

# **New to the LSP classroom?**

A selection of monographs  
on successful practices

Edited by

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Series in Education



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# List of abbreviations and acronyms

AWL	Academic Word List
BE	Business English
CALAT	Computer-Assisted Language Assessment and Testing
CALL	Computer-Assisted Language Learning
CALP	Cognitive and Academic Language Proficiency
CELTA	Certificate in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages
CEFR	Common European Framework for Languages
CercleS	European Confederation of Language Centres in Higher Education
CertTESOL	Trinity Certificate in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages
CLIL	Content and Language Integrated Learning
CODHUS	Centre for Corpus Related Digital Approaches to Humanities
DELTA	Diploma of Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages
DDL	Data-Driven Learning
EAP	English for Academic Purposes
EBP	English for Business Purposes
ECTS	European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
EFMD	European Foundation for Management Development
EGBP	English for General Business Purposes
EGP	English for General Purposes
ELP	English for Legal Purposes
ELT	English Language Teaching
EMI	English as a Medium of Instruction
EMP	English for Medical Purposes
EOP	English for Occupational Purposes
EQUIS	European Foundation for Management Development Quality Improvement System
ESBP	English for Specific Business Purposes
ESL	English as a Second Language
ESP	English Specific Purposes

EVP	English for Vocational Purposes
FSP	French for Specific Purposes
GB	General Business
GE	General English
GELS	Global Engineers Language Skills
GSE	Global Scale of English
GSL	General Service List
HE	higher education
HOTS	high-order thinking skills
ICT	information and communications technology
IMAT	International Medical Admissions Test
Inlato	Interactive Language Toolbox
L1	first language
L2	second language
LC CUT	Language Centre of the Cyprus University of Technology
LP	Language for the Professions
LSP	Language for Specific Purposes
M	mother tongue
MALL	Mobile-Assisted Language Learning
MIUR	Italian Ministry of Education, Universities and Research
ML	modern languages
RSA	Royal Society of Arts
TE	teacher education
TEFL	Teaching English as a Foreign Language
TELL	Technology-Enhanced Language Teaching
TESOL	Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages
TFrench& GreekSOL	Teaching French and Greek for Speakers of Other Languages
TLU	target-language use
VE	vocational education
WTC	willingness to communicate

# INTRODUCTION: New to the LSP classroom?

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Languages for Specific Purposes (LSP) have always been defined as learner-centered, communication-oriented, and content-based as the learner, the way of acquiring language, and its situational use are considered to be the main factors in the whole process of learning. The centrality of the student is reflected in the fact that LSP courses must be “tailored to meet the needs of specific students in specific circumstances” (Huckin 2003, 8). Thus, LSP practitioners should ideally know their students, including the level of their knowledge and skills at the beginning of the educational process and the target level at its end. They should be acquainted with job profiles, literary genres, and linguistic forms of those professions their students typically enter in order to prepare them to communicate effectively in their own particular scientific or professional contexts. The LSP practitioner should help students develop the essential skills of understanding, using, and presenting (in written and oral forms) authentic information in their fields and facilitate the use of the foreign language in a real context. Therefore, LSP practitioners are required to go beyond the general language methodology and consider the aspects related to different content areas. These features of LSP can be traced back to its humble origins in the 1950s in *The Language of Science* by Savory (1953).

LSP is an all-encompassing discipline. In the introduction to *Innovations in Languages for Specific Purposes: Present Challenges and Future Promises* (2017), the editors stress the “diversity of target learners and instructional contexts” (Sowa and Krajka 2017, 9) that LSP must deal with, which gave rise to a publication whose ambition is to be a “forum for the exchange of experiences of researchers and practitioners from a number of countries” (Sowa and Krajka 2017, 10). Such fragmentation of focus and a call for exchanging experiences underlies most, if not all, publications in the field of LSP. Some areas, however, are more pronounced than others. The needs analysis is the necessary starting point for any successful practice. For example, in *The Changing Face of ESP in*

*Today's Classroom and Workplace* (2020), two whole chapters are dedicated solely to needs analysis in particular geographical and business contexts. The analysis of learners' needs is also closely tied to the identity the learners construct of themselves and of their professional community. Belcher and Lukkarila (2011) argue that teachers have to find out more about their learners' imagined identities and imagined communities. This focus on the target community of language users has given rise to ethnographic approaches to LSP. An overview of ethnographic ESP research is provided by Dressen-Hammouda (2013), and ethnography-oriented research techniques in relation to EAP are also discussed by Paltridge and Starfield (2016).

The focus on communication has been reflected in an ongoing interest in the genre. The development of the genre in the field of ESP and its relation to discourse analysis, the multimodality of language, and social context can be found in a chapter by Brian Paltridge in *The Handbook of English for Specific Purposes* (2013). Genre is also widely discussed in the field of academic writing (in EAP). Several chapters in *English for Specific Purposes Instruction and Research: Current Practices, Challenges and Innovations* (2020) discuss academic writing from various viewpoints, including using corpus linguistics as a tool for analyzing students' papers. Also, Lillis and Curry in *Academic Writing in a Global Context* (2010) employ document analysis, interviews, and observations to examine the experiences of scholars publishing their work on English. However, when it comes to inspecting communication in LSP, an increasingly dominant space has been dedicated to technology, electronic communication, and the use of media. CALL (Computer-Assisted Language Learning) and MALL (Mobile-Assisted Language Learning) are investigated in several chapters in *Positioning English for Specific Purposes in an English Language Teaching Context* (2018). There is also a whole publication entitled *Languages for Specific Purposes in the Digital Era* (2016), which explores various issues connected with CALL. The benefits of wikis, blogs, and podcasts created by learners themselves and used in a language class as student-generated content are discussed in journal articles by, for example, Wheeler, Yeomans, and Wheeler (2008) and Snowball and McKenna (2017).

The content is another major area of LSP research, as already mentioned above. As LSP serves a diversity of disciplines, a great number of papers are dedicated to issues arising from teaching language for a particular discipline. Such a diversity of papers can be found, for example, in *Vistas of English for Specific Purposes* (2015) and *Convergence of ESP with Other Disciplines* (2018). The evergreens of material design, curriculum development, and CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning) are thoroughly discussed in *Key Issues of in English for Specific Purposes in Higher Education* (2018). However, Nalan, Isik-Tas, and Jian (2020) included in their edited volume also more specific deliberation



on developing teaching material through cooperation with subject specialists and students.

As the survey of current literature showed, the learner, communication, and content have kept on having the upper hand. However, it is only through the carrier and performer of this specific educational process—the LSP practitioner—that these topics may become such dominant centers of practice. To counterbalance the aforementioned centrality, the goal of this volume is to shift the focus to the neglected agent of LSP instruction. This turn towards the instructor has been motivated by the fact that a great number of LSP practitioners enter their jobs without previous expertise. Most LSP practitioners undergo general language teacher training. They, however, lack LSP education or may not even have a background in applied linguistics. This motivation has proven valid as many of the volume's contributors faced this “sink-or-swim situation” (Feng 2009, 195) in their professional lives. They started from scratch and rediscovered the already discovered, as there is no solid theoretical canon that novice LSP practitioners can be equipped with.

The less pre-service education LSP practitioners receive, the more in-service education they need. For insights into the LSP field and guidelines on best practices, instructors have to rely on their colleagues who are willing to share their experiences through workshops, conferences, or papers. In her overview of LSP teacher education, Basturkmen concludes the same by saying that even though standardized core literature is very limited, “many of the LSP initiatives, courses and projects reported in the literature are written by experienced LSP teachers who faced a specific challenge or need in their teaching context” (2014, 27). All chapters in this volume have been written by LSP practitioners and researchers in higher education. In other words, it has been written by experienced LSP practitioners for aspiring LSP practitioners about how they see themselves and face the challenges of their jobs. This volume provides both guidance and self-reflection. It joins the initiative to form LSP support groups and networks, thus contributing to the ongoing professional self-development efforts.

As a proof that LSP practice is a global challenge, papers have been collected from many European countries, the USA and Uruguay. Even though most chapters are naturally concerned with English, being the lingua franca of today, the collection also features guidelines for teaching Spanish or French for specific purposes. Moreover, the target disciplines that these languages are taught for encompass business, engineering, sociology, or medicine, thus supporting the assumption of the universal character of problems with which LSP practitioners deal.

Chapters have been arranged so that they start with LSP practitioners' challenges and move on to successful examples of LSP practice. The first four

chapters thus present considerations of problems and difficulties novice LSP instructors do not always expect to encounter. The dismal state of LSP practitioners' education may have a negative effect on their identity formation. An LSP practitioner's identity is made of a variety of often disparate roles, which is reflected in the terminological instability in this volume. Despite the widely used term "LSP practitioner" introduced by Hutchinson and Waters in 1987, some authors in this volume prefer other designations, such as LSP teacher or instructor. The remaining chapters comprise accounts of genuine LSP practice. They explore specific LSP programs, techniques, and activities with the aim of sharing lessons learned, providing inspiration and guidance to other LSP practitioners. It offers best practices with possible answers to questions LSP practitioners frequently ask themselves.

Chapter 1 by Kakoulli Constantinou and Papadima-Sophocleous starts with a motivation common to the whole volume: LSP/ESP teacher education has not been properly investigated, and opportunities for it are very few. Not only do the authors stress the necessity of ESP pre-service education but they also present results from their own research conducted among Cypriot and Greek ESP practitioners with the aim of finding out what input such undereducated teachers need. Their research participants either received no ESP teacher training or very little and were indeed unsatisfactory. The participants identified the most pressing responsibilities of ESP practitioners as analyzing the learners' needs, defining the course objectives, and deciding on the content of the course and the material to be used. In fulfilling these responsibilities, ESP practitioners cannot rely on their education or any seriously undertaken research but tend to rely on their own intellect, personality, and experience. Thus, the authors conclude that ESP practitioners with little pre-service education desperately need in-service training. Such LSP/ESP professional development programs should involve both a theoretical aspect of LSP/ESP and learning in general and a more practical aspect focusing on teaching methodology and curriculum design.

Berezky, in Chapter 2, takes up the challenge to describe the various roles LSP practitioners must assume in their jobs that make up their professional identity. She conducted a survey among Hungarian higher-education ESP practitioners. To counterpoint the omnipresent student-centered aspect of LSP, Berezky commences her chapter with a historical survey of approaches to the teacher as the main agent of education, differentiating general teacher's roles, language teacher's roles, and ESP teacher's roles. The ESP practitioner's roles seem rather diversified in the literature, yet the most outstanding one is that of a subject specialist. It is in the demands placed on the subject-specialist role that the author finds a possible identity crisis that ESP practitioners may feel. Many language teachers, including her research subjects, believe that they are

unprepared to tackle the specific content they must teach in ESP. Yet, most literature on ESP denies the need for deep subject knowledge. The author thus identifies a clash of identities. The ESP practitioner's assigned identity—in the literature described under the roles of teacher, trainer, instructor, or coach—clashes in real-life conditions with the identity the ESP practitioners claim for themselves—the learning facilitator. Without specific subject knowledge, ESP practitioners tend to be perceived as “less worthy” than other subject teachers. Facilitating the learning process by teaching language skills does not seem equal to teaching hardcore science. Such is the heart of the identity crisis present in the transition process from a general language teacher, a true subject specialist, to the LSP practitioner, a learning facilitator.

Chapter 3, “Being a legal alien: Inspecting the (in)accessibility of specific professional communities to LSP teachers,” identifies various challenges novice LSP teachers come up against in their careers that might discourage them from their efforts. The first one is, once again, the lack of pre-service education which has serious consequences for general language teachers thinking that LSP is only a question of specialist vocabulary and content. Another challenge is coping with not being perceived as true academics. In the university environment nowadays, the stress of doing research, particularly strategic research bringing financial incentives, has immensely devalued the teaching part of the job. Teaching an instrument, not hard science, is another reason for considering LSP practitioners a “necessary pendant” to true academic endeavors. In case LSP practitioners try to acquire specific subject knowledge or get information about the specific language skills their students need, they usually come up against a tall wall of resistance from the target community of professionals whose language they teach. Professional communities tend to be seclusive and guard their knowledge, which prevents successful co-teaching or team-teaching. The final challenge is the needs analysis. Teachers educated in language-related disciplines find themselves at a loss as it is based on ethnographic research of the target-language community. For such research, they are utterly unprepared. Nevertheless, Vránová does not only paint a bleak picture of the LSP practitioners' profession. She suggests that the immediate source of subject knowledge and the easiest access to the target-language community available to LSP practitioners is their students. Cooperation with students promotes an educational partnership that brings tangible rewards and satisfaction for both parties.

The reasons why many students lose motivation to study languages early into their university studies are presented in Chapter 4. However, the insights are presented from the point of view of the students' teachers (Hungarian LSP practitioners teaching English for business, tourism, and catering), who are themselves very much aware of the fact that motivating students to study

languages is often a Sisyphean endeavor. Lazar starts with an overview of relevant literature on student motivation, reasons for losing it, and ways of regaining it. As the most powerful “demotive” is a lack of meaningful purpose and the most powerful “remotive” stems from the student’s own ambitions, we can see that LSP courses may be a double-edged sword. If LSP courses do not properly address the working-life-related realities, students get demotivated; if a direct link between one’s future professional career and mastering a foreign language is explicitly established and personally felt, students may gain or even regain motivation. Lazar’s research yielded similar results to those of theoretical studies. When students feel true intrinsic motivation for the profession, their instrumental motivation to learn a foreign language intensifies as well. However, the research also revealed that motivation is not only a matter of students but also an organic part of the LSP practitioner’s identity. Hungarian LSP practitioners embrace the role of motivational agents even though their task is to motivate their students for a professional career with which they themselves have very little experience.

Chapter 5, “Developing a language curriculum in a business institution,” presents a possible attitude to one of the main areas of LSP—course and curriculum development. Responding to a great demand for Spanish for Specific Purposes, Rubio designed a Spanish for Business Minor at Bentley University. After tackling the university’s curriculum policies, Rubio reflects on his own facilities to help him in curriculum design—his research background, cultural experience, and knowledge of business. Having been trained in literary and cultural studies, he found himself exactly in that situation we try to address in this volume. He thus allowed himself some flexibility to research business-related topics. At the same time, he also counted on his students to contribute to the learning process because of their strong business education. His curriculum has several goals, which include appreciation of business practices in Spanish cultures, understanding cultural differences, and gaining new knowledge of ethical practices in Spanish-speaking countries. Once again, we can see the strong tie between content and language, which can be turned from a disadvantage—the LSP practitioner’s lack of subject knowledge—to an outright advantage—engaging students in the learning and teaching process and developing their soft skills in a particular cultural context. What follows is a description of three courses designed with an interdisciplinary approach and examples of classroom activities used in these courses.

Having proficient reading skills in English has become essential for any professional so that he or she can keep up with international news or the latest scientific findings. To respond to this demand, the Center for Foreign Languages at Universidad de la República (Uruguay) has been offering ongoing courses in English Reading Comprehension. The goal of these courses is to provide

university students with the necessary strategies to tackle frequent genres in their disciplinary areas so that they can access specialized literature. Having this goal in mind, in Chapter 6, Rodríguez and Risso present three sociolinguistic tenets that guided the design and execution of the courses. First, they argue that monolingualism is not the normal state of humankind, stressing that languages do not have to be taught separately; students' native and other foreign languages are welcome and compared with the target language. Second, emphasizing that languages change over time, students may be led to see the target-language irregularities. The third tenet is particularly important for students speaking Romance languages and studying English. The fact that languages are in contact with each other paves the way to dealing with language borrowings and cognates. The reading comprehension courses based on these sociolinguistic principles are then regularly evaluated by students themselves so that they are kept relevant to their needs. These questionnaires proved that students indeed become aware of the sociolinguistic reading strategies, which will help them in the future.

In Chapter 7, a team of authors from European technical universities addresses the most common challenge novice LSP practitioners usually have—inadequate knowledge of the target domain. They propose strategies to develop the language instructor's technical terminology and concepts. Struggling with feelings of intimidation in an alienating environment of the technical English classroom led the authors to a realization that the best source of target-domain knowledge is their own students. Interacting with students and receiving and appreciating subject-matter input from them bridges the gap between LSP practitioners with humanistic training and their technology-oriented students. By creating the classroom culture of two sets of experts in cooperation to solve a problem, both the teachers and the students can symbiotically learn from each other. Such teacher-student cooperation will give novice LSP practitioners a considerable head start. Moreover, it ensures that course design and curriculum can be tailored to the students' needs. Such student-guided input will also make up for the intensely felt lack of contact between LSP instructors and experts teaching subject-matter courses. The reflections on the unenviable situation of LSP instructors in an environment where everybody else but them has the target-domain knowledge is then followed by a list of specific in-class and take-home activities that incorporate the student-domain expertise in the ESP classroom. All these activities can be adapted to any language, level of proficiency, or target domain.

In order to pass IMAT and successfully enter the studies of medicine in Italy, students have to have an excellent level of English-text comprehension as well as an in-depth knowledge of specialized terminology and target-language use. Such skills will enable them to predict language performance in the specific

context of their future workplace. Preparation for IMAT implies the use of both EMI (English as a Medium of Instruction), which is increasingly present at educational institutions at non-English-speaking countries, and CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning), whose aim is dual—studying both subject matter and language in which it is conveyed. Abbate thus, in Chapter 8 entitled “Lexical approach and social reading in CLIL settings,” suggests employing these two strategies to develop students’ functional vocabulary and communication skills—the essentials for IMAT. The lexical approach focuses on the study of lexical structures, or “language chunks,” such as collocations or institutionalized utterances. To assist the integration of the lexical approach into CLIL, the author suggests using online cloze-test creators and gap-fill generators, such as IdiomSearch. Since learning has recently been considered a social activity, Abbate, especially in the time of COVID-19, also recommends social reading—a shared reading practice in the Web environment. Specifically, collaborative annotation tools are useful as they offer a meta-reading opportunity and promote close reading. What follows is a guide to using some online tools, such as Vocabkitchen, eMargin, NowComment, or Learn Actively. This instructional chapter on teaching medical vocabulary can be easily altered to any other discipline.

Those who write in two different languages face several challenges. One of them is writing for two academic writing audiences with different genre expectations. Even though articles published in student journals by students at West University of Timișoara (Romania) are selected and edited by professors, the interference from Romanian into English has become an issue of discussion. In Chapter 9, Bercuci and Chitez analyze the influence of Romanian language traits and academic genre norms in order to suggest remedial practices which will make students aware of this interference. The traits of Romanian in English academic writing were analyzed on introductions in two student journals. Two learner corporuses—one English and one Romanian—were compiled, and specific traits of Romanian style in student English writing were identified. As such transformations from a mother tongue to a foreign language exist in all languages, the authors provide a guide on how to analyze student texts and identify these traits. Even though the corpus linguistic procedure is for advanced LSP practitioners and for those trained in linguistics, what this research proves is, once again, that the most readily available source of subject knowledge, research, and teaching materials is the students themselves.

Chapter 10 focuses on the development of a writing program in French for Dutch-speaking students of economy and sociology. Yet the strategies discussed could be applied to any language as the chapter is indeed conceived as instructions on how to develop a writing program/course. The advantage of the text is that it describes strategies for writing reports, summarizing texts, and

presenting figures, which are daily tasks of most professions. This is in contrast to many academic writing textbooks whose content is mostly essay writing. First, an overall design of the training program is described with specific goals for enhancing writing competence, and then a detailed procedure with examples of activities and text samples is given in the section, “Developing writing activities, coaching tools, and materials.” Also, post-writing activities in the form of correcting a created text are discussed. The program is strictly context-oriented (“specific” in the sense of LSP) and relies on blended learning (part in-class and part digital learning). Such a program needs continuous development to fit the changing needs of students, which means that activities are adapted, and language materials are revised based on the student writing production and questionnaires. The students’ submissions for the course also become a basis for update and adaptation, emphasizing the role of students as an essential source of knowledge for the LSP teacher.

With an increasing emphasis placed on internationalization and employability, physical mobility programs have become key tools in their achievement. Recently, especially in the time of COVID-19, alternatives have been offered to both educators and students to gain international experience without leaving their classrooms. The digital space has become the medium for online collaboration, telecollaboration, and virtual exchange projects. In Chapter 11 “Twenty-first century methods for twenty-first century skills,” Koris describes a virtual exchange project between Hungarian and American universities in the fields of international relations and international business communication. This virtual project aimed to develop students’ intercultural competence, critical thinking, debating, online collaboration, and communication skills in virtual international teams, with an additional goal for the Hungarian students to practice professional communication in English. After the project, Koris interviewed her Hungarian subjects and realized that they had a very positive attitude towards intercultural and international online collaboration projects. Such learning experience increases their motivation, activates their creativity, and promotes learner autonomy. The students benefited from an exchange of individual perspectives and the idea of practice over theory. In their own opinions, content knowledge can be reinforced much better by participating in international collaboration projects. Venturing into virtual exchange projects which combine language and subject-matter learning is thus a meaningful effort to be tried by LSP practitioners.

In summary, the whole volume is not only a guide for starting LSP practitioners or those who look for advice. It also pays tribute to LSP practitioners as they enter their professional lives quite unprepared but continue facing struggle, often developing courses from scratch, so that their students can prosper.

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