

The needs of LSP teachers in the preparation and implementation of the didactic process. An attempt at diagnosis

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DOI: [10.47050/66515796.28-52](https://doi.org/10.47050/66515796.28-52)

Abstract: The starting point for programming a vocational language course is the identification of the learner's needs. By focusing priority attention on the learners, the needs of the foreign language teacher should not be lost sight of, the satisfaction of which is in many cases crucial for the proper organization and successful implementation of the didactic process aimed at learning the language of a specific profession. In the text, an attempt will be made to diagnose the needs of specialist language teachers working in the Polish education system. The data illustrating the key problem are based on surveys conducted in the last five years among LSP teachers of Polish technical and vocational schools, as well as from the analysis of the Polish education system, in which foreign language teachers gain preparation for the profession and carry out their own teaching mission.

KEYWORDS:

- teaching language for specific purposes (LSP)
- LSP teacher needs analysis
- needs analysis
- needs of LSP teachers

1. Introduction

Foreign language proficiency, especially in terms of one's current or future professional activity, is a desirable competence for any employee. There is much evidence supporting this statement. Firstly, such requirements are stipulated in job advertisements offering employment, which highlight the required foreign language skills and proficiency level in the job profile of the candidate sought. In addition, employers often define the scope of professional activities that a given employee will conduct in a foreign language. Secondly, the top two competencies desired in graduates entering the labour market, as listed by the researched employers, are effective communication and speaking foreign languages (Budnikowski et al., 2012). To undertake professional activity, candidates with lower education also must speak a foreign language, as evidenced by such things as entries in documents regulating curricula in vocational education. The core curriculum for vocational education from 2012 (Journal of Laws 2012, item 184), defining the scope of the content and learning outcomes for secondary technical and sectoral schools, includes speaking a foreign language for professional communication among the basic competencies common to all professions and introduces compulsory learning of a professionally oriented foreign language at this stage of education.

The above factors translate into various motives and/or reasons prompting learners at various stages of their lives to learn a specialist foreign language (LSP)¹. The needs underlying learning should be met during an adequately designed and implemented didactic process. It is worth recalling that activities consisting in identifying learners' needs, defining learning goals, selecting content and choosing teaching and assessment techniques are undertaken by a teacher who must demonstrate an appropriate type and level of competence to properly implement them. This means that the didactic effectiveness of teachers is strongly related to the level of fulfilment of their own needs in the scope of knowledge and skills needed to prepare and implement LSP curricula (Sowa, 2020). Therefore, it should be stated that the needs of an LSP teacher are as important as the needs of the learners, yet the former has received relatively little attention in the subject literature so far. It can be noticed that the increased demand for LSP education is not accompanied by the same increased interest

¹ For the purposes of this text which deals with the concept of a specialist/vocational/professional foreign language for professional needs or purposes in a didactic context (i.e. teaching the language of a given discipline or professional community), these terms will be used interchangeably.



in the specificity of the work of specialist language teachers and the development of their professional competencies. The aim of this text is therefore to fill this gap, at least partially, by determining the level of competencies and diagnosing the type and scope of the needs of LSP teachers working in Polish technical and vocational secondary schools. The considerations presented in the text are based on the empirical material obtained from the survey conducted among teachers of various LSP, working in Polish secondary schools with a vocational/sectoral and technical profile (cf. section 3). To highlight the essence of the diagnosed needs, the presented survey data will be linked to the results of research on the analysis and diagnosis of the needs of LSP teachers in Polish secondary vocational and technical education, obtained by other researchers (Gajewska, 2020; Kościńska, 2020).

2. Factors determining the didactic activity of an LSP teacher

The specificity of teaching a specialist foreign language (LSP) makes it necessary to view the professional activity of a teacher (and thus also their teaching effectiveness) through the lens of many factors. The most important ones include the educational context in which the learning process takes place, the type and scope of activities that the teacher must or should undertake in the process, as well as the roles and tasks the quality of which attests to the level of the teacher's professional competence. These elements are discussed in greater detail in the subsequent sections.

2.1. Educational context and LSP recipient profiles

The diversity of learners' needs, so characteristic of LSP teaching, translates into a variety of learning goals. These, in turn, can be achieved in the course of education carried out in a non-uniform scope, at different levels, with different study times, and in different educational contexts. LSPs constitute an element of education and/or professional development that is present in the curricula of secondary schools (sectoral and technical), colleges and universities (as part of specialisation or modern language studies profile, or as a foreign language course), as well as in language course curricula proposed by vocational training centres, agencies of foreign educational and cultural institutions, and commercial language schools. A cursory review of educational contexts makes it possible to conclude that a teacher of a foreign language (also LSP), often employed at

many entities at once, meets a very wide group of recipients whose profiles and needs determine the teaching procedure.

Potential profiles of LSP learners include:

- students of vocational/sectoral and/or technical schools who learn a foreign language appropriate for their sector (industry) of study while completing vocational training;
- students at technical, science and medical faculties who attend foreign language courses related to their field of study, preparing them for specialist communication in a foreign language;
- students at the humanities departments who undertake the study of a trade/professional language as part of the specialisation offered in a given field (e.g., specialisations or business modules implemented in language studies curricula);
- employees who take up basic or advanced LSP courses for professional reasons;
- employees who improve their general foreign language proficiency in the field of professional/specialist communication;
- economic migrants who learn to perform their professional duties in a foreign language while seeking employment in another country;
- persons who use the LSP education offer available on the market but do not have a precisely defined career plan (their goal is to develop language competencies to improve their employability prospects);
- persons who decide to participate in more or less specialised foreign language education or who want to diversify the language courses they participate in due to their own interests (cf. Mourlhon-Dallies, 2020)².

2.2. Elements of the LSP teaching process organisation

When analysing the concise list of learners' profiles, one can notice clear differences in terms of their professionalisation level – e.g. there are school students and active employees; students of technical faculties and students of the humanities departments/language studies; employees who know the intricacies of their trades but do not speak a foreign language, and vice versa. Given the above, LSP teachers must select adequate didactic approaches that would allow them to meet the needs

² The author points out that new formulas of language classes, courses and workshops are available in recent years, combining learning a foreign language with developing other interests or passions of learners. An example is the French gastronomy workshops "Cours de français et cuisine", "La pâtisserie des rêves", "French Cooking & Gastronomy Workshops", "French and wine testing", which integrate learning the language of the country with culinary initiation and tasting.



of their students in the most satisfactory way. They may consider choosing an approach focused on such things as the profession itself (law, hospitality industry, medicine, technology, etc.), on the language users themselves (their occupations, specialisations, positions), on language competencies common to many professions/professional activities, or on the integration of sector-specific and language content.

The character of the profile of the group the teacher works with, as well as its needs, also translate into the choice of teaching material (it is necessary to consider what language and in what scope to teach, what the ratio of the sector and sector-related content to the overall curriculum should be and more) and its didactic application in class. Although in many cases the teacher, who is not an expert in a given field, may rely on the professional competencies of the learners, this cannot be expected to be a universal pattern. Working with groups with a low level of specialisation (e.g., students of sectoral vocational schools, philology students, economic migrants) requires the teacher to possess good knowledge of how the given field functions, both in terms of professional practice and specialist communication.

Yet another problem is selecting teaching aids that will be adequate to the needs of learners and applicable during education. In teaching the language of more popular professions or industries (e.g. hospitality industry, tourism, business) or in groups of recipients that do not require high professional specialisation, the teacher has a better chance of both quickly "mastering" the language of a given industry/sector (and possibly of gaining sector-specific knowledge), as well as finding teaching materials or teaching aids that can be used in the classroom without major modifications. More niche sectors (e.g. floristry, horse breeding) or professions requiring a high level of specialisation (wood technology, architecture renovation, CNC machining³) prove more problematic when FL teachers are unfamiliar with their specifics and have no access to ready-made teaching materials. Teachers facing such challenges are forced to search for source information on their own, and to analyse the relevant linguistic and/or professional elements contained therein, and afterwards develop didactic materials adequate to the profile and requirements of the learners.

The variety of profiles and needs of recipients requires that elements related to learning the language and understanding the specificity of the professional area be included in the target education programme to a different degree and at different levels. Recipients' profiles and needs are also important when

³ Computerised Numerical Control (CNC) – material manufacturing technology using a precise computer-controlled machine.

choosing the right didactic approach, designing the curriculum and teaching materials. Depending on where, with whom and under what conditions the learner works, the teacher's actions regarding the choice of the curriculum or didactic material may include:

- introducing minor adaptations to readily available textbooks or materials;
- supplementing general language curricula with vocational elements;
- comprehensive development of language education programmes tailored to specific recipients with professional needs (Gajewska and Sowa, 2014).

2.3. Professional competencies of an LSP teacher

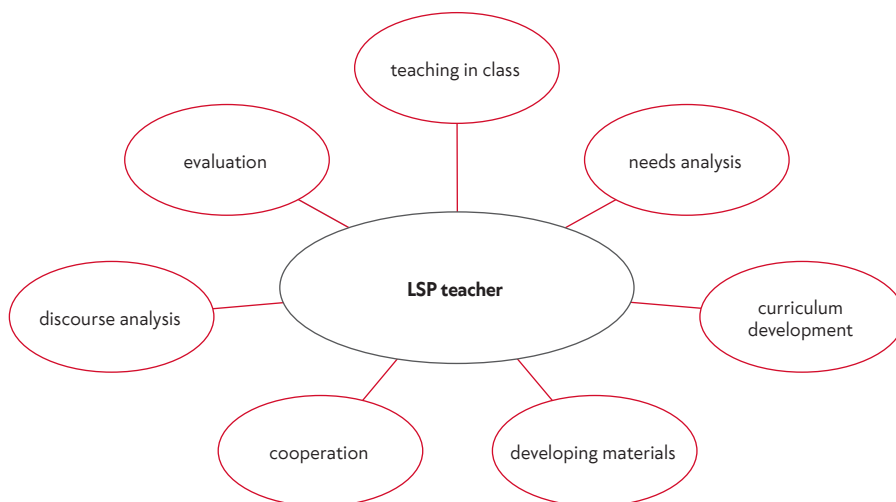
Regardless of the circumstances of planning and conducting LSP classes (i.e. whether it is necessary to develop the curriculum from scratch, supplement or modify accessible materials, or use what is already available), every involvement in the teaching process activates various areas of professional competence on the part of the teacher – both those relating to the subject itself (linguistic and/or sector-specific knowledge and skills), as well as to the organisation and implementation of the teaching process (methodology).

While the scope of the teacher's competencies is broadly defined in the subject literature (Ferguson, 1997; Master, 1997, 2005; Jordan, 2000; Alexander, 2012; Hall, 2013; Gajewska and Sowa, 2014; Campion, 2016; Bocanegra-Valle and Basturkmen, 2019), three key types of competencies essentially predominate, i.e. those in the field of foreign language proficiency, LSP teaching methodology and the professional field. Adequate mastery of the foreign language taught must be supported by the ability to create and conduct language classes in accordance with LSP teaching rules. This set of competencies should also include knowledge (even minimal) of a given professional field and its FL resources.

The professional competence of LSP teachers is closely related to the diverse nature of the roles they take on and the tasks they conduct while preparing and delivering language classes. These tasks may include creating an appropriate syllabus and/or curriculum, providing teaching materials, working with others, conducting one's own research, as well as evaluating classes, materials, and student progress (Dudley-Evans and St. John, 1998; Belcher, 2006; Woodrow, 2017). Many authors declare that the LSP teacher is: a teacher, researcher, creator (author) and evaluator simultaneously (Belcher, 2006; Basturkmen, 2010, 2014; Hall, 2013; Parpette, 2017), as evidenced by the broad spectrum of roles presented in the Scheme 1.



SCHEME 1. ROLES OF AN LSP TEACHER



Source: Own study based on Woodrow (2017).

3. LSP teachers in Polish vocational and technical schools – research presentation

Considering the complexity of the activities of the LSP teacher and the resulting variety of roles, the development of specific competencies needed for teaching requires appropriate preparation to work with groups with specific needs and professional goals. Even in the case of a single group selected based on the previously indicated learner profiles, i.e., students of sectoral vocational and technical schools (see point 2.1), a teacher of professionally oriented foreign language⁴,

⁴ Regulation of the Minister of National Education of 7 February 2012 on the core curriculum for vocational education (Journal of Laws of 2012, item 184) defines the learning outcomes common to all professions and treats LSP as one of obligatory elements of apprenticeship, listing it among the education results relating to all professions. Mastering the language of professional communication is to allow the student to: "carry out professional tasks with the help of linguistic means (lexical, grammatical, spelling and phonetic); interpret statements concerning the performance of typical professional activities; analyse and interpret short written texts concerning the performance of typical professional activities; formulate short and understandable statements and written texts enabling communication in the work environment; as well as to use foreign-language sources of information" (Journal of Laws of 2012, items 184, 22–23). The same provision on learning outcomes for LSP was included in the more recent Regulation of the Minister of National Education of 31 March 2017 on the core curriculum for vocational education (Journal of Laws of 2017, item 860).

a subject that is obligatory at this stage of education, faces various challenges. A brief look at the provisions of the Regulation of the Minister of National Education of 16 May 2019 on the core curricula for vocational education arranged by sector and additional vocational skills for selected occupations identified within vocational education (Journal of Laws of 2019, item 991), makes it possible to conclude that the legislator has set the number of hours of LSP education assigned for selected professions (e.g. 64 hours for an assistant to a film and television production manager, 30 hours for a concrete placer). The Regulation also specifies the type of language appropriate for the trained profession (e.g. German in the profession of a construction technician and piano and grand piano tuning technician, English in the profession of a sound technician, or any LSP in the profession of a carpenter or roofer). This information alone implies that education in vocational and technical schools presupposes learning a foreign language (FL) oriented towards outcomes and needs different from those specific to general language education. Moreover, different numbers of hours assigned to language training in individual professions make it impossible to plan and uniformly implement the teaching content in each class. Hence, the teacher must possess extensive methodological skills.

Foreign language teacher training (as in the case of any other subject) is currently defined in the Regulation of the Minister of Science and Higher Education of 25 July 2019 on the standard of teaching preparation for the teaching profession (Journal of Laws of 2019, item 1450)⁵. The legal act specifies the conditions of educating teachers at all school subjects but in no way accounts for the specific nature of the work of FL teachers⁶. It is worth noting that the legislator paid little attention to the issues of preparing teachers to work with groups with professional goals and needs. The detailed aspects of the design of teacher education curricula have been left to the discretion of the centres involved in the preparation of candidates for FL (and LSP) teacher positions.

A more extensive and detailed description of the results is contained only in the Regulation of the Minister of National Education of 16 May 2019 on the core curricula for vocational education arranged by sector and additional vocational skills for selected occupations identified within vocational education (Journal of Laws of 2019, item 991).

⁵ One of the previous legal acts on the standard of teaching preparation for the teaching profession includes the Regulation of the Minister of Science and Higher Education of 17 January 2012 on the standard of teaching preparation for the teaching profession (Journal of Laws of 2012, item 131).

⁶ "Teaching preparation for the teaching profession during studies includes substantive and pedagogical preparation. Pedagogical preparation includes psychological and pedagogical preparation as well as didactic preparation. Didactic preparation includes the basics of teaching and voice emission as well as didactic preparation for teaching a subject or conducting classes".



3.1. Research on the needs of LSP teachers – general data

When reflecting on the professional competencies of teachers, on the one hand, it is worth making a more in-depth analysis of the specific nature of the work of specialist language teachers (referred to here as "LSP"), sanctioned with the provisions of the aforementioned Regulation of the Ministry of National Education (Journal of Laws of 2019, item 991), and on the other hand, the (self) assessment of the level of methodological and linguistic preparation of LSP teachers and their possible needs in the field of professional development. Therefore, between 2016 and 2018⁷, a questionnaire survey was conducted⁸ on a deliberately selected research sample comprising only LSP teachers working in sectoral vocational and technical schools throughout Poland⁹.

The original form designed for the study contained 20 sentences to which the teachers were to respond by ticking one of the values on a 1–5 scale. On the one hand, the sentences included in the questionnaire referred to the content of teaching and typical tasks that LSP teachers should perform as part of the teaching process (sentences 7, 9, 11 and 14); on the other, they were to direct the respondents' attention to the assessment of the educational context appropriate for their work (sentences 1, 3, 6, 10, 13, 15, 17 and 18) and the level of their own competence in the field of LSP teaching (sentences 2, 4, 5, 8, 12, 16, 19 and 20). An open-ended question requiring a longer answer was also added to the list, which made it possible to learn about the specific needs of teachers, which – according to the respondents – should be met as soon as possible.

The online survey questionnaire was sent to potential respondents who gave and sent their answers anonymously. The data underlying the presented study comes from 98 questionnaires¹⁰ completed by LSP teachers from all over Poland, teaching

⁷ Relatively extended period of the research results from the difficulties in reaching a representative number of respondents and obtaining the largest possible number of fully completed questionnaires.

⁸ Survey form is provided at the end of the chapter.

⁹ Proper study was preceded by a pilot study involving 33 LSP teachers working in vocational and technical schools in Lublin Province. It made it possible to evaluate the validity of the statements proposed in the survey. Modifications to the research tool used, introduced after the pilot, consisted in clarifying selected phrases and changing the order of survey questions.

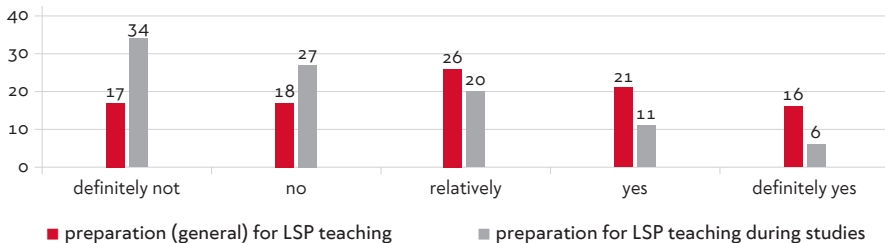
¹⁰ In total, 108 questionnaires were collected during the study. However, 10 of them were excluded from further analysis as they contained incomplete or off topic answers (e.g. regarding general foreign language teaching).

various foreign languages¹¹ in many industries¹². This text considers only the replies of respondents who best correspond to the goal set out in the introduction, i.e. the (self)assessment of LSP teachers' competencies and the diagnosis of their needs in the field of professional (self)development. Conclusions presented in the further part of the article are therefore a derivative of the answers provided by 98 respondents in relation to ten statements (contained in sentences 2, 4, 5, 8, 12, 16, 17, 18, 19 and 20) of the survey questionnaire and to one open-ended question (21).

3.2. Professional training of LSP teachers

At the beginning of the analysis of the results, it should be noted that the teachers participating in the survey express mixed feelings about their preparation to conduct LSP lessons, as shown in Figure 1. Teachers' answers are evenly distributed – about 38% claim that they are fully prepared to conduct LSP lessons while about 36% believe that they are not. Many (about 26%) deem their preparation average or have no opinion. On the other hand, the majority agrees that the higher education system does not prepare for teaching a language in vocational schools (a total of 62% respondents chose "no" and "definitely not").

FIGURE 1. PREPARATION OF LSP TEACHERS (N = 98)



Source: Own study.

¹¹ Respondents included teachers of English (79), German (9), Russian (5), French (4) and Spanish (1).

¹² The following industries (professional fields) were represented: IT/ICT (23 teachers); economics and mechanics (18 each); hospitality industry (16); logistics (15); gastronomy, tourism, tourist service (10 each); construction, electrical engineering, mechatronics, advertising (9 each); hairdressing, commerce (8 each); electronics, agriculture, food technology (7 each); shipping (6); landscaping architecture, mining, port and airport service (5 each); cook and mechanisation of agriculture (4 each) geodesy, graphics, horse breeding (2 each); and administration, agribusiness, chemistry, journalism and social communication, floristry, waitressing, accounting, medicine, brickwork, CNC machining, renewable energy, gardening, nursing, dairy processing, architectural renovation, carpentry, locksmithing, wood technology, telecommunications, veterinary medicine (1 each).



Disproportions between the general satisfaction of teachers with their own readiness to engage in LSP teaching and the level of preparation resulting from received higher education stem from their professional self-improvement. Teachers' competencies enabling relatively good preparation for conducting LSP lessons are there largely due to the teachers' linguistic and/or didactic (self)education, which is already evident during their professional activity and very often after receiving information on the professional profile of learners (see Gajewska, 2020¹³; Kościńska, 2020¹⁴).

Further, research by Elżbieta Gajewska (2020) shows that many teachers (9/24) confuse specialist English (language learning) classes with classes on teaching specialist languages. This leads to the conclusion that the content of LSP teaching methodology is not commonly discussed in preparation for the profession of a foreign language teacher¹⁵ and that the respondents were not introduced to that type of class at various stages of their education.

3.3. Self-assessment of LSP teachers' competencies

Although the higher education system insufficiently implements issues related to LSP teaching methodology in FL teacher curricula, it can be concluded that the surveyed LSP teachers are doing relatively well by compensating for the deficiencies in the language and/or methodological competencies on their own.

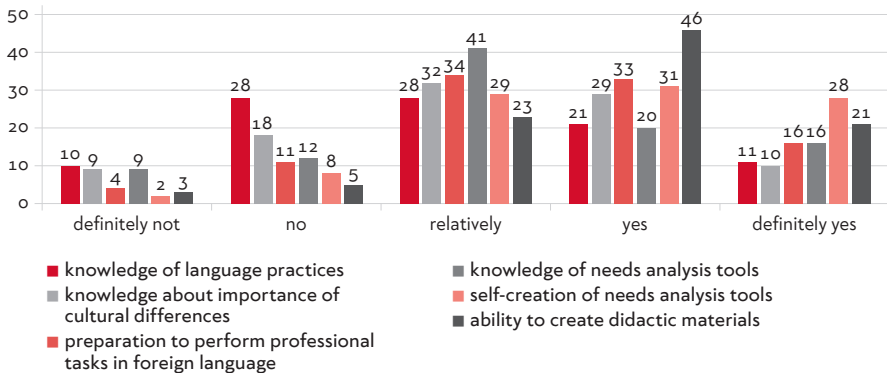
Based on the answers provided in the questionnaire, it should be stated that the respondents correctly identify tasks undertaken by an LSP teacher at various stages of the didactic process and positively respond to the level of their own competencies in the implementation of these tasks. The self-assessment of selected components of linguistic competence (knowledge of the language and culture of the professional area) and didactic competence (needs analysis, creation of didactic materials, implementation of the didactic process) was positive, although there were many neutral answers (between "yes" and "no").

¹³ Survey conducted by Elżbieta Gajewska on a sample of 24 teachers of vocational English participating in the project "Małopolska Chmura Edukacyjna" (Education Cloud of Małopolska) in the 2018/2019 school year showed that the competences of LSP teachers are largely the result of their self-improvement efforts. Only five from the respondents teaching English in several industries simultaneously declared that they knew the sector-specific language before starting work with the group. In remaining cases, learning/exploring the specificity of the language took place while working with the students.

¹⁴ Based on 138 questionnaires completed by LSP teachers in Małopolskie and Podkarpackie Provinces, Kościńska concluded that teachers self-improved their language competencies in the field of health care (130 out of 138 respondents) and teaching (in various areas; to a different extent; with varying results).

¹⁵ The scope of preparation of foreign language teachers for LSP teaching and the absence/presence of LSP/LSP teaching methodology classes in university curricula for foreign language teachers were analysed in a detailed study whose results were thoroughly discussed in Gajewska, Sowa and Kic-Drgas (2020).

FIGURE 2. SELF-ASSESSMENT OF SELECTED COMPONENTS OF THE PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCE OF LSP TEACHERS (N = 98)



Source: Own study.

While some concerns were indicated with respect to the teachers' familiarity with language practices appropriate in the professional context (37% negative answers as compared to 28% neutral and 32% positive ones), teachers seem to compensate for this with a better understanding of cultural differences in the work environment (39% positive answers, 32% neutral and 27% negative ones). They state that they can prepare learners to perform professional activities in a foreign language quite effectively (49% answered "yes" and "definitely yes" and 34% chose "neutral") using teaching materials that they can create on their own (67% answered "yes" and "definitely yes"; 23% picked "neutral"). Although an overwhelming number of the teachers surveyed have a problem with identifying tools for analysing learners' needs (41% chose "neutral" and 21% picked "no" and "definitely not"), most of them claim to know how to develop such instruments for their own use (59% chose "yes" and "definitely yes"; 29% opted for "neutral").

Gajewska (2020) also points to LSP teachers (of the English language) self-assessing their teaching competencies as high. Respondents participating in her questionnaire study assessed their own teaching competencies as "good" (12/24) and "very good" (3/24). Eight persons were moderately satisfied, while only one considered their competencies to be insufficient.

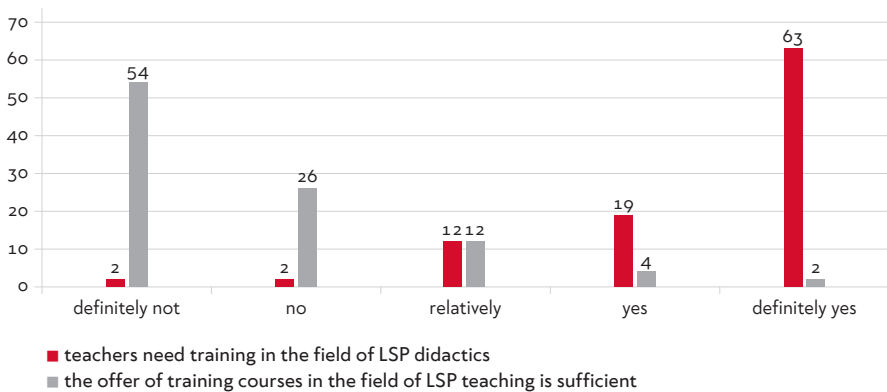
3.4. LSP teachers' needs

Based on the data presented in Figure 2, it can be concluded that LSP teachers are doing well and do not need assistance in preparing and/or implementing LSP classes. However, the relatively high self-assessed linguistic and didactic competencies do not mean that LSP teachers refrain from self-improvement



activities. Statement no. 17 from the questionnaire form, concerning the demand for thematic and targeted training in LSP teaching methodology, met with a decidedly affirmative response (84% "yes" and "definitely yes" answers).

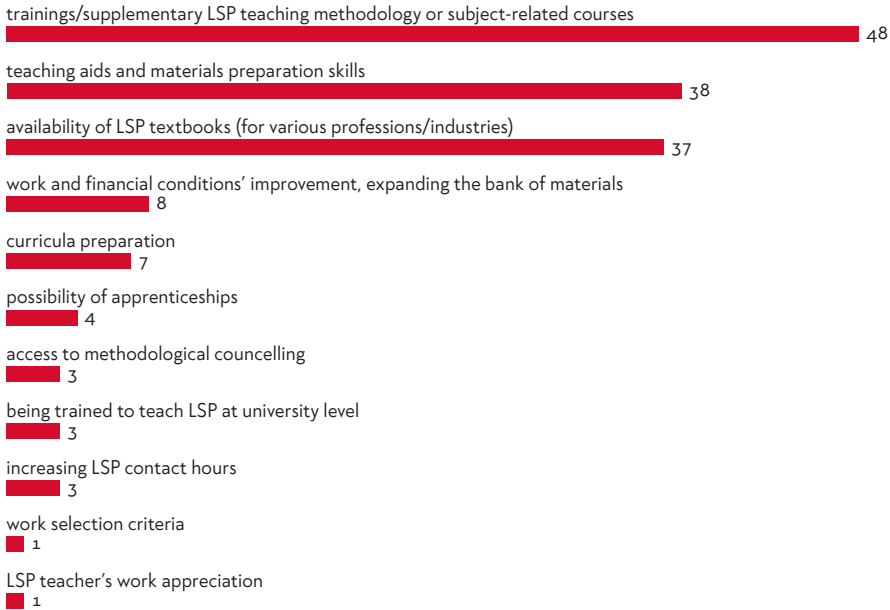
FIGURE 3. DEMAND FOR LSP TEACHING COURSES/TRAINING (N = 98)



Source: Own study.

According to the surveyed teachers, there is too little training and courses on LSP teaching available. Among the training needs for teachers (defined in survey question 21), the improvement of competencies in the field of sector-specific knowledge and LSP teaching seems to be the most important (48% answers).

FIGURE 4. SPECIFIC NEEDS OF LSP TEACHERS (N = 98)



Source: Own study.

Training aimed at developing skills related to the creation of teaching materials for classroom work and for students' own use at home seems to be particularly necessary¹⁶ (38% answers). Almost two-fifths of the respondents (37%) call for access to ready-made teaching materials for various sectors (e.g., in the form of textbooks), which should be modern, relevant to examination requirements, and attractive for both students and teachers.

A small percentage of the respondents (less than 10%) formulate their needs in relation to the financial conditions under which LSP teaching in secondary schools takes place. Teachers see the need to supply multimedia equipment, dictionaries and modern learning aids, and they also call for an increase in the number of LSP class hours. They believe that it would also be desirable to collaborate more closely with teachers of vocational subjects who could assist them in expanding their sector-specific knowledge and improving their understanding of a given industry.

¹⁶ NB: The research by Agnieszka Kościńska (2020) indicates that expectations of LSP teachers regarding forms of training in which they would like to participate are reflected by their wish to receive ready-to-use exercises pertinent to their field (94%), as well as to develop exercises while in training (83.3%).



Answers to the open-ended question also indicate that some LSP teachers would like to see more support from methodological advisors, the inclusion of LSP teaching classes in higher education curricula, as well as the recognition of the specific nature their work and the development and implementation of the selection criteria for the teaching profession.

4. Conclusions and proposals

The data obtained from the questionnaire study on the competencies and needs of LSP teachers leads to quite alarming conclusions. First, it should be stated that most teachers did not acquire the appropriate LSP teaching competencies during their professional university training. It is their commitment and determination that motivate teachers to invest time and energy in self-study to undertake LSP teaching and meet the demands of the subject-specific learning process. Therefore, one may conclude that the inclusion of LSP teaching classes in higher education curricula is not indispensable as teachers can fill the gaps in their professional skillsets on their own.

The surveyed LSP teachers assess their own skills as rather high – enabling the proper and effective organisation and implementation of the teaching process. On the other hand, among the training priorities, they indicate areas that they believe to be sufficiently or well developed (e.g., the ability to develop teaching materials). Although teachers claim that they can prepare teaching aids on their own according to the profile of students and the requirements of the teaching process, they also express the need for additional training and improvement of the professional workshop.

What could be the reasons for such a discrepancy in the assessment of skills and needs? Among the important causes is the dynamics of LSP teachers' work context in general. The educational offer proposed by virtually all LSP education centres is very dynamic and changes from year to year. It is strongly conditioned by the evolving needs of the market which dictates either more or less favourable conditions for language teaching in respective sectors. To secure the appropriate number of students, training centres prepare offers of language classes in terms of the field/industry/profession currently in demand – and this varies from year to year. Consequently, each year LSP teachers must prepare for a new curriculum targeted at a "new" profession/sector. Moreover, research results indicate that in many cases one teacher teaches a foreign language specific to different industries/professions. A single teacher may simultaneously work with various professional profiles and different language needs groups,

oftentimes in different educational contexts (school and external courses, LSP and FL courses, etc.). The variability of parameters that determine how and what teachers have to teach in a given year, which affects what they have to learn on their own (as they miss prior formal preparation), may explain their need for a relatively solid resource base (ready-to-use teaching materials, exercises and textbooks) for use in case of a sudden change of curricula, a significant number of classes or the impossibility of developing their own exercises. It is worth emphasising that the preparation of an LSP learning unit requires substantial work, time and commitment input¹⁷. Considering the variability of parameters influencing the education offered, as well as various limitations of the teachers (e.g. organisational, institutional, individual, family or financial), it is impossible to develop original teaching material for all classes and at a short notice. It can also be assumed that for some respondents, the teaching aids received during training or workshops may serve as a model to refer to in the course of their own work or possibly as proof of the correctness of their intuitive choices, or a reference point for verification or modification.

Moreover, the didactic and/or language skills that LSP teachers have developed independently in the course of their work (based on the experience of their colleagues or their own) certainly require approval by experts in a given professional field or the field of LSP teaching/methodology. It can be presumed that teachers would welcome confirmation of the legitimacy or effectiveness of the adopted method of work, provided by an expert in a given field. They would also appreciate feedback on the revision of their own actions or expert guidance on how to teach and/or how to do it better. Perhaps this explains the willingness of teachers to participate in training and work under the guidance of specialists who could endorse their approach or encourage them to modify it.

While the teaching needs of Polish LSP teachers are not the only ones expressed by the teaching community, such needs are certainly vital expectations that affect the FL teachers' education curricula developed in Poland. In light of the research results presented above, it seems that classes devoted to LSP teaching should be urgently included in these curricula, which would allow future educators to gain at least elementary knowledge on the specifics of teaching groups with professional needs and learn about possible ways of working with them. Of course, such preparation (undoubtedly within a limited time frame) will not provide a ready-made course of action for every possible vocational

¹⁷ Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998, p. 172) draw attention to the time-consuming preparation of original teaching materials: according to their estimates one hour of effective classes requires up to 15 hours of own work input.



context. While it is difficult to adjust teacher training programmes in terms of the exact language and field of their future professional activity, it is certainly much easier to predict the type and scope of didactic tasks undertaken and implemented by LSP teachers, regardless of the field they are going to teach in. Therefore, in the course of their professional preparation, it is worth focusing on shaping didactic competencies related to the tasks carried out by teachers at various stages of the didactic process (including needs analysis and development of the general curriculum, obtaining source materials and their didactic adaptation in terms of learners' needs, developing teaching techniques in relation to specific FL educational objectives and professional tasks, selecting forms and criteria of evaluation). The presence of LSP teaching methodology elements in LSP teachers' training programmes by no means guarantees the complete professional preparation to work with all student profiles and in all possible educational contexts. However, taking those elements into account during professional training, even partially, allows future teachers to focus on how LSP teaching differs from general language teaching, and thus recognise the role of didactic competencies in the teacher's professional skill set.

It seems necessary to intensify efforts in the scope of organising training and workshops for professionally active teachers – not only under the auspices of educational publishing houses but above all universities and educational centres, as well as teacher training centres. As part of these classes, experts from various industries and FL educators could collaborate with teachers on the didactic adaptation of specific aspects of learning a sector-specific language. Yet another vital initiative could be the presentation of experiences of the teachers themselves, who could share their achievements, successes and proven, independently developed techniques, as they are the ones who best know the reality of their work.

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Legal acts

- Rozporządzenie Ministra Nauki i Szkolnictwa Wyższego z dnia 17 stycznia 2012 r. w sprawie standardów kształcenia przygotowującego do wykonywania zawodu nauczyciela (Dz.U. 2012 poz. 131) [*Regulation of the Minister of Science and Higher Education of 17 January 2012 on the standard of teaching preparation for the teaching profession (Journal of Laws of 2012, item 131)*].
- Rozporządzenia Ministra Edukacji Narodowej z dnia 7 lutego 2012 r. w sprawie podstawy programowej kształcenia w zawodach (Dz.U. 2012 poz. 184) [*Regulation of the Minister of National Education of 7 February 2012 on the core curriculum for vocational education (Journal of Laws of 2012, item 184)*].
- Rozporządzenie Ministra Edukacji Narodowej z dnia 31.03.2017 r. w sprawie podstawy programowej kształcenia w zawodach (Dz.U. 2017 poz. 860) [*Regulation of the Minister of National Education of 31 March 2017 on the core curriculum for vocational education (Journal of Laws of 2017, item 860)*].
- Rozporządzenie Ministra Edukacji Narodowej z dnia 16.05.2019 r. w sprawie podstawy programowej kształcenia w zawodach szkolnictwa branżowego oraz dodatkowych umiejętności zawodowych w zakresie wybranych zawodów szkolnictwa branżowego (Dz.U. 2019 poz. 991) [*Regulation of the Minister of National Education of 16 May 2019 on the core curricula for vocational education*].



arranged by sector and additional vocational skills for selected occupations identified within vocational education (Journal of Laws of 2019, item 991)].

Rozporządzenie Ministra Nauki i Szkolnictwa Wyższego z dnia 25 lipca 2019 r. w sprawie standardu kształcenia przygotowującego o do wykonywania zawodu nauczyciela (Dz.U. 2019 poz. 1450) [*Regulation of the Minister of Science and Higher Education of 25 July 2019 on the standard of teaching preparation for the teaching profession (Journal of Laws of 2019, item 1450)].*

Annex



QUESTIONNAIRE

This questionnaire concerns the teaching of foreign languages in schools with vocational profiles. Its results will be used in the ongoing research project and will make it possible to formulate operational conclusions for LSP teaching.

The survey is anonymous. Thank you very much for your willingness to participate in the survey and for providing reliable answers.

Please specify the elements listed below that characterise the educational context relevant to you.

Foreign language taught:

Place of work (type of school, e.g. (basic) vocational school, technical high school, specialised secondary school):

Vocational profile of the class(es) (e.g. construction, economy, electronics, catering):

Work experience in the teaching profession:

Work experience in a school with a vocational profile:

Please express your opinion by checking the answer box (1–5) that best illustrates your opinion, according to the following scale:

1 – definitely not; 2 – probably not; 3 – neutral/I don't know; 4 – probably yes; 5 – definitely yes.

1.	The core curriculum on vocational education correctly assumes learning a language for specific/professional purposes (LSP).	1	2	3	4	5
2.	LSP teachers effectively prepare students to perform their professional duties and work tasks in a foreign language.	1	2	3	4	5
3.	All vocational schools have the material resources needed to implement LSP curricula.	1	2	3	4	5
4.	LSP teachers are well acquainted with the linguistic practices and habits of the target professions and professional areas the languages of which they teach in a vocational school.	1	2	3	4	5
5.	FL teachers are fully prepared to conduct LSP lessons.	1	2	3	4	5
6.	Teachers of all foreign languages have sufficient teaching aids to teach LSP in a vocational school.	1	2	3	4	5

7.	LSP teaching requires teachers to independently develop teaching materials meeting the needs of the target profession and/or professional area.	1	2	3	4	5
8.	Higher education sufficiently prepares for LSP teaching in a vocational school.	1	2	3	4	5
9.	LSP teachers should be familiar with the specifics of the profession and/or professional area of the language they teach.	1	2	3	4	5
10.	English teachers are better equipped for teaching LSP than teachers of other foreign languages.	1	2	3	4	5
11.	LSP teachers should know the educational needs of students and be able to self-diagnose them.	1	2	3	4	5
12.	LSP teachers can independently create tools enabling a reliable assessment of the current language and educational needs of their students.	1	2	3	4	5
13.	Recommendations of the LSP core curriculum and LSP teaching programmes are thoroughly implemented in every vocational school.	1	2	3	4	5
14.	LSP teachers should have theoretical knowledge of LSP.	1	2	3	4	5
15.	In some vocational schools, only general foreign language is taught during LSP lessons.	1	2	3	4	5
16.	LSP teachers are familiar with the needs analysis tools used in teaching foreign languages for special/professional purposes.	1	2	3	4	5
17.	LSP teachers need thematic and targeted training on LSP teaching.	1	2	3	4	5
18.	There are enough LSP training courses that vocational school teachers can participate in.	1	2	3	4	5
19.	LSP teachers can explain to students the types and significance of cultural differences among representatives of a given profession from various countries/world regions.	1	2	3	4	5
20.	LSP teachers can independently develop LSP teaching materials based on data from a given professional field and authentic documents.	1	2	3	4	5
21.	In your opinion, what are the most important/urgent/pressing needs of LSP teachers that should be met (at the level of apprenticeship, work at school, professional development/support, etc.)?					

