Introduction

Discourse and communication in organizations

The research studies reported in this Special Issue of *Pragmatics and Society* demonstrate an interest in the relevance of discourse and communication to organizational settings in the professional world. Organizational communication is perceived as "how organizational actors operate in communication and *through* discourse" (Jian, Schmisseur and Fairhurst 2008:314; italics in original). Analysis of organizational discourse as a field concerns examining "the linguistic elements in the construction of social phenomena" (Vaara, Kleymann and Seristo 2004:3), including identity, institutions, strategy, and organizational change (Philips and Oswick 2012).

Approaches to organizational discourse analysis are varied. Philips and Oswick (2012: 458) offer a summary of levels of discursive analysis of organizations and organising, and corresponding dominant methodological approaches, primary discursive foci, organizational emphasis, typical data sources, and prevalent organizational foci:

Level of discursive analysis	Dominant methodological approach	Primary discursive focus	Organizational emphasis	Typical data sources	Prevalent organizational foci
Micro-level	Conversation analysis	Analysis of real-time interaction	Interaction *as* organizing	Observation of meetings, interviews, and presentations	Micro-strategizing and decision making
Meso-level	Narrative analysis	Interpretation of stakeholder accounts	Organizations *as* storytelling arenas	Interviews with key respondents or the	Identity work and sensemaking

				analysis of a sample of selective texts	
Macro-level	Foucauldian discourse analysis	Study of discursive formations	Institutions *as* governing and constituting bodies	Historical interrogation of bodies of texts and practices	Knowledge, subjectivities, and control
Multi-level	CDA	Connecting local texts and wider social practices	Organizational events *as* contextually implicated	Analysis of a piece of ext (or interaction) combined with contextual synthesis	Ideology, power, and power relations

The issue of limited research that goes beyond the levels and approaches, primarily due to the researcher's parochial view about the scope of their undertaking, is observed (Philips and Oswick 2012). This issue of "discursive parochialism" (p. 471) has led to "segmentation of discursive inquiry" and "issues of epistemology (i.e. what I study) and identity (i.e. who I am)" (p. 461). The authors advocate the bridging of disciplines, levels and methods by promoting multi-level and multi-method research in organizational discourse studies in order to generate "richer organizational and discursive insights" (p. 463). Another issue identified, "discursive isolationism" (p. 471) involves a preference for "discourse *as* materiality" over "discourse *and* materiality" (p. 468); in other words, a stance on adopting only discursive research methods rather than using discourse analytic methods together with other research methods including surveys, ethnography and experiments.

A few recent studies reviewed illustrate a variety of texts, discourses, genres and discursive practices of different professionals in various commercial and industrial sectors, some of which conduct multi-level discursive analysis in the investigation of different organizational goals and strategies. For instance, Ashehave and Holmgreen's (2011) study, which is text-focused, practitioner-oriented and discursive, examines interview data with ten staff members of Softia, a Danish-owned, cross-border software company, to "identify the complementing, dominating, or competing discourses that practitioners draw on to give expression to their view on "doing culture"" (p. 274). The staff members interviewed vary in nationality, location and intercultural work experience, among other parameters. Analysis of the interview data shows that the Softia's practitioners use three main discursive constructions, namely the one-sided adaptation discourse, the mutual adaptation discourse, and the plurality discourse, to express their intercultural work practice.

In another study, the concept of 'interpretative management', defined as "what middle managers, the department heads, are doing when trying to teach employees to think the way the organization thinks" (Nielsen 2009:24) is explored. Specifically, the concept involves collaboration between managers and employees, with managers interpreting, and employees allowing them to interpret, the "actions, experiences, and observations of the employees" with reference to organizational "context, practices, and strategies" (p. 24). Using conversation analysis, Nielsen (2009) investigates interactional strategies of managers and employees in fifteen departmental meetings in five Danish companies. Findings confirm collaboration between managers and employees in a number of ways, including interpreting and framing organizational tasks in relation to the organizational context, acquiring organizational language, explicitly articulating the process of interpretative management, negotiating interpretations, and negotiating competitive interpretations and challenges to the interpretative authority. The study contends that interpretative management is an important function of organizational leadership.

The discourse collected from the corporate web sites of 60 British, Danish and Norwegian public relations agencies (PR) is studied (Isaksson, and Jørgensen 2010) in order to determine if whether the North European PR agencies moves in the direction of

convergence and divergence in their corporate self-presentations of identities as "competent, dependable, and likable" (p. 121). The content study examines the rhetorical patterns and their linguistic realization on the web sites, based on an ethos model for analysis of credibility in corporate discourse. The ethos model comprises three ethos qualities (expertise, trustworthiness and empathy), three rhetorical strategies (self-promotion, self-characterization and self-sacrifice), and a number of ethos appeal (world knowledge, integrity/justice, attention, entitlements/enhancements, abilities/attributers, presence/resources, knowledge/skills, truthfulness, courage, passion, and enjoyment). The study concludes that the agencies adopt a conservative approach to the self-presentation of credibility or ethos on their corporate web sites and that ethos in PR discourse is more convergent to than divergent from others within the industry.

In their study of intercultural business discourse (Giménez-Morena and Skorczynska 2013), the genre of business emails is examined. The study compares 100 emails of response to business requests collected from British, Spanish and Polish companies, representing different European cultures. The study finds significant intercultural variations in the register of the emails, possibly attributed to the language abilities and culture-specific business practices. Despite register differences, the study argues for business emails as a typified corporate discourse across national cultures, characterized by such common features as the move patterns, time to respond, the need to provide a proposal, and the mean word count of the proposal.

In another study of organizational discourse, the speech act of apology is examined using a discursive and interpretive approach (Hargie, Stapleton and Tourish 2010). The study analyses the public testimony of four banking CEOs presented at a meeting of the Treasury Committee of the UK House of Commons in 2009. The aim of the study is to find out "how banking CEOs addressed the issue of apology in a public context, from the perspective of the heuristics they employed to attribute responsibility, agency and causality for the banking crisis" (p. 727). The method of content analysis is adopted, whereby the full text of the testimony was read and the content classified in terms of "constituent elements of apologetic rhetoric (and apology avoidance tactics) therein" (p. 729). Findings show that all four bankers use discursive moves and strategies to "avoid direct culpability for the crisis and invoke instead the spectre of impersonal

global events which mitigates personal responsibility" (p. 722). Hence the apology avoidance moves and strategies are realized as expressions of regret, alignment with others affected by the crisis, dissociation from the events, and statements of willingness to apologize and/or reference to past apologies.

In this Special Issue of *Pragmatics and Society*, four articles on discourse and communication in organizations are presented. The article "Flight attendant identity construction in inflight incident reports" by Barbara Clark examines the discursive construction of the flight attendant professional identity realized in a corpus of safety reports submitted to a US government aviation safety regulatory body. Discursive identity construction is theorized as an outcome of the social and cultural semiotics of discourse practice, indexicality, ideology and performance. Research methods are drawn from ethnography of communication (e.g., Gumperz and Hymes 1986), using the SPEAKING taxonomy (Hymes 1986), namely Speakers, Participants, Ends, Act sequence, Key, Instrumentalities, Norms, and Genre, and incorporating contextual, situational-specific and ethnographic information in interpretation and analysis of discourse.

Pragmatic language competence is the focus of the interventionist applied conversation analysis (Heritage and Robinson 2011) study in "Interventionist applied conversation analysis: collaborative transcription and repair based learning (CTRBL) in aviation" by William Tuccio, David Esser, Gillian Driscoll, Ian McAndrew, and Mary Smith. The study evaluates the efficacy of an innovative, low resource yet intensive Collaborative Transcription and Repair Based Learning (CTRBL) method to impart aviation crew resource management skills to novice pilots. Evaluation of the efficacy of the CTRBL intervention is performed by means of a quantitative quasi-experimental repeated-measure design and analyses artifacts of transcripts, repairs, crew approach briefings and air traffic control readbacks, measuring the dimensions of manageability, reactions and learning of aviation crew approach briefings.

Marina Bonde's "The future in reports: prediction, commitment and legitimisation in CSR" analyses the discursive construction of corporate identity in the company disclosures in a corpus of corporate social responsibility (CSR) reports from the sectors of beverages, technology and pharmaceuticals. Bonde's study combines corpus methods

and discourse and genre analysis in the investigation of textual markers of futurity and their functions in the strategic disclosure documents of CSR reports.

The study of Al fonso Del Percio, reported in "Branding the nation: Swiss multilingualism and the promotional capitalization on national history under later capitalism" investigates the international promotion strategies and branding practices of a nation, Switzerland, in different promotional texts and discourses. The aim of the study is two-fold: first, to discuss the promotional potentiality of linguistic and cultural diversity as a historical capital; and second, to critically analyze the integration of this capital in a branding practice. The study performs a discourse analysis of excerpts of Switzerland's nation branding promotional texts and discusses the findings in relation to the nations' history and branding policy.

The collection of articles in the *Special Issue* aims to expand research networks and encourage efforts that utilize multi-level and multi-method approaches, blending both discursive and non-discursive research methods among scholars working in the area of discourse and communication in organizational settings. Research will examine a variety of fields, in addition to those explored in these studies, such as language and identities in organizational communication, multimodal discourses and genres in corporate and institutional communication, enterprise communication across languages and cultures, and social and ideological dimensions in corporate and institutional communication.

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About the author

Winnie Cheng is Associate Dean of Faculty of Humanities, Professor of English and Director of Research Centre for Professional Communication in English (RCPCE) of Department of English, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University. Her research interests include pragmatics, intercultural and professional communication, corpus linguistics, conversation analysis, critical discourse analysis, critical genre analysis, discourse intonation, and English for Specific Purposes.

Address for correspondence

Department of English
The Hong Kong Polytechnic University
Hunghom, Hong Kong

winnie.cheng@polyu.edu.hk