Subjectivity in news discourse: a corpus linguistic analysis of informalization

Kirsten Vis

This dissertation provides insight into the effects of informalization on Dutch journalistic prose, a process which is presumed to have caused a shift toward a more informal and conversational style. It focuses on the linguistic concept of subjectivity, i.e. the expression of beliefs, attitudes and opinions of a speaking or writing subject, and his/her attention to himself/herself and to the addressee. This dissertation makes an important contribution to the study of subjectivity in news discourse by showing that it is essential to make a distinction between subjectivity as expressed by the journalist and subjectivity as expressed by news sources that are quoted literally in the news texts (in direct quotations). Based on a series of analyses of Dutch news texts from 1950/1 and 2002 this dissertation shows that informalization lies primarily in direct quotations, which are more subjective than the words of the journalist, and have increased over time, both in proportion and in their expression of subjectivity.