

BUSINESS DISCOURSE STUDIES IN THE 'NEW' AND 'FAST' CAPITALISM: APPROACHES AND INVESTIGATION METHODS

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ABSTRACT. – **Business Discourse Studies in 'New' and 'Fast' Capitalism: Approaches and Investigation Methods.** The complex and changing linguistic context cannot be confined or constrained to a single approach or theory. It is, thus, the purpose of the present article to argue in favour of the fluidity, flexibility, dynamic and variable background against which new tenets for business discourse have emerged. To build a case for the present evolution of research in *business discourse studies*, the present article examines such issues as the blurred lines between business discourse and other sub-branches (such as workplace discourse, institutional discourse, organizational discourse, etc.), the diverging sociological underpinnings of these studies and the methods used in the related research in an attempt to highlight the difficult and sinuous development of business discourse research. The paper seeks to underline the variability of the approaches and the research methods proposed by six discourse analysts in their writings, while pointing out their consensual basis. The discussed articles are: Norman Fairclough (2004) 'Critical Discourse Analysis in Researching Language in the New Capitalism: Overdetermination, Transdisciplinarity, and Textual Analysis'; Iedema, R. and Scheeres, H. (2009) 'Organisational discourse analysis'; Francesca Bargiela-Chiappini and Catherine Nickerson (2002) 'Business discourse: old debates, new horizons'; Daniushina, V. Yulia (2010) 'Business linguistics and business discourse'.

Keywords: *business discourse, texturing, discourse dialectics, affect-based discourse practices, business linguistics.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Discourse studies have known an upsurge in the 1990s, when, from the range of specialized languages, some distinct branches, such as professional discourse, workplace discourse, organizational discourse and institutional discourse

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emerged and developed. Very quickly, each form of discourse attracted its supporters, who tried to define, set disciplinary boundaries, find characteristics and suitable research methods for the new areas of inquiry. All these areas created a background for ongoing debates about the methodological approaches that could characterize each field, while each has been permanently and substantively challenged by a plethora of changes and innovations that have major implications for organizations, employees and their use of language. The changes refer to new technologies, new products, product lines, services, which, in turn, affect organizational behavior, managerial, professional and occupational tasks, the individual and his relation to other employees. The proponents of organizational discourse have discussed these changes in terms of a rise in 'knowledge work' (Drucker 1993) or work that centres on the production, sharing and use of data and information in an informatized and globalized economy.

In addition, these research grounds have developed from their corresponding communication areas (professional communication, organizational communication, institutional communication, etc.), but, at the same time, have preserved their close kinship with related discipline areas, such as special or *specialized languages, English for specific purposes, etc.*

The 1990s have also heralded a new turn in discourse investigations, as scholarship mobilized their efforts to understand the social underpinnings of discourse, its creation and use in society. Discourse analysts have thus oriented their investigations towards individuals, identities, social practices, communities of practice (such as workplaces, institutions, organizations), the relationships among members of given communities in an attempt to find out how discourse shapes all these social processes and reversibly, how they impact on language use. Within this sociolinguistic context, Critical Discourse Analysis and Systemic Functional Linguistics took to research in this direction. Following these premises and within this context, discourse analysts looked for the right sociological theories to anchor their linguistic assumptions in. Critical discourse analysts, represented by Fairclough (2004) embraced Bourdieu's structuralist theory and applied it to discourse analysis.

Another remarkable phenomenon, which continues to influence the production and use of discourse is *hybridization*. Hybridization has been a linguistic phenomenon for a long time, also noticed in the production of texts and in text functions. Fairclough notes that text properties 'hybridize discourses in constituting discourses', that they 'hybridize genres in constituting genres and hybridize styles (in the sense of ways of being, i.e. identities, in their language aspect) in constituting styles' (2004: 112).

Fairclough (2004) speaks about 'interdiscursivity', while Meurer (2004) proposes the notion of 'intercontextuality', notions which point to a *fluid, flexible, dynamic* and highly *variable* linguistic context/environment which cannot be confined or constrained to a single discourse sample, approach or theory. It is, thus, the purpose of the present article to argue in favour of the fluid, flexible, dynamic and variable background against which new discourses are generated and new tenets for business discourse have emerged. To build a case for the present evolution of research in *business discourse studies*, the present article examines such issues as the blurred lines between business discourse and other sub-branches (such as workplace discourse, institutional discourse, organizational discourse, etc.), the diverging sociological underpinnings of these studies and the methods used in the related research, and, finally, to highlight the difficult and sinuous development of business discourse research. The paper seeks to underline the variability of the approaches and research methods proposed by analysts while hinting for a consensual, joint perspective on the issue (Bargiela-Chiappini, Nickerson, 2002). To prove these points, the present paper discusses four articles on business discourse: Norman Fairclough's *Critical Discourse Analysis in Researching Language in the New Capitalism: Overdetermination, Transdisciplinarity, and Textual Analysis* (2004), Rick Iedema and Hermine Scheeres's *Organisational discourse analysis* (2009), Francesca Bargiela-Chiappini and Catherine Nickerson's *Business discourse: old debates, new horizons* (2002) and Yulia V. Daniushina's article *Business linguistics and business discourse* (2010). At the same time, the article seeks to reconcile divergences and convergences.

2. BACKGROUND

In their study, Drew and Heritage (1997) set out some criteria by which they distinguished workplace discourse from other forms of discourse occurring in other settings. In order to isolate the criteria they compared 'institutional discourse' with casual or ordinary conversations. The identified features include: (1) a perceivable 'goal orientation', where at least one participant is oriented towards achieving a goal, a task, or a purpose in relation to an institution; (2) 'constraints on allowable contributions', by which it is meant that the discourse must be appropriate to a particular situation in an institutional setting; (3) the use of 'inferential frameworks', that is the use of 'frameworks' to interpret discourses; (4) asymmetry (Heritage, 1997) in the use of discourse, a feature which indicates that the distribution of power and knowledge among the participants in interactions is unequal and that one of the participants will be in control, given the institutional status or position (for example, this is the case of interactions between professionals and lay people, such as doctor-patient interactions); (5) institutional discourse reflects and negotiates identities.

Koester (2010) agrees that beside 'workplace discourse' there are other related terms used by researchers, such as 'institutional discourse', 'professional discourse' and 'business discourse'. He tries to shed some light on the use of the terms and sets out to differentiate them. Koester admits that both 'workplace discourse' and 'institutional discourse' are rather general terms and that they are 'often used interchangeably in the literature' (2010: 18). According to Drew and Heritage (1992: 3) institutional talk is task oriented, where 'at least one participant represents a formal organization'. According to Koester, interactional talk can also stand for a workplace discourse.

On the other hand, compared to 'workplace discourse' and 'institutional discourse', both 'professional discourse' and 'business discourse' seem to be more specific. While workplace discourse seems to cross 'all areas of occupational settings, only some of these involve business discourse' (Koester, 2010: 18). This comparison makes workplace discourse a higher category of discourse than its 'business' alternative. Koester (Idem.) defines *business discourse* as 'a specific kind of workplace discourse occurring in the commercial sector'. Business discourse was defined by Bargiela-Chiappi (2007: 3) as 'a social action in business contexts' which embraces 'how people communicate using talk and writing in commercial organizations'. Assumably, there are two approaches to what is termed 'business discourse': a narrower approach views it as company-to-company communication or communication between suppliers and customers, which, in turn, would be materialized in commercial correspondence and business negotiation. According to Koester, 'the broader view would include company internal communication as part of business discourse. Interactions between colleagues in private sector organizations have a great deal in common with interactions among co-workers in white collar workplaces in the public or semi-public sector'(2010: 18-19). Most of the researches and corpora regarding business discourse are based on recordings of company internal meetings, on job interviews and office talk.

Although institutional discourse is often used for workplace discourse and the separating features seem rather vague, Sarangi and Roberts (1999: 15-19) propose a clarification of the term 'institutional discourse' as compared to 'professional discourse' (Gunnarson, 2009). They suggest that the definitions of the two concepts derive very easily from the everyday meaning that the terms 'professional' and 'institutional' are used for. 'Professional' refers to 'a member of a vocational group' who possesses certain skills and knowledge that enable him to perform the job activities and duties. Thus, 'professional discourse' is a discourse constructed by professionals who have duties and responsibilities. In contrast, an 'institution' is associated with 'systems, regulations and the exercise of authority' (Koester, 2010), consequently, 'institutional discourse' is made up by genres constructed, to control activities and how they are carried out.

The divergent views on the discourses that can be brought under the broad category of discourse have been continued by analysts in divergent directions. In the next subsection we shall discuss four views which stand for four diverging directions in the investigation of business discourse. The first perspective is Fairclough's (2004), an interdiscursive-bound reflective and conceptual analysis anchored in the dialectics of discourse aimed at revealing the sociological underpinnings of the use of discourse amid the new era called by him 'New capitalism'.

The second view is based on a different investigation carried out by Iedema and Scheeres (2009), who have approached the economic and social changes and their impact on the workers, on their workplace activity and on their own self-development. They propose new ways of understanding and exploring the employees' experiences and the new practices they are exposed to. They notice that *emotion* and *knowledge* express the employees' conduct as resulting from existing discourse practices (2009). Going out from the changes brought about by the 21st century, Iedema and Scheeres discuss the implications they bear on discourse research in business. The view that discourse practices are more affect based indicates that researchers should focus on how business is conducted, on the experiences of those involved, on how the changes affect people or employees and how they evolve.

The third study deals with the call for a new multi-disciplinary research and multi-method research paradigm for business discourse put forward by Bargiela-Chiappini and Nickerson (2002). They trace the development of business discourse as lying in the overarching field of business communication and recognize the contribution of sociolinguistics in the study of discourse.

The fourth stance discussed in the present paper is I. L. Daniushina's (2010) proposal to push 'business linguistics' as a new branch of applied linguistics into scholarly use. In her article, 'Daniushina builds her argument on the origins of business communication/discourse, on the vast research focused on business discourse, on its evolution, as well as on the methods that can be used for further explorations.

Despite the differences that distinguish the four articles, they all reflect present tendencies that characterize business discourse investigations in the first decade and the beginning of the second decade of the 21st century. In this respect, the present paper seeks to show the divergence of views and research directions, which instead of pursuing the same directions in-depth or clarifying some underlying concepts, open up and propose new directions for research. Would then, in this changing world threatened by permanent shifts, the call for a collaborative research that brings together organizational communication, critical discourse analysis, organizational ethnography and sociolinguistics be possible?

3. CHALLENGES OF BUSINESS DISCOURSE IN THE 'NEW' AND 'FAST' CAPITALISM' AND PROPOSED METHODS FOR ITS INVESTIGATION

3.1. Fairclough's 'new capitalism' approach and his methods of investigating discourse (2004)

Anchored in the Critical Discourse Analysis tradition, Norman Fairclough (*Critical Discourse Analysis in Researching Language in the New Capitalism: Overdetermination, Transdisciplinarity, and Textual Analysis*, 2004) takes a broader outlook on world events and defines the new era as 'new capitalism', a label he uses to refer to 'the most recent of a historical series of radical restructurings through which capitalism has maintained its fundamental continuity' (Jessop 2000). The designations assigned to the new world define it from different research angles. Fairclough became one of the most influential proponents of business and organizational discourse analysis writing on social and organizational change in the late 1980s. He linked discursive change to these changes, while insisting on the trends in business-employee relationships.

Fairclough continued his investigations into the socioeconomic changes by means of language. In the first decade of the 21st century, while focusing on the role of language in expressing these social and economic changes, Fairclough (2004) also states that discourse analysis can provide insightful contributions to understanding the transformations of the new capitalism. Fairclough and the group of social researchers claim that the new economic order is discourse-driven. He further suggests that 'it is not only text and interactional analysis that discourse analysts can bring to social research on the new capitalism, it is also the theorization of the dialectics of discourse' (2004:105). Fairclough uses Jessop's (2000) dialectical 'changes in the networking of social practices' which contribute to restructuring and rescaling of discourse, of 'orders of discourse' in general. He defines the 'restructuring of orders of discourse' as a 'matter of shifting relations, i.e. changes in networking, between the discourse elements of different (networks of) social practices' (2004:105). To explain the process of restructuring of orders of discourse, Fairclough provides the example of the process by which the language of management 'has colonialized public institutions and organizations such as universities', insisting that the process involves a 'colonization/appropriation dialectic', which relies on 'diverse ways in which the discourses are received, appropriated and recontextualized in different locales, and the ultimately unpredictable outcomes of this process' (2004:105). By 'the re-scaling of orders of discourse' Fairclough means 'the changes in the networking of discourse elements of social practices on different scales of social organization-global, regional, national and local' and illustrates the process through the

permeability of local social practices in countries across the world to dominant discourses which are spread and disseminated through international or global organizations, such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank. Given these prerequisites, Fairclough states that 'Working the above account of the transformation of capitalism into a dialectical theory of discourse provides a theoretical framework for researching the global penetrative power of the "new planetary vulgate", which Bourdieu and Wacquant (2001) allude to, as well as its limits'(Idem.)

Indeed, Bourdieu and Wacquant (2001:3) speak about a 'new planetary vulgate', which they view as a 'vocabulary ("globalization", "flexibility", "governance", "employability", "exclusion" and so forth), which is endowed with the "performative power" to bring into being the very realities it claims to describe'. Starting from such assumptions, Fairclough pursues a sociological approach to discourse addressing several questions to the research community:

'How does this discourse come to be internalized (Harvey, 1996) in social practices, and under what conditions does it construct and reconstruct (rather than merely construe) social practices including their non-discoursal elements? How does it come to be enacted in ways of acting and interacting, e.g. organizational routines and procedures including genres, and inculcated in the ways of being, i.e. the identities of social agents? How does it come to be materialized in the 'hardware' of institutions and organizations? Researching this crucial issue requires detailed investigation of organizational and institutional change on a comparative basis, such as the study of Salskov-Iversen et al. (2000) of the contrastive colonization/appropriation of the new "public management" discourse by local authorities in Britain and Mexico, but working with the sort of dialectical theory of discourse I sketch out below.'(2004:105).

Fairclough applies his views to Tony Blair's text/discourse analysis. In order to show the social underpinnings of social and political discourses in the new capitalism he undertakes an analysis of the dialectics of discourse, an interdiscursive analysis of Tony Blair's 'Foreword' to a UK Department of Trade and Industry White Paper, 'Our Competitive Future: Building the Knowledge Economy' text in the CDA tradition. His analysis turns out as an extremely complex one which valorizes a few of Fairclough's concepts. Fairclough uses the concept of *texturing* and *retexturing* to focus on the way in which the global and the national and the relationship between them are constructed. To this end, Blair is 'writing about, and texturing, a relationship between the modern world' (more specifically the "new global economy" [...] and Britain' (2004:106). While analyzing the representation of both global and national space-times relationships, Fairclough insists on the relationship between the semantic use of elements and their grammatical realization.

Yet another highlight of Fairclough's analysis is his use of the notion of *interdiscursivity* (2004). He shows how different equivalent words, 'which come from different discourses that are historically associated with different domains of social life', such as education and learning, crafts and trades, and art, are textured or retextured into new discourses. While creating new discourses, some differences between prior discourses are 'subverted', so that this 'subversion of the difference between prior discourses is constitutive in the making of a new discourse' (Fairclough, 2004: 111). Fairclough assumes that 'at some level of analysis, the relations textured by texts constitute discourses in relation to (and potentially, in subversive relation to) other discourses' and argues that the relations of equivalence in a text, 'hybridize discourses in constituting discourses' (Idem.). Fairclough further states that "This is only one aspect of other, more general processes: they hybridize genres in constituting genres and hybridize styles (in the sense of ways of being, i.e. identities, in their language aspect) in constituting styles' and that "This is an aspect of the multifunctional character of texts'. Consequently, Fairclough admits that the simultaneous representational, actional and identificatory functions of texts expressed or mediated by their linguistic features, are present 'interdiscursively' at the level of discourses, genres and styles. Furthermore, in CDA, he opines, 'interdiscursive analysis of texts is the mediating level of analysis which is crucial to integrating social and linguistic analyses', a remark he made earlier in his research (Fairclough 1992; Chouliaraki and Fairclough, 1999).

Without pursuing Fairclough's views and analyses of the dialectics of discourse further, we contend to having pointed out a few of his instantiations of these theories which are opening up new areas of sociolinguistic investigation.

3.2. The rise of 'knowledge work' and affect-driven business discourse in the 'fast' capitalism (Iedema and Scheeres, 2009)

Other scholars have turned to cognition-related aspects of language behavior. In their article titled *Organisational discourse analysis* (2009) Iedema and Scheeres focused their attention on knowledge creation and have noticed that it has become a phenomenon which leads to faster rates of organizational development and production redesign, which, in turn, stimulated by new technology, results in new knowledge creation. They have termed this development 'fast capitalism' to show 'the rapidity with which these dynamics are played out'. Iedema and Scheeres (2009: 81) have approached these changes and their impact on the workers, on their workplace activity and on their own self-development, admitting that 'the impact on workers is that they spend more effort and time

rethinking work processes and on building relationships. They quote Barley and Kunda (2001:77), who suggest that 'even factory workers are said to require interpersonal and decision-making skills previously reserved only for managers'(Idem.).

This is the framework for a new organizational discourse which relies on the contribution of employees rather than on that of the decision makers or managers. Second, this change has resulted in a considerable emphasis placed on the emotional skills of employees at work. This sociolinguistic pursuit has revealed that such new business practices can produce two effects: on the one hand, they may boost personal achievement and pride, but, on the other, they can generate stress, frustration, anxiety, etc. because of the emotional consequences linked with producing benefits for other people (Iedema and Scheers, 2004). Iedema and Scheers hold the view that workers are expected to 'invent new ways of being, doing and saying as part of how they work together' (2009:87). Ignoring the shortcomings of such an approach, Iedema and Scheers propose new ways of understanding and exploring the employees' experiences and the new practices they are exposed to. They suggest that *emotion* and *knowledge* express the employees' conduct as subservient to existing discourse practices and hence reflect 'reactive and cumulative behaviours, not innovative and self-motivating ones', while affect 'helps broaden our appreciation of human vitality, creativity and interestedness (Matssumi 2002; Thrift 2004a)'. Affect also 'shifts our attention to the unusual and the unexpected, whether that manifests as creativity, innovation, surprise, excitement or intensity.'(2009:87)

Going out from these assumptions, Iedema and Scheers discuss the implications they bear on discourse research in business. The view that discourse practices are more *affect based* indicates that researchers should focus on how business is conducted, the experiences of those involved, on how the changes affect people or employees and how they evolve (2009).

Iedema and Scheers (2009) also admit that, if, in the past, researchers used an analytical approach based on the collection of pieces of textual evidence and on theory-oriented conclusions 'from a distance', this approach proves insufficient and one-sided for the research of the complexities of the world, as they are 'not sensitive to local complexities' and 'insufficiently informative for non-discourse analysts'. Consequently, they consider that 'combining discourse analytic methods with ethnography will afford more immediate feedback, exchange and interpersonal relationships, much of which is affection-based'. They suggest that 'a discourse ethnographic approach is therefore potentially productive of alternative realities, as a result of the relationships it creates and works with' (Iedema et al. 2006a).

Such an approach has implications to teaching and training. Thus, the traditional teaching paradigm which sought to train the personnel into adopting the conventional models of communication or complying with rules and principles and acting upon established emotional frames and cognitive schemas should be replaced by new ways of teaching the worker deal with workplace challenges that require 'inspiration, enthusiasm and intensity of participation' (Iedema and Scheeres, 2009: 89). Considering these shifts, Iedema and Scheeres conclude that teaching must necessarily focus of teaching adaptation strategies to change, 'teaching change is teaching affect' (Idem.) They further explain that this 'means that curricula, in focusing on emerging discourses and practices, need also to address the personal implications for workers of these developments' and continue that

'Education, teaching and learning in contemporary business are therefore not about enabling employees to settle on new if rather different identities. Instead, what emerging pedagogic methods need to encompass is how employees can be enabled to distance themselves from identity per se through recognition that identity cannot be "natural and necessary". This, in turn, involves reconfiguring who people consider themselves to be, and accepting that what they do with ease is no longer a legitimation for who to be, how to speak, or how to do their work' (Idem.).

3.3. The call for a new multi-disciplinary research and multi-method research paradigm for business discourse (Bargiela-Chiappini and Nickerson, 2002)

The first decade of the 21 century stimulated both a clarification and a look back at the evolution of business discourse studies. In this respect, Bargiela-Chiappini and Nickerson (2002) provide a convincing definition and an account of business discourse. According to them business discourse is 'a web of negotiated textualisations, constructed by social actors as they go about their daily activities in pursuit of organizational and personal goals.' Thus, they conclude that it is 'language in action'. Bargiela-Chiappini and Nickerson recognize that sociolinguistics has stepped in to investigate the relationship between practice and social theory, in a similar way in which they themselves proposed the 'integration of social constructionism and structuration theory in the discourse-based interpretation of business writing' (2002:2). They review the field of 'business communication', the overarching field which is the host of business discourse, and agree that its development is heavily indebted to United States

researchers, who tried to set disciplinary boundaries to the field and define its status. They note that 'in some quarters, the strong vocational orientation of business communication as a "practical science" is defended, but contrasted with management communication and English composition (Reinsch, 1996:35)' (Idem). Other researchers and practitioners settled the controversy over the disciplinary boundaries to business communication by assigning to it an equal status alongside management, corporate and organizational communication, each of which, they admit, deserve a 'distinctive emphasis' (2002:2). Bargiela-Chiappini and Nickerson (2002:2), quoting Rivers (1994) further recognize a third position that accepts the view that business communication has been focused on 'the written mode and the proliferation of topics and borrowings from many disciplines'. While taking a look at the European continent, Bargiela-Chiappini and Nickerson (2002) quote the scholars who addressed business communication, i.e. Yli-Yokipii, 1994; Chares, 1996; Charles and Charles, 1999, etc. However, a significant opinion expressed by Bargiela-Chiappini and Nickerson (2002) is that beside the two traditional schools (North American and European) which discuss the present and future of business communication and business discourse, a third contribution should be coming from less heard voices representing other countries.

In spite of the lack of explicit focus on business discourse and its more general integration into the wider web of business communication, Bargiela-Chiappini and Nickerson (2002) acknowledge the place held by business discourse: "The label of "business communication" seems to us best understood as an overarching category encompassing the whole field of communication studies in business settings, therefore, subsuming organizational and management communication, and *discourse* approaches (Murphy, 1998; see also Rogers, 2001)'(Idem). They stress the need to re-order related disciplines, a re-ordering which must not be regarded as a the limitation or 'rejection of the valuable individual contributions that each can make to an improved understanding of the nature and role of communication in professional and corporate settings,' but rather as an acknowledgement of the complexities and interrelated nature' of the discipline (Idem.). Hence they call for a 'dialog and possible cross-fertilization between disciplines', a *convergence* of studies that may contribute to a redefinition of status and boundaries.

While insisting on a multi-disciplinary approach to business communication, they also propose a new methodological shift, a shift from the less efficient quantitative research method to a more qualitative approach, such as the *interpretative ethnography* approach advocated by Smart (1998). Bargiela-Chiappini and Nickerson (2002:3) opine that 'this would enable the discipline to overcome an earlier criticism of being micro-analytical and skill-oriented,

and it would open it up to insights from the “feeding disciplines” such as rhetoric, sociology, psychology and linguistics, as well as to an appreciation of the influence of situational and contextual factors (Shaw, 1993)’. They admit that the methodological approaches used in the 1990s, including conversation analysis, pragmatics, corpus linguistics, genre analysis, rhetorical analysis, social constructionism, etc. represent a good start for a move on to other, more appropriate ones. With this end in view, they recommend a *multi-disciplinary* investigation of business discourse, stating that ‘business discourse must progress towards “partnership research”, a method shared by researchers working in related disciplines. In support of the proposed ‘partnership approach’ they argue that it ‘offers the opportunity to work towards a certain degree of methodological and theoretical consolidation or convergence, without which interdisciplinarity will remain elusive’(Idem.). They call for a collaborative research that brings together organizational communication (Jablin and Putman, 2001), critical discourse analysis (Wodak and Meyer, 2001), organizational ethnography (Weber, 2001) and sociolinguistics (Coupland et al, 2001). They place discourse in contrast to ‘professional language’, which originated from LSP or ESP, arguing that business discourse represents an attempt to ‘recontextualize’ discourse within the framework of related disciplines, between praxis and social theory, and reconcile specific investigation methods (Bargiela-Chiappini and Nickerson, 2002).

On the basis of these prerequisites, Bargiela-Chiappini and Nickerson propose a model that ‘incorporates insights from genre and discourse analysis, intercultural communication and organizational theory into a context-sensitive analytical framework for the study of discourse in corporate settings’ (2002:5). Their framework combines three hierarchical analytical levels (a *macro* level representing national and regional cultures and generic discourses, a *meso* level standing for the organizational culture, business type etc. responsible for shaping up generic discourses, and a *micro* or *interactional level*, where socio-psychological profiles and interactional preferences are expressed through pragma-linguistic features). The authors explain that the approach to business discourse applied ‘aims to be: (1) *integrated* in its multi-level ordering of expandable interplay factors, and (2) *integrative* in its projected outcomes, which include dialogue between research and teaching/training needs, and between theoretical advances and practical applications’(2002:6). The breadth of the framework, which incorporates the elements that the authors consider relevant, reflects the ‘embeddedness’ of business discourse in a ‘wider context than the immediate one surrounding the specific interaction’ and ‘sensitiveness to other factors such as corporate culture, multilingual communication, organizational power and control, etc.’(Idem.)

At the same time, Bargiela-Chiappini and Nickerson (2002:5) remark the sociological aspects embedded in the use of discourse:

'the social nature of language at work is exemplified in business writing practices, both as processes and as products. Writing in business contexts is often, generically speaking, *hybrid*, in that many texts display signs of *intertextuality* and *interdiscursivity*, collective, in that texts are often the products of a multiple authorship process; structure-dependent and structure-shaping, in that writing always takes place in a cultural and historic context by which it is influenced and which, in turn, it influences'. (1999a:18) (our Italics)

3.4. Business linguistics and business discourse (Daniushina, 2010)

Some authors went further with their insights proposing new linguistic paths for the investigation of business discourse. Daniushina (2010) recommends that a new branch of Applied Linguistics be established, *Business Linguistics*, which she describes as 'a multidisciplinary synergic field for researching the use of language and communication in business'(2010:241). Daniushina argues that, in the age of high technological progress, scholars interact more substantively, crossing borders and giving rise to fertilized disciplines which appear in the zones of contact between sciences. She states that these emerging disciplines can improve interdisciplinary interaction. Daniushina (2010) gives some examples of the proliferation of cross-border disciplines that arose in, what she cautiously calls, the 'study of languages', thereby naming: mediallynguistics (Dobrosklonskaya, 2008; Wyss, 2008), political linguistics (Bell, 1975, Zatushevski, 2001: Ellis, 2004; Chudinov, 2008; Political linguistics Conference, 2009), judicial (or legal or forensic) linguistics (Nerhot, 1991; Kniffka, 1996, Gibbons, 2003; Olson, 2004; Mattia, 2006) and ethno-linguistics (Kindlell and Lewis, 2000). To the range of emerging disciplines we add Irimiea's (2005) launching the sub-brunch of *vocational linguistics*, based on the rise of vocational disciplines and EU training programmes. Daniushina continues the list of developing disciplines naming environment linguistics (Wang, 2008), medical linguistics (Bruzzi, 2006; Aronson, 2007), military linguistics (Kruzel, 2008) and sports linguistics (Soccerlingua, 2005, Sports linguistics, 2007). The simple deploy of these disciplines recently pushed into the general study of discourse studies shows that they mushroomed in the close neighborhood of *special* or *specialized languages*. Heading from these assumptions, Daniushina sustains that *business* 'is no less important a sphere of human activity', a sphere which concerns everyone. In order to sustain her point of view, Daniushina (2010) puts forward the following arguments:

first, she points out that the 'sublanguages of business and business communication have their specific properties which require specific linguistic examination. Second, business texts possess distinctive features and perform different functions. The specific characteristics associated with business are: 'communicative, pragmatic, lexical, syntactical, textual, compositional, visual-graphic, normative, genre-stylistic, etc.

Once Daniushina has proven that the features of business discourse are different from those of other sublanguages, she sets out to find adequate research methods and a 'scientific apparatus'(2010). Since any discipline should provide a definition, Daniushina describes business linguistics as 'a field that explores the specific functioning of language in a business context, investigates the use of language resources in business activities, and studies verbal and para-verbal aspects of business communication'(2010:241). According to Daniushina, it relies on a *multidisciplinary approach* and a wide spectrum of areas, which include:

- business discourse, organizational, corporate and managerial communication;
- oral, written and technically mediated communication in business, its typology and genre classification;
- professional sublanguages of business sectors (those of banking, trading, accounting, manufacturing, administration, etc.);
- languages of advertising and marketing, public relations;
- lingua-pragmatics in a business context and business rhetoric;
- documentation (document) linguistics: business correspondence and drafting contracts;
- instructional and academic language of business, economics and management, etc;
- business lexicography;
- language of the business media;
- intercultural business communication (including teaching/learning foreign languages for business purposes, as well as language in the workplace in multinationals and language assessment).(2010: 242)

Daniushina establishes the origin of business linguistics in the interplay of sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics, text linguistics, functional styles, pragmatics, discourse studies, cognitive and communication theory, theory of organization, organizational psychology, and organizational communication, management studies, and applied research of teaching and learning LSP. On the other hand, it will interact with media linguistics, judicial linguistics, political linguistics,

etc. One of the main concerns of business linguistics would be to develop theories and practical methods of teaching and learning foreign languages for business purposes. The subject of business linguistics, according to Daniushina, should be 'the study of language functioning in business and the linguistic component of business communication' (Idem.).

While the *methodology* can easily be determined to be relying on the 'traditional methods of discourse and text *analysis* and, conversation analysis, empirical-descriptive and comparative techniques, cognitive, pragmatic and genre-style analysis, etc.' (Idem.), the terminology and the scientific apparatus 'are still under construction'. However, she agrees that terminology and the scientific apparatus 'could be built on the basis of those of the above-mentioned sister disciplines' (Idem.).

Daniushina considers that establishing the new territory of *business discourse* is a legitimate proposal that follows the development of several disciplines in the western business culture focused on the study of business discourse and the business sublanguage (Idem.) in the 1980s. At the same time, Eastern Europe and the countries of the so-called 'emerging economies' have also been exposed to technological development, to the demands of new business, of new relationships and new business ideologies. Daniushina winds up her case for the acceptance and adoption of the new discipline as a research discipline arguing: 'its time to introduce this concept and accept Business Linguistics as a full sub-discipline, a separate complex branch within the framework of Applied Linguistics' (2010: 243).

Business linguistics should centre around business discourse, which, according to Daniushina, was first mentioned, among others, by Johns (1986). Inspired by the concepts of discourse provided by van Dijk (2007), Fairclough (2001) and Wodak and Chilton (2005), Daniushina defines business discourse as 'the verbalization of business mentality, realized in the form of an open multitude of thematically correlated texts on a wide range of business issues, considered in a combination with their extra-linguistic contexts' (2010:244). The broad concept of business discourse integrates 'thematic subspecies', such as: economic discourse, corporate discourse, etc.

Daniushina (2010) states that business discourse in various forms has been studied widely by a plethora of researchers, who carried out investigations into: organizational communication and business discourse, the culture of corporate discourse, transactional and communication models, stylistic and semantic aspects of business communication in the form of genre analysis of written business discourse such as business correspondence (Louhiala-Salmien, 2002; Garzone, 2005; Gotti and Gillaerts, 2005; Gimenez, 2006), while the semantics of business English was investigated by Nelson (2006). At the same time, intercultural business

discourse and communication in many national languages were discussed by L. Beamer, I. Varner, M. Al-Ali, E. Lavric, L. Yeung and others. Varner (2000), for example, presented the theoretical model of intercultural communication, Kameda (2005) compares English and Japanese business communication, Ponchini (2004) deals with discursive strategies for multicultural business meetings, etc. By far, the most comprehensive treatment of business discourse is that undertaken by Bargiela-Chiappini et al. in *Business Discourse* (2007).

Daniushina warns that, if business discourse would be functionally sub-classified into types of discourse, they would be 'often transitional and mutually overlapping with other discursive fields' (Idem.). The list of sub-categories would include: training and academic business discourse (performing an educational function), ritual-public business discourse (based on meetings, reports, speeches, presentations, PR and advertising materials- with an argumentative-persuasive function), document business discourse (internal and external correspondence, corporate documents, regulations and charters of companies, articles of incorporation- mainly written discourse, with a regulative function), the discourse of business media (performing an informative-polemic function), the discourse of professional business communication (mainly oral, and which includes: negotiations, client -professional interactions, peer interactions, performing an instrumental-persuasive function).

Business discourse should include not only the traditional forms (written and oral), but should embrace the emerging web-type discourse, with its new technical and linguistic features.

Despite the vast amount of writings on business discourse, most of them were aimed at providing students and practitioners with means and techniques that could enhance a better understanding and use of the principles of effective communication. Hence, they combined descriptive and prescriptive purposes.

According to Daniushina, researchers may use a wide range of data or material, nevertheless, adapted to the research purpose. They may include experimental, simulated materials, authentic materials or their combination. Insofar as the methods of investigation are concerned, Daniushina suggests that 'a combination of quantitative and qualitative analysis techniques is most typical, including methods of corpus linguistics with statistical data processing', but also admits that 'case studies' are also well represented especially when 'combined with critical analysis' such as in the case of Livesey's (2002) writings on corporate discourse.

All in all, after having discussed the evolution of business studies, mostly centred on business discourse and communication studies, and providing sound reasons for the acceptance of business linguistics as a legitimate subfield of Applied Linguistics, Daniushina (2010) proposes its 'de jure' acceptance.

4. DIVERGENCE VERSUS CONVERGENCE

Without doubt, business discourse studies have come a long way since business discourse was first mentioned in scholarly writings in the 1980s. The recognition of business discourse as a research area has attracted many linguists in search for more challenging and less investigated areas in the vicinity of ESP, EFL, etc., but within the welcoming and prosperous field of applied linguistics.

Business discourse mushroomed in the close neighbourhood of other communication-related sub-branches of applied linguistics, such as 'professional discourse', 'institutional discourse', and gradually came to be defined as a sustainable area of linguistic pursuit. Throughout its identity-creating process, linguists tried to identify its disciplinary boundaries and status, find or import appropriate research methods and, finally, anchor it in valid communication or sociopolitical theories. In this respect, business discourse followed in the footsteps of applied linguistic studies.

The growth to maturity of business discourse as well as the emphasis placed on the field is also proven by the increasing number of associations and research traditions that have emerged in the last decades. (for example, the Association for Business Communication, the European Association for Business Communication, the International Association of Business communicators, American Communication Society, Global Association of Women in Communication, etc.). In addition, the number of publications and books written on the subject have amounted to a significant figure. These prerequisites underline the importance of business discourse as part of communication studies and as a promising area of research and study.

In the first decade of the 21st century researchers of business discourse have tried to broaden and deepen the research focused on business discourse. However, instead of putting light on some debated concepts and theories or clarifying the identities of related discourses (such as professional discourse, institutional discourse, business discourse, workplace discourse), researchers looked out for new directions in which they could take discourse. One way ahead was to explore discourse in close connection with its social underpinnings (Fairclough, 2004; Bargiela-Chaippini and Nickerson, 2002). Another way was to establish *business linguistics* as a subfield of applied linguistics (Daniushina, 2010).

One reason to account for the divergence of business discourse studies is the bewildering and unprecedented complexity of the global landscape as it has been shaped by substantive changes. If in many other fields, scholars have recognized that professionalization and specialization should be the answers to the rapidly changing society, the four views on the development of business

discourse outlined in the present paper stay proof of the same need to move on, either by exploring new linguistic territories (Daniushina, 2010) or by adopting a social-bound inside looking perspective that can explicate the dialectical relationship between social practices, social theories, identities, relationships, and their linguistic instantiation (Fairclough, 2004).

Thus, the divergence of business discourse studies should rather be understood as a recognition of the complexities and, at the same time, interrelated nature of the discipline (Idem.) positioned within a troubled and changing economic and political context.

On the other hand, the four perspectives also show some visible similarities. Both Fairclough (2004) and Bargiela-Chiappini and Nickerson (2002:5) use the concept of 'texturing', 'textualization' to account for the way in which new discourses are created. Fairclough demonstrates how different equivalent words are textured or retextured in the Blair text, whereas in the 2002 article Bargiela-Chiappini and Nickerson (2002:5) hint at textualization without, however, properly applying it to any specific text.

Similarly, both Fairclough and Bargiela-Chiappini and Nickerson (2002:5) valorize the concept of 'interdiscursivity', i.e. the way in which different words that belong to different discourses are textured into new discourses. Again, while Fairclough's article is centred on demonstrating the applicability of the concept to text analyses, Bargiela-Chiappini and Nickerson (2002:5) use the term analytically.

A common feature that crosses all articles, and is retrievable from the discussed perspectives, is the 'multidisciplinary approach'. Beside Fairclough's perspective, which is deeply sociology-based, Bargiela-Chiappini and Nickerson (2002:5) recognize the contribution of social studies to discourse analysis, and Daniushina recognizes the interplay of business linguistics and sociolinguistics, without insisting on the sociological underpinnings of business discourse, or of discourse, in general. Despite Iedema and Scheeres's (2009) inclination towards sociological issues, which is made relevant in their concern for aspects involving the workers' identities and their interpersonal relationships and which shapes up their affect-based approach to business discourse, their approach moves in the direction of cognition and affect-related insights.

In respect of the methods used for the investigation of business discourse, all discussed linguists rely on qualitative and quantitative methods, but, on the other hand, each recommends particular methods. Fairclough's (2004) article reveals without doubt his preference for an *interdiscursive* approach based on social and linguistic analyses, Iedema and Scheeres (2009) prefer a combination of discourse analytic methods and ethnography-based methods, which might offer a more immediate feedback. Bargiela-Chiappini and Nickerson (2002) insist on a multidisciplinary approach and recommend a shift from a less efficient quantitative

research method to a more qualitative method, such as the interpretative ethnography approach in the line Smart (1998) proposed it. Daniushina (2010) opines that a combined approach based on both quantitative and qualitative methods should be used along with corpus linguistic and statistic data processing, critical analysis and case studies.

All in all, the presented orientations offer an evolving and inspiring research environment which seeks to adapt to the societal, economic, political and technological changes. Channeling research in one and the same direction is an impossible mission in the 'new' and 'fast' capitalist era, which is characterized through variety and diversity. Within this complex and permanently changing global context, Bargiela-Chiappini and Nickerson (2002:5) call for a 'dialog and possible cross-fertilization between disciplines', a *convergence* of studies and research methods that may contribute to a redefinition of the status and boundaries of many disciplines or subservient ones.

5. CONCLUSIONS

The paper sought to discuss some perspectives on *business discourse* in order to point out the diversity of approaches and research methods used or proposed for its investigation. The paper discussed four articles: Norman Fairclough's (*Critical Discourse Analysis in Researching Language in the New Capitalism: Overdetermination, Transdisciplinarity, and Textual Analysis* (2004), Rick Iedema and Hermine Scheeres's *Organisational discourse analysis* (2009), Francesca Bargiela-Chiappini and Catherine Nickerson's *Business discourse: old debates, new horizons* (2002) and Yulia V. Daniushina's article *Business linguistics and business discourse* (2010).

The present article set in a *fluid, flexible, dynamic* and highly *variable* linguistic context the four perspectives on business discourse while pointing out the different theories and the convergent issues that characterize them. The article suggests that the 21st century approaches cannot be confined or constrained to a single approach or theory but that they need to keep pace with the rapid changes and challenges of the 'new' and 'fast' capitalism. To build a case for the present evolution of research in *business discourse studies*, the present article examined the definitions of business discourse and other sub-branches (such as workplace discourse, institutional discourse, organizational discourse, etc.), the diverging sociological underpinnings of these studies and the methods used in the related research, to highlight the divergent development of business discourse research. The paper sought to underline the variability of the approaches and research methods proposed by analysts while tracing down a consensual, joint perspective on the issue.

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