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***I.A.D.A.***  
***Forum***

**4**  
**2002**

GIULIANA DIANI

## REPORT ON "ACADEMIC DISCOURSE" GENRE AND SMALL CORPORA.

(UNIVERSITY OF MODENA AND REGGIO EMILIA, 6-7 DECEMBER 2001)

On December 6th-7th 2001, the Faculty of Letters and the Language Centre of the University of Modena hosted the workshop Academic Discourse: Genre and Small Corpora, organised by the Dean Professor Marina Bondi. The workshop was the occasion for some preparatory work both for getting some feedback and planting some project seeds through fostering exchange and discussion among academic experts.

With invited speakers and short talks, the two-day program was surely an intensive one. The papers presented were either theoretical approaches to the analysis of academic discourse, or descriptive studies of transcripts and/or written records of real spoken academic discourse.

Proceedings were opened by Susan Hunston's (University of Birmingham) keynote lecture on 'It has rightly been pointed out... Attribution, Consensus and Conflict in Academic Discourse'. She discussed the role of attribution in constructing consensus and conflict with a series of discourse and corpus studies. She argued that attributing propositions and ideas to a variety of sources play an important role in academic discourse. According to Hunston, attribution may be to a named source, to an entity such as research findings or, more nebulously, to general agreement or 'common sense'. She suggested that the functions of attribution may be perceived as ideational, in that it indicates the epistemic status of a proposition, or interpersonal, in that it constructs a balance between consensus and conflict in the academic community.

Two other plenary talks were given by Anna Mauranen (University of Tampere) on 'Academic Speech Corpora - Small and Special' and David Oakey (University of Birmingham) on 'Lexical Phrase Variation Across Genres of Academic English Writing'.

Anna Mauranen discussed the importance of the criterion of representativeness (statistical vs 'notional') in the compilation of academic speech corpora. She argued that random statistical representativeness can conflict with other criteria such as comparability across disciplines, comparability across cultures. According to Mauranen, it is impossible to assess the

amount of speaking within speech events and to represent them in correct proportions. She suggested for a principled stratified sampling method.

David Oakey centred his talk on lexical phrases as pedagogically applicable units of formulaic language for the teaching of academic writing. He suggested that lexical phrases would need to be examined in corpora containing texts from one genre across different academic disciplines. His study presented one possible methodological approach to this task, and presented results of searches for one lexical phrase in a small corpus derived from the BNC.

Around fourteen papers were presented in addition to the plenary ones. Here are the main tenets of the talks, presented here in the order of the workshop's program.

Gabriella Del Lungo Camiciotti (University of Florence): 'The Negotiation of Academic Knowledge in 19th Century Lectures of Economics'. She investigated the interactional aspects of the six lectures that the economist Alfred Marshall gave, under the auspices of the Lectures for Women scheme, at Cambridge University in 1873. Her analysis focused on metadiscoursal evaluative devices used to explicitly engage students' attention or to signal the professor's attitude both to the content of the lecture and to the audience. This study enabled Del Lungo to make some observations as to the question of the degree of authorial presence and the construction of the social identity of the academic lecturer vis-à-vis his students in the context of late 19th century academic economics culture and pedagogic practices.

Christina Samson (University of Florence): 'Negotiating Academic Knowledge in Contemporary Written Economics Lectures'. She presented some results of an interuniversity research project concerning the rhetorical strategies used by the writer in his/her negotiation of his/her economic knowledge with the reader. In particular, Samson described the writer's use of interpersonal metadiscursive devices in a corpus of written economics lectures, arguing that, on the one hand, those metadiscursive devices indicate the academic's stance towards both his/her propositions and his/her readers; on the other, they correspond to the writer's display of authority within the text that helps him/her signal more decisively the important points the reader should focus on, in an attempt to create a sense of togetherness while simultaneously showing deference towards the discipline's community.

Julia Bamford (University of Siena): 'the fact is neither here nor there: A Corpus Approach to Deixis in Academic Discourse'. She explored various patterns of usage of the lexical item 'here' in lectures in economics and quantified some impressionistic findings of her previous analysis of it. In addition she discussed its polar spatial partner 'there' thus encompassing, as it were, both ends of the continuum of spatial deixis. Bamford suggested that those spatial adverbs occur in discourse situations in which contextual features can be crucial to interpreting what is going on and are typical examples of deictics in which grammar and pragmatics interlock. She showed that 'here' and 'there' could be both used to indicate physical nearness or distance but also cognitive or interactional relative nearness or distance.

Pauline Webber (University of Rome): 'The Use of a Spoken Corpus for the Analysis of Academic Conference Monologue'. She centred her research on linguistic features, which occur with a high frequency in conference monologues and serve a range of communicative functions common to the two sub-genres represented in the corpus, paper presentations and plenaries. She observed how in a close-knit community of the kind under study, some features of language use may become routine and conventionalised, and this is where computational linguistics can be useful in providing empirical evidence for the analyst's intuitions. Webber claimed that the quantitative analysis should be accompanied by a qualitative analysis of the communicative functions in an attempt to identify what they mean to field specialist participants in the particular discourse community.

Belinda Crawford Camiciottoli (University of Florence): 'Non-Verbal Communication in Business Lectures: An Interactional Tool for Negotiating Meaning in Cross-Cultural Contexts'. She reported the findings of an investigation of non-verbal communication in business lectures. Her analysis focused on various types of non-verbal signals, their frequency and differences among the lectures. Her aim was to gain a better understanding of how non-verbal communication may be used interactively with speech in cross-cultural settings in an effort to enhance the instructional message, and thus improve understanding.

Elena Tognini Bonelli (University of Lecce): "Reading Economic Discourse: Phraseological Units between Discourse Structure and Semantic Prosodies". She presented some results of a project concerning the identification of parameters of argument in economic discourse at the level of

discourse and at the level of semantic prosody. She observed that phraseological units are analysed formally as "functionally-complete" units of meaning; semantic prosodies define the boundaries of these functional units; the ultimate function of a unit merges with the ultimate function of the unfolding state of discourse and helps realise it.

Adina Abadi (The Hebrew University of Jerusalem): 'Friendly vs Formal Discourse - Genre of Mathematics/Physics'. Her talk focused on the analysis of Hawking's book on subjects in physics and mathematics. She showed how the book reveals features of "friendly" discourse such as interweaving stories (especially at the opening of the book); pointing to difficulties shared by the author in imagining certain structures; using similes; details about scientists; personal details of the author's life; details of author's intellectual autobiography and scientific work; humour and even black humour; remarks on science fiction or writers of "space westerns"; linguistic remarks on terms, that are written in footnotes in formal discourse; observation about intellectual honesty of scientists in general and of the author in particular. As a conclusion she suggested that the friendly discourse Hawking uses in his book is aimed to enable the layman to overcome the obstacles of scientific jargon and to acquire knowledge about the universe.

Marc Silver (University of Modena and Reggio Emilia): 'The Entanglement Between Epistemological and Disciplinary DOs and DON'Ts in the Analysis of American Use of Adverbials of Stance'. He explored how certain epistemic adverbials of stance are used in contemporary American academic discourse, with particular attention to differences that may appear across disciplinary lines. His research focused on occurrences of 'naturally' and 'evidently' in journal articles from history and economics and analysed peculiarities in their behaviour within the language of the specific disciplines as well as to draw parallels and generalizations wherever possible. Silver's analysis showed that these adverbials play an active role in the text's argumentational strategy and how epistemological concerns, disciplinary constraint and authorial stance work themselves out in the text.

Federica Scarpa (University of Trieste): 'Imagery and Terminological Inconsistency in the English Academic Language of Migration Studies'. She conducted an analysis of the language of migration studies in both English and Italian from a translator's perspective. In particular, she analysed the standard language and terminology related to the rhetoric of

the perceived 'difference' of immigrants, and to the subsumed imagery of fear, conflict, deceit and illness. Her attention turned to the imagery related to fluidity and disorder that seems to characterise this field of study and to the standard language and terminology originating from what can be considered as the 'commodification' of migrants.

John Morley (University of Siena) and Alan Partington (University of Camerino): 'Compiling Small Corpora: A Case Study of Some Problems'. In their presentation, they reflected on a few of the problems encountered in compiling a corpus of newspapers for a MURST project whose he was co-ordinator. They argued that the creation of newspaper web sites eases researchers' task in collecting their corpora, but it brings some problems such as, for instance, to what extent web papers are the same as their paper equivalents. On the basis of their experience, Morley and Partington argued for further research into the problem of SGML/XML because encoding is necessary if the researcher's work is to be available in a worthwhile form to other scholars.

Antonie Hornung (University of Modena and Reggio Emilia): 'Teaching German Academic Writing to Italian Students - Language or Genre-Problems?'. In her talk, she discussed the necessity of teaching German Academic Writing in an English speaking and writing science community, and the characteristics of genres in German Academic Writing. Her question is whether teachers do need to teach German Academic Writing in the context of foreign language teaching. On the basis of her experience, she argued for the importance of studying German language and linguistics in order to help students cope with the difficulties of comprehension, and get some idea of how German academic genres are structured and their LSP characteristics.

Franca Poppi (University of Modena and Reggio Emilia): 'Writer Presentation and Authorial Stance'. She described the ways in which the author of argumentative ESP texts expresses opinion. Her analysis showed a marked tendency on the part of the author to use the 1st person plural pronoun 'we' for the purpose of self-representation, while terms like 'the author' or 'the writer' only occur a very few times. She observed that the pronoun 'we' is used both when the author takes on an expert position and when s/he takes sides with her/his students-readers. Poppi argued that whenever the former use of 'we' (receiver-excluding 'we') is referred to, the writer does not only want to inform, but s/he wants to argue and, in

order to convince her/his readers, s/he distances him/herself, claiming the authority due to her/him because of her/his position of 'expert'. Her contribution tried to explore how the expression of the writer's opinion plays a key role in the organisation of the text and is functional to the writer in her/his attempt to construct the community's shared knowledge in the novices' minds.

Maria Freddi (University of Bologna): 'Ways of Arguing about Linguistics: Textbooks, a Case in Point'. She reported on some preliminary results of research being carried out on a corpus of introductory chapters taken from textbooks in linguistics. Her focus was on the argumentative strategies adopted in such introductory chapters, and the various linguistic resources, which account for such strategies. Freddi placed special emphasis on such elements of the lexico-grammar as, for example, connectives, verbs, adverbs, pronouns and a particular kind of interrogative clause which signals the argumentative dialogue that shows a triadic structure involving the writer as teacher and researcher, and the readers as students and/or members of the scientific community.

Giuliana Diani (University of Modena and Reggio Emilia): 'A Genre-Based Approach to Analysing Academic Review Articles'. She investigated the information organisation of academic review articles in terms of a genre whose exemplars share a conventional schema, consisting of hierarchically ordered knowledge structures referred to as 'moves' and their constituent elements. It was her contention in the contribution that evaluation is an essential element of the most basic information structure of the genre. Her talk focused on the role played by evaluation in discourse organisation. Diani investigated the reviewer's use of evaluation words and phrases s/he makes use of in establishing her/his critical point of view, her/his 'judgement of good or bad'. She paid particular attention to the signals used to introduce the reviewer's positive or negative evaluation of the argument reported.

To conclude, the workshop was scientifically very successful and all the papers were of a very high standard and stimulated deep discussion. Many new aspects in terms of the advantages that small specialised corpora can have for linguistic analysis and also for language teaching were raised, challenged and debated by both lecturer and audience alike. The organisation was as near perfect as could be and Marina Bondi deserves, and received, the warmest congratulations.



CARLA BAZZANELLA (ED.)

*ON DIALOGUE. CONTEXT AND FORMS OF INTERACTION*  
GUERINI E ASSOCIATI, MILANO, ISBN:88-8335-309-9

Dialogue is a complex form of communication involving multifarious aspects. It has been studied from various different perspectives, mainly from within our association (IADA; cfr. starting from Stati 1982, Weigand 1984, Dascal 1985, and the various volumes on "Dialogue analyse" edited by Niemeyer).

Interest in dialogue in different domains has greatly increased in recent years, thanks to new technologies which have allowed for novel ways of getting – and keeping – in touch (cf. e-mail, chat, etc.).

This volume offers a new, interdisciplinary, approach to dialogue, taking into account the forms which interaction can display between persons, and between persons and computers, as well as extending its scope to the limit of 'dialogue between cells'.

The first introductory section by Carla Bazzanella is subdivided into three chapters:

- i) several definitions of dialogue are discussed, thus underlining its wide variety of forms;
- ii) the 'prototypical' features of dialogue are presented: from 'canonical' face-to face conversation, to the 'peripheral' features which characterize other forms of dialogue;
- iii) the multiple kinds and functions of silence are analyzed, stressing the continuum between silence and speech.

A correlation between contextual constraints and the kind of dialogic production which characterizes the different forms, in a complex configuration of parameters, is hypothesized and verified in the second section.

Also the second section (written by experts in specific fields) is subdivided into three parts:

- i) *dialogue between persons*
- ii) *dialogue between persons and computers*
- iii) *dialogue between cells.*

More specifically:

'Dialogue' in family conversation (Sabine Pirchio, Clotilde Pontecorvo, Laura Sterponi)

Dialogue in the classroom (Alessandra Fasulo, Hilda Girardet)

Beyond the tv screen: co-viewing and interaction in the classroom (Letizia Caronia)

Monologism and di(a)logicism in academic communication (Laurie Anderson, Anna Ciliberti)

Co-constructing asymmetry: Language Proficiency Interviews (Susan Eerdmans, Polly Walsh)

Job interviews (Orsola Fornara)

Communication in legal context (Renata Galatolo)

Therapeutic dialogue as narrative (Carla Gallo Barbisio)

Dialogue in movies (Fabio Rossi)

Telephone conversations (Fabrizio Bercelli, Gabriele Pallotti)

SMS messages (Giovanna Cosenza)

Dialogue and emotions in Cicero's correspondence (Alessandro Garcea)

Theoretical models of human-machine dialogue (Rossana Damiano)

Human-machine dialogue: applications (Morena Danieli)

Computer mediated communication (Alberto Baracco)

Cross-talk between cells (Aldo Fasolo, Davide Lovisolo)

The heterogeneity of the kinds of interaction and situations is not meant to be exhaustive, but to provide a wide panorama in which the study of the individual forms contributes to providing a general, more complete picture to the reader.

# Johannes Gutenberg-Universität Mainz

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Starting October 2002, the Johannes Gutenberg-University of Mainz, the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) and the German Research Association (DFG) are offering a 3-year program in *Performance and Media Studies (Theatre, Film and Television)* leading to a Dr.phil./PhD degree. The program offers potential doctoral candidates a unique combination of intensive individual supervision by the local program-faculty, an internationally oriented and interdisciplinary course-program within a network of seven international partner-institutions, and easy access to a wealth of theatre-, film-, and television-companies as well as research-resources in the Rhein-Main area.

#### Qualifications:

Considered will be applicants with interdisciplinary dissertation-proposals in the fields of theatre, drama, performance, film, television or the new media. The research should be hermeneutical in its orientation and focus on aspects of intermediality and/or interculturality.

Applicants must provide official documentation that they qualify for academic work on the doctoral level in their respective home-countries. International students are recommended to apply for a DAAD Fellowship in their country of citizenship prior to submitting their program-application.

Some scholarships will be available for outstanding candidates.

## Applications:

To apply send a cover-letter, curriculum vitae, certified copy of highest academic degree and/or official transcript, two letters of recommendation and a ten-page dissertation-proposal to:

Prof. Dr. Christopher Balme, Chair  
*Performance and Media Studies*  
Institut für Theaterwissenschaft  
Johannes Gutenberg-Universität  
Jacob-Welder-Weg 18  
55099 Mainz, Germany

For further information contact the program-coordinator: Dr. Anja Klöck, [kloeck@mail.uni-mainz.de](mailto:kloeck@mail.uni-mainz.de), +49 (0)6131 3925507.

Review of applications will begin April 30, but applications will be accepted until all positions are filled.

## Notes for Contributors

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KASHER, ASA (1991). On the pragmatic modules: A lecture. *Journal of Pragmatics* 16: 381-397.

KRIPKE, SAUL (1991). Speaker's reference and semantic reference. In: GARFIELD, J. & KITELEY, M. (eds.). Meaning and Truth. Essential Readings in Modern Semantics, New York: Paragon House.

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