JCaDS

PRESENTING THE SPECIAL ISSUE OF JCADS IN HONOUR OF ALAN PARTINGTON

ANNA MARCHI
UNIVERSITY OF BOLOGNA

CONTACT

Anna Marchi, Department of Interpreting and Translation, University of Bologna, Corso della Repubblica 136, Forlì, Italy. anna.marchi@unibo.it

ORCID

https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1284-6356

Presenting the Special Issue of JCaDs in Honour of Alan Partington

Anna Marchi

University of Bologna; Editor-in-Chief, JCaDS

This special issue was conceived as a tribute to the work and talent of Alan Partington, who founded the Journal of Corpora and Discourse Studies (*JCaDs*) and edited it for five years. It would be impossible to overstate the contribution Alan made to the field of corpus-assisted discourse studies (CADS) and linguistics at large. While nobody can claim to have invented CADS, as the approach blossomed in the zeitgeist of the late 1990s and early 2000s, with leading publications by Michael Stubbs (1996), Gerlinde Mautner (Hardt-Mautner, 1995) and Alan's own (Partington, 1998), it was Alan who coined the name in his famous 'Corpora and discourse: A most congruous beast' (Partington, 2004). Here he describes the combination of corpus linguistics and discourse analysis, what became later known as the 'synergy' view (Baker et al., 2008), using a mating metaphor and the mythological hippogriff, inspired by The *Frenzy of Orlando* and Ludovico Ariosto, illustrious citizen of Alan's adoptive hometown of Ferrara (Italy).

> Of all the magic and marvels in Ariosto, the hippogriff seems at first sight the most illusory and fantastic, but turns out in the end to be the most real. And the most useful. Astolfo flies him to the Earthly Paradise to break the curse and recapture Orlando's lost reason. Although, as mere academics, we might not aim so high, we too hope this volume will help break the spell that keeps so far apart the methodologies of various schools of linguistics. "The mare (of discourse) shall now lie down with the griffin (of Corpus Linguistics)", and the fruit of their union shall be Corpus-Assisted Discourse Studies (CADS). (Partington, 2004, p. 17)

This piece of writing originated from the very first edition of the Corpora & Discourse Conference, organised by Alan on the hilltop town of Camerino (Italy), back in 2002, when I first met him. Around the same time the SiBol group was founded, SiBol being a portmanteau of Siena and Bologna, the two universities where the founders of the group – John Morley, Alison Duguid, Charlotte Taylor and myself (then at the University of Siena) and Alan Partington and Caroline Clark (University of Bologna) – were employed. The SiBol group (or the Sybols) advanced the area of diachronic corpus-assisted discourse analysis (MD-CADS; Partington, 2010) and over the years produced the largely used (now 850 million words) SiBol corpus of English language newspapers. Most importantly the SiBol group sparked 20 odd years of collaborations and discussions among its members. For this reason, I would like to open this special issue with a special

mention of two colleagues and friends of a lifetime: Charlotte Taylor and Alison Duguid, without whose help and support this collection would have never been possible, and without whom my professional life, and I am sure Alan's, could have never been the same.

As editor-in-chief of *JCaDS,* I would also like to thank the outstanding scholars who contributed to this volume. I am honoured to host in our journal the work of colleagues both Alan and I much admire, and I am grateful for their enthusiastic participation in this project. Originally we were planning 13 contributions—it was not superstition that stopped us—unfortunately and with much regret Alison Duguid was unable to complete her piece because of health issues. The 12 papers collected here reflect the multiple interests and proliferous publications of Alan's career, and can ideally be divided into four broad categories:

The first category is concerned with epistemological reflection. Vessey discusses the challenges and opportunities of using and reshaping CADS through the kaleidoscope of multiple languages and presenting the value added by such an approach in uncovering 'non-obvious meaning' (Partington, 2017b, p. 339). Flowerdew's article also addresses epistemological matters by bringing to centre stage the issue of register in the investigation of discourse and by fostering what CADS has to offer to genre analysis. Bednarek takes a sweeping methodological perspective, looking into the (underused) potential of CADS to investigate intratextual patterns, and reviewing the tools and techniques that allow for the analysis of text structure.

The second strand of contributions focuses on a core theme in Alan's production: 'evaluative prosody' (Morley & Partington, 2009). Starting with Susan Hunston's piece 'Coming to terms with success' (indeed a very clever title for a Festschrift), where she explores semantic prosody, evaluation and what Alan would call 'evaluative cohesion' (Partington, 2017a) in the use of the expression COME to *terms.* Polizzi, Bernardini and Ferraresi survey the 'evaluative gap' between near-synonyms in German and English, mining corpora to glean the complexity of linguistic (and translational) choices.

Then we have a rich set of studies meeting the social and political inclination of CADS research: investigating representations. Brookes and Curry, echoing Alan's work on antisemitism (Partington, 2012), use the SiBol corpus to analyse stability and change in discourses surrounding Islamophobia over time. Fitzgerald's diachronic study of how the International Baccalaureate has been portrayed in the English language press, guides us through five decades of patterns, meanings and surprises, showing how the narrative of education is manipulated. Bevitori and Johnson tackle the challenge of identifying 'absence' (Duguid & Partington, 2018) in the discursive representations of human mobility in the context of the climate crisis. Finally, Del Fante propels us in a meta-analysis, looking at the representations of representations in corpus-assisted research of news media.

The last three papers in this special issue fit into the pragmatics strand of Alan's opus: laughter (Partington, 2006) and politeness (Partington, 2003). Eugenia Diegoli, who is currently working with Alan on testing Michael Hoey's theories of lexical priming (2005) on Japanese, applies corpus-assisted methods to the examination of laughter-text (i.e., written laughter) in a Japanese web forum. Pace-Sigge's article brings together two case-studies on the absence or presence of laughter and gesture in spoken discourse. Finally, Friginal looks at interactions in the contexts of call centers and aviation and addresses culture-specific differences in the use of markers of politeness.

I hope readers, and especially Alan, will enjoy the creativity and variety of this cornucopia of excellent contributions.

We often hear, and say, that editing and copyediting are thankless jobs, and indeed they are. For this reason, I will not miss the chance to offer my unending gratitude to the wonderful *JCaDs*' team, that has dedicated over a year to the preparation of this special issue. In particular I would like to thank Charlotte Taylor, my consistent collocate and co-editor, and the colleagues who copyedited with care and expertise the research presented here: Saira Fitzgerald, Eugenia Diegoli, Dario del Fante, Alon Lischinsky, Mark McGlashan, Frazer Heritage, and Stefania Consonni. It has been, and always is, a pleasure and a privilege working with you, and your commitment testifies to the recognition and respect we all have for Alan's work. As testimony of appreciation are the original pieces of research in this special issue in honour of Alan Partington.

So, rather than making the introduction a pompous celebration of Alan's outstanding production, international prestige and influential ideas, which would most likely embarrass the lad from Manchester (readers can meet him in the video interview realized for this issue by Ramesh Krishnamurthy), I would ultimately like to use this space to acknowledge the collective effort and generosity of the many people involved in this journey. One's legacy, after all, is measured by one's ability to inspire others and by the time and attention they gift in return. And Alan will no doubt appreciate this, having himself always been generous to colleagues, students, and friends with his time and guidance.

Speaking of journeys, perhaps the greatest insight that Alan gave us is that the nature and virtue of CADS is its ability to surprise us and bring us unforeseen and non-obvious discoveries throughout our 'serendipitous journeys' (Partington, 2009, p. 286). With this collection we salute and honour Alan and wish him plenty more serendipitous encounters along the way of his industrious picaresque research.

References

Baker, P., Gabrielatos, C., KhosraviNik, M., Krzyżanowski, M., McEnery, T., & Wodak, R. (2008). A useful methodological synergy? Combining critical discourse analysis

and corpus linguistics to examine discourses of refugees and asylum seekers in the UK press. *Discourse & Society*, 19(3), 273–305. https://doi.org/10.1177/0957926508088962

Duguid, A., & Partington, A. (2018). Absence: You don't know what you're missing. Or do you? In C. Taylor, & A. Marchi (Eds.), *Corpus approaches to discourse: A critical review* (pp. 38–59). London: Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315179346-3

Hardt-Mautner, G. (1995). 'Only connect': Critical discourse analysis and corpus linguistics. UCREL Technical Paper 6, Lancaster University. Retrieved from https://ucrel.lancs.ac.uk/papers/techpaper/vol6.pdf

Hoey, M. (2005). *Lexical priming: A new theory of words and language*. London: Routledge.

Morley, J., & Partington, A. (2009). A few frequently asked questions about semantic—or evaluative—prosody. *International Journal of Corpus Linguistics*, 14(2), 139–158. https://doi.org/10.1075/ijcl.14.2.01mor

Partington, A. (1998). *Patterns and meanings: Using corpora for English language research and teaching*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins. https://doi.org/10.1075/scl.2

Partington, A. (2003). *The linguistics of political argument: The spin-doctor and the wolf-pack at the White House*. London: Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203218259

Partington, A. (2004). Corpora and discourse: A most congruous beast. In A. Partington, J. Morley, & L. Haarman (Eds.), *Corpora and discourse*, (pp. 11–20). Bern: Peter Lang.

Partington, A. (2006). *The linguistics of laughter: A corpus-assisted study of laughter-talk*. London: Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203966570

Partington, A. (2009). Evaluating evaluation and some concluding thoughts on CADS. In J. Morley, & P. Bayley (Eds.), *Corpus-assisted discourse studies on the Iraq conflict: Wording the war* (pp. 261–303). London: Routledge.

Partington, A. (2010). Modern Diachronic Corpus-Assisted Discourse Studies (MD-CADS) on UK newspapers: an overview of the project. *Corpora* 5(3), 83-108.

Partington, A. (2012). The changing discourses on antisemitism in the UK press from 1993 to 2009: A modern-diachronic corpus-assisted discourse study. *Journal of Language and Politics*, 11(1), 51–76. https://doi.org/10.1075/jlp.11.1.03par

Partington, A. (2017a). Evaluative clash, evaluative cohesion and how we actually read evaluation in texts. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 117, 190–203. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pragma.2017.06.008

Partington, A. (2017b). Varieties of non-obvious meaning in CL and CADS: From 'hindsight post-dictability' to sweet serendipity. *Corpora*, 12(3), 339–367. https://doi.org/10.3366/cor.2017.0124

Stubbs, M. (1996). *Text and corpus analysis: Computer-assisted studies of language and culture.* Oxford: Blackwell.