

Book announcements

Malcolm Coulthard and Alison Johnson (2007) *An Introduction to Forensic Linguistics: language in evidence*

Divided into two sections, 'The Language of the Legal Process' and 'Language as Evidence', this is probably the first textbook designed to give equal coverage to the two sub-areas of forensic linguistics broadly construed. The first section looks at legal language, the structures of legal genres and the collection and testing of evidence from the initial police interview through to examination and cross-examination in the courtroom. The second section focuses on the role of the forensic linguist, the forensic phonetician and the document examiner, as well as examining in detail the linguistic investigation of authorship and plagiarism. The book is targeted particularly at the undergraduate student of forensic linguistics and provides research tasks, suggested reading and website references at the end of each chapter.

London: Routledge. ISBN 0415320240 (paperback) UK £19.99, US \$35.95.

Frances Rock (2007) *Communicating Rights: the language of arrest and detention*

This monograph examines in detail the communication of legal rights to defendants in police custody. Drawing on authentic written and oral discourse data from British police stations, Rock analyses different speakers and writers explaining the same texts (e.g. the caution – roughly equivalent to the US Miranda warning) in their own words. The data reveal that when speakers and writers transform texts for others through explanation they work hard to convey meaning both by simplifying words and grammar and by considering the other's perspective and communicative needs. However, this apparently tightly-regulated, goal-oriented talk is used by both police officers and detainees not just to convey facts but also to perform a wide range of other speech acts including reassuring, persuading, distracting, challenging, empathising, and making suggestions.

Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan. ISBN 0230013317 (hardback) UK £55,
US \$74.95.

Roger Shuy (2008) *Fighting Over Words: language and civil law cases*

In his latest book, Shuy collects and analyzes disputes in 18 civil cases where language framed the battle ground. The cases involve contracts, trademark disputes, advertisements, product liability, copyright infringement, discrimination, and fraud controversies. Shuy shows how the skills of linguistic analysis can help resolve disputed meanings by answering such questions as what a contract actually said, whether a warning label was clear and effective and whether there was deception in a piece of advertising. Shuy aims to show how civil cases can prove to be a fertile ground for linguistic scholarship since they are the utmost examples of battles over words.

Oxford: Oxford University Press. ISBN 0195328833 (hardback) UK £29.99, US \$55.

Janet Cotterill (ed.) (2007) *The Language of Sexual Crime*

This edited collection brings together linguists, psychologists, police officers and lawyers who are involved with cases of sexual crime and who are currently engaged in exploring ways of improving questioning techniques with both suspects and victims, in police interviews and in the courtroom. The papers draw on authentic data from rape, sexual assault and abuse cases involving both adults and children, and they cover such topics as the law and language of rape, sexual assault and sexual abuse; the detection of sexually-motivated crime through linguistic analysis; police interview techniques used with victims and perpetrators; examination and cross-examination of victims and perpetrators at trial; judicial reports and public inquiries involving sexual abuse or assault cases; and the reporting of rape or sexual assault cases in the media.

Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan. ISBN 023000170X (hardback) UK £50, US \$80.

Kristina Beckman (2007) *An Immigrant's Run-In with the Law: a forensic linguistic analysis*

In this monograph, Beckman applies linguistic theory to a court case involving a licensed gun dealer charged with illegally selling weapons. His defense was that his abilities in English (his first language is Chinese) were not sufficient to understand some of the minor points of law. Therefore, there was no intent on his part to disobey the law and his actions were simply the

result of a misunderstanding. The book examines his claim through ‘applied forensic linguistic’ techniques. While a single text serves as the foundation for discussion, other representative cases are also included.

New York: LFB Scholarly Publishing LLC. ISBN 9781593322342 (hardback)
UK £38, US \$65.

Anne Wagner and William Pencack (eds) (2006) *Images in Law*

This collection ambitiously explores what the law ‘looks like’. Rather than examining law and legal action in terms of its language, it considers how visual images of the law influence its interpretation and execution in ways not discernible from written texts. The collection is divided into two equal sections: ‘Images of Law’ and ‘Legal Language in Action’. While the first appears to be concerned with the interface between visual imagery and the law, the second discusses such linguistic acts of communication as jury instructions, jury deliberation and police directives.

Aldershot: Ashgate. ISBN 075464720X (hardback) UK £65, US \$124.95.