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Professional Discourse across Medicine, Law, and Other Disciplines:
Issues and Perspectives
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The intricate tapestry of English for Specific Purposes (ESP), as it unfolds across diverse domains such as medicine, law, and beyond, serves as a mirror to our complex and interconnected world. In an era marked by rapid advancements in technology, shifting sociocultural landscapes, and evolving communication platforms, the study of professional discourse has never been more relevant or essential. Professional discourse wields a profound impact upon our lives, transcending boundaries and shaping our understanding of crucial aspects of society. ESP is the lifeblood of knowledge dissemination, decision-making, and problem-solving within specialised fields. It dictates how medical professionals communicate their diagnoses, how legal experts construct their arguments, and how experts across various disciplines convey their insights. It underpins our ability to navigate complex terrain and make informed choices, often with far-reaching consequences. Yet, the intricacies of professional discourse are far from static. They evolve in response to technological advancements, cultural shifts, and societal demands. In this dynamic landscape, scholars and practitioners alike must continuously explore, analyse, and adapt to the evolving nuances of professional communication. Professional uses of language have evolved significantly over time and become a hub for interdisciplinary research. Discourse analysis plays a central role in this evolution by offering a framework for understanding language in various social domains, especially within the practices of professionals. It facilitates the integration of expertise and intellectual tools across disciplinary boundaries for the comprehensive analysis of professional discourse. In this context, any discourse analytical approach that is relevant to researchers and impacts professional practices through interdisciplinary collaboration should be acknowledged and described.

This book embarks on precisely that journey, delving into the multifaceted dimensions of professional discourse within the domains of medicine, law, and beyond. It emerged from of the 6th International Conference Cutting Through Medicine, Law and Other Disciplines – Interdisciplinary Challenges and Opportunities (20-21-22 May 2021), organised by the Centre for Research in Language and Law (CRILL) of the University of Campania 'Luigi Vanvitelli', which included authoritative voices across ESP research, including Professors Richard Ashcroft (UK), Vijay K. Bhatia (Hong Kong, Greece), Ruth Breeze (Spain), Giuliana E. Garzone (Italy), Rick Iedema (UK), Srikant K. Sarangi (Denmark), and Robin Walker (Spain).

The book comprises seventeen chapters, each serving as descriptive and interpretive explorations into a diverse array of topics within the realm of disciplinary and professional domains and discourses. These domains encompass applied linguistics, law, medicine, healthcare, and others, all of which are embedded in socially and culturally informed contexts. The individual chapters within the book feature specific viewpoints, diverse applications, and a combination of methodological approaches. These are illustrated through qualitative and quantitative datasets, all of which are employed to scrutinise a wide spectrum of texts and genres, whether they be oral or written.

Given the vast array of topics treated across the text, it may be worth focusing on the individual contributions. In fact, it is important to note that very often the essays have a transdisciplinary vocation, which brings together different sectors pertaining to ESL and diverse methodologies. The first contribution by Giuliana E. Garzone is a case on point, as it reviews research on metaphors in disease communication and examines their use in representing diseases in the media, with a focus on COVID-19 during the 2020-2021 pandemic. The author highlights how metaphors are extensively employed in disease communication and how they influence public perception. Diseases are not just medical facts but carry cultural significance, making metaphors a tool to make taboo topics more approachable.

Paola Catenaccio's second chapter uses argumentation to analyse the complex decision-making process in organ transplantation, driven by ethical challenges and persistent organ shortage. She highlights the use of non-clinical criteria, including psychosocial assessments, in organ allocation. Catenaccio discusses cases of discrimination, where individuals with disabilities, including children, face denial of organ transplants due to their conditions. She analyses scientific articles and policy documents, identifying key terms that help uncover the reasons behind this discrimination. Through this examination, she reveals the ideological aspects of clinical decision-making in organ allocation.

The third chapter joins medical and legal discourse, as its author William Bromwich employs critical discourse analysis to scrutinise the discourse practices of Coroner's Courts in New South Wales, Australia. He explores how Coroners, who can be legal or medical practitioners, use a diverse array of disciplinary practices and meta-discourse in inquests. This unique discourse, addressing both professional and lay audiences, differs from the generic conventions of the legal or medical fields, reflecting an interdisciplinary nature where law intersects with various disciplines, influencing and relying on their expertise.

A similar healthcare and legal intersection characterises the fourth chapter, where Giulia Adriana Pennisi examines Clinical Ethics Committees (CECs), which have gained institutional importance for addressing ethical dilemmas in healthcare. These committees, comprising members from various backgrounds such as medicine, law, and religion, discuss critical clinical issues like treatment decisions and confidentiality. Pennisi investigates the UK Clinical Ethics Network (UKCEN) newsletters from 2004 to 2020, revealing how interdisciplinary discussions within CECs are reflected in written genres, and highlights their socio-pragmatic aspects and the subtle influence of corporate interests in shaping the discourse beyond mere information dissemination.

The fifth chapter momentarily shifts the attention to environmental issues. Here, Stefania D'Avanzo investigates the European Union's efforts to promote a 'green economy' that efficiently utilises resources, enhances well-being, and maintains natural systems. The study focuses on EU legislative procedures adopted between 2009 and 2020 to ensure responsible resource use while preserving human well-being. Using a corpus-based approach, D'Avanzo analyses language patterns related to 'green economy' conceptualisations to examine the EU's commitment to a more sustainable economic path for its citizens.

The spotlight returns to healthcare and legal discourse with the contribution by Michela Giordano. Her focus is on advance directives, specifically healthcare powers of attorney and living wills, crucial legal documents for end-of-life care decisions. These documents make patients' choices legally binding and prevent family disputes over medical decisions. The study examines American advance directives to distinguish

between living wills (outlining treatment preferences) and healthcare powers of attorney (appointing an agent for healthcare decisions). It explores the generic structure, rhetorical features, and specialised lexicon in these texts, highlighting their significance in interdisciplinary, professional, institutional, and social contexts for improving end-of-life decision-making.

The seventh chapter by Antonella Napolitano and Maria Cristina Aiezza discusses a delicate topic crossing healthcare, legal, ethical, and political spheres, as it focuses on the Alabama Human Life Protection Act, a near-total abortion ban passed in May 2019. This legislation aimed to challenge the 1973 Roe v. Wade decision, which protected a woman's right to choose abortion. US District Judge Myron Thompson later blocked the law due to constitutional violations. The authors examine the legal discourse of the act and pro-choice opposition, focusing on online discussions on the NARAL website and social media, using Critical Discourse Analysis to explore how it frames abortion, challenges patriarchal control over women's bodies, and engages citizens in political debate.

The analysis brought forward in the eighth chapter by André L. F. Augusto, Amitza Torres Vieira, and Vicente Ricco is more explicitly legal. Their study addresses the deficiency in legal professionals' analysis of video evidence. They qualitatively analyse empirical data from a video used as evidence in Brazilian Military Justice. The research explores differing perspectives on the video. Multimodal analysis of the video is performed using ELAN software, considering framing and contextualising clues. The authors find that the victim perceives it as aggression, while the accused views it as playful, with legal professionals aligning with their respective roles in the trial.

Law, ethics, and healthcare cross their path again in the ninth chapter. Here, Anna Iegorova explores public attitudes towards surrogacy, a topic with wide-ranging ethical, cultural, and legal implications. She conducts critical discourse analysis on Facebook comments from five different news reports on surrogacy. This analysis reveals common stereotypes and strategies employed by commenters as they discuss issues related to children's well-being, family, parenthood, and society, shedding light on the broader public discourse surrounding surrogacy.

The tenth chapter, by Piero Manzella, is once again focused on COVID-19, albeit in a different perspective. In fact, it discusses the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on essential workers. He explores how trade unions in Italy and the USA used different linguistic tools and strategies to advocate for the rights and safety of these workers, who continued to work despite the pandemic's risks. The study analyses union discourse in both English and Italian to understand the ways in which unions supported essential workers during the crisis.

In the eleventh chapter, Marco Mazzocca explores the intersection of clinical practice guidelines and the legal field. Clinical guidelines, originally intended to enhance medical care, are increasingly relevant in legal cases, creating a gap between medical application and legal interpretation. Mazzocca investigates whether these guidelines can serve as both clinical recommendations and legal prescriptions, highlighting differences and proposing interpretive strategies to bridge the gap between medical and legal language.

Ginevra Peruginelli and Sara Conti's twelfth chapter emphasises effective communication of legal concepts to patients in the healthcare sector. They highlight the challenges posed by the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and propose the use of visual techniques, like infographics, to simplify complex legal information. Visual aids enhance understanding, bridge language barriers, and promote awareness of data

protection regulations, ultimately strengthening the doctor-patient relationship and patient well-being.

Another contribution focuses on the recent pandemic, as Colin Robertson's thirteenth chapter delves into the implications of the COVID-19 pandemic on EU law, specifically in the realms of medicine and health. It examines how the pandemic has shaped EU legal discourse and the possibility of an extended EU health policy. This shift may align with broader ecological concerns, potentially shifting EU law's primary focus from trade to health and well-being, raising questions about the role of language, translation, and terminology in this evolving landscape.

In their fourteenth chapter, Juliette Scott and John O'Shea take a translingual perspective as they explore the impacts and consequences of legal translations in medical contexts, emphasising the need for greater diligence in the translation process. They highlight various examples, including personal injury cases, public health notices, medical devices, and regulatory compliance. The authors argue that the importance of translation is often underestimated across different spheres, from legal professionals to authorities and the judiciary.

In the fifteenth chapter, Bruno Tassone addresses the intricate concept of causation in law, science, and medicine. He examines the challenges in establishing causation, particularly in cases involving the "loss of chance" doctrine. The chapter explores how various disciplines define probabilities and grapple with causation-related questions. Through this interdisciplinary exploration, it seeks to uncover novel legal approaches to address these intricate issues.

The final two chapters explore the role of audiovisual language as a meeting point between specialised knowledge and general audiences, taking the same case study, the TV series *Body of Proof*, but from different methodological perspectives. In particular, in the sixteenth chapter, Adriano Laudisio primarily employs genre analysis and focuses on genre hybridisation, as he examines how crime drama borrows from these fields to entertain and educate a broad audience. The aim is to identify the discursive features of crime drama as a genre and how it contributes to the popularisation of specialised content. The author's findings reveal both similarities in generic patterns used for popularising discipline-specific contents and variations arising from interactions between participants, leading to genre hybridisation.

In the seventeenth and final chapter, Daniela Giordano uses discourse analysis to explore text-level discursive features and emphasises the educational potential of crime drama. Using scenes from the same TV series, the author identifies text-level discursive features crime drama as a genre borrowing from various scientific and forensic discourses. The author examines how professionals and experts interact and how they communicate scientific information to a potentially uninformed audience.

The seventeen chapters share several common traits. They often take an interdisciplinary approach, combining elements from fields like law, medicine, linguistics, and social sciences to analyse complex topics. Critical Discourse Analysis is the prevalent methodological tool, helping uncover hidden biases, ideologies, and power dynamics in discourse. Moreover, these chapters frequently explore the social and ethical implications of language use in specific contexts, revealing how language influences public attitudes, legal decisions, and policy outcomes. In essence, language is viewed not just as a means of communication, but as a tool for shaping reality in various fields, such as healthcare, law, and environmental policy.

Despite these commonalities, the chapters also exhibit differences. Each chapter focuses on distinct subject matter, ranging from healthcare issues like organ

transplantation and advance directives to legal topics such as abortion legislation and legal translations, and even environmental policy like the 'green economy.' Some chapters have a regional or national focus, while others explore broader international contexts. Methodological approaches vary, with some chapters using corpus-based techniques, multimodal analysis, or qualitative analysis of specific texts. Temporal focuses also differ, with some chapters adopting a diachronic perspective and others having a more synchronic approach. This diversity highlights the adaptability of discourse analysis in examining a wide array of topics, using different methodologies, and crossing paths with other disciplines, while emphasising the role of language role in shaping perceptions, policies, and practices across diverse fields.

Throughout the book, readers will find solid cross-disciplinary investigations, carried out with methodological rigour and originality. The diverse chapters offer a multifaceted exploration of the profound impact of language and discourse analysis across a range of disciplines. Whether the reader is an aspiring linguist or is looking to sharpen existing skills, these chapters serve as instructive examples and guides for effective application. Another particularly notable aspect of this book is that all the chapters delve into the social and ethical implications of language usage, demonstrating how it moulds public attitudes, drives legal decisions, and steers policy outcomes.

For professionals in healthcare, law, environmental policy, or media, the book offers practical insights into how language influences their respective domains. It equips the reader with knowledge to enhance communication, inform decision-making, and shape policies that respond to contemporary challenges. Drawing from a diverse array of case studies, the book tackles pressing issues such as organ transplantation, surrogacy, and global pandemics. These real-world examples make the content relatable and pertinent to ongoing societal dialogues.

Educators and students, particularly in fields related to linguistics, communication studies, law, healthcare ethics, and environmental policy, will find this book to be a valuable educational resource. It offers a vast array of case studies and methodological approaches that can enrich classroom discussions and research projects.

Overall, this collection of chapters offers valuable insights and analytical tools applicable across diverse professional and personal realms. It constitutes a compelling resource for anyone intrigued by the profound ways in which language shapes the world.

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