



French for Specific Purposes (FSP): A Key to Success in the Professional World

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Article Info

ISSN (online): 2582-7138

Impact Factor: 5.307 (SJIF)

Volume: 04

Issue: 06

November-December 2023

Received: 12-10-2023;

Accepted: 13-11-2023

Page No: 934-938

Abstract

This article highlights the growing importance of mastering French for Specific Purposes (FSP) in an increasingly globalized world. The article discusses the characteristics of FSP, including its historical evolution, learner-centered approaches, and the integration of authentic materials. It also explores teaching methods such as task-based communicative approaches and the use of practical activities to facilitate real-world application. The evaluation process in ESP involves diagnostic, formative, and summative assessments. Additionally, the feedback from professionals who have undergone FSP training highlights the concrete benefits of French for Specific Objectives in various professional sectors.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.54660/IJMRGE.2023.4.6.934-938>

Keywords: French for Specific Purposes (FSP), pedagogical approach, professional context, evaluation, experiences feedback, benefits

1. Introduction

In an increasingly globalized and multilingual world, the demand for FSP (French for Specific Purposes) continues to grow. Professionals often need to interact with international colleagues, clients, or partners, requiring mastery of communication skills in areas such as law, medicine, finance, commerce, technology, and many more.

FSP is an educational approach aimed at teaching French by focusing on the specific needs and objectives of learners within their professional field. While traditional foreign language learning often emphasizes general grammar and vocabulary, FSP concentrates on the linguistic and communicative skills necessary in specific professional contexts.

In this article, we will examine the characteristics and challenges of FSP, teaching methods suited to this approach, as well as assessment within the framework of FSP while outlining the tangible benefits of learning FSP in the professional world.

2. Characteristics and Issues of FSP

2.1. Definition and Historical Evolution

French for Specific Purposes (FSP) is an approach that saw development starting in the 1970s within the realm of foreign language teaching. According to Diane Belcher and Alan Hirvela, "FSP is characterized by its orientation towards specific objectives linked to particular professional domains." Its aim is to prepare learners to effectively communicate in French within specific professional situations.

The historical evolution of FSP mirrors changes in the professional world and learners' needs. According to Jean-Marc Mangiante, "FSP evolved in response to globalization and the increasing demand for specialized language skills." Initially, FSP primarily focused on areas such as commerce and business, but it gradually expanded to encompass other fields like law, medicine, technology, engineering, tourism, and many more.

As FSP evolved, it adopted a more learner-centered approach geared toward solving real problems. According to Anne-Marie Narbonne, "FSP has become more oriented towards learners' real needs and adapted to their specific professional environment." This means that FSP courses now incorporate tasks and authentic activities that simulate the professional situations learners will encounter.

3. Specific Pedagogical Objectives

One of the essential aspects of FSP is the definition of specific pedagogical objectives. Jean-Marc Mangiante defines them as follows: "The pedagogical objectives of FSP must be clearly defined and focus on the linguistic and communicative skills necessary in precise professional contexts." FSP courses aim to develop learners' linguistic and communicative skills in specific fields of activity such as medicine, business, law, or tourism.

In the domain of FSP, pedagogical objectives are closely linked to learners' real needs within their professional field. According to Annick Rivens Mompean, "Objectives should be based on a thorough analysis of learners' language needs and the tasks they will be required to perform." This implies that FSP's pedagogical objectives must be relevant, specific, and aligned with learners' professional needs.

Pedagogical objectives in FSP can vary and change according to fields of activity. For instance, in the legal domain, objectives might focus on understanding legal texts, drafting legal documents, and oral communication within a legal context. In the medical field, objectives might concentrate on medical terminology, communication with patients, and reading medical documents. In each domain, specific pedagogical objectives are defined based on the linguistic and communicative skills required for effective professional practice.

3.1. Adaptation of Content to Learners' Professional Reality

Adapting content to the professional reality of learners is a central element of FSP. This pedagogical approach stands out for its intent to precisely address learners' needs within their specific professional field. Thus, the content and activities offered in FSP courses are carefully designed to mirror the professional reality of learners and promote their integration into the working world.

According to Anne-Marie Narbonne, "Adapting content in FSP aims to create a close link between the linguistic and communicative skills taught and those required in the targeted professional context." This means that the content covered in FSP courses is selected based on practical and functional skills that are directly applicable in the targeted professional domain.

In FSP, content and activities are meticulously chosen and developed to meet learners' real needs. This may involve using authentic documents such as professional texts, reports, case studies, or videos related to learners' field of activity. According to Françoise Salager-Meyer, "FSP content must be relevant, current, and specific to learners' language needs within their professional context." For instance, in an FSP course focused on international commerce, learners might study commercial contracts, analyze economic reports, engage in negotiation role-plays, or create business presentations.

The primary goal of adapting FSP content is to develop practical and functional skills directly applicable in the targeted professional context. This might include oral communication skills for meetings, presentations, or negotiations; writing skills for reports, professional correspondence, or specialized articles; or reading comprehension skills for technical or regulatory documents. FSP content aims to prepare learners to interact effectively and professionally within their specific field of activity. FSP distinguishes itself with its learner-centered approach,

reflected in content adaptation to professional reality. As Aïda Alcántara asserts, "Adapting FSP content to learners' professional reality is essential to ensure their motivation and engagement in the learning process." FSP courses are specifically designed to reflect situations and tasks that learners will encounter in their professional domain, fostering their integration into the workforce.

4. Teaching Methods Adapted to FSP

French for Specific Purposes (FSP) doesn't have its distinct methodology; rather, it has adapted to various methodological approaches that have emerged in the field of teaching French as a foreign language (FLE). Currently, FSP aligns with the (post)communicative approach known as the Action-oriented Approach. This means that FSP instruction emphasizes communication and the skills required to use the French language in specific contexts. In this regard, Richer, J.J. states: "French for Specific Purposes hasn't developed a specific methodology; it has molded itself into the various methodological trends that have evolved in F.L.E. teaching. Currently, it fully aligns with the (post)communicative methodology as outlined by the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages."

4.1. Communicative Approach

FSP teaching emphasizes the communicative approach, focusing on interaction and real language practice within specific professional contexts. Learners engage in concrete and authentic activities such as simulating professional situations, case studies, and role-plays. This approach aims to promote active language use and develop the necessary skills to effectively interact in specific professional contexts.

4.2. Action-oriented Perspective and Implementation of Practical Activities to Foster Concrete Use of Acquired Knowledge

The action-oriented perspective is an extension of the communicative approach that emphasizes using language in concrete and authentic situations. To facilitate the integration of acquired knowledge, FSP courses implement practical activities allowing learners to concretely apply their learning. This might involve simulations of meetings, drafting professional reports, oral presentations, or engaging in professional email exchanges. It encourages learners to use the language to accomplish practical tasks, such as problem-solving or completing a mission, rather than solely focusing on grammar and vocabulary learning. These practical activities bolster learners' confidence in their ability to use the language in their professional environment.

5. Evaluation within the Framework of FSP Diagnostic

5.1 Assessment Diagnostic

Assessment Diagnostic assessment plays a crucial role in identifying learners' specific linguistic needs before the commencement of their training. It enables pinpointing their strengths and weaknesses in language within the targeted professional context. By precisely understanding learners' linguistic skills, teachers can design personalized programs that cater to the specific requirements of their field of expertise. Consequently, diagnostic assessment plays an essential role in the success of FSP learning by ensuring a targeted and effective approach to developing the linguistic skills necessary for advancement in their profession.

5.2. Formative Assessment

Formative assessment, conducted throughout the learning process, allows for regular monitoring of learners' progress and the adaptation of activities and content based on their specific needs. According to Jean-Paul Narcy-Combes, "Formative assessment in FSP promotes an individualized approach to learning by continuously providing feedback to learners and guiding them in their linguistic and communicative development." It can take various forms such as diagnostic tests, peer assessments, individual or group projects, oral interviews, or self-assessments. Formative assessment thus encourages constant adaptation of teaching to learners' needs and allows for personalized learning. Similarly, Anne-Marie Barraja-Rohan notes that, "Formative assessment enables teachers to gather information about learners' linguistic and communicative skills, guide their progress, and facilitate continual adaptation in teaching." It occurs throughout the learning journey and may involve regular tests, individual or group projects, oral interviews to evaluate communication skills, or self-assessments where learners reflect on their progress. Formative assessment encourages constructive feedback and continual adaptation of teaching to meet learners' specific needs.

5.3. Summative Assessment

In addition to formative assessment, the final summative evaluation occurs at the end of the learning process to validate learners' acquired competencies. This evaluation aims to measure the mastery level of French within the targeted professional context and certify learners' communicative and linguistic skills. It consolidates achievements and determines whether learning objectives have been met. According to Jean-Louis Chiss, "The final summative assessment provides official recognition of learners' competencies in the professional domain for which they have prepared." It can take various forms, such as a written exam, a final project where learners demonstrate their mastery of specific skills relevant to their professional domain, or an oral presentation before an assessment panel. The final summative assessment thus provides an overall evaluation of acquired skills and certifies learners' ability to effectively use French in real professional contexts.

Evaluation within the framework of FSP holds a threefold dimension: diagnostic assessment, formative assessment, and summative assessment. It plays a crucial role at different stages of FSP training. Firstly, it has a diagnostic importance at the beginning of training to assess learners' specific needs. Secondly, it is used formatively throughout the learning process to provide continuous feedback and aid in improving linguistic skills. Lastly, it is used summatively at the end of training to validate learners' acquired competencies. This comprehensive and integrated evaluation contributes to ensuring effective learning and certification of linguistic skills within the professional framework.

Concrete Benefits of Learning FSP in the Professional World: Experience Reports from Various Specialties

During this stage of the study, we conducted interviews with professionals active in different sectors who have benefited from FSP training. We asked them the following question: *"What concrete advantage have you gained from your learning of FSP in your professional journey?"*

The responses obtained can be considered as experience reports. Each response highlights the specific advantages the

interviewee derived from their FSP learning in their professional specialty. This allows for sharing tangible examples of the benefits obtained through mastery of FSP in the context of the professional world. These experience reports illustrate how FSP has had a positive impact on the skills, opportunities, and professional confidence of the interviewees.

1. Profile of Interviewees

We conducted interviews with six individuals: 1) Sales Manager at a French hypermarket in Rabat, 2) Project Manager in the automotive industry at a multinational company located in Kénitra, 3) Export Sales Representative at Tanger Med, 4) Head Chef at a four-star hotel in Rabat, 5) Computer Engineer at a company based in Kénitra, 6) Researcher and Lecturer at Ibn Tofail University in Kénitra.

2. Research Method: Semi-Structured Interview

The use of the semi-structured interview method was a relevant research choice for *gathering in-depth qualitative data*. This method allowed for a structured interaction with the participants, where prepared questions were asked while enabling open-ended responses and in-depth discussions. The semi-structured interview provided us with the necessary flexibility to delve deeply into participants' experiences, perspectives, and knowledge, while maintaining a certain structure to ensure data coherence and comparability. Here are the responses of the interviewees with their professional specialties:

Interviewee No. 1 - Specialty: Sales Manager in a Hypermarket.

"Learning FSP was crucial for me as a sales manager. Through this approach, I've developed specific language skills in my field, enabling me to communicate more effectively and precisely with colleagues and clients. I can now convey clear information and avoid misunderstandings, significantly enhancing my performance as a sales professional."

Interviewee No. 2 - Specialty: Project Manager in the Automotive Industry.

"Learning FSP was essential for me as a project manager in the automotive industry. With my knowledge of technical terminology and specific standards in my field, I could quickly adapt to new professional situations. This adaptability is a valuable asset in a constantly evolving field, where I interact with multidisciplinary teams and ensure all members have a thorough understanding of project issues and objectives."

Interviewee No. 3 - Specialty: Export Sales Representative.

"Intercultural communication is essential in my field as an export sales representative. Thanks to my FSP learning, I can effectively interact with international colleagues and partners. This facilitates collaboration and strengthens professional relationships with our overseas clients. I can understand and use culture-specific terminology, promoting better mutual understanding and contributing to the success of our international business activities."

Interviewee No. 4 - Specialty: Head Chef.

"Learning FSP has boosted my professional confidence as a pastry chef. I feel much more comfortable during culinary

demonstrations, negotiations with suppliers, or discussions with colleagues and clients. Mastering French in a professional context has enabled me to express myself clearly and precisely when describing dishes, making recommendations, and discussing culinary techniques, positively impacting the presentation of my creations, customer satisfaction, and establishing strong professional relationships in the pastry world."

Interviewee No. 5 - Specialty: Computer Engineer.

"As a computer engineer, mastering FSP has given me a competitive advantage in the job market. I know that employers value specialized language skills in the IT field. By acquiring technical vocabulary and expressions specific to my sector, I've been able to demonstrate my expertise and deep understanding of professional IT-related issues, helping me stand out and secure interesting career opportunities."

Interviewee No. 6 - Specialty: Researcher and Lecturer.

"Mastery of FSP has given me an edge in accessing specialized information as a scientific researcher. In my field, some relevant resources and documents are only available in French. Thanks to my language skills, I can read, understand, and utilize this information, allowing me to stay constantly updated on scientific advancements and remain competitive in research."

2. Interpretation and discussion

The interpretation and discussion of the interviewees' responses highlighted several advantages of learning French for Specific Purposes (FSP) in the professional world. These advantages underscore the significance of this approach. The following points are particularly noteworthy:

Interviewee No. 1: Effective communication

Learning FSP enables professionals to communicate more effectively and precisely within their expertise. By acquiring specialized vocabulary and sector-specific expressions, they can convey information more clearly and avoid misunderstandings.

Interviewee No. 2: Adaptability

FSP learning allows professionals to quickly adapt to new situations and specific demands within their field. They can understand and utilize technical terminology, standards, and common practices, facilitating their integration into new professional environments.

Interviewee No. 3: International collaboration

In an increasingly globalized world, intercultural communication is essential. By learning FSP, professionals can efficiently interact with international colleagues and partners, thereby facilitating collaboration and strengthening professional relationships.

Interviewee No. 4: Professional confidence

FSP learning boosts professionals' confidence in their ability to express themselves and succeed in their field. A better command of the French language in a professional context makes them feel more comfortable during presentations, negotiations, or discussions with clients, colleagues, or partners.

Interviewee No. 5: Competitive advantage

Mastering FSP provides professionals with a competitive edge in the job market. Employers value sector-specific language skills as they demonstrate expertise and a profound understanding of professional challenges.

Interviewee No. 6: Access to information

Some pertinent information in a professional field might only be available in French. Mastery of FSP allows professionals access to documents, studies, research, and resources specific to their sector that may not be translated or available in other languages.



Fig 1: Chart Illustrating the Advantages of FSP (French for Specific Purposes) According to Some Professionals

In summary, learning FSP (French for Specific Purposes) is crucial in the professional world as it enables precise and effective communication, offers competitive advantages, promotes adaptability, facilitates international collaboration, provides access to specialized information, and enhances professional confidence. These specific language skills can open numerous career opportunities and contribute to professional success in a particular sector.

6. Conclusion

French for Specific Purposes (FSP) represents an essential approach for learning French in a professional context. By focusing on learners' specific needs and objectives, FSP enables the development of linguistic and communicative skills directly applicable in the workplace. Teaching methods tailored to FSP, such as task-based communicative approaches and the use of authentic materials, foster efficient and concrete knowledge acquisition. Continuous formative assessment throughout the learning process and a final summative evaluation ensure tailored progression and validate acquired skills.

In an increasingly internationalized professional environment, mastering FSP becomes crucial for success and adaptation to specific professional requirements. In this

sense, learning FSP offers numerous advantages to professionals, enabling them to communicate more precisely and effectively in their field of expertise. By acquiring specialized vocabulary and understanding sector-specific norms and practices, they can convey information clearly and avoid misunderstandings. Moreover, it facilitates their adaptation to new professional situations and requirements, enhances intercultural communication, boosts their self-confidence, provides a competitive edge in the job market, and grants access to domain-specific information available only in French.

Therefore, ongoing training tailored to real business needs is necessary to support professionals in their linguistic development and professional evolution.

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