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## **Constructing and Communicating Crisis Discourse from Cognitive, Discursive and Sociocultural Perspectives**

Mimi Huang

### **1. Aims and contributions of the volume**

As a phenomenon that has been experienced and observed by many, a crisis can take multiple shapes and forms, and can affect virtually any aspect of a society, organisation, group or individual. Although much has been studied in crisis management and crisis communication (see Coombs and Holladay 2010, Heath and O’Hair 2009), one area that remains under-explored is how social agents experience and communicate a crisis through relevant cognitive, discursive and sociocultural means. This book aims to address this research gap by showcasing a comprehensive volume of original scholarly ventures pertaining to the exploration of the discursive and cognitive features, patterns, effects and functions that collectively constitute crisis-related discourse. With its innovative findings and development of new working concepts and analytical models, the volume contributes to the advancement of theories and practice in discourse analysis, cognitive linguistics and crisis studies, presenting fresh critical insights and empirical evidence for the influential roles played by metaphors and frames in discourse and communication.

In order to present a balanced, in-depth, and nuanced examination of crisis discourse, this volume compiles a total of ten original chapters that examine three main types of crisis situations, namely organisational, political and personal struggles. Contributed by a group of international scholars whose expertise lie in discourse analysis, cognitive linguistics, narrative studies, media studies and communication sciences, this volume offers four remarkable features. Firstly, the chapters propose original approaches, findings and examinations of crisis discourse from cognitive, discursive and socio-cultural perspectives. The chapters provide detailed accounts of how to identify and evaluate the patterns and functions of cognitive devices and discursive strategies that serve to negotiate and construct discourses surrounding hardship and struggle across different cultures and communities. Secondly, the contributors of this volume have taken a mindful and sensitive approach when evaluating the organisational, political and personal struggles revealed in the linguistics data. This approach strengthens the volume's overarching purpose of treating crisis discourse and crisis communication as a socially embodied construct that is grounded in cultural, ideological and moral values perceived and experienced by social agents. Thirdly, in the application of research methodologies, both qualitative and quantitative methods are employed in the discussions. Whilst the main analytical method adopted in this volume is qualitative in nature, quantitative methods, including corpus linguistics, psychological testing and log-linear modelling, have been carefully considered and applied to achieve more representative and generalisable findings where appropriate. Finally, this volume investigates authentic linguistic and extralinguistic data that feature under-researched areas. Examples include analyses of powerful vs less powerful social actors in political discourse; less explored case studies in hard-to-reach communities; visual and photographic evidence as well as digital data from social media, online forums and blogs. The examination of these data-sets provides a nuanced and context-sensitive understanding that sheds light on the profound

impact of crises upon a diverse body of language communities, thereby giving voice to stakeholder groups that are often vulnerable and marginalised. With these features explored and examined in detail, this volume offers fresh research evidence and original understandings of the ways social agents with different backgrounds and ideologies navigate the complex social, cultural and political landscapes where crises are experienced and communicated.

In the following sections, a brief review of crisis studies will first be presented, with an emphasis on a social constructionist perspective upheld in this volume. The subsequent section will propose a combined approach of discourse analysis and cognitive linguistics, with a focus on conceptual metaphors and frames. This combined approach will be further evaluated in Section Four, where the main line of inquiry within the volume will be explained through five interrelated aspects. After this, an overview of the individual chapters will be presented, followed by a final section that discusses the implications and contributions brought forward by this volume to relevant fields of research as well as to its intended readers.

## **2. An overview of crisis and crisis management studies**

The definitions of crisis have been many and varied, largely due to the complex nature, cause and outcome of any crisis event (Coombs and Holladay 2010). Despite this, some commonalities can be drawn in crisis related research where the essence of the phenomenon is under critical scrutiny. Many studies, for example, consider a crisis consists of three crucial elements: threat, urgency and uncertainty (Boin, Ekengren, and Rhinard 2010, Rosenthal et al. 1989, Rosenthal, Boin, and Comfort 2001). Threat emphasises that something of great value to an agent is at risk if no intervention takes place. Urgency highlights the limited amount of time available to the agent in responding to and finding means of intervention to avert the

threat. Uncertainty addresses the vulnerabilities experienced by the agent when facing unknown or hard-to-predict consequences and (sometimes lasting) outcomes of the crisis at hand. This notion of crisis is compatible with an agent-centred stance, in that the three elements collectively point toward a sense of adversity in a time of crisis, henceforth calling for vital decisions made by social agents involved for reversing or alleviating the negative impacts brought upon by devastating events. Indeed, recent research in crisis literature has placed great attention to the aspect of agency for its capacities, influence and impact on crisis-related issues (Wrenn 2014, Bendle 2002, Bailey et al. 2016).

Whilst maintaining risk and uncertainty as the main characteristics of crises, scholars have also recognised a crisis can act as a crucial turning point. Interestingly, this conceptualisation of crisis can be observed in the Chinese word “危机” (crisis), which consists of two separate characters “危” and “机”. Whilst the first character “危” means danger, harm and disaster, the second character “机” refers to a crucial point amid said dangerous moment (Wang et al. 2015). This traditional view in the Chinese culture is in fact closely aligned with recent studies where a crisis is construed as a dynamic process with incipient potentials, some of which can transform into positive change, development and growth (Bloch 2014, Comfort 2007, Shank 2008 and Huang in this volume). Taken together, crisis has been understood – across disciplines and traditions – as a dynamic process within which rapid adaptations and effective leadership, as well as communication among social groups and individuals can play key roles in reducing risk and responding to danger.

Although crisis studies encompass research in differing disciplines and subjects, the majority of the recent works have adopted, or are compatible with, a contextualised and socially-

oriented approach (Hearit and Courtright 2003, De Rycker and Don 2013). This means that while crisis is considered to possess both material and semiotic properties (Fairclough, 2010), the discussions and analyses emphasise the socially situated and collectively mediated nature of a crisis phenomenon. This social constructionist view of meaning construction resonates well with the underlying principles in discourse analysis in that it rejects the positivist view that sees linguistic inquiry as an objective pursuit. Instead, discourse analysis studies how social realities and social interactions are constructed by language and language users in their own environments, and how ideologies are embodied in and reproduced through discourse practices (Baxter 2010). This social constructionist stance can also be observed in the recent “social turn” in metaphor studies in cognitive linguistics, where metaphor is on one hand an embodied, cognitive phenomenon, and on the other hand contextually grounded and influenced by social interactions (Kövecses 2015, Charteris-Black 2004, Hart 2011, Chilton 2004). It is in this spirit that we endorse a social constructionist perspective, alongside cognitive linguistic and discourse analytical frameworks to the investigation of crisis and crisis-related discourse in this book. The social constructionist view argues that the understanding and perception of a social phenomenon are achieved by social agents’ collective construction and sharing of their knowledge, values and ideas (Potter 1996, Berger and Luckmann 1967). In the event of a crisis, this process of co-construction across individuals and groups is intensified where people involved and affected act to pool resources and develop plans and strategies in response to emergency situations. While some social agents are able to work together to achieve joint goals, others may represent conflicting interests, values and ideologies that can lead to disagreements, disputes and even volatile confrontations amid crisis. In any case, crisis is experienced by the people involved as a dynamic and intersubjective process from its onset. As this volume shows, this process is constituted through the act of communication, where a body of discourse – both public and

private – is formed and becomes an integral part of the way we perceive, identify and interpret the crisis. The dynamic nature of the crisis development process and its associated communication also result in the evolving meanings of crisis discourse. As asserted by Derrida (1978), the meaning of a text is continuously deferred in relation to its co-text and context, and new meanings can emerge in novel applications that alter the fabric of interpretive assumptions. A meaningful understanding of a crisis discourse therefore requires a situated, contextualised and agent-centred analysis on how people develop and assign meanings to their social, cultural and political environments where a crisis arises.

### **3. To study the language of crisis with a discourse and cognitive-based approach**

Although the term “discourse” frequently appears in crisis-related research, the term itself is often used in a loosely defined fashion. A careful observation of this issue has been made by De Rycker and Don (2013) who point out that the examination of “discourse” in the majority of recent research on discourse and crisis (e.g. in disciplines of organisational studies, public relations, mass media communication and finance studies, to name a few) remains undefined, unproblematised, and is not subject to any linguistically-informed approaches or systematic discursive analyses. There is a lack of academic engagement in employing clearly-articulated linguistic theories to inform the investigation and interpretation of relevant discourse data. As previously discussed, this volume is situated within the tradition of discourse analysis within linguistics, which studies how we use language to engage with the world and each other in creating and shaping the social, cultural, political and personal formations of our lives and experiences in both public and private domains (Bhatia, Flowerdew, and Jones 2008, Fairclough, Cortese, and Ardizzone 2007, Paltridge and Hyland 2011). In addition, the investigation of the linguistic data is examined by cognitive linguistic approaches for their specific features in employing conceptual metaphors, frames and narratives in the

construction of a crisis discourse. In order to provide the readers with the underlying rationale and theoretical background that this volume rests upon, the following sections discuss the essential aspects, strengths as well as potential challenges in adopting a discourse- and cognitive-based approach to the examination of crisis discourse.

### *3.1 Analysing the discursive aspects within crisis-related discourse*

Given the kaleidoscopic nature of crises, it is not surprising that a discursive approach to crisis discourse will involve multiple aspects, topics and theoretical frameworks. As an established analytical approach in linguistics, discourse analysis provides rigorous and systematic methods to untangle the complex elements that constitute a crisis discourse in question, revealing the fundamental and evolving relationships amongst social agents concerned. The employment of a discursive approach with a clear linguistic focus enables the researcher to fully capture and scrutinise the manifestation of a crisis discourse at its semiotic, cognitive and epistemic levels (Chalozin-Dovrat 2013), offering rigorous and insightful interpretations of the language that constructs often conflicting events, interactions and values. The volume also maintains an overall critical stance (Fairclough, 2010; Van Dijk, 1995; Weiss & Wodak, 2003; Wodak & Chilton, 2005) in that it recognises, where relevant, the socio-political issues that relate to ideologies and inequality as experienced by different social and political groups and individuals surrounding a crisis event. With the aid of empirical data and evidence, this volume aims to address these power-relevant issues adequately, uncovering discursive strategies employed by the more powerful and the elite to persuade, legitimise and justify certain social and political values. These aspects are prominent in Part I and Part II of the volume. In addition to the critical evaluation of how a crisis-related discourse is shaped by the more powerful party, this volume also showcases the remarkably oppositional, agentive and reflective strategies by the less-powerful, under-



represented and typically marginalised discourse participants when facing a crisis event (see Part III of the volume, as well as Chapter 3 by Holmgren and Chapter 6 by Kotzur). Taken together, the discourse analysis approach employed in this volume provides a linguistically focused, context-sensitive, data-driven and problem-oriented account on the critical relationships between ideology, identity, agency as well as socio-cultural practices relevant to a crisis discourse.

Whilst there are many types of crises that are worth researching, this volume primarily focuses on discourses that surround three types of crises, namely financial and organisational crisis, political crisis, and personal crisis. Each chapter within the volume investigates the discursive topics, features, patterns and meanings emerging from the use of language surrounding a specific crisis (See Section 5 of the Introduction for a detailed overview of the contents of the chapters). Throughout the volume, multiple types of linguistic data are carefully surveyed from a wide array of sources, including discourse in the public domains (e.g. press releases, media coverage, government documents and official interviews), communications across social groups (e.g. commercial campaigns, community protests and social media disputes), as well as discourse taking place in more private and personal contexts (e.g. patient-therapist interactions during consultations, private interviews and written accounts about living with illness and disorders). When analysing these linguistic data, the chapters seek to reveal the intricate meanings and social relationships that emerge under these crisis situations through relevant discursive processes, functions and strategies. Although the crisis discourses examined in the chapters are individually different, they are all actively shaped, developed and experienced by the social agents involved. These agents – sometimes withholding conflicting interests and beliefs – have been observed to purposely construct, reconstruct and modulate the discursive information that is key to the development

and resolution of the crises at hand. This powerful agentive stance brings forth the cognitive, perceptual, emotional and communicative processes that are crucial in crisis management. An analytical approach that provides elegant interpretations of the above aspects whilst keeping a linguistic focus is cognitive linguistics. The following section discusses how cognitive linguistics frameworks – in particular conceptual metaphors and frames – can work effectively with the discourse analytical approach for the investigation of crisis discourse in this volume.

### *3.2 Exploring conceptual metaphors and frames with a discourse and cognitive-based approach*

The cognitive approach as established within cognitive linguistics is an interdisciplinary venture that seeks to explore the interconnection and relationship between language and thought (Geeraerts and Cuyckens 2007, Janssen, Maria, and Redeker 1999, Dabrowska and Divjak 2015). Situated within cognitive sciences, cognitive linguistics maintains an embodied, situated and grounded understanding of the mental structures, representations and processes that we incorporate and express via linguistic means to make sense of our knowledge, experience and interactions in our living environments. Within its broad coverage of linguistic research, the aspect of “discourse” has become pivotal and gained rapid growth in cognitive linguistic studies (Liebert, Redeker, and Waugh 1997). Metaphor studies that embrace socio-cultural determinants in meaning construction and discourse studies that endorse the social constructionist stance have a shared tenet that sets out to investigate how knowledge is mediated by the language we use and how the meaning-making process is achieved through language and communication in situated contexts. Indeed, there have been fruitful and successful explorations that combine cognitive linguistic approaches and discourse analytical frameworks for the investigation of the narrative, meaning constructions

and discursive features from social, cultural, ideological and political dimensions (Dancygier, Sanders, and Vandelanotte 2012, Hart 2011, Tyler, Kim, and Takada 2008). Amongst the cognitive approaches that work compatibly with discourse analytical frameworks (Harder 2010, Gonzalez-Marquez 2007, Charteris-Black 2004), this volume places its primary focus on the contributions of conceptual metaphors and frames alongside discourse analysis to the description and exploration of meaning construction in crisis-related discourse.

This primary focus is based on the unique discursive features and their cognitive-linguistic content that can be observed in the linguistic data examined in this volume. As supported by recent research, conceptual metaphors and frames are both ubiquitous and pivotal to the shaping and interpretation of discursive information (Semino, Demjén, and Demmen 2016, Sullivan 2013, Cameron and Deignan 2006, Musolff 2004). Under the cognitive approach, metaphors are first and foremost systematic mappings across conceptual domains; it is a fundamental and highly useful cognitive process that we use to understand as well as constructing ideas and concepts in their contexts. In crisis-related discourse, metaphors play an influential role in conceptualising significant factors, behaviours and relationships in their discursive contexts. For instance, during an economic crisis, a series of inter-related ontological metaphors, such as *ECONOMY IS ORGANISM*, *ECONOMY IS SICK* and *FINANCIAL CRISIS IS ILLNESS* can be employed in conceptualising the complex stages, components and impacts of a financial crisis in journalistic discourse (Soares da Silva 2016; and in this volume). Closely relating to conceptual metaphors, the notions of “frames” and “framing” provide further insight into the framing power and effects of metaphor in a discourse. The studies of conceptual frames have been studied under different academic disciplines including semantics (Fillmore 1975, Sullivan 2013), social sciences (Goffmann 1974), media analysis (De Vreese 2005) and artificial intelligence (Minsky 1979). Despite disparities in the

definitions in existing literature, a “frame” is recognised for its heuristic functions and can be generally understood as “a portion of background knowledge that (i) concerns a particular aspect of the world, (ii) generates expectations and inferences in communication and action, and (iii) tends to be associated with particular lexical and grammatical choices in language” (Semino, Demjén, and Demmen 2016: 3). This volume adopts this view and sees frames as schematic units that contain knowledge structures and can be accessed by linguistic means. When working with conceptual metaphors, this notion of frames works compatibly with relevant concepts that have been developed in metaphor studies such as “scenarios” (Musolff 2006) and “metaphoremes” (Cameron and Deignan 2006), where a metaphorical expression can reveal and act upon structural mappings at the sub-domain level within a specific discourse context. This further gives rise to a vital component of the “framing” process where frames are used by social agents to define problems, diagnose causes, make moral judgements and suggest remedies under specific contexts (Entman 1993, Hallahan 1999). Similar to conceptual metaphors, frames function in an embodied and situated manner. When we process a piece of linguistic information, we are able to evoke the relevant frames that contain the knowledge structure that can help us to navigate a given situation and to make meaningful interpretations of what the words try to communicate to audiences. Furthermore, the framing process involves both “selection” and “salience” (Entman 1993: 52-53), where certain aspects of a problem or issue are presented by certain social actors as more noticeable, meaningful and important, and are consequently perceived as such by the intended audiences. This strategic use of frames in communication has been researched in discourse studies (Tannen 1993, Ensink and Sauer 2003), and is further developed in this volume with new research evidence. Holmgreen (Holmgreen 2015 and in this volume), for instance, studies the resilience of public frames to news media frames during public disputes, which demonstrates the conceptual grounding of the framing effect.

Taking into consideration the power of framing in discourse and communication, recent studies of metaphor and discourse have identified three main perspectives where framing effects can take place within a metaphor, namely the cognitive, discourse and practice perspectives (Lakoff and Johnson 1999, 2003, Musolff 2004, Semino et al. 2017). The cognitive-based perspective sees the framing effects of metaphor as primarily a cognitive phenomenon based on structural mappings between conceptual domains. The discourse-based perspective examines how discursive forms and functions of metaphor can reveal discourse participants' strategies, intentions and consequences in using the metaphors in their situational contexts. The practice-based perspective focuses on how metaphors in professional and organisational settings can facilitate or impede communication, and what relevant recommendations can be shared with policy makers and stakeholders to inform and improve future practice (for a detailed discussion of these three perspectives of metaphor in a case study in the healthcare context, see Semino, Demjén, and Demmen 2016). Whilst the three perspectives outlined here provide useful insights into the framing function of metaphors, they also shed light on the complexities and challenges to be addressed in current research. As pointed out by Semino et al. (2016), a thorough examination of a metaphor's framing effects requires careful considerations of the conceptual structures situated within their detailed, specific discursive context. In addition, attention should be paid to any emergent and context-dependent properties in language use by their discourse communities in order to adequately explain the framing implications of metaphor in a discourse. The next section outlines how this volume addresses these challenges through original findings, approaches and insights to the discussions of metaphors and frames in different types of crisis.

#### **4 The Volume's contributions to the studies of metaphors and frames in crisis discourse**

After proposing a cognitive and discourse-based approach to the study of metaphors and frames, this section discusses how the volume employs this combined approach in contributing and advancing theories and practice in crisis studies, cognitive linguistics and discourse analysis through five interrelated aspects. The first aspect emphasises the importance of context in situating and enabling the construction of a crisis discourse. The second aspect focuses on the emergent linguistic expressions, patterns, as well as their associated meanings and conceptual structures that are evidenced in the discursive data surrounding metaphors and frames. The third aspect considers the roles and involvement of the relevant social agents, who purposely develop, manipulate and mediate a crisis discourse through sociocultural, cognitive and discursive means. The fourth aspect that underlies the volume's contribution is the authors' mindful and professional approach when working with discourse participants from varied social and cultural backgrounds. The final contributing aspect highlights the volume's adaptation of multiple research methods and interdisciplinary approaches. In addition to the main cognitive and discourse-based approach, the discussions within individual chapters have been further enriched by a number of research methods including the use of linguistic corpora, log-likelihood calculations, psycho-tests, counselling techniques, as well as narrative analytical models. In what follows, these five aspects are detailed in turn.

In the first aspect, "context" is essential to the discursive constructions and communication of a crisis phenomenon, and it is of great importance to the discussions in this volume. The term "context" concerns not only a range of situations, domains and scenarios where a discourse is produced, but also the ways it is construed by researchers in their work (Flowerdew 2014). In

this volume, each chapter offers its own definition and interpretation of what context entails. Despite these individual differences, all the chapters take into consideration the information regarding the relevant background (which can be physical, social, cultural and situational, where appropriate), environment (both linguistic and extralinguistic), the social actors involved (from organisational to individual) as well as their beliefs and attitudes. This enables the authors to gain in-depth and comprehensive insights into the grounding and situated environments from which relevant metaphors function to frame and define a particular crisis event or process. Importantly, the aspect of context enables the dual position embraced by this volume, where metaphors both constitute and reflect culture models, and discourse actors may consciously or unconsciously adjust the use of certain metaphors and frames in the communication process (See Holmgreen, 2015 and in this volume). This line of inquiry is well illustrated in Chapter 3 of the volume, where Holmgreen conducts a case study on the framing power of metaphors in social media discourse relating to two high-profile Danish organisations that have attracted negative public response. The study uncovers the significance of the social and cultural contexts to the contingency of frames amid organisational crises and coherence amongst public perceptions. Throughout the volume, there is a clear consensus that metaphors and frames are grounded and embodied in the very situation and environment of a crisis. The chapters examine authentic and fresh evidence in linguistic data in order to reveal how metaphors and frames are perceived and interpreted in a crisis-related situation on the one hand, and how such metaphor and frames, on the other hand, can be purposely crafted by discourse actors in order to elicit specific responses and actions from the audiences.

The discourse contexts investigated in this volume include those in journalistic reports, political discourses, social media, internet forums, as well as in self-reflective writings and in

psychotherapeutic consultations. The examination of these discourse contexts offers exciting new findings on crisis development and management via the functions of metaphors and frames on differing social, cultural, political and personal platforms and interfaces across varied discourse communities.

The second aspect highlighted in this volume concerns original linguistic expressions and their usage that emerge from relevant discourse contexts. These emergent linguistic expressions are explored for their communicative meanings, their usage within and across discourse communities, as well as the conceptual structures that facilitate such meanings and usage. The chapters offer detailed analysis of the linguistic data with well annotated examples from authentic data sources. Insightful arguments are presented by the authors to interpret the functions and applications of metaphors, frames and their constructive powers during the communicative processes. A noticeable feature of the volume is the authors' observations of the linguistic data for their diachronic and continuing development in meanings, usage, effects and impacts. For instance, Rasulić in Chapter 4 presents a corpus-aided study on how new metaphors and frames that emerge from Serbian political discourse contribute to the shaping and framing of a new geopolitical reality between Serbia and Kosovo by virtue of marginalizing previous metaphors and frames with opposing values and beliefs. With a similar focus on the political landscape, Ullmann in Chapter 5 examines the Arab Spring movement through a triangulatory approach that combines corpus-linguistic methods with critical metaphor analysis (Charteris-Black 2004). The study expands and advances Charteris-Black's analytical model for metaphor interpretation. The findings reveal the complex metaphorical mappings and entailments across a wide range of conceptual domains. The linguistic data examined in this volume provide new evidence to address the key issue of



how metaphors and frames constitute a crisis event or process, and how they influence the perception and reception of a crisis phenomenon.

The third aspect that underpins the volume's contribution to knowledge concerns the discussion of agency and interpersonal relationships. This aspect regards the social agents as one of the central elements that shape and influence a crisis discourse. This resonates strongly with the social constructionist view presented in Section Two of the Introduction, where agency and intersubjectivity bear significant values in the study of crisis discourse. This agent-centred stance, alongside the perspective of an embodied and grounded cognition, provide a strong theoretical grounding for advancing research topics that involve the social agents' roles, relationships, actions, emotions and values through the processes of experiencing, communicating and making sense of a crisis event. These topics highlight the personal and interpersonal agency in the making of crisis discourse, and as such embrace a performative stance that serve to untangle the purposes, intentions and ideologies conveyed through the metaphors, frames and other cognitive and discursive strategies by the social agents. Throughout the volume, various types of interpersonal relationships are examined in relation to crisis discourse and the functions of metaphors and frames. In Chapter One, for instance, O'Mara-Shimek scrutinises metaphors in financial news media for their far-reaching effects and influences on crisis marketing, which provide unique insights into the critical debate of journalistic ethics, fairness and truth as exercised and performed by professional journalism organisations and individual journalists.

In addition to investigating agency and interpersonal relationships, the authors in this volume approach the research participants and data with mindfulness and respect, which forms the fourth contributing aspect of the volume. The authors take great care to ensure that research

ethics are adhered to, and appropriate research methods are employed so that the research data and respondents are fairly represented. This careful positioning of the researchers, data and participants can be observed across the chapters and is especially prominent in Part III of the volume. In this part, the authors investigate both written and spoken discourse data that encompass different types of personal crises experienced by the research participants, ranging from physical illness to mental health (see Ferrari, Tay, Huang and Knapton in this volume). In keeping with the ethical standards in the research process, the authors take into consideration the feelings, emotions and values held by people involved in the research process. In doing so, this volume delivers fair and convincing representations of the personal and interpersonal relationships in their studies.

The fifth and final aspect featured in this volume is the use of multiple research methods and its rich adaptation of theoretical frameworks and models across the chapters. As crises can take many shapes and forms, investigations of crisis-related discourse must be supported by research data and analytical methods that are appropriate and suitable for the research purposes. Across the volume, both qualitative and quantitative data have been examined to study crises taking place in varied organisational, political and personal contexts. Examples of qualitative studies include case studies, interviews, social media entries and political campaign materials (e.g. see O'Mara-Shimek, Knapton, Holmgreen and Kotzur in this volume); examples of quantitative data can be found in the analysis of existing as well as self-compiled linguistic corpora (e.g. see Soares da Silva, Rasulić and Ullmann in this volume). In the process of data analysis, as previously discussed, this volume adopts a discourse and cognitive-based approach for its aptness in handling crisis-related discourse where metaphors and frames play prominent roles. In order to achieve further comprehensiveness and robustness in the data analyses, the authors in this volume further

employ complementary analytical frameworks including psychological testing, corpus linguistics, narrative studies and log-linear modelling (e.g. see Ferrari, Ullmann, Huang, Knapton and Tay in this volume) that serve to triangulate and contextualise the research findings. The rich sets of research data and the multi-method analytical approaches employed in this volume allow the authors to offer qualitative, case-specific as well as quantitative, generalisable findings of the language use in complex crisis situations.

After showcasing the five major aspects through which this volume contributes to the development and advancement of theories and practice in cognitive linguistics, discourse analysis and crisis studies, the following section moves on to introduce the main content of each of the chapters.

## **5 Overview of individual chapters' original research and findings**

The chapters in this volume offer original research and findings on how metaphors and frames are utilised by social agents in constructing and communicating crisis discourses. The chapters are organised into three parts, each focusing on a specific type of crisis discourse. Part One of the volume consists of three chapters that investigate language use in large scale financial and organisational crisis. Part Two of the volume presents a further three chapters that examine public discourse amid political turmoil and conflicts. The last part of the volume features four more chapters that explore counselling and narrative discourse in times of personal crises where individuals' health and wellbeing are in jeopardy. Guided by the same principals in cognitive linguistics and discourse studies

Part One of the volume is concerned with media discourse in organisational crisis. Building upon the Conceptual Metaphor Theory, O'Mara-Shimek in Chapter One employs a broader

concept of “Crisis Marketing” in order to explore how financial news media uses metaphor and metonymy when reporting on stock market crash in a financial crisis. Taking the perspective of “the Right to Information” as well as a critical analytical approach, O’Mara-Shimek evaluates the roles and responsibilities of news media organisations when making ideologically informed “decisions” that have the power to influence the perceptions of the public. The author further examines how metaphor teleology in the context of financial news reporting has far-reaching implications for consumers and investors, as well as posing serious challenges to professional ethics and practice in journalism organisations. Also informed by Conceptual Metaphor Theory, Soares da Silva in Chapter Two compares the role of metaphors in the conceptualisation and ideological exploitation of the economic crisis in the Portuguese press in two crucial periods – the 2008 global financial crisis and the Portuguese government’s austerity policies in 2011-2013 – when the government tried to tackle the severe economic crisis in the country. Benefiting from a successful convergence between cognitive linguistics, CDA and corpus linguistics, the study reveals how economic crisis and the by-product of austerity policies are metaphorically conceptualised and framed in the Portuguese press and how crisis- and austerity-related metaphors serve ideological, emotional and moral purposes. The chapter provides further empirical evidence from a socio-cognitive viewpoint that the crisis and austerity metaphors in Portugal are socially embodied, making them an instrument for manipulation. In Chapter Three, Holmgreen investigates the creation and dynamics of public frames in social media through the analysis of two recent instances of large Danish organisational crises. Holmgreen employs Fillmore’s theory of framing in combination with Conceptual Metaphor Theory and social media research. The data for the analysis consist of posts on social media, e.g. Facebook and Twitter, as well as articles from the Danish online media on two major organisational crises, i.e. that of a large Danish bank and a large Danish restaurant chain. Holmgreen argues that public frames are highly

contingent on their social and cultural contexts, and are often established when announcements are made of corporate actions that challenge common notions of right and wrong. It is demonstrated that the most salient frames are rooted in shared cultural and social beliefs that serve to unite stakeholder groups in common action against reproachable organisational behaviour.

The second section of the book features three chapters with a shared theme of political struggle. It starts with a chapter by Rasulić, who addresses the current process of resolving a long-lasting crisis between Serbia and Kosovo. The chapter discusses how conceptual metaphor and metonymy function in the framing of Kosovo in Serbian political discourse. With the aid of corpus linguistics, the analysis highlights theoretical implications for the dynamics of metaphor and metonymy in a crisis-related political discourse. In particular, it evaluates the role of metonymy as an avoidance strategy and the ways in which metaphor and metonymy are used and abused in order to maintain inequality and promote the emergence of alternative frames. The chapter presents a detailed and critical description of the ongoing linguistic and conceptual management of a geopolitical crisis. The findings may be generalised and applied to other cases of political discourse related to territorial dispute crises worldwide. Also addressing the topic of political discourse, Chapter Five studies the Arab Revolution on the basis of a purposely compiled linguistic corpus of speeches delivered by Western politicians from the United States and the United Kingdom between 2011 and 2013. Using the Conceptual Metaphor Theory and Conceptual Integration Theory in combination of corpus linguistics and critical metaphor analysis, Ullmann identifies key cognitive phenomena in political language surrounding the Arab Spring. She further discusses potential ideological characteristics and possible effects of these constructions on perceptions of the events by the general public. Importantly, the findings show that only selected entailments of

the different mappings are frequently applied by the US and the UK respectively with both nations displaying clear preferences for different conceptual mappings in general. In Chapter Six, Kotzur addresses the emotional appeal and persuasive power of conceptual mappings underlying metaphors on demonstration posters used by opponents of the controversial urban development and railway project Stuttgart 21 (S21) in Germany. The data consist of over a hundred demonstration posters and short texts used in the protest, collected from photographs published on websites, newspapers, and in the protesters' blogs. Through analysing the language use of the less powerful and under-represented social groups, the chapter provides a novel perspective for cognitive approaches to critical discourse analysis and critical metaphor studies.

The third and final part of the volume revolves around the discourse of personal crisis where an individual's health and wellbeing are under threat. Whilst Chapters Seven and Eight explore metaphors used in counselling and psychotherapy, Chapters Nine and Ten look at narrative data that depict individuals' viewpoints of their health conditions. In Chapter Seven, Ferrari sets out to pinpoint the 'transformative power' of metaphor in the context of psychotherapy. Focussing on 'talking cure' practices and employing an innovative analytical model of "M" psychometric testing, Ferrari makes both qualitative and quantitative observations on how the psychometric test can systematically measure the transformative power of metaphors used by both counsellors and clients at thought, emotional and body levels. The evidence gathered shows that implemented use of metaphor may help deal with resistant cases, foster personal development and improve personal wellbeing. Moreover, the measure of the transformative power of metaphor through 'M' psychological testing can offer further degree of awareness for both counsellors and clients. Also situated within the context of psychotherapy and counselling, Chapter Eight observes the use of metaphors in

counselling sessions where the therapist assists the client to come to terms with his sexuality. When identifying metaphorical expressions in the case study, Tay adopts Log-linear modelling to detect associations and higher order interactions between linguistic variables. The results reveal patterns of metaphor use, e.g. the relative frequencies of metaphor used by therapists and clients, as well as the relative predominance of novel versus conventional metaphors. Importantly, the evidence shows higher level associations at the bi- and multi-variate levels of analysis, which underlies the construct of crisis discourse through the use of metaphor. The findings provide empirical support for practitioners, clients and researchers for making meaningful interpretations of personal crisis discourse in psychotherapy and counselling.

Continuing the investigation of personal crisis discourse, the last two chapters of the volume focus on narrative data that illustrate the narrators' viewpoints of their health conditions and lived experiences. In Chapter Nine, Huang develops an original working concept of "narrative modulation", which is a dynamic process in storytelling that configures and navigates relevant narrative elements for the purpose of developing storylines and themes within a narrative. Employing narrative modulation as an analytical model, the author conducts a case study that examines breast cancer survivors' transitional experiences from health crisis to survivorship through the participants' self-reflective writing. The case study shows how the participants adopt image schemas, metaphors, frames and psychosocial coping strategies as "narrative modulators" in shaping and making sense of their transitional experiences under traumatic circumstances. The chapter further argues that narrative modulation is a useful analytical approach for both patients and healthcare professionals when communicating and working through illness and personal crises. The final chapter by Knapton investigates the personal and psychological crises experienced by women with OCD.

Combining illness narrative analysis with theories of image schemas and frames, the chapter presents fresh qualitative evidence from semi-structured interviews that show how the participants employ cognitive and discursive strategies in constructing their crises with highly personal frames that reject the more dominant biomedical frame. The research findings suggest an alternative framing of OCD with an embodied and contextualised perspective, and in so doing reveals how image schemas can be linguistically constructed to represent illness experience as well as to provide narrative structure in storytelling.

## **6 Scope and interest of the volume**

With the aim to explore and advance the understanding of crisis-related discourses within their personal, social, cultural and political contexts, this volume presents original findings, develops new working concepts and analytical models that advance studies in crisis management, discourse analysis and cognitive linguistics. With a focus on conceptual metaphors and frames, this volume provides detailed accounts of the emerging linguistic patterns, discursive and communicative strategies, as well as narrative structuring and knowledge representation models pertinent in the construction and mediation of crisis-related discourse. The discussions in the volume are carried out with a contextualised, embodied and performative stance where research evidence is assessed and evaluated with mindful and sensitive approaches, allowing fair and truthful representations of multiple viewpoints and values from social agents from differing backgrounds and bearings. The original findings, concepts and frameworks developed in this volume should serve as important references to support, benefit and inspire future research in relevant fields. Furthermore, the volume offers practical implications for organisations and practitioners in developing effective crisis management strategies and in improving practice and services for stakeholders and communities involved.



This volume promises to appeal to a wide audience including readers concerned with crisis management and crisis communication, linguists of different persuasion (especially scholars of cognitive linguistics, discourse analysis, cultural linguistics, pragmatics and sociolinguistics), communication and media studies scholars, sociologists, cognitive scientists and language and communication researchers.

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