Special Issue, Part II: Global Advances in Business Communication - World Languages for Specific Purposes: The Future is BLENDED

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In the first half of the special issue, we discussed blended learning from four perspectives. In addition to the traditional use of BLENDED--hybrid systems and the adoption of synchronous and asynchronous online teaching, BLENDED referred to four other critical factors:

1. The BLENDING of non-U.S. and U.S. educators;

2. The BLENDING of traditional WLSP themes (business, engineering) and non-traditional themes (biotechnology and agribusiness);

3. The BLENDING of academic, military, and corporate experts; and

4. The BLENDING of diversity, equity, and inclusion.

The goal was, and is, to provide a more comprehensive forum for sharing ideas, best practices, and empirical research findings among WLSP educators than is found in WLSP volumes.

The articles in both halves not only include commonly taught languages like Spanish, French, and German but a bevy of less commonly taught languages such as Arabic, Dari, Farsi, Hindi, Korean, and Pashto. English, normally the domain of English for specific purposes (ESP), has been added to enrich the collection of ideas and practices.

The special issue is also unique because it includes authors representing three global companies: Language Mentors International (LMI), LeoDynamics, and Sacco Global Consulting. The owners, once successful academics, add perspectives that are not normally included in WLSP journals. These three examples illustrate that academicians can play a valuable role in corporate and military education if they decide to go in that direction. Conversely, Milevica Bojovic, a manager who worked in import and export logistics, left her global business environment to become an academic.

The BLENDING of empirical methods, employing qualitative and quantitative measures, permeates the essays of the special issue. Milevica Bojovic used descriptive statistics and a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) for data processing to assess the potential effects of two language learning environments (blended learning and F2F instruction), in pre/pandemic and pandemic era, on the levels of undergraduate biotechnology students' communicative language variables (general communicative ability, linguistic competence, discourse competence, functional and sociolinguistic competence, strategic competence, fluency, and non-verbal

communicative ability). Drewelow and Granja Ibarreche used a qualitative interpretive approach to assess student reflection papers while Deb Reisinger, Florina Matu, and Seung-Eun Chang used mixed methods to assess the effectiveness of their courses.

Table of contents for this issue:

- "Languages for specific purposes: Best practices in teaching and learning South Asian and Middle Eastern languages to military personnel." (Farid Saydee, ACTFL);

- "Inclusive teaching practices in a French for professional purposes course at the U.S. Air Force Academy." (Florina Matu, U.S. Air Force Academy);

- "Service-learning in language for specific purposes: A case of Korean language practicum." Seung-EunChang, Georgia Tech; and

- "Open architecture curricular design and the teaching of corporate English" (Steven J. Sacco, Professor Emeritus of French & Italian, San Diego State University and Leonilda Renaldo (LeoDynamics, Geneva, Switzerland)

In his article, "Languages for Specific Purposes: Best Practices in Teaching and Learning South Asian and Middle Eastern Languages to Military Personnel," **Farid Saydee**, the CEO of Language Mentors International (LMI), details the process of designing and developing effective language and culture courses for U.S. military personnel. Saydee, a nationally recognized military language teaching expert, explains that typically, language training programs focus on the development of (1) skills acquisition for general communication, (2) reading skills, and (3) knowledge about cultural differences (Hudson & Brown, 2015). He adds that while these skills are essential for meeting the goals of language programs, they fail to prepare learners for practical purposes, especially when it comes to job-specific language needs (McGinn, 2014; USGAO, 2010 & 2002). Saydee then presents readers with data collected from an institution of higher education in Southern California offering courses on Middle Eastern and South Asian languages, including Modern Standard Arabic (MSA), Arabic-Iraqi, Arabic-Levantine, Arabic-Yamani, Dari, Pashto, and Persian-Farsi to military personnel who enroll in order to satisfy a job requirement.

In a second essay on military-oriented WLSP, **Florina Matu**, shares the components of her advanced course on French for Professional Purposes at the U.S. Air Force Academy. Her essay, "Inclusive teaching practices in a French for professional purposes course at the U.S. Air Force Academy," describes a groundbreaking course, which is much needed given the U.S. military's lack of linguistic and cultural preparation in combating terrorism in Francophone Africa. Matu's course emphasizes "alignment between leadership skills required for future officers and diverse course materials and assessments." The alignment also comprises "inclusive language used in professional settings, engagement with diverse Francophone cultures, student-

teacher partnership and team building for creating group projects relevant to the military profession." Matu's focus on "professional skills" through the optic of diversity and inclusion including "a wide range of gender, socio-economic, political, and geographical identities" are applicable to all WLSP courses.

In "Service-Learning in Language for Specific Purposes: A Case of Korean Language Practicum," Georgia Tech's **Seung-Eun Chang** describes her service-learning course in this critically important less commonly taught language (LCTL). Despite the complexities of executing service-learning programs in less commonly taught languages, Dr. Chang describes a highly successful program that provided an enriching experience to approximately a dozen students, a model for LCTL instructors worldwide. In her service-learning course, she developed a tripartite language practicum service-learning course which combines: (1) "in-class activities of group discussions, oral reports, and academic lectures; (2) a 10-week community service project outside the classroom (25-30 hours); and (3) individual reflection on service and academic learning." Chang shares both quantitative and qualitative data illustrating the effectiveness of the course. One student's "reflection" summarizes the success of the course: *I believe that the most successful part of the service was getting the students out into the real world to interact with people. My partners do well with textbook language but have difficulty with the spoken language in society. Taking them out into the city or going to events and interacting with them was much more memorable for both me and the partners, while also getting them exposed to and practicing language that is used outside of the classroom.*

In Sacco and Renaldo's "Open Architecture Curricular Design and the Teaching of Corporate English," describes the execution of OACD within a corporate language learning context. Preferable to a "fixed curriculum" or a "one-size-fits-all" method of teaching corporate languages, OACD encourages companies and language providers "to add and swap activities and tasks on a continual basis" according to the company's needs, student learning styles specifically their styles, strategies, level of fossilization, interests, and zone of proximal development… according to a thematically based syllabus based on authentic materials" (Leaver, 2019). To illustrate, **Sacco and Renaldo** describe three OACD programs using blended learning platforms: (1) *Online Safety English*, a program designed for nonnative English-speaking agribusiness employees; (2) *Boardroom English®,* a program designed for senior corporate executives; and (3) *The Business Trip*, a virtual reality unit designed for the needs of corporations who send their nonnative English-speaking employees abroad. They posit that the use of OACD is a strategy to boost the proficiency levels of B1 business practitioners, agronomists, and engineers to C1, the level required by many multinational corporations.