Editorial

There is a growing interest in the intersection of language use, language teaching and Information and Communication Technology (ICT). The increasing number of papers in relation to this subject recently submitted to AELFE conferences, held in Madrid, Porto, and Granada, or the CILFE Conference held in Vilanova (Barcelona), confirm this wide interest also within the area of LSP. This issue of *Ibérica, Revista de la Asociación Europea de Lenguas para Fines Específicos* (*Ibérica, Journal of the European Association of Languages for Specific Purposes*) collects a set of representative articles focused on this emerging field within language analysis and language teaching. Four of the studies here included come from the First International Conference on Internet and Language, held at Universitat Jaume I de Castelló in 2003. The issue is complemented with two additional papers directly submitted to the journal and related to this topic, a review article on traditional methods in specialised lexicography and several book reviews.

Baron's opening article takes the subject of ICT and language use beyond the scope of language teaching. For her, the relevance of Internet and ICT has implications that may not only affect how foreign languages are taught, but also the way in which we use and learn our own language. Will written culture as we know it remain or will it be challenged and transformed by technology and the new communication media? Will the tools to access literacy change, and, if so, how? Will the notion of authorship be maintained? These are some of the questions to which Baron's work provides keen insight. It has to be noted that to unfold some of her answers, the author first allocates the initial part of her article to define the parameters of written culture and its historical evolution. Baron then compares these parameters with the new paradigm which Internet and ICT are generating.

Alejo's study is an example of LSP discourse analysis research focused on a specific digital genre (i.e. commercial websites). The author uses systematic linguistic insight to describe the peculiarities of metadiscourse in this type of digital texts produced and distributed in the World Wide Web. His conclusions show that (a) traditional linguistic analysis has to incorporate new elements and variables when studying texts in the Internet if research is to produce relevant explanations of the way language is used in this communication medium; and (b) that links have developed a salient metadiscursive role in the Internet which demands further study since these devices have become an essential feature of many digital texts

Soler, Rueda and Arnó's paper focuses on how the Internet may be exploited for language teaching. For this purpose, they have carried out both qualitative and

quantitative research on the subject, describing how students do have a significant interest in combining the net with their language learning process. Complementarily, the authors explore the way in which the Internet and ICT may be applied to enhance foreign language learning autonomy in the context of English for Academic Purposes.

With Yus's linguistic-cognitive approach this issue of *Ibérica* takes a more theoretical perspective on the study of language use in the net. Here the author carefully shows the apparently contradictory tension between an increasingly globalised world thanks to the Internet and ICT where, however, at the same time a more "glocalised" use of the net is growing. Yus finally resorts to an epidemiological model of cultural dissemination to account for virtual communities and comes with what he himself considers may be viewed by others as a too individualistic vision of such groups; he, however, defends his position in the final paragraphs of his paper.

Ancarno's work represents a different line of research, which does not focus on digital texts on their own. Instead she makes use of a mixed corpus of texts where electronic and traditional genres are compared. In this study, she examines the digital genre of emails in relation to their antecedent: personal letters. To narrow the large variation and diversity that could be found in such genres, she focuses on emails and letters in the specific context of academic communication. Ancarno then subdivides her corpus so as to be able to (a) draw differences between the two genres, and (b) detect significant variations between native and non-native speakers of English in these communication situations.

The last paper in this volume, written by Bolaños, Rodríguez, Bolaños and Losada, brings as back to the approach previously undertaken in this issue in Alejo's study. In this case, however, the authors analyse corporate websites from computer companies instead of commercial in general, narrowing the genre to a specific group of companies. As in Alejo's research, the authors here also conclude that in order to properly describe a digital genre the linguist has to resort to complementary variables beyond the traditional linguistic items, thus incorporating the use of images and links in the core of this study, among several other relevant pragmatic features.

These set of articles attest the increasing interest of linguists in general and LSP practitioners in particular in the outstanding status of Internet and ICT in our 21st century society. All these papers provide suggestive ground on which to build further analyses which may help us better understand how language is being used in our new technological world, how foreign languages may be better taught and how language itself is being changed under the pressing force of the Internet and its collateral technological allies.

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