Teacher Talk in Higher Education as a Language for Specific Purposes: Its Features and LSP Teachers' Awareness

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A B S T R A C T

There is scarce evidence of publications pertaining to the phenomenon that a foreign teachers' language in fact is a language for specific purposes. In the field of (foreign) languages for specific purposes, traditionally linked to a vast variety of professional and academic domains, it seems that LSP teachers' language has not yet gained due attention. However, any FL or LSP teacher's language is used for professional, teaching purposes; yet it does not seem that FL teachers for specific purposes are aware of their teacher talk, either in class or conceptually. On the basis of classroom observation and semi-structured interviews among 17 Slovenian teachers of foreign languages for specific purposes this paper attempted to identify differences in the teacher talk used by them in class, and the level of their awareness of their own teacher talk. The results of the quantitative analysis indicate that there are some specific features in LSP teacher talk which led us to conclude that it could be identified and categorised as a separate LSP category. However, the related LSP teacher's awareness about their own teacher talk varied from highly profiled to absent, and there was a perceptible impact on working efficiency in the class. All discussed phenomena require further research.

Keywords: foreign languages for specific purposes; teacher talk as a professional language; teaching LSP; LSP teacher talk features; LSP teacher talk awareness

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Introduction and Review of Literature

Within the foreign language (from now on: FL) teaching/learning context, it is surprising how *relatively* low *explicit, direct* attention has been given to empirical research of the actual FL teachers' language used in class (teacher talk) (Sešek, 2005; Sešek, 2007; for a thorough overview see Khany & Malmir, 2017). Only in recent years has this received more attention with (still rare) systematic, comprehensive and in-depth empirical studies (Khany & Malmir, 2017). On the other hand, the authors of teachers' manuals (for teaching FL for general or specific purposes, from now on: FLge or FLsp) seem to have considered it thoroughly over many decades, for instance in the form not only of implicit hints but explicit instructions ('recitation scripts') regarding 'what' to say in class at certain moments of the teaching process in order to guide the learners towards achieving the learning goals and outcomes more successfully or more efficiently (e.g., Thornbury, 1996). Such 'recitation scripts' are characterised by teacher-led sets of questions, explanations, motivational initiations, and the like.

In recent decades however, pedagogy and SLA researchers have developed research instruments pertaining to the various occurrences in the FLge classroom which deal *also* with problems related to teacher talk (e.g., of novice teachers: Kourieos, 2016; of teacher educators: Moradkhani, 2017). FL teacher talk is part of any teacher talk research in general (e.g., Abhakorn, 2017), but recently it is gaining in its importance in a context of its own (e.g., Khany & Malmir, 2017; Jing & Jing, 2018), though not yet at all *specifically* with foreign LSP teacher's language (FLsp).

Indeed, FLge classroom interaction and teacher talk for FLge have been researched from various points of view (e.g., motivational impact, politeness issues, efficiency, etc.); implicitly it is often related to research about L1 *versus* FL use in teacher talk (e.g., Bozorgian & Fallahpour, 2015; Littlewood & Yu, 2011). It is also mentioned as an item in the vast pedagogical knowledge and the metalinguistic awareness of teachers and teacher educators (e.g., Moradkhani, 2017), confirming explicitly how important the quality of teacher talk is (e.g., Abhakorn, 2017; Bondi, 2001; Butzkamm & Caldwell, 2009; Khany & Malmir, 2017; Jing & Jing, 2018), impacting *inter alia* their self-confidence (cf. Tajeddin & Adeh, 2016) and raising the question as to how it should be used, essentially, in a non-detrimental way in proceeding according to any approaches of instruction (Ur, 2016).

The FL teaching methodology in the world, at least over the last three decades, has been predominantly the communicative approach, integrated with its widely used 'co-methodologies', such as the lexical approach (Lewis, 1993) and task-based teaching and learning (e.g., Ellis, 2003; Van den Branden, 2006; Willis, 1996), having in common also the presence of dialogic or reciprocal teaching/learning, in the sense that both teachers and students contribute to FL knowledge construction (e.g., Mercer, 1995). It seems that the concept of the contribution of *both* in FLge teaching/learning, might be related to the teaching of FLsp in particular: here the collaborations among learners with specific needs, FLsp teachers and content-experts is the only imaginable combination for successful learning (e.g., Basturkmen, 2010, 2014; Dudley-Evans & St. John, 1998).

Teacher talk for FLge and FLsp teaching

In primary, secondary and tertiary education, teacher talk can be observed and analysed, regarding its type as used by a teacher to transfer knowledge to learners about various areas (e.g., Chemistry, Biology, History, etc., see Figure 1).
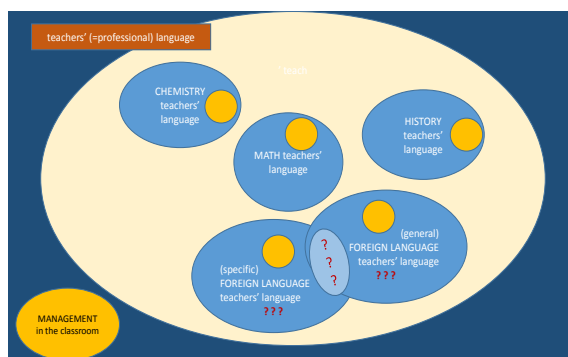

Figure 1. Teacher talk types, included the meta-language of FLge and FLsp teachers

Certainly, the teacher talk of FLge teachers is a specific case, and was defined as LSP by Sešek (2005, p. 228-229) in the section *English for EFL teachers as a case of ESP* and with a remark that *"'Teacher English' might not be the stereotypical ESP; it is indeed specific in terms of communicative functions [...]"* (Sešek, 2005, p. 229). Also, Bondi (2001), though referring exclusively to primary school, mentioned that because of the specific needs of the profession, the teacher talk for teaching an FL should be regarded as a case of LSP. According to both authors, further studies are required of EFL teachers' discourse as a special LSP (Sešek, 2007). Their studies and conclusions referred to teacher talk for teaching English as an FLge; however, in this regard the question arises regarding the existence or peculiar characteristics of teacher talk of teachers of FLsp: e.g., Business English, German in Health Care, Italian for Art Historians)

However, there were general, rather conceptual, mentions about special features of language used to train FL teachers as early as during the 1990s, for example Richards (1998, p. 18) prophesying that *"The development of proficiency courses for prospective language teachers raises issues that are distinct from those involved in developing general language courses. This is a special case of LSP, though one that does not feature prominently in the literature."* According to him and to both others mentioned previously, if from various points of view, teacher talk is supposed to be the meta-language of an FL teacher comprising a teacher's language related to all possible teaching steps or moments in the class: the general management, discipline of learners, tasks and activities, instructions, immediate corrective feedback from and to learners, explanations of grammar structures and vocabulary, explanations of frequent features of texts dealt with: all these aspects aggregate into the process of teaching/learning a target FLge, and none the less a target FLsp.

Moreover, the latter has not been outlined or defined (yet) as a special type of FL teacher talk, referring also to FLsp teachers as a special category of FL teaching professionals. Despite the strong development of the various fields of LSP (and FLsp), for instance *"English for occupational, EOP, versus academic purposes, EAP"*, division proposed by Laurence (see Karami, 2018) one would expect that among numerous topics (specific or particularly difficult), of interest for FLsp teaching and research (Basturkmen, 2014), also comparisons between *general* and *specific* FL

teaching (Basturkmen, 2014), and one of in-depth directions could be FLsp teacher talk. Despite being under-researched, we believe that FLsp teacher talk can be regarded (see Picture 1) as one of several teacher talk variations. Therefore, some initial questions may arise: what does it mean, in fact, that supposedly a distinctive teacher talk of FLsp teachers also exists? Which might be special distinctive signs of their teacher talk? In which aspects do FLsp teachers perceive distinctions in their FLsp teacher talk compared to FLge teacher talk?

In the vast bibliography of LSP, mainly about foreign/second LSP (FLsp) there are numerous aspects that have been dealt with so far, but none about FLsp teacher training. Basturkmen (2014), in her survey in the field of LSP teacher education, emphasizes the low frequency of research articles in the domain of pre- and in-service LSP teacher training as well as a lack of empirical data to shed light on several areas of LSP teacher training research. However, from her exhaustive list of suggestions it might be deduced that instruction about FLsp teacher talk might be one of FLsp teachers' needs or *topics for teacher education* (Basturkmen, 2014, p. 29). Elsewhere no specific research attention, especially based on empirical studies of FLsp lesson observation, has been placed on particular features of FLsp teacher talk, which might lead us to assume that there are not any. And it was precisely here that our interest was piqued, leading to the observance of research gaps and resulting in the following research questions:

> RQ1: Could the argument be made that FLsp teacher talk also exists, distinct from that of the teacher talk of FLge teachers?

> RQ2: Could this then be defined as a subcategory of FLge teacher talk, or a separate category of, presumably, the teacher talk of FLsp teachers?

Methodology

Participants and procedure of data collection

The objects of our research, in the teaching context of English, German and Italian (all as FLsp) were 17 lessons lasting 90 minutes in March and April 2017 (see Table 1). The participants of the lessons were 17 different FLsp teachers and their higher education students (groups consisted of approximately 10-20 students in presence), from first-cycle academic and professional programs who have a compulsory FLsp in their study programme (area of future expertise). During the lessons the learners were *not* the primary focus of the observation, rather their FLsp teachers, specifically the teacher talk they use as professionals to transmit and evolve the FLsp proficiency of their students: 9 teachers of English, 5 of German and two of Italian.

The 17 observed FLsp teachers represent approximately one quarter of all FLsp teachers in Slovene higher education (regularly and fully employed as such). The 17 lessons took place at eight different faculties belonging to the three Slovene public universities and, accordingly, to seven different professional areas.

Table 1
Distribution of 17 Observed and Interviewed FLSP Teachers, According to Their Affiliation

Higher education institutions	English as an (F)LSP	German as an (F)LSP	Italian as an (F)LSP
University of Ljubljana			
Faculty of Arts		1	
Faculty of Economics	2	2	1
Faculty of Maritime Studies and Transport	1		
Faculty of Public Administration	1	1	
Faculty of Social Sciences	2		
University of Maribor			
Faculty of Civil Engineering, Transportation Engineering and Architecture	1		
Faculty of Economics and Management	1	1	
University of Primorska			
Faculty of Tourism Studies	1	1	1
TOTAL	9	6	2

It must be pointed out that during their university studies, the observed FLsp teachers had not received any specific teacher training programme aimed at FLsp teaching, but at FLge, mainly as a short course in the fourth (last) year of their English, or German, or Italian language and literature studies. The observer in the lessons was an FLge teacher trainer with 15 years of experience, and during a whole 25 year career, was involved in FLge and FLsp teaching and course design.

The lesson observation in class (without video recording) was followed by a semi-structured interview with each FLsp teacher, lasting approximately 60-90 minutes. The data arose also from 17 semi-structured interviews based on a four-page questionnaire with open-ended questions pertaining to several aspects of teacher talk. The answers were handwritten by the observer, with all teachers having insight and control of what was written. For data analysis, the coding procedure was done by hand, highlighting with colours the important passages. Among the four aspects, two[1] were related to stances regarding the awareness of the observed FLsp teachers about their teacher talk.

The interviewees enabled us to use two qualitative research methods: direct observation in the class with hand-written recording (taking notes) of the teacher talk; i.e., their professional language during the observed lesson. The procedure could be further regarded as observation with participation, due to the experienced FLge teacher trainer in the role of the observer; however, it was her first time in the role of observing FLsp teaching process of experienced FLsp teachers with 7-30 years of experience. The observation was followed by semi-structured interviews with the observed teachers. To secure anonymity personal data has not been identified, so 'T' in the hand-transcribed data refers to 'teacher' and the following number to the chronological order of observation in the two months in which the study took place.

The choice of investigating methods for pursuing our research questions was influenced primarily by their nature and purpose - in other words by the anticipated outcomes. Being part of qualitative research methodology, they were considered to be more suitable for investigating our research questions than other research methods, offering two angulations and expected to reveal to us in-depth and extensive understanding of the issues by means of (con)textual interpretation.

In order not to regard hand-written notes as unreliable, the researcher generated an agreed 'verbatim transcript' of all verbalised thoughts of the interview *in loco* which were confirmed by the interviewee on the spot. The interviews were preceded by 90-minute class observations, as a

type of qualitative research method which not only included participants' observation, but also the observer's expertise (an experienced FLge teaching methodology teacher, researcher in higher education) which enabled her to detect slight differences between FLsp and FLge teacher talk. Observational data and semi-structured interviews were treated as equally valid research methods.

Instruments: class observations and design of semi-structured interviews

Both research questions required class observations and interviews with FLsp teachers in order to obtain some relevant insight. Our major concern was whether it would be possible to identify the differences, evident or barely perceivable, between FLge and FLsp teacher talk. It was expected that differences in FLsp teacher talk might exist, but are not yet explicitly researched. Besides this, there is a considerable body of literature that examines the linguistic awareness of FLge teachers (related to the teaching of linguistic features of the target language); the research on their awareness of their own professional communication code is rising, as seen before, whereas teacher talk in FLsp class seems to be unexplored.

Consequently, the second area of our interest arose, developed on the basis of this lack of information about teachers' awareness regarding their FLsp teacher talk. Therefore, the semi-structured interview questions addressed explicitly the awareness of teacher talk in FLge *vs.* FLsp classes, as well as their perceptions about differences in their own FLsp teacher talk compared to their own FLge teacher talk (if applicable, i.e. they teach FL for general and specific purposes), and about their conscious elaboration of FLsp for which in our case it was expected that nuances of awareness would be observable in class. The questions used for exploring the nature of the general awareness status of the interviewed teachers were:

-   How do you perceive your awareness of the fact that you use a special meta-language as a teacher of FLge, do you perceive your teacher talk as a kind of LSP?

-   Have you ever felt that the teacher talk of a mathematics or chemistry teacher is a professional language (LSP) in equal terms as the professional language of an FL teacher, which is used in class to conduct the process of learning/teaching an FL?

-   Have you ever thought that you use certain FL-related expressions (parts of your teacher talk) which your learners have to get used to in order to follow the teaching process and develop their FL?

The semi-structured interviews also included questions aimed at studying or possibly defining a more specific awareness of their FLsp teacher talk (related to their teacher talk itself and to its effective or potential use with peers or colleagues, and with FLsp learners):

-   When using your teacher talk, do you perceive any differences when you teach FLge or FLsp?

-   Do you perceive any differences in your professional communication with other FLsp teachers *vs.* FLge teachers? Have you ever thought that you use your special FLsp teacher talk in order to communicate professionally with your FLsp teacher colleagues?

-   Do you perceive that special terminology exists (that must be understood by learners) which is *only* related to the *learning of an FLsp*?

Results and Analysis of Data

Before the results of the class observations and semi-structured interviews regarding general and specific awareness of the teachers' own professional language (teacher talk) are presented, a few remarks about specific features of the observed FLsp lessons might be of interest. In an interactive and dialogic classroom where the FLsp teaching process takes place, and where teachers and learners are expected to interact and learn together, FLsp teachers are supposed to organise and facilitate the relevant teaching process rather than play the role of 'expert'. Therefore, also in FLsp classes it is advantageous and perhaps the only *general* goal that FL teachers structure and maintain processes within the classroom as an organised dialogue between teacher and learner, and certainly also organise learner-to-learner activities, so that the FL teacher's responsibility, either for general or for specific purposes, is to:

- clarify the objective/s of the activity and organise teaching activities by choosing the teaching repertoire on the basis of fitness for purpose,

- set the context, provide background information, introduce students to the content,

- facilitate and sustain conversation with relevant prompts and questions,

- encourage students to share pre-existing knowledge, come up with ideas, provide support for each other,

- make students use the target FL that they are supposed to learn,

- give corrective feedback, appropriate for target FL usage.

In terms of these criteria, all including teacher talk to 'materialise' them at a higher or lower extent, and presumably related also to genre-focused FLsp teaching and learning (Cheng, 2006), some features of observed lessons might be spotted which differentiate or are in common between effective vs. less-effective lessons (based on Plöger, W., Krepf, M., Scholl, D., & Seifert, A., 2019). Despite being aware that the term 'effective' might be a slippery word, an overall judgement of the observed lessons has been elaborated.

To that end, well balanced classes, which include the development of appropriate receptive and productive activities well related to FLsp, are regarded as 'outstanding', done with a dynamic goal-oriented pace and highly motivated, active learners (in our study four ones). We considered 'good' the nine classes in which a few aspects could be improved (e.g., balance between receptive and productive activities, work on grammar, work on FLsp, dynamic pace, goal-orientation, actively involved learners). 'Average with weaknesses' were four lessons where several aspects offered room for improvement (i.e., several aspects during the same lesson), while 'weak' lessons would have been those in which all aspects needed improvement.

Interestingly, as will appear from the presentation of results, it seems that FLsp teachers with 'outstanding' lessons seem to be those with higher awareness about their teacher talk; however, this might need support from in-depth further research. For the present study, it can be presumed that high quality levels of lessons in fact enabled us to locate, follow and analyse the finer features of FLsp teacher talk.

Results with discussion, regarding FLsp class observations

A common trait of all the 17 observed lessons, though not explicitly verbalised in the actual FLsp teacher talk of the lecturer, was the choice of contents and texts from the future expertise areas of learners: this aspect was expected and it was not analysed whether and/or how the choice of FLsp texts appears in the FLsp teacher talk. However, one of the actual aims of our research included the tracing of those elements of FLsp lessons in which differences in traits of teacher talk for FLge *versus* FLsp can be recognised. In particular, the presence of discrete, and/or unexpected elements in FLsp teacher talk was looked for. Our research aims in this regard, whether there were any prominent specificities in the use of FLsp teacher talk in the observed lessons, revealed some interesting phenomena.

Such phenomena, firstly, were manifested in concrete and FLsp related teaching goals, not only at the beginning of the class, but also at later stages of the lesson. The FLsp goals are not expressed in a highly intensive or invasive way, but mainly discretely, as if 'by the way', but not left out. In the majority of observed lessons they are clearly expressed at the beginning of the class or at the beginning of a series of learning steps or activities, precisely aimed at a FLsp goal, related to the foreseen learning outcomes of students; for example, by T-17 (Business English): *"In the next activities we learn how to write a complaint about the delivered product."* Very often they were clearly related to the specific genre the output task was about, for example by T-7 (Maritime English): *"In this task you learn what to say when a pollution emergency at sea occurs."* Compared to FLge lessons, the expressed goals are a distinctive feature in the teacher talk of FLsp teachers who seem to be more aware of their importance for the development of communication in a specific professional community. Regrettably, this feature in FLsp teacher talk was present in the few 'outstanding' FLsp lessons only, not in all 17 observed.

Secondly, there were small, but nevertheless evident, differences in one detail when giving instructions: the first part of instructions overlaps with instructions in FLge classes, but almost all observed FLsp teachers added an element of FLsp, for example a remark on how and why an activity or a learning step is directly related to a learning outcome in FLsp or why it may be relevant for the learner's professional area of expertise; so, for example, T-12 (Business English) remarked to learners: *"You see, you need to master the second conditional in English to be able to guide the process of business negotiation better."* And, for example, T-16 (English in Tourism) encouraged the learners: *"Please, do consider the presentation principles we dealt with today. You'll work in the field of tourism, you'll need that right away on the job-market."* Also this second feature, albeit highly expected in FLsp teacher talk, appeared in 'outstanding' and some of the 'good' lessons only.

Thirdly, when dealing with input texts (written, only once video-watching) and professional vocabulary, lots of teaching time and FLsp teacher talk were spent working on the input. Whenever a new FLsp text was introduced, there were – in ten of the 17 lessons – long and well-structured scaffolding activities in the pre-reading or pre-video-watching phase. The FLsp teacher talk in these activities contained more eliciting of longer, multi-word expressions than normally observable in FLge classes. The aim to get learners to know the features of FLsp text genres and to comprehending new vocabulary, predominantly professional terminology in advance, was more than obvious. And also in the follow-up comprehension steps, the teacher talk of all observed FLsp teachers geared around refreshing, consolidating and/or explaining additional professional expressions.

The use of L1 seemed to be very strictly controlled by the FLsp teachers in our study: besides the terminological unit (e.g., *corporate finance regulations*) the corresponding terminological unit in L1 was elicited from students or (rarely) given by teachers. So, L1 and pedagogic translations seldom appeared in the FLsp teacher talk of this study (cf. Mertelj, 2019). In only two cases, L1 use was

accompanied by a strict remark to FLsp learners: paraphrases, synonyms or antonyms mainly cannot be used when using FLsp, but precise terminology, so: *"You should use this one precise expression in FLsp, not an approximate alternative."* (by T-10 in Business German, by T-11 in Business English).

The teacher talk related to professional traits of the FLsp taught was often accompanied by discrete, but prominent, body language on the part of FLsp teachers. Very frequently phenomena that could be observed as accompanying the teacher talk are: more breath, stronger voice, eyes opened wider, determined *in plenum* position of the body – always during moments of the contact lesson aimed at terminology or genre-related explanations and tasks.

Regarding teacher *versus* student talking time (ttt *versus* stt), it was strikingly obvious in most cases that teachers are very conscious about giving voice to learners, to elicit general *and specific* vocabulary from them, to elicit their talk or have them write using FLsp, all by focused instructions and comments through teacher talk. FLsp teachers at lower learners' proficiency levels often let them use *general* vocabulary (however in no case commented upon through teacher talk) and require from them only the comprehension of FLsp texts.

Nevertheless, among the 17 lessons one could serve as an excellent model regarding how to organise a contact lesson where the stt is optimally maximised, where FLsp input and output activities exchange every 5-10 minutes. In this lesson it was explicitly repeated by the FLsp teacher talk (T-17, English in Tourism): *"This is to make you talk or write using FLsp."* Besides, where stt was high, it was also well connected with tasks aimed at FLsp use (developing productive knowledge of professional oral or written texts). However, in most cases both shorter and longer oral presentations of students pertaining to the context of their (future) professional expertise, were followed by some teacher talk: immediate corrective feedback by the FLsp teacher, mainly with comments on the execution or on individual examples of oral presentations; comments regarded both FLge and FLsp issues.

A common element of the observed teacher talk was also giving praise and encouragement, which in fact can be related to *any* teacher talk, no example appeared where a student was praised specifically for his/her quality of FLsp use. Besides this, the occurrences when teachers explicitly corrected FLsp terminology or elements of text-genre, were rather few.

Finally, for teaching grammar, morpho-syntactic issues and text formation in the observed lessons, too much *general* teacher talk about grammar structures was used. In extreme cases even 30-45 min were used for explicit teaching of general grammar, without any hint how a certain structure is related to the specificities of the target FLsp. The amount was definitely too prominent in most observed lessons and in this area of FLsp teachers' expertise much improvement could be made which would influence directly their awareness and consequently (presumably) their teacher talk. Nevertheless, a few excellent examples were noticed in which the direct link between a grammar structure and its contribution to conveying the exact message in FLsp was shown to learners.

After surveying the most prominent features of FLsp teacher talk during the 17 lesson observations, it can be concluded that the research question about the existence of the FLsp teacher talk and its clearly perceivable differences in elements of the FLsp teaching process yielded two answers: a) special teacher talk of FLsp teachers exists, and b) differences between FLge *versus* FLsp teaching process are also reflected in FLsp teacher talk.

Results with discussion, regarding semi-structured interviews

The interviews consisted of four sheets of questions about various aspects of FLge and FLsp teacher talk, with open questions from the less to more detailed, targeted towards exploring the level or type of teachers' awareness of their teacher talk, both for FLge and FLsp teaching in comparison. The questions were set at the beginning, in the middle and in the last part of the semi-structured interview, among other topics, partly repeated regarding teacher talk contents in order to implicitly bring the interviewees back to teacher talk topics, and also to be assured about the consistency of the teachers' answers. Further, below the answers are arranged according to both main areas: a) general awareness of one's own FLge or FLsp teacher talk, and b) specific awareness of one's own FLsp teacher talk.

General awareness status of one's own FLge or FLsp teacher talk

The general awareness status was explored and discussed with three longer and rather conceptual questions through which the interviewees were encouraged to think about their perception of FLsp versus FLge (their ideas, cognition stances, self-perception), but not yet to provide examples or personal anecdotes.

To the first question: *"How do you perceive your awareness of the fact that you use a special meta-language of an FLge teacher, or even a kind of FLsp teacher talk?"* the vast majority of interviewed FLsp teachers declared that they feel fully aware of their teacher talk and use it in transition from one stage to another spontaneously and subconsciously; for example T-1 (English in Political Sciences): *"Well, I generally feel aware of it, but in class I use my meta-language spontaneously and am unaware of switching from one stage to another."* Only few of the interviewees have not thought about it so far, for example T-13 (German for Philosophers): *"Oh, in fact, you might be right, but I have never thought about it."*

Among those who felt strongly aware, some specified that their use of FL teacher talk was generally conscious, for example T-2 (Business Italian and English): *"Mainly I do feel well aware of when and how I use my teacher talk."* Another teacher linked such awareness to the combination of professional contents of learners and her FLsp teacher talk, for example (T-6):

> "Sometimes I feel obliged to prepare and transmit both, the professional/academic contents and FLsp. Such a situation makes me fully aware of my teacher talk during my preparation for the classes, and during the classes themselves."

On the other hand, it is very interesting that all four FLsp teachers with 'outstanding' lessons declared themselves not to be fully or *since the beginning as a teacher* aware of their own FL teacher talk, and even less of the FLsp teacher talk; for example, T-8 (English in Business Administration) saying: *"Well, now I feel fully aware of it, but also … I'm not sure, maybe in the last 10 years I've fully developed this insight."* One of the interviewed FLsp teachers (T-7, Maritime English) was completely analytical in this regard:

> "Now, as you mention it, I feel I have become aware of this issue, well, eh … it's partly true and partly not true. For sure, there was a lot of unawareness until reading the article of Sešek (2007) about the (general) EFL-teacher talk. After reading that, I said to myself 'For God's sake, FLge teacher talk is an LSP!' And I somehow included my FLsp teacher talk into that category."

The second question about the general awareness stance (*Have you ever felt that the teacher talk of a mathematics or chemistry teacher is a professional language (LSP) on equal terms as the professional language of an FL teacher, which is used in class to conduct the process of learning/teaching an FL?*) was answered by the vast majority of FLsp teachers with variants of *"Yes, absolutely. Definitely!"* However, there were two

individuals with the completely opposite opinion who firmly denied perceiving FLge or FLsp teacher talk as equally existing as any other teacher talk (of other, non-linguistic subjects), expressed by T-4 (English in Marketing) with the opinion: *"We, teachers of FLge or FLsp, use less specific teacher talk; our teaching can be more easily done without any special teacher talk."*

This stance yields information about a level of professional awareness of these two FLsp teachers (which in fact was perceivable through clear traits in their actual teaching in the observed lesson, which was 'average', with several weaknesses' lacking in particular FLsp contents and related teacher talk). They believe that FLge or FLsp meta-languages - i.e., teacher talk - are similar to common everyday communication, and that explaining history, for instance, requires more specific, distinctive professional language than teaching FLge or FLsp; however this stance might be a prompt for further research.

Some of the additional sub-questions (*Have you ever thought that in your FLge or FLsp classes you use certain FLge-related expressions (belonging to your teacher talk) which your learners have to get to understand them in order to follow the teaching process and develop their FL in general?*) reflected and commented upon in the interview, were related to a general awareness of an FLge teacher talk, followed by the repeated and reassuring stances of the interviewees with *"Yes, definitely!"* and by adding further reassuring or anecdotal remarks.

Despite any initial stance, all of the interviewees at some point agreed that in their classes they use certain FL-related expressions (belonging to teacher talk) that their learners have to get used to in order to follow the teaching process and develop their FL; the distinction between FLge *vs.* FLsp was not highlighted. They argued that (for example T-17, Business English): *"In fact the understanding of general FL teacher talk the learners bring along from their previous schools;"* which can be regarded as an example of a highly conscious remark about one's own teacher talk and its perception by learners. Further, one of the teachers (T-6, Business German)) claimed that it is an absolute necessity that learners master some FLge teacher talk: *"Without FLge teacher talk you cannot bring learners to certain points in FLsp learning."* Very interestingly, a teacher (T-16, English in Tourism) with many international students, described a surprising experience with them, pointing out that *"Linguistic expressions and the teacher talk of FLge are not obvious to all students, despite being all from the European context."*

Summing up the stances of the 17 FLsp teachers we can argue that the perception levels of one's own teacher talk, in particular about FLsp teacher talk is heterogeneous: in some singular cases there has not yet been any reflection about it, but the majority feel fully aware of their teacher talk; its use is within them, so to speak, spontaneous and subconscious, with the argument that they have been teaching FLsp for 7-30 years. However, they were apparently not convinced about differentiating between their FLge and FLsp teacher talk, as they all avoided this part of the question in their first reactions. Nevertheless, some of the interviewees remembered feeling strongly aware when faced with special teaching situations, and, interestingly, the four 'outstanding' teachers were the only ones who declared themselves as not being fully or *since the beginning as a teacher* aware of their FL teacher talk.

'More specific' awareness about FLge or FLsp teacher talk

For exploring answers aimed at researching or defining a more specific awareness status of FLsp teachers three areas about the level of perception, related to their teacher talk, were tackled: a) in relation to the process of teaching, b) to learners in class and c) to other FLge and FLsp teacher colleagues For the first question (*When using your teacher talk, do you perceive any differences when you teach FLge or FLsp?*), related to the teacher's own teacher talk when teaching FLge or FLsp. The

interviewees gave a variety of answers, ranging from those who do not perceive any difference at all, for example, T-4 (English in Marketing): *"I perceive no differences between FLge and FLsp teaching."* or T-8 (English in Business Administration) saying: *"I feel unable to tell the difference.",* to two FLsp teachers, T-1 and T-7 (English in Political Sciences, Maritime English) who started *"[...] to think about the possible differences after reading the Sešek article in ESP journal, in 2007."*

However, more or less convincingly the vast majority of interviewees listed differences, of various types, related in particular to FLsp teacher talk, for example T-3 (Business German):

> "Most seen, most perceivable is the FLsp teacher talk in instructions to learners, giving them comments, explaining terminology and giving examples from professional communication. As an FLsp teacher I consciously add or include such elements into my FLsp teacher talk."

One of the interviewees, T-6 (Business German) expressed a firm distinction between FLge and FLsp, though only implicitly related to teacher talk: *"One thing is FLge and another FLsp: it is my job to show learners what they need to consider thoroughly, for outside the class, in their professional life."*

Some teachers were even more firm and wanted to point out the crucial differences they perceive between both teacher talk variations; for example, T-7 (Maritime English): *"Of course there are differences! What's essential to me is that FLsp teaching is genre-related in every moment of the teaching process."* Another teacher, T-8 (English in Business Administration), also experienced with teaching both FLge and FLsp, pointed out her idea that: *"The teaching 'path', or let's say 'process', seems shorter to me within FLge, and longer within FLsp because I feel to be of more consequence with learners, using more teaching steps,"* a stance in which FLsp teacher talk aspect is implicit only. However, in answers to questions related to a more specific awareness of FLge *versus* FLsp teacher talk, the stances of the interviewees were again quite homogeneous and consistent with general awareness.

The exception to general stances, about any possible differences in the professional communication with other FLsp *versus* with other FLge teachers, was the vast majority of interviewees who stressed that they do not feel able to spot a possible difference because they have not (for a long time, over a decade or more) been involved in professional communication with FLge teachers; for example, T-3 (English in Marketing): *"Professionally I do not keep touch with FLge teachers."* Nevertheless, quite a few remembered and some imagined where differences were or could be, for example T-6 (Business German): *"I draw myself back, you know, they are less or not at all aware of certain issues."* or a firm answer of T-7 (Maritime English): *"Of course there are differences: genres, besides professional terminology;"* or of T-8 (English in Business Administration): "*With other FLge teachers, I wouldn't talk about needs and much less about communicative context."*

These two stances, both more or less equally represented ('no differences' between FLge and FLsp *versus* 'yes, clear differences') received some fine-tuning in the question about communication with FLsp teacher colleagues, where the FLsp teachers who do perceive a proper FLsp teacher talk as distinct from FLge teacher talk, expressed some interesting points, demonstrating again how varied the awareness level can be, which according to our conviction illustrates their high awareness in the attitude to their FLsp teacher talk; for example, T-8 (English in Business Administration): *"[...] especially if we discuss something very specific, related to FLsp teaching, then no one around us has a clue about it, not even FLge teachers."*

The highly dynamic process of the FLsp teacher's career, directly and closely related to the strong awareness of one's own FLsp teacher talk, was expressed in diachronic perspective by the interviewee T-17 (English in Tourism) with: *"It is amazing to feel how your teacher talk changes through time, and how you give things to learners with a different text and in a different way."* and in synchronic

perspective by T-7 (Maritime English) with: *"In fact, we FLsp teachers 'fight with' our FLsp teacher talk in a different way than FLge teachers."*

The growing and maturing awareness about FLsp teacher talk can be also deduced from the stance of T-6 (Business German): *"For a very long time I did not pay any attention, until a certain moment at which I became aware of this: this special teacher talk we FLsp teachers use is our important additional value."*

Conclusion

The present empirical study shed some initial light on a small, but not unimportant part of LSP teaching, leaving apart more traditional LSP topics in LSP teacher education (see Basturkmen, 2014) and focusing on an element in the professional infrastructure for teachers of ESP and other LSP: their FLsp teacher talk.

Firstly, with class observations we tried to approach the answers to two questions: Could the argument be made that besides the teacher talk of FLge teachers, 'FLsp teacher talk' also exists? Could this then be defined as a subcategory of FLge teacher talk, or a separate category of, presumably, the teacher talk of FLsp teachers? On the basis of observed lessons, without much doubt it can be concluded that there are perceivable differences in some elements of the FLsp teaching process, clearly reflected in FLsp teacher talk.

From the study it is apparent that in FLsp teacher talk there is a significant presence of FLge teacher talk, but overall some clearly perceivable differences in FLsp classes have been noted, particularly in 'outstanding' and 'good' lessons:

- teaching/learning goals are clearly expressed at various moments of the teaching process, mainly related to the foreseen learning outcomes;

- instructions are the same or similar as in FLge classes, but FLsp teachers tend to add remarks about FLsp elements (often relating them to potential job-market demands);

- when dealing with FLsp input and vocabulary much teaching time is spent working on structured scaffolding activities combined with longer, multi-word professional expressions (paraphrases or 'synonyms' were considered too vague);

- L1 use seems to be more conscious than in FLge classes: the corresponding terminological unit in L1sp was mainly elicited from students or given by the teachers;

- FLsp teachers' body language, as a part of teacher talk, is prominent, in particular for terminology or genre-related explanations and tasks, expressing keen interest in achieving FLsp learning goals;

- teacher *vs.* student talking time is not well equilibrated for the most part, with too much teacher talking time, except in a few outstanding lessons where the proportion seemed to match the activities well;

- teachers' oral feedback to students' in class is rare to medium frequent, usually praise for (or comments on) a student's execution, rarely related to FLsp terminology or genre;

- general grammar issues in FLsp teaching process are dealt with too often; teacher talk seldom links the specific grammar features to the FLsp genre taught.

Hence, FLsp teacher talk seems to be a sub-category of FL teacher talk, as one of numerous languages for specific purposes. On the basis of observations it remained unclear whether FLsp and FLge are supposed to *both* be sub-categories of FL teacher talk, or whether FLsp is subordinated to FLge teacher talk.

Secondly, through semi-structured interviews we tried to approach answers regarding two groups of questions, one pertaining to the *general awareness status* of one's own FLge or FLsp teacher talk, and pertaining to a *specific awareness status* of one's own FLge and FLsp teacher talk in relation to learners, peers (other teachers of FLsp and/or FLge), and the process of teaching and learning. On the basis of all semi-structured interviews, by which FLsp teachers' attitudes and opinions were expressed, with no doubt it can be concluded that the vast majority of teachers have a well-profiled general awareness status about their FL teacher talk. They clearly consider it an essential part of their professional self, by means of which their FLsp teaching process is conducted.

On the other hand, answers about a more specific awareness status show a much more diversified picture: there are FLsp teachers who declare they do not perceive any difference between FLge and FLsp teacher talk, and quite many who tend to perceive the difference precisely and clearly. In between there are several FLsp teachers who claim to perceive the difference and provide examples, but the awareness is not clearly evident from their actual teacher talk, and those who demonstrate some awareness which could be defined as weak, vague, oscillating. Besides all these pools of tendencies, the awareness status about one's own FLsp teacher talk is not in all cases correlated to the actual teaching; i.e., two of the 'outstanding' FLsp teachers in our study didn't declare themselves as highly aware or even convinced about the boundaries between their FLge and FLsp teacher talk.

To conclude, FLsp teachers' awareness of one's own teacher talk is undoubtedly present, however the vast majority of FLsp teachers remain unsure about the distinction or even differences between their FLge and FLsp teacher talk. Many of them were faced with this possible reflection for the first time during the interviews, so it could be defined also as 'nascent' from this research. The awareness status is not often evident from the actual teaching.

Pedagogical implications

On the basis of this study, some indications might be relayed to FLsp teachers about their teacher talk in FLsp class: a) there are differences in FLge *versus* FLsp teacher talk, and awareness can be raised about it; b) being aware that FLsp teaching goals and expected outcomes have or might have a qualitative impact on the FLsp teacher talk; c) an efficient FLsp teacher may have an implicit awareness regarding FLsp vs. FLge teacher talk differences; d) awareness and learning about the distinctive elements can improve one's FLsp teacher talk, and hence, one's FLsp teaching.

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[1] The other two, not dealt with in this paper, were related to other decisions in class, reflected in the teacher talk: a) usage of the L1 and pedagogical translation in FLsp classes (Mertelj, 2019), and b) the nature of grammar instruction.