Abstract

The purpose of this study is to examine the appropriateness of the Korean police English test, to analyze the test types, to discuss the related issues, and to find out the effective employment method of police officers by conducting more efficient English test. This study examines the types of police English tests currently being conducted and looks at how they relate to police job relevance and how helpful they are. The results of the study are as follows.

The current police English test is presented as a multiple choice type, and it is judged to be a type that examines the degree of knowledge related to English, not the type that assesses the actual use ability of English. It is designed to find the correct answers based on the candidate's grammar and vocabulary knowledge, so it does not have much effect on practical help when using English in real working environment. In a real working environment, when a common police officer uses English, communication and understanding based on mutual communication become a prerequisite. However, current testing does not meet these requirements. Therefore, the items used in the police recruitment test also need to be modified to meet the conditions. The most appropriate type of test for assessing English proficiency is judged to be essay writing and in-depth interview. This test type is effective in identifying the candidate's language proficiency and expressiveness. Changes in the type of English test will have a direct impact on the police work activities and should be improved with close attention.

Keywords] Foreign-Affairs Police, Police Recruitment Test, Foreigner-Related Crimes, ESP & EOP Training, Problem-Solving Ability

1. Introduction

English learning in Korea has a considerable impact on the selection process of career groups. The most essential skills in the era of globalization are related to the recognition of English communication skills as the most essential condition, and as a result English tests are included as an integral part of the majority of employment and selection exams in Korea. Many civil servant candidates including police officers spend a lot of time and effort to prepare for the English test but there is a strong concern that the test is not linked to job utility. It is recognized that the English test, which is included as a required course in the police officer examination, is not practicable because it is not linked to the job performance of the police officer in reality[1]. In order to improve the problems of the police English test, it is necessary to introduce the test of the English ability test focusing on the communication ability evaluation type instead of the test question type of the discrimination test using the high-level vocabulary which is practically not that useful in the real world. Official police officer tests for police recruitment include English courses for assessing applicants' English ability and diagnosing basic competencies to perform job
skills. It is a common conclusion that all police officers who have passed the examination of police officers which have such a role should meet the precondition that they have the basic English ability. However, there are various research results that the English ability of police officers in Korea is below expectations. This is because the English test which aims to test the English proficiency of the candidates does not reflect the actual situation accordingly it is not effective for cultivating the English ability needed in the actual work environment after the applicants are appointed. This study examines the limitations and improvement points of the Korean police English test and to improve the English proficiency of the police officers by applying a better method of recruiting police recruiting English test. The practical effectiveness of the police English test needs to be enhanced through correlating test type with the job relevance. In result, it will help to improve the quality and quantity of foreign crime handling and civil service.

2. Theoretical Background

2.1. Increasing numbers of foreign visitors

According to the statistics of the Korea Tourism Organization(KTO), the number of tourists visiting Korea from 2016 to 2018 have an annual average of more than 15 million visitors.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>17,241,823</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>13,335,758</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>15,346,879</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Korea Tourism Organization: http://kto.visitkorea.or.kr/

Compared with past, the number of foreign visitors has increased dramatically and the number of foreigners visiting Korea is expected to increase even more in the future considering the consequence.

The nationality of tourists is very diverse, and visitors from Asian countries are the most frequent visitors. This phenomenon is a natural result considering the regional characteristics. However, considering the development of transportation and the trend of globalization, it is expected that more diverse visitors will increase in the future.

Table 2. Number of visitors by Region.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>2018.7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Asia</td>
<td>1,014,416</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>America</td>
<td>112,761</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Europe</td>
<td>88,304</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oceania</td>
<td>14,735</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AFRICA</td>
<td>5,055</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle East Asia</td>
<td>21,810</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Korea Tourism Organization: http://kto.visitkorea.or.kr/

These tourists would definitely prefer to use their mother tongue for communication, but if they cannot use their most preferred language, they will have to use the most popular lingua franca, English. Foreigners who are staying in Korea for a short or long term also use English for communication. This is because English is the language with the most extensive linguistic characteristics that people in different native languages use to communicate with each other. In result, the result of the status of the English language as the lingua franca is becoming stronger. In recent years, 'Gloish(Global + English)', which uses simple expressions, is gaining popularity in non-English speaking countries[2][3]. It is considered that approximately 1.5 billion people worldwide are able to communicate in English.

2.2. Status of crime and civil complaints related to foreign residents in Korea

In response to the growing number of foreign-related crimes and civil service, the need for professional coping personnel has arisen, and foreign police and tourism police have been formed to deal with related matters[4][5]. Figure 1 illustrates foreign-related case processing status from 2009 to 2018. In 2017 and 2018, related figures are falling because of the decrease in Chinese visitors due to diplomatic problems. Not all police officers who have passed the police appointment test are required to be fluent enough to speak English similar to a native speaker. It is not practical for all police officers to learn and
use English fluently, and it is true that there is no need for officially appointed officers to be fluent English speakers. Nonetheless, police officers must have basic English speaking abilities because they have a duty to protect Koreans and foreigners and provide related services due to the job characteristics of the police role. It can be seen that the police officers should be able to communicate basically with the foreigners staying in Korea according to the background of the globalized era. In the domestic situation where foreign residents and tourists exceed 15 million people per year, the problem of language communication inconvenienced by foreigners is one of the main factors that make foreigners visiting Korea hesitate to visit again. Therefore, a realistic solution is needed to solve these problems.

3. Police English test Needs

3.1. Professional workforce shortages

Foreign professional police in Korea are divided into two categories, foreign-affairs police and tourist police. The proportion of foreign-affairs police officers specializing in foreign language work among police officers is very low compared to the ratio of foreigners residing in or visiting Korea. It is not realistic for foreign-affairs police officers to be able to put on the scene immediately or to help them in the process of handling emergency work against foreigners. In the case of foreign-affairs police officers, the majority of police officers are selected from open recruitment and the proportion of foreign-affairs police officers who didn’t receive professional training is over 30%.

The main tasks of foreign-affairs police are based on helping to facilitate international investigation and international exchange and cooperation. In addition, the activities of foreign-affairs police officers are not limited to domestic ones but have a characteristic of handling a wide range of tasks such as international cooperation activities[6]. These police officers have the specificity to be fluent in foreign language to deal with foreign-related crime and investigation but due to lack of manpower they neglect to deal with general crime or civil service. Of the 244 police stations, there is not one where there are independent foreign affairs departments. In addition, since there are not any foreign-affairs police officers in more than 60 police stations, police officers who are in charge of other duties perform foreign affairs duties.

In addition to foreign-affairs police officers, a tourist police officer who deals with the tasks of tourists is also present in the police of Korea and is carrying out actual work. The duty of Korea’s tourism police is to protect foreigners who are primarily tourists from
crime and minimize the inconvenience of tourists through tourist related service activities. However, the ratio of tourist police is not high, and most of them are located in famous tourist areas and only limited activities are being performed. Therefore, the need for English language ability of general police officers is increasing more and more.

There are fundamentally three methods that can be proposed to solve this problem. First, there is a way to reduce the proportion of workload done per foreign-affairs police officer through the increase of external manpower. This means that there is a burden of considerable time and expense in establishing and implementing a systematic workforce increase plan for the related research and the expansion of the budget for the training of professional manpower. Second, there is an option to improve the job ability of current police officers and candidates at the stage of employment through thorough verification and training on foreign language proficiency ability that affects the utility of civil service and crime. Third, supporting the task of handling foreign tourists and foreign residents in Korea through the increase of tourist police forces would be a possible scheme. Among these measures, the increase of the foreign-affairs police and the tourist police cause the increase of the budget scale, so there is a necessity of support from the government at the initiative level, and the enlargement of the tax burden can cause side effects such as tax resistance. Considering the current situation of international exchange increase, it is considered that the most effective and practical method is to utilize the existing manpower by enhancing the international police crime and complaint handling service ability of the general police force[7]. In order to do this, it is imperative to revise the current police English test and improve the test type so that the assigned police officers can efficiently deal with foreign affairs.

3.2. Police English test type analysis

The number and content of the questionnaires in the 2019 English Police Tests are as follows: Grammar (4 items) 20%, Vocabulary (5 items) 25%, Everyday English (1 item) 5%, Reading (10 items) 50%. The test questions types have maintained the same as the past police examinations in terms of the type and difficulty of the question types. Like the previous English tests in police, there is a strong tendency to maintain the same type of arrangement.

Unlike the rapidly changing modern society and the domestic environment, the police English test, which consists of 20 questions that seem to be obsessed with discriminating type, is focused on finding out the applicants’ common knowledge of English grammar and their vocabulary[8]. This is not enough to assess the applicant’s ability to use English, and these types of tests do not help to perform tasks in a working environment of the police officers.

At present, the English test of police officers in Korea is presented as a multiple choice question type like the other subjects. In countries such as the United States and Japan, language proficiency and expressiveness are evaluated through essay writing and interview. In Korea, the test questions are given in a multiple choice form and there is a question as to whether this multiple-choice type of test is effective in assessing applicants’ abilities[1].

There are advantages and disadvantages of essay test and multiple choice test forms. Descriptive items are effective in dealing with complex abilities such as creativity, judgment, and logical thinking ability through evaluation of a wide range of knowledge, but they have difficulty in scoring criteria and acquisition of securing fairness. On the other hand, the multiple-choice type has a high standard of scoring and objectivity, but has a weakness in evaluating high intellectual ability of the candidates[9]. In the evaluation of logical judgment ability to comprehensively evaluate the qualities that the police officer should possess, judge that the descriptive problem-solving method is more appropriate. Therefore, applicant’s expressive power and logical power should be evaluated through the descriptive type test, essay writing, and in-depth English interview.
3.3. Usefulness of English proficiency in selection of professional manpower in police force

Korea is relatively safe and secure, but foreigners who are unfamiliar with the culture can feel relative instability. For this reason, the introduction of tourism police has been planned and implemented. The main duty of the tourist police is to prevent crime in tourist area, to maintain basic order, and to resolve the complaints about tourist inconveniences. As the foreign-affairs police officers, the tourist police officers are basically composed of police force that are fluent in foreign languages[10]. The foreign language that is used as the selection criterion of tourism police in Korea is limited to English, Chinese and Japanese. Since the nationality of foreigners visiting Korea is very diverse, there are opinions that the range of foreign languages should be expanded in the selection regulations. In addition, the percentage of domestic visitors is the highest among Chinese and Japanese but the ratio of foreign language proficiency in tourist police is known to be English.

Based on the suggested fact, it is argued that foreign language speakers other than English should be preferentially selected, but this is caused by the mistake of determining the means of communication based on the nationality of visiting foreigners. The most popular language used by people using different native languages for communication is English. This phenomenon can be applied anywhere in the world. The best language for communicating ideas and opinions among people using different languages is their mother tongue. However, it is not possible to construct a police force capable of speaking all kinds of languages in the world, so it is assumed reasonable to use the language by mutual agreement as the criteria for selection of a tourist police to enable minimum communication[11]. Unless everyone can understand others’ native language, the best language for mutual communication is the most popular lingua franca, English[12][13].

4. Fluency Improvement Plan

4.1. Applying ESP training

ESP has a goal-oriented character rather than an English education that focuses on learning English. It is designed not only to learn practical English but also to help the learner to communicate in working environment[14][15]. Therefore, ESP learning with high level of practical relevance in English learning process is effective for job utility[16][17]. The most important areas of English proficiency that primary police need to deal with foreigners are speaking, listening, and reading areas. This is the most basic and essential part of communication through language. After acquiring these skills, it is appropriate to learn writing areas. In result, the process of evaluating the applicant’s English ability through examinations, speaking and listening should be considered the most important. The English proficiency test that the police English test should aim for should be based on the EOP, which is a kind of ESP[18][19]. Candidates are encouraged to improve their English skills through Task Based Language Learning that meets the English proficiency test based on EOP. It is necessary to select the most important contents for job performance through the job analysis as the type of the English test for police and apply the most necessary communication skills in job performance to English proficiency evaluation[20].

If we look at the current types of police English test questions, there are basically 4 vocabulary items, 5 grammar items, 10 reading comprehension, and 1 everyday English comprehension. These tendencies have been maintained for the past 4 ~ 5 years. In the domestic situation where foreigner crime and civil complaints are increasing, English test for police officers cannot be considered as a standard for evaluating the English ability required for the work ability applicable to the actual working environment. Thus, current English test needs to be reorganized into English proficiency test items that match reality. In order to verify the applicant’s actual English ability, the test should be replaced with a type of question that can confirm the problem-solving ability in actual work activities regarding foreign visitors.
4.2. English proficiency improvement plan utilizing ESL classroom environment

What is needed in the police English proficiency assessment is the kind of ability assessment used in the ESL environment. The ESL classroom environment is based on a communicative teaching environment between a teacher and learners comprising less than 10 students. The instructor describes the vocabulary, grammar, culture, etc. in the target language and gives the explanation and usage of the syntax used in the specific situation. The learners do not accept class contents passively, but they actively ask questions and acquire the familiarity of the target language through the process of learning while using the contents of the learning directly or indirectly in the classroom environment[21]. When dealing with foreigners, it is often necessary to use English which has a strong tendency as an official international language.

Explanation based on communication with foreigners is necessary in the process of civil service or legal proceedings related to foreigners. Accordingly, it is very similar to the ESL class environment that it is possible to reach problem solving through mutual communication of situation explanation and process description of foreigners. Therefore, if a police officer is selected by applying English interviews and essay tests that are not multiple choice questions like the current police English test, the selected police officers will be able to communicate more efficiently using English than they are now. In addition, it is expected that the method of learning for the candidates who prepare for the police recruitment test will be changed according to the type of the police test, which will contribute to the gradual improvement of police English ability.

These results will help to resolve the heavy workload of foreign-affairs police officers and tourism police officers who are in charge of special duties. It also brings about the effect of increasing the work efficiency of the general police force. In the current police English test, there are questions that evaluate the knowledge of language rather than the ability to use language in evaluating the applicant’s English ability. If the police are to use English in the course of their work, they need practical skills rather than knowledge of the language[22]. Therefore, there is a need to evaluate the functional use of English, not knowledge of English.

5. Conclusion

The number of foreigners who visit or reside in Korea is increasing, and the number of police officers for providing crime and civil service related to them is also increasing. However, the increase in police workforce is failing to follow the increase in foreign-related work. In order to solve this problem more effectively, it is necessary to use the current manpower to cope effectively, rather than merely approaching from the perspective of increasing human resources. Therefore, this study presents the problems and remedies of the police English test which is currently being implemented as a countermeasure for solving problems related to foreigners, and suggests ways to improve the work capacity of the police officers rather than increase the number of special duty officers such as foreign-affairs and tourist police. As the demand of police to solve foreign affairs will increase, it is imperative to take prompt action.

6. References

6.1. Journal articles


6.2. Books


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