

GREEK LEGAL LANGUAGE. A DIFFERENT APPROACH

Review of Eleni Panaretou's "Legal Discourse". 2009. Athens:
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The book of Professor Eleni Panaretou (2009) of the University of Athens is a very important contribution to research devoted to the Modern Greek legal language, and especially legal discourse in statutory acts. The book was published for the first time in Athens in 2009 and it was written in Greek (orig. «Νομικός λόγος. Γλώσσα και δομή των νόμων»)

The author of the book clearly expresses its objective in the introduction to the book. The main purpose of the reviewed monograph is to examine linguistic phenomena, which exist in the legal language from the synchronic perspective. According to Panaretou this issue was omitted during the seventies' when the interest in Modern Greek legal language arose due to intra-linguistic translation from katharevousa into the demotic form of the Greek language. Thus Greek statutory acts and their texts are determined as the object of the study.

The first chapter of the book presents the methodological approaches of the author. It concentrates on various aspects of textual researches and among of them one may find the rhetorical approach, organising scheme of texts, style schemes and taxonomisation of various legal texts. The last part of the chapter presents some information on the legal genres. The classification of Professor Panaretou differs from typical, well ordered classifications presented in legal linguistic studies (Mattila 2006 and 2012, Galdia 2009 et al.) and it is not based on differences between language of the law and legal language (Kurzon 1989). Even so Panaretou takes into account the classification based on the method of expression of the text and she especially underlines the dichotomy between the oral and written forms of the text. Moreover it is proposed to consider the purpose of certain text when analysing it but no clear classification is proposed.

The next chapter is devoted to the connection between the language and the law. This particularly valuable part of the book presents on the one hand law-oriented researches of legal language and on the other language-oriented researches of legal language in a wider, global perspective. Then the role and place of forensic linguistics is described. Continuing the discourse on the connection between the law and the language, Panaretou gives some basic legal meaning in the third chapter. She emphasises that even if laws come from nature, which is abstractive, the legal application depends on the language of the law and its features what she considered to be a legal paradox.

When discussing legal discourse Panaretou describes the communication status of the laws and especially, in the fourth chapter, she concentrates on the communication objective. She discusses legal communication very aptly referring to the speech theory of Austin and then the pragmatic role of the legal text in certain situations is described. On the basis of the illocutionary acts' theory she underlines the performative character of the laws and their texts giving some classifications of legal rules.

The next chapter is devoted to grammatical and lexical aspects of the language of laws. Firstly general remarks are given and then the laws are analysed with regard to grammar including syntactic phenomena and morpho-syntactic phenomena (i.e. modality, verbal time and aspect), voice etc.). According to the title of the chapter also lexical phenomena are investigated. It is worth mentioning that legal definitions are included in this part even if they may be analysed on the syntactic and textual levels. This chapter is the richest and it may be especially interesting for the Modern Greek philologists as it provides interesting examples excerpted from original texts of laws.

Chapter six concentrates on textual patterns of the laws. The main issue, which is discussed, is the relation between the law and the legal rule (norm). Here some cognitive approaches are exploited to analyse the texts of the laws. The most valuable part of the book are tables on the pages 132, 136 and 138 where the texts are investigated considering different aspects (i.e. pragmatic, legal), and then the place and variety of determinants in the legal clauses are discussed. Thus the relations between organisational units and their morphological forms are given.

Finally in the seventh chapter editorial and organisational approaches to the texts of the laws and codices are included. The general view of these texts is given on the basis of cognitive approaches as well on the basis of structural approaches to the texts. Thus the Hoey scheme of details' description is applied (p. 153).

The conclusions are included in the last part of the book where the close relationship of the language and the law is underlined. The conclusions have a general nature thus they may be taken into account when performing similar investigations on the texts of laws of different states, cultures and languages.

As mentioned above the book might be considered almost unique as it is devoted to the synchronic approach to Greek legal language, while the majority of studies where the Greek legal language is analysed, have a diachronic (historical) character. According to the reviewer it is the greatest value of Panaretou's book as it opens the gates to new approaches to Modern Greek Language (Gortych-Michalak 2013), which has not yet been investigated deeply. This status could explain why Panaretou did not include any detail on the 'state of art' concerning Modern Greek legal language in her book. Besides the reader might feel somewhat dissatisfied when certain grammatical phenomena are discussed. For instance the analysis of deontic modality does not include any complex set of linguistic markers of modality even though the category of modality seems to be one of the most important in the language of the law. Moreover the author of the book did not clearly determine the classification of analysed texts and calls them "legal discourse" as she claimed in her biographical notices on the pages of the University of Athens, According to the reviewer the term "discourse" seems not to be fully matched as discourse has vast meaning and in the book no special, determined semantic field of the term is given, Thus the term language of the law" seems more adequate to the analysis, especially in the perspective of many legal linguistic researches, which were not considered by the author of the book.

It must be stressed that the book was not published properly from the editorial and technical point of view as many copies did not have all the pages well printed and many blank pages were also included in the book. Thus the reviewer personally experienced it and to fully read the book at least two differing items were needed where the blank pages in one book were printed in another book and vice versa. Nevertheless it is the reviewer's duty to consider that Panaretou's book, when compared to other Greek books devoted to Greek legal language, provides another linguistic and synchronic approach to Greek legal language and moreover the reviewer hopes it will be an encouragement for other legal linguists to take up more systematic and complex researches of the Modern Greek legal language.

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