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UNIVERSITÀ DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO

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CENTRO DI RICERCA SUI FENOMENI
LINGUISTICI E CULTURALI

Seniors, Foreign Caregivers, Families, Institutions: Linguistic and Multidisciplinary Perspectives

International Conference

Book of Abstracts



9-10 APRIL 2019

**COLLEGIO UNIVERSITARIO CARLO CATTANEO
“AULA MAGNA”
VIA JEAN HENRY DUNANT 7
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PLENARY LECTURES

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Dispossessed, Without Place and Face. The Plight of Elders

Have we grown closer and closer apart? Imagine the plight of our elders. Their history is linked with their geography, where they lived, loved, and labored. Though they earned their “place” in the world, a world now under the hegemony of accelerated time and blurring of distance, many feel displaced, “unseen,” and irrelevant.

I will address this loss of place and face for today’s elders within the context of our failure, in the U.S. and much of the West, to construct a consistent, coherent philosophy of life stages. Put simply, our thoroughly pragmatic and future-driven culture of youth and productivity assigns no intrinsic value to getting old.

Place unfolds in particularities – my place, our home, etc. - and is critically distinct from space. As we squeeze together time and space through worldviews and technologies, we have erased the importance of place. This poses unique problems for elders for whom place, in particular home, carries special meaning involving time and relationships.

Moreover, such meaning comes through lived, embodied experiences. I argue that our embodied encounters enable moral meaningfulness, and that it is the face which is the centerpiece of such engagement. Face reveals a moral invitation to authentic person-to-person communication.

Understanding the importance of place and need for face-to-face interaction helps to ground us in our conversations with elders. With our seniors, for whom the greatest gift is our time and attention, it is not only what we say, but how we are with them, through our presence, that matters.

Keywords: elders, place, face, life-stages, presence, communication, home

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Aging Care is a World Concern

Introduction: This presentation begins by summarizing highlights of the current emphasis on social contexts, and a focus on identity in conversation and narrative to look at language across time and place which can be seen in the fast-developing investigations of language and aging in pragmatics and sociolinguistics. We must also incorporate the new wave of discourse analysis which by taking a sociolinguistic/sociopragmatic perspective now draws on features from communications studies and applied conversation analysis that intersect with clinical perspectives, especially in communicative interventions and sustainable care. Such findings are particularly important as they allow us to look at sustaining people wishing to age in place.

What we are learning now about social aspects of communication in dementia care: We will focus on two areas: first, the use of represented speech which shed light on social identities and self-presentation in the speakers' use of often-formulaic, often multiply-told narratives as the condition progresses. This allows us to investigate potential retention of pragmatic skills used for interaction as well as on language change over time. For example, by allowing us to examine positions and identities speakers present in their dialogic narratives, represented speech can show us how a person is establishing relationships and handling impression management. Our second area is the use of fillers such as *uh* or *but*, manipulated to show meaning by speakers with dementia who use these in compensation as their condition increases. As we have noted elsewhere, their usage gives information to the hearer about how to interpret what the speaker is saying, and where the speaker is heading next: is it a new topic? A resumed topic? A question? An expanded story? A contradiction?

The expanding need for day care and for training caregivers: A number of studies have shown that language-based issues cause more than half of the problems in talking with caregivers, and in assessing severity of conditions or illnesses. My goal here has been to develop training for culturally sensitive care, whether for certification for second language/multilingual paraprofessional (unlicensed) assistants or for professional healthcare workers or on continuing education training for multilingual caregivers already on the job in care home settings – or to family members who are the primary caregivers. Adult Day Care (ADC) is the least expensive means of care assistance for community-based caregivers and care recipients with dementia. On a daily basis, ADC is roughly half the cost of home maker or home health care whether they focus on therapeutic rehabilitation post-hospitalization, or are multipurpose, non-clinical in focus and in staff, and accept persons with mental or physical problems and disabilities. The remainder of this discussion will focus on ADC in Kaohsiung, Taiwan's second largest city. Our examples will be a set of free smartphone caregiver training apps across several languages and development of Taiwanese caregiver workshops stemming from two weekly arts therapy programs, sponsored by Kaohsiung Medical University (KMU), illustrating Tiers B and C of Taiwan's government-mandated Long-Term Care Policy 2.0. for aging persons and people with dementias.

Keywords: represented speech, positioning, adult day care, fillers, sociolinguistics, pragmatics, Taiwan

Ageing and Elderly Citizens' Rights in Institutional Documents: Discursive Perspectives

In a context where the number of older persons in all societies the world over is growing steadily, and is expected to increase from 901 million in 2015 to 1.4 billion by 2030 and 2.1. by 2050, i.e. more than 20% of the world's population (UNO 2017: 2), institutions address the key challenge of "building a society for all ages" (UNO 2002).

Part of this challenge has been the predicament of the elderly in terms of rights, which started to be studied and discussed in the 1990s (cf. Rodriguez-Pinzon/Martin 2003), while until then the focus of the debate had mainly been on healthcare, welfare, political and economic aspects, etc. The gradual rise of a rights-based approach has seen increasing attention given to the issue by institutions, especially on an international level, leading to the publication of resolutions, reports and other policy documents.

This presentation examines a corpus of institutional documents issued in the last few decades by international and supranational organizations (UNO, WHO, ILO, EU) and by national and state governments for the promotion and protection of older persons' rights and dignity. The rationale underlying all these documents is the recognition that "the elderly have distinct human rights, which were not addressed specifically in the 1948 Universal Declaration for Human Rights or other relevant human rights instruments" (WHO 1993), and is "a part of larger fragmentation of the human rights project" (Mégret 2010) with a tendency to codify specific rights for select population groups (e.g. women, children, sexual minorities, individuals with disabilities, migrants, etc.)".

The analysis focuses on the linguistic and discursive resources deployed to claim that, although in theory human beings have the same rights, the elderly raise specific issues in terms of human rights on account of their specific existential condition, and to argue in favour of the recognition of human rights for older persons, encouraging countries to introduce specific legislation, and working for the establishment of a comprehensive international instrument.

A second complementary focus will be on the discursive construction of aging and of elderly citizens as subjects of the rights being advocated in the texts included in the corpus, with special regard to discursive patterns aimed at countering any possible ageist stance (Butler 1975; Coupland / Coupland 1993).

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Designing a Survey for Care Workers, the Elderly and Their Families

The Age.Vol.A. project aims to develop technological tools to help non Italian-speaking in-home carers to communicate with the families of the assisted elderly and receive useful information to fulfil their duties in the area of Varese and its province. The purpose of this presentation is to provide an update on the current status of the research (Vicentini *et al.* 2018a, Vicentini *et al.* 2018b).

The research method is both qualitative and quantitative. The general approach is strongly influenced by ethnomethodology (Garfinkel 2002) which, along with its focus on communicative and relational aspects, is a useful tool for qualitative investigation of home care involving many social actors: elderly people, families, and foreign carers. The social and individual representation of domestic care is therefore interpreted in the terms of the speaker, whose subjectivity is structured by a dense relational context. The importance of the relationships among the different social actors is also stressed in relational sociology (Donati 2011), whereby the social identity of the actors investigated is built not only on self-perception, but also on the relationships with those who are not involved. The methodology of this qualitative research is therefore based on the study of narratives (life stories, interviews, short written texts) in which the subjectivity of the experience is both structured and mediated by the subject's relational context (Demetrio / Favaro 2002).

Questionnaires are normally used not to elicit actual language data but “to collect data on attitudes about language or qualitative sociolinguistic information” (Schleef / Meyerhoff 2010: 4). The approach of the sociolinguistic section of the questionnaire thus draws upon social constructivist tradition, which highlights the importance of language in understanding society and social categories, hence promoting the study of language attitudes, beliefs, and reactions about the use of language (Coupland / Jarowski 1997: 70-72), which are related to the theme of identity (Fairclough 1995, Irwin 2010: 100). The questionnaire design is cross-sectional as it offers “an overview of how a particular variable is distributed across the sample at a particular moment in time” (Rasinger 2008: 36).

After mapping the context of the social actors involved through previous studies on the subjects and by involving local institutions and voluntary associations, we conducted preliminary interviews with foreign communities, volunteers, doctors and social workers in Varese to study their experiences and needs in relation to domestic care. The questionnaire also includes some questions about the self-perception of the social actors involved and their relationships in the complex interaction of home care. The majority of the questions of the survey are designed to analyse the same aspects from the viewpoint of the social actors involved in the phenomenon under study. All questionnaires end with an open-ended question in which people are invited to

tell their experiences in their own words. The survey will be administered using an online survey tool and in a paper-based format. In the case of foreign in-home carers and families, in particular, the methodology of sociocultural section is inspired by questionnaires set up by the Institute for Educational and Training Research (Maioni / Zucca 2016) and by the Institute for Social Research (Pasquinelli 2015), which analyse the socio-economic impact of caregiving jobs.

Keywords: elderly, caregivers, families, sociocultural survey, sociolinguistic survey, relational sociology, home assistance

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‘Struggling to Cope’?: Negotiating Older People’s Identities on Age UK

Over the last century, the age structure of Western societies has changed as life expectancy has increased and, at the same time, the birth rate has declined. These two factors can explain why the population is ageing and, according to long-term projections, this process is set to accelerate in the future. The aging of the population has enormous economic and social implications. ‘Old age’ has therefore become a prominent issue in international forums capturing the attention of institutions, organizations and scholars from various fields. As a result of the shifting age profile, a pressing challenge facing our society today is to improve the quality of life for older citizens and build an inclusive society.

Older people are not a homogeneous group as many factors play in the construction of old age identity. Studies are based on different perceptions of older people: some refer to chronological age when identifying older people, while others use different life stages when relating to them, such as functional age, or social age.

Besides, like the rest of the population, there are huge differences in health, income, educations and expectations within the older community with needs and expectations evolving with time.

To address this issue, the present study explores how social and personal age identities are negotiated and renegotiated within the context of societal stereotypes of age on the website of Age UK, the UK's largest charity dedicated to helping older people “make the most of later life”.

The term identity is employed here to refer to a shared sense of belonging, to the way older people are placed in the societal system, and the way they are defined and referred to in the texts.

Taking into account the framework set by studies on age (Harwood 2007; Coupland 2009) related to different dimensions of age identity (subjective age, desired age, and perceived old age), and Critical Discourse Analysis (Van Dijk 2003; Fairclough 2010), this study aims at identifying salient discursive linguistic choices, such as evaluative language, deployed in the construction of older people’s identities (Bait 2009).

First, attention will be paid to the organization of the homepage, then the focus of the analysis will be placed on the various texts appearing on the homepage under the heading “Information and advice”, as well as the “latest news and views on age and ageing” appearing in the section titled “Discover”.

The discussion of findings will focus in particular on the accommodation to the “objective conditions” of being and becoming old; on the implications of negative visions of older age involving physical and mental decline and dependency (agist ideology); and on positive themes, including active engagement and maturity (anti-agist ideology).

Keywords: aging, older age, critical discourse analysis, ideology, old age identity, web communication

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The Myth of Eternal Youth and the Post-Modern Civilization

The myth of eternal youth and its related imaginary have a very long history which crosses the various phases of the development of the Western civilization. Some examples can be found, for example, in the ancient narratives of deities like Dionysus, Eros, or Osiris, who all embody the *puer aeternus*, or in such literary myths as the one depicted in Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, but also in the ancient alchemical practices which aimed at discovering the philosopher's stone. In today's post-modern globalized society, thanks to the progress of the biomedical sciences and their promise to delay ageing and death as much as possible, this long-standing myth acquires entirely unique meanings. The prolific symbolism of eternal youth thus takes on some socio-political features, which are particularly interesting both for consensus reaching and for what concerns the cult of the body, of beauty and of physical efficiency. This inevitably transforms the perception of old age and of its typical prerogatives, including the idea of wisdom, which is connected to experience and to the ability to have a better and deeper understanding of oneself and others. There consequently emerges a new imaginary which is destined to rephrase the dialectic between old age and youth, following symbolic and narrative schemes which constantly proliferate on the new technologies and the dominant scientific knowledge.

Keywords: eternal youth, post-modern civilization, consensus, social practices, social imaginary

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Elderly People on Couchsurfing: Self-Perception *versus* Community Perception

The process of ageing has undergone drastic changes throughout the last decades owing to advancements in medicine, technology, and to an improved awareness of good health practices on the part of the elderly and their caregivers. Nowadays, the ‘new older people’ are faced with a changing world that provides them with new possibilities as well as new challenges. Among such possibilities/challenges are social networking services that have not only revolutionised the way in which people meet, socialise and interact, but they have also had a more general impact on people’s lifestyle.

An example is the website Couchsurfing.com, a service that connects approximately 14 million users that are willing to host travellers free of charge. Although only about 2% of the users are above the age of 60, if one considers that Couchsurfing.com was designed to suit a much younger audience, it is rather surprising that elderly people from around the world have decided to join.

Far from being sedentary members of society as depicted in the collective imagination, mature people in good health seem to be interested in leading a more active life and their inclination to travel is proven, amongst others, by a wealth of publications focussing on the subject of senior tourism (see, amongst others, Dann 2001; Le Serre / Chevalier 2012; Alén / Losada / Domínguez 2016; Grego 2016).

The present work follows on from previous research that was aimed at profiling senior members of the Couchsurfing community by analysing a dataset that comprises demographics and other types of information (Berti, forthcoming). The profile of the average senior couchsurfer that has emerged is that of an open-minded, easy-going, active individual who is willing to enjoy life, meet new people, make new friends and exchange ideas. However, in order to gather a more authentic picture of these elderly members, an analysis of the reviews left by other couchsurfers who have met them in person seems to be necessary. To this aim, the reviews left for as many as 12,500 senior members have been scraped from the Couchsurfing website and have been analysed through text analytics techniques. The ultimate goal of this work is to compare the way in which elderly people describe (thus perceive?) themselves to the way in which the other members actually see them.

Keywords: ageing, senior tourism, couchsurfing, NLP, data-driven discourse analysis, word frequency analysis

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Negotiating a Role: Types of Dialogical Behavior of Caregivers in Dialogues between Doctors and Elderly Patients. A Qualitative Analysis

In consideration of the tenets of the Chronic Care Model, which has shaped and keeps shaping many of the reforms in the provision of healthcare, the role of the caregiver has acquired increasing importance (Wagner *et al.* 2001; Coleman *et al.* 2009). This is due also to the particular challenges posed by old age, when multimorbidity, frailty, and cognitive impairments may significantly impact on people's self-care abilities and quality of life (Osborn *et al.* 2015). At the same time, the presence of caregivers may add a level of complexity to interactions in medical settings.

Such interactions can be considered as specific activity types defined by the advice-seeking intention of patients and characterized by the main discourse type of advice-giving, performed through complex dialogical sequences by doctors (Bigi 2018). In dyadic interactions, the activity of advice-giving happens also through contributions by patients, who can provide new information, put forward proposals, or object to doctors' suggestions. When a third party is present, the difficulty of finding alignment and final agreement can be increased. The goal of the paper is to explore such complexity by analyzing the different types of dialogical behavior displayed by caregivers who participate in medical encounters.

This study builds on a previous qualitative study, which revealed frequent misalignment between patients and caregivers during consultations; in particular caregivers' contributions to the interaction seemed to fall primarily within the following three categories: 1) 'echo' comments: by repeating doctors' words and phrases, caregivers dialogically construct for themselves the role of the 'vice-doctor' vs the patient; 2) information giving: filling in when patients forget; specifying information given by patients; 3) non relevant dialogue moves: shifting to other dialogue types (e.g., from information giving to chat), not always in a collaborative way.

In this contribution, the goal is to further enquire into the dialogical behaviors of caregivers in order to develop a preliminary typology, particularly in chronic care settings.

Based on a larger corpus of real-life interactions collected in Italian chronic care outpatient clinics, caregivers' contributions will be described in relation to the following variables: the kind of caregiver (habitual, sporadic); their motivation for accompanying the patient, as can be inferred from their contributions to the dialogue (controlling, collaborative, supporting self-care abilities at home, etc.); and the kind of contributions they make to the interaction (requests for explanations regarding behaviors, requests for definitions regarding specialized terminology, proposals for action, etc.). Caregivers' contributions will be analyzed in relation to the overarching goal of providing advice for patients' health conditions, in order to attempt a description of the 'quality' of these contributions in terms of their dialogical 'relevance', i.e. coherence with the dialogue type within which they appear (Macagno / Bigi 2017).

Keywords: activity types; argumentation; doctor-patient interactions; dialogue moves; shared decision making; dialogical relevance

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Constructing a Professional Identity as an In-Home Carer of the Elderly

It is well-documented that Italian families rely heavily on live-in foreign carers to undertake elderly care within the family. Despite the economic and social value of this work, for many it remains a low-status occupation which, hidden within the family and largely undertaken by women, is easily undervalued by society (Kontos 2014). In this paper, I examine several ways in which carers are able to successfully counteract negative discourses regarding care work, gender and nationality and, instead, construct alternative, expert identities which invite the re-evaluation of care work as a profession.

This paper examines interviews with women working as carers in Bologna which took place over several years and focuses on “small stories”. These stories may include non-linear unfolding of events, deal with seemingly mundane occurrences, and be constructed between several speakers and listeners (Georgakopoulou 2015). Using positioning analysis, more particularly Michael Bamberg’s three levels of positioning (Bamberg 1997), I examine both the immediate micro context where the narrative takes place and the wider context of societal discourses as they are made relevant in the stories told. These stories are constructed interactively with the interviewer and are an opportunity for the interviewees to reflect on their initial motivations for moving to Italy and compare these with their feelings on their current situation.

In this paper, I identify several common recurrent discourses which relate to being a foreign carer in Italy. These “carer narratives” can be seen as part of the “general tendencies in the way issues are viewed and dealt with by the communities to which individuals belong” (De Fina 2013: 45) and can be seen as either positive or negative. Here I concentrate on the stories which run counter to prevailing negative discourses regarding caring in Italy and allow the speaker to construct “counter narratives” (Bamberg 2004). This is managed in several ways including resisting being positioned as low-skilled workers, rejecting negative stereotypes of what it means to be a “badante” and contesting the idea that migrant workers are forced to emigrate for economic reasons. In addition, more positive identities are constructed which highlight the speakers’ expertise in caring and in other fields, and where the decision to emigrate is framed as an agentic career choice.

Finally, I reflect on what this approach can contribute to this field. By treating these stories as events constructed through interaction, I hope to demonstrate how we can gain a better understanding of how identities can be co-constructed in an interview setting. I believe this approach helps us toward a better understanding of the lived-experiences of foreign care workers as it shines a light on aspects of carers’ lives which do not easily fit into the categories which are often the focus of larger-scale, thematic studies.

Keywords: migration, domestic workers, discourse analysis, narrative, small stories

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Chinese Domestic Helpers and Caregivers within Chinese Families Living in Italy. The Growing Caregiving Needs of an Ageing Migrant Community

Italy holds the distinction of having the largest resident population of PRC citizens in all of Europe, and the Chinese are now our country's fourth largest immigrant population. They are also the product on one of the earliest foreign migrations to Italy, as today's migrants trace their lineage back to pioneering forefathers who first settled down in the late 1920s (Farina *et al.* 1997). Italy's Chinese nowadays are a population of families, with a perfect balance between male and female migrants, and the majority of these families count several generations of kin that have been or raised in Italy (Brigadoi Cologna / Cavalieri 2017). Although the average Chinese migrant is 31 years old, a growing proportion of Chinese Italian is over 60 years old. Since most adults (both male and female) are entrepreneurs or self-employed, or work in a family business (Ceccagno 2018), ever since the late 1990s there has been a great need of caregivers and domestic helpers (Miranda 2002). The need for Chinese-speaking nannies has even prompted a novel migration flow during the late 1990s and early 2000s, as middle-aged women workers from China's Northeast have been "imported" to tend to those younger Chinese families who could not count on family support to raise their children in Italy. Their toil and plight as and vulnerable undocumented migrants has much in common with the lot of so many immigrant caregivers in Italy and worldwide (Ehrenreich / Hochschild 2004). In some Italian cities, even Italian caregivers have been hired by Chinese families to address these needs (Miranda 2002). Today, a growing need for Chinese speaking caregivers for the elderly is compounding the families' perception of social risk and their anxiety towards granting access to healthcare for their elderly parents and grandparents. The latter being mostly first-generation migrants, they are inevitably still hampered by language and cultural barriers, which hinder their autonomous access of public health care and social services. This paper showcases the increasing impact of these issues on Chinese Italian families, illustrates the way they have been addressed during the past twenty years, and highlights the consequences that the aging of one of Italy's largest immigrant populations has both on the Chinese-Italian minority and on the public health care and social services system.

Keywords: immigrant caregivers, Chinese migration, healthcare access, language barrier, marginalisation, second generation migrants, elderly migrants

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Frail, Old, and Dying? Representations of the Elderly in Social Gerontology Textbooks

The aim of this study is to explore representations of the elderly in social gerontology textbooks published during the last 25 years with a view to identifying salient characterisations of older people and, possibly, detect evolutionary trajectories in the discourses and representations of ageing over the period considered. The study is conducted on a sample of widely used textbooks (some of them running into multiple editions over the years) and uses corpus linguistics methods to retrieve recurring patterns of representation. Discourse analytical methods are employed to investigate how such patterns contribute to positioning ageing people within society. In particular, the study will focus on patterns of attribution and predication, as well as on the agentivity structures (grammatical relations and semantic roles) in which the elderly are implicated, and will explore the way in which such patterns and structures contribute to the discursive construction of their social roles. The negotiation of frailty and decline vis-à-vis discursive constructions of successful ageing will be a special focus of attention. More specifically, the study will seek to identify in textbooks examples of discursively constructed alignment, disalignment and explicit or implicit critical engagement with representations of old age as a time of poverty, illness, disability and social disengagement (dominant in the second half of the twentieth century; Baars 1991), or with more recent views of successful ageing in which the ageing body is represented as a site for improvements involving the individual, psychological and social self (Baltes / Carstensen 1996). The findings are expected to shed light on the ideological constructs underlying dominant representations of old age likely to exert a powerful influence on expert communities entrusted with the care and management of the elderly.

Keywords: discourse analysis, representation of ageing, social construction of ageing, social positioning of older people, critical gerontology

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Who is a “Senior”? Looking for a Definition in the Healthcare System

Nowadays it is increasing the discussion on the part of the population we call *seniors*, in order to be able to help them more and better (Saputelli 2011). The main question of this debate is how to assure them a high quality of life, providing services and proper health care, helping them with the common diseases and also in chronic situations.

But who are seniors? First of all, we have to ask ourselves if we can give a definition of this word: seniors are not only a part of the population to point out but also, and above all, people we have to take care of. Seniors live, like anyone, in different contexts: they are parents and grandparents, customers (Duay / Brian 2008) and citizens (Raymond / Grenier 2013), retirees and, one of the most challenging circumstance, patients (Bigi 2014). Hence, there are different environments in which they live, i.e. their families (Turner / Findlay 2012), the institutions and the complex healthcare system.

The goal of this paper is to highlight some places (laws, codes, and guidelines) where we can find the qualities and the rights referred to seniors and collecting them to reach a proper definition of who a *senior* is. The analysed documents are all related with the healthcare system, which represents a sensitive issue because of the high level of involvement of a senior who is both a patient and a person.

Being aware of the main features about who the seniors are allow us to figure out how to take care of them in concrete, not as a stranger group of the population, but as a part of it and in this sense as a part of us.

Keywords: senior, definition, healthcare system, institutional reports, patient, context

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Third Time and Imaging Ageing

Our Research Group is an interdisciplinary group that has activated and promoted a project, called “Terzo Tempo/Third Time” for senior citizens. Third Time is a research project of well-being, with some strategies to prevent frailty and ageing-related problems such as cognitive decline. The program includes multidisciplinary laboratories and workshops with activities aiming at increasing awareness about ageing processes and encouraging good practices to achieve well-being. Indeed, many research evidences show that modifiable lifestyle factors and a multidomain intervention – including physical activity, cognitive engagement, active social life and a good/healthy diet – are a key strategy for protection against risks of developing frailty. The project is designed for people who are preparing to live old age, or who are already living it, and it will be divided into steps. The first phase is the knowledge of the participant through intergenerational comparison groups and working groups. The second phase includes conferences and interactive workshops of a multidisciplinary nature held by professors of the Division of Medical Science and other Departments, aiming to illustrate the phenomenology of aging and the different strategies for active ageing to prevent frailty, manage chronic diseases and to prevent co-morbidities: good nutrition, physical activity; cognitive and cultural stimuli, technology; socialization and a reading group. The third Phase involves the choice of the participants towards the most suitable strategies that will support personal attitudes, interests and experiences in order to obtain maximum involvement.

The cooperation between medical science and literary studies in the Humanities has also recently resulted in the volume *Imagining Ageing*. Dr E. Favaro’s contribution provides a scientific, medical survey of major neuro-degenerative diseases, to examine and explain impairment in old age and ageing processes. On the other hand, the literary studies group (Prof. Concilio and Della Valle and others) provided a background of exemplary Anglophone texts on the same pathologies within an aesthetic and rhetorical discourse that is not necessarily reassuring, nor consolatory, but which is profoundly humane.

In the present occasion, C. Concilio will analyze the graphic novel by the Canadian writer, Leavitt, *Tangles*. A story about Alzheimer’s, my mother, and me, where she gives voice to a suffering family who acts as care-giver for years, while depicting in a very comprehensible ways the stages of progressive deterioration in her mother’s behavior. Her work creates a new space for the genre of medical autobiography on cases of severe medical conditions. P. Della Valle’s “A Perspective on Ageing in Aotearoa New Zealand”, comments on images of lonely elders in Janet Frame’s novel providing a critique of material Western society. The evolution of Aotearoa New Zealand from a mono-cultural country to a bicultural one has changed the approach to age and ageing. The ongoing official plan for positive ageing reflects the influence of the Māori view on this topic, in its more inclusive nature and its empowering effects for the aged. This important element appears in works of Māori writers Ihimaera and Grace. This shows the crucial role of literature in reporting, commenting, and even anticipating topical issues of human reality.

The project is supported with the RiLo2018 (ex 60%), Third Time, Dott. Enrica Favaro, Department of Medical Science, University of Turin.

Keywords: active ageing, prevention of frailty, lifestyle, cognitive training, neurodegenerative disease, Anglophone literatures, literary studies

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Webpages, (E)Brochures, and Image Promotion in Long-term Healthcare. The Case of Lombardy's *Residenze Sanitarie Assistenziali*

There is no question that we are now living in a rapidly ageing society, where advancements in medical science have made it possible for individuals to live longer than ever before in human history. While this is certainly a great gift, it also poses challenges and questions, of economic, ethic, social, and civil nature. Some of these fundamental and pressuring questions concern: who will need caregiving; what kind of caregiving will be needed; who will provide it; and who will pay for it (President's Council on Bioethics 2005). Concerns about pension insecurity, the high and rising costs of health care, the shortages of available caregivers, of good nursing homes and of long-term care facilities make it difficult to provide satisfying answers to these questions, thus increasing individuals' and their families' anxiety about the potential neglect and abandonment of the elderly (Norton 2000).

The present paper will focus on the way in which nursing homes and long-term care facilities choose to present and describe themselves to potential beneficiaries and their families (Laurence / Kash 2010); it will also analyse the way in which these decisions affect the genres of medical webpages and of medical (e)brochures (Grego 2010; Vicentini 2012). In order to do this, a corpus will be made, comprising the webpages of Lombardy's *Residenze Sanitarie Assistenziali* (R.S.A.; Residential Care Facilities) that are listed on Lombardy's website (Open Data Lombardia 2019); where possible, paper brochures of the same facilities will be also collected and analysed, in order to draw a comparison between the two. Since Italy is still a highly devolved country, where regions differ greatly especially as far as healthcare policies are concerned, Lombardy was chosen as a case study because it has a vast offer of long-term care facilities and nursing homes compared with other regions, which is grounded in an old and firm tradition of private healthcare, making it a good case study for marketing and image promotion in the long-term care continuum. These texts will be then analysed using the frameworks and methods of corpus linguistics (Baker 2006) critical discourse analysis (Fairclough 1995, 2003), and multimodal analysis (Kress / van Leeuwen 2006).

The analysis will seek to answer three main questions: do the elderly individual and their family have a role in the construction of the discourse, and if so, what kind of role is it? What are the perceived defining features of the quality of long-term caregiving? The aim is to discover whether personal relations between the elderly, their family and the caregiver play a central role in the construction of long-term care discourse, as opposed to doctor-patient interaction and scientific medical treatments; and also to discover whether these interpersonal relations play a role in the genre and linguistic changes that have been taking place in medical discourse.

Keywords: healthcare, marketing, communication, long-term care facilities, webpages, medical (e)brochures

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A Multidisciplinary Perspective on Kidney Transplantation in an Elderly Patient with an Immigration Background

End stage renal disease is common in the elderly patient population (i.e. ≥ 65 years of age). Kidney transplantation (KT) is the optimal treatment for this subgroup of patients offering improved quality of life and better patient survival rates compared with dialysis (Humar *et al.* 2003; Hod / Goldfarb-Rumyantzev 2015). There is general agreement that age as an independent variable may not be considered as a contraindication to KT. Yet, elderly patients often pose multiple clinical and psychosocial challenges relative to eligibility in terms of expected transplant outcomes. These include patients' cognitive ability ensuring decision-making capacity, availability of social supports, understanding of the transplant process, ability to adhere to post-transplant requirements and others (Segall *et al.* 2016). In non-European patients with an immigration background, pre-transplant assessments are further confronted with multi-layered ethical concerns which lack guidance across clinical practice guidelines (Van Biesen *et al.* 2018). Research reveals that there is a need for attention to migration together with other determinants of healthy aging in order to prevent inequities in the well-being of elderly patients (Kristiansen *et al.* 2016). We present a case of a 65-year-old woman from Morocco undergoing periodic pre-transplant re-assessment following a 9-year period on the KT waiting list and on three times weekly hemodialysis treatment whose son and nephew acted as interpreters. The case generated a five-layered ethical dilemma: (1) how to protect patient autonomy against paternalistic positions by family members, (2) how to protect patient autonomy by respecting the cultural values and context in which patient autonomy can be realized, (3) how to undergo psychosocial assessments in the presence of an insurmountable communicative

barrier, (4) how to assess the caregivers' understanding of post-transplant responsibilities and potential burdens in an elderly patient, (5) how to guarantee the patient's decision-making capacity to accept the non-standard risk/expanded criteria donor offer for improving chances to undergo KT faster. These issues are addressed from a multidisciplinary perspective and analyzed by the Four-Boxes method of clinical ethics consultation (Jonsen / Siegler / Winslade 2015). The value of contributions of clinical ethics consultation in pre-transplant assessments in elderly patients in a linguistically and culturally diverse setting will be discussed.

Keywords: kidney transplantation; elderly; migrant; clinical ethics; caregiver; cultural diversity

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“It could happen to me” Youth Perspectives about Ageing in Varese, Italy

As Italy is one of the countries with the highest ageing population and the lowest birth ratio per woman in the world (The World Factbook 2018), facing ageing issues is a common experience for Italian families. Help is provided by family members, especially the elders' offspring, the so-called “sandwich generation” who takes care of both their parents and their own children. They are partially supported by the regional welfare; more frequently they hire foreign women mainly from Eastern Europe or South America as caregivers, the so-called “badanti”, which represents a sort of makeshift welfare. As far as in Italy home-assistance is a family matter, investigating relations within the families is crucial to understand assistance choices and the roles of the social actors involved: elders, badanti and family members. According to the relational sociology theory, “individual, familiar and generational cycles are interrelated and influence each others” (Donati 1995: 222). Through a qualitative study based on story-telling, this paper aims to point out how intergenerational family ties structure life choices of social actors and how story-telling helps people in shaping and sharing the knowledge about one's life (Stevenson 2018).

Caregiving has impacted on the private lives of caregivers and on the time that they can spend with other members of their family (Pasquinelli 2018: 45-46). In particular, coresidentiality within the household seems

to be a crucial factor in shaping relations, especially in case of domestic care of the elders (De Jong Gierveld / Dykstra / Schenk 2012). It is the private lives of caregivers that are mostly affected by caregiving. Even though the younger members of the family are not the main caregivers, they are altogether involved in their families' issues. As the next generation of caregivers for their own parents, this study aims to highlight the Italian youth's point of view on ageing.

Fifty-three students in their early twenties from the University of Insubria, Varese, were invited to a conference on ageing issues in Varese and they were asked to submit a report on it. The more they realized the bigger picture of ageing issues in Italy, the more empathic they became towards all the social actors involved. After having analysed the reports, seven students were selected to discuss the issues as a focus group, according to whether they had an older family member requiring assistance and their personal involvement. This in-depth analysis has shown that familiar and individual choices about elders' assistance are submitted to the quality of relations among the members of the families and residential choices. When asked about their future roles as main caregivers, students operated choices according to the present relations with their parents. Insofar the relational issue has been defined as crucial to investigate perspectives on ageing and even possible choices about in the future.

Empathy between the social actors lies in the story-telling given to the students and by the students. It has become essential to the building of social bonding between generations and between natives and migrant workers in a growing multicultural community.

Keywords: youth, ageing issues, Varese, social bonding, intergenerational perspectives, story-telling, family relations

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“Living with Dying”: the Elderly’s Language of Terminal Illness

This study examines the way in which elderly people with terminal illness use language to construct a narrative about their “living with dying” experience. Drawing on Jaworska and Ryan (2018; cf also Semino *et al.* 2018) this investigation is a secondary analysis based on a large corpus of health and illness narratives collected by the Health Experiences Research Group at the University of Oxford and published by the DIPEX charity (available at: <http://healthtalk.org/home>). From this large corpus, all available terminal conditions (nine) in elderly people aged 71-90 (5 men and 4 women), their terminal illness and their narratives were examined using discourse analysis in a corpus-driven approach (Tognini-Bonelli 2001; McEnery / Hardie 2012). These were compared with all terminal conditions (ten) in people aged 50-60 (5 men, 5 women).

Our study shows that there are quantitative and qualitative differences not only in the way in which the two groups report their relation to death but also in the way in which men and women report their experience with terminal illness, pointing to the existence of distinctive lexical repertoires of the terminal illness talk.

When comparing the elderly with the younger group, the narrative of the living with dying experience is extremely different. The 50-60 group of people communicate their impotence to the situation, their inability to overcome the shock of the mental pain related to the awareness of facing death – a situation experienced as a form of injustice. The elderly group, on the contrary is ready for their destiny and has accepted the situation. When, on the other hand, we compare men vs. women, the linguistic repertoires conform to some of the dominant stereotypes surrounding masculinity and femininity in society. Women, in general, refer more frequently to aspects showing an interaction between their illness, themselves, and their role in family or their position as expected in society. In contrast, younger men seem more detached when speaking about their terminal illness and tend to use more factual references in their narratives.

Understanding the different gradations in which elderly people as well as the different groups within the elderly narrate how they live while dying in terminal illness experiences can help health professionals to effectively develop more all-inclusive health policies and practices in end-of-life care.

Keywords: corpus linguistics, discourse analysis, gender discourse, health narrative, terminal illness narrative

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Investing in Mobility: a Worthy Asset in Later Age

The ageing of the worldwide population raises a number of future issues with respect to the provision of services adjusted to the elderly needs and the impact on healthcare and pension system. World Health Organization proposes the approach of active ageing and mobility consists an integrable part of this process. The public transport system can be an ally in promoting elderly mobility and particularly during the period of driving cessation.

The purpose of this study is twofold and its novelty lies in its multidisciplinary approach. Firstly, identifies the aspects of everyday life of the ageing population that are affected by out-door physical mobility. Secondly, seeks to understand what is the role of public transport in supporting elderly mobility. A multidisciplinary literature review was conducted for this purpose. The findings suggest that mobility is crucial in later age and adds value in a diversity of sectors. It affects health and many diseases that are inextricable part of ageing can be prevented or postponed. Moreover, mobility combats loneliness, provides the sense of independence and contributes to social inclusion. All these effects support well-being and consequently lead to a better quality of life. Also, transportation policies were found to be linked with participation in family and community life which can be valuable both for the individual's life and the society.

The results suggest that keeping elderly mobile should not be neglected in any case and the multidimensionality of the impacts reveals the significance. The perception of the old people in the society has changed during the years, from those who were holding the knowledge to unproductive and dependent ones. But it should not be forgotten that the seniors can assist the younger generations and the economy.

Keywords: mobility; elderly; public transport; healthy ageing; multidisciplinary synthesis

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Identity Construction of Caregivers and Seniors: from Recruitment Websites to Narratives of Resident Caregivers

The growing proportion of older people, often called the elderly or seniors, has wide implications on the social structure of modern countries (Tinker 2002). The increasing ageing population in Italy (Reynaud / Miccoli 2019; Rugolotto *et al.* 2017) changes the employment landscape of those who assist them, creating the demand for an influx of foreign caregivers. A large number of foreign caregivers in Italy come from the countries of the former Soviet Union (Cvajner 2018), where many people who grew up during the Soviet period still speak the Russian language either as their first language or as their strong second language. There is a neat generational divide in terms of the use of a common language of communication: whereas people whose active youth occurred during the Soviet period and who are now in their 50s prefer Russian as a lingua franca, the younger generations tend to communicate in English as a lingua franca. This situation makes Russian a lingua franca for caregivers coming from the region, despite the modern “vigorous derussification” (Pavlenko 2006: 78) in some of the post-Soviet states.

The recruitment procedure for foreign caregivers starts on various job-advertising websites, where the description – and hence the identity construction for the potential candidates – is typically available in local languages (such as Ukrainian or Romanian for Moldova), or in Russian if a website covers several CIS countries, with some descriptions available in English.

This paper starts from the analysis of the identity construction on several recruitment websites in Russian and in English in comparison with narratives by acting caregivers. The narrative paradigm is adopted to assess linguistic representations of the caregiver job in Italy by Russian-speaking caregivers coming from Ukraine, Moldova and other post-Soviet countries. Fisher’s narrative theory revolves around storytelling encompassed in “symbolic actions – words and/or deeds that have sequence and meaning for those who live, create or interpret them” (Fisher 1987: 57). It is posited that the attitudes that these stories create and promote should become the object of relevant research as this communication channel may promote important health- or welfare-related information (Lee *et al.* 2016).

This paper pursues the goal of assessing how the caregiver job, including interaction with families and institutions, is linguistically represented through storytelling. The analysis is carried out on a small corpus of stories – both written and oral (YouTube) – that were created by Russian-speaking caregivers working with seniors in Italy.

The preliminary results uncovered a twofold orientation of narration, oscillating between a dreamlike representation of Italy – the host country – and the difficulties connected with working with seniors, lack of support or linguistic isolation. These results indicate that job descriptions on the recruitment websites could not prepare the candidates for the coming job on account of lack of information about the real employment conditions. It is felt that storytelling may be used to inform the incoming caregivers as well as to describe life and employment conditions of the already resident foreign caregivers.

Keywords: storytelling, narrative theory, caregivers, seniors, identity construction

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The Research Abstract-mediated Constitution of Ageing. A Source of Ideological Conflict within Bio/gerontology

Recent research advancements in genetics and biotechnology have contributed to the emergence of biogerontology as a scientific discipline, whose overall goal is “to increase the health span, not life span, of human beings” (Farrelly 2012: 735). In spite of the substantial legitimacy gained over the past decade or so, biogerontology is still seeking to strengthen the boundaries between its research field and the flourishing anti-ageing clinical and commercial practices posing threats to its scientific credibility (Fishman *et al.* 2008). Media manipulation of research findings on the biology of ageing and consequent public misunderstanding represent a major risk for the many biogerontologists who also seek to achieve ‘prolongevity’, or “the significant extension of the length of life by human action” (Gruman 2003: 3). Yet, biogerontology does not seem to face the risk of remaining a marginalised area of scientific inquiry solely due to the apprehension of publicly exposing its findings.

Biogerontologists are further challenged by the “gerontological establishment” grounded in the tradition of “the biomedicalization of ageing”, whereby medical intervention is normalized as necessary and “the tendency to view ageing negatively” is fostered (Estes / Binney 1989: 594). Hence, traditional gerontologists reject other ways of conceptualizing ageing and its problems; they are therefore vigilant about biogerontological research, evermore so as it continues to strive to have a significant scientific impact on the nature of human ageing and thus still holds a fragile status. On the other hand, biogerontologists have turned to ‘boundary work’ (Gieryn 1983) on anti-ageing medicine (AAM) in the effort to differentiate themselves from entrepreneurial anti-ageing practices and preserve their status. This endeavour has become a particular site of a long-lasting intra-disciplinary ‘war’ (Binstock 2003) as it appears to undermine claimed epistemic authority.

This paper assumes that research abstracts (RAs) may represent one particular site of this conflict and attempts to explore how language resources are chosen to make and/or reconfigure the meaning of ageing, or “the discursive constitution of ageing” (Coupland 2009: 850) according to potentially diverging AAM claims. From an intra-disciplinary perspective, the study is primarily based on a comparative discourse analysis of sample gerontological and biogerontological RAs. The overall aim is to unravel AAM meanings and thereby highlight possible differences in the ways scientific truths about human ageing are mediated. From an interdisciplinary perspective, AAM representations are further explored through a critical discourse analysis (Fairclough / Wodak 1997; Fairclough 2003) to disclose the gerontological and biogerontological ideologies underpinning the construct of old age. At the micro-discursive level, the analysis examines the lexicogrammatical features which construe the dynamics of the ageing process; at the macro-level, it considers the ways these choices may potentially affect the social construction and public understanding of the nature of late life. Quantitative and qualitative findings foreground how divergent bio/gerontological AAM views are reflected through specific linguistic choices; results further highlight discursive convergence in conveying the “evermore negative understandings of ageing based on bodily failure” (Vincent 2008: 338), whereby the fears of negative ageism are commonly endorsed, and the elderly, as effective beneficiaries, are obscured.

Keywords: anti-ageing medicine, gerontology, bio-gerontology, epistemic authority, disciplinary ideology, critical discourse analysis, research article

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Recent Initiatives in Order to Cope with the Aging of Population: a Comparative Law Assessment

The respect for equality and the treatment of the elderly gain space in the declarations of human rights, while EU directives reframe the concept of non-discrimination in order to include “age” as a possible variable (Giordano 2005).

European societies face an increasing demand for care due to an ageing population, increasing life expectancy and chronic illness. In response to that, governments are restructuring their healthcare systems to keep them affordable and sustainable. A specific policy for caregivers becomes urgent and has important impacts on migration issues (Verbakel 2001).

In the care of older people, the respect of dignity becomes a crucial issue in defining the quality of services (Gallagher 2008).

On the other side, at supranational level, the European Commission has launched several initiatives in order to cope with new labour force projections that take into account the availability of “older workers” (European Commission 2017).

Keywords: equality, non discrimination, aging population, legal initiatives, health care systems

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The Representation of Older People in English Quality Newspapers: Comparing Articles and Readers' Letters

Increased life expectancy and declining fertility rates, which have caused an unprecedented aging of the Western population (Ylänne 2012: 12), have been identified as responsible for the creation of a fairly new demographic group: the “young old”. The members of this generation, who are relatively young (aged between 60 and 75), rather healthy and quite active, do not recognize themselves as the “elderly” or “the old” anymore (Hurd 1999: 424). Indeed, as pointed out by Falconer and O’Neil (2007), in a European survey older people have labeled “old”, “aged” and, in particular, “elderly” as unacceptable, while articulating a preference for “older” and “senior” (Falconer / O’Neil 2007: 316). Older people’s distaste for these terms, which have been described as unrepresentative if not downright disrespectful (Hurd 1999; Nuessel 1982), might be explained by the generally negative stereotypes that these words seem to evoke, the most frequent of which are those that relate to impairment, grumpiness, isolation, despondency and vulnerability (Hummert *et al.* 1994: 245-246).

As newspapers act as a filter of sorts between the specialized and the lay community, their use of language, especially when such sensitive topics are concerned, is particularly interesting. Previous research (Rovelli 2018) has shown how the terminology used to refer to the older section of the population in *The Guardian* and *The New York Times* has changed in the last 30 years coinciding with older people’s expressed preferences. Indeed, the declining frequency of terms such as “elderly” and “old”, which is countered by an increase in more neutral expressions like “older people” and “seniors”, seems to respect older people’s wishes for a more considerate and representative portrayal of old age.

This paper aims at tracing how older people are described and talked about by readers in the newspapers’ letters to the editor sections and comparing them to their portrayal by journalists in newspaper articles (Rovelli 2018). Since readers’ letters do not only include pieces written by older people themselves, but also by their relatives, different types of health professionals, university professors, and the representatives of various organizations and associations, to name just a few, the investigation intends to highlight how the different members of this extremely heterogeneous community variously construct old age. To do so, two macro-corpora of letters published between 1989 and 2018 in *The New York Times* and *The Guardian* were created, using the subject and section search in the LexisNexis Academic database (2019). The research was conducted following corpus-assisted discourse analysis methods (Baker *et al.* 2008), with specific insights into aging discourse studies (Coupland 1997).

The preliminary analysis showed that, notwithstanding some differences, which may also be due to the diverse sizes of the corpora, the journalists’ and the readers’ portrayal of old age have mostly evolved symmetrically. Indeed, both news articles and readers’ letters exhibit a tendency to represent this particular

demographic group in increasingly neutral terms, as evidenced by the declining frequencies of expressions like “elderly” and “aged” and by the increasing use of less negative ones like “older people” and “senior(s)”.

Keywords: ageing issues, older people, ageism, news discourse, corpus linguistics, critical discourse analysis

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Terminology of Elderly Care: a Corpus-Based Approach

Terminology provides a particular lens to explore the signifying dynamics between structure and agency in the shaping of occupation at individual and collective levels, which results in behavioural expectations on individuals who take up particular roles. A professional identity is an important cognitive mechanism that affects workers’ attitudes, self-identification and behaviour not exclusively in work settings.

In the last few decades, a debate has arisen over the terminology referring to the people assisting the elderly and other vulnerable groups. In spite of an increased focus on senior care, the short research history reveals the absence of a widely accepted definition. For instance, the term ‘carer’, which is profusely used in health and social-care research and practice was criticised as “ineffective” (Molyneaux *et al.* 2011), “devaluing and blaming the people originally targeted for care” (Calderbank 2000), “a mark of bureaucracy, turning what was a normal human experience into an unnecessarily complex phenomenon” (Foster 2005). Furthermore, there seems to be some confusion about the interpretation of terms such as ‘carer’ or ‘caregiver’ in relation to either professional care workers who assist vulnerable people or unpaid family members who look after them

(Molyneaux *et al.* 2011). For these reasons, in both specialised and non-specialised sources a large number of lemmas can be found (such as ‘care worker’, ‘domestic assistant’, ‘helper’) or a variety of modifiers are used to avoid ambiguity, e.g. ‘informal caregiver’, ‘professional caregiver’, ‘in-home caregiver’.

The purpose of this study is to explore the terms used to identify the people who are paid to provide or voluntarily provide care for the elderly (which also includes people with a disability, mental illness, chronic condition, terminal illness, etc.), using the frameworks and methods of Corpus Linguistics (Adolphs *et al.* 2007) and corpus-based Terminology (Cabr  1998; Gamper / Stock 1998). The terms are extracted from a corpus from mainly specialised and non-specialised British sources, e.g. specialised websites, institutional health portals, academic articles, quality newspapers. Using Sketch Engine (Kilgarriff *et al.* 2004; Kilgarriff *et al.* 2014), an online corpus manager and text analysis software, the functional distribution of the target lemmas is explored to reveal the underlying systematic nature of the differences in the way these terms pattern with other lexical units to characterise the profession under examination. The analysis also points out the variation in terminology observed in the corpora intended as different communication contexts, e.g. how professionals define themselves compared to how external actors identify them.

Keywords: carers, caregivers, elderly care, terminology, corpus-assisted analysis

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Images and Identities of Ageing: A Proposal to Integrate Humanistic Gerontology in Social Work Education

The ageing of the population is a reality that presents multiple challenges to today’s society, not the least of which is the need to have a highly skilled workforce of care and health professionals able to provide more appropriate services to older adults. Social workers are an essential part of the workforce to maintain and enhance the quality of life of seniors and their families (Berkman / Harootyan 2003). However, regardless of

the tasks undertaken, they may encounter numerous difficulties on the job, including their personal attitudes and prejudices towards ageing (Phillips 2018) and the deeply entrenched ageism that is pervasive in contemporary Western society and, as Duffy (2016) points out, within conventional social work practice. For this reason, the integration of 'humanistic gerontology' (Cole/Sierpina 2007; Cole et al 2010) or 'age studies' (Gullette 2000) into formal academic training programs is essential to produce a new generation of social work practitioners who are up to the task of working with an older population and better understand the complexity and diversity of older people's lives.

Guided by the principle that a response to the needs and interests of older adults requires innovative pedagogies and practices of research, this study presents a comprehensive account of a classroom-based project designed for the graduate students of social work at the University of Molise to positively impact their beliefs about ageing and older adults as well as their interest in working with them. In particular, the idea was to employ reflective learning techniques, observations in local communities and interviews with seniors for enabling individual voices to be heard and critically understood. Moreover, the proposed teaching material is intended to demonstrate the contribution that Critical Discourse Analysis(CDA) can make to social work studies by getting more insight into the crucial role of discourse in the reproduction of inequality and prejudice.

After illustrating the aims of the pedagogic project, the most significant findings will be reported by providing detailed information on the activities students undertook. Finally, the data will be discussed to provide a final assessment on the value and benefits of the humanistic gerontology approach that proposes a critical reflection on the representation of old age and offers students the opportunity to interact with elders.

In trying to incorporate emotional, discursive and communication elements in the proposed teaching materials, an attempt has been made to implement activities which enable students to better understand the intricacies of ageing as a complex and multifaceted experience within the life course. In this way, they were encouraged to consider personalized views about later life and were presented with an antidote to simplistic and conventional ways of thinking about old age.

Keywords: Ageing, critical social work, discourse, humanistic gerontology, older people

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Health Information and Advice for and about the Elderly

In recent years great attention has been given to the importance of health literacy as a means of empowerment for individuals to make informed decisions about their health and wellbeing. In the case of elderly people, the problem is complicated by the fact that they face more and more health challenges and become increasingly vulnerable and dependent on others for their care. As a consequence, health communication often needs to be addressed not only to the people directly interested, but also to their non-professional carers, who are family members, husbands, wives, children, siblings.

Nowadays a patient-centred approach is considered crucial for high quality health care and it views the patient not just in terms of his illness or a set of symptoms, but rather as a person with emotions, feelings, needs and preferences. An essential element of this approach is empathy, which involves the ability to understand another person's experiences and feelings and view them from their perspective. Health information, therefore, is not only aiming to improve the factual knowledge of the patient, but also convince him of the necessity and the advantages of adopting a particular treatment or lifestyle. To do so, it has to adopt a form of argumentation that has been described as "info-suasive", in which information and persuasion are blended inextricably (Schulz / Rubinelli 2008). The study will examine how essential information on ageing and specific health issues, such as strokes and dementia, is presented on the Internet or in printed guidelines to both the elderly and their carers and identify any differences in the approach for the two addressees.

The analysis will be made using a theoretical framework which has already been adopted to study health information on diabetes for adults, adolescents and young children (Turnbull 2015a, 2015b). It takes into consideration both the cognitive and communicative dimensions of knowledge dissemination. The cognitive aspects cover the strategies adopted to explain 'technical' information to the reader, as for example through the use of definitions, examples, scenarios and metaphor in order to translate and recontextualize it in lay terms. As advice-giving may appear as a face-threatening act in Anglo-Western contexts (Adolphs *et al.* 2004), the communicative strategies will aim to establish a relationship of trust between the addresser and addressee and may include personalization, humour, questions, marked lexis and metaphors, as well as the use of politeness markers, such as modality, *if* as a logical operator, hedges, vagueness.

Keywords: health information, the elderly, carers, cognitive strategies, communicative strategies

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The Health of Foreign Caregivers from the Employer's Point of View

Considering the aging of European society and the widespread of the double earning couple model, the home care work and the domestic work are jobs doomed to increase. The wellbeing of a significant proportion of Southern Europe's elderly and people who are not self-sufficient relies on home care assistants, who are usually migrant women. An abundance of literature has been published on such migrant home care workers, but few studies have focused on the consequences of this type of employment on the workers' health (Ahonen *et al.* 2009; Christensen / Manthorpe 2016).

There is an urgent need to investigate the occupational health of home care assistants, because they are a particularly vulnerable category of workers, often discriminated against and exploited. They consequently risk developing health issues related both to their occupation and to their experience of migration (Schenker 2010; Rechel *et al.* 2011). Moreover, scientific research has abundantly demonstrated that protecting care assistants' wellbeing is a prerequisite to ensuring that people who are frail, elderly and not self-sufficient receive good-quality care (Walsh / Shutes 2013; George *et al.*, 2017).

The paper presents the first results of an on-going research entitled "Migration and Occupational Health: Understanding the Risks for Eastern European Migrant Women". In particular, it wants to discuss the results of semi-structured interviews with employers (families and older people) of foreign caregivers. The goal is to answer to two research questions: how do employers deal with their employee health problems? what are the implications of workers' poor health conditions on the quality of care they provide?

Keywords: migration, women, health, care work, employers

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“Dear Young People, don’t vote”. Aging in Political Communication, Inter-generation Dialogues, Irony and Legitimation Issues

The widespread representation of older people in popular culture as passive and inert has been challenged in a range of recent studies and publications (Nussbaum / Coupland 2004, Caprara *et al.* 2013). In view of the increasing number of older adults in today’s society, the notion of aging has received significant attention in the public sphere where common assumptions and stereotypes are challenged and potential scenarios are presented. As it has been discussed from different academic perspectives over the past twenty years, older people’s collective condition is undergoing important sociological and cultural changes, making the elderly - among other things - an enticing political reservoir of votes and a pivotal segment of the active electorate. Guided by this evidence, many political actors have devoted specific communication strategies to such age-groups, providing both ad hoc political messages and policy activities. This study builds on previous research (Schneider / Ingram 1993; Kaid / Garner 2004; Holladay / Coombs 2004) in order to provide an overview of the ways in which older adults have been addressed and exploited in political (i.e. electoral) campaigns, especially in the USA, in the last decade. The data basis consists of *YouTube* videos and media libraries of TV channels, so the emphasis is thus on spoken language and the visualization of the actors in videos. Considering electoral ads as multimodal texts, Kress and Van Leeuwen’s social semiotic approach (2001) is used to examine how multimodal elements convey authority. In particular, this study draws on legitimation theory (Van Leeuwen 2008) to analyse which legitimation tactic is employed to convey meanings through the voice of elderly people (e.g. role model, tradition, expert, conformity) and what use is made of irony as a pragmatic strategy for persuasion. This approach will highlight the various characteristics attributed to seniors and should shed light on the use of aging in political communication.

Keywords: seniors, legitimation, irony, political communication, multimodal analysis, social constructions

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