



International Journal of Business Communication Newsletter

April 2018

Bringing You Some Very Exciting News!



We are delighted to announce that IJBC is now covered by the Social Sciences Citation Index (SSCI). This achievement marks great progress in enhancing the value of IJBC and their stakeholders. We give our hearty thanks to all of you who made this advancement possible; especially to Robin Walker (former IJBC Editor), ABC Executive Director, Jim Dubinsky and the ABC Board, the Publications Board, Martha

Avtandilian (our Sage Editor), our Associate Editors, reviewers, production team, and of course - our authors. Congratulations, you paved the way!

A Special Thank You

Bidding adieu to our past Associate Editors.

We are sorry to say goodbye to some highly talented Associate Editors who have made first-rate contributions to IJBC. Our gratitude goes out to Drs. Stephen Bremner, Sandra French, John Penrose, and Daniel Perrin for their outstanding service.

Introducing the New Team

New to the Associate Editor's Team



Ryan S. Bisel (PhD, University of Kansas) is an Associate Professor of Organizational Communication in the Department of Communication at the University of Oklahoma. His research interests focus primarily on issues surrounding leadership communication, organizational culture, and behavioral ethics. His works are published in communication and management journals, such as *Human Relations*, *Small Group Research*, *Management Communication Quarterly*, *Communication Monographs*, and *Leadership Quarterly*. He has a book with Routledge Press, titled, "Organizational Moral Learning: A Communication Approach" as well as a co-authored textbook with Oxford Press, titled, "Organizational Communication: A Lifespan Approach."



Jonathan Clifton received his Ph.D. in applied linguistics from the University of Antwerp, Belgium, in 2008. Since then, he has been working in France, and is currently working as an associate professor at the University of Valenciennes. For many years, he has both published in, and reviewed for, *The International Journal of Business Communication*. His research interests focus on the analysis of workplace interaction, workplace narratives, identities-in-talk, and leadership.



Paul Madlock (Ph.D., West Virginia University, MA and BA from the University of Akron) is an Assistant Professor at Southeast Missouri State University in the Department of Communication. Paul has 18 years of experience as a corporate executive and has published 28 research articles which have appeared in the *International Journal of Business Communication*, *Human Resource Management Journal*, *Communication Studies*, *Communication Research Reports*, *Journal of Business Strategies*, among others. His research

interest lies in intercultural communication in the workplace; leadership; the influence of technology in the workplace; interpersonal relationships in the workplace: communication alienation and more. He has presented over 40 research studies at regional, national, and international academic conferences and has received ten top research paper awards at academic conferences.



Sky Marsen's expertise lies in organizational communication, professional writing and public relations. She is interested in how language is used in professional contexts and she has researched and taught a variety of related subjects, including the ways organizations manage crisis, and perceptions of technology in popular culture. Her approach is informed by discourse analysis, narrative theory, and semiotics. In addition, she advises professionals and scientists on communicating with the public. For example, she has advised

researchers on communication strategies at Jet Propulsion Lab, Caltech, and business clients at IBM and Xero Accounting. She is a faculty member at Flinders University, Australia.



Amber N. W. Raile (Ph.D., Michigan State University, 2008) is an Associate Professor, the Director of Business Communication Curriculum, and the Management Option Coordinator in the Jake Jabs College of Business & Entrepreneurship at Montana State University. Dr. Raile's research examines the role of communication in creating a positive organizational environment and examining multi-level social change related to defining, measuring, and securing political will and public will (PPW) across contexts. Dr. Raile's PPW research has

been supported by several grants. Her work has been published in communication journals, such as *Management Communication Quarterly*, and policy journals, such as *Politics & Policy*.



Jacob D. Rawlins is an assistant professor in the Linguistics and English Language department at Brigham Young University, Provo, UT, where he has taught courses in editing and publishing since 2015. He earned his PhD in rhetoric and professional communication from Iowa State University in 2013. His research interests include professional communication pedagogy, workplace mythbuilding, applied rhetoric, and interactive data visualizations. He is currently finalizing a textbook on a competency-based approach to teaching business communication,

which will be released by Business Expert Press in 2018.



Robyn Walker's areas of research and publishing are leader communication, intercultural communication, group communication, virtual teamwork and digital communication. She is co-author of the book "Leadership Talk: A Discourse Approach to Leadership" and co-editor of the research volume *Discourse Approaches to Organizational Communication*. She also is the author of two textbooks, "Strategic Management Communication for Leaders and BCOM". She is former editor of the *International Journal of Business Communication* and

received the Distinguished Member Award from the Association of Business Communication in 2018. She has taught communication and writing at various universities throughout the American Southwest and received her Ph.D. from the University of Utah in Communication, specializing in Critical Cultural Studies and Identity Formation.



Marlies Whitehouse is Research Associate at ZHAW Zurich University of Applied Sciences, and Treasurer of the International Association of Applied Linguistics AILA. She investigates text production and text reception with focus on inter-cultural, cross-domain, and intra-lingual aspects at the intersections of financial journalism, organizational communication and financial analysis. She has more than 20 years of professional experience in the financial sector.

Returning Team Members



Rod Carveth (Ph.D., University of Massachusetts) is an Associate Professor and Director of Graduate Studies in the School of Global Journalism and Communication at Morgan State University. He actively publishes in national and international journals and has served as reviewer to many prestigious journals. He currently is an associate editor to the *International Journal of Business Communications*. His research interest lies in three primary areas: media economics, popular culture and crisis communication.



Paola Catenaccio is the Chair of English Linguistics and Translation at Università Statale di Milano, Milan (Italy), where she is Program Coordinator for the BA in Language Mediation and Intercultural Communication and the MA in Languages and Culture for International Communication and Cooperation. Her research interest lies in the areas of business communication and professional discourse, which she investigates through both qualitative and quantitative methodologies – the former grounded mostly in discourse analysis,

pragmatics and argumentation, while the latter rely on automated corpus interrogation routines. She has published extensively in the area of business discourse, especially on CSR-related themes.

Special Issue Editors

Words from the Special Issue editors

We were overwhelmed by the great response on our call for papers. Dedicated authors and diligent reviewers confirmed the rising interest and ardor for the topic which has found a platform on the AILA Research Network on Financial Communication (<http://www.aila.info/en/research/list-of-rens.html>). This special issue seems to be the right thing at the right time.



Rudi Palmieri is Senior Lecturer in Strategic Communication at the University of Liverpool, where he leads the MSc program in Strategic Communication. His research focuses on the role of argumentation in strategic communication, with a peculiar interest in the discursive dynamics of financial communication. He is one of the main organizers of the International Conference on “Discourse Approaches to Financial Communication”.



Daniel Perrin is Professor of Applied Linguistics, Director at Zurich University of Applied Sciences, President of the International Association of Applied Linguistics AILA, and Editor of the International Journal of Applied Linguistics and the de Gruyter Handbook of Applied Linguistics series. His areas of research are media linguistics, methodology of applied linguistics, text production research, and analysis of language use in professional communication.



Marlies Whitehouse is Research Associate at ZHAW Zurich University of Applied Sciences, and Treasurer of the International Association of Applied Linguistics AILA. She investigates text production and text reception with focus on inter-cultural, cross-domain, and intra-lingual aspects at the intersections of financial journalism, organizational communication and financial analysis. She has more than 20 years of professional experience in the financial sector.

Special Issue Book Reviewer



Deborah C. Andrews (M.A. from University of Pennsylvania) is Professor Emeritus of English and Director of the University of Delaware Center for Material Culture Studies. Deborah’s teaching is focused in technical editing and rhetoric, in interpreting objects and sites for public understanding, and in American literature from 1865 to 1945. She supervises internships and independent studies, coordinates a yearly colloquium series in material culture

research, and teaches a seminar in strategies for researching and writing about the relationship between people and their things. She has published several articles, book chapters, and texts on professional communication, including *Technical Communication in the Global Community* and, most recently, *Management Communication: A Guide* and has served as researcher, consultant, and speaker on many aspects of professional communication, especially in an international context. She is the former editor of *Business Communication Quarterly*.

Special Issue Articles and Abstracts: Financial Communication, Volume I

Special Issue Editors: Rudi Palmieri, Daniel Perrin, and Marlies Whitehouse

The Pragmatics of Financial Communication. Part 1: From Sources to the Public Sphere

Rudi Palmieri, Daniel Perrin, and Marlies Whitehouse

Research in financial communication has long been dominated by scholars in accounting and finance, who largely focused on the extratextual aspects of financial disclosures, such as the choice

(not) to reveal information or the impact of new regulatory standards. In contrast, the past decade and a half has witnessed a significant shift of attention toward the linguistic and textual elements of financial communication. Finance scholars have started to develop text analysis approaches to investigate, in particular, market sentiment and its impact on stock prices. At the same time, accounting scholars have engaged in the so-called narrative turn by investigating the rhetorical aspects of voluntary disclosure.

Recent developments in the field, however, dig deeper and are beginning to shed light on the crucial functions of language use in financial communication. There is a growing interest throughout the disciplines to analyze the interplay of micro and macro structure in financial communication, which is clearly reflected in academic initiatives and rapidly evolving subject areas in recent years. Bringing together these initiatives on a higher level, an AILA research network in financial communication is meant to enable scholars from all over the world to strengthen and elaborate on their research and its dissemination.

The two parts of the special issue “The Pragmatics of Financial Communication” aim to reflect these recent developments and to foster current and future initiatives in the field.

How Text Presentation and Financial Literacy Affect Pension Communication Success

Louise Nell, Leo Lentz, and Henk Pander Maat

This study examined the effects of (a) text presentation and (b) prior knowledge and language skill on finding information in financial documents. First, the participants filled out tests that measured their levels of vocabulary, reading skill, domain knowledge, and topic knowledge. Subsequently, they read an on-screen text on pension information in either a linear structure (“nonlayered”) or a hypertext structure (“layered”). Readers’ performance was measured by verbal scenario questions. No difference was found for text presentation. Language skill and domain knowledge were both important predictors for finding, whereas topic knowledge was not associated with readers’ performance at all. When differentiating between text presentation conditions, we found that domain knowledge only plays a role in the nonlayered condition, not in the layered condition. These results indicate that the set of skills needed to successfully read a document varies with both type of task and type of reading, confirming prior research.

Disclosing Principles of IR Communication: Rhetorical Moves for Constructing Transparency

Merja Koskela

A functioning financial market requires transparency of listed companies. Transparency is a communicative practice ensuring that stakeholders have all relevant information about a company to make informed financial decisions. This article discusses how transparency is communicated through a genre specifically designed for this purpose, disclosure policy. A disclosure policy is a communication strategy document in which companies define their investor relations communication principles and thereby deliver a transparent image of themselves. The data for this study consist of 13 disclosure policy documents published in English on investor relations websites of listed companies. Methodologically the study combines a rhetorical moves analysis with a semantic approach to intertextuality. The results of the analysis indicate that following a consistent genre pattern enables companies to directly address requirements of authorities but also leaves room for company-specific characterizations. In order to portray a rhetorically convincing image, transparency characterizations need to reflect the company strategy.

Change But no Climate Change: Discourses of Climate Change in Corporate Social Responsibility Reporting in the Oil Industry

Sylvia Jaworska

Using corpus-linguistic tools and methods, this article investigates the discourses of climate change in corporate social responsibility and environmental reports produced by major oil companies from 2000 to 2013. It focuses on the frequency of key references to climatic changes and examines in detail discourses surrounding the most frequently used term “climate change.” The analysis points to shifting patterns in the ways in which climate change has been discursively constructed in the studied sample. Whereas in the mid-2000s, it was seen as a phenomenon that something could be done about; in recent years, the corporate discourse has increasingly emphasized the notion of risk portraying climate change as an unpredictable agent. A proactive stance signaled by the use of force metaphors is offset by a distancing strategy often indicated through the use of hedging devices and “relocation” of climate change to the future and other stakeholders. In doing so, the discourse obscures the sector’s large contribution to environmental degradation and “grooms” the public perception to believe that the industry actively engages in climate change mitigation. At the methodological level, this study shows how a combination of quantitative corpuslinguistic and qualitative discourse-analytical techniques can offer insights into the existence of salient discursive patterns and contribute to a better understanding of the role of language in performing ideological work in corporate communications.

The Simple Truth: Ambiguity Works. Discursive Strategies by Swedish Public Authorities During the 2008 Financial Crisis

Catrin Johansson and Lars Nord

The global financial crisis that broke out in 2008 affected a large number of governmental, public, and private organizations. This article explores communication of public authorities in Sweden during the crisis, and highlights their discursive strategies between 2008 and 2010, analyzing press releases. As an analytical point of departure, complexity theory is combined with theory on strategic ambiguity in order to analyze which communication strategies were employed by the authorities. Results show that the public authorities embraced complexity and ambiguity differently in their communication, and consequences of their different approaches are discussed. The study also confirms that the different roles of significant actors during a crisis influence the selection of possible message strategies.

JPMorgan Chase, Bank of America, Wells Fargo, and the Financial Crisis of 2008

Lauren Berkshire Hearit

Following the financial crisis of 2008, major banks such as JPMorgan Chase, Bank of America, and Wells Fargo attempted to rebuild stakeholder and shareholder trust in the American financial system. Through a discourse analysis of JPMorgan Chase, Bank of America, and Wells Fargo’s legitimation efforts, this study provides additional research on the practice of strategic financial communication. Specifically, this article found how JPMorgan Chase, Bank of America, and Wells Fargo responded to questions about their actional and institutional legitimacy in their practice of issue management was echoed within each bank’s press coverage and organizational discourse. Yet this study also found that banks that were better able to directly respond to media critique more effectively navigated the financial crisis. This study underscores the importance of careful communication in managing shareholder and stakeholder concerns and rebuilding public trust in their corporations.

Book Review

Spinuzzi, C. (2015). *All Edge: Inside the New Workplace Networks*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press. 220 pp.

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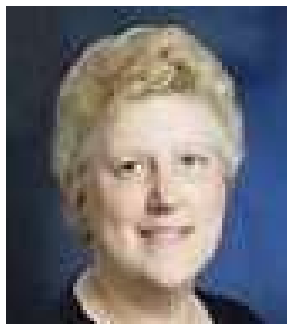


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IJBC is a publication of



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The Association for Business Communication (ABC) is an international, interdisciplinary organization committed to advancing business communication research, education, and practice.