

From the Guest Editor

THE WAY AHEAD IN LANGUAGES FOR SPECIFIC PURPOSES

The processes of globalisation, the increasing dominance of English in academic and professional spheres, and the ongoing changes in higher education worldwide have destabilised the role of specialised language teaching at university level. Like many situations of instability, the current panorama presents those involved with both opportunities and threats. On the positive side, the increase in international contact in most areas of social, academic and economic life means that the need for specialised language education is probably greater than ever before. No one leaves school with excellent professional communication skills in a second language – and so precisely those skills should be the focus of new generation Languages for Specific Purposes (LSP) courses. But unfortunately many institutions have been slow to understand the vital role that language training for specific purposes has in equipping students for their future professions. The teachers and departments responsible for LSP teaching also urgently need to update their own knowledge and competences, redesign their courses, and seize this opportunity to become experts in professional communication. As linguists, LSP practitioners are uniquely positioned to conduct principled inquiry into specialised language domains, to map the specific features of professional genres, and to build a robust understanding of how different discourse communities use them. Such research will allow LSP teachers to adopt a critical attitude to material that is available (Jiang and Hyland 2020), and to devise courses and resources that match more closely with what their students need.

Against this background, this special issue of *Language Value* brings together a number of papers that sketch out new routes for LSP teaching in the next ten years. As we would expect in LSP, these papers all presuppose a solid underpinning in genre and sound knowledge of how language is used in specialised discourse communities. But they are also forward-looking in different ways, characterised by a special emphasis on aspects such as the importance of digital technologies, our growing awareness of

multimodality, and the need to cultivate pluriliteracies in complex multilingual settings (Meyer 2015).

In the first article, **Ignacio Guillén Galve** and **Miguel Ángel Vela Tafalla** show how the application of technology to digital genres can inject new dynamism into our understanding of English intonation and its rhetorical functions in professional language. Their research brings further insights into promotional aspects of scientific discourse, and has practical applications for those of us involved in supporting students on the road to becoming scientists on the international academic stage. Also focusing on spoken language, in the next paper **Bojan Prosenjak** and **Iva Lučev** address the importance of helping students to develop presentation skills in International Relations, proposing pedagogical innovations designed to make students take responsibility for their own learning in a collaborative and reflective way. In their course design, peer assessment plays a key role in sensitising students to the different aspects of their performance.

In our changing scenario it is not always easy to negotiate the relationship between language experts and other university teachers, or between teachers specialising in different languages. In the third article, **Teresa Morell** takes on the essential issue of how LSP experts should cooperate with teachers involved in English Medium Instruction (EMI), analysing ways of optimising preparation for EMI in the Spanish context. After this, situated in the very different context of a university on the border between the USA and Mexico, **Theresa Donovan**, **Isabel Baca** and **Teresa Quezada** add a new dimension to the discussion of LSP in the age of globalisation by approaching the need for students to develop pluriliteracies. The idea of developing professional and academic literacy in two languages in a way that is affirmative and mutually complementary is epitomised in their design for a cross-disciplinary certificate program in Bilingual Professional Writing. Their paper also points to the increasing importance of languages other than English as targets for LSP, and the growing need for students to develop linguistic mediation skills, biliteracies and bicultural competences. The last paper in this selection, by **Enrique Sologuren Insúa**, helps to expand this plural approach to LSP by addressing the need for principled research on LSP in languages other than English. Sologuren's article provides a detailed account of the

creation of a map of student genres from a Spanish learner corpus in engineering, which should provide a starting point for developing a focused writing programme for engineering students in his university, and in similar contexts.

Finally, I would like to thank all the people who have helped with this special issue of Language Value. My thanks go particularly to the two editors, Begoña Bellés Fortuño and Carmen Sancho Guinda, and to Lucía Bellés Calvera. I am also grateful to all those who took part in the AELFE conference in Pamplona in 2019, which was the starting point for this special issue. My special gratitude goes to Larissa D'Angelo, Marcelino Arrosagaray, Sally Burgess, Miguel García Yeste, Christoph Hafner, Ana Halbach, Matthew Johnson, Mark Krzanowski, María José Luzón, Gerrard Mugford, Barry Pennock, Joan Ploettner, Hanne Roothoof, Davinia Sánchez and Ekrem Simsek for their guidance, comments and advice on the papers in this issue.

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