

Publication state: Japan  
ISSN: 2423-8279

Publisher: J-INSTITUTE  
Website: <http://www.j-institute.jp>

Corresponding author  
E-mail: [nayltd@semyung.ac.kr](mailto:nayltd@semyung.ac.kr)

Peer reviewer  
E-mail: [editor@j-institute.jp](mailto:editor@j-institute.jp)

<http://dx.doi.org/10.22471/police.2018.3.1.01>

© 2018 J-INSTITUTE

## Actual Improvement Plan of the English Language Proficiency of Tourism POLICE in KOREA

Yi Jae-il<sup>1</sup>

*Semyung University, Jecheon, Republic of Korea*

### Abstract

*Purpose; The purpose of this study is to examine and analyze the English ability and operation status of the Korean tourism police officers, to find out the problems, and to find out more effective tourism police officer's English ability according to the characteristics of the tourism police.*

*For this purpose, we examined the English ability of the tourism police officers who are performing actual work, and analyzed the importance of English ability in accordance with some of the representative cases in tourist attractions around the world. Also, this study analyzed the problems and difficulties of English language ability that tourism police officers consider to be important in real work environment in order to make improvements in current English test and education system.*

*As a result of examining the cases of foreign tourism police, the most common case of English utterance is when they need to give help in solving the inconveniences of foreign tourists while enjoying the visit in tourist attractions. The necessity of English was most emphasized in speaking and listening to the basic vocabulary and expressions used by foreign tourists, and the difference of accent by culture was one of the factors that caused difficulties in mutual communication. The main topic of communication between foreign tourists and tourism police officers was mainly on asking and responding to directions, giving some explanation of the tourism sites, taking complaints of various inconveniences around the attraction spots. Therefore, it is necessary to design the test and curriculum for a special purpose English required by the tourism police in order to meet the actual work condition.*

**[Keywords]** Policing, Tourism Police, ESP, English Proficiency, Functional Use

## 1. Introduction

The number of foreign tourists visiting Korea has been steadily increasing, exceeding 10million by 2012 and has reached 14.2 million by 2014. In addition to the increasing number of foreign tourists, the number of reported inconveniences by foreign tourists has also increased resulting in 1093 cases in 2012, 1107 cases in 2013, 1154 cases in 2014, and 1310 cases in 2016, respectively. However, there was a slight fall in numbers during 2015 because of the MERS(Middle East Respiratory Syndrome) incident[1].

■Table 1. Reported tourist inconvenience case.

Year	Total number received
2012	1,093
2013	1,107
2014	1,154
2015	1,061
2016	1,310

The National Police Agency promoted the introduction of tourism police, judging that illegal activities targeting foreign tourists might cause dissatisfaction of Korean tourists and make them hesitant to visit Korea again.

The National Police Agency promoted the introduction of tourism police, judging that illegal activities targeting foreign tourists might cause dissatisfaction of Korean tourists and make them hesitant to visit Korea again. In October 2013, the National Police Agency held a ceremony for the opening of the Tourism Police under the slogan, "A tourism police officer with excellent foreign language ability will solve the inconvenience of foreign tourists visiting Korea". The Ministry of Tourism Police announced that the organization was composed of police with excellent foreign language ability at the time. However, 63% of the interviewees scored less than 40 points out of 50 points scale which is lower than the average score of auxiliary police officers.

Also, the TOEIC score, between 650 to 800 points, of the police officer which was submitted as the reference data was found to be insufficient to categorize their language proficiency as top class. In the case of Chinese, HSK 3<sup>rd</sup> ~4<sup>th</sup> grade certificate was submitted, which is considered the elementary and intermediate level. These certificates even lower than the basic qualification of the tourist interpreter who needs to send in a certificate of HSK level 5 or above[2]. Therefore, it is necessary to improve the basic English fluency level of the tourism police and the needs for ESP(English for Special Purpose) education must be followed to deal with illegal acts against foreign tourists and resolve complaints. ESP refers to English for special purpose which focuses on improving English proficiency for situational environment as opposed to learning general English skills. According to the universal classification method, ESP is divided into English for Academic Purposes(EAP) and English for Occupational Purposes(EOP).

The English language course was not sufficient enough to meet the needs of learners who needed to learn English for specific purposes. As a result, the study of ESP emerged during the 1960s. The importance of learning ESP has emerged due to the need for English learning to meet specific objectives as the combination of the specificity of English language. Foreign language learners generally learn the target language with a sense of the

necessity to learn the target language. Therefore, the most important factor in ESP course/test design is to go through a thorough learner centered needs analysis. As a result, an empirical examination of the effectiveness of English tests, one of the prerequisites in the process of recruiting police officers, is needed and it can be considered that the tourism police officers need special education and test that can confirm the verification of actual English proficiency[3][4][5].

In this study, we navigate the current English test that is being conducted in the police officer recruitment process in the purpose of finding out the effectiveness and give resolution on improving the English course and test to meet the tourism officers' needs according to their work environment.

## 2. Preceding Research

### 2.1. Preceding researches

Police officers perform individual tasks to protect the public, arrest criminals, supervise and regulate illegal activities to provide guidance and civil service. Therefore, it is important to recruit talented individual with appropriate skills for completing the given task. Even after they are employed, it is necessary to allocate them in appropriate departments through Job Analysis. Due to the nature of the tourism police duty, countering illegal activities against foreign tourist and resolving complaints, the importance of recruiting talented candidate who has appropriate capacity in foreign language skills and educating target language to make them able to deal with the unique working environment.

The recruiting test of the police officers are designed to meet the following criteria and the English test, which is one of the test subjects, is designed with the same premises[6].

•Table 2. Principles of examination.

Equal opportunities for applicants
Predict candidate's job ability, behavior, post-exam mind-set
Assessing potential of the candidate
Evaluate and rank candidate's grades transparently and objectively

These criteria are designed to make it easier to rank all the candidates by sorting out whether the candidates test score is above or under the pass/fail level. In the case of the English test, there is a considerable gap between the test scores and the actual language used in the working environment or the needs of the tourism officers. Thus, it is necessary to introduce ESP education and test which can offer practical help for those who need it.

In the field of ESP, centered in Korea, there are not so many studies related with the situational distinctiveness of tourism police. In addition, from a practical point of view, English proficiency of tourism police officers who deals with foreign tourists is not good enough to meet the needs of tourists[2].

In the case of an English test for police officers, a reasonable ESP test and curricula should be introduced that is designed to help learners to develop their English skills in accordance with the unique characteristics of their work environment.

According to a survey of police officers working in well-known tourist areas in foreign countries, the most commonly used field in the use of English language is speaking and listening followed by reading and writing among the four categories. These results can be regarded as natural when we look at the priority of English usage situation for tourism police. The following is the priority ranking of work situation in which police officers need to use English in the tourist attractions areas[7][8].

1. Responding to foreign tourist's questions and problem solving.
2. Phone or face to face conversation.
3. Questioning& taking statements.
4. Giving directions.
5. Recovering lost and stolen goods.
6. Explaining emergency issues.
7. Dialogue on Historical/tourist sites.

Mutual communication between the tourist and police officers is quite important factor as it can be seen from above and the tourism officers also recognized as the most important element for acquiring job efficiency[9].In result, when designing an English test or course, it must be focused on speaking and listening training among the four areas of English. Also, in an actual working environment of the tourism police, Officers are faced with the some difficulties such as fast speaking speed of foreign tourist, grammatical punctuation, lack of vocabulary, and opportunities of actual practice.

In general, tourism police work should be focused on the functional use of English because they are likely to use English for questions and answers or responding to help requests from foreign tourists. As a result, developing and designing a curriculum that fist the tourism police needs, a class or test that can reinforce the basic communication skills of English, should be emphasized[10][11].

### 3. Applying ESP in Course & Test

The role of tourism police is to protect tourists from crimes related to tourism and to minimize the inconvenience of tourists related activities and services[12].

Tourism police in Greece, famous for having many famous tourist destinations, are comprised of officers specifically trained in foreign languages. Their primary duty is to provide information to their citizens and foreign tourists, and to help them by solving tourism-related problems. Therefore, in case of tourism police, focusing on communication with the tourist in terms of providing tourist services and convenience, differentiating the duty regulation to better serve the foreign tourist. Looking at the ratio of foreign tourists who visit Korea, China is the largest and Japan is the second most. The proportion of tourists concentrated in some countries cannot be considered as a good phenomenon in the long term. Establishing a long-term plan to attract more diversified tourists from the all over the world is imperative. In order to communicate

with tourists from different nationalities, usage of the most universally used language, English, is critical. Thus, it is essential to find a way to improve the functional use ability of tourism officers which in result open the way for them to solve various inconveniences of foreign tourists and provide better services.

The most essential skills needed for tourism police, in the case of foreign tourist attractions, were functional use of language. Among them, speaking and listening ability were the most frequently used and to communicate with the tourist. Generally, officers used English to give directions, for problem solving such as question & response, recovering lost items, and giving a short explanation on tourist attractions which can all be regarded as everyday English. This means that English test, which is currently being implemented in Korea, is not appropriate enough to meet the needs for tourism police duties.

The police recruiting English test conducted in 2017 consists of 4 vocabulary questions, 5 grammar questions, and 10 reading questions summing up to total 20 questionnaires. Only 20 questions presented in the test are not sufficient enough to check the candidates' language fluency and furthermore, test items presented are also not in line with practical communication requirements that tourism police need to make mutual communication appropriately with the foreign tourist. There were only one case of a dialogue question directly related to practical communication and the questions related to vocabulary could only be solved if the candidates know the meaning of words that are far from common vocabulary used by tourists. In

addition, the grammar questions were too much focused on specialized property that would not cause problem in mutual communication even if the candidates don't know about the grammatical scope perfectly.

This kind of test question tendency is more centered on identifying candidates' ability to find the right answers rather than checking the fluency of the target language. <Table 3> shows the three questionnaires that were presented as vocabulary problems in police recruiting test. The only question that can be used by the tourism police officer in a work circumstance is the third one which is related with circumstantial communication environment. However, in the case of the vocabularies used in questions 1 and 2 for example, tattered/deject/opaque/sanguine are extraordinary vocabularies that do not correspond to basic vocabulary. It is very unlikely that these kinds of vocabularies having sophisticated meaning will be used by non-native speakers who are willing to use English to communicate in tourist attractions.

In order to verify the candidate's actual English fluency, it is necessary to replace the test method that can confirm the problem-solving ability based on the situation setting in actual work environment. The questions must be transformed into the kind that can verify officer's ability in problem-solving technic utilizing modified basic vocabulary needed in tourism settings. Therefore, in case of question 3 in <Table 3>, it is desirable to replace it with the type of question describing and explaining the situation by question and response. In addition, question No. 2 should be changed into the one that is appropriate for checking how the candidate describes and

•Table 3. Example test questionnaires from 2018 civil service examination.

1. What is the closest meaning to the underlined word? The woman was <u>convicted</u> and sentenced to ten years in prison for the murder case.
a. indisposed    b. tattered    c. condemned    d. dejected
2. What is the closest meaning to the underlined word? The earthquake and the <u>subsequent</u> aftershocks frightened citizens.
a. opaque    b. repellent    c. sanguine    d. ensuing
3. What is the appropriate word in the empty space? The truck went out of control and came close to _____ over a pedestrian.
a. running    b. pulling    c. taking    d. looking

explains the situation of an earthquake then help tourists evacuate the area for avoiding the subsequent aftershocks.

In the case of reading comprehension, questions were presented to examine the candidate's reading ability using examples of science, social, cultural English paragraphs. The question itself doesn't seem to be a problem in checking the reading ability of the candidates. But it can't be considered as an effective questionnaire without considering the specificity of the tourism police. Tourism police should be able to explain the characteristics of the culture, historical sites or even the traffic situations and the best way to do so is to have a short conversation with the tourists. Therefore, it can be said that it is effective to use the examples that imply the regional characteristics, culture, sightseeing places, transfer, traffic or emergency situations, etc.

With the popularization and development of smart devices, the road guidance system for using public transportation or rental cars much easier without any help of anyone. However, there are occasions when a tourist needs assistance in the process of finding a specific destination using a tourist map around the tourist complex. If the tourism police help the tourist to figure out the difficulties in this kind of situation, it will not only give a good impression but also provide an opportunity to visit Korea again. In order to meet these conditions, the English skill which can explain the way of looking at the map and explaining the path to the destination is one of the essential elements that the tourism police should have. Thus, the kind of test items shown in <Figure 1> below should be added to verify such cap ability[13].

Figure 1. Test example of describing the location.



As such, it is necessary to cultivate abilities appropriate to the purpose of the tourism police by subdividing the English skills necessary for the needs of the officers. In order to achieve the above-mentioned object, the following procedure is required. First, English test and course design should be centered on core vocabulary that can be used by native and non-native speakers. Second, examples of reading comprehension should be used considering the characteristics of tourism in Korea. Finally, in the case of a dialogue questionnaire, the items should be focused on the actual working environment of the tourism police for verifying the target language fluency to cope with the circumstantial situation. Due to the linguistic nature of the individual, there are cases where communication difficulties arise in accordance with the different accent and intonation. So, basic training on unique intonation and accent is also needed to understand the tourists from non-English speaking countries.

#### 4. Conclusion

This study focused on discussing the necessity of ESP and improving the English proficiency which can act as a cornerstone of the existence of tourism police. The first step for providing better services for foreign tourists through proper ESP education can be summarized as follows:

First, a survey of the basic vocabulary that is mainly used by foreign tourists should be conducted and applied to the tourism police English test and course design.

Second, the curriculum should be designed so that the tourism police can use the target language without difficulty in the actual work environment by organizing the content in details regarding road guide, tourist spots, and the historical sites where the officers operate.

Third, as not only native English speakers but non-natives use the language as a tool for mutual communication in various tourist attractions. English accent and intonation may differ in accordance with the tourist's cultures. So, the curriculum for tourism police should contain a pre-training course of diverse accent and intonation used in various cultures. If so, the satisfaction of service provision will be increased and the rate of re-visit will also increase.

## 5. References

### 5.1. Journal articles

- [3] Ulum OG. ESP Needs Analysis of Public Order Police Officers. *International Online Journal of Education and Teaching*, 4(1), 19-30 (2017).
- [6] Kim YG. A Study on the Revision of Police Selection System. *Korean Association of Public Safety and Criminal Justice*, 19(4), 100-132 (2010).
- [7] Aldohon HI. English for Specific Purposes(ESP) for Jordanian Tourist Police in Their Workplace: Needs and Problems. *International Education Studies*, 7(11), 56-67 (2014).
- [8] Fahad A. Teaching English for Police Purposes in Saudi Arabia: An Exploratory Study. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, 2(4), 844-849 (2011).
- [12] Oh SY & Kwak YG. The Study on the Present Actual Conditions and Improvement Schemes of Tourism Police. *Korean Journal of Local Government & Administration Studies*, 29(3), 236-259 (2015).

### 5.2. Thesis degree

- [4] Kim SS. A Validity Analysis of the English Section in the Korean Civil Service Examination. Dankook University, Master's Thesis (2007).

- [5] Kong JY. The Usefulness of English Test in Korea's Civil Service Examinations. Korea University, Master's Thesis (2008).
- [9] Romaya P. The Professional Development of Tourist Police in Thailand: An Investigation into English Communication Competency. Edith Cowan University, Doctoral Thesis (2009).
- [10] Promrat N. A Study of English Vocabulary Competency and Problems of the Tourist Police in the Lower Central Region of Thailand. Naresuan Univeristy, Doctoral thesis (1998).
- [11] Meemark M. An Analysis of Needs and Problems of English for Tourist Police. Mahidol University, Doctoral Thesis (2002).

### 5.3. Additional references

- [1] <https://kto.visitkorea.or.kr> (2018)
- [2] <https://www.gunsanews.com> (2018)
- [13] <http://www.daegayapark.net> (2018)

#### Author

**Yi, Jae-il** / Semyung University Professor

B.A. Cheongju University

M.A. Cheongju University

Ph.D. Cheongju University

#### Research field

- Second Language Learning Convergence System Based on Big Data, *Indian Journal of Science & Technology* (2016).

- A Study on English Vocabulary Learning Utilizing Augmented Reality, *Advanced Science Letters* (2017).

#### Major career

- 2012~present. Semyung University, Assistant Professor.