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**Orts, María Ángeles, Ruth Breeze & Maurizio Gotti
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Fanny Domenec

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Orts, María Ángeles, Ruth Breeze & Maurizio Gotti (Eds.). 2017. *Power, Persuasion and Manipulation in Specialised Genres*. Bern: Peter Lang. 368 pp. ISBN: 978-3-0343-3012-1.

- 1 With *Power, Persuasion and Manipulation in Specialised Genres*, **María Ángeles Orts**, **Ruth Breeze** and **Maurizio Gotti** propose another insight into professional communication, following Bhatia and Bremner (2014). Although the latter focused on corporate discourse, the former favour a more global perspective on “the language of professions” (p. 9) and how they use persuasion and manipulation in various genres.
- 2 The 368-page book is divided into two sections: the six chapters in the first section focus on “power through manipulation” in media, organizational, academic, legal and institutional discourses. The second section comprises seven chapters that focus on “power through persuasion” in promotional, legal and corporate contexts. Notes on the authors can be found at the end of the book.
- 3 In the introduction, Orts & Breeze insist that power is not necessarily seen as alienating. Rather, power is considered from a constructivist, positive perspective, as creative and “at the origin of the social order” (p. 10). As such, professions and the resulting specialised discursive communities appear as a way for humans to “organize and institutionalize the world” (p. 10). As the main controlling mechanism, language can be used to manipulate or to dominate. It is thus necessary to adopt a critical view on discourse, using Critical Linguistics (CL) or Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), and to distinguish between manipulation and persuasion. In this context, professional genres are described as conventionalized techniques of persuasion or manipulation and a useful reminder on genre theory (Austin 1962; Searle 1976; Bhatia 2012) is provided page 11. The editors state that language represents and constitutes social and legal reality, which is why text, co-text and context are of the utmost importance in critical genre analysis (CGA). In order to study the three aspects, various methods are used by the authors, including corpus linguistics, multimodal analyses and discourse analysis, among others. Orts & Breeze conclude on the emergence of a power shift, mainly due to multimodality and globalization. Interdiscursivity and CGA are seen as ways of “‘demystifying’ professional practices” (Bhatia 2016: 9) to tend to a “more egalitarian and communal approach to authority in specialized discourse” (p. 23).
- 4 Section 1 provides various examples of this will to demystify professional practices. The six chapters focus on manipulative discourses, “either because of the deliberate distortion or withholding of information, or because of the appropriation of discourses from other spheres” (p. 16).
- 5 In the first chapter, **Vijay and Aditi Bhatia** address the contemporary issue of media reporting on the Panama Papers in India. Unfounded accusations of celebrities are analysed in headlines and media reports, using the tools of CGA: genre is considered as an “interdiscursive performance” (p.32) and examined from the perspective of

interdiscursivity and multimodality. The authors find that the reports and headlines under study are characteristic of “new hybrid genres” (p. 29) that mix speculation and facts in order to sensationalize information and attract readers. Various “linguistic, rhetorical and text-external devices” (p. 31) like negatively-connoted adjectives; amplification, and speculation, the use of expert voices, the principle of “recenticity” (p. 45) disclaimers in the form of “corporate interdiscursive style” (p. 37); name and shame of celebrities; the use of hashtags or quantification or metaphors, are used to persuade the readers that the celebrities are involved in the Panama Papers scandal. However, the authors conclude that readers hardly believe in this “discursive manipulation” (p. 33).

- 6 Another type of discourse is studied in the second chapter: **Anna Bocanegra-Vale** focuses on the argumentation processes in the annual speeches of the Secretary of the International Maritime Organization (IMO). After a literature review on institutional discourse, more specifically on the construction of power through the concept of globalization (Fairclough 2001), the author describes the corpus, which comprises fifteen messages delivered between 2002 and 2016. The qualitative analysis was carried out with the AntConc concordancer. Four main themes are identified in the corpus: *i.* globalization to expand the world economy in a socially responsible way, focusing on the social utility of the IMO; *ii.* leadership, through a personalization of discourse and conversationalization techniques to “humanize the institution” (p. 63); *iii.* hegemony, to justify the IMO’s dominant position and the need for its activities; *iv.* legitimation, to build trust by promoting transparency and stressing collaboration. These four elements allow the speakers to promote the interests of the organization, broaden the target audience and appear as responsible.
- 7 In their article, **Shirley Carter-Thomas** and **Elizabeth Rowley-Jolivet** shift to another specialized domain, as they delve into leadership and authority in academic medicine. They focus on the syntactic resources and formulations in 400 editorials of medical journals to “establish authority and convince” (p. 72) readerships. The authors adopt a genre-based approach, drawing comparison with 50 research articles. All the documents under study were published between 2005 and 2014. Four main syntactic features are analysed: *i.* deontic modality, *ii.* pronouns, *iii.* questions, *iv.* extraposition. Deontic modals, especially must and should are overrepresented in editorials. Their broad target audience and the variety of issues covered in the editorials allow the writers to appear as experts, using “forceful directives” (p. 77) that “indicate a clear power imbalance between author and reader” (p. 75). The modals under study are scarcely used with hedging, which could qualify the stance. Instead, editorials frequently include boosters. The pronouns *I*, *you*, *one* and *we* are meant to involve the readers and make them “more receptive to the writer’s claims” (p. 83). Questions are very frequent in medical editorials. They help organize the text, “guiding the reader through the text and helping comprehension – but also steering the reader’s interpretation in the direction chosen by the author” (p. 87). Finally, extraposition in editorials mostly performs evaluative and directive functions: impersonality allows the writer to criticize or emphasize particular areas of priority. The analysis carried out by Carter-Thomas and Rowley-Jolivet thus reveals power asymmetry between the dominant group of writers and their readers, where interpersonal features and syntactic forms are used by the former to impose their point of view and boost their authority.

- 8 **Giuliana Garzone** examines another aspect of medical communication. Her work on the webpages of surrogacy organizations in the US, Mexico, Canada, Georgia, Ukraine and Greece highlights the particular importance of websites in a controversial field, which cannot rely on traditional promotional modes. The multimodal corpus comprises 98,315 tokens posted online and is analysed from the perspective of CL and CDA. The author used Wordsmith Tools 6.0 “to identify salient aspects of the texts investigated” (p. 104) through the analysis of the discursive and rhetorical practices. Results of the discursive analysis first show that on the homepages, visuals and texts present the organizations’ activities as an “altruistic help” (p. 109), creating a “morally upright professional identity” (p. 110). The lexical analysis also reveals that the achievements are described as collective enterprises, carried out by teams of professionals. Frequent references to the notions of success, experience and help are also meant to reassure future clients. Finally, specialized language is also used, yet explanatory strategies or glossaries “are aimed at rationalizing intended parents’ perception of the process” (p. 121). From a rhetorical perspective, the author concludes that “the ethical construction of surrogacy organizations’ character is effected consistently” (p. 122). *Pathos* and *logos* are less frequent, and often combined to *ethos*, as the main purpose is to attract clients, but more importantly, “to win their trust” (p. 124). The author concludes that a general model could be useful to “systematize the synergic analytical approach” (p. 126) proposed in this paper.
- 9 In chapter 5, **Esther Monzó-Nebot** also investigates a controversial topic. *People of the State of California v. Borck Allen Turner*, a judgement on a sexual assault case, made the headlines because the sentence was viewed as lenient. To show how face work strategies can be used as “an ideological instrument to influence behaviour” (p. 131), Monzó-Nebot carries out a content and discourse analysis of the discourse pronounced by the judge. In a detailed literature review, the author explains that in a trial, a positive representation of the perpetrator and a negative representation of the victim – especially when the latter is a member of an underprivileged group – contribute to the “just-world hypothesis” (p. 132). “Victim blaming” or “victim derogation” (p. 133) are also frequently used to deny or rationalize injustice. Finally, the author reminds the reader of the influence of cognitive biases in sentencing: when they feel close to the offender, judges and jurors tend to be less severe. In order to identify “in- and out-grouping strategies” (p. 137) in the judge’s discourse, Monzó-Nebot first identified and coded all the references to the agents. The references were then classified as “defensive”, “protective”, “self-threatening” or “threatening”. Other categories include “supportive” or “remedial” actions, but also “accounts”, “apologies” and “requests” (p. 141). Silences and omissions were also included. Results show that when presenting himself, the judge adopted a defensive face but also gave himself credit. The author states that the discourse pronounced by the judge was visibly biased and based on a “cognitive dissonance” (p. 150) in the (re)presentation of the victim and of the offender. For instance, the selection of information when presenting and quoting the victim led to “a biased selection” which proved “manipulative, silencing and damaging for the victim and her social group” p. 146). In addition, the media were presented as a threat to both the victim and the defendant, laying the blame on the media rather than on the offender.
- 10 In the last chapter of the first section, **Pascual Pérez-Paredes** shifts to the field of higher education. His research work focuses on the green paper on higher education

(HE) by the UK government, whose key idea was the implementation of the teaching excellence framework (TEF). The analysis also focuses on the ensuing debate on Twitter. The author uses corpus analysis combined with “social data mining techniques” (p. 162) to identify keywords revealing an underlying discourse of power and manipulation on the TEF. After a quick reminder of the main purposes and tools used for part of speech keyword analysis, Pérez-Paredes presents the main categories identified in the report: *i.* common nouns, which express a focus on students, *ii.* the expression of purpose, *iii.* modals, to express volition. Different keywords were identified in the two Twitter corpora. Results indicate a preference for common nouns (p. 184) in the report, mainly related to a focus on students and HE institutions. The expression of purpose is founded on modals to express “different levels of authority” (p. 185). Most tweets are actually retweets of media contents and thus expose the limits of the use of keywords for this research, because retweets may convey “the false impression that those taking part in the debate are using a set of lexical items to convey their own opinions” (p. 186). Repetitions are used to present “an idealized business model that delivers quality and excellence” (p. 188). In conclusion, the corpus under study presents an economic vision of universities, where higher education is constructed as a competitive market.

- 11 The second section of the book, “Power through persuasion” (pp. 192-362), focuses on subtle, rather than explicit, manifestations of persuasion, where the participants are on a more equal footing.
- 12 In the first article of this second section, **Antoinette Mary Fage-Butler** focuses on campaigns by the Scottish NGO Zero Tolerance to fight violence against women (VAW). Two different genres are examined: seven lesson plans (the RESPECT programme) for primary school teachers and a handbook for journalists called *Handle with Care*. After a reminder on gender and VAW representations, CGA (Bhatia 2010, 2012) from an interdiscursive perspective is used to identify “the inclusion of discourses that are used to promote changes in attitudes towards women and VAW” (p. 196). Results of the Foucauldian discourse analysis (p. 203) show that the *Handle with Care* handbook achieves seven main purposes: presenting VAW as a gender issue, de-trivializing gender violence, de-glamorizing the sex industry, de-sensationalizing VAW, re-allocating responsibility, providing factual evidence and using ethical arguments. The RESPECT lesson plans address six main topics: ethics, equal rights, gender discrimination, “power over” (p. 210), factual evidence and empowerment. While the *Handle with Care* corpus aims to unveil the “media’s role in constructing gendered roles for women” (p. 208), the RESPECT programme seeks to “sensitize pupils to gender-related meanings and practices” and “to take a critical stance on discriminatory practices” (p. 211). As such, the comparative analysis in this chapter stresses that different strategies are used to persuade different audiences in different settings.
- 13 In the next chapter, **Daniel Gallego-Hernández** proposes a comparative corpus-based study of promotional website genres in banking. The challenges linked to translating “persuasive devices” are considered using a comparative analysis between French and Spanish. After a literature review of previous studies on promotional products and services and the importance of studying metadiscourse, the COMENEGO¹ corpus and the main functions of the AntConc concordancer are described. The analysis focuses on metadiscursive elements in interactional resources. Engagement markers in the form of pronouns, imperatives and questions are the most commonly used in the two

corpora, though most notably in French. Self-mention, attitude, hedges and boosters are frequent in French and Spanish to persuade consumers in their purchase decisions. These metadiscursive similarities and differences have a direct impact for translators, as they show the limits of a literal translation and the need to understand cultural differences.

- 14 The next two chapters (9 and 10) both focus on alternative dispute resolution, more specifically on arbitration as a way to avoid trial. In Chapter 9, **Diana Giner** studies the rhetorical strategies of persuasion in the reasoning of international investment arbitral awards. Arbitration has gained momentum in our globalized world, making it worthy of attention to study power and persuasion in legal discourse. The corpus under study is made of “fifteen arbitral awards” (p. 246) issued between 1987 and 2010. The texts were analysed from a “multi-perspective approach to discourse analysis” (p. 247), combining generic, interpersonal and rhetorical perspectives. The main rhetorical strategies of persuasion identified in the argumentation stage are the following: intensification of “arguments that favour the final decision and [...] lessen the ones that contradict its logic” (p. 251) and hedging “to open alternative viewpoints” (p. 252), “to restrict the context of commitment” (p. 253) or “to convey a face-saving strategy” (p. 252). Attitude markers, gradability and combinability are also used in arbitral awards to express the authors’ feelings or personal opinions. These strategies allow the authors to convince the readers that their final decision is justified.
- 15 In the next chapter, **Maurizio Gotti** also focuses on arbitration but adopts a comparative approach between East and West. Taking China as the main example, the author aims to prove the influence of local culture in international investment arbitration. Although Western countries frequently see mediation and arbitration as incompatible, Eastern countries are more eager to combine conciliation, litigation and arbitration in “hybrid dispute processing” (p. 271). The Chinese legal tradition, rooted in Confucian philosophy, favours “discussion and compromise” (p. 276), while social conflicts are viewed as “a shameful aberration of morality and as a form of disruption of the natural order of social life” (p. 280). Social factors also explain the emphasis on conciliation: the concepts of *mian* and *lian*, frequent in Chinese business communication, exemplify the particular place of face work in Chinese society.
- 16 In his article on companies’ self-presentation on corporate webpages and LinkedIn accounts, **Juan Carlos Palmer-Silveira** starts by highlighting the recent challenges of globalization: companies have to adapt to different cultures in order to attract and retain customers, but also to remain competitive. Information technology (IT) plays a crucial part in the promotion process of companies, namely through web pages and social media (p. 287). Given the wide audience targeted by social media, companies have to “pay attention to persuasion when communicating internationally in today’s IT setting” (p. 289). In this chapter, Palmer-Silveira analyses and compares the use of the “Corporate News/About us” section in corporate websites and social media, to understand how language is used to present the companies as powerful and competitive. The corpus is made up of LinkedIn and corporate website texts in English for twenty Spanish companies, twenty European firms and twenty North American corporations. Six aspects are discussed: self-references, boosters, power words, sensory language, clear orders and hidden commands, and short sentences. Results show that in LinkedIn and in corporate website texts, companies avoid repeating the brand name and favour “first and third personal pronouns and possessive adjectives” (p. 302).

However, it seems that a personal tone is more frequently used in American firms than in European, and more specifically Spanish, ones. Although intensifiers and sensory language are not frequent in the corpora, power words, direct orders and hidden commands are commonly used. The Internet thus appears as a privileged channel to implement a “global corporate appearance” (p. 303).

- 17 **Carmen Sancho Gunda** focuses on risk communication in 1,708 aviation accident dockets issued by the National Transportation Safety Board of the USA (NTSB) between 2005 and 2015. These accident summaries are meant to inform various target audiences about accidents and are characterized by a “discursive hybridization” (p. 313), as they are at the same time retrospective and prospective, objective and subjective, prescriptive and informative. The AntConc concordancer is used to identify “stylistic and persuasive traits” (p. 318) like connectives of deduction, glosses, quotation marks, storytelling, hedged criticism and reporting verbs. Results show that accident dockets share the same purpose as accident report but are more complex in the way information is disseminated, which makes them more accountable. The author elaborates on the four Cliffordian categories of authority: hegemonic authority is achieved thanks to *pathos*, storytelling and multimodality, but also a complex intertext based on animated simulations (p. 323). Dialogical authority is founded on popularization strategies (informal comparisons, quotes or hedges), storytelling and detail disclosure that help reach non-expert audiences. Multimodality makes these documents different from traditional accident reporting. The next category, labelled “experiential and interpretive authority [...] rests on self-reference and reporting strategies” (p. 326). Finally, polyphonic authority “may be turned into a hedge of narrative agency and opinion” (p. 330). The author concludes that accident dockets may be examples of a “bent genre” (p. 332), comprised of various modes and registers to communicate the *ethos* of the institution.
- 18 The last chapter of this section examines the use of hedging devices to convince in Supreme Court majority and dissenting opinions. After stating the importance of dissenting opinions for Supreme Court judges, **Holly Vass** focuses on the various forms and functions of hedging. WordSmith Tools 6.0 was used to analyse 81 texts (39 majority opinions and 42 dissenting opinions), published in 2013. The WordList function allowed the author to look up specific lexical items, but also their context. Results indicate that hedges are significantly more frequent in dissenting than in majority opinions “a difference of nearly 25%”, (p. 344). Though one might think that dissenting justices tone down their statements to show respect to their peers, the author explains that “[i]n judicial genres, [...], such as dissenting opinions, hedging items are most likely not included to show humility and deference” (p. 346). Instead, Vass argues that hedges perform three main functions in the corpus under study: i. Casting epistemic doubt on the majority’s rationale, ii. Transmitting a value judgement, iii. Presenting alternative scenarios. She also notices a tendency to refer to the Court explicitly and to use the first person singular in dissent opinions. All these features aim to “reach the hearts and minds of the general public, and ultimately influence future policy makers and legal practitioners” (p. 353).
- 19 To conclude, *Power, Persuasion and Manipulation in Specialized Genres* offers a stimulating perspective on how power is exerted and what it means for professional communities. Indeed, power is not only seen as a means to exert authority, but also as a way to institutionalize a profession, create norms and rules, and organize professional

communities. This conception of power echoes some aspects recently tackled in ESP research, where specializedness is described as built on institutional facts, shared and accepted by the specialized communities (Van der Yeught 2017). It seems that this theoretical approach, which is essential to understand the underlying mechanisms of professional communities and specialized genres of discourse, could pave the way for future research in the field.

- 20 It seems that more references to Aristotelian rhetoric, (*ethos*, *logos* and *pathos*) or to face-threatening acts (FTAs) and face-flattering acts (FFAs) may have been added, especially in papers explicitly focusing on face work. Indeed, the introduction states that “[the] texts are [...] contemplated from the stance of genre theory which starts from the premise that specialized communities have a high level of rhetorical sophistication” (p. 9). Yet, in some chapters, some concepts are barely defined and analysed, while they could have brought more insight into the rhetorical strategies at use. Another useful notion that is scarcely mentioned is that of framing, which we believe is particularly relevant when discussing bias and information selection: p. 147 for instance, the author mentions the reframing of a discourse, without explaining what (re)framing consists in.
- 21 Given the particularly high number of references in each chapter, an index of authors could have proven useful to readers, in order to identify the main researchers in the field. Similarly, an index of notions could have highlighted the key concepts presented in the book and helped readers make connections between the different chapters.
- 22 The diversity of domains and discourse communities under study make the book particularly relevant for a variety of professionals, academics or students. The structure, distinguishing overtly manipulative practices from more subtle persuasion techniques, is particularly useful to understand the various challenges at stake in the construction of power through discourse. As such, some of the chapters could be used to prepare case studies for students in communication, public relations or management or provide training to communication professionals based on real-life situations.

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NOTES

1. *Corpus Multilingüe de Economía y Negocios* (p. 225).

AUTHORS

FANNY DOMENEC

Université Panthéon-Assas – Paris 2, CeLiSo – Sorbonne Université