

Call for papers

38th International GERAS Conference

16-18 March 2017, University of Lyon (France)

Linguistics Research Center (EA 1663)

Norms, practices and transgression in English for Specific Purposes

Although a norm is traditionally defined as a set of practices designed to standardise an operation mode, it can also be seen as a dynamic process that contributes to the emergence or the disappearance of practices in terms of both time and space.

English for Specific Purposes (ESP) can be considered as a set of particular norms of various (e.g., lexico-grammatical, discursive, cultural) orders which influence practices and give language its “specific configuration” (Gledhill & Kübler 2016: 66). Such a configuration, which stems from the rules that govern each specialised domain, gives them their own identity and provides specialised discourses with features that are often immediately recognisable – whether it be a business sale contract, a scientific paper written in medical English or a company’s annual report. However, a distinction must be drawn between those typical cases in which the norm is transmitted explicitly through handbooks or training sessions and the more ambiguous situations where the norm can only be acquired by immersing oneself into the culture of the specialised communities. Characterising norms, whether they be explicit or implicit, thus requires the use of varied methodologies such as ethnography, genre analysis, corpus linguistics or terminological studies.

The observation of norms sheds light upon specialised discourses as a whole: the underlying values, the control mechanisms, the keepers of the “official expression of knowledge” (Dubois 2016: 26), etc. More specifically, the diachronic study of contexts allows to detect and identify new practices as well as potential transgressive phenomena which might in turn lead to new norms or even to the emergence of new domains.

This conference aims to address all kinds of issues about norms in ESP:

- the epistemological function of norms – serving the finality of the domains and contributing to the definition of the specialised facets of language;
- the role of norms in the transmission of specialised knowledge and know-how;
- the role of norms in the way domains are appropriated by outsiders;
- norms as markers distinguishing the practices that are consistent with the expectations of the specialised communities, regardless of the domain (e.g., law, economics and management, medicine), from those that are not;
- the norms’ evolutionary and transgressive processes within the specialised domains.

All submissions (in English or French) should be sent to guillaume.thomas@univ-lyon3.fr before December 1, 2016. Participants are invited to submit a 300-to-400-word abstract, a title and a short biographical note.

References

Dubois, Michel. 2016. Science as vocation? Discipline, profession and impressionistic sociology. *ASp* 69, 21-39.

Gledhill, Chris & Natalie Kübler. 2016. What can linguistic approaches bring to English for specific purposes? *ASp* 69, 65-96.