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ESP TEACHING/LEARNING STRATEGIES APPLIED TO ENGLISH FOR THE LIFE SCIENCES

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Abstract: *The aim of this paper is to raise awareness on the benefits of integrating specialty concepts and topics in the ESP (English for Specific Purposes) course at the University of Life Sciences "Mihai I" from Timisoara, Romania. The study highlights the need for academics to pay greater attention to a number of typical competencies in order to support students pursuing a career in the life sciences – Agricultural Engineering, Horticulture, and Farm Management. Our ESP course is tailored to meet the demands of students specializing in fields across the Life Sciences, despite the fact that ESP methodologies may vary extensively. Gaining the specialized knowledge and understanding needed for this subject helps graduates integrate into the multidisciplinary society that awaits them.*

• Introduction

Specialized communication in English for Specific Purposes (ESP) has developed over the last decades, given that English has become essential to the global jargon of many scientific areas. We seek to develop materials adapted for students in the Life Sciences, e.g. English for Agricultural Engineers, English for Genetic Engineers, Ecological English – English for the Life Sciences, etc.

• Material and method

- Based on linguistic, communicative, and qualitative methodology, we examine the most proper tools to develop ESP textbooks
- 1st year students specializing in these fields were subjected to a two-semester period of experimental ESP teaching during the 2023-2024 academic year.
- Our teaching experiment followed several stages:
 - preliminary assessment to test the level of learners' communicative skills;
 - experimental teaching based on free communicative exchanges;
 - post-experimental re-evaluation, and examination of qualitative findings based on the results we have obtained.

• Results and discussions

- Our ESP students have been subjected to an empirical study based on an assumption concerning the comparative effectiveness of our language teaching tools.
- After compiling empirical evidence from the classroom., we redesigned ESP teaching materials so as to improve functional communicative language skills for the students' practical use and to include them in our textbooks.
- Based on comprehension checks and class observations, we focused on underdeveloped communicative aspects and on the acquisition of inter-relational competences.

• Conclusions

- We investigated the effectiveness of the proposed approach via experimental training in our ESP classes.
- In light of the findings, we suggest that: ESP teaching focused on communicative methodology, specialized teaching resources, and content-based learning is more meaningful to learners; developing professional communicative skills and specialized teaching resources acclimates students to real-world environments.