
Foreword

Welcome to volume 17 of *ESP Across Cultures*, the seventh to be published in on-line format, and the second to be published in the era of Covid-19. As with the previous issue, the fact that the journal is published online has meant that it could be published without major technical problems. In human terms, of course, the impact of the global pandemic has provoked endless stress, and this has translated into allowing for slightly extended deadlines on all sides. One aspect that has remained unchanged since the journal began in 2004 has been the policy of double-blind peer reviewing, so only some of the papers submitted are considered worthy of publication.

There are seven papers in the current issue, all focusing on particular aspects of English for Specific Purposes from a cross-cultural perspective.

Lucia Abbamonte is the author of the first paper with the intriguing title ‘Black stories matter – Liverpool International Slavery Museum and multimodal representations of a controversial heritage’. Using a multimodal discourse analysis perspective, Lucia Abbamonte investigates how the International Slavery Museum (ISM) tries to engage visitors “through the synergy of (virtual) artefacts, verbal narratives of slavery, visuals and music that dynamically shape the contemporary semantics of the new emerging racial literacies, and attempt to promote change at societal level.” The author shows how, rather than underlining the theme of “black victimhood”, the museum focuses on the resilience, resistance and rebellion of those who were enslaved, “creating new transformative meanings by re-semiotizing loci, words, and tools of past iniquity into instruments of education and progress.”

In her paper Barbara Cappuzzo investigates the linguistic characteristics of a corpus of medical English texts included in *The Netter Collection of Medical Illustrations*, and compares it to the corresponding corpus of Italian translations. Netter’s texts have been reference tools for generations of medical specialists. Barbara Cappuzzo focuses on the topics of anatomy, physiology, traumatology – including sports-related injuries – and metabolic disorders of the musculoskeletal system, as she teaches English for Medical Purposes to Italian sports sciences undergraduates. She concludes that the Italian translations investigated “offer an example of the extent to which specialized translation can be a process of recontextualization where several adjustments are made, including omissions, additions, paraphrases, clarifications, reformulations, as well as variations that are carried out according to the discourse goals to be accomplished” in the target language.

In ‘A cross-cultural and cross-linguistic analysis of *Freedom Writers*: dubbing emotional upheavals from US English(es) into Italian’, Paola Leotta examines how the screenplay of this film – written and directed by Richard La Gravenese about a young teacher thrown into a class of at-risk students during the Los Angeles Riots of 1992 – is dubbed in Italian. Analysing a series of extracts taken from the film, the author observes that the students speak a socially marked variety of US English, an idiolect which includes “features denoting in-group identity, often combined with low social status, such as slang words (generally associated with an urban street culture), cursing and taboo words”. The Italian dubbed version, on the other

hand, “is a more standardized and socially flattened text, characterized by more neutral colloquial markers”.

Fabiola Notari states that the aim of her paper ‘Blended learning scenarios for developing students’ pragmatic competence in court interpreting’ is “to propose a new didactic approach to provide adequate preliminary training for future consecutive court interpreters from English into Italian and vice-versa”. The author argues for the need for a flexible syllabus to enhance students’ understanding of the spoken language of the law by creating ‘blended learning scenarios’ where “the analysis of popular legal movies can pave the way for more challenging activities aimed at identifying – in real-life trials – translation equivalents and pragmatic patterns from a cross-cultural perspective, with the ultimate goal of fostering students’ procedural knowledge”. The study of the language of the law thus becomes more stimulating by using ‘popular’ audio-visual materials.

Monica Randaccio’s paper focuses on museum audio description (AD) which, she observes, has “started to move from being a service for the visually impaired to become a paradigm in Translation Studies”. Beginning with an illustration of the main features of museum AD, the author analyses the theoretical background explaining how interpretation has become a major issue of museum AD and how this issue of interpretation “must be gauged against the wider backdrop of museums as multimodal and multi-sensory spaces”. She then shows how “cohesion, coherence and the discourse-based notions of microstructures and macrostructures are relevant for a comparison between an early un-interpretative example of museum AD and its later interpretative version” of Ben Nicholson’s artwork ‘Ramparts’ (1968).

Annalisa Sandrelli’s contribution, ‘A corpus-based study of deontic modality in English Eurolect’, starts from the premise that English has become the main drafting language of the European Union since the 2004 round of enlargement, thus creating an ‘English idiolect’ with its own specific features. Her study aims at verifying whether obligation, prohibition and permission modals and semi-modals are used differently in the EU’s enacting terms of directives with respect to UK national transposition measures and UK domestic laws. The author observes “the high frequency of the obligation modal *shall*, the prohibition modal *shall not* and the permission modal *need not*” in the EU-based corpus, with frequencies much higher than in the other two UK-based corpora. She concludes that “modality usage patterns in Eurolect seem to differ considerably from those found in the domestic variety of legislative English in the UK”.

In the final paper in this volume, Alice Spencer describes the use of an Open Badge certification for an ESP course. After explaining that Open Badges are online records of achievement documenting “field-specific, soft and technical skills” and highlighting their “uniquely ‘glocal’ nature, inasmuch as they are internationally recognized awards tailored by local providers in response to local demands”, the author describes in detail the Certificate of Competence in English for the Social Services introduced by the Turin University Language Centre in 2019. She concludes that by providing detailed information on the training experience undertaken, Open Badges are potentially useful for recruitment purposes. In a context in which the digitalization of teaching and learning resources is leading to an increased globalization in education, the author

argues that the use of Open Badges in ESP shows how “digital credentials can be used to acknowledge and promote local academic and professional expertise within an international framework”.

I hope you will enjoy the current issue of this journal, and please feel free to delve into any of the past issues, all available online.

Christopher Williams
(Chief Editor)