

INTRODUCTION TO VOLUME 8, ISSUE 3

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1. Introduction

Professional discourse is, before anything else, discourse spoken from a role. The president addressing the General Assembly, the cartoonist on the editorial payroll, the forum user certifying an engine on the strength of his own mileage, the translator facing a foreign statute, the applicant pleading for federal funds, the teacher writing for a tenure committee – each of these figures uses language under an institutional constraint, and each text carries the imprint of the institution behind it. Volume 8, Issue 3 of *Professional Discourse & Communication* brings together six empirical studies that examine precisely this imprint, in political, media, market, legal and academic communicative spheres. In doing so, the issue addresses the core of our journal's scope: the strategic use of language and semiotic resources by people acting as members, representatives, agents or critics of institutions.

The composition of the authorship spans two countries – Russia and Saudi Arabia – and six research centres. The empirical ground stretches far beyond the affiliations. Between the virtual covers of this issue the reader will find Uruguayan presidential speeches delivered in Montevideo and at the United Nations, editorial cartoons published in London and in Washington, Russian consumer forums arguing about automobiles assembled in China, British and American statutes and supreme-court decisions, 99.4 million words of abstracts archived by the US National Science Foundation, and teaching statements posted on North American university websites. An issue thus reads the institutions of four continents through a common analytical lens – precisely the cross-cultural and cross-linguistic dialogue this journal was created to sustain.

2. The structure of the issue

We arranged the papers along a descending gradient of institutional authority, which is at the same time a movement from the most public utterance to the most occluded text. The issue opens with a head of state – the institutional role par excellence – and closes with a solitary applicant producing a document hidden from public view by design. Between these poles the chain passes through the press that comments on power, the lay public that answers professional journalism in the comment section, the codified vocabulary of the law, and the promotional paperwork of science. Read in sequence, the six studies show how an institutional voice is claimed, echoed, contested, codified, promoted, and accredited.

3. About the articles

Irina Zaalishvili's "*Political Narratives in the Presidential Discourse of Yamandú Orsi and Their Linguistic Representation*" opens the issue at the highest point of institutional speech. Analysing 34 addresses of the Uruguayan president, the author identifies five governing narratives – democracy as foundation, pluralism and alternation in office, continuity of power, socio-economic stability, peaceful coexistence – and shows how Orsi turns the very

absence of drama into a national brand: a president who walks among citizens without a security detail becomes living proof of public trust, and the metaphor of Uruguay as a “lighthouse of democratic republicanism” converts a small country’s moderation into a moral mission. The study reads as a fine illustration of institutional communication in the strict sense: Orsi never speaks as a private person, and his ideologemes, anaphoric parallelisms, intertextual appeals to José Mujica and domestic metaphors of construction perform the office of the presidency even while they describe it.

From the podium we step to the press. In “*Metaphor, Metonymy and Conceptual Integration in Satirical Discourse: British and American Political Cartoons*,” Svetlana Pavlina and Natalia Milashchenko examine 200 editorial cartoons from The Guardian and The U.S. News & World Report and demonstrate that Richard Trim’s six-level model of figurative decoding, built for verbal political texts, collapses into a five-level architecture once the image enters the message: cultural and political contexts fuse on a single level, and the visual or verbal figure itself becomes the entry point of decoding. The most arresting pages of the article follow the red necktie of Donald Trump, which in one cartoon doubles as a lasso thrown around Greenland and, splitting at its tip, into a snake – a single polycode sign in which metonymy and metaphor function inseparably. The cartoonist, as the authors remind us, is himself an institutional actor, a visual commentator whose figures are licensed by the editorial line of the paper, so satire here is professional discourse twice over.

The third article hands the floor to the public that talks back. Anna Tikhomirova’s “*Discursive Legitimation of Chinese Automobile Brands in the Russian Market: A Mixed-Methods Analysis of Online Consumer Discourse*” tracks 1,144 forum comments from 2014 to 2023 and finds that legitimation proceeds out of step with itself: pragmatic legitimacy, argued through price-benefit calculations and mileage statistics, consolidates first, while moral legitimacy remains stubbornly hostile, with two thirds of its comments coded negative even in the final period. The linguistic journey is equally telling – the early delegitimizing synecdoche “they were only recently collecting rice” gives way to the precise statistical lexicon of the lay expert (“my Omoda has 170,000 km”), and the comment section emerges as a battleground where ordinary consumers validate or overturn the verdicts of professional automotive journalists. For our journal’s concern with institutional communication, the lesson is that legitimacy is negotiated from below as much as it is declared from above.

The middle of the issue turns from institutions speaking to institutions codified in language. Irina Zhilina’s “*Terminological Field Structure as a Reflection of Legal Institutions in English-Russian Legal Terminology*” argues that a legal term borrows its meaning from the system that authorises it, and that the divergence between English and Russian equivalents is graduated rather than uniform. Her four-case scale runs from the status of a single office – the English magistrate is by default a lay volunteer sitting in a bench of three, while the Russian “mirovoy sudya” is a professional judge sitting alone – through the basis of categorical classification and the category of the legal remedy, up to the structure of the whole terminological field, in which six English names for a lawyer answer one Russian “advokat.” Corpus evidence sharpens the argument: in the British National Corpus the strongest collocate of *magistrate* is *stipendiary*, a fossil of the pre-2003 court system, and the frequency gap between *solicitor* (3,069 tokens) and *barrister* (508) reproduces the division of the profession itself. The proposed “institutional label” for bilingual dictionaries follows directly, and the paper situates translation firmly within institutional communication: the translator negotiates between legal systems as much as between lexicons.

The fifth article follows money into science. Dmitriy Tulyakov's "*Variation and Diachronic Change in Epistemic Stance: Testing Promotional Trends in NSF Grant Proposal Abstracts*" puts the widespread claim that academic writing is growing more promotional to a 38-year test on a 99.4-million-word corpus of successful NSF applications, and the test fails. Boosters and hedges decline together across most directorates, and within the modal system the normative *should* retreats while the capability-marking *can* advances – a shift from obligation to potential that suits a genre selling feasibility and impact. Education stands out as the sole directorate with rising boosters, yet the rise dissolves under inspection into multifunctional verbs such as *highlight* and *demonstrate*. Grant abstracts are institutional communication under competitive pressure, and Tulyakov's finding that their authors grow more restrained rather than more loud complicates the promotionalisation thesis on which much current ESP research rests.

The issue closes where authority is most hidden. Atekah Abaalkhail's "*Rhetorical Structure of an Occluded Academic Genre: A Corpus-Based Move Analysis of Teaching Philosophy Statements*" reports fourteen moves in 46 authentic statements, of which five qualify as conventional, and delivers the genre's central irony: the document named after philosophy is overwhelmingly about practice, since the move "focus on teaching practices" occurs in every single text and dwarfs the philosophical declarations in word count. The genre proves hybrid – academic prose in its prepositional-phrase n-grams, CV and application letter in its self-promotional moves – and the comparison of faculty with graduate writers shows expertise at work: established academics reach for philosophical concepts and acknowledge their mentors, while novices foreground concrete classroom activities together with technology use, and dwell on learners of different backgrounds far more often than their senior colleagues. Writing guides, the author adds, silently omit moves that authentic texts practise, so the empirically derived model corrects the advice literature. As a gatekeeping document required for hiring, tenure, promotion and award decisions, the teaching statement is institutional accreditation condensed into a page, and its occlusion makes the article a fitting close to our gradient from the podium to the hidden file.

4. Major themes of the issue

Four thematic lines bind the six papers together.

The first is the *institutional embeddedness of professional language*: the dependence of a unit's meaning on the institution that licences it – the dependence of a legal term on its legal system, of a presidential narrative on the office that utters it, of a brand name on the market community that grants or withholds acceptance, of a cartoon figure on the editorial line behind it. Zhilina demonstrates the point at the level of the term, Zaalishvili at the level of the narrative, Tikhomirova at the level of the brand, Pavlina and Milashchenko at the level of the satirical image. Conceptually, the theme carries the journal's core premise: professional meaning cannot be decoded from the dictionary alone, because the institution is part of the semantics.

The second line is *promotion and legitimation under competitive pressure*. Grant applicants, job candidates, market entrants and even heads of state compete for attention, funds, posts and trust, and their language registers the pressure. Tulyakov tests the promotionalisation hypothesis on the longest time series in the issue and finds restraint rather than hype; Abaalkhail shows self-promotion fused with academic prose in an occluded genre; Tikhomirova watches legitimacy being granted and withheld, comment by comment, in a digital

marketplace. Read together, these papers suggest that promotional force is real yet uneven across genres – a conclusion with direct consequences for ESP teaching and for the study of academic and market communication.

The third line is the *figurative and conceptual machinery of professional meaning*. Metaphor, metonymy, conceptual blending, narrative schemas and terminological fields are the cognitive instruments through which institutions are made thinkable: a lighthouse for a republic, a snake-lasso for a foreign policy, a sponge for a hesitant premier, a bare interior and a fully loaded one for competing car markets, a field of six names for a split profession. Pavlina and Milashchenko supply the multimodal decoding model, Zaalishvili and Tikhomirova the verbal evidence, Zhilina the conceptual mirror between field and institution. The theme speaks to the cognitive strand of our journal's scope, showing that figurative thought is at work in statutes and forums no less than in poetry.

The fourth line is *time* itself. Professional discourse has a history, and the issue repeatedly uses that history as evidence: Tulyakov's 38-year corpus exposes a slow convergence of stance categories, Tikhomirova's decade divides into three legitimation epochs, Zhilina's corpus preserves a pre-reform vocabulary in which *stipendiary* still collocates with *magistrate*, and Abaalkhail's 2004-2016 sample stands as a pre-pandemic baseline against which the teaching statement of the online era can one day be measured. The conceptual payoff is methodological: without diachronic depth, a synchronic snapshot mistakes a phase for a norm.

5. Conclusion

Taken together, the issue covers six types of professional and institutional discourse: the political discourse of the head of state; the satirical discourse of the editorial cartoon; the digital consumer discourse of the automotive forum; the legal discourse of the statute, the court decision, the dictionary entry and the translation equivalent; the scientific discourse of the grant abstract; and the pedagogical-professional discourse of the teaching statement. Each type is studied with the same conviction – that language at work inside an institution is the proper object of linguistics.

We are grateful to the authors for entrusting their work to this journal, and to the anonymous reviewers whose careful reports strengthened every paper in the issue. We invite readers to continue the conversation through citations, correspondence, classroom use and submissions to future volumes, and we look forward to the studies these six papers will provoke.