

## **The Significance of BELF and Communication Skills: Incorporating ESP in the Core Curriculum in Higher Education – Challenges, Issues, and Opportunities**

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**Abstract:** *The need for ESP is vital in equipping non-native English speakers from all fields to be competitive in the workplace, outside the academic context, regardless of where they see themselves in the future, and where they will pursue their professional ambitions; they now need to demonstrate their English proficiency in their chosen professional endeavors. As such, there is a need to incorporate ESP in the core curriculum for every Faculty in addition to the core courses of the particular field of study. However, before this can be realized, there are other issues that need to be addressed, such as the class load, the number of semesters it will be offered, and the level it will be taught at, among others. Furthermore, there are questions concerning the competencies the students will have been equipped with by the end of the course, as well as the expectations concerning the final aims and outcomes. In line with this, an important issue that needs to be addressed is that of the choice of materials to be used in the realization of the syllabus, all with the aim to best meet the learners' needs. This paper will take a closer look at all these issues, as well as possible solutions to alleviate and overcome them. In this context, it will look at and discuss the results from a survey that was conducted among students, freshmen, from the Faculty of Economics in Skopje, N. Macedonia, who had taken the elective course Business English in the fall term of 2022/2023.*

**Keywords:** *ESP, proficiency, competencies, communication, Business English*

### **Introduction**

Globalization and the ascent of the internet have helped to cement the lingua franca status of English, and, as such, being proficient in General English (GE) for non-native speakers is nowadays simply expected, while the importance of ESP (English for Specific Purposes) is becoming increasingly significant and necessary.

The need for ESP is vital in equipping non-native English speakers from all fields to be competitive in the workplace, outside the academic context, regardless of where they see themselves in the future, and where they will pursue their professional ambitions; they now need to demonstrate their English proficiency in their chosen professional endeavors. As such, there is a need to incorporate ESP in higher education, specifically, to incorporate it in the core curriculum for every Faculty, such as Business

English, Legal English, and Medical English, among others, depending on the program study.

ESP addresses various aspects of the English language which are significant for a particular field, and which cannot be covered in GE instruction, where the focus tends to be more on developing and improving grammar proficiency, as well as students' reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills.

Business English communication, for example, takes place mainly among non-native speakers of English, meaning that these language users come from different cultural backgrounds. As such, we may say that Business English communication is "highly situation-specific, dynamic, idiosyncratic and consequently, inherently tolerant of different varieties" (Kankaanranta & Louhiala-Salminen 57). In this context, in order to effect successful Business English learning and teaching, since the two inadvertently go hand in hand, instructors need to design an appropriate curriculum to meet the needs of various types of learners, as well as to be familiar with the 'technical' language, i.e. vocabulary of business. Furthermore, unlike GE instructors, they can be found in different places, such as language schools, higher education programs, or within a company, and in addition to the role of helping learners acquire and master the various FL (foreign language) competencies, they also need to bridge teaching and training, that is, they need to link language and job performance.

### **Business English Lingua Franca**

An important acronym to enter the English lexicon is that of BELF, standing for Business English Lingua Franca, in reference to English being used as the medium when it is the only option to communicate. This goes hand in hand with the belief that English is owned by nobody, or, that it is owned, in fact, by everybody. Essentially, the main notion at this stage is that possessing business communication and strategic skills is vital for successful interactions. In addition, the language user, whose native language is not English, needs to use English proficiently enough to get the job done, as well as to create rapport. In this context, one of the main sources of potential issues is the lack of adequate business communication skills, which shines a light on the importance of developing and improving users' communicative competence, and the concept of 'culture' is understood in terms of business community cultures and practices and individual cultural backgrounds.

Business English Lingua Franca (BELF) is a relatively new concept in comparison to the existence of English as a Lingua Franca (ELF), though they are similar in that they both refer to the use of English as a shared language by speakers of different mother tongues in interpersonal encounters

(Kankaanranta & Louhiala-Salminen 1). In addition, we may say that BELF communication takes place mostly between non-native speakers of English, with participants who come from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds. As such, its characteristics are simplified English, terminology that is specific for business in general, and “hybrid discourse practices originating from the speaker’s mother tongues” (Kankaanranta & Planken 392).

Bearing in mind the aims of BELF, to simplify the ways that ease communication in different business settings, followed by managerial and corporation communication (Kankaanranta & Louhiala-Salminen 27), the role of the instructor has also had to undergo some changes. It has been noted, for example, that ESP instructors have several things they need to cover, as in being familiar with the content, i.e. the language of the subject; being adept at teaching adult learners; being ready to spend time on evaluating, as well as on developing materials; being ready to review materials; relying on colleagues’ knowledge; as well as, understandably, being creative and flexible (Bocanegra-Valle 157).

In a Business English course, however, in addition to all of these roles, the instructor needs to adapt to, there are others that need to be present so as to successfully achieve the aims and objectives. One of these is connected to the issue of the curriculum, that is, a Business English instructor must provide, design, and/or adapt an appropriate set of materials created on the students’ needs, which will serve to motivate and encourage progress. Ellis and Johnson (1994) compare Business English teachers to trainers who can sometimes be found within a company, or in language schools, and higher education programs, regardless of the country. This is an unenviable task, as its significance and the challenges it presents are relatively high, and there is no one set formula that will fit all the requirements, nor check all the boxes.

### **Issues and Challenges**

Inevitably, despite the importance of incorporating ESP in the core curriculum at the level of higher education, there are various issues that need to be addressed and resolved, such as the class load, the number of semesters it will be offered, and the level it will be taught at, among others. Furthermore, there are questions concerning the competencies the students will have been equipped with by the end of the course, as well as the expectations concerning the final aims and outcomes, which naturally follow. In this context, an important issue that needs to be addressed is that of the choice of materials, i.e. a course book to be used in the realization of the syllabus, all with the aim to best meet the students’ needs.

Concerning the class load and the number of semesters it will be offered, we may note that there will undoubtedly be variations depending on the program in question, as well as on the duration of the actual program itself – whether it is a three-year program or a four-year (or even longer, in the case of medical school, for example) program. As with anything, quality trumps quantity, but there should, nevertheless, be a corresponding link between the length of the program and the number of semesters the ESP course is offered. There are arguments that support a one-semester ESP course with six classes per week, just as there are arguments that support a two-semester course with three or four classes per week, or even a four-semester course with two classes per week. Numerous other factors need to be taken into consideration, such as, for example, the students' other courses, which are often seen, by the administration and/or the students themselves, as more important.

In terms of the level the ESP course should be taught at, ideally, there should be a universal minimum present in higher education. However, bearing in mind the higher education institutions' fight for their survival, invariably connected to the number of students they manage to enroll, a situation which has been notably exacerbated in the last several years by the pandemic that impacted a number of other aspects of life, such as the financial aspect, this, too, is very difficult to precisely pinpoint. And, certainly, each institution best knows its students, the students it is there to serve, and what their needs are, and, as such, will make decisions accordingly. It goes without saying that these decisions will be modified and (re)adjusted on an as-needed basis.

In line with the competencies that students should acquire by the end of the ESP course, any ESP, whether it be Business English, Legal English, Medical English, or any other type, we may note that there is an added dimension here as opposed to where General English is concerned. Namely, GE instruction works primarily on developing and improving students' communicative language competence, with the focus being placed on developing and improving linguistic competence, such as grammatical accuracy, pronunciation, vocabulary range, and control, etc. In ESP, however, attention needs to be paid not just to the linguistic competence, but to the sociolinguistic and pragmatic competences, as well, which includes raising awareness of sociolinguistic appropriateness, in connection with the former, as well as coherence and cohesion, development of ideas, and fluency, among others, in connection with the latter.

Thus, far be it for us to devalue the importance of linguistic competence, it would be impossible to not note that without possessing socio-pragmatic competence, and especially in the business sphere, grammatical

knowledge may end up with “awkwardness, embarrassment, rudeness, failure of the speaker’s message to get through, all of which result in communication breakdown” (Choraih, Loutfi & Mansoor 187).

In this context, it is important to note that linguistic competence and grammatical competence are essentially used interchangeably, in reference to the students’ knowledge of the grammatical rules of the language, as well as them using these rules accurately, i.e. the focus is on grammatical accuracy. Sociolinguistic competence, on the other hand, refers to the appropriate use of language in different social situations, and here we can incorporate discourse competence, as well, such as the notions of fluency, coherence, and cohesion. Strategic competence is similar to pragmatic competence, in that it has to do with the efficacy of communication, as well as using strategies to overcome gaps in language knowledge (Canale & Swain 27).

Communicative competence can be seen as a concept which “includes linguistic competence, implicit and explicit knowledge, the rules of grammar and socio-linguistic knowledge of the rules of language use in contexts” (Hymes 273), inherently posing such questions as what is formally possible, what is feasible, what is the social meaning or value of a given utterance, and what actually occurs.

In line with the variety of competences non-native speakers of English need to acquire, develop and improve their proficiency in, another issue that arises is that of material selection, that is, choosing, or developing, the most suitable materials which will help learners in reaching these aims. Though course books are undeniably essential in the teaching and learning process, “they seem to absolve teachers of responsibility” (Swan 104). That being said, the Business English instructor, besides the issues they need to address and deal with, such as making decisions about the selection of suitable learning material, determining the learning potential of the learning material, improving the learning material, understanding the problems and processes of developing learning material, as well as giving an opinion of a course book, has several options at their disposal, like material evaluation, development, and adaptation, which is crucial in achieving the course aims and objectives. The guiding point in all this is that the main aim and objective in any (ESP) course should always be on covering the syllabus rather than on completing the course book.

If, or when, the instructor does not like what is being offered for a specific course, in our case, Business English, they may decide to design their own set of materials that will follow the objectives of the course. As a combination of the first two, the instructor may also choose one of the available sources, develop additional materials, and, in this way adapt the existing materials. It goes without saying that this is both a practical and

challenging undertaking, requiring thorough preparation and a students' needs analysis, which will ultimately result in the production, evaluation, adaptation, and delivery of the said materials.

Despite the challenges this may present, the advantages are numerous. From the students' perspective, for example, we may note that it exposes them to a rich, comprehensible, and meaningful input of language in use; it engages them effectively and cognitively in the language experience; they have an opportunity to develop and improve their communicative competencies; they are provided more chances to use language in order to achieve communicative purposes, among others. In addition, from the point of view of the instructor, it allows them to be both the creator and executor of the materials they have created, enabling them a first-hand opportunity to see what works and what might need further tweaking, and trying to strike a balance between what is offered by the existing materials and what is available. It goes without saying that the priorities of different instructors will certainly differ, to a greater or lesser extent, due to a variety of reasons, such as aspects of language use; skills; classroom organization; and supplementary materials (McDonough and Shaw 87). These should not be seen as absolute, however, as there is nothing absolute in terms of being right or wrong in the context of changing a set of materials that is used. Making adjustments in teaching materials is normal and expected, and numerous factors may be involved in the decision to make changes and/or adaptations, such as the instructors' priorities and/or the students' needs and expectations.

### **Previous Research in the Field/Theoretical Framework**

Over the centuries, and especially in the last decades, English has inarguably cemented its position as the global lingua franca. Some countries have even reached the point where speaking English has started to be considered a 'basic skill', as important as numeracy and literacy. Living in an age where business, and all aspects connected to business, is accepted as the backbone of any prosperous society, it is no wonder that English proficiency has managed to infiltrate this sphere, too, in combination with effective communication skills. Good communication skills, in fact, are among the most sought-after soft skills in the world of business (Berger 142), and possessing good communication skills is of great importance in the business world.

As such, it is not surprising that where EFL (English as a Foreign Language) is concerned, there has been a shift from GE instruction to ESP instruction, with the aim of focusing on helping learners improve in the specific areas they need to become proficient in concerning their professional

life. In this context, it is no wonder that ESP has even branched out in different directions and sub-branches, as presented in the image below.

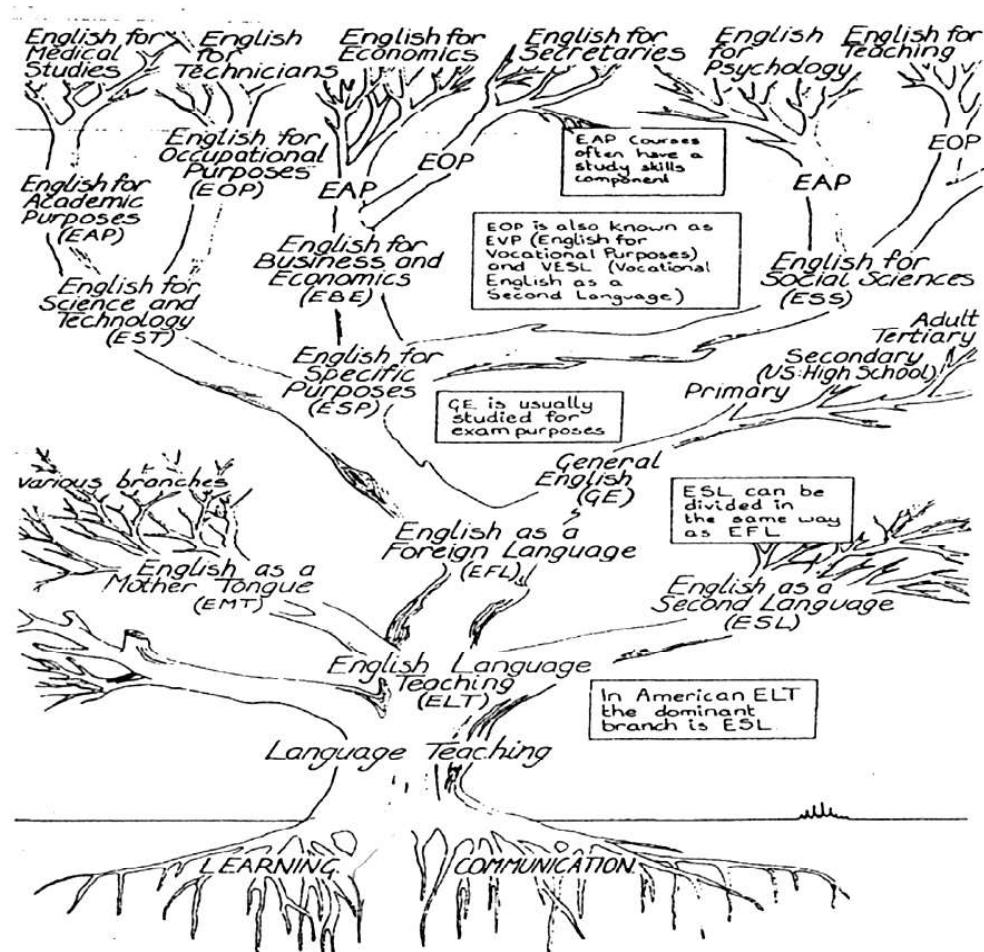


Fig. 1 The tree of ELT (Hutchinson & Waters 17)

Despite its widespread use, it is important that we also note the absolute and variable characteristics introduced by Dudley-Evans & St. John, as given below, who define ESP as “the careful research and design of pedagogical materials and activities for an identifiable group of adult learners within a specific learning context” (Dudley-Evans & St. John 298). In that context, they delimit the absolute characteristics of ESP as designed to meet the specific needs of the learner; making use of the underlying methodology and activities of the disciplines that it serves; centered on the language appropriate to these activities in terms of grammar, lexis, register, study skills, discourse and genre, and the variable characteristics as possibly being

related to or designed for specific disciplines; potentially using, in specific teaching situations, a different methodology from that of GE; having its subdivisions, or branches, such as EAP (English for Academic Purposes), EST (English for Science and Technology), EOP (English for Occupational Purposes), among others. As can be seen from the tree of ELT, English for Business, or Business English is, in fact, part of English for Occupational/Professional Purposes, and in some research studies, it can be called English for Business and Economics (EBE).

In spite of the fact that Business English has become a topic of ever-increasing interest for scholars in the last several years, it is still considered to be in its ‘infancy’, with much more to be researched and studied.

### **Survey**

Students in their first year of studies, freshmen, at the Faculty of Economics in Skopje, N. Macedonia who had taken the elective *Business English* in the fall term of 2022/2023 were asked to participate in a wide-ranging survey by answering a varied set of questions in connection to the author of this paper, and the said-course instructor, conducting a needs analysis, with the aim to identify the students’ expectations, and help them improve their overall proficiency in Business English, as well as their communicative and pragmatic competencies. So as to meet the restrictions concerning the length of this paper, the scope of the survey has been limited, and only one set of questions has been selected, i.e. only those questions that best fit the topic of this paper, mainly centering around why the students chose *Business English*, as well as their aims and general views on the importance of the course in their studies, and outside the academic context, for their future careers.

The respondents’ age was not specifically asked for in the survey; however, we may note that these are students in the range of 18-20 years old, which means that their opinions are not expected to diverge significantly. The majority of these students were high school graduates in the last 1-2 years.

In terms of the participants’ gender, this was also not something that was asked since it was felt that gender would not play a crucial role in terms of the answers received to the questions in the survey. Generally speaking, however, the enrollment at the Faculty of Economics tends to be rather evenly distributed, perhaps leaning toward a slightly higher female student ratio.

The students’ participation was on a voluntary basis, the survey was anonymous, done online, on Google forms, in the November-December, 2022 period, which was essentially in the middle of the semester, when the students have settled into some kind of an academic routine, and attendance is still in the satisfactory range of the spectrum.

In terms of the number of students that participated, there were 134 in total, which is more than half (59%) of the total number of students enrolled in the course (227). As previously noted, the participants are all students at the Faculty of Economics, enrolled, however, in different Departments, with some shared courses, of which the elective *Business English* is one.

### **Research Questions, Data Analysis, and Discussion**

The set of questions that is the focus of our attention here consisted of seven questions which were either fully open-ended or partially, in the sense that though the participants were offered options from which they could choose their response, every question also had an additional option which was open to the participants formulating their own response if the offered choices did not quite meet what they wanted to say. In addition, the questions allowed the respondents to elaborate on their answers, where they could explain them in more detail, should they wish to do so. Not all of the respondents decided to elaborate further, however, nor did they provide their own responses.

The questions were the following:

- Why did you choose to take the Business English elective? Feel free to elaborate.
- What do you want this course to help you improve in? Feel free to elaborate.
- What should be the focus of this course? Feel free to elaborate.
- Have you had, or did you have any other exposure to Business English (not counting this course)? Feel free to elaborate.
- What should the status of ESP (English for Specific Purposes) be at the Faculty of Economics? Feel free to elaborate.
- What should the class load of the course be (weekly)? Feel free to elaborate.
- How many semesters should the course be taught for? Feel free to elaborate.

The responses to the research questions will be provided in the section that follows, and they will be discussed individually.

- *Why did you choose to take the Business English elective? Feel free to elaborate.*

This question was left open-ended so that the respondents could provide their own answers. The answers received, though phrased in different ways, can be grouped in the following way, as shown in Fig. 2 below. Interestingly, the majority of the respondents showed a high level of self-awareness in answering this question, with the majority of them (65%) saying that they had taken the course in order to improve their English proficiency and/or their Business English vocabulary, while the others (35%) displayed their pragmatic nature in their choice to be practically-inclined. In addition, some of the respondents in the majority group elaborated their answers with the additional explanations that they needed to improve their Business English proficiency and/or vocabulary because they were planning to work or continue their studies abroad, as well as that they were already working for foreign companies in the country, and that they needed to improve their skills to be able to better communicate with clients and superiors.

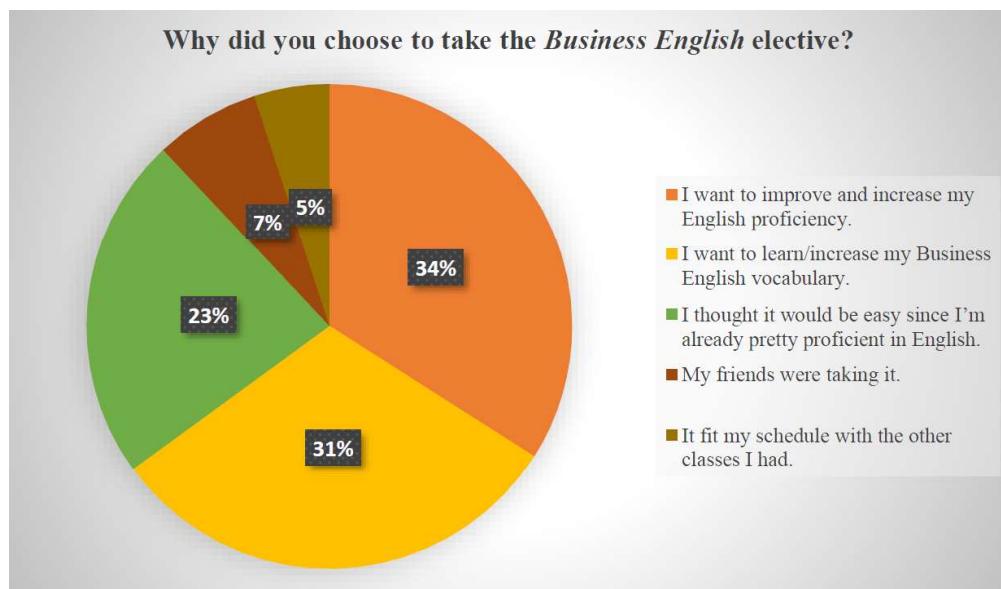


Fig. 2 Why did you choose to take the *Business English* elective?

- *What do you want this course to help you improve in? Feel free to elaborate.*

This question was initially planned to be left open-ended, so as to allow students greater freedom in providing an answer, but upon greater deliberation, it was ultimately formulated with a set number of options offered to the respondents to choose from, as well as an option Other, where they could note down any additional thoughts. The main reason why options

were offered was to help the students reign in their thoughts and not allow the potential answers to go all over the place and become impossible to analyze. Thus, as possible options, the respondents had the following: grammar, reading comprehension, writing skills, listening comprehension, speaking skills, vocabulary, and lastly, communication. In addition to these options, they also had the chance to add anything else they felt was important for them under Other. It should be noted that respondents could pick one or more of the options provided, as well as write additional notes under Other. Essentially, the options were not mutually exclusive, or limited to just one. The results of this question are presented in Fig. 3 below.

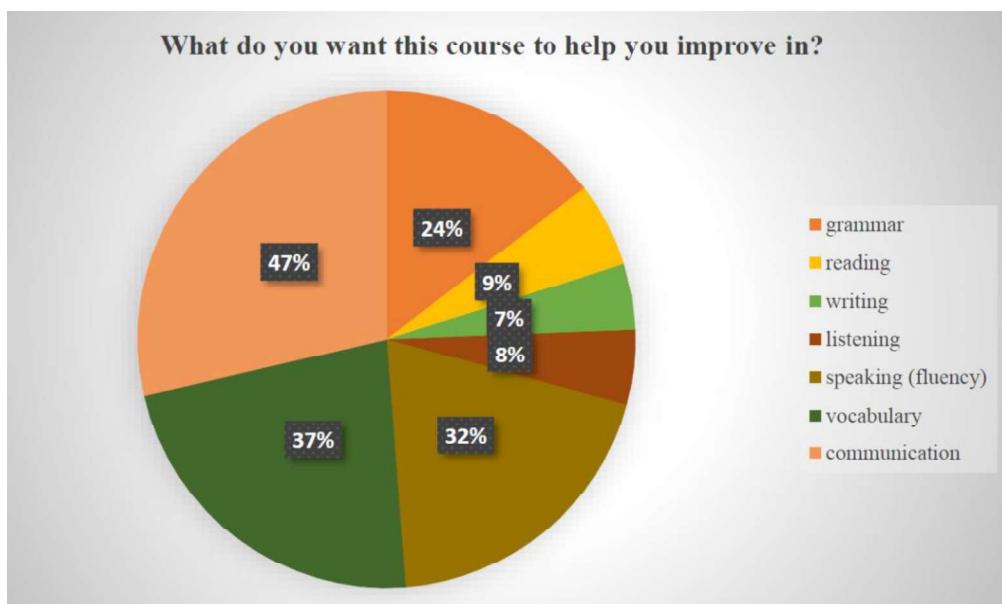


Fig. 3 What do you want this course to help you improve in?

There are several interesting things that may be noted here, such as the fact that the majority of students have noted that they do not see the receptive skills (reading and listening) as a priority for themselves. The majority would focus on improving their skills connected to speaking, fluency, communication, and vocabulary, which are tied together. For example, the greater the vocabulary of a language user, the more confident they will be, and the more fluently they will be able to express themselves, which will serve to enhance their communication skills.

Another interesting thing is that the respondents answer that they do not see writing as something of great importance to them, which is unusual when we analyze what notes they have made under the category of Other, that is, where they have added what they would like to improve in, and they

note the following: writing reports; negotiating skills; writing business letters and other business correspondence, practice various business-related situations - job interviews, meeting clients and/or business partners, making presentations. The evident discrepancy is that while, on one hand, only 7% would like to improve their writing skills, in the answers they have added we may see that some of the things they have noted as things they would like to improve in are, in fact, connected to writing skills, such as writing reports and writing business letters and other business correspondence. This discrepancy has arisen in all probability due to the respondents not making the connection that writing is not always in reference to creative writing, or essay or paragraph writing, which is probably what they were exposed to in their secondary education. Unsurprisingly, improving their listening and reading skills is not a priority, which illustrates another contradiction - on the one hand, they do not see reading as something that they would like to improve in, and on the other hand, they would like to improve their vocabulary, showing a lack of awareness that the two go hand in hand; the more reading they are exposed to, the more their vocabulary will expand.

- *What should be the focus of this course?*

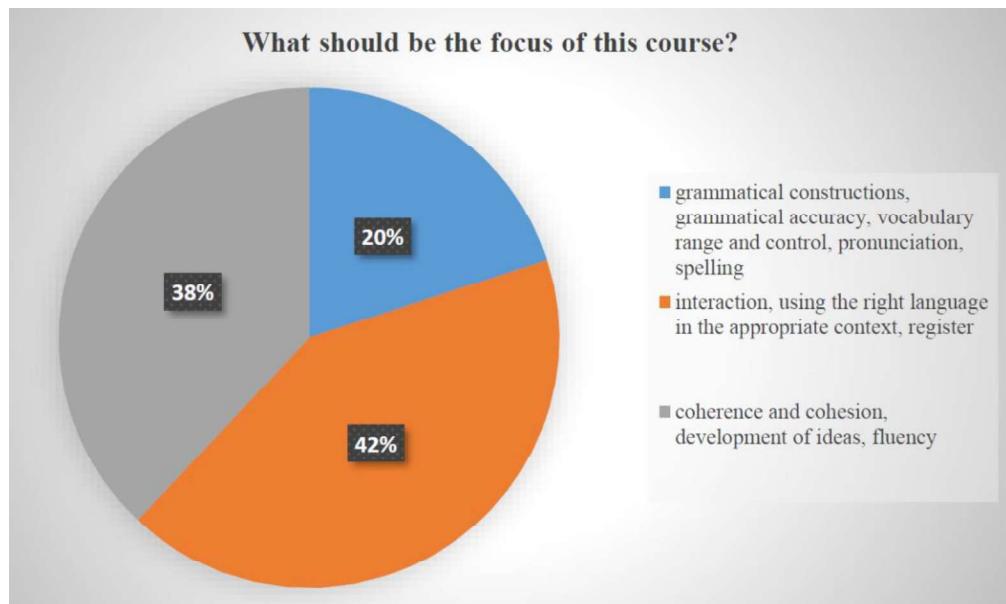


Fig. 4 What should be the focus of this course?

The following question is given in connection to the previous question, the aim of which was to see whether the answers would be complementary and would actually correspond. The offered options were, in

fact, the three competences that make up the communicative language competence according to the CEFR (Common European Framework of Languages), a descriptive scheme of L2 proficiency that was created in the 1990s and officially launched in 2001, at the beginning of the European Year of Languages. The significance of this framework can be noted in that it is the second most translated document of the Council of Europe, after the Convention of Human Rights. The respondents, being business majors, were not expected to know the finer details of foreign language learning, nor were they expected to know how the communicative competence is sub-divided, hence the reason why they were offered the groups as such.

In fact, the first group made up linguistic competence, and this was where the majority of respondents (42%) felt the focus of the course *Business English* should lie in. The second set - interaction, using the right language in the appropriate context, and register - was connected to sociolinguistic competence, and it came a close second (38%), while the last set - coherence and cohesion, development of ideas, and fluency of expression - stands for pragmatic competence.

Interestingly, the majority of students do not feel the need for much grammar instruction, which may be due to the fact that the focus in their EFL courses up to this point was essentially on grammar. This corresponds to their answers in the previous question, where the number of respondents who state that they wish to improve in grammar is about the same (24%).

In addition, the answers here match the answers in the previous question, where the majority of respondents note that the focus of the course should be on helping them develop and improve their sociolinguistic and pragmatic competences, that is, that they wish to improve their speaking skills and overall communication abilities, which can be seen as a part of interaction, coherence and cohesion, development of ideas, fluency, and so on.

Understandably, these competences overlap and complement each other, and we cannot expect strict divisions among them. As can be seen, vocabulary falls under the category of linguistic competence, but we can also treat it as a pragmatic competence, too, as just knowing words is not enough if we do not use them in the appropriate context, and this is connected to the concept of register, for example.

- *Have you had, or do you have any other exposure to Business English (not counting this course)? Feel free to elaborate.*

This question did not invite a great selection of possible answers, although it did allow the respondents to make additional notes if they wished

to elaborate on their answers, as some of them did. We can see that the majority of students (77%) stated that they had (had) no other exposure to Business English apart from these classes at the Faculty. Out of the students that responded that they did/do have other exposure to Business English (23%), some explained that it was because they had gone to a specialized high school, business, and law stream, where they did Business English texts and vocabulary; others noted that some of their other courses at the Faculty were also in English; and 2-3 students noted that they liked reading business journals and papers online, which was nice to hear.

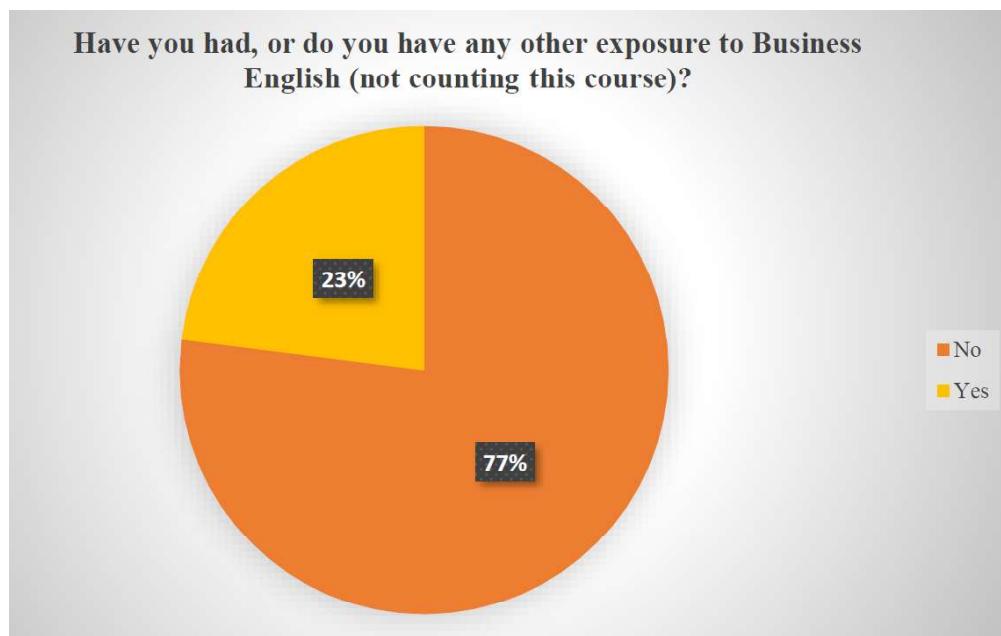


Fig. 5 Have you had, or do you have any other exposure to Business English?

In addition, the answers to this question, which indicate that the great majority of students had (had) no other exposure to Business English, may also explain the results from a previous question, illustrated in Fig. 3 above, where they state that they wish to improve their vocabulary. As this is specialized vocabulary, it would be logical that the greater the students' exposure to this type of ESP, the greater their proficiency in that particular area.

- *What should the status of ESP (English for Specific Purposes) be at the Faculty of Economics? Feel free to elaborate.*

This question, like the previous one, also did not invite a great many differing opinions, as it was phrased as a yes/no question, although it was expected that the reasons for the respondents' answers could possibly shed light as to why they answered the way they did. Essentially, the question aimed to see whether the respondents felt that *Business English* should become a core course, compulsory, or whether it should remain as it was, an elective. Unfortunately, not very many respondents decided to elaborate here, and out of those that answered in the affirmative (72%), the explanations can be essentially grouped as because they felt the course was important and useful for their future careers, while out of those that answered in the negative (28%), their explanations were along the lines that as adults they should be allowed choices and should have the opportunity to pick which courses they felt would be necessary for them. The sentiment here, however, seems to be that they are protecting their freedom of choice more than remarking on the importance of the course, or lack thereof.

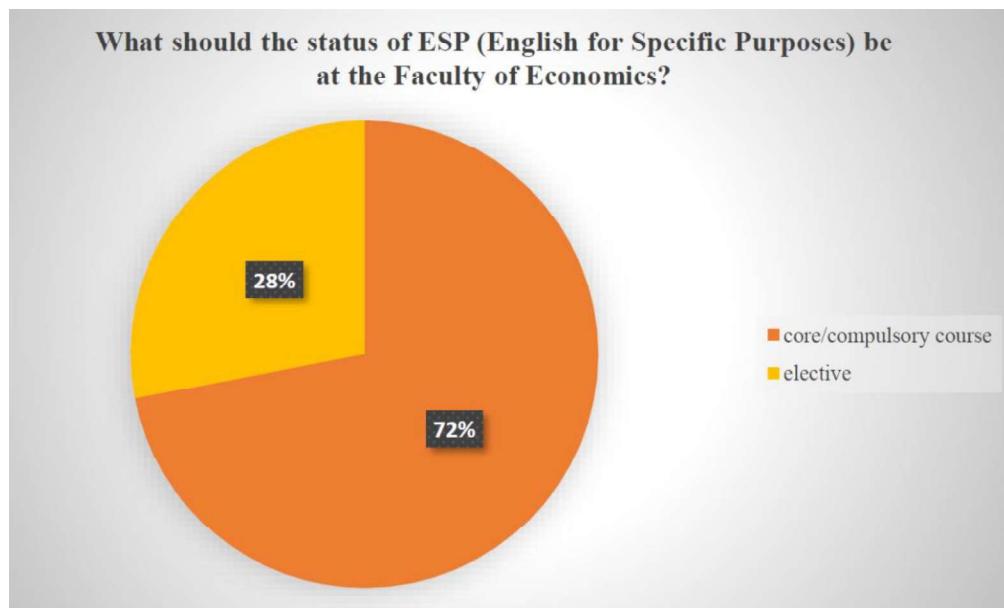


Fig. 6 What should the status of ESP (English for Specific Purposes) be at the Faculty of Economics?

- *What should the class load of the course be (weekly)? Feel free to elaborate.*

This question had options provided, where the last option was Other, and here the students could write in something other than what was offered,

and/or elaborate on their answer. It should be noted that there were no explanations provided by any of the respondents, although some used this Other category to note that they would be OK with several of the options, such as having either two or four classes per week. We may note that most of the students went with either two classes (40%) or with four classes (33%) per week, whereas only 19% were in support of six classes weekly, and the remaining respondents were undecided between two or four classes and said that both options would be acceptable. In addition, there were a few students who noted that three classes would be ideal, but since they did not elaborate, we have no explanation to account for their answer, and why they felt that three classes a week were better than two, or even four, for example.

It is worth noting here that at the moment *Business English* has a class load of six classes per week at the Faculty of Economics, which might perhaps be too much for them, hence the low number of respondents that chose that option.

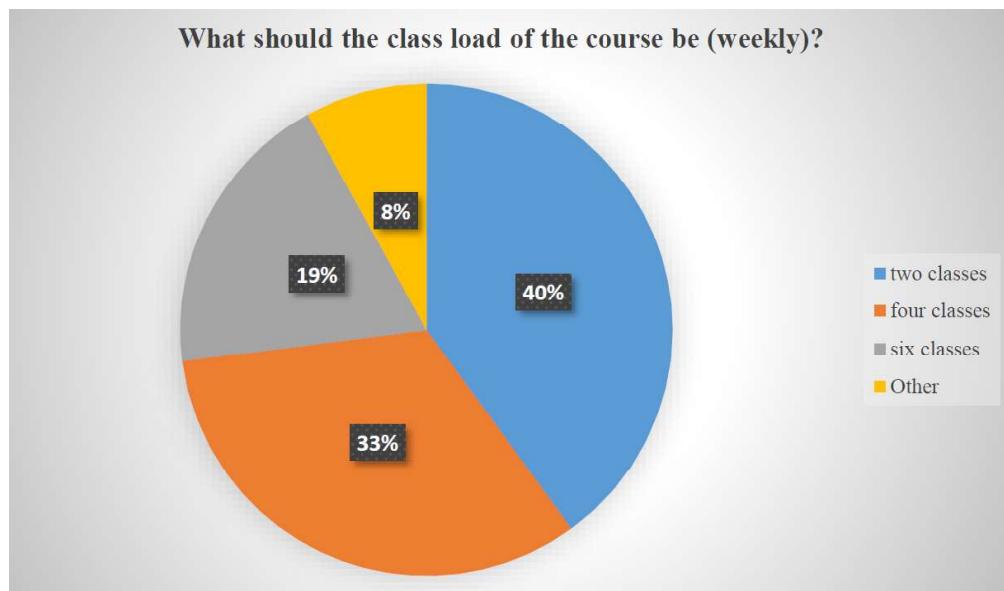


Fig. 7 What should the class load of the course be (weekly)?

In addition, it might be worthwhile to look at the answers to this question together with the answers from the next question below, concerning how many semesters the course should be taught for. At the moment, *Business English* is a one-semester course, yet from the responses we see that the students would prefer it to be taught for either four or six semesters, that is, two or three years, respectively.

- *How many semesters should the course be taught for? Feel free to elaborate.*

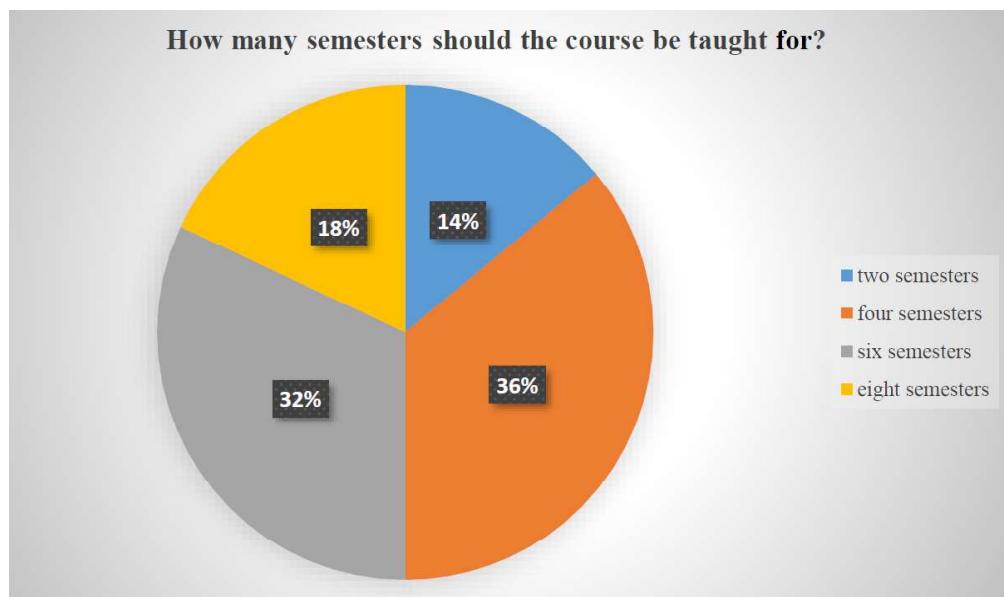


Fig. 8 How many semesters should the courses be taught for?

If we do the math for the last two questions, it seems that what the students have at the moment - six classes per week in one semester, and what they would like to have - two classes per week spread out over four semesters, which comes up to a total of eight classes, seem to correspond, just in a less concentrated fashion.

In conclusion to this section, though we may note the depth of the questions as one limitation of the survey, we may also see it as an advantage, in providing ample directions in which it may take as a further area of study. In addition, as noted earlier, the questions looked at in greater detail here were, in fact, taken from a more encompassing survey, which provides other information, not included in this paper.

### Conclusion

That English is the undisputed lingua franca worldwide is a fact, and that English proficiency among non-native speakers is no longer a skill that puts candidates ahead holds true; rather, being proficient in English is nowadays something that is both expected and assumed, just like being literate or possessing computer skills. Business has always played an important role in society, and today that importance seems to be amplified, and that much greater.

The fact that English has become indispensable in the world of business has made it necessary for EFL teaching and learning to be sub-classified, and for greater emphasis to be placed on ESP, and specifically for BELF, as a prerequisite for success in the workplace. As such, the role of the English instructor has transformed, and those that find themselves teaching Business English may often find themselves in need of guidance to make the leap between teaching and training to make the connection between language and job performance.

It is vital, then, for ESP to be included in the core curriculum in higher education so as to help candidates be competitive in the workplace, as wherever they end up professionally, they will need to demonstrate their English proficiency in their particular field. Undoubtedly, this, like anything else, has issues and potential hurdles that will need to be overcome, but it is without a doubt a situation where the advantages outweigh the issues that need to be addressed.

Thorough preparation is imperative for the successful execution, such as ironing out questions in terms of the class load, the number of semesters it will be offered, and the level it will be taught at, among others. In addition, there needs to be some reflection concerning the competencies the students will have been equipped with by the end of the course, as well as the expectations concerning the final aims and outcomes. In line with this, an important issue that will need to be addressed is that of the choice of materials, i.e. course books to be used in the realization of the syllabus, all with the aim to best meet the learners' needs.

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