
Foreword

Welcome to the second online edition of *ESP Across Cultures*. As expected, the switch to going from a paper-based to an online edition has helped give our journal greater visibility among the international academic community. This enhanced accessibility, together with the journal's policy of double blind peer reviewing – a policy that has characterized the journal ever since its inception in 2004 – and its 'A' ranking status by AN-VUR (Italy's National Agency for the Evaluation of University and Research) have all helped to consolidate its reputation among language scholars worldwide.

This current issue contains seven papers, all focusing on English for Specific Purposes from a cross-cultural perspective.

The first paper is by Francesca Bianchi who provides a qualitative and quantitative analysis of Italian subtitling in science documentaries aimed at the general public. The author describes the strategies adopted in translating the narrator's spoken lines: the subtitles were classified according to the type of strategy applied and the linguistic elements that were manipulated. Her analysis shows that while some of the instances of text manipulation correspond with the needs in subtitling of shortening and simplifying on the one hand and clarifying on the other, the remaining cases were a deliberate attempt to make the text more formal. The author concludes that the shift in the tenor of discourse denotes the translators' adaptation of the text to Italian culture and that "achieving greater formality should be considered a driving force in the subtitling of science documentaries from English into Italian, on a par with clarifying, simplifying and shortening".

Barbara Cappuzzo examines the role of allo-repetition in a subcorpus of speech events included in the section of spoken academic medical interactions in the ELFA (English as a Lingua Franca in Academic Settings) corpus. The author focuses on the communicative functions served by allo-repetition in the meaning-making process and understanding co-construction in a medical academic ELF context involving speakers of several different linguistic and cultural backgrounds. The main aim of the work is to show "how allo-repetition as an interactive process between speakers contributes to increasing understanding, constructing an atmosphere of cooperation, establishing and/or re-establishing shared understanding in knowledge negotiation at an international spoken academic level in the medical field".

Marta Degani looks at American political discourse on the basis of Lakoff's interpretation of American politics. The study analyses elements of McCain's and Obama's speeches during the 2008 presidential election campaign and examines how highly frequent lexical items characterizing the rhetoric of the Republican and the Democratic candidates can be indicative of distinctive ideologies that highlight the existence of two contending political cultures. The author thus investigates political discourse across two different political cultures in the United States.

Christopher Goddard focuses on pragmatic competence in cross-cultural contexts, specifically among legal professionals. Starting from the premise that law has no separate existence of its own, the author states that people, events and ideas "will inevitably be reflected in the framing and content of laws, as well as in the way they are expressed in legal language". Through his exploration of the literature Christopher Goddard attempts to identify "some of the unseen factors and forces that make legal language what it is, with the aim of opening avenues for further comparative legal linguistic research in the field of legal ESP, as well as in legal translation and comparative law".

In their paper, Lynn Rudd and Antonietta Bagnardi look at how to meet the needs of PhD students in Computer Science who wish to improve their English language abil-

ities for writing theses and articles. The authors carried out an in-depth study of the literature concerning academic, scientific and specialized discourse analysis and works regarding corpus analysis, then built a corpus by selecting specialized academic writings published in Computer Science journals. The target papers were presented to the students and each section was analysed both stylistically and grammatically. The learning object is described in detail, including the guidelines, hints and useful activities provided to aid the learning process.

Federico Sabatini analyses Museum Discourse from a cross-cultural perspective observing that museums “should be critically approached as knowledge sites where, besides artifacts and artwork, verbal and visual language are on display, constructing specific socio-cultural mind-frames and construing community involvement”. The author examines and compares a selection of texts from the Tate Gallery in London and the Galleria d’Arte Moderna in Turin. He concludes that the Tate Gallery’s discourse “incorporates both the promotional, self-advertising and marketing features of Tourist Discourse, revealing a logogenic capacity which is in line with democratization and social change, whereas GAM’s Museum Discourse seems resistant to play these tunes”.

The last paper in this volume, by Marco Venuti and Chiara Nasti, also compares forms of institutional discourse aimed at disseminating information, this time with reference to university websites written in English in a variety of European settings. In particular, the authors compare Italian and British university websites to see how the latter use movement metaphors on their institutional websites, and to what extent Italian universities use the conceptual frame of movement with a self-promotional purpose as English and Irish universities seem to do. The authors ask whether Italian universities use English only to comply with the international rules or whether they are genuinely interested in attracting greater numbers of students.

Their conclusion is that Italian universities are merely providing a web-mediated version of their curricula and activities.

I hope that you will enjoy this latest selection of papers and that you will continue to take full advantage of the journal’s free access to explore this and previous issues.

Christopher Williams
(Chief Editor)