

theory; instead, many linguists are divided between the first and second theory. Another issue that is receiving great attention is whether AAVE is slowly conforming to or diverging from Standard English. The general view is that, through the influence of mass media, AAVE speakers are following Standard English speech patterns more and more regularly. As regards Chicano English, spoken mostly by descendents of Hispanic immigrants from Mexico, its specificity is mainly related to varying segmental phonemes.

Chapter Ten discusses the language of politics and sections 5.2, 5.3, and 5.4 deal with “Official English” (or rather, the lack of it) and the debate concerning bilingual education between supporters of multilingualism on one hand and English-only advocates on the other. This debate started when a Japanese-American language scholar, Senator S. I. Hayakawa, proposed the “English Language Amendment” (ELA) to make English the official language of the United States. Although English has always been the dominant language in the United States, it is not legally recognized either by the Declaration of Independence or the Constitution. On the other hand, multilingualism is perceived as a potential threat to the American language and culture. Even if the author does not clearly stand up for any of the two sides of the debate, in her last paragraph she underlines the fact that there is no doubt that American English is becoming an international model for an increasing number of non-English speaking countries.

Each chapter begins with an epigraph and a short introduction, and ends with recommended readings and references to websites where additional sources are available. Despite occasional minor typos, this is a useful guidebook on interaction in situations that are typical of the American culture and lifestyle, and gives an interesting account of American English as a whole. The book emphasizes linguistic information necessary to both undergraduates and future teachers at teacher training colleges or courses.

[Mary Puccia]

CORTESE, Giuseppina / RILEY, Philip (eds.), *Domain-specific English – Textual Practices across Communities and Classrooms*, Peter Lang, Bern 2002 [Linguistic Insights – Studies in Language and Communication 2], pp. 420, ISBN 3-906768-98-8, € 59,30.

This book presents state-of-the-art research in English as employed in specific professional contexts. It includes fifteen contributions distributed among four sections and preceded by a rich and finely-worded Introduction in which the editors (both leading figures in the study of Specialized Discourse in English) discuss the rationale and highlight the innovative traits of this collection of texts. Firstly, from the ‘technical’ point of view, the papers do not only originate from individual

investigations, but also owe their depth and breadth to the debate ensuing from their first presentation at the Fifth Conference of the European Society for the Study of English (ESSE), held in Helsinki in August 2000. Secondly, all contributors approach their topics from accurate methodological perspectives, in which the tenets of Critical Discourse Analysis, Corpus Linguistics, and the study of issues in language policy and pedagogy are equally relevant, in order to stress the importance of a new approach to the textual features of specialized discourse, as opposed to a less encompassing study of specialized terminology.

This is a crucial issue, strongly and excellently highlighted in the book. Until recently, and indeed even today, in some scientific communities, specialized discourse has been perceived to be a mere sequence of domain-specific lexis, thus presupposing the possibility of word-by-word translations in different languages and, at the same time, the possibility of learner ‘instruction’ by means of ‘service’ courses without any particular attention paid to broader requirements of language awareness at the level of discourse organization and sociolinguistic implications. In fact, as shown by the studies in this collection, the ways in which encoders address recipients, express evaluation or convey power or solidarity, or negotiate solutions to potential conflict, all constitute important aspects of specialized discourse; this signals the need for sociolinguistically consistent translations and, perhaps even more important, the necessity for learners to understand such pragmatic strategies by means of studies going beyond terminology to focus on textuality, and in which applied linguistics plays a crucial role.

Pedagogic issues are discussed in several papers, one of the most stimulating of which is perhaps the one by Giuseppina Cortese, on innovative, more active and co-operative uses of hypertext and corpus linguistics methodology with undergraduates, and the potential this approach is shown to have for the improvement of language skills and awareness on the part of the learners.

Pedagogic issues, in turn, relate to topical debates in language policy. The growing power of English as a lingua franca in an increasing number of domains, whether economic, political, academic or scientific, is discussed by Christer Lauren in a paper on language ecology, an increasingly relevant topic in today’s debate and which cannot but affect decisions relating to what languages (indeed, what varieties of those languages) should be taught and the important cultural consequences of which cannot be overestimated, as equally shown in Donna Miller’s contribution. Indeed, the cross-cultural perspective emerges quite clearly in many papers, especially those dealing with translation; in addition, also translation between media (such as Paola Giunchi discusses in her paper on web-posted accounts of medical research papers) is shown to be especially relevant for an accurate understanding of the dynamics operating within specialized discourse. Awareness of the cultural implications underlying specialized discourse is then linked to the more or less efficient use of crucial linguistic tools such as dictionaries on the part of non-linguists – a topic accurately investigated in Stefania Nuccorini’s paper.

Similarly, varying presuppositions are discussed in the papers dealing with the complementarity of orality and literacy. While the traditional ‘word-for-word’ approach appears to neglect the crucial subtlety of linguistic usage in spoken language (focussing as it does on written texts), a more modern approach to specialized textuality takes into consideration the relationship existing between participants, which in turn influences pragmatic choices and politeness strategies. This is shown quite clearly in Anna Mauranen’s paper on evaluation in academic discourse, in which the author stresses the greater frequency and importance of positive evaluation in spoken interaction, as opposed to what happens in written texts. Also in specialized discourse, the presence of the interlocutor thus seems to dictate forms of linguistic behaviour not unlike those found in every-day interaction, in which positive politeness is constantly in the foreground. As a result, the study of specialized discourse is closely connected to sociolinguistic investigations of the strategies employed by the discourse community under discussion. Indeed, this is the topic of Philip Riley’s paper, at the very beginning of the collection. The identification of participants as insiders or outsiders enables encoders to decide the extent to which they will be expected / allowed to use highly specific terminology, phrases and indeed ellipsis or redundancy. Such an argument is in line with the paper by Candlin, Bhatia and Jensen, in which cooperation between linguists and practitioners (i.e., the convergence of two discourse communities) is advocated, in order to enhance understanding of the ways in which specialized discourse is constructed and employed. The research to which their paper refers also stresses the importance that such an approach may have for trainee practitioners (in this case in the field of law and business), for the development of linguistic awareness. The old divisions between English for Business, English for Law, Academic English, etc. are thus shown to be quite artificial – it is in fact far more appropriate to represent the use of English in specialized domains as a cline, along which specific traits appear to cluster in relation to the domain in which they are used.

Nor does the collection neglect to focus on the historical development of specialized discourse, whose traits have been shown to follow the actual development of science itself, reflecting changes in thought-styles and in ways of representing reality. This is discussed in Maurizio Gotti’s contribution, on the stages through which English has passed in order to acquire the crucial role it plays today. It would be beyond the scope of these notes to summarize all the papers in this rich collection, which certainly contributes to the vitality of the recently-established series to which it belongs. The wealth and variety of all contributions, their attention to methodological problems, and their contextualization of findings in the discussion of research issues, constitute excellent material for a reflection on current topics in specialized discourse in English and provide stimuli for further research – in this respect, it is to be hoped that the path indicated by Cortese and Riley will also be followed by other scholars investigating other languages, so that further cross-cultural comparisons may become available to the scientific community.

[Marina Dossena]