

ENGLISH LANGUAGE NEEDS OF CROATIAN STUDENTS

**Smiljana Narančić Kovač
Ivana Cindrić**

Faculty of Teacher Education, University of Zagreb

Summary - The article presents the results of the second phase of the needs analysis research that was carried out in the spring of 2007. The preliminary survey, conducted in the spring of 2003, aimed at finding out the current status of foreign languages in Croatia, and at identifying English language needs of the urban adult population, mostly employed or studying. The findings prepared ground for designing a more specific instrument for wider scale research on learners' needs with respect to different professional contexts. The focus of this particular research was on the student population, to be more specific, students at higher educational institutions and their need for the English language in both their studies and private lives. This article closely analyzes particular situations and contexts, that is, English skills and competences (i.e. language-related activities) that students identify as necessary in both domains. The results are also related to the previous research.

Key words: educational domain, English as a foreign/second language, needs analysis, private domain, professional domain

INTRODUCTION

The research conducted in the spring of 2003 showed that English is the most desirable and important language to be mastered in private and professional lives of the Croatian urban adult population, mostly employed or studying, and therefore the most useful to know in both contexts. Certain specific needs and situations of English language usage were also established. (Cindrić and Narančić Kovač, 2005). This created grounds for further research of particular needs and

uses of the English language for different professions. In other words, a more thorough needs analysis could be carried out.

A ‘needs analysis’ is the collection of various kinds of information about learners in order to establish not only what learners would need to learn during instruction, but also “how language learning and skills learning can be maximized for a given learner group” (Dudley-Evans and St John, 1998: 126).

The nature of language use and the language user/learner is more closely examined in the *Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR)*, where the personal, public, private, professional and educational categories of language use have been established (*CEFR*, 2001: 45).

The personal domain focuses on the individual centered on home life, family, friends, leisure time, the Internet; an individual who, for instance, practices reading for pleasure, keeps a personal diary, pursues special interests and hobbies and keeps an active social life. The occupational domain is centered on the situations and contexts that the individual is engaged in in his or her job or profession.

Focus on the professional and private domains was the starting point for devising an instrument in the abovementioned preliminary research, and the data collected aided in the development of the instrument for the new research, the results of which are presented in this article.

In the present research, we have concentrated on the needs of the student population at Croatian higher educational institutions with regard to the English language, keeping in mind that “statements of the aims and objectives of language learning and teaching should be based on an appreciation of the needs of learners and of society, on the tasks, activities and processes that the learners need to carry out in order to satisfy those needs, and on the competences and strategies they need to develop/build up in order to do so” (*CEFR*, 2001: 131). Furthermore, in a needs analysis it is necessary to “specify the situations in which learners will need to use language and the language-related activities required in those situations” (Yule and Tarone, 1989: 37).

In that respect, this article focuses on particular situations and language activities which belong to both the professional and private domain, where the former also contains aspects of the educational domain. In other words, studying at the university is linked with a certain professional area, which makes studying a profession. Therefore, it is felt that the results on the needs in the context of university studies can be compared with adequate results from the previous research, where those who are employed also mention some educational needs within the professional domain. This is in accordance with the general consensus on the need for lifelong education. Accordingly, in some cases, it is difficult to define whether a need belongs to the professional, educational or even public domain. Therefore, for the purpose of this research, these three domains are encompassed under the heading “professional”.

SAMPLE

The sample consists of 250 students of the University of Zagreb in their third (124 students), and fourth (final) year of study (126 students). From the sample, 175 students are attending the Faculty of Teacher Education, of which 63 are students of Primary education and the English language, 31 are studying Primary education and German, 81 are studying Primary education and minors other than foreign languages. The other 75 students are studying Communicology (Journalism) at the University Center for Croatian Studies. Of the total number of participants, 35 are male and 215 female. The majority of the students (192) have completed Gymnasium (classics-program secondary school), and 50 finished a vocational high-school.

The abovementioned preliminary research focused on the urban adult population (388 participants; 256 employed, 87 students, and 45 belonging to other categories such as unemployed or retired).

METHOD

The questionnaire consists of two parts: biodata questions and the second part which deals with whether and for what purposes the respondents need the English language. The questionnaire offers 87 statements for language use (examples and behaviors) that the participants could mark as needed in their course of study and/or their private lives. For the majority part, these statements have been derived from answers and suggestions that participants in the preliminary research noted as situations and contexts where English language was necessary in their private and professional lives.

Several categories offered as examples in the preliminary research included e.g. the Internet, communication with friends, directions for medication usage such as package leaflets, etc. From these examples, the participants could choose to provide data about their needs. They also added, for instance, business meetings, correspondence, telephone conversations, job interviews, using software, personal pleasure, etc. (Cindrić and Narančić Kovač, 2005: 193).

The 87 statements offered in the 2007 questionnaire thus include answers from the preliminary questionnaire (14 originally offered and 49 added by the participants), and 24 new statements, such as speaking during classes, reading and writing blogs, computer games, cultural events such as exhibitions, theatre performances and concerts, etc.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

As can be seen from **Table 1**, almost all the students state that they have a need for the English language in their studies and in their private lives. Two

(0.80%), who decline the need for the English language, study Primary Education and German, so they probably rely on German and other languages, other than English, in satisfying their educational and private needs within the international context.

Compared to the results of the 2003 research, when 97.70% students in the sample stated the need for the English language, the 99.20% in the present research confirm the previous finding. Accordingly, it can be concluded that there is an extremely widespread and constant need for English among the student population over the period of four years.

Table 1: Comparative data. Needs in general.

Total:	2007				Preliminary Research 2003				Total: students
250	Answers				Answers				87
	Yes		No		Yes		No		
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	
	248	99.20	2	0.80	85	97.70	2	2.30	

As can be seen in **Table 2**, the most frequent situation in which students need English is when they use the Internet. This finding is also in line with the preliminary research results, where the Internet was also the most commonly chosen category, both among students and in the whole sample, both in professional and in private contexts. Only among the ‘others’ in the 2003 sample is the Internet placed in the fourth position, after the categories *Job interview*, *Meetings* and *Reading professional publications*, but merely in the professional context. It remains firmly in the first position in the private context even for this group.

It is evident from **Table 2** that students very frequently use the English language for *Film watching*, *Listening to music*, *Giving information to foreigners*, *E-mail* and *Using computer programs*, to mention only those categories chosen by more than two thirds of the participants.

Table 2: Results by categories, ranked according to frequency.

English language needs													
Students: Total: 250													
Frequencies							Categories	Percentage					
Professional Domain Only	Private Domain Only	Both Domains	Professional Domain – Sum	Private Domain – Sum	Total: Professional and Private Domains	Rank * -Total		Professional Domain Only	Private Domain Only	Both Domains	Professional Domain – Sum	Private Domain – Sum	Total : Professional and Private Domains
18	99	117	135	216	234	1	Internet	7.20	39.60	46.80	54.00	86.40	93.60
22	163	27	49	190	212	2	Film watching	8.80	65.20	10.80	19.60	76.00	84.80

English language needs													
Students: Total: 250													
Frequencies						Rank * -Total	Categories	Percentage					
Professional Domain Only	Private Domain Only	Both Domains	Professional Domain – Sum	Private Domain – Sum	Total: Professional and Private Domains			Professional Domain Only	Private Domain Only	Both Domains	Professional Domain – Sum	Private Domain – Sum	Total : Professional and Private Domains
20	174	15	35	189	209	3	Giving information to foreigners	8.00	69.60	6.00	14.00	75.60	83.60
26	161	20	46	181	207	4	Listening to music	10.40	64.40	8.00	18.40	72.40	82.80
19	128	55	74	183	202	5	Electronic mail (e-mail)	7.60	51.20	22.00	29.60	73.20	80.80
18	116	60	78	176	194	6	Using computer programs	7.20	46.40	24.00	31.20	70.40	77.60
158	7	18	176	25	183	7	Writing seminar papers	63.20	2.80	7.20	70.40	10.00	73.20
22	152	7	29	159	181	8	Getting around in other countries	8.80	60.80	2.80	11.60	63.60	72.40
45	50	86	131	136	181		Translating text from the English language	18.00	20.00	34.40	52.40	54.40	72.40
160	5	13	173	18	178	10	Communication with teachers	64.00	2.00	5.20	69.20	7.20	71.20
20	146	8	28	154	174	11	Television programs (news, sport, call-in shows, serials)	8.00	58.40	3.20	11.20	61.60	69.60
16	150	6	22	156	172	12	Traveling	6.40	60.00	2.40	8.80	62.40	68.80
21	138	12	33	150	171	13	Computer games	8.40	55.20	4.80	13.20	60.00	68.40
143	10	18	161	28	171		Completing homework assignments, projects, etc. for university courses	57.20	4.00	7.20	64.40	11.20	68.40
17	149	4	21	153	170	15	Using a cellular phone	6.80	59.60	1.60	8.40	61.20	68.00
56	38	76	132	114	170		Translating text to the English language	22.40	15.20	30.40	52.80	45.60	68.00
13	147	6	19	153	166	17	Commercials	5.20	58.80	2.40	7.60	61.20	66.40
142	10	11	153	21	163	18	Oral class reports	56.80	4.00	4.40	61.20	8.40	65.20
31	94	37	68	131	162	19	Communication with friends	12.40	37.60	14.80	27.20	52.40	64.80
20	113	26	46	139	159	20	Reading foreign press (newspapers and magazines)	8.00	45.20	10.40	18.40	55.60	63.60
13	140	5	18	145	158	21	Documentaries	5.20	56.00	2.00	7.20	58.00	63.20
18	124	16	34	140	158		Handling various appliances, operating manuals	7.20	49.60	6.40	13.60	56.00	63.20
18	116	20	38	136	154	23	Installing computer programs	7.20	46.40	8.00	15.20	54.40	61.60

English language needs													
Students: Total: 250													
Frequencies							Percentage						
Professional Domain Only	Private Domain Only	Both Domains	Professional Domain – Sum	Private Domain – Sum	Total: Professional and Private Domains	Rank * -Total	Categories	Professional Domain Only	Private Domain Only	Both Domains	Professional Domain – Sum	Private Domain – Sum	Total : Professional and Private Domains
15	134	3	18	137	152	24	Preparing for exams	6.00	53.60	1.20	7.20	54.80	60.80
13	120	19	32	139	152		Obtaining information in the visual media	5.20	48.00	7.60	12.80	55.60	60.80
119	6	27	146	33	152		SMS	47.60	2.40	10.80	58.40	13.20	60.80
14	135	2	16	137	151	27	Shopping	5.60	54.00	0.80	6.40	54.80	60.40
11	113	27	38	140	151		Personal pleasure	4.40	45.20	10.80	15.20	56.00	60.40
34	37	79	113	116	150	29	Gathering information	13.60	14.80	31.60	45.20	46.40	60.00
20	111	17	37	128	148	30	Spontaneous (informal) conversation	8.00	44.40	6.80	14.80	51.20	59.20
15	131	0	15	131	146	31	Labels and declarations on various products and food	6.00	52.40	0.00	6.00	52.40	58.40
17	117	12	29	129	146		Signs and store names	6.80	46.80	4.80	11.60	51.60	58.40
14	106	17	31	123	137	33	Helping others	5.60	42.40	6.80	12.40	49.20	54.80
59	31	45	104	76	135	34	Expressing personal attitudes or opinions	23.60	12.40	18.00	41.60	30.40	54.00
19	105	7	26	112	131	35	Correspondence	7.60	42.00	2.80	10.40	44.80	52.40
17	107	6	23	113	130	36	Hobbies and other interests	6.80	42.80	2.40	9.20	45.20	52.00
12	102	16	28	118	130		Brochures	4.80	40.80	6.40	11.20	47.20	52.00
49	22	54	103	76	125	38	Research	19.60	8.80	21.60	41.20	30.40	50.00
14	96	13	27	109	123	39	Chat	5.60	38.40	5.20	10.80	43.60	49.20
105	7	11	116	18	123		Understanding class teaching	42.00	2.80	4.40	46.40	7.20	49.20
25	56	41	66	97	122	41	Reading foreign literature	10.00	22.40	16.40	26.40	38.80	48.80
39	47	36	75	83	122		Translating speech from the English language (mediation)	15.60	18.80	14.40	30.00	33.20	48.80
56	31	31	87	62	118	43	Understanding speeches and lectures by foreign speakers	22.40	12.40	12.40	34.80	24.80	47.20
61	29	26	87	55	116	44	Reading specialized books	24.40	11.60	10.40	34.80	22.00	46.40
68	22	23	91	45	113	45	Communication with colleagues	27.20	8.80	9.20	36.40	18.00	45.20

English language needs													
Students: Total: 250													
Frequencies						Rank *-Total	Categories	Percentage					
Professional Domain Only	Private Domain Only	Both Domains	Professional Domain – Sum	Private Domain – Sum	Total: Professional and Private Domains			Professional Domain Only	Private Domain Only	Both Domains	Professional Domain – Sum	Private Domain – Sum	Total : Professional and Private Domains
17	76	18	35	94	111	46	Art appreciation, art exhibitions	6.80	30.40	7.20	14.00	37.60	44.40
25	68	16	41	84	109	47	Retelling jokes, events, stories, movies	10.00	27.20	6.40	16.40	33.60	43.60
12	92	2	14	94	106	48	Directions for using medication	4.80	36.80	0.80	5.60	37.60	42.40
16	56	33	49	89	105	49	Translating speech to the English language (mediation)	6.40	22.40	13.20	19.60	35.60	42.00
11	74	18	29	92	103	50	Forum	4.40	29.60	7.20	11.60	36.80	41.20
10	88	3	13	91	101	51	Dining out	4.00	35.20	1.20	5.20	36.40	40.40
6	80	7	13	87	93	52	Telephone conversations	2.40	32.00	2.80	5.20	34.80	37.20
7	79	7	14	86	93		Public announcements	2.80	31.60	2.80	5.60	34.40	37.20
13	72	6	19	78	91	54	Radio programs (news, sport, call-in programs, music)	5.20	28.80	2.40	7.60	31.20	36.40
53	20	17	70	37	90	55	Writing summaries	21.20	8.00	6.80	28.00	14.80	36.00
55	15	20	75	35	90		Taking notes	22.00	6.00	8.00	30.00	14.00	36.00
9	79	0	9	79	88	57	Reading professional publications, professional and scientific journals, and similar	3.60	31.60	0.00	3.60	31.60	35.20
40	22	26	66	48	88		Social games	16.00	8.80	10.40	26.40	19.20	35.20
59	13	14	73	27	86	59	Discussions, debate clubs	23.60	5.20	5.60	29.20	10.80	34.40
9	59	11	20	70	79	60	Comics	3.60	23.60	4.40	8.00	28.00	31.60
26	35	18	44	53	79		Paraphrasing	10.40	14.00	7.20	17.60	21.20	31.60
48	15	12	60	27	75	62	Participating in workshops in the English language	19.20	6.00	4.80	24.00	10.80	30.00
5	67	2	7	69	74	63	Communication with relatives	2.00	26.80	0.80	2.80	27.60	29.60
10	64	0	10	64	74		Sitting for exams (in addition to English language exams)	4.00	25.60	0.00	4.00	25.60	29.60
7	58	9	16	67	74		Traffic	2.80	23.20	3.60	6.40	26.80	29.60
55	5	14	69	19	74		Applying for work	22.00	2.00	5.60	27.60	7.60	29.60

English language needs													
Students: Total: 250													
Frequencies							Categories	Percentage					
Professional Domain Only	Private Domain Only	Both Domains	Professional Domain – Sum	Private Domain – Sum	Total: Professional and Private Domains	Rank * -Total		Professional Domain Only	Private Domain Only	Both Domains	Professional Domain – Sum	Private Domain – Sum	Total : Professional and Private Domains
10	54	8	18	62	72	67	Other professional or private contacts	4.00	21.60	3.20	7.20	24.80	28.80
10	53	7	17	60	70	68	Form filling	4.00	21.20	2.80	6.80	24.00	28.00
7	57	3	10	60	67	69	Going to the theater, concert, etc.	2.80	22.80	1.20	4.00	24.00	26.80
12	46	9	21	55	67		Writing CVs – biographies	4.80	18.40	3.60	8.40	22.00	26.80
8	50	8	16	58	66	71	Writing short messages	3.20	20.00	3.20	6.40	23.20	26.40
41	14	9	50	23	64	72	Participating in seminars, professional and scientific conferences	16.40	5.60	3.60	20.00	9.20	25.60
7	52	3	10	55	62	73	Reading blogs	2.80	20.80	1.20	4.00	22.00	24.80
7	47	8	15	55	62		Doing sports, competitions	2.80	18.80	3.20	6.00	22.00	24.80
32	17	12	44	29	61	75	Writing other kinds of texts in a foreign language	12.80	6.80	4.80	17.60	11.60	24.40
5	48	6	11	54	59	76	Job interview	2.00	19.20	2.40	4.40	21.60	23.60
6	52	0	6	52	58	77	Using cookbooks	2.40	20.80	0.00	2.40	20.80	23.20
6	52	0	6	52	58		Other health needs	2.40	20.80	0.00	2.40	20.80	23.20
20	25	10	30	35	55	79	Communication with students from other universities	8.00	10.00	4.00	12.00	14.00	22.00
31	10	11	42	21	52	80	Participating in classes by means of electronic media	12.40	4.00	4.40	16.80	8.40	20.80
26	16	6	32	22	48	81	Writing articles	10.40	6.40	2.40	12.80	8.80	19.20
4	40	2	6	42	46	82	Performances	1.60	16.00	0.80	2.40	16.80	18.40
19	9	14	33	23	42	83	On-line conferences or classes	7.60	3.60	5.60	13.20	9.20	16.80
2	33	5	7	38	40	84	Organizing documentation	0.80	13.20	2.00	2.80	15.20	16.00
15	19	4	19	23	38	85	Negotiations	6.00	7.60	1.60	7.60	9.20	15.20
2	23	6	8	29	31	86	Meetings	0.80	9.20	2.40	3.20	11.60	12.40
4	22	2	6	24	28	87	Creating blogs	1.60	8.80	0.80	2.40	9.60	11.20

* An empty cell in the Rank column means that the particular category is of the same rank as the previous one.

On the other hand, if students do write blogs, they do not seem to do that in English – at least not frequently. The least popular categories, those that amount to less than 20%, also include *Meetings*, *Negotiation*, *Organizing documentation*, *On-line conferences or classes*, *Performances*, and *Writing articles*. Yet, only those five have been chosen by less than 20% of the population, and not a single category had a frequency below 10%. As expected, using English for meetings and negotiation is of low frequency because these are the contexts more typical for employees than for students. Also, some other activities, such as writing articles and organizing documentation in English also imply specific work-related or private contexts not always typical for students' horizons of interest.

Comparatively, those categories also ranked extremely low (some do not even appear at all) among students in the 2003 sample, only *Correspondence* reached 12.64% occurrences in the professional domain. On the other hand, *Meetings* ranked second in the professional domain among the employed participants, singled out by 17.58% of them, and the *Negotiation* ranked fourth (8.59%). In the same sample, the *Internet* ranked highest with 30.86%, and *Correspondence* ranked third with 12.89%.

Interestingly, in 2007, as shown in **Table 2**, *Participating in classes by means of electronic media* also ranks very low with only 20.80%, but it nevertheless reflects a positive development in university teaching practices, especially since this data is on using the English language only for that particular context. However, we consider *Communication with students from other universities* sadly rare with only 22%, as it implies the international student contacts, let alone exchanges, have not taken root. Such situations are overall closely related with the English language as the leading language of international communication. Accordingly, we believe that international communication in other languages without any English involved would generally be rare among our participants, especially as they use English regularly for such a great variety of purposes.

Table 3: Categories chosen in both domains (studying and private life) by rank.

Rank*	Both domains: professional and private	Total: 250	
	Category	f	%
1	Internet	117	46.80
2	Translating text from the English language	86	34.40
3	Gathering information	79	31.60
4	Translating text to the English language	76	30.40
5	Using computer programs	60	24.00
6	Electronic mail (e-mail)	55	22.00
7	Research	54	21.60
8	Expressing personal attitudes or opinions	45	18.00
9	Translating speech from the English language (mediation)	41	16.40

Rank*	Both domains: professional and private	Total: 250	
	Category	f	%
10	Communication with friends	37	14.80
11	Reading foreign literature	36	14.40
12	Translating speech to the English language (mediation)	33	13.20
13	Understanding speeches and lectures by foreign speakers	31	12.40
14	Film watching	27	10.80
15	Preparing for exams	27	10.80
16	Personal pleasure	27	10.80
17	Reading foreign press (newspapers and magazines)	26	10.40
18	Reading specialized books	26	10.40
19	Reading professional literature, professional and scientific journals, and similar	26	10.40

* An empty cell in the Rank column means that the particular category is of the same rank as the previous one.

Table 3 shows categories which have been chosen by more than 25 (10%) participants as needed in both domains, ranked according to frequency. The need for using English in the IT (information technology) context and for translating can be said to dominate this list. The former are represented by the *Internet* (rank 1), *Using computer programs* (rank 5) and *E-mail* (rank 6). (Yet, other IT-related categories remain fairly low in rank and in percentage on this list. Our participants seem to connect them rather with the private domain and less frequently with the educational context). The latter include all the variants of translating offered by the questionnaire, i.e. *Translating texts from English* (rank 2) and *into English* (rank 4), as well as mediation in terms of *Translating speech from English* (rank 9) and *into English* (rank 12). English is also fairly often used for *Gathering information* (rank 3), *Research* (rank 7) and *Expressing personal attitudes or opinions* (Rank 8 – as many as 18% use English for this purpose in both domains).

It should be noted that according to expectations, categories *Labels and declarations on various products and food*, *Communication with relatives*, *Social games*, *Using cookbooks* and *Other health needs* do not appear at all in this group. They are logically rather connected with the private domain.

Finally, we find it appealing and encouraging that *Personal pleasure* has ended up on the list as a need which more than 10% of the participants identify in both domains. It is a category that has been added to the questionnaire because it was suggested by 19 participants in the preliminary research as a need within the private domain. However, it was not mentioned by anyone in the student division of the sample in 2003. Regarding the present research, it should be noted that 45.20% of the participants choose this category in the private domain only, and 4.40% only in the context of studying. Thus, it ranks high (rank 27) in the gener-

al frequency list, with 151 occurrences, which amounts to 60.40% of the sample who identify using English for personal pleasure as an important need (see **Table 2**). Obviously, based on new results, using English is seen as a pleasurable aspect not only of private life, but also of studying.

As seen in **Table 4**, the prevailing categories of participants' needs reflect the fact that the majority of students tend to use English in traditional situations and contexts connected with university education, and also that they tend to use sources in English to accomplish various tasks (see ranks 1-5).

Table 4: Categories in the professional domain; i.e. studying, by rank.

Rank*	Studying: Professional domain	Total: 250	
	Category	f	%
1	Writing seminar papers	176	70.40
2	Communication with teachers	173	69.20
3	Completing homework assignments, projects, etc. for university courses	161	64.40
4	Oral class reports	153	61.20
5	Preparing for exams	146	58.40
6	Internet	135	54.00
7	Translating text to the English language	132	52.80
8	Translating text from the English language	131	52.40
9	Understanding class teaching	116	46.40
10	Gathering information	113	45.20
11	Expressing personal attitudes or opinions	104	41.60
12	Research	103	41.20
13	Communication with colleagues	91	36.40
14	Understanding speeches and lectures by foreign speakers	87	34.80
	Reading specialized books	87	34.80
16	Using computer programs	78	31.20
17	Reading foreign literature	75	30.00
	Taking notes	75	30.00
19	Electronic mail (e-mail)	74	29.60
20	Discussions, debate clubs	73	29.20
21	Writing summaries	70	28.00
22	Sitting for exams (in addition to English language exams)	69	27.60
23	Communication with friends	68	27.20
24	Translating speech from the English language (mediation)	66	26.40
	Reading professional literature, professional and scientific journals, and similar	66	26.40
26	Participating in workshops in the English language	60	24.00
27	Participating in seminars, professional and scientific conferences	50	20.00

Rank*	Studying: Professional domain	Total: 250	
	Category	f	%
28	Translating speech to the English language (mediation)	49	19.60
	Film watching	49	19.60
30	Reading foreign press (newspapers and magazines)	46	18.40
31	Listening to music	46	18.40
32	Paraphrasing	44	17.60
	Writing other kinds of texts in a foreign language	44	17.60
34	Participating in classes by means of electronic media	42	16.80
35	Retelling jokes, events, stories, movies	41	16.40
36	Personal pleasure	38	15.20
	Installing computer programs	38	15.20
38	Spontaneous (informal) conversation	37	14.80
39	Art appreciation, art exhibitions	35	14.00
	Giving information to foreigners	35	14.00
41	Documentaries	34	13.60
42	On-line conferences or classes	33	13.20
	Computer games	33	13.20
44	Obtaining information in the visual media	32	12.80
	Writing articles	32	12.80
46	Helping others	31	12.40
47	Communication with students from other universities	30	12.00
48	Forum	29	11.60
	Signs and store names	29	11.60
	Getting around in other countries	29	11.60
51	Hobbies and other interests	28	11.20
	Television programs (news, sport, call-in shows, serials)	28	11.20
53	Chat	27	10.80
54	Correspondence	26	10.40

* An empty cell in the Rank column means that the particular category is of the same rank as the previous one.

It is also worthy of note that there is a large number of categories which occur in the professional domain with a frequency of more than 10%, as it amounts to 54 categories. Thus, it can be inferred that students tend to use English extensively in the educational context.

As seen in **Table 5**, a comparison of two categories which appear frequently among the student population both in the preliminary research and in the present study; i.e. *Writing seminar papers* and the *Internet*, suggests that students tend to use and need English more often today than four years ago in similar contexts.

Table 5: Comparative data: Professional context – students

Professional context: students	Total: 250				Total: 87	
	2007		2003			
	F	%	Rank	Rank	f	%
Writing seminar papers	176	70.40	1	2	27	32.18
Internet	135	54.00	6	1	28	31.03

The analysis of the private domain shows that as many as 77 categories occur with the frequency of 10% or higher, leaving only 10 categories in the lower range. Therefore, in **Table 6**, we have only presented the 32 categories which appear with the frequency of 40% or higher (**Table 2** provides more detailed findings, even though they are ordered according to a different criterion.) These findings demonstrate that, even though students use English for numerous and various purposes during their course of study, they seem to need and use English significantly more widely and more often in their private lives.

Table 6: Categories in the private domain by rank.

Rank	Private life	Total: 250		Categories included in the 2003 survey
	Category	f	%	
1	Internet	216	86.40	✓
2	Film watching	190	76.00	
3	Giving information to foreigners	189	75.60	
4	Electronic mail (e-mail)	183	73.20	
5	Listening to music	181	72.40	✓
6	Using computer programs	176	70.40	
7	Getting around in other countries	159	63.60	
8	Traveling	156	62.40	✓
9	Television programs (news, sport, call-in shows, serials)	154	61.60	
10	Using a cellular phone	153	61.20	
11	Commercials	153	61.20	
12	Computer games	150	60.00	
13	Handling various appliances, operating manuals	145	58.00	✓
14	Personal pleasure	140	56.00	
15	Documentaries	140	56.00	
16	Reading foreign press (newspapers and magazines)	139	55.60	
17	Obtaining information in the visual media	139	55.60	
18	SMS	137	54.80	
19	Shopping	137	54.80	
20	Translating text from the English language	136	54.40	
21	Installing computer programs	136	54.40	

Rank	Private life	Total: 250		Categories included in the 2003 survey
	Category	f	%	
22	Communication with friends	131	52.40	✓
23	Labels and declarations on various products and food	131	52.40	
24	Signs and store names	129	51.60	
25	Spontaneous (informal) conversation	128	51.20	
26	Helping others	123	49.20	
27	Hobbies and other interests	118	47.20	✓
28	Gathering information	116	46.40	
29	Translating text to the English language	114	45.60	
30	Brochures	113	45.20	
31	Correspondence	112	44.80	✓
32	Chat	109	43.60	

* An empty cell in the Rank column means that the particular category is of the same rank as the previous one.

The results of the preliminary 2003 survey support these findings, as the categories which are ranked high in our present research also showed high frequencies and ranks in 2003, among the student population in the sample. It should be repeated here that only several examples were offered in the preliminary research, so that we can only compare results based on those common categories (see **Table 6**, where such items are ticked). The comparison shows that the 2003 ranks present almost an exact match with the 2007 data as, for example, the first five ranks in 2003 were the *Internet* (44.83%), *Listening to music* (43.68%), *Communication with friends* (39.08%), *Traveling* (36.78%) and *Handling various appliances, operating manuals* (18.39%). Extracting these categories from the 2007 survey into a separate list would result in a similar, in fact almost identical ranking, even though with consistently higher frequencies.

An interesting additional finding also shows that categories connected with IT actually rank lower on the list of needs in the professional domain – i.e. in the educational context – than in the private domain. Thus, a percentage higher than 40% seldom appears in connection with the IT-related activities in the professional domain. In other words, our participants need English for such situations only when they use the Internet (54% of them say so, as seen in **Table 4**). However, as seen in **Table 6**, over 40% of the participants need English in the private domain not only when using the *Internet* (86.40%), but also for *E-mail* (73.20%), *Using* (70.40%) and *Installing computer programs* (54.40%), and *Chat* (43.60%). Considering these findings, it is surprising though, that *blogs* have ranked rather low throughout (see Table 2, ranks 73 and 87).

Interest in cultural events and products, as well as travelling also seem to be popular among our students, and they find English indispensable for these situations (e.g. see ranks 2, 5, 7 and 8 in **Table 6**).

Table 7: Comparative data – Educational situations in professional vs. private domains

Categories	Professional domain			Private domain		
	f	%	Rank	Rank	f	%
Writing seminar papers	176	70.40	1	77	25	10.00
Communication with teachers	173	69.20	2	86	18	7.20
Completing homework assignments, projects, etc. for university courses	161	64.40	3	74	28	11.20
Oral class reports	153	61.20	4	83	21	8.40
Preparing for exams	146	58.40	5	71	33	13.20
Understanding class lectures	116	46.40	9	87	18	7.20
Taking notes	75	30.00	18	69	35	14.00
Writing summaries	70	28.00	21	68	37	14.80
Sitting for exams (in addition to English language exams)	69	27.60	22	85	19	7.60
Participating in workshops in the English language	60	24.00	26	76	27	10.80
Participating in seminars, professional and scientific conferences, etc.	50	20.00	27	79	23	9.20
Participating in classes by means of electronic media	42	16.80	34	84	21	8.40
Communication with students from other universities	30	12.00	47	70	35	14.00

Finally, looking at the categories that rank extremely low in the private domain, with a frequency below 15%, and comparing their ranks in two domains, we are lead to the conclusion that there are indeed very few situations in which English would not be needed by at least some of the Croatian students. Out of the 20 bottom categories in the private domain, thirteen are given in **Table 7**, accompanied by the comparative data regarding their ranks and representation in private and in professional domains. It can be seen that the categories that rank higher in the professional domain than in the private domain are actually those placed at the bottom of the list in the latter and, at the same time, in the upper part of the list in the former domain. It is logical, as they all belong to the strictly educational context, which shows that the participants have recognized significant need for them, as well, only in an appropriate context.

On the contrary, some of the categories ranked low in the professional domain remain rather low in the private one, as well. These include *Using cookbooks* and *Other health needs* (see **Table 2**), which obviously do not belong to the horizon of interests of our students, similarly to items such as *Meetings*, *Negotiation*, etc., which we have already discussed.

CONCLUSION

The analysis of the general aspects of university students' needs for the English language has established that students see English as indispensable not only for studying, but also, even significantly more so, in their private lives. Their needs for the English language are general, constant, widespread and extremely diverse.

Also, the comparison with data from the previous research implies that the need for the English language among the student population seems to be on the rise.

Our results may find application in designing more efficient and realistic university English language curricula. Moreover, comparing students' needs with respect to their majors would most likely yield valuable results in terms of designing more specific English language syllabi for various fields of study.

Future research may also concentrate on further classifying the needs along the lines of thematic contexts (IT, culture, communication, international contacts, etc.), of linguistic skills and activities (productive and receptive skills, mediation) and according to specific areas of language use themselves.

REFERENCES

- Cindrić, I., & Narančić Kovač, S. (2005). English and Other Foreign Languages in Croatia – A Needs Analysis. *Strani jezici*, 34(3), 189-204.
- Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment* (2001). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Dudley-Evans, T., & St John, M. J. (1998). *Developments in English for Specific Purposes: A Multi-Disciplinary Approach*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Yule, G., & Tarone, E. (1989). *Focus on the language learner: approaches to identifying and meeting the needs of second language learners*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.