

**Third WU Symposium on International Business Communication**

# **Discourse and Organization: Multidisciplinary Perspectives**

Vienna, 24 – 26 March 2010

## **Abstracts**

Judy Delin (University of Reading)

## **Consulting on Tone of Voice: Experiences of a linguist turned practitioner**

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This presentation looks at a range of issues arising in the application of linguistics in a commercial context – developing language styles and training for companies' communications with customers (websites, letters, bills, statements, brochures, in-branch communications, and the like). Working within branding and information design, my experience is with companies that wish either to communicate more clearly, or to communicate a certain 'brand position', or both.

There is already an industry around training in 'Plain English'. This work goes beyond this, in three particular ways:

- in linguistic sophistication, in that it draws on language concepts and principles from a broad range of linguistic and psychological subdisciplines;
- in document design, in that the work goes beyond language into the effective visual presentation of information – linguistic and graphical; and
- in stylistic detail, in that this isn't the application of a single style – because brands seek a 'Tone of Voice' that distinguishes them from competitors.

Drawing on a wide range of examples from finance, telecommunications, and utilities, I focus on some questions – political, personal, and practical – that have arisen in the journey from (and between) academia and commercial practice:

- What do companies want to know – and why?
- What are the benefits (or otherwise) to businesses and their customers?
- What are the preconceptions that business people have about working with academics – and vice versa?
- Is this *proper* linguistics? Isn't it just 'dumbing down'?
- What, beyond subject knowledge, do you need to work in a commercial environment?

Given the short time available for the talk, I hope to evolve it into discussion at any time participants feel is appropriate.

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## **Institutional discourse: Types and norms**

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Institutional discourse is verbal communication which takes place between the members of a professional community organized to satisfy specific demands of population. Such demands predetermine special organizational, presentational and symbolic activity of social institutions established by the society in order to ensure its existence in the spheres of production and exchange of goods, information, education and research, medical aid, maintenance of law and state security, arts and recreation, nature protection, etc. Hence there appear various social institutions with agents who carry out their work according to objectives and norms of institutional behavior. Socially their activity corresponds to four types of social actions determined by Jürgen Habermas. Linguistically it may be described in terms of institutional types and norms.

Functionally an institutional discourse is made up of its basic objectives: 1) performative (social practice); 2) normative (norms and values of the institution including explicit and implicit prescriptions); 3) presentational (stereotype intentions and expectations in their verbal and non-verbal expression); 4) selective (making and keeping distance between inner and outer agents).

Structurally an institutional discourse description may be presented as a system of communicative situation components close to the "SPEAKING" framework devised by Dell Hymes and including the following issues: 1) objectives of a social institution, 2) agents characteristics, 3) institutional values, 4) institutional chronotope in the sense of Mikhail Bakhtin, i.e. symbolic time and place, 5) institutional discourse strategies, 6) institutional genres, 7) institutional discourse formulaic phrases.

Topically an institutional discourse includes the following items: 1) topical detail elaboration, i.e. precise determination of the issues to be dealt with, often in the form of special terminology, 2) real and symbolic instrumentalities (devices and strategies) worked out to solve professional problems, 3) institutionally approved evaluation criteria for the items to be fulfilled, 4) institutional monitoring of the situation in its development, 5) institutional scripts for self presentation.

Born: 1953. Education: Volgograd and Moscow Pedagogical Universities. Professional fields: Linguistics and Cultural Anthropology. Ph.D. (Linguistics), first dissertation "Modal Component of the English Verb" (1982), second dissertation "The Language of Social Status" (1992). Main books: "The Language of Social Status" (Moscow, 2002); "The Language Circle: Personality, Concepts, Discourse" (Moscow, 2004); "The Language Keys" (Moscow, 2009) (in Russian). Position: Professor and Chair, English Philology Department, Volgograd State Pedagogical University.

Veronika Koller (Lancaster University)

## **Identity, image, impression: Corporate self-presentation and public reactions**

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This paper looks at corporate language used to project a particular image in the public domain and addresses the reaction of various publics to this communicated corporate identity (CI).

CI has so far received only scant attention from linguists, who have instead focused on individual professional identities (e.g. Watson 1996), or on collective national identity (Wodak et al. 2009). While cutting across these, CI nevertheless represents a separate form of collective identity and therefore promises valuable new insights into the discursive production, distribution and reception of self

The first part of the study is based on the websites of 100 multinational corporations. Starting from the assumption that identity comprises values/beliefs, goals and memory (Augoustinos et al. 2006), it draws on systemic-functional grammar to investigate mission statements and corporate histories. The analysis combines computer-assisted methods to ascertain keywords, modality and pronoun usage with subsequent qualitative research into these parameters. In terms of reception, functional analysis will look at texts by customers (e.g. word-of-mouth testimonials from chatrooms) and by critics of globally operating companies.

Keywords evoke the company's principal values, objectives and stakeholders, showing almost exclusively positive semantic prosody. Modality is overwhelmingly deontic, focusing on obligation and permission, while pronoun usage constructs a reinforced, but underspecified corporate WE in opposition to an equally unspecified THEY. Direct address of the allegedly cherished public is noticeably absent. While the texts representing those publics show similar modality, they feature more differentiated semantic prosody and reverse the US-THEM dichotomy.

Results suggest that the impression management, i.e. conveying an ideal self, witnessed on corporate websites is at odds with not only critics' but also customers' evaluation of the companies, thus pointing to a widening, problematic gap between narcissistic corporate self-promotion and grass-roots public sentiment about corporations and their role in society.

Augoustinos, M., Walker, I. and Donaghue, N. (2006) *Social Cognition: An Integrated Introduction*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. London: Sage.

Koller, V. (2008) "Identity, image, impression: Corporate self-promotion and public reactions". In: Wodak, R. and V. Koller (eds) *Handbook of Communication in the Public Sphere*. Berlin: de Gruyter, 155-80.

Watson, Diane (1996): "Individuals and institutions: The case of work and employment". In: Wetherell, M. (ed.) *Identities, Groups and Social Issues*. London and Milton Keynes: Sage/The Open University, 239-82.

Wodak, R., de Cillia, R., Reisigl, M. and Wetschanow, K. (2009): *The Discursive Construction of National Identity*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Veronika Koller received her PhD in English Linguistics from the University of Vienna (*Doktorat* 2003). She joined the Department of Linguistics and English Language at Lancaster University in 2004 and has been Senior Lecturer in English Language there since 2008.

Veronika's research interests include critical discourse analysis, cognitive semantics and social cognition. In particular, she has studied the conceptual structure and discursive function of metaphor in business magazines, as well as the socio-cognitive representations in corporate branding discourse. In addition, she has done research on analysing collective, especially corporate, identity in discourse.

Veronika's teaching at undergraduate and postgraduate levels covers the areas of (critical) discourse analysis, language and gender, language of advertising, and corporate communication. She also supervises ca. 12 PhD students who pursue research projects in (critical) discourse analysis and/or metaphor theory and use.

Outside Lancaster University, Veronika has co-facilitated seminars for the British Academy of Management and acts as course consultant for the Foundation Degree and BA Communication at Work at Blackpool and the Fylde College. She also freelances for consultant company Linguistic Landscapes.

**Selected publications (out of a total of 40, Dember 2009):**

- 2002 "A shotgun wedding': Co-occurrence of war and marriage metaphors in mergers and acquisitions discourse". *Metaphor and Symbol* 17(3): 179-203. [reprinted in: Patrick Hanks and Rachel Giora (eds) (2010) *Metaphor and Figurative Language: Critical Concepts in Linguistics*. London: Routledge.]
- 2004a "Businesswomen and war metaphors: 'Possessive, jealous and pugnacious?'". *Journal of Sociolinguistics* 8(1): 3-22.
- 2004b *Metaphor and Gender in Business Media Discourse: a Critical Cognitive Study*. Basingstoke: Palgrave. [paperback edition 2008]
- 2005 "Critical discourse analysis and social cognition: Evidence from business media discourse". *Discourse & Society* 16(2): 199-224.
- 2007 "'The world's local bank': Globalisation as a strategy in corporate branding discourse". *Social Semiotics* 17(1): 111-30.
- 2008a Wodak, Ruth and Veronika Koller (eds) *Handbook of Communication in the Public Sphere*. Handbook of Applied Linguistics vol. 4. Berlin: de Gruyter.
- 2008b "'The world in one city': Semiotic and cognitive aspects of city branding". In: B. Mitsikopoulou (ed.): *Branding Political Entities in a Globalised World*. Special issue of *Journal of Language and Politics* 7(3): 431-50.
- 2009 "Missions and empires: Religious and political metaphors in corporate discourse". In: A. Musolff and J. Zinken (eds) *Metaphor and Discourse*. Basingstoke: Palgrave, 116-34.

Nick Llewellyn (Warwick Business School, University of Warwick)

## **Discourse, communication and multimodality**

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This presentation explores the relevance of *multimodality* for the study of organizational discourse and communication.

Discourse and communication are realised through overlapping and interwoven modalities. But discourse analytic research in organization studies, following the linguistic turn in philosophy, has tended to privilege just one modality, namely language. Other modalities have been downplayed including gesture, gaze, intonation, facial expression, prosody and how speakers position their body, handle material objects and orient to technologies. There is a clear challenge if alternative modalities are to be put on an equivalent footing.

Drawing on ethnomethodology, and especially the video-based studies of Charles Goodwin\*, the presentation introduces issues and problems of unpicking the layered nature of organizational communication. Empirical materials\*\*, namely video recordings of employee-customer interaction, will be analyzed to highlight analytic and practical implications, for academics and for those designing customer interfaces, of coming to terms with multimodal interaction.

\*Illustrative paper include:

Goodwin, Charles. (2003). Embedded Context. *Research on Language & Social Interaction*, 36: 323-50  
Goodwin, Charles. (2003). 'Pointing as situated practice'. In S. Kita, Ed., *Pointing: Where language, culture, and cognition meet*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum: 217-42

Goodwin, Charles. (2003). 'The body in action'. In: J. Coupland, P. Gwyn, eds., *Discourse, the Body and Identity*. Palgrave/Macmillan, New York: 19-42.

\*\*The data files will be made available before the presentation at <http://sites.google.com/site/llewellynnick3/>

Florentine Maier & Michael Meyer (WU Vienna)

## **Discourses of non-profit organization and their implications for non-profit governance**

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We examine discourses of organization in NPOs, and what consequences these discourses have for non-profit governance. Based on group interviews with representatives of 15 Austrian NPOs, five discourses of organization have preliminarily been identified:

In the *Domestic* discourse of organization, immediate action and harmonious relationships are valued. The central metaphor is the family, where parents take care of and lead the children. All members are expected to make sacrifices for the organization; in return they enjoy feelings of closeness. The leader is expected to guide the organization, while also carrying the main burden of responsibility for the organization and its dependents.

In *Grassroots* discourse, egalitarianism and autonomy are important. Techniques are used to prevent the formation of hierarchies. The underlying metaphor is the commune, with members realizing shared values in the organization's area of activity, but also directly in their lives. Because members are autonomous, disagreements can only be overcome by discussions leading to full consensus.

In *Professionalist* discourse, members are knowledgeable experts. Their relationship with clients is one of expert paternalism. Leaders of the organization and persons performing central work belong to the relevant occupation. The communication structure is decentralized; members have wide-ranging authority over their affairs. There is frequent collaboration beyond the borders of the organization with experts from the same field.

In *Managerialist* discourse, instrumental rationality, agency, and progress are central. The leading metaphor is the business enterprise, with everybody in the organization being a manager who at least manages their own affairs. The governance structure consists of a board that nominates its own succeeding members, and a top management that is appointed by the board and appoints the rest of staff. Environments are conceived of as markets.

In *Civic* discourse, formal procedures and democratic processes are valued. The central metaphor is the republic, with members of the organization as citizens holding equal basic rights, notably active and passive voting rights. Democratic representation and conflict are integral parts of the organization. While consensus is the primary aim, the organization also uses majority decisions if controversies cannot be solved by consensus.

Each of these discourses has distinct implications for the governance of NPOs, as subjectivities of more or less worthy and powerful actors are established, which in turn are assigned distinctive places and relationships in the organization's governance system.

*Florentine Maier* is researcher at the Nonprofit Management Group at WU Vienna University of Economics and Business. Her research focuses on managerialism and alternative forms of organizing in CSOs. She received a doctoral degree in personnel management and organizational behaviour from WU in 2008 and served as a Fulbright Visiting Scholar at Stanford University in 2009.

*Michael Meyer* is head of the Nonprofit Management Group at WU Vienna University of Economics and Business. He has published more than 70 academic papers on a variety of topics in organizational behaviour and non-profit management. His current research focuses on the third sector and civil society, careers in CSOs, the social theory of Pierre Bourdieu, social systems theory, text and discourse analysis, organisational analysis, and the diffusion of management thinking into CSOs and its consequences.

Susan Meriläinen (University of Lapland), Janne Tienari (Aalto University, School of Economics) & Anu Valtonen (University of Lapland)

## **Talking about bodies in business: Headhunters on managerial candidates**

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Our study focuses on the accounts of executive search consultants – or headhunters – in relation to the recruitment processes of corporate executives and managers. We adopt a discursive perspective, and pay specific attention to the ways in which headhunters talk about the body performances and appearance of (potential) executives and managers. While attributes attached to the 'ideal' manager have been discussed in organization research, the meaning of the body has mainly been silenced. We suggest that there is a need to embrace approaches that combine the material, the symbolic, the social and the cultural to better understand how "the material body and its social construction are intertwined in complex and contradictory ways which are extremely difficult to disentangle in practice" (Holland et al. 1994, 22).

We address the body as a category of analysis, and highlight its ontological status as historically, culturally and discursively inscribed (Fonow and Cook, 2005). The aim of such an approach is to move beyond the conception of the body as an unproblematic, biological entity towards an understanding of the body as a complex constructed object of social discourses. According to Butler (2004), bodies are always becoming embodied in reference to that which is stated as the norm. There is no 'being' behind any doing, for the doing is everything, while the subject is its effect (Salih and Butler, 2004). Thus, for example, gender is the effect of assigning it to a sexed body. Such an effect continues to be produced and naturalized in its repetition by every-body over time.

Our data is produced in interviews with Finnish headhunters who are involved in listing potential candidates for executive and managerial positions, in sorting out the most promising candidates, and in assisting their clients in making the final selection. By paying specific attention to talk about bodies in business, we want to unsettle the apparent neutrality of disembodied constructions of the 'ideal' manager. This provides a unique opportunity for organization theorists and linguists to learn from each other, with feminist theory acting as a bridge.

### **References**

**Butler, J.** (2004) *Undoing Gender*. New York: Routledge.

**Fonov, M.M. and Cook, J.A.** (2005) Feminist methodology: new applications in the academy and public policy. *Signs* 30/4, 2211-36.

**Holland, J., Ramazanoglu, C., Sharpe, S. and Thompson, R.** (1994) Power and desire: the embodiment of female sexuality. *Feminist Review* 46, 21-38.

**Salih, S. and Butler, J.** (eds.) (2004) *The Judith Butler Reader*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Susan Meriläinen is professor of management at the University of Lapland, Janne Tienari is professor of organizations and management at Aalto University, School of Economics (formerly Helsinki School of Economics), and Anu Valtonen is professor of marketing at the University of Lapland, all in Finland.



Florian Menz (University of Vienna)

## **Constructing unity and identity in flexible and uncertain environments: A case of internal business communication**

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At the threshold of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, businesses are exposed to a series of problems and requirements that are apt to subject their entire organizational structure to a radical change.

The increasing demand for flexibility and for fast reactions to unexpected problems leads to an extensive loss of clear structures, routines and command or instruction chains. Hierarchies are no longer recognizable, or if they are, then no longer reliable in the sense of a sustainable producer of solutions. In this respect, the business presented here does not differ from many others, indeed it is a good example of what is called post-bureaucratic organization in various organization-theoretical approaches (Donnelon/Heckscher. 1994, Iedema 2003), being marked by increasing communication and, along with it, qualities like spontaneity, initiative, commitment, enthusiasm and pragmatic decision-making. However, if an organization loses its structure, it is threatened with the loss of its identity, since constancy and continuity, which are proper to the nature, and even to the definition characteristic of an organization, are lost.

In my contribution, using contrastive analysis of various linguistic data sources from a young business, I would like to show the interactive strategies of the members to maintain identity and unity for themselves and for the business in turbulent surroundings full of uncertainty and insecurity.

Two approaches to a solution will be illustrated: Bureaucratization on the one hand and a new form of a somewhat paradoxical solution on the other hand. For the employees make the aspect that threatens identity the central identity-endowing factor. "Chaos" and competence emerge as unique characteristics and are consequently construed as an essential, central component of the identity of the business. As identity characteristics, they are stabilizing, offer certainty and make contingency bearable. At the same time, by its outward demarcation function, this quality also generates inward unity.

Donnelon, Anne / Heckscher, Charles (1994): *The Post-Bureaucratic Organization. New perspectives on Organizational Change*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Iedema, Rick (2003): *Discourses of Post-Bureaucratic Organization*. Amsterdam: Benjamins

Menz, Florian (2000): *Fremd- und Selbstorganisation im Diskurs*. Wiesbaden: Deutscher Universitäts-Verlag.

Florian Menz is Professor of Applied Linguistics and Sociolinguistics at the University of Vienna. Combining CDA with sociological systemic approaches, his main research interests include organisational language use, with a focus on medical and business institutions, gender and power-related aspects of interaction, and interactional representation of pain.

Homepage: <http://www.univie.ac.at/linguistics/personal/florian/>

### **Recent publications:**

Menz, Florian / Lalouschek, Johanna (2006): „I just can't tell you how much it hurts“. Gender-relevant differences in the description of chest pain. In: Salager-Meyer, Françoise / Gotti, Maurizio (eds): Medical Discourse. Lang (Linguistic Insights series): 135-154.

Menz, Florian/ Lalouschek, Johanna / Gstettner, Andreas (2008): Effiziente ärztliche Gesprächsführung. Optimierung kommunikativer Kompetenz in der ambulanten medizinischen Versorgung. Ein gesprächsanalytisches Trainingskonzept. Münster: Lit-Verlag.

Menz, Florian, Al-Roubaie, Ali (2008): Interruptions, status, and gender in medical interviews: The harder you brake, the longer it takes. In: Discourse & Society 19 (5): 645-666.

Jiří Nekvapil & Tamah Sherman (Charles University Prague)

### **Language ideologies and multilingual practices in multinational companies**

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Practices and discourses in multinational companies are inextricably linked, and one challenge presented to researchers is that of how to demonstrate these links in a coherent and relevant way. This paper attempts to begin to do so. Its theoretical basis is the Language Management Framework in the vein of J.V. Neustupný and B.H. Jernudd and their students (see Nekvapil & Sherman 2009a). This framework presumes the existence of norms or expectations for communicative behavior which different participants possess in different situations. Drawing on these norms, participants may produce communicative acts without paying attention to the language they use or to aspects of communication. The management process starts only when they reflect language use, that is, they notice a deviation from their expectations, evaluate it (be it negatively or positively), consider what to do with the evaluated item, and finally, implement a given design in communication. This process may assume a form of 'simple management' (when it takes place in face-to-face communication) or 'organized management' (when it takes place in institutions of varying complexity, for example, multinationals). This paper argues that language ideologies guide norms or expectations for communicative behavior and thus also what can be noticed as a deviation from the norm, what can be evaluated (negatively, positively or otherwise) and so forth, that is, management processes.

The empirical section of the paper draws on the analysis of the linguistic, communicative and socio-cultural situation in multinational companies with branches or plants located in the Czech Republic. There are typically several languages used in these companies. In addition to the local languages, there are the languages of the parent companies – most commonly English or German (see Nekvapil & Sherman 2009b). These languages are distributed unevenly among the various employees, who develop particular arguments in order to legitimize (and thus maintain) communicative behavior or to push for change in it. One of the main aims of the paper is to reveal the language ideologies underlying such argumentation. The second aim, not unrelated to the first one, is to find out how and to what extent language ideologies are connected to the language management of the individual employees and of the corporations as a whole.

The research reported in this paper was carried out as a part of the FP6 European project LINEE ([www.linee.info](http://www.linee.info)), devoted to the study of linguistic diversity in Europe.

## References:

Nekvapil, J. & Sherman, T. (eds) (2009a) *Language Management in Contact Situations: Perspectives from Three Continents*. (= *Prague Papers on Language, Society and Interaction*, Volume 1). Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang.

Nekvapil, J. & Sherman, T. (2009b) Czech, German and English: Finding their place in multinational companies in the Czech Republic. In Stevenson, P. & Carl, J. (eds) *Language, Discourse and Identity in Central Europe*. Houndmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, pp. 122-146.

**Jiří Nekvapil** is an associate professor in the Department of Linguistics, Faculty of Arts, Charles University in Prague, where he teaches sociolinguistics, discourse analysis and general linguistics. He has published extensively in these areas. His current research focuses on theories of language planning, Language Management Theory, ethnomethodologically informed analysis of media discourse, and the use of languages in multinational companies. Since 2006, he has worked for the EC 6th Framework Program project LINEE -- Languages in a Network of European Excellence, leading the Prague team of researchers dealing with the relationship between language and economy.

### Selected publications:

Language management in the Czech Republic. *Current Issues in Language Planning* 4, 2003, 181-366 [reprinted in Baldauf R.B. and Kaplan, R.B. (eds.), *Language Planning and Policy in Europe, Vol. 2.: The Czech Republic, The European Union and Northern Ireland*. Clevedon/Buffalo/Toronto: Multilingual Matters, 2006, pp. 16-201] (co-authored with J.V. Neustupný)

*Languages and language communities in the Czech Republic* (= *International Journal of the Sociology of Language* 162, 2003) (special issue, co-edited with S. Čmejrková)

*Sprachen in multinationalen Unternehmen auf dem Gebiet der Tschechischen Republik*. München: Forschungsverbund Ost- und Südosteuropa (forost), 2005 (with Nekula, M. and Šichová, K)

*Small and Large Slavic Languages in Contact* (= *International Journal of the Sociology of Language* 183, 2007 (special issue, co-edited with R. Marti)

On the relationship between small and large Slavic languages. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language* 183, 2007, 141-160.

*Sociologický časopis / Czech Sociological Review* 42, č. 2: *Analýza promluv a textů, analýza diskurzu (monotematické číslo)* [Sociologický časopis / Czech Sociological Review 42, No. 2: Discourse Studies (special issue)]. Prague: Sociologický ústav Akademie věd České republiky, 2006 (editor and author).

**Tamah Sherman** is a researcher at the Institute of Linguistics and Finno-Ugric Studies at Charles University in Prague. Her research focuses on the numerous forms of contact between Czech and English in the Czech Republic after 1989. Her dissertation analyzed Czech-language interactions between Czech native speakers and American Mormon missionaries. Since 2006, she has worked for the EC 6th

Framework Program project LINEE -- Languages in a Network of European Excellence, leading the team of researchers dealing with communication in multinational companies in Central Europe.

Relevant publications:

Nekvapil, J. & Sherman, T. (2009a) Pre-interaction management in multinational companies in Central Europe. *Current Issues in Language Planning* 10 (1), 181-198. ISSN 1466-4208.

Nekvapil, J. & Sherman, T. (2009b) Czech, German and English: Finding their place in multinational companies in the Czech Republic. In: Stevenson, P. and Carl, J. (eds.), *Language, Discourse and Identity in Central Europe*. Houndmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 122-146.

Nekvapil, J. & Sherman, T. (eds.) (2009c) *Language Management in Contact Situations: Perspectives from Three Continents*. Frankfurt: Peter Lang.

Cliff Oswick (Queen Mary, University of London)

**From Critical Discourse Analysis to Creative Discourse Analysis: Of mutuality, merged methodologies and the study of organizations**

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The proposed paper considers the various tensions within organization studies regarding the legitimacy and appropriateness of discourse analytic approaches. Discourse analysis (especially critical discourse analysis) has been widely applied to the study of organizations to the extent that this form of inquiry has been somewhat over-used and on occasions misappropriated. In addition, it will be argued that the discursive analysis of organizations and organizing has generally been undertaken in a rather narrow, isolated and overly constrained way.

The paper posits that what is required is the deployment of discourse analytic methods in combination with other qualitative approaches. In particular, it is suggested that the conjugation of discourse analysis with either social network analysis (Scott, 2000), stakeholder analysis (Burgoyne, 1994) or sequence analysis (Abbott, 1990) has genuine synergistic potential. For example, the study of the enduring pattern of relationships between individuals (revealed by social network analysis) can be enhanced by considering the dynamics of interaction (that can be apprehended through discourse analysis). This, in turn, leads to richer and more sophisticated insights into a given social situation. Beyond the benefits of understanding relationships through discourse and vice versa, we can also derive fresh insights into agency and positionality (revealed by stakeholder analysis) by simultaneously deploying discursive techniques. Finally, it is also possible to enrich our understanding of events and the process of colligation associated with sequence analysis through the interrogation of the discursive episodes and texts that link the chain of events being analyzed.

In conclusion, if we are to develop 'creative discourse analyses' rather than perpetuating an over-reliance on 'critical discourse analysis' we need to embrace multi-method discursive approaches in order to meaningfully engage with the study of relationships (via social network analysis), the study of positions (via stakeholder analysis), and the study of events (via sequence analysis).

Cliff Oswick is a Professor of Organization Theory in the School of Business and Management at Queen Mary, University of London. He is also Dean of the Faculty of Law & Social Sciences. His research interests focus on the application of aspects of discourse, dramaturgy, tropes, narrative and rhetoric to the study of organizations, organizing, and organizational change. He has published over 100 academic articles and contributions to edited volumes. He is the European Editor of *Journal of Organizational Change Management* and co-director of ICRODSC (International Centre for Research on Organizational Discourse, Strategy and Change) which links a network of researchers in several renowned institutions located in the UK, Canada, US, Sweden and Australia.

Gina Poncini (University of Milan)

### **Discourse, knowledge creation and communities: A view from Italy**

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This paper focuses on the role of discourse in efforts to enhance knowledge creation and knowledge sharing in selected organizational contexts that bring together members of different professional communities. It first examines the role of discourse and communication in Eni's knowledge management programs. The energy company based in Italy has developed special programs in the field of knowledge management, in particular by setting up "Practice Communities" with the goal of making tacit knowledge explicit. The paper analyses the discursive strategies and practices used in a set of documents and resources available on the corporate website in English and in Italian to represent knowledge and the company's knowledge-related initiatives. It also draws on supplementary data in the form of semi-structured interviews with individuals involved in Eni's knowledge management programs and the Eni Corporate University, which covers what the company refers to as the whole "knowledge cycle", from planning the requirements of critical skills to the construction of integrated academic curricula in cooperation with universities in Italy, up to the selection of new talents and their training during their professional lives. A qualitative approach is used, with methods drawn from discourse analysis and pragmatics.

The second part of the paper is dedicated to organizations and associations of producers of wines and foods based in Lombardy, Italy. It draws on the author's collaboration with several associations and her ongoing research in the agro-food industry. Regional associations of wine producers and the individual businesses they represent are currently facing the challenges of innovation and knowledge sharing. Internationalization has taken on importance: local and regional governments and agencies are also participating in this process, as are other local firms. In this scenario, boundaries between various types of organizations are becoming more blurred in promoting events, research, and other initiatives. At times, companies need to compete as well as collaborate, since producing and promoting their products also calls for enhancing quality at a regional level and promoting local elements strategically. To investigate issues of expertise and knowledge sharing, the paper draws on interviews with professionals involved in regional associations of wine producers and producers of local foods and wines. The paper also analyzes the strategies and discursive practices used in media reports and promotional materials to represent different aspects of local products. It gives attention to representations of innovation, expertise and internationalization as well as local culture, traditions and the natural environment. A qualitative

approach is used, with methods drawn from discourse analysis and pragmatics, focusing in particular on evaluative language, personal pronouns, and participation frameworks.

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Dörte Resch (University of St. Gallen)

### **Discourses of change – changing discourse in organizations?**

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Discourse theory has played an important role in understanding the construction of change processes in organizations for many years (e.g. Caldwell, 2005; Chreim, 2006; Grant, Michelson, Oswick, & Wailes, 2005; Tsoukas, 2005). Due to its focus on the linguistic construction of realities, discourse theory has been able to dismantle many of the realist myths on change processes (e.g. 'resistance to change' or 'agency of change agents') were critically discussed.

Though important in their own right, we believe that discourse theory has underestimated the important nexus between discourse and change: that is, how do prevailing discourses of change affect a given change processes? Based on the insights of a three-year consultancy project in a non-profit organization, the present contribution explores how the discourses of change embraced by the members of the organizational had to be both revealed and changed in order to render possible organizational transformation. It is discussed that making the results of the discursive analysis accessible to organizational members and using them as tool for mutual reflection formed a springboard not only to further people's awareness of the organizational discourse. Rather, this formed a preeminent condition for a de- and consecutive re-construction of the logics of the change processes itself. To render palpable the minutiae of the change process, it is in a first step that the sequences of de- and reconstruction of change-discourses are discussed. Second, the particular functions and consequences of the different discourses for the change processes are reflected. Third, given that different stakeholders were involved in the change process, the particular conflicts of interest between the different interest groups will be analyzed.

By way of conclusion, it is (critically) discussed that discourse analysis is not merely an analytical method for understanding change processes but can also pose as a promising "tool" for stimulating organizational transformations.

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Elena Trubina (University of Ekaterinburg)

### **"I won't allow disgrace for our region to happen!": Organizational discourse in the public sector**

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Hosting international events acquired significant status for city and national government development agendas since it is common wisdom today that such events could produce an economic surplus and increase a city's and a nation's visibility. As a rule, a city's hosting an international summit doesn't involve a complete change of that city's skyline. However, this is exactly what was planned in Ekaterinburg during the run-up to the Shanghai Cooperation Organization transnational summit meeting that was held there in June 2009, followed by the BRIC summit. While the authorities intended to position the city as the "Eurasian capital" and were eager to make the city's look agree with this imagined status, the local business community received at the time a convenient framework for their ambitious investments in commercial real estate. The plans of the host city and region were made when federal money was generously distributed, ambitious national projects devised, and nationalistic pomp was at its peak. Then difficult tasks arose: of conveying confidence when in reality there was loss of it, of organizing pompous displays in times of a dramatic and rapid decline in the purchasing power of the populace, and of investing in things that many deem unnecessary in times of full-scale economic crisis. . On the conceptual side, the future is, in a modernist manner, still considered as an outcome of one's actions in the present, but the present itself is changing so rapidly that the priorities one got used to (for

instance, the city as growth machine) may need to be reconsidered. As a result, different temporalities have been at play in the rhetoric and actions of officials and businessmen: first linked to the narrative of globalization, second derived from Soviet times, and third comprised of uneasy balancing between the past plans and disturbing present realities.

Elena Trubina is professor of philosophy at Ural State University, Ekaterinburg, Russia. Except her home university, she lectures widely throughout Russia and abroad, namely, in Italy, Kyrgyzstan, Finland, Germany and US. Her research deals broadly with social theory, urban and cultural studies, and the interactions between urban space, politics, memory, and subjectivity. She has been a recipient of numerous fellowships, including the ones awarded by Fulbright Foundation, DAAD, Carnegie Foundation, IFK (Vienna). She is co-organizer of the interdisciplinary international project "Diverse Cultures in the Contemporary World", sponsored by the Kennan Institute which resulted in a book "Dilemmas of Diversity after the Cold War: Analyses of Cultural Differences by United States- and Russia-Based Scholars" (2010, in print), co-edited with Michele Rivkin-Fish, and of the Russian-Finnish project on the Russian media, the ideas of the good life, and post-Soviet subjectivities. Together with Arja Rosenholm and Kaarle Nordenstreng, she co-edited the volume "Russian Mass Media and Changing Values" with the Finnish colleagues (Routledge, 2010, in print). Her publications in Russian include two books devoted to post-Soviet identities, a few textbooks, a book on urban theory "Urbanisticheskaya Teoriya" (2008), and "Trauma: punkty" (Moscow, 2009) - an edited collection of essays on various social and cultural dimensions of trauma written by American, European, and Russian scholars and co-edited with Sergey Oushakine. She is currently working on a project devoted to mobility and cosmopolitanism.