

ENGLISH LANGUAGE NEEDS OF AVIATION MANAGEMENT GRADUATES

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Abstract

English, designated as the official language of aviation, plays a vital role in the operations of aviation companies and organisations. Therefore, English proficiency is essential for aviation professionals, and educational institutions must ensure that the graduates of aviation programmes are well-equipped to meet the needs of their professional roles. This research aims at determining the English language needs of aviation management graduates of Estonian Aviation Academy to tailor the language training accordingly. By means of the qualitative research method, incorporating interviews with graduates in years 2017-2021, the study identifies how frequently English is used in the workplace, which language skills and vocabulary are mostly required, and whether the English language courses at Estonian Aviation Academy address work-related needs. Findings indicate that English is used daily, and all four language skills, speaking, listening, reading, and writing are required. Moreover, the research demonstrates that while graduates possess a foundational proficiency in English, including terminology, some improvements can be made to ensure that graduates are equipped with the necessary English skills to succeed in the international aviation industry. This research contributes to the broader discourse on English for Specific Purposes (ESP) in aviation education, providing valuable insights for curriculum developers and language instructors in similar institutions.

Key words: aviation management, four language skills, English for specific purposes, aviation English, job-related language needs, course planning, needs analysis

1. INTRODUCTION

The evolving global economy and international business environment necessitate high foreign language proficiency [1]. Foreign language skills appear to be valued during recruitment as well as employment [2]. After the World War II English became the official language of aviation worldwide and in order to be successful in this field, these professionals must possess very good English skills. According to Karjalainen and Lehtonen [2], employers emphasise that great language skills include the expertise to communicate and interact both nationally and internationally. In addition to that, these skills are crucial for effectively performing job-related tasks, which typically require a blend of subject matter expertise, language proficiency and communication skills [2].

English is the working language in many aviation companies and organisations in Estonia. Moreover, some Estonian Aviation Academy (EAVA) graduates may opt for a career abroad. Therefore, poor language skills may decrease students' chances in the labour market [3], and, on the contrary, having good English skills is one of the prerequisites of becoming employed. Thus, a tight link between English language needs in the workplace and English courses in the curriculum is paramount. To foster that link, a needs analysis, the goal of which is "to collect information that can be used to develop a profile of the language needs of a group of learners in order to be able to make decisions about the goals and content of a language course" [4], could be utilised. There is no doubt that such language course entails English for Specific Purposes (ESP) defined as "an approach to language teaching that targets the current and/or future academic or occupational needs of learners, focuses on the necessary language, genres, and skills to address these needs, and assists learners in meeting these needs through the use of general and/or discipline-specific teaching materials and methods" [5].

Research has been conducted into the interrelation between graduates' language needs in the workplace and the language courses taught at universities as well as into the English language needs of professionals working in the field of aviation. Karjalainen and Lehtonen undertook a detailed study into

occupational foreign language needs of the graduates of the University of Helsinki. The researchers employed graduate questionnaires and employer interviews to collect data, which would enable the university language centres in Finland to tailor their courses to students' future career needs. It was found that language skills are crucial for employment and career progression, though not always directly linked to salary increases. Moreover, the authors discuss that English is used for a variety of tasks, including writing texts such as memos, emails, reports and project plans, reading different texts, listening to presentations, negotiating, making phone calls, oral communication with customers and colleagues, and in international meetings and events. According to the graduates, they need improvement in the following areas: grammar, general as well as subject-specific vocabulary, courage to speak and fluency. Similarly, to the graduates, the employers believe that the graduates lack the courage to speak, but differently from the graduates emphasise the deficiency in (inter)cultural skills. [2]

Korba et al. carried out research on the language needs of aircraft mechanics in the Slovak Republic by utilising a triangular approach, comprising questionnaires, some informal interviews, and an analysis of documentation. The study reveals that training often occurs in the native language, necessitating code-switching to English for technical terms. Furthermore, the document analysis indicates that basic language structures and technical terminology must be acquired. Reading was identified as the most critical skill used by aircraft mechanics, followed by writing, listening, speaking, and general skills such as the relationship between aircraft mechanics and travelling abroad, and collaborating with foreign colleagues. However, the language training should still involve the development of all four language skills as the 15 most common communication activities identified in the research include activities from all language skills. [6]

Hidayat has studied which English language skills airline staff need and to what extent the current English syllabus at International Tourism College in Banda Aceh addresses these needs. To collect data, quantitative as well as qualitative methods, namely a questionnaire, syllabus analysis, and interviews, were employed. The research demonstrates that it is important to develop all four language skills, with a particular emphasis on communicative and speaking skills due to the nature of the job. While the syllabus generally meets students' needs, the study suggests adding content related to weather, which was identified as an important yet missing topic. In general, while the syllabus is appropriate, it would benefit from some updates to facilitate the communicative focus. [7]

Furthermore, Singh et al. conducted a needs analysis into aviation management (AM) trainees' spoken and written communication they are to engage in at the workplace, and, in addition, aimed at identifying the extent of English language usage among aviation management personnel. Similarly to Hidayat [7], Singh et al. combined qualitative and quantitative research methods, namely semi-structured interviews were conducted prior to distributing questionnaires to employ input received from the interviews in the latter. The participants consisted of aviation management personnel working in various local as well foreign aviation companies near Kuala Lumpur International Airport. Their results demonstrate that English is the common language in the aviation industry, and aviation management personnel must be proficient in all four language skills, but the dominant skills are speaking and writing, followed by reading and listening. Presentations, negotiations, meetings, networking, and other types of verbal communication were identified as the most typical speaking tasks and emails, reports, proposals, and letters as the most prevalent writing tasks. [8]

The term aviation management encompasses the essential skills necessary for coordinating aviation activities within the air transport industry. These skills include network, fleet, revenue, human resource, and operating performance management. Skilled aviation management professionals are sought after in the aviation entities depicted below. [8]

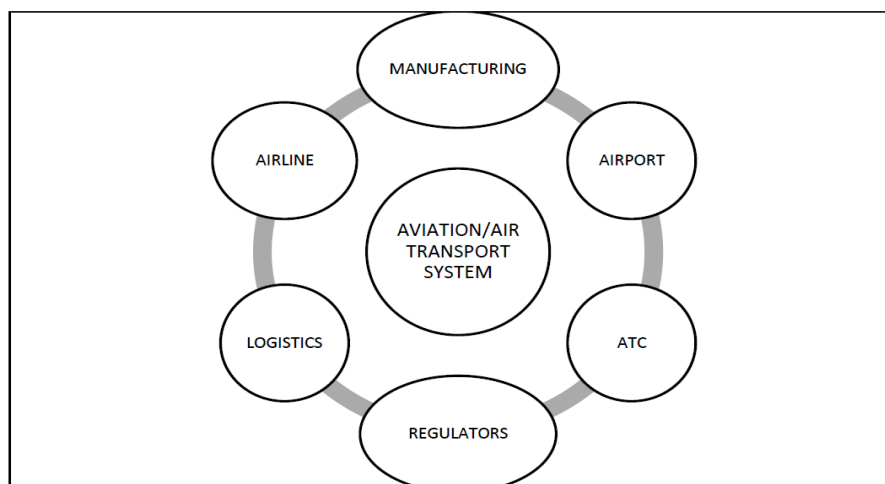


Fig. 1. Aviation industry entities [8]

Thus, aviation management personnel, who coordinate and oversee tasks within their departments, are among the industry's key stakeholders [8], and employers look for candidates with the necessary knowledge and skills to manage their departments before hiring them [9]. Essential skills include professional English communication abilities to effectively handle organisational management in both local and global contexts [8]. Therefore, it is important that highly qualified aviation management professionals are prepared at EAVA.

The number of English courses in the Aviation Management curriculum at EAVA has been different in different curriculum versions and have included ESP as well as general English. Since 2020 there is only one compulsory English course, Aviation English (6 ECTS points), in the Aviation Management curriculum and it is a three-year programme. The common goal of aviation personnel training is to ensure adequate English proficiency to reduce the number of misunderstandings, which may lead to undesirable occurrences, however, the communication requirements still vary, and, hence, aviation English training must be tailored accordingly [8]. International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) Circular 323 provides guidelines for aviation English training [10], but these are general, and apply rather to the English language training for pilots and air traffic controllers (ATCOs). Thus, no concrete guidelines exist for teaching aviation management trainees, whose remit is very wide. The content of the aviation English course at EAVA has been developed by the lecturers on the basis of brief conversations with their colleagues at the academy, and what they expect the students' needs to be in the future. This, however, may result in a skill mismatch, meaning that highly qualified graduates do not possess the skills required, and possess the skills not required as discussed by Karjalainen and Lehtonen [2]. Research indicates that education systems must better address students' learning and professional needs by collaborating more closely with employers, chambers of commerce, and other stakeholders, thereby integrating language instruction with career paths [1]. Therefore, the aim of the study was to learn what English skills the graduates of the EAVA Aviation Management programme require in the workplace so that the English language training for Aviation Management students at EAVA would address these.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

A target-situation analysis was used to pursue the aim of the research as, according to Hutchinson and Waters (cited in [6]), this type of analysis focuses on the needs of learners after they have completed the course, and it involves enquiring about the target situation. Hence, the following three research questions were formulated:

1. What are the Aviation Management graduates' work-related language needs?

2. To what extent have the English language courses at EAVA prepared the graduates for employment?
3. What amendments should be made to the English language training for Aviation Management students at EAVA?

To answer these research questions, a qualitative method of data collection was employed. Namely, together with her colleague at EAVA the author conducted ten semi-structured interviews via Zoom from 6 May to 14 October in 2022. Interviews were adopted because they enable a deeper examination of issues compared to questionnaires, though they require more time to conduct and are feasible for smaller groups [11]. The interview questions were piloted and validated by an alumnus, who was working at the academy at that time, to determine the unambiguity and clarity of the questions. It was confirmed that the questions were easily understandable, and no changes had to be made.

The Head of the Office of Academic Affairs provided the author with the list of the names of the graduates of the Aviation Management programme in years 2017 – 2021 and the Head of the Aviation Management Curriculum assisted the author in determining the interviewees. On average there were 9.2 graduates a year during the 5-year period. The participants had to meet the following criteria: firstly, 1-5 years since graduation, because after 5 years employees tend to change jobs and, secondly, working in the aviation industry. Also, the author aimed at finding candidates from different companies and positions to receive as different input as possible. In total graduates from six different aviation companies and one organization were involved in the research. At the time of the interview two interviewees were working abroad. Some had worked in one aviation company in the same position since graduation and some in several companies or in several positions in the same company. Thematic analysis was used to interpret the data gathered during the interviews.

3. RESULTS

3.1 *The use of English in the workplace*

In general, the aviation management programme graduates use or have used English at work every day. Interviewee 1 stated: *“To perform my duties, I use English every day at work because the working language at our company is English.”*

However, it depends a little on the position as there are few positions that the graduates have held or hold now, which do not require the use of English, or the usage is less frequent.

All interview participants make less small talk and have more formal, work-related conversations, in addition, emails they compose are mainly formal. Interviewee 8 mentioned: *“All emails are formal.”*

3.1.1 *Main activities at work in English*

According to the graduates, the following activities are performed in English: communicating via email; making phone calls; interacting with colleagues, clients, cooperative partners, suppliers, flight crews, cabin crews, mechanics/technicians, passengers, and stakeholders; ordering products and tracking the orders; reading different documents such as manuals, regulations, guidelines, laws, and legislation; holding meetings; dealing with problematic situations; giving feedback; generating estimates; supervising; running projects; analysing safety incidents; compiling reports; participating in training and webinars; providing training; making refunds; making work plans for mechanics; creating social media and website content; writing a newsletter; searching for information.

Interviewee 9 discussed: *“Daily communication by e-mail as well as phone is only in English. Even if a colleague of mine speaks the same language as me, which happens rarely, there is a rule established in the company that we must talk to each other in English. In addition, all kinds of manuals, regulations, and communication with cooperative partners are only in English.”*

3.1.2 Nationalities

Aviation management deems to be a truly international remit as the interviewees claimed to have been in contact with many Europeans (British, Germans, Spanish, Portuguese, Italians, Latvians, Lithuanians, Swedish, Finnish, Danish, Belgians, Austrians, Czech, French, Turkish, Russians, Maltese, Slovenians, Croats, Dutch), but also Americans, Indians, Chinese, Koreans, and African. All in all, they must be ready to communicate with the representatives of all nationalities all over the world. Interviewee 5 stated: *"To be honest, in reality with every nationality, because in general aviation we have crews and pilots coming from all over the world."*

On the other hand, meeting such a variety of people can also cause some communication issues. The speed of delivery has been problematic for some interviewees. British people tend to be more difficult to understand because of English being their mother tongue. Poor enunciation, incorrect pronunciation, strong (German, French, Turkish, Russian, Spanish, Italian, Indian) accent, using less common words or slang, and a low level of general English were also highlighted. Furthermore, mutual misunderstandings or not "being on the same page" has occurred. Interviewee 2 elaborated: *"The challenge lies in the possibility that maybe both parties do not understand the topic the same way, or something simply gets lost when the other person is speaking. You seem to be talking about the same topic, but both of you may understand differently."*

However, the graduates find experience, getting used to, or listening more carefully helpful. Moreover, it is not important to understand each word, but to understand the general idea. In addition, strategies such as asking for help from a colleague, asking to repeat, clarifying, and using body language have been useful. Interviewee 9 discussed: *"It takes time, you ask clarifying questions, but it is still manageable. Nothing is impossible."*

3.1.3 Four language skills

Some graduates use all four language skills equally in their current position. Interviewee 3 explained: *"I would say that all skills are used pretty much to the same extent in the current position."* However, some use one or two skills more often than the other skills. Interviewee 10 stated: *"Writing is definitely a dominant skill."* Therefore, a conclusion can be drawn that the usage varies according to the position, and different skills are dominant in different positions.

The frequency of using speaking skills varies according to the position as well as work period. Many interviewees use speaking skills every day, the others nearly every day or a few times a week. Speaking skills are used during negotiations with clients; meetings; when interacting with colleagues, employers, clients, flight crews, cabin crews, technicians, and passengers; for networking; relaying information and/or work orders; discussing work-related issues with colleagues; conducting interviews; making phone calls; conducting training courses; making presentations; making airport boarding gate announcements; making sales; and making small talk. Interviewee 2 discussed: *"Sometimes I talk to a technician and discuss some kind of task to reach a mutual understanding because you can understand the text in manuals differently, and you can miss some of the information. Therefore, sometimes there have been situations when it has proved to be necessary to discuss the procedures."*

Most of the graduates use writing skills every day. Writing skills are most frequently used for email composition. Interviewee 8 mentioned: *"Mainly I write emails, where I have to express myself in sufficient detail to receive satisfactory replies."* Emails are written, for example, to clients, colleagues, suppliers, cooperative partners, carriers, and passengers. Some interviewees highlighted the following topics of the emails: placing orders, giving feedback, and making requests. Moreover, writing skills are used for filling in forms, for example, related to certification, transport, projects, and technicians' work plans. Furthermore, the graduates have written documents such as risk analysis, social media analysis, justification for the amendment, procedures, procurement specifications, and even a manual. Lastly, the following writing tasks were described: writing reports, for example, tax reports; compiling training material; making transcripts; taking minutes of meetings; preparing PowerPoint presentation slides; writing social media content; writing a newsletter; writing text to marketing materials including banners, placards, and notebooks; preparing job advertisements; and in chats like Teams and WhatsApp. Thus, there is a remarkable variety in the texts written.

Reading skills are used either every day or nearly every day by the graduates. This is probably because aviation is a strictly regulated industry, and, to a lesser or greater extent, all positions involve reading regulations and manuals. The aforementioned skill involves reading the following texts: international regulations, especially European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) and European Commission (EC) ones; ICAO as well as International Air Transport Association (IATA) standards and guidelines; laws and legislation; certificates; different manuals such as aircraft manuals, airline-specific ground operations manuals, and dangerous goods manuals. It requires skill and experience to navigate in and comprehend such long texts and having mastered skimming as well as scanning techniques is an advantage for the reader. Interviewee 9 acknowledged: *“Reading regulations is harder and requires deeper concentration as the regulations are 1500-2000 pages long and you must find the right piece of information and understand that correctly. In addition, the kind of text used in regulations is very formal and uses slightly legal language.”* In addition to long texts, graduates mentioned reading shorter texts, for example, guidelines; work orders; documentation related to new technologies, systems, descriptions of procedures, projects, policies, master plans, programmes, and agency business plans; service letters; emails; maintenance logs; training documents; meeting minutes; contracts; LinkedIn posts; popular science articles; articles published by EASA and IATA; and searching for information on the Internet.

Depending slightly on the position and similarly to reading skills, listening skills are used either every day or nearly every day by the aviation management graduates. Often, they apply listening skills to listen to the conversation partner and understand the oral message as precisely as possible. Moreover, listening skills are utilised when watching training videos, listening to presentations, radiotelephony communication, attending training courses, and webinars, also in meetings, fairs, and during phone calls. Interviewee 9 described: *“You never knew who on the other end of the line was, but you had to understand the message. Moreover, if the pilot was somewhere at an airport, in a noisy environment and English was not their mother tongue, you really had to focus and try hard to understand what they wanted and what their concerns were.”*

3.1.4 Terminology

In their position many graduates need technical vocabulary consisting of terminology related to aircraft construction, parts of aircraft, tools, spare parts, and transportation. Interviewee 1 said: *“I use terminology related to the parts of aircraft like wings, landing gear, engines, and smaller objects such as screw, bolt, which are not directly related to aviation, but which I use a lot. I would say there is a lot of terminology related to transportation, not only aviation transportation.”* Moreover, the usage of the following terminology was highlighted: parts inside a cargo hold; logistics; maintenance; ground handling; airfield; airport equipment; navigation aids; security; vocabulary concerning Aircraft Operator Certificate (AOC); legal terms; business English; purchasing goods; policies and legal framework of Air Traffic Management (ATM); accounting; and finally a wide range of abbreviations /acronyms. Interviewee 4 discussed: *“We have to use a lot of different terms that relate to, for example, the field of air traffic control, aircraft maintenance, continuing airworthiness management. Also, everything related to ground handling and of course airport operation, the provision of air navigation services. We use acronyms a lot - as is common in aviation. Interviewee 9 concludes the usage of terminology: “Basically, I’d say, aviation specific as well as business English vocabulary is used a lot.”*

3.2 Preparation for employment

All graduates have passed general, aviation, and business English courses at EAVA. The graduates believe these courses mostly addressed their work-related language needs. The relevance of the language courses differs between the graduates probably due to the tasks they have undertaken and the challenges they have faced in their job. Some find the internship even more valuable compared to the theoretical language courses because of being more practical, directly related to the field, and in-depth. Some feel they were lacking specific technical vocabulary, scanning skills for reading long texts, and were not so familiar with the language used in regulations and manuals when starting the job. However, the development of reading and speaking skills, public speaking skills in English, the familiarity with acronyms, and aviation, general as well as business English terminology has proven to be useful. Interviewee 3 explained: *“I remember some exercises well, and the vocabulary that was used there is*

very useful for what I read, listen to, write, and speak here in the workplace. I would say that it has proven to be useful."

Many graduates state having acquired the basic aviation terminology related to parts of aircraft, security, airfield; business terminology; and acronyms during the language courses at the academy. Interviewee 5 said: *"The knowledge gained during the studies facilitated my understanding of aviation terminology and integration into the field of aviation - easier during training courses, easier to communicate with flight crews and understand their concerns. Very good basic knowledge was acquired, especially if the job does not require specific vocabulary."* On the other hand, some state that they expanded their aviation terminology mostly while being an Erasmus student at a university abroad.

Many graduates recall practising all four language skills to a greater or lesser extent during the English language courses at EAVA, but not always in an aviation context. Interviewee 1 discussed: *"I remember doing listening tasks, where you had to understand the message or fill some gaps. These I definitely remember. Then, regarding reading tasks I can remember answering questions about the text. Furthermore, there was pair work where we had to discuss a topic. Moreover, we had to make presentations, where you had to write on slides at first, and then present it. Regarding writing there were mainly grammar exercises."*

The graduates recall speaking skills being enhanced via discussions in pairs, presentations, role-plays, for example, buying and selling aircraft. Being in the same group with Erasmus students in the language course and engaging in pair and group work with them was found extremely valuable. Listening skills were practised with the help of listening to various accents, radiotelephony conversations between pilots and air traffic controllers; and doing exercises like filling gaps, listening for gist, and making notes. Reading skills were improved via reading different types of texts, answering questions about the text, and doing gap-fill tasks. Finally, writing skills received the least attention, however, some exercises like preparing presentation slides and doing grammar exercises contributed slightly to the development of writing skills.

On the other hand, few graduates cannot recall practising different language skills, and, in their opinion, emphasis was rather on aviation-specific terminology acquisition. Interviewee 9 stated: *"I would say that the development of speaking skills was rather in the background."* Moreover, some believe understanding a more complicated text, finding necessary information in the text, and practising writing skills was rather in the background.

Even if the graduates did not possess all necessary English skills at the time of graduation, they had the prerequisites for independently acquiring terminology needed in the workplace. Interviewee 7 said: *"I think it (the English language courses at EAVA) provides the basis for acquiring more specific vocabulary."* They find that internship and doing various practical tasks during their studies greatly contributed to the preparation.

3.3 Further developments in Aviation Management curriculum regarding ESP

Many graduates feel that the number of the English language courses (worth 14 ECTS points) during their four-year programme was optimum. However, a few graduates think the amount of the English courses in AM curriculum at the time of their studies was minimum, and they would have preferred an even bigger number of ESP courses. Interviewee 1 discussed: *"I think it is a minimum. I personally felt that I would have liked more. I mean, there were a lot of subjects taught in English, but I felt like not developing enough in English and perhaps specifically in the field of aviation English during these courses."*

The alumni interviewed had an opportunity to do a language proficiency test, namely Cambridge Business English exam, at the end of their business English course. The expenses were covered by the academy. All interviewees think such an option should remain, but the exam must not be compulsory. Interviewee 7 declared: *"It is extremely useful if someone wants to continue their studies or work abroad, therefore, the opportunity should remain. If I remember correctly, it used to be voluntary, and it should remain like that."*

Furthermore, to enhance the quality of the English courses in the AM curriculum at EAVA and tailor these courses more effectively to the graduates' work-related needs, several recommendations were made by the interviewees. Firstly, the number of English courses in the curriculum could be increased, or most subjects, especially the ones closely related to aviation, should be taught in English to familiarise students with the variety of speciality vocabulary and enhance its consolidation. Interviewee 9 expressed even a more radical idea: *"In my opinion, the entire curriculum could be in English. To be honest, I do not know most expressions in Estonian, I cannot write a formal letter in Estonian anymore because I have never needed it professionally."* In addition, utilising more foreign lecturers as well as mixing AM and Erasmus students in a study group would expose the students to a more natural English environment. Even greater emphasis should be placed on the development of reading, speaking and writing skills, while also ensuring a strong focus on grammar. Students should be taught to read and comprehend regulations and manuals; to use scanning skills in reading; to structure formal emails correctly; and more presentations and discussions should be included in the studies to increase students' confidence in speaking English. Furthermore, coverage of a variety of topics via combining business and aviation English must be assured to cater for the diverse job opportunities available to AM graduates. Interviewee 6 said: *"I think learning business English, aviation English and public speaking in English are very useful, general English not so as we can practise that everywhere."* Moreover, regarding terminology, it was advised to include vocabulary related to ground handling to the ESP course. In addition, it was suggested that language teachers collaborate with students who have completed internships to incorporate relevant skills and terminology into the ESP course. Finally, it is paramount to ensure a consistent presence of English during the studies to reinforce vocabulary and prioritise continuity. Interviewee 1 concluded nicely: *"In my experience, language learning is very important at school, and it is very difficult to do without it, especially in the aviation sector. I see people who have problems with English. Often there is the possibility that the employer provides support regarding English courses. But I can see that it is difficult for people and requires so much energy from them. I think that this kind of preparation at school before starting your career is very important. When I started to work in my company, I immediately understood that everything is in English and, therefore, I felt much more comfortable here."*

4. DISCUSSION

The research supports the significance of English proficiency within the global aviation industry [1] and correlates with the findings of Singh et al. study [8] that English is lingua franca in the aviation sector as the EAVA AM graduates also use English daily at work. In addition, all four language skills are used in the workplace similarly to the findings [6,7,8], however, the frequency of the usage and the dominance of one over another is dependent on a specific professional role. The latter differs from Singh et al.'s study, which proved the dominance of speaking and writing skills over reading and listening among aviation management personnel [8].

Moreover, the research shows some similarities in the tasks that the graduates perform compared to the previous studies. EAVA AM graduates write memos, emails, reports, and project plans; read different texts; listen to presentations; negotiate; make phone calls; establish oral communication with customers and colleagues; and also use English in networking, meetings, and events as also found by Karjalainen and Lehtonen [2], and Singh et al. [8].

As proven by Hidayat [7], in general, the English courses at EAVA meet the needs of AM graduates, but some updates to the AM curriculum regarding the English courses are still beneficial. For example, as also discussed by Karjalainen and Lehtonen [2], the graduates state having lacked some of the subject specific vocabulary when commencing the job and confidence to speak. Moreover, at the beginning of the career the graduates experienced deficiencies in scanning skills for reading long texts, and they were not so familiar with the language used in regulations and manuals, and, therefore, these proved to be difficult to comprehend.

Some key recommendations can be derived from the study. Firstly, a continuous exposure to English is vital. The latter could be achieved either via incorporation of more ESP courses into the curriculum or

teaching aviation-related subjects in English. Secondly, there should be even greater focus on speaking skills to boost students' confidence in oral communication; reading skills to comprehend regulations, manuals, and other critical documentation; and writing skills to feel more comfortable with producing formal texts. Moreover, although business English is not currently among the compulsory courses in the curriculum, according to the research, the English language training should include both business and aviation English to prepare the graduates for a wide range of professional roles. In addition to that, engaging foreign lecturers and attending courses together with Erasmus students exposes students to diverse accents, thereby making them more adaptable in their future working environment, which proves to be international as shown by the study. Furthermore, language teachers should collaborate with students who have completed internship to identify and incorporate relevant terminology into the curriculum closely aligning the language training with job requirements.

5. CONCLUSION

English plays a significant role in aviation business operations. Aviation management professionals are among the industry's key stakeholders [8], and effective communication in English is essential for them to complete job-related tasks that require a combination of subject matter expertise and language proficiency, which, in turn, ensures safety and efficiency in aviation operations. The research was mainly triggered by the author's need to tailor the Aviation Management students' Aviation English course to their actual language needs, namely what terminology, topics, and which of the English language skills should be addressed. Utilising the results of the research possibly increases students' motivation, ESP training is tailored to the students' actual needs, and the students are better prepared for their professional roles. Moreover, understanding the language and communication demands in the workplace enables the academy to design the degree requirements and the whole curriculum more effectively [2].

The research demonstrates that the dominance of one language skill over another and vocabulary requirement is position specific. However, due to the wide range of job opportunities within the career spectrum, the study identifies the necessity of developing all four language skills among aviation management trainees and covering the basic vocabulary from various subfields. Moreover, according to the graduates, the language courses mostly satisfied their work-related language needs, however, some updates to the language module of the AM curriculum prove necessary.

As a result of the study, some changes have already been made to the syllabus of the aviation English course, especially regarding the development of reading and writing skills. There is greater focus on reading longer texts such as regulations, and also writing formal emails is practised. In addition, more subjects are taught in English in the AM curriculum, a bigger number of foreign lecturers is utilised, and study groups are comprised of a mixture of AM, Erasmus and the students of other specialities to provide a more natural use of English and consolidate speciality vocabulary. Furthermore, the results of the research might be a valuable source of information for similar institutions teaching aviation management trainees to better align the content of their ESP courses with language skills needed in the workplace.

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