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From classroom to workplace: Importance of teaching English for sports purposes

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Background

Today's open labour market, the internationalization of business, the development of digital technology, multiculturalism, and the global spread of knowledge have contributed to an increase in the need to use the English language. In other words, although the European Union tries to direct the labour market towards the acquisition of different foreign languages apart from English, it is expected that English continues to play the role of the leading language in the future, especially in helping graduates find a job in sports profession (European Commission, 2008). In addition, while previously Croatian was the main and often only language of instruction, university teaching staff are now expected to teach their courses in English, making English for Specific Purposes an integral part of their teaching inventory thus making the students' enrolment more inviting. In addition to communication, the present study has the following objectives: 1) to analyze students' attitudes towards the need to use English for Specific Purposes (ESP) for sport as a profession as an integral part of courses delivered in English; 2) to provide feedback on students' attitudes towards the importance of learning English for sports profession for their future job; 3) to examine students' attitudes towards the importance and necessity of creating adequate teaching materials to master English at tertiary level.

Materials and methods

The study sample comprised 91 randomly selected sports students from the University of Split, Croatia. The study was conducted from 2022 to 2023. Data was collected using an adapted questionnaire.

Results

Students strongly believe that ESP should be an integral part of the courses delivered in English. They have also showed strong positive attitudes towards the importance of learning ESP for sports as a profession and their future employability. However, study reveals that students believe that it is important to create teaching materials for ESP adapted to non-native speakers of English but not so significantly.

Conclusions

The study shows that students strongly believe that ESP should be taught through available courses at the faculty. due to its numerous benefits: from upgrading their knowledge of English skills, and expanding their understanding of transferrable skills, to helping them improve their general English knowledge needed for future job in sports field inside and outside of Croatia. It can also be concluded that this type of analysis has an important role in creating further steps in terms of raising awareness of the importance of teaching ESP at the tertiary level, as well as incorporating ESP at all faculties as its obligatory subject.