Editorial

The fact that 46 researchers from 38 universities worldwide answered the call for abstract proposals for this special issue is ample testimony to the dynamicity of metaphor studies in the field of languages for specific purposes. The issue opens with two invited contributions which pursue different purposes. The article by Zoltan Kövecses, author of *Metaphor. A Practical Introduction* (Oxford University Press, 2002), among many other works, examines how context bears on metaphor in discourse, providing, as it were, a general backdrop to the more specific articles to follow. The other invited article by Graham Low and Jeannette Littlemore addresses the more specifically didactic issue of the metaphoric nature of classroom management language and how it might be mis/understood by students.

Kövecses' article, while tackling a major issue in metaphor studies at the present time, namely, how local cultural issues may be playing a decisive role in motivating the use of metaphor in general or in determining the choice of one or other metaphor at any particular juncture, is at the same time highly relevant to the use of metaphor in languages for specific purposes. Thus, if discourse on the car industry exploits the semantic field of that industry for metaphor sources or the presence of a boxer leads to metaphor use from that source or a journalist constructs his argument exploiting relevant aspects of the Californian habitat to metaphorically deal with a question that has a bearing on that part of the world, then an important issue for language teachers for specific purposes could be the question of how aspects of their particular fields may trigger and sustain metaphor. That is, if and how, for instance, naval engineering, architecture, business, medicine or any other specific field may be tapping the conceptual and linguistic resources of its own subject matter for metaphor sources. The result of such a process is that specific concepts and vocabulary, literal in, and proper to, those specific fields, may be reutilised metaphorically in those same disciplines.

Graham Low and Jeannette Littlemore, joint authors of such a relevant book to this *Ibérica* issue as *Figurative Thinking and Foreign Language Learning* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), point out that "the target language to manage a class and organise its work represents one of the few genuinely communicative uses of the target language in many formal foreign-language

or bilingual-education teaching situations" (abstract). The foreign language class holds a unique advantage over any other subject in that, as Bachman (1990: 2) puts it, the language itself is "both the instrument and the object". Low and Littlemore show that this instrumental classroom-language is highly metaphoric and may easily be misunderstood by students. They provide intriguing evidence (which I will not reveal here) of how perceptions vary both among and between native and non-native speakers.

The selected contributions cover a wide range of subjects within the scope of languages for specific purposes. The first two focus on Science. Andreas Musolff's contribution contrasts how the topic of embryonic stem cells (ESC) comes across in media publications in Britain and Germany. It shows both the salient role of metaphor in public debates on crucial scientific issues and, at the same time, points to cultural specificities. One of the major questions one tends to ask is what difference metaphor makes and what difference the choice of one metaphor rather than another makes. Interestingly, the author discusses and reveals "how the different metaphor preferences may account for contrasts in British and German public attitudes and legislation regarding ESC research" (abstract). The article by Laura Hidalgo Downing and Blanca Kraljevic Mujic taps a different scientific genre as their evidence comes from abstracts on the theme of immunology appearing in *Scientific American*. They are particularly interested in distinguishing between conventional and new or more creative metaphors, their different functions and the persuasive effects they entail. Perhaps, we are very much accustomed to the idea that science operates on a basis of technical concepts and terminology and then metaphor is subsequently added to simplify and get across those concepts and terminology. This may not necessarily be the actual sequence. The authors show a very revealing case where a new metaphor –"cell suicide"– is first introduced in an academic field to name a novel concept and it is only later that an appropriate technical term is developed –in this case, "apoptosis"– to substitute it. In other words, the sequence is the inverse of what may have been taken for granted.

The next three articles have different didactic or pedagogical ends as their main focus. A question that had been posed for some time at conferences was to what extent the insights deriving from metaphor research were making their way into the classroom. This is the central goal of Marisol Velasco's contribution. On the back of extensive research being carried out in the fields of translation and interpretation, there is renewed interest in the potential of translation in language-for-specific-purposes teaching. Adopting

this view, the author goes on to outline specific and concrete strategies to take advantage of the possibilities afforded by translation where metaphor use in the context of business is concerned. In addition to metaphor in language, she also introduces pictorial metaphor and both allow her to show that appropriate translation very characteristically may imply the raising of cross-cultural awareness on the part of students. Andrés Palacios presents a very novel proposal providing a system of visual patterns to capture tense and aspect, pointing out the advantages of visuals for students of today's world. As with all novel proposals, it is difficult to predict their application and staying power. Nevertheless, the author does provide a convincing system of cross-modal correspondences –spoken-graphic-visual– and argues for the applicability of the system for ESP students, particularly in Architecture and Civil Engineering and in general "for raising learners' linguistic awareness of agreement within the sentence" (abstract). If, as Jun Zhao points out, gesture as a conveyor of metaphor has been largely ignored, LSP practitioners will find very convincing evidence in her article, gleaned from real teaching scenarios, for taking it into account. Indeed, they should even find it intriguing to learn how coherent and systematic teacher gestural behaviour may be and at the same time be something which so blatantly escapes our notice. The author makes the important point that gesture is not just an extra added onto word but that it often plays a crucial role in encapsulating and getting across abstract ideas and that we may miss the point if we only analyse verbal utterances. Additionally, while language comments and assessments are typically susceptible to rehersal, gesture is characteristically produced on-line and hence for that very reason has a particularly significant effect on communication potential.

The remaining three articles of this number deal with a variety of issues. Magdalena Bielenia-Grajewska examines the language of investment-banking communication in English, German, Spanish and Polish, paying close attention to merger and acquisition processes, an area which is particularly rich in metaphor use. Evidence is gleaned from a variety of sources and with 170 English terms as her starting point, the author examines how the other languages behave vis-à-vis these metaphoric terms. This gives her scope for very interesting cross-linguistic evidence and analysis. She claims that "[we] can observe globalising tendencies in technical, political or business vocabulary but national languages tend to keep their own semantic structures, especially figurative expressions" (pages 146-147). The article co-authored by Maity Siqueira, Ana Flávia Souto de

Oliveira, Dalby Dienstbach Hubert, Galeno Faé de Almeida, and Larissa Moreira Brangel, deals with metaphor identification in a terminological dictionary, arguing, in line with very recent developments, for the need to place figurative language very firmly within the brief of terminology. The always controversial issue of identification benefits from the pooled opinions of the group and their evidence is based on Brazilian Portuguese terminological dictionaries enriched by contrasts with different English dictionaries. They conclude that "metaphorical extensions seem to be one of the main reasons for the polysemy of lexical items" (page 173). Thomas H. Smith's contribution incorporates yet another specific area where metaphor deployment may have very significant effects, namely, that of mediating in conflict resolution. The author's corpus shows seven highly conventional metaphors to occur in such frequency as to frame descriptions and explanations. Furthermore, they easily fit into interrelated groups. While these metaphors, according to Smith, may oversimplify issues, at the same time, they pave the way for extended interactions, reintroducing necessary complexity and facilitating developments in the mediating process.

In summary, then, the two invited articles plus the selected ones cover a wide spectrum of interests within the much wider field of the use of metaphor in languages for specific purposes. Those articles have dealt with metaphor as shaping content in different areas, as a pedagogical tool or facilitator in others or as a bearer of cultural heritage in many others. As a sign of the globalisation of knowledge at the present moment, the cross cultural or cross linguistic agenda to appear to a greater or lesser degree has a bearing on such languages as English, Portuguese, German, Hungarian, Polish, Chinese as well as passing references to others, Amerindian, for instance. The set of articles are a testimony to how far and how rapidly this particular field of research is progressing and it is to be hoped that this Special Edition will encourage further work on metaphor in the vast territorial extensions of Languages for Specific Purposes. Indeed, very significant work along these lines is right now emerging from AELFE-colleague pens (see, for instance, recent *Ibérica* numbers; or Roldán Riejos & Úbeda Mansilla, 2006; or Cuadrado Esclápez & Redondo Ramiro, 2008).

Let me take advantage of this opportunity to thank *Ibérica* for the honour and pleasure of Guest-Editing this special issue and my particular gratitude goes to the Editor-in-Chief, Ana Bocanegra who spared no support nor organisational expertise in helping me far beyond the call of duty –and always doing so with characteristic cheerfulness. Moreover, she took the

gestation and delivery of this special issue in her stride making it compatible with the pregnancy and birth of her own son, David. Heartiest congratulations. My enduring regret is not having been able to take far more of the excellent proposals on board for this issue and I sincerely thank the authors of all 46 abstracts and again convey my appreciation for their understanding that despite positive or very positive assessments, space limitation made it impossible to include them. Undoubtedly, many of those proposals will see the light in suitable publication venues. Finally, I want to express, on behalf of *Ibérica* and particularly on my own, the sincerest of gratitude for the invaluable help from so many colleagues worldwide who generously gave of their expertise and time to the assessment and refereeing processes at different stages of the preparation of this issue. As a token of recognition their names appear below in alphabetic order:

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