

THE ROLE OF LANGUAGE IN PROFESSIONAL DISCOURSE: INSIGHTS FROM POLITICAL, LEGAL, MEDIA, AND ACADEMIC CONTEXTS

*Dmitry S. Khramchenko,
Editor-in-Chief*

Welcome to Volume 6, Issue 1 of “*Professional Discourse & Communication*,” a scholarly platform for researchers of linguistic and pedagogical aspects of professional communication. In this edition, we continue our journey into the profound relationship between language and professional praxis, presenting a diverse collection of articles by authors from Nigeria, Kenya, China, and Russia articulating innovative and compelling explorations within the fields of linguistics, communication studies, and pedagogy. As a quarterly online journal with international peer-review and open-access, we are dedicated to providing our readers with the latest and most significant findings, fostering a deep understanding of the complex nature of professional discourse and its intersection with modern linguistic approaches.

This issue covers topics such as language use in online political activism, the role of language in persuasive legal discourse, questioning strategies in television talk shows, the semantics and pragmatics of “rumor” in different contexts, academic writing challenges for Chinese learners of English, and stylistic fusion across languages and cultures in political discourses in English and Russian. The articles employ multiple methods and approaches to analyze the linguistic features, strategies, and conventions of professional communication, illustrating the implications and applications of their findings for improving cross-cultural and interdisciplinary communication in various professional spheres.

The digital sphere is an arena of ideological contestation, where political movements evolve and challenge the status quo. Richard Akano’s opening article, “*Online Resistance in Nigeria: Legitimising the Oduduwa Nation Separatist Mandate through Language*,” offers a compelling exploration into how language serves as a powerful tool in the quest for political autonomy and national identity through the lens of digital communications. The study provides a meticulous examination of the linguistic strategies employed by online advocates of the Oduduwa nation secessionist movement, demonstrating how language and discourse can serve as double-edged swords in shaping public opinion, galvanizing collective action, and stoking ethno-nationalist tensions. By harnessing the power of the written word across various digital platforms, supporters craft narratives steeped in historical, cultural, and socio-political motifs. Critical stylistic analysis reveals how these narratives are not merely strings of lexemes but are imbued with the power to shape perceptions and rally support.

The author explores in depth the themes of insecurity, historical grievances, and marginalization that drive the secessionist agenda. These are not abstract concepts but lived realities that resonate with the collective memory of the movement’s advocates. The article also contextualizes the separatist lexicon within the broader Nigerian socio-political framework, tracing its origins and implications. Furthermore, the research highlights the revo-

lutionary impact of digital media technology in spreading secessionist discourse. The extraordinary ease and speed of message dissemination enable a more effective and extensive campaign than traditional methods would allow. The Oduduwa nation supporters can reach and persuade a global audience, demonstrating the democratic potential of the internet, but also raising challenges for national unity in the face of such powerful online activism.

This research investigates the power dynamics underlying linguistic choices, revealing the ideological orientations that inform and generate the discourse. By studying the relationship between language and national identity, the author illuminates the difficulties of maintaining cohesion in multiethnic societies and the complexities of regional autonomy and self-determination. This research constitutes a significant contribution to the fields of political science, linguistics, and communication studies, emphasizing the critical role of language as a tool for mobilization and social change. The article not only enhances our knowledge of the socio-political factors behind the Oduduwa nation secessionist movement but also underscores the importance of rigorous analysis in understanding the subtleties of digital discourse and its impact on contemporary issues of national identity and belonging.

Moving from the broad digital canvas to the specificity of the courtroom, we encounter the pivotal role of language in legal proceedings. The research article *“Metadiscursive Boosting in Russian Courtroom Discourse: Enhancing Persuasiveness in Defense Speeches”* by Olga Boginskaya offers an enlightening perspective on this phenomenon, analyzing the linguistic tactics defense attorneys deploy to bolster their persuasive power and foster a connection with the judiciary. At the heart of this study is the exploration of metadiscursive markers – tools that are essential for constructing persuasive narratives within the high-stakes environment of the courtroom.

One of the most compelling aspects of this research is the examination of various markers that contribute to the persuasive force of defense arguments. By looking at the use of linguistic devices related to confidence, evidentiality, intensity, superiority, and solidarity, the author provides a comprehensive overview of how defense attorneys strategically wield language to sway the judiciary. In particular, her exploration of markers of confidence, such as epistemic adverbs and assertive phrases, offers fascinating insights into the ways in which defense attorneys achieve the credibility of their assertions, thereby enhancing their persuasive impact.

Moreover, Olga Boginskaya’s discussion of markers of solidarity, such as inclusive pronouns and expressions denoting shared knowledge, sheds light on the importance of fostering a sense of unity between the defense attorney and the judicial audience. By employing these language means, defense attorneys can create a more collaborative atmosphere in the courtroom, which may ultimately prove beneficial to their clients’ cases.

In addition to its contributions to the field of Russian legal discourse, this research article also resonates with the broader domain of linguistics, particularly in the context of professional communication. As the author delves into the complexity of communicative strategies employed by defense attorneys, she not only deepens our understanding of persuasive courtroom discourse but also offers a glimpse into the pragmatic competence of legal professionals and their ability to navigate the complexities of legal judiciary discourse while advocating for their clients.

The implications of this research are profound for lawyers and linguistic scholars alike. For attorneys, the insights offer a blueprint for crafting more compelling arguments that

resonate with the judiciary's expectations and preferences. For academics, the study provides a tangible illustration of how language operates as a tool of influence in specific professional settings, thereby expanding our understanding of the power dynamics at play in legal discourse. By illuminating the sophisticated rhetorical techniques employed by defense attorneys, the article not only enriches our understanding of courtroom discourse but also provides a foundation for further research into the role of language in the legal sphere.

In the vibrant setting of Kenyan television, questions are more than mere requests for information. They are strategic tools that define the functional-linguistic properties of argumentative talk shows. The article "*Question Typology in Kenyan TV Argumentative Talk Shows*" by Loice W. Mwai, Geoffrey M. Maroko, Daniel O. Orwenjo, and Emily A. Ogutu offers a detailed examination of the central role that questions play in shaping the oppositional and argumentative nature of Kenyan television talk shows. Through a careful exploration of the questions employed in these discourse settings, the authors have identified recurring question types, diverse forms, and communicative functions. This typification of Kenyan TV argumentative talk shows not only highlights the complexity of question dynamics but also opens up intriguing avenues for future investigations.

One such avenue is the interconnectedness of question typology and panelists' response strategies. By exploring this relationship, researchers can gain a deeper understanding of the interactive elements that characterize televised discourse, as well as the influence of viewer contributions. Acknowledging viewers as active participants rather than passive consumers, the study encourages us to rethink the role of the audience in making TV content. The research conducted by Mwai et al. adds depth to our comprehension of communication in the evolving landscape of televised discourse. It lays the groundwork for further exploration into the genre's interactive elements and the influence of viewer contributions.

Moreover, the authors' study of question dynamics in Kenyan TV argumentative talk shows aligns with the broader domain of linguistics of professional communication. The article offers important ideas about language use within the context of televised discussions, highlighting the relevance of linguistic approaches in unraveling the complexities of professional communication in contemporary media settings, opening up new avenues for scholars interested in discourse analysis, pragmatics, and the sociolinguistic impacts of media on society. The findings prompt us to consider how such typologies could be applied across different cultures and media landscapes, potentially offering a universal framework for analyzing televised argumentation.

In conclusion, the article is a must-read for scholars interested in media discourse and linguistics in professional communication. The authors' meticulous analysis and thoughtful insights contribute significantly to our understanding of the communicative characteristics of Kenyan TV argumentative talk shows and offer a foundation for future research in this exciting field.

In the article "*RUMOUR: A Lexicographical Description of the Word Meaning from an Evidentiality Perspective*" by Svetlana Ivanova and Gulnara Khakimova, the authors diligently dissect the semantic complexities of the English word "rumor," revealing its complex nature and highlighting its significant implications for professional communication. By employing a unique approach that merges componential analysis with an examination of dictionary definitions, the study uncovers the polysemous structure of "rumor," distinguishing five distinct Lexico-Semantic Variants (LSVs) linked by varying semantic relationships.

Central to this analysis are the core features of these variants, which include notions of questionable reliability and indefinite sourcing, effectively delineating the semantic boundaries of “rumor” and emphasizing its connections to the realms of epistemic modality and evidentiality. The authors further classify reportative evidentiality as a multi-level typology, providing important insights into the dynamics of informal communication and positioning rumors as crucial channels of third-hand knowledge.

By advancing our understanding of linguistic phenomena and shedding light on the interconnectedness of language, knowledge, and communication in professional contexts, this research not only offers theoretical contributions but also provides practical implications for improving verbal interaction practices in various professional settings. The authors’ meticulous examination of the word “rumor” and its associated LSVs serves as a reminder of the importance of careful language use, particularly when engaging in professional discourse. Ultimately, this study encourages readers to consider the profound impact of language choices on knowledge sharing and perception formation, thereby promoting more effective and responsible professional communication.

Anna Wing Bo Tso’s *“Challenges in Achieving Coherence and Cohesion: A Discourse Analysis of Chinese EFL Students’ Essays”* stands as a testament to the complexities of academic writing and the specific hurdles encountered by Chinese students learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL). The author’s analysis is not merely an academic exercise but a piercing inquiry into the very fabric of how cultural backgrounds shape written communication.

The article adeptly combines discourse analysis with focus group interviews, providing a dual lens through which readers can discern the patterns that typify the written work of Hong Kong Chinese EFL students. One of the more poignant revelations of this research is the dichotomy between Chinese and English rhetorical structures, a divide that often leads to the underdevelopment of thesis statements and the erratic use of cohesive devices in students’ essays. These are not trivial issues; they strike at the heart of clarity and effectiveness in written communication, which are critical for academic success.

Crucially, the work does more than highlight problems. It extends a bridge towards solutions. One of the most significant contributions of this research lies in its examination of the relationship between Chinese rhetorical styles, steeped in Confucian philosophy, and the organization and expression of ideas in English essays. By intertwining theoretical frameworks such as Kaplan’s cultural thought patterns with practical classroom strategies, Anna Wing Bo Tso crafts a roadmap for educators dedicated to refining the writing skills of Chinese EFL students. This is scholarship with immediate application, promising to influence teaching methodologies and curricular design.

The article’s implications resonate far beyond the classroom, however. The research underscores the essential role that linguistics plays in the broader context of professional discourse. The study serves as a reminder that our understanding of language is continuously shaped by cultural forces and that the pursuit of effective communication requires a sensitive appreciation of this complexity.

In essence, the article is a clarion call for a more thought-through approach to language education – one that recognizes the deep-rooted cultural influences on discourse and seeks to address them directly in the pursuit of clarity and coherence. It is an invaluable contri-

bution to the ongoing conversation about how best to support EFL students and serves as a rich foundation for exploration and pedagogical development within linguistics of professional communication.

In the communicative sphere of political discourse, language serves as not only a tool for communication but also a powerful medium that reflects and shapes cultural norms, values, and ideologies. In their article, “*Cross-Linguistic Stylistic Fusion: How English Political Discourse Shapes Russian Political Science Professionals*,” Svetlana Polskaya and Elena Kirsanova focus on the influence of English-language political discourse on future Russian-speaking political practitioners revealing a fascinating trend of stylistic fusion and a notable integration of stylistic elements borrowed from English-language political rhetoric into the Russian-language discourse of political science undergraduates. As these professionals-to-be adapt their communication styles preparing to enter the globalized political arena, they inadvertently contribute to a functional-pragmatic evolution in discourse norms and practices. This phenomenon, which the authors refer to as “cross-linguistic stylistic fusion,” highlights the subtle yet significant impact of English-language political discourse on the communicative strategies of Russian-speaking students.

Through a meticulous analysis of speeches crafted by these undergraduates, the study unveils the ways in which they draw upon and repurpose stylistic elements commonly found in anglophone political discourse. These elements include, but are not limited to, the strategic use of repetition, parallelism, irony, and emotive language to engage their audiences, persuade listeners, and project authority. By incorporating these techniques into their Russian-language discourse, these students demonstrate a remarkable ability to adapt and innovate within the ever-changing environment of political communication.

The findings of Svetlana Polskaya and Elena Kirsanova’s research contribute significantly to our understanding of the dynamic nature of political discourse and the role of language in shaping professional competencies. By bringing to light the cross-pollination of stylistic elements across language boundaries, the article underscores the need for educators and practitioners to develop a clear awareness of the changing nature of language in professional contexts.

This article serves as a timely reminder of the importance of fostering a deep understanding of the relationships that exist between language, culture, and political discourse. By doing so, we not only enrich our own communication practices but also contribute to the ongoing development of a more inclusive, diverse, and interconnected global community.

Finally, the editorial team would like to express their gratitude to the authors who have contributed to this issue, as well as to the reviewers who have generously given their time and expertise to help maintain the high standards of the journal. We hope that readers will find the selected articles to be thought-provoking, engaging, and informative, and we look forward to receiving your feedback and suggestions for future issues. Thank you for your continued support of “*Professional Discourse & Communication*”.