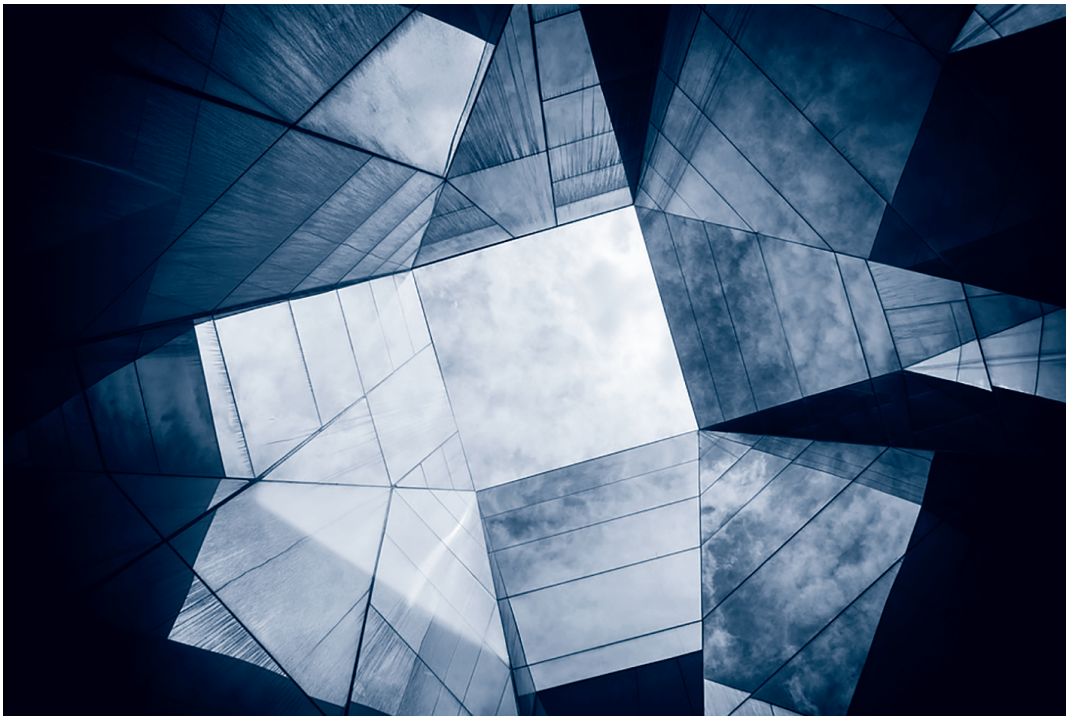
Multiperspectives in analysis and corpus design



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Interlingua

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(*eds.*)

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Introducction

In this volume, the readers of *Multiperspectives in Analysis and corpus design* will find nine selected peer reviewed and original contributions which deal with key aspects in recent trends in corpus linguistics, such as the developments in corpus design, compilation procedures and annotation, and the different analytical perspectives in which corpus techniques have become a core empirical methodology, either in isolation, or combined with other approaches that help reinforce arguments. It will be found that, in most of the articles, the authors themselves have compiled their own study corpus. Consequently, as it is customary in Corpus Linguistics research, a justification of the compilation procedure (e.g. sampling parameters or representativeness) is part and parcel of the discussion. The research areas to which corpus linguistics has been successfully applied in this volume include historical linguistics, linguistic variation, discourse analysis, computational linguistics and translation.

The first paper by Arinas and Anesa, "Advance-Fee Scams: A corpus and genre analysis", provides a detailed analysis of online scams. The authors state that online scams have "become a global criminal phenomenon which, worryingly, is on the increase". Their corpus contains over 500 fraudulent email texts. Their study aims to identify the persuasive strategies used by scammers to manipulate their victims by generating their confidence to deceive them. A keyword analysis is applied as a crucial analytical technique followed by a qualitative analysis. The analytical frameworks applied include Bhatia'[1]s notions of promotional letter move structure, Gao & Gao's representation of knowledge involved in fraud detection and prevention, Kahnenab's model of judgment and choice according to preferences and attitudes, and Fischer, Lea and Evans' persuasion strategies. An important conclusion is that scammers "use a strong narrative within

[1] All references to authors or titles mentioned in this introduction will be located in the bibliographical references provided by each contributor to this volume.

a recognizable genre", creating the "illusion of intimacy, sincerity, and urgency", to persuade and tease their victims.

Pérez and Ortego carry out a contrastive terminological analysis around food entities, in particular, apples: "El sabor de las manzanas: Análisis contrastivo (español-inglés) de la terminología objetiva referida a la experiencia sensorial del gusto". In their paper, the authors of this second article perform a contrastive Spanish-English discourse study of terms used to name the gustatory perception. For that purpose, they make use of a comparable bilingual study corpus based on fact sheets on apples gathered from websites of Spanish and British food companies. They look into meaning choices through frequent collocates, and co-textual intensifying and mitigation strategies. They find that in their description of apple taste, these fact sheets typically appeal to sensory qualities such as sweetness or acidity, the evocation of different foods and beverages, the aroma and the touch. In their conclusion, they highlight that both languages use a wide variety of terminology to describe, with great accuracy, the different taste sensations that the consumption of an apple causes on the palate. They hope that this study can be useful for translators, who would need to use the appropriate terminology and discourse features when promoting online products.

The third article, by Rodríguez-Abruñeiras, examines the use of *for example* and *for instance* in Present-Day English in two corpora, the *British English 2006* and *American English 2006*, each of these containing one million words. The author follows Eggs and McElholm's typology of exemplification, selection and argumentation, undertaking a corpus-based study of two mainstream varieties of English, namely British and American English, in the early twenty-first century. Among other aspects, her analysis reveals that both markers show quite similar overall distributions in the two general corpora, and that the argumentative function prevails over others in both mainstream varieties of English. Regarding text types, the results indicate that fiction has very few examples of these markers, when compared with informative prose, which is due, according to Rodríguez-Abruñeiras, to their differing rhetoric and communicative purposes. Thus, she argues that "fiction is creative and is not expected to be accurate except as a reflection of human experiences, whereas text types, such as science or law (which are argumentative by nature), are characterised "by the use of more accurate and concise kind of language". Rodríguez-Abruñeiras claims that both markers "may also bring about various pragmatic nuances, such as focus or mitigation", most particularly in scientific prose. In her conclusion, she highlights that that there are no significant differences between British English and American English. In both varieties there is "clear preference for *for example* over *for instance*" and a similar use of the three functions she examined in this paper.

Tamaredo's paper "Probabilistic grammars across registers: Pronominal subject expression in some varieties of English", fourth in this monograph, takes a dialectal and variationist/sociolinguistic perspective. Tamaredo focuses on the internal and external constraints which determine the choice between overt and pronominal subjects among speakers of three varieties of World Englishes with different regional and cultural back-

grounds, namely British English, Indian English, and Singapore English. This research was carried out by exploring the corresponding three national corpora, containing one million words each, within the *International Corpus of English*. The author adopts the double approach of probabilistic grammar framework, which assumes that grammatical knowledge is at least partially experience- and a usage-based approach. The author takes into account various internal language-constraints as predictors of subject pronoun omission, and language-external factors (variety, mode of production, and level of formality). He makes use of VADIS variationist modelling, in order to examine probabilistic differences. Tamaredo's findings seem to demonstrate that, among the external factors, the mode of production and the level of formality outweigh variety to account for variation between omitted and overt subject pronouns in the three varieties. As for the internal factors, the author concludes that coordination and clause position are the most crucial constraints. As in many cases of morphosyntactic variation in PDE, Tamaredo finds that register-related factors appear "to override variety-specific patterns".

"Semantic frames in *SciE-Lex*" is the title of the fifth paper, by Verdaguer, Castaño and Laso. The paper focuses on the analysis of two English verbs, *to block* and *to inhibit,* very frequently used in biomedical discourse. The article discusses a new development of *SciE-Lex*, a lexical database of biomedical English, a development from their *Health Science Corpus*, a four-million-word corpus of biomedical English. In this new development, the authors applied Fillmore's frame semantics' approach and used the well-known database *Framenet*, which classifies individual words on the basis of their semantic frames. The aim of the *SciE-Lex* project is to help the Spanish biomedical community to publish papers in English which conform "to the conventions of scientific discourse". At present, *SciE-Lex* contains phonological, morphological, syntactic, semantic, collocational and phraseological information on highly frequent biomedical English words. The authors analyse the frame-based information for both verbs, which enables them to observe the syntactic and semantic patterns that both of them share. This approach makes it possible to integrate lexical meanings into a higher level of organization, as well as compare and contrast their preferred meanings, collocational and syntactic patterns against those in general discourse. Since the meanings of words in domain-specific texts tend to be more specific than in general use, the authors claim that their idiosyncrasies should be considered. The authors conclude that "the application of Frame Semantics to the semantic and syntactic description of the verbs *to block* and *to inhibit* in their specialised corpus bears witness to the existence of "remarkable differences between general and biomedical English".

Subtitling norms and accessibility in audiovisual translation is the focus of the sixth contribution in this monograph. Serrat's paper, "Accesibilidad, traducción audiovisual y normas en la subtitulación *online*: EMPAC (EuroparlTV) Multimedia Parallel Corpus", discusses issues of accessibility on the audiovisual content in subtitling on the online television channel EuroparlTV. Her analysis is based on EMPAC, a Spanish and English parallel (English/Spanish) corpus of 5 million words she has compiled for the years 2009-2017. In this contribution, Serrat discusses the norms which underlie the online

subtitles generated by translation professionals to determine whether they are aligned with the commitment to equal access to information for all European citizens. She homes in on the following relevant features: reading speed, pauses between subtitles, and characters per line, as well as (in)adequate segmentation of syntactic patterns. Her conclusions indicate that the lack of commonly accepted standards for online subtitling leads to malpractice and dubious quality and illegible subtitles. In her view, these are barriers for effective communication in this institutional EU context.

Moreno Sandoval, Gisbert and Montoro's "A corpus of financial reports in Spanish" provides an overview of the different steps taken to retrieve texts of annual reports in a corpus of contemporary Spanish financial narratives (FinT-esp) a corpus compiled by their research team. This is a contribution to the development of existing methodologies in computational linguistics and, more specifically, aims to help finance and accounting fields in the processing, classification and analysis of large amounts of financial narratives provided by PDF files. A great deal of the article is dedicated to the description of the contents of FinT-esp and the methodology followed for the compilation of the corpus. The authors use an adaptation and modification of the CFIE-FRSE tool developed by Mahmoud El Haj (Lancaster University), an application that detects the structure of annual reports and allows them to extract their contents at section level. Once this was done, the texts were processed with computational tools such as POS taggers or parsers. For example, they highlight that to help prospective users in their searches "[t]he texts are indexed with Elastic Search, which favours "a fast and easy search as if we were using a Google-like tool". To illustrate the usefulness of this specialised corpus, Moreno-Sandoval, Gisbert and Montoro discuss three lexical features: modality (to detect possible linguistic biases), keyword analysis (to identify domain specific vocabulary) and polarity (by applying a computational tool of sentiment analysis). Regarding possible applications, the authors state that it is already being used for terminology extraction and, claim that FinT-esp could become "a valuable source of data to facilitate both the development of new techniques in computational linguistics and the promotion of interdisciplinary studies between accounting and linguistic academics".

Romero-Barranco shows his interest in the compilation and annotation of historical corpora in his paper "Spelling normalisation and POS-tagging of historical corpora: The case of GUL, MS Hunter 135 (ff. 34r-121)". In this eighth contribution, Romero-Barranco brings in decisions or suggestions involving the process of compiling and annotating an early Modern English linguistic corpus. As a source of evidence, the author examines the criteria used to compile and annotate the Glasgow, University Library, MS Hunter 135 (ff. 34r-121v), a medical volume written in the first half of the sixteenth century. Given that early Modern English features spelling variation, it is his view that diachronicians would need to normalise the orthography if they wish to enhance the performance of an automatic POS-tagger as would be done with a contemporary text. The spelling normalisation is carried out with *VARD* (Rayson, Archer and Smith 2005). One of its most crucial features is that *VARD*, the variant detector tool, not only normalises spelling variants, but also adds a tag showing where this original

spelling is kept. Romero-Barranco also gives and overview of progress in automatic part-of-speech tagging. Most particularly he looks at what has been accomplished by developments of the CLAWS (Constituent Likelihood Automatic Word-tagging System) POS (Part of Speech) tagger. Both VARD and CLAWS taggers have been applied to this early Modern English document. The study shows that thanks to spelling normalisation, part-of-speech annotation with CLAWS increases its accuracy approximately by 15%. Particularly, CLAWS' accuracy is enhanced from 82.9% and 83.9% to 96.8% and 97.2% in the surgical text and the medical recipes. Nevertheless, Romero-Barranco points out that historical linguists who work with earlier texts need to make decisions about problematic issues such as how to deal with archaic words, genitives or compounds, among others. Additionally, he claims that automatic normalisations must be checked and manual amendments would be required.

In the last contribution to this volume, "Annotating factuality in the TAGFACT", Vázquez and Fernández-Montraveta focus on the complexity of applying automatic corpus annotation to do research on factuality and evaluation. The authors describe and give a rationale for the labels used for the annotation scheme of the corpus TAGFACT. The chapter takes into account, discusses and illustrates with numerous examples four aspects: eventual types (dynamic and non-dynamic situations) and the writer's commitment to the certainty of the assertion, polarity and time. Their analysis aims to capture "the degree of commitment of an author regarding the certainty of the facts he or she is narrating". The authors highlight three innovations which result from their approach. First, it helps distinguish dynamic from non-dynamic situations. Second, it allows the identification and annotation of absolute truths. Thirdly, it helps distinguish prototypical from eventual properties. Vázquez and Fernández-Montraveta claim that their system is the only one at present which is based exclusively on linguistic knowledge, for Spanish. Even though this model has been created for the annotation of a Spanish corpus, they claim that it may be applicable to other languages.

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The readers of *Multiperspectives in Analysis and Corpus Design* will find in this volume nine selected peer reviewed and original contributions which deal with key aspects in recent trends in corpus linguistics, such as the developments in corpus design, compilation procedures, and annotation. All the contributions in this book use corpus techniques as a core empirical methodology, either in isolation, or combined with other approaches. Furthermore, in most of the articles, the authors themselves have compiled their own study corpus. Consequently, as it is customary in Corpus Linguistics research, a justification of the compilation procedure (e.g. sampling parameters or representativeness) is part and parcel of the discussion. The research areas to which corpus linguistics has been successfully applied in this volume include historical linguistics, linguistic variation, discourse analysis, computational linguistics and translation.

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editorial

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