

ESSE 10

University of Turin
24-28 August 2010

LECTURERS NOMINATED BY NATIONAL ORGANISATIONS

L.01 Isabel Carrera Suárez

Catedrática de Filología Inglesa. Universidad de Oviedo, ES

“Bodies, Cities, Histories: Transnational Urban Imaginaries and the Postcolonial Metropolis”

The final decades of the 20th century and the first of the new millennium have seen an unprecedented interest in the representation of the urban, both in theoretical and creative terms. Until the intervention of Modernism, literatures in English tended to favour the rural imaginary, and even recent literary analyses of the urban –with notable exceptions– focused almost exclusively on Modernist tropes such as the *flâneur*. During the past century, Canada and Australia constructed a national canon whose symbolic power was heavily based on unique ‘national’ landscapes. The transitional decades, however, brought not only a literary correlative for massive global urbanization and migration, but also a radical change in self-definition and self-perception of postcolonial nations and cities. Not only the colonial metropolis, London, but also formerly Anglo-oriented (‘Anglo-Celtic’) cities such as Toronto and Sydney, now gateways for entry into their respective countries, re-imagined themselves as primarily multicultural centres. The literatures of these new metropolises have consolidated a varied production of texts from well-established communities, but only recently have they crossed group borders to represent transcultural interaction, and the movement of both genders within urban space. These texts, constitutive representations of the transnational –and gendered– global city, will be the nucleus of my analysis.

Taking into account recent urban theory and its intersections with theories of representation and literary studies, my talk will focus on a selected number of works by women writing from Sydney, Toronto and London, which also singularize new migration routes/roots, modifying traditional postcolonial charts. Among the defining traits of these narratives of a gendered, transcultural metropolis is a distinctively embodied, (micro-)historicised relation to cities, together with a mapping of alternative spaces and genres. Canadian authors discussed will include Dionne Brand (*What We All Long For; Thirst*), Janice Kulyk Keefer (*The Green Library*), Hsu Ming Theo (*Behind the Moon; Love and Vertigo*), Simone Lazaroo (*The Australian Fiancé*), with comparative references to works by British authors Jackie Kay, Monica Ali, Zadie Smith and Diana Evans.

L.02 Angela Downing

Professor Emérita, Universidad Complutense de Madrid, ES

“The English Pragmatic Marker *surely* as a Positioning Strategy in Discourse”

There has been considerable interest in recent years in the functions of discourse-pragmatic markers, inter-subjectivity and positioning in discourse. My lecture will reflect my own corpus-based studies in this area with regard to the marker *surely* in present-day British English, as it occurs in various clause positions. In its most common use *surely* indexes the speaker’s attitude towards the idea s/he is expressing at a certain point in the discourse. Specifically, *surely* is triggered when, despite the assumption of common ground, lack of convergence between speaker and addressee is perceived as occurring or imminent. In self-validation, the *surely*-user positions him/herself vis-a-vis the interlocutor with regard to the value content of the utterance. (Downing 2001, Downing 2006, Downing forthcoming). This inter-subjective positioning is manifested in different speaker stances which are usually responded to by the interlocutor. Illustrations of the stances adopted and the interlocutors’ reactions to them are taken from the British National Corpus and analysed in relation to contextual factors determining the choice of stance.

References

- Downing, A. 2001. “*Surely you knew!*” *Surely* as a marker of evidentiality and stance. *Functions of Language* 8:2 (2001), 253-285. Benjamins.
Downing, Angela 2006 The English pragmatic marker *surely* and its functional counterparts in Spanish. In Aijmer, Karin and Anne-Marie Simon-Vandenberg (eds.) *Pragmatic Markers in Contrast*. Oxford: Elsevier, 39-58.

L.03 Maria Kostadinova Georgieva

Associate Professor in English and Applied Linguistics, Sofia University “St Kliment Ohridski”, BG

“Competing Discourses in the Context of Globalization: Mainstream vs. Youth Communicative Behaviour”

The globalization of world economy has affected deeply the paradigm of social practices in local contexts creating hitherto unknown tensions between mainstream and newly emerging global discourses. These tensions find diverse manifestation in societies crosscut by numerous internal divisions of which the intergenerational shift in attitudes seems especially prominent. In most smaller European countries today one can identify an arguably monolingual majority of people striving to maintain the purity and symbolic value of the local language as a stronghold of people’s history and cultural tradition challenged by groups, in their large part, of young, multilingual, geographically and upwardly mobile individuals, who aspire to a more active participation in global processes and construct their behaviour and identities in opposition to dominant culture.

In this paper I examine the relationship and potential conflicts between discourses pertaining to mainstream and youth culture in an attempt to uncover some general tendencies of social change reflected in communication. My contention is that language policies based on normative and prescriptive values could not adequately account for the newly emerging ways of speaking that tend to challenge the concept of monolingual matrix and defy pigeonholing identities in linguistically-based categories. What is needed is to reconsider language policies and ideologies and attribute a more important role to human agency as a key instrument for shaping communicative behaviour and identity in a context of continually growing linguistic and cultural diversity.

Key words: globalization, English as an international language, code switching and code-mixing, language policy, multilingualism

L.04 Jacqueline Hurlley

Universitat de Barcelona, ES

“Pushing the Envelope: the Politics of Biography”

In her *Reflections on Biography* (1999), Paula R. Backscheider speaks of biographies that ‘push the envelope’. The term expresses the idea of attempting to extend the current limits of performance, of going beyond established boundaries. Starting off with Woolf’s considerations on biographical practice as expressed in *Orlando*, the lecture will ponder the question of “[plodding]” in producing a biography and what taking the liberty of looking “left [and] right”, beyond “the indelible footprints of truth” (Woolf 1998: 40) can yield in analysing representation, the received knowledge, as regards a university professor, Walter Fitzwilliam Starkie, who was also a critic, journalist and broadcaster as well as a Director of the Abbey Theatre in Dublin, a traveller in Hungary, Roumania, France, Italy and Spain, amongst other destinations, a popular travel writer and the first Representative of the British Council in Spain. The lecture will develop with reference to Backscheider’s claim: “Biography is not a neutral art; in fact, of all the major literary genres it is probably the most political – the one most likely to influence how a nation and its history are defined and to be forced into serving the dominant point of view.” (Backscheider 1999: 216)

References

Backscheider, Paula R. 1999. *Reflections on Biography*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Woolf, Virginia. 1998. *Orlando*. Edited by J.H. Stape. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Ltd.

L.05 Geert Jacobs

Associate Professor, Ghent University, BE

“Beyond News Text and Talk”

In this lecture I hope to present a state-of-the-art survey of the emerging linguistic field of news production research. I will first deal with the rationale underlying the rapid growth of this new field by tracing its origins in a long-standing tradition of media discourse scholarship and a general sense of dissatisfaction with some of its tenets. Next, I will present some of the methodological innovations on which the linguistics of news production is founded and I will illustrate them by referring to wide-ranging recent research in a number of different European countries. Finally, I will indicate some of the challenges that the field will be facing as well as repercussions that it may have both on related fields like literary and cultural studies and on teaching practices at large.

L.06 Barbara Korte

Englisches seminar, Universität Freiburg, DE

“Poverty in Contemporary British Literature”

Political and media discourses of the 21st century identify poverty as a problem with new urgency in the so-called First World, and Poverty Studies are proliferating in the social sciences. 2010 will be the ‘European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion’. ESSE 10 thus seems an ideal forum for addressing the role of literature in negotiating social inequality in contemporary Western societies. This role has been underresearched so far, despite an increasing number of relevant texts. This lecture will ask how poverty is represented in the *British* literary field; Which aspects are addressed here, and in which aesthetic(s)? Do writers reiterate patterns inherited from traditions (of the 19th century and 1930s specifically), or have they found new modes of artistic expression that have a capacity to explode stereotypes? The lecture will also invite a discussion as to the role that literary studies can/should play in Poverty Studies.

L.07 Zoltán Kövecses

Professor of Linguistics, Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest, HU

“Metaphorical Creativity”

On the “standard” view of conceptual metaphors (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980; Kövecses, 2002), metaphorical creativity arises from the cognitive processes of extending, elaboration, questioning, and combining conceptual content in the source domain (Lakoff and Turner, 1989). I will propose that such cases constitute only a part of metaphorical creativity. An equally important and common set of cases is comprised by what I call “context-induced” metaphors in English. Such metaphors have not been systematically investigated so far in conceptual metaphor theory. In addition, I will attempt to characterize aspects of metaphorical creativity in English poetic texts by making use of context-induced metaphors.

L.08 Pierre Lurbe

Professor, Université de Montpellier III, FR

“The Issue of Canonicity and Authority in Early Eighteenth Century England”

A major component of the so-called Deist controversy in early 18th Century England was the debate over the authenticity and authority of the scriptural canon. From *Amyntor* (1699), in which he questioned the canon of the New Testament, to *Origines Judaicae* (1709), in which he cast doubt on the validity of the Pentateuch, the Irish pamphleteer John Toland (1670-1722) played a major role in this onslaught against the authority of Scripture. Toland was launching a three-pronged attack, not only against the canon itself, but also at the same time against Church and State. For the Church of England, which as a Protestant Church premised its own authority on that of the Bible, this attack was tantamount to undermining its very foundations. Furthermore, in a country in which Church and polity had been at one since the Henrician Reformation, subverting the authority of the Church was tantamount to subverting that of the state. A vigorous and protracted controversy ensued, with a number of divines weighing in to rebut Toland's charges (from John Richardson's *The Canon of the New Testament Vindicated*, 1701 to Jeremiah Jones's *A New and Full Method of Settling the Canonical Authority of the New Testament*, 1726-1727). Outdated as it may seem, this debate is of more than academic or antiquarian interest: it was one of the early occasions when the pattern of mutual reinforcement between canonicity and authority was systematically explored.

L.09 Carla Marengo Vaglio

Professor of English, Università di Torino, IT

“‘Charting the immarginable’: Exploration and Cartography in Joyce’s Work”

“His father once said that if he were dropped in the middle of the Sahara he would sit down and make a map of it”.

Integrating legend and myth, history and geography Joyce’s tridimensional ‘mappa-mundi’ succeeds in including and weaving into itself the fantastic and the marvellous, as well as the history of exploration and of cartography.

L.10 Anna Mauranen

Professor of English, University of Helsinki, FI

“What’s Going on in English? Developments in a global Lingua Franca”

English has established itself beyond doubt as the global *lingua franca*. As our thoroughly internationalised world uses English for all key domains of communication, the question arises what effects this might have on the language itself. Do we have to re-think our notions of speech communities? Is it necessary to redraw the boundaries of English? What is happening to norms and standards?

These questions are addressed in this talk in the light of two kinds of evidence: corpus data and discourse analysis. Typical features in English as a lingua franca (ELF) grammar, lexis and phraseology are explored in a large database of a million words of academic talk (the ELFA corpus). Some developments parallel those found in standard and non-standard varieties of English, while others appear specific to ELF. To understand how speakers manage to communicate effectively in environments where a broad range of non-standard forms and cultural backgrounds come together, salient communicative practices in ELF discourse are also examined. ELF communities of practice differ in many respects from traditional speech communities, but like any communities, they regulate their speech norms to achieve communication and to avoid misunderstanding. While some rules of correctness of Standard English are dispensed with, fundamental aspects of discourse get acted out with creative employment of shared language resources.

L.11 Frank Schulze-Engler

Goethe University, Frankfurt, DE

“Postcolonialism and After:

English-Language Literatures and the Comparative Study of Modernity”

In recent years, an intensive debate on the need to extend comparative literary studies beyond traditional horizons of European texts has given rise to new models of „world literature“ that explicitly encompass non-Western literatures. At the same time, English Studies in Europe and elsewhere are grappling with the transition from an older bipolar understanding of “English and American Studies” towards a multipolar practice of exploring the realities of English as a world-wide communicative and literary medium.

For more than two decades, postcolonialism has provided major theoretical resources for coming to terms with this transition, but the continuing emphasis on anticolonialism and – more recently – the attempt to redefine the postcolonial in terms of a resistance to global capitalism have arguably eroded the productivity of postcolonialism for English literary and cultural studies. The lecture will take a critical look at recent “Third Worldist” reformulations of postcolonialism as well as models of “world literature” produced in comparative studies and will then discuss the potential of a comparative cross-cultural study of English-language literatures to contribute towards an understanding of literature in a world of multiple modernities.

L.12 Nóra Séllei

Associate Professor of British Studies, University of Debrecen, HU

“English Cultural (Gender) Studies and the Communication of (Academic) Cultures – A Central-Eastern European Perspective”

For scholars doing English Cultural Studies based at institutes in a non-English-speaking country, a crucial concern is how we position ourselves at the intersection of two academic worlds: the international community of English Studies and the national academic community of our home countries. The problem is that the mainstream theoretical approaches, priorities and agendas of these two academic communities may not coincide, or may not even be reconcilable, particularly in countries of the ex-Eastern bloc. In my proposed talk I will analyse this situation from three different perspectives: firstly, using Bourdieu’s terms of sociology of culture, I will investigate the chances of academic institutionalisation in the case of English Cultural Studies; secondly, I will explore how a gender-conscious approach can make its way into the theoretical canon in countries where the impact of second-wave feminism cannot be taken for granted; and thirdly, in a case study in cultural semiotics I will discuss how the meaning of a genre: chick lit – a popular cultural product with evident gender markers – is transformed when translated into another (in this instance, into Hungarian) culture. With this threefold approach I hope to shed light on the complexity of the academic cultural discourse which may be counterproductive to institutionalisation.