

Gianluca Pontrandolfo & Sara Piccioni (2022): *Comunicación especializada y divulgación en la red. Aproximaciones basadas en Corpus*. London & New York: Routledge. ISBN 9780367190767. 220 pages.

The series Routledge Studies in Hispanic and Lusophone Linguistics has just published *Comunicación especializada y divulgación en la red. Aproximaciones basadas en corpus*, a book written in Spanish by two Italian scholars, Gianluca Pontrandolfo, Associate Professor at the University of Trieste and Sara Piccioni, Associate Professor at the University of Chieti-Pescara. The book contains an Introduction, six chapters, Conclusions, and a thematic Index. Each chapter is independently organized and contains its own list of references and DOI identification. This means that the book is designed as a collection of related topics, an idea confirmed by the same authors, who, in the Introduction (pages 2 and 6), claim that the book is based on the concept of "aproximaciones" (approximations), which they define as using different linguistic approaches throughout the book, and that chapters 3, 4, 5 and 6 are case studies that contribute to characterize how specialized knowledge is "popularized", i.e. communicated to (interested) lay audiences.

The Introduction also states that the six chapters deal with specialized domains and are based on corpus data for analyzing the state of art of specialized communication in Spanish, especially those mostly or totally connected with digital communication that have been created for disseminating scientific knowledge, i.e., for popularizing it. The data are extracted from WebLesp, an "ad-hoc" corpus of digital communication in Spanish that contains several sub-corpora of "specialized digital genres" covering (a) environment, (b) law, (c) economics, and (d) medicine. The authors use a very broad definition of "specialized digital genres" ("cualquier texto caracterizado por rasgos lingüísticos y discursivos recurrentes cuyo soporte o medio es la red." page 2)¹. It seems that the authors should not have used "specialized" but "popularized" (see Chapter 1), as they refer mostly to communication with interested lay people. This makes me think that the title of the book may be a bit confusing as it is not properly dealing with specialized communication, i.e., communication among experts, but with semi-specialized communication, i.e., texts for scientific dissemination or popularization.

In chapter one "Divulgación y géneros digitales" (Popularization and Digital Genres), the authors initially quote Myers' (2003: 265) definition of popularization. It "includes only texts about science that are not addressed to other specialist scientists, with the assumption that the texts that are addressed to other specialists are something else, something much better: scientific discourse." They, however, claim that this idea is too simplistic, and that popularization must be understood as recontextualization, i.e., a kind of translated text which is influenced by several textual, social, situational, and cognitive features, e.g., by identity factors, metadiscourse, and so on. This leads them to present the concept of "popularization" in terms of a dissemination continuum that manifests itself in a variety of genres, registers, and repertoires. Some of them are discussed in the second part of chapter 1, devoted to the analysis of digital genres, especially to the changes observed due to the widespread use of popularizing scientific knowledge. The chapter ends up with an enumeration of the main characteristics of the "géneros digitales divulgativos" (popularized digital genres), which are much influenced by "function", an idea that merits my total recognition.

In Chapter 2 "Diseño, estructura y usos del corpus de comunicación digital especializada WebLesp" (Design, structure, and usages of WebLesp, an ad-hoc corpus of specialized digital communication), the authors describe the methodology of their investigation. After a brief summary of the concept of corpus as a methodology, they present WebLesp. They describe its design and

¹ My translation is: any text characterized by recurrent linguistic and discursive features published on the web.

structure. It is subdivided into eight subcorpora, four of popularized texts dealing with environment (859,506 tokens), law (759, 598 tokens), economics (752,781 tokens) and medicine (908,853 tokens), and four of specialized texts dealing with environment (657,752 tokens), law (761,528 tokens), economics (852,509 tokens) and medicine (925,460 tokens). The distinction between "popularized" and "specialized" is straightforward. The former are written texts extracted from blogs, popular reports, and newspapers and the like, whereas the latter are also written texts taken for scientific journals, reports, and PhD dissertations. From a corpus linguistic point of view, WebLesp is a written, specialized, synchronic, monolingual, comparable and morphologically annotated corpus. There are tables of word lists, keywords, concordances, collocations, and semantic annotations, e.g., semantic prosodies and preferences, distributed between "popular" or "specialized" subcorpora. This distinction is really relevant and adequate, as the authors claim, for exploring the relationship between "popularization" and "specialized communication", the object of analyses of chapters 3, 4, 5 and 6.

In chapter 3 "Divulgación médica: la metáfora en el discurso sobre cáncer de mama" (The popularization of medical discourse: the role of metaphor in descriptions and information on breast cancer), the authors rest on Lakoff and Johnson's conceptual metaphor (1980) and highlight its relevant role in conceptualizing and explaining many scientific thoughts and actions. Their corpus analysis indicates that metaphors are common in medical discourse, especially useful for explaining particular diseases and their connections with our day-to-day life. The authors claim that metaphors play a role in emphasizing the importance of understanding illness and learn to live with it and illustrate such view with conceptual metaphors that refer to "breast cancer" as WAR, JOURNEY, ANIMAL, etc. that can be "conquered" by using adequate medical treatment (they are WEAPONS, CLOTHES, etc.). The analysis of the different conceptual metaphors and their linguistic realizations are well explained, and the conclusions drawn from WebLesp are that both conceptual and linguistic metaphors are more frequent and varied in popular discourse than in specialized one, that they are adapted to the assumed knowledge of the end users of texts, and that they are widespread and "essential" for popularizing the concept and its implications for humans.

In chapter 4 "Voces discursivas en la divulgación jurídica: entre reformulación y polifonía" (the popularization of legal discourse: between reformulation and polyphony), the authors analyze quantitatively and qualitatively two discourse resources: reformulation markers and reporting verbs. The analysis of such features (e.g. reformulation markers such as "o sea" (i.e.), "es decir" (that is to say), "en otras palabras" (in other words), and so on, and reporting verbs contribute to justifying the idea of a "dissemination continuum" as these linguistic mechanisms are used for giving the same idea under several linguistic manifestations, i.e. for creating a polyphony, whose main manifestations are "direct quotes", "indirect quotes", "integrated quotes" and "inserted quotes".

In chapter 5 "Tendencias discursivas en la divulgación macroeconómica" (Discourse trends in the popularization of macroeconomics), the authors follow a corpus-driven approach and interrogate POS tags of query markers, quoting mechanisms, clitic and personal pronouns and adversative conjunctions. The results indicate that authors are more interested in informing and communicating than in "convincing". In particular, authors are interested in eliminating "fake news" and different types of manipulation, e.g., the idea that the 2008 economic crisis was due to the introduction of the euro.

In chapter 6 "Divulgación y ciencias ambientales: encuadres dominantes en el discurso sobre el cambio climático" (the popularization of environmental discourse: a frame analysis of climate change), the authors combine frame analysis, keyword analysis, and collocations in order to find out the distribution of several semantic categories. The results indicate that the popularization of environmental discourse is a kind of social activism as authors are not only interested in informing but also on emphasizing actions for fighting climate change. They, then, address the reader and demand their actions.

The chapter on conclusions summarises the main findings already commented, highlights the use of corpora for performing case studies (chapters 3, 4, 5 and 6 are examples of case studies), and enumerates topics for future research. In general, I find the book very interesting and agree with the authors on the following:

- Popularization is a kind of recontextualization that depends on social factors, especially on author and reader's identity, degree of knowledge, and channel of communication.
- The author of popularized texts must also take into consideration the function(s) he or she envisages for his or her text. Some authors only inform whereas some others invigorate social movements.
- Popularization is better understood as a continuum.
- As a methodology, corpora offer many more possibilities than as a theory of language.

References.

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