

Lenguas para Fines Específicos en España a través de sus publicaciones (1985-2002).

María Rosario Bueno Lajusticia
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During his plenary speech at the GERAS (*Groupe d'Etudes et de Recherche en Anglais de Spécialité*) conference in Dijon (France) in 2001, John Swales warned the audience: “*Watch Spain.*” María Rosario Bueno Lajusticia’s recently published book entitled “*Lenguas para Fines Específicos en España a través de sus publicaciones (1985-2002)*” proves how right John then was.

I wholeheartedly agree with what Enrique Alcaraz, one of the pioneers of the ESP movement in Spain, writes in the foreword of the book. María Rosario Bueno Lajusticia’s volume will mark a “before” and an “after” and will become a must for anyone involved in the studying, teaching and research in the LSP field (Language for Specific Purposes, the equivalent of LFE¹ in Spanish). This “anyone” will of course have to be a fluent reader of Spanish.

As its title indicates, the book presents a comprehensive review of LSP research published in Spain (written both by Spanish and non-Spanish academics) and abroad by Spanish LSP practitioners over a period of 17 years. The book is well

¹ LFE stands for “*Lenguas con Fines Específicos*”.

written and clearly organized. It opens with a 2-page introduction that presents the scope and overall organization of the book.

Then follows a 5-page Chapter entitled “*Evolución del ESP*”, divided into two sections: ESP in the United Kingdom, on the one hand, and LSP in Spain, on the other. Since the sub-chapter on Spain deals with LSP rather than ESP per se, I believe that a more appropriate title for this Chapter would have been “*Evolución de ESP/LSP*”, but this is a very minor point. María Rosario Bueno Lajusticia very aptly covers the birth and growth of ESP in the Anglo-American world, starting in the mid 60’s with the emphasis then put on needs analysis. She then refers to the structural and register analysis period and closes that sub-section with a brief review of genre and discourse analysis characteristic of ESP research carried out in the 1990’s and early 2000’s. The section devoted to LSP in Spain is obviously much shorter since the movement started in that country in the mid 80’s only. The author refers here to the hallmarks of the ESP/LSP movement in Spain, viz., the first ESP communication delivered in 1984 at the AESLA (*Asociación Española de Lingüística Aplicada*), the creation of the journal *IBERICA* in 1985, and the creation in 1992 of the *Asociación Española de Lenguas para Fines Específicos* (AELFE), to day called *Asociación Europea de Lenguas con Fines Específicos*. All the major ESP publications on these topics are mentioned in the bibliographical references of this Chapter.

In Chapter II (40 page-long) entitled “*Estudio crítico*” (Critical Analysis) the author first of all explains how she carried out her work. She then presents and comments in detail the statistical results she obtained from the examination of the material she consulted. Maria Rosario Bueno Lajusticia read a total of 1.422 articles. She reckons that these 1.422 papers cover 90% of the LSP articles written by Spanish researchers in Spain and abroad. The great majority of these articles were published in specialized multi-authored books and in proceedings of LSP conferences that took place in Spain, and, but to a much lesser extent, in specialized journals. Fifty two percent of these papers were written in Spanish, 40% in English, 5% in French and the remaining 8% were written either in German, Portuguese and/or *Catalán*. In this Chapter, the author also analyses the relative contribution of the different Spanish universities where LSP research is conducted, the distribution of the 1.422 papers per faculties (engineering, health sciences, tourism, law, biological sciences, etc.), per gender (over 80% of the papers are written by women), per year, per areas (discourse analysis, lexicology, needs analysis, corpus linguistics, etc), the number of bibliographical references and of authors per paper (singled- vs. multiauthored papers), the relative contribution of non-Spanish researchers, etc. All these topics are abundantly and clearly illustrated by tables, graphs and coloured maps.

I would like to briefly comment on two observations the author makes in Chapter II. She remarks, on the one hand, that 75% of the papers she reviewed were written by a single author and, on the other, that the participation of non-Spanish researchers is very scarce: only 10% of the articles Maria Rosario Bueno Lajusticia read were co-authored by a non-Spanish LSP researcher. She then argues that this

reflects a rather selfish behavior: Spanish LSP academics prefer to work and publish their papers alone instead of seeking their national or 'foreign' colleagues' cooperation.

I would like to argue here that soft sciences articles are generally much less frequently written by 2 or more authors than hard sciences papers, although it is true that we are recently witnessing an increase in the number of authors per paper in the LSP field. I believe that two factors can account for such an increase: 1) LSP is becoming more and more interdisciplinary and 2) Internet allows for a quicker and more efficient communication among researchers who can then much more easily, rapidly and efficiently co-write papers. Now, with respect to María Rosario Bueno Lajusticia's remark that the participation of non-Spanish researchers in the LSP research carried out in Spain is scarce, I wonder whether the same could not be said of LSP research conducted in France, Germany, Denmark, the United Kingdom, etc. In other words, is such a situation characteristic of Spanish LSP research only?

Chapter II is followed by seven very detailed appendices (listing of all the books consulted; of the non-Spanish universities that, one way or another, are linked to LSP research undertaken in Spain; distribution of Spanish-LSP practitioners per university; relative contribution of Spanish universities in LSP-related publications, etc). I would like to mention two omissions. In Appendix 3, Venezuela and the University of the Andes are not mentioned, and the agreement act between the University of The Andes and the University of La Laguna (Sta Cruz de Tenerife) is not mentioned in Appendix 4. (The collaboration between these 2 universities started over 15 years ago). There might be other omissions I am not aware of, but it is impossible, in such a huge and arduous enterprise such as the one represented by the work conducted by María Rosario Bueno Lajusticia, not to overlook anything. Finally, a very minor point: the French city *Toulouse* is misspelt in Appendices 3 and 4.

Chapter III (almost 500 pages) is undoubtedly the one that will prove most useful for LSP teachers, researchers and students. It presents the abstracts of the 1.422 articles the author read to conduct her study. And it is in this Chapter where we can really appreciate the depth of the author's work. Indeed, only a minority (21%) of the abstracts was actually written by the author(s) of the papers. This means that the remaining abstracts (almost 80%) were written by María Rosario Bueno Lajusticia. Not an easy task at all. The abstracted articles are grouped according to the school or faculty their authors belong to (health sciences, biology, economics, law, computer science, engineering, tourism, etc) and are followed by the LSP sub-area the article can most likely be identified with (discourse analysis, lexicography, corpus linguistics, teaching and course design, contrastive linguistics, etc.). I personally think the author made a wise decision at presenting the abstracted papers per sphere of knowledge (faculties) rather than per applied linguistics sub-areas.

Chapter IV (30 pages) is divided into 2 parts. The first few pages present a listing of 140 LSP specialized dictionaries (law, business, economics, computer science, etc), textbooks and doctoral theses, and the remaining pages are dedicated to LSP-related book reviews written by Spanish academics and published in Spain and abroad.

The book ends with a comprehensive general bibliography. We could perhaps lament the absence of some concluding remarks. What general conclusions could be drawn from such an interesting and much needed research? But this is, again, a fairly minor criticism.

All in all this is an excellent book that succeeds in achieving the author's aims. It is a very useful work that clearly fills a gap in the existing literature. Its strengths are the scope of the material analyzed and the breadth and details of the analyses performed. The detailed presentation of LSP research conducted in Spain from its birth in 1985 till 2002 makes this volume an invaluable resource for LSP junior and senior researchers and LSP practitioners in general. I believe this fine book should be a required reading for any LSP Spanish student or any person interested in LSP Spanish research. It will definitely benefit anyone interested in teaching and researching the field.

Dr. María Rosario Bueno Lajusticia graduated from Zaragoza University and has been teaching English for twenty five years at the Universidad Complutense de Madrid. She holds a Ph.D in English Philology from the Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia (UNED).
