

CALL FOR PAPERS¹

LANGUAGES FOR SPECIFIC PURPOSES AND DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES (LSP-Num)

Université Grenoble Alpes, Nantes Université and CNAM Paris

16-18 octobre 2024, Grenoble

Website: <https://lsp-num.sciencesconf.org/>

In 1993, the inaugural issue of the French journal specialising in English for Specific Purposes *ASp*, already devoted considerable attention to the burgeoning field of digital technology. Several publications within the journal delved into the subject, either focusing exclusively on digital technology or incorporating it in various forms. During that period, the term “digital” was predominantly linked with “pedagogy,” as reflected in early articles that presented the integration of emerging digital tools into classroom settings (software and programmes, such as ALGROD and Translator, as well as satellite television), so as to enhance the learning and teaching of languages for specific purposes (LSP) (Thily 1993; Soula *et al.* 1993; Vaché 1993). A smaller subset of publications explored the intersection between LSPs and digital technology from different perspectives. Martine Schuwer advocated for the use of digital tools to characterise LSPs, exploring the applications of computer databases in the creation of specialised bilingual dictionaries. Monique Mémet and Nadine Pasternak-Eboueya presented insights into characterising specialised discourse of two digital domains, “industrial computing” and “computer engineering.”

In technical and scientific literature, the term “digital technology” encompasses various dimensions: tools and instruments, networks, uses and human activities based on these instruments and networks (Dubasque 2019: 17-22, *translation*):

The term “digital technology” represents all applications that use a binary language to classify, sort and disseminate data. This term includes interfaces, smartphones, tablets, computers and televisions, as well as the networks that transport data. It encompasses tools, content and uses.

In our research fields, the term can be seen as “neutral” (Demaizière & Grosbois 2014, *translation*), or as a “term conveying imagination,” with an “all-encompassing dimension,” which “maintains fuzziness,” according to Bruno Devauchelle (2013). For Devauchelle, the term extends beyond a mere technological descriptor: it refers to “encompassing a science, or techniques, uses, culture and imagination” (*translation*).

The 1990s marked a significant turning point with the advent of the Web and personal computers (Barzman, Gerphagnon & Mora 2020). Thirty years later, nearly 93% of the households in France have Internet access (INSEE). This “ubiquity of screens” and the “easy access to the Internet” have not only reshaped various facets of daily life, but have also brought about a profound shift in higher education and research. In teaching practices, digital technology impacts the content taught (through the development of cross-disciplinary and multimodal skills, for example), the tools that are used (video projectors, interactive whiteboards, digital media, virtual reality), while diverse teaching and learning methods, including online, blended, virtual classes, using various learning tools, such as videos, blogs, applications, forums, and wikis, reflect the dynamic nature of this technological integration (Barzman, Gerphagnon & Mora 2020). Turning to our research practices, digital technology has opened new perspectives with the

^{1 1} The call for papers was first translated with the help of DeepL, then improved by Chat GPT and, finally, post-edited by humans.

emergence of new research objects (e-health, e-marketing), new tools (statistics and data collection tools), new ways of writing and publishing research (applications for writing bibliographies, online journals, online publication processes, tools to gain visibility), and has transformed the relationships within the research community (through scientific, professional and generic social networks, research communities, collaborative spaces) (*op. cit.*; Boulton 2023; Kelleher 2023). As digital technology continues its rapid evolution, the latest advancements in artificial intelligence (AI) tools are presenting profound challenges to established teaching and research practices.

The first issue of *ASp* already highlighted the intricate web of connections between LSPs and digital technology. We have identified four areas that call for further exploration.

Theme 1: Use of Digital Tools to Characterise Languages for Specific Purposes

The gradual integration of digital technology into our research practices has transformed how we characterise specialised languages and cultures. Key to this transformation is the central role played by digital tools in the data collection process. Digital corpora, such as the British National Corpus and the Corpus of Contemporary American English, pre-existing specialised corpora or *ad hoc* corpora designed by researchers for specific studies (Kübler & Frérot 2003; Nesi 2015; Boulton 2016) have become instrumental in shaping our investigative approaches. Online questionnaires have emerged as powerful tools to collect data about the discursive and/or cultural practices of a community (Charpy 2004; Wozniak 2011; Domenec 2015). They are also often used to conduct needs analyses (Joulia 2014; Carnet 2016; Labetoulle 2022). Tools designed for linguistic data analysis, such as concordancers (e.g., Antconc, TXM) and textometric software, like Iramuteq, facilitate the identification of frequencies and collocations, as well as the comparison of corpora (Pic *et al.* 2013; Lavissière 2022).

Digital tools also play a crucial role in communication within the LSP research community. Social networks, the websites of learned associations and conferences serve as channels for exchange. Tools, such as Zotero, make it easier to manage and share digital libraries, or Google Calendar, Notion, Lucidchart and Canva, which contribute to more efficient work management (Atzeni 2023).

From this perspective, we invite submissions addressing the following themes:

- digital tools used to collect and analyse data with a view to characterising languages for specific purposes;
- digital tools contributing to the creation, federation, and structuring of the community of teacher-researchers in languages for specific purposes.

Theme 2: Characterising Emerging Digital Genres and Digital Mediation for Discursive Genres

The development of the Internet since the 1990s (similar to the printing press at the beginning of the Renaissance) has led to a great deal of experimentation with specialised discursive genres, either through the digitilisation of existing genres (such as scientific articles or encyclopaedias), or through the emergence of new genres. These candidate-genres are developing both in professional circles, with architects' blogs for example (Kloppmann-Lambert 2023), and in the various academic disciplines, where traditional genres are diversifying, as shown by the success of doctoral competitions in the 'my thesis in 180 seconds' format (Rowley-Jolivet & Carter-Thomas 2020), or hybridising in the case of video methods articles (Hafner 2018). All specialist genres have been able to take advantage, to a greater or lesser extent, of new possibilities linked to the Internet, particularly navigation within sites, but also between sites (in the form of hyperlinks,

for example), interaction with the target audience (in blogs, in particular) and above all multimodality, with the possibility of adding images, podcasts or videos (Miller & Mehlenbacher 2016). Opening up specialist genres to a wider audience, once they are available on the Internet, certainly makes it possible to put technical or scientific information within the reach of a larger number of citizens, thanks to the interactions thus created (Luzón & Pérez-Llantada 2019), but it also gives rise, as a result, to a certain blurring between genres for specialists and non-specialists, as can be seen, for example, with researchers' tweets (Tardy 2023). Specialised genres on the Internet, therefore, require new research tools (Patin 2024), whether to build up corpora (on social networks, for example), or to take full account of multimodality. The emergence of these new genres is multiplying the number of areas of research in LSP and means that the theory needs to evolve in order to characterise the new genres and find stabilisation criteria. The study of the place of specialised genres within the Web also opens up perspectives in terms of cultural studies and the societal reasons underlying the emergence of new genres (Patin 2021).

Papers on the following themes (among others) are welcome:

- the societal causes of the emergence of new genres;
- the place of emerging genres within established genre families;
- the way in which emerging genres take advantage of new functionalities available on the internet (multimodality, interaction, hyperlinks);
- the evolution of discursive genre theory as a result of the emergence of new genres.

Theme 3: Teaching and Learning Languages for Specific Purposes with Digital Tools

The widespread use of digital tools over the last thirty years has led to a profound transformation in teaching and learning practices and to a redefinition of the roles of the various stakeholders. Far from being mere supports or aids to teaching and learning (T&L), digital tools now offer a host of possibilities for developing LSP skills. They also provide solutions to the constraints of an institutional context often characterised by “high demand and generally low available resources” (Demaizière & Grosbois 2014, *translation*).

Thanks to easier access to an ever-increasing number of online resources, exposure to specialised languages and cultures can be increased. The possibilities are almost endless in terms of designing training materials and sharing them is easy. In addition, the development of Open Educational Resources (OER) represents a challenge for the dissemination of knowledge about specialised languages and cultures and for the learning and teaching of LSPs.

Digital tools can also be used to create environments conducive to the development of language and pragmatic skills. The various modalities - blended teaching and learning (Nissen 2019), synchronous and asynchronous distance learning, co-modality (Othman 2021) - make it possible to encourage learner autonomy and collaboration. Within immersive environments, such as virtual worlds, learners can apply skills that will be transferable to real-life situations (Château *et al.* 2019).

The following aspects may be explored as part of the reflection on the contributions of digital tools to learning and teaching LSPs:

- the new perspectives offered by digital tools for learning and teaching LSPs;
- the different methods of learning LSPs and how they are evolving;
- the integration of open educational resources (OER) into LSP training courses;
- the use of digital tools for teacher training in LSPs.

Theme 4: Artificial Intelligence Tools for Research and Teaching and Learning Languages for Specific Purposes and Specialised Translation

Artificial intelligence (AI), a term coined in the 1950s following the first work in the field (DNE-TN2 2023; Russell & Norvig 2022), “covers a set of theories and techniques that deal with problems whose solution normally involves human intelligence” (Romero *et al.* 2023: 6, *translation*). Although AI experts disagree on when, if ever, AI will achieve performance that is truly comparable to that of human beings, the ability of AI to engage in processes typical of human activity, such as learning, synthesis and data processing, is undeniable (Popenici & Kerr 2017).

The impact of artificial Intelligence (AI) in the realm of language teaching and learning has reached a notable magnitude. Many learners engage with applications leveraging AI technologies, such as DeepL, Duolingo, Memrise, Grammarly, and, notably, ChatGPT—an interactive conversational agent employing artificial neural networks for human language interaction (Thierry 2020). The utilisation of AI extends beyond student applications; language educators now integrate AI not only to enhance classroom activities, but also to design lessons (Skrabut 2023). Moreover, the integration of ChatGPT responses into student assessments poses intriguing questions for educators, prompting a reevaluation of their instructional methodologies in this domain (Sullivan *et al.* 2023).

Translation stands as a focal point in sectors profoundly impacted by technological advancements (Kübler 2003 ; Kübler 2011), with machine translation (MT) playing a pivotal role. The European Commission (the European Masters in Translation) underscores the imperative for translation students to adeptly master MT technologies and apply them as needed, shaping the landscape of contemporary translation studies (Rossi 2019). One of the seminars at the forthcoming European Society for the Study of English (ESSE) conference in 2024 will focus specifically on teaching specialised translation in the age of MT.

The transformative potential of AI extends to reshaping the landscape of research methodologies. AI is likely to have the capacity to revolutionise the various traditional stages of the research process. Researchers could expedite literature searches, streamline experimental procedures, enhance the efficiency of analysing and interpreting research data, and even facilitate translation of their scholarly contributions (Gruetzemacher 2022; Schmidt 2023).

We welcome scholarly contributions on:

- the application of AI tools to design teaching and learning materials tailored for LSP classes;
- teaching examples involving the use of AI tools by learners in LSP courses;
- teaching and learning specialised translation using MT tools;
- examples of LSP research that integrate AI tools;
- innovative adaptations of assessment methodologies that account for the evolving capabilities of conversational agents, offering insights into the dynamic interplay between AI technologies and assessment practices in the LSP context.

Paper proposals must be submitted on the **scienceconf** platform:

<https://lsp-num.sciencesconf.org/>

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Proposals should range between **450 and 600 words** and should include a **bibliography** (in a [separate file](#)).

Articles resulting from the presentations may subsequently be published in *ASp*, the journal of GERAS (English for Specific Purposes Study and Research Group) in November 2025.

Important dates:

Launch of the CFP: January 2024

Deadline for proposals: **15 April 2024**

Evaluation of the proposals by the scientific committee: 15 April – 31 May 2024

Notification to authors: 15 June 2024

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