

## CALL FOR PAPERS

44th GERAS International conference (March 2023)  
École normale supérieure Paris-Saclay, France

### **Cultures, shared legacies and collective memories in English for specific purposes** March 23-24-25, 2023

Specialised phenomena in the English language can be associated with cultures, shared legacies and collective memories among certain discourse communities: when we use specialised varieties of English, we indeed show some degree of adherence to specific cultural patterns, to vivid traditions among professional or disciplinary circles, we tend to adopt inherited schemata that frame and govern our linguistic choices. By acquiring the codes and conventions of these specialised varieties of English, either through formal instruction or informal exposure, we venture into cultures that are specific to specialised communities, we embrace common remembrances and traditions, we adopt and extend existing linguistic and behavioural legacies. Through the notion of habitus, French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu (1980: 91) indeed taught us that we are constantly subjected to the influence of a “collective memory, reproducing in successors patterns already established by predecessors.” Thus, the observable traces of cultures, legacies and collective memories in the English language reflect the fact that specialisation is above all a collective phenomenon, which brings together certain human communities assembled to perform specific social tasks, and unites them around converging linguistic choices.

The 44th GERAS international conference will be held at École normale supérieure Paris-Saclay, France, on March 23-24-25, 2023. It will focus on **cultures, shared legacies and collective memories in English for specific purposes**.

Colleagues are invited to submit abstracts (300-600 words) related to the following topics:

#### **1. Specialised domains in the Anglophone world**

How can we characterise the cultures – viewed as complex systems of values, norms and representations (Cuche 2004) – of Anglophone specialised domains? Do these specialised cultures induce specific social or language styles? What are the most appropriate conceptual frameworks for describing these cultural phenomena in English for specific purposes? What are the inner workings of the interplay between language, culture and shared memories in English for specific purposes?

Are English-speaking domains and milieus endowed with “collective memories,” as defined by the great sociologist Maurice Halbwachs in his book *The Social Frameworks of Memory* (1925)? What would be the linguistic manifestations of these memories in specialised texts and discourses? How can we construe these rather insubstantial phenomena as objects for scientific study in English for specific purposes?

Can ethnographic approaches in English for specific purposes (Wozniak 2019) grasp the key tenets and symbolic systems of groups assembled around a common social function, namely their “common ancestry, real or supposed, [their] memories of a shared historical past, [their] cultural focus on one or more symbolic elements defined as the cornerstone of their collective bonds” (Schermerhorn 1970: 12)?

#### **2. Discourse analysis, specialised genres, specialised fictional narratives**

What are the key features of cultural patterns and collective memories in specialised discourses and genres? How do they become manifest in the language, style and rhetorical organisation of specialised texts? How do these texts make use, with various degrees of constraint, of inherited models or stylistic legacies?

Are the concepts of “discursive memory” (Courtine 1981), “interdiscursive memory” (Moirand 1999, 2007) or “prediscursive schemata” (Paveau 2006, 2008) relevant to characterise specialised discourses and genres?

With regard to specialised genres, should we posit with Jean Paul Bronckart (2004: 82) the “pre-existence of textual genres developed by previous generations, organised into a repertoire of generic templates,” echoing the generic schemata mentioned by John Swales in *Genre Analysis* (1990)? In what way do specialised discursive genres reproduce earlier or pre-formulated generic conventions? Do genres ultimately copy pre-established cultural and memory patterns, or can mechanisms of innovation and differentiation be found among them? How can the diachronic study of discourse genres shed light on the discursive reminiscences at work among them?

How do specialised fictional narratives provide access to the cultures, memories and legacies of specialised English-speaking communities? What narrative and symbolic mechanisms do they resort to in order to represent them? In addition to reflecting the linguistic and professional practices of specialised Anglophone circles, do specialised fictional narratives also attempt to stage specialised cultural or inherited patterns?

### **3. ESP teaching and learning**

Beyond speaking, writing or comprehension skills, language teaching is also known to involve key cultural aspects, which underlines the strong links between a given language system and the culture to which it is associated. Is it possible or relevant to assume that cultural dimensions are, or should be, essential aspects in all ESP programmes? What strategies should we adopt for teaching or introducing the cultures of professional or disciplinary circles? Sandrine Chapon (2011) suggested that specialised fictional narratives dealing with legal matters have become part of the cultural landscape of French-speaking students, and that their use as teaching tools can facilitate access to the target culture of English-speaking legal circles. Would it be possible to extend this type of approach, and use it in a more systematic way? Are there specialised professional cultures that could be considered as essential curricular elements in ESP programmes?

Are there, within the LANSOD (LANGuage for Specialists of Other Disciplines) sector in France, as pointed out by Gail Taillefer (2007), particular cultural patterns and specificities associated with inherited practices and established conceptual frameworks? In what way can they be seen as forces for progress, or do they stand in the way of some necessary advances? Are they challenges or opportunities?

What is the place of memory and memorisation in the teaching and learning of specialised varieties of English? Is it possible to investigate their key mechanisms and to characterise them, as Jean-Paul Narcy-Combes (2006) tried to do by describing two modes of memory at work, both in language production and learning tasks?

The didactics of languages and cultures has been influenced, since the beginning of the 20th century, by multiple conceptual and methodological paradigms (direct or audio-oral methods, then, more recently, communicative and co-actional approaches, for example). If we were to delineate specific approaches of teaching and learning in English for specific purposes, a perspective outlined by Cédric Sarré and Shona Whyte (2016), should we continue to adhere to, or perhaps free ourselves from, these dominant paradigms inherited from the past? What can we learn from the legacy of these schools of thought in language teaching? Should we adopt a more critical approach when implementing them in higher education, whether in

France or abroad?

#### **4. Specialised corpora and corpus linguistics**

How can corpus linguistics help to detect and characterise the cultural aspects of specialised corpora? Does the often ineffable and intangible nature of cultures, shared legacies and collective memories in English-speaking specialised communities prevent researchers from using statistical approaches that would allow us to map their presence and their influence? Within corpora, is it possible to delineate the hallmarks of specialised cultures and memories?

#### **5. Translation studies and specialised translation**

In what way does the translation of texts, especially of specialised documents, involve a cultural transfer? Jacqueline Guillemain-Flescher (1994) indicated that translators often have to transfer the “spirit” of a language—a form of “collective style” built around common cultural behaviours—from one national culture to another. Claude Bocquet (2008) also emphasised the importance of cultural parameters in legal translation. Should we take into account cultural aspects and the input of shared collective memories when translating specialised texts?

As tools for the Taylorisation of pragmatic and specialised translation, “translation memories” symbolise the fact that translating often means activating statements that pre-exist in certain human communities in order to describe certain themes, or label specific phenomena. Do the advent of artificial intelligence in translation, and the consequent shift in the professional role of translators (who are increasingly revising machine translations) significantly alter the place of discursive, terminological and phraseological memory in translation?

Does the history of pragmatic and specialised translation reveal particular cultures and traditions among translators? In what way are today's translators the custodians of older methodological and epistemological legacies? Are these legacies an unsurpassable horizon, a stumbling block or valuable assets?

#### **6. History and epistemology of research in English for specific purposes**

As the GERAS community moves towards its 50th anniversary, would it be appropriate to take stock of the memory and legacy of the work of the “French School” of English for specific purposes? Looking back, how do we view the scientific culture that we have accrued together over the years? In what way are we the custodians and heirs of the great voices and figures who have marked our history and built the epistemological frameworks that guide our thinking today?

Please send proposals & abstracts to

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before 16 December 2022

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