

Book announcements

Chris Hutton (2009) *Language, Meaning and the Law*

This book is a critical introduction to legal debates about linguistic meaning and interpretation in relation to legal language. It claims that law is an ideal domain for considering fundamental questions relating to how we assign meanings to words, understand and comment on texts, and deal with socially and ideologically significant questions of interpretation. It argues that theoretical issues of concern to linguists, philosophers, literary theorists and others are illuminated by the demands of the legal context, since law is driven by the need for practical solutions and for determinate outcomes based on explicit reasoning. The book covers such topics as: the relationship of linguistics to legal theory; indeterminacy and statutory interpretation; the theory and practice of using dictionaries in law; defamation and language in the public sphere; and the distinction between perjury and deception.

Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press. ISBN 0-7486-3350-0 (hb)

Anne Wagner and Vijay K. Bhatia (eds) (2009) *Diversity and Tolerance in Socio-Legal Contexts: explorations in the semiotics of law*

The contributions in this volume explore issues of religious, cultural and ethnic diversity and tolerance, which remain under threat despite efforts of the international community to encourage open-mindedness. Part I tackles the semiotic foundations of diversity and tolerance through chapters on such issues as the evolution and development of US constitutional doctrine on civil liberties, the legal concepts of race and ethnicity, and the legal position of the Hungarian Roma minority. Part II provides a series of case studies of the interplay of tolerance and diversity from visual, legislative and interpretative perspectives, including chapters on the commercial branding of Barcelona, visibility in native title claims, and women as legal subjects and objects in contemporary China.

Farnham and Burlington: Ashgate. ISBN 0-7546-7386-6 (hb)

John Olsson (2008) *Forensic Linguistics*

This second edition of Olsson's introduction to language in evidence has been revised and updated and includes new chapters on language in the justice system, forensic transcription, and an expanded chapter on forensic phonetics.

London: Continuum. ISBN 978-08264-9308-8 (pb)

Amelia Church (2009) *Preference Organisation and Peer Disputes: how young children resolve conflict*

Although this book does not discuss forensic issues as such, it provides an ontogenetic context for the sorts of verbal disputes that take place in forensic contexts. For where conflict occurs, even very young children are encouraged to resolve the situation through verbal rather than physical means. The book offers a conversation analysis of children's arguments, revealing disputing as a highly ordered, rule-governed activity, even amongst very young children. Church also provides detailed theoretical discussion of work in conversation analysis and speech act theory dealing with moves in disputes, some of which is directly related to forensic contexts.

Farnham and Burlington: Ashgate. ISBN 0-7546-7441-2 (hb)