

# Multilingual Approaches to Specialized Language Pedagogy and Research: A Journal's Perspective

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## Abstract

The exploration of LOTE (Languages Other Than English) as a multilingual scope in LSP (Languages for Specific Purposes) constitutes both a major goal and challenge in LSP pedagogy and research, since English is mostly the target language used and analyzed in specialized communication. This study set out to explore multilingualism-oriented articles in a representative LSP journal in Spain, *Ibérica* (Q1 in language and linguistics). The years from 2012 to 2022 were selected for comparison, as other studies had examined previous time frames. A thematic exploration of these articles was enabled by keyword-based analysis, comparing the *Ibérica* collection with a larger academic corpus of writing in order to retrieve highly distinctive linguistic occurrences. It was found that keyword-derived collocations point to pivotal thematic references throughout the corpus, as these linguistic elements were frequent and dispersed. By manually annotating the co-texts of these collocations referring to multilingual issues and ideas, a classification was achieved according to thematic elements, leading to four major categories related to multilingualism in the journal: Methodologies, ELF (English as a Lingua Franca), groups of learners/participants, and collaborative projects. In general, it was confirmed that ELF dominates specialized language pedagogy and research in multilingual studies. However, it was also observed, among other developments, that three areas, lexicology, translation, and teaching methods, concentrate more studies dealing with LOTE and multilingualism in the journal.

## Keywords

LSP, Multilingualism, Keywords, Thematic Analysis, ELF, LOTE

## 1. Introduction

LSP (Languages for Specific Purposes) advancements were prominent during the

1980s (e.g., the *Journal of English for Specific Purposes* was established as a pioneering specialized language journal internationally). In Spain, parallel to and reflecting on these developments, early publications emphasized integrating LSP approaches in Spanish universities (Monroy, 1983). Some years later, AELFE (European Association of Languages for Specific Purposes) was founded in Madrid (June of 1992) to form a collaborative network of LSP teachers, researchers, and practitioners for the organization and sharing of events and information.

In AELFE, an LSP journal, *Ibérica*, started publication in 1999, welcoming articles in six European languages, even though English and Spanish dominated early contributions (Aguado de Cea & Curado-Fuentes, 2012). Over time, English has predominated, both in the journal and AELFE conferences, and since 2020, the journal's language policies have made publishing in English mandatory (Curado-Fuentes, 2023). However, multilingualism in LSP clearly benefits from collaborations among experts from different language backgrounds, applying inter-disciplinary strategies and inter-linguistic scopes (Pérez-Llantada, 2021). This multilingual/multicultural aspect is encouraged by the journal and can be contrasted with actual publication practices.

This study thus set out to examine multilingualism in LSP pedagogy and research by focusing on *Ibérica* articles between 2012 and 2022 in order to explore how multilingual foci and developments have taken place and evolved in this journal. A keyword-based analysis was implemented to identify key thematic elements that may be related to multilingualism in this journal. These thematic elements, inferred from keyword-based linguistic information, led to the differentiation of four major thematic categories: Methodological approaches, the role of ELF (English as a Lingua Franca), groups of learners, and collaborative projects. It was thus found, among other aspects, that LOTE (Languages Other Than English) in multilingual approaches have been mostly occluded by ELF, and that methodological approaches encompassing digital genres across languages and cultures are salient. Additionally, by examining specific areas in the journal, such as teaching methods and corpus analyses, more references to multilingual issues have been found in lexicology, translation, and teaching methods articles.

Next, a review of the literature on LSP and multilingualism will be provided, followed by the methodology, main findings, and discussion of the implications and conclusions of this study.

## 2. Theoretical Framework

This section provides key background references related to multilingual approaches in LSP, which can then be used for contrastive purposes in the analytical discussion of the findings of the present study. The literature works cited in this section are different from the articles encompassed in *Ibérica* during the selected time period (2012-2022).

Multilingualism has been approached from different angles in LSP over the

past 20 years or so. A major perspective has been the effort to integrate multilingualism in academic settings despite the fact that English constitutes a primary foreign language practice in these contexts (Siemund, 2023). The Commission of the European Communities issued a policy framework for multilingualism in 2008 to enable multilingual literacies in universities across Europe; however, the fact is that regional disparities persist, and most often English tends to homogenize the linguistic landscape in academic contexts (Lasagabaster, 2023). Therefore, there exists an overall discrepancy between the legislative efforts and actual adoption/application of multilingual schemes in specialized contexts (Sahan & Rose, 2021). This trend is evident in Spain, where ESP (English for Specific Purposes) has traditionally held a hegemonic position, and ELF constitutes the main practice for facilitating effective communication in academic and professional domains, particularly in written scientific research (Bocanegra-Valle, 2013).

Therefore, the key role of English for high-impact scientific publications and international collaborations has mostly marginalized other languages in Spain (Pérez-Llantada et al., 2011). In other contexts, such as the Scandinavian countries, utilizing other languages in academic contexts has differed to some extent, but English has persistently constituted a major “threat” (Bolton & Kuteeva, 2012). Additionally, English is mostly the language analysed in multilingual settings for specialized communication developments, and yet, most speakers/writers comprising research participants and/or objects of study are English non-natives. This dichotomy between English-only-research and LOTE has been recently explored in multilingual research-focused applied linguistics journals via systematic analysis (Warren & Sato, 2024), observing that, even though these journals’ language policies underscore the importance of multilingualism, English and native “speakerism” are prioritized in actual publication practices.

More recently, however, a way of reconciling this disparity between English and other languages in science communication has been an increased focus on online Open Access (OA) resources, which provide opportunities for multilingual science dissemination and the democratization of science (Luzón & Pérez-Llantada, 2022). For example, in online academic blogs, multilingual cultures may converge, sharing different forms of communication for science dissemination (Biletska et al., 2023). These digital communication platforms have amplified multilingualism, offering diversified audiences access to scientific information in various languages and via miscellaneous digital and non-digital resources (Luzón & Pérez-Llantada, 2019).

In corporate settings (e.g., multinational companies and the touristic sector), multilingual practices are encouraged at specific levels of corporate work, e.g., transnational video-conference presentations with simultaneous translation/interpretation (Fraiberg, 2018). Multimodal digital practices can thus enhance communication in multilingual scenarios, particularly in corporate cultures (Galante, 2020). Nonetheless, the key role of BELF (Business English as a Lingua Franca) is ever present in these scenarios, since it is mainly used as the common language for different business situations to facilitate international interactions

(Bhatia, 2008). In tourism, English is also dominant, but communicative exchanges often take place multi-linguistically, with professionals and customers having to accommodate to a common mode where code-switching often occurs (Goethals, 2015).

In terms of collaborative international projects, for both online and offline communication, multilingualism is fostered. For example, CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning) programs and networked cooperation mostly involve English as the main focus, but for teaching, research, and academia, the endorsement of collaboration in different languages, even minority languages, is also taking hold (e.g., Bier & Lasagabaster, 2023). Virtual exchanges for specialized translation and interpretation can also constitute key spaces for multilingual developments in LSP (Verzella & Tommaso, 2021). Digital multilingualism thus seems to be targeted more in LSP pedagogy and research, since specialized communication harnesses internet affordances across lingua-cultural variants (Luzón & Pérez-Llantada, 2022: p. 26), facilitating collaboration in diverse linguistic and cultural landscapes. This phenomenon draws great attention from the LSP community.

### 3. Methodology

Thematic approaches to multilingualism have been made by previous works (e.g., Warren & Sato, 2024; Mairi et al., 2023, among others). However, the use of corpus-based keywords for thematic analysis has not been found in the approach to this topic. In this study, as a result, corpus-based keyword analysis constitutes the conceptual framework for the analysis of themes related to multilingualism in the LSP journal *Ibérica*. The objective was to implement a thematic analysis in the line of Scott (2010), Baker (2011), and Naeem et al. (2023). In this scope, keywords are considered pivotal linguistic items for thematic analysis (Naeem et al., 2023: p. 4). This type of analytical framework focuses on unveiling the thematic essence of a corpus of texts (Scott, 2010; Bondi, 2010), since keyword-derived collocational information throughout texts characterize the discourse of a particular specialized/academic community (Baker, 2011). Therefore, this type of analytical focus can reveal pivotal thematic strands in a specific corpus (Stubbs, 2007).

For these aims, first, a corpus of journal articles was retrieved from *Ibérica*. This journal is found in Q1 in language and linguistics (see <https://calidadrevistas.fecyt.es/>). More and more international collaborations (e.g., authors from different world regions) have been published in this journal over the past ten years (Curado-Fuentes, 2023). This evolving trend was another reason for exploring the journal thematically. The research articles encompassed in the study were the ones published in the journal from 2012 to 2022 (<http://revistaiberica.org/index.php/iberica>). A total of 214 journal articles were therefore cleaned of meta-data, such as page headings, page numbers, hyperlinks, and extra-textual sections (e.g., bibliography and appendices). The corpus software used was LancsBox 6.0 (Brezina et al., 2021), which computed a total num-

ber of 2,210,290 tokens (or running words) in this corpus.

Secondly, it was crucial to choose a suitable larger reference corpus in order to utilize it as a comparison reference with the *Ibérica* corpus. In general, it is recommended by the literature that reference corpora contain both similar and different texts in terms of genres and topics (Bondi, 2010). Therefore, the reference corpus should be academic and written, but should also encompass other types of texts across academic disciplines. BAWE (British Academic Written English Corpus) (Hilary et al., 2008) was thus employed. This collection consists of proficient upper-level academic writing (various academic genres such as essays, research papers, and so on) from university (undergraduate and graduate) students in UK, totalling 8,369,142 words. The texts include miscellaneous topics and academic disciplines, and have been thoroughly assessed by faculty.

By comparing the *Ibérica* corpus with BAWE, a keyword list was created, ordered according to word frequency; these words were proportionally higher in the *Ibérica* corpus than in BAWE. However, this type of wordlist approach computes keywords regardless of the number of texts where they occur. As a result, Cohen-d, a statistical measurement in the corpus software, was used to balance word frequency and dispersion across texts. With this computation, a different keyword list emerged. From this list, only the very top keywords appearing in over 50 percent of the *Ibérica* articles were selected. Such keywords were: Specific, discourse, language/languages, linguistic, and genre/genres<sup>1</sup>. They were considered highly theme-specific, and as such, they could provide significant information about key linguistic usage throughout the articles in order to unveil pivotal thematic elements related to the research topics and pedagogical developments in the journal.

Next, the corpus-based analysis focused on the collocational information of the selected keywords. These collocations were measured by using five words to the left and right of the keywords. The statistics used for their measurement were T-score and MI2, provided by LancsBox 6.0. These statistics determined significant collocating words with these keywords when the linguistic items appeared more frequently (using T-scores) and also with lower frequencies (by applying MI2) (Lijffijt & Gries, 2012). However, in order to capture dispersed keyword collocations over texts, a minimum value of 0.2 percent was established. This cut-off value meant that the number of texts where these keyword-based collocations occurred divided into the number of occurrences had to yield at least 0.2. Thus, for instance, if a collocation appeared 12 times in two texts, it was not valid ( $2/12 = 0.16$ ), whereas if this number of items occurred in three texts, the keyword collocation was accepted ( $3/12 = 0.25$ ). This type of approach ensured the selection of shared collocations across texts, even if the collocations occurred with low frequencies.

Concordance analysis was then conducted to examine the co-texts of these

<sup>1</sup>The plurals of “language” and “genre” were included because keywords were analysed as lemmas with their derived forms, and if these forms were also highly frequent and dispersed, they were selected.

keyword-based collocations. Co-texts were the surrounding context of these collocations (i.e., phrases, sentences, and/or full paragraphs where these linguistic items occurred). They were thoroughly explored in order to identify any references or denotations of multilingual ideas in the texts. This exploration was done in a bottom-up manner, meaning that the co-texts were manually coded according to perceived thematic references (using the qualitative coder by Xu & Xia, 2011). Four main thematic categories were subsequently established as a result of identifying multilingualism-related elements: Methodology, ESL, groups of learners/participants, and LSP projects/collaborations. When all the co-texts had been annotated according to thematic elements in these categories, they were checked and contrasted in their article texts in order to corroborate that these references indicated, indeed, multilingual ideas or developments. Otherwise, they were discarded in the final analysis.

A second major corpus analysis of keywords involved a comparison between specific groups of articles, collected within area categories established in the journal, and BAWE. These thematic areas correspond to six thematic panels in AELFE: Teaching methods, Translation, Lexicology, Corpus studies, Genre analysis, and Information Technologies (see [revistaiberica.org](http://revistaiberica.org) and [aelfe.org](http://aelfe.org)). In this case, the articles within these categories were compared with BAWE in order to extract widely used keywords that may include terms such as “multilingual” and “bilingual” (and their derived word forms in any languages) on the top 500 word positions of the lists<sup>2</sup>. As a result of these comparisons, only three categories were found to include such terms in these keyword lists: Lexicology (“multilingual”, “bilingual”, “plurilingual”, and “bilingües”), Translation (“bilingües” and “bilingüe”), and Teaching methods (“multilingüe” and “multilingual”). The linguistic findings obtained from these analyses will be described and discussed in the subsequent sections.

#### 4. Results

The *Ibérica* articles from 2012 to 2022 targeted LOTE (Languages Other than English) much less than English. Only 18.6 percent of the total number of articles in this period analyzed other languages, with Spanish being mainly targeted (75 percent of these LOTE articles), followed by French (7.5 percent), German (5 percent), and Portuguese, Arabic, Catalan, Montenegrin, Croatian, and Russian (2.5 percent each). In contrast, 14.6 percent of the total number of articles in *Ibérica* were written in LOTE (mostly Spanish, but also four articles in French, three in German, and one in Portuguese). In all cases, these articles analyzed the languages in which they were written. Additionally, five articles in the journal (2.3 percent of the total number of articles in *Ibérica* from 2012 to 2022) dealt with comparative English/Spanish analyses, followed by one article on English/Polish, one on English/Turkish, one on English/Chinese, and one on English/Japanese. Finally, 16 articles (7.4 percent of the total) encompassed more

<sup>2</sup>This 500-word limit was established because the keyness values after this position get lower than 0.30, indicating less frequency and dispersion in the corpus (Scott, 2010).

than two languages for LSP study (mostly European languages).

Given this multilingual scope in the journal, the keyword-based analysis could uncover thematically relevant ideas and developments across texts. First, the keyword-based collocations served as lexical references which the thematic analysis took as point of departure. **Table 1** displays this core linguistic information.

The linguistic items in **Table 1** appeared more than 20 times in the corpora except for the case of MI2. Some derived forms (e.g., the plurals “discourses” and “genres”) were also included because of their significant usage across texts. This collocational information was explored over concordance lines in order to identify and code any co-texts denoting thematic references to multilingualism. This procedure led to the annotation of 67 thematic co-texts related to multilingualism. **Table 2** shows 14 representative co-texts, classified according to the four major categories inferred from such thematic coding: Methodology, ELF, groups of learners, and collaborative projects. The key collocations from **Table 1** appear highlighted in bold in **Table 2**.

As displayed in **Table 2**, these co-texts can consist of one or more sentences (e.g., co-text # 6) and more than one keyword collocation (e.g., co-text # 2). These textual chunks concentrate and illustrate key linguistic information about multilingualism in the texts.

The second keyword-based analysis was run with the articles classified under the six thematic panels mentioned in the Methodology section. This analysis also unveiled significant keyword-based usage related to multilingualism. As mentioned, Lexicology, Translation, and Teaching were the only panels that contained keywords related to multilingualism. **Table 3** shows examples chosen from the 34 co-texts found. The keywords are shown in bold within these co-texts. Implications from these findings will be discussed in the next section.

## 5. Discussion

The thematic analysis of the results point to different issues and ideas related to multilingualism in LSP studies. According to the key information gathered and represented by the co-texts in **Table 2** and **Table 3**, approaches to specialized multilingual contexts are described. This discussion will focus on keyword-derived information in the line proposed by Naeem et al., (2023), since keyword-derived information leads to the main themes of the analysis. As a result, other issues related to multilingualism in LSP, not derived from this keyword focus, are beyond the scope of this study. Observations will be contrasted with information from the literature on multilingualism and LSP (mostly cited in the Theoretical Framework section above).

### 5.1. Thematic Categories (Table 2)

Firstly, the thematic elements in **Table 2** point to key ideas related to methodologies, ELF, groups of learners, and international collaborative projects in multilingualism.

**Table 1.** Top widely dispersed keywords and collocations.

Keywords	Keyword-derived collocations		
Specific	Specific + purposes <sup>a</sup>	Discipline-specific	Specific information
Discourse	Discourse + analysis	Academic + discourses	Disciplinary + discourse
Language	Language + learning/teaching	English + language	Second + language
Linguistic	Linguistic + features	Linguistic + analysis	Linguistic + mechanisms (MI2) <sup>b</sup>
Genre	Genre + analysis	Academic + genres	Professional + genres

<sup>a</sup>The + signs indicate that these collocations occurred both adjacent to keywords and within the five-word spans. <sup>b</sup>MI2 refers to the lower frequency of this collocation (repeating 12 times across texts).

**Table 2.** Examples of co-texts where key language occurred, grouped under thematic categories.

Categories	Examples of co-texts in thematic categories
Methodology	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The discursive representation of international students by the three Australian universities is discussed in relation to conceptual shifts in international student education, diversity management and multimodal <b>discourse analysis</b>.</li> <li>2. Implications for cross-cultural <b>genre analysis</b> and genre and <b>second language</b> education as language is important for cross-cultural learning</li> <li>3. Interviews provide enriching participants' insights that can support claims about the <b>professional genres</b></li> <li>4. Traced in the <b>linguistic features</b> used in the presentations of Spanish and Russian companies on their websites</li> <li>5. <b>Discipline-specific</b> teaching of these collocations is certainly advisable. This might be especially important for non-native speakers of English</li> </ol>
ELF	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6. The <b>English language</b> became a driver to achieve these ideological objectives since it was felt that an alternative political and economic ideology could best be accessed through English. Western business and management consultant firms set up branches in Central Europe, and the need for English to act as a lingua franca.</li> <li>7. Given this <b>English language</b> education, a survey of the Chinese literature indicates that there has been growing interest in the ESP corporate genres</li> <li>8. EAL (English as an Additional Language) scholars may be reshaping rhetorical patterns in innovative ways and Anglophone norms are merging with culture-specific <b>linguistic features</b></li> <li>9. Writers should be more aware of a broader range of <b>linguistic features</b> that English writers tend to use</li> </ol>
Groups of learners/ participants	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>10. Recognized through the use of hedges, reported to be more abundant in English than in Spanish groups. This coincides with previous work on <b>academic genres</b> in a variety of disciplines.</li> <li>11. Japanese language learners of <b>disciplinary discourses</b> will need to learn the correct forms, meanings, and usage of common Japanese formulaic sequences in order to convey politeness and familiarity with the genre. Similarly, English language learners of <b>academic discourses</b> have a need to learn other sequences</li> </ol>
Collaborative projects	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>12. The project ran from 1991 to 1999, and was motivated by the post-Soviet Union political changes in that it was designed to reform the <b>teaching and language learning</b> of ESP in 16 Higher Education institutions in Romania and raise <b>English language</b> levels.</li> <li>13. The situation started to change in Spain after the publication of the Framework Document of Language Policy for the internationalization of universities, where a <b>linguistic accreditation analysis</b> was carried out</li> <li>14. Integrating media into <b>language teaching</b> intended for teachers and trainers. The platform, material, and package were developed by the project partners in each participating country</li> </ol>

**Table 3.** Examples of co-texts in thematic panels, derived from multilingual keywords.

Categories	Examples of co-texts in thematic panels
Lexicology	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. There is still a considerable number of <b>bilingual</b>—or <b>plurilingual</b>—dictionaries being printed that are virtually word lists with equivalents and almost nothing else.</li> <li>2. A number of promising <b>bilingual</b> specialized school dictionaries have seen the light in various countries, especially in <b>multilingual</b> countries like South Africa and Estonia</li> <li>3. The labelling of a word as a false anglicism should be under constant review, and it may very well happen that what we now consider a slip by a <b>bilingual</b> dictionary is rather an anticipation of what the situation might be in the not-so-far distant future</li> </ol>
Translation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. Los alumnos estudian los textos con diccionarios <b>bilingües</b> de Inglés y Español como apoyo a su lectura pero también conceptos a resolver en grupos.</li> <li>5. The starting point is the premise established by the project WeinApp: Sistema <b>multilingüe</b> de información y recursos vitivinícolas, focused on the study of the lexicon from a constructivist perspective.</li> </ol>
Teaching methods	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6. Para enfrentar con éxito las demandas del mercado laboral actual, multicultural y <b>multilingüe</b>, hemos clasificado las competencias referidas por los empleadores internacionales componentes que conforman la competencia comunicativa intercultural</li> <li>7. By means of multicultural and intercultural language awareness through blended Open Education resources in <b>multilingual</b> programs</li> </ol>

In the methodology category, a first main approach was made to specialized texts/discourses in genre analysis. According to the co-texts examined, this type of methodology is prominent, and focuses on discipline-specific texts and genres across cultural/linguistic backgrounds. In fact, this multilingual aspect of genre research is valued as an important issue in the literature on multilingualism and LSP genres (e.g., Pérez-Llantada, 2021). Two examples can illustrate this approach (Table 2).

Co-text 1 refers to genre-focused analysis in Australian universities, where websites are analysed in order to identify discursive features for attracting multilingual/multicultural learners to their academic institutions. Co-text 2, in turn, points to the analysis of multicultural elements in a cross-cultural comparison of digital writing by different nationalities.

In fact, three *Ibérica* articles focus on the analysis of corporate email writing across cultures, a distinctive approach of online genre analysis across languages. In *Ibérica*, of all online genre analysis methods articles (43), a significant percentage (12 articles) address other languages (Spanish, Turkish, Montenegrin, Polish, and Russian), and 6 articles are written in Spanish, whereas 6 of them include a comparison with English (Curado-Fuentes, 2023). These LOTE-focused articles deal with specialized communication approaches in both scientific/academic contexts (e.g., Youtube videos and other social media) and professional genres (e.g., corporate reports, online medical consultations, and Tourism-related blogging). It is thus perceived that multilingual studies published in *Ibérica* target innovative linguistic/communicative phenomena. In contrast, articles published in/about English approach novel genres, but also deal with more

conventional genres (e.g., research articles, faxes, and emails, among others).

A second methodological scope inferred from the thematic analysis deals with ethnography, i.e., on-site observational research of multilingual situations and interactions. These incursions are carried out in both academic and professional/corporate contexts where more than one language is explored. Informants in these contexts are mostly bilingual speakers of English/Spanish (11 articles), whereas one study focuses on Japanese/English, and another on Chinese/English. In various cases, online communication is investigated (e.g., video-conference calls, online presentations, or email exchanges). Co-text 3 (**Table 2**) provides an example of how L2 (second language) developments are conducted by observation and note-taking via discussions/interviews with participants.

In these ethnographic studies, a key observation is that multilingual speakers often cope/interact with specialized linguistic-communicative resources and strategies via digital technologies. This type of online communication includes significant linguistic and socio-pragmatic elements related to multi-lingua-cultural factors (Fraiberg, 2018). An example is co-text 4 in **Table 2**, involving the professional use of websites for promotional purposes in different languages. This type of focus on multilingual digital literacies is a key aspect observed in different studies (both for professional and academic aims). Other examples include online interactional communication via online forums (e.g., doctor-patient communication) and web-chats (e.g., in the Tourism sector).

In this scope, various methodological instruments and resources are utilized to approach multilingualism across different settings. For example, cross-cultural analyses are applied to examine web-based features in different languages, such as hyper-textual and audio-visual information in hotel websites in Spain, where different pragmatic and socio-cultural devices are used in Spanish and English interchangeably to appeal to a wider range of potential customers. According to the literature, this type of approach is important in multilingual scenarios (Giltrow & Stein, 2009).

The example of online medical forums, mentioned above, is also researched in multilingual contexts of LSP. The reason is that patients and/or lay audiences form diversified audiences in terms of nationalities and cultures. Different degrees of expertise are confronted in these situations, such as consultations between non-experts and experts, but also among non-experts facilitating information and helping each other (the so-called semi-expert public).

Furthermore, multinational companies form a common ground where participants from various nationalities collaborate via live video sessions. These events can be organized as general meetings, but also sub-divided according to work groups that comprise multilingual-cultural situations. In these situations, some important communicative exchanges taking place to a greater or lesser degree in more than one language include short corporate reports and project presentations.

Finally, some ethnographic approaches also appear in interviews with online forum and blog experts. An example is the compilation of linguistic-cultural feed-

back derived from university faculty (from Europe and other world regions) using academic blogs for research and content dissemination. Another example is the role of insiders in multinational companies providing feedback on their communicative performance while doing daily tasks. In both cases, different perspectives and issues related to the use of more than one language in academia and/or corporate cultures are gleaned. These findings point to the importance of socio-linguistic and cultural literacies in specialized communication.

A last type of methodological scope derived from thematic elements is the use of lexical/terminological approaches. For example, university learners from different nationalities need to gain lexical knowledge in the form of collocations, specialized phraseology, and figurative language (e.g., metaphors) in their disciplines. In most cases, English is the target language, but there are also other languages addressed with this type of methodology, such as Spanish and German (see co-text # 5 in **Table 2**). In certain university contexts of Spain, the extension is made to Catalan (analysed in one article in the journal).

The second major thematic dimension or category is the analysis is ELF (“English as a lingua franca”) in multilingual scenarios. Different thematic elements can be also scrutinized within this category.

A first major topic addressed is the conflicting position of ELF in multilingual settings. In these cases, most participants are non-native speakers of English, in agreement with previous literature (e.g., **Pérez-Llantada, 2012**). This non-native “speakerism” is described in professional/corporate situations: for example, in the need for learners to have a greater capacity for transferring knowledge in multinational contexts. Thus, non-native speakers of English reflect on their disadvantageous limited linguistic position compared to native English counterparts. An example is co-text 9, where a reference is made to researchers and/or scientists often needing to publish their work in highly ranked journals, which requires them to have optimal research writing skills and high linguistic competences.

ELF developments are also explored by addressing the epistemological opportunities fostered by multilingual-cultural knowledge, as **Lasagabaster (2023)** observes. For example, co-text 6 exemplifies a case in which academic cultures can gain knowledge and enhance their own competences by sharing and opening up to ELF variants, as in the case of ELF developments in Central and Eastern European universities. Another example is co-text 7, denoting the importance of enriching experiences shared via written and spoken modes of communication between Western and Chinese corporate cultures.

ELF is therefore examined in the journal as a convenient area where both academic and professional collaborations across languages and cultures can take place. This perspective has been amply observed in the literature (e.g., **Shrestha, 2015**). For example, co-text 8 points to how research authors from different countries use phraseological devices in their writing, which may deviate from prototypical English native writing and/or norms, and which may belong to specific ELF variants, shared in academic communities. On the other hand, content

lecturers deploy their own linguistic-rhetorical strategies that differ from traditional English strategies. These phenomena are investigated as strategies that, far from affecting specialized communicative scenarios negatively, comprise multilingual and multicultural mechanisms that enhance translanguaging and polylinguaging procedures and analyses in LSP, in agreement with Pérez-Llantada (2021), among others.

The third major thematic category is “Groups of learners/participants”, which comprises references to the multilingual groups targeted in various studies. In this journal, most references are made to European learners/participants, as observed in Bocanegra-Valle (2013), but there are also some cases of groups in USA and the Australasian region. For example, as co-text 10 points out, within Europe, most non-native speakers are, understandably, Spanish learners, many in academic situations where their linguistic abilities are compared with other groups of speakers. Spanish appears as the target language in some studies, e.g., analysing how migrant groups of students use Spanish for different purposes. In this scope, Spanish for specific purposes also becomes a growing interest in LSP, in agreement with Lasagabaster (2023). Writing and orally presenting research in front of multilingual audiences are key activities investigated with these groups of participants.

Cross-cultural analyses are often made in the journal, and, in some analyses, key linguistic competence traits are addressed and explored among groups of international participants. An example involves the use of written persuasion in digital genres, such as websites in Tourism, where different nationalities are targeted, or in Australian university websites, where multilingual students form the target audience. In other cases, linguistic-rhetorical devices and items, such as reading/interpretation techniques in appraisals for blurbs, turn-taking in oral discussions and meetings, and lexical-grammatical choices of formulaic language in specialized discourses are explored. For example, co-text 11 examines the comparison of groups of Japanese and English writing learners.

Finally, multilingual collaborative projects form the fourth main thematic category under which various co-texts were registered. Co-text 12, for example, refers to collaborations in multilingual mobility programs for LSP teaching and learning. In this case, reference is made to the establishment of LSP projects throughout some Eastern European regions during the 1990s and how these have crystallized and converged later, leading to empowered LSP associations and institutions developing in these regions.

In other studies, international virtual communication programs are found to have important academic functions in LSP configuration across regions and/or countries. These online projects aim at exploring linguistic and communicative issues/competences, but also transversal skills such as leadership, culture, and ethical values. Co-text 14, for instance, refers to projects about the teaching and learning of specialized course materials developed online collaboratively between academic institutions across Europe.

Finally, in academic settings, it is observed that specialized language courses are designed and implemented as a common ground where international students can be trained for discipline-specific linguistic skills. Co-text 13 illustrates how, in these contexts, language policies are investigated both globally and locally for the configuration of multilingual opportunities, such as linguistic accreditation programs for academic purposes. This observation parallels studies addressing the need for LOTE (Languages Other Than English) specializations and ELF across European academic institutions (e.g., Bolton & Kuteeva, 2012; Lasagabaster, 2023; Siemund, 2023).

## 5.2. Thematic Panels (Table 3)

Moving on with this discussion, the following description revolves around the information derived from Table 3, where the foci on “multilingual” and “bilingual” as key lemmas led to the examination of different themes across texts. These lexical items appeared as key items, i.e., frequently and widely distributed in the categories of lexicology, translation, and teaching methods articles in the journal.

Firstly, in terms of lexicological approaches, attention is critically placed on multilingual lexicons due to the perception that rigorous lexicographic approaches are needed for specialized language teaching and research. For example, co-text 1 (Table 3) illustrates a need for enriched terminological databases and lexical utilities. This demand for further scrutiny of terminology-devoted studies in LSP parallels an observed gap in terms of studies addressing how specialized languages influence each other across disciplines and professional areas. For example, *Ibérica* editors have reflected on the need for more inter-LOTE-focused studies in LSP (Curado-Fuentes, 2023).

A second lexicological incursion is the exploration of bilingual and multilingual dictionaries comprising minority languages in specialized settings. An example is the study of industry and engineering terms (see co-text # 2). In agreement with some authors (e.g., Salager-Meyer, 2015), this inclusion of semi-periphery and periphery regions in LSP studies should be a priority for globalized academic contexts where English vocabulary is not the only lexicon encompassed. In lexicology studies, anglicisms appear as problematic occurrences, and they are treated differently according to disciplines and settings. An example is co-text 3, suggesting that the proof that ELF dominates specialized language contexts is the pervasive presence of anglicisms. This use of anglicisms prevails despite the availability of suitable equivalents in other languages.

In the area of translation, a key finding is that mainly English is compared with other European languages: Spanish, Italian, German, French, Portuguese, Basque, Catalan, and Galician. The disciplinary areas where bilingual approaches are made vary: Health sciences, Art, Industry, Economics, and Engineering. These translation projects include the use of bi- and multi-lingual lexicons, analysed semantically and according to cultural aspects. An example is co-text 5,

exemplifying translation research which focuses on constructivist approaches to terms, combining both linguistic and cultural elements. These resources can provide users/professionals/learners with effective multilingual comparisons of professional terms.

Multilingual translation studies also focus on specialized professional translation, where the improvement and updating of lexical databases are in demand. This need is paralleled by lexicology-related research, but for translation, effective pedagogical methods are distinctively sought. An example is co-text 4, where translation tasks in university settings are considered key multilingual activities. Other examples involve the use of different languages in professional discourses, where elements such as metaphors can challenge translation students to find reliable linguistic devices that effectively convey professional concepts and developments (e.g., in Medicine). This type of interdisciplinary approach to translation in multilingual contexts of LSP has been underscored by the literature (e.g., Pérez-Llantada, 2021).

In teaching methods, the studies exploit miscellaneous multilingual dynamics for teaching implications. For example, five articles exploit intercultural issues, since corporate cultures often demand specialized lingua-cultural competences from college graduates. Co-text 6 illustrates how this learning approach is crucial in multilingual LSP courses, in agreement with the literature (e.g., Galante, 2020).

The fact is that corporate cultures often include digitally mediated, discipline-specific communication skills as a target competence across languages and cultures, especially in multinational companies. Therefore, PBL (Project-Based Learning) is tackled as an important learning tool, since effective project-based performance is crucial in multilingual business environments. Socio-cultural knowledge and training are beneficial factors for students to have so that they successfully join the labour market. Digitally mediated multicultural communicative situations also require the use of translanguaging and translation as important activities. Therefore, in LSP, this type of pedagogical approach should be prioritized, in agreement with Galante (2020), among others.

However, as previously mentioned, a tension exists between the alleged importance of multilingualism and the actual cognitive practices developed in specialized communicative situations. An example is the divide between English versus the use of other languages in university settings. For instance, content instruction is mostly done in L1, followed by almost exclusively English (Lasagabaster, 2023). Therefore, even though the European Language Policy Division supports LSP in Europe with a focus on multilingual EU citizens with intercultural abilities, the reality is that monolingual approaches still predominate. In LSP teaching-focused studies, as a result, blended teaching and learning programs are sometimes seen as a partial solution for developing multilingual competences at different levels and in various settings (e.g., university, vocational schooling, pre-training courses, and so on). Multilingual learning developments are thus encouraged via international projects. For example, co-text 7 refers to bilingual teaching taking place at university via blended projects on open-access

platforms, with a major focus on English and another language (notably, Spanish).

## 6. Conclusion

The keyword-based analysis in this study has led to the thematic exploration of key ideas and developments on multilingualism and LSP in *Ibérica* from 2012 to 2022. References to multilingual and bilingual approaches were identified in specialized language research and teaching. Some concluding aspects can be underscored next, based on key ideas:

Firstly, although few articles (by comparison) in *Ibérica* target LOTE, a significant percentage of these deal with genres and/or online environments. For example, multilingual websites, academic/scientific blogs, corporate reports/ presentations, emails, online lectures, and specialised forums are explored. These studies share the need for more multilingual developments, both in academic settings (e.g., research on writing and dissemination) and for communicative skills in professional contexts (e.g., research on international projects). These situations call for the exploration of transversal and multi-linguistic skills in LSP pedagogy, less addressed in the journal articles.

Secondly, in specialized language settings, ELF prevails. In this scope, multilingual foci are placed on translation and translanguaging as strategies for both academic and professional/business communication. For example, language pairs (e.g., English/Spanish, English/Polish, and so on) and multicultural elements (e.g., different groups from various countries) are targeted. This realization that other languages and cultures influence specialized communication is sometimes addressed. Therefore, the demand is strong for collaborative multilingual LSP projects, as in the case of putting multilingual collaboration into practice via online platforms.

Thirdly, in lexicology/terminology and translation, studies focus on various languages for specific purposes and for different contexts and areas (e.g., engineering, business, medicine, and so on). Phraseological and lexical-grammatical studies analysing terminologies, lexical collocations, idiomatic constructions, and metaphorical language, among other elements, are pivotal in LSP lexicology and translation research. Multilingual databases are thus targeted in order to improve and update current LSP courses and materials. Collaborative effort is internationalized for the examination of different lingua-cultural terms and lexicons.

Fourthly, multilingual explorations, compared to monolingual English research, constitute a low percentage in the journal within this time period (2012-2022). In fact, in comparison with previous years, in *Ibérica*, LOTE-focused research has decreased from 35.1 percent between 2002 and 2011 to 18.6 percent during the following decade. Thus, all present and past *Ibérica* editors have accentuated the need for more multilingual foci and methods. Among some reasons stated is the demand for more methodological instruments (e.g., corpus tools) in the

study of linguistic/paralinguistic elements across languages, and for more language comparisons in LSP needs analysis.

Fifthly, LSP scholars tend to view English as a reference model for linguistic analysis. An example is research being done about novel communicative situations over social media, the web 2.0, and so on. These studies are mostly conducted by having English as reference, even if multilingual situations constitute a growing phenomenon.

In the present study, *Ibérica* is considered representative of LSP research, since more transnational (outside of Spain) collaborations increasingly get published in this LSP journal (up to 61.3 percent from 2012 to 2022), with world regions such as Australasia gaining traction (21.5 percent of international authors) since 2012. However, the thematic claims made about multilingualism are not intended to be applicable and extrapolated to other LSP research contexts, since key themes may differ if other sources are employed. Yet, one main claim made about the wide presence of English can be mirrored by recent systematic analyses of linguistics journals, where language policies promote LOTE, but the reality is that English writing and native “speakerism” are prioritized in practice.

Finally, if the focus of the present study had been placed on Spain only, other journals, conferences, and materials should have been accessed and explored in addition to *Ibérica*. For example, the AELFE and AESLA (Spanish Association of Applied Linguistics) conference proceedings could afford more updated information on multilingual analyses and perspectives. Additionally, journals in Spain such as ResLA (*Spanish journal of Applied Linguistics*) and RLFE (*Journal of Languages for Specific Purposes*) could greatly enhance the description of LSP and multilingualism analyses in Spain.

## Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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