**Linguistic Analysis of Public Service Encounters: Initial Empirical Explorations of Spoken Administrative Language**

Steffen Eckhard1 & Laurin Friedrich1,2

1 University of Konstanz

2 University of Duisburg-Essen

**Abstract**

Administrative language is a critical element in the relationship between citizens and the state, especially when it comes to face-to-face interactions between officials and citizens during public service delivery. But there is little research on the communicative substance of these encounters. In this paper, we present a multi-method approach to measure administrative language and study its impact on citizen satisfaction. Building on literature in communication studies and explorative interviews, we develop a four-dimensional taxonomy of administrative language. We subsequently present findings from a survey experiment. Participants evaluated audio recordings of a hypothetical service encounter where we systematically varied the language used by the official. The results indicate that variation in administrative language affects citizen satisfaction, independent from actual service decisions. Findings contribute to literature and practice of public administration, by providing a conceptual understanding of the building blocks of administrative language and conclusive evidence of its impact on citizen satisfaction.