

derivatives in literary texts. Collocations of the verb *to see* are the central topic of Daniele Franceschi's study, which focuses on the case of the prepositional verb *to see about* and how its elements are semantically determined; the issues deriving from transposing this verb into Italian are also analysed. Similarly, Maria Ivana Lorenzetti offers a contrastive study of the English verb *to see* and the Italian verb *vedere*, which she uses to demonstrate one particular aspect of lexical complexity: the omission of the direct object in transitive verbs.

The concluding section of the volume deals with the topic of complexity in literary texts. Carla Dente focuses on the complexity of the language of drama, a topic extended further by Sara Soncini in her chapter on interlinguistic translation. Literary translation is the central issue of Mario Curreli's and Ilide Carmignani's contributions. The former is a comparative analysis of different versions of Joseph Conrad's works, translated by Gadda, Guidacci and Maraini, while the latter focuses on the complexities arising from the translation of lexical terms in *El otoño del Patriarca* by Gabriel García Márquez. The final chapter, by Roberto Di Scala, analyses the complexities that arise from translating certain terms such as *hobbit* and the proper noun *Bilbo Baggins*, present in Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*.

The volume presents a collection of contributions covering several related issues concerning lexical complexity and their implications in specific contexts. Interesting research models are presented, and well-grounded questions are helpfully set up for further investigation, making the findings and the analyses outlined in the chapters particularly relevant to both linguists and translators. The volume can thus be seen as a useful reference tool for further research in both fields, especially in a contrastive perspective.

[Patrizia Anesa]

WAGNER, Anne / CACCIAGUIDI-FAHY, Sophie (eds.), *Legal Language and the Search for Clarity*, Peter Lang, Bern 2006 [Linguistic Insights 37], pp. 493, ISBN 3-03911-169-8, US-ISBN 0-8204-8388-5, € 61,90.

The topic of vagueness and clarity in legal texts has attracted increasing academic interest in recent years. The year 2005 saw the publication of *Vagueness in Normative Texts* (edited by Vijay Bhatia, Jan Engberg, Maurizio Gotti and Dorothee Heller; published by Peter Lang), devoted to the discussion of linguistic indeterminacy, vagueness and ambiguity in legal texts. In the same year the 2nd International Clarity Conference was held in Boulogne-sur-Mer, France, on the theme of *Clarity and Obscurity in Legal Language*. This successful conference was followed by the publication of the volume *Legal Language and the Search for*

Clarity in 2006, which confirms the importance of this area of research and offers an insight into current scholarly debate on this topic. This volume includes contributions in English and French by international scholars and professionals, and offers a deep and comprehensive reflection upon recent developments of legal language and the importance of clarity in this register. It also examines a range of strategies and initiatives which aim to achieve clarity and improve comprehensibility in different types of legal texts, with case studies drawn from several different countries.

After the editors' introduction, which provides a succinct and helpful overview of the issues and arguments considered in the volume, Part I offers an analysis of clarity and obscurity as linguistic elements characterizing legal texts, and concentrates upon how clarity is pursued. In the first chapter Véronique Champeil-Desplats presents an overview on the origins of the search for clarity and describes what requirements a rule should satisfy in order to be considered 'clear'. She also observes how clarity can be regarded as a tool to improve the effectiveness of a rule.

Ross Charnock's paper, whose title 'Clear Ambiguity' is seemingly oxymoronic, provides an extremely interesting reflection on the sources of obscurity in legal texts; he observes that the lack of clarity is usually related to "the understanding of commonly occurring, plain words" and discusses examples related to a wide range of legal texts. He concludes that obscurity is an intrinsic element of legal language and cannot therefore be simply eliminated by the introduction of clearer terms, as they may themselves be a source of obscurity. Richard Tremblay illustrates the origins of the quest for precision remarking how excessive precision can lead to over-complexity. He advocates abstraction as an important tool in attaining precision, and argues in favour of more abstract drafting methods as a way of achieving clarity and concision in legal texts, especially in Common Law countries.

Lucia Morra, Piercarlo Rossi and Carla Bazzanella examine the role of metaphors in legal texts and in particular how these figures of speech convey precision or obscurity. After explaining the concept of cognitive metaphor, they study the role of metaphor in legal texts and, more specifically, in normative texts. They analyse the Italian Civil Code and some EU directives and demonstrate that metaphors are essential in legislative texts. Samuel Xavier analyses the situation of legal French, focusing on the tools and the techniques used by the Conseil Constitutionnel to achieve transparency and clarity. The study of Catherine Bergeal also focuses on the role played by the Conseil Constitutionnel in guaranteeing transparency and clarity in legal norms. She also raises some interesting questions as to whether this is a legal or a political issue.

Christopher Williams analyses the role of the modal verb *shall* in legal texts and reflects upon the "presumed fuzziness of *shall*" and its function in conveying clarity or obscurity. He also observes the objectives and the developments of the

Plain English Movement and its influence on the drafting of legal texts. The process of simplifying legal drafting is also considered by Rose-Marie Gerbe, who analyses the role of verbal constructions. In particular, her study examines the use of the present indicative as a technique to simplify legal language: this tense expresses a permanent state of truth and reality and, as a consequence, the result is necessarily a most certain and effective understanding of the rule, less dependent on subjective or arbitrary interpretations. This is therefore an important tool for improving clarity, but interpretation will always play a crucial role in applying legal norms, considering the complexity of the relationship between clarity and obscurity.

The final paper in this section concerns the role played by ambiguity in legal translation. Lena Blomquist demonstrates how the process of translation can create problems of vague language, even when these issues are not present in the source text. She interestingly observes how the translation of “one little word” can modify the meaning of the text and how mistranslation can be crucial in the legal field.

The second part of the volume – which focuses on the linguistic tools that are used in different countries in order to achieve clarity – offers a reflection on current responses to the problem of obscurity in legal texts. Ros Macdonald describes the role of Plain English as a tool to write better decisions, with special reference to the situation in Australia. He shows the objectives and the principles of plain language and offers practical suggestions on how to write different types of administrative decisions in order to make them as clear as possible. A different approach is offered by Nicola Langton, who describes the 6-stage approach, originally developed by Vijay Bhatia, as a tool used to understand and reformulate legislative writing in order to make it clearer, but maintaining at the same time a traditional way of drafting.

Arnaud Suspene’s article discusses the initiatives taken by the Comité d’Orientation pour la Simplification du Language Administratif (COSLA) in order to simplify administrative language in France. The project, which is part of a wider programme aiming to change the relationship between users and administration, intends to facilitate access to administrative documents by the general public. The paper describes more specifically the techniques and the tools used by COSLA and focuses on administrative language. Similarly, Girolamo Tessuto offers an insight into the initiatives taken in Italy in order to simplify Italian legislative writing. He describes how the implementation of plain language in Italy has been promoted in particular by the project *Progetto Chiaro*, which aims to simplify official administrative documents.

After describing the complexity of legal texts, Claude Coulombe and Benoît Robichaud concentrate on the importance of simplifying legal texts in order to avoid obscurity. With this end in mind, they discuss SIMPLUS, a Simplified Language Tool, and its use in improving the clarity and accessibility of a text. The role of structured methodologies to achieve clarity in administrative and legal

writing is also studied by Nathan McDonald, who describes the Mustor Management™ approach, a structured methodology which has become an effective tool for promoting better understanding of legal and administrative documents, as well as facilitating the process of drafting in plain language. Moreover it is also an important language translation tool.

In the concluding chapter Francis Delpérée, both a scholar and a legal professional, offers a comprehensive summary of the different points of view and suggests interesting methodological reflections, insisting on the complexity of drafting a law, and especially of doing so in a clear way. He highlights the linguistic aspects of the drafting process and, like Blomquist, also stresses the crucial importance of translation in the process of conveying clarity or obscurity.

The volume is a wide-ranging collection of different perspectives, drawn from both the legal and the linguistic arenas and thus deals with the different issues related to clarity and obscurity in legal texts with an interdisciplinary approach. Although contributions from scholars, linguists, jurilinguists and legal professionals deal with different issues from a variety of angles, the overall analysis is carried out within a cohesive and consistent methodological framework. Moreover, the collection includes some of the most interesting and innovative reflections on legal language both from a theoretical and a practical point of view, which makes this volume an ideal springboard for further research.

[Patrizia Anesa]

ZIRONI, Alessandro, *Lezioni etimologiche. Scelte lessicali nelle versioni germaniche del Vangelo di Matteo*, Unipress, Padova 2006 [Studi e Testi di Linguistica e Filologia Germanica], pp. 129, ISBN 88-8098-222-2, € 20,00.

Questo volume, stampato con il contributo del MIUR e dell'Università degli Studi di Ferrara (Dipartimento di Scienze Umane) è uno dei frutti del lavoro che Alessandro Zironi ha compiuto nell'ambito del progetto *Da Matteo a Matteo. Analisi comparativa ed ipertestuale delle traduzioni germaniche antiche del Vangelo secondo Matteo*, un progetto triennale attuato all'interno del Programma di Ricerca Scientifica di Rilevante Interesse Nazionale (PRIN) dal titolo *Riscrittura e intertestualità: metamorfosi, interferenze e reinterpretazioni del testo medievale*. Nell'ambito di questo progetto, oggetto dell'indagine dello studioso sono state le scelte traduttorie nelle versioni germaniche del Vangelo di Matteo, a partire dal IV secolo, con la traduzione gotica della Bibbia, fino a arrivare al XVII secolo con la *Authorized Version*, o "Bibbia di re Giacomo", in inglese. I risultati scientifici dell'indagine di Alessandro Zironi sono stati pubblicati in due saggi, entrambi nel