

ENGLISH FOR SPECIAL PURPOSES (ESP) IN AN INNOVATIVE AGRIPRENEURIAL ENVIRONMENT

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Abstract: For decades, the acquisitional significance of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) has been latently problematized in the European Union (EU), and the Republic of Croatia, as a part of Southeastern Europe (SEE), was no exception to the rule in that respect. Nonetheless, the Local Action Groups' (LAGs') awareness of the benefits of a foreign language teaching in the contexts of an enhanced cooperation and employability remains evidently inadequate in many EU Member States (EU MSs), despite a wide popularity of Lifelong Learning (LLL) initiatives and an increased embracement of the Liaison Entre Actions de Développement de l'Économie Rurale (LEADER) and the Community-Led Local Development (CLLD) principles. What is more, this manifested tendency is discrepant to the EU MSs' commitment to an improved language teaching efficiency.

Consequently, the EU Commission has devised a plan setting up a framework for both the digital and entrepreneurial aptitudes—or for the agripreneurial dexterities in this particular case—to detect a typology of linguistic skills demanded by the labor market and ensure that the teaching, learning, and coursegoer assessment take these necessities into account and focus on the appropriate learning outcomes.

Keywords: English for Specific Purposes (ESP), Higher Educational Institutions (HEIs), Lifelong Learning (LLL), agripreneurship, Community-Led Local Development (CLLD), Local Action Groups (LAGs), social capital

1. INTRODUCTION

The exact preponderance of English for General Purposes (EGP) and English for Specific Purposes (ESP) is a global phenomenon, observable in the Republic of Croatia as well. English is the world's third vernacular (after Chinese and Spanish), that is, a modern lingua franca of international institutions, quotidian lifestyles, and likewise of contemporary science, being, as of 2019, a communicational tool for 1.132 billion speakers in 106 countries, 379 million of whom use it as their first language, while more than 753 million of them use it as their second language. Thus, inevitably, most transnational business collaborations, career upskillings worthy of the *curricula vitae*, networkings, personal professional developments and project proposal applications are phrased in English, and acquiring it early and properly as a foreign language could prove to be empowering as a crucial social capital toolset, notably in a non-English-speaking country. Higher educational institutions (HEIs), such as the universities or universities of applied sciences, colleges, and polytechnics, may be successful LAG partners and ESP course incumbents in this joint, Moodle-platformed endeavor.

Consequently, the ESP courses under an umbrella of the English Language Teaching (ELT) scheme are, inter alia, already being organized at the agrobiotechnological HEIs in the following EU MSs, in addition to the Republic of Croatia: Austria (University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences, Vienna), Belgium (University of Ghent and the University of Liège), Czech Republic (Czech University of Life Sciences, Prague), Germany (Humboldt University of Berlin, University of Kassel, and Christian Albrecht University of Kiel), Denmark (University of Aarhus and the University of Copenhagen), Finland (University of Applied Sciences, Seinäjoki), Italy (University of Bologna), Poland (University of Cracow), Romania (University of Agricultural Sciences and Veterinary Medicine, Cluj-Napoca), Sweden (Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, Uppsala) and Slovenia (University of Ljubljana, University of Maribor). Obviously, Germany leads the English-oriented learning opportunities and qualifications list, but the instruction is also styled as the French-, German-, or Russian-targeted Language for Specific Purposes (LSP) programs.

According to the data downloadable from the Zagreb-based Agency for Science and Higher Education's website, that is, from the Directory of Study Programs, the Croatian HEIs currently tailor the respective agribusiness and biotechnological ESP courses in Dubrovnik, Osijek, Split, Zadar and Zagreb, having a European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) scores, common in the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) and the Bologna Process, ranging from two to five points. Hence, they are already reputable potential affiliates to the LAGs and the prospective coursegoers in a foreign language acquisition process, too, especially concerning a fact that some of them, for example, the Osijek-based Faculty of Agrobiotechnical Sciences in case of the announced

Graduate Study Program in Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) in Agricultural Sciences, envisage their entire future curricula and syllabi in the ESP, to attract the foreign nationals as their incoming (international) student enrollees.

2. RATIONALE

Ever since 1991, the EU has fostered the implementation of its comprehensive program targeting the rural regions' development, acronymed as LEADER. In light of the EU's reformed Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), these "liaisons between the actions for the development of rural economy" are actually an initiative supporting the locally launched rural development projects, aimed at the revitalization of rural areas and a new job creation. Reliance thereby, in the so-called "LEADER approach," is placed on the devising and subsequent execution of the Local Development Strategies (LDSs), frequently stylistically influenced by an expressive English terminology all over the EU MSs, even in the non-English-speaking countries.

With the assistance of such a lexicon, notably the anglicized Eurojargon, the LDSs, incited by the LAGs, are envisaged to facilitate an integral conduct of socioeconomic cohesion activities. Being legally structured as the associations directly aiding the national rural development endeavors, that is, the programs and projects of this type, the LAGs, and occasionally also the Fisheries Local Action Groups (FLAGs), thus favor the multisectoral local developmental stakeholders and are regularly operationalized nationwide as the Nongovernmental Organizations (NGOs) that aggregate sustaining institutions from both the civic and public segment, as exemplified by the LEADER Network Croatia, too.

Besides, a collaborative, transnational brainpower of trusts such as the LEADER Network Croatia resides, all over the EU and beyond, on the fact that their membership commonly incorporates not only the LAGs or FLAGs but also the respectful scientific thinktanks and rural development establishments authorized to indorse the LEADER approach and instrumentalize the CLLD measures. Bearing in mind a rather considerable territorial encompassment, population capture, and local administrative units' involvement in such linked systems, the significance of ESP as a communicational social capital toolset also becomes truly self-evident, especially when trying to successfully apply to the EU funds on the basis of the Open Calls for Proposals.

3. STATUS

While the capacity of LAG interconnections is mostly equitably appreciated in the older EU MSs, their potential appears to still be partially insufficiently validated in other countries. In geographic Central Europe (CE), however, the bottom-up LEADER principle that stimulates local development based upon local characteristics and resources is more pronouncedly embraced. Particularly, some veteran EU MSs, or those that have acceded to the EU earlier than Croatia has, have a relatively minor number of LAGs.

Financially, the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) are predominantly accountable for the 2014 – 20 European Structural and Investment Funds (ESI Funds) subsidies, followed by the European Social Fund (ESF) and the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). Moreover, sixty-eight LAGs have already evinced their interest in a CLLD Cooperation.

Finally, in addition to the socioeconomic aspects, even twenty-eight LAGs are presently attracted to explore the avenues to possible joint cooperation activities in cultural heritage preservation, and thirteen of them would like to be engaged in educational and training activities pertaining to the knowledge transfer.

4. CONCLUSIONS

Analyzing the overall CLLD mechanism and the LAGs as its incumbents, one may purport that its methodology, by now, has exactly invigorated local partnerships, having animated the civic society representatives and indigenous economic participants alike, so that the planning and enactment of efficaciously integrated, polysectoral local strategies, backed by a LLL concept of English acquisition during modular Moodle courses, may indeed raise the involved LAG's educative awareness and progressively pave a pathway to its transition into a concerted, sustainable future. As per the ESI Funds, this may energize the LAG's networking attempts and synergize its local toolsets both on a national and on the EU level. While so doing, a LAG may thus animate and boost its participatory approach toward the civil and economic private sector, foster its transnational capacity building, clarify the jurisdictions and delegate the tasks, and ultimately increase its liberty to select the projects commensurate to its LDS.

Such a LAG-tailored English course design could produce the curricula and syllabi that completely respect both the communal necessities and communal capabilities while providing an interactivity and teamwork, as well as the pioneering, evolutionary possibilities, in a localized context. This flexible and inventive attitude, without major restrictions, could therefore be a follow-up to the crux of the eight original CLLD tenets, that is, an upward-progressing, communicative-philological tactic in a stratified scheme that takes into account the realistically manifested needs of regional players for an expansion founded on the homegrown features. Furthermore,

encouraging a decentralized administration, information and service exchange among the group members, tie-up and a unified sectoral style, a LAG may appoint an educator entity to conduct a foreign language course of the kind to assist the extraterritorial messaging efforts of the established public-private partnerships, for example, in the spheres of convention centers, park architecture, or public transportation hubs.

Regarding a LLL weltanschauung, the soon-to-be ESP coursegoers, affiliated with a LAG in the LEADER/CLLD scheme promoted in the SEE area, should not be hesitant when it comes to their active involvement and contributive participation in such a venture. Basic English (BE), or any other valuable foreign language at the A1 level of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment (CEFRL), may, as a matter of fact, be learned with a minimized effort invested, for example, in a group, studied online, or tutored individually. What is more, many webpage materials or smartphone apps dedicated to foreign language education are even available free of charge.

Nonetheless, a more complicated ESP viewpoint requires instructor's adaptive and expert guidance rendered to the students during their professional terminology acquisition and authentic text translation. Therefore, bearing in mind the integral LEADER philosophy, a HEI – LAG alliance appears to be quite a reasonable pathway to follow.

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