

BUSINESS DISCOURSE: A WESTERN FIELD LOOKING EASTWARDS.

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Abstract

Business discourse is a multi-disciplinary field of research that has emerged over the last decade from the European traditions of intercultural negotiation studies and ‘language at work’ analysis. From its inception, business discourse has invited dialogue with other disciplines, with practitioners and professionals outside business, and, of lately, with a growing body of Asian scholarship. Thus, it has sought to engage with business communication and, more recently, organisational communication, both originating in North America. It has also promoted the idea of ‘partnership research’ in order to foster cross-disciplinarity and joint, researcher-practitioner collaboration in the field. In the last few years, business discourse has begun an exploration of influences and lessons from South East Asia and East Asia, as work in intercultural relations. In this lecture, I will trace the origins of business discourse back to early studies of business negotiations, especially intercultural business negotiations, for which northern European linguists are deservedly well-known. In the early Nineties, conversation analysts also provided fine-grained analyses of institutional interactions, concentrating on how actors construct social reality through daily, verbal routines. More recently, organizational discourse analysts based in the UK and Australia have contributed a perspective on discourse originating within management and organisation studies, which has greatly enriched business discourse. Beyond Europe and Australia, the North American fields of business communication and organizational communication are also responsible for extending the horizons of a field that was born within linguistics and pragmatics and discourse analysis and is now embracing diverse epistemologies and methodologies. This is what is now on offer to our Asian colleagues who in the last few years have joined the debate with a rich offer of distinct issues, challenges and insights.

Bionote

Francesca Bargiela is Senior Research Fellow in linguistics at the University of Nottingham Trent, UK, graduating *summa cum laude* in Modern Languages from the University of Bergamo, and with a Masters (distinction) and PhD in Linguistics from Nottingham University, UK. Her research career reflects a sustained commitment to multi-disciplinary and collaborative work that has extended into the direction of Asian scholarship resulting in the publication of an edited volume with M. Gotti (Peter Lang 2005) and a double special issue of the Journal of Asian Pacific Communication (John Benjamins 2005/6), on *Asian Business Discourse(s)*. Her other notable publications include *Business Discourse* (Palgrave Macmillan 2006), and *Managing Language: the Discourse of Corporate Meetings* (John Benjamins 1997). Forthcoming publications include *The Handbook of Business Discourse* (Edinburgh University Press 2009) and *Politeness Across Cultures* to appear in 2010. A founding member of LiPs (Language in the Professions) group, UK, the cross-institutional LPRG (Linguistic Politeness Research Group) and ELAB (English as a Language of Asian Business) network, she has established a research partnership with Meisei University in Japan and most recently one with IKON, UKM.