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English for Specific Purposes for Sport as a Profession in Croatia: Students' and Teachers' Voices

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Abstract

University teaching staff in Croatia are expected to implement English Medium of Instruction (EMI) as an integral part of their teaching inventory, while students are encouraged to enrol in academic subjects taught in English. This study aimed: 1) to examine and analyse students' and teachers' attitudes towards the importance of using EMI, i.e., the importance of using English for Specific Purposes (ESP) for sport as a profession as an integral part of subjects delivered in English; 2) to provide feedback to all the ESP teachers regarding the necessity of creating adequate teaching materials for teaching ESP for sport as a profession. The study sample consisted of 91 students and 32 teachers randomly selected from one of the public universities in Croatia. Data was collected using an adapted questionnaire. The reliability of the questionnaire was confirmed since the t-test for dependent samples showed no significant differences between the first and second measurements ($p > 0.05$), and the correlation was moderate to high (r ranged between 0.71 and 0.89; $p < 0.05$). The results show that the usage of ESP enhances the teaching and learning process and enriches their general knowledge of English. Also, the findings point towards the necessity of accumulating the number of teaching hours for subjects that implement EPS for sport as a profession and their availability at the academic level.

Keywords: Education, English Medium of Instruction, English for Specific Purposes, university teaching staff, university students.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The English language has also been a part of the Croatian educational system, but not for very long. Due to its recent historical turmoil, attempts to implement English into the Croatian educational system have been challenging. In other words, until June of 1991, Croatia was one of the states that formed the Socialist federal unit of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY), with the official language being Serbo-Croatian (Franolij, 2001). Once Croatia became independent, the Croatian language became the official language of the Republic of Croatia in all its institutions (public or private). In addition, following the implementation of the Bologna reform in 2002, the country's accession to the European Union in 2013, and the significant introduction of modern technology, the English language has acquired a prominent role in Croatian education. Thus, from the 2003/2004 school year onwards, English has been an obligatory subject taught from the first year of elementary school onwards (Kapović, 2022).

The view that English has a prominent role in the Croatian educational system today has been demonstrated by the Croatian Educational Curriculum, which has incorporated it into the programme as an element that encourages and ensures the development of communication and intercultural competence (MSE, 2023a). Moreover, Croatia's Curriculum for English for primary and secondary school programmes stresses that learning a foreign language develops an individual's creative and critical thinking. At the same time, knowledge of English affects responsible and independent decision-making and influences an individual's development into an active member of a democratic and pluralistic society (MSE, 2023b).

Additionally, today's open labour market and the role of the European Union within the global societal context have placed new challenges and demands on the education of future specialists, requiring an individual to have, among other skills, advanced English language skills. With this in mind, the English Medium of Instruction (EMI) as a form of formal education in which the use of the English language aims at teaching academic subjects, apart from English itself (Smit, 2023), started gaining traction beyond the English philology programmes at Croatian HEIs. In other words, English for Specific Purposes (ESP) is a separate activity within English Language Teaching (Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998). It focuses primarily on the learner's needs stemming from the language demands of their specific professional situation (Hyland, 2022). Even more ESP has had a prominent role not only among international scholars (Getie, 2020) but also in the context of higher education institutions (HEIs) worldwide. Therefore, ESP has been taught as an obligatory or elective course at all four of the largest public universities in Croatia, i.e., the University of Zagreb, the University of Split, the University of Osijek and the University of Rijeka.

On the topic at hand, one of the public universities in Croatia that educates students in the field of sports and exercise sciences offers its students one obligatory and two elective English subjects. In addition, 24 non-language elective subjects per academic year use English as their language of instruction, i.e., making ESP for sport as a profession an integral part of their teaching inventory. This initiative is seen not only as a necessary response to the demands of the institution's position in global university rankings but also, as Parr (2014) addresses it, a response to the single most significant current trend in internationalising higher education. However, limited

empirical study has to date investigated students' and teachers' attitudes toward the importance and need of teaching and learning ESP in the field of sports science at an HEI in Croatia.

1.1 Attitude/Motivation Test Battery (AMTB) Questionnaire

Even though there are validated measuring instruments (questionnaires) that determine different achievements of subjects in learning and teaching English, those that would examine and determine achievements in the context of learning and teaching ESP are scarce. The existing questionnaires are mostly used to investigate the correlation between motivation and learning English in general. [Gardner \(2004\)](#), who is considered to be the pioneer of such measuring instruments, has developed a battery of tests - *Attitude/Motivation Test Battery* (AMTB) - to investigate not only attitudes and motivation for learning English (from the aspect of learning and developing the four language skills) but also to determine the non-linguistic structures (attitudes about the society in which he lives, about the importance of continuous language learning, attitudes about the importance of learning foreign languages in general). Because of [Gardner's \(2004\)](#) wide range of questions in his measuring instrument, the questionnaire has undergone numerous modifications (depending on the research's need, goal, and language).

The examples of validated questionnaires for testing ESP are also particularly rare. [Jelovčić \(2010\)](#) validated a questionnaire used to determine students' achievements in learning English and their needs and motivation for learning ESP in general. [Martinović and Poljaković \(2010\)](#) distributed the questionnaire to the student population to analyse students' attitudes toward ESP in general. [Penjak and Duran \(2017\)](#) developed a validated measuring instrument that did not directly assess respondents' opinions toward ESP but rather students' oral skills of presenters at the congress in English.

1.2 ESP Students' and Teachers' Attitudes

Many studies focus on determining different students' target needs regarding EMI: from identifying students' academic writing assessment tasks ([Cai & Cheung, 2019](#)) to identifying their lexical needs ([Kirkgöz, 2006](#)). Moreover, prior research has also been undertaken regarding students' motivation for learning ESP ([Jelovčić, 2010](#); [Martinović & Poljaković, 2010](#); [Mihaljević Djigunović, 1996](#)). Furthermore, [Duplančić Rogošić \(2009\)](#) and [Žegarac & Grabar \(2018\)](#) investigated the importance of learning ESP at the tertiary education level, while various other scholars ([Ferčec & Šoštarić, 2006](#); [Jelovčić, 2010](#); [Kabalin Borenić, 2011](#); [Martinović & Poljaković, 2010](#); [Rujevčan & Dumančić, 2016](#)) studied HE students' attitudes toward the importance of learning English at the HEIs in general.

Given the demanding nature of ESP teaching and ESP teachers worldwide, literature remains scarce in this field. Some studies focused on students and teachers regarding EMI and ESP. [Kirkgöz \(2009\)](#) conducted a study centred on students' and teachers' perceptions of the effectiveness of foreign language instruction in EMI concerning students' academic needs. Her findings underlined the importance of an adequate curriculum that can influence and determine students' effective preparation for the academic demands. In addition, [Ferris \(1998\)](#) also addressed university

teachers' views on the difficulties that students experienced with listening and speaking tasks in their second language, while Bui (2022) compared students' and teachers' perceptions of effective ESP teaching. Basturkmen (2017) conducted a study examining the additional knowledge and skills that teachers who teach ESP need to have. Bocanegra-Valle and Basturkmen (2019) addressed a similar matter. In their research on the teacher education needs of experienced ESP teachers in Spanish universities, they found five teachers' needs areas: course development, knowledge of the target discipline, knowledge of language use in the target discipline, peer collaboration, and professional development opportunities. Similarly, Liszt et al. (2005) discussed the benefits of developing transversal skills in teaching business English at HE.

Based on our literature review, the current literature has raised awareness and provided generalised views on students' interests and needs, i.e., on teachers' needs regarding ESP teaching. However, empirical research is still very limited and notably absent from students' and teachers' attitudes toward the importance of teaching and learning ESP for sport as a profession at HEI. Therefore, the objective of this explanatory study is to advance this issue and partly fill this gap. To achieve this objective, the following questions are formulated to guide the current study.

1. Can the students' educational and sports background and teachers' academic ranking influence their attitudes towards the importance of ESP for the sports profession and students' employability across Europe?
2. Can creating adequate teaching material for the ESP play an important role in achieving English proficiency at the academic level?

Following these questions, this study aimed to identify differences between students' and teachers' attitudes on the posed research questions.

2. METHODS

2.1 Participants and Procedure

The sample consisted of 91 students in the second and third year of undergraduate study of Kinesiology (M = 48, F = 53) together with 32 teaching staff members (M = 20, F = 12) from one of the public universities in Croatia. A questionnaire was developed to obtain information on:

1. Students' and teachers' demographic characteristics and
2. Students' and teachers' attitudes toward:
 - their English language proficiency in general;
 - the importance of creating teaching materials for ESP that are adapted to non-native speakers of English;
 - the importance of knowledge of ESP for any kind of profession;
 - the importance of learning ESP at the academic level as a complementary and additional knowledge of general English (GE);
 - the correlation between knowledge of ESP and students' employability across Europe.

The teachers and students completed the same online questionnaire delivered in Croatian. They were informed that the questionnaire was anonymous and that their participation was voluntary. The participants were also informed about the Common

European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) standards and principles. There were no time constraints. The study protocol followed the guidelines stated in the Declaration of Helsinki.

2.2 Data-Gathering Instrument

For this research, the students' and teachers' attitudes toward using English as their language of instruction, i.e., using ESP as an integral part of subjects delivered in English, were examined. Due to the lack of previously developed, reliable, and valid measuring instruments, a questionnaire with 6 items, together with a separate demographic section, was constructed following [Penjak and Delaš Kalinski \(2023\)](#). All the questions that could be answered quantitatively were asked using a 5-point Likert scale (from 1 = strongly agree to 5 = strongly disagree). To obtain additional information on students' and teachers' background education, additional language knowledge, and their experience travelling abroad, some demographic questions (see Appendix) were included in the questionnaire. We believe that knowledge of this background information can explain their attitudes more profoundly.

Due to the necessity of identifying the psychometric characteristics of the observed questionnaire, 12 days after the first survey, a sub-sample of 24 students and 7 teachers were asked to complete the questionnaire again (the test-retest method). The validity of the questions themselves was tested through communication with several experts, some of whom had 20 years of teaching experience.

2.3 Data Analysis

Prior to the statistical analysis, as a measure of reliability, the correlation between the test and retest was used together with the t-test for dependent samples. It was confirmed that no significant differences between the test and retest were found ($p > 0.05$), and the correlation between the test and retest was moderate to high (r ranged from 0.71 to 0.89; $p < 0.05$). It was concluded that the measurement tool used was reliable. The descriptive parameters Mean $\pm$ standard deviation ($M \pm SD$) was calculated for all variables. The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was used to determine data distribution. Due to the necessity of identifying the significance of differences in two independent groups, a t-test for independent samples was used to examine the differences between the students' and teachers' answers. The type I error was set at $\alpha = 5\%$. The data were analysed using the statistical software package Statistica 14.0.

3. RESULTS

Before analysing the data, the data distribution was determined using Kolmogorov-Smirnov test. Moreover, demographic characteristics of the questionnaire include the variable "students' type of secondary education" and the variable "teachers' academic rank". The results are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Students' type of secondary education and the teachers' academic rank.

Students			Teachers		
Variable	N	%	Variable	N	%
Gymnasium (grammar school)	27	29	Distinguished Professor	3	9.4
Vocational secondary school	64	71	Full professor	7	21.9
			Associate professor	9	28.1
			Assistant professor	8	25
			Teachers without Ph.D.	5	15.6

Table 1 indicates that 71% of the students had a vocational secondary education, where they received the same amount of teaching hours per week, different yet precise specific vocabulary integrated with the main language skills (level A2-B1). Twenty-nine per cent of the students who had completed secondary education at a gymnasium (grammar school) had learned more English language teaching hours but had been learning general English vocabulary integrated with the main language skills (level B1-B2). Despite this 'initial' difference, 42% of the student stated that they had attained the grade 'excellent' as their final grade for English, while 25% stated that they had attained the grade 'very good.' This indicates that they have learnt all the basic linguistic skills prescribed by the curriculum regardless of their type of secondary school.

As for the teachers' demographic characteristics, we deduced that most teachers were experienced teachers (with a doctoral degree) and only a small percentage of them were novices in teaching (teachers without a doctoral degree). In addition, out of 32 teachers, only one teacher was an English language teacher (with a doctoral degree in English Philology), two of them had a doctoral degree in Medicine, one in Mathematics, and the other 28 teachers in sports and physical education. Moreover, Table 2 presents other demographic variables for both samples of participants.

Table 2. Demographic characteristics.

Students		Teachers	
Variable	%	Variable	%
The grade for English at SS	42% excellent 25% very good 33% good	Have you learnt English so far	99% Yes 1% Occasionally
AELC	42%	I have learnt English:	87.1% at primary school 9.7% at secondary school 3.2% occasionally as a part of language subject
Categorized as an athlete	88% without categorization	Benefits of EL in professional life	71.1% extremely beneficial 28.9% beneficial
IPS	50% active > 5 years	Erasmus exchange mobility programme	59.4% Yes 40.6% No
Travel to countries with EL as official	79% travelled to countries where English is an official language	Subjects taught in English	56.3% Yes 43.7% No
Purpose of the travel	3% sport competitions 46% private reasons 21% not declared	Language of the teaching materials	70% in English 20% Half in English and half in Croatian 10% in Croatian

Note. grade for English at SS = average grade for English at secondary school; AELC = additional English language subject; IPS = involvement in professional sport

Table 2 shows that the majority of the students achieved very good grades in English at their secondary schools and had additional English language subjects. As for the teachers' prior knowledge of general English, out of 32, only one teacher declared that he/she had never learnt English before. This stands as a good predictor that both samples might have positive attitudes towards the importance of teaching and learning ESP, as well as higher results regarding their English language proficiency in general.

Furthermore, half of the students have been involved in professional sports, while more than half of them have used English, whether as a part of their participation in international competitions or as a part of their personal travelling. The teachers were also requested to report their international mobilities. Unlike students, teachers' travelling abroad was evaluated by participating in some international mobility exchange programmes (for instance, the Erasmus⁺ mobility programme). Out of the whole sample, only 13 of the teachers had no experience with any international mobility programme.

It is also apparent from the above instances that 18 teachers used English as their medium of instruction in the subjects they teach in English, and 14 declared not to use English as their medium of instruction. Specifically, of those who used English in their subjects, 14 used teaching materials in English; 4 used teaching materials that were half in Croatian and half in English; while only 2 exclusively used teaching materials in Croatian.

In developing knowledge of students' and teachers' self-evaluation variables, teaching material variables, and attitudes toward the ESP, the second part of the questionnaire addressed various sub-questions. Table 3 shows the results from the collected data.

Table 3. Differences in the samples' self-evaluation, teaching material, and ESP.

Variable	M ± SD (Students)	M ± SD (Teachers)	t	P
Self-evaluation	3.86 ± 0.63	3.94 ± 1.01	-0.31	0.76
Importance of teaching materials	3.88 ± 0.85	4.34 ± 0.65	-2.34	0.02
ESP importance	4.70 ± 0.46	4.78 ± 0.42	-0.61	0.54
ESP fulfils GE's knowledge	3.17 ± 0.48	4.69 ± 0.54	-10.98	< 0.01
Finding a job in Croatia	3.75 ± 1.03	3.88 ± 0.87	-0.49	0.63
Finding a job outside Croatia	4.58 ± 0.72	4.78 ± 0.49	-1.23	0.23

Note. self-evaluation = rate your English language proficiency in general; importance of teaching materials = creating teaching materials for ESP that are adapted to non-native speakers of English is important; ESP importance = knowledge of ESP is important; ESP fulfils GE knowledge = learning ESP at university complements and expands the students' previous knowledge of General English; finding job in Croatia = knowledge of ESP will benefit students when seeking a job in Croatia; finding job outside Croatia = knowledge of ESP will benefit students when seeking a job outside of Croatia

The data presented in Table 3 illustrate that attitudes toward the importance of teaching materials significantly differ between students and teachers. Notably, students perceived the importance of having adequate teaching materials in ESP for sports as less important than the teachers, which is expected since the teachers focused on creating and distributing teaching materials in ESP to non-native students to help them develop good English proficiency in ESP for Sports as a Profession as efficiently accurately as possible. The same difference was observed in the variable of 'ESP fulfils GE knowledge'. On the other hand, Table 3 reveals no significant differences between

students and teachers regarding the self-evaluation variable, which has been relatively high in both sample subgroups due to their high self-assessment language skills. This result is explained by the fact that both sample subgroups rated their English proficiency as high, which is expected since they had been exposed to English in various contexts.

4. DISCUSSION

The current research examined and analysed differences in students' and teachers' attitudes toward the importance of using ESP for Sports as a Profession. For this purpose, we used a newly constructed questionnaire for which the metric characteristics had to be calculated. In doing so, the study has confirmed the reliability of the questionnaire since the t-test for dependent samples showed no significant differences between the first and second measurements ($p > 0.05$), and the correlation was high (r ranged from 0.71 to 0.89; $p < 0.05$). Because there is no other questionnaire available for this context, we strongly believe this questionnaire could help future research on ESP for Sports Professionals in conducting, for instance, a longitudinal study that would track the long-term impact of ESP instructions on the academic level of students' language proficiency.

Furthermore, the study also addressed whether students' educational and sports background could influence their attitudes toward the importance of ESP for Sports as a Profession, their English proficiency level, and whether it could enhance their employability across Europe. Research studies clearly indicate that learning English from primary school onwards relates to the student's proficiency levels later on in life because the ages between six and 12 years are considered the most suitable for gaining foreign language knowledge (Cahyati & Suwarsih, 2019). Observing the results from a demographic group of variables, we notice precisely what the abovementioned authors proved in their research. The results of the student's assessment of English language skills and abilities acquired throughout students' background education (in particular, the type of education and the final grade for English) proved to be correlated with their attitudes toward the importance of learning and teaching ESP for Sports as a Profession at HEI level and with their high self-reported English language proficiency.

Moreover, it is widely recognised that maintaining educational continuity, both vertically and horizontally, is crucial for effectively enhancing language proficiency (Galishinovka & Khafizova, 2015). In other words, the horizontal process includes the acquisition of new knowledge based on past experiences, which, in our case, would mean that the good foundations that the students have from learning English throughout their primary and secondary education, judging from their final grades for English, will influence their mastery and acquisition of future English language skills at the tertiary education level. Our results also revealed that the student's enrolment in private English language subjects has contributed to their positive attitudes toward the importance of learning ESP for their profession. This might be due to the quantity and quality of the private subjects that might have complemented their past knowledge of GE acquired through their secondary school education. The extent of the relevance of the student's previous language instruction will influence the way students meet their academic needs (Kirkgöz, 2009).

Additionally, due to the students' study field, assessing the need for language skills and language usage in their current professional sports careers was necessary. For that reason, the students were asked to state if they had a Croatian Olympic Committee professional athlete categorisation. In other words, having the categorisation requires an athlete to participate at the highest international level, whether at European or world competitions and, accordingly, to be exposed to a multilingual context in which English is the official language. The results of the study show that 88% of the students did not reach the target level of categorisation. This result is expected because the regulations for obtaining any of the six categories are very strict, and the status has to be renewed annually based on that year's achievements. Nevertheless, 79% of the total student sample have travelled to countries where English is an official language, which definitely has contributed to them using the English language within a native context and developing their transversal and intercultural skills (Krstinić & Pauković, 2020), developing their confidence in using English in different out-of-classroom situations, and, eventually, developing positive attitudes towards the importance of learning ESP for Sports as a Profession.

In addition, the study also examined the potential impact of teachers' academic standing and English language proficiency on their perspectives regarding the significance of English for Sports as a Profession. Firstly, we intended to establish the teachers' academic rank since the higher the academic rank, the more requirements the teachers have to fulfil (publishing in scientific journals, presenting scientific findings in English, or simply taking data from English linguistic contexts). In other words, a teacher who ranks higher in terms of academic rank should have better English proficiency than their colleague who ranks lower and, accordingly, might be more aware of the importance of English for their profession.

Besides, Weatherford (1986) stated that mastering more than one foreign language not only enhances one's enjoyment of their professional environment and of travelling abroad but also lowers frustration and isolation levels experienced during travel in other countries. Since we live in a multilingual world, where the knowledge of a second language can give an advantage (for instance, it improves one's performance in other academic areas), and due to the demands mentioned above defined by a teacher's academic rank, teachers were asked to declare if they spoke any other foreign language. In order of prevalence, the following languages were reported: Italian, German, French, Spanish, Slovenian, and Flemish. Having said that, this indicated that most of the teachers, no matter their academic rank level, were familiar not only with other foreign language particularities, especially in terms of grammar, semantics, and vocabulary, but with their socio-cultural identities for sure, had broadened their viewpoints on the importance of learning, and eventually teaching, foreign languages on any educational level and to any focus group.

To understand the complete picture of the teachers' awareness of the importance of knowing a foreign language in general, the study also addressed the matter of the teachers' mobility within the Erasmus⁺ exchange programme (see Table 2). The results demonstrate that 59.4% of the teachers had participated in the Erasmus⁺ exchange mobility, while 40.6% had never been in this type of exchange. We did not ask for a more detailed purpose (i.e., type) of the mobility, but we can assume that they must have been comfortable and confident using English since they applied the mobility. Also, the study indicates that the results regarding the teachers' English knowledge

and usage background, together with 87.1% of them having learnt English since elementary school, correlate to their developing positive attitudes towards the other variables concerning ESP.

Furthermore, every language-learning process is a very complex and long-lasting process that develops different skills and abilities that, at the same time, depend much on motivation and parent support (Ilyinska, 2004; Penjak & Karninčić, 2015). When asked about the importance of knowledge of ESP, i.e., about the importance of learning ESP at university as a language component that complements and expands students' previous knowledge of GE, both the teachers and students saw it as very important. While some studies explain that such positive attitudes might be due to the impact of the media through which people are directly exposed to English (Wilkinson & Thelwall, 2012), others see the reason in the usage of English words instead of native, Croatian, equivalents (Konya, 1966; Krstinić & Pauković, 2020). It has been proven that over 50% of the kinesiology students preferred using English sports terms over their Croatian equivalents simply because they considered them more contemporary (Penjak & Karninčić, 2017). These findings inform us that regardless of what the English language today represents, according to Chapple (2015, p. 91), "the most significant trend in educational internationalisation", national identity markers, national language, should not be neglected and treated of less importance. In other words, according to Rován and Jelić (2008), the policy of multilingualism in the European Union views cultural diversity and multilingualism as one of the fundamental European values that enrich European culture and society.

In addition, recent years have witnessed that one of the key requirements placed on HEIs today is to train students to acquire, among other elements, proficient English language skills to enhance their employability across multilingual Europe. As such, the results of this study underline teachers' slightly more positive attitudes when addressing the importance of knowledge of ESP in finding a job in Croatia. This might be due to two factors: firstly, the teachers' awareness of the present economic crisis in Croatia and around the world, and secondly, the teachers' awareness of the fact that only the people with extensive skills right for the required job can keep their position, regardless of the country (Klimova & Semradova, 2013). On the other hand, the results indicate that both the students and teachers strongly agreed that knowledge of ESP would help them find a job outside of Croatia. More specifically, due to globalisation and internationalisation, the ability to speak a second language, as Kerby and Romine (2009) emphasise in their study, has become one of the most important skills when seeking for job (Kerby & Romine, 2009). As such, studies present numerous benefits of learning foreign languages, not only in terms of students' overall academic achievements and professional lives (Grosse, 2004) but also through enhancing their capability of finding desirable job positions (whether in Croatia or abroad).

Furthermore, if we consider the geographical position of Croatia and the fact that tourism is its most dominant economic sector and the biggest creator of new jobs, we can conclude that knowledge of English and communication with native speakers are an integral part of finding a job in tourism (Prachanant, 2012). Therefore, some students will likely find a job in this sector since sports and recreation are closely linked to tourism and are an integral part of every tourism offer. In other words, although the European Union tries to direct the labour market towards the acquisition of other foreign languages apart from English, it is expected that ESP will continue to

play the role of the leading language in the future, especially in helping graduates find a job in sports profession (European Commission, 2008).

Finally, this study also aimed to provide feedback to all the ESP teachers regarding two elements: the necessity of creating adequate teaching materials for teaching ESP and its importance in achieving English proficiency at the academic level. To be successful in teaching ESP and to improve English language proficiency, teachers should, according to Basturkmen (2017), investigate not only the learner's needs but also the ways to answer his/her needs by developing adequate ESP courses and teaching materials. The results of our study reveal that the teachers, unlike the students, have strong positive attitudes toward the importance of creating teaching materials for ESP adapted to non-native speakers of English and that they considered it as an important factor in successfully mastering ESP within the sports context. According to Dudley-Evans and St John (1998), the materials used in ESP should "concentrate on material that is parallel to the main subject, but is not actually part of it; in other words, topics that could have been included in the main subject, but were not" (p. 10). Thus, our results may be interpreted in correlation to teachers' awareness of the learner's needs, of what the learners know, can do, and need (Graves, 1996) and, consequently, to their ability to compensate for the deficiency of knowledge of suitable content through their careful preparation or relevant teaching materials. On the other hand, as Belcher (2006, p. 139) stressed, the teacher's role, in the context of the ideal ESP practitioner, is that of a "content-knowledgeable instructor, capable of coping with a revolving door of content areas relevant to learners' communities". In other words, by adopting ESP as a part of their teaching inventory and by developing adequate teaching material for the non-native speakers of English, teachers enrich students' learning, contribute their GE knowledge and their English language proficiency, and, eventually, confirm the importance of using English as an integral part of HEI instruction today. Finally, in doing so, teachers enhance their national competitiveness in knowledge production and assist HEIs in stimulating greater mobility and internationalisation, which are two of the objectives of the Bologna Process (Hu, 2007).

5. CONCLUSION

Several significant findings emerge from the present study. Firstly, the study shows that while teachers' positive attitudes toward using English as their language of instruction are primarily based on their own experience regarding their level of English language knowledge and their experience in using English as scientists, students' positive attitudes correlate with their English language skills and abilities acquired throughout their background education and sports experience. Additionally, the study concludes that teachers have slightly more positive attitudes towards the importance of ESP for sports as a profession and students' employability correlation. Lastly, we confirmed that the teachers were more positive regarding the importance of creating teaching materials for ESP as a factor in successfully mastering ESP within the sports context.

Nevertheless, there are several limitations to this study. Involving larger and different sample groups (for instance, teachers from other scientific fields, sports professionals, and students from other study programmes) would complement the

present data and provide a more complete picture of the issue. As the data analysis was conducted only at the national level, further research is needed to generalise the current findings on a more international level. Finally, it would be interesting if future studies would conduct qualitative research based on the results of the present study to understand the issue in more depth. Furthermore, to provide clear insight into the first objective of this study, it would be appropriate to conduct follow-up research. We believe that the follow-up research would give all ESP practitioners clearer insight into the effects of creating and using adequate teaching materials for the ESP needs of other professions besides sports. Based on those as mentioned earlier, it can also be concluded that this type of analysis has had, and will continue to have, 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.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Table A.1 Questionnaire of demographic characteristics.

Demographic characteristics	
Students	Teachers
1. Sex	1. Sex
2. Age	2. Age: a) 20–25 b) 26–30 c) 31–35
3. Type of secondary education: a) gymnasium (grammar school) b) vocational school	d) 36–40 e) 41–50 f) 51 and over 3. Academic rank: a) Distinguished professor b) Full professor c) Associate professor d) Assistant professor e) Other
4. Average grade for English at secondary school: 2 3 4 5	4. Have you learnt English so far: YES NO If the answer to the previous question is YES, how long have you been learning it: a) From primary school b) From secondary school c) I have not learnt English in primary or secondary school d) Only occasionally as part of some language subject e) Only as part of some informal learning context (TV, media, social media, family, friends, etc.)
5. Have you completed any additional English language subjects? YES NO If the answer to the previous question is YES, which level have you achieved: B1 B2 C1 C2	6. Do you speak any other foreign language? Which?
6. Are you categorized as an athlete? YES NO	

If you are, how long have you been involved in professional sports: a) ≤ 5 years b) > 5 years 7. Do you often travel to countries where English is an official language? YES NO What is the purpose of your travel (sports competitions, private, etc.)	7. How much does knowledge of the English language benefit you personally and in your professional life: (5 — It benefits me very much; 1 — It does not benefit me at all): 8. Have you participated in an Erasmus exchange mobility? YES NO 9. Do you teach any subject in English as part of your teaching inventory? YES NO If the answer to the previous question is YES, your teaching materials are in: a) English b) Croatian c) Half in English and half in Croatian
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Table A.2 Questionnaire of Students' and teachers' attitudes toward English.

Students' and teachers' attitudes on English
1. Rate your English language proficiency in general: 5 — Extremely high; 1 — Extremely low 2. Creating teaching materials for ESP that are adapted to non-native speakers of English is important: 5 — I strongly agree; 1 — I strongly disagree 3. Knowledge of ESP is: 5 — Extremely important for any profession; 1 — Totally unimportant 4. Learning ELS at university complements and expands students' previous knowledge of general English (GE): 5 — I strongly agree; 1 — I strongly disagree 5. Knowledge of ESP will benefit students when seeking a job in Croatia: 5 — I strongly agree; 1 — I strongly disagree 6. Knowledge of ESP will benefit students when seeking a job outside of Croatia: 5 — I strongly agree; 1 — I strongly disagree