



# Hispania

*Hispania*, the official journal of the [American Association of Teachers of Spanish and Portuguese \(AATSP\)](#), invites the submission of original, unpublished manuscripts on applied linguistics, cultural studies, culture, film, language, linguistics, literary criticism, literature, and pedagogy having to do with Spanish and Portuguese. Throughout *Hispania's history* since its founding in 1917, it has published scholarly articles and reviews that are judged to be of interest to specialists in the discipline(s) as well as to a diverse readership of teachers of Spanish and Portuguese.

## CURRENT ISSUE

**December 2019 (102.4)**

This issue of *Hispania* includes a State-of-the-State Feature on the future of Spanish for the Professions and Specific Purposes by Michael Scott Doyle, Lourdes Sánchez-López and Enrica Ademagni that can't be missed. The Editors are also pleased to be publishing eight research articles on Gopegui (by Ana M. López-Aguilera), gender and L2 reading in undergraduate Spanish courses (by Cindy Brantmeier et al.), storytelling the Camino (by Carmen Granda), translation in Aub (by Gabriella Martin), biography and fiction in Carvalho (by Luciana Namorato), Goldemberg's *Valentia* (by Cecília Rodrigues), discourse in Gage (by Monica Styles), and Libertad Lamarque in Mexican cinema (by Valentina Velázquez-Zvierkova). The diverse book/media review section includes reviews of Carmen Benito-Vessel's *España y la costa atlántica de los EE.UU.: Cuatro personajes del siglo XVI en busca de autor*, Silvia G. Kurlat Ares's *La ilusión persistente: Diálogos entre la ciencia ficción y el campo cultural*, and Alan V. Brown, and Gregory L. Thompson's *The Changing Landscape of Spanish Language Curricula: Designing Higher Education Programs for Diverse Students*.



## Introduction: Moving Forward with Spanish for the Professions and Specific Purposes

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**Keywords:** best practices/mejores prácticas, CDA-SPSP stakeholders/los interesados en CDA-SPSP, curriculum development activism (CDA)/activismo del desarrollo del currículo, Language for Specific Purposes (LSP)/lenguas para fines específicos (LFE), language policy/política lingüística, relevance of the study of Spanish/relevancia del estudio de español, Spanish for the professions and specific purposes (SPSP)/español para las profesiones y fines específicos (EPFE)

The following four interrelated essays developed from the session titled, Curriculum Development Activism (CDA): Moving Forward with Spanish for the Professions and Specific Purposes (SPSP), at the 100th AATSP Annual Conference in 2018 in Salamanca, Spain. The overarching theme for the essays was “Looking Forward/Forward Looking: Spanish and Portuguese on the Move.” The articles further explore an issue of pressing interest within the profession, that of Spanish and non-English Language for the Professions and Specific Purposes (LPSP) as a vital curricular consideration in undergraduate and graduate foreign language programs in the United States. They do so via the lens of a forward-looking Curriculum Development Activism (CDA), which is more fully defined and contextualized here than when the term was initially coined in the *Hispania* Centenary Issue (2017), and also via best-practices curriculum development methodologies at the University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB) and at Indiana University Purdue University Indianapolis (IUPUI).

CDA is a crucial consideration because it serves as a safeguard against curricular stagnation and disconnection from the always evolving needs of the learner and society. Such stagnation and disconnection pose a real threat to the continued relevance and centrality of the study of Spanish and foreign languages in US higher education. For this reason, graduate-level programming through the PhD is encouraged to take on a stronger leadership role in a redefined aspect of the language generalist that is now required, that of LPSP, for today’s foreign language educator. This would respond to the curricular sea change that has been taking place at the undergraduate level. Since Spanish for the Professions and Specific Purposes is a major subset of all Languages for the Professions and Specific Purposes, in talking about SPSP in these interconnected articles, it is at the same time a reference to LPSP and vice versa. Because of the relevance of its content in meeting the needs of the learner and society, SPSP-CDA can also help to attract new enrollments and buffer against enrollment downturns.

Specifically, the four articles address context, stakeholders, leadership, attitude, curricular architecture, best-practices integration and normalization, program continuity, and how the future curricular landscape of the study of Spanish and foreign languages in the US will likely be shaped increasingly, and be best served, by SPSP-CDA. The first article provides a status update of LPSP-SPSP-CDA context and dialectics. The second engages with key foundational, curricular, and policy considerations. The third and fourth articles address integration and normalization of SPSP within an evolving liberal arts curriculum, via adaptable models for SPSP-CDA in US higher education at two leading university programs in applied Spanish.



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## Curriculum Development Activism (CDA): Moving Forward with Spanish for the Professions and Specific Purposes (SPSP)

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### Status Review of Non-English Language for the Professions and Specific Purposes (NE-LPSP)

#### 1. Research and Development Context for NE-LPSP and SPSP

The steadily gathering momentum of NE-LPSP (Doyle 2013, 2017), identified alternately as World Languages for Specific Purposes (WLSP, King de Ramírez and Lafford 2018), and of SPSP, within the national foreign language curricula of the US, has been well chronicled for nearly four decades in the work of a substantial number of scholars, among them Grosse (1982, 1985, 1991), Grosse and Voght (1990), Cere (1987), Doyle (1987, 1992), Melton (1994), Branam (1998), Fryer and Guntermann (1998), Schorr (2000), and Voght (2000). This ongoing development of NE-LPSP (or WLSP) and SPSP, preceded by unconnected pioneering work in English for Specific Purposes (e.g., Halliday et al. 1964), as the two curricular areas (English vs. other languages) were busy being developed independently from one another, is also confirmed by the many publications in groundbreaking US journals, such as the nineteen issues of *Global Business Languages* at Purdue University, which published 233 scholarly editors' introductions, articles, essays, case studies and reviews from 1996–2014 ([goo.gl/PHq6Bb](http://goo.gl/PHq6Bb)), and sixteen volumes of the *Journal of Languages for International Business*, which published 180 scholarly contributions from 1984–2006 at Thunderbird, the American Graduate School of International Management ([goo.gl/VWf6ss](http://goo.gl/VWf6ss)) and ([goo.gl/MV57Gi](http://goo.gl/MV57Gi)). As Doyle has indicated (2017), more recent research of scholars such as Grosse (2009), Grosse and Voght (2012), Domcekova (2010), Doyle (2010, 2012a and 2012b, 2013, 2014, 2018), Doyle, Pujol and Godev (2017), Dulfano (2011, 2014), Fryer (2012), Long (2010, 2014, 2017), Long and Uzcinski (2012), King de Ramírez and Lafford (2013), Lafford (2017), Sánchez-López (2010, 2012, 2013a, 2013b, 2014, 2017, 2019), Pérez (2017), José (2014), Long (2013), and Hertel and Dings (2014, 2017), has continued to chronicle and contribute to ongoing developments in NE-LPSP and SPSP. In recent years, we have also seen a steady increase in the number of journal special issues and edited volumes and proceedings dedicated to LPSP and SPSP, such as: *Hispania* (the 2010 issue “Special Section: Curricular Changes for Spanish and Portuguese in a New Era,” with at least five contributions related to SPSP); the twelve contributions in *The Modern Language Journal* (2012, ed. Lafford); the four post-2016 contributions (out of a total of 20 contributions included) in the special issue *50 Years of Foreign Language Annals: A Retrospective* (section titled “Content-infused Learning: Making Connections to Other Disciplines and the Professions”); the eleven contributions in *Cuadernos de ALDEEU* (2014, eds. Doyle and Gala); and the 31 contributions in the three refereed volume proceedings of the International Symposium on Languages for Specific Purposes (*Scholarship and Teaching on Languages for Specific Purposes* 2013, ed. Sánchez-López; *Language for Specific Purposes: Trends in Curriculum Development*

2017, editor Long; and *Transferable Skills Acquired Through World Languages for Specific Purposes: Preparing Students and Instructors for the 21st Century Workplace* 2018, editors King de Ramírez and Lafford). In 1998, Fryer and Guntermann led the way by coediting the groundbreaking volume *Spanish and Portuguese for Business and the Professions*, sponsored by the AATSP, which contained 26 contributions (two prefaces and 24 chapters). The impressive numbers of scholarly publications, at least 490 by this count, in mainly NE-LPSP and SPSP, build on the more than 200 publications referenced by Grosse and Voght in their pioneering 1991 study, “The Evolution of Languages for Specific Purposes in the United States.” These numbers do not factor in the even larger number of scholarly publications in the LPSP sub-categories of Translation Studies and Interpreting Studies, which have matured worldwide in recent decades into prominent freestanding fields of curriculum development and scholarly inquiry. In its recently published Centenary Issue (2017), *Hispania* once again features numerous essays on SPSP as the American Association of Teachers of Spanish and Portuguese contemplates what the future may hold for the study of Spanish and Portuguese in the United States. As Nuessel writes in his Guest Editor Column to the Centenary issue, Language for Specific Purposes is now a significant component of the curricula of many language departments, and “will only increase as the profession seeks appropriate ways to modify and strengthen the curriculum” (7).

## 2. SPSP Dialectics

The to-be-expected and lingering dialectics of the current curricular landscape confirm that the steady growth in SPSP, supported by a growing number of colleagues in US higher and secondary education, as evidenced by conference attendance and presentations and the publications indicated above, has also been characterized by a stubborn resistance on the part of others, as SPSP moves in from Toury’s marginalized, hovering-in-the-periphery status to that of mainstream norm (Doyle 2017: 98). The exceptionalism claimed by the traditional literature- and culture-based curriculum, by virtue of having occupied first the mainstream center stage of foreign language and Spanish language university curricula, has been challenged by the ongoing loss of language enrollments and programs and by emerging new curricular possibilities of SPSP, which has been working steadily to develop its own “prominent cohesive space” as a curricular norm (Doyle 2017: 98). There has been a push and a pushback. These dialectics have been analyzed in a recent survey by Hertel and Dings (2017), who inform us that (*italics added for emphasis*):

While faculty tended to value traditional offerings such as literature and culture courses, alumni and students rated advanced conversation courses as most important. In addition, *students and alumni rated translation and language for specific purposes courses significantly higher than faculty did*. Qualitative analysis of the participants’ comments revealed a generalized tension between *student and alumni emphasis on the need for courses that promote practical communicative skills* vs. faculty emphasis on the development of critical thinking and cultural awareness alongside language skills. (1)

Raquel Oxford (2010) has defined critical thinkers as those who are “able to reason effectively, make judgments and decisions, and solve problems in creative ways” (67; see also “Transferable Skill: Critical Thinking” by King Ramírez and Lafford, 21–35). It is a red herring to claim that the development of such critical thinking skills distinguishes the traditional literature- and culture-based curriculum from the emerging SPSP content domains and methodologies. Effective reasoning, the making of judgments and decisions based on rigorous and insightful analysis, and problem solving are all required by illustrative SPSP scenarios such as, in a business Spanish

class, that of 1) making and justifying a recommendation for an investment or a marketing campaign based on a comparative cost-benefit analysis in different cultural-economic-business settings, such as Mexico City vs. Cusco, Peru vs. Seville, Spain; 2) investigating comparative economic development realities and issues in Central America; 3) leading a formal (coherent and standards-based) job performance evaluation and review (positive and/or negative) of an employee; or 4) preparing an effective cover letter and resume (psychological priming), and rehearsing for and doing a successful job interview. The development of critical thinking skills is essential to and pervades LPSP and SPSP, whether in business, medical, legal, social work, or other professional and job content domains, including STEM. All the functional areas of business, for instance, from management to human resources, banking and accounting, manufacturing, marketing, advertising, and finance (risk management scenarios), require critical thinking, well informed and substantiated decision making, and problem solving (Doyle 2012a: 109). Indeed, each of the functional areas of business has long offered graduate education up through the doctoral degree, dedicated to the development of critical thinking skills and innovative scholarship at the highest academic levels. Furthermore, representative fields that inform the interdisciplinarity of Business Spanish and business language studies—such as economics, psychology, anthropology, sociology, history, philosophy, political science, geography, etc. (Doyle 2012a: 109)—, all require and develop critical thinking skills. Critical thinking skills and problem solving are woven deeply into the methodological fabric of LPSP and SPSP.

Emerging new norms or curricula do not necessarily have to replace mainstream present norms, a false dilemma that would reflect a zero-sum reading of Toury's triadic model of the fluid cycle: 1) the curricular potentiality in the process of emerging moves from periphery into mainstream tenant, which 2) in turn is moved out, as the previously marginalized or future curricular possibility in turn occupies the mainstream narrative, and 3) the status quo of the present curriculum is pushed aside or into the past, and itself becomes marginalized. In terms of the NE-LPSP and SPSP curricular agenda, this would also be what Ruggiero (2014) identifies as "de-centering and repositioning literature and language instruction courses alongside more diverse, interdisciplinary, collaborative, and applied courses that situate language within broader social, historical, geographic, and cross-cultural perspectives" (59). If the curricular focus is on meeting the needs of the learner and society, there must be enough space for emerging norms or curricula (SPSP) to share center stage with curricula that arrived earlier. The systemic creation of this space, "responding to the needs of the greater society," is emblematic of Hlas's Grand Challenges (2018) for the study of foreign languages, which address pressing topics such as (brackets added):

What does contemporary language teaching look like? How can our research influence [much less relate to] public debate and opinion? How will we know what impact our practices have on our students' developing proficiency [and to what ends], our teachers, and language policy in general? How can our research advocate for language learning within society? (52)

At the heart of such policy considerations lie curriculum development and methodology. In this terrain, as Álvarez-Castro reminds us, we must remain attentive to "the importance of keeping students at the center of all our academic and scholarly endeavors" (504).

But accommodating change is stressful, as Oxford (2010) reminds us in her essay "Promise (Un)fulfilled: Reframing Languages for the Twenty-First Century":

[It] is significant to note how difficult, slow, and ineffectual change may both seem and actually be. Change in higher education, as manifested in curriculum reform, can be particularly difficult as the structures of academia, such as rank and tradition, retard the process. (66)



Ruggiero (2014) makes a similar observation, that a key obstacle to change “remains an internal audience: namely, our own departmental faculty” (60), with an indictment that “the political structures in which we work, rather than student, professional, and community needs, seem to predominate in dictating the agenda and curricula of our graduate programs” (61). Hlas further contextualizes the curricular situation as follows (brackets added):

we seem to focus more on the now [what is already in place, comfortably] rather than the future [what could and should be in place, uncomfortably, because this moves us out of a status quo comfort zone], lacking a unified ability to predict and examine factors that are driving change in our field and thus spurring areas for innovation. (47)

The anxiety of developing vs. not developing the curriculum is also captured by Hertel, Jaundry and Dings (2014): “While it is clear that many Spanish departments are adjusting their offerings, many remain stagnant” (2). Curricular stagnation is neither a reasonable nor an acceptable option in a world—which constitutes education’s external environment—that itself is continually changing. As Nuessel concludes in his Guest Editor Column in the *Hispania* Centenary Issue, regardless of how it is handled, “Change *will* occur in the language program” (7, emphasis added). In this context, SPSP curriculum development activism serves as a safeguard and a counter to stagnation, which threatens our shared interest in the continuous and optimal renewal of the relevance and centrality of the study of Spanish in US higher education, at both the undergraduate and the graduate level. The latter, as we shall see in the second article, is a pivotal consideration, in terms of stakeholders in the SPSP-CDA agenda.

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