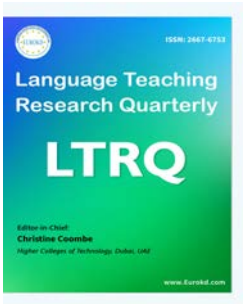

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ESP Student Feedback –A Tool to Develop both Students' and Teachers' Competences

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Abstract

The current paper investigates how ESP teachers and learners may benefit from feedback exchange during the learning process. The article is a qualitative analysis of student feedback provided for ESP classes by learners from a Romanian economic university – i.e. the Bucharest University of Economic Studies. Responses refer to: the development of (general and business) English skills, enhancing self- and peer awareness, benefits of peer cooperation. The analysis is undertaken by an interdisciplinary team comprising an English teacher and a psychologist and discusses the relevance of such assignments for the development of students' and teachers' competences. We place our analysis against the background of research on (language) teacher competences and (language) learner competences in professional frameworks developed in Europe, Asia, Australia, North America, highlighting the complex teacher and learner/ graduate profiles required across the world, as well as the contribution of feedback exchange skills to this profile.

Keywords: *Student and Teacher Competences, English For Specific Purposes (ESP), Feedback Exchange, Personal, Academic and Professional Development, Interdisciplinary Qualitative Analysis*

Introduction

The role of (language) teachers has been the topic of revisited debate as researchers in the field have shown constant interest in identifying what teaching professionals need to know and be able to do to mould competent professionals in all fields of activity and valuable members of the society. As will become apparent from our investigation of international standards for the language teaching profession, teachers play comprehensive roles in society, starting from delivering knowledge, to building characters (by modelling democratic values or facilitating personal development), to equipping learners with very practical skills in view of cooperation with other members of the society. Language classes fit this wider desideratum in that they

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contribute to the development of (inter)personal, academic and professional skills that facilitate learners' cooperation with others and inclusion in the global labour market. Against this background, the present paper aims to explore the benefits of feedback exchange to enhance teachers' and learners' competences.

Literature Review

In the current section, we first review key literature on language teacher competences to describe the successful (language) educator according to various global frameworks. Secondly, we review key literature on the competences successful language learners exhibit upon finishing their studies, which leads to their insertion into the labour market. Thirdly, we refer to several studies that highlight the importance of feedback exchange in the learning process.

Language Teacher Competences

The competence frameworks available for language teachers on four continents – Europe, Asia, Australia, North America ― highlight that successful language teachers have to possess a complexity of knowledge, skills and personal value. As shown in Figure 1 below, apart from high proficiency in the language they teach, language teachers have to exhibit knowledge of both the subject matter (phonetics and phonology, morphology and syntax, semantics, lexicology and syntax, discourse and genre, cultural issues, literary currents specific for the respective language, as well as issues in second language acquisition/ learning) and of other subjects (natural and social sciences, arts and humanities) or the context language teaching and learning takes place in (as the teaching and learning processes are influenced by a variety of societal and institutional factors). In terms of skills and competences, language teacher frameworks in all regions highlight the imperative for general and discipline-specific pedagogical and methodological knowledge and skills (including lesson planning, preparation and delivery, learner assessment, materials design, catering for learner needs, ability to teach in a trans-, inter- and multidisciplinary manner, educational psychology, classroom and conflict management), as well as the need for language teachers to exhibit intercultural and digital competences, managerial and administrative competences, cooperation with a variety of stakeholders. Moreover, language teachers' characteristics and professional values, principles and conduct are also under scrutiny. Naturally, this complex language teacher profile is shaped during an entire career, which is why teacher frameworks across the world emphasised both initial education and career-long professional development.

No.	Region/ Language teacher competences	At global level	In Europe	In Romania	In Asia	In Australia	In the USA	In Canada
	References - Language teacher competence frameworks:	EAQUALS (2011, 2016) 13 key competence areas	COE-ECML-CEFRLT (2019) 8 key competence areas	MECȘ (2015)	Nguyean (2013), based on Richards (1998)	Met (1989), Norris (1999), ACARA (2011)	NCATE (2008)	Faez (2011) based on Richards (1998)
1.	Initial education and training, as well as career-long/ ongoing professional development (as regards language knowledge and proficiency, teaching/ methodological practices, reflective and self-assessment abilities, peer observation and assessment abilities, knowledge of professional standards, policies, regulations and history of professional practices in the field etc.)	√	√	√			√	
2.	High level of language proficiency (including para-linguistic and non-linguistic aspects)	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
3.	Subject-matter knowledge: - language awareness (phonetics and phonology, morphology and syntax, semantics, lexicology and syntax, discourse and genre, cultural issues, literary currents) - an understanding of the nature of second language acquisition/ learning	√	√	√	√		√	√
4.	Common knowledge (natural and social sciences, arts and humanities)				√	√		
5.	Contextual knowledge (e.g. awareness of the way in which language teaching and learning is influenced by a variety of factors: societal and institutional factors, the community etc.)				√			√
6.	General and discipline-specific pedagogical and methodological knowledge and skills (including lesson planning, preparation and delivery, learner assessment, materials design, catering for learner needs, ability to teach in a trans-, inter- and multidisciplinary manner, educational psychology, classroom and conflict management etc.)	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
7.	Intercultural competences (including awareness of the role played by learners' cultural background in supporting/ hindering learning and academic achievement)	√	√				√	
8.	Competences for management and administration	√						
9.	Competences for cooperating/ communicating with a variety of stakeholders (e.g. peers, staff members, educational authorities, parents) and adjusting instruction accordingly	√	√	√			√	
10.	Information technology competences	√	√	√			√	
11.	Teaching experience (acquired both through initial training and throughout one's career)	√						
12.	Personal characteristics					√		
13.	Professional values and principles Professional conduct	√	√	√	√	√	√	√

Figure 1. (English) Language teacher competences across the world
Source: Authors' compilation

As evident from Figure 1 above, our review of the competences required across the globe of language teachers (in general, and of English language teachers, in particular) shows that language teaching professionals need to exhibit a complex set of knowledge and competences, and that most of "the key competences required of language teachers" [… are] not restricted to language teaching" (EAQUALS, 2016: 5), but are in fact general teacher competences. This is so because language teachers, like all teachers, play many crucial roles in society. Among these roles, we mention: "teacher, course designer, materials provider, collaborator (with subject specialists), researcher and evaluator of courses, materials and student learning" (Dudley-Evans and St John 1998, as cited in Basturkmen, 2014: 18), "advisor on content and language integrated learning (CLIL) programmes" (Taillefer, 2013; Basturkmen, 2014: 18), "intercultural mediators and mentors for lifelong learning" (Bocanegra-Valle, 2012; Basturkmen, 2014: 19), "mediator in the process of content knowledge acquisition in English" (Lesiak-Bielawska, 2015: 5), "mediators of the learning system" (Marinescu, 2010: 619; see also Bocanegra-Valle & Basturkmen, 2019).

Learner/Graduate Competences and (English) Language Learner/Graduate Competences

In this section, we review a series of publications on employability skills at a global, regional and local level. We first refer to the complex profile of a successful graduate in general (which will be shown to include mastery of languages), and then we explore what knowledge of languages means for employers in the labour market.

As evident from Figure 2 below, language and language-related skills are a very important component in the profile of 21st-century learners/ graduates that aim to be successfully inserted into the labour market. Thus, language skills (literacy; receptive skills – reading; productive skills – oral and written communication, presentation and argumentative skills; intercultural

skills and global awareness) are either explicitly mentioned as employability skills or may be said to contribute to the development of other key skills (such as logical reasoning, problem solving and analytical thinking, creative thinking, interpersonal skills and teamwork, continuous learning skills). For further discussion of employability led by proficiency in world languages, cf. European Union. OMC (2012), and Corradini et al. (2016).

Region/ 21st century learner/ graduate competences	Global perspective	In Europe	In Romania	In Asia	In Australia	In the USA	In Canada
References:	OECD.Quintini (2014); World Economic Forum (2018)	European Parliament and the Council of the European Union (2006) 8 key competences for lifelong learning; European Commission (2016); Council of the European Union (2018)	Government of Romania, Decision 915/ 2017, Deaconu et al. (2014) - 20 skills; Foerster-Pastor and Golowko (2017, 2018); Stăiculescu (coord.) et al. (2017); Butum et al. (2020) - 23 skills and abilities	ILO (2015) - 23 core competences; Erling (2014)	Jackson and Chapman (2009) - 20 competency clusters	Wickam (2015) - 19 employability skills	ILO. Dyson and Keating (2015); ILO (2019); Gyarmati et al. (2020) – 9 essential skills
Language skills – both mother tongue and foreign languages: - literacy - receptive skills (reading) - productive skills (oral and written communication) - intercultural skills and global awareness	√	√ multilingual competences	√ English + another foreign language	√	√ genre analysis; public speaking skills, argumentative skills	√ presentation skills	√
Employability skills which language skills contribute to: - logical reasoning, problem solving and analytical thinking - creative thinking - interpersonal skills and team work - continuous learning skills	√ influencing and co-operative skills, emotional intelligence; self-organising, organizational and time management skills; creativity	√ social and civic competences	√ ability to work in multicultural teams; negotiation skills	√ efficient workplace communication (with team members and customers); negotiation skills; communication and management skills	√ emotional intelligence	√ persuasive skills; decision-making skills; global awareness	√ leadership skills
Other employability skills: - numeracy - digital skills	√ dexterity; physical skills; trustworthiness, originality; initiative	√ basic competences in science and technology; sense of initiative and entrepreneurship; financial literacy	√ sound theoretical knowledge; European values, democratic values, law abidance, proactive attitude to work; volunteering experience; professional responsibility; sustainable development skills			√	√

Figure 2. 21st century learner/ graduate competences across the world
Source: Authors' compilation

There is an obvious correlation between the language skills mentioned by employers on the global labour market and the language skills that various internationally-developed frameworks for language learners aim at developing. We have been able to identify three major such frameworks: The *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* – CEFRL used in the European Union (Romania included) and not only (COE, 2001, 2020), the *World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages* used in the USA (ACTFL, 2013), and the *Canadian Language Benchmarks* – CLB used in Canada (Canadian Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, 2012). Figure 3 below epitomises the content of the respective frameworks.

Region/ Language competence framework	In Europe	In the USA	In Canada
References:	COE (2001, 2020)	ACTFL (2013)	Canadian Minister of Citizenship and Immigration. (2012)
Types of language competences	*Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* - CEFRL: Types of skills: - reception skills (oral, audio-visual and reading comprehension), - production skills (oral and written production), - interaction skills (oral, written and online interaction) - mediation skills (mediating a text, concepts, communication) Types of communicative language competences: - linguistic competence - sociolinguistic competence - pragmatic competence	*World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages*: with five goal areas: - Communication - Cultures - Connections - Comparisons - Communities Three goals to be met by learners of English as a second language: - to communicate in social settings - to achieve academically in all content areas - to use English in socially and culturally appropriate ways	The Canadian Language Benchmarks (CLB) is a descriptive scale of language ability in English as a Second Language (ESL) written as 12 benchmarks or reference points along a continuum from basic to advanced. Types of communicative language competences: - grammatical knowledge - textual knowledge - functional knowledge - sociolinguistic knowledge - strategic competence The CLB provide detailed descriptions of the listening, speaking, reading and writing skills that adult learners of English have to exhibit, and includes a series of competency tables, very similar to the self-assessment grid in CEFRL (2001).
Levels of proficiency	Six levels of proficiency: - A1A2 (Basic user) - B1B2 (Independent user) - C1C2 (Proficient user)	Standards, descriptors and progress indicators (for all grade levels and proficiency levels) are continuously developed by TESOL International Association – the Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, Inc.	similar to CEFRL (2001)

Figure 3. Language competence frameworks across the world
Source: Authors' compilation

To assess job seekers' proficiency in languages, employers across the world resort to internationally recognised exams and locally-developed examinations. There is a great list of internationally recognised UK or US-based examinations for proof of proficiency in English (CAE, IELTS, Pearson Test of English — PTE, TOEFL, and so on). Locally-developed examinations include the Australian Adult Migrant English Program — AMEP and Occupational English Test — OET for the healthcare sector (in Australia, see Australian Government, not dated); the General English Proficiency Test — GEPT, the EIKEN/Test of English for Academic Purposes — TEAP, the College English Test — CET, the Test of English Proficiency developed by Seoul National University — TEPS, the Vietnam Standardized Test of English Proficiency — VSTEP, the English Language Proficiency Assessment — ELPA for the Malaysian Public Service (Asia, see Su et al., 2020).

In a nutshell, our exploration of the skills expected of learners/ graduates on four continents — Europe, Asia, Australia, North America — has pointed to the labour markets' needs for employees with good command of languages. The employers' demands correlate with international language competence frameworks in highlighting that knowledge of languages goes beyond grammatical and textual knowledge and includes awareness of functional, sociolinguistic, cross-cultural issues, to name but a few.

The Need for Feedback Exchange in the (Language) Learning Process

According to *Merriam Webster Dictionary Online*, feedback is "the transmission of evaluative or corrective information about an action, event, or process to the original or controlling source; also**:** the information so transmitted". As pointed out by *Encyclopedia Britannica*, feedback is a model of communication - based on the work of Norbert Wiener, "the so-called father of the science of cybernetics"; feedback means "to be responsive to [one's] own behaviour", to audit "[one's] own performance […] in order to avoid errors". Moreover, *Encyclopedia Britannica* highlights that "interactions between human beings in conversation" rely heavily on feedback.

In education, feedback is essential for the authentic communication between the two 'parties' directly involved in teaching and learning – i.e. teachers and learners – as it provides information

on one's own behaviour that affects the others. According to Cozărescu et al. (2003), feedback is important for *awareness* (it helps to increase awareness of self, of one's behaviour and its effect upon the others); *identification of alternatives* (it helps to identify several behavioural options and improve how one relates with the others), and *evolution* (it helps to learn, develop and evolve).

Wiggins (2004) highlights the distinction between feedback, evaluation and guidance. For Wiggins, feedback is "useful information about what was and was not accomplished, given a specific goal. It thus is not guidance (advice based on feedback) or evaluation (a value judgment about the meaning of the results)". To this effect, offering feedback is, in fact, an opportunity to objectively describe accomplishment (and, hence, reinforce it) and non-accomplishment (and, afterwards, identify its roots and allow for remedial work).

As regards types of feedback used in language education, the literature refers to a variety of aspects: positive versus negative feedback, internal versus external feedback, direct versus indirect feedback, explicit versus implicit feedback, corrective versus supportive feedback (for a review of literature on each type; see Ypsilandis, 2014). More specifically, "positive feedback refers to judgements implying satisfaction with the learner's performance" while "negative feedback implies criticism and the need for changes" (Askew, 2004: 7). Internal feedback is based on one's self-monitoring, whereas external feedback comes from somebody else (e.g., a peer, a teacher; see Ypsilandis, 2014). Direct feedback is "a straight and immediate correction mechanism" applied explicitly by the teacher, while indirect feedback is "an indicator of a flaw without any specification on the error" by the teacher (Ypsilandis, 2014: 192). Explicit feedback is "typically provided by the teacher", whereas implicit feedback is "offered by any external source, possibly a co-speaker" (Ypsilandis, 2014: 193). Corrective feedback "aims to the noticing of a flaw, the immediate correction by repetition of an acceptable / expected version and […] a more permanent long term correction of unacceptable language", while supportive feedback "aims to assist the learning process without having to correct or require an outcome from the learner, […] it does not reward or punish" (Ypsilandis, 2014: 193; see also Evans et al., 2010, Russell & Spada, 2006, Reinders & Mohebbi, 2018); supportive feedback comes in the form of clarifications and explanations on new input provided by "the teacher, the software, a co-learner or a listener" (Ypsilandis, 2014: 190). For discussions on types of feedback in education, see also Mackey et al. (2000), Swinson & Harrop (2012), Boud & Molloy (2013), Boyle & Charles (2013) and references cited therein.

As evident from the previous definitions, there are several sources of feedback in the learning process: "from self, from peers and from the other 'party'", and each source applies to both teachers and learners (Dima et al., 2012: 21, see also Dima, 2007, and sources cited therein). Figure 6 below epitomises how frameworks mention feedback to teachers and learners from all three sources for (language) teaching across the world. As regards feedback received by and offered to teachers, the frameworks for (language) teaching we consulted frequently refer to "feedback from self" and "feedback from peers", whereas "feedback from learners" is more sporadically referred to. As regards feedback received by and offered to learners, the frameworks for (language) teaching we consulted indicate "feedback from teachers" as the most common

source of feedback, followed by "feedback from self", whereas "feedback from peers" is barely mentioned.

Region	Teacher feedback from self	Teacher feedback from peers	Teacher feedback from learners	Learner feedback from self	Learner feedback from peers	Learner feedback from teachers	References
At global level	√	√	-	-	-	√	Education International & Oxfam Novib, (2011); OECD (2013); UNESCO (2015)
In Europe	√	√	√	√	√	√	COE-ECML. Mureşan et al. (2007); COE-ECML-CEFRLT (2016-2019)
In Romania	√	√	√	-	-	√	MEC. Gliga, L. (coord.). (2002); MECŞ (not dated); MECŞ (2015, 2016); Government of Romania, Decision 915/ 2017
In Asia	-	√	-	-	-	√	Nguyean (2013); UNESCO (2016); Teachers' Council of Thailand (2018)
In Australia	√	√	√	√	-	√	Norris (1999); Western Australia Department of Education and Training (2004); ACARA (2011); OECD. Révai (2018)
In the USA	√	√	√	√	-	√	NCATE (2008); NBPTS, 2010; NCEE (2020); NEA (2020a., b.)
In Canada	-	-	-	√	√	-	Faez (2011); Canadian Minister of Citizenship and Immigration (2012); NCEE (not dated)

Figure 6. Feedback to teachers and learners in (language) teaching frameworks across the world
Source: Authors' compilation

As pointed throughout this section, feedback exchange is crucial in (language) learning, with positive effects on both teachers and learners. Thus, we may safely say that feedback exchange contributes to the personal and professional development of all parties involved, helping them "build a positive and realistic level of self-esteem" (Marinescu, 2010: 612), become more aware of self and others, more autonomous, and, ultimately, more successful in their endeavours.

Case Study: Feedback Exchange Occasioned by ESP Classes at the Bucharest University of Economic Studies — ASE, Romania

Research Aims and Methodology

The case study aims to explore the advantages of resorting to feedback exchange in ESP classes. More specifically, we embark upon a qualitative analysis of student opinions on the usefulness of various ESP activities for personal, academic and professional development. The analysis is based on data collected by means of Feedback Reports[1] designed by the authors, in two stages, as described in Figure 7 below:

1 Feedback Reports 1 and 2 are rendered in Appendix 1 and 2, respectively.

Feedback Report 1	Feedback Report 2
• 5 questions	• 11 questions
• 450 first year students in the period 2014-2017: • 225 students from the Faculty of Economic Cybernetics, Statistics and Informatics • and 225 students from the Faculty of Accounting and Management Information Systems	• 225 first year students in the period 2015-2017: • 150 students from the Faculty of Economic Cybernetics, Statistics and Informatics, • and 75 students from the Faculty of Accounting and Management Information Systems
• distributed to obtain students' views on the ESP units from: • both semesters of the 2014-2015 academic year • and the first semesters of the 2015-2016 and 2016-2017 academic years	• distributed to obtain students' views on the ESP units from: • the second semesters of the 2015-2016 and 2016-2017 academic years

Figure 7. Information on the Feedback Reports designed by the authors to obtain students' views on the ESP units

In what follows, we illustrate the answers we obtained for both types of Feedback Reports, after we briefly describe the way in which ESP classes take place.

A few Remarks on ESP Classes Taught at the Bucharest University of Economic Studies - ASE, Romania

English for Business seminars is included in the curricula of all of the Faculties of the Bucharest University of Economic Studies — ASE, Romania[2]. Such seminars aim to develop both productive and receptive skills in English (e.g. reading, listening, speaking, writing), while providing opportunities for the acquisition of specialised (business) vocabulary, for the revision of grammar issues, for translation practice, as well as for simulating real-life work-related situations (such as job interviews, oral presentations, meetings, negotiations, exchange of business correspondence).

During the time the Feedback Reports were administered to the students from the two aforementioned Faculties, the English for Business seminars were taught based on textbooks developed by ASE's academic staff — Ioncică et al. (2011) was used as the main textbook for Accounting students, while Condruz-Băcescu et al. (2013, 2014) were used as the main textbooks for Cybernetics students. When the need arose, the respective textbooks were supplemented by materials designed by the teacher, as well as by excerpts from textbooks edited by international publishers.

Results

Findings on Feedback Report 1

Feedback Report 1 was used by the English teacher (Viorela Dima) to find out more about how students perceive the English class to improve teaching and learning. As pointed out above, Feedback Report 1 was elicited from students in two steps — first, throughout the 2014-2015 academic year, and then, during the first semesters of the 2015-2016 and 2016-2017 academic

2 For details regarding the foreign languages included in the curricula, the number of hours per week, the number of semesters etc., see Dima et al. (2018).

years. By analysing and comparing the responses we found in the two steps, we realised that they are very similar across generations and across Faculties, which is why we choose to present them together in Table 1 below.

Table 1.
Findings on Feedback Report 1

Aspect under scrutiny	Student answers to Feedback Report 1

Lesson content	• **Students from both Faculties**: developed their "general knowledge" and "knowledge about how economy works", both at national/ local and at global level.
	• **Accounting students**:
	  • "understand the domain better"
	  • express confidence that ESP classes develop their ability to "find solutions to economic problems I'll encounter when I become an accountant".
	  • "the content of the lesson was very diverse and well structured. I find it useful and very interesting".
	• **Cybernetics students** perceive exposure to "cross-cultural aspects" and "foreign traditions" during the ESP classes as an advantage.

Language skills developed	• S**tudents from both Faculties**:
	  • developed mostly their (business) vocabulary, speaking/ communication, writing and reading skills.
	  • to a lesser extent, they developed listening and translation skills,
	  • the least developed skilled is use of grammar
	  • few responses also pointed to the development of "all skills slightly", or "nothing worth mentioning"
	• **Accounting students**: ESP classes help them "describe information objectively", "compare and contrast ideas", "agree and disagree politely", "increase persuasion skills"
	• **Cybernetics students**: practising language skills is seen as a means of improving "emotional skills" or "supporting my point of view" (either in writing or during a debate)

Transferable skills developed	• **Students from both Faculties**:
	  • the most frequently developed transferable skill is writing for work (e.g. the job application file – CV and Cover Letter; in-company communication items – e-mails, memos, reports, graph descriptions; business-to-client communication items – orders and offers, complaints and adjustments)
	  • developed work-related oral communication skills (job interview strategies, oral presentations, "keeping a conversation going")
	  • increased awareness of non-verbal aspects such as "professional outfit" and "body language"
	  • increased "time management" and "teamwork" skills, as well as "confidence"
	• **Accounting students**:
	  • developed "creativity" and "research skills", "learned how to listen to and understand others" and "how to adapt to new situations"
	  • other responses: "know ourselves better", "evaluate my own work", improving "my ability of making feedback reports".
	• **Cybernetics students**:
	  • developed "strategic intelligence (e.g. what steps to follow to get the job I want)"
	  • other responses; became aware of "how to act and behave in society", "keeping

Aspect under scrutiny	Student answers to Feedback Report 1
	calm in front of the others", "acting reliably and independently", "exploring our personal qualities", "being articulate, accurate, speaking in public", "being responsible, being punctual, being able to make decisions", "being attentive to details", becoming more "confident".
Use of acquired skills outside the ESP classes	• **Students from both Faculties**: both language and transferable skills developed during ESP seminars are seen as useful for: • their future career (finding a job and doing their best at it) • other subjects in school (be they taught in Romanian or English) • extra-curricular activities (participation in workshops and debates, or in activities as members of student organisations) • studying or working abroad • daily life (conversation with foreigners, watching TV shows "without subtitles", reading or listening to the news) • **Accounting students**: use what they learn in ESP classes while "helping family [with the family business or with homework] and friends", "in society", while "travelling". • "English classes are useful and relevant to my life-long ambition of living and working abroad". • **Cybernetics students**: use the skills developed during ESP classes to "translate for school or work" • "I don't know where I can use what I've learned but definitely I feel smarter".
Further work needed	• **Students from both Faculties**: • most frequently mentioned areas: grammar, speaking/conversation/pronunciation, vocabulary, listening, reading, writing/spelling, or "all skills" • less frequently mentioned areas: "intercultural skills", "public speaking", "I don't feel I have to improve anything now". • **Accounting students**: "I need to make a greater effort because the teacher speaks only in English", "I have to improve confidence and avoid making mistakes", "There is always room for improvement and I have a lot of work to do". • **Cybernetics students**: would like to "overcome shyness", "improve myself in all aspects", "be a good mentor for others, as the quality of a member of a team can encourage others to learn from them", are aware of the fact that "you are never good enough, there is always room for improvement".
Other issues **(not explicitly elicited)**	• **Students from both Faculties**: disliked issues such as: • curriculum design (having one ESP class per week "is not enough") • content (some exercises are "too difficult" or "too long", too much or too little grammar practice, too much or too little translation practice, too much exposure to acronyms), • manner of delivery ("not covering all the items in a unit" in class, the teacher "speaking only in English" or "speaking too fast").

Findings on Feedback Report 2

Since numerous responses received for the questions in Feedback Report 1 during the 2014-2015 academic year referred to ESP classes contributing to students' examination of self (i.e. own strengths and weaknesses, be they related to the mastery of English or not), as well as of

exploration of the others (e.g. teamwork abilities), the English teacher (Viorela Dima) decided to further explore these two issues in cooperation with one of the University's psychologists (Laura Ştefan). Thus, we designed together Feedback Report 2 and invited students to respond to it during the second semesters of the 2015-2016 and 2016-2017 academic years, after accustoming students to feedback exchange by using Feedback Report 1 during the first semesters of the same academic years. By analysing the responses received for Feedback Report 2, we again noticed that they are very similar across generations and across Faculties, which is why we present them together in Table 2 below.

Table 2.
Findings on Feedback Report 2

Aspect under scrutiny	Student answers to Feedback Report 2
Opportunity for teamwork during ESP classes	• **Students from both Faculties**: ESP classes provide opportunity for teamwork • during activities where the teacher explicitly instructed them to work in pairs/ teams (e.g. role plays, preparing and delivering oral presentations, simulating job interviews etc.), • but also when they were not instructed to do so (e.g. solving grammar, vocabulary, reading, listening exercises in class, doing homework, sharing homework using social media).
Positive impressions on teamwork	• **Students from both Faculties**: students perceive teamwork as "interesting", "creative", "pleasant", "fun", "efficient", and an occasion "to get to know the others better","to listen to other people's opinions", "to see a different perspective", "to correct each other". • **Accounting students**: teamwork is an opportunity "to express stability, respect, understanding, appreciation towards colleagues", and that they appreciated "the politeness of colleagues". • "four brains are better than one", "the final result is better than one person's work", "teamwork facilitates exchange of knowledge and experience between students", "the teamwork method has the purpose to make you more attentive in class than if you work individually". • **Cybernetics students**: teamwork is "an occasion to practice agreeing and disagreeing politely", "helpful in solving difficult issues"; • while engaged in teamwork, "I improved my own knowledge", "I improved language skills" (e.g. speaking fluently, pronunciation, vocabulary, reading), • became more "confident", "creative", "patient", "open-minded", "aware of my language errors", "learned how to do what I don't know".
Negative impressions on teamwork	• **Students from both Faculties**: it is difficult "to reach consensus", "to keep up with the rest", "to manage time, when the team members have different schedules", "to manage disagreement". • dislike it when they are "not appreciated as an individual", or when "the workload is not evenly distributed", "not everybody contributes equally", or when "some take advantage of the other team members while doing nothing".
Students' perception of own contribution to ESP classes	• **Students from both Faculties**: students mentioned contributing by: "solving exercises", "sharing opinions", "doing homework", "listening to the others attentively", "showing interest" in classroom debates, or merely "attending class". • Some students honestly admit they "didn't contribute" (for lack of interest,

Aspect under scrutiny	Student answers to Feedback Report 2
	shyness etc.) or they "skipped class".
Students' perception of peer contribution to ESP classes	• **Students from both Faculties**: peers contributed by "solving exercises", "sharing opinions", "doing homework". • students appreciate it when the others "help me do my homework". • generally, students highlight the positive aspects in their peer's contribution to class, but they also try to be objective and write that "some colleagues contribute more, others less", some contribute "on their own, others on the teacher's initiative".
Students' perception of own behaviour during ESP classes	• **Students from both Faculties**: "don't know" whether they disturb colleagues, or "hope I didn't disturb anyone". • Some students admit they disturbed the class by "being late", "not paying enough attention", or "being too loud".
Students' perception of peer behaviour during ESP classes	• **Students from both Faculties**: most feel peers "didn't disturb me" in any way during class, but that they were "friendly" and "entertaining". • some peers disturb the class by "being late", "being too noisy/loud", "talking about side issues", "asking silly questions", or "playing on their mobile".
Students' perception of own relationship to peers	• **Students from both Faculties**: by engaging in teamwork, students feel that they "completed each other", "learned a lot from each other", liked "to respect and be respected", "learned to accept others' opinions", "learned to listen to my coworkers", "made connections between my ideas and my colleagues' ideas", "became aware of my strengths and weaknesses", "became more patient/ communicative", "we got to know each other better". • **Accounting students**: • mentioned learning about oneself ("the most important thing I learned is that sometimes I can be wrong", "learned to correct my own mistakes", "I learned I am not capable of voicing my opinions with confidence", "I learned I can be a good coordinator", "I appreciate myself more than I did before", "I have to contribute, to get involved and help others", "I have to be more gentle when I tell my opinion and to trust myself more when I speak in English") • appreciate their peers ("my colleagues help me evaluate my abilities"). • **Cybernetics students**: • learning about oneself ("I like to socialise", "I like being in the company of quality people", "I am a good organiser/ team worker", "I possess greater knowledge" - in terms of economic content or language proficiency, or "I am not courageous enough", "I am too shy", teamwork is "an amazing opportunity to learn and to control my reactions") • improving oneself – the need to be more "sociable", "tactful", "flexible", "organised", to "pay more attention", "become a better student". Teamwork proves to be satisfactory: "I did my best to help my colleagues and I like to think that they feel the same. Because in the end I think we made a great team". • appreciate their peers ("My colleagues stimulated my competitive side", "challenged my critical thinking", "I have smart and intelligent colleagues – most of them – and that forces me to be at their level. I like their company").
Skills developed during ESP classes	• **Students from both Faculties**: "learned new content", "developed my vocabulary", "improved writing", "improved ability to write business correspondence", improved speaking/ pronunciation/ communication/ persuasion, as well as listening, reading or

Aspect under scrutiny	Student answers to Feedback Report 2
	translation skills, became aware of "formal language" to be used in class or in a work environment. • Few students write that they developed "very little" or "nothing new" during ESP classes.
Use of acquired skills outside the ESP classes	• **Students from both Faculties**: ESP and teamwork skills are useful for: • other subjects at school, • extracurricular activities (reading specialised magazines and books), • a future job • **Cybernetics students**: "we develop our teamwork skills in the workplace: helping, guiding, persuading, participating, suggesting, respecting, listening, problem solving and communicating."
Further work needed	• **Students from both Faculties**: language skills in general, or a combination of language skills (speaking/ communication, vocabulary, grammar, writing, reading, listening), "work harder to achieve more knowledge", "be more communicative", "share opinions in class more often", "be fairer in distributing tasks". • **Accounting students**: "I'll consult more with colleagues", "I'll try to be a better colleague because sometimes I am stubborn, impulsive and agitated". • **Cybernetics students**: need to be "more courageous", "better", "more active during discussions", to "treat homework more seriously", to "pay more attention to what is going on around me", to "give up laziness".
Other issues **(not explicitly elicited)**	• **Accounting students**: "these Feedback Reports help us develop our abilities", "the method has the purpose to make you more attentive in class". • "with each week that goes by, I am discovering new sides of my personality. What I am trying to say is that, if last semester I tended to lose my patience when I had a debate with someone who doesn't think the same, now I am calmer, and I have learned to accept that people are different, and so are their opinions". • **Cybernetics students**: "teamwork skills can't be improved in a few weeks of school, it's something you improve during years and months of different projects and activities you are part of". • "I have learned that I must set goals in life. Once I have decided my goals, I must assign a priority to them. Then review the goals and re-prioritise until I am satisfied with the life that I want to lead. I must transform my failures in lessons for the future problems that I must solve".

In a nutshell, this section has provided details on the responses of first-year students from the Bucharest University of Economic Studies — ASE, Romania, provided for two distinct Feedback Reports upon completing their English for Business units during several academic years in 2014-2017. We have noticed that their responses refer not only to the development of proficiency in English but also their personal development and usefulness of ESP for both academic and professional pursuits. In the next section, we further discuss these issues.

Discussion

To analyse the findings of the feedback exchange described in section 3.3. above from the language teacher's perspective, we considered aspects such as: i) students' perceived progress in

and attitude towards learning the English language, ii) students' perceptions regarding the use of language classes for (inter)personal, academic and professional development. We first refer to findings in both Feedback Reports and then add some observations on the answers received for each Feedback Report separately.

Students' responses show that learners perceive that they progress in learning English (in general, and for business), especially by improving their (business) vocabulary and their writing skills, followed by speaking/ pronunciation/ communication/ persuasion skills, by reading and listening skills, and by translation skills. This ranking of skills developed during ESP classes roughly corresponds to the amount of time spent on developing these skills in class — in general, ESP classes contain vocabulary, speaking, reading and paragraph writing activities weekly, listening and one-page writing activities every two weeks, grammar activities once a month, and one-page translation activities once a term. With respect to students' attitude towards learning the English language, their responses evince mixed feelings — on the one hand, a positive view of ever-increasing confidence in self-improvement and a pro-active stance as regards areas for further improvement (i.e. speaking/ conversation/ pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, writing/ spelling, reading, listening), on the other hand, a set of apprehensions regarding their perceived inabilities (i.e. to speak in public, or to keep up with the teacher). Nonetheless, overall, English classes are perceived as useful, relevant, interesting, and fun (in line with the aspects research suggests motivate learners to engage in collaborative learning, see Stăiculescu, Ștefan, Livinți et al. (2017), who investigate students' projections about the ideal learning environment).

On the use of language classes for (inter)personal development, responses can be grouped into aspects referring to self and aspects referring to peers, both characterised by mixed feelings. When referring to self, students appreciate the fact that language classes help them increase self-awareness, patience, responsibility and capacity for adaptation, and improve emotional and self-evaluation skills, decision-making, creativity and cognitive skills (attention to details, "definitely I feel smarter"); however, ESP classes are also challenging in that students have to face and overcome their own limitations (personality — shyness, temper — "keeping calm in front of the others", limited content or language knowledge, limited language or teamwork abilities). When referring to peers, students point to the fact that language classes help them be better colleagues (by actively listening to the others and appreciating points of view that are different from their own, by showing "respect, understanding, appreciation towards colleagues"), and at the same time understand their colleagues better and work better with them (since peers are perceived as smart, polite, "helpful in solving difficult issues"). Nonetheless, interaction with others is also sometimes perceived as uncomfortable since it provides an opportunity for one's comparison with others and increased awareness of one's weak points.

On the use of language classes for academic development, students refer to the fact that the language and transferable skills developed during ESP classes are used for other subjects at school. For instance, students resort to ESP-enhanced documentation skills (reading specialised magazines and books written in English), speaking skills (participation in workshops and debates), or translation skills (as they are sometimes required to "translate for school" — i.e. to submit small scale translations of specialised articles as part of the assignments requested for

successful completion of specialised disciplines). Moreover, several students highlight their desire to study abroad (as part of a student exchange programme or by attending a subsequent Master's programme), which evidently requires proficiency in English (and other foreign languages).

On the use of language classes for professional development, students point to several aspects. Firstly, there is a consensus that ESP classes contribute to improved content (both general and specialised knowledge), improved professional skills (research skills; argumentation skills — "describe information objectively", "compare and contrast ideas", "supporting my point of view"; work-related speaking skills — e.g. job interview strategies and making oral presentations; in-company and business-to-client writing skills; time management skills), improved attitude towards and cooperation with colleagues ("agree and disagree politely", "persuasion skills", teamwork skills); increased awareness of the importance of non-verbal aspects (professional outfit and body language). Therefore, ESP language classes are perceived as useful for the workplace both in the home country and if given a chance to work abroad.

Responses for Feedback Report 1 also hint at students' perceptions of ESP curriculum design, content and manner of delivery, suggesting that students need greater exposure to ESP (by including more English classes in the curriculum), as well as a more personalised approach (i.e. with the teacher adapting the level of difficulty, the amount of practice allotted for each type of activity, or the speed of delivery). Furthermore, students highlight the use of ESP-enhanced language and transferable skills in their daily life: to engage in conversations with foreigners in the home country or while travelling, to watch TV shows "without subtitles", to read or listen to the news, to help family members and friends with homework, or to help with the family business.

Given the nature of the questions included in Feedback Report 2, students expectedly offered more varied answers regarding their perceived self, their peers and their relation with their peers. Students' answers reflect the fact that the use of teamwork during ESP classes contributes to: increased responsibility and accountability (i.e. they acknowledge the need to be more punctual and participate more actively in the ESP classes, make sure they do not disturb colleagues); increased awareness of own and peer strengths ("I am a good organiser/ team worker") and weaknesses ("sometimes I can be wrong", lack of confidence); increased openness towards others ("I have learned to accept that people are different, and so are their opinions", they "learned a lot from each other"); increased self-esteem ("I learned I can be a good coordinator", "I appreciate myself more than I did before", "learned to correct my own mistakes"). As a rule, resorting to teamwork during ESP classes is seen as a positive endeavor, but it is far from being devoid of challenges! In fact, teamwork brings about the need to improve one's perception of self (by identifying weaknesses and ways to remedy them) and one's cooperation with peers (by being more tactful, by making efforts "to reach consensus", "to keep up with the rest", or to manage conflict when "the workload is not evenly distributed").

In sum, from the language professional's perspective, feedback reports are beneficial for both teachers and students. On the one hand, teachers get to know their students better –their positive and negative feelings about (language) learning, their needs in terms of types of learning

activities and manner of delivery, their needs and fears concerning the rest of the class; hence, teachers can reflect on this knowledge and improve their pedagogical and mentoring competences. On the other hand, students can reflect on the way they learn (languages), rejoice at identifying strengths, become aware of their weaknesses (which they can set objective remedial goals for), and enhance cooperation with their peers. Thus, Feedback Reports can be considered very useful tools (albeit incredibly time-consuming!) to "help students identify their own challenges and respond to them, help students monitor their own changes, […] teach the students how to cooperate, help the students develop as individuals, develop a sense of class community" (Williams & Burden, 1997, as cited in Marinescu, 2010: 615). Such aspects are, indeed, beneficial not just for students' success in (language) learning but also for their self-development, enhanced cooperation with peers, academic and professional development.

To analyse the findings of the feedback exchange described in section 3.3. above from a psychological perspective, we considered aspects such as students' personality, professional and transversal competences. The instrument we resorted to is the Big Five Questionnaire — BFQ (Caprara et al., 1993), based on the following five main attributes:

- Extraversion represents individual differences in social engagement, assertiveness, and energy level.
- Agreeableness captures differences in compassion, respectfulness, and acceptance of others.
- Conscientiousness represents differences in organisation, productiveness, and responsibility.
- Neuroticism (sometimes referred to by its socially desirable pole, Emotional Stability) captures differences in the frequency and intensity of negative emotions.
- Openness to Experience (sometimes referred to as Intellect) represents differences in intellectual curiosity, aesthetic sensitivity, and imagination (Caprara et al., 1993; Soto, 2018).

As regards Feedback Report 1, students provide answers mostly along the following scales: Agreeableness (agree and disagree politely; learned how to listen and to understand others), Conscientiousness (responsibility, time management, attentiveness) and Emotional Stability (emotional skills/self-confidence). A less represented scale is Openness to Experience (creativity; adapting to new situations/flexibility), whereas Extraversion is the least represented scale, with only one student response in this area ("increase persuasion skills"). Feedback Report 1 also received answers referring to cognitive abilities ("describe information objectively", "compare and contrast ideas"), self-awareness ("know ourselves better") or self-evaluation ("evaluate my own work"), and transversal competences (foreign languages, communication, employability). Students' responses referring to the areas that need improvement lead to learners' self-analysis and identification of weak points (such as organisational skills, setting goals).

As regards Feedback Report 2, students provide answers mostly along the following scales: Openness to Experience (became more "creative", "open-minded"), followed by Agreeableness

(they appreciated "the politeness of colleagues") and Emotional Stability ("confident", "patient"). Students' answers predominantly refer to the development of language competences ("developed my vocabulary", "improved writing"), as well as to the usefulness of Feedback Reports in increasing the quality of learning – as learning becomes active and reflexive. Among the difficult aspects that need further work, students refer to teamwork (it is difficult "to manage disagreement", "not everybody contributes equally").

There is a series of aspects that become evident from student answers provided to both Feedback Reports; for instance, the Agreeableness and Emotional Stability scales are best represented. On account of their age, students probably do not evince a strong Emotional Stability, and they are aware of it, which makes them find solutions for improvement. Agreeableness is a means to counteract a series of issues related to Emotional Stability, as students find comfort and support in each other. Teamwork and reflection on teamwork increase group cohesion by increasing awareness of each other and emotional and cognitive support. Teamwork also increases the objectivity of the feedback that students provide and contributes to enhanced self-awareness. Collaborative methods increase the quality of learning, as "the teamwork method has the purpose of making you more attentive in class than if you work individually". Student feedback is mainly positive, evaluative and explicit; however, negative feedback is also present, and it refers to the teachers' teaching style, peers' behaviour or involvement during the classes, one's own performance related to the learning task or other issues, such as Conscientiousness, Emotional Stability, Agreeableness, or professional and transversal competences.

In sum, from the psychologist's perspective, feedback reports are beneficial for both teachers and students. On the one hand, student feedback to teachers is useful for enhancing the quality of the teaching practice. On the other hand, student feedback to self and peers leads to reflexive, active learning, authentic professional and personal development, and ultimately, to enhanced employability. Noticeably, student answers referring to the need to "overcome shyness" and "improve myself in all aspects" make us argue in favour of cooperation between students and educational psychologists to overcome emotional issues stemming from lack of self-confidence. Such cooperation may be mediated by teachers by means of the latter offering information on the existence of psychologists among the university staff (as is the case with ASE, Romania, where psychologists provide free of charge counselling services for students' personal and career development), or inviting a psychologist for a brief presentation during one of the initial seminars (so that students become aware of the counselling services available to them).

Conclusions

The purpose of this paper has been to examine the benefits of feedback exchange for (ESP) teachers and learners. We have placed our endeavour in the wider context of the global discussion of key (language) teacher competences and successful (language) learner competences by referring to relevant frameworks on four continents – Europe (with details on the European Union Member State Romania), Asia, Australia, and North America. By reviewing current standards on language teacher competences at the country, regional or global level, we

have arrived at the extraordinarily complex profile of the 21st-century educator. Thus, besides knowledge of the discipline (language) they teach and of pedagogical approaches and instruments, (language) teaching professionals also have to role model sound values and evince strong intercultural, managerial, or interpersonal skills, which allows them to not only convey information to learners and build characters but also to cater for the needs and meet the expectations of a variety of stakeholders.

By addressing key literature on the competences expected of learners/ graduates, we emphasised that mastery of languages contributes to graduates' successful insertion into the labour market. On the one hand, we noticed that language skills are either explicitly or implicitly present in the complex profile of the 21st-century learner/ graduate, who should evince strong literacy, oral and written communication skills, intercultural and interpersonal skills. On the other hand, sound language skills are a means to enhance other employability skills (logical reasoning, problem solving and analytical thinking, creative thinking, interpersonal skills and teamwork, continuous learning skills).

A dedicated section of the paper referred to several studies highlighting the importance of feedback exchange in the education process. Among other aspects, we referred to three possible sources of feedback (from self, form peers and from the 'other party'), which contribute to both teachers and learners' personal and professional development.

An extensive section of the paper described the case study entitled "Feedback exchange occasioned by ESP classes at the Bucharest University of Economic Studies - ASE, Romania". The case study consisted in the qualitative analysis of Accounting and Cybernetics students' opinions on the activities occasioned by English for Business seminars, with opinions collected during three academic years through Feedback Reports designed by the authors. We found that student responses highlighted the contribution of ESP classes to the development of proficiency in English and their personal, academic, and professional development. Next, we discussed the findings from a mixed, interdisciplinary perspective. From the language teacher's perspective, we found that feedback exchange is beneficial for both students (and referred to their perceived progress in and attitude towards learning the English language, and their views on the usefulness of language classes for (inter)personal, academic and professional development), and teachers (and referred to the latter being offered a glimpse of students' needs to adjust lesson design accordingly). From the psychologist's perspective, we again noticed that feedback exchange is beneficial for both students (who engage in more reflexive and active learning and overcome emotional limitations), and teachers (who can use student feedback to enhance the quality of the teaching practice, thus developing their pedagogical skills).

In conclusion, both the literature reviewed and the results of the case study suggest that the (language) teacher-learner relationship is a complex one and that the two parties directly involved in (language) learning continuously develop not just by sharing content knowledge but also by enhancing (inter)personal skills. Resorting to feedback from each other, from self and from peers is but one instrument which leads to authentic personal and professional development, and ultimately, to enhanced student and teacher competences. It remains for further work to continue to research on the global profile of the successful 21st century

(language) educator and learner by addressing key competence frameworks in the remaining two continents (Africa and South America) and to examine how teacher feedback to learners and learner feedback to teachers contributes to reshaping their identities and to enhance personal, academic and professional success.

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Appendices

Appendix 1 – Feedback Report 1

Student's full name: ……..
Faculty, group no.: ……..

FEEDBACK REPORT ON
…….. (unit title)

Introduction	Purpose of the report, main idea
Contents	1. What have I learned about the content of the lesson? 2. What English language skill(s) do I feel I have (slightly) improved? 3. What transferrable skills do I feel I have acquired/ improved? 4. What extra-curricular activities/ situations can I apply my newly acquired skills/ knowledge in? 5. What areas of further work do I consider necessary?
Conclusions	Summary of the main points covered, final remark

Feedback Report developed by Viorela-Valentina Dima,
Bucharest University of Economic Studies – ASE, Romania, 2013

Appendix 1 – Feedback Report 2

Student's full name: ……..
Faculty, group no.: ……..

FEEDBACK REPORT ON
…….. (unit title)

Introduction	Purpose of the report, main idea
Contents	1. What kind of teamwork did the unit offer (mention exercises/assignments etc.)? 2. What did I like about teamwork and why? 3. What didn't I like about teamwork and why? 4. How did I contribute to the seminar activities (be they teamwork or not)? 5. How did my colleagues contribute to the seminar activities (be they teamwork or not)? What have I learned from their contribution? 6. Did I disturb the others in any way? Give details. 7. Did your colleagues disturb me in any way? Give details. 8. What have I learned about myself in relationship with the others? 9. What English language skill(s) do I feel I have acquired/ developed during the unit? 10. What extra-curricular activities/ situations can I apply my newly acquired skills/ knowledge in? 11. What more can/should I improve and how?
Conclusions	Summary of the main points covered, final remark

Feedback Report developed by Viorela-Valentina Dima & Laura Raluca Ștefan,
Bucharest University of Economic Studies – ASE, Romania, 2015

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Ethics Declarations

Competing Interests
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