

Linguistics corner

In the 1980s the first issue of a linguistic journal entirely devoted to the teaching of medical English and to publishing the results of research conducted on medical discourse was published at the University of Kuwait. It was called *The EMP* (English for Medical Purposes) *Newsletter*; and was edited by a very enthusiastic British linguist, Nigel Bruce, who was then teaching EMP at Kuwait University. Needless to say, the newsletter was very warmly and positively received by all the applied linguists and English language practitioners who, one way or another, were involved in EMP.

Very sadly, though, Operation Desert Storm wiped out Nigel's EMP work in the Arab world, and the *EMP Newsletter* ceased being published. As a consequence, those interested in and conducting research on medical discourse had to look for new outlets for their publications. They thus started sending their papers for publication to applied linguistics journals, such as *English for Specific Purposes*, *the Journal of English for Academic Purposes*, *LSP and Professional Communication*, *IBÉRICA* (the official journal of the European Association of Languages for Specific Purposes), *Communication and Medicine*, *The ESPecialist*, *Hermès*, *Asp* (Anglais de Spécialité), *Text*, *Discourse Studies*, *Interface*, etc.

With the very timely birth of the special section on translation in *TWS*, I thought that a 'special corner' could be dedicated as well to summarizing the results of applied linguistics research that deal with medical discourse. I submitted that idea of a 'Linguistic Corner' to the editor, who wholeheartedly embraced the idea under one condition, though: that I be the section editor!! More work... but I accepted!

The aim of the 'Linguistic Corner' will be to publish the abstracts of papers related to oral or written medical dis-



course that I believe could be of interest to *TWS* readership. Being a fervent proponent of scientific multilingualism, my intention is to mention papers written not only in English, but also in other languages (e.g., Spanish, French, German). In the case of abstracts published in a language other than English, I'll contact the authors and ask them to provide an English-language abstract of their work.

I hope you will all enjoy the new Section as much as I do the translation section. ■

Françoise Salager-Meyer

*Faculty of Medicine,
University of the Andes,
Mérida, Venezuela
francoise.sm@gmail.com*

Abstract 1

Charpy J-P Milieux professionnels et FASP médicale: de l'autre côté du miroir, Asp (Anglais de Spécialité), la revue du GERAS n°45-46, 2004, pp. 61-79.

GERAS: Groupe de recherche et d'études en Anglais de Spécialité Asp est la revue de ce Groupe et est publié par l'Université de Bordeaux (France)

In his paper, Jean Pierre Charby highlights and analyses the relationship between the medical profession and "medically-based fiction". Medical thrillers belong to the genre described by M. Petit in 1999 as "professionally-based fiction" (PBF)-namely, works of popular fiction resting on the experience of professionals. They are reputed to be a pretty accurate reflection of the world of medicine. The diachronic study of medical thrillers is a recent field of research within the genre of PFB, and it is generally agreed that the novels of a small group of American writers (R. Cook, M. Palmer, T. Gerritsen) form the core of medically-based fiction.

This specialised genre related to PFB is characterised by specific features, both external (in the paratext, i. e. on the fringes of the text) and internal (within the text), which are clearly identifiable in the paratextual, textual, narrative and linguistic fabric of medical novels of suspense. The author proposes to show that, beneath the surface and beyond the conventional clichés of the editorial paratext, medical thrillers integrate the specific nature of the discourse and practices of the medical community, and reflect the sociocultural preoccupations and the ethical standards of the medical profession.

In order to better understand the links between professional background and fiction, the author presents the answers to a questionnaire submitted to four doctors-turned-novelists (R. Cook, M. Palmer, L. Ruth Robinson, T. Gerritsen). The responses indicate that medical thrillers are both

convincing and entertaining, which underlines the pedagogical interest of medically based fiction for the teaching of English for specific purposes. ■