Reviews

Birte Bös and Lucia Kornexl (eds.). *Changing Genre Conventions in Historical English News Discourse*. Advances in Historical Sociolinguistics 5. Amsterdam/ Philadelphia, PA: Benjamins, 2015, xv + 254 pp., € 99.00/$ 149.00.

Reviewed by **Daniela Landert,** University of Zurich
E-Mail: daniela.landert@es.uzh.ch

This collection of nine contributions plus an introduction originates in the Third International Conference on Historical News Discourse (CHINED III) that took place in Rostock in May 2012. So far there have been five CHINED conferences, with the sixth to take place in Sheffield in June 2017. The conference series is devoted to "research into the discourse of historical news texts written in the English language".[1] It adopts a broad focus on historical news texts, including not only texts from traditional newspapers but also from related genres.

The book starts with a brief introduction by the editors of the volume, who provide an overview of the contributions and contextualise them within the topic of the volume. The contributions are then structured into three thematic parts.

The two contributions in Part I both deal with metadiscursive terminology in historical news texts. Nicholas Brownlees studies three groups of terms in early periodical news publications published between 1620 and 1695, namely terms referring to publication types (e.g. *booke*, *coranto*, *pamphlet*), terms referring to news presentation (e.g. *account*, *continuation*, *report*) and terms referring to concepts of news (e.g. *advice*, *intelligence*, *news*). He carries out a qualitative analysis of how these terms are used and how their use develops over time, and he shows that the study of such metadiscursive terminology can reveal how news writers of the time perceive and present this new genre.

In the second contribution, Birte Bös studies metadiscursive terms in newspapers from 1700 to 2000 from the *Rostock Newspaper Corpus*, thus extending Brownlees' period of analysis. She includes terms referring to concepts of news, terms referring to news gathering and transmission, and references to agents of news processing. She traces these terms through time quantitatively and qualitatively and is able to show how they mirror changing journalistic practices and genre conventions. Bös identifies the end of the 19th century as one important

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1 <http://www.chinednews.com/chined-board-and-aims/>.

turning point within her period of study, when journalistic practices changed with New Journalism and the development of new technological means of transmission.

The similarities between Bös' and Brownlees' approach make it possible to compare the results between the two periods of analysis. Bös' categories overlap with those used by Brownlees to some extent. For instance, *account* and *report* are treated as concepts of news by Bös, but as modes of news presentation by Brownlees. Bös explains this difference with semantic shifts of the terms after the 17th century (29).

Part II, entitled "Changing modes of reference and shifts in audience orientation", contains four contributions. The first one is authored by Claudia Claridge and it is devoted to time and space adverbials in three newspaper corpora, the *Zurich English Newspaper Corpus*, the *Rostock Newspaper Corpus*, and the press section of the *Freiburg-LOB Corpus*, collectively spanning the period from 1660 to 2000. Applying a combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches, she finds evidence for the influence of other genres (letters, chronicles) on the use of time and place adverbials in early newspapers. For instance, letters appear to have provided models for how to structure news texts with the help of time and place information in datelines. In addition, she argues that the use of place and time adverbials was also affected by more general stylistic shifts and production factors, such as publication rhythm.

Minna Palander-Collin studies one specific genre – advertisements – in two 19th-century London newspapers, *The Times* and *The Morning Post*. She focuses on person-mention in advertisements, i.e. references to either the advertiser, the audience, or other persons. Her quantitative evaluation shows a decline of person-mention throughout the period of investigation; especially advertisements mentioning the audience or other persons in addition to the advertiser become less common. Palander-Collin concludes that there is a shift in focus from the advertiser-audience dyad to the advertised product. She connects this shift to sociocultural changes in the 19th century, both on the micro-level of individuals (e.g. changing business practices of advertisers), and on the macro-level, such as changes in newspaper production and the mass production of consumer goods.

The contribution by Sarah Borde deals with a sub-genre of news discourse, too, namely death notices. Her study is based on the *Corpus of English Death Notices*, which includes 400 death notices that were published in English newspapers between 1801 and 2012. She identifies thirteen different structural elements of death notices, such as name and age of the deceased, circumstances and cause of death, and information about the funeral. These elements are then analysed according to their linguistic realisation and the frequency with which they can be found. Her findings provide interesting insight not only into the

development of death notices as a genre, but also into the changing attitudes towards death and cultural norms and conventions with respect to social status and gender.

The last contribution in this part is by Irma Taavitsainen, who studies three early periodicals that include medical news, *The Philosophical Transactions for the Royal Society*, *The Edinburgh Medical Journal* and *The Gentleman's Magazine*. Combining keyword analysis and qualitative discourse analysis, she studies both the increasing professionalisation of the periodicals and the differences in audience orientation between journals targeted at professional and lay audiences. The findings on the earliest set of data from *The Philosophical Transactions* 1665–1700 add new evidence to the conclusion that changing scientific thought-styles are reflected in textual realisations, for instance through keywords and descriptions directly relating to scientific experiments. The second part of her study, in which she compares 18th-century data from all three periodicals, shows that the difference in audience orientation can be observed in a higher frequency of linguistic characteristics of personalisation (e.g. first and second person pronouns) in the lay-oriented *Gentleman's Magazine*.

The third and final part includes three contributions devoted to "[t]ransgressing boundaries and shifting styles". Elisabetta Cecconi compares 17th-century murder reports across four different news genres: broadside ballads, news pamphlets, newsbooks and an early newspaper (*The London Gazette*). She analyses the texts with respect to page layout, text structure and discourse organisation, and she also includes an analysis of metadiscourse that shows similarities to the approaches used by Brownlees and Bös. Cecconi explains the differences that she observes between the genres with different audience orientations and production processes. However, in addition to variation, she also finds parallel developments between the genres over the course of the 17th century.

The contribution by Alexander Haselow is based on the most recent data represented in the volume. He investigates speech-like syntax in British newspapers from 1900 and 2013. By including data from both popular and quality papers – *The Daily Express* and *The Manchester Guardian* for 1900, *The Sun* and *The Guardian* for 2013 – his study contributes to research on the role of popular journalism in leading changes in journalistic writing. Haselow focuses on sentence-initial uses of *and* and *but* and on fragmented sentences. Since the study is based on a relatively small set of data (about 40,000 words overall) and since the characteristics are not very frequent, the quantitative evidence appears somewhat slim for some of the conclusions that are drawn. For instance, Haselow's observation of an increase of initial *and* is based on a total of 18 instances from four different data samples; while the popular data shows an increase from 1 to 8 instances, the *Guardian* even shows a slight decrease from 5 to 4 (202). Never-

theless, Haselow's findings can be taken as a starting point for further investigations into the informalisation and colloquialisation of news discourse.

The final contribution is authored by Isabel Ermida, who studies Mark Twain's hoax news articles as an example of 19th-century news satire. She shows how Twain uses linguistic conventions and discursive strategies of news writing to create satirical texts. Applying her previously developed Model of News Satire, Ermida analyses Twain's texts with respect to the intertextual, critical and comic component. The intertextual component captures that the satirical texts are modelled on news texts with respect to structure and language. The critical component deals with the critical intention of the text; it requires that the satirical text "must disapprove, censure or disparage certain aspects of society or certain social actors" (235). The third and final component deals with comic effects created through lexico-pragmatic triggering of scripts that create incongruity as well as with rhetorical devices like antithesis and hyperbole that create further comic effects.

Collectively, the contributions in this volume illustrate different approaches to genres in news discourse. Some contributions focus on the origin and diachronic development of one prototypical news genre (Brownlees, Bös, Claridge, Haselow); some study the variation between different news genres (Taavitsainen, Cecconi); and some investigate specialised genres in newspapers (Palander-Collin, Borde, Ermida); in addition, several authors study the influence of related genres (letters, chronicles) on news texts, a topic that is most prominent in Claridge's contribution. The studies are based on a wide range of different corpora and span the entire period from the beginning of printed news discourse to the beginning of the twenty-first century. While most contributions combine quantitative and qualitative approaches, the emphasis clearly lies on qualitative analysis and detailed discussions of examples in context are presented throughout the volume.

This carefully edited volume gives a good sense of what is currently being explored in the field of historical news discourse and related research areas. For instance, the contributions reflect a growing recognition of the heterogeneity of news discourse. Early corpus-based research based on first generation corpora like the *Brown Corpus* and the *British National Corpus* tended to pay little attention to the fact that newspapers contain a range of different text types and genres. This has started to change in recent years both in synchronic and diachronic investigations of news discourse and this trend is well represented in several contributions in the volume (e.g. Palander-Collin, Borde, Taavitsainen, Cecconi). Likewise, the strong focus on the role of genre as a link between the broader sociocultural context and the linguistic realisation of texts that can be found in all the contributions is representative of ongoing research trends in historical linguistics, espe-

cially historical pragmatics. By applying established models and methods to new sets of data the authors help complete the picture of the development of newspapers and their genres from their origins to the present day. Thus, the volume fulfils its aim "to enhance our understanding of the complex relations of language, society, and changing genre conventions" (xiii). As such, it will certainly appeal to researchers interested in (historical) news discourse and (historical) genre studies.