

Global Business Languages

Volume 21

Introduction

Margaret Gonglewski
Mohssen Esseesy
The George Washington University

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Introduction

Last year, we celebrated the premier issue of the newly relaunched *Global Business Languages* journal at the International Symposium on Languages for Specific Purposes and CIBER Business Language Conference (ISLSP/CIBER), hosted at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte. At the conference, which took place from March 5–7, 2020, participants discussed a novel viral outbreak that was spreading around the globe, but it wasn't until March 11, 2020, when the World Health Organization declared COVID-19 a pandemic that we grasped the true gravity of the situation. How strange it is now to think back on attending that large gathering, joyfully greeting friends and colleagues without face masks, enjoying buffet-style meals together, passing around stacks of handouts in crowded presentation rooms—all of us quite unable to fully understand what was to come.

The conference was, for many of us, the last gathering in public that we attended before lockdown procedures began. Here in the United States, the enormous societal wounds resulting from the devastating virus as well as from the surrounding political turmoil (some virus-related, much not) will require years of active effort to heal. If this tumultuous year has taught us anything, it has demonstrated the urgent and ongoing need to improve communication within and across borders—a key goal for the field of Languages for Specific Purposes (LSP). LSP recognizes the importance of communicating effectively and efficiently for understanding and meeting the immediate needs of fellow humans, whether in our own local communities or internationally. Not surprisingly, that notion lies at the heart of all articles in this new issue of the journal. The majority of the articles here are based on presentations given at last year's March symposium; however, because much of that work was done prior to the current pandemic, when contact with learners face-to-face in classrooms was still possible, most articles do not directly address the impact and ramifications instructors have been experiencing for the past year with fully online, or hybrid, or “hyflex,” or other, teaching scenarios. Nevertheless, the research and innovations presented herein undoubtedly educate us regarding tools, practices, and perspectives that will make us prepared to handle future challenges better than we have done over the past year.

Readers will recall that in the first volume of the journal at its new home at the George Washington University, we presented our vision for *GBL* in the introduction to the relaunch. We noted that even as we chose to maintain the journal title (with an apparent narrow focus on business) so that we could build directly on its 20-year history at Purdue University, we embraced a broader definition of business that could encompass additional LSP domains. This current issue follows through on that vision, with expanded domains being reflected in the seven articles. Indeed, right from the very first article we dive into the wider LSP realm with Oscar Pérez's thorough examination of the history of teaching Spanish for professions and purposes within the fields of science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM). His article, “Spanish for STEM in US Higher Education: A Historical Review and Future Perspectives,” features not only a valuable presentation of the historical arc, but also a thoughtful analysis of materials,

pedagogical approaches, and perspectives of the ways that Spanish for STEM was taught through the past century, noting the ways that these have had an impact on educators and scholars in the field today. Pérez concludes by offering potential new directions in Spanish for STEM.

Within the domain of the medical domain of LSP, Meng Yeh's article "Using Authentic Chinese Doctor-Patient Consultations to Develop Patient-Centered Communication Skills" bridges the authenticity distance between the LSP classroom and workplace. Using recorded authentic doctor-patient conversations that have taken place in a clinical setting in Chinese, she developed a teaching module forming a part of Chinese for Healthcare Professions course, which is potentially replicable for other languages. The discourse analysis used in this module is informed by the Patient-Centered Clinical Method (PCCM), taking at its core the whole patient into consideration. The recorded doctor-patient interviews form the basis for four-step instruction that pairs the specialized medical content with language instruction which also integrates speaking, reading, writing, and listening modalities. As a result of this approach, Yeh's study indicates a number of gains for the students in her class, among them improved communication skills and more crucially, a shift from a doctor-centered to patient-centered communication approach.

Darcy Lear and Verónica Moraga Guerra's article "Backward Design for LSP: Domain Analysis as a Consistent Research Framework for a Necessarily Decentralized Field" examines the current decentralized and context-dependent state of LSP courses within the United States to reframe the design of LSP courses within domain analysis. In this conceptual paper, the authors highlight the potential of domain analysis "to provide an even more robust framework that produces measurable proficiency outcomes" (p. 73). With its adoption in course (re)design, closer alignment is established between the students' knowledge, skills, and abilities in a given learning context and the expectations in a given LSP field in the real world. Their article includes examples of domain studies from social work and law, wherein each subdomain is distinguished: clinical and administrative social work on the one hand and public interest law within the domain of law on the other. This contribution highlights the value of domain analysis in LSP as a research framework across many domains and contexts.

María Redmon, Shelly Wyatt, and Corrinne Stull's article "Using Personalized Adaptive Learning to Promote Industry-Specific Language Skills in Support of Spanish Internship Students" takes specialized and technical terminology in legal and medical (two fields using Latin-based lexicon) Spanish as a central focus. They developed a technologically based, personal adaptive learning (PAL) course that meets the students' academic and professional terminological needs in these two LSP fields. The created PAL in their course at University of Central Florida has been shown to be an effective learning tool that enables LSP students to self-improve their lexical competence prior to starting an internship where translation and/or interpretation is expected.

An additional law-related LSP domain is addressed in this volume in Lottie Baker's work, "The Intersection of Policy and Practice: Two Cases of English Language Programs in Southeast Asian Law Enforcement Academies." In response to the growing demand for law

enforcement officers to use English in their work, many law enforcement academies across Southeast Asia have made English language instruction a priority in their programs. Baker re-examines data gathered and analyzed from earlier needs assessment evaluations at two law enforcement academies: one in Vietnam and one in Indonesia. Her research reveals common threads across the two institutions, including the challenges that come from trying to meet a national requirement for high achievement on language tests while addressing other requirements of police cadet training, skills, and duties. As is so often the case with LSP-focused scholarship, Baker's offers recommendations relevant to all LSP domains and languages, particularly as related to language policy and planning. This includes involving local practitioners in formulating national policy when designing language programs for professionals, to allow for a more bottom-up approach that addresses the community's LSP needs in each location.

While *GBL* has expanded its scope beyond a narrower focus on business, we maintain a strong interest in business language studies. In her article "Marketing French through a French for the Professions Course," Deborah Reisinger describes an innovative approach to teaching French through a marketing project assignment, for which the 'object' being marketed is the study of the French language itself. Who better to understand how to market French to students than the students themselves? In this project, even while students were gaining content knowledge and experience related to marketing—from conducting market research to formulating branding strategies—they were honing their language and communication skills, working in a team and presenting the results of their work to a broader audience, which included French program faculty. Reisinger reports student satisfaction with the opportunity to use their language for a real-world task, and faculty satisfaction with the resulting marketing campaign proposals, many of which have contributed to the department's current marketing strategies. The article provides details on how she set up the project in French, and without question, her creative approach can be used by any language program looking to attract more students.

In their article titled "French for Professional Purposes in US Undergraduate Education: An Analysis of Course Offerings and Student Demand," H el ene Bouche and Deborah Reisinger provide in-depth study of the current lay of the land in French for Professional Purposes (FPP) in the United States. Their research included an extensive analysis of current FPP course offerings at colleges and universities across the country, which showed a range of FPP courses being taught at over 300 institutions. While the largest number of courses (more than two-thirds) falls within the general topic of business French, others focus on content areas such as health, international relations, and journalism. Not satisfied to examine solely the supply side of this story, the authors paired this research with a nation-wide survey of students to gauge the demand for FPP courses. Bouche and Reisinger's findings demonstrate the need not only to offer more FPP courses (within a wider variety of content areas), but also to increase student awareness of the value of their language competence for their future careers.

Based on these summaries it should be evident that *GBL* readers will find in this new volume plenty of LSP-related food for thought, but also inspiration to submit their own work for the next volume. The Call for Papers for volume 22 is available on the journal website. Just as

for this current volume, we opted to keep the call open to articles in all domains of LSP. Yet, while we have not explicitly formulated a volume theme centered on the new world of online teaching due to the pandemic, we expect (and hope!) to see some submissions on the innovations LSP teacher-scholars have been engaged in during this past year.

This volume would not have been possible without the willing and eager involvement of many people, from last summer through day of publication. We thank the authors for the immense time and energy they put into first engaging in LSP research, then writing and submitting their manuscripts, and then into the long process of revising and refining their work into the finished product that we are pleased to present here. We are likewise indebted to the colleagues who served as reviewers during the peer-review process, crucial to ensuring that *GBL* maintains the highest possible standards for academic publishing in the growing field of LSP. Our copy editor for volume 21 was the excellent Jennifer Brady, who contributed her eagle-eyed editing skills as well as her kind patience with our countless questions and queries as we finalized the issue. We are lucky to have the ongoing support of GW Libraries and Academic Innovation, which includes the generous assistance of Dolsy Smith with all things related to the *GBL* website. Last but not least, we thank the GW Center for International Business Education and Research, whose support (both material and mental) made it possible to relaunch this journal last spring and to publish this new issue.

Margaret Gonglewski
Mohssen Esseesy
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