



Interdisciplinarity and Languages. Current Issues in Research, Teaching, Professional Applications and ICT

Francisca Suau-Jiménez, Barry Pennock-Speck (eds).
Bern: Peter Lang, 2011. 218 pages. ISBN: 978-3-0343-0283-8.

According to Hans Lauge Handsten (2004), if we understand the general aim of humanistic disciplines as an investigation into the relationships between our culture and the ones that surround it – that is, our cultural specificity in the face of others – it is evident that the main challenge that LSP studies face in the twenty-first century is the understanding of the cultural impact caused by political and economic globalization, and the mediation of information technology in the process. Accordingly, the necessity to conceive culture as an open, multi-faceted linguistic interaction makes of interdisciplinary work one of the most outstanding facets in the area of Language for Specific Purposes (LSP).

The present book specifically provides a specialized, language-oriented audience with a representative collection of papers dealing with language as the expression of specialized knowledge in science, technology and the professions. The concept of interdisciplinarity (the integration of concepts and methods of teaching and research) is ubiquitous throughout the volume, as it is the role and deployment of linguistic mechanisms as effective weapons to create improvement in the areas of industry, commerce and the professions. *Interdisciplinarity and Languages* addresses variegated and challenging aspects such as intercultural business communications, ICT and specialized translation, terminology applied to translation, language acquisition and communication in virtual environments, ICT interpreter training, the commercial requisites of language industries, corpus-based research and ICT applications in specialized dictionaries, university language-learning courses and lastly, the state of research on specialized languages in Latin America. As the volume editors point out in the Introduction to the book, it is organized into ten chapters, each by renowned researchers and practitioners, on the subjects described above, reflecting the concern of teachers, translators and other

experts in the field of linguistic institutions for the real needs of industry, commerce and the professions.

In chapter one, “Development and assessment of an aptitude test for interpreters: Using labs for interpreting training”, CARMEN VALERO-GARCÉS and DENIS SOCARRÁS-ESTRADA describe a specific battery of aptitude tests of their own devising, giving account of the competences and skills to be assessed, the scales and methods to be applied, the reliability and validity of the test, and the different exercises to be used in it, concluding that their creation has proved to be a fairly predictive instrument and a very useful weapon to measure the needed skills and expertise by students of Interpreting studies.

Chapter two, by MARÍA LUISA PÉREZ-CAÑADO, titled “The use of ICT in the European Higher Education Area: Acting upon evidence”, accounts for three state-of-the-art pedagogical innovation projects at the University of Jaén, outlining their positive outcomes implemented with an aim to revise and update English teaching methodology.

“Translation-oriented terminology management and ICTs: Present and future” is the chapter written by CHELO VARGAS-SIERRA. She describes different aspects of terminology management and computer workbench, envisaged to be used in the context of translation-oriented terminology. She states that a greater collaborative consciousness and the usage of collaborative translation platforms could one day contribute constructively to the future advancement of the discipline.

In “Relevance equations of effective Internet communication” FRANCISCO YUS endeavors the analysis of user-to-user internet communication from the point of view of Relevance Theory, conceiving relevance as a balance between the interest (cognitive effects) that information provides and the mental effort that obtaining this interest demands. Through the deployment of nine sample relevance equations, he ponders on the aspects that generate alterations in the eventual validity of such equations.

Chapter five, “Linguistic models in learning innovation theories: Linear approaches versus interactive practices”, by BEATRIZ GALLARDO-PAULS and VERÓNICA MORENO-CAMPOS, revises the teaching and learning advantages of university educational innovation based upon ICTs. The authors state that interactive communicative processes and the capabilities of digital communication (together with variables defined by the type of student) are imperative when devising new pragmatic linguistic approaches.

FRANÇOISE SALAGER-MEYER, in her chapter on “Interdisciplinarity and Languages for Specific Purposes in Latin America” undertakes a revision of the onset of ESP studies in Latin America, accounting for the teaching and research problems that practitioners face when dealing with the discipline. She remarks upon the fact that there are linguistic constraints that affect the visibility of Latin American science which spring from the burden of having to publish in English language international journals, an issue which requires governmental intervention.

Chapter seven, by ISABEL GARCÍA-IZQUIERDO, titled “Investigating professional languages through genres”, reflects on the research conducted in specialized genres by the GENTT group. This research group – she explains – aims to push forward in the design of an intelligent genre-based system for the management of multilingual specialized documents. The study they carry out on specialized communication, and, therefore, on the languages which are used as vehicle for the discourses issued in those professional communities, calls for a necessary interdisciplinary approach.

MIGUEL ÁNGEL CANDEL-MORA describes the rebirth of machine translation and, more explicitly, the new advances accomplished in statistical machine translation in his chapter, “Computer-assisted translation and terminology management: Tools and resources”. Providing, among others, an overview of CAT (computer-assisted translation) tools, he expounds on their short-term inability to efficiently communicate, translate, manage terminology and perform searches in textual databases in the way desired by translators. These need to be prepared to make up for such dearth with their own skills and methodological competence regarding the use of CAT tools and other resources at their disposal.

Chapter nine, “Developing intercultural communicative competence through video-web communication in the NIFLAR project”, by JOSE RAMÓN GÓMEZ-MOLINA, describes the e-learning project undertaken by an intercultural group of teacher trainees and students of Spanish as a Foreign Language, or more specifically, by pre-service teachers from the University of Valencia on the one hand and students of Spanish from the University of Utrecht in Holland on the other. According to the author, the deployment of a video-web communication virtual environment between participants has unveiled the valuable role of telecollaboration, the potentiality of innovation in the design of interactive tasks and the research possibilities unveiled by technological tools, all of which demonstrate how such an

experience has enriched the context of teaching and learning Spanish as a Foreign Language.

The final chapter, “When humanities and information and communications technology merge” by VICTORIA GUILLÉN-NIETO explains how applied linguistics, social anthropology and ICT merge in the research interests of the COMINTER-SIMULNEG project. Such project is aimed at providing both the design of a pragmatic model for the analysis of intercultural communication between Spanish and British businesspeople, and the construction of a graphic adventure to develop intercultural communicative competence in business contexts.

All in all, the volume represents a valuable effort in the depicting of state-of-the-art advancements in the area of language teaching and translation, specialized communication and ICT tools. For the sake of its novelty and wide-ranging subjects in the sphere of language teaching and learning, it is highly recommendable for both students and practitioners of higher education.

[Review received 14 December 2011]
[Revised review accepted 23 February 2012]

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References

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