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Business Discourse During COVID-19

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Introduction

Business discourse, the research object of this thesis, belongs to business linguistics under the branch of generalized applied linguistics. This thesis introduces the definition, characteristics, functions, types and research status of business discourse from a theoretical perspective. It also analyzes business cases related to business discourse during COVID-19 from a practical perspective. The research on business discourse is international, and the research on business discourse inevitably involves business linguistics. Linguists have made rich achievements on the research object, research methodologies, logical starting point, academic system and other important contents of this discipline: Bargiela-Chiappini F., Nickerson C., Planken B., Daniushina Y. V., Nihan K. F., Aylin C. K., Seyda O., Asli O., Hiromasa T., Francesca B., Sandra L. H., Gina Poncini., Jianping Chen, Wenhui Yang, Tianhu Lin, Xv Wen, Yonggang Lu, Yajun Jiang, Mengzhen Zhou, Ji Yuhua.

The purpose of this thesis is to understand the application of business discourse in the time of COVID-19 by discovering the relationship between language and objective social context.

Therefore, the specific research objectives are as follows:

- 1) Clarify the concept and history of business discourse.
- 2) Describe the characteristics and functions of business discourse
- 3) Clarify the relationship between business discourse and business linguistics and applied linguistics

- 4) Understand the current research status of researchers on business discourse
- 5) Analyze the functions and characteristics of business discourse and the new development during the epidemic through practical discourse cases.

The novelty of this paper lies in the fact that the study of business discourse will no longer be confined to a single discipline and analytical tradition, but will develop towards the direction of "collaborative research". The following research methodologies are mainly used to concretize the concept of "business discourse" :

- 1) Cases of business discourse in combination with multiple disciplines, such as media linguistics, computational linguistics, organizational communication, sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics, etc.
- 2) Two types of business discourse: spoken and written: such as business letters, business speeches, business reports, business dialogues and so on
- 4) Critical discourse analysis, dialogue analysis, organizational communication, management theory, genre analysis, ideational function and other analytical methods

The theoretical significance of this thesis is to promote the understanding of a subdiscipline of applied linguistics, which is similar to business linguistics. At the same time, it will also help to enrich the research methods and research direction of applied linguistics. The study of practical case of business discourse helps to understand the relationship between discourse text and context, and how linguistics interacts with other disciplines to influence human social behavior.

This thesis is expected to give business practitioners a more detailed and complex understanding of the interactive dialogue that takes place inside and

outside business organizations, and can also be used in the teaching process of courses in applied linguistics, economics, management, and cross-cultural communication.

The thesis consists of introduction, two chapters, conclusion and reference.

The first chapter introduces the relevant theories of business discourse. The second chapter directly introduces the practical application of business discourse and a large number of case studies. Finally, the main conclusions contained in this work are drawn.

Chapter 1. THEORETICAL BASIS FOR BUSINESS DISCOURSE DURING COVID-19

1.1 What is Business Discourse?

1.1.1 Definition of Business Discourse

What is business discourse? Business discourse is the discourse used by business subjects in business practice to achieve business objectives. Business discourse is not an independent language, but a language variant formed in the communication of the national language in the field of business, with its own characteristics and style. And it is an important medium for commercial activities to be carried out. It is the main role of the carrier of commercial communication information, and it plays the role of a bridge and a tool to transmit information, receive information, communicate commercial subjects and objects, and achieve commercial purposes.

From the perspective of discourse analysis, basic discourse acts include conversation and text, which are composed of basic linguistic units conceptualized and integrated from the perspective of discourse psychology (Yang, 2019. p 3). Business discourse is all about how people communicate using talk or writing in commercial organizations in order to carry out their work. Francesca and Nickerson defined business discourse as 'talk and writing between individuals whose main work activities and interests are in the domain of business and who come together for the purpose of doing business' (Bargiela-Chiappini, &

Nickerson, 1999: 2). Bargiela-Chiappini also defines it as “all about how people communicate using talk or writing in commercial organizations to get their work done”, as “social action in business contexts” (Bargiela-Chiappini, & Nickerson, 2002). We can define business discourse as the linguistic expression of a business mentality, implementing a wide range of business issues in the form of an open mass of subject-related texts, and considering their extralinguistic context.

The two areas of business and language are closely linked. Business and language influence each other, language is the medium for business activities, and business activities continue to enrich the connotation and expression system of language (Chen, 2019). Commercial organizations and the types of communications used in them are complex entities. Many different factors affect the way business people use language to do their work. Researchers interested in business discourse in the past have mentioned many fields and disciplines in their investigation of language at work, such as genre theory, discourse analysis, organizational communication, and applied linguistics. This crossdisciplinarity has led to a number of different ways of thinking about business language and the different contextual variables that can be of influence in how people talk and write at work (Christopher, David, 2007: 4).

1.1.2 The Relationship Between Business Linguistics and Business Discourse

Professor Daniushina said, “the origins of Business Linguistics as a new interdisciplinary field can be traced in the synergy of Sociolinguistics and Psycholinguistics, Text linguistics and Functional styles, Pragmatics, Discourse

studies, Cognitive and Communication Theory, Theory of organization (Organization Studies), Organizational psychology and Organizational Communication, Management Studies, as well as in applied research of teaching and learning Language for Specific Purposes (Daniushina, 2010: 241-242).”

If you want to understand the relationship between business linguistics and business discourse, you need to go back to such branch of linguistics as applied linguistics. Generally speaking, linguistics can be divided into two categories: theoretical linguistics and applied linguistics. Theoretical one is the foundation and main part of linguistics. The definition of applied linguistics is divided into narrow and broad. In a narrow sense, applied linguistics mainly refers to language teaching, which means the study of the application of linguistic theories in language teaching. Applied linguistics in this paper is understood in a broad sense, and it mainly refers to other than language teaching. Many applied disciplines were formed by the intersection of linguistics and other disciplines. For example, the combination of linguistics and sociology gave birth to sociolinguistics, the combination of linguistics and psychology gave birth to psycholinguistics, the combination of linguistics and statistics gave birth to statistical linguistics. The interdisciplinary trend of linguistics is an inevitable result of the development of modern society, and this trend has become more obvious from the second half of the 20th century to the present.

The interdisciplinary perspective of business linguistics involves business discourse, specialized sublanguages in the business sector, specific linguistic terms for sales markets, advertising, business, market language, business context and

general language pragmatics in business rhetoric, document linguistics, teaching and academic language in business activities, business lexicography, language in business media, cross-cultural business communication, etc. Business linguistics is an independent branch of applied linguistics, and business linguistics is a discipline formed multiple disciplines (Tianhu Lin, 2014: 2).

Business Linguistics , as a separate branch of Applied Linguistics , a multidisciplinary synergic field for researching the use of language and communication in business. Professor Daniushina introduced "Business Linguistics" as an independent discipline within the framework of applied linguistics and initiated the development of its methodology (Daniushina, 2010). It can be seen that business linguistics is a discipline that explores the specific function of language in the business context, studies the use of language resources in business activities and verbal and para-verbal aspects of business communication.

Besides, business discourse is supposed to be the object and the center of study for Business Linguistics. From the perspective of applied linguistics in a broad sense, the combination of linguistics and international business disciplines forms business linguistics, and the study of business discourse requires attention to the intersection and integration between linguistics and international business disciplines, and international business as a sub-discipline of economics, we can use the research methods of linguistics, economics, management science and other disciplines to study the discursive behavior in international business activities.

1.1.3 Characteristic Features of Business Discourse

The key object of business discourse is business people. Compared with ordinary discourse, business discourse has distinct characteristics in terms of vocabulary, sentence pattern and rhetoric. The lexical features of business discourse are mainly formal, accurate and rigorous; the sentence patterns and textual characteristics of business discourse are mainly characterized by coherent sentences, rigorous structure and rigorous logic. These features are to ensure the accuracy, timeliness and logic of the expression effect. For example, business English practical writing usually has “7C” characteristics, namely completeness, conciseness, concreteness, correctness, clearness, courtesy and consideration (Chen, 2019: 3). The cultural characteristics of business discourse are mainly reflected in the different cultural customs and historical backgrounds due to the different users. Based on the definition, emergence and evolution of business language, professor Chen summarized its basic characteristics as follows (Chen, 2019):

Professional wording: Business activities usually take place in a certain field, so professionalism and skills are often required. In addition to common vocabulary, business discourse also has a large number of business professional vocabulary. For example, in the field of commerce and finance, words such as bad checks, tariffs, arbitration, patents, monopolies, deductibles, etc., are involved. Such terms have specific usage requirements and occasions in business activities.

Objective normativity: Business activities involve the economic interests of all parties and have corresponding legal effects and legal consequences. This

requires business people to follow the basic principle of honesty and credit. In order to ensure the effect of business discourse, the use of business discourse must be objectively standardized, and business people should pay attention to the occasion and field, and comply with industry norms.

Euphemism and Politeness: The use of business discourse should conform to the characteristics of business activities and the requirements of professional ethics. For example, when it is necessary to refuse the invitation of the other party in a formal business communication occasion, the business discourse should choose euphemistic and polite wording, such as "other itineraries have been arranged on the day, can you invite other colleagues of the company to attend on your behalf". This feature of business discourse is to create a harmonious communicative atmosphere and maintain a good communicative relationship for future business cooperation and business contacts.

Flexible targeting: In business activities, there are great differences in the nationality, age, identity, personality and cultural background of participants, so when business people use business discourse, they should consider business communication occasions, objects, goals, etc., and adopt flexible strategies. Let us take business negotiation as an example. Before the negotiation begins, business people can use more routine words to create a good negotiation atmosphere; after entering the negotiation stage, in order to reflect the formality of business negotiation, formal business negotiation words should be used; When drafting a commercial contract after negotiation, formal and rigorous commercial writing should be used to avoid any ambiguity.

Cultural mapping: Discourse is the mapping of culture, and business discourse naturally reflects different business cultures. For example, business terms such as "bull market" and "bear market" in the securities market, "bull market" is a term that predicts higher prices in the securities market, because in ancient Western civilizations, "bull" represents power and wealth; "bear market" is a term that predicts the price of the stock market to fall, because in Western culture, "bear" represents the suppression of fanaticism. It can be said that cultural mapping is another distinctive feature of business discourse, and all parties to business communication are usually influenced by each other's cultures.

Language variability: There are different language carriers for business discourse in current global business contacts, such as business English, business French, business Chinese, business Japanese, etc. These carriers are derived from their respective native languages, but have their own characteristics, and then form language variants. Therefore, it is of great significance to grasp the characteristics of language variability in order to promote business communication.

Utilitarian purposefulness: One of the main purposes of business activities is to pursue economic benefits. In order to achieve this purpose, companies must use business discourse as a media tool to properly package and promote products and services. The effective use of business discourse is conducive to establishing a good image of the enterprise, expanding the market influence of the enterprise, opening up the enterprise's business channels, building the enterprise's transnational business network, and ensuring that the enterprise can maximize its interests.

Keep pace with the times: The development of business discourse keeps pace with the development of social economy. The economic development also promotes the diversity of business discourse, and also promotes the emergence of new industries and new business activities and business models, which also promote the production of new business words. For example, after China's reform and opening up, a large number of international trade vocabularies such as international letters of credit, international wire transfers, FOB, and CIF have been known by the public. In contemporary times, the Internet develops rapidly, emerging business terms such as smart home, Bitcoin, Internet +, and remote meeting have also begun to be frequently used. It can be seen that business discourse is synchronized with social and economic development.

1.2 What is Included in Business Discourse?

1.2.1 Four Main Types of Business Discourse

The development of the company's business is inseparable from the business discourse in the form of voice or text. Diversified use of business discourse is a prerequisite for the proper functioning of a company. The four most commonly used types of business discourse are meetings, debates, written correspondence and management theory. Each has its own place in business activities and contains many different concrete manifestations.

Types of business discourse include meetings. Talk is the "lifeblood" of the business. Meetings are a rich site where iterative, recursive relationships between talk and structure can be analyzed through meeting notes. This is because the

occurrence of meetings is routine and ritualistic. We can analyze and investigate the recordings and transcripts of the actual conference discourse, distinguish the groups attending the meeting, and also distinguish the start, rotation and end of the meeting. Through analysis, we can easily understand how the company's business is negotiated through meeting words. Presentation, speech and other business discourse behaviors may occur during the meeting. It will also show the effect of business discourse in motivating, problem solving, brainstorming, team building, selecting people and evaluating them.

“Meetings and debates serve two different types of business discourse needs. A company often uses meetings to inform multiple individuals at one time on any given topic. There are a number of tensions and debates that stimulate dialogue among business discourse researchers, including the roles of context, power, and prescription (Vitez, 2022)”. In this case, the participants only unilaterally obtained the same information. Whereas a debate represents multiple views on a topic. A heated debate occurs when two or more parties have different views on a particular topic or action.

Written correspondence is also an important part of business discourse. For example, letters and other documents notify others in writing about specific issues. Memos are probably the least formal form of written communication. Letters are passed between parties inside and outside the company, and usually carry a certain subject. Regardless of the form of written discourse, due to the particularity of its context, it still has to maintain its rigor, professionalism and formality.

Management theory discourse can be a neglected form of business discourse. Owners, executives and managers can all educate others through their actions and words. Management theory discourse works primarily for internal users; the system trains and educates others on how to accomplish business tasks and activities successfully.

Understand how discourse is used in business settings, then apply those insights to the workplace. For example, researchers at the New Zealand Workplace Language Project combined detailed descriptions of workplace interactions with the needs of workplace practitioners. Rather than prescribing workplace practices through decontextualized lists of dos and don'ts, a dialogue has been established between academic researchers and workplace practitioners to bring awareness to the complexity of language use (Jones & Stubbe 2004). This shows that when we study discourse in business activities, we can first determine the type of discourse and its role to ensure the effectiveness of business discourse.

1.2.2 Functional Sub-classification Of Business Discourse Types

In "Business Discourse" the study of the function of business discourse involves the different goals of research work.: “on the one hand there are those researchers whose primary focus is on describing how language is used in or by business organizations toward the end of understanding the process, while other studies investigate situated language use toward the end of informing pedagogy, training, and how to do it ‘better’ (Bargiela-Chiappini, Nickerson, & Planken, 2007)”.

It goes without saying that the functional types of business discourse often overlap with other discourse domains, and through *Business linguistics and business discourse* (Daniushina, 2010) we can identify functional sub-categories of business discourse types as follows:

Training and academic business discourse: It performs an educational function. This function of business discourse is embodied in textbooks, manuals, research of all aspects of business, economics, management and entrepreneurship, as well as in lectures, case studies, training, business consulting and coaching. This need is most urgent in the education of business management professionals. In the past, the need for this function was often ignored or minimized (Fairhurst 2005). In recent years, business schools have been called upon to focus more on the skills needed for a career, including communication. Perhaps, as Holt (1998) suggests, managers need to be discourse analysts—in terms of their sensitivity to language, the sequential flow of social interactions, the explanatory function that discourse provides to communicating participants, and the need to evoke the need for linguistic precision and diversity. As Chiappini wrote in *The Handbook of Business Discourse*, “Perhaps if such knowledge were acquired and ultimately put into practice, managers would be more confident in navigating the politicised aspects of work life and more adept in handling the communicative challenges brought on by a multicultural and largely distributed workforce (Bargiela-Chiappini, Nickerson, & Planken, 2007)”.

Ritual-public business discourse: It performs an argumentative-influencing function. This function of the business discourse is reflected in the meetings,

reports and speeches, public relations and advertising discourse for business purposes. In terms of conference discourse, Yamada's work on the differences between Japanese and American conferences is a seminal work in the study of business discourse. According to Chiappini , “It provides a detailed account of the crucial difference between the two cultures involved and the rhetorical action that each group is trying to achieve in a meeting situation (Bargiela-Chiappini, Nickerson, & Planken, 2007)”. For example, Japanese use meetings to exchange opinions, while Americans use meetings to make decisions. Yamada's research, which included cross-cultural analysis, was one of the first comprehensive studies of the interaction between two different cultures in the business environment.

Document business discourse: It performs a regulative function. Business discourse documents here mainly refer to written discourses, such as internal and external business letters, corporate documents, corporate and organizational regulations, etc. These business discourses identify specific business outcomes and how to conduct business in an orderly manner. These documents ensure the orderliness of business activities and have certain legal benefits.

The discourse of business media: It performs an informative-polemic function. Business media discourse refers to the remarks made by companies or organizations on business activities, behaviors and phenomena. It mainly includes: publishing business news information, controlling the orientation of business public opinion, and analyzing business behavior.

The discourse of professional business communication: It performs an

instrumental-persuasive function. This function is mainly oral and occurs mainly in negotiation, communication with clients and colleagues. It covers a wide range of production, manufacturing and technical discourse, as well as business slang and jargon.

1.3 Research Background of Business Discourse

1.3.1 Characteristic Features of Business Discourse Research

In Business Discourse, Bargiela-Chiappini attributes the characteristics of business discourse research to the following points: 1) The types of data that have been analyzed. 2) The relationship between certain types of data and different methodologies. 3) The purpose of business discourse research. 4) The role of context in the study of business discourse.

Types of data

The study of business discourse will use different types of data depending on the research objectives, or researchers will use a combination of different types of data if necessary. The three commonly used data types are authentic data, simulated data, and manipulated data.

Authentic data is the initial data that the researcher obtains by visiting commercial organizations. These data are often chaotic, and the researcher needs to organize the data and then analyze it. The simulated data is collected when the researcher is interested in a specific aspect of language use. Variables need to be controlled for in the research process, and then participants play specific roles to elicit desired results. The latest types of business discourse research refer to

manipulated forms of data to investigate how specific target readers respond to specific aspects of language. It was mainly developed to investigate and improve the effectiveness of technical, professional and business documents.

The link between data and methodology: multimethod research

One of the defining characteristics of business discourse research is that it does not rely on any one methodology. Especially in the analysis of authentic data, researchers allow themselves to be data rather than theory driven and choose the most appropriate type of analysis for the datasets they collect. In this regard, genre analysts John Swales and Vijay Bhatia hold similar views, preferring to drive research through data, referencing appropriate theoretical approaches, rather than conversely using theory to guide data analysis. Similar types of data are often analyzed using the same methods, for example, conversational analysis or discourse analysis is often considered the most appropriate method for analyzing oral interactions in business meetings; genre analysis has been widely used in the analysis of written business discourse.

Harris and Bargiela-Chiappini note “the shift from ... simulated data to naturally-occurring corporate language” (Bargiela-Chiappini, & Harris, 2003). One of the most frequently used methodology in the study of business discourse is the "case study" technique, especially when it is combined with critical analysis. This research methodology is widely used by Livesey in her publications on corporate discourse of Shell, McDonalds and ExxonMobil.

Current research on business discourse is using a variety of analytical frameworks, which is one of the characteristics not only of professional discourse

but also of early business discourse. For example, in the book "Business Discourse" (Bargiela-Chiappini, & Harris,1997), the first analytical framework for analyzing business discourse was found by further examining the findings from earlier comparative research in multinational corporations, which includes five dimensions: national culture, corporate culture, interactions, generic types of discourse and individual language systems. It can be said that the explanatory power of these frameworks depends on empirical research. And with the continuous collection of data and improvement of theories, these frameworks can help us enhance our understanding of business discourse.

Research purpose: description and prescription

The purpose of business discourse research is both descriptive and prescriptive. When we study the application of business discourse research, some of the goals of business discourse studies involving needs analysis or language surveys remain prescriptive, as part of business discourse research is designed to provide business people with teaching or training programs in order to promote effective business communication. Studies of commercial discourse began as early as the end of the 20th century and mainly were driven by educational needs. In contrast, there is now a large body of business discourse research with the purpose of describing and explaining its mechanisms, thereby helping people better understand how talking or writing can be used to facilitate business organizations to do their jobs.

The importance of the organizational context

Research in business discourse has increasingly focused on the role that

organizational environment plays in shaping spoken and written genres within business organizations. The emphasis placed on the study of business discourse is primarily based on the idea that people spend a significant portion of their lives in business organizations and that work within organizations is primarily done through conversation and text, and there is a need to practice discourse. Academia and practitioners' interest in business discourse has emerged in business organizations, especially corporations. Business discourse researchers do not view language as their sole object of study, but seek to determine how written texts and spoken events reflect the social and organizational contexts in which they occur. In the 1990s, Belgian researcher Sonja Vandermeeren carried out a landmark study that established a clear link between language use and the business environment. Her findings highlight the importance of understanding the impact of foreign language use and business performance. She also established the relationship between the need for languages and the company's business activities.

Questions of context are often used by researchers to support their analysis. When studying business discourse, researchers not only analyze text elements, such as memos, letters, meeting minutes, etc., but also analyze the specific business context in which text elements exist, such as who wrote a particular discourse, for what purpose, production conditions, and how it was received. The focus on contextual issues in the study of business discourse is due to the involvement of cultural concepts, not only the specific business culture of the company, but also the culture of the country. In fact, there is a large number of business discourse studies that attempt to make cross-border or cross-cultural comparisons. For

example, Bargiela-Chiappini and Harris (1997) followed up on Boden's important work on conference discourse by investigating the similarities and differences between British and Italian business meetings.

1.3.2 Important Areas of Business Discourse Research

The research of business discourse has international scale and is exercised from multiple disciplines and perspectives, including various forms of discourse analysis: discourse psychology, critical discourse analysis, dialogue analysis, organizational communication, management theory, sociolinguistics, pragmatics, genre analysis. According to *Business Discourse*, the three key areas of current business discourse research are as follows: 1) The influence of power and title on language use in business contexts. 2) Critical approaches and business discourse. 3) Business discourse in cross-cultural contexts.

Discourse and power

In business context, discourse is seen as "powerful action", which also reflects the operation of power and status in business organizations. As business discourse moves further across disciplinary boundaries in organizational communication, critical management, and other aspects, the focus on power structures should become increasingly apparent. For research in this area, we can refer to a "Language in the Workplace Project" centered on the study of power and language. The project was carried out by a team of linguists headed by Janet Holmes. In this study, they used speech act theory as a theoretical framework to analyze the relationship between status and the exercise of power.

In this study they point out that “the power differences tend to be minimized through the use of mitigation and the gender of the (female) managers observed seems to contribute to the preference for a participative style of management, which in turn tends to empower lower level staff.” For example, the phenomenon of sexism faced in the context of business discourse has long been a focus of attention. In the past, this was simply understood as the difference in how men and women speak. However, a study by Holmes on the use of power and gender in business discourse shatters this stereotype. In meetings, higher-ranking people spoke longer than any other participants, which was not directly related to their gender, and female managers were as good as men at using command or using sense of humor (Bargiela-Chiappini, Nickerson, & Planken, 2007).

Critical approaches and business discourse

The critical approaches of business discourse aims to provide a new perspective for traditional business discourse research. Researchers reflect critically on research topics and approaches and their roles as researchers. The research literature on business discourse is full of “critical” studies in a variety of disciplines.

First of all, we need to be clear about the definition of critical thinking. Critical thinking is "thinking about thinking", which is a way of thinking to determine whether an idea is reasonable or unreasonable. It is mainly aimed at two situations: logical fallacies and cognitive biases. Cognitive biases are the wrong choices people make because of lacking specific knowledge. Logical fallacies are misleading ideas that may seem right but are actually wrong.

Critical discourse analysis has eight principles in theory and method: 1. Critical discourse analysis focuses on social issues, dissecting the manifestations of social development and contradiction in language and other symbols, rather than analyzing language for purely linguistic studies use. 2. Discourse reflects power relations, and critical discourse analysis emphasizes the embodiment of power relations in discourse, and power relations are consolidated or changed through discourse. 3. Discourse is a constituent element of society and culture, and discourse and social culture are actually a dialectical isomorphic relationship, that is, they contain and influence each other. 4. Discourse is a tool of ideology. Discourse describes and constructs society and reproduces power relations through special methods. 5. Discourses are historically relevant, and discourses cannot be produced in a vacuum, nor can they be interpreted without historical context as a reference. 6. The relationship between discourse and society is indirect. The sociocultural structure and its evolution are related to discourse, but the relationship is indirect. 7. For different listeners and readers, there may be different interpretations and understandings of the same discourse due to different emotional class status, race, gender, age, attitude, cognitive mode and belief, especially due to different information of relevant background. 8. Critical discourse analysis is social action whose purpose is to expose unequal power relations and promote the advancement of human society and culture (Ji, 2001).

Critical approaches to business discourse research continue to be enriched, particularly in the study of managerial language and other types of professional discourse. Critical discourse analysts conduct these studies by engaging in social

practice, they identify inequalities and asymmetries and work to change them. Because “critical” is not only about questioning inequalities and injustices in business activities, but also promotes self-reflection among researchers and practitioners. It also inspires people to keep an open mind to continuous change. In *Business Discourse*, the author cites three areas of critical research: the ideology of the language of marketization of higher education, at the ideology of clinical practice and that of the Internet.

However, critical research on business discourse is currently in its infancy, as many linguists involved in business discourse try to soften a critical positioning that espouses a political agenda for social change, and they attempt to conduct their research from a neutral stance. Here comes Critical Applied Linguistics, a discipline that seeks to promote the integration of language use with practical problem-solving, re-connecting discourse, language learning, language use, and the social contexts in which these occur.

Intercultural business discourse

A very fruitful area of business discourse research is the study of the communication that occurs when different cultures meet in order to conduct business. Linguists' research on intercultural business discourse in the early 21st century mainly focused on the following two points: (1) the challenges faced by researchers in this field (2) the improvement of cross-cultural communication theory.

There are four challenges facing researchers in the field of intercultural business communication. The first is what Poncini refers to as "fluid roles and

flexible relationships" in cross-cultural business meetings, which require analysts to overcome restrictive national stereotypes and tolerate ambiguity. The second is that professional experience is far more important than cultural differences and individual language ability in cross-cultural negotiation. The third is the ethnocentrism of existing categories and theories of cross-cultural communication analysis, as well as the monodisciplinary nature of cross-cultural business studies. About the fourth challenge Bargiela-Chiappini notes "while there are a number of intercultural communication scholars, most cannot capture the complexities of the organisational context without some grounding in the organizational sciences" (Bargiela-Chiappini, 2009). An understanding of organizational sciences is needed to overcome the complexities of cross-cultural and organizational discourse research, which is badly needed in an increasingly globalized society.

British researcher Helen Spencer-Oatey has developed one of the most comprehensive theories of intercultural communication, "rapport management". As an interaction theory, Spencer-Oatey points to the critical role that including content, the organization of talk, politeness, style and deference, and body language may play in the success or failure of cross-cultural communication in a business context.

1.3.3 New Communication Channels for the 21st Century

One of the most basic criteria for business discourse classifications is the difference in the communication channels used. According to the type of channel it can be divided into oral and written business discourse. In oral discourse, the

transfer of information is instantaneous, and the comprehension of the recipient occurs synchronously, and the interlocutors are in the same time and space, which enables them to have a high degree of participation in the conversation. In written discourse, there is a certain time difference between the transmission of information and the comprehension behavior of the recipient due to the spatial differences. Also, spoken utterances tend to use simpler syntax. In written discourse, information is rigorously expressed through complex sentence and syntactic structures.

Today, the traditional 20th century division of spoken and written discourse is becoming obsolete. This phenomenon has an important impact on the study of business discourse. With the development of information technology and communication technology, people can communicate instantly through e-mail and social software. At this time, the boundary between oral and written form is no longer clear. However, this technology-mediated form of discourse lacks important non-linguistic and quasi-linguistic features such as facial expressions and tone of voice, but possesses the informality of spoken discourse. If such short text message (SMS) exchanges on the Internet are accompanied by images of the interlocutor or with emoticons, can they be classified as spoken discourse?

Obviously, in the 21st century, a new type of discourse has emerged, the web-discourse (or internet discourse), which has the characteristics of both oral and written discourse. Networks can facilitate the instantaneous delivery of information and the synchronization of perceptions, and conversation participants do not require deep participation in conversation, and the content is typical informal

colloquialism, although "conversation" is conducted in writing. Therefore, the online business discourse is a reality of the 21st century, and it is expected to develop rapidly and has research implications.

The development of the Internet has deeply affected business, and the operation of enterprises is inseparable from the Internet. The growth and success of every business greatly rely on the Internet. Effective discourse communication is a key factor in promoting the success of an enterprise. The Internet makes seamless connection possible, both internally and externally. The Internet has even enabled small businesses to compete with larger organizations with a better online presence at the lowest cost. Accessing to more effective resources through the Internet, and using various platforms to interact with customers more smoothly result in obtaining more income and growth. In fact, the online operation of enterprises is an inevitable trend, which is also a powerful weapon to help enterprises survive in the increasingly fierce modern competition. Besides, it has also become an important driving force for the study of Internet business discourse.

1.4 Summary

The theoretical part of this paper is derived from the definition and content of "business discourse". This is followed by an introduction to research activities in the field of business discourse, with a brief discussion of a series of landmark studies in geographical and social contexts, the examples of spoken and written data types, as well as research methodologies used by analysts. It was then concluded that the use of commercial discourse around the world as illustrated by

the different specializations of many researchers who represent different disciplinary approaches, mainly has the following three aspects:

The first part shows that the development and research driving force of business discourse comes from objective economic development. International business activities have greatly driven the development of the world economy and the trend of global economic integration. Under this trend, the demand for diversified international business foreign language talents has promoted the emergence and development of business linguistics. With the deepening of economic globalization that began in the mid-1980s, business activities have become one of the most active social activities in modern society. The business industry has the largest number of practitioners and the most employed people. The context in which a business discourse is used determines its unique characteristics.

According to the second part, we can find out that the multi-function and character of business discourse are constantly enriched with the change of economic activities. As companies develop new ways of working during COVID-19, the roles and types of business discourse in business activities inevitably change. Through these changes researchers can understand how members of the organization use and develop discursive abilities, in which conversations and texts are not just used to achieve goals, but largely the work itself.

The third part introduces the research characteristics and key aspects of business discourse. The research of business discourse needs to rely on the collection of various data and combine with different types of methods. In addition,

descriptive and prescriptive uses should be paid attention to in the study of business discourse. At present, with the deepening of the degree of economic globalization, a cross-cultural business communication mode with English as the main language and other languages as the supplementary language has been formed. According to the use of business discourse, research on power, critical research perspective and cross-cultural background is attracting a lot of attention. That is to say, researchers mainly focus on business discourse context studying with the help of text.

Chapter 2: PRACTICAL CASES FOR BUSINESS DISCOURSE DURING COVID-19

2.1 Prominent Features of Business Discourse During COVID-19

2.1.1 Flexible Targeting

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused a huge loss of life worldwide and has presented unprecedented challenges to public health and the world of work. The economic and social devastation caused by the pandemic is frustrating: tens of millions of people are at risk of falling into extreme poverty and millions of businesses face existential threats. In order to stop further spread of the virus, the country had to resort to quarantine. Many people have no means of earning an income to support themselves and their families during the lockdown. Business discourse has inevitable connection with social and political environment and has the characteristics of flexible targeting. The effective use of business discourse is affected by various factors. The characteristics of business discourse has been fully reflected in customer complaints. The epidemic has affected many industries; restaurants, tourism, transportation, trade... A series of social problems such as unemployment, suspension of work, and loan repayment caused by this are very common. People who are deeply affected are naturally stressed and need to find an outlet to vent.

As things stand, the pressure on service demand during the epidemic is due to the increase in customer expectations (Dore, Ehrlich, Malfara, & Ungerman, 2020).

Due to the impact of the epidemic on the economy, local governments have introduced relevant economic policies, which includes that the companies should provide full refunds and deferred repayments service for travel and transportation orders when necessary. Some of these policies are mandatory, requiring enterprises and organizations to strictly implement them, but some policies are advisory. Although such kind of policy is aimed at protecting the interest of the people, there is no denying that the policy has raised customers' expectations for the enterprise service. Customers do not distinguish whether policies are mandatory to enterprises, but blindly require enterprises to fully implement these policies. There are also some customers who misunderstand the policy, or put forward requirements on the enterprise based on their own understanding without knowing it at all. At the same time, it is undeniable that these policies will also lead some people to think that as long as it is related to the epidemic, enterprises should... This kind of psychology brought about by the epidemic will push up customers' expectations and make some unreasonable demands on enterprises.

In view of the situation of the above customers, we need to adjust the business language of customer service. First of all, we need to understand that both accepting customer consultation and facing customer complaints are divided into two aspects. One is rational explanation, the other is emotional persuasion.

Rational persuasion discourse mainly aims at the following situations:

- 1) Clarifying policies: Many customers are not clear about the export policies for cross-border transactions during COVID-19; In particular, a large number of customers do not carefully read whether national policies are prescriptive or

advisory. In *how should you respond to customer inquiries during the epidemic*, this article introduced some verbal tricks, *“Our company has set a very strict access condition on respirators, and other protective equipment. All listed products are produced and distributed abroad and subject to the laws of its country of origin, and from the sellers who have been authorized with CE or FDA certification.”*

2) Explaining the reason: In many complaints, employees just say they are sorry over and over again, but customers often need to know the reason. It should be remembered that whether the customer can understand is not achieved through apology, but the customer needs reasons to judge by himself. For example, in *how should you respond to customer inquiries during the epidemic*, they recommend explaining to customers like this, *“I am very sorry that the express cannot be delivered temporarily due to the epidemic in your area. I will urge the express company to deliver to you as soon as possible after the express is restored”* *“Dear customer, due to the extended Chinese Spring Festival most of our staff are off their duty, so from Jan 19th PT to Feb 18th PT, you may see an extension for the preparation period, cancellation time, dispute time and estimated delivery time of orders. We are trying our best to deliver your order as fast as possible. Appreciate your understanding.”*

3) Comparative policies: The specific measures developed by each company are different, and of course we need to show our advantages to customers, for example, *“We know that the spread of the coronavirus was a cause for concern. There is no evidence to show that There is any virus within the package, and all*

orders of our company run through a lot of scanning before the package been sent out, and before it arrives."

4) Provide alternatives: When can't solve the problem of the customer, it's time to give customers a certain alternative proposal, at least to make customers feel that we sincerely want to help them, such as *"if the delivery delay is unacceptable to you, you can apply for a refund, and we will deal with a refund as soon as possible"* *" We offer an unconditional life time return policy, and you can also apply for a replacement, we will deal with as soon as possible. Since it is now the epidemic period, it is estimated that the shipping time will be affected, so we will arrange replacement as soon as we receive your package."*

Although this epidemic will bring about an increase in customer expectations, it will also arouse empathy from the whole society. When we are feeling grateful to the medical staff, we will also show respect to those who are still sticking at their work during the epidemic. From the perspective of psychology, discourse can produce analogical interaction force on people, and choosing appropriate discourse in corporate services can improve the effect of customer complaint handling. Here are some tips you can use to persuade by resonating:

1) Insist on providing services: *"Sir, we understand you very much, so we have been working overtime without rest during the epidemic in order to provide satisfactory services to you."* *"Because of the epidemic, our workload is very heavy, so my voice is a little uncomfortable, please forgive me."*(Yang. 2020) It's about giving the customer the perception that we're taking a risk to provide a service.

2) Warm reminder: If the customer mentions the inconvenience caused by the epidemic, we will take advantage of the situation to chat with the customer about the epidemic, and let the customer have the meticulous service during the epidemic, such as *"nothing is as important as your life, please pay attention to protection, wear a mask, wash your hands frequently. We are always there when you need service."* (Yang. 2020)

3) Professionalism: When facing customers' complaints, enterprises should show good professionalism, keep listening patiently and confirm customers' problems, so as to truly understand customers, such as using words *"Your problem is...Am I right?" "Please allow me to repeat your question to make sure we provide you with an effective solution..."* (Yang. 2020)

2.1.2 Keep Pace with the Times

While the epidemic has adversely affected the economy and society, it has also brought development opportunities to new industries. The business discourse is constantly advancing with the times and is based on economic development. These new business activities and industrial trends have promoted the production of a large number of new business words. The industries that have benefited the most from this pandemic are the Healthcare industry and the Internet industry, as well as the digital economy industries based on the Internet, such as online education, online entertainment, New Retailing, and manufacturing upgrades.

In terms of the Internet economy, according to statistics from the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology of China, during the Spring Festival holiday,

mobile Internet traffic consumption was 2.716 million TB, a year-on-year increase of 36.4%. The construction of a new generation of information infrastructure in China is in a period of great development. The “Sharing Economy” with the keywords of *"Mass Innovation"*, *"Crowdsourcing"* and *"Crowdfunding"* is an important part of the digital economy. Everyone is a creator. This creative execution would not be feasible without modern media technology. At the same time as the promotion of various online collaborative office software, they are actually supported by "Data Services".

During the COVID-19 period, the digital economy can best reflect information technology innovation, business model innovation and institutional innovation. Therefore, *"electronic business cards"*, *"traffic consumption"*, *"online office"*, *"self-media"*, *"big data"*, *"cloud computing"*, *"smart city"* " New words such as *"smart transportation"*, *"smart public service"*, *"data service"* and *"cloud data"* have become high-frequency words for business communication within the industry. The digital economy can best reflect information technology innovation, business model innovation and institutional innovation during COVID-19. Therefore, new words such as *"electronic business cards"*, *"data charge"*, *"online office"*, *"We media"*, *"Large data"*, *"cloud computing"*, *"smart city"*, *"smart transportation"*, *"smart public service"*, *"data service"* and *"Cloud technology"* have become high-frequency words for business communication within the industry.

Healthcare industry. After this epidemic, people pay more and more attention to health, and the scale of health consumption demand continues to grow.

"Pneumonia treatment", "medical care", "health protection" and "health insurance" have become consumption keywords. In addition to specific transaction product categories, the use of keywords such as *"online medical inquiries", "Telemedicine" and "Intelligent medical treatment"* has exploded due to restrictions on people's travel activities.

Online education. Online education is actually not a new concept, but with the emergence of the epidemic, online education will become a new round of hot spots. When people are used to online learning, the use of keywords such as *"distance learning", "snackable", and "paying for knowledge online"* has already become a norm.

Online entertainment industry. Online entertainment has become the mainstream entertainment for everyone during COVID-19 (Seetharaman, 2020). In the early days of the outbreak in 2020, with a series of actions such as cooperating with local TV stations during the Spring Festival and watching movies for free online, the number of ByteDance's users doubled. Taking Tencent as an example, the daily active users of their game product "Honor of Kings" peaked at around 120-150 million during the Spring Festival holiday. Depending on the issues above, *"online recharge", "tip", "network flow", "trending", "digital advertising", "search engine optimization"* and other business terms have become important indicators to the business activities in this industry.

In terms of new retailing, the impact of the epidemic has increased people's attention to dietary health. In the future, high-quality fresh e-commerce and platforms that provide one-stop catering ingredients will have huge room for

growth. Their products tend to cover beverages, snacks, kitchen condiments and other daily necessities. You can buy groceries contactless in the community without contacting with people. Key words such as "*contactless retail*", "*unmanned supermarket*", "*intelligent vending machines*", "*mobile convenience store*" and "*payment security*" are the development characteristics of this industry.

Transformation and upgrading of traditional industries. The epidemic has affected labor-intensive industries, with manufacturing being the first to bear the brunt. The impact of labor shortages and human-to-human transmission on the production and operation of enterprises in many industries such as manufacturing during COVID-19 has become a factor driving enterprises to implement intelligent transformation. Therefore, enterprises are actively expanding the application of robots in factories, hotels, restaurants, logistics and distribution and other fields. Key words such as "*AI*", "*5G*", "*cloud computing*", "*industrial control*", "*smart grid*" and "*digitalization*" have become the focus of enterprise transformation.

2.2 Functional Sub-classification of Business Discourse Types during COVID-19

2.2.1 The Educational Function of Business Discourse

As for educational functions of business discourse, there are four forms, namely lecture, case study, training and business consultation. The following are some examples of the educational functions of business discourse during COVID-19.

The online lecture "*Foreign Investment Review Mechanism in Germany and the EU in the context of COVID-19*" is a typical example. It is held in Munich on

September 23, 2020. *"The COVID-19 pandemic has seriously affected the global economic development, and enterprises around the world are facing great difficulties in investment. In order to protect the interests of these companies, governments around the world have made new adjustments to their foreign investment review policies. The general trend is that censorship will become more and more stringent. This year, the German government has revised the laws and regulations related to foreign investment twice, and the new foreign investment review framework at the EU level will be implemented soon. Chinese enterprises will face new challenges in both Germany and Europe,"* said Yonggui Peng, a member of the Economic and Commercial Counselor's Office. The educational significance of business discourse in this lecture is to help Chinese enterprises understand the latest requirements and development trend of foreign investment control in Germany and the EU, and enhance compliance awareness and risk screening ability in the process of overseas investment.

Constellation brands pledges €2.24 Million To COVID-19 Relief Efforts

- *Of these funds, €900 000 will be earmarked for the National Restaurant Association Educational Foundation's (NRAEF)*
- *The drinks company has also established the Constellation Brands COVID-19 Crisis Relief Fund, through which it will match contributions from its employees 2:1 to donate to non-profit organisations supporting communities affected by the crisis.*
- *the group will donate €224,000 to support relief efforts in Italy, which is home to the company's Ruffino brand*

- *Constellation Brands, in partnership with Modelo Especial, has also pledged €450,000 to the US Bartenders' Guild charity*

These cases come from a collection of COVID-19 Business cases called Business as a Force for Good in Times of a Crisis compiled by The Consumer Goods Forum. The organization is dedicated to bringing together consumer goods retailers and manufacturers around the world. Their purpose is to help global retailers and consumer goods manufacturers work with other key stakeholders to ensure consumer trust and boost positive transformations. The organization arranges this analysis list to help retailers and manufacturers in the world learn from each other's successful experience and get rid of crisis during COVID-19.

On April 17, 2022, the "Exchange Meeting on Helping Enterprises Operate Efficiently During COVID-19" was held online. More than 10 enterprises participated in the training activities. In view of the restrictions on activities caused by the epidemic affecting the business activities, Vice Chairman Bin Zhong gave the following suggestions: *"The epidemic is giving birth to the era of intelligent and unmanned, and it is also accelerating the combination of intelligent factories and information technology, and he encourages cooperation between small and large businesses."* At the exchange meeting, Business Discourse demonstrated its educational function, provided effective business information for recipients, and provided guidance on how to deal with the epidemic among enterprises.

In addition, consulting companies use business discourse to solve operational problems for customers and meet their needs for certain business skills and business information. Here's an example of Intueor (Intueor is a strategy,

management and technology consulting firm that helps public and private sector organizations create and maximize business value) providing business advice to state workforce agencies, which have been pushed to the brink during COVID-19:

Antiquated systems, inflexible processes, shortages of qualified staff, constrained budgets, and, most importantly, sudden and overwhelming spikes in unemployment caused by natural disasters make state workforce agencies face sub-par customer service, delayed payment of urgently needed benefits to claimants, an inability to support re-employment, and billions of dollars in fraudulent claims that lead to insolvent trust funds. According to this Intueor advice that *“State governments can benefit from simplifying the way they engage with their constituents, streamlining their internal operations, adopting innovative technology solutions, and collaborating with their peers through multi-state consortia or shared investments. Intueor’s consultants have stepped up to help state workforce agencies quickly respond to unforeseen needs, build resilience into their program operations, make sustainable investments in technology and be better prepared for the next big crisis.”*

2.2.2 The Regulative Function of Business Discourse

Document business discourse performs a regulative function, such as company documents and corporate regulations. The company regulations are the standards and regulations used by the company to regulate all members of the company and all the company's economic activities. It is the embodiment of the company's internal economic responsibility system. The company's rules and

regulations are universal and mandatory for the company, and everyone and any department must abide by them. The formulation of company rules and regulations should reflect the characteristics and requirements of the company's economic activities and should be based on the "Labor Law", and must not violate relevant legal provisions. The regulatory function of business discourse during COVID-19 is mainly reflected in some documents issued by enterprises to ensure the orderly development of business activities. For example, the following are the regulations for employees to return to work in Jiaxing Economic and Technological Development Zone:

1) The office is responsible for the formulation of the "Epidemic Prevention and Control Management System", "Company Epidemic Prevention and Control Emergency Plan" and other documents; responsible for the issuance and training of the "Prevention and Control Manual"; responsible for the inspection and reporting of workers' health status; the office is also responsible for disinfecting the work area, arranging the guards to check the temperature of visitors and make records.

2) The purchasing department is responsible for sterilizing the goods to and from the company and keeping records of the drivers who deliver the goods; fully sterilizing the goods sent by the company; fully sterilizing the incoming vehicles; arranging for regular disinfection of the company's existing goods. In addition, the purchasing department should be responsible for distributing the materials needed during COVID-19, and training the employees how to use the materials; organize and record the temperature detection of the employees no less than twice a day.

.....

3) The operation department is responsible for investigating visiting customers, and only eligible personnel is allowed to visit the company. In addition, the operation department should establish a visitor health account, formulate a customer reception prevention and control system, be responsible for inevitable business meetings arrangements during the epidemic (Qian Meng, 2020).

The regulation is the focus of the enterprise's sustained and stable operation during covid-19. The rules and regulations set the guidelines for business activities such as business production, business meetings, business procurement, etc. during Covid-19. This kind of business discourse is not only used to exchange information, but also a criterion to restrict and adjust operation and management activities, which ensured the stable development of enterprises in covid-19 period.

2.2.3 The Instrumental-persuasive Function of Business Discourse: EDM

The persuasive role of business discourse as a tool mainly occurs in communication with clients and colleagues. It covers a wide range of industry vocabulary. While conversations between businesses and customers during COVID-19 took place primarily in the form of written texts, early written business discourse work was characterized by the analysis of business letters, which is an important communication genre at that time.

During the COVID-19 era, corporate marketing teams are struggling to get the attention of online customers through digital marketing in the midst of chaos and crisis. Research shows that businesses with online marketing channels have experienced a dramatic increase in the frequency of communication with

customers. Before the Internet, reaching customers was a challenge because it either required expensive phone calls or a lot of travel. However, the Internet has dramatically changed this by reducing the cost of communication. The main way for companies to promote their products during the COVID-19 period is EDM.

Email is one of the most common and cost-effective forms of business communication. It allows you to target your audience in a fast, cheap and interactive way. You can provide important information to your employers and potential clients. For example, any news about discount offers, product features can be effectively communicated via email. Due to the economic stagnation caused by the epidemic, most companies have to face its impact. In order to reduce corporate risks, most companies' marketing and promotion work is in a conservative state. As a cost-effective online marketing channel, email marketing is widely favored by global marketing teams under this predicament. Worldwide, 21% more emails were sent in the second quarter than in the first, according to a survey by U.S. marketing firm Hubspot. And throughout the second quarter, not only did the open rate remain stable relative to the increased sending volume, but it also rose.

Companies of all sizes have responded differently to email marketing during the pandemic. The data shows that marketing emails sent by companies with 0-200 employees have grown the most over the past few months. In the second quarter, the number of emails sent by companies with 0-25 employees increased by 31% compared to the first quarter; companies with 26-200 employees increased by 21%; and companies with more than 201 employees increased by 14%.

As far as the open rate of emails is concerned, the email open rates of companies of different sizes have increased significantly. Companies with fewer than 200 employees have lower open rates than medium-to-large companies with more than 200 employees due to sending more emails to smaller customer groups.

The following are the actual email cases with the highest feedback rate when contacting customers during the global epidemic:

Supplier:

Title: XXX Tech is ready to produce your XXX

Dear XXX,

I am Isabella Lay from XXX, we are Chinese XXX factory established in 2004.

We glad to know that your company is running the business of XXX manufacturing services.

May we know do you have work with any Chinese XXX suppliers before?

As the Coronavirus issue, many of the suppliers have to delay their production.

But FS Tech is ready now and we already start proceeding orders. Attached pictures are taken from our factory. (Attached are some real shots of workers wearing masks while operating the equipment)

If you have any project need to produce in China recently, welcome to let us know.

Best regards,

Isabella Lay

Customer:

Dear Isabella,

We have received your information and would like you to quote the following boards.

Please advise pricing and lead time. Due to the unfortunate situation with the coronavirus we are in urgent need of parts.

Product 1 – 3000 PCS

Product 2 - 3000 PCS

Product 3 – 500 PCS

Thank you,

XXX

XXX Co. Ltd.

Supplier:

Thank you for your email, we will check the best cost and the fastest delivery time for you.

Customer:

Dear Isabella,

Thank you for your quick response - we looking forward to your information.

Supplier:

Hi dear XXX,

Our cost is ready, please check if this delivery time is acceptable for you.

Also, we want to let you know we have been working with some great companies in America which have the similar business like XXX Electronics.

They are located on Utah, Washiton, Boston, California, ect.

Some of them are XXX factories, some are high tech companies that applied our XXX on government's projects.

For NDA agreement, we can't share the names. But we have been working very pleasant with our USA clients.

Below are some comments from them:

(Attached are a few screenshots of other US customers' good reviews of our products, which are very convincing)

Hope there is a chance to begin our long-term partnership, welcome to let us know if you have further question.

Best regards,

Isabella Lay

Through this group of correspondence with overseas customers, we can see the characteristics of politeness, timeliness and professionalism of business letters. For example, these words such as *glad to, may we know, please check, welcome* reflect politeness of business discourse. Words like *the fastest delivery time, quick response* reflect timeliness of business discourse. Words such as *pricing and lead time* are specific words in the field of Commerce and trade, which reflect the professionalism of business discourse.

In the case that the customer knows nothing about the supplier, there are factory pictures, product pictures, screenshots of other customers' favorable comments attached to the letter. Simply inform them that we have many cooperative customers in the United States, but do not need to be specific about other customers, because European and American customers pay special attention

to privacy, let them know that you respect customer privacy. Through the timely reply of the email, it can be known that the customer is a person who is used to responding immediately, and the customer has stated that the delivery time is urgent, so if the supplier is neglectful, they may choose another supplier. What customers need is your professionalism and your ability to solve problems as soon as possible. And the timely response to the letter can make customers feel your commitment and integrity.

2.2.4 The Informative-polemic Function of Business Discourse

The informative-polemic function of business discourse is mainly expressed in the form of business media discourse. Business media discourse is the research object of business linguistics, media linguistics and sociolinguistics. The research materials in this field mainly come from business media, which includes news discourse on economic development and external publicity of enterprises. Our introduction to the function of business discourse mainly shows the cognitive process realized by news producers (business operators and business media) and its influence on news readers of different backgrounds and cultures, and how business news reveals social issues. This requires our analysis of business media discourse to combine textual analysis and contextual analysis. The following are media reports on the state of the economy during COVID-19:

Hiring gains slowed sharply headed into the fall as more layoffs turned permanent, adding to signs that the U.S. economy faces a long slog to fully recover from the coronavirus pandemic.

.....

The U.S. has replaced 11.4 million of the 22 million jobs lost in March and April at the beginning of the pandemic. Job growth, though, is cooling, and last month marked the first time since April that net hiring was below 1 million (Chaney, 202).

—The Wall Street Journal

Six months after the first coronavirus shutdowns went into effect across the United States, unemployment data is painting a picture of how quickly — or not — the economy is recovering from pandemic job losses.

.....

With a large number of schools switching to remote learning and many child care programs shut down, some parents have had to make a choice between working a job and caring for children. Others may not want to go back to work in person for fear of endangering someone at home who is at a high risk for complications from the virus (Koeze, 2020).

— The New York Times

About 350,000 women aged 20 and older left the workforce in September and August of this year, while 321,000 men in the same age group came on board.

Women face tremendous headwinds as they try to reenter the workforce post-pandemic," C. Nicole Mason, president and chief executive officer of the Institute for Women's Policy Research, said in a statement. "It will take time to see how women navigate what is hopefully a waning pandemic and what that means for their jobs and careers (Marte, 2021).

— Reuters

According to the reports of the three Western mainstream media on the economic performance of the United States during the epidemic, there are key words such as *layoffs*, *job growth*, *unemployment data*, *choice between working a job and caring for children* among them. In addition to the economic development during the epidemic, a large number of reports emphasized the protection of human rights and interests, the basic unit of society. This is mainly due to the wave of unemployment caused by the impact of the epidemic on the economy. In particular, the attention to women as a disadvantaged group reflects a strong humanistic concern. From this point of view, we can see the individualism-oriented thinking mode and cultural characteristics in the United States. Economic development includes many aspects, but during the epidemic, the media paid more attention to people's employment issues.

The government remains committed to reducing the number of coronavirus carriers to 0, responding quickly, blockading high-risk areas, tightening travel restrictions on medium-risk areas and quarantining about 100,000 people. The economic costs of such a lockdown, including restrictions on international travel, are extremely high. But after all, China's strict approach, based on institutional arrangements and cultural traditions, kept it insulated from the virus for months. Although the cost is high, especially for tourism and travel-related services. China says it's worthy and we can afford it.

— China Newsweek

In collectivism-oriented China, China Newsweek's description of China's

economic development during the epidemic emphasizes that "everyone is responsible for the rise and fall of the world". The words such as *quarantining about 100,000 people, lockdown, restrictions on international travel* show that in order to protect people's lives and national interests, the inconvenience caused by the blockade to individuals and the economic loss to enterprises are inevitable. Sacrificing the interests of small groups to protect the interests of the country is necessary during COVID-19.

Even if the RBI rolls out more aggressive measures, the broader concern that still remains is the inadequate monetary policy transmission that limits the effectiveness of any monetary stimulus in India, especially in the context of an impaired financial sector.

One can only hope that the acute economic challenges already faced by the country, which will only be exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic, will persuade Prime Minister Modi's government to refocus its priorities towards dealing with economic stabilisation and upliftment rather than pursue the more controversial aspects of its social and political agenda. The need of the hour is unity of purpose (Rajan, & Gopalan, 2020).

— *The Hindu*

In India, there are political parties representing a wide range of ideologies. One thing they have in common is that most of the participants are elite and western-educated. As the mainstream media, The Hindu represents the view of the enlightened elite. They have also found a problem: Indian society has long been divided between classes due to the existence of castes. Different classes not only

have different interests, but also can say that they live in a completely different world, receiving a completely different ideological education. Those who have been enlightened call on the country's managers to pay more attention to the stability of economic development during the epidemic, rather than on political struggles.

The comparative analysis of discourses in different commercial media tells us that in order to understand business discourses in a specific cultural context, we should combine national cultural backgrounds and different cognitive frameworks. At the same time, business media discourse can also reflect the thinking patterns, values and cultural connotations of a certain culture. Discourse is closely linked with cognition and culture.

Understanding the pragmatic differences and cognitive differences in news discourses under different cultural backgrounds can help us to dig deeper into the social and commercial cognitive models embodied in the mass media, and then help us understand how discourse affects the media and public perception.

2.2.5 The Argumentative-influencing Function of Business Discourse

Ritual-public business discourse reflects the argumentative-influencing function of business discourse, which includes speeches, reports and advertising discourses with commercial purposes. The two most prominent research areas during COVID-19 are business public speaking and advertising marketing discourse.

The following is an excerpt from a speech by IMF Managing Director

Kristalina Georgieva on April 9, 2020 on the topic Confronting the Crisis: Priorities for the Global Economy content:

I want to begin by wishing my personal best to everyone—for you and your families' health and safety during these difficult times.

Today we are confronted with a crisis like no other. Covid-19 has disrupted our social and economic order at lightning speed and on a scale that we have not seen in living memory. The virus is causing tragic loss of life, and the lockdown needed to fight it has affected billions of people. What was normal just a few weeks ago—going to school, going to work, being with family and friends—is now a huge risk.

I have no doubt that we will overcome this challenge. Our doctors and nurses are fighting it around the clock, often risking their lives to save the lives of others. Our scientists will come up with solutions to break COVID-19's grip. Between now and then, we must marshal the determination of all—individuals, governments, businesses, community leaders, international organizations—to act decisively and act together, to protect lives and livelihoods. These are the times for which the IMF was created—we are here to deploy the strength of the global community, so we can help shield the most vulnerable people and revitalize the economy.

.....

My next point is about building the bridge to recovery. We see four priorities: First, continue with essential containment measures and support for health systems.....

Second, shield affected people and firms with large, timely, targeted fiscal and

financial sector measures.

Third, reduce stress to the financial system and avoid contagion.....

Fourth, even as we move through this containment phase, we must plan for recovery.

.....

Let me conclude with a line from Victor Hugo who once said: “Great perils have this beauty, that they bring to light the fraternity of strangers” (Georgieva, 2020).

It is this common threat that brings us all together, to harness the greatest strengths of our humanity—solidarity, courage, creativity, and compassion. We don’t know yet how our economies and way of life will change, but we do know we will come out of this crisis more resilient.

Thank you very much.

We'll analyze this business speech through Halliday's ideational function. The term is explained as follows: Halliday's term for a linguistic function referring to the content or idea expressed in an utterance (Chandler, & Munday, 2011). This is presented as one of three essential metafunctions reflected in all adult language usage (compare interpersonal function; textual function).

There are three transition processes involved in this speech: material process, mental process and verbal process. The material process includes three categories: 1) The epidemic is very destructive: *...lessen our social and economic order at lightning speed...; ...causing tragic loss of life...; ...a huge risk...* 2) People should unite: *...marshal the determination of all...; ...help shield the most vulnerable*

people and revitalize the economy... 3) Confidence in the future: ...we will overcome this challenge...; ...we will come out of this crisis more resilient...

In these words, we realized that the damage to economic, social and personal security caused by the epidemic is a fait accompli and a challenge we all face. The speaker tried to connect with audience by stating facts. She then called for related organizations to work together on economic recovery by inspiring their sense of mission. In the end, she used inspirational words to encourage people to be optimistic about success.

In Halliday's theory, mental process is divided into four categories: perception, cognition, desire and emotion. In this speech, the speaker uses mental process verbs like *wish*, *anticipate*, and *anticipate* in sentences. It can be seen that the main mental process of the speaker is perception and cognition, that is, the purpose of this speech is to tell audience what the organization can do based on reality.

Calling for, help, will need to and other words are used in the sentences involving the verbal process, which have strong appeal. The use of these words in many references to initiatives in the text further confirms that the purpose of this speech is to introduce a series of measures taken by the International Monetary Fund to promote economic recovery.

In general, Kristalina Georgieva's speech aims to give the audience confidence in the economic recovery, as well as understand what measures the International Monetary Fund has taken for economic recovery during the epidemic, and call on the World Bank to provide policy advice, technical assistance and financial

resources to member countries.

Advertising marketing discourse involves the analysis of marketing's special language skills, psycholinguistic manipulation and so on. The development distress of offline advertising during the pandemic has prompted the advertising discourse to find new breakthroughs.

In the early stage of the epidemic in 2020, offline commercial advertising was in limbo. NetEase's Lifease team launched such an advertisement in the Binhu business district in Hangzhou, "*Don't look at this advertisement. This should have been our advertisement for the promotion of 2.23-2.29, but now it has been temporarily changed. Although everything is on the right track, it is still recommended that you'd better gather less in public places and don't stay too long in front of advertisements. Stay at home and wait for spring.*" From the perspective of communication, this advertisement adopts the traditional offline business media promotion idea, but grasped the orientation of public opinion based on public health. At the same time, from the perspective of consumer psychology, words like "*don't look at it*" will cause consumers' "reverse psychology". If there is no "*don't watch this ad*", but only the "warm reminder" below, then not many people will really notice this ad, which is a very simple psychological tactic.

It can be seen that due to COVID-19, the effective marketing promotion function of business discourse should be less commercial and less entertaining. After this epidemic, people began to care about emotional maintenance. At this time, if brands can use business words that reflect humanistic care, they will naturally gain approval from consumers.

2.3 New Developments in Business Discourse During COVID-19

2.3.1 Critical Approaches and Business Discourse

In the context of COVID-19, more and more business conversations move online, such as, email, teleconferencing, and conversations on platforms, which lead to a series of issues like the protection of privacy in the workplace. With the development of Internet technology, the probability of business data leakage is actually higher and higher. Therefore, the changes in the way of business conversation during COVID-19 have attracted the attention of critical linguists. Through critical discourse analysis, two aspects have to be focused on: Should the use of business discourse on online platforms be supervised? And what kind of supervision is effective and respect the discourse power of employees?

"Workplace monitoring" and *"productivity software"* are the keywords of this phenomenon. In a paper published in 2019, Wu Kai mentioned that control is a basic function of management, and replacing manual monitoring with electronic monitoring is an inevitable result of the deep integration of informatization and industrialization.

Between January 2015 to march, Mr. Zhou, a senior engineer of a manufacturing company, utilized his position and send internal confidential commercial documents to rival enterprises by e-mail for many times. Among these documents, there are product inspection guidelines, process document, measuring fixture image and other commercial confidential information, which has taken a heavy toll on the company's vital interests and led to great loss to the company.

In the context of informatization and globalization, email, as one of the important carriers of business discourse, has become one of the main reasons for enterprise data leakage. According to an article called “*In China, half of enterprises have experienced email attacks*”, about 50% of enterprises in China are subject to email attacks, and 94% of enterprises and institutions have been aware of the "email crisis", but there are still no effective protection measures to prevent the leakage of business secrets. According to a report named “*Data Leakage Typical Case Analysis Report*” by Qi Anxin Technology Group Co., Ltd. (Qi Anxin Technology Group Co., Ltd. was established in 2014, focusing on the cyberspace security market, providing enterprise-level network security products and services to government and enterprises) shows that 80% of the theft of trade secrets is done by internal employees, and even the losses caused are incalculable. Traditional security prevention focuses on external intrusion prevention, but lacks effective internal management. It can be seen that it is necessary for enterprises to monitor the use of business discourse texts within the enterprise, and they need to master the sending and receiving records of employees' email accounts, and intercept the conversation when necessary.

The pandemic has made surveillance of workplaces commonplace. Is the employee's right to use the text of business discourse violated? From a sociological point of view, China's "*Civil Code*" clearly protects citizens' privacy rights, but the ownership of office computers belongs to the employer. According to Regulations on technical measures for Internet security protection, the company has the right to use monitoring software to supervise the use of the Internet by employees.

According to Article 8 of the "*Labor Contract Law*", enterprises should truthfully inform employees that the surveillance is existed, and cannot disseminate content at will.

The scope of enterprise monitoring of employees' business discourse usage includes: real-time screen content, mainstream instant messaging software, browser history, file operation records, email content, clipboard records, download content, print content, etc. A surveillance software developer in the United States told CENFORTUNA: "*Checking employees' social networking sites and email content is a need we often meet.*" From the perspective of critical discourse analysis, employees' use of business discourse is strictly monitored. But doing so from an employee's point of view may violate their right to privacy. There is a view of power mentioned in critical discourse analyze: Power is taken for granted and usually serves the interests of the dominant group, while marginalizing other views and groups. For example, in her book *Good to talk? Living and working in a communication culture* Deborah Cameron questions whether the power discourse in business operations really benefits those at the bottom of the ladder as it claims. Instead of being liberated from constraints, Cameron concludes, employees are taught to work within them, to become more team-oriented, to resolve conflict, and to control emotions that can undermine the values of efficiency and order (Vitez, 2021). At present, there are clear criteria for judging whether the use of business discourse is illegal, but how to implement effective supervision through technical means under the condition of respecting employees' right to speak still needs to be solved by critical discourse researchers and researchers from other disciplines, such

as computer linguistics, sociolinguistics, forensic linguistics, political linguistics, etc.

2.3.2 Intercultural Business Discourse

With growing geo-economic globalization, the volume of international business contacts is rising constantly. The importance of the role of "foreign languages for commercial purposes" in business discourse is constantly highlighted. In addition, the use of cross-cultural business discourse during COVID-19 reflects its characteristics of humanistic concern.

When the new coronavirus broke out in Wuhan, China in 2019, a Japanese business organization printed some meaningful poems on the materials donated to the disaster relief area in Hubei, such as *"Although hills and rills set us apart, the moon and wind share our kind heart"*. This poem comes from a real story about the friendly relationship between China and Japan more than 1,300 years ago. In the Tang Dynasty in China in the eighth century AD, the Japanese prince of Nagaya embroidered this poem on the thousand cassocks presented to China, which means that though miles apart, we are under the same sky. It is hoped that these thousand cassocks can be used as the origin to create some kind of relationship with each other. The Chinese master Jianzhen was moved by this poem, so he made six trips to Japan to promote Buddhism, which became one of the most iconic practices in the history of Sino-Japanese cultural communication. More than 1,300 years later, at a critical moment when China was hit by an epidemic, Japanese offer material assistance and spiritual blessings to the Chinese people by using this poem.

Many companies have offered assistance including medical materials to the society during Covid-19. They all show their sense of social responsibility. It is the Chinese poetry printed on the supplies from Japan reflects the change in marketing oriented by the cultural background of the target group. That is to say, the marketing behavior of commercial organizations impresses potential customers by deeply quoting localized discourse, rather than only printing the name and logo of the enterprise. This case shows that the use of business discourse is influenced by interactive situations, and it is also a successful case of the cultural mapping of business discourse in the context of cross-cultural communication. In addition, some stores in Japan have also put up slogans such as "Go! Wuhan". This not only show their kindness to the Japanese public, but also attracts a lot of Chinese consumers.

Business discourse during COVID-19 has a strong de-commercialization color. When companies use business discourse, they avoid a very direct introduction to their products and services, but packaging brands with humanistic care, and then expanding the reach of brand influence through multiple languages. For example, the Doraemon "stay home" project specially released by Japan's "Asahi Shimbun" and Toei Co., Ltd. to encourage the fight against the epidemic has attracted the attention of animation fans around the world. This publicity tells in the tone of Doraemon *"Because you stay at home. Because you diligently wash your hands. Because you care about your family. Because you and your friends support each other. Because you show kindness to everyone. Because you help people who are ill. Because you work hard for everyone else. Because you never*

give up. Because of you... the future will be fine”, which also comes with various language versions.

During the epidemic, all cross-cultural business communication had to be moved online. Before Covid-19, business conversations in cross-cultural contexts were often conducted face-to-face, whether within a multicultural business organization or as a conversation between multiple business organizations from different cultures. But now, things are much easier and electronic networking allows companies to collaborate with professionals from around the globe. Global teams can log into the office in real time to solve challenges and complete tasks.

Many international conferences also turn to online meetings by using technical tools. Hosted by UNESCO and the Chinese National Commission for UNESCO, the dialogue session of the "Belt and Road" Youth Creativity and Heritage was held on the basis of Tencent Conference; the United Nations also announced that Tencent has become a global partner to provide comprehensive technical solutions for the 75th anniversary of the founding of the United Nations, and software such as Tencent Conference will serve the largest global dialogue in history. Thousands of conferences are held online; the 6th International Conference on Social Science and Higher Education was also successfully held with the help of Tencent's conference platform.

Under the premise of cross-cultural communication, if we compare the cost of the Internet with other available communication methods, we will find that the cost of Internet communication is much lower. Smoother interactions without commuting promote cross-cultural business discourse to be more cost-effective.

Online business conversations are also a relief during a global pandemic when people need health monitoring to stay safe.

2.3.3 The Impact of New Communication Channels on Business Models

The Internet plays an important role in effective business communication in the time of COVID-19. There is no doubt that the official website, online customer support services play a vital role in the success and development of a business. One of the most effective ways to communicate with customers, suppliers and business partners is through a website. A website can be a sales tool or a means of doing business, and can be used to ask and answer questions online and provide visitors with detailed illustrations of products, services, or organizations. During the COVID-19 period, many companies have turned their marketing activities online, which has promoted the increase of cooperation between websites and commerce, and has also brought opportunities for some companies that provide online marketing strategies for enterprises. The following is a company's sales discourse about online marketing strategy:

Our company's main product is "One-stop". It is a marketing network platform specially used to do business online and turn network traffic into business opportunities. We also provide online marketing solutions for small and medium-sized enterprises. Core advantage of One-stop is "high conversion ". It converts potential customers who visit your website into actual customers with much higher efficiency than ordinary websites, thereby helping you get more returns with less investment.

Our services include the following:

- 1) We provide all services from website building, promotion, to the conversion of customers in the later stage.*
- 2) One-stop is an online marketing platform that combines B2B and search engines. It can help your company and products to be promoted on various search engines such as Baidu, Google, etc. and industry alliance websites, so that your potential customers and peers can see your advertisements.*

These sales words are the embodiment of the persuasion function of business words. It also reflects that online marketing has enriched business vocabulary in the epidemic era, such as "B2B", "O2O", "SEO: Search Engine Optimization", "Website Traffic", "Resource Realization" and other words. Customers can learn that the company's contact information, location, product or service details are provided on the business website, and most importantly, the company uses the Internet to create brand awareness at the lowest cost. A business website is part of a business identity, allowing businesses to communicate with potential customers in real time and allowing customers to get immediate guidance from the customer support team. This can promote enterprises to put forward better communication concepts, enrich the way of brand display, highlight the salient features of products or services, and further win the trust and satisfaction of customers. A well-designed, beautiful, and user-friendly website can attract more potential customers and help businesses make more profits.

Customer support is the backbone of any successful business. Smooth online customer support services depend on seamless communication and better contact

with customers. Customers are often reluctant to contact the customer support team over the phone due to the waiting time usually involved. Putting the customer support page on the business' official website ensures that the business can assist customers in any way possible 24/7. After all, quick interaction and instant response are crucial to business success. The epidemic has reduced people's opportunities to go out, so many consumption behaviors have turned to online, and a large number of business discourses related to this have appeared, mainly concentrated on B2B and B2C e-commerce trading platforms. For different aspects of the transaction, the following discourse usually occurs:

- 1) The first consultation for new customers: Hello! Welcome to the.... flagship store, I am the customer service official ..., what can I do for you?
- 2) When the customer service official cannot reply in time: Hello, I'm really sorry. Because this is the peak time for inquiries, thank you very much for your patience!
- 3) The customer refuses to consume: Dear customer, thank you for your patronage. I hope you can continue to pay attention to our company, we will continue to launch new products, thank you again for your support.
- 4) The customer expressed consideration: Hello, do you have any questions or related questions?
- 5) After the customer places the order and pays: Thank you for your patronage, I will check with you the products you have shot, XXX models, one piece. Recipient XXX, Address XXX, Phone XXX. Please check and confirm. Your goods will be sent by XX express at XXX. Please keep your mobile phone unblocked (delivery is postponed in epidemic areas). Please sign for the goods when you receive them,

and check the integrity of the packaging first. In order to protect your rights, please read the after-sales service guarantee card and after-sales service manual carefully. If you have quality problems or other problems, please do not hesitate to contact us immediately. Thank you again for your patronage! I wish you a happy life.

As one of the manifestations of business discourse, online customer support service requires practitioners to have the ability to respond quickly, warmly, professionally, and quickly build trust. Live Chat, FAQ and other features help businesses to provide real-time assistance to customers, and help them to get more information about products and services. to promote the success of transactions. This kind of effective real-time communication greatly contributes to the successful execution of the transaction. Moreover, the business discourse to be used in this dialogue often reflects the characteristics of politeness, accuracy, professionalism and utilitarian purpose.

2.4 Summary

The first part of practice introduces two prominent features of business discourse during COVID-19, namely flexible targeting and keeping pace with the times. The emergence of the pandemic has led to the transformation of business model, which requires enterprises to make appropriate discourse adjustment when dealing with the relationship with customers. Effective discourse communication can improve the service quality, expand customer groups and gain more profits. Keeping pace with the times is reflected in the wide application of a large number of industry keywords. The epidemic has given the Internet and its derived digital

industries an opportunity to rise, which can be seen from the changes in the vocabulary of business discourse.

The second part introduces the effective embodiment of different functions of business discourse during the pandemic, mainly from text analysis and discourse analysis, combined with business letters, business speeches, business negotiations, business conversations, business documents and other discourse types. The function of business discourse is studied from the perspectives of inter-enterprise dialogue, enterprise management, business activities and business media during COVID-19. During COVID-19, there have been frequent exchanges between companies on their experience of recovery, mainly in the form of training sessions and lectures. It is of great help for managers in enterprises to master relevant skills to deal with the economic crisis, in which business discourse plays an important role as a medium. In addition, some business discourses that help enterprises cope with the epidemic crisis and carry out economic activities in an orderly manner play an executive regulatory role in the form of rules and regulations. Due to the restrictions of people's activities outside the epidemic, people turn their business development activities to online, mainly in the form of email business dialogue. In addition, from reports on economic development in different countries during the epidemic period, we can see that people's attention to economic performance during the epidemic period varies with different cultural values. Business discourse can not only reflect the specific cultural background, but also affect people's cognition in turn. As a language tool, business discourse has a strong impact on the public. Some economic organizations, such as the World Monetary Fund's speech

on restoring the world economy and some enterprises' innovation in offline advertising promotion discourse, both of which have delivered business messages and encouraged people to overcome the epidemic.

The third part introduces the emergence of some new research focuses on business discourse during COVID-19. Working online has been adopted by many enterprises during COVID-19, and critical business discourse has focused on the unfair phenomenon of internal employees' power to use business discourse. In addition, due to the increase of international humanitarian aid, cross-cultural business conversation has also taken on obvious humanist characteristics. The rapid development of the Internet during COVID-19 has promoted the transformation of traditional business model, and the marketing behavior of enterprises has shifted to online, and so has the consumption behavior of customers. Therefore, business discourse plays an important role in effective business promotion and providing customers with high-quality online services

Conclusion

By explaining the relevant theoretical knowledge of business discourse, this paper confirms that the discourse behavior contains multi-disciplinary and multi-domain knowledge. Discourse can reflect the speaker's values, thinking mode and cultural connotation. The effective use of business discourse has become one of the necessary soft skills of business practitioners

Business discourse plays a significant role in world economic recovery and global economic integration. Pandemic is known as a “black swan”. Apart from

destroying the economy, it has also promoted the economy to keep pace with the times and keep developing.

This paper introduces the application of business discourse in the COVID-19 period. We can make the following conclusion: discourse and social practice are interrelated. Discourse, as a specific culture, has its own inherent characteristics, but it will continue to develop under the influence of social and economic development and other factors, which is a dynamic process of continuous development. Therefore, we can find that in different social periods and social events, business discourse involves different fields, different expression carriers and different communication modes. Therefore, if we want to understand the business language of a certain period, we need to take a comprehensive consideration of the political, economic, cultural, institutional and other factors at that time.

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