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**CONTACT:** [estella.ciobanu@univ-ovidius.ro/](mailto:estella.ciobanu@univ-ovidius.ro)

**Adresa redacției / Editorial board address:**

Facultatea de Litere

Campus, Clădirea A, sala 129

Aleea Universității nr. 1, Constanța 900472, ROMÂNIA



**In memoriam**

**ILEANA JITARU**

**(1970-2023)**

## CUPRINS / CONTENTS

### I. Linguistics and Translation Studies

Ilina Doykova	<b>Developing English Language Skills for Professional Communication in Medicine</b>	3-18
Slaveyah Goranova	<b>The Role of Metaphoric Competence in Medical English Instruction</b>	19-31
Alexandra Lavinia Istrate-Macarov	<b>Analysis of Volodymyr Zelenskyy's Telegram Posts by Means of Text Mining</b>	32-45
Oleksandr Kapranov	<b>The Discursive Presence of Digital Technology in Research Articles in Psycholinguistics: A Systematic Analysis</b>	46-71
Irina Liashenko	<b>Critical Thinking Strategies as an Influential Tool in Growing the Disciplinary Literacy</b>	72-95
Svetlana Nedelcheva	<b>Pro- in Two Semantic Networks (A Comparative Study of English and Bulgarian)</b>	96-115
Deyana Peneva	<b>The Markers of Concession in Assertive Speech Acts in American and Bulgarian Discussion Programmes</b>	116-133
Ioana-Raluca Vişan, Oana Tătaru	<b>Strategies Used in Translating IMO SMCP (2001)</b>	134-152
Cristina-Mihaela Zamfir	<b>Euphemisms – Sweet Talking and Face Saving in Business Relations</b>	153-165

### II. Didactics

Daniel Clinci	<b>A Case for Critical Pedagogy in Medical Education</b>	168-182
Antony Hoyte-West	<b>Official Language Certifications and the Celtic Languages: An Overview of Relevant Offerings</b>	183-200

Anamaria Ioniță, Monica Vlad	<b>Les pratiques langagières et communicatives des étudiants internationaux en formation médicale en Roumanie en situation de stage clinique à l'hôpital</b>	201-225
Ionela Ionițiu	<b>How to Encourage Your Students to Speak When Teaching ESP Online</b>	226-238
Marinela Doina Nistea, Oana-Luiza Barbu	<b>Romanian for Specific Purposes. Innovative Review and Assessment Methods</b>	239-254
Carmen Opriț-Maftei	<b>Teaching Academic Vocabulary to Doctoral Students</b>	255-267

### **III. Communication and Culture and Identity**

Silvia Aulagnon	<b>Des colonisations occidentales à la remigration dans le Banat (post)imperial</b>	270-287
Andreea Roxana Bellot	<b>Virtual Exchange Programs and the Development of Cross-Cultural Communication and Academic Language Skills in Higher Education</b>	288-300
Alina Costea	<b>Teaching Conversation (10 Documentaries for Law Students)</b>	301-317
Liliana-Carmen Mărunțelu, Cristina Tamaș	<b>Le retour aux <i>annees vertes</i> par des films inspires de romans celebres ou de scenarios consacres, des dernieres trois decennies</b>	318-332
Lavinia Nădrag, Alina Buzarna-Tihenea (Gălbează)	<b>Teaching Idioms Connected to Business English and Colors</b>	333-345
Biljana Naumoska-Sarakinska	<b>The Significance of BELF and Communication Skills: Incorporating ESP in the Core Curriculum in Higher Education - Challenges, Issues, And Opportunities</b>	346-365
Oana Tătaru, Ioana-Raluca Vișan	<b>Functional Exchanges and Context in Point of the English language as "<i>lingua franca</i>". Case Study Agenda-setting Concept</b>	366-377

**IV. Reviews**

Alina Buzarnea-Tihenea (Gălbează) *Defiance of “Magdalenes”. Female Challenges in Recent Irish Fiction* by Nicoleta Stanca 380-383

**List of Contributors** 384

## **Critical Thinking Strategies as an Influential Tool in Growing the Disciplinary Literacy**

Iryna LIASHENKO  
Sumy State University

**Abstract:** *The rapid development and changing of the employability market due to ongoing economic metamorphoses require high-level skills and abilities to prepare graduate students for specific life situations. The educational system needs to use more efficient approaches in increasing essential skills for modern life and work situations. The study aims to define the appropriate teaching methods and more profound thinking skills for developing specific work activities with the students. The academic importance of the research lies in revealing new connections between critical thinking skills and disciplinary literacy in ESP in preparing future professionals with its practical meaning for future application. The relevant literature helped synthesize the contextual framework of the structure of disciplinary literacy. The student group has traced and justified critical thinking skills as a professional component in the study. The results supported the conceptual framework with critical thinking as a crucial component of disciplinary literacy for future professionals. Critical thinking, a key 21<sup>st</sup>-century employability skill, is sought to make the professional portrait of a graduate consistent and effective, which could have important implications for future educational policies.*

**Keywords:** *critical thinking, disciplinary literacy, professional competency, university students, ESP*

### **Introduction**

To capitalize on the rising demands on the graduates' profound 21<sup>st</sup>-century skills for the future workplace, many educators position critical thinking skills as a goal. A growing number of graduates compete for an increasing lack of workplaces, often facing many other than just specific professional skills. In particular, future professionals need to obtain a broad scope of essential 21<sup>st</sup>-century skills to be successful in the employability market.

Although extensive academic research has explored the characteristics and dynamics of critical thinking and its complete application in the university education setting (Lee; Lou; Marni et al.; Sibirian et al.; Tosuncuoglu), the influence of critical thinking on professional qualities needs constant updating and refreshing as the actual realia is constantly changing (Bezanilla et al.; Samsudin and Hardini; Shavelson et al.; Vero and

Puka). This need is illustrated in many ways: graduate students need critical thinking skills to undertake the necessary professional activities. They are often required to solve quite specific job problems. More than that, since the technologies are gaining priority in the modern world of jobs, the demand for more specific professional skills, thus, being deep into professional details, is prevailing. The shift to online learning is another reason for constantly changing educational and practical technologies in developing critical thinking skills, which means new facets in challenges in learning and acquiring professional skills.

### **Critical thinking as one of the essential 21<sup>st</sup>-century skills for professional performance enhancement**

Critical thinking is an active, high-ordered thinking skill vital for achieving the goal and making decisions (Tosuncuoglu). Thinking critically and strategically significantly improves students' ability to achieve goals in academic experiments. Critical thinking correlates with the thinking process, which enhances intellectual abilities (Lou). This, in turn, results in increasing intrinsic motivation to cope with the life experience. Critical thinking helps analyze social problems and build communication flexibly, centered on an interlocutor (Vero and Puka). Expressing reflection in contact is a crucial indicator of critical thinking, a strategic thinking system in building rapport. This ability is intransient in a professional contacts environment and for successful job tasks realization.

The impact of critical thinking on students' learning experience, developing a more profound and more holistic approach, and setting intellectual challenges in their studying process suggests that critical thinking skills develop the potential for effective learning making the students professional users of information (Bankole-Minaflinou). This idea finds consensus in the relevant research and is supported by practice in class revealing the correlation between the thinking skills performance.

Critical thinking is one of the key life skills that influence professional activity and growth. Being considered as an ability to reflect, analyze, and question, critical thinking enables one to see things from a different angle, which positively correlates with the vocational demands at the workplace (Rönnlund et al.). For this purpose, a person exposes their critical thinking related to their personal perspective and other people, working settings and rules, requirements, and processes.

Critical thinking is a professional competency, one of the essential characteristics of a successful individual in both personal and professional life. Many universities tend to develop critical thinking skills in students' learning through oral and written reflection and argumentation, reading, analysis, synthesis of resources, and case studies. The theoretical analysis of the academic literature illustrates a steady positive relationship between critical thinking skills and successful professional activities (Bezanilla et al.).

Being a vital necessity for specific professional activity, critical thinking is used to prepare future professionals in different spheres. Critical thinking skills are inextricably linked with forming practical and specific skills (Sartori et al.). Being considered as one of the basic life skills, critical thinking is sought after as the main engine of forming a graduate's professional career.

The various spectrum of methods enhances this ability to think more profoundly, creatively, and find a quick solution to social and professional challenges. Along with the growing variety of techniques and on-site and online tools, concept mapping has become an efficient approach for enhancing students' critical thinking competency (Mohammadi et al.), critical reflection, which enables future professionals in surgery to develop, observe and criticize their results in clinical thinking, proving the relationship between the specific professional skills and filling the professional gap in workplace requirement. Moreover, this method helps create an algorithm for monitoring, guiding, and evaluating the professional decision of future surgeons (Gray and Coombs). Another way to develop critical thinking is to use interactive applications within the specialisms of the graduate students, which assist in critical thinking and active learning and help build self-directedness in the learning process (Karimi et al.). The efficient methods of increasing self-directedness and developing critical thinking, which reveals opportunities for graduate students to examine their professional independence, are problem-based learning (Montenery) and project-based learning (Cardullo et al.). Task and problem-oriented instruction make the students analyze the professional situations deeper, using their background knowledge and seeking the correct specific information, applying their imagination, and consciously sinking into the future professional setting.

While critical thinking skills and instruction have been a subject of research for recent years, current higher and vocational education places a strong emphasis on higher-order thinking skills in learning, research, and

professional development, seeking for practices to fit nowadays demands in vocational training.

### **Reflective strategies and their role in rising professional learning**

Reflection results in learning from the values, beliefs, knowledge, and critical experiences that contribute to our perspectives of ourselves, other people, and the world. As a trigger for new ideas and deeper views or critique, reflection in the form of a comment or experience can be an additional tool for professional development. To make the students more engaged in academic or professional activities, reflection creates more ground for raising questions for further development. Reflection in the professional background refers to conceptualising of global experience, analysis, and comparison of personal experience, ideas implementation, and seeing gaps and benefits in the professional ground. Despite being considered time-consuming and frustrating, reflection is an integral tool in professional growth and understanding (Merryland). In response to the question about the effective use of reflective activities in professional practice, Boud and Walker state the importance of designing educational courses by applying reflective practices in learning. Creating a specific context, which can be professional or cultural, is a key factor in promoting reflection in professional programmes. Another important factor is to be focused on a learner for teachers. In vocational training, we can substitute this relationship as being ‘client-centered’. In addition, focusing on processes can enhance reflective practice in seeing the professional environment and communication, learning targets, circumstances, and agreements within the professional situation. In the follow-up research, the components of reflective practice and their impact on professional growth and understanding were further explored and analyzed.

Reflective practice is a crucial tool in forming professional competence (McLeod et al.) as it engages future professionals in authentic job situations and in any complex situations making them critically evaluate their level of learning and see the professional situation as more client-centered.

Reflective strategies have increasingly influenced students’ achievement and learning in the current research. Reflective thinking accounts for successful students’ outcomes (Phan). Reflective practice positively correlates with the highest level of critical thinking in academic performance. Even though the use of reflective thinking is the area of educational psychology study that has received the least attention, statistical

analysis has shown that it directly correlates with academic learning and success. Being deeply involved in high-order thinking skills, analyzing the situation, and asking additional questions for understanding, the students benefit from thorough and detailed engagement in the learning or any other thinking or academic activity. While Phan (2009) ranks reflective thinking strategies on the same value as deep processing strategies, effort, mastery and performance-approach goals, and critical thinking in achieving success in students' academic performance, Clegg et al. argue that reflective practice is also a bridge between theory and practice followed by defining four types of professional practice linked to reflection: immediate and deferred action and reflection. The action and reflection components create strong engagement in professional practice involving the professional context, skills, and technologies, developing professional competence overall.

### **Disciplinary literacy as the aim of professional education**

Modern 21<sup>st</sup>-century skills encompass various skills and abilities, including basic literacy, critical thinking, and analysis skills. Disciplinary skills are designed to focus on specific professional information through analysis and application within the specific scope of future jobs.

An analysis of the literature on this topic showed that disciplinary skills development should be improved. Thus, the term “literacy” is defined not only as literacy, reading, and writing skills but in today's context, means a broader ability to apply in more detail, for example, “a set of multifaceted social practices resulting from contexts, participants and technologies are formed” (Archibald et al.). According to educational research, learning progress declines every year, especially in reading and national testing (Kirsch et al.). Disciplinary literacy is gaining momentum these days, reflecting the crux of the specific professional issues underlying ESP teaching. It's getting a crucial point within the online education epoch, having challenged the medium of critical thinking education in terms of specific job needs.

Resulting from the definition of disciplinary literacy as critical literacy (Moje), Cisco defined the key pillars of disciplinary literacy, which are characterized by specific literacy practices, taught to students, such as strategies, skills, and discourse or language practices, which are distinctive and identifiable. According to the soft skills discussed in the current aims in the higher education framework agreed with the employability market, the

list of thinking skills is growing meeting the technological development process and labour market requirements.

Disciplinary studies aim to enhance professional components by developing vocational and social skills, authentic for future job placement. Disciplinary literacy is considered to revolve around a mix of disciplinary-specific communicative practices: academic, vocational, and social, resulting in the targeting of university studies (Airey). Bearing this in mind, educators use disciplinary models to build specific knowledge for future professionals.

Disciplinary competencies are becoming one of the key competencies of the 21<sup>st</sup> century for developing specific knowledge in every subject area, further education, and every area of life. For the practical development of disciplinary literacy, educational researchers suggest several strategies closely connected with critical inquiry and analysis. For example, for reading activities, the primary vital actions for activation the disciplinary literacy may be: ‘provide ongoing, embedded literacy professional learning,’ ‘form a literacy leadership team,’ ‘make sure professional learning communities or disciplinary literacy cohorts are grounded in continuous disciplinary literacy learning and collaborative inquiry,’ ‘provide the resources,’ ‘ensure that teachers, especially those in cohorts or teams, experience encouragement, support, and opportunities to stretch their skills and knowledge,’ ‘encourage cross-curricular or cross-team collaboration,’ ‘foster leadership in all areas,’ ‘use reflection, learning, and planning collaboratively,’ ‘find opportunities for coteaching and peer coaching within disciplines’ (Lent and Voigt). As we can see from the list of the skills, they directly reflect the core abilities mainly exploited within the authentic job skills acquisition, which correlates with the essential 21<sup>st</sup>-century skills, along with reflection, which is considered the highest critical thinking ability.

### **Role-playing in the framework of developing professional competence**

The modeling and role-playing techniques have played a crucial role of in developing and enhancing professional functioning, taking priority in the instructional process in vocational training compared to seminars and lectures (Teevan and Gabel). The research proves the evidence that these methods are more efficient in improving professional skills, especially in communicating with clients. At the same time, applying roleplaying methods even in non-communication spheres has been proven to become positively improving for acquiring professional competence, as this not only assists in mastering and polishing gained knowledge, skills, beliefs, and attitudes, but adds a real

element of authentic job situation and simulation of professional environments (Carpio et al., Colin and Aubrun 1-6). This argument is supplemented by research by Skoura-Kirk et al. with enriching the roleplay benefit, adding the chance to practice, and developing procedures actively engaging cognitive and emotional processing, which significantly improves performance.

In defining the role-playing technique for professional performance enhancement, the basic step is argued to be the most efficient in this process: becoming client-centered in immersing the specific situation, focusing on the professional issues, and finding the best communicating decision (Colin and Aubrun 1-6). Undoubtedly, the process of engaging in the professional environment boosts the specific vocabulary in EFL learning, making the students plunge into the multifaceted process of applying the professional dimension and the specific language.

### **Aim of the study**

This study is an attempt to explore critical thinking strategies for developing disciplinary literacy and the correlation between critical thinking skills and disciplinary literacy outlining the idea that critical thinking may influence disciplinary literacy, increasing professional competence. It is commonly agreed that being an essential skill for the future employability of graduates, critical thinking and disciplinary literacy relation may have connotations for educators, labour market researchers, employers, as well as graduates and young professionals (Garcia-Esteban and Jahnke; Mtawa et al.; Miglani; Daellenbach).

The research reveals the basic components for building an employability framework for future professionals, such as thinking skills, for example reflective, critical thinking, deductive reasoning, and analysis thinking skills, which along with other soft skills are relevant to a professional career (Garcia-Esteban and Jahnke).

The core research question is *whether critical thinking strategies influence professional competency, which is the constituent of disciplinary literacy.*

The specific research objectives we guide in this study are:

- 1) defining the theoretical background for critical thinking;
- 2) analyzing the disciplinary literacy build;
- 3) finding the theoretical proof in the literature about their congruency;

4) checking this theory in the experiment with the graduate students.

Based on the aforementioned discussion, we hypothesize that critical thinking can develop disciplinary literacy, which includes professional competency as a main constituent.

H0:  $\mu$  critical thinking =  $\mu$  disciplinary literacy

H1:  $\mu$  critical thinking  $\neq$   $\mu$  disciplinary literacy.

The potential practical implications of this study appear to be helpful for researchers, educators, and educational practitioners better understand how to build the courses and assignments for graduate students to develop their professional competency.

This paper has four parts. First, it reviews the academic resources on the topics above, then describes the methods, presents the results, and lays out the discussion and conclusion.

## **Research Design and Methodology**

### ***Materials and Methods***

#### ***Participants and Setting***

The study examined students' progress in exposing critical thinking skills in professionally focused situations and was conducted by means of an online questionnaire distributed amongst a convenience sample of 40 undergraduate (second-year) students of Law at Sumy State University in the Fall term (2018-2019). The study was presented as research on the professional impact of critical thinking tasks used in professional situations in the English course. The development of disciplinary literacy was manipulated by randomly assigning participants to a condition where they had an English course designed specifically on the language and skills relevant to the student's present and future situations. The students had classes once a week face-to-face classes for the whole 32 hours as a part of their curricula. So, their course was compulsory and was designed according to their professional needs, outlined by the university policy. Teaching grounded in the English-for course design, is aimed at the actual language for the job the students need (Day), providing the authentic vocabulary and phrases for practical vocational usage. The critical thinking component and the additional reflective practices were introduced by an instructor at the beginning of the course, giving instructions on how to use them in professional speaking situations as a supportive component of the complete future job portfolio. The student's disciplinary literacy and critical thinking results were assessed using the sum score on their grades, evaluating their performance in

professional situations and critical thinking skills. The participants were debriefed about the real purpose of the study after the course was completed. The students were offered a series of reflective techniques for critically evaluating the professional situations given in the course along with the standard syllabus. When exposing their speaking, they were supposed to exploit the reflective strategies as high-level critical thinking skills, sincerely evaluating and analyzing the professional situations.

Participants in the experimental condition who completed the ESP course with critical thinking tasks were expected to have a relationship between critical thinking skills and disciplinary literacy development. The attained data were treated by the IBM™ 26 SPSS software grounding on the research questions.

### **Instruments**

#### *Critical thinking skills development through reflective practice materials*

The students were taught a series of lessons that addressed critical and creative skills development within professional situations. In the coursebook, speaking parts where the students had to develop an authentic situation and using the acquired lexis and language, the students were asked to apply reflective and critical thinking strategies showing their deep engagement in the professional situation. The aims of the lesson were:

- to be able to find the appropriate solution to the professional problem
- to be able to view a situation from a new professional perspective
- to be able to reflect on applying critical thinking skills and reflection strategies/language.

While pedagogical approaches to highlighting reflective practices vary across the specificity of vocational fields, there is consensus that the students need to use reflection by developing their critical overview of their knowledge, behavior, and beliefs, and by turning their personal practices into their potential practitioners' benefits (McLeod et al.). Other-research results reveal the key components of reflective practice as following: recollection, reflection-in-action, and mentoring process (Nuraeni and Heryatun). The analysis of principal practices in this area (Grohol; Robinson and Kelley; Luk) has led to a basic list of reflective strategies to be used in a vocational classroom:

1. Use your full attention to read or listen to an interlocutor.
2. Reflect before responding.

3. Make sure you understood what the other person meant by asking clarifying questions and getting a clearer idea about the situation.
4. Recognize the emotional side.
5. Offer alternatives.
6. Share your point of view, knowledge, or experience.
7. Request more information.
8. Ask questions the other person hasn't thought of, examine the assumptions, and consider other possibilities.
9. Take an objective stance.
10. Offer a different way of seeing things.
11. Get the other person thinking about the future.
12. Be respectful (World Learning).

Research shows that the ability to think critically and to apply reflective strategies is more easily acquired in the classroom by providing clear and explicit instructions (Marin and Halpern). So, the students received the list of reflective strategies and were asked to refer to the professional situations in parallel where possible.

### *Professional Problem Situations*

The professional problems were taught within the ESP course for students of Law, emphasizing problem-solving skills, and grounding in the specific legal disciplines the students had been taught. For example, the students had to deal with authentic problems in interaction between a lawyer and a client, a lawyer, and a judge, and a jury.

#### *Professional Problem Situation Example:*

Student A: You are a lawyer. Ask Student B about:

- Recent calls
- Why clients waive attorney-client privilege.

Student B: You are a legal assistant. Talk to Student A.

Both students should apply reflective strategies in their conversations.

Emerging into a specific professional situation evokes both linguistic levers in communications and core skills as critical thinking skills necessary in a future-job environment.

### **Instruction**

At the beginning of the course, the students were offered a test on reflective practice strategies (Annex A). After completing the course with the opportunity to practice reflective thinking strategies, they were tested with

the same questions. The specific vocabulary units were introduced during their ESP course grounded in the coursebook *Career Paths: Law* (Evans et al.), which focused on the development of vocational training in balance, engaging students in authentic efficient vocabulary work through reading, listening, writing, and speaking. The conversation practice in the course suggests role-playing techniques and modeling professional situations, so the students were supposed to add a reflective component to the job-oriented one in their disciplinary sphere. At the end of the course, in their summative control in speaking, the students were supposed to present their disciplinary-oriented role-playing speaking pieces exposing the reflection strategies and specific vocabulary units.

### **Data collection procedures**

The results of the pre-test data were obtained at the first stage after completing the entrance test on professional vocabulary units and knowledge of reflective practice strategies.

Administration of the observation stage, pre-test reflective practice at the first stage, and post-test after the training was followed by the implementation of the independent variables, reflective practice, and vocabulary-specific language units at the first stage in all groups (Kadioglu-Akbulut and Uzuntiryaki-Kondakci; Oxford and Amerstorfer; Warren et al.). Then, the post-test reflective practice test was administered to the groups to determine if the reflective practice impacted the dependent variables: critical thinking and levels of professional competency. In this test, we used the same test on reflective strategies (Annex A). In contrast, the professional vocabulary varied, including more language units due to the discipline syllabus, yet, the test was designed in the same way and style as in the pre-test. A post-test rubric was used to assess reflection and critical thinking skills evidenced in student answers and their oral descriptions of critical professional situations. This design allowed for empirical testing of the second stage post-test results while also allowing for learning new insights about students' reflective practice (Kadioglu-Akbulut and Uzuntiryaki-Kondakci; Oxford and Amerstorfer; Warren et al.). The pre-test was carried out a few days before the instruction and the post-test two days after the lessons were completed.

The results taken from the pre-test and post-test stages on reflective strategies and speaking evaluation were analyzed according to the ELT speaking criteria, further transforming the gained grades into the points for

accounting for them in statistics justification. The points from the test, both pre-test and post-test stages, were inverted into the scale from 1 to 5, related to the levels from ‘initial’ to ‘excellent,’ where ‘initial’ refers to the lowest level, and ‘excellent’ refers with the highest one correspondently, which was used for descriptive statistics after that.

The dynamic of reflective practice strategies and professional vocabulary in the pre-test and post-test is illustrated in Figures 1-4.

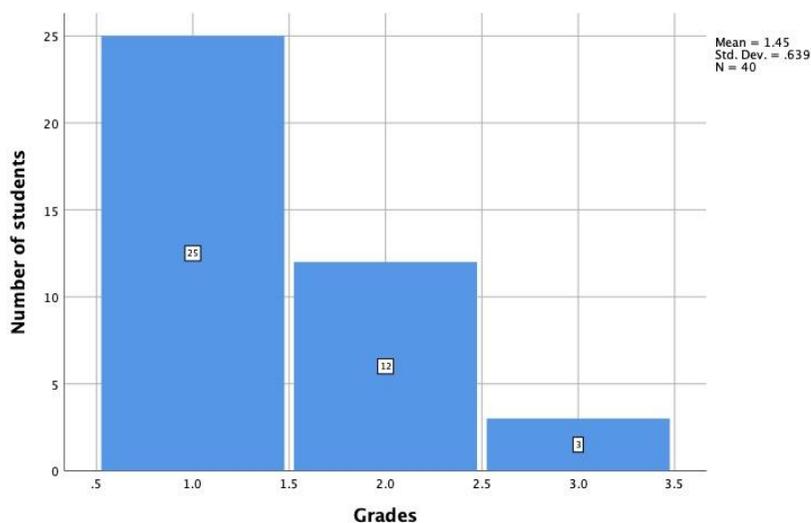


Figure 1. Professional vocabulary grades in the pre-test

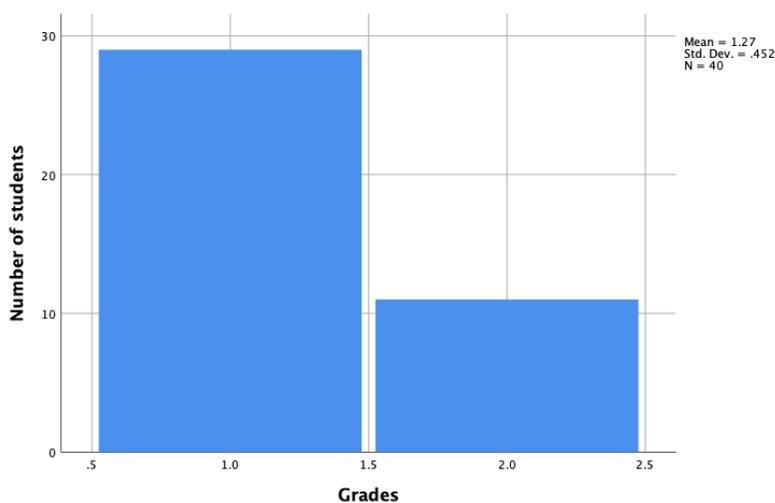


Figure 2. Reflective practice grades in the pre-test

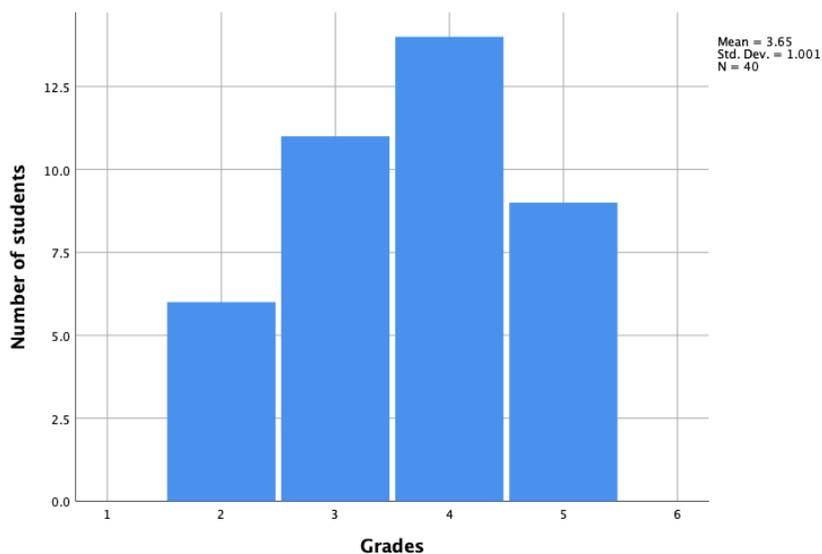


Figure 3. Professional vocabulary grades in the post-test

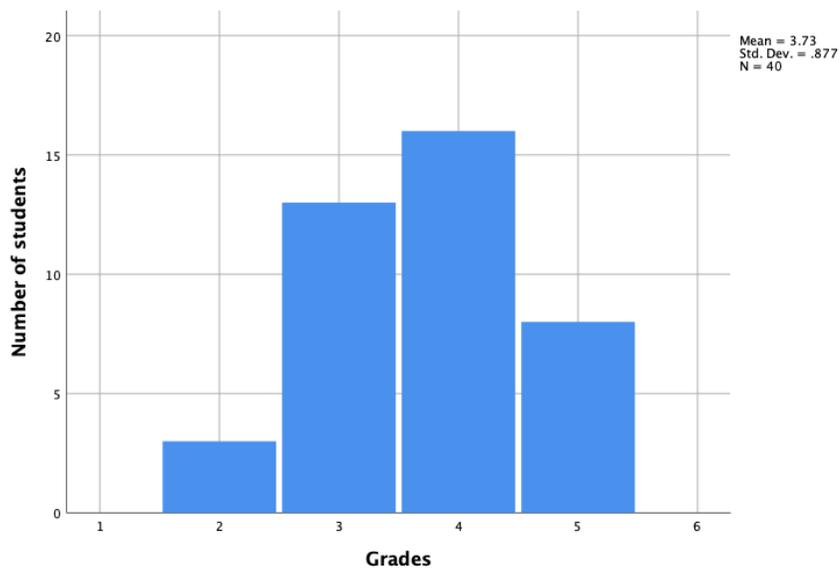


Figure 4. Reflective practice grades in the post-test

Following our hypothesis about the influence of critical thinking on disciplinary literacy, which includes professional competency as a main

constituent, we assume a correlation between critical thinking strategies and professional competency development.

The variable sample has a normal distribution, and the effect size is significant for our research (Cohen’s  $d = 0.08$ , 95% Conf. Interval:  $-0.36; 0.52$ ).

Having checked the correlation between our variables, we can determine a moderate strong positive correlation between the variables ‘use of reflective practice’ and ‘use of professional vocabulary’ in the post-test:  $r(40) = 0.73$ ,  $p < 0.05$ , shown in Table 1 (Kiernan; DePaul University’s Department of Psychology).

Table 1. Pearson’s correlation between the reflective practices and specific vocabulary.

	Use of specific vocabulary pre-test	Use of reflective practices pre-test	Use of specific vocabulary post-test	Use of reflective practices post-test
Use of specific vocabulary pre-test	1.0000			
Use of reflective practices pre-test	0.3597 approx. 13% $r^2 = 0.12938$	1.0000		
Use of specific vocabulary post-test	0.6938 approx. 48% $r^2 = 0.48135$	0.3313 approx. 11% $r^2 = 0.10975$	1.0000	
Use of reflective practices post-test	0.5016 approx. 25% $r^2 = 0.25160$	0.5837 approx. 34% $r^2 = 0.34070$	0.7346 approx. 54% $r^2 = 0.539$	1.0000

## Discussion

The aim of this study was to explore whether critical thinking strategies correlate with the disciplinary literacy, increasing professional competence. This study researched the potential role of critical thinking in reflective practices in influencing professional competency, particularly the specific

professional vocabulary in job situations by means of role-playing situations outlined by this study. The findings of this study report support our prediction: the more aware of reflective strategies the students are in professional conversations, the deeper the knowledge of professional terms and language units they demonstrate. Moreover, these findings support the notion that critical thinking along with reflective thinking skills as a high order critical thinking skills positively influence professional performance (Bezanilla et al.; Clegg et al.; McLeod et al.; Merryland; Rönnlund et al.; Samsudin and Hardini; Sartori et al.; Shavelson et al.; Vero and Puka).

Consistent with the related studies on the congruency of critical thinking and professional competency, our findings indicate the relationship between the usage of reflective practices as the techniques for high-ordered skills, and professional vocabulary usage in specific job situations, which is a component of the professional competence.

In the explanation to this research, we can say that the correct model of reflective strategies, awakens the mindfulness in using the right professional language and immersing in the similar to authentic professional environment. To our knowledge, this is one of the few studies demonstrating the relationship between reflective practices and professional development with the students of Law (Black and Plowright; Leigh; Roberts).

The results of this research suggest that developing professional competency, which includes soft skills and practical and analytical skills of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, depends, to a great extent, on critical thinking skills, notably, as this research thus illustrated, reflective practices integrated into the usage of the professional vocabulary.

The results of this study could provide future studies with some theoretical implications. Our study utilized an integrated theoretical framework with engaged high-order thinking skills and disciplinary literacy, revealing the meaning of critical thinking skills, reflective thinking strategies, and role-playing techniques for enhancing disciplinary literacy in the framework of professional performance development.

This study also makes several contributions to LSP instructors' and educators' practice in designing vocational training courses suggesting the reflective strategies element in enhancing immersion into professional situations and reviewing the learned material.

The results show that utilizing role-playing techniques with accentuated specific vocabulary and reflective strategies enriches the students' vocational training encouraging them and adding a motivational

factor to study. A communicational component of the vocational training course with critical thinking and reflective strategies provides better acquisition of the course and a deeper understanding of their future job client-centered practice.

Despite the theoretical and practical implications, this study has some limitations. The first limitation might pertain to a bias of the authors' personal view in designing the research framework. There are loads of possible flows of viewpoints in the scaffolding ground for making the review grid. Another potential shortcoming is gaps in literature searching which can lead to missing relevant research. Selecting studies only from peer-reviewed journals decreased the range of works on the topic from other sources. A third potential limitation is related to the components of disciplinary literacy in defining its meaning and the interpretation of the research aims. The true meaning of vocational oracy may be partially interpreted and based on a personal viewpoint. Moreover, we would gain more precise results if the sample could be more extensive. We did not measure individual attitudes and performance by using reflective practice in specific vocabulary classes, which could influence the results. And, we did not consider control variables in this study. Future studies may look at the effects of control factors like demographics and personality traits, which may impact the study's findings.

Opportunities for future research should develop a further framework for empirical research on assessing the factors influencing the growth of vocational training performance. This study can be a ground for doing the research by adding more components to impact the quality of professional performance in the specific context.

## **Conclusions**

In general, this study contributes to the understanding of reflection as a high form of critical thinking for professional competency development. It is based on the mindful use of reflective strategies and professional language acquisition at ESP – Legal English classes with Law students. The study justified the assumption that critical thinking strategies build disciplinary literacy as the core constituent of professional competency. With the use of critical thinking strategies, professional vocabulary in the research was enhanced, showing a moderate strong positive correlation. Despite the limited number of students in this research, our study can be followed as a backdrop for other specialisms and further academic research.

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## APPENDIX A

### Test on Reflective Strategies

#### *Written questions*

1. You are unlikely to give meaningful feedback to someone if you do not fully understand what they are saying! You need to give your full attention to the other person to make sure you understand what they are saying.

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TYPE YOUR ANSWER

2. If the speaker has not mentioned something, it may be because he/she does not think it is important. However, when you ask about that information, you may be able to show that there are other factors in the situation that could be important. Other excellent questions for promoting critical thinking include,

Why do think that was?

What do think the other person was thinking?

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TYPE YOUR ANSWER

3. First, are you sure you understand what the person is saying? Next, what is it that this person needs to critically examine? How can you help him or her to do that?

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TYPE YOUR ANSWER

#### *Matching questions*

1. When the other person answers you, he or she may become clearer about his/her ideas by explaining the situation better. Because of the wait time between responses in our written discussions, you might want to save

time. Instead of simply asking for clarification, you can restate or summarize what the other person is saying and see if they agree with it.

2. In critical thinking, we need to examine our assumptions, but it is usually quite hard to even realize what our assumptions are. Our assumptions and habits can make us forget the importance of some factors. For example, if a teacher sees a student frowning in class, he might automatically assume that the student is unhappy. A few questions from someone else might help the teacher consider other possibilities, for example,

Is it possible that that is just what she looks like when she concentrates?

How is her eyesight? Maybe she can't read what is written on the board.

3. It is important to first think critically on past experiences and what they mean, but when the time is right, it is also important to think about implications for the future. You can ask the person you are listening to what they plan to do in the future. If they have given some ideas but you have some other ideas, you might want to suggest alternative courses of action.

- A. Ask questions the other person hasn't thought of.
- B. Get the other person thinking about the future.
- C. Make sure you understood what the other person wrote or said.

### ***Multiple choice questions***

1. All of these can also help the other person to consider other interpretations and perspectives.

- A. Request more information.
- B. Reflect before responding.
- C. Use your full attention to read the posts or listen to your partner.
- D. Share your point of view, knowledge, or experience.

2. Here we are really starting to get into the active work of encouraging reflection. If we can offer alternative interpretations, we are helping the other person see multiple points of view, which is at the heart of critical thinking.

- A. Offer alternatives.

- B. Take an objective stance.
- C. Be respectful.
- D. Recognize the emotional side.

3. Reflective practice is hard work for everyone. There are always perspectives we haven't considered, and a lot of emotional issues connected to our work. It is important to respect the other person and choose our comments and questions wisely.

- A. Offer alternatives.
- B. Recognize the emotional side.
- C. Take an objective stance.
- D. Be respectful.

#### True/False questions

1. There are many emotions connected to experiences like teaching experiences and intercultural encounters. If the person you are talking to thinks you do not understand this, they may not want to discuss the experience with you. → Reflect before responding.

True / False

2. Many times people can't think critically about a situation because they are too emotionally involved. People who are not involved in the situation can help the other person think the event through when they offer an objective point of view. → Offer alternatives.

True / False

3. You can help the other person imagine someone else's point of view. → Offer a different way of seeing things.

True / False

False

### List of Contributors

**Silvia AULAGNON** est enseignante de FLE (Français langue étrangère) et responsable de la Médiathèque du CILEC (Centre International de langue et civilisation) au sein du Pôle International de l'Université Jean Monnet de Saint-Etienne. Elle est l'auteure d'une thèse en sciences du langage intitulée *Représentation médiatique des échanges interculturels, des enjeux et dynamiques identitaires de la minorité lorraine du Banat*, à l'Université de Lorraine /Metz (2022). Elle a publié notamment trois articles sur la communauté lorraine/souabe de Roumanie, notamment « Multi/plurilinguisme du Banat. De l'espace vécu à l'histoire de langues chez les Lorrains du Banat contemporain », in *Langues et cultures en contact. Réflexions linguistiques et traductologiques*, (eds.) Marc Lacheny, Nadine Rentel, Stephanie Schwerter, Peter Lang 2022, p. 79-94 ; « Langue, chanson et subversion dans l'imaginaire socio-discursif de Herta Müller », in *Chansons entre langues, révoltes et subversions*, (eds.) Claude Cortier, Marielle Rispaïl, Valeria Villa-Perez, Lambert Lucas, 2022, p. 53-68, et « La Représentation du Souabe danubien dans la presse roumaine post totalitaire. De l'échange culturel au transfert identitaire », in *Germanica*, 62/2018, *Echanges et transferts culturels entre la Roumanie et les pays germanophones de 1880 à nos jours*, p. 57-74.

Teaching assistant **Oana-Luiza BARBU**, Ph.D. - Department of Foreign Languages and Communication, Faculty of Engineering in Foreign Languages, Technical University of Civil Engineering Bucharest. Ph.D. in Philology, University of Bucharest. Professional experience in the following fields: Romanian as a foreign language, Romanian culture and civilization, Romanian for specific purposes, internationalization of higher education. Areas of interest: applied linguistics, language teaching didactics, culture and civilization, internationalization of higher education from a cultural perspective. E-mail: [oana.luiza.barbu@utcb.ro](mailto:oana.luiza.barbu@utcb.ro).

**Andrea Roxana BELLOT** lectures in English literature and cultural studies at the Department of English and German Studies, Rovira i Virgili University, in Tarragona, Spain. Her research focuses on analysing the cultural and literary representations of conflict, examining the intricate relationship between language and social integration, and exploring the development of intercultural competence. With a passion for innovative

teaching methods, Andrea has designed and implemented projects aimed at fostering intercultural communicative competence within the university classroom. These initiatives have developed into virtual exchanges following the COIL (Collaborative Online International Learning) methodological framework, providing students with valuable opportunities for cross-cultural interaction and learning. Her main publications have appeared in *Journal of Peace Education* (2022), *English Teaching: Practice & Critique* (2020) and *Journal of War & Culture Studies* (2018), among others. ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0561-2132>. Email: [andrearoxana.bellot@urv.cat](mailto:andrearoxana.bellot@urv.cat)

Graduate of two BA programs (Philology - English-French languages, and Sociology, *Ovidius* University of Constanța), an MA Program (Anglo-American Studies) and a PhD in Philology, **Alina BUZARNA-TIHENEA (GĂLBEAZĂ)** is Associate Professor at *Ovidius* University of Constanta, the Faculty of Letters, Department of Modern Languages for Specific Purposes, where she holds ESP courses and seminars. She is author and co-author of books, chapters and articles indexed in international databases, in areas such as translation studies (issues in the translation of specialized texts), ESP teaching, specialized terminology analysis, sociology, British and American literature and cultural studies. She is member of several professional and academic associations, such as RAAS, EAAS, RSEAS, ESSE and ISAPL.

**Daniel CLINCI** is a Lecturer at *Ovidius* University of Constanța and holds a PhD from the University of Bucharest, with a thesis on the historical Avant-garde and the transition to experimental postmodernity. During his doctoral studies, he researched contemporary philosophy and media studies at the University of Amsterdam. He is also co-editor of *Post/h/um. Jurnal de studii postumaniste*, an independent journal dedicated to bringing new critical theories and concepts into Romanian through the translation of very recent academic articles from researchers worldwide. He published *Avangardă și experiment. De la estetica negativă la cultura postmodernă*, București, 2014, and *First, Do No Harm. A Medical English textbook*, Constanța, 2020.

**Alina COSTEA** has been an assistant professor Ph.D. at The Department of Foreign Languages for Specific Purposes within The Faculty of Letters, *Ovidius* University of Constanta since 2012. Among the specializations that she has been teaching English to, there are to be mentioned Geography, Tourism, Local Police, Law. Previously, she was also a journalist at *Tomis* cultural magazine, between 2001 and 2010, where she published multiple book or theatre reviews, articles and interviews. Starting with October 2023,

she has been a cultural journalist for *Tomis* magazine, again. Having a particular interest for domains such as literature, film industry, anthropology or history, the author finds it crucial to invest in her professional development, as well, through communication and intertextuality.

**Iilina DOYKOVA** works mainly on the interface between academic discourse and corpus linguistics. In addition to her expertise in teaching English for healthcare professionals (EMP), she has a keen research interest in languages for specific purposes, specialized translation and technology enhanced learning. Iilina Doykova holds a Master's degree in English and Bulgarian Linguistics and a doctoral degree in Germanic Languages. As a bilingual lecturer she has been teaching Bulgarian as a foreign language and English for specific purposes in tertiary institutions for over 20 years. She is currently an Associate Professor of English for Medical Purposes and head of the Department of Foreign Languages, Communication and Sports at MU-Varna, Bulgaria. Her fields of teaching include English for Medicine, English for Dental Medicine, English for Pharmacy, English for Kinesiotherapy, as well as English for Academic research. As a member of the award-winning “HELP 2” project team she authored of several English modules that train healthcare students in communicative language activities at levels B1 and B2. She also published textbooks designed to suit the needs of medical opticians and students of medicine that reflect the current trends in medical communication in English. Email: [ilina.doykova@mu-varna.bg](mailto:ilina.doykova@mu-varna.bg)

**Slaveyah GORANOVA** is a Senior Lecturer of Specialized English at Medical University “Prof Dr. Paraskev Stoyanov” – Varna. Her main teaching experience is with courses in English as a Foreign Language and Spanish as a Foreign Language. Currently, she is focused on pursuing her academic interests in the fields of English for the Medical Sciences and Academic English Writing. She is doing research on the challenges that students of Medicine, Pharmacy, and Dental Medicine encounter when writing. Furthermore, she is particularly keen on exploring the role of metaphor in medical discourse. Other interests include Teaching Spanish as a Foreign Language, Comparative Linguistics, Phonetics and Phonology.

**Antony HOYTE-WEST** is an interdisciplinary researcher focusing on linguistics, literature, and translation studies. He is particularly interested in historical and contemporary language policy, sociological aspects of the translation and interpreting professions, literary translation studies, and institutional translation and interpreting. A qualified translator and conference interpreter from several languages into his native English, he

holds a doctorate in linguistics and postgraduate degrees in languages and social sciences from the universities of St Andrews, Oxford, Galway, and Silesia, as well as two diplomas in piano performance. He is the author of forty-six publications and has presented his research at international conferences in a range of countries.

**Anamaria IONIȚĂ** est docteur en philologie depuis 2021, assistante universitaire associée à l'Université *Ovidius* de Constanta et chercheuse postdoctorale au cadre de l'Ecole des Sciences Humaines de l'Université *Ovidius* de Constanta. Elle a travaillé sur une thèse consacrée aux parcours langagiers des étudiants étrangers en mobilité de diplôme inscrits dans le domaine de la santé et à leur intégration socio-académique. Ses recherches portent particulièrement sur la mobilité internationale académique, sur la plurimobilité étudiante, sur la migration et l'intégration, sur les représentations sociolinguistiques et le plurilinguisme.

**Ionela IONIȚIU** is a lecturer and teaches English for Civil and Mechanical Engineering, English for Dentistry, and English for Arts to Bachelor-degree students, A2-B1 levels. Dr. Ionițiu is interested in course design, curriculum development, assessment materials, writing textbooks and other publications related to English teaching methodology, engineering English, linguistics, and online teaching. She has various participations in national/ international conferences. She also participated to various certified on-line courses organized by highly-ranked institutions and organizations: "How languages are taught", "The A-B-C of Communication: Topics into Tasks", "Flip to actively engage and to incite learner responsibility in young learners", "How to Sharpen Your ESP learners' Employability Skills", "Everybody Thinks They Can't Before They Can – The Benefits and Drawbacks of Online Teaching". She participated to various national/ international projects, either as a coordinator or an expert/ administrative personnel: 1. August 2019 – December 2021: Project member: Cross-Border Maritime Spatial planning for the Black Sea, II; 2. Project code: 68/SGU/NC/I – Tools for the prevention of abandonment in Civil Engineering, *Ovidius* University of Constanta, INCLUSION; 3. September 2016 – July 2017: Project member: Cross-Border Maritime Spatial planning for the Black Sea – Romania, Bulgaria (MARSPLAN-BS), EASME/EMFF/2014/1.2.1.5/Lot 1/P01; 4. 27 August – 21 September 2012, Project Manager & member: Erasmus Intensive Language Course, to name just a few.

**Dr. Alexandra-Lavinia ISTRATIE-MACAROV** is an Assistant Professor in English for Specific Purposes at *Ovidius* University of Constanta, with the

Department of Modern Languages for Specific Purposes of the Faculty of Letters, and on the scientific board of the Centre for Research on Specialized Languages from a Multidisciplinary Perspective. She holds a BA in English and French foreign languages, an MA and a PhD in philology from *Ovidius* University. She has expertise and has done research in areas such as teaching ESP (with a focus on business and engineering), translation studies, linguistics and American literature. She is a member of several professional associations, such as RAAS, EAAS, RSEAS and ESSE.

**Dr Oleksandr KAPRANOV** is an associate professor in English linguistics at NLA University College, campus Oslo (Norway). Having obtained his PhD from The University of Western Australia in Perth (WA), he taught English linguistics at a number of universities in Sweden and Norway. His was a post-doctoral fellow at The University of Bergen (Norway), where his research was focused on corporate and political discourse on climate change and sustainability. His current interests involve academic discourse, academic writing, climate change discourse, and psycholinguistics.

**Iryna LIASHENKO** is an Associate Professor at Sumy State University with a diverse range of responsibilities, including teaching General English (GE), English for Specific Purposes (ESP), and English for Academic Purposes (EAP). She instructs graduate-level courses, develops course materials, publishes articles in academic journals, serves on committees, attends conferences, writes grant proposals, delivers presentations, and manages administrative tasks. Her research interests lie in Applied Linguistics, ESP, professional competence, critical thinking, and reflective practices in vocational training. As an active member of professional organizations such as TESOL, IATEFL, UALTA, UERA, and others, Iryna consistently prioritizes her professional development. She continually enhances her academic and research perspectives, incorporating innovative teaching methods and conducting action research with both undergraduate and postgraduate students.

**Dr. Carmen Liliana MĂRUNȚELU** is Associate Professor and Head of Department at *Ovidius* University of Constantza, Faculty of Letters, Department of Modern Languages for Specific Purposes, where she holds ESP courses and seminars. She got her BA and PhD in Philology at “Al. I Cuza” University, in Iași, and she has also graduated several English teaching courses in the UK, at the Management and Language Specialists Institute in Bournemouth and at the Institute for Applied Language Studies, the University of Edinburgh. Her field of expertise includes ESP, English

teaching and learning, British and American literature and cultural studies, communication in the economic environment, and she is author and co-author of numerous books, articles and conference presentations on topics related to these areas.

**Biljana NAUMOSKA-SARAKINSKA**, PhD, is an associate professor at the Department of English Language and Literature, at the Faculty of Philology within the Ss Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje, Republic of N. Macedonia. Her key interests are in the field of English grammar and linguistics, in the areas of semantics, word formation, morphology, lexicology, as well as ESP – Business English. She teaches a number of core and elective courses at the undergraduate level of studies, including Modern English, Semantics, Business English Communication, as well as Business English at the Faculty of Economy, within the same University. At this level of studies, she is engaged as a visiting professor at the Faculty in Novi Sad. At the postgraduate level, she teaches Topics in Semantics, and at the doctoral level of studies she offers the course Approaches and Studies in Semantics. At the moment, she is involved in the Erasmus+ (KA2) Project - DAFLS – Developing Applied Foreign Language Skills (Developing multilingual skills training for special purposes), an international project in collaboration with the University in Caen, France, the University in Belgrade, Serbia, and Ss Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje, Republic of N. Macedonia. Her email address is [biljananaumoska@flf.ukim.edu.mk](mailto:biljananaumoska@flf.ukim.edu.mk), [orcid.org/0000-0001-7657-9598](https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7657-9598)

**Dr. Lavinia NĀDRAG** is full Professor at *Ovidius* University of Constantza, Faculty of Letters, Department of Modern Languages and Literatures and Communication Sciences. She got her BA at *Ovidius* University of Constantza and her PhD at the University of Bucharest, Romania. Her fields of research and expertise are linguistics, psycholinguistics and ESP. She is mainly interested in applied linguistics (TEFL and ESP). She has written numerous books and articles on topics related to the above-mentioned domains of language study. She is a member of ISAPL (The International Association for Applied Psycholinguistics), RAAS (The Romanian Association for American Studies and RSEAS (The Romanian Society for English and American Studies).

**Svetlana NEDELICHEVA** graduated from the University of Shumen, majoring in English Studies. In 2007 she defended her doctoral thesis entitled “Cognitive Interpretation of the English Preposition ON and its Bulgarian Equivalents” and in 2013 she published her habilitation work “Space, Time

and Human Experience: A Cognitive View on English and Bulgarian Prepositions”. She has specialized in a number of universities, including the University of Bangor, UK (Post-Doctoral Research Program) and Georgetown University, USA (as a Fulbright researcher). She has lectured at a number of European universities. Her research interests are in the field of cognitive linguistics, contrastive linguistics, translation and foreign language teaching. E-mail: [s.nedelcheva@shu.bg](mailto:s.nedelcheva@shu.bg)

Assoc. prof. **Marinela Doina NISTEA**, Ph.D. - Department of Foreign Languages and Communication, Faculty of Engineering in Foreign Languages, Technical University of Civil Engineering Bucharest. Graduate of the University of Bucharest, Faculty of Foreign Languages and Literatures. Ph.D. in Philology, University of Bucharest. Professional experience in the following fields: Romanian as a foreign language, Romanian culture and civilization, contemporary Romanian language, Russian language for beginners. Areas of interest: contrastive linguistics, applied linguistics, language teaching didactics, cultural interference, culture and civilization, Russian literature. Member of the Association of Teachers of Russian Language and Literature in Romania (A.I.P.L.L.R.), Member of the Association of Slavists in Romania.

**Carmen OPRÎȚ-MAFTEI** is an Associate Professor at the English Department of the Faculty of Letters, ”Dunărea de Jos” University of Galați, Romania. Her PhD title in General Linguistics was awarded in 2007 by ”Al. I. Cuza” University of Iași. Her PhD thesis, *Voice in English and Romanian. A Contrastive Study* was published in 2016. The research she has conducted so far materialized in over eighty articles, books reviews, studies, and chapters in books. She also authored and co-authored five books (*English for Marketing, English for Business Administration, English for the Business World, English Borrowings in Romanian: Economic Terminologies, English for Professional Communication – Part I – Oral Presentations in a Nutshell*). Her research interests include translation theory, discourse analysis for translation purposes, Business English, Academic Writing, ESP, Translation Studies, discourse analysis. She is a member of ESSE and RSEAS. E-mail: [carmen.maftei@ugal.ro](mailto:carmen.maftei@ugal.ro)

Assoc. Prof. **Deyana PENEVA**, Ph.D. is a full-time lecturer at the Department of English studies at Konstantin Preslavsky University of Shumen. The theoretical and practical contributions of her scientific production are in the fields of Applied Linguistics, Pragmatics and Speech acts phenomena. She was awarded a doctoral degree in Philology (Germanic

languages – Modern English) after successfully defending a dissertation on the apology speech acts in English and Bulgarian. Her habilitation work entitled “Expressing Gratitude in English (a pragmalinguistic study based on a Bulgarian learners’ corpus) is a natural continuation of her scientific preferences.

**Dr. Cristina TAMAȘ** est écrivain, professeur et ancienne doyenne de la Faculté des Lettres de l'Université *Ovidius* de Constantza. Actuellement, elle est membre associée du corps enseignant et donne des cours et des séminaires de français à la même faculté. Elle a obtenu son diplôme de licence et son doctorat à « Al. I Cuza » Université de Iași, et son domaine d'expertise englobe, entre autres, des domaines tels que la littérature et les études culturelles françaises, les études de traduction, les études de communication, le français - langues spécialisées, l'enseignement et l'apprentissage du français. Elle a publié beaucoup de livres, de chapitres et d'articles traitant des sujets dans les domaines susmentionnés. Elle est également membre de plusieurs associations professionnelles et universitaires, telles que l'Alliance française - Branche de Constanta, l'Union des écrivains de Roumanie - Branche de Constanta, l'Association Roumanie-Israël.

Lecturer **Oana TĂTARU**, Ph. D, ‘Ovidius’ University of Constanta, Faculty of Letters, Department of Modern Languages for Specific Purposes, graduate of the above mentioned institution. The doctoral thesis *Romanian political discourse between identity and identitarian crisis* has had as focus the analysis as regards the act of communication of particular political actors in various intervals of time with emphasis on specific features and characteristics in relation to speech and manner of addressing. The articles *The Facets of Distinctive Forms as Regards Social Communication*, *A miscellaneous perspective on the issue of modernity*, *The Cogency of Social Mindset* reflect personal study and interest over society and its corresponding component aspects/peculiarities. *Academic Language Learning-Interdisciplinary Knowledge* is a material that is in the works, being intended as a course handout for students in terms of politics, international relations and history, thus enabling the access and introduction within specialized texts, applications, vocabulary and topics of discussion.

**Ioana-Raluca VIȘAN** holds a PhD in translation studies from ‘Dunărea de Jos’ University of Galați. Her research interests include LSP translation, LSP discourse and specialized terminologies. Ioana-Raluca Vișan has participated in the International Maritime English Conferences in and outside Europe. Additionally, she contributed to the translation of the International Maritime

Dictionary (IMD) into Romanian, a dictionary meant to enhance the quality of communication and safety in the shipping industry, particularly for shipboard practices on board vessels that have multilingual crews.

**Monica VLAD** est professeure des universités HDR à la Faculté des Lettres de l'Université Ovidius Constanta, Roumanie. Elle dirige actuellement l'Institut des Etudes Doctorales et enseigne la linguistique française et la didactique du plurilinguisme et des langues. Elle a publié notamment *L'Ecrit universitaire en pratique* (Bruxelles : De Boeck, coll. Méthodes en sciences humaines 2009, 2011, 2017, 2020) – avec Georgeta Cislaru et Chantal Claudel. Elle a fait partie du comité scientifique du projet CECA (projet conjoint FIPF-AUF : <http://ceca.auf.org/>) pendant la période 2007-2010 et a coordonné, suite au projet - avec Francis Carton et Emmanuelle Carrette - le volume collectif *Diversités culturelles et enseignement du français dans le monde* (Grenoble : Presses Universitaires de Grenoble, 2011). Elle a coordonné également, avec Mariella Causa et Stéphanie Galligani le volume *Formation et pratiques enseignantes en contextes pluriels* (Paris : Riveneuve, 2014) ainsi qu'un numéro thématique de la revue *Le Français dans le Monde. Recherches et Applications* consacré à la formation des enseignants au plurilinguisme avec Stéphanie Galligani (janvier 2020). Depuis janvier 2020, elle fait partie de l'équipe du projet européen *Développer des compétences enseignantes pour les approches plurielles* ([www.ecml.at/pluralisticteachercompetences](http://www.ecml.at/pluralisticteachercompetences)).

**Cristina Mihaela ZAMFIR**, PhD, is an Associate Professor in the Department of Languages for Specific Purposes at the “Ovidius” University of Constanța, Romania. She holds a doctoral degree from the University of Timișoara. She is the author of the books *English for Sports and Games*, (Constanța: Ovidius University Press, 2011), *Mapping Business Territories: A Neuro-Linguistic Programming Perspective on Negotiating and Selling* (Constanța: Ex Ponto, 2012), *Business Communication and NLP: Successful Drivers in Theory and Practice* (București: Editura Universitară, 2018), *Business at Work: Company Communication Patterns through a Linguistic Lens* (București: Editura Universitară, 2020), and co-author of *Bazele generale în pregătirea animatorului socio-educativ* (Constanța: Ovidius University Press, 2020). Her research interests include language studies, psycholinguistics, ESP terminology, NLP and communication. She has published over 50 articles in the fields of ESP and English lexicology and semantics in national and international peer-reviewed journals. E-mail address: [cristina\\_m\\_zamfir@yahoo.com](mailto:cristina_m_zamfir@yahoo.com)