# DE LA SALLE UNIVERSITY

AN ETHNOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS OF THE LANGUAGE NEEDS OF CIVIL ENGINEERING STUDENTS OF ST. PAUL UNIVERSITY: A BASIS FOR THE DESIGN OF EAP SYLLABI

ECSTM

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ABSTRACT

This research work is a preliminary attempt to study students' language needs using an ethnographic approach at St. Paul University (SPU), Tuguegarao, Cagayan. It is a response to the need of designing effective and relevant syllabi for the English courses in the English Program of the College of Engineering and Technology of SPU.

The ethnographic approach to needs analysis, based onthe approach of Ramani et al (1988), was chosen as the means for gathering data because it is believed that it provides a more extensive data of students' language needs compared with the other approaches like pure text analysis.

The ethnographic needs analysis was conducted by first, observing six Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering (BSCE) major courses. Second, by interviewing content teachers who handled the BSCE major courses observed. And third, by analyzing handouts and textbook chapters that contained the topics discussed during the sessions observed.

Results of the ethnographic needs analysis conducted reveal that for BSCE students to be able to function effectively in their content courses, they need the skills of reading, listening, writing, and speaking

(presented according to importance, the first being the most important).

As a result of the needs analysis conducted, four English courses were identified to meet the language needs of the BSCE students. These are 1) English 1 which concentrates on basic reading skills; 2) English 2 which deals with advanced reading and listening skills; 3) English 3 which focuses on writing skills; and 4) English 4 which deals with speaking skills.

Because English 1 and 2 cover the most important skills needed by the BSCE students for their content courses, a detailed syllabus for each of these two courses were designed.

On the basis of the results of this study, it was concluded that 1) through an ethnographic approach, BSCE students' needs can be effectively identified and specified; and that 2) based on these specified needs, skills-based syllabi can be designed for this particular group of students.

Finally, it was recommended that 1) the four English courses identified to meet the language needs of the BSCE students should comprise the English program for the same group of students; and that 2) a dynamic model of needs analysis should be conducted to a similar group of students while the syllabi designed in this study are

being tried out to evaluate the accuracy and effectiveness of the syllabi.

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