



**CLAVIER 2019 – *Knowledge Dissemination and Multimodal
Literacy: Research Perspectives on ESP in a Digital Age***

Pisa, 28-29 November 2019

BOOK OF ABSTRACTS



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Plenary Speakers

Developing stronger methodologies for multimodal research into knowledge dissemination: The material challenge and the challenge of materials

John Bateman
Bremen University
bateman@uni-bremen.de

As multimodal literacy establishes itself increasingly both as a research orientation and as a practical component of curricula in diverse educational contexts, many challenges are raised concerning just how the necessary competences can be encouraged not only among learners, but also among those tasked with teaching learners just how to effectively engage with multimodal artefacts and performances. Too often educators are asked to address complex multimodal configurations for which they themselves may not have particularly robust conceptual tools and methodological frameworks. Researchers on multimodal literacy need then not only to understand how multimodality operates but also be able to translate that understanding at various levels of technicality, ranging from teacher education to that of the classroom. The difficulties involved in such translation should not be underestimated because meta-language based on theory is by no means automatically a meta-language usable in concrete educational contexts. What is more, the sheer diversity of medial contexts within which communication unfolds is dramatically expanding, which means that skills and meta-languages learnt with respect to specific constellations of modalities may not be immediately applicable to new constellations. Against this background of concerns, the aim of this presentation will be to set out some basic dimensions of organization capable of allowing researchers, practitioners and learners to productively situate and analytically engage with any particular case of multimodal communication that they may encounter. This relies upon a re-orientation to the materiality of communication, be that communication written, spoken, graphic or any combination of expressive forms, in order to help ground any interpretative strategies that may be explored or applied subsequently. The appeal to materiality, and the framework provided for this, has the important function of making analysis, at least in its earliest phases, more responsive to actual perceptible properties of the objects and situations being studied so that analysts, at any level, can become increasingly confident in their discussions and interpretations. Consequences of this approach for achieving broader, more empirical foundations will also be discussed, with examples from film, comics and several other media.

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Multimodal Corpus Linguistics: Looking back and thinking forward

Dawn Knight
Cardiff University
knightd5@cardiff.ac.uk

A priority for researchers investigating natural language and gesture-in-use is to develop better approaches for constructing multimodal records of real-life communication that are not only naturalistic but accurate, detailed and high quality. This presentation reports on some of the methodological, practical and ethical challenges faced in the creation and use of various forms of emergent multi-modal corpora.

The presentation will take stock of previous developments and the current state-of-the-art in the field of multimodal corpus linguistic research and will reflect on possible future directions for work of this nature. First, a discussion of some of the optimum ways in which corpora from a range of different contexts might be recorded, processed, stored, accessed and analysed by the user will be provided. Then, attention will be paid to the ways in which results from such analyses can be utilised and applied to a range of different contexts. Specific attention will be paid to how multimodal corpus work can contribute to/enhance multimodal literacy.

The presentation draws on a range of case studies including the:

- Analysis of spoken and non-verbal backchannel behaviour, gaze and deictic in multimodal corpora.
- Use of wearable sensors in multimodal corpus development (as a means of recording audio tracks and accurate, detailed graphical representations of hand movements as they are performed 'in the wild').
- Crowdsourcing linguistic data collection and coding.

Multimodal digital approaches to specialised discourse domains

Kay O'Halloran
University of Liverpool
kay.ohalloran@liverpool.ac.uk

I explore how a multimodal digital approach can help English language learners to understand and use semiotic resources effectively in specialized discourse domains. First, I focus on multimodal analysis of digital media in English language classes, where the complexity of such analysis involves methodologies which themselves are digital in nature (O'Halloran, Tan, & E, 2017; Tan, Wignell, & O'Halloran, 2016). From here, I explore how a multimodal approach can be used in other discourse domains, in particular mathematics and science (O'Halloran, 2015). In doing so, I show how multimodal analysis can be used to understand the functionalities of language and other resources (images, scientific symbolism, sound and music and so forth) and the ways in which choices from these resources combine to construct knowledge. Lastly, I explore the implications of a multimodal approach to language-related studies in the digital age.

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Panel

PANEL

Popularising texts for children: A survey across genres and domains

Silvia Bruti
University of Pisa
silvia.bruti@unipi.it

This panel aims to explore the strategies and the characterising features of popularisation (Myers, 2003; Hyland 2005; Calsamiglia & Van Dijk, 2004; Garzone, 2006; Gotti, 2013; Mattiello, 2014; Cappelli, 2016) for children in a wide array of texts belonging to different genres and specialised domains. On the basis of previous research in the field (Bianchi, 2018; Diani, 2015, 2018; Diani & Sezzi, *forthc.*; Cappelli & Masi, *forthc.*; Bruti & Manca, 2019; Manca, *forthc.*), popularisation appears to be a form of “reconceptualisation and recontextualisation of expert discourse that meets the needs, tastes and background encyclopaedia of lay readers” (Cappelli & Masi, *forthc.*, p. 3), which varies considerably depending on the profile of the intended reader, on the degree of specialisation needed (which in turn depends on the genre and its aims) and also across culture, as different countries prioritise different communicative styles.

Starting from these premises, it is the aim of the panel to account for the variation of strategies aimed at increasing accessibility (not only and not necessarily explanation in all its forms, but also techniques to favour involvement, relying on multimodal communication), in relation to the genre, topic, and age of the intended addressees. To the purpose, we consider legal, environmental, political, and, interestingly, literary texts: even though the latter are not prototypically considered as means of dissemination of knowledge, there are plenty of examples of ‘re-writings’ of famous literary masterpieces for younger audiences.

Rewriting novels for a young audience: A corpus-assisted comparison between two versions of *The Da Vinci Code* by Dan Brown

Francesca Bianchi
University of Salento
francesca.bianchi@unisalento.it

Elena Manca
University of Salento
elena.manca@unisalento.it

General agreement seems to exist on the fact that writing for children involves adjusting contents and language (vocabulary and syntax) to the target audience, but scholarly descriptions of the linguistic strategies used or needed to adapt texts to young audiences are still scarce. Using corpus-linguistic methods, Bianchi (2018) analysed two narrative versions of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* written in contemporary English by an experienced author specialising in bringing Shakespeare to young audiences, and observed the application of a specific set of adaptation techniques. Bruti and Manca (2019) investigated the strategies of popularization in texts about environmental issues using both a qualitative and a quantitative approach. In particular, they compared and contrasted two comparable English texts dealing with environmental issues, one for children and one for adults (respectively, from *National Geographic Kids* and *National Geographic* magazines), and a similar text aimed at children in Italian (from *Focus Junior* magazine). Results show that popularization and involvement are achieved by means of differing strategies in the texts addressed to adults and in those addressed to children.

The structural, linguistic, and stylistic strategies observed in previous studies, though representing a highly interesting set of devices, do not cover the entire gamut of resources and practices for adapting a text for young audiences. Analysis of a wider range of types of texts, authors and age groups is needed for a more comprehensive description of adaptation strategies.

This paper adds to previous studies by analysing a version of *The Da Vinci Code* – the famous novel by Dan Brown – which was specifically rewritten for a young audience by the author himself. The aim of the study is to identify the adaptation techniques used to create this particular piece of writing, considered as a typical instance of rewriting of a contemporary adventure novel, and compare them to those observed so far in the scientific literature on adaptations for young readers. To this aim, the adapted version of *The Da Vinci Code* will be compared to the original adult version, and/or to a large reference corpus, such as the BNC at the level of words (keywords), grammatical categories (key pos tags), and semantic categories (key domains).

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Ecology for children across ages and languages

Silvia Bruti
University of Pisa
silvia.bruti@unipi.it

The aim of this work is to discuss the popularisation strategies adopted in non-fiction texts destined for children dealing with the topic of environmental education. Information books for children mean to transfer knowledge about a specific topic in a way that is comprehensible and stimulating at the same time.

Starting from two main hypotheses, i.e. that the age and the profile of the target reader have a strong bearing on the structure and nature of a text and that popularising genres might be moulded in different ways in different countries, in this paper I mean to ascertain which popularising strategies are used in relation to the age of the addressee. To this purpose I will concentrate on three books, *The Adventures of a Plastic Bottle: A Story about Recycling* by Alison Inches, 2009, *The Everything Kids' Environment Book* by Sheri Amsel, 2007 and *Generation Green: The Ultimate Teen Guide to Living an Eco-Friendly Life* by Linda and Tosh Sivertsen, 2008, addressed to three different age groups and, where, consequently, the theme of ecology is treated in different ways, both in terms of content and language.

My second research question is to verify by means of an evaluation of popularising texts for children originally written in English with comparable texts in Italian which strategies are used across languages. The hypothesis is that, given the fact that the information books market in Italian is developing rapidly but is still in its infancy in comparison with the Anglo-Saxon one, it is probably still more informational than entertaining.

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“Each and every one of us can make a difference, and here are some things you can do to help!”: Sensitive issues in science websites for children across languages

Giuliana Diani

University of Modena and Reggio Emilia
giuliana.diani@unimore.it

Annalisa Sezzi

University of Modena and Reggio Emilia
annalisa.sezzi@unimore.it

The aim of this paper is to investigate how sensitive scientific-related issues, such as climate change and pollution, are faced in science websites for children from a cross-linguistic perspective (English and Italian). Websites aimed at youngsters provide a direct and fun access to science. They are one of the privileged channels for popularising expert discourse to an audience that is not only deficient in specialised knowledge but has also a limited knowledge of the world due to children’s early phase of cognitive development (Myers, 1989). However, popularisation for youngsters is far from being a process of simplification: even in this context, it is a reconceptualisation and a recontextualisation (Calsamiglia & Van Dijk, 2004, p. 37) that meets the needs, tastes and background encyclopedia of lay readers.

In order to popularise expert knowledge among children, web-based educational environments (Djonov, 2008) merge education and entertainment (Buckingham & Scanlon, 2001) so that the expression “edutainment” is commonly used to define them. In particular, scientific knowledge dissemination is therein characterised by the combination of different semiotic codes: the verbal strategies of popularisation (Calsamiglia & van Dijk, 2004) and the different kinds of visual materials, partially similar to those of science books (Unsworth, 2005), transfer knowledge in an appealing way so as to favour children’s involvement and comprehension.

The present study will investigate how the verbal mode exploits the visual mode to render information more accessible to children and contribute to their understanding. The adoption of a cross-linguistic perspective will contribute to identify the main (dis-)similarities in the knowledge dissemination strategies used to promote a better understanding of the issues under investigation when translating adult knowledge and expertise into comprehensible knowledge targeted at children.

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Disseminating Knowledge through TED Talks for Children

Silvia Masi
University of Pisa
silvia.masi@unipi.it

TED talks are an increasingly influential multimodal genre with the goal of “sharing ideas worth spreading” in different fields. The talks are freely available online (www.ted.com) and are currently being exploited in instructional-educational settings on various levels. While verbal and, to a lower extent, some non-verbal features of the genre have been investigated from distinct perspectives (cf. Caliendo, 2012; Laudisio, 2013; Caliendo & Compagnone, 2014; Scotto di Carlo, 2013, 2014, 2015; Meza & Trofin, 2015; Masi, 2016; Valeiras Jurado, 2017; Mattiello, 2017; Anesa, 2018; *inter alia*), little or no attention (to my knowledge at least) has been paid to its potential as a knowledge dissemination tool for a young audience.

The present contribution focuses on a corpus of talks given by children and/or taken from different playlists and TED events (such as TEDYouth) designed to share ideas with middle and high school students and covering distinct topics and domains, such as science and technology, global issues and activism, entertainment and design. To what extent are TED talks for children different from other TED talks? Do they share similar strategies with other informative literature (cf., for example, Mallet, 2004; Sezzi 2012; Cappelli & Masi, *forthc.*; Diani & Sezzi, *forthc.*; Bruti & Manca, *forthc.*) for children? A preliminary qualitative analysis of the verbal code and visuals (Theunissen, 2014; Masi, 2019) in the data has confirmed expectations for popularizing strategies (Calsamiglia & van Dijk, 2004) such as definition, description, reformulation and exemplification (also through visuals), as well as strategies of engagement through humour. A quantitative analysis and comparison with a corpus of TED talks not specifically involving children (as either speakers or part of the intended audience) will help validate and expand on the findings above.

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Individual Papers

Narrative functions of the interplay of hand movements and oral discourse. A corpus-assisted analysis of the TV series *House, MD*

Cristina Arizzi
University of Messina
cristina.arizzi@unime.it

This paper illustrates the preliminary findings of ongoing research into the co-deployment of hand movements with other semiotic resources in the popular *House MD* TV series. Building on previous research into online film repositories (Arizzi, 2012), the analysis is grounded in multimodal corpus studies (Baldry & Thibault, 2006; Sindoni, 2014) and supported by the House Corpus with its tools for scene-based viewings of episodes in this TV series, manual annotation of visual, verbal and gestural features and retrieval of data through corpus searches (Taibi et al., in press). So far research findings – the result of the author’s development of model for the annotation of hand movements implemented as a special interface to the House Corpus – have indicated their predominance over language and other semiotic resources in providing narrative cohesion in the Teaser sections of the majority of episodes in the series.

By identifying the different types of narrative structure in which hand movements are involved, the research would already appear to provide ESP teachers with a ready-to-go multimodal approach to corpus-assisted learning and teaching that will be particularly valuable for explorations of medical discourse in a North American setting. However, the presentation will also suggest other forms of support which include the special role in the structuring of episode narratives played by disjunctive meaning-making patterns arising from the combined use of discourse and hand movements.

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What videos tell us about the evolution of healthcare services: A student-oriented exercise in the application of multimodal corpus studies to ESP

Anthony Baldry
University of Messina
apb.dicgesi@gmail.com

Deirdre Kantz
University of Pavia
dkantz@unipv.it

With its corpus-based comparison of online videos, the paper reconstructs the changing identity of healthcare services in English-speaking countries and reports on the contribution that this approach has made when providing evolutionary and historical approaches to healthcare services that have proved beneficial for both undergraduate and postgraduate medical students who need to gain a wider vision of the communication challenges raised by Public Health issues (Baldry, 2011). As part of the authors' more general work in establishing access to new areas of investigation for multimodality (Baldry, 2000; Baldry & Kantz, 2009), the paper also reports on, and exemplifies, engagements with ESP-oriented multimodal corpus studies on the part students enrolled in language study degree courses. These include the fun and enjoyment derived from using online annotation and corpus construction tools and the educational value of project-based construction and annotation of online healthcare corpora (Baldry, 2011; Kantz & Marenzi, 2016; Taibi et al., in press) in an ESP era that necessarily and rightly promotes students' digital literacy and critical appreciation of service-oriented teamwork (Baldry, 2000; Baldry & Kantz, 2009).

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Pecha Kucha presentations in professional contexts: A genre to enhance multimodal literacy in ESP teaching

Vicent Beltrán-Palanques
Universitat Jaume I
vbeltran@uji.es

Mercedes Querol-Julián
International University of La Rioja
mercedes.querol@unir.net

While the use of videos has traditionally played an important role in ESP teaching, multimodal literacy (Cope & Kalantzis, 2000) has generally been neglected in higher education. Nonetheless, ESP prepares students for developing their careers in a globalised world (Aguilar, 2018) where audiovisual communication is part of everyday life. Enhancing multimodal literacy using authentic videos may give students opportunities to develop effective communication in the additional language.

Pecha Kucha (PK) is an audiovisual presentation whose format forces presenters to quickly and clearly communicate the essence of the subject without digression (Courtney Klentzin, Bounds Paladino, Johnston & Devine, 2009). Based on the analysis of 7 PKs given in a night networking event in an architecture conference, we have deconstructed this audiovisual genre (Bateman, Wildfeuer & Hiippala, 2017) to identify its pedagogical potential to develop ESP students' multimodal literacy. Particularly, we have analysed the structure and the modal density (Beltrán-Planques & Querol-Julián, 2018) of two semiotic resources, speech and visuals.

Results indicate that despite the simple structure of the spoken discourse, PK involves a complex dynamism among semiotic modes and represents a challenging multimodal construction of meaning. Spoken discourse not only subsumes specialised language but also interpersonal and pragmatic features. The visual document combines different canvases mainly containing images, which comprise people and buildings, maps, blueprints, text fragments, elements that refer to technology and means of mediated communication (e.g., Twitter, Instagram), and culture. Spoken and visual discourses synchronise, enrich each other, and cannot be easily understood separately.

We conclude that PK can be suitable for engaging ESP learners in effective construction of meaning from the multiple semiotic modes they have at their disposal. Our concern is to develop students' multimodal awareness and multimodal communicative effectiveness for professional practices.

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Developing accessibility strategies through multimodal literacy in the English for tourism classroom

Veronica Bonsignori
University of Pisa
veronica.bonsignori@unipi.it

Gloria Cappelli
University of Pisa
gloria.cappelli@unipi.it

Teaching English for Tourism (Eft) at the university level necessarily involves both developing specialized language skills and forming knowledgeable professionals capable of appropriate and effective intercultural communication. The distinctive feature of most instances of tourism discourse is the fact that it draws from a range of specialized domains, including but not limited to art, history, economics, architecture, and geography to name but a few. It mediates the tourist experience and contributes to closing the gap between the home- and the destination's culture by making culture-specific knowledge and specialized concepts accessible to non-specialists (Cappelli, 2016).

The paper discusses the instructional effects of authentic multimodal materials within task-based project-work carried out with young adult learners at the University of Pisa. The aim is to investigate the development of popularization and knowledge dissemination strategies for tourism communication through dedicated instruction. The advantages of using multimodal resources in language teaching have been extensively described (Ackerley & Coccetta, 2007). Moreover, the integration of project-work in the ESP classroom has proven to be beneficial in terms of learners' active involvement, higher-level thinking skill development and autonomy (Taguchi & Kim, 2018) and in avoiding the limitations of the non-authenticity of the learning task (Mamakou, 2009). The paper presents the multimodal analysis of the authentic video clips from documentaries, "docu-tours" and guided tours used in class and of some clips created by the students before and after dedicated instruction and investigates the changes in their use of accessibility strategies.

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“As my Right Honourable Lady knows...”: A multimodal critical discourse analysis of Prime Minister’s Question Time comparing Margaret Thatcher and Teresa May

Veronica Bonsignori
University of Pisa
veronica.bonsignori@unipi.it

Denise Filmer
University of Pisa
denise.filmer@unipi.it

According to van Dijk (2014), the notion of knowledge is inextricably linked to discourse. He also notes that the study of discourse has become increasingly multimodal embracing not only the verbal but also the interplay of image, sound, gesture, facework, and body position during spoken interaction. As such, “knowledge may be acquired, presupposed and expressed in these many multimodal forms, and may directly influence the formation of multimodal mental models language users use to construe when they understand text and talk” (van Dijk 2014: 10). Starting from this premise, the paper presents a comparative case-study on the multimodal construction of meaning during Prime Minister’s Question Time (PMQs) (Bates et al., 2012) focusing on two historically significant PMQs: Theresa May’s last PMQs before she announced her resignation (22nd May 2019) and Margaret Thatcher’s PMQs on the day of her resignation (22nd November 1990). As a political discourse genre, PMQs are extremely popular with the general public so much so that people can book their entry to the House of Commons’ Public Gallery to observe. They are also digitally available on the Parliament website, and thus easily accessible.

A selection of clips from authentic material retrieved from the Margaret Thatcher Foundation website and www.parliament.uk will be analysed taking account both verbal and non-verbal cues by using the multimodal annotation software ELAN (Wittenburg et al., 2006). Combined with a critical discourse analysis framework (Machin & Mayr, 2012), the study aims to compare across time the ways in which the various semiotic and verbal resources work together to construct meaning (Jewitt, 2014) in this particular genre within the discourse of these two female Conservative leaders.

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Fostering the development of digital literacies through (international) collaborative research-oriented teaching and learning

Claudia Burger
Goethe University Frankfurt
c.burger@em.uni.frankfurt.de

Polina Shvanyukova
University of Bergamo
polina.shvanyukova@unibg.it

Digitalization has had a profound impact on institutionalized education in general and the teaching and learning of English as a foreign language and culture/s in particular. Curricula both at school and university are increasingly focused on “ICT skills” (Fraillon, Schulz & Ainley, 2013), “multiliteracies” (Cope & Kalantzis, 2000), “digital literacies” (Lankshear & Knobel, 2015), and “multimodal literacy” (Crawford & Campoy-Cubillo, 2018; O’Halloran, Tan & Kwan Lin, 2017) – to name but a few concepts that are currently discussed in academic literature. Creating learning environments that enable students not only to develop such skills, but to engage critically with this wide range of concepts, has become a priority in higher education settings. Given the role of English as today’s digital lingua franca, study programs of English play a pivotal role in the process.

This contribution shall present a concept of a university seminar that follows the methodological framework of international collaborative research-oriented teaching and learning at a major German university in cooperation with another European university. In the winter term of 2018/19, students of English from the two universities interviewed each other on their knowledge of digital literacies and the importance of such skills in today’s EFLC. We will start with a theoretical discussion focusing on the differences and overlaps between the skills mentioned above. We will then introduce the seminar concept and present some of the research findings the students generated through their interview study.

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The role of multimodal resources in building linguistic and discursive competence in specialised domains: The case of Biotechnology

Paola Catenaccio
University of Milan
paola.catenaccio@unimi.it

Giuliana Garzone
IULM University, Milan
giuliana.garzone@iulm.it

This paper discusses the use of multimodal resources in teaching ESP in courses aimed at language specialists, i.e. language mediators, community and conference interpreters, and translators. In this type of courses, a fundamental problem is that students need to learn vocabulary and work on textual and discursive structures relative to domain-specific topics with which they are unfamiliar and which require the preliminary acquisition of some basic encyclopaedic knowledge. In this context, recourse to multimodal materials is especially useful because the integration of visuals and sounds can help understand notions that would be inaccessible to students if explained verbally relying on conceptualisations and vocabulary with which they are unacquainted.

Today the semiotically hybrid character of science is widely accepted (cf. Lemke, 1998): in order to communicate, scientists “combine verbal discourse, mathematical expressions, graphical-visual representation, and motor operations in the ‘natural’ world” (Lemke, 1998, p. 98), and rely on gesture and on other paralinguistic elements. These considerations provide the rationale for advocating multimedia learning (Mayer 2009). This does not mean playing down the role of language, but rather assigning it a more relational status in the meaning-making process (Kress et al., 2001).

This paper explores the use of multimodal resources in developing linguistic and discursive competence in specialized domains, looking in particular at a repertoire of videos of scientists’ lectures on biotechnologies and GMOs, which are used as a case study. *Biotechnology* is an “umbrella” term (cf. Temmerman, 2000, pp. 83-88) which identifies a broad and constantly evolving area comprising a whole range of technologies, each of them characterized by specific terminologies which can pose several challenges to students. These challenges are often compounded by additional difficulties posed by the controversial status of many biotechnological applications, which means that discourses on biotechnologies often involve the transmission of ideological stances.

The study shows how multimodal resources can be used in the classroom to 1) impart learners encyclopedic knowledge that may serve as a starting point to understand scientific texts on biotechnological applications, and in particular the relevant terminology; 2) teach students to identify the linguistic resources whereby stances are more or less explicitly conveyed, thus making it possible for them to fully appreciate the subjective/ideological component in the communicative event examined.

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How video abstracts are constructed: A corpus-based approach

Francesca Coccetta
Ca' Foscari University of Venice
francesca.coccetta@unive.it

Developments in digital technologies have broadened the range of media forms of knowledge dissemination: blogs/forums, tweets, TED Talks, and video abstracts are examples of how researchers transcend the confines of research articles and reach an audience extending well beyond the members of their own research community. Yet this comes at a price for both researchers and ESP analysts: the former need to acquire specific competences to produce texts that make full use of full range of semiotic resources available in such media, while the latter need to develop methods for analyzing them for both research and teaching purposes.

The present paper investigates a corpus-based approach to the Video Abstract, “a video presentation corresponding to a specific science research article, which typically communicates the background of a study, methods used, study results and potential implications through the use of images, audio, video clips, and text” (Spicer, 2014, p. 3). Drawing on established models for the analysis of the ESP genre (Swales 2004) and multimodal discourse analysis (Kress, van Leeuwen [1996] 2006; Baldry & Thibault, 2006) the study builds on the author’s previous work on video abstracts (Coccetta, in press) using corpus-based methods to characterise the resource selection process – what choices authors actually make from the overall inventory of semiotic resources when deciding how best to communicate their research.

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Representations of the ideal workplace on corporate websites: Values and linguistic strategies

Costanza Cucchi
Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore of Milan
costanza.cucchi@unicatt.it

Francesca Seracini
Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore of Milan
francesca.seracini@unicatt.it

Corporate websites have become sophisticated tools that target a variety of addressees through different channels. Among the addressees, prospective and current employees are key to the success of companies: employer branding is thus crucial to the conveying of a positive image of the company as an employer. Being able to make the appropriate linguistic and multimodal choices to achieve the intended effects are required skills for professionals dealing with corporate communication; this is a need that has to be addressed in terms of ESP.

This paper reports on a study into how multimodal texts available on corporate websites are constructed to communicate company values. The study analyses a corpus comprising the online texts in English from the ‘Careers’ section of the websites of the top ten multinational companies in the award for ‘Europe’s Best Workplaces 2018’ (<https://www.greatplacetowork.co.uk>). The texts include informative sections, interviews with employees and employees’ personal accounts both in written and audio-visual form. A corpus-assisted discourse studies approach (Partington et al., 2013) was used with the intended aims of 1) identifying the values that are conveyed by the companies, 2) establishing how these values are expressed through language and 3) determining the modes through which meaning is made in association with words (Paltridge, 2012).

The findings reveal that values such as integration, teamwork and diversity are prominent and that the different multimodal texts present elements that are typical of rewriting, such as manipulation, as well as reformulation and recontextualization of the information provided (Calsamiglia & Van Dijk, 2004).

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Teaching Functional Linguistics through ESP: Tourism discourse

Olga Denti
University of Cagliari
odenti@unica.it

Tourism Discourse is cross-cultural representation: it is where cultural meanings are constructed and transmitted (Hall, 2002). Over time, multiple semiotic modes have contributed in different ways to the construction of these meanings. This has required the analysis and understanding of the modes and recontextualisation and adaptation of texts and images, especially to the new web genres. Nowadays, the tourist experience is mediated by personal, digital and mobile technologies, which redirect the tourist gaze and become the mediator between the traveller and the tourism destination. Tourism can be experienced through the online process of mediatisation, through images and narratives accessible anywhere and anytime.

The present paper aims to show how ESP, but especially Tourism Discourse has been used to explain Functional Linguistics to the second-year students of a University English course in a degree on Languages and Cultures for Linguistic Mediation. The course content has ranged from Systemic functional linguistics and Semantics (Halliday, 1978; Halliday & Hasan, 1985) to microfunctions and macrofunctions, text types, cohesion and coherence, and so on, combining them with Discourse and Genre Analysis (Bhatia, 1993). Corpora were also used in the analysis of the materials, to support the qualitative observations.

This approach has tried to sensitise students on the numerous linguistic strategies, cultural facets and pragmatic effects involved in the understanding and creation of multimodal and multimedia tourism texts. The ultimate goal has been to enable students to apply effectively and efficiently the acquired knowledge, communication and linguistic tools to professional settings, starting with their internships.

In order to carry out the objectives of the course, authentic material was employed, ranging from travel guides, brochures, blogs and reviews to websites and apps.

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The status of spoken grammar: A challenge to ESP

Pierfranca Forchini
Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore of Milan
pierfranca.forchini@unicatt.it

Amanda Murphy
Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore of Milan
amanda.murphy@unicatt.it

The importance of spoken language was pointed out almost a hundred years ago (cf. Bloomfield, 1933), and since the 1980s the spoken domain has been considered prominent both in human society (cf. McCarthy, 1998) and in educational settings (Hunston, 2002). There seems, however, to have been little progress on including and developing the competence of spoken grammar in the syllabus (Reppen, 2010), despite the fact that traditional approaches to language teaching have undergone profound changes. In order to fill this gap, the present paper aims to introduce a new perspective on English for Specific Purposes by suggesting that *spoken grammar and the development of its competence* should be considered *a specific purpose* in language teaching. English for Specific Purposes grew out of specific needs, and the present paper starts from the observation that spoken English is a specific need and cannot be equated with ‘conversational skills’. Spoken grammar has its own specific morphosyntactic, lexical, textual and pragmatic features and mastering these specific spoken features should be one of the purposes of language learners, particularly those whose aim is to become language specialists. The primary, theoretical aim of this paper is, thus, to move away from a concept of ESP as being anchored to the English of “different fields” and posit the importance and specificity of spoken grammar as a “specific purpose” which deserves attention. The secondary aim starts from the observation by Jewitt (2009) that “language is [...] only ever one mode nestled among a multimodal ensemble of modes” (2009, p. 15), particularly in the present age, increasingly dominated by the screen (cf. Kress, 2003) in which language occurs in a normally multimodal reality. The paper thus attempts to outline an approach to the teaching of spoken grammar with the aid of a corpus of ‘multimodal artefacts’ (Bateman, 2013) – i.e. movies, which are highly motivating, easy to access and in line with the development of pedagogy in a multimodal age (Forchini 2012, 2018; Kalantsis & Cope, 2013; Bruti, 2015; Dikilitas & Duvenci, 2015; Bonsignori, 2018). For this purpose, the *American Movie Corpus* (AMC) will be suggested as a resource which can well serve the purpose of teaching spoken grammar.

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New genres and new approaches: Teaching product pitches from a multimodal perspective in the ESP classroom

Inmaculada Fortanet-Gómez
Universitat Jaume I
fortanet@uji.es

Nuria Edo-Marzá
Universitat Jaume I
nedo@uji.es

Business communication today needs to be adapted to the use of new media and technologies. Online trade has brought innovative ways to promote products, which need to be visual and interactive (Cestero-Mancera, 2017). One of the most innovative genres for the online sales promotion is the product pitch, which is a brief persuasive explanation of a product and its advantages for the consumer. Product pitches have a multimodal nature (Daly & Davy, 2016) and, therefore, paralanguage and kinesic modes become as relevant as words. Consequently, a multimodal perspective is essential in order to analyze and also to teach this genre (Tamarit & Skorczynska, 2014; Valeiras-Jurado, 2017). There are already some studies about product pitches and their multimodal nature. However, research is scarce regarding the teaching of this genre to business ESP students. The purpose of this paper is to present an innovative pedagogical approach to the teaching of this genre from a multimodal perspective. Drawing from a simple multimodal discourse analysis of two Youtube 90 minutes product pitches, a group of 3rd year ESP business students at Universitat Jaume I will be requested to decode the multimodal ensembles by means of small group and whole class discussions (Querol-Julián & Fortanet-Gómez, forthcoming). After this, students will be asked to create their own product pitches, which will be recorded and presented to the class for peer review. By means of this innovative pedagogical approach to a new genre, we expect to enhance students' motivation and contribute to their learning of the English language in business contexts.

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Teaching ESP multimodally: The case of lawyer-client interactions

Daniele Franceschi
University of Roma Tre
daniele.franceschi@uniroma3.it

Academic research on the language of the law has prevalently focused on the analysis of the features of various types of written texts from a number of different, but often related perspectives, e.g. contrastive, translational, socio-linguistic and so forth. Textbooks for teaching legal English also devote most of their activities to the reinforcement of the learners' ability to understand and produce written samples (e.g., Garzone & Salvi, 2007; Tessuto, 2018) or to translate them into their L1 (e.g., Giampieri, 2017; Tessuto, 2012). The text- and course books that include speaking and listening comprehension exercises only aim at developing verbal communication skills, despite the acknowledged fact that communication is always multimodal.

Corpus-based research on spoken legal English produced by EFL learners (Franceschi, 2018) has suggested that a more holistic approach for teaching ESP is called for. This is because learners not only struggle with lexico-grammar and technical vocabulary, but also appear to have little awareness of other important aspects of communication, e.g. turn-taking patterns, indicators of social interaction (eye gazing, hand gestures and body posture/movements) and socio-cultural diversity. This presentation thus intends to propose an integrated method for teaching spoken legal English, with specific reference to lawyer-client interactions, which reinforces learners' overall (verbal and non-verbal) performance. A proof-of-concept teaching unit is provided in order to exemplify how materials for teaching legal English can be made more responsive to the needs of professional practice.

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Teaching communication strategies for the workplace through blended learning: A multimodal framework

Valeria Franceschi
University of Verona
valeria.franceschi@univr.it

Sharon Hartle
University of Verona
sharon.hartle@univr.it

Roberta Facchinetti
University of Verona
roberta.facchinetti@univr.it

Studies on Business English as a Lingua Franca underline the importance of strategic skills for the success of international communication, including the ability to employ Communication Strategies purposefully to pre-empt and solve communication problems. Despite the importance attributed to such strategies in both oral and digital interactions (Louhiala-Salminen & Kankaanranta, 2011; Poppi & Caleffi, 2019), Business English textbooks provide little attention to developing awareness and skills in the use of Communication Strategies (Vettorel, 2019). Digital materials in ESP have long been advocated (Slaouti, 2002) but clearer frameworks have been called for (Littlewood, 2014) and in teaching contexts where Blended Learning is adopted in Higher Education the question of the blend itself is essential.

This presentation focuses on the case study of ‘English for the World of Work’, an English for Professional Purposes course designed to improve key language competencies required for the Italian world of work. This is a blended learning course developed at Verona University to meet the needs both of university students and of professional practitioners. In the three editions of the course, digital and multimodal materials have been increasingly employed to foster the communication skills of learners beyond the spoken and written skills; students have been trained to develop both awareness of and competence in multimodal communication skills related to the visual, gestural and spatial modes. The study illustrates the blended learning framework that was developed, which provides in-class scaffolding and online support; this fosters learner autonomy for students in their acquisition of key Communication Strategies.

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Informal contact with English: A survey of Italian university students and the media

Elisa Ghia
University for Foreigners, Siena
ghia@unistrasi.it

Maria Pavesi
University of Pavia
Mariagabriella.pavesi@unipv.it

Recent surveys from several countries show that English L2 acquisition is increasingly moving out of institutional settings (Leppänen et al., 2011; Sockett, 2014; Arnbjörnsdóttir & Ingvarsdóttir, 2018). Patterns of exposure to English have also been radically changing in Italy, with more and more learners accessing television, the Internet and new media in the L2. These media often grant learners access to a variety of texts and resources, mostly in the form of tutorials, news and specialized talks in a multimodal environment.

To date, no systematic study has been carried out of Italian learners' habits and the motivations triggering their untutored contact with English. Therefore, this contribution is an initial attempt to explore informal exposure to English among Italian postgraduate university students majoring in several disciplines. The survey is questionnaire-based and taps students' frequency, intensity and type of contact with English in extramural contexts, together with their language proficiency self-evaluations and motivations for contact.

The statistical analysis of the 305 collected questionnaires suggests an increasing informal exposure to English media among Italian students, with many respondents declaring a quite extended access to audiovisual input and the Internet in different interest and specialized areas. The picture, however, is far from homogeneous and a polarization can be observed between students who regularly or quite regularly access English-language resources for entertainment, information seeking and communication and those who do so rarely. The implications of the questionnaire findings will be discussed with reference to the diversification of English input that today university students access informally out of the classroom.

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Emerging trends in teaching professional communication practices: Using online resources for the design and implementation of seminars for trainee doctors

Isabel Herrando
University of Zaragoza
herrando@unizar.es

Rosa Lorés
University of Zaragoza
rlores@unizar.es

In the last few years, the web has become a privileged access platform for knowledge for an increasingly globalized society who uses English as a vehicle of international communication. The spread of digital platforms has brought with it the emergence of new modes of communication, some of them based on already existing ones, some others, totally new (Herring, 2012). It has also involved a substantial evolution in professional and discursive practices in all walks of life, and the scientific has not been an exception. Among other affordances, digital platforms offer resourceful repositories that could be exploited by linguistic trainers as a source of innovative multimodal ESP materials for the teaching of professional and occupational communicative practices.

This presentation focuses on the design and implementation of a set of seminars addressed to urology practitioners and interns who are urged to present their clinical research in the 2020 European and World conference of Urology by means of digital posters. Following previous linguistic and rhetorical research on how audiovisual compositions, such as visual abstracts (Mur, 2018), are integrated by different modes that interact and contribute to create meaning as multimodal ensembles (Jewitt, 2016), we will here argue that the design and use of multimodal ESP materials and methodologies effectively contribute to enhance the linguistic and communicative competence of training professionals.

Thus, in line with previous research (Crawford & Bonsignori, 2015; Fortanet-Gómez & Querol-Julián, 2010), our ethnographically-informed results convey that using multimodal ESP materials as learning tools (YouTube poster presentations, MOOCs on how to deliver feedback and manage questions, clips from medical TV series or audioslides) should be considered today an indispensable element in the significant acquisition of effective professional communicative competences.

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A comparative multimodal analysis of Government Debates

Ersilia Incelli
Sapienza University of Rome
ersilia.incelli@uniroma1.it

This paper takes a multimodal approach to a comparative linguistic analysis of live debates in the UK House of Commons and US House of Representatives, with the aim of investigating verbal and non-verbal communicative modes which may culturally differ. To accomplish this, the multimodal context consists of two sub-corpora, one composed of UK live video debates on important issues such as *Leaving the EU* and *climate change*, and the other composed of US House of Representative video debates on economic and environmental issues. The tapescripts of the two sub-corpora (each approximately 80,000 words) are quantitatively and linguistically analyzed via software programmes and the use of *ELAN* (Wittenburg et al., 2006), which acts as a multimodal annotator integrating verbal and non-verbal multimodal cues linked to words.

The approach is grounded in multimodal discourse analysis, pragmatics and theories of multimodality and semiotics (Baldry & Montagna, 2011). The overall objective is to expand the knowledge of the discourse of government debate from a multimodal perspective, in which not only ‘what’ is said is diagnosed, (verbal metadiscourse), but ‘how’ it is said through non-verbal behaviour and the combination of modes. Thus, the linguistic analysis moves on to the paralinguistic, prosodic and kinesics features which accompany and complement language; an example can be the ‘head nod’ associated with a pragmatic utterance, e.g. *will the honourable gentleman give way?*

The ultimate pedagogical aim is to foster and leverage multimodal literacy among students in ESP instructional settings (Crawford Camiciottoli & Fortanet-Gomez, 2015), helping students to become more aware of semiotic modes and raising cross-cultural awareness, in alignment with new EU learning frameworks (Council of Europe, 2018).

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Multimodality and task authenticity in EMI courses

Elizabeth Ruth Long
University of Modena e Reggio Emilia
elizabeth.long@unimore.it

Franca Poppi
University of Modena e Reggio Emilia
franca.poppi@unimore.it

Sara Radighieri
University of Modena e Reggio Emilia
sara.radighieri@unimore.it

Universities in many non-English-speaking countries are now embracing the challenges of internationalization (Coleman, 2006; Dearden, 2014). If on the one hand this can open up new opportunities, on the other hand it also arouses dilemmas concerning the accreditation and training of teaching staff (Costa, 2012): what language competence and which methodological skills the teachers should deploy in order to teach their subjects through English.

University language centres can play a fundamental role in providing answers and custom-tailored solutions for the above mentioned issues (Cots, 2013, p. 116). As a consequence, teacher education courses are being developed and offered in several universities, also in Italy. This is also the case of the Language Centre of the University of Modena and Reggio Emilia, where courses have been successfully delivered since 2011. These courses take advantage of online Moodle platform, which serves not only as a repository of common resources shared among the teachers and the teacher-learners, but also as the starting point for the creation of an online collaborative community of practice progressively fostering a learning by doing strategy.

The present contribution will look at the various activities in which learners are involved via this institutional platform, with a view to exploring how the multiple semiotic resources they are exposed to can contribute to enhancing their linguistic competence and promoting their ability to act as competent communicators in the EMI context. By looking at the tasks completed by the teacher-learners and at the evaluation questionnaire compiled at the end of the course, it is possible to state that the multimedia/multimodal dimension of material used for training courses can greatly benefit the end users.

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Multimodal analysis of medical posters. A corpus-driven study

Stefania Maci
University of Bergamo
stefania.maci@unibg.it

Progress and digital technologies have eased social change (Fairclough, 2006). In this context, academia has developed new ways to show its efficiency, in particular in the medical science. Here, efficiency can be perceived in *poster sessions* where researchers' projects and investigations are literally shown and presented – in a context in which space and time are optimized: the poster format provides for the maximum number of presentations in a very short time period. Since posters are constructed to be presented but also to *stand* alone – that is, to *do* and *show* the talking (MacIntosh-Murray, 2007), it is clear that in the hard sciences poster authors place an enormous relevance on posters as *visual* representations of scientific knowledge.

Despite the large amount of literature available on medical posters by scientific authors, from the applied linguistics perspective, the genre of posters has undergone little investigation, probably because posters are seen as a convenient genre for junior researchers (cf. for instance, Swales, 2004). The aim of this presentation, therefore, is to offer a consistent analysis of the visual elements contributing to the construction of scientific meaning with the purpose of creating a framework for the multimodal analysis of medical posters. This will help both students and junior researchers who use English as L2 to construct the literacy they need in poster creation which will allow them to cope more effectively with the interrelation between visuals and text for the sake of achieving effective communication in terms of pragmatic and culture-related aspects of scientific language.

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Using Google Talks in ESP educational settings: A multimodal approach

Elisa Mattiello
University of Pisa
elisa.mattiello@unipi.it

As the field of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) has developed and expanded by the use of digital technology, one important advance has been the inclusion of multimodal perspectives. Recent studies in multimodal literacy and semiotics (Jewitt & Kress, 2003; Jewitt, 2006; Unsworth, 2008; Archer & Breuer, 2016) have already shown the importance of including multimodality in pedagogical settings. Modern educational environments where new media resources are employed call for a multimodal approach, in which students can acquire specific competences related to the ability to construct meanings from various semiotic modes, both verbal and nonverbal, across a range of communicative platforms (O'Halloran, Tan, & Smith, 2016).

This paper investigates how different semiotic modes are combined and integrated in Google Talks and, therefore, how Google videos can be used as multimodal ESP materials for linguistic improvement and professional development. Google Talks is a new knowledge dissemination genre which consists of a series of presentations by the world's most influential intellectuals and professionals. Available on the website *Talks at Google*, the talks lie at the intersection of more traditional oral genres, such as interviews, conference presentations or university lectures, and novel forms of popularisation discourse, such as TED Talks. The paper analyses a series of Google Talks in the domains of business and economics from a multimodal perspective with the aim to show how, to promote their ideas, experts such as CEOs and entrepreneurs integrate spoken discourse with facial expressions, hand gestures, proxemics, and body posture (McNeill, 1992) as well as with graphs, images, and photographs (Kress & van Leeuwen, 1996) in their PowerPoint presentations. The study demonstrates that, although each mode has a different meaning potential and specific affordance, in Google Talks all modes synergistically concur to meaning-making and successful communication. Therefore, in ESP educational settings, they can be used to develop students' multimodal awareness in meaning-making processes, as well as to teach them how to exploit modes beyond verbal language to produce effective domain-specific texts.

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Exploring multimodal discourse of PowerPoint conference presentations on Human Genome Editing: Linking iconic and verbal representations of knowledge

Jekaterina Nikitina
University of Milan
jekaterina.nikitina@unimi.it

A modern conference presentation is difficult to imagine without a PowerPoint presentation. In fact, starting from the early 2000s an increasing number of studies emerged focusing on the multimodal aspects of conference paper presentations (Charles & Ventola, 2002; Rowley-Jolivet, 2002). In general, scientific presentations tend to rely on the visual channel of communication as a major resource for meaning making (Rowley-Jolivet, 1999, p. 134). In the biomedical field, specifically, non-verbal mode of knowledge communication takes on a greater role (Dubois, 1980). Modern biomedical presentations combine a range of verbal, visual and spatio-temporal aspects into a new channel of specialised communication, where the visual channel carries a “heavy organisational, interactional and ideational burden” (Rowley-Jolivet, 2002, p. 21).

This paper addresses the multimodal dissemination of knowledge in a corpus of 95 PowerPoint presentations delivered at the First and Second International Human Genome Editing Summits in December 2015 in Washington D.C. and in November 2018 in Hong Kong by representatives of soft and hard sciences. The study applies Rowley-Jolivet’s (2002) work for the classification of PowerPoint slides. The analysis looks into the relationship between the verbal and iconic representations of scientific knowledge to assess multimodal conceptual descriptions (Faber et al., 2006).

Preliminary findings confirm divergent use of multimodal slide organisation by the representatives of soft and hard sciences, and suggest that scientific concepts pertaining to the field of gene editing tend to be represented multimodally, though a combination of iconic and verbal elements.

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Designing multimodal learning environments: The use of serious games in teaching ESP

Inesa Sahakyan
University of Grenoble
inesa.sahakyan@univ-grenoble-alpes.fr

Although multimodality research has been gaining ground only over the past few decades, ‘it addresses a phenomenon which is as old as representation itself and crucial to an understanding of almost all forms of communication’ (Stöckl, 2004, p. 9). Indeed, human communication has always been multimodal by nature but it is with the advent of new technologies that multimodality has taken an increasingly greater place in education. It is worthwhile to note here that more often than not when mentioned multimodality in education is associated with technology-mediated learning. Nevertheless, while multimodality and multimediality are intricately linked, the former cannot be reduced to the latter. In line with this view, the present study explores multimodality in a wider sense, as referring to ‘communicative artefacts and processes which combine various sign systems (modes) and whose production and reception calls upon the communicators to semantically and formally interrelate all sign repertoires present’ (Stöckl, 2004, p. 9). Through the use of serious games, i.e. games ‘in which education (in its various forms) is the primary goal, rather than entertainment’ (Chen & Michael, 2006, p. 17), ESP learners are engaged in active classroom interactions (in small groups) where they are brought to use and combine various modes of communication (e.g. speech, written language, gesture, drawings, etc.) to perform a specific communicative task in order to advance through the plot of a game. Games help learners acquire greater self-confidence and increased spontaneous speaking time. By examining learners’ experiences, the present study seeks insight into the potential carried by such multimodal learning environments for motivating and engaging learners and thereby enhancing learning outcomes: acquisition of specialized ESP knowledge (Business English) and skills (oral and written).

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Towards multimodal deixis? Some examples from health discourse and communication

Maria Grazia Sindoni
University of Messina
mgsindoni@unime.it

Levinson early acknowledged (1983, p. 54) that deixis is the most “obvious” way in which the relationship between language and context is realized by means of the structures of the language itself. In broad terms, deixis explores how certain linguistic expressions help position entities and events in spatio-temporal, social and discourse contexts (Marmaridou, 2000). It is particularly useful when exploring how identity and distance are projected in health discourse, especially in the context of risk communication campaigns, when addressing the audience by fine-tuning expert specialised knowledge and lay communication is pivotal. However, in multimodal digital environments, the pragmatic notion of deixis may be articulated by means of semiotic resources other than language. For example, the importance of gestures and images in the research on illness narratives (Riessman, 2008) is supported by studies that explore how patterns of online representation shape health and illness identities in digital contexts, such as in social networking sites (Koteyko et al., 2015). Other studies underline the importance of incorporating multimodal approaches in research involving language (van Leeuwen, 2004).

In this presentation, the notion of deixis will be drawn on to investigate how participants, and context, are indexed and entextualised (Androutsopoulos, 2014) in major US governmental digital campaigns against HIV. The aim is to explore how context is construed in digital environments and how CMC is shaped with a proposal to theoretically extend the notion of deixis beyond linguistics into multimodal approaches to communication.

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Breaking the ice after moments of silence in Virtual Meetings

Laura Trandafir
Universitat Jaume I
al133787@uji.es

Julia Valeiras-Jurado
Ghent University
valeiras@guest.uji.es

Silence is defined as the absence of speech breaking the flow of conversation. Its occurrence has the potential to communicate a message, as well as to create human reaction comparable to any other conversational behavior (Jaworski, 1993). Most studies on silence have focused on face-to-face conversation. Little attention has been paid to silence in online communication and the interplay of semiotic modes that it entails. In this paper we provide a theoretical framework that combines a cross-cultural approach and Multimodal Discourse Analysis (MDA) to study the use of silence in virtual contexts.

As a result of the evolution of new information tools, scholars and professionals deal with new and potentially challenging communicative contexts. Such is the case of webinars (Ruiz-Madrid & Fortanet-Gómez, 2017) and virtual meetings (Markman, 2009). Due to the asynchronous nature of online communication, spontaneous speech often occurs chaotically, with lengthy gaps intermixed with topic discussions (Kerbat-Orecchioni, 2004). Subsequently, training students to manage this type of communication has become important. In our research, we explore the communicative strategies that students employ to relieve tension or resume the conversation after moments of silence in virtual meetings.

Our theoretical framework is based on the cross-cultural approach to silence supported by Lemak (2012). Additionally, we employ multimodal analysis, focusing on intonation and gaze. Hence, we consider the differences and similarities in the students' use of silence from a cross-cultural and multimodal perspective. Results indicate that silence and subsequent transitions to talk are significantly dependent on the context of each meeting.

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List of Conference Participants

Arizzi, Cristina (University of Messina)
Baldry, Anthony (University of Messina)
Bateman, John (Bremen University)
Beltrán-Palanques, Vicent (Universitat Jaume I)
Bianchi, Francesca (University of Salento)
Bondi, Marina (University of Modena and Reggio Emilia)
Bonsignori, Veronica (University of Pisa)
Bruti, Silvia (University of Pisa)
Burger, Claudia (Goethe University, Frankfurt)
Cappelli, Gloria (University of Pisa)
Catenaccio Paola (University of Milan)
Cesiri, Daniela (“Ca' Foscari” University of Venice)
Cocchetta, Francesca (Ca' Foscari University of Venice)
Crawford, Belinda (University of Pisa)
Cucchi, Costanza (Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore of Milan)
Del Fante, Dario (University of Padova)
Denti, Olga (University of Cagliari)
Diani, Giuliana (University of Modena and Reggio Emilia)
Edo-Marzá, Nuria (Universitat Jaume I)
Facchinetti, Roberta (University of Verona)
Filmer, Denise (University of Pisa)
Forchini, Pierfranca (Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore of Milan)
Fortanet-Gómez, Inmaculada (Universitat Jaume I)
Franceschi, Daniele (University of Roma Tre)
Franceschi, Valeria (University of Verona)
Garzone, Giuliana (IULM University, Milan)
Ghia, Elisa (University for Foreigners, Siena)
Hartle, Sharon (University of Verona)
Herrando, Isabel (University of Zaragoza)
Incelli, Ersilia (Sapienza University of Rome)
Kanani, Ilda (University of Vlora)
Kantz, Deirdre (University of Pavia)
Knight, Dawn (Cardiff University)
Long, Elizabeth Ruth (University of Modena and Reggio Emilia)
Lorés, Rosa (University of Zaragoza)
Maci, Stefania (University of Bergamo)
Manca, Elena (University of Salento)
Masi, Silvia (University of Pisa)
Mattei, Elena (University of Verona)
Mattiello, Elisa (University of Pisa)
Murphy, Amanda (Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore of Milan)
Nikitina, Jekaterina (University of Milan)
O'Halloran, Kay (University of Liverpool)
Palumbo, Giuseppe (University of Trieste)
Pavesi, Maria (University of Pavia)
Ponton, Douglas (University of Catania)
Poppi, Franca (University of Modena and Reggio Emilia)
Querol-Julián, Mercedes (International University of La Rioja)

CLAVIER 2019 – *Knowledge Dissemination and Multimodal Literacy: Research Perspectives on ESP in a Digital Age*, University of Pisa, Italy, November 28-29, 2019

Radighieri, Sara (University of Modena and Reggio Emilia)
Sahakyan, Inesa (University of Grenoble Alpes)
Seracini, Francesca (Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore of Milan)
Sezzi, Annalisa (University of Modena and Reggio Emilia)
Shvanyukova, Polina (University of Bergamo)
Simi, Nicoletta (University of Pisa)
Sindoni, Maria Grazia (University of Messina)
Trandafir, Laura (Universitat Jaume I)
Valeiras-Jurado, Julia (Ghent University)
Vignozzi, Gianmarco (University of Pisa)