Rethinking the Languages for Specific Purposes Syllabus in the 21ˢᵗ Century: Topic-Centered or Skills-Centered

A. Knezović

Abstract—21st century has transformed the labor market landscape in a way of posing new and different demands on university graduates as well as university lecturers, which means that the knowledge and academic skills students acquire in the course of their studies should be applicable and transferable from the higher education context to their future professional careers. Given the context of the Languages for Specific Purposes (LSP) classroom, the teachers' objective is not only to teach the language itself, but also to prepare students to use that language as a medium to develop generic skills and competences. These include media and information literacy, critical and creative thinking, problem-solving and analytical skills, effective written and oral communication, as well as collaborative work and social skills, all of which are necessary to make university graduates more competitive in everyday professional environments. On the other hand, due to limitations of time and large numbers of students in classes, the frequently topic-centered syllabus of LSP courses places considerable focus on acquiring the subject matter and specialist vocabulary instead of sufficient development of skills and competences required by students' prospective employers. This paper intends to explore some of those issues as viewed both by LSP lecturers and by business professionals in their respective surveys. The surveys were conducted among more than 50 LSP lecturers at higher education institutions in Croatia, more than 40 HR professionals and more than 60 university graduates with degrees in economics and/or business working in management positions in mainly large and medium-sized companies in Croatia.

Various elements of LSP course content have been taken into consideration in this research, including reading and listening comprehension of specialist texts, acquisition of specialist vocabulary and grammatical structures, as well as presentation and negotiation skills. The ability to hold meetings, conduct business correspondence, write reports, academic texts, case studies and take part in debates were also taken into consideration, as well as informal business communication, business etiquette and core courses delivered in a foreign language. The results of the surveys conducted among LSP lecturers will be analyzed with reference to what extent those elements are included in their courses and how consistently and thoroughly they are evaluated according to their course requirements. Their opinions will be compared to the results of the surveys conducted among professionals from a range of industries in Croatia so as to examine how useful and important they perceive the same elements of the LSP course content in their working environments. Such comparative analysis will thus show to what extent the syllabi of LSP courses meet the demands of the employment market when it comes to the students' language skills and competences, as well as transferable skills. Finally, the findings will also be compared to the observations based on practical teaching experience and the relevant sources that have been used in this research.

A. Knezović is with the Department of Business Foreign Languages, Faculty of Economics and Business, University of Zagreb, Croatia (e-mail: aknezovic@efzg.hr).

In conclusion, the ideas and observations in this paper are merely open-ended questions that do not have conclusive answers, but might prompt LSP lecturers to re-evaluate the content and objectives of their course syllabi.

Keywords—Languages for specific purposes (LSP), language skills, topic-centered syllabus, transferable skills.

I. INTRODUCTION

AFTER considerable experience in teaching both English for General Purposes (EGP) as well as English for Specific Purposes (ESP), and given the new educational and professional context of the information age, it is quite logical that we ask ourselves the question from the title of this paper. Since most definitions in the scholarly work on the subject view ESP as the teaching of a specific kind of English to learners who will use it in a particular professional setting in order to fulfill a practical purpose, we should try to ensure that the goals and objectives of our course syllabuses meet that purpose. It has to be acknowledged that learners' needs today are oriented towards a much wider scope of professional requirements, and not only linguistic competence. In the 1970s, ESP courses were mainly aimed at teaching specialized business terminology and grammatical structures, while a major shift occurred in the mid-1980s with communicative language teaching approach focusing on developing effective business communication skills in typical professional situations. With the advent of globalization process and development of advanced information and communications technologies at the beginning of 1990s, expansion of big multinational organizations and greater job mobility, increased communication on a global scale resulted in higher demand for professionals with good linguistic competence and good communication skills.

In addition to linguistic accuracy and knowledge of specialist vocabulary, successful professionals today are expected to demonstrate a certain level of communicative competence, which is composed of linguistic competence, sociolinguistic competence and pragmatic competence, as well as basic business skills, managerial skills, numeracy skills, writing skills, as well as awareness of cross-cultural differences and business etiquette [1]. With reference to knowledge-skills dichotomy, Jendrych emphasizes that teaching for knowledge is quite different from teaching for skill since knowledge can be 'presented' or 'discovered', but it can also be forgotten. Skill, on the other hand, can only be

acquired through practice, and once acquired is relatively easily maintained. The fact is that while we can 'teach' knowledge, we cannot 'teach' skill. Skill has to be learned, and practice is a central element in that learning [2]. When it comes to specialist vocabulary and knowledge acquisition, Gatehouse [3] points to Mackay and Mountford's statement that the only practical way in which we can understand the notion of specialist language is as a restricted repertoire of words and expressions selected from the whole language because that restricted repertoire covers every requirement within a well-defined context, task or vocation. On the other hand, a specialized aim refers to the purpose for which learners learn a language, not the nature of the language they learn [4]. She concludes by saying that the focus of the word 'special' in ESP ought to be on the purpose for which learners learn and not on the specific jargon or register that they learn [3]. Having this dichotomy in mind, the aim of this paper is to examine how much attention the syllabuses of Languages for Specific Purposes (LSP) courses at Croatian universities devote to specialist vocabulary and content knowledge acquisition as opposed to sufficient development of skills and competences required by the students' future employers. It will be interesting to see whether the objectives and requirements of LSP courses match the needs of professionals in everyday work environment. It is important to mention that special consideration will be given to ESP within the broader context of LSP, in particular Business English and English for Academic Purposes (EAP), since those are the main areas of interest in this paper.

II. FEATURES AND OBJECTIVES OF ESP COURSES

Before re-thinking the content and teaching methodology used in LSP courses in the 21st century, it is useful to reflect back on the historical background of the subject in question. Hutchinson and Waters highlight several factors that contributed towards the development of ESP and increased specialization in language learning in the 1960s and early 1970s. The first one is associated with the expansion in scientific, technical, and economic activity that created a demand for an international language of technology and commerce to suit particular professional purposes. The second one is related to revolutionary developments in the field of linguistics that shifted attention from describing the formal features of language usage to studying ways in which language is used in real communication. Finally, the third contributing factor revolves around new developments in psychology emphasizing the central importance of the learners and their needs and attitudes to learning [5]. Various divisions of ESP that can be found in the literature clearly suggest its pragmatic purpose, specialization in language learning, and focus on learners' needs, which could be academic, occupational, or scientific. The notion of a language for specific purposes, which first appeared in the 1960s and early 1970s was connected with English for Science and Technology (EST), the first variety of language for specific purposes that came to scientific attention. Hutchinson and Waters further developed this notion in their tree of ELT by

dividing ESP into English for Science and Technology (EST), English for Business and Economics (EBE), and English for Social Studies (ESS). Each of these three varieties was further sub-divided into English for Academic Purposes (EAP) and English for Occupational Purposes (EOP) [5]. Dudley-Evans and St John simplify the aforementioned classification by dividing ESP into English for Academic Purposes (EAP) and English for Occupational Purposes (EOP), which was further sub-divided into English for Professional Purposes and English for Vocational purposes [6]. Carver adds two more categories to these varieties of ESP by distinguishing English as a restricted language, English for Academic and Occupational Purposes and English with Specific Topics [8]. A clear distinction is made between English as a restricted language, where focus shifts from its purpose to a limited or restricted repertoire determined by a specific professional situation of vocational context, and English with specific topics, where emphasis shifts from purpose to topic. On the other hand, EAP and EOP are classified under the same category because it could be assumed that both have the same end purpose, which is employment. Hutchinson and Waters support the same argument by stating that people can work and study simultaneously and that it is also likely that in many cases the language learnt for immediate use in a study environment will be used later when the student takes up, or returns to, a job [5].

The traditional divisions of ESP are quite indicative of the purpose of such courses, while several authors have tried to define their features as opposed to English for General Purposes (EGP). Dudley-Evans and St. John define ESP as part of a more general movement of teaching Language for Specific Purposes (LSP), which has always retained its emphasis on practical outcomes. They emphasize that the main concerns of ESP have always been, and remain, needs analysis, text analysis, and preparing learners to communicate effectively in their tasks prescribed by their study or work situation [6]. Their definition highlights one important distinction between ESP and EGP, which is the primacy of needs analysis in determining the content and teaching methodology of ESP. Hutchinson and Waters make the same point with their definition of ESP as an *approach* rather than a *product*. According to them, ESP is not a particular kind of language or methodology, nor does it consist of a particular type of teaching material. Hence, ESP is an approach to language teaching in which all decisions as to content and method are based on the learner's reason for learning [5]. This approach marked a major shift in language teaching from a teacher-centered approach to a learner-centered and learning-centered approach, which had its repercussions for the decades to come. Robinson also emphasizes the importance of needs analysis as one of the distinctive features of ESP by saying that it is "*normally goal-directed,*" and that ESP courses develop from a needs analysis, which aims to specify as closely as possible what exactly it is that students have to do through the medium of English. She complements this definition by adding that ESP courses are generally constrained by a *limited time period*, in which their objectives

have to be achieved, and are taught to adults in *homogeneous classes* in terms of the work or specialist studies that the students are involved in [9]. Dudley-Evans and St. John believe that a definition of ESP should reflect the idea that much of ESP teaching, especially where it is specifically linked to a particular profession or discipline, makes use of a methodology that differs from that of General Purpose English teaching. So, as a point of departure they use Strevens' [7] definition, which makes a distinction between *absolute* and *variable characteristics.* The absolute characteristics are based on the idea that ESP consists of English language teaching which is:

- designed to meet specified needs of the learner;
- related in content (that is in themes and topics) to particular disciplines and activities;
- centered on the language appropriate to those activities in syntax, lexis, discourse, semantics, etc., and analysis of the discourse;
- in contrast with "General English".

The variable characteristics are that ESP:

- may be restricted as to the language skills to be learned (for example reading only);
- may not be taught according to any pre-ordained methodology.

They further elaborate Strevens' [7] definition by adding more variable characteristics:

A. Absolute Characteristics

- ESP is defined to meet specific needs of the learner;
- ESP makes use of the underlying methodology and activities of the disciplines it serves;
- ESP is centered on the language (grammar, lexis, and register), skills, discourse, and genres appropriate to these activities.

B. Variable Characteristics

- ESP may be related to or designed for specific disciplines;
- ESP may use, in specific teaching situations, a different methodology from that of general English;
- ESP is likely to be designed for adult learners, either at a tertiary level institution or in a professional work situation. It could, however, be used for learners at secondary school level;
- ESP is generally designed for intermediate or advanced students;
- Most ESP courses assume some basic knowledge of the language system, but it can be used with beginners [6].

The characteristics of ESP courses identified by Carver [8] coincide with some theories that have already been mentioned in this section, and recapitulate some of the main features and objectives of ESP. By identifying *authentic material* as one of the features common to ESP courses, this is entirely achievable if we take into consideration Dudley-Evans and St John's claim that ESP is generally designed for intermediate and advanced students. The *purpose-related* feature of ESP courses is in direct correlation with their aforementioned focus on communicative tasks required by a particular target

situation rather than simply teaching grammar and vocabulary, or teaching language for its own sake. While all four language skills: listening, reading, writing and speaking, are given equal attention in EGP courses and course books, it is the needs analysis which mainly determines the syllabus design and the teaching methodology used in ESP courses. In addition, the subject matter is combined with language teaching, which means that students learn a foreign language in a context that is directly connected with their special field of study, thus enhancing the learners' motivation and foreign language acquisition. Finally, *self-direction* concerned with "turning learners into users" lends itself well to the Hutchinson and Waters' [5] idea that learner-centered and learning-centered approaches help students to utilize their linguistic and communicative competence more efficiently in their academic as well as professional context. However, the theories that have been mentioned in this section are not without limitations. With regard to Dudley-Evans and St John's [6] claim that ESP is generally designed for intermediate or advanced students and Robinson's claim that it is taught to adults in homogeneous classes, it has to be said that this is not always the case in everyday teaching practice. LSP classes, especially at tertiary level, are not necessarily homogeneous (intermediate or advanced) since most students do not have the same level of foreign language proficiency, owing to their diverse secondary education background and foreign language exposure, which may result in students' lack of motivation or interest in learning. Carver's [8] as well as Mackay and Mountford's [4] definitions of ESP as a restricted language with a restricted repertoire of words and expressions may have prompted teachers and course book authors to place considerable focus on the acquisition of specialist vocabulary in their syllabuses. As opposed to their definitions, it has been emphasized in recent literature that the demands of the 21st century employment market go beyond language correctness and the mastery of grammar and specialist terminology. It has been suggested, instead, that more attention should be given to the development of skills that are transferable from their academic context to their future professional setting. Another limitation of ESP theories is connected with the frequently quoted learner-centered and learning-centered approach, which is not always entirely feasible in classes with a large number of students, especially at higher education institutions. Finally, needs analysis, as the focal point of most theories discussed in this section, places primary emphasis on students' needs, but it is suggested that equal attention should be given to analyzing the needs and requirements of their future employers, as well as re-evaluating our teaching objectives accordingly. These issues will be given consideration that is more detailed in the research that will be presented in the subsequent sections.

III. Issues Related to Syllabus Design

A. Different Approaches to Syllabus Design

When thinking about the components of an effective and adequate course syllabus that would cater for the needs of

students, academic institutions and prospective employers, it is important to define the notion of "syllabus". In simple terms, it is a statement of content used as the basis for planning courses of various kinds, while the task of the syllabus designer is to select and grade this content. A distinction is traditionally drawn between syllabus design, which is concerned with the "what" or the outcomes of a language program, and methodology, which is concerned with the "how" or the process through which these outcomes are realized [10]. Gatehouse suggests that several key issues have to be taken into consideration when thinking about syllabus design, such as abilities required for successful communication in occupational settings, content language acquisition versus general language acquisition, heterogeneous versus homogenous learner groups, and materials development. The first ability required in order to communicate successfully in an occupational setting is the ability to use the particular jargon characteristic of that specific occupational context. The second is the ability to use a more generalized set of academic skills. The third is the ability to use the language of everyday informal talk to communicate effectively, regardless of occupational context. The task for the ESP developer is to ensure that all three of these abilities are integrated in the curriculum and to identify academic skills that are transferable to most occupational settings [3].

Various frameworks for syllabus design have been discussed in the literature, but it is useful to start with Hutchinson and Waters' [5] approach to ESP course design since they try to pinpoint the answers to the "what" and "how" questions related to the aims and objectives of syllabus design. They identify three main approaches to ESP course design: language-centered, learning-centered, and skills-centered. Language-centered approach, as the most familiar one to English teachers and particularly prevalent in ESP, is characterized by a direct connection between the analysis of a target situation and the content of the ESP course. However, the fact that this model does not take the learning needs of the students into consideration is perceived as its principal drawback. When comparing the learning-centered approach to the learner-centered approach, Hutchinson and Waters prefer the concept of learning-centered approach in order to suggest that this type of approach to course design is focused on maximizing learning, while the learner-centered approach is based on the principle that the learning process is entirely determined by the learner and their background knowledge. The skills-centered approach to course design focuses on the development of skills and strategies that a learner could use in order to produce or comprehend discourse. It is a process-oriented rather than a goal-oriented approach that is concerned with the processes of language *use* rather than language *learning* [5].

The key questions of the "what" and "how" in syllabus design from the beginning of this section are parallel to the aforementioned goal-oriented and the process-oriented approach. Nunan [10] makes the same distinction by differentiating product-oriented and process-oriented syllabuses. He draws a clear distinction between the goals of the linguistically-oriented syllabuses, which focus on the grammatical elements that the learners are expected to master, and the so-called communicative syllabuses, which focus on the functional skills they would need to master in order to communicate successfully. However, Nunan [10] comes to the conclusion that both of these approaches focus on the things that learners should know or be able to do as a result of instruction. He further elaborates this dichotomy by defining product-oriented syllabuses as those that focus on the knowledge and skills that learners should gain as a result of instruction, and process-oriented syllabuses as those which focus on the learning experiences themselves. Examples of product-oriented syllabuses would include grammatical and functional-notional syllabuses, and are criticized on the basis of focusing on only one aspect of the language, such as grammar, or problematic criteria for grading and selecting functional items, such as apologizing or making requests, which are to be included in the course syllabus. On the other hand, examples of process-oriented syllabus would include procedural and task-based syllabuses, both of which are supposed to enhance the classroom processes that stimulate learning [10].

Before analyzing the features and objectives of communicative language teaching, today, Richards [11] starts with the distinction between grammatical competence and communicative competence. The former refers to the knowledge we have of a language that enables us to form and produce grammatically correct sentences, whereas the latter refers to the knowledge of a language that we use for a range of different communicative purposes and functions in specific occupational or educational settings. In order to ensure that communicative language teaching fulfils these purposes, Richards considers several important characteristics that have to be incorporated in ESP course syllabuses. It is clear that communicative language teaching, as a foundation of many ESP courses today, has synthesized some of the main premises of ESP that we have already discussed, such as:

- The shift from teacher-centered instruction to learner-centered instruction, in which learners assume an autonomous and constructive role in taking more responsibility for their learning outcomes as well as negotiating some aspects of course content. The use of self-assessment would be an example of this principle.
- The shift from product-oriented to process-oriented instruction.
- Developing students' communicative competence by creating the need for real communication, interaction, and negotiation of meaning by the use of activities such as problem solving, information sharing, and role-play.
- Providing opportunities for learners to develop both accuracy and fluency, not teaching grammar in isolation but arising out of communicative tasks.
- Placing emphasis on the social nature of learning by creating an environment where learners learn through collaboration and sharing. Different forms of cooperative learning exemplify this point.

- Cross-curricular integration, by which the content of ESP courses is linked to other courses in the curriculum. Project work would an excellent example of this approach.
- Developing critical and analytical thinking skills by employing more cognitively challenging tasks.
- Using language as a means of performing real-life tasks. Students do not learn language for its own sake but use the language in a spontaneous and natural way, and as a means of practicing productive skills like speaking and writing. Case studies prove to be an excellent tool for this purpose.
- The teacher is viewed as a facilitator and co-learner rather than an instructor.
- Selection of authentic material that is relevant, purposeful, and engaging to create interest and to provide valid models of language.
- Materials are selected based on learners' reasons for learning, that being needs analysis.

Richards [11] proposes *process-based CLT* approaches as the most adequate frameworks for developing communicative competence since they focus on creating classroom processes that are believed to best facilitate language learning. These methodologies are *content-based instruction* (CBI), which focuses on using content as a coherent framework for developing grammatical and communicative competence, and *task-based instruction* (TBI), which focuses on interactive tasks as the basis of language instruction. The advocates of content-based instruction assume that people learn a language more successfully when they use the language as a means of acquiring information, rather than as an end in itself. On the other hand, a central issue is the extent to which focusing on mastery of content provides a sufficient basis for the development of accurate language use. Another issue concerns whether language teachers have the necessary subject-matter expertise to teach specialized content areas, and lastly, there is a dilemma whether learners should be assessed according to content knowledge, language use, or both. The proponents of task-based instruction suggest that effective language learning results from engaging learners in interactive tasks, while grammar and other dimensions of communicative competence can be developed as a by-product of such tasks. A role-play in which students practice a job interview would be a task of this kind. Thus, the aim of this approach is to create a real purpose for language use and provide a natural context for language study. This methodology is not without limitations either, since there is little evidence that it works any more effectively than the traditional presentation-practice-production approach it aims to replace. Criteria for selecting and sequencing tasks are also dubious, as is the problem of language accuracy. Task work may well serve to develop fluency at the expense of accuracy, as with some of the other activities suggested within a CLT framework. The fact that TBI addresses classroom processes rather than learning outcomes is also an issue.

As the counterpart of *process-based* approaches, Richards [11] examines the *product-based* CLT approaches that focus more on the outcomes or products of learning as the starting point in course design rather than on classroom processes. *Text-based instruction*, also known as a genre-based approach, bases communicative competence on the mastery of different types of texts, which are identified through needs analysis and through the analysis of language as it is used in different settings. This approach has been criticized on the grounds of placing insufficient emphasis on individual creativity, and focusing on the products of learning rather than the processes involved. Unlike *text-based instruction, competency-based instruction* aims to teach students the basic skills they need in order to prepare them for situations they commonly encounter in everyday life, while its critics point out that analyzing situation into tasks and underlying competencies is not always possible.

A step further in flexible syllabus design, as well as the effectiveness of the teaching methodology used in ESP courses, can be seen in Content-and-Language Integrated Learning (CLIL). It has been described as a new paradigm in language education and a holistic approach to foreign language teaching based on the premise that students can effectively obtain both language and subject matter knowledge by receiving content input in the target language [12]. The proponents of this approach often emphasize the fact that in content-based classrooms, students are exposed to a considerable amount of incidental language while learning content, which should be comprehensible, linked to their immediate prior learning, and relevant to their needs. Both teachers and students explore interesting content while students are engaged in appropriate language-dependent activities, so the language learning is not based on artificial or meaningless exercises. Thus, CBI supports contextualized learning, successfully integrates language instruction with content instruction, in a relevant and purposeful context and it lends itself to student-centered classroom activities [13]. It has to be said that although CLIL offers teaching that is targeted at content matter, strong emphasis is also put on using academic, professional, and authentic course materials with high terminology input. For all the reasons mentioned above, CLIL is often based on cooperation between a language teacher and a subject matter teacher. However, in practice, it is the subject matter teachers with good linguistic competence who teach in such courses, while owing to difficulties, constraints, and negative attitudes, language teachers refrain from accepting teaching positions in CLIL courses. Consequently, the primary focus is on content matter, and ESP is given a secondary focus [2]. It can be concluded that CLIL is faced with similar dilemmas related to the relationship between learning outcomes and learning processes, as well as the balance between the content knowledge acquisition as opposed to the development of linguistic and communicative competence in ESP courses. Given the demands of ever-changing educational and working environment, it is evident that ESP teachers and course syllabus designers constantly have to be aware of ways of improving their syllabuses, and one of the most reliable ways is certainly by using the needs analysis.

B. The Importance of Needs Analysis

Hutchinson and Waters [5] define needs analysis as a process of first identifying the target situation in which the learners will use the language they are learning, then carrying out an analysis of that situation and then identifying features that will form the syllabus of the ESP course. What distinguishes the ESP from General English is the awareness of a target situation, which is a definable need to communicate in English that distinguishes the ESP learner from the learner of General English [5]. Needs analysis, carried out to establish the "what" and the "how" of the course, is the first stage in ESP course development, followed by curriculum design, materials selection, methodology, assessment, and evaluation of the effectiveness of a course [14]. Hutchinson and Waters [5] establish the learning-centered approach to needs analysis, which consists of target situation needs and learning needs. The target needs include *necessities*, which are determined by the demands of the target situation, that is, what the learner has to know in order to function effectively in a target situation; *lacks,* which stem from the difference between what the learner knows already and the necessities the learner lacks; and *wants*, learners' subjective views of what their needs are. Learning needs, on the other hand, are connected with ways in which learners learn the language. Hutchinson and Waters' [5] explanation of needs analysis is in direct correlation with the distinction between the *target situation analysis (TSA)* and the *present situation analysis (PSA).* While the *target situation analysis* focuses on what learners are required to do in the target situation, the *present situation analysis* draws attention to the gap between what students are able to do with language at the beginning of the course and what they need to do at the end of the course. Thus, broadly speaking, whereas the *target situation analysis is* concerned with "needs", the *present situation analysis* addresses learners' "lacks" and "wants [14]. Richards [11] also emphasizes the importance of needs analysis in determining the ESP course syllabus as opposed to EGP course syllabus by stating that the focus of needs analysis is to determine the specific characteristics of a language when it is used for specific rather than general purposes. Such differences might include differences in grammar, vocabulary choice, the types of texts, functions and the need for particular skills. Observation, surveys, interviews, situation analysis, and analysis of language samples collected in different settings are used in this process to determine the kinds of communication learners would need to master if they were in specific occupational or educational settings.

Nunan's [10] approach to needs analysis combines elements of both aforementioned definitions, since it identifies two different types of needs analysis used by language syllabus designers. Learner analysis is based on information about the learner, so the central question of concern to the syllabus designer is: "For what purpose or purposes is the learner learning the language?" Task analysis aims to specify and categorize the language skills required to carry out real-world communicative tasks, hence the key question in relation to a linguistic perspective is: "What linguistic elements should be taught?" Finally, from a learning perspective, the key question

is: "What activities will stimulate or promote language acquisition?". It is clear that Nunan's [10] approach to needs analysis combines the features of learning-centered and learner-centered approach to syllabus design, as well as language-centered and skills-centered approach, all of which can be found in Hutchinson and Waters' [5] approach to needs analysis. Dudley-Evans and St John [6] are thinking along the same lines by juxtaposing the *goal-oriented* definition of needs, referring to what the learner *wants* to do with the language, with the *process-oriented* definition of needs, referring to what the learner *needs* to do to actually acquire the language.

C. The Role of ESP Teacher

Different approaches to needs analysis stress various elements to consider when designing a course syllabus that should be responsive to the needs of different stakeholders included in the learning process, as well as the outcomes of this process, which significantly expands the range of responsibilities of ESP teacher. Hence, it is not surprising that Dudley-Evans and St John [6] use the term "practitioner" rather than "teacher" to emphasize that ESP work involves much more than teaching. They identify five key roles for the ESP practitioner:

- *Teacher,* who is not the primary knower of the subject matter, but has the opportunity to draw on students' knowledge of the content in order to create communication in the classroom.
- *Course designer and materials provider*, who does not only select the published material, but also assesses the effectiveness of the teaching material, adapts material if it is not suitable, or writes their own materials.
- *Collaborator*, who co-operates with subject specialist in order to meet the specific needs of the learners and adopts the methodology and activities of the target discipline. The fullest collaboration is where a subject expert and a language teacher team-teach classes.
- *Researcher*, who explores the aims of their courses, necessary to design a syllabus, to write teaching materials, and to discover the students' particular interests.
- *Evaluator*, who evaluates students' progress and teaching effectiveness.

Jendrych's [1] view of the role of the ESP teacher in the current contemporary context shares many similarities with Dudley-Evans and St John's description of the ESP "practitioner". The shift from teacher-centered approach to learner-centered approach is visible in describing the teacher as facilitator and the feedback provider while the learner takes a more active and constructivist approach to learning. Students need to acquire communication and business skills, as well as social and pragmatic competence, while teachers need to incorporate more interactive teaching methods and techniques in their teaching methodology, providing students with opportunities to deal with real-life professional situations and developing the transferable skills required in their future working environments. In addition, in order to match the demands of the contemporary educational and work setting,

ESP teachers constantly need to improve their own skills and competences in order to respond to learners' needs effectively. By following the needs of the employment market and adapting their course content and learning tasks accordingly, ESP teachers will not only improve their syllabuses but they will also add variety to their teaching methodology and students' learning processes. They can achieve this by selecting and incorporating authentic and up-to-date materials into their courses that are relevant for the students' special field of study, making use of online sources and social networking media, and bringing novel concepts and tasks into their syllabuses, such as case studies, for example. The idea that ESP teachers could modify the teaching of writing skills for professional purposes in accordance with the new trends characteristic of the digital era should not be ignored either.

We should remember, though, that ESP teachers are not specialists in the field, but in teaching English, their subject is English for the profession but not the profession in English. They help students, who know their subject better than the teachers do, develop the essential skills in understanding, using, or presenting authentic information in their profession [15]. However, there are situations in which ESP teachers may be confused about this basic premise, which is why one sometimes cannot escape the fact that we are actually focusing more on teaching the subject matter rather than developing students' linguistic and communicative competence. This is another major dilemma that will be analyzed in the research for this paper, in which the needs of university graduates and their employers will be compared to the opinions of LSP teachers at academic institutions.

IV. THE IMPORTANCE OF TRANSFERABLE SKILLS IN LSP

In the information-rich digital world the traditional concepts of literacy and linguistic competence have gained new and broader dimensions, so the importance of information and media literacy skills, critical and analytical skills, communication and teamwork skills, as well as reflection and self-assessment have been highlighted with reference to 21st century skills. In the broader context of foreign language teaching, and more specifically ESP, it has already been pointed out that teaching a language is no longer about focusing exclusively on teaching vocabulary and grammar, but using the language as a medium to develop other skills. Most students today possess a high level of information and communication technology (ICT) literacy, and with considerable amounts of information accessible to them on a daily basis, they do not have difficulty finding information, but selecting, filtering and abstracting information. Giving students guidance in finding the relevant information as well as quoting reliable and appropriate sources is of crucial importance in ESP, and particularly EAP. It is clear that access to information is unlimited in the digital era, but knowledge is limited, so we need to teach logical and creative thinking, which is why teaching methodology should aim to develop those skills and encourage students to approach the information so easily available to them online in a more critical way. Living in today's world is not about living in isolation but about sharing information and being part of a large sharing community, especially through social networking sites, so it is natural for students to work together and not individually. That segment is already incorporated in teaching methodology through pair work and group work activities in EGP classes, but we should teach students about the values and principles of team work, leadership skills and flexibility. Communication in the 21st century often occurs through channels like Skype or video conferences, which have a strong visual component, which is why the development of students' presentation skills should be given considerable attention both in EGP as well as in ESP classes. However, teachers have to ensure that the visual or superficial aspect of the presentation should not draw away attention from the content or substance. Lastly, different types of learners and multiple intelligences: visual, auditory, kinesthetic, learning independently or in a team, require the teaching methodology that should cater for different varieties of learning styles. Through the process of self-assessment, students should be encouraged to use different learning strategies to identify their own strengths and weaknesses in order to become more independent to develop life skills that they will need for the 21st century professional context [16].

In the more specific context of ESP, 21st century skills often correlate with transferable or transversal skills that are not limited to any academic discipline or knowledge area but are interdisciplinary abilities that are transferable to many occupations and professional contexts. Such skills are sometimes referred to as "soft skills" or "generic skills" which are non-technical skills necessary for the students' future employability, adaptability, and occupational mobility. These skills are based on cognitive, affective, social or psychological components of human development and may include: communication skills (verbal and written), presentation skills, interpersonal or people skills, teamwork and collaboration skills, analytical and critical thinking skills, problem-solving skills, computer skills, information and media literacy skills, leadership and organizational skills, time management skills, as well as research and investigation skills. Characteristics like adaptability and flexibility, creativity and innovation, attention to detail, willingness to learn, personal and social responsibility, work ethic, global awareness, as well as financial, business and economic literacy are often included in the aforementioned category. Hard skills are more closely associated with a specific discipline of study, or career field. They are the technical skills necessary for the success in the workplace, and are not as transferable as soft skills.

It has to be said that there is no consistent theory for defining and classifying various skills, and there is no generally accepted skills taxonomy. However, released in 2011, a report for the European Commission as part of the social agenda for modernizing Europe entitled *Transferability of Skills across Economic Sectors: Role and Importance for Employment at European Level* [17] has tried to accomplish this goal. As the final result of this research, three categories of skills are distinguished in this report: *soft skills*, *generic hard skills*, and *specific hard skills*. Employers distinguish

between hard skills such as job-specific skills, which are closely connected with knowledge and easily observed and measured as well as specifically trained, and soft skills such as non-job specific skills closely connected with attitudes and necessary for innovation, which are intangible, and difficult to quantify and develop. Other actors, mainly policy-makers and educational institutions, usually distinguish between *general* (or *generic*) and *specific* skills.

Soft skills include *personal effectiveness skills* (e.g. self-control and stress resistance, self-confidence, flexibility, creativity, lifelong learning), *relationship and service skills* (e.g. communication, cooperation with others, interpersonal understanding), *impact and influence skills* (e.g. organizational awareness, leadership), *achievement skills* (e.g. efficiency, accuracy, initiative, problem solving, planning and organization), and *cognitive skills* (e.g. a*nalytical and conceptual thinking***)***. *Generic hard skills,* i.e. technical and job-specific abilities, can be applied effectively in almost all jobs in a majority of companies, occupations, and sectors and in personal life, which are thus perceived as highly transferable. The following 6 generic hard skills have been used in the project: *legislative and regulatory awareness*, *economic awareness*, *basic skills in science and technology*, *environmental awareness*, *ICT skills/E-skills*, and *communication in foreign languages. Specific hard skills* are technical and job-specific abilities that are applicable in a small number of companies, occupations and sectors, which describe special attributes for performing an occupation.

It is concluded that specific hard skills closely related to specific jobs, as well as rare skills whose particularity makes them non-transferable, are characterized by their lower level of transferability. On the other hand, soft skills and generic hard skills, such as knowledge of foreign languages, mathematical skills, communication skills, problem solving, creativity, planning and organizing, interpersonal skills, or team working skills, are skills with high transferability across sectors and occupations and can be identified as *transversal skills*. Having these skills, which can be transferred from one context to another, is a good basis for accumulation of specific skills required by a given job.

The three aforementioned groups of skills have been analyzed in terms of employability, transferability, and occupational mobility. It could be seen that employability of individuals and lower risk of unemployment are based on specific skills, which are complemented by transversal skills, since individuals possessing a higher stock of skills have faced a lower risk of unemployment during the economic crisis. In addition, easy outsourcing in the globalizing world increases the dynamics of the labor market, and employees should invest in their skills development to enhance their chances of keeping their job or finding a new one easily. Another advantage of being multi-skilled is the fact that it facilitates a worker's movement within their current organization. In general, the opportunity for employees to develop their transversal skills, as well as opportunities for internal mobility and the transferability of job-specific hard skills, depend on the size of the employer. This means that employees of small

companies and micro-companies are disadvantaged in their access to relevant training and personal development, which can make redundancies especially troublesome for them. Recognition and assessment of transversal skills in new hires is more difficult for small companies, whereas large and medium-sized companies carry out such assessments for high-level positions. One of the conclusions drawn from this report indicates that a transformation from traditionally knowledge-based to competence-based education system is necessary in order to match the demands of both corporate and the public sector. This is directly connected with the knowledge-skills dichotomy, as the basic question of this paper and the subject of the research that will be presented in the next section.

V. Research Objectives and Methodology

This research aimed to investigate the perceptions of three distinct, albeit closely related, groups of stakeholders in the process of foreign language learning at tertiary level institutions in Croatia: LSP teachers, young professionals, and HR managers. The main goal of this research was to make comparisons between the responses collected from these three groups and consider the results when developing an LSP syllabus that would be aligned with the target situations in the real life professional context and thus contribute to the employability of future graduates.

For the purpose of this research, the respondents were divided into three groups. The lecturers of foreign language in higher education institutions were referred to as LSP teachers. The university graduates with a degree in economics and/or business, who during the course of their study have completed a certain type of LSP course, were referred to as young professionals. Finally, the professionals who select and recruit new employees in their respective companies were referred to as HR managers.

The research survey was comprised of three different questionnaires aimed at three groups of respondents; LSP teachers, young professionals and HR managers. As the preferred method of data collection, we chose the closed-response format primarily due to the possibility of using the quantitative data to facilitate the comparisons of results. The questionnaires were distributed and collected in electronic form via SurveyMonkey Inc. online platform, and they were administered between March 23 and May 20, 2015.

All three questionnaires addressed the same issues surrounding foreign language knowledge and usage in professional and academic settings, although questions were formed to correspond to each group of participants. The key issues related to LSP course syllabus that were investigated were:

- Balance between the time spent on content-knowledge and specialist vocabulary acquisition and the development of skills and competences that are transferrable from the academic to professional context.
- Relevance of specific elements of LSP course content (reading and listening comprehension of the specialist texts, acquisition of specialist vocabulary, presentation skills, negotiation skills and business meetings, business

correspondence and report writing, academic writing, case studies, debates, informal business communication, business etiquette, and core courses delivered in a foreign language) in the academic and work-related context.

- Target situations in which LSP is typically used for everyday communication in a professional setting.
- Importance of developing the four general language skills (reading, listening, writing and speaking) in the LSP classroom.
- Importance of developing grammatical and communicative competence.
- Importance of developing non-linguistic competences, such as sociolinguistic and pragmatic competence.
- Importance of students' level of foreign language proficiency in the academic and work-related context.
- Importance of continuous assessment and evaluation of students' work.

The LSP teachers' questionnaire consisted of 8 questions, made up of 1 open-ended introductory question that established the participants' contextual data, 3 multiple-choice questions, 1 multiple answer question plus 3 ranking questions. The young professionals' and HR managers' questionnaires consisted of 10 questions, made up of 1 open-ended introductory question that established the participants' contextual data, 4 multiple-choice questions, 4 multiple answer questions plus an additional ranking question. The questions in the LSP teachers' questionnaire can broadly be divided into two parts. The first 7 questions are diagnostic and try to establish the common practice in an LSP classroom while the last question examines the teachers' perception of usefulness of specific elements of the LSP course syllabus in the professional context. The questions in the young professionals and HR managers' questionnaire follow the same pattern; the first part is diagnostic and aims at giving a snapshot of practices in Croatian companies while the last question also examines the working professionals' perception of usefulness of specific elements of the LSP course syllabus in the work-related context.

The research findings will be analyzed in more detail in the section that follows, and compared to the observations based on practical teaching experience, as well as the relevant sources that have been used in this research.

VI. RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

LSP Teachers. The participants for this research study were 51 LSP lecturers of differing academic rank and experience teaching at various higher education institutions in Croatia. These include business and economics schools and faculties (39 respondents); electrical engineering, mechanical engineering and naval architecture (3 respondents); food technology (2 respondents); law (2 respondents); police college (1 respondent); veterinary medicine (1 respondent); medicine (1 respondent); chemical engineering and technology (1 respondent); and maritime studies (1 respondent). All participants were asked to provide contextual data as part of their questionnaire. 12 were teaching at privately owned institutions while 39 were teaching at state

universities. 40 were teaching English while 10 were teaching other languages (German, French, Italian, or Spanish).

Young Professionals. The participants were 65 young professionals whose mother tongue was Croatian and who used English as an official, administrative or foreign language in their workplace. Most of them were university graduates with a degree in economics and/or business working in lower, middle and senior level management positions in mainly large and medium-sized Croatian companies, as well as international subsidiaries. The companies come from a wide range of industries in Croatia, such as banking, consultancy, insurance, pharmaceuticals, retail and wholesale, food and beverages, ICT, marketing, tourism and hospitality, manufacturing, industrial production and construction. 35 worked for privately owned companies, while 3 worked in state agencies or institutions. Croatian was the official language in 53 companies, with German or English featuring as the official or default language in 9 companies.

HR Managers. A total of 42 HR managers, regardless of their rank within the company, working in mainly large and medium-sized Croatian companies, as well as international subsidiaries from a wide a range of industries in Croatia, such as banking, consultancy, insurance, pharmaceuticals, retail and wholesale, food and beverages, ICT, engineering, industrial production and energetics, participated in this research. They were selected based on their role in the selection and recruitment process. 30 worked for organizations where the official language was Croatian, 5 worked for organizations where the official language was English or German, 4 worked in companies where both English and Croatian were used, while 3 persons did not provide an answer. 35 managers worked for privately owned companies and 3 worked for state-owned companies.

VII. RESEARCH FINDINGS

The results reported in this section provide insights into the perceptions of LSP needs and priorities of young professionals and HR managers, and the implications of these findings for course syllabus developers. The research study focused on uncovering and comparing the perceptions of young professionals, employers, and LSP teachers.

A. LSP Teachers

In the survey aiming at LSP teachers, the focus was placed on gaining insight into the current teaching practices and course content that are commonly used in Croatian higher education institutions. The results of this survey are shown in Table I in the Appendix section.

The survey showed that on average there are between 20 and 30 students per class who have a foreign language proficiency level of B2 (CEFR - Common European Framework of Reference), which proves Dudley Evans and St. John's claim that ESP is generally designed for intermediate or advanced students.

When asked which elements form the basis of their syllabus (Q4), LSP teachers responded that it was mostly organized around domain specific topics and specialist vocabulary

(82.98%) while business communication skills (8.51%), grammar (4.26%) and academic skills (4.26%) do not comprise a significant part of their course content. This ratio confirms the main hypothesis of this paper that LSP syllabus is mainly topic-centered with considerable focus on the content knowledge and specialist vocabulary acquisition rather sufficient development of skills and competences that are transferable from the academic context to the work-related setting. The fact that grammar constitutes such low percentage is not surprising considering the developments in the field of linguistics and foreign language teaching, which have shifted attention from grammatical and functional-notional syllabus to communicative language teaching approach to syllabus design, which has taken precedence over traditional approaches in the past few decades. The question mentioned above is elaborated in greater detail in Q6 which adds more categories to the aforementioned list, such as presentation skills, business meetings and negotiations, writing for professional purposes (business correspondence, report writing, memo, minute taking, graph description and summary writing), academic writing (essays, critical reviews and research papers), case study, debate, informal business communication and business etiquette. With reference to reading and comprehension of specialist texts in a foreign language (95.65%) and acquisition of specialist vocabulary (95.65%), the answers coincide with those in Q4. On the other hand, presentation skills (93.48%), writing for professional purposes (71.74%) and informal business communication (54.35%), all of which comprise business communication skills, form significant part of the LSP syllabus compared to their respective percentage in Q4. However, it has to be said that business meetings and negotiations (26.09%) and business etiquette (30.43%) do not show the same trend. What is interesting to see is the fact that writing for professional purposes is given noticeable attention in the LSP course syllabus. Jendrych [2] also recognizes the critical importance of writing for specific purposes since professionals, especially in legal and business professions, are required to produce texts and documents in a standardized way, each requiring a special layout, structure, a specialized routine language, clarity and argumentation, as well as appropriate register, style and tone. On the other hand, she perceives difficulties in teaching writing for professional purposes, since students generally do not have the sufficient secondary education background to produce well-written standardized texts in English. In addition, with a limited number of classes in ESP courses at universities and a large number of students in classes, it is often difficult to provide students with enough opportunities for acquiring good writing skills and giving quality feedback on their written work, and everyday teaching practice at tertiary level provides abundant evidence in support of this claim. The relatively low percentage for academic writing (32.61%) is an additional proof in support of this argument. Lastly, it is noteworthy to mention that debate (41.30%) and case study (39.13%), as more demanding and challenging alternatives to conventional classroom tasks, have relatively high percentage in the LSP syllabus, which contributes

towards the development of critical and analytical thinking skills, problem solving skills, teamwork and collaboration skills as well as overall communication skills.

Q5 asked the LSP teachers to rank various elements of their syllabus according to their relevance to foreign language learning. Their answers are ranked according to the following score: reading and comprehension of specialist texts in a foreign language (5.00), the acquisition of specialist vocabulary (4.52) and the development of business communication skills (3.80), which were perceived as the most important segments. On the other hand, listening to audio and video materials in a foreign language (2.95), knowledge of grammar (2.42) and development of academic skills (2.30) were given less significance. It can be seen that these scores summarize and match the main findings from Q4 and Q6.

The final section of this survey (Q7) intended to examine how consistently different language skills and communicative competences are being assessed and evaluated according to the LSP course requirements at Croatian higher education institutions. The ranking of answers to this question shows consistency with some answers to the previously discussed questions. Reading and comprehension of specialist texts in a foreign language (9.70), acquisition of specialist vocabulary (10.02), presentation skills (8.76), writing for professional purposes (7.53) and knowledge of grammar (6.89) take up most of the time in the LSP classroom. To a certain extent, this can be explained by the fact that designing vocabulary, grammar or reading comprehension tests is less demanding while the test scores are easier to interpret and less time-consuming for assessment. The downside of such an approach is that testing focuses on individual components instead of measuring students' overall ability to use the foreign language effectively in a target situation. The fact that writing for professional purposes received such high ranking is surprising, considering its time-consuming assessment, but a low ranking of academic writing (5.00) may explain this discrepancy. The fact that informal business communication (5.64), case study (4.95), debate (4.32) and business etiquette (4.44) ranked lowest is not surprising since tasks that focus on productive skills like speaking are frequently more demanding for classroom management and less quantifiable in terms of assessment.

In the final question (Q8) the LSP teachers were asked to rank the above mentioned course elements in order of relevance. The intention was to examine which elements, in their opinions, contribute most to the development of students' foreign language proficiency and communicative competences, which are the most useful and applicable in the work-related context. Majority of LSP teachers believed that the acquisition of specialist vocabulary adds most to the accomplishment of the aforementioned goals. Reading and comprehension of specialist texts in a foreign language was indicated as second by most of the respondents, while presentation skills were ranked as third most important element. Writing for professional purposes and business meetings and negotiations were highly ranked as well. They believed that the knowledge of grammar and informal

business communication are factors that should not be ignored, while core courses taught in a foreign language were recognized as another contributing factor towards the enhancement of students' foreign language proficiency, unlike academic writing, which received a very low ranking. It can be concluded their LSP teachers' perceptions of the needs of the employment market coincide with the objectives of their courses, except in the case of business meetings and negotiations (Fig. 1).
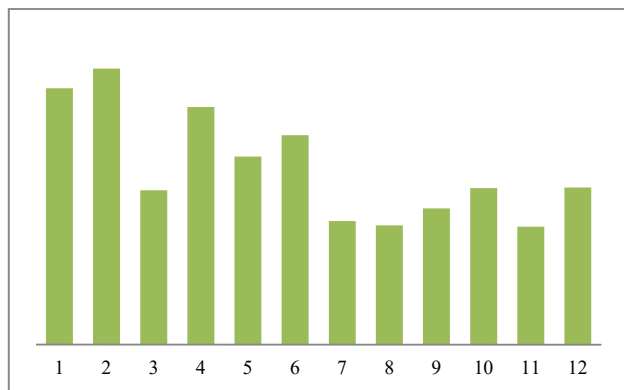

Fig. 1 Elements of LSP syllabus that contribute most to the development of linguistic skills and communicative competences in the work-related context. (LSP Teachers): 1=Reading and comprehension of specialist texts in a foreign language, 2=Acquisition of specialist vocabulary, 3=Knowledge of grammar, 4=Presentation skills, 5=Meetings and negotiation skills, 6=Writing skills 7=Academic writing, 8=Case study, 9=Debate, 10=Informal business communication, 11=Business etiquette, 12=Core courses taught in a foreign language

B. Young Professionals and HR Managers

In order to avoid imposing top-down ideas about the relevance of certain linguistic skills and communicative competences within LSP syllabus, it is important to understand how employees and employers perceive the importance and frequency of these elements. The central question in this research was to establish if there is a connection between the aims and objectives of the LSP courses taught at Croatian universities and the needs of the labor market. Two almost identical questionnaires were administered to young professionals and HR managers, and the results of their respective surveys are shown in Table II and Table III in the Appendix section.

From the total number of young professionals, 52.31% use foreign language in their workplace every day while 24.62% use it very often. These findings correspond to the answers gathered from the HR managers, since in 54.76% of companies foreign language is used every day, while in 21.43% of companies foreign language is used very often. The insignificant percentage of answers in both questionnaires (0.00% - 4.76%) stating that foreign language is used rarely or almost never in Croatian companies proves that the knowledge of foreign languages, primarily English, is of vital importance in today's occupational context. Unsurprisingly, 61.54 % of

young professionals underwent foreign language assessment as part of their selection process, while 70% of companies regularly include language testing into their selection process (Q5). HR managers agreed that levels B1 and B2 were usually required for the entry position, while young professionals add level C1 as almost equally important entry requirement (B1, B2 – 26.00% and C2 – 22%), which might in some cases put the candidates with levels C1 or C2 in advantageous positions. If foreign language proficiency level was assessed during the selection process, it was most frequently done by administering an internal written test, face-to-face or telephone interview, business correspondence or presentation in a foreign language. Some companies offer foreign language training to their employees, mostly through in-house group or individual training or language, tailored or specialized courses in schools for foreign languages.

When asked in which target situations foreign language is most frequently used (Q3), both groups gave similar answers. HR managers stated that foreign language is in most cases used for written communication and business meetings, and the same was true for young professionals. To be more precise, HR managers prioritized them in the following order: business correspondence (97.44%), business meetings (84.62%) and report writing (58.97%), while young professionals responded in this way: business correspondence (91.94%), business meetings (62.90%) and report writing (59.68%). Answers that are more elaborate were given in response to Q4. Overall, both groups of respondents regard, as most important communication skills in their professional life, skills like telephoning, business meetings, presentations, negotiations, report writing and business correspondence, although there are slight variations in their respective percentages. Given the 21st century professional context, it is not surprising that teleconferences and video conferences take up considerable amount of their working time according to young professionals as well as HR managers (Fig. 2).
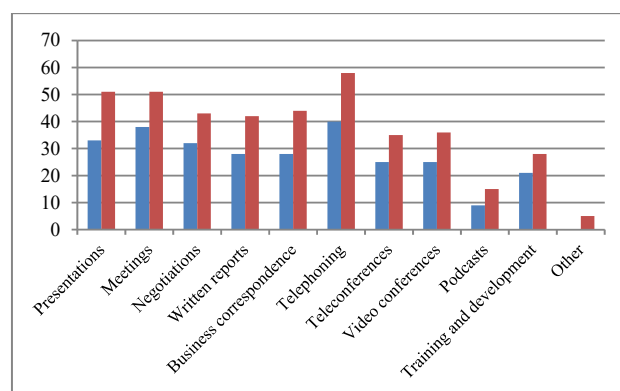

Fig. 2 Business situations in which employees use a foreign language

In order to identify which elements of the LSP syllabus university graduates and employers perceive as the most useful and applicable in their professional environment, both groups, young professionals and HR managers, were asked to rank the elements of LSP syllabus in order of relevance (Q10).

There is an agreement between the two groups that the most useful and applicable elements of the LSP syllabus are business meetings, writing for professional purposes, reading and comprehension of specialist texts in a foreign language, acquisition of specialist vocabulary, presentation skills and informal business communication, although there are slight variations in their respective rankings (Fig. 3).
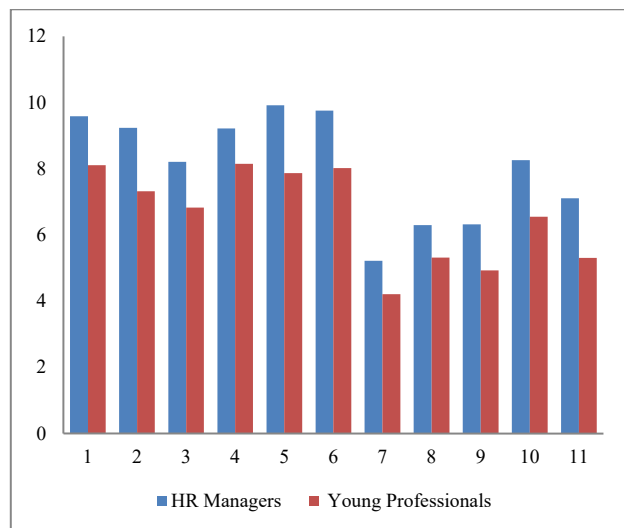

Fig. 3 Elements of LSP syllabus that contribute most to the development of linguistic skills and communicative competences (HR Managers and Young Professionals) 1= Reading and comprehension of specialist texts in a foreign language, 2=Acquisition of specialist vocabulary, 3=Knowledge of grammar, 4=Presentation skills, 5=Meetings and negotiation skills, 6=Writing skills 7=Academic writing, 8=Case study, 9=Debate, 10=Informal business communication, 11=Business etiquette

Based on the ranking of the responses to the last question in their respective surveys, it can be seen that all three groups of respondents have similar opinions. They highlight reading and comprehension of specialist texts in a foreign language, acquisition of specialist vocabulary, presentation skills, business meetings and writing for professional purposes as the most relevant elements of the LSP syllabus and useful and applicable in the work-related context. However, both HR managers and young professionals place higher importance on writing for professional purposes, business meetings, and presentation skills than LSP teachers. All three groups of respondents also agree in giving very low ranking to academic writing. In addition, there are some critical differences with respect to informal business communication, which is given much lower priority by LSP teachers. Nevertheless, the situation is quite different when it comes to business etiquette, where the perceptions of young professionals and LSP teachers differ from the opinions of the HR managers who place much higher value on this element of the LSP syllabus. The fact that LSP teachers consider the knowledge of grammar to be less important than the other two groups of respondents is not the answer that one would expect. To summarize, we may have detected a gap between the practices

of LSP teachers and syllabus developers and the needs of the labor market with regard to certain elements of their course syllabus.

VIII. CONCLUSION

If we recall Dudley-Evans and St John's [6] view of ESP teacher as a "practitioner" assuming the role of teacher, course designer and materials provider, collaborator, researcher and evaluator, it is logical to assume that the constant re-evaluation of course objectives as well as syllabus design are the responsibilities included in their job description.

The questions that were asked at the beginning of this paper seemed to have generated some answers. The research findings clearly confirm the main hypothesis of this paper that LSP syllabus mainly focuses on the content knowledge and specialist vocabulary acquisition rather than sufficient development of skills and competences that are transferable from the academic to the work-related context. On the other hand, it has to be said that business communication skills comprise a significant part of the LSP syllabus as well, which stems from the historical shift in the field of linguistics and foreign language teaching from the traditional to communicative approach to course design. The fact that LSP teachers do not perceive the reinforcement of grammatical structures to be of high priority in their classroom is another proof in support of this argument. Overall, it can be noticed that LSP teachers at Croatian higher institutions have adopted features of both process-oriented and product-oriented approaches to syllabus design, as distinguished by Nunan [10] and Richards [11], since equal attention is given to learning processes as well as learning outcomes. The fact that LSP teachers do not disregard ambitious alternatives to the conventional repertoire of classroom activities, such as debate and case study, shows evidence of employing elements of a task-based approach to syllabus design. Moreover, the implementation of tasks that feature students as the principal actors in the learning process contributes towards a shift from teacher-centered to learner-centered pedagogy. With reference to the attitudes of LSP teachers, persistently low ranking of academic writing in their course content shows that within the broader context of ESP, English for Occupational Purpose is given far more prominence than English for Academic Purposes. Nevertheless, the development of academic skills should be given more attention in the LSP classroom since those are the skills that are transferable from the foreign language courses to the students' core courses, and contribute towards the development of students' overall academic competence. Another dilemma posed at the beginning of this paper was connected with the extent to which LSP course objectives meet the demands of the labor market. The research findings show that all three stakeholders involved, LSP teachers, young professionals and HR managers, agree that the content knowledge and specialist vocabulary acquisition, as well as business communication skills are crucial components of the LSP syllabus, which are useful and applicable in everyday professional situations. On the other hand, the fact that business meetings, negotiations, presentation skills, and

writing for professional purposes are much more valued in the work-related than academic context shows a discrepancy between the perceptions of LSP teachers and the working professionals. The same can be said for informal business communication and business etiquette, which indicates that the development of sociolinguistic competence in the LSP classroom leaves room for improvement. The fact that both LSP teachers and working professionals recognize the idea that core courses taught in a foreign language add variety to the conventional foreign language teaching at tertiary level is a step further towards Content-and-Language Integrated Learning, which is a concept that is yet to be fully exploited in the future.

Having discussed the subject of this paper from different points of view, both by analyzing the responses from the research participants and reviewing the relevant literature, we can conclude that there are no straightforward answers to its main questions. What we can suggest is that LSP teachers should constantly re-examine their course objectives in order to discover whether their course content is in line with the needs of the labor market, and needs analysis has often been quoted as the most reliable methodology for achieving this purpose. All the principal stakeholders, teachers, students as well as their future employers should be involved in this process to make sure that university graduates are equipped with the knowledge and skills necessary for successful functioning in the workplace. In other words, a stronger cooperation between universities and industries is certainly a step towards the accomplishment of this goal. Hence, it is the role of ESP teacher to adopt a holistic approach to foreign language teaching and within the requirements of their course syllabus provide enough opportunities for their students to develop not only linguistic but also non-linguistic competences, as well as soft and generic skills that would ensure their employability, transferability and occupational mobility.

APPENDIX

TABLE I

ONLINE QUESTIONNAIRE FOR LSP TEACHERS

Q2 What is the average foreign language proficiency level of your students?	A1 4.26%	A2 21.28%	B1 40.43%	B2 34.04%		C1 0.00%						C2 0.00%			
Q3 What is the average number of students per class?	80-100 8.51%	50-80 10.64%	30-50 23.40%			20-30 44.68%						10-20 12.77%			
Q4 Which of the following elements form the baseline of your syllabus?	Business topics and specialist vocabulary 82.98%		Grammar 4.26%			Business communication skills 8.51%						Academic skills 4.26%			
Q5 Rank, according to your opinion, the following elements in order of relevance in an LSP class.	Knowledge of grammar 2.42		Acquisition of specialist vocabulary 4.52	Reading of specialist texts in a foreign language 5.00	Listening to audio and video materials in FL 2.95		Development of business communication skills 3.80					Development of academic skills 2.30			
Q6 Which of the following elements are part of the LSP syllabus at your university? Multiple answers are possible.	*1 95.65%	2 95.65%		3 65.22%	4 93.48 %	5 26.09 %	6 71.74 %	7 32.61 %	8 39.13 %	9 41.30 %	10 54.35 %	11 30.43 %	12 6.52%		
Q7 Which of these elements are being monitored and are continuously assessed and evaluated according to your course requirements? Rank them in order of importance.	**1 9.70	2 10.02	3 6.89	4 8.76	5 5.05	6 7.53	7 5.00		8 4.95		9 4.32	10 5.64	11 4.44		
Q8 Which of the these elements, in your opinion, contribute most to the development of linguistic skills and communicative competences which are the most useful and applicable in the work-related context? Rank them in order of importance.	***1 9.97	2 10.74	3 6.00	4 9.24	5 7.31	6 8.14	7 4.80	8 4.64	9 5.30		10 6.08	11 4.58	12 6.11		

*1=Reading and comprehension of specialist texts in a foreign language, 2=Acquisition of specialist vocabulary, 3=Knowledge of grammar, 4=Presentation skills, 5=Meetings and negotiation skills, 6=Writing skills (business correspondence, reports, memos and minutes, summary writing, graph description), 7=Academic writing (essays, critical reviews and research papers), 8=Case study, 9=Debate, 10=Informal business communication, 11=Business etiquette, 12=Other.

**1=Reading and comprehension of specialist texts in a foreign language, 2=Acquisition of specialist vocabulary, 3=Knowledge of grammar, 4=Presentation skills, 5=Meetings and negotiation skills, 6=Writing skills (business correspondence, reports, memos and minutes, summary writing, graph description), 7=Academic writing (essays, critical reviews and research papers), 8=Case study, 9=Debate, 10=Informal business communication, 11=Business etiquette.

***1=Reading and comprehension of specialist texts in a foreign language, 2=Acquisition of specialist vocabulary, 3=Knowledge of grammar, 4=Presentation skills, 5=Meetings and negotiation skills, 6=Writing skills 7=Academic writing, 8=Case study, 9=Debate, 10=Informal business communication, 11=Business etiquette, 12=Core courses taught in a foreign language.

TABLE II
ONLINE QUESTIONNAIRE FOR YOUNG PROFESSIONALS

Q2: How often do you use a foreign language for internal or external business communication?	Every day 52.31%		Often 24.62%		Sometimes 18.46%		Rarely 1.54%		Almost never 3.08%		
Q3: For which of the following communication channels do you use a foreign language? Multiple answers are possible.	Intranet 45.16%		Business correspondence (e-mails and business letters) 91.94%		Work instructions 50.00%		Written reports 59.68%		Meetings 62.90%		Memos and minutes 33.87%

Q4: In which business situations do employees in your company use a foreign language? Multiple answers are possible.	*1 80.00%	2 80.00%	3 67.69%	4 64.62%	5 67.69%	6 90.77%	7 53.85%	8 55.38%	9 23.08%	10 43.08%	11 7.69%

Q5: Was foreign language testing part of your recruitment and selection process?	YES 61,54%			NO 38,46%		

Q6: What level of foreign language proficiency was required for your entry position?	A1 6.00%	A2 8.00%	B1 26.00%	B2 26.00%	C1 22.00%	C2 12.00%

Q7: Which of the following assessment methods were used during the recruitment and selection process to test foreign language proficiency? Multiple answers are possible.	**1 46.43%	2 8.93%	3 26.79%	4 12.50%	5 3.57%	6 12.50%	7 3.57%	8 21.43%	9 46.43%	10 14.29%	11 17.86%	12 21.43%

Q8: How does your company provide foreign language training for employees?	Group courses 28.57%	One-to-one courses 23.81%	Tailored and specialized courses (e.g. presentation skills) 9.52%	Foreign language training is not provided 55.56%

Q9: How does your company organize foreign language training for employees? Multiple answers are possible.	In-house courses with internal trainer 8.06%	In-house courses with external trainer 29.03%	Language courses in a school for foreign languages 22.58%	None of the above mentioned 45.16%	Other: 8.06%

Q10: In your opinion, which of these elements of foreign language courses offered at the university, are the most useful and applicable in your current professional environment? Rank them in order of importance.	***1 8.11	2 7.37	3 6.83	4 8.15	5 7.87	6 8.02	7 4.21	8 5.32	9 4.93	10 6.55	11 5.31	12 5.69

*1= Presentations, 2=Meetings, 3= Negotiations, 4=Written reports, 5=Business correspondence, 6=Telephoning, 7=Teleconferences, 8= Video conferences, 9= Podcasts, 10=Training and development, 11=Other.

**1= Internal test, 2= Standardized test (e.g. OUP Placement Test), 3= Business correspondence, 4=Summary writing, 5= Graph description, 6= Written translation, 7=Essay, 8=Presentation, 9=Interview, 10=Telephone interview, 11=Case study, 12=Other.

***1=Reading and comprehension of specialist texts in a foreign language, 2=Acquisition of specialist vocabulary, 3=Knowledge of grammar, 4=Presentation skills, 5=Meetings and negotiation skills, 6=Writing skills (business correspondence, reports, memos and minutes, summary writing, graph description), 7=Academic writing (essays, critical reviews and research papers), 8= Case study, 9= Debate, 10= Informal business communication, 11=Business etiquette, 12=Core courses taught in a foreign language.

TABLE III
ONLINE QUESTIONNAIRE FOR HR MANAGERS

Q2: How often do you use a foreign language for internal or external business communication?	Every day 54.76%		Often 21.43%		Sometimes 19.05%		Rarely 4.76%			Almost never 0.00%		
Q3: For which of the following communication channels do you use a foreign language? Multiple answers are possible.	Intranet 33.33%		Business correspondence (e-mails and business letters) 97.44%		Work instructions 35.90%		Written reports 58.97%			Meetings 84.62%		Memos and minutes 48.72%
Q4: In which business situations do employees in your company use a foreign language? Multiple answers are possible.	*1 80.49%	2 92.68%	3 78.05%	4 68.29%	5 68.29%	6 97.56%	7 60.98%	8 60.98%	9 21.95%		10 51.22%	
Q5: Is foreign language testing part of your recruitment and selection process?		YES 70.00%						NO 30.00%				
Q6: What level of foreign language proficiency is required for the entry position?	A1 7.89%		A2 5.26%		B1 34.21%		B2 36.84%			C1 13.16%		C2 2.63%
Q7: Which of the following assessment methods are used during the recruitment and selection process to test foreign language proficiency? Multiple answers are possible.	**1 42.86%	2 5.71%	3 45.71%	4 17.14%	5 2.86%	6 40.00%	7 5.71%	8 40.00%	9 71.43%	10 22.86%	11 14.29%	12 8.57%
Q8: How does your company provide foreign language training for employees?	Group courses 51.28%		One-to-one courses 41.03%				Tailored and specialized courses (e.g. presentation skills) 23.08%			Foreign language training is not provided 33.33%		
Q9: How does your company organize foreign language training for employees? Multiple answers are possible.	In-house courses with internal trainer 18.42%		In-house courses with external trainer 57.89%		Language courses in a school for foreign languages 50.00%		None of the above mentioned 15.79%			Other: 2.63%		
Q10: In your opinion, which of these elements of foreign language courses offered at the university, are the most useful and applicable in your current professional environment? Rank them in order of importance.	***1 9.59	2 9.24	3 8.21	4 9.22	5 9.92	6 9.76	7 5.22	8 6.30	9 6.32		10 8.26	11 7.14

*1=Presentations, 2=Meetings, 3=Negotiations, 4=Written reports, 5=Business correspondence, 6=Telephoning, 7=Teleconferences, 8=Video conferences, 9=Podcasts, 10=Training and development.

**1=Internal test, 2=Standardized test (e.g. OUP Placement Test), 3=Business correspondence, 4=Summary writing, 5=Graph description, 6=Written translation, 7=Essay, 8=Presentation, 9=Interview, 10=Telephone interview, 11=Case study, 12=Other.

***1=Reading and comprehension of specialist texts in a foreign language, 2=Acquisition of specialist vocabulary, 3=Knowledge of grammar, 4=Presentation skills, 5=Meetings and negotiation skills, 6=Writing skills (business correspondence, reports, memos and minutes, summary writing, graph description), 7=Academic writing (essays, critical reviews and research papers), 8=Case study, 9=Debate, 10=Informal business communication, 11=Business etiquette.

REFERENCES

[1] E. Jendrych, "New approach to teaching English for business communication," *Sino-US English Teaching,* vol. 8, no. 10, 2011.
[2] E. Jendrych, "Developments in ESP teaching," *Studies in Logic, Grammar and Rhetoric*, 34 (1): 43-58, 2013.
[3] K. Gatehouse, "Key issues in English for Specific Purposes (ESP) curriculum development," *The Internet TESL Journal*, vol. VII, no. 10, 2001.
[4] R. Mackay and A. Mountford (Eds.), *English for Specific Purposes: A Case Study Approach.* London: Longman, 1978. Cited in K. Gatehouse, "Key issues in English for Specific Purposes (ESP) curriculum development," *The Internet TESL Journal*, vol. VII, no. 10, 2001.
[5] T. Hutchinson and A. Waters, *English for Specific Purposes. A Learning-Centred Approach.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987, pp. 5-22, 53-80.
[6] T. Dudley-Evans and M. J. St John, *Developments in English for Specific Purposes: A Multi-Disciplinary Approach.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998, pp. 1-17; 121-145.
[7] P. Strevens, ESP after Twenty Years: A Re-appraisal. In M. Tickoo (Ed.), *ESP: State of the Art* (pp. 1-13). Singapore: SEAMEO Regional Centre, 1988. Cited in T. Dudley-Evans and M. J. St John, *Developments in English for Specific Purposes: A Multi-Disciplinary Approach.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998, pp. 1-17; 121-145.
[8] D. Carver, "Some propositions about ESP," *The ESP Journal*, vol. 2, issue 2, 1983, pp. 131-137. Cited in K. Gatehouse, "Key issues in English for Specific Purposes (ESP) curriculum development," *The Internet TESL Journal*, vol. VII, no. 10, 2001.
[9] P. Robinson, *ESP Today: a Practitioner's Guide.* Hemel Hempstead: Prentice Hall International, 1991. Cited in T. Dudley-Evans and M. J. St John, *Developments in English for Specific Purposes: A Multi-Disciplinary Approach.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998, pp. 1-17; 121-145.
[10] D. Nunan, *Syllabus Design.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988, pp. 1-45.
[11] J. C. Richards, *Communicative Language Teaching Today.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006.
[12] M. Dueñas, "A description of prototype models for content-based language instruction in higher education," *Bells: Barcelona English Language and Literature Studies*, vol. 12, 2003.
[13] W. Grabe and F. L. Stoller (1997) "Content-based instruction: research foundations". In M. A. Snow and D.M. Brinton (eds.) *The Content-Based Classroom. Perspectives on Integrating Language and Content.* White Plains, NY: Addison Wesley Longman. 5-21. Cited in *M. Dueñas, "A description of prototype models for content-based language instruction in higher education," Bells: Barcelona English Language and Literature Studies*, vol. 12, 2003.
[14] L. Flowerdew, "Needs analysis and curriculum development in ESP" in B. Paltridge and S. Starfield (eds.), *The Handbook of English for*

Specific Purposes. John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2013, pp. 325-347.

[15] M. Bracaj, "Teaching English for Specific Purposes and teacher training," *European Scientific Journal*, vol. 10, no. 2, 2014.

[16] 21ST Century Skills, a video as part of *21ST Century Learning*, Pearson, 2013. Available at: http://www.pearsonelt.com/21stcenturylearning

[17] European Union Report, *Transferability of Skills across Economic Sectors: Role and Importance for Employment at European Level,* Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2011.