never*

(3.16%). The majority probably find that it was quite difficult to understand the English

utterances especially when unfamiliar words were used. Under this category, it appears

that although all the respondents have undergone English education for 13 years of schooling in the Malaysian education system, they are still unable to follow some basic use of English by the speakers. Upon discussion with some of the respondents, it appears that these officers find it very difficult only when client speaks too fast with unfamiliar accent and words which are not part of their vocabulary repertoire. This usually happens in telephone conversations, and less or seldom during face to face interaction, owing to the fact in face to face encounters the use of non-verbal strategies such as body language with hand gestures allow for better comprehension. Another reason for the poor performance is in the fear of taking the risk. With such apprehensions communication apprehensions will continue to persist.

Table 4.15   Problems in English Speaking Skills (9 & 10)

	Frequency	Percentage
P9) I cannot communicate well in English		
Always	54	56.80%
Usually	23	24.20%
Sometimes	9	9.50%
Seldom	7	7.40%
Never	2	2.10%
P10) I have problem in expressing myself		
Always	62	65.30%
Usually	27	28.40%
Sometimes	4	4.20%
Seldom	2	2.10%
Never	0	0.00%

 As shown in the result for item P9, again slightly more than half of the respondents (56.80%) admitted that they were not able to communicate well in English. Other respondents seems to have lower percentage of 24.20% (*usually*), 9.50% (*sometimes*), 7.40% (*seldom*) and 2.10% (*never*). Based on the interview data, the officers were not willing to challenge their ability to speak English probably because they do not want to

feel uncomfortable when they pronounced inaccurately or make ungrammatical sentences. Interview transcript from Officer 9 says that "*my poor speaking skill seems to hold me down when I try to have a conversation with clients, as it will be quite embarrassing when I make wrong pronunciation or sentence structure*".

In item P10, the result shows that 65.30% of the respondents *always* have problem in expressing themselves, followed by the other respondents with a lower percentage of 28.40% (*usually*), 4.20% (*sometimes*) and 2.10% (*seldom*). This could probably be due to the fact that to express oneself in one's own mother tongue would be easier and hence confidence to express in another language would be definitely more difficult as there is little competence of the second language. From the interview and observation data, there were occasions when the officers had the experience of trying to express themselves in English but the more they tried, the more chaotic it became and as a result only silence ensued. The experience of frustration is real as the officers felt they have a lot of ideas and opinion to share but the lack of proficiency hampers them to voice it out.

Table 4.16   Problems in English Speaking Skills (11 & 12)

	Frequency	Percentage
P11) I am afraid of making mistakes in my sentence structure		
Always	63	66.32%
Usually	23	24.21%
Sometimes	6	6.31%
Seldom	3	3.16%
Never	0	0.00%
P12) I have insufficient English vocabulary		
Always	54	56.84%
Usually	21	22.11%
Sometimes	11	11.58%
Seldom	7	7.36%
Never	2	2.11%

For item P11, 66.32% of the respondents resist attempts at their speaking as they dread making mistakes. Others in the different categories also face the same problems. Based on the interview and observation data, it is noted that the officers were more concern about trying too hard at organising their sentences to make them coherent but this attempt is unsuccessful and so it leads to them not wanting to speak at all. The easiest way out is to seek assistance from peers whose language competency is better to speak on their behalf.

As for item P12, the result shows a high concern in the vocabulary range for 56.84% of the respondents *always* perceived that they have inadequate English vocabulary. This is followed by 22.11% (*usually*), 11.58% (*sometimes*), 7.36% (*seldom*) and only 2.11% indicated that do not have this problem. This situation probably causes anxiety among the respondents in particular when trying to search for appropriate words to use during interaction. Based on the interview data, the officers prefer to avoid handling English speaking clients unless the clients use words that are familiar and easier to comprehend. However, due to the lack of English vocabulary among the officers, this seems to contribute significantly in their lack of confidence during interaction.

Table 4.17   Problems in English Speaking Skills (13 & 14)

	Frequency	Percentage
P13) When I tried to speak English I stutter		
Always	63	66.30%
Usually	23	24.20%
Sometimes	6	6.30%
Seldom	3	3.20%
Never	0	0.00%
P14) I struggle to find the correct word to express my opinion		
Always	54	56.80%
Usually	21	22.10%
Sometimes	11	11.60%
Seldom	7	7.40%
Never	2	2.10%

The above table shows the result for item P13, which indicates that 66.30% of the respondents stutter when trying to use English. The other options as tabulated are 24.20% for *usually*, 6.30% for *sometimes* and 3.20% for *seldom.* The respondents did make an effort at speaking but the problem of frequent stuttering in their utterances tend to drag them down. Based on the interview and observation data, the officers stutter in their utterances when trying very hard to find the right word to say and at the same time mentally trying to build a proper sentence structure by translating from their mother tongue to English. Thinking in Bahasa Malaysia and then groping for the words in English takes time, so by the time they retrieve the word or sentence structure, they have lost their clients' attention. There were times when there were too many fillers used instead of words spoken.

Results for item P14 shows that 56.80% of the respondents were quite concern about trying hard to find the right word to express their opinion. This result seems to have some similarity to items 12 and 13, where the main focus was on the vocabulary. However based on the interview and observation data, the officers would normally remain silent while trying to figure out the correct word for the right expression. In this aspect, having mastery in vocabulary plays a vital role towards successful and effective communication. In addition to this, it also reveals that the officers were not only struggling with finding the correct words but also in trying to take the courage to respond to the conversation.

Table 4.18 Problems in English Speaking Skills (15 & 16)

	Frequency	Percentage
P15) I misinterpret speaker's intention		
Always	20	21.05%
Usually	47	49.47%
Sometimes	19	20.00%
Seldom	7	7.37%
Never	2	2.11%

P16) I based my understanding on the context not the actual message spoken		
Always	6	6.32%
Usually	42	44.21%
Sometimes	25	26.32%
Seldom	21	22.10%
Never	1	1.05%

In item P15, the result shows almost half of the respondents (49.47%) find that they *usually* have the tendency of misinterpreting the speaker's intention. Others seem to have indicated lower responses but they also acknowledged that they do face the same problem. Based on the interview data, the officers would assume the speaker's intention without paying attention to the actual message spoken. Making assumptions is not a way to cope with such lack, especially when it concerns recording for official reports. Listening and understanding the exact content of the speaker's intention is very important as every complaint lodged by clients has to be recorded and reported accurately before action can be taken. It would be more effective if they could interact with the client to get comprehensive information before recording it as an official report to avoid any misinterpretation of information.

For item P16, the result shows 44.21% of the respondents *usually* prefer to base their understanding on the context of situation and not from the actual message communicated. However, only 6.32% says that they *always* experience this problem, 26.32% *sometimes* do faced the situation, 22.10% *seldom* and only 1.05% never had the problem. Based on the interview data, the officers were aware of the importance of paying attention to the actual message spoken but due to their low proficiency and time factor, they would normally like to base their understanding around the context instead. This scenario often caused misunderstanding and misreporting of the actual situation which brings about a negative impact in their job performance.

Table 4.19   Problems in English Speaking Skills (17 & 18)

	Frequency	Percentage
P17) I have problem when client speaks English too fast.		
Always	50	52.60%
Usually	21	22.10%
Sometimes	12	12.60%
Seldom	5	5.30%
Never	7	7.40%
P18) I have problem when it comes to constructing or to organize sentence		
Always	65	68.40%
Usually	20	21.10%
Sometimes	6	6.30%
Seldom	4	4.20%
Never	0	0.00%

The result for item P17 shows that 52.60% of the respondents constantly encounter the problem of catching up with clients who sometimes tend to speak too fast. Even though others have lower percentages in their ranking, they do experience the problem but not as frequent. Interview feedback revealed that this is quite a difficult problem as it was not an easy task to grasp familiar words from speakers who speak too fast and using words with accent or slang.

As for item P18, the result indicates that 68.40% of the respondents *always* have the problem of constructing or organizing sentences. Others varies in their ranking; 21.10% (*usually*), 6.30% (*sometimes*) and 4.20% (*seldom*). Having a proper constructed and well organized sentence may provide a good flow of argument or point of view in a clear and concise manner. However, if sentences were not well constructed, it can probably interrupt the flow of meaning that led to client not being able to construe the actual meaning. Based on the interview data, the officers tried too hard in constructing proper

sentence structure that makes it too complicated and complex that even client cannot comprehend the actual meaning.

4.6   Communicative Strategies of LPA officers

The analysis derived from the data collected for Part V of the questionnaire seeks to answer research question 3:   *How do the enforcement officers cope with their speaking problems by using different types of communication strategies?*

According to Nakatani (2006) there are eight categories of strategies for coping with speaking problems and the findings from the questionnaire will be presented based on strategies identified under each category.

Table 4.20 – Social Affective

	Frequency	Percentage
(S1) I try to use fillers when I cannot think of what to say		
Always	56	58.94%
Usually	25	26.32%
Sometimes	10	10.53%
Seldom	3	3.16%
Never	1	1.05%
(S2) I try to pay attention to the conversation flow		
Always		
Usually	52	54.74%
Sometimes	33	34.74%
Seldom	7	7.36%
Never	3	3.16%
	0	0.0%

In the Social Affective factor, the two strategies appear to be focusing on social contexts where the interaction activity looks at how interlocutors attempt to overcome their anxiety by enjoying the process of the communication.

In strategy 1, the result shows that 58.94% of the respondents indicate that they *always* use the strategy of using fillers when they could not think of what to say in conversation activities. Other respondents appear to be less active in using this strategy. This indicates that they wanted to show their participation in communication activities even though they were not able to converse well. This is most likely their best strategy to keep the communication going and managing their own feelings professionally. In comparison, strategy 2 results illustrates a lower percentage: 54.74% reveal that they probably try to pay more attention to the conversation flow. By listening and showing interest to whatever transpired, this probably demonstrate how they were able to maintain a smooth process of conversation flow and be part of the activity even though they may not be able to converse well. Therefore, these strategies undeniably falls in the Social Affective factor.

Table 4.21 – Fluency-oriented

	Frequency	Percentage
(S1) I pay attention to my pronunciation, rhythm and intonation		
Always	54	56.84%
Usually	26	27.37%
Sometimes	10	10.53%
Seldom	4	4.21%
Never	1	1.05%
(S2) I try to speak clearly and loudly to make myself heard		
Always	20	21.05%
Usually	15	15.79%
Sometimes	25	26.32%
Seldom	32	33.68%
Never	3	3.16%

As for the fluency-oriented strategy factor, result for S1 shows 56.84% of the respondents prefer to pay attention to their pronunciation, rhythm and intonation during communication activities. Other respondents seem to also use the same strategy but at a

lower frequency. This probably indicates that a majority of the respondents have positive drive in motivating themselves to challenge their ability in their fluency by emphasizing on their pronunciation, rhythm, intonation and speak with clarity when expressing themselves. They would take their time to send accurate messages to clients with sufficient comprehension. This is compared to the other respondents who probably has less interest in improving their skills.

The result for S2 strategy shows that the highest percentage (33.68%) was opted by the respondents who *seldom* express themselves by speaking clearly and loudly just to be heard. 21.05% shows that they *always* use the strategy, 15.79% *usually* use the strategy, 26.32% only *sometimes* apply the strategy and 3.16% *never* actually use the strategy. According to the data collected, the respondents were trying to show their participation in a conversation activity by building up their confidence to speak clearly and loudly just to be heard. It was a commendable effort as according to some of the respondents, they do not mind if their pronunciation were inaccurate as long as they can be heard. They are aware that words spoken has to be carefully pronounced, with clear intonation so that interlocutors can comprehend and get the correct message.

Table 4.22 – Negotiation for Meaning

	Frequency	Percentage
(S1)I give examples if the listener doesn't understand what I am saying		
Always	54	56.84%
Usually	26	27.37%
Sometimes	10	10.53%
Seldom	4	4.21%
Never	1	1.05%

(S2) I repeat what I want to say until the listener
understand

Always	52	54.74%
Usually	33	34.74%
Sometimes	7	7.36%
Seldom	3	3.16%
Never	0	0.0%

(S3) I make clarification request when I am not
sure what the speaker has said

Always	30	31.58%
Usually	47	49.47%
Sometimes	18	18.95%
Seldom	0	0.0%
Never	0	0.0%

(S4) I ask the speaker to give examples if I am not
sure what he/she said

Always	42	44.21%
Usually	25	26.32%
Sometimes	16	16.83%
Seldom	10	10.53%
Never	2	2.11%

(S5) I use circumlocution to react to the speaker's
utterance when I don't understand his/her intention

well.	37	38.95%
Always	12	12.63%
Usually	42	44.20%
Sometimes	2	2.11%
Seldom	2	2.11%
Never		

(S6) I ask the speaker to slow down when I have
difficulties in comprehension

Always	35	36.84%
Usually	38	40.00%
Sometimes	19	20.0%
Seldom	0	0.00%
Never	3	3.16%

There are six strategies shown in the figure above, as listed in the questionnaire. The strategies were identified to be under the factor of Negotiation for Meaning. Findings reveal that the respondents utilize the strategies of repetition, clarification request, asking for example, using circumlocution and asking speaker to talk slowly for comprehension, and these are means of negotiating for meaning. These factors of negotiating were regarded by Nakatani (2006) as an essential skill to improve foreign language ability. The respondents seem to show positive attitude when handling the situations as it illustrates their confidence when they were in control of the situation to achieve their objectives.

Result for item S1 shows that slightly more than half of the respondents, which is 56.84% indicate that they *always* use this strategy when they have difficulty in conveying message which the clients find it difficult to understand. Other respondents seems to have lower percentage: 27.37% (*usually*), 10.53% (sometimes), 4.21% (*seldom*) and 1.05% (*never*). By giving examples as an alternative strategy to get across a message effectively is the normal way to help their clients understand their message correctly.

For item S2, the result illustrates how more than half of the respondents (54.74%) emphasize using the strategy to ensure that the client understands the message conveyed. Followed by 34.74% of the respondents who chose *usually*, 7.36% *sometimes* and 3.16% *seldom* apply this strategy. This is a very useful strategy as it shows that by repeating a message can probably help them avoid any misunderstanding or misinterpretation.

The result for item S3 shows slightly less than half of the respondents (49.47%) *usually* uses this strategy of making clarification request for better understanding of the speaker's message. Other respondents seem to have lower percentage: 31.58% (*always*) and 18.95% (*sometimes*) also do apply this strategy but at a lesser frequency.

For item S4, the strategy of requesting for the speaker to give examples for better understanding, shows 44.21% of the respondents prefer to *always* use this strategy when they do not understand what has been said by the speaker. Other responses are 26.32% (*usually*), 16.83% (sometimes), 10.53% (seldom) and 2.11% (*never*).

The result for item S5 shows 44.20% of the respondents indicate that they *sometimes* use this strategy, 38.95% *always* apply this strategy followed by 12.63% (*usually*), 2.11% (*seldom*) and 2.11% (*never*). This probably indicate that the respondents did not frequently practise this strategy of using circumlocution to help them in negotiating for meaning when they do not understand the speaker's intention correctly.

The result for item S6 indicates that 40.00% of the respondents *usually* prefer using the strategy of requesting speakers to speak slowly for ease of comprehension. However, only 36.84% of respondents *always* apply this strategy in the job task. 20.00% chose *sometimes* whilst 3.16% *never* use it. This probably illustrate that the respondents find it useful when a speaker speaks at a slower pace so they are able to grasp the meaning accurately.

Table 4.23 – Accuracy-oriented

	Frequency	Percentage
(S1) I try to talk like a native speaker		
Always	2	2.11%
Usually	7	7.37%
Sometimes	12	12.63%
Seldom	31	32.63%
Never	43	45.26%

There is only one strategy identified under the factor Accuracy-Oriented. This factor is in relation to the desire to speak English precisely like how the native speaks. The speaker

would focus intensely on the forms of their speech and strive for complete accuracy in terms of grammatical rules. They would probably be very careful in their speech, as it is not an easy task to speak like a native English speaker. The results for this specific strategy shows that the 45.26% of the respondents says that they *never* want to take the risk of talking like the native speaker unlike 2.11% of the respondents who *always* like to sound like the native speaker, while others were willing to take the challenge but at a lower frequency. However, the attempt of trying to speak like native speakers was a worthy effort and should be encouraged. This strategy is obviously in the Accuracy-Oriented strategy.

Table 4.24 – Message Reduction & Alteration

	Frequency	Percentage
(S1) I reduce the message and use simple expressions		
Always	20	21.05%
Usually	35	36.84%
Sometimes	26	27.37%
Seldom	3	3.16%
Never	11	11.58%
S2) I replace the original message with another message because of feeling incapable of executing my original intent		
Always	43	45.26%
Usually	27	28.42%
Sometimes	8	8.43%
Seldom	12	12.63%
Never	5	5.26%
(S3) I guess the speaker's intention by picking up familiar words		
Always	51	53.68%
Usually	32	33.68%
Sometimes	9	9.48%
Seldom	3	3.16%
Never	0	0.0%

There are three strategies identified under the factor of Message Reduction and Alteration. The above table shows the result of the 3 strategies that varies in their responses. The above result for item S1 shows that 36.84% of the respondents *usually* use this strategy. Other respondents indicate a lower percentage in using this strategy: 21.05% (*always*) 27.37% (*sometimes*) 3.16% (*seldom*) and 11.58% (*never*). Based on the interview data, they prefer to reduce the message and use simple expressions to avoid any unnecessary misinterpretation or misunderstanding.

The result for item S2 illustrates that 45.26% of the respondents prefer to *always* use the strategy of replacing the original message with another message due to their incapability of executing the original meaning. Others show a lower frequency of 28.42% (*usually*), 8.43% (*sometimes*) 12.63% (*seldom*) and 5.26% (*never*). This strategy may lead to unnecessary misinterpretation of the actual content of the message as they perceive matters according to their own perception.

For S3 result, slightly more than half of the respondents (53.68%) *always* use this strategy of guessing speaker's intention by picking up familiar words. This is followed by other respondents ranking of 33.68% (*usually*), 9.48% (*sometimes*) and 3.16% (*seldom*). According to the interview data, this often happens at the counter service. Officers tend to assume client's intention by picking up familiar words. Unfortunately, sometimes this resulted in misinterpretation of the actual intention of the client.

The overall review of the above 3 strategies indicate that there are possibilities of the respondents feeling confident when using the strategies of reducing, simplifying, replacing original message and using simple expression, when performing their job tasks. However, this may probably be possible for those who have better level of proficiency.

Table 4.25 – Non-Verbal Strategies

	Frequency	Percentage
(S1) I try to make eye contact when speaking		
Always	28	29.47%
Usually	21	22.11%
Sometimes	37	38.95%
Seldom	7	7.36%
Never	2	2.11%
(S2) I use gestures and facial expressions if I can't express myself verbally		
Always	49	51.58%
Usually	34	35.79%
Sometimes	8	8.42%
Seldom	3	3.16%
Never	1	1.05%
(S3) I send continuation signals to show my understanding in order to avoid communication gaps		
Always	42	44.21%
Usually	32	33.69%
Sometimes	20	21.05%
Seldom	1	1.05%
Never	0	0.00%

The above table comprises of 3 strategies identified under the Non-Verbal factor. This factor refers to interlocutors using other resources to achieve their communication goals.

The result for item S1 shows that 38.95% of the respondents prefer to *sometimes* use the strategy of trying to make eye contact when speaking. Compared to other respondents who varies in their responses when using this strategy: 29.47% (*always*), 22.11% (*usually*), 7.36% (*seldom*) and 2.11% (*never*). Eye contact is an important tool during conversation as it may give an indication that you are paying attention and focused on what the speaker has to say. According to the respondents, they are aware that making eye contact may help in establishing connection with the speaker and this would encourage the flow in the conversation especially the quality of the interaction. However, some of the respondents find that they do not have the confidence when trying to use this strategy probably due to their poor proficiency level.

The result for item S2 shows 51.58% of the respondents *always* use gestures and facial expressions if they could not express themselves verbally. Except for the other 35.79% of the respondents who chose to frequently use this strategy, the rest seems to have lesser interest. They chose this strategy as an alternative in expressing themselves and not only does it save their time but they also find it to be quite effective.

The result for S3 shows 44.21% of the respondents with the frequency of *always* are in favour of using continuation signals to show that they understand and to avoid communication gap. They would send out continuation signals to show that they understand and this strategy also would probably allow good relation with interlocutors. Based on the interview and observation data, they prefer using this strategy as they find that it was quite helpful and convenient when handling English speaking clients. It has helped the interlocutors in identifying their needs by guessing the hints given through their non-verbal strategy.

Table 4.26 – Message Abandonment

	Frequency	Percentage
(S1) I abandon the execution of a verbal plan and just say some words when I don't know what to say		
Always	45	47.37%
Usually	33	34.74%
Sometimes	14	14.73%
Seldom	3	3.16%
Never	0	0.00%
(S2) I ask other people to help when I can't communicate well		
Always	51	53.68%
Usually	32	33.68%
Sometimes	9	9.48%
Seldom	3	3.16%
Never	0	0.00%

(S3) I anticipate what the speaker is going to say based on the context		
Always	46	48.42%
Usually	35	36.84%
Sometimes	11	11.58%
Seldom	2	2.11%
Never	1	1.05%

The above figure comprises of three strategies identified to be under the factor of Message Abandonment. This factor is common among low proficiency speakers where they would probably give up easily when they encountered problems in their verbal communication activities. All three strategies seem to have high percentage under the frequency of *always* and *usually*.

For the result in item S1, it shows that 47.37% of the respondents *always* use this strategy of abandoning the execution of a verbal plan. For the frequency of *usually*, 34.74%, followed by 14.73% (*sometimes*) and 3.16% (*seldom*). Based on the interview data, due to their lack of fluency, they find that by abandoning the execution of a verbal plan they have less anxiety and at times they even pretend to understand just to be part of the conversation. Some even commented that they do not have the courage of speaking up especially in conversation activity.

The result for item S2 shows 53.68% of the respondents always use this strategy of asking other people to help in their communication problems. According to the respondents, this is a normal practice for them since they have poor proficiency and this strategy also helps them from any possibility of embarrassment. Problems arise when they do not have anyone around, at a certain point of time, to help them in their problems. This strategy also seems to give them the alternative of not taking the initiative to challenge their ability in speaking skills.

For item S3, the result indicates that 48.42% and 36.84% of the respondents with the frequency of *always* and *usually* respectively, seems to anticipate the speaker's intention based on context. Based on the interview and observation, from the facial expression of the officers during communication activities, attitude problem may be the issue as they prefer to take the easy way out in completing their job tasks. They pay less attention to every detail spoken by the client, instead they prefer to anticipate the speaker's intention based on the context of the interaction. The action of abandoning, pass on problems for others to handle and generally anticipate message based on context would probably help them in completing their job but may lead to negative impact on their job performance.

Table 4.27 – Attempt to think in English

	Frequency	Percentage
S1) I think first of what I want to say in my native language and then construct the English sentence		
Always	54	56.84%
Usually	35	36.84%
Sometimes	4	4.21%
Seldom	2	2.11%
Never	0	0.00%
(S2) I think first of a sentence I already know in English and then try to change it to fit the situation		
Always	16	16.84%
Usually	48	50.53%
Sometimes	25	26.32%
Seldom	5	5.26%
Never	1	1.05%

The above table represents the result of two strategies identified under the factor Attempt to think in English.

For the of item S1, it shows that 56.84% of the respondents *always* use this strategy of using mental translation, where they would think in their native language, construct and generate the output in English. According to the respondents, they use this strategy each time they encounter an English speaking person. The problem arise when they try hard to think and construct sentences in English that they often end up with the difficulty in getting the right word to construct the sentences. Therefore, they would usually just remain silent or add in some fillers just to keep the conversation going.

As for item S2, the result shows that half of the respondents (50.53%) *usually* use this strategy of applying what they already know in English and attempt to change it to fit in the context of the situation. Based on the interview and observation data, this strategy was found to be used by officers who have better English proficiency as they were able to construct sentences using the words that they are familiar with, to fit in the context of situation. Interlocutors tend to process their thoughts to think of what to say in their own language first before building into a proper English sentence which is similar to S1. Even if the sentences sometimes may not be in proper grammar, the attempt shows that they have the initiative to bring out their ability according to their level of fluency.

4.7   English Language Training Needs

This part shows the responses for English language training needs as perceived by the respondents. The analysis is derived from the data collected for Part VI of the questionnaire on English language training needs. The results would hopefully provide guidelines for the benefit of the course designers and the organization in recognizing specific English courses for the officers in enhancing their English speaking skills.
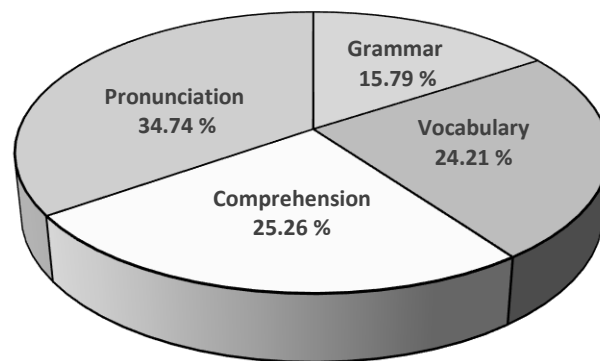
Figure 4.1   Speaking skills that require improvement

The above figure shows the result for respondents' opinion on which part of the speaking skills they would want to improve. 34.74% says they need to improve more on their pronunciation, 25.26% of the respondents wants more on comprehension, 24.21% says they need to increase their vocabulary and 15.79% wants to improve grammar. The high percentage seems to indicate that pronunciation is the most important element in improving their speaking skills. Based on the interview data, they expressed concern about the way they pronounced a word that sometimes would refrain them from speaking up. They were afraid of the possibility of an embarrassment when they pronounced a word wrongly. However, the respondents seem to agree that all the four elements are important in improving their speaking skills.

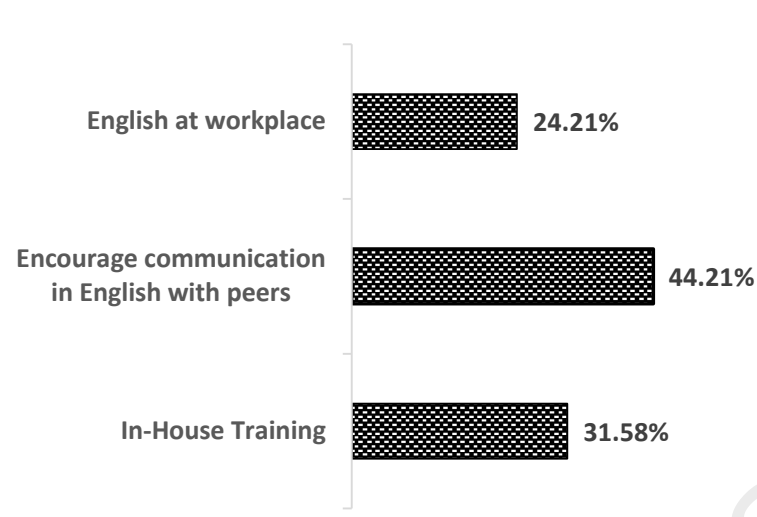|	
English at workplace	24.21%
Encourage communication in English with peers	44.21%
In-House Training	31.58%

Figure 4.2   Company's assistance in improving English language skills

The above figure illustrates the responses for the question on the company's involvement to improve English language skills at the workplace. 44.21% were in favour of the management's role in encouraging usage of English as their communication medium at the workplace. 31.58% says that they need to have in-house training to improve their English language skills whilst 24.21% finds it better for the company to implement usage of English at the workplace. Based on the interview data, they have high expectations for the employer's involvement in providing them with more English courses, specifically for the enforcement unit and also to encourage more interaction among peers at the workplace.
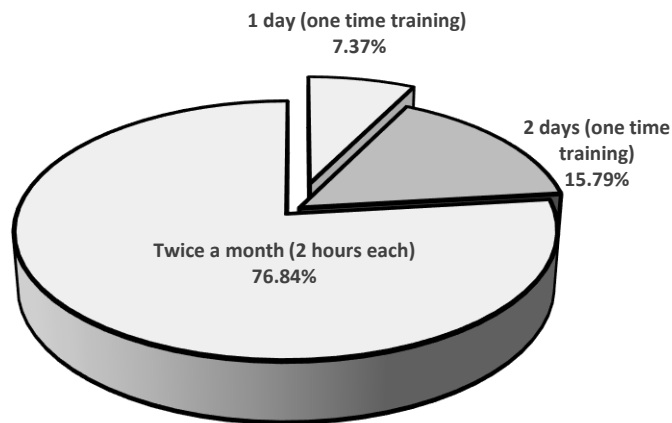
Figure 4.3   Proposed duration for training program on English speaking skills

The above figure (4.3) reveals the responses on English speaking skills training duration preferred by respondents. A very high percentage (76.84%) indicate that respondents chose to have regular and continuous training of twice a month with a duration of 2 hours for each training. This is to allow consistent result in maintaining their English proficiency and it was suggested that every officer, from every level, should be involved regardless of their rank or level. Other responses show that 7.37% chose to have a one day training and 15.79% says they prefer a 2-day training. The respondents who chose shorter duration for the training are mainly from those who work on tight schedule and at odd hours. Therefore, it may not be appropriate for them to spend longer time attending to courses.

4.8   Chapter Summary

This chapter provided the analysis and discussion of findings on the general information of the respondents, their English language background, English speaking skills needs, problems in English speaking skills, communicative needs and English language training needs.

Conclusions of the study, discussion on major findings and recommendation for further studies will be presented in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the summary of the study, and findings, with some discussions and recommendations for further studies. Also included is a proposal for an English language course for the LPA officers training.

5.2 Summary of the Study

The objective of this study is to identify and explore the needs analysis on the speaking skills of enforcement officers at a local public agency. To accomplish the objectives, the study attempts to answer the following research questions:

1.   What are the needs in English speaking skills of the LPA enforcement officers in performing their duties when handling English speaking clients?

2.   What are the problems in English speaking skills of the LPA enforcement officers when dealing with English speaking clients?

3.   How do the enforcement officers cope with their speaking problems by using different types of communication strategies?

Research question 1 focusses on the English speaking skills needs of the LPA enforcement officers in performing their duties when handling English speaking clients. The study adopted a needs analysis approach to identify the needs. Research question 2 aimed to obtain information on the speaking problems faced by these officers, while

research question 3 focused on knowing the types of strategies used by these officers in coping with their speaking problems.

The study used a mixed method design with a triangulation approach that included a combination of both qualitative and quantitative methods to answer the above research questions. For the quantitative aspect, a questionnaire was employed as the main instrument, while interview data comprised the qualitative part. To strengthen the data collection process, observations at the workplace and fieldwork were also carried out to add support to the findings from the questionnaire and interviews.

5.3   Findings from Related Studies

The related past studies discussed in Chapter Two comprised of investigations involving the four skills of language acquisition, which are reading, writing, listening and speaking. These studies were done in different contexts but most of them were related to service providers. The researchers in these studies used similar instruments for data collection, such as questionnaires and surveys, and their findings revealed similar needs and problems (Aldohon, 2014; Khamkaew, 2009; Charunsri, 2011; Alharby, 2005; Maniruzzaman, 2004). The needs analysis studies in English Language contexts reveal that most of the respondents indicated that among the four skills, speaking is the one which needs greatest attention. Subsequently the respondents indicated their need for specific training in speaking, which hopefully would result in some actions for the stakeholders. It would be useful if the stakeholders come up with a more specific curriculum for training purposes to cater for the real needs. The problems investigated were on giving information, providing services, offering help, understanding foreign accents, building vocabulary, grammar, and answering questions, and improving pronunciation and intonation. Some interesting facts from one of the studies (Khamkaew, 2009) show that the respondents preferred to have training conducted by a combination

of local and English native speakers so they are able to comprehend the language better from the local context and yet able to learn the correct slang or pronunciation from the native speakers.

The past studies also highlighted the coping strategies used by the respondents when they faced problems with speaking. These respondents preferred to use strategies that they were confident in when executing instruction or explanation, but some were not willing to take the risk in challenging their abilities especially in English communication.

5.4 Summary of the Findings

On the whole, the data collected from the questionnaire supported with the interviews and observation, have answered the three research questions set out for this study.

5.4.1 General Information

The respondents were more male dominated (74.70%) than female (25.30%), and most of them were in the age range of between 20 to over 50. Majority (66.31%) have been working with LPA for over 6 years. Their academic qualification level with highest percentage of 85.26% were respondents with certificate level qualification. 56.84% of the respondents were from the Unit/Zoning department, it being the largest unit in LPA, so the unit has more number of staff compared to other units.

5.4.2 English Education Background

In terms of the respondents' background for English language, 57.90% of them indicated that they have attended extra courses in addition to their formal education in schools. This indicates that initiative has been taken to enhance their proficiency level and their job performance to a higher level. The level of English proficiency among the respondents from the level of *fair, poor* and *very poor* totalled 87.37%, and this shows that the majority of them are at a relatively low level of proficiency. Therefore, this may indirectly point out that the respondents are in need of good and consistent training in English proficiency,

in particular on speaking. The frequency of using English in the workplace (per week) shows even though more than 90% did not show a frequent usage of English at the workplace, based on the interview data, they claimed that if they were well equipped with good English proficiency knowledge, they would have built more confidence in taking the tasks of handling English speakers better. For the most problematic English skill, the respondents indicated the highest percentage (75.79%) on speaking followed by listening (15.79%). This does appear to show quite clearly that the findings would benefit LPA in their objective of identifying the needs and problems encountered by the officers during interaction with English speakers. It would also provide LPA course planners with some guidelines in designing a more focussed English language training module, especially for speaking skills.

5.4.3 Needs in English speaking skills of the LPA enforcement officers

With regard to research question 1, the figure below summarises the findings obtained from the analysis of data obtained from the questionnaire.
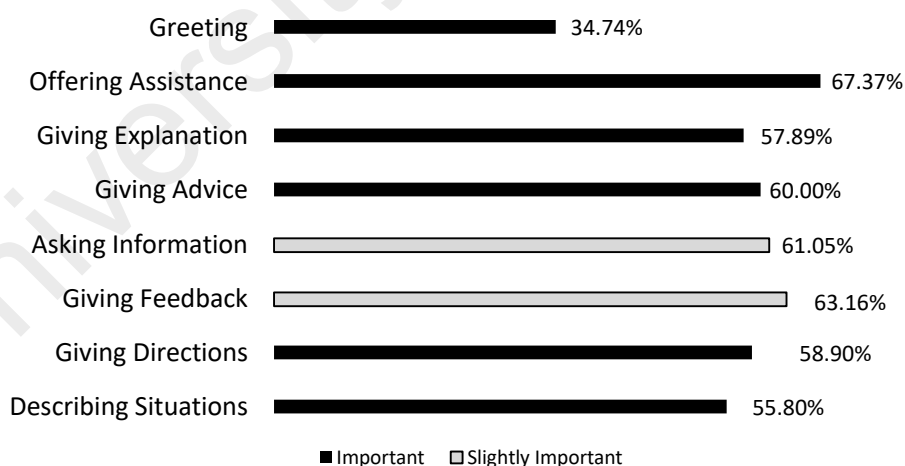

Figure 5.1 – Summary of findings for research question 1

The figure illustrates the highest percentage perceived by the respondents in each function. There are eight functions listed. Six functions were identified to have the highest percentage on the ranking of *important* and two on *slightly important*. The figure

only captures the ranking of *important* and *slightly important* as others seems to show much lower percentages. The function *Greeting* shows the lowest percentage of respondents (34.74%) ranked it as *important*, which clearly indicates that other respondents find it to be *less important* as they were not too willing to introduce themselves or their superiors unless necessary. Other functions that seem to have the highest percentage under the *important* ranking, shows that this function have greater impact in their job tasks. Except for two functions that have high percentage, under *slightly important* ranking, it shows that the functions of *Asking Information* and *Giving Feedback* may have slight influence but it is still an important aspect in their job performance.

The findings of the study shows that the officers were in great need of English speaking skills training. They are the front liners of the agency who hold the image and reputation of the organization. Their lack of speaking English skills has become their setback which does affect the credibility of the organization. The officers do realize that acquiring good English language skills is an important aspect when performing their job functions. However, they allow their problems to hold them back and were not willing to take the risk of making mistakes which resulted in them being less competent at work. Another element identified that contributed to this setback is their attitude and low self-esteem. Due to this, it is highly necessary that officers acquire a good level of English proficiency. The organization is the key player to stimulate the environment and provide encouragement for officers to lift up their spirit towards developing better job performance by having competent English speaking skills when performing their job tasks is crucial. This goal could probably be achieved by developing positive attitude and recognizing the needs required by the officers with a well-planned and consistent method in their English language training, especially for speaking. Own efforts in building up their vocabulary is the most basic process towards enhancing their speaking skill ability.

They can take the advantage of various technology and technique widely available, to work on increasing their vocabulary bank.

5.4.4 Problems encountered by the LPA officers in speaking

Figure 5.2 – Summary of findings for research question 2

Figure 5.2 shows the highest percentage perceived by the respondents under the ranking of *always* and *usually* for each item as listed under the problems in speaking skills compared to other rankings which seems to have less active responses. These two scales (*always* and *usually*) have been put together because both rankings have almost similar frequency. Adding up, it would give a more realistic frequency of the respondents under each item. The high frequency in the problems listed evidently shows that more than 50%

of respondents have difficulties with speaking. Except for problem under "*difficulty in understanding English sentences*" shows a much lower percentage of 15.79% which indicates that the respondents do understand English sentences but have difficulty in comprehending when spoken at a fast pace and with different accent. This also confirms that the present study is timely as the findings collected gives evidence to the state of affairs within LPA and it is hoped that with the evidence, the proposed syllabus planned may be adopted by the agency to run their training in a more focussed way.

In addition, data collected from the interview and observations have also been incorporated in the findings of the study. During interviews, the officers appear to be honest in sharing their views and were not hesitant in expressing their desire to overcome their problems in English speaking skills. The result also shows a strong evidence of problems for the respondents in their speaking skills when handling English speaking clients. Their problems were identified to be focusing more in understanding foreign accents, recognizing unfamiliar words, pronunciation, organizing sentence structure, focusing too much on grammatical rules and not able to comprehend messages. They also need to upgrade their vocabulary level as without having sufficient vocabulary knowledge, attempts in enhancing their speaking skills may not show much progress. For officers who had been with LPA for a long period, they need to come out of their comfort zone and start embracing the global language in line with upgrading the professional image of LPA. With the findings, it would provide guidelines to the course planners at LPA in looking into the problems and needs of the officers and be able to plan a more specific training module for the officers of LPA with informed knowledge.

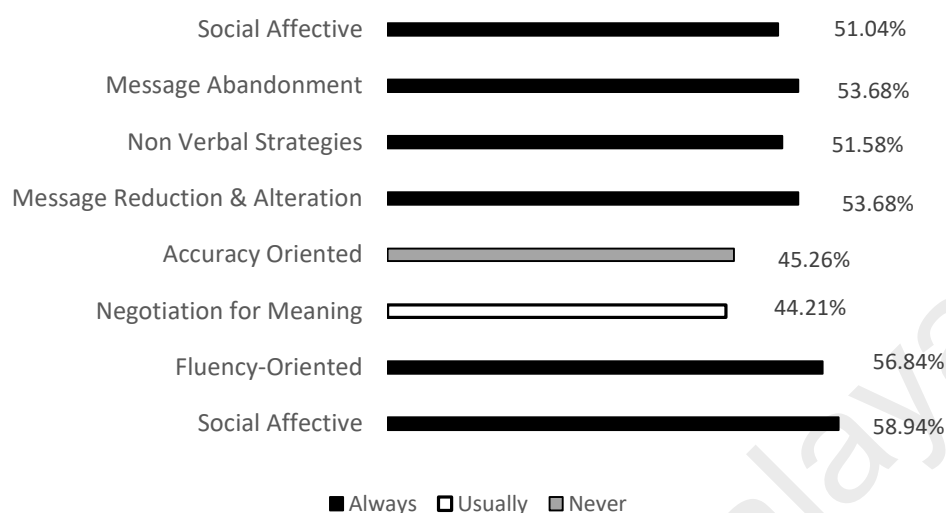## 5.4.5 Use of different types of communication strategies

Figure 5.3 – Summary of findings for research question 3

The above bar graph shows a summary of the data analysed for the communicative strategies as collected from the questionnaire survey. Percentages were only taken for the 3 rankings of *always*, *usually* and *never* as other rankings have lower responses from the respondents.

The result of the study reveals that the respondents often encounter language difficulties in their English communication, and had to resort to using communicative strategies to cope with their speaking problems. The kinds of strategies and the consistency of their use depends on the specific context and the proficiency level of the officers. In the *Social Affective factor*, strategies used by the officers seems to have a positive impact on their social interaction that gives them the confidence to be take part in communication activities. In fact in the *Fluency-Oriented factor*, there were attempts in emphasizing on their pronunciation, rhythm and intonation and even the officers also have the courage to expose themselves by speaking out clearly and loudly just to be heard. They even made an effort to improve their skills by using strategies to keep the conversation flow smoothly

without any interruption even though fillers were used to fill up the gaps that may occur during the interaction. There were quite significant differences in applying the strategies under the *Negotiation of meaning* factor. This is probably why the highest percentage was on the ranking of *usually* while other rankings vary in their responses. The 6 strategies listed under this factor shows an inconsistent percentage of responses as it depended on their level of proficiency to execute this strategy. Nevertheless, respondents are in agreement that this strategy has an effective impact in their job performance when dealing with clients. For *Accuracy-Oriented*, the strategies used may be unsuitable for most people as trying to speak like native speakers is not an easy task to do except for some who has the courage to challenge their speaking ability and increased level of fluency. Under the Factor *Message Reduction and Alteration,* the strategies used were mainly to avoid any communication breakdown by reducing, simplifying, replacing the original message and using simple expressions which they were confident to execute. For *Non-Verbal*, the strategies used as a replacement to verbal action were by way of reducing, simplifying, replacing original message and using a simple expression which they were confident to execute. In fact, a majority of the respondents prefer to use these strategies actively in their job performance. For *Message Abandonment*, examples of the strategies used by the respondents are giving up efforts to communicate and leaving matters unsettled, and leaving these matters for others to handle. In general messages are anticipated based on context and not the original message as delivered by clients. For the *Attempt to Think in English*, the strategies used were more in using their mental skills in translating and finding the right words to fit the situations. But this strategy often result in silent action for those who are not fluent as they probably take longer time to process their sentence unlike those who have a better level of proficiency. They show that they were able to use words that they are familiar with and construct sentences to fit the context of situation.

5.4.6　English Language training needs

The results of the study shows that the training needs for the LPA officers should emphasize more on speaking skills which covers all the important aspects of grammar, vocabulary, comprehension and pronunciation. The involvement of the organization is crucial as it may help improve the officers' English proficiency skills by way of providing more English courses for the benefit of the staff and encourage more interaction in English among peers at the workplace. For the duration of the training program, a majority of the officers prefer to have continuous training to allow consistent result in maintaining their English proficiency level and even suggested that every staff of LPA should be involved regardless of their rank or level.

5.5　Discussion

Based on the findings of the study, a majority of the officers were well trained staff and have been working with LPA for a long period of time. Their speaking problems are not new and they are very aware that having good English proficiency can upgrade the quality of their job performance. The officers are the front liners of LPA carrying with them the reputation and image of the organization in the eyes of the community around them. The areas under the jurisdiction of the LPA consist of highly educated communities, comprising of not only locals but also foreigners from various nationalities. For these foreigners who do not speak the local language, the only way used for communication is English. To cater for the community needs, the officers must to be able to communicate and interact with confidence. Based on the findings, the officers were still not able to have good interaction with the clients and they often relate this to their lack of proficiency as an excuse to avoid participating in conversation with English speaking clients. Mastering English is not an easy task, and it cannot be acquired overnight if the learners

do not consistently practise the language. To be effective, the language must also be applied on a daily and regular basis. They have to take the risks of making mistakes by challenging themselves to frequently speak English with peers or clients. With the right training in addition to a positive attitude and positive sense of confidence, the officers should be able to speak English fluently when giving feedback or assistance to their clients.

5.6 Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusion of this study, the following recommendations are put forward and could be considered for future research. Firstly, a study on the needs for English proficiency skills in particular speaking could be extended to other departments within LPA. There are other officers in LPA who do not have direct contact with foreign clients but they still need to build up their language to serve the local community. Even though Bahasa Malaysia is the official language, the need to use English is equally necessary in the workplace, to further strengthen the professionalism of the organization in the eyes of potential foreign private investors. Secondly, most previous researchers focused only on needs and problems of English speaking skills or strategies on communication, whereas this study is a combination of all three elements: needs, problems and strategies. Hence a study that could be recommended for future research is to include the elements of motivation and attitude in this area of study.

5.7 Proposal for English Language Course

5.7.1 Previous offered training

Information gathered from LPA shows that there have been various training related to English skills offered to their staff. However, the types of training provided are not meant

for all staff. For example, in 2011 a program titled *English at Work* was offered to 30 nominated staff from various departments. In 2012, a program titled *English Confidently Workshop* was offered to 44 staff of various levels from many different departments. The most recent program held in 2015 titled *English Communication Skills* was offered to only the higher grade officers.

The 2011 program (English at Work) was basically to provide better exposure on how to apply English language in the workplace. Most of the participants are from the lower rank level. Based on the information gathered from the Training Department of LPA, feedback from the participants on the program was not encouraging. The participants felt that the module presented in the program does not fit to their needs and they have difficulty in understanding the contents of the program delivered by the trainer. Later in 2012, the training department decided to have another English training program (English Confidently Workshop). Even though they nominated 44 staff for the program, during the actual program there were fewer participants attended based on the attendance list recorded. According to the training officer of LPA "*when we decided to have this program for the staff, we expected a more positive reaction from the participants compared to the 2011 program. Unfortunately, it was not a successful program. Since the program was held in the same office premise of LPA building, participants tend to take time off often from the program with an excuse to attend to their desk job. Therefore, this probably interrupts the flow of the program and the lack of focus from the participants. Some of the feedback received from participants' show that they find the program did not reach out to their needs and it was too rigid with the lack of active responses from the participants*". Probably with the poor responses from the previous two program, there was no English program held until 2015. Subsequently, the 2015

program is not specifically for the staff of LPA as it was a joint program held for top management from all state government agencies.

Considering that it has been a long time since any consistent or systematic English training programmes were conducted by the LPA, it does appear that the findings of this study can contribute to the urgency and importance of having such programmes for the officers to improve their English speaking skills. The LPA could be informed of the results of this study and adopt the recommendation put forward in this study. Indeed, the enforcement officers, particularly front liners would greatly benefit from such training programmes, because they are the ones who deal directly with English speakers in their daily job tasks. With good English speaking skills, it would improve the productivity of the staff and help to build their confidence in handling their clients effectively, and ultimately enhance the image of the agency.

5.7.2 English Language Course

The world of business is becoming more complex than ever with extensive demands from providing information to making sure that messages are understood and executed appropriately. Those demands require good English speaking skills when interaction occurs which leads to effective communication. Therefore a course is proposed using the findings from this study. The course is designed for learners to develop and ignite their confidence level by speaking better English at their workplace.

Course Description

The proposed module for this course is aimed at helping learners to develop oral proficiency by promoting effective speaking in communication activities. The module is also expected to improve learners' confidence in using English in their communication

situations either formal or non-formal. The ability to speak fluently requires good pronunciation, unlimited vocabulary, accurate grammar and knowing the right word for the right context of situation.

Course Objective

The objective of the proposed course would be:

a) To help learners develop their ability to speak English well and with confidence.

b) To improve learners' knowledge in their pronunciation, grammar and technique in expanding their vocabulary bank.

c) To help learners' understand the importance of English speaking skills in their job performance.

d) To encourage learners' to express themselves with confidence according to the various communicative situations.

e) To motivate learners' in demonstrating positive attitude and continuous effort in improving their speaking skills.

Course Outcomes

Upon completion of the course, learners will have the confidence to speak up effectively using appropriate grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation. Learners will be able to perform their speaking ability actively in a social context especially when dealing with English speaking clients. Learners' should also be able to encourage continuous effort in promoting English speaking environment at their workplace.

Course Time frame

Completion time frame for this module depends on the period allocated for each class, for example number of learning hours and number of class per week. Depending on the requirement of the organization, the time frame could be flexible and can be planned in accordance to the company requirements.

Course Outline

    i.   Understanding the importance of good speaking skills

    ii.   Techniques in learning to be a good speaker

    iii.   Understanding the impact of communication process

    iv.   The importance of sending and receiving the correct message and its action

    v.   Giving and receiving instructions – misconceptions and misinterpretations

    vi.   Providing feedback at workplace – the impact of precise feedback in productivity

    vii.   Vocabulary, grammar and tenses

Course Materials

The core material used is based on the learners' nature of work. In general, the main focus is using English to deal with people at work. Therefore, this module will make use of real-life situations such as role plays, conversations and communication activities generally used at their workplace.

Course Content

Table 5.1 Weekly Course Content

WEEK	KEY TOPICS	HOURS
Week 1	**Introduction to Course** 1. Getting Started 2. Making introductions	2 hours
Week 2	**Greeting** 1. Starting a conversation 2. Telephone etiquette	2 hours
Week 3	**Asking for Information** 1. Seeking clarification 2. Confirming information	2 hours
Week 4	**Listening to instructions/queries** 1. Understanding 2. Responding 3. Explaining	2 hours
Week 5	**Using polite expressions** 1. Responding to clients 2. Making request 3. Engage in conversation 4. Giving advice 5. Giving explanations	2 hours
Week 6	**Social interaction** 1. Office conversation 2. Offering assistance 3. Sharing ideas and opinions 4. Speak with confidence	2 hours

The course content focuses on the English skills with a balance on speaking, listening, reading and writing but additional focus will be on the particular needs of the enforcement officers in their speaking skills. Throughout the course, learners' will acquire the knowledge of all the important aspects of grammar, vocabulary, comprehension and pronunciation. Active two-way communication will enhance further their speaking skills confidently especially in social context with client, peers, management and telephone conversation.

It is hoped that the above course proposal would guide the planners of LPA training department to realize the importance of having a good English language course module to meet the needs of the enforcement officers. Subsequently, it will help to increase the officers' level of confidence when handling English speakers in their daily job tasks.

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