



HAL
open science

Digital transformations of language for specific purposes (LSP) learning and teaching

Julie McAllister, Mary Catherine Lavissière, Audrey Cartron

► To cite this version:

Julie McAllister, Mary Catherine Lavissière, Audrey Cartron. Digital transformations of language for specific purposes (LSP) learning and teaching. Recherche et pratiques pédagogiques en langues de spécialité - Cahiers de l'APLIUT, 42 (2), 2023. hal-04417027

HAL Id: hal-04417027

<https://nantes-universite.hal.science/hal-04417027>

Submitted on 3 Jun 2024

HAL is a multi-disciplinary open access archive for the deposit and dissemination of scientific research documents, whether they are published or not. The documents may come from teaching and research institutions in France or abroad, or from public or private research centers.

L'archive ouverte pluridisciplinaire **HAL**, est destinée au dépôt et à la diffusion de documents scientifiques de niveau recherche, publiés ou non, émanant des établissements d'enseignement et de recherche français ou étrangers, des laboratoires publics ou privés.



Distributed under a Creative Commons Attribution - NonCommercial - NoDerivatives 4.0
International License

Digital transformations of language for specific purposes (LSP) learning and teaching

*Transformations numériques dans l'enseignement et l'apprentissage des langues
de spécialité*

Julie McAllister, Mary Catherine Lavissière and Audrey Cartron



Electronic version

URL: <https://journals.openedition.org/apliut/10816>
ISSN: 2119-5242

Publisher

APLIUT

Provided by Nantes Université



Electronic reference

Julie McAllister, Mary Catherine Lavissière and Audrey Cartron, "Digital transformations of language for specific purposes (LSP) learning and teaching", *Recherche et pratiques pédagogiques en langues* [Online], Vol. 42 N°2 | 2023, Online since 05 December 2023, connection on 03 June 2024. URL: <http://journals.openedition.org/apliut/10816>

This text was automatically generated on December 19, 2023.



The text only may be used under licence CC BY-NC-ND 4.0. All other elements (illustrations, imported files) are "All rights reserved", unless otherwise stated.

Digital transformations of language for specific purposes (LSP) learning and teaching

Transformations numériques dans l'enseignement et l'apprentissage des langues de spécialité

Julie McAllister, Mary Catherine Lavissière and Audrey Cartron

Introduction

- 1 This issue reflects the research and discussions which took place during the conference *Crises, challenges, innovations* held at Nantes Université in June 2022, and which investigated the opportunities and challenges of integrating digital tools into language teaching and learning. While technology has been reshaping how we teach and learn languages since the late 1960s and early 1970s (Grosbois, 2012), the wide-spread health crisis highlighted the necessity of considering the place of digital tools in the larger community of applied linguistics. The ongoing digitalisation of everyday life and the advent of social media, machine learning, and artificial intelligence, which have transformed how students interact and learn, have also contributed to this trend. These evolutions have given a wider significance to themes in applied linguistics such as using corpora in language learning or data-driven learning (Boulton, 2016, 2017; Frérot & Pecman, 2021), creating specialised corpora for teaching and learning uses (Nesi, 2015), and exploiting translation technology (Kübler, Mestivier, & Pecman, 2018). In addition, new research topics such as virtual reality and virtual exchanges have been garnering much interest in the field of language teaching and learning (O'Dowd, 2021).
- 2 This special issue seeks to explore the affordances of different technological tools and how they can support and even transform languages for specific purposes (LSPs) learning and teaching practices. Teaching and learning LSPs, defined as the use of language by specific discourse communities (Swales, 2016), represent a fast growing

field in applied linguistics (Liu & Hu, 2021). Specifically, the first two articles of this special issue examine teaching about specialised genres, the creation and annotation of specialised corpora and the training of students to use corpora for writing and oral production. The next two articles explore virtual exchange in LSP pedagogy. Finally, the remaining articles investigate the use of translation and technology and students' perceptions of technological innovations providing us insights into pedagogical practices and lessons learnt. The studies examine LSPs in a range of target languages including English, French, Chinese, and Italian across different international university settings including France, Poland, Spain, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, Burkina Faso, Ireland, Slovakia, and others.

- 3 In the following paragraphs, we give a brief overview of how each article fits into the scope of this special issue.
- 4 **Hilary Nesi's** study opens the special issue. While the Internet has increased the opportunities for multimodal resources in language teaching, Nesi examines the use of genres whose purpose is to disseminate scientific findings to non-specialists. She observes that dissemination genres such as podcasts, videocasts, blogs, webinars, YouTube videos, and TED Talks have been used to prepare students for following university lectures in English. This is partly because university lectures are a less-accessible genre. However, Nesi's study of a corpus of these lectures shows that, seen through the analysis of speaker and listener identities, move analysis, and length, TED Talks differ widely from university lectures. The latter may include a formal style, depending on the culture whereas TED Talks are based on an American culture of low power distance. In addition, the rhetorical structure in TED Talks is aimed at conveying one message and galvanising the audience to action. Lectures, in contrast, are meant to inform students on complex and often nuanced areas of scientific interest. Finally, the length and detail of the lecture requires specific listening skills. Nesi's contribution highlights the need for filtering LSP teaching resources based on genre theory. She also underlines the need for resources and corpora that more accurately reflect language for specific purposes.
- 5 The development of specific corpora is a theme that is taken up by **Julie McAllister** and **Mary C. Lavissière** in their study of how creating specific corpora may help students learn language for persuasive purposes in promotional genres. The authors point out that few studies have shown that the creation and use of small, specific corpora can help students learn and use patterns in promotional texts. They asked students in an applied languages programme to use Sketch Engine to explore a corpus of promotional texts. Then, in the context of a serious game, the students were asked to write their own promotional brochure. A study of the students' brochures showed that they reproduced patterns observed through Sketch Engine in authentic brochures. A post-course questionnaire showed the students generally appreciated the method, although Sketch Engine was seen as a complex tool.
- 6 **Carmenne Kalyaniwala** discusses the potential of a synchronous virtual exchange programme between French law students and Spanish business English students for ESP learning. Following a brief introduction to the use of legal genres, she presents the characteristics that define virtual exchange (VE), and more specifically three-dimensional VE or virtual reality (VR), which immerses students in a life-like interactive and sensorial experience. She then reviews four models of VE in second

language learning including e-tandem, telecollaboration, transnational VE, and critical approaches to telecollaboration.

- 7 Her study draws on qualitative data from the transcripts of five synchronous exchanges from two groups of students who participated in a lawyer-client consultation. A comparison of 2D and 3D interactions shows an attempt by legal English students at simplifying core legal constructs in plain English for their counterparts of business English and highlights some key differences in discursive practices under the two modalities. The 2D interaction is characterised by shorter structures, more directly posed questions and spontaneous answering of questions. On the other hand, the 3D interaction is characterised by relatively longer sentences in the form of short monologues with less interaction.
- 8 **Michael Moore, Christine Evain, and Spencer Hawkrigde** continue on the theme of VE for LSP learning and teaching by presenting their Virtual Exchange Challenge (VEC) programme, which was first introduced during the COVID-19 pandemic, but has subsequently been incorporated into a larger EU Erasmus + project. The authors start by defining a number of key concepts underpinning their study including internationalisation at home (IaH), experiential learning, and challenge-based learning within a VE context.
- 9 The VEC brought together first year (M1) and second year (M2) master's students of language didactics from Rennes 2 University and international French and English language learning students from five different countries including Burkina Faso, Ireland, Slovakia, Spain, and USA. The international university teams competed against each other in a challenge to promote sustainable and connected campuses and were coached online by the Rennes 2 University M1 and M2 pre-service language teachers. Analysis of qualitative and quantitative data derived from questionnaires shows students engaged with the LSP VE learning environment in such a way that they experienced learning and the development of skills, particularly cultural, collaboration, digital technology, and project management skills.
- 10 **Jingrao Li's** article investigates how technology in the form of access to scientific corpora with translation tools may help researchers with academic writing skills. Li's study focuses on Chinese-speaking learners of French as a second language (FLE). She presents a tool that allows Chinese speakers to identify lexical items that are common to academic writing rather than specific to one scientific discipline. This transdisciplinary scientific lexicon (TSL) is important to master for non-native speakers of English. This is particularly the case of the humanities, where language is a key factor in presenting results as opposed to disciplines outside of the humanities which tend to rely on statistical methods. Li describes the lexical tool that gives Chinese-speakers access to TSL in French via translations. The French and Chinese lexicon and translations are based on corpora of scientific articles and commented with observations about their usage as well as authentic examples. Li's article highlights how technology can facilitate composition of research articles in French via a semi-bilingual dictionary.
- 11 In the same vein, **Enrica Bracchi** explores translation and technology in her teaching report describing the integration of automatic translation (*DeepL*) into a master's of law and foreign languages. She identifies a need for the master's students to be able to translate legal documents quickly and accurately, although most of the graduates of the programme do not become professional translators. Bracchi proposes that the

translations produced by the automatic translator be evaluated using jurilinguistic theories. She cites several cases of legal terms that were not accurately translated between French and Italian by the automatic translator. Bracchi concludes that automatic translators have an important place in specialised language teaching today, but that students must be trained to use them with efficiency and accuracy.

- 12 In the teaching report “From ex cathedra courses to project-based pedagogy, in a flipped classroom”, **Aurélie Picton and Philippe Haeberli** delve into the transformative journey of a master's level terminology course within the University of Geneva's translation programme. Offering insights into the gradual reshaping of the course through active learning tools, the authors shed light on the choices made for this transformation. They explore in particular its impact on the overall perception and quality of the course as perceived by teachers, students, and the institutional academic advisors support team.
- 13 **Aleksandra Makowska's** research report provides further insight into students' perceptions of the use of ICT tools and their effectiveness in LSP courses, more specifically during and after the COVID-19 pandemic. She draws on qualitative and quantitative analysis of two surveys conducted among 134 linguistics for business undergraduate students and linguistics in specialised communication master's students at the University of Lodz (Poland). The use of new technologies, particularly the communication platform Microsoft Teams which quickly overtook the Moodle platform as the preferred choice of both students and teachers, was very much welcomed by students. They perceive such tools as fostering their engagement and participation in class, however, it is the teachers' ICT and methodological skills that enhance or diminish the effect of experiencing the innovation and thus foster or hinder the learning process. Teachers' ICT competencies are thus key to successful adoption and learning, which in turn implies the need for sufficient training.
- 14 The journal's issue ends with **Fiona Smythe's** review of *Virtual Exchange for Intercultural Language Learning and Teaching*, edited by Anthippi Potolia and Martine Derivry-Plard (2023). The review highlights several interesting features of this edited volume, including its wide range of contributors who offer a diversity of perspectives on virtual exchange pedagogies exploring how they were adapted to the COVID-19 pandemic era and how they brought the humanistic dimension in virtual exchange to the fore.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Boulton, A. (2016). Integrating corpus tools and techniques in ESP courses. *ASp*, 69, 113-137.

<https://doi.org/10.4000/asp.4826>

Boulton, A. (2017). Data-driven learning and language pedagogy. In S. L. Thorne & S. May (Eds.), *Language, education and technology* (pp. 181-192). Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-02237-6_15

doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-02237-6_15

Frérot, C., & Pecman, M. (2021). *Des corpus numériques à l'analyse linguistique en langues de spécialité*. UGA Éditions.

Grosbois, M. (2012). *Didactique des langues et technologies : De l'EAO aux réseaux sociaux*. PUPS.

Kübler, N., Mestivier, A., & Pecman, M. (2018). Teaching specialised translation through corpus linguistics: translation quality assessment and methodology evaluation and enhancement by experimental approach. *Meta : Journal des Traducteurs / Meta: Translators' Journal*, 63(3), 807-825. <https://doi.org/10.7202/1060174ar>

Liu, Y., & Hu, G. (2021). Mapping the field of English for specific purposes (1980-2018): A co-citation analysis. *English for Specific Purposes*, 61, 97-116. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.esp.2020.10.003>

Nesi, H. (2015). ESP corpus construction: A plea for a needs-driven approach. *ASp*, 68, 7-24. <https://doi.org/10.4000/asp.4682>

O'Dowd, R. (2021). Virtual exchange: moving forward into the next decade. *Computer Assisted Language Learning*, 34(3), 209-224.

Swales, J.M. (2016). Reflections on the concept of discourse community, *ASp*, 69, 7-19.

AUTHORS

JULIE MCALLISTER

Julie McAllister is an associate professor in the Applied Foreign Languages Department of Nantes Université, France, where she teaches English for specific purposes (logistics and marketing) and is co-director of the international logistics and supply chain management master's programme. Her research interests include second language acquisition, technology mediated language learning and the use of specialised corpora in a didactic perspective, including the analysis of English promotional discourse and the analysis of learner corpora. She has written a number of publications on language learning in blended contexts and on English for specific purposes. [Julie.Mcallister1\[at\]univ-nantes.fr](mailto:Julie.Mcallister1[at]univ-nantes.fr)

MARY CATHERINE LAVISSIÈRE

Mary Catherine Lavissière is an associate professor of applied languages at Nantes Université, France. Trained in English and Spanish linguistics, she focuses on language for specific purposes, genre, morphosyntax, and historical linguistics. Her recent work includes analysing macrodivisions in legal genres, including US Supreme Courts opinions and maritime contracts. She is the principal investigator for Lexhnology ANR-22-CE38-0004, which uses artificial intelligence to model macrodivisions in case law for teaching and learning purposes. [Marycatherine.Lavissiere\[at\]univ-nantes.fr](mailto:Marycatherine.Lavissiere[at]univ-nantes.fr)

AUDREY CARTRON

Audrey Cartron teaches Business English at the Faculty of Foreign Languages and Cultures, as well as Legal English at the Faculty of Law and Political Sciences, at Nantes Université (France) and she is affiliated with the *Centre de Recherche sur les Identités, les Nations et l'Interculturalité* (CRINI). She holds a Ph.D. in English for Specific Purposes (Aix-Marseille Université, 2022) and the objective of her doctoral research was to identify the linguistic and cultural features which characterize English for Police Purposes through in-depth analysis of the written and spoken discourse of police officers in the UK and the US. Her research interests cover the characterization of specialized languages, discourse and genre analysis, the transposition of

academic knowledge into teachable knowledge, specialized cultures as well as specialized fictional narratives (FASP). She is an active member of the *Groupe d'Étude et de Recherche en Anglais de Spécialité* (GERAS).

audrey.cartron[at]univ-nantes.fr