



News as Changing Texts: Corpora, Methodologies and Analysis

By Roberta Facchinetti, Nicholas Brownlees, Birte Bos, Udo Fries

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This book focuses on the dialectic interrelation between 'news' and 'change', whereby news is intended as a textual type in its evolutionary - and revolutionary - development, while change is discussed with reference to the form, content and structure of such typological variety explored across the centuries, largely in the British environment. The time spans in the chapters have been distributed according to historical key moments in the process of news-writing changes, and extant computerized corpora covering such periods, thereby permitting specific linguistic analyses. Indeed, each chapter makes use of a set of corpora specifically devised to suit the needs of scholars studying the periods under scrutiny. The topics discussed and the corpora exploited to analyze them call into question basic methodological issues that are tackled from different perspectives in the book, while the epicentre of all research remains the news itself, in a continuous process of adjustment and renewal.

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Editorial Review

Review

"It is a particular merit of the present volume that it indeed gives a very good overview of the major extralinguistic developments, of the available data sources together with their respective advantages and problems, of methodological approaches and of relevant research questions. In this respect it is comparable to a comprehensive handbook treatment, also with regard to the ratio of reported vs. new research. [...] There can be no doubt [...] that the volume is a stimulating read and provides many insights into the evolution of historical news discourse." - Claudia Claridge, 'Anglia' 131:1 (2013), 141-145. "The volume [...] explores almost four hundred years of newspaper writing. One of the assets of the book is the very chapter organization, which is not based on equally distributed time spans, but rather on relevant turning points in news history and also on the specific academic expertise of the authors. This editorial decision allows for a less pre-packaged and more lively approach to changes in news discourse and format. Another valuable aspect of the book is that, as experts and even compilers of machine-readable corpora, the authors share their personal experience and concerns with readers, such as the need to focus on amounts of news material that can be searched electronically but which can also be read and analyzed manually in their entirety. Moreover, available corpora (such as ZEN, the largest corpus of late 17th- and 18th-century newspapers, compiled by Fries himself et al.) are described, evaluated, and sometimes critiqued as for size and features, thus enabling the academic reader - and, more broadly, the scientific community - to gather useful information and stimuli for further research." - Anna Belladelli, *Iperstoria*.

About the Author

Roberta Facchinetti is Professor of English Language and Linguistics at the University of Verona, Italy. Her main research fields focus on media linguistics, language description and pragmatics, with special reference to how language is used to negotiate social and discourse roles. This is done mostly by means of computerized corpora of both synchronic and diachronic English. On the subject she has authored, co-authored and edited various books and articles, among which *Corpus Linguistics 25 Years on* (2007) and *From International to Local English - And Back Again* (2010) with David Crystal and Barbara Seidlhofer. Nicholas Brownlees is Associate Professor of English Language at the University of Florence, Italy. He has written extensively on early modern news and is the author of *The Language of Periodical News in Seventeenth-Century England* (2011). He is also editor of *News Discourse in Early Modern Britain* (2006) and co-editor of *The Language of Public and Private Communication in a Historical Perspective* (2010). Birte Bos is currently Guest Professor of Applied Linguistics at the University of Augsburg, and she has worked as a Junior Professor of English Linguistics at the University of Rostock, Germany. Her research interests include synchronic and diachronic pragmatics, discourse analysis and media linguistics. Based on the Rostock Newspaper Corpus (RNC), which is currently being extended, she has investigated the communicative practices of historical and modern news discourse. Udo Fries was Professor of English Linguistics at the University of Zurich until his retirement in 2007. He has published widely in the fields of English philology, syntax and text linguistics. In recent years he has concentrated on work in computer corpus linguistics, producing ZEN (The Zurich English Newspaper Corpus), a corpus of 17th- and 18th-century English newspapers.

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