

Breeze, Ruth/Gotti, Maurizio/Sancho Guinda, Carmen, eds. (2014): *Interpersonality in Legal Genres*. (Linguistic Insights 191). Bern et al.: Lang. ISBN 978-3-0343-1524-1, 393 pages.

The versatile and fuzzy term “interpersonality” is at the heart of this collection of 14 papers written by renowned international scholars in the field of legal research. Since communication in this domain is said to be highly impersonal, full of stylistic conventions in legal writing and in compliance with norms, one would not expect a great variety of discursive features of interpersonality in legal texts at first glance. However, the editors do not only provide an excellent insight into the topic in their extensive introductory chapter (27 pages), but also discuss interpersonality as “moulded by national cultures, registers, disciplines, genres, and private intentions, as well as by the media and the communicative situation – the nature and size of audiences, for example – through which all of them are transmitted” (p. 9). In their well-organized chapter, they clearly outline their attitude towards this concept located between *stance* and *engagement*. Moreover, the reader is served “appetizers” of brief article summaries to read on.

The book is divided into three major sections: (i) Interactions among legal experts; (ii) Interactions between legal experts and mixed audiences; (iii) Interactions between legal experts and laypeople. Thus it addresses not only researchers but also legal practitioners and laypeople interested in legal communication aspects.

The five contributions in the first section are devoted to legal expert communication in judicial interpretation, on rights discussions, interactions in charter parties, research articles and barrister’s opinions. First, Davide Mazzi considers features of interpersonality in two quantitatively comparable corpora of judgments on agriculture in English non-common law contexts (EU) and common law (by the Supreme Court of Ireland). He could trace a converging effect of diverse legal systems through the EU legislation and a stamp on common-law countries. Moreover, the interpersonal positioning in the judgments reveals that EU judges devote less attention to ambiguity of terms and communicate in a more impersonal style, “speaking in the name of the ‘court’”, whereas “Irish judges show a propensity to negotiate their standpoint” (p. 18). Tarja Salmi-Tolonen studied the main features of communicating rights in European legislation and draws on a corpus of EU Directives, exploring interpersonal metadiscourse. Directives are prescriptive and so legislators of the individual member states are directed to comply with these and need to implement the defined measures. The EU directive drafters need to persuade the individual state stakeholders to accept specific motives, their background etc. for the legal steps to be pursued. Therefore the discourse is highly directive, but also expository.

María de los Ángeles Orts describes voyage charter parties (GENCON standard), referring to their formal, discursive, textual and pragmatic levels. This contract genre regulates the rights and obligations between ship owners and charterers. Her corpus is derived from texts of the Baltic and International Maritime Council (BIMCO). Her results show that the ship owners’ interests seem to be more strongly protected than those of their business partners. Michele Sala’s study examines 320 research articles (from CADIS with 80 texts each from applied linguistics, law, medicine and economics) for their use of interrogative expressions (‘conductive’ and ‘non-conductive’ questions).

Finally, Christoph Hafner presents findings on interpersonal linguistic means in the barristers’ opinions. The purpose of this genre is to spur a balanced legal perspective on a specific case used to represent the client’s interest. Therefore such texts include objective assessments as well as subjective advice on the tactics to be applied in a case.

The five chapters of the second section of the book are devoted to discursive interactions of lawyers and diverse partners. Vijay Bhatia's chapter is on statutory writing. He examines several versions of three sample texts: one original, one simplified ('plain-language') text for the general public and another more comprehensible ('easified') text for an expert audience. Carmen Sancho Guinda investigates the reader-considerateness in legal decisions on aviation accidents and incidents released by the US National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB). Authors make use of engagement choices in order to allow for accessibility and informativeness to the texts. The engagement features fall into three categories: organisational, meta-discursive and embedded.

Manuals and guides for drafting legislation (with a focus on the Scottish Government Publication *Plain Language and Legislation*) are considered by Christopher Williams specifically addressing author- and readership issues.

Domain name arbitration awards and patents are examined in the next two chapters. Ignacio Vázquez-Orta focuses on interpersonal elements of arbitration discourse of the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) regarding authoritativeness, interpersonal reasoning and legalese. Ismael Arina Pellón's contribution is devoted to interpersonality in patents, in particular to persuasion pointers for novelty, creativity and ownership in U.S. patent property claiming.

Interactions between legal experts and laypeople are discussed in the four contributions of the third section of the volume. First, Ruth Breeze investigates letters of advice and opinion with regard to relational resources expressed in writer-reader dialogue, e. g. the textual roles of I, we and you and the importance of if-constructions. Maurizio Gotti addresses aspects of mediation and the way it dissolves disputes by analysing transcripts from mediation cases where the mediator negotiates through a specific strategic approach. Patrizia Anesa analyses the asymmetric communication in instructions to US court jurors in order to reveal how experts and laypeople interact in the jury instruction phase of trials. Finally, Isabel Corona reports on her research into corporate e-press releases in international arbitration cases (Kraft Foods vs. Starbucks case). Her chapter is particularly interesting for the rhetorical strategies of the companies to defend their actions in order to save "face" (i.e. reputation and stakeholders' trust).

As has been briefly demonstrated, this collection of papers spans a wide spectrum of interpersonality analysis in diverse legal genres. The book provides clear evidence that "interpersonality is a key component in legal interactions which is not only audience-bound but may also vary with genres, genre stages, media, linguistic code, and the sender's circumstances" (p. 30). Moreover, the individual chapters open up new approaches to study legal texts and provide an excellent opportunity to familiarize with legal genre specifics. Indeed, this collection of papers spurs further research into the use of interpersonal linguistic means in a variety of other discourse fields between experts and laypeople. It is highly recommendable to both scholars and practitioners working in this field.

Prof. Dr. phil. habil. Ines-Andrea Busch-Lauer
Fakultät Angewandte Sprachen und
Interkulturelle Kommunikation
Westfälische Hochschule Zwickau
Ines.Busch.Lauer@fh-zwickau.de