



# Legal-Lay Communication: Textual Travels in the Law (Oxford Studies in Sociolinguistics)

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This volume responds to a growing interest in the language of legal settings by situating the study of language and law within contemporary theoretical debates in discourse studies, linguistic anthropology, and sociolinguistics. The chapters in the collection explore many of the common occasions when those acting on behalf of the legal system, such as the police, lawyers and judges, interact with those coming into contact with the legal system, such as suspects and witnesses. However the chapters do this work through the conceptual lens of 'textual travel', or the way that texts move across space and time and are transformed along the way. Collectively, notions of textual travel shed new light on the ways in which texts can influence, and are influenced by, social and legal life.

With contributions from leading experts in language and law, *Legal-Lay Communication* explores such 'textual travel' themes as the mediating role of technologies in the investigatory stages of the legal process, the centrality of intertextuality in the legal construction of cases in court, the transformative effects of recontextualization in processes of judicial decision-making, and the way that processes of textual travel disturb the apparent permanence of legal categorization. The book challenges both the notion of legal text as a static repository of meaning and the very idea of legal-lay or lay-legal communication.

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#### Review

"Rather than representing a pastiche of unconnected contributions, the diversity of perspectives included in the volume, the richness of combined expertise of the contributing authors, and the varied range of methods and theoretical frameworks applied add up to a coherent whole of complementary, multidisciplinary perspectives." --*The International Journal of Speech, Language and the Law*

"This cohesive and accessible volume provides a useful lens for exploring legal-lay communication and would be of interest not only to readers with a specialist interest in its central theme, but also to anyone investigating communication beyond disciplinary boundaries." --*Applied Linguistics*

"It is not an easy book to review because brief references to the individual chapters fail to capture the rich and meticulous analysis undertaken by the contributors." --*Linguistic Anthropology*

"The importance of this collection, both theoretical and practical, cannot be overstated... this collection reflects a growing interest and need to engage in interdisciplinary research in law; it is a good example of how linguists' and sociolinguists' micro-analysis of how language functions in legal contexts can reveal how law works, or does not work, at the macro level. In other words, answers to legal problems can be located in non-legal (lay) fields, in the interaction of legal and lay disciplines, or shall we say no legal problem is ever purely legal..." --*Discourse Studies*

"Written by a group of eminent international scholars, this work should rightly be seen as a significant contribution to a growing literature in Legal English discourse." --*Discourse Studies*

#### About the Author

Chris Heffer is a Senior Lecturer in Language and Communication at Cardiff University, Wales, and the author of *The Language of Jury Trial*.

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John Conley is William Rand Kenan, Jr. Professor of Law at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. He is the co-author of *Just Words: Law, Language, and Power* and co-editor of *Polar: The Political and Legal Anthropology Review*.

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