OLGA DONTCHEVA-NAVRATILOVA, MARTIN ADAM, RENATA POVOLNÁ, RADEK VOGEL (2020). *PERSUASION IN SPECIALISED DISCOURSES*. LONDON: PALGRAVE MACMILLAN.

The monograph *Persuasion in Specialised Discourses* by Olga Dontcheva-Navratilova and colleagues deals with language conveying persuasion. The point of departure for the study is the observation that the nature of persuasive language is invariably shaped by its context of use, specifically by the type of discourse and cultural background. Hence the authors compare the language of persuasion from two complementary viewpoints: the discourse/genre perspective (how is persuasion conveyed in different specialised discourses, each represented by a selected genre?) is complemented by a cross-linguistic perspective (what is the difference between English and Czech linguistic and rhetorical means of persuasion?). Additionally, the authors address the overarching question of what common features of persuasive language can be found across both the genre and cross-linguistic dimensions. Given their intercultural approach, cultural differences are expected to occur between the two linguistic communities; yet, by contrast, some of these differences may become obscured due to the global spread of English and the influence of Anglophone writing practices, as can be testified in academic writing (this topic was addressed previously in Dontcheva-Navratilova 2014).

The choice of English and Czech is valuable in itself, as the topic at hand has hitherto been underresearched within a contrastive framework. It also presents an opportunity to compare the linguistic means of persuasion in two languages which are typologically vastly different, although this is not implicitly stated as one of the authors' chief concerns in the present study. The authors state convincing reasons for selecting this particular language pair, setting both the languages in a broad social and historical context: English is viewed in the light of its status as an international lingua franca, exercising influence over other languages across a variety of domains of use, particularly in specialised and professional settings. Czech, in turn, is examined within the context of the recent period of rapid socio-political changes in Czech society, as well as being shaped by globalisation and the growing influence of English.

The monograph is usage-based, drawing on corpus material, and the authors opt for a combined quantitative and qualitative approach to their data. To identify persuasiveness in the texts, they refer to Biber and Conrad's (2009) criteria to analyse the "contextual factors affecting interaction in specialised discourses" (p. 16) as well as Bell's (1997) criteria for speaker and audience roles. They go on to classify the instances of persuasive strategies using the Aristotelian triad of rhetorical appeals — logos (referring to facts), ethos (speaker's credibility) and pathos (emotional appeal). Means of linguistic persuasion are identified and compared between four professional domains. The authors have compiled a custom-built corpus to this end, entitled *the Corpus of English and Czech Specialised Discourses* (CECSD) and comprising eight subcorpora, representing four professional discourses, each in Czech and English.

The first chapter of the monograph delineates the area of persuasion and introduces major approaches to it. Throughout the book, the concept of the Aristotelian rhetorical appeals — ethos, logos and pathos — is employed consistently. The sec-

ond chapter introduces the specialised discourses which were analysed: namely academic, business, religious and technical discourse. The preliminary findings presented in the second chapter suggest that although the four discourses are characterised by markedly different communicative situations, they manifest a number of similarities as regards the presence of persuasion. Across the four discourses, persuasive strategies fall under all three rhetorical appeals — ethos, logos and pathos, ethos being the most prominent. This indicates the major importance of the writer establishing their own credibility, which — it is suggested — stems primarily from the speaker or writer's expertise within their field. Specific persuasive strategies vary between the four discourses. For example, religious sermons rely extensively on the pathetic appeal: they are characterised by a strong personal bond between speaker and audience. On the other hand, business discourse accentuates persuasion of the logical type, referring to hard facts; still, emotional appeal is present too, specifically in the use of positively connotative vocabulary. Variation is observed also in particular linguistic realisations of the persuasive strategies. For instance, academic writing is shaped by a tension between "detachment and commitment" (p. 107): allowing for multiple interpretations, while also building a convincing argument to persuade the reader. This tension is reflected in the use of particular linguistic means, namely hedges and boosters, respectively.

The next four chapters each present the findings from the individual specialised discourses. Each discourse is examined through a genre which was selected as representative. In each study, discourse-specific persuasive strategies were identified: hence each chapter discusses a different set of persuasive language elements, ranging from metadiscourse markers to connotational meanings or expressing humour. These chapters therefore offer a detailed and structured overview of a variety of persuasive means and strategies, meticulously analysed with regard to both genre characteristics, as well as the cross-linguistic perspective.

Academic discourse is represented by research articles from linguistics and economics. The means of persuasion under scrutiny are interactional metadiscourse markers; metadiscourse is deemed convenient by its potential to convey all three persuasive appeals, i.e. ethical, logical and pathetic (emotional). The two disciplines are found to differ in the extent to which they employ individual persuasion strategies: while linguistics emphasises ethos and pathos (e.g. addressing readers to build a sense of common ground), economics relies more heavily on the logical and ethical appeal (offering factual evidence and presenting the author as a trustworthy professional). As similar results are found in both Czech and English, these persuasive strategies seem to stem from the nature of the disciplines. The prevalence of self-mentioning metadiscourse devices (serving to build credibility) is shown to vary between the languages but also between disciplines within the same language. The authors also comment on the uses of first person plural pronouns in English and Czech, discussing their potential cultural underpinnings, suggesting the tendency for agentivity to be less prominent in Czech research writing.

The focus in this chapter is on economics and linguistics only, which somewhat limits the scope of the comparison as no hard science is represented. The authors state that "differences between the hard and soft sciences [...] seem not to be as clear-

cut as it was originally believed" (p. 121) but do not expand on this further. While technical discourse (albeit not academic) is covered later by the sixth chapter, I believe that adding a representative of a technical discipline and/or natural science to this comparison would help provide a more comprehensive view of the variety of persuasive language in academic texts.

The following chapter analyses business discourse through annual corporate reports: it is argued that they are a multifaceted genre encompassing texts whose persuasive appeal may be explicit or implicit to different degrees: letters to shareholders as opposed to reviews. Persuasive strategies are found to occur more often in the letters. The analysis focuses mainly on lexical items and their connotations, either positive or negative. It is argued that frequency can serve as an indicator of persuasiveness: "the surplus of positively connoted words must result from the author's intention, which is probably a persuasive one" (p. 172).

In the next chapter, religious discourse is approached through sermons and the focus is on means of conveying humour; they are shown to contribute to coherence, text-structuring, as well as accessibility and establishing a connection with the audience. Finally, the technical discourse is exemplified by user manuals. Here, persuasion is viewed through interactional and interactive markers. The findings point to cultural differences: the English manuals use more stance markers such as hedges, while the Czech ones tend to emphasise facts and logic.

Findings arising from comparing persuasion between the individual discourses are summarised and discussed thoroughly in the seventh chapter, which compares the language of persuasion from the cross-linguistic and cross-cultural perspective, observing potential cultural as well as disciplinary differences. To name just one example, the case of hedging proved interesting: while in academic writing hedging was more prevalent in Czech, in business reports the opposite trend was revealed: English reports used more hedges, as well as more boosters.

The final chapter sums up the key findings from the book's two perspectives, i.e. a comparison across discourses and across languages, and outlines directions for further research, emphasising the need for studying the impact of English as a global lingua franca. It calls for a multimodal approach to be applied in future studies — persuasiveness, the authors argue, is likely to be construed through a variety of devices including visual and other extralinguistic means of communication. This brings to mind the study of non-verbal communication — examining the role of paralanguage, gesture and facial expressions is a potential additional perspective. Other avenues for future research which spring to mind are linked to practical applications of the findings: they could be useful in the classroom within the scope of media studies or developing critical reading skills. Additionally, they can undoubtedly contribute to the highly topical study of misinformation and fake news, especially in the light of the authors' acknowledgment that persuasive devices are not always readily recognisable in language.

To conclude, the monograph *Persuasion in Specialised Discourses* is a valuable contribution to the field of contrastive pragmatics and discourse studies, as well as an example of effectively applying a combination of quantitative and qualitative corpus methods, characterised by a careful selection of data with representativeness

in mind. The *Corpus of English and Czech Specialised Discourses*, created as part of this research project, will surely prove a useful resource for future studies of specialised discourses. Expanding this corpus by adding other languages may be a worthwhile next step, allowing for a multilingual cross-linguistic comparison.

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