

GUIDO, Maria Grazia / ZAPPULLI, Luisa (eds.), *Il Discorso Legale in Contesti Multiculturali*, Franco Angeli Editore, Milano 2007, pp. 139, ISBN 978-88-464-8322-5, € 16,00.

This volume presents the results of a research project in cognitive sociolinguistics carried out at the University of Lecce on the use of English and French as *linguae francae* in multicultural forensic contexts where Italian legal experts and advisors have to deal with migrants and asylum seekers coming from Africa, the Middle East, and South-Eastern areas of Europe and Asia.

Through the analysis of discursive practices such as spoken interactions, interviews, legal translations, forensic transcriptions, rogatory letters, and extradition proceedings, and with a special focus on the processes and practices used by legal experts to make laws and regulations understandable and applicable in contexts which are characterised by ethnical, cultural and linguistic differences, this volume assesses the way the *lingua franca* is exploited in expert-migrant interaction for juridical purposes. The analysis is organized in three parts, each of which approaches legal discourse in multicultural contexts from a different angle.

The first part of the book presents a *top-down* approach. In Chapter 1 ('The Discourse of Legal Advice in Cross-cultural Immigration Contexts'), by applying the parameters of Schema Theory and of ethnomethodology, Maria Grazia Guido discusses how culturally-based *schemata* may bias the participants' interpretative processes in situations of legal advice, often resulting in interlinguistic and intercultural miscommunication. Through a protocol analysis of the transcription of authentic tape-recorded instances of spoken interaction between Italian lawyers and West African illegal immigrants, the author highlights how the cognitive processes and pragmatic strategies adopted by Italian advisors to address their African clients produce communicative difficulties, as the textual and semantic *schemata* at work are not shared by the two cultures.

The second part of the volume (Chapters 2 and 3) offers a *bottom-up* approach to communication in multicultural juridical contexts, focussing on the cognitive and discursive processes (re-textualization, syntactic and lexical simplification, translation) used by the participants to access legal discourse. More specifically, in Chapter 2 ('Textual and Schematic Dimensions of the Legal Discourse on Immigration in an Intercultural Perspective'), Mariarosa Provenzano discusses the editing of Law no. 189/2002 (popularly known as 'Bossi-Fini Law') carried out by a group of EFL students at the University of Lecce with the aim to resolve some problematic instances – in terms of accessibility – found in the original text and arising from the gap existing between the legal competence of the legislator, on the one hand, and of the migrants, on the other. The author investigates the practices of cross-cultural discourse negotiation in the editing process in light of the principles of coherence and cohesion, and the macro-rules for textual simplification (intra-lingual reformulation and inter-lingual translation). The chapter is then completed by an

ethnometodological investigation carried out at CIR (Italian Refugee Council) and at ANOLF (National Association 'Oltre le Frontiere') through encounters with immigrants to find out whether the edited English version of the law could appear more accessible to them, especially in terms of cultural *schemata*.

In Chapter 3 ('Interlinguistic and Intercultural Aspects of the Legal Discourse on Women's Rights'), Antonella Pace focuses on the cognitive and pragmatic problems that may arise in intercultural communication concerning women's rights in Islamic and Italian legal contexts. The main aim of this study is to show how the English language can be effectively used as a *lingua franca* in order to allow non-Italians to understand the Italian legal system, through strategies of simplification and especially of adaptation of the text of some Italian laws concerning the role and rights of women in the family and in the workplace to the *cognitive schemata* of Muslim women.

The third part of the book (Chapters 4 and 5) proposes an interactive perspective on the issue of legal multicultural communication, combining both the *top-down* and the *bottom-up* approaches. In Chapter 4 ('Cross-cultural Insights into Forensic Interpreting'), Julia Boyd investigates the role, the work and the duty of the forensic interpreter, an institutional figure established by the European Convention of Human Rights. Based on a case study concerning the court of Lecce, the author focuses on the miscarriages of justice due to poor or unreliable courtroom interpreting. After comparing the practice of forensic interpretation in Italian courtrooms with the situation in Spain and in the United States (where forensic interpreters have also the role of cultural mediators and negotiators), the author shows how and to what extent the Italian standard could be improved through the introduction of professional qualifications and training programmes in forensic interpreting.

In Chapter 5 ('Locating Albanian Identities within a UK Asylum Context') Karen Latricia Hough, through a case study concerning a group of Albanian asylum seekers who moved to a small city in the UK during the period 1996-2004, examines the effect that their status had on their identity and culture, and on their strategies of community formation. In particular, the chapter discusses how Albanian migrants defined their different status either as individuals or as community members using legal terminology (for instance, distinguishing between people with or without documents or housing benefits), highlighting the extent to which the categories of asylum became an important mode of consciousness in the migrants' interpersonal interaction and in their relationship with the institutional authority.

The three parts of the book are followed by a final chapter by Luisa Zappulli ('Etnometodologia, Etnografia e Ricerca Interculturale') in which the author provides an overview of the ethnographic and ethnometodological approaches to the analysis of multicultural legal contexts, primarily aimed at discussing how juridical knowledge is constructed by the combination, the articulation and the harmonisation of different discourses, and cultural and courtroom practices. More specifically, the author observes how, despite the existence of objective contextual difficulties, the inter-

subjective orientation of the participants and their communicative competence work together to attain and transmit truth.

The present volume represents an original and innovative tool for the study of forensic communication in multicultural contexts, in that it combines both cognitive analysis and ethnographical observation. On the one hand, it offers useful means to examine forensic discourse in a cognitive perspective, both in relation to the social context of its use (often biased by culture and power constraints) and to the specific purposes and expectations of its users. At the same time, it provides ethnographical observations which are aimed at describing and documenting the functioning of professional knowledge and cognitive *schemata* in multicultural forensic communication.

[Michele Sala]

EHLICH, Konrad / HELLER, Dorothee (Hgg.), *Die Wissenschaft und ihre Sprachen*, Peter Lang, Bern 2006 [Linguistic Insights 52], pp. 323, ISBN 978-3-03911-272-2, € 57,40.

L'analisi dei linguaggi della comunicazione accademico-scientifica costituisce il comune ambito di ricerca nel quale si collocano gli studi presentati in questo volume, che raccoglie buona parte degli interventi in lingua tedesca effettuati durante il XV Simposio Europeo sui Linguaggi Specialistici *LSP 2005: New Trends in Specialized Discourse* (Bergamo, 25 agosto-2 settembre 2005), oltre che ulteriori contributi di studiosi parimenti impegnati nell'analisi linguistica del discorso scientifico.

Dopo un'accurata introduzione dei curatori, il volume si apre con un saggio di Konrad Ehlich, che affronta qui il tema del plurilinguismo nell'ambito della comunicazione scientifica. Muovendo da una prospettiva storica, lo studioso mostra come l'enorme sviluppo delle scienze a partire dalla modernità sia strettamente legato all'abbandono del latino quale unica lingua veicolare del sapere, e al conseguente imporsi di una comunicazione scientifica allargata a più lingue. Viene quindi individuato nel plurilinguismo il principio fondante del processo scientifico, la condizione necessaria per il suo sviluppo, nonché la premessa indispensabile per la costituzione di un proficuo confronto dialettico tra società democratiche. In quest'ottica viene scongiurato il pericolo di un ritorno all'egemonia di un'unica lingua per la scienza (il riferimento è questa volta all'inglese come *lingua franca* del discorso scientifico), e vengono prospettate concretamente alcune soluzioni di politica linguistica in ambito europeo per la salvaguardia e la promozione del plurilinguismo.

Il contributo di Cristian Fandrych sposta l'attenzione sulle convenzioni linguistiche in uso nella comunicazione scientifica. Sulla base del concetto di *alltägliche Wissenschaftssprache*, vengono qui prese in esame le "azioni linguistiche" (*Sprechhandlungen*) impiegate per strutturare un testo scientifico, che l'autore poi raggrup-