Review

Ruth Breeze & Inés Olza (eds.): *Evaluation in Media Discourse: European Perspectives* (Linguistic Insights 207). Bern: Peter Lang, 2017, ISBN 978-3-0343-2014-6, 286 pp.

Technological, economic and social transformations in mediated communication constitute new challenges to rhetoricians and linguists. With (r)evolution in media production and dissemination, there have come new discourses and genres, new manners of argumentation, and, last but not least, new patterns of textual evaluation. Evaluative uses of language and image in mediated public and semi-public discourses are important objects of study, as they may induce (de)legitimization of socially constructed knowledge and are key to persuasion. Evaluation is a prominent feature of rhetorical practice characterized by reliance on shared knowledge and values: "ideologically speaking a text unfolds as rationality – a quest for 'truth'; axiologically it unfolds rhetorically – an invitation to community" (Martin 2004: 327). These reasons have motivated the editors and authors of *Evaluation in Media Discourse* to compile a volume on some recent trends in evaluative rhetoric approached from a few analytic perspectives (but mostly appraisal theory) and examined on the basis of media texts from a range of European contexts.

In *Introduction* Ruth Breeze and Inés Olza define media discourse using a critical lens, namely the potential of mediated texts to reproduce ideologies. However, they aptly note that the changing circumstances of production (e.g., from mass media to social media technologies) have caused more opportunities to negotiate meanings and respond to them. What they highlight is the growing amount of active involvement of consumers into mediated communication. The rise of non-institutional (non-professional) media channels further problematizes the distinction between producers and recipients and makes it harder to state how evaluative meaning is co-constructed through various rhetorical means. Given that information can now be propagated in multidirectional ways, the whole paradigm of studying media influence is also problematized. It is against this complex and fluid background of mediation patterns that the volume's case studies of evaluative language are set.

Juana I. Marin-Arrese aims to develop and nuance the appraisal theory by focusing on "Stance-taking and inter/subjectivity in journalistic discourse: The Engagement system revisited". Taking issue with some insufficient operationalizations of Martin and White's (2005) expansion/contraction categories within the heteroglossic discourse of the Engagement taxonomy, the author argues for the various resources of epistemic stance to be offered in a "non-hierarchical" order. Hence, she advances the analytic tools for the positioning of the stance-taker between subjectivity and intersubjectivity, as this may be much more significant for the readers' perception (or "illusion") of objectivity in quality journalism. Within the domain of epistemic stance, the author distinguishes between markers of epistemic support (the expressions contributing to certainty, veracity or likelihood of information provided) and of epistemic justification (evidentiality indicators that derive from inference or reporting). Within the domain of attribution, she makes a distinction between speaker perspective and source-derived representation, often realized through indirect or direct

speech. What is more, she demonstrates that in media discourse it does matter if the role of the conceptualizer – stance-taker – is highlighted (as in "I think") or, by contrast, left implicit (as in "it seems") and projected as part of socially shared knowledge or an input from an external source. This is what constitutes her argument for the continuum between subjective and intersubjective epistemicity, which is important for the question of the degree of "personal responsibility" taken for particular claims made in texts. After all, if stances are presented as shared by a group (involving the reader), the journalistic burden of accountability is diminished. Marin-Arrese designs her corpus-driven case study of British quality papers' news, opinions and leading articles in an intricate and representative way, working under the assumption that in journalistic discourse direct evaluations will be avoided for the sake of strategic impersonalization (aka balance or neutrality), but stance-taking will be realized through the selective uses of the engagement system. Her observation is that there is a marked preference for epistemic support rather than justification, and that *opinion/leading articles* obfuscate personal responsibility by backgrounding subjectivity (indexing virtual conceptualizers). This leads to the rhetorical "objectivization" of commentary in the form of "the paper's voice". Meanwhile, *news reports* attribute evaluations to external sources, whereby the illusion of journalistic objectivity is retained through strategic "displacement of responsibility".

María de los Ángeles Gómez González looks at evaluative argumentative discourse of online reviews in "Concession in evaluative argumentative discourse: The semantics, pragmatics and discourse functions of *but* and *although*". The group of concessive markers that includes *but* and *although* had been previously studied from both a syntactic and a functional perspective of its purpose of "denying expectations". The author reviews this research and adds to the discussion of discursive functions of these types of concessives by pointing to the persuasive aspect of refutations which make use of concessive strategies to enhance the strength of the argumentation. In order to lay out the evaluative variables of concessive sentences with *but* and *although*, the author discusses how the generic structure of concession, namely "acknowledgement" + but/although + "counter-claim", is realized in an action-oriented model that can make use of various sequences and polarities (ultimately to underpin the recommend/not recommend verdict in the review's conclusion). These options help make online reviews more nuanced and equivocal exponents of evaluation and work rhetorically to corroborate given recommendations as trustworthy and valid. Basing on the corpus-assisted analysis of 100 online reviews, the author traces the distribution and structural function of both concessives, noting the relative frequencies of *but* (nine times higher than *although*) and teasing out their evaluative potentials. Interestingly, *but* is often used for Judgment in negative reviews and for Appreciation in positive reviews within the system of Attitude, while both concessives are used for Disclaim (in 84,3% of instances) within the system of Engagement. The author's conclusion is that due to face-work requirements and generic expectations, the revealed patterns of concessives function as useful devices to tone down the negative evaluation, to reverse or mitigate false or implied assumptions, or to convince the review reader to accept the author's recommendation.

"Evaluation in the headlines of tabloids and broadsheets: A comparative study" by Laura Alba-Juez is a multimodal contrastive analysis of the semiotic space of headlines and their accompanying images in four online British news outlets. The motivation behind the design of this work is to verify whether tabloid headlinese is more infused with evaluative markers that entice readers. Noting the complexity of evaluation as not only a question of polarity or intensity, but also a question of transference (inscribed and evoked) and the question of both linguistic and contextual/cultural factors, the author undertakes the task of quantifying the syntactic and functional facets of evaluation in headlines. She proposes a new formula for coding evaluation in terms of six multimodal ingredients to objectify her analysis. With respect to syntactic aspects, the author finds that, contrary to expectations, tabloid headlines are more complex syntactically and involve compound evaluative resources, with some of them nested or interrelated. With respect to the linguistic level of evaluation, she discovers a systematic difference between broadsheets' pragmatic evaluative resources (which indicates the tendency to leave evaluative conclusion to the reader) and the tabloids' more overt lexicalization of evaluation. This is mirrored by the broadsheets' tending to resort to invoked

evaluation slightly more frequently than to inscribed evaluation, which is indicative of the need to keep the pretenses of neutrality. Interestingly, despite the assumption that newsworthiness behind negativity should be exploited more by tabloid journalism, there is a higher (though still low) percentage of good news or complex (positive and negative) evaluations there. As regards the appraisal systems, the author highlights that broadsheet headlines are more frequently monoglossic, which may make them seem a bit more dogmatic and less negotiable. Finally, with respect to multimodality, the finding is that tabloids are more coherent when it comes to the match between linguistic and pictorial evaluation than broadsheets, which allow more ambiguity in letting readers decide on their final evaluative stance on the issue. The article offers a new methodological perspective for "cracking the code" of evaluation in headlinese, and shows how interpretative and quantifying tools can be combined. This study extends methodologically and empirically an earlier strand of work on headlinese (Molek-Kozakowska 2013) and helps explain how and why tabloids engage readers effectively through their evaluations.

Frank J. Harslem in "The banality of evil. A study about translating 'los desaparecidos' in the German and English press" takes a diachronic perspective to look at the semantic prosody of the Spanish term *desaparecido(s)* and its translation equivalents in *Der Spiegel* and *Times Magazine*. Having acquainted the readers with the historical circumstances of the Argentinian military junta of 1976-1983, and located it in the context of broader ideological struggles of the Cold-War period, the author traces the specific frequencies and usages of the term in his two corpuses. He shows that the Spanish word is often translated into *disappear/missing* in English and *Verschwundene(r)* in German, in which case the atrocious practices of the regime that used countless forced abductions and killings are banalized. The author claims that the untranslated term would be capable of activating a fuller semantic prosody of the concept of the original *desaparecido(s)* which overlaps with the conceptual meaning of KIDNAP, TORTURE, and MURDER. Through the rhetorical analysis of selected examples, the author demonstrates the inadequacy of literal translations to represent the full scope of evaluation of the regime's evil in the Western quality press. He concludes that, despite the introduction of *desaparecido(s)* into English/German dictionaries and lexicons, the fact that it has not been accepted as a loanword precluded the adequate lexicalization and appropriate extension of meaning. The conceptual and evaluative constituents characteristic of the original term are thus lost in its translation. The author traces here a specific example of a broader phenomenon known to practitioners of Critical Discourse Analysis, namely how the struggle over terminologies is a struggle over ideology, and how the media can be instrumental to the normalization, even trivialization, of oppression.

Paola Catenaccio's "Negotiating futures in socio-technical controversies in the media: Strategies of opinion orientation" explores the current coverage of domestic hydraulic fracking in British quality press. Given the *Guardian*'s and *Independent*'s anti-fracking stance and the *Times*' and the *Daily Telegraph*'s advocacy of the technology, the study is located in the context of controversy that requires persuasion and evaluation resources to be drawn to uphold the respective stances. This is often done indirectly, as the quality press's appearance of impartiality and balance eschews one-sided biases. Thus the heteroglossic nature of such coverage and the techniques used by journalists to endorse their stances are a very relevant object of rhetorical exploration. The author draws on appraisal theory and argumentation theory (mainly pragmadialectics). The corpus of almost 600 articles is subjected to automated identification of key terms and a qualitative analysis of selected passages that instantiate one of four dominant techniques for argumentative evaluation. The first one is thematic foregrounding of environmental or economic arguments (*water* vs. *benefit* as frequent keywords in anti- and pro-fracking discourses). The second one consists in encoding of evaluation through collocations with *fracking*, thus framing it as either dangerous or safe. Importantly, such framing is mostly attributed to external sources and almost always introduced through epistemic reporting expressions capable of averring the force of the claim when contrary to editorial lines. The third strategy is proxy evaluation which bases on expert opinions strategically to guide readers to adopt a "preferred reading" or in the case of the *Guardian* through extensive coverage. Finally, the strategy of attitudinal invocation through argumentation relies on (1) presenting information as

belief only rather than evidence, (2) using unexpressed premises in a defence of the offered stance, and (3) resorting to multiple argumentation patterns that go as far as to make use of fallacious schemas, ad hominem, or passive voice obfuscations. The study is valuable in its attempt to harness the evaluative potential of argumentative maneuvering (Eemeren 2010).

Isabel Corona in "'A life well lived of a lady well loved': The power of appraisal in the comments section" investigates the multimodal, multimedial and interactional character of online commentary, whose function is to rear loyal readers as much as enable dialogue. Far from being the "last" word, a celebrity's journalistic obituary in an online forum can now be opened for the public display of emotion and management of collective memory through the comment section. The author notes how obituarists have exploited the multimedial and interactional potential of the genre to develop a set of modern conventions for constructing factual and evaluative multimodal "packs" that aim to engage readers, sometimes through provocation. The study is devoted to 2014 obituary of Duchess of Alba in *Mail Online* together with the analysis of comments and multimodal attachments. The domains of Attitude, Judgment and Affect from the appraisal system are applied in a mostly qualitative attribution of evaluative patterns. While the obituary itself features mostly inscribed evaluation invited through the selection of biographical details and some attention-drawing words, the comments abound in explicit appraisal. In the 86% positive to 14% negative ratio, the readers responded to the text expressing judgment on the Duchess's behaviour, appreciation of her life/appearance and affect over the news of her death. Some evaluative responses, however, did not relate to the news item, but to the way the outlet chose to portray the aristocrat through the choice of provocative photos and sensationalist captions. In this, *Mail Online* succeeded in providing a rhetorical "invitation to community" constructed around the response to improper obituary. Such study of multimodal online commentary, however challenging, can provide significant insights into the discursive construction of knowledge, collective memory and communal ideologies/moralities.

"The evaluative potential of colonial metaphor scenarios in (written) media representations of Spain's economic expansion. Spanish investors as forceful aggressors or audacious pioneers?" by Jasper Vandenberghe discusses current print coverage of Spanish investments in Latin America with respect to dominant discourse metaphors and metaphor scenarios. Given the Spanish colonial past and the historical frames that can be used to discuss current economic developments, the author envisions how diverse evaluations can be implied and activated with the choice of specific metaphor scenarios: colonization or exploration. 55 articles on Spanish investments from six British newspapers (1990-2009) were retrieved to scrutinize the most striking metaphoric representations. A number of metonyms, vivid visualizations and mini-narratives unleashed by colonial metaphors were identified, some including topographical references, military source domains (Spanish Armada), or cultural stereotypes (the Black Legend). The author also concludes that the profuse use of negative scenarios of aggressive "Spanish corporate conquistadors" by British journalists has been moderated by occasional portrayal of them as "audacious pioneers" and mitigated by Spanish outlets (e.g., El Pais) that aimed at redefining the colonial metaphor. The research contributes to grasping the ideological potential of discourse metaphor (Charteris-Black 2005) and indirectly points to how collective memory of historical processes can be shaped through evocative metaphorical entextualizations.

"Re-articulating critical awareness about racism in public discourse: Changing one's mind on the Black Pete debates in the Netherlands" by Jan Zienkowski is an argument for examining indicators of stance, subjectivity and critique in the context of mediated debating. First, the author conceptualizes *re-articulation* – an on-going, socially embedded process of producing arguments, re-framing issues and performing identities in public debates. Re-articulation, seen as a change in one's positioning on an issue of controversy, is a metapragmatic discursive act that requires the "vocabulary" of evaluation. The article details the history of the ubiquitous Black Pete figure in the traditional Dutch festivities of St Nicholas's day by highlighting its carnivalesque imagery and banal neo-nationalistic attributes. It documents how the figure has recently been subjected to a challenge with respect to its inscribed racism. The author gives an insightful overview of various stances articulated recently in Black Pete debates, including its supporters' key framing of it as harmless

tradition, which demonstrates their oblivion to colonialist overtones and racist stereotyping. The critical analysis undertaken in the study refers to a detailed tracing of a vlogger's re-articulation of her stance on Black Pete and the linguistic, multimodal and medial resources used in her self-transformation from an ignorant to reflexive stance on the racism of the Black Pete representation. The study shows how metapragmatic awareness and discursive strategies transpire in the change from a self-presentational vlog to an ethical space of performativity and critical engagement with a public issue. The article is an elaborate demonstration of the potential of vlogs to foster reflexivity and criticality in the ever-polarized public sphere. Its advantage also lies in showing the intricacies of linguistic, medial and social resources in stance-taking.

The eight chapters that make the collection make a compelling reading with their reliance on diverse frameworks, which often go beyond reviewing the literature and offer a novel approach or combination of perspectives. Also empirically the studies provide convincing conclusions derived from intricate research designs and triangulated or corpus-driven methodologies. Although some of these studies are quite technical and thus difficult to follow for readers unacquainted with appraisal theory and discourse analysis, they significantly expand on the current status of knowledge on (studying) evaluation in various spheres of public mediation.

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