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Identity, Language and Diversity

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Discourses of Societal Transformation

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PUBLISHER

Paolo Loffredo Editore srl

via Ugo Palermo 6

80128 Napoli - Italy

P.IVA 05014040876

R.E.A. NA 931959

+39 3248382362

www.loffredoeditore.com

paololoffredoeditore@gmail.com

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Director: **Elisabetta Donadono**

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The Powerful Nexus between Emotional Involvement and Social Change

DOI: 10.26379/IL2022001_003

Margherita Rasulo

University of Campania "Luigi Vanvitelli"
margherita.rasulo@unicampania.it

Jan Engberg

Aarhus University
je@cc.au.dk

Prolonged emotional expenditure during times of transformational challenges could result in anxiety or anguish as participants struggle with constant adaptation to the often sudden changes in life course processes (Kiefer 2005). Indeed, emotional intensity is inexorably connected to major change events, which seems to suggest that the entanglement of life experiences with the emotional sphere takes on more significance, and values tend to be reconsidered as people search for existential meaning. Emotional challenges posed by contemporary social innovation and change have fluctuated between the urgency to rapidly shift course from old mindsets and approaches that no longer work to the need to cultivate a more equitable transformation of society (Louis/Montiel 2018).....

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“Don’t Call me Woke!”: Tracing the Pragmatic and Emotive Trajectory of the Word of Our Era

DOI: 10.26379/IL2022001_001

Denise Filmer

University of Pisa
denise.filmer@unipi.it

Gianmarco Vignozzi

University of Pisa
gianmarco.vignozzi@unipi.it

Abstract

This paper investigates the fluctuating attitudes and emotional responses to the adjective ‘woke’ viewed through the lens of British news discourse. The study seeks to understand how recent newspaper coverage surrounding the notion of woke culture and its linguistic referents has influenced the semantic and pragmatic shifts of ‘woke’. The analysis is based on a self-compiled corpus of British newspaper articles featuring the contested term and is conducted both quantitatively and qualitatively. The polarisation of British newsbrands (quality vs. tabloids and left-leaning vs. right-leaning) seems to play a pivotal role in determining the way in which ‘woke’ is implemented within the text: either as part of journalistic discourse, as metadiscourse, or within reported discourse. The collocational analysis uncovers the discourses that most typically characterise news reporting on ‘woke’ highlighting different attitudes and representations. Having identified five key news narratives on wokeness, two mini case studies critically assess how multi-modal features contribute to and reinforce the meaning-making process, confirming the current polarised and ideologically loaded usage of ‘woke’.

Keywords

woke and woke culture, media studies, British newsbrands, corpus linguistics, multi-modal critical discourse analysis

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The Emotional Labour of Beauty Standards: The Case of YouTube Beauty Gurus

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Antonio Fruttaldo

University of Macerata

antonio.fruttaldo@unimc.it

Abstract

Contemporary research in the field of media and communication underlines the importance of ‘subcultures of consumption’ (Schouten/McAlexander 1995), ‘brand communities’ (Muniz/O’Guinn 2001), or ‘consumer tribes’ (Cova et al. 2007) in addressing potential buyers. These studies additionally acknowledge that one of the most important and successful strategies adopted in selling specific products is represented by the creation in buyers of a desire for belonging that “may be satisfied through social interaction surrounding products or services” (Mardon et al. 2018: 1–2). Such feeling of belongingness is based on the discursive creation of ‘tribes’ whose members are bound together by “shared emotions, styles of life, new moral beliefs and consumption practices” (Cova/Cova 2001: 67). And nowadays, online platforms and social networking sites (SNSs) have increasingly provided digital ‘spaces’ where tribe members may construct and experience a collective identity which is conveyed predominantly via discursive cues and genre constraints that allow members to recognise each other and be recognised as belonging to that community and, most notably in the case of consumption practices, in the products that are being sold to them. On the basis of this background, the present study wants to investigate the particular case of YouTube beauty gurus, an online consumer-centred community that focuses on beauty-related matters addressed via vlogs (García-Rapp 2017; Riboni 2020). In particular, the specific evaluative resources and generic constraints will be highlighted that define the contours of the linguistic practices adopted by the online beauty community embodied in the ‘emotion work’ (Hochschild 1983) that manages and regulates viewers’ feelings so as to enhance interpersonal relationships, resulting in ‘emotional labour’ (Hochschild 1983; Fuoli/Bednarek 2022), that is, the commodification of feelings of belongingness. Therefore, the ensuing investigation will examine the generic structure and discursive ‘tribe’ construction found in beauty product reviews uploaded by the most popular and influential beauty gurus on YouTube.

In analysing such data, special attention will be paid to the construction of digital landscapes for culture-specific communities of affective practice in order to better understand how people forge alignments and negotiate meanings through digital practices (Zappavigna/Martín 2018).

Keywords

genre analysis, corpus linguistics, consumer tribes, beauty gurus, emotional labour, moral emotions

Problem Solving in the COVID-19 ERT University Classroom

DOI: 10.26379/IL2022001_004

Sabrina Fusari

University of Bologna
sabrina.fusari2@unibo.it

Abstract

This paper deals with pragmatic aspects of Emergency Remote Teaching adopted in an academic setting as a COVID-19 containment strategy. We consider an intensive introductory course in English Language and Linguistics taught at the University of Bologna by the author of this study (30 academic hours). Following university policy and Italian special COVID-19 laws, the first half of the course was taught full distance, synchronically on Microsoft Teams, while the second part was administered live, with part of the audience present in the physical classroom, and the rest connected online from home.

Lessons were videorecorded and transcribed using Microsoft Stream, and subsequently stored on the Sketch Engine (Kilgarriff et al. 2014) to create a fully POS-tagged and lemmatized corpus in English. As the study is methodologically grounded in corpus pragmatics (Aijmer/Rühlemann 2015), both corpus findings and videorecordings are analysed pragmatically for metacommunicative expressions (Bazzanella 2002, 2010), and metadiscursively for markers of interactivity (Hyland 2005: 49). The results show that the root cause of most pragmatic accidents (as revealed, in corpus data, by the frequency of hesitations, apologies, and other expressions of uncertainty and doubt) is a contextual mismatch arising from the fact that the same lecture is administered simultaneously to students on campus and online. Despite some positives, e.g., more interactivity (Luporini 2020) in comparison with the fully in-person version of the course that was taught prepandemically (Fusari 2021), it is therefore suggested that hybrid teaching should be much more carefully planned if it is to continue after the pandemic.

Keywords

corpus linguistics, COVID-19, e-learning, emergency remote teaching (ERT), English for academic purposes (EAP)

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Old, Female and COVID-19+: Issues of Age and Gender in the Midst of the SARS- CoV-2 Pandemic

DOI: 10.26379/IL2022001_007

Kim Grego

Università degli Studi di Milano - University of Milan

kim.grego@unimi.it

Abstract

Although it is still unclear whether COVID-19 infected elderly people more than young people, seniors fell victim to it more frequently and severely. This exploratory sample study addresses the impact of the pandemic on the socially vulnerable group of older women, by analysing their representation in supranational institutional publications. To do so, documents were collected from the WHO website that dealt with COVID-19, women and older people. Findings show that very few of these documents deal with older women and COVID-19. Those that do were examined discursively following a CDS qualitative approach. The analysis suggests that older women are little investigated, and that more qualitative studies are needed to explore their presence in supranational institutional discourse, if material is quantitatively limited.

Keywords

older adults, women, COVID-19, WHO, critical discourse studies

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Emotional Advocacy and Cognitive Empowerment in Social Change and Crisis Communication: Exploring Multimodal Discursive Strategies in THE WHY Videos

DOI: 10.26379/IL2022001_005

Carmen Daniela Maier

Aarhus University
cdm@cc.au.dk

Abstract

The purpose of this article is to explain how to explore the roles of multimodal crisis discourses in NGO's empowering and advocacy communication meant to fight cognitive limitations and lack of genuine commitment to implementing social changes that can alleviate or eradicate ongoing global crises. The selected data is represented by THE WHY foundation's videos addressing the globalised community. The methodological approach combines multimodal discourse analysis with thematic reflexive analysis. Drawing upon this methodological framework, the article shows how to examine the integration of several semiotic modes in empowering or disempowering representation of social actors as groups or identifiable individuals affected by global crises' consequences. Drawing upon an understanding of discourse as socially constructed knowledge, the article also shows how to explore crises-related social practices that are multimodally legitimated (or delegitimated) according to strategic advocacy goals. The identified multimodal discursive strategies are connected according to their crisis-related communicative themes (issue identification, blame attribution, and potential solutions) and accomplish two overarching functions related to implementing social change: empowerment articulation and advocacy orientation. This article contributes to the expanding fields of both crisis communication and communication for social change in NGO context. By showing how to examine the roles and effects of the semiotic modes' potent interdependence and functional differentiation upon the emotional convergence or segregation between represented social actors and prospective viewers, it provides means for rethinking and improving the strategic usage of multimodal discursive strategies and, consequently, move the study of crisis communication and communication for social change forward.

Keywords

social change, crisis communication, advocacy, empowerment, discourse, multimodality

Sex, Love, and Stigma: A Social Media Critical Discourse Analysis of Sexual- Emotional Disability Discourse on Reddit Posts

DOI: 10.26379/IL2022001_006

Annalisa Raffone

University of Naples 'L'Orientale'
araffone@unior.it

Abstract

Sexuality and disability have always represented two opposite and distinct polarities due to a long-lasting narration of people with impairments as asexual, unattractive, unable, and non-normative individuals. However, they have found in social media a safe place where sharing experiences, feelings, and emotions with people facing similar issues. Drawing on Social Media Critical Discourse Analysis, this study investigates an underresearched area of discourse-based disability studies, namely digitally-based (intersectional) sexual-emotional disability discourses, by analysing a corpus of threads, posts, and comments retrieved from the Reddit social media platform. The results unveil that people with impairments still undergo marginalisation and alienation phenomena based on centrist culturally-based beliefs, ideologies, and mental models that enact a vicious cycle of stigmatisation by their able-bodied counterparts and internalisation of stigma by the disabled that contribute to enhancing their invisibility. Contemporarily, they also show that people with impairments try to resist and challenge ableist and heteronormative discourses through social media spaces. Accordingly, this paper aims to shed new light on the topic and provide insightful reflections on disability at its intersection between sexuality, socio-culturally-based ideologies, and media technologies.

Keywords

ableism, disability discourse, critical discourse analysis, reddit, sexuality, social media studies



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The role of language typology on L2 acquisition and learning

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via Ugo Palermo 6

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+39 3248382362

www.loffredoeditore.com

paololoffredoeditore@gmail.com

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113 Static and Dynamic Location Events: Typological Differences between French and Swedish and Its Implications for Learning L2 Swedish

[*Maria Hellerstedt*]

Director: **Elisabetta Donadono**

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I-LanD Journal - n. 2/2022 – December 2022

Introduction: The Role of Language Typology on L2 Acquisition and Learning

DOI: 10.26379/IL2022002_001

Simona Anastasio

University of Toulouse Jean Jaurès, France
simona.anastasio@univ-tlse2.fr

Patrizia Giuliano

University of Naples 'Federico II', Italy
giuliano@unina.it

Abstract

This special issue of the *I-LanD Journal* aims to explore the role of language typology on second language acquisition (SLA) and learning.

The contributions to this special issue address the question as to whether and in which ways typological contrasts of languages play a crucial role in how events are expressed in adult second language (L2).

In this regard, Slobin (1996), by means of his *Thinking for Speaking* hypothesis, argues that differences across languages predispose native speakers to view and to talk about events differently and this seems to have important consequences in discourse conceptualisation and production even at very advanced levels of L2 proficiency...

The Expression of Affected Arguments in L2 French: Evidence of Conceptual Transfer from Spanish-speaking Learners

DOI: 10.26379/IL2022002_002

Isabel Repiso

Paris Lodron Universität Salzburg
isabel.repiso@plus.ac.at

Abstract

The paper describes how affectedness is expressed in French, Spanish, and L2 French by Spanish-speaking learners attending to two parameters: the thematic role under which affected arguments are realised, and the interaction between grammatical and lexical means at play. 63 participants completed an offline task in which they were presented with a series of vignettes and had to retell what happened to a blue-dressed cartoon figure.

The corpus of the study consists of 252 responses: 84 were elicited in L2 French, 84 in L1 French, and 84 in L1 Spanish. The results reveal that French expresses affected arguments as subjects in the 'se faire' passive constructions (e.g., *Il s'est fait agresser*), whereas Spanish expresses affectedness through the realisation of objects depending on causative verbs within SVO sentences (e.g., *El coche impactó al ciclista*) and OV(S) sentences (e.g., *A él lo atropelló un coche*). Our findings suggest that the instantiation of affected arguments is highly grammaticalised in French, whereas Spanish relies more on the semantics of the verb. As for L2 French, our results are coherent with previous SLA findings regarding the learner's overuse of structures available in both native and target languages but dispreferred by target language speakers (Benazzo/Andorno 2017). Regarding conceptual transfer, the results of our study suggest that the status of a given language as L1 or as L2 plays a crucial role in the dissimilar expression of affectedness across related Romance languages such as French and Spanish.

Keywords

undergoer, affectedness, thematic roles, RRG, intra-typological variation, transfer

Differential Object Marking in the L2 Polish of East Slavic Learners: Transfer and Universal Tendencies

DOI: 10.26379/IL2022002_003

Jacopo Saturno

Università degli Studi di Bergamo

jacopo.saturno@unibg.it

Abstract

The present paper discusses several possible accounts of L2 errors arising in a contact situation in which the target language (Polish) is very closely related to the learner's L1 (East Slavic: Belorussian, Russian, Ukrainian). Although L1/ L2 proximity often leads to attribute most or all errors to cross-linguistic interference, it will be shown that explanations based on universal tendencies are also viable, as indeed long suggested by detractors of the contrastive analysis approach. Because of the peculiar learning environment created by the possibility of mutual intelligibility between Polish and East Slavic, the reflection is framed within research on the psycholinguistic aspects of intercomprehension.

The analysis will focus on the morphological marking of a subset of nouns that in the plural engage in slightly diverging differential object marking patterns in Polish and East Slavic. The paper presents the results of a large-scale, quantitative-oriented experiment, whose findings are discussed in connection with previous non-quantitative research in order to provide a comprehensive view of the phenomenon.

Keywords

L2 Polish, East Slavic, cross-linguistic interference, contrastive analysis, markedness, differential object marking

Is Sylvester Pacing Up and Down or Is He Going Back and Forth? Onomasiological Analysis of the Multimodal Expression of Motion Events in French and Dutch as L1 and L2

DOI: 10.26379/IL2022002_004

Christina Piot

University of Liège/University of Lille - Savoirs, Textes, Langage (CNRS UMR8163)
christina.piot@uliege.be

Abstract

The typological differences between verb-framed and satellite-framed languages observed by Talmy (2000) have been shown to be reflected in cospeech gestures (McNeill/Duncan 2000; Kita/Özyürek 2003; McNeill 2005; Brown/Chen 2013). More specifically, studies indicate different correlations between the types of language and semantic components encoded in gestures, and the synchronisation between gestures and speech (McNeill/Duncan 2000; Kita/Özyürek 2003). Such gestures should therefore be considered when studying L2 learners' thinking for speaking patterns (Stam 2018). Against this background, our study aims to determine how motion events are expressed in speech and co-speech gestures by L1 speakers of French, L1 speakers of Dutch and CLIL French-speaking learners of Dutch.

We conducted an elicitation experiment in which participants recounted scenes from a Tweety and Sylvester cartoon. Nine L1 speakers of French, nine L1 speakers of Dutch, and 11 CLIL French-speaking learners of Dutch (proficiency level: between A1 and B2) completed the task. Using different taxonomies, we identified the semantic components (manner and path) encoded in the verbs and satellites. Iconic and deictic gestures were analysed in terms of the semantic components of motion they convey (e.g., manner, path, ground). Finally, we examined the synchronisation between speech and gestures, following Stam's (2006) procedure.

In the present study, we adopted a qualitative approach by focusing on the expression of specific self-propelled motion events. We addressed the different multimodal combinations used to express these motion events and aimed to highlight the multimodal inter- and intralanguage differences and learners' interlanguage specificities.

Keywords

motion events, thinking-for-speaking, thinking-for-speaking in L2, co-speech gesture...

The Conceptualisation of Dynamic Space in Italian, German, and Italian as Foreign Languages

DOI: 10.26379/IL2022002_005

Delia Airoidi

Università degli Studi di Udine
airoidi.delia@gmail.com

Abstract

This work aims at adding to the studies of Typological Linguistics, Contrastive Linguistics, and Acquisitional Linguistics, contributing, at the same time, to the debate on the relationship between language and cognition both in mother tongue and foreign language.

The main objective is the analysis of the conceptualisation of dynamic space in Italian L1, German L1 and Italian L2 of German-speaking learners living in Germany. So, the study aims to analyse the spatial conceptualisation in the oral expression of three groups of informants: Italian speakers in L1, German speakers in L1 and German speakers in Italian L2.

The main objectives of the contribution are: 1. typological, because the aim is to identify the type of behaviour of Italophones and Germanophones in relation to the conceptualisation of dynamic space, with reference to the

classification of world languages initially proposed by Talmy (1985, 1991, 2000) and refined by Slobin (1996, 2004, 2006); 2. contrastive, as the two languages are compared, highlighting their similar features and especially their divergent ones; 3. acquisitional, as special attention is paid to the linguistic productions of German-speaking learners in Italian L2.

Keywords

dynamic space, typology, Italian, German, second language acquisition

Static and Dynamic Location Events: Typological Differences between French and Swedish and Its Implications for Learning L2 Swedish

DOI: 10.26379/IL2022002_006

Maria Hellerstedt

Université de Lille

maria.hellerstedt@univ-lille.fr

Abstract

Static and dynamic location is predominantly encoded with a posture verb in Swedish: *ligga*, *stå*, *sitta* ('lie', 'stand', 'sit') for static location and *lägga*, *ställa*, *sätta* ('lay', 'put standing', 'put sitting, set') for dynamic location. This is in accordance with Talmy's theory that S-languages confl ate the Co-event Manner in the main verb when it comes to spatial expressions. French on the other hand uses positionally neutral verbs, like *être* and *mettre*, *poser* ('be' and 'put', respectively), and encodes Manner in a Satellite outside of the verb, almost only in non-canonical situations, just like V-languages tend to do. Our results in L1 Swedish and French confirm the typological differences observed for Germanic and Romance languages. Our results in L2 Swedish accounts for the difficulties of French learners of L2 Swedish when encoding positional expressions, switching from a general one-term semantic system to a semantically specific, multi-term system. The L2 grammars of our two groups of learners (i.e., B1, C1) show an over-use of one of the posture verbs (*ligga*, 'lie'), the use of a static posture verb instead of a dynamic one, and the L1-transfer of a positionally neutral verb (*vara*, 'être', or *finnas*, 'il y a'). The learners show a certain conscience about the typological differences and take them into account, adapting to the L2-system.

Keywords

L2 acquisition, location verbs, typology, Swedish