

THE APPLICATIVE INTEGRATIVE DIMENSION OF THE COMMUNICATION CULTURE COURSE AND THE SPECIALTY LANGUAGE IN THE TRAINING OF FUTURE PHYSIOTHERAPISTS

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Abstract. In the last decade, substantial reforms have taken place in Moldova's higher education; one of the measures taken by the ministry was the movement from content-based training to competence-focused training. In this context, the communication culture and the specialty language taught in the SUPES fall into the category of general skills and competences. The main purpose of the course lies in the formation of communication skills, with a view to effective social and professional integration. This paper includes the results of a questionnaire applied to students of the SUPES Physical Therapy Faculty during three academic years (2013-2014, 2014-2015, 2016-2017), through which it was intended to determine the applicative integrative dimension of this study discipline, assessing the extent to which it responds to the interests and training needs of future specialists in the field of physical recovery culture, as well as the quality of the teaching process at the respective hours.

Keywords: professional training, communication skills, specialised languages, application, integration, communication culture and specialty language, the quality of the teaching process organization.

Actuality. Higher education in the Republic of Moldova aims to ensure students' professional training for their effective integration into the labour market, which has led, in addition to other actions taken by the relevant bodies, to the shift from content-based training to that focused on skills. Professional competence is "the ability to apply, transfer, and combine knowledge and skills in diverse work situations and environments to perform the required workplace activities at the quality level specified in the standard. Professional competence means combining and harmonious use of knowledge, skills and attitudes to achieve the expected workplace outcomes. Being competent in a professional field means: applying specialist knowledge, using specific skills, analyzing and making decisions, being creative, working with others as a member of a team, communicating effectively, adapting to the specific work environment, coping with personal and professional stress and unexpected situations" [2].

Among the most well-known reasons for the introduction of competences, in the specialized works are emphasized: the old necessity of approaching the school of life; the need to introduce practical, novel or simulated contexts into the educational process; integrating assessment of students' knowledge, capabilities and attitudes; adapting content to their interests and potential, and so on. [3, p.32].

In the context of competence-based education, the Communication Culture and Special-

ty Language (CCSL) taught in SUPES comes to complement the first area of key competences provided by compulsory education - communication in the mother tongue, but also the area of interpersonal, intercultural networking competences and civic competence, initiative and entrepreneurship spirit, cultural awareness. In SUPES, the respective course is in the category of general skills and competences and is taught in semester I (for groups with Romanian language training) and in the second semester (for allophones).

The importance given to the formation of the communication skills of future specialists has increased considerably lately, fact illustrated not only by the immense number of specialized papers published in the field, but also by the normative acts adopted at different levels. Thus, one of the recent documents issued by the Minister of Education calls on the university centres of the Republic of Moldova to implement the "Recommendations for Intercultural Education in Higher Education Institutions" elaborated by the ministry specialists, which give a priority role to the formation of intercultural communication skills. One of the recommended actions is the mandatory introduction in the curricula of Romanian language communication courses, including Communication Techniques, Business Correspondence, etc., regardless the field of training [4].

Today, the purpose of language learning has essentially changed, focusing on the formation of a communicative repertoire in which all language

skills are involved, with an important role in the competence of applying specialized languages to subsequent professional activity. A significant aspect is that learning a language is a continuous process, developing the motivation for this learning, the capacity and the confidence to achieve a new communicative experience outside the university environment becoming a necessity in the contemporary social context.

In the view of a group of researchers at the University of Arad (coordinated by A. Ardelean and O. Mandrut), communication competence is essential in a global world that provides both knowledge/ learning and the relationship of a person to life situations, in family, leisure, etc., as well as the development of other key competences [1, p.36]. According to the opinion of the cited authors, "communication competence in the mother tongue is made up of a set of elements, relating to: the use of language as a tool of oral and written communication; representation, interpretation and understanding of reality using language as a tool; reception and communication of knowledge; organization and orientation or modelling of thinking and behaviours" [1, p.36]. Therefore, the competence of communication implies, on the one hand, the individual's ability to express and interpret, both verbally and in writing, concepts, beliefs, feelings, opinions, etc.; on the other hand - the ability to interact with other people, social and professional integration.

In order to form the curricular competences covered in the regulatory documents, the communication culture course and the specialty language it is aimed to identify the functional knowledge necessary for the professional field chosen by the students, supplementing them with the skills that can be practiced and refined based on them, determining the attitudes that will condition the desired behaviour, selecting optimal techniques for training, etc. In particular, it is emphasized not only the knowledge of didactic content, but also their understanding, application and integration.

Aim and methods. In order to reveal the applicative-integrative dimension of this subject, the extent to which it responds to the interests and needs of the students' professional training, their main tendencies and aspirations, as well as the effectiveness of organizing the didactic process in

the culture of communication and the specialized language, it was elaborated a 20-question questionnaire, which was applied during three academic years (2013-2014, 2014-2015, 2016-2017) in all Romanian-language groups of the Faculty of Physical Therapy (course holder - A. Luca).

In the academic year 2013-2014, the questionnaire was addressed to a contingent of 86 students, being applied in January 2014, i.e. after the communication culture course and the specialty language, which ensured a maximum degree of objectivity. The same has happened in the years to come. In the university year 2014-2015 to the questions had answered 75 respondents, and in the study year 2016-2017 - 54 students (from two academic groups). The recorded results were analyzed, processed and inserted into charts and tables.

The analysis of the results

In the following, we will analyse the most relevant issues to the topic that we are interested in.

In the literature concerned the stages of competence development are dealt with in four phases:

a) *unconscious incompetence* - the subject does not have a specific competence, but does not even realize that he/she would need it. The educational approach, the whole motivation system will place it in front of the need to learn something.

b) *awareness incompetence* is built on motivation and, implicitly, is the catalyst of any learning. The subject realizes that he does not know anything, can not make or express something and looks for ways to overcome the situation.

c) *awareness competence* is the immediate phase of learning, when the subject, in the process of exercising, reflects, "controls" its behaviours and words, referring to what it has learned recently.

d) *Unconscious competence* is formed as an extension, after sufficient exertions in time, when knowledge + skills + integrated behaviours become automatism. Behind this automatism lies creativity and expressiveness [3, p.33].

For these reasons, the first question addressed to students was about the extent to which they are aware of the CCSL formative role in their professional training. The answers were affirmative in 97% of cases (2013-2014 year of study and 2014-2015 year of study) and 92% (2016-2017 year of study) - Figure 1.

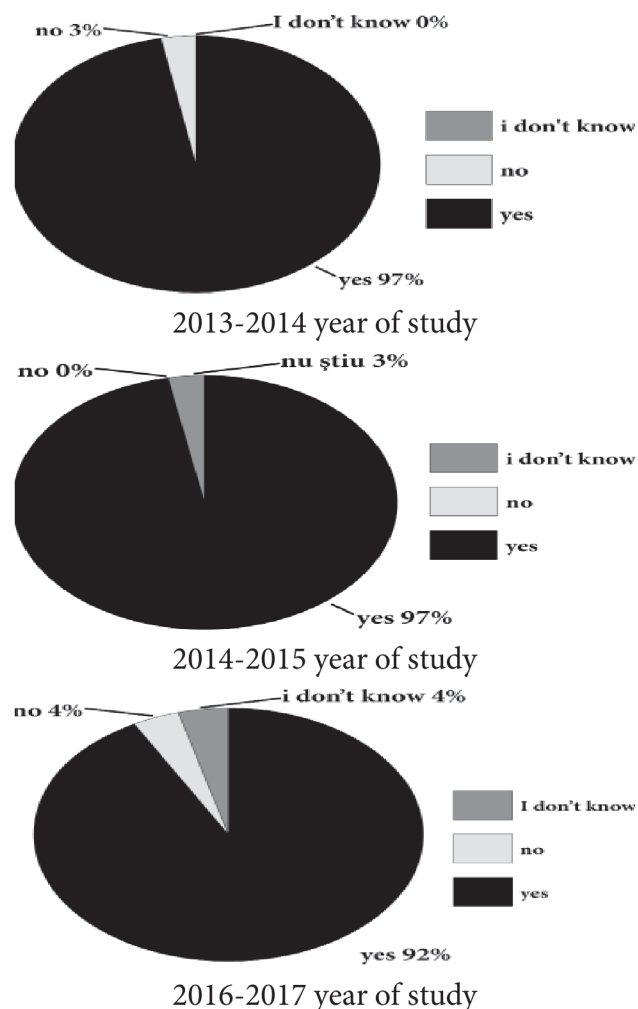


Fig. 1. Students' answers to the question: "Are you aware of the importance of studying the culture of communication and specialty language?"

Through the second question we tried to find out what represents the study of the communication culture and the specialized language for the investigated subjects. I found that in the year 2013-2014, 41% of students considered that the acquisition of the CCSL course gave them a chance of further professional assertion, for 31% of the CCSL classes constituted an opportunity to speak, to be listened, for 17% this knowledge is a necessity, And for 8% - a preference among other objects studied. The other variants of the response had an insignificant weight. In the study year 2014-2015, there is the same trend: for the majority of respondents, the CCSL course represents a chance for future professional assertiveness (38%), a possibility of expressing within the classes (36%), a necessity (20%). In the year 2016-2017, responses were distributed roughly similar to previous years, with a slight tendency to give

greater priority to a 43% chance of future professional assertiveness. The other responses were: a possibility to express during the lessons (28%), a necessity (21%), a preference (8%) - Figure 2

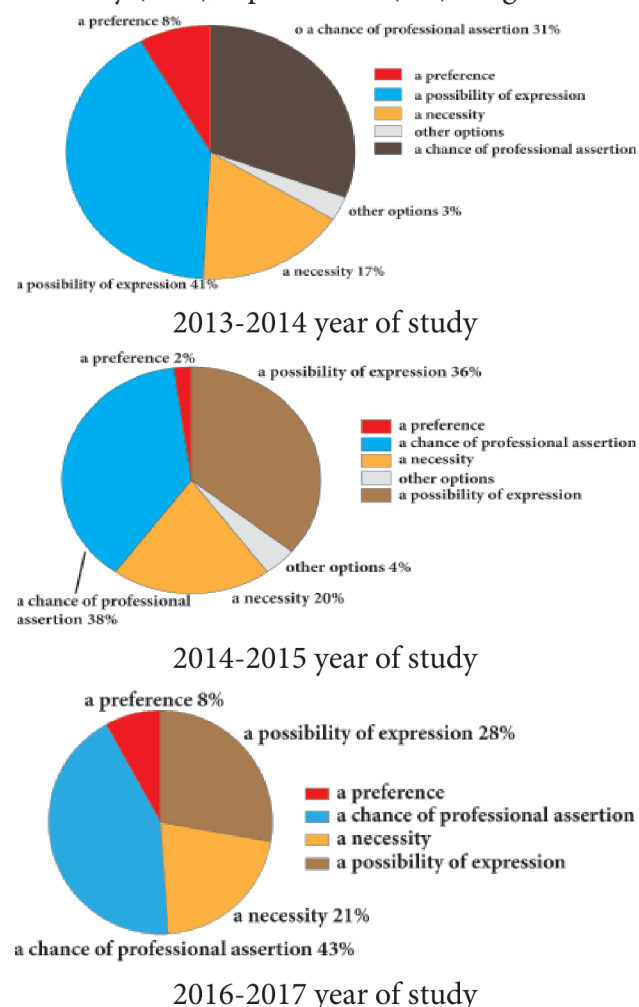


Fig. 2. Students' answers to the question "What represents the CCSL study for you?"

Some other questions aimed the revealing students' interest in the CCSL study and the factors that determine it. To the question "How do you appreciate your interest in studying CCSL?", in the 2013-2014 year, students' responses were as follows: 50% said their interest was medium, 36% - high and 11% - very high. Only 3% responded that there was little interest and no one said that this interest would be missing altogether. In the 2014-2015 year, 15% of students of the first year appreciated their interest in acquiring CCSL as very high, 38% - high and 45% - medium. Only two students (about 3%) confessed that their interest is low. And in the current academic year, 9%, high - 39%, medium - 53%, low - 2% (1 student) showed very high interest. These answers

reflect the constant interest of SUPES students in acquiring the analyzed discipline (Figure 3).

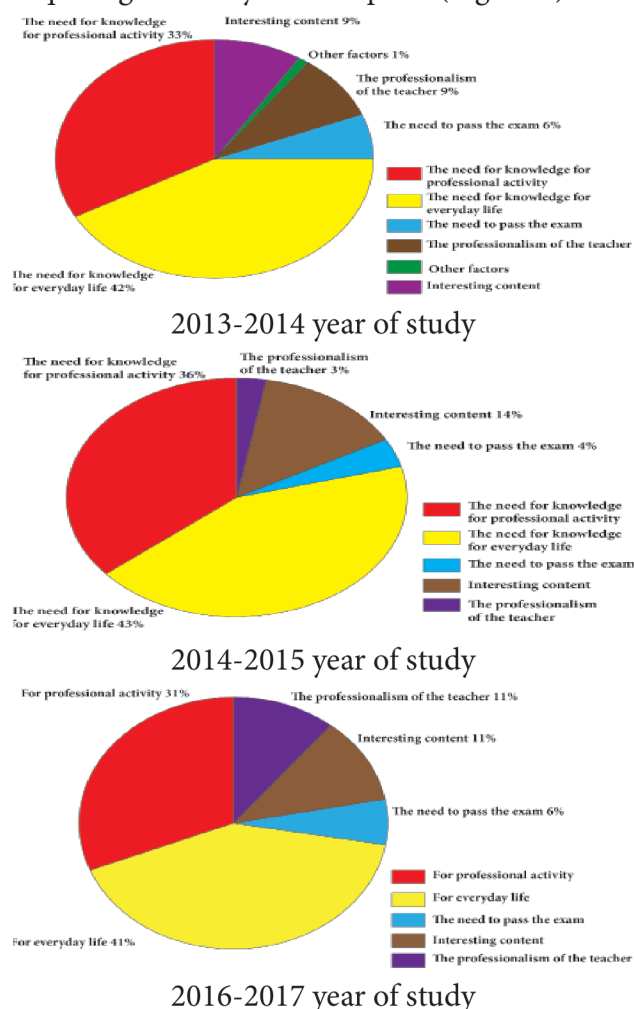


Fig. 3. Students' answers to the question. "What determined the increased interest in this discipline?"

Overall, the increased interest in studying CCSL was determined primarily by: the necessity of this knowledge for everyday life (on average 42%) and for the subsequent professional activity (on average 34%), the professionalism of the teaching staff - the title holder of the course 8%) and the interesting content of the subject (11%).

The following question referred to the most exciting aspects of the course: "What did you like most about CCSL lessons?" The most attractive aspects of the CCSL course in the 2013-2014 and 2014-2015 academic years were: the appropriate psychological climate (33% and 32% respectively), didactic strategies applied by the teacher (25% and 22%, respectively) (21% and 25% respectively), as well as the interesting content of the subject (20% and 21%, respectively). In this year, the

atmosphere created at the lessons (the adequate psychological climate) was highly appreciated by 52% of the students, the applied methods - 18%. There were factors to ensure the attractiveness of the course that CCSL classes offer them the possibility of consolidating specialist knowledge - for 17% and content - for 13%. There is a clear transposition of the emphasis on didactic content on skills training as students appreciated not just what they did, but also how the course of CCSL was organized (Figure 4).

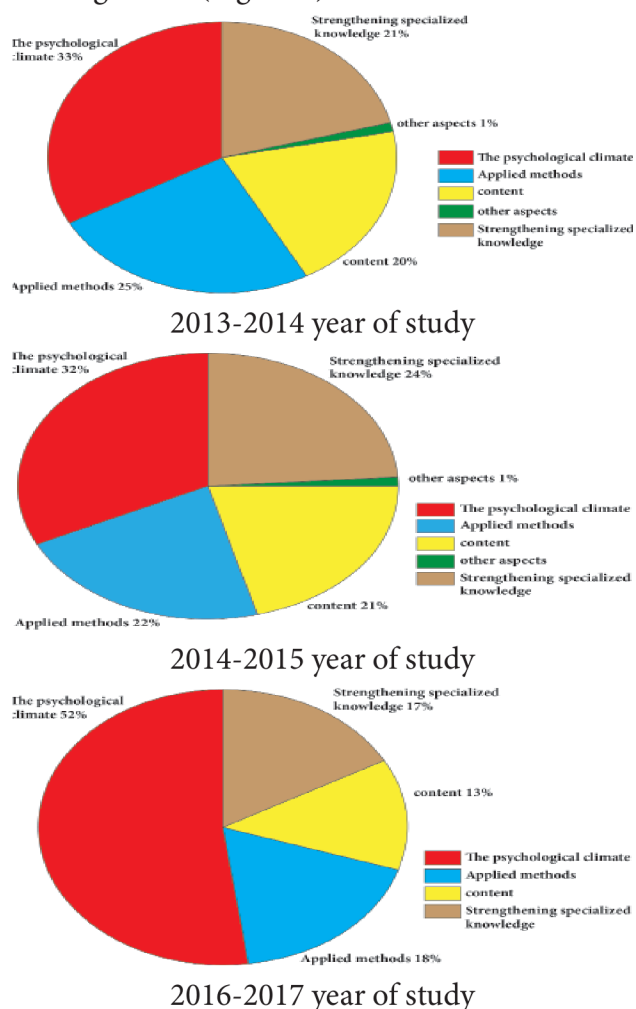


Fig. 4. Students' answers to the question "What did you like most about CCSL lessons?"

Given that, in competency-based education, the content can be improved in any teaching discipline, I have asked some questions about the content of the CCSL course.

In the first two cases analyzed, for the 61% of the students the topics proposed correspond to the interests and needs to a great extent and for 38% - partially. Only 1 student gave negative answers to this question. In the academic year 2016-

2017 no one responded negatively, the subjects proposed by the teacher correlating with their interests and needs to a large extent (57%) or partially (43%).

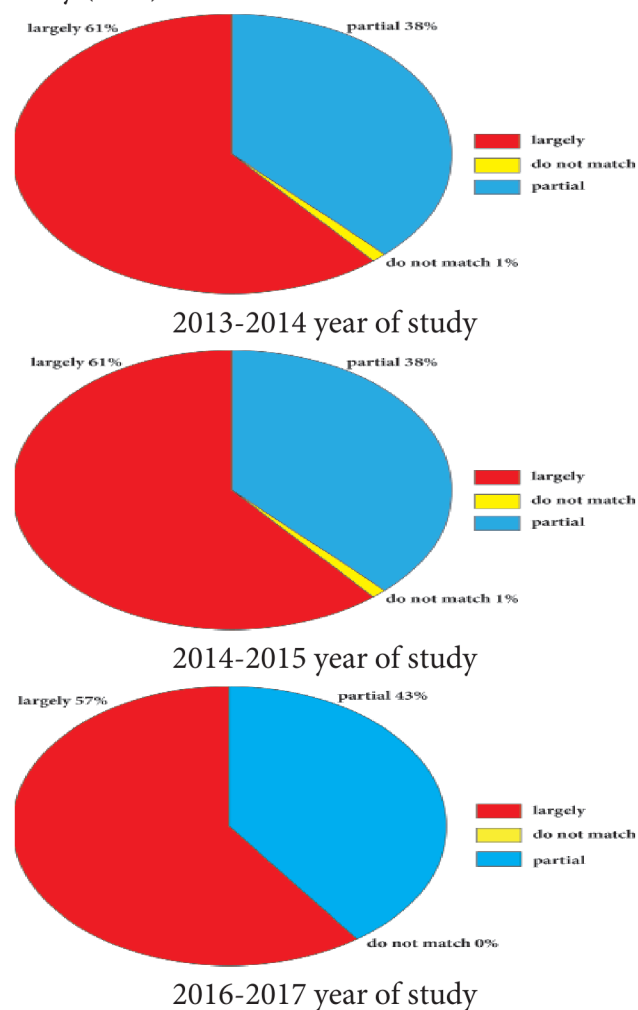


Figure 5. Student Answers to the Question. "To what extent did the topics proposed by the teacher correspond to your interests and needs?"

At the same time, the most exciting subjects for students were in the year 2013-2014: the themes related to the training of the correct communication skills (45%), the models of official documents (9%), these answers demonstrating once again the usefulness of the course; the literary texts (21%) and the supplements to the studied subjects (curiosities, proverbs and aphorisms, the media material analyzed, etc.) - 22%, these being further arguments for the attractiveness of the discipline (Figure 6).

In the academic year 2014-2015, subjects related to the formation of correct communication skills were mentioned among the preferences of

an even larger number of students - 65%, literary fragments - 14% and the additional material used by the teacher - 12%. Topics and corrective speech enhancement exercises, one of the major objectives of the CCSL course, also attracted the students of the Faculty of Physical TTerapy (53%) this year, and the additional materials selected for attitudes formation and feedback were Considered most interesting by 29% of students (Figure 6).

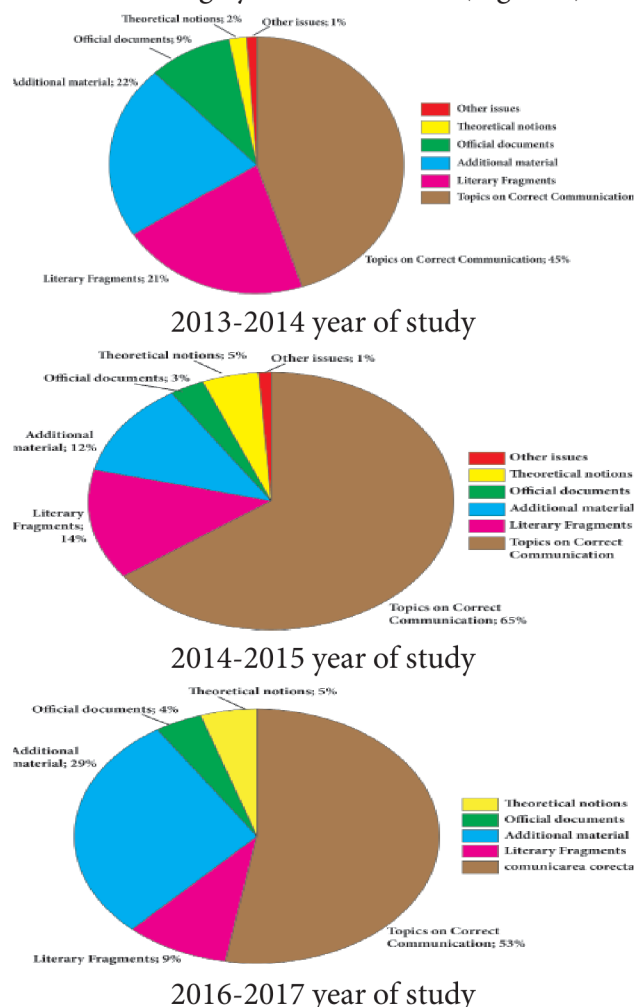


Fig. 6. Answers to the question. "What topics did you like most about CCSL lessons?"

At the same time, we tried to find out whether our disciples would like to diversify the content of the taught matter. TTe recorded responses have highlighted the fact that in the academic year 2013-2014, the students wanted to complement the CCSL didactic content with topics related to inter-human relations (36%), with several scientific texts, which would contribute to the consolidation of the specialized lexicon (34%), as well as several fragments from artistic literature (15%). At the same time, 12% of the students were sat-

isfied with the current content of the CCSL discipline and did not want to change anything. In the academic year 2014-2015, topics related to inter-human relations (34%), scientific texts (36%) and fragments of literary-artistic works (20%) were the subjects mentioned by the students. And 10% of respondents did not want content changes. These results reflect, in our opinion, the varied nature of student interests. In the year 2016-2017, the distribution of responses differs insignificantly: 44% believe that more topics should be introduced in relation to human relations, 27% - scientific texts, 12% - literary texts and 17% - nothing (Figure 7). We mention that these responses were recorded after several tasks of an applicative-professional nature were started at the CCSL classes, such as supporting a speech on a specialized topic, producing a questionnaire, case studies, analyzing some articles from the scientific literature and publicity texts etc. (Figure 7).

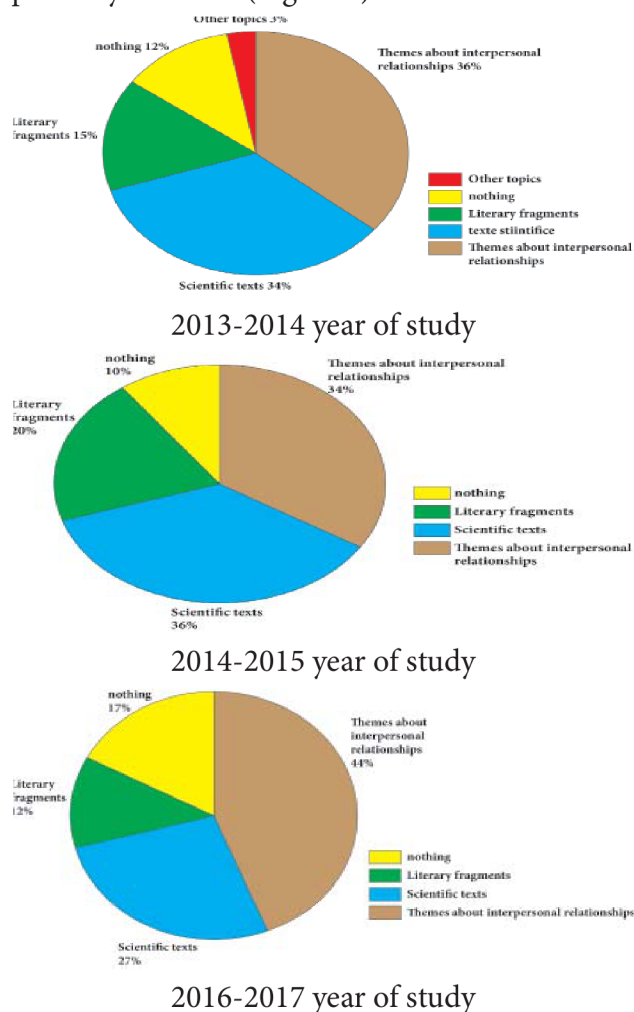


Figure 7. Students' answers to the question "What topics would you like to be included in the content of CCSL discipline?"

The following questions were focused on the usefulness of the competencies formed during the CCSL classes in the extra-academic environment: the influence of the course on the communication development outside the classes (Figure 8) and its importance on the formation of the right communication skills in everyday life (Figure 9).

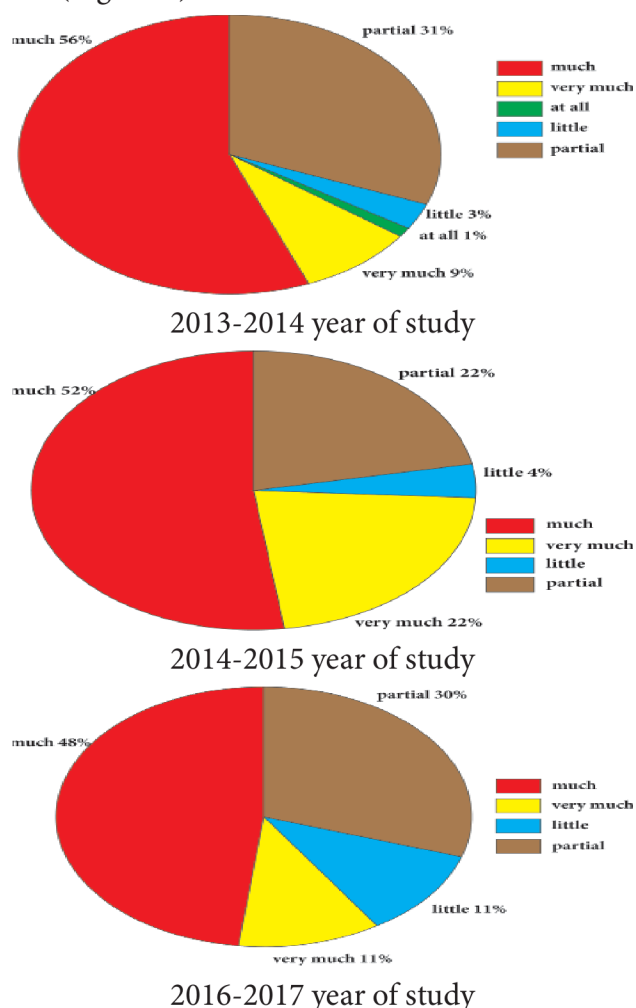


Fig. 8. Students' answers to the question "To what extent did the competences of the CCLS course have contributed to the formation of an out-of-class culture of communication?"

In the academic year 2013-2014, 9% of respondents considered that the influence of CCSL on the formation of communication skills outside the classes was very high, 56% - that this course influenced much, 31% - partially and only 1 student (1%) considered this to have zero influence, and 3 students (3%) - reduced. In the academic year 2014-2015, the competences of the CCSL course have contributed to the formation of a communication culture outside the classes

very high - 22%, high - 52%, partially - 22%. In the academic year 2016-2017, the responses were distributed as follows: very much - 11%, much - 48%, partially - 30%, little - 11%. These figures reflect, in our opinion, a steady trend of application of knowledge gained during classes, but also the usefulness of the course.

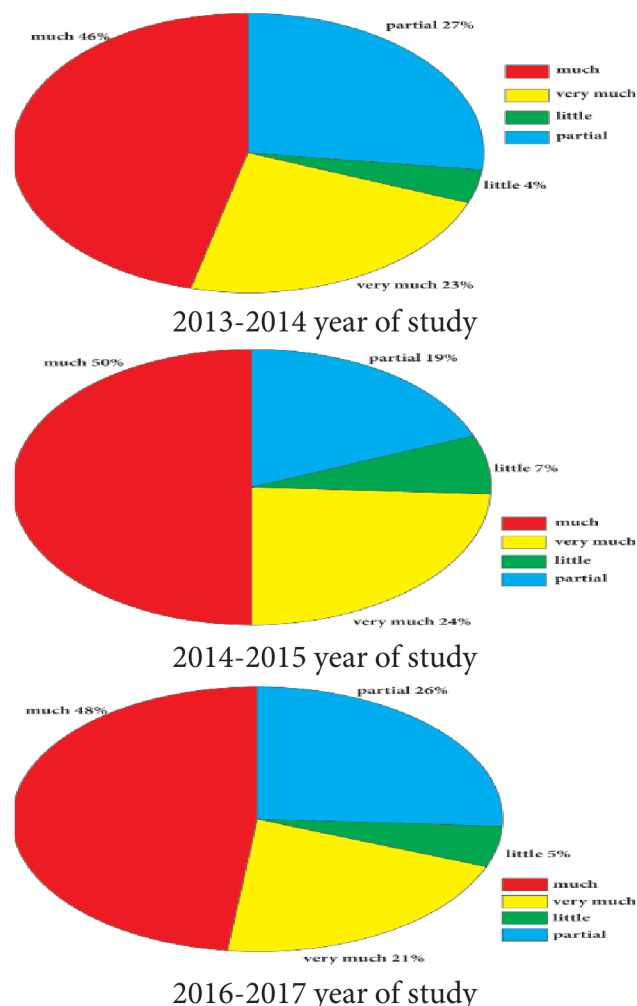


Fig. 9. Students' answers to the question "To what extent has this course influenced the formation of correct language skills in Romanian?"

In the academic year 2013-2014, the importance of CCSL for the formation of correct language skills in Romanian is very high for 23% of students, high for 46%, partial for 27%, which motivated us to insist on the topics concerning the training of these competences within the analyzed discipline. The "little" type answers made up 4%, and "not at all" - 0. The same trend is also evident in the coming years. In the year 2014-2015: very much - 24%, much - 50%, partial - 19%, little - 7%, not at all - 0. In the academic year 2016-2017: very much - 21%, much - 48%, partial - 26%, little - 5%, not at all - 0.

"To what extent did the study of this discipline motivate you to further improve your way of expressing yourself in Romanian?" was the next question addressed to the students. In the academic year 2013-2014, the motivation for further improvement training is very high in the case of 22% and high for 57%, partly for 19% of the respondents, fact largely due not only to the interesting content of the discipline but also to the effectiveness of the didactic strategies applied during the classes. Only 2% opted for the response "little" and no one responded "at all". In the academic year 2014-2015, the study of the CCSL discipline motivated the first year students to further improve their way of expressing Romanian: very much - 29%, much - 54%, partially - 13%, little - 4%, and in the year 2016-2017, very much - 24%, much - 50%, partially - 22%, little - 4%. No negative response was recorded (Figure 10).

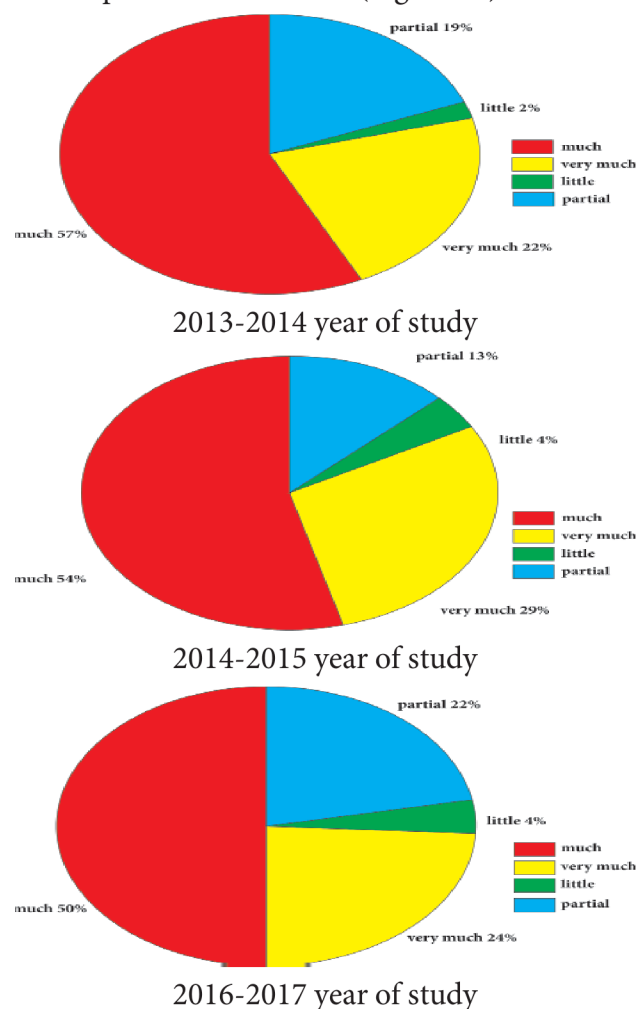


Fig. 10. Students' answers to the question "How did the study of this discipline motivate you to further improve your way of expressing yourself in Romanian?"

At the same time, the vast majority of students said that if they had the opportunity, they would still study CCSL: 81% in the academic year 2013-2014, 80% -2014-2015 and 78%- 2016-2017. Most respondents consider that the number of hours required to form a sufficient level of communication within the CCSL course is higher than the one allocated: in the year 2013-2014, would have wanted to increase the number of hours allocated to the CCSL course to 90 hours - 27%, up to 120 hours - 33%, over 120 hours - 13%. In the academic year 2014-2015: 90 hours - 36%, 120 hours - 36%, more - 3%. Only 22% of respondents considered that 60 hours were sufficient and 3% to 30 hours. In the current year, 19% of students consider 90 hours, 54% -120 hours, 4% more than 120 hours.

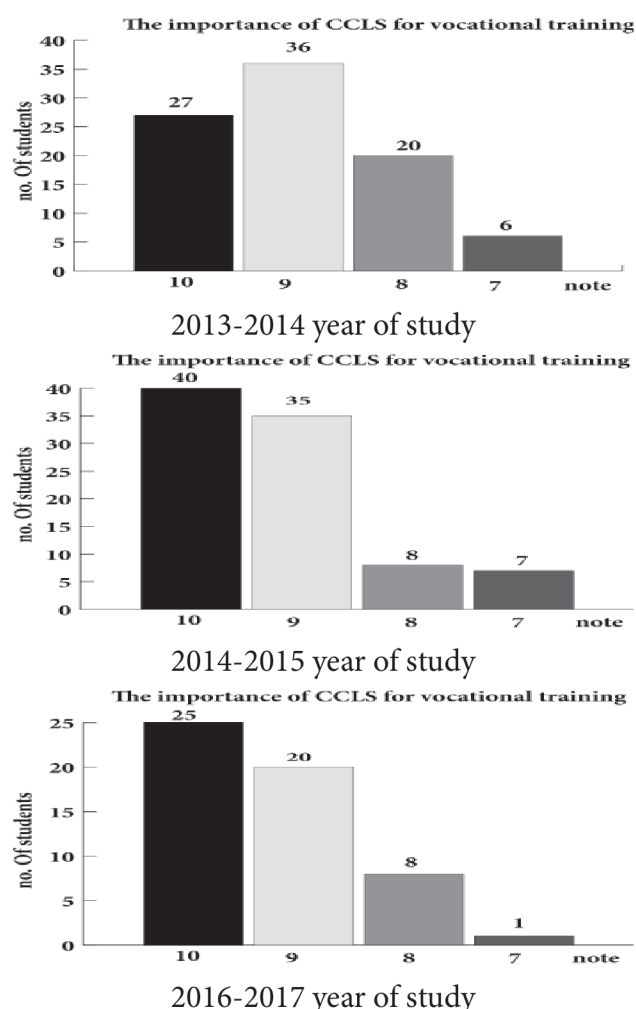


Fig. 11. Students' answers to the question "On a scale of 1 to 10, appreciate the importance of CCSL for vocational training."

Finally, respondents were asked to assess on a scale of 1 to 10 the importance of CCSL for

their professional training. We note that the role of this study discipline was appreciated as being very great. In the academic year 2013-2014, 27 respondents (30%) awarded the maximum number of 10 points and 36 people (41%) - 9 points. Note 8 - 20 people (22%), and grades 7 - 6 people (6%). No lower grades were given by any student. During the year 2014-2015, most students gave the most importance to CCSL study (10-48%, 9-41%), and 11% selected response variants "8" and "7". In the academic year 2016-2017, 46% rated the CCSL course with 10, 36% - 9, 16% - 8 and 2% - 7. Other answers were not recorded (Figure 11). TTis reflects the special role of the "Communication Culture and Specialty Language" in the process of training the professional skills of future specialists in the field of physical culture of recovery.

Conclusions and recommendations

TTe study underlined the constant positive attitude of the students and their high appreciation for the way the didactic process is organized in the communication culture classes and the specialized language:

1. TTe overwhelming majority of respondents (on average, 96%) are aware of the importance of acquiring this course for their professional training. For most of them, communication culture lessons represent a chance for professional assertion in the future (41% in 2013-2014, 36% in 2014-2015 and 43% in 2016) -2017), a possibility of expressing within the hours (31%, 36% and 28% respectively) or a necessity (17%, 20% and 21%, respectively).

2. TTroughout the whole reference period, the interest in studying CCSL is constantly maintained: each academic year students appreciated their interest as very high and high (summed up, these two variants account for about 47% in the academic year -2014, 53% in 2014-2015, 48% in 2016-2017), or medium (50%, 45% and 53%, respectively). TTe increased interest in this course was conditioned by the necessity of these competences in the daily life (on average 42%) and in the subsequent professional activity (on average 34%), the professionalism of the course holder (8%) and the interesting content of the subject (11%).

3. TTe comparative analysis of the answers during the three academic years revealed the

most attractive aspects of the discipline: the appropriate psychological climate (33%, 32% and 52% respectively), didactic strategies applied by the teacher (25%, 22%, respectively, 18%), the possibility to strengthen their specialized knowledge (21%, 25% and 17% respectively), the interesting content of the discipline (20%, 21% and 13%, respectively). Thus, a shift of emphasis from content on skills training is observed, in the current year the students appreciated first of all the way in which the CCSL course was organized.

4. The most useful subjects were, in the opinion of the students, the subjects of the training of the correct communication skills (45%, 65% and 53%, respectively), the extra and intuitive material (curiosities, aphorisms, publicity and fictional texts) selected by teacher for consolidation and feedback (43%, 26% and 38%, respectively).

5. The usefulness of the lesson-based skills for the work done outside the classes was appreciated by most respondents as very high (9%, 22%, 11%) and high (56%, 52%, 48%). These figures reflect, in our opinion, a stable tendency to apply the accumulated knowledge, but also their applicative integrative value.

6. The importance of CCSL for the formation of correct language skills in Romanian, one of the major objectives of the course, is considered to be very high (23%, 24% and 21% respectively), high (46%, 50% 48%), partial (27%, 19% and 26%, respectively), which led us to continue to insist on the topics related to the training of the respective competences within the analyzed discipline. At the same time, the study of the CCLS motivated the students to continuously improve their communication skills in Romanian: very much (22%,

29% and 24% respectively) and much (57%, 54% and 50%).

7. The vast majority of respondents said that if they had the opportunity, they would still study CCSL (81%, 80% and 78%, respectively). About 76% believe that the number of hours currently allocated to the course is too low to form a sufficient level of communication skills, mentioning that 90 hours (average 27%), 120 hours (44% on average) or even over 120 hours (7%).

Given that the increase of the number of hours does not seem to be an achievable objective, our efforts will continue to increase the quality of the communicative skills training process at the taught classes by: continuous improvement of the disciplinary curricula and didactic design of all levels; the completion of elaborated courses, including those provided in electronic format; avoiding the overloading of the informational content of the didactic process; applying the most efficient technologies and didactic strategies, diversifying and increasing their attractiveness; optimal blending of teaching methods with learning activities and evaluative approaches; ensuring individual and differentiated work for students with different levels of language knowledge and with different specializations; the adequate use of auxiliary technical means and multimedia systems in and within the lesson preparation process; design and realization of extracurricular actions with formative character; ensuring the continuity of training sessions, etc. All these actions will integrate the applicative integrative dimension of the subject of study "Communication culture and speciality language".

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