Interdisciplinary collaboration and interaction: Opportunities for *Journalism and Discourse Studies*

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INTERDISCIPLINARY COLLABORATION AND INTERACTION: OPPORTUNITIES FOR JOURNALISM AND DISCOURSE STUDIES
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Journalism and Discourse Studies (JDS) provides a cross-disciplinary space for publication to authors and readers in fields of journalism, media and discourse research. The journal is not meant to be an exclusive space for what is notionally referred to as critical discourse studies (CDS) per se. We believe that so long as journalism and media research provide insights into our understanding of media in social, historical, political and economic contexts, it will ultimately be of interest for scholars concerned with discourse, power, ideology, and social practice. Jonathan Cable’s contribution to this issue of JDS is a fine example of media research that is valuable to scholars of CDS: whilst Cable does not explicitly discuss discourse theory or claim to conduct a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), he focuses on “tactical repertoires of three particular protest groups and how their internal objectives and decision making processes [impact] upon their protest tactics and press coverage” (2015:2). These tactical repertoires, internal objectives and decision making processes are discursive practices that impact upon the textual substance and discursive formation of messages expressed by groups that often struggle to have their voices heard through the press. Since discursive practice and social context have always been primary concerns in CDA, this research evidently offers an important insight; shedding significant light on processes of discursive practice that are often absent in other forms of discourse analysis with a strict textual focus.

JDS provides an expansive space for different disciplines to talk to each other; working together in a dynamic forum rather than requesting research that is exclusive to any niche of discourse analysis. This should encourage a more eclectic range of approaches than current traditions of journalism studies by showing that other disciplines can offer further innovative analytical frameworks for the investigation of media texts and practices. The editorial team’s collaborative perception of discourse analysis might also be more accommodating than some traditions of CDA that have focused heavily on micro-linguistic analysis. But this is not to criticise the latter, since a balanced combination of micro and macro contextual analysis would be ideal. Lyndon Way’s research in this issue, for instance, features an approach to CDA that will be familiar to readers who adopt traditional frameworks that are common in CDS. Way analyses the lexical and grammatical components that perpetuate conflict and aggravate relations with the Republic of Cyprus through the ideological expressions of Turkish Cypriot radio stations, which reflect an anti-unity bias. Nonetheless, whilst traditional approaches to CDA and other micro-linguistic research are fascinating, and welcome in submissions to JDS, we also value macro-contextual approaches that investigate discourse in other practical and social spaces. Professional and social developments in media practices provide new challenges that demand the eclectic and innovative collaborative efforts of interdisciplinary research to understand the power dynamics and communicative processes of contemporary society. For example, when we consider the current role of digital and social media in our daily interactions, expressions and consumptions of discourse, we are seeing a growing need for macro-contextual theorisations of media practice (Kelsey and Bennett 2014; KhosraviNik and Unger...
Hence we encourage future submissions on digital discourse and journalism on social media.

Our intentions in launching this journal are not to contradict or challenge other traditions of journalism studies or discourse studies. Rather, we hope to develop these fields further and recognise the niche spaces for collaborative work from both sides. JDS will provide opportunities for media and journalism scholars who are not from linguistic backgrounds or adopting traditional CDA frameworks to publish work that is relevant and important to discourse studies in a broad sense. At the same time, journalism and media researchers will become familiar with other tools and forms of analysis that CDS scholars can offer in order to enrich the analytical frameworks available to journalism and media studies.

The professional and academic backgrounds of the JDS editorial team reflect the synergy that is possible through journalism and discourse research. Coming from a media and cultural studies background, I have drawn on aspects of CDA (Wodak 1999; Fairclough 1995; van Dijk 2001) combined with other media and cultural theory; I agreed with the conceptual perspectives of CDA and used this synergy to expand beyond traditional approaches within journalism and discourse studies. The analytical and methodological synergies informing this approach enabled me to analyse the textual representations, discursive practices and socio-historical contexts of mythological storytelling in journalism, memory and national identity after the July 7th bombings (Kelsey 2012a, 2012b). CDA has also been an effective tool for identifying the contradictions of newspaper discourse through their ideological contexts. In studies on the London riots and July 7th bombings, I have sought to explain some of the paradoxical persuasions that occur in the right wing press and in other ideological battlegrounds of mythology (Kelsey 2012b, 2015c). A discourse-mythological approach (DMA) (Kelsey 2015a) has enabled me to investigate discursive constructions of trickster mythology in financial discourses about the banking sector (Kelsey 2014), and hero mythology in the right wing populist discourse of Nigel Farage (2015b). Hence, DMA is an adaptable framework and flexible synergy that can be adopted across multiple topics and contexts to critically analyse media discourse.

Whilst analyses of myth are not new to journalism studies (for example, Lule 2001), CDA offered suitable analytical toolkits in the development of a more systematic approach to analysing myth. DMA was developed to identify the lexical, contextual, ideological and discursive nuances of mythology and archetypal conventions (Campbell 1949; Barthes 1972) whilst accounting for multiple layers of newspaper discourse (Richardson 2007; Fairclough, 1998). As Chris Flood (2002) once pointed out, myth theory has often been able to explain how myths work but it has lacked a systematic framework for analysing the linguistic, grammatical and discursive construction of myth. Synergies between cultural and political theory, journalism studies and CDA helped me develop a suitable framework to overcome this problem.

This research motivated me to establish a journal that provides a space for further development, collaboration and interaction across these disciplines. This collaborative effort is reflected in the editorial team’s research interests. Majid KhosraviNik has moved towards this collaboration from a different direction to me. Originally from a linguistic background, KhosraviNik has focused on media discourses in Britain, Europe
(2013, 2012, 2010a, 2014a) and Iran (2015) and proposed a systematization for devising CDS research (2010b). More recently he has turned to explore the challenges of proposing a discursive approach to social media communication whilst developing the scope of his critical approach to language, power and society (2014b) and analysing discourses of national(ist) identity on Facebook (KhosraviNik and Zia 2014). Majid emphasised the increasing necessity of interdisciplinary work in approaching social (digital) media from discourse analytical perspectives (KhosraviNik and Unger 2015). On the other hand, there is the issue of quality of interaction between micro and macro analysis (2010b). Whilst linguistic (content/semiotic) analysis certainly is valued as the descriptive phase for data analysis, finding an ideal balance between macro-contextual grounding and micro-textual analysis has always been a challenging issue. This is partly a disciplinary discrepancy as approaches in linguistics and cultural studies may be working with varying notions of “discourse”. Linguistically informed approaches have been rich in providing a toolkit for micro analysis whilst approaches in media and cultural studies have been often focused on macro structural analysis and social contexts. Hence, an aim of this journal is to address this disciplinary gap between different research traditions.

Former journalist, David Baines researches the political economy and discursive practices of news in hyper-local and international contexts (2010, 2012a, 2012b). He is currently interrogating the changes taking place as journalism – traditionally a production process generating a range of texts – adapts to a networked, interactive, collaborative model in which process is as important as production. David has 30 years of experience in the newspaper industry, bringing a wealth of insight on day-to-day practices of text production and consumption and the macro-structural issues of the industry. We highly value healthy conversations between academics and practitioners, which would in turn inform research and scholarship whilst seeking to impact upon real life issues on the ground. As we have argued in previous work, and in our own teaching at Newcastle University, theory and practice are not separate entities:

Theory and practice in journalism education are not separate, binary entities; they are interlinked, interrelated and supplement each other. [We argue] that a crisis of trust in British journalism, which led to the 2012 Leveson Report, constitutes the need for an ethical and practical turning point in British journalism education. By considering more nuanced, active, informed notions and understandings of ideology and political economy we argue that incorporating critical frameworks into journalistic education provides the reflexive, philosophical and theoretical tools necessary for developing future journalism education, post-Leveson (Baines and Kelsey 2013:31)

Since discourse analysts are often concerned with the contextual production and consumption of texts, these organisational mechanisms and aspects of political economy that we discuss in journalism studies are relevant to readers and scholars across multiple disciplines. Given the recent crisis in British journalism and the reputation of the profession as a whole, we have increasingly witnessed the importance of understanding the political economy of media: who owns and regulates the press, and why those issues of private and public ownership are crucial to accountability in public, professional and academic assessments of how the media fulfils its social responsibilities.
There are reciprocal benefits in adopting the expansive and inclusive stance of this journal. Since traditional approaches to CDA have been concerned with levels of textual analysis, discursive practice and social practice (Fairclough 1998), we believe that journalism analysts and theorists can work closely with researchers in discourse studies to enhance our understanding of the media’s role in society. Of course, this might account for the things that journalism does well and the benefits it brings to social interactions, but it should also seek to scrutinise and understand how the media could do better and address the problems that it contributes to (or perpetuates) through its coverage and communicative practices.

Since JDS takes a global interest in media across all social and cultural contexts we are interested in the varied perceptions of journalism in terms of text and practice as a tool for democracy, control, propaganda, investigation, enlightenment, participation, inclusion and exclusion, depending on the multiple social contexts in which processes of media production and consumption occur. For example, in this issue of JDS, James Owens and Thomas Hawes investigate gender inequalities through language in the press by quantifying discursive components that reflect ideological choices in two newspapers. They speculate whether the press might be partly responsible for attitudes which suggest that “women themselves are often to blame when they fall victim to violent sexual crimes” (2015:2). In the final article of this issue Margaret Jjuuko also tackles issues of inequality when she considers “how the broadcast media in Uganda frames the environmental risk associated with wetland degradation” (2015:2). By analysing two radio documentaries, Jjuuko highlights a failure to “address the most pressing issues and the root causes of wetland degradation in Uganda” (ibid:2). She argues that the broadcasts reproduce a hegemonic discourse, in which poorer sections of society remain marginalized and victims are partly blamed for their activities, rather than the social structures responsible for their way of living (ibid:2).

JDS concurs with traditions in CDA as a problem-orientated research discipline that sets out to tackle issues of inequality and exploitative social relations. However, as the range of mediums, topics, methodologies and political positions in the contributions of this inaugural issue show, there are multiple contexts in which we can continue to analyse discursive practices. Referring back to Cable’s study, he might not be explicitly “critical” of discursive practice in the same way as other articles in this issue. But his work as a media scholar provides an important insight for critical researchers who might be concerned with other cases in which marginalized voices are suppressed or misrepresented. On the other hand, other authors in JDS have the opportunity to show how frameworks of CDA can be used in contexts where scholars might not have previously considered or recognised their suitability. It is this breadth, variety and range of opportunities that enables discourse studies, as a field of research, to continue expanding across disciplines as it has done so successfully over the past 25 years.

Finally, the JDS editorial team want this to be more than just another academic journal. This is an online, open access, interdisciplinary journal that hopes to appeal to readerships beyond academia – especially through the guest blog page on the journal website: http://www.jdsjournal.net/jds-guest-bloggers. JDS guest bloggers will contribute discussions about current issues, debates and research on journalism, media, society, culture and politics. We hope that JDS will serve its academic purpose across multiple disciplines whilst still connecting to a public readership; allowing public
engagement and contributions from those with shared interests and concerns over the role of journalism, media, language and communication in society.

The following section of this issue contains a series of short essays from distinguished scholars in the fields of journalism studies and discourse studies. Each author is a member of the JDS advisory panel. They have provided their views on why this journal is important by explaining what it can do as a collaborative effort across disciplines and the contribution that this synergy provides to its readership. In 2001, Teun van Dijk made a plea for diversity in the prospective development of multidisciplinary approaches to CDA (2001). It is fitting that JDS has now received strong support from Teun who discusses the overlapping dimensions of journalism studies and discourse studies. In addition to Teun’s expertise on discourse analysis and social cognition, Christopher Hart provides a short essay on the collaborative space between journalism and discourse studies through a brief cognitive linguistic analysis of language, metaphor, and ideology in press coverage of news events. Stuart Allan and Chris Frost have also provided comments on their expectations of JDS’ contribution as an academic journal. As journalism researchers and educators, hosting a balance of academic and practical experience between them, the JDS editorial team are hugely grateful for their input.

The editorial team would like to thank the authors of these contributions and the support provided by other members of the advisory panel. We are delighted to have such a healthy breadth of researchers supporting JDS through our international advisory panel. We would like to thank members of the Newcastle Critical Discourse Group (NCDG) for their contributions to the research environment that has helped us to establish this journal. We are particularly grateful to the previous co-convenors of NCDG, John Richardson and Christopher Hart, who co-founded the group. NCDG has recently benefitted from its innovative collaboration with Newcastle University’s Strategy, Organisation and Society research group, which has expanded the interdisciplinary work that our groups continue to pursue. We are also pleased that JDS has a healthy relationship with other journals – including CADAAD, Critical Discourse Studies, JOMEC, Journal of Language and Politics, and Discourse & Society – whose editorial teams have been supportive throughout the compilation and launch of JDS.

We look forward to receiving future submissions. Requests to edit special issues are welcome and we encourage prospective guest bloggers to contact us at any stage.

References


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