



Spotlight on Courts: Judges and their discourse from a multidisciplinary perspective

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The purpose of the *Spotlight on Courts* conference, held under the auspices of the International Law and Language Association, was to provide a forum and the opportunity for scholars working otherwise in different disciplines to share their views and insights into various dimensions underlying contemporary judicial discourse. The organizing team at the University of Lodz led by Prof. Stanisław Goźdz-Roszkowski in collaboration with Prof. Gianluca Pontrandolfo (IUSLIT, University of Trieste) wished to bring together lawyers (academics as well as practitioners), political scientists, legal linguists, media specialists, sociologists, etc. to consider a wide range of court-related phenomena and processes.

The conference programme was organized into five themed panels concerning the judicialization of politics, the organization and working methods of courts and their impact on

judicial discourse, the nature and function of judicial dissent, media representations of courts and the judicial decision-making process, public perceptions of courts, courts and their image, judicial and political ways of conflict resolution, judicial argumentation and persuasive and evaluative concerns in judicial discourse.

The first panel, led by Prof. Victoria Guillén Nieto (University of Alicante), was dedicated to judicial discourse and its construal. First to speak was Prof. Anne Lise Kjær, who presented considerations on the 'consensus' case law of the European Court of Human Rights. Dr. William Byrne and Prof. Zuzanna Godzimska continued the discussion, focusing on the issue of pleadings at the International Criminal Court. Their paper was followed by three presentations on linguistic analysis of legal discourse: Dr. Paulina Nowak-Korcz and Dr. Margarete Flöter-Durr focused on the evolution of the French *arrêts de la Cour de cassation* and the use of forms in European procedural law; Prof. Łucja Biel, dr. Dariusz Koźbiał and mgr. Dariusz Müller gave a presentation on genre profiling of the Court of Justice of the European Union judgments whereas Prof. Gianluca Pontrandolfo presented his keyword-informed study on (in)frequent patterns in judicial discourse.

Prof. María Ángeles Orts Llopis (University of Murcia) chaired the second panel, which addressed the issue of constructing identities and reflecting perceptions through judges' and courts discursive practices. The first to speak was Prof. Ruth Breeze (ICS, University of Navarra), who presented Baroness Hale's prorogation of parliament in the sight of media creation. In his presentation, Prof. Jan Engberg (University of Aarhus) analyzed the website of the Court of Justice of the EU and on that basis presented ways of popularization and creation of organizational identity. The session was closed by Prof. Miguel Ángel Campos Pardillos (University of Alicante), who focused on the construction and personal relations' metaphors in European Judicial Cooperation.

The third panel was led by Prof. Dieter Stein (Heinrich-Heine-University Düsseldorf). The subject addressed in this block concerned judicial argumentation and evaluation. Two presentations dealt with the problem of corpora-based analysis of judicial texts: Prof. Martina Bajčić (Faculty of Law, University of Rijeka) presented her thoughts on the use of corpora in multilingual adjudication, whereas Dr. María José Marín Pérez (University of Murcia) dedicated her presentation to a corpus-based comparative analysis of the evaluative lexicon found in judicial decisions on immigration. Prof. Stanisław Goźdz-Roszkowski (Department of Specialized Languages and Intercultural Communication, University of Lodz) continued the discussion, focusing on evaluation and argument in the justification of judicial decisions. Next two presentations were focused on Supreme Court opinions: Prof. Davide Mazzi (University

of Modena and Reggio Emilia) presented the causal argumentation in Supreme Court of Ireland's judgments on data protection, while the presentation of Prof. Magdalena Szczyrbak (Jagiellonian University, Kraków) addressed the issue of the evidentiality in US Supreme Court opinions with focus on passive structures with 'say' and 'tell'.

The fourth panel, led by Prof. Friedemann Vogel (University of Siegen), was dedicated to clarity in judicial discourse. Three papers were presented: James Brannan (Senior Translator, European Court of Human Rights) spoke about principles and problems of multilingual communication at the European Court of Human Rights, Antonio Mura (Prosecutor General at the Rome Court of Appeal) and Prof. Jacqueline Visconti (University of Genoa/Honorary Research Fellow at Birmingham University) presented their thoughts on clarity in court proceedings and Prof. Christopher Williams (University of Foggia) added his analysis of the impact of plain language on court judgments in the UK.

The fifth and final conference panel was chaired by Prof. Frances Olsen (UCLA, Law School) and it was concerned with judicial interpretation. First to speak was Prof. Marek Jan Wasiński (Faculty of Law and Administration, University of Lodz) who presented the dogmatic approach to decisions of international courts. Next speakers – Dr. Anna Tomza-Tulejska and Dr. James Higgins (Faculty of Law and Administration, University of Lodz) – dedicated their paper to current problems in the US judicial argumentation. The focus was transferred to the European ground by Dr. Joanna Kulesza (Faculty of Law and Administration, University of Lodz), who spoke about free speech, artistic expression and blasphemy laws within the ECHR margin of appreciation. The last two presentations again referred to the US judicial interpretation: Prof. Jessica Greenberg (Department of Anthropology, University of Illinois) presented comparative frameworks for judicial approaches to expression rights, whereas Prof. Kathryn M. Stanchi (William S. Boyd School of Law, University of Nevada) analyzed the rhetoric of tacism in the United States Supreme Court.

The conference reflecting a broad range of topics and critical perspectives on judges and their discourse was a great success, and as it was said in the concluding statements, both organizers and participants believe it constitutes an excellent starting point for fostering further interdisciplinary research. Selected papers will be published with Routledge in November 2021 in a volume titled *Law, Language and the Courtroom. Legal Linguistics and the Discourse of Judges* edited by Stanisław Goźdz-Roszkowski and Gianluca Pontrandolfo.

