



Ibérica

ISSN: 1139-7241

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Asociación Europea de Lenguas para Fines
Específicos
España

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Reseña de "Specialised Languages in the Global Village: A Multi-Perspective Approach" de Carmen
Pérez-Llantada, Maida Watson (eds).

Ibérica, núm. 23, 2012, pp. 194-197

Asociación Europea de Lenguas para Fines Específicos
Cádiz, España

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Specialised Languages in the Global Village: A Multi-Perspective Approach

Carmen Pérez-Llantada, Maida Watson (eds).

Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars, 2011. 298 pages. ISBN: 978-1-4438-2909-0.

The increasing social demand of specialised language learning has encouraged the publication of countless volumes in this field in the past decade and fostered scholarly debate in what is generally referred to as Languages for Specialised Purposes (LSP henceforth). Pérez-Llantada and Watson link it to McLuhan's (1962) concept of "global village" so as to offer a panoramic view of the status of LSP in the world today, focusing on the impact of globalisation in specialized communities of practice.

There is no doubt that English has dominated the modern languages scenario in the turn of the century, and within the context of English for Specific Purposes (ESP), academic and business are the ones that have played a more prominent role. However, *Specialised Languages in the Global Village* does not restrict itself to the most popular LSP branches, but offers a wider scope focusing on other areas within ESP, from maritime to legal English. Furthermore, it includes other languages such as Spanish, Italian, French or Eastern European languages, in a attempt to find common features in this wide-ranging field.

The editors acknowledge inspiration for the structure of the book from the principles of genre theory and applied discourse analysis, taking the three perspectives proposed by Bathia (2004) as the guidelines for the configuration of the volume. Thus, the first part of the monograph is entitled "The Socio-cultural Impact of Globalization on Specialised Languages", an effort to capture the "world of reality". This section debates the issue of English as a lingua franca of business, with the challenges faced when adopting English as a corporate language, the use of LSP in the non-profit sector (community service learning and non-governmental organisations), and some qualitative research that shows shared values regarding language learning interests and expectations in LSP professionals in this globalised world. GIBSON R. FERGUSON opens with a discussion on the notion of English as lingua franca in business communication and shows

some problems when teaching it, such as the collision with standard English. ANNIE ABBOTT focuses on social entrepreneurship and calls upon students to learn translingual and intercultural competence and implement it in the sphere of work. In the third chapter LAURA MURESAN explores how generic quality principles operate in LSP organisations around the world, showing some in-depth research carried out in central and eastern Europe.

The second part of this volume, “The Rhetorical View of Specialised Languages: Effective Communication in Intercultural Contexts” shifts the attention to the development of intercultural competence in LSP with examples of legal, business and maritime English.

Chapter 4 flags up the efforts in harmonising the procedures related to international commercial arbitration rules. MAURIZIO GOTTI investigates the situation in the Italian legal system and shows the influence of the socio-economic environment in which the legal norms are to be introduced on the style adopted in drafting the texts. Chapter 5, by MIGUEL F. RUIZ-GARRIDO and ANA M^a SAORÍN-IBORRA, shifts the attention to computer-mediated communication, examining the rhetorical organisation of e-mails and the linguistic choices writers make when they are complaining and apologising – all in the context of business English. In the remaining chapter of this section, Chapter 6, LIEVE VANGHEUCHTEN, WILLY VAN PARYS and ALISON NOBLE exemplify a similar state of affairs to the one pointed out by MAURIZIO GOTTI in Chapter 4, but in the context of maritime English. They offer a survey-based study with the objective of establishing a connection between communication and levels of effectiveness during professional maritime activities.

The last two sections, Part III “Discourse Practices, Disciplinary Communities and the Construction of Professional Identities” and Part IV “The Impact of Globalisation on Languages for Special Purposes. Reflections on Language Instruction and Language Policy Suggestions” draw from Bhatia’s (2004) conception of the “world of applications”. The third part provides a comprehensive analysis of the discourse of professional, domain-specific communities, showing how business can be made out of LSP learning and translation and offering courses of action for professional development in LSP, especially in the world of academia and business. Chapter 7 goes back to the same topic dealt with in chapter 1, entrepreneurship, and the author, MAIDA WATSON – also co-editor of this collection of essays – points out the many possibilities that exist for creating

start ups related to foreign languages, such as translation – interpretation companies, language academies or enterprises which combine second language instruction with social networking. In the following chapter CHRISTINE UBER GROSSE focuses on the interdisciplinary nature of LSP and the need to find a common ground in the academic and business world, since business language instructors frequently cross the border between both fields. Also, MARY E. RISNER describes a professional development model for an online Community of Practice (CoP) in chapter 9, providing research-based guidelines and explaining the process in order to successfully create a CoP in LSP.

The final part of the book focuses on the interdisciplinary applicability of LSP, with a thorough description of current methodological trends in ESP instruction, strategies for LSP practitioners about the development of materials and a reflection on the importance of intercultural competence in specialised communication worldwide. Chapter 10, with a rather literary title, “Separating the Wood from the Trees”, is written by SONSOLES SÁNCHEZ-REYES. A very comprehensive overview of methodology in ESP, it may have been better located at the beginning of the volume, given its general introductory nature. In chapter 11 CHRISTINE B. FEAKE provides an insightful depiction of the creative process involved in the design of ESP teaching materials, stressing the importance of showing the course of action, not just the result. A closing chapter pinpoints a recurrent issue in the volume: the relevance of intercultural work in order to overcome the hurdles that the language barrier may pose in professional contexts. For the author, STEPHANIE STADLER, the only way forward is a holistic approach to intercultural competence in LSP, which will facilitate intercultural work beyond verbal communication and language skills.

Other shared topics in the book are the new teaching and learning needs caused by globalisation in LSP, the problems of standardised language, the need for collaboration within LSP communities of practice and the inevitability of constant professional updating for practitioners and instructors. One of the main strengths of this collection of essays is how the different parts of the book are inter-connected, with references in each of the articles to other chapters that deal with the same subject and a topic index at the end; all which results in a very cohesive compilation that can be easily used as reference material. Perhaps a greater focus on Information and Communication Technology and the impact of emerging technologies is missing, but on the whole this volume is a solid contribution to scholarly

research in this field, showing how LSP pursues to adapt to the shifting socio-cultural demands, searching for consensus and common grounds in such a vast, interdisciplinary field.

This book will be valuable for linguists interested in theoretical conceptions and practical applications of LSP alike. Researchers and scholars will find this collection of essays of interest as it delves into the fields of discourse analysis, sociolinguistics and rhetoric. It is also a worthy volume for LSP instructors and practitioners, providing guidelines to keep up to date with the latest trends in specialised language learning. Although the most visible effort in this area is usually in the form of published research articles and books, it should not be forgotten that the majority of work is done in a less public way, in the form of classroom teaching. All these professionals will definitely benefit from the multi-perspective approach adopted in *Specialised Languages in the Global Village*.

[Review received 16 January 2012]
[Revised review accepted 03 March 2012]

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