The Online Glossary and Other Learning Strategies for ESP Vocabulary among Engineering Students

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The online glossary is a useful strategy to teach / learn ESP (English for Specific Purposes from now on) vocabulary. The main goal of the glossary is to build structures for definitions and elaborate examples in contexts applied to technical vocabulary of specific fields so that students can develop written and lexical learning strategies. The online glossary is a cooperative task that the students themselves carry out individually and it is then shared with the rest of their classmates on the *Moodle* platform. This technique has been employed for years in the ESP courses, *English Applied to Industrial Design and Product Development (EIDPD)* in the degree in Industrial Design and Product Development Engineering, and in *English for Telecommunications Engineering (ETE)* in the Master's degree in Telecommunications Engineering at the Universidad de Las Palmas de Gran Canaria (Spain). With this scenario, this study has a twofold purpose. Firstly, it aims at comparing and analysing the glossaries of these two ESP subjects in the academic year 2021-2022 in order to classify the most common definition structures used by learners, and to register whether these ESP students share recurrent terms, expressions or acronyms. Secondly, an anonymous survey has been administered to a sample of 44 students (23 women, 20 men and 1 other gender) in November 2021 in *EIDPD* and *ETE* in order to know the strategies students find more useful to learn new vocabulary in their professional fields. Findings suggest that the online glossary is a significant cooperative tool to learn new terms and expressions, but other strategies and tools are also highlighted: monolingual and bilingual lists of words, flashcards, visual materials, reading technical texts, games and movies. A total of 86% of participants reported that they have improved their ESP vocabulary after having taken these courses. The online glossary is presented, therefore, as a constructive and cooperative teaching-learning approach to enhance students' most current technical expressions in definitions and examples in context with feedback and language recommendations. Moreover, some terms were identified as neologisms and anglicisms that these ESP used in their professional field. Further studies could be extended by comparing the impact of the online glossary in other ESP courses (tourism, nursing...) in higher education.

Keywords: ESP, vocabulary, learning, online glossary, engineering students.

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