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TABULA GRATULATORIA IN HONOUR OF ALAN PARTINGTON

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Tabula gratulatoria

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It is an honour for me to introduce the ‘table of congratulations’ (sic.) in this special issue in honour of Alan Partington.

Alan Partington is a highly esteemed researcher in corpus assisted discourse studies with an impressive record of accomplishments to his name. Readers of the *Journal of Corpora and Discourse Studies* will be aware of his significant contributions to the academic community through his research. In this issue, colleagues, former pupils, and friends present Alan a series of contributions which will surely delight him.

What especially emerges from Alan’s widely quoted publications is his fervent interest in matters pertaining to the public sphere. His work on argument and persuasion takes us from meticulous examinations of public discourse on the Middle East to that of the White House, from the language of antisemitism to how spin-doctors set about persuading voters.

Alan’s research which is closest to my heart concerns his work on the language of laughter and humour. Alan has published substantially on wordplay, where he has even dared to venture into the highly complex field of irony. And Alan is especially in his element when he combines his work on humour with one of his favourite talking points which is politics. It comes as no surprise to those who know him well that he should publish a book entitled *The linguistics of laughter: Laughter-talk at the White House*. And politics comes up in *The linguistics of political argument: The spin-doctor and the wolf-pack at the White House*.

Beyond his celebrated work in and around the company that words keep and the way they behave, especially in politicised contexts, I think we should also acclaim the lesser-known sides of Alan. Alan the father, uncle, and grandad; Alan the consumer of loose-leaf tea and baked beans, Alan the connoisseur of BBC sitcoms, Alan the punster.

More importantly for some of us, Alan will always be the debonair lad from Up North who was part of the special in-group of ‘lettori’ in Italy, a handful of young linguists who fought tooth and nail for their recognition as fully-fledged academics.

So, here's to you, Alan, a source of inspiration for all those who are passionate about words. May your scholarly journey continue to grow and may your influence in the field endure for years to come.

- Adele D'Arcangelo (University of Bologna)
- Adriano Ferraresi (University of Bologna)
- Alison Duguid (ex University of Siena)
- Anna Islentyeva (University of Innsbruck)
- Anna Marchi (University of Bologna)
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