

# The Language of Corporate Blogs



# The Language of Corporate Blogs:

*A Corpus-Based View*

By

Katarzyna Fronczak

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BNC	<i>The British National Corpus</i>
CADS	Corpus-Assisted Discourse Studies
CBC	Corporate Blog Corpus
COBUILD	<i>The Birmingham Collection of English Texts</i>
COCA	<i>The Corpus of Contemporary American English</i>
ESP	English for Specific Purposes
HP	Hewlett Packard
IoT	Internet of Things
IT	Information Technology
ITU	International Telecommunication Union
LL value	Log-Likelihood Value
LOB	<i>The Lancaster-Oslo/Bergen Corpus</i>
TCS	Tata Consultancy Services





# INTRODUCTION

The Internet has led to the advent of computer-mediated communication and to the beginning of the era of social networking sites. The popularity of social network sites, such as Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, and Google+, has been rising rapidly, not to mention digital forms of communication, such as emails and instant messaging, which are used by almost everyone on a daily basis. However, there is one more tool used for online communication which has received relatively little academic attention until now, namely a weblog.<sup>1</sup> This is more commonly known as a blog, which, according to Stine Lomborg (2009), “has become a mainstream genre of computer-mediated communication”.<sup>2</sup> Its popularity can be demonstrated by the growing number of blogs appearing daily on the Internet. It is almost impossible to provide an exact and reliable number for existing blogs, as such statistics are extremely difficult to obtain because of the constantly changing situation. In addition, various sources provide different figures. According to Technorati’s annual reports, the number of blogs online in 2004 was 4 million; in 2005 it increased to 19.6 million; in 2007 to 70 million blogs; and in 2008 to over 133 million, whereas the report from “State of Blogging” claims that in 2004 there were over 8 million blogs.<sup>3</sup> Statistics concerning the total number of blogs in the recent years are almost impossible to source as some of the tracking services do not share such findings. Others focus more on social networking sites or on analyses concerned with blogs as a social communication phenomenon (blog users, types of blogs, etc.).<sup>4</sup> One of the most recent reports obtained for 2011 says that 181 million blogs were available in the blogosphere at that point.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> I will use the terms ‘weblog’ and ‘blog’ interchangeably.

<sup>2</sup> See, <http://firstmonday.org/ojs/index.php/fm/article/view/2329/2178>. Accessed July 14, 2015.

<sup>3</sup> A report by the Pew Internet and American Life Project at <http://www.pewinternet.org/2005/01/02/the-state-of-blogging/>. Accessed July 14, 2015.

<sup>4</sup> Technorati’s report from 2013 is available at <http://www.slideshare.net/truthdefender/technorati-2013-digital-influence-report>. Accessed July 14, 2015.

<sup>5</sup> The number of blogs tracked by Nielsen/McKinsey company at <http://www.nielsen.com/us/en/insights/news/2012/buzz-in-the-blogosphere-millions-more-bloggers-and-blog-readers.html>. Accessed July 14, 2015.

Nevertheless, the growth and rapid development of blogging since its beginning is both unquestionable and unprecedented.

It should be highlighted that the forms of online communication mentioned above are used not only for private objectives but also for professional ones. Nowadays social marketing has become a powerful tool enabling companies to become recognisable and popular in the business world. As Kaplan and Haenlein assert (2010, 67), “Social Media allow firms to engage in timely and direct end-consumer contact at relatively low cost and higher levels of efficiency than can be achieved with more traditional communication tools”. Moreover, as the authors (2010, 68) claim, “(Mobile) Social Media will be the locomotive via which the World Wide Web evolves. Businesses, take note—and don’t miss this train!”. Many business organisations are well aware of the fact that it is almost impossible to gain achieve success without being present in the virtual world. In fact, many companies not only have their own official business websites and accounts on social networking sites like Facebook or Twitter, but also have blogs, which, in this day and age, seem to be an essential part of any marketing campaign. It is worth stressing that blogs are successfully used as a marketing tool for a variety of reasons; for example, they are easily accessed (Efimova and Grudin, 2007), regularly updated, and less formal than official business websites (Kaznowski 2008, 163–164). Their power is recognised by Dearnsteyne (2005, 40), who argues that blogs

provide a means of collecting and organizing fresh insights and opinions and thereby reinforce organizational objectives of fostering knowledge and information sharing as a way of enhancing productivity. They are unedited and unfiltered, which appeals to readers who may not fully trust official corporate pronouncements or traditional mainstream media.

This observation points to the fact that both the stakeholders and prospective clients have changed their requirements from business organisations. This implies that stakeholders may have previously been dissatisfied with the impersonal and highly formal way of dealing with customers, since, as Dwyer (2007)<sup>6</sup> argues, “[t]he personal relationship that companies once had with customers degenerated into the cold automaticity of data-gathering with the widespread adoption of management information systems”. In the age of ubiquitous digitalisation and computer-mediated communication, the way people communicate with each other has changed. This concerns not only the private but also the business domain, in which more personal and informal communication is now expected. All these requirements seem to

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<sup>6</sup> Accessed July 14, 2015 from <http://icwsm.org/papers/2--Dwyer.pdf>

be fulfilled by blogs which enable corporations to reach their customers and, at the same time, to satisfy their expectations (e.g., Goodwin 2003; Kelleher and Miller 2006; Scoble and Israel 2006; Wood et al. 2006; Dwyer 2007; Efimova and Grudin 2007; Ahuja and Medury 2010).

The main goal of this book is a systematic and comprehensive description of corporate blogs aiming to determine their generic status. It needs to be stressed that there are various opinions concerning the status of blogs. In the literature on the subject, hybridity and the “over-genericness” of blogs are often highlighted (Maryl 2013), as well as the need to distinguish genre and format: in other words, the collection of technical features determining the shape and genre of a communicated message (Herring 2004; Maryl and Niewiadomski 2012). The hypothesis that will be tested concerns the hybrid nature of corporate blogs. In this book, I argue that corporate blogs constitute a hybrid form by taking the generic form of blogs and adopting it to the needs of corporate communication. Therefore, the major objective of this study is to investigate the elements creating (macro-structure) corporate blogs, the degree of formulaicity (phraseological analysis), authorship (singular, specified or anonymous, collective), and uniformity of functions (e.g., corporate communication, company image-building and forming relations with clients and stakeholders). The analysis will be based on selected English-language corporate blogs written by leading companies from the Business Process Outsourcing and Information Technology sectors, such as Accenture, Capgemini, Fujitsu, Genpact, Hewlett Packard, IBM, Infosys, Microsoft, Tata Consultancy Services, and Wipro. The author further argues that corporate blogs represent a new and unique genre form, which, while sharing some characteristics with corporate discourse, retains its unique features. This will be corroborated by providing examples from a range of analyses. One thing that distinguishes corporate blogs is, for example, the type of language used by their authors, which differs significantly from a formal business pattern. In addition, the peculiarity of this genre relies on the participation of the recipients, who, due to the ability to comment and take part in discussion, influence the content and shape of blogs. This study will also examine whether corporate blogs have a promotional function. To that end, it is necessary to analyse the content of corporate blogs with regard to the use of evaluative language and stance expressions. An ancillary aim is to provide a systematic review of the literature on corporate discourse, corporate communication, and internet blogs. The lack of existing literature reveals that the corporate blog has not received sufficient scholarly attention and remains largely under researched. The few existing publications do not convey their importance and the role they play in internal and external corporate communication as well as in

building a positive image of a corporation. Therefore, this book is an attempt to fill these research gaps.

The methodological approach taken in this study is based on standard corpus linguistic techniques (keywords, semantic domains, lexical bundles, concordancing), which enable one to provide a systematic and comprehensive description of the language used in corporate blogs. The core of corpus linguistics is the analysis of a text corpus which constitutes a collection of various, authentic written and spoken types of texts, conducted by the use of specialised computer programmes. This enables one to analyse large amounts of data, which, as a consequence, results in the greater representativeness and credibility of the results. The obtained frequency lists, keywords lists, and concordancing constitute an excellent starting point for further language analysis. Moreover, such a quantitative analysis conducted by the use of corpus methodology and corpus tools allows one to reveal hidden and unobvious tendencies in the analysed material. This study is concerned with not only the application of a quantitative analysis of the corporate discourse found in internet blogs but also a qualitative one. It is worth stressing that detailed investigation of the concordance lines of selected keywords and phraseology in the Corporate Blog Corpus (compiled by the author) via the discourse analysis method illustrates the typical collocations and contexts of use for those keywords and idiomatic expressions which, as a result, enables one to determine and define the techniques and language used by the authors of corporate blogs. Additionally, it will provide an opportunity to address the issue of the generic status of corporate blogs.

This book is divided into six chapters, with the first three being the theoretical ones. Chapter 1 introduces the field of corporate communication and discusses a range of key concepts deemed directly relevant to the study. These include corporate identity, corporate culture, corporate stakeholders, and discourse communities. An insight into the issues of corporate communication is necessary to prepare the ground for the ensuing discussion of corporate blogs.

Chapter 2 provides an overview of the concepts that constitute the framework for a genre analysis of corporate blogs. It concentrates on the notion of genre, with an emphasis on Bakhtin's speech genre theory and the various approaches to genre: (a) genre in folklore traditions, (b) genre in literature traditions, (c) genre in rhetoric traditions, and (d) genre in linguistic traditions: ethnographic studies; systemic-functional linguistics; and translation studies. Moreover, there are references to digital genres and

hybrid genres. This chapter also involves a discussion of distinctions between genre, register, and style, as well as making references to genre analysis and ESP (English for Specific Purposes) studies.

Chapter 3 introduces the concept of a blog by focusing on its origin and development, its types, and any previously conducted research. An insight into the concept of a corporate blog with special regard to its types, diversified popularity, features, advantages, usage, language, authors, and targeted audience is necessary in order to understand the phenomena of this type of computer-mediated communication used by business organisations.

Chapter 4 concentrates on a description of the methodology used in the study as well as on the research material, namely the Corporate Blog Corpus. All of the methodological aspects, applied computational tools, and programmes enabling quantitative analyses are introduced and described in detail.

Chapters 5, 6, 7, and 8, respectively, present the results of empirical analyses of the structure of corporate blogs and corporate blog posts (Chapter 5); stance-taking in corporate blogs via an investigation into the stance adverbials, evaluative adjectives, and stance verbs used by their authors (Chapter 6); the use and discourse functions of key semantic domains found in the corporate blogs (Chapter 7); and the keywords included in these domains and lexical bundles across the Corporate Blog Corpus (Chapter 8).

Finally, Chapter 9 includes the findings and the conclusions drawn from the study. The book ends with references and appendices.

# CHAPTER ONE

## THE CORPORATE WORLD

### 1.1. The concept of a ‘corporation’

Everyone who is involved in or at least interested in business and economics has undoubtedly encountered the notion of a ‘corporation’. The first associations one may have with this word are a large company, an international company, corporate culture, and corporate communication. Besides, a ‘corporation’ may arouse controversial and conflicting emotions since, for some people, a corporation will mean a safe enclave whereas others will associate it with modern slavery. Nonetheless, nowadays corporations are becoming irreplaceable and ubiquitous in the business world. Moreover, they are provided with various opportunities resulting from the process of globalisation, such as mobility of capital, the removal of the barriers in money flow, the development of technologies used to transfer money, and the removal of the national barriers in the financial sphere (Chojnacki 2015, 70–71). Interestingly, according to Global Justice Now,<sup>7</sup> of the world’s 100 largest economic entities in 2015, 69 are corporations and 31 are countries, which only confirms corporations’ undisputed importance and prominence for the global economy in the twenty-first century. In addition, with reference to Encyclopaedia Britannica,<sup>8</sup> “[t]he millions of corporations throughout the world dominate the manufacturing, energy, and service-industry sectors of most developed and many developing nations”. Also, Breeze (2013a, 11) points to the wealth of large corporations as well as their influence on world affairs, which are considerable and distinct in comparison to many states or small nations. It means that a corporation constitutes not only economic but also political, environmental, and cultural powers.

The introduction of the notion of a ‘corporation’ is crucial since one of the tools which enables corporations to be so powerful is communication. In

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<sup>7</sup> Accessed July 24, 2017, from <http://www.globaljustice.org.uk/news/2016/sep/12/10-biggest-corporations-make-more-money-most-countries-world-combined>.

<sup>8</sup> Accessed August 4, 2017, from <https://www.britannica.com/topic/corporation>.

order to target internal and external audiences, corporations need to communicate their message effectively. Recent years have seen that obtaining effective communication seems to be impossible without the use of new technology and the internet. As a result, corporations have started to use new types of communication including corporate blogs. Therefore, a brief overview of a 'corporation', which can be regarded as a 'producer' or a 'broadcaster' of a corporate blog, sets the stage for the further discussion and analysis of corporate blogs.

An important question arises here: What exactly is a corporation? One of the earliest attempts to describe a corporation was made in 1819 by Chief Justice Marshall (in Donaldson 1982, 3) who argues that it is "an artificial being, invisible, intangible, and existing only in the contemplation of law. Being the mere creation of law, it possesses only those properties which the charter of its creation confers upon it, either expressly, or as incidental to its very existence".

A definition of 'corporation' can be found in most dictionaries and encyclopaedias, e.g., the Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines a corporation as "a large business or organization that under the law has the rights and duties of an individual and follows a specific purpose"<sup>9</sup> whereas Encyclopaedia Britannica describes it as a "specific legal form of organization of persons and material resources, chartered by the state, for the purpose of conducting business".<sup>10</sup> Corporations are also defined by a number of scholars who present various points of view; for example, van Riel and Fombrun compare corporations to "networks of people who communicate with each other" (2007, 13), whereas Donaldson claims that "corporations are highly complex entities which depend upon the acceptance of a series of abstractions for their very existence" (1982, viii) and adds that corporations are "unusual entities" (1982, 1). Moreover, Donaldson (1982, 2) suggests that corporations may be divided, on the basis of a few distinctions, into profit-making and non-profitmaking; private and common; privately held and publicly held; and "productive" and "non-productive". At this point, it needs to be stressed that the present book will refer to profit-making, publicly held corporations which also qualify as productive organisations.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/corporation>. Accessed November 4, 2015.

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.britannica.com/search?query=corporation>. Accessed November 4, 2015.

<sup>11</sup> The term 'corporation' in the described meaning is commonly used in American English whereas the British equivalent to 'corporation' is 'company'. From legal

However, Breeze claims that a corporation should be recognised as “a new entity” which cannot be compared to “a natural person, and not a traditional social body or institution” (2013a, 7). Their exceptional position is also highlighted by Barry (2003, 22) who claims that a “corporation can do things that private individuals or business partnership cannot do”. This means that a corporation is ‘privileged’ since it has entity status and limited liability. Additionally, among the features characterising corporations, Breeze mentions a legal personality in corporation’s own right: the capability for performing a variety of business-related activities, such as owning, buying, and selling, as well as employing and dismissing people, and, most importantly, for “conducting business activities in an independent way” (2013a, 7).

What seems to be really significant in the case of corporations is the way they communicate, “since it is primarily through discourse that corporations construct their self-understanding and their relationship with other agents” (Breeze 2013a, 7). Thus, the purpose of the next section is to introduce the area and some issues of corporate communication which have been brought to the fore in recent studies (e.g., van Riel 1995; Bargiela-Chiappini and Harris 1997; van Riel and Fombrun 2007; Cornelissen 2011; Breeze 2013a).

## 1.2. Corporate communication

People communicate in a variety of ways in business organisations, which range from internal to external and from formal to informal communications. All these types of communications play a unique and significant role in business organisations as they exert some influence over the way participants and observers perceive a particular organisation as well as its activities and, as a result, the organisation’s image, brand, and reputation are affected (van Riel and Fombrun 2007, 13). In addition, Bargiela-Chiappini and Harris (1997, 4) draw attention to the fact that “[i]n an important if obvious sense, no ‘organisation’ exists prior to communication: organisations are talked into being and maintained by means of the talk of the people within and around them”. Nonetheless, various communications used in corporations should not be treated equally because, as Frandsen and Johansen (2014, 223) argue,

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and economic point of view, this sphere is regulated by company law. In the present book, these terms will be used interchangeably. See also Amy Krois-Lindner, Translegal®, and Jeremy Day (2006) *International Legal English*.



Corporate communication differs from other types of business-related communication such as public relations, organizational communication, marketing communication and business communication by involving and communicating with *all* types of external and internal stakeholders, by integrating the corresponding the internal and external communication activities, and by applying a strategic perspective on communication.

In other words, marketing communication, organisational communication, and management communication are all involved in corporate communication, which is perceived by van Riel and Fombrun (2007, 22) as “a coherent approach to the development of communications in organizations, one that communication specialists can adopt to streamline their own communications activities by working from a centrally coordinated strategic framework”.

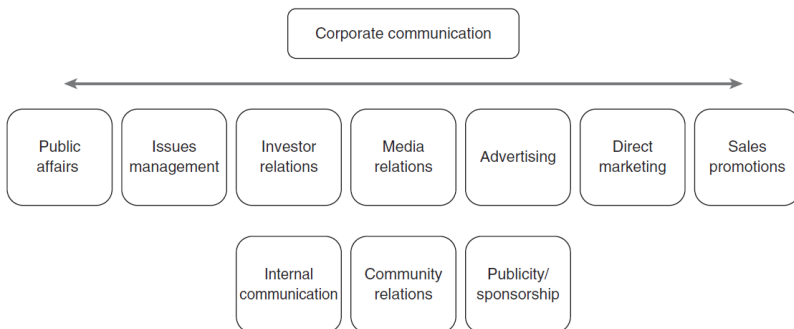
The term ‘corporate communication’ evolved from ‘public relations’ which, until the 1970s, was used by practitioners to describe the way they communicated with stakeholders; however, it functioned more as a way of communication with the press which was not accepted by internal and external stakeholders who expected more detailed information (Cornelissen 2011, 4). As a result, corporate communication provided an answer to the stakeholders’ demands. It is assumed that the term ‘corporate communication’ was officially introduced in 1972 by the American magazine *Fortune* in its first annual Corporate Communication seminar (Otsubo 1992, cited in Yamauchi 2001, 131). One of the first attempts to characterise corporate communication was made by Shelby (1993, 255) who describes it as “an umbrella for a variety of forms and formats” and as “[a] cafeteria from which choices are made”. Among various definitions of corporate communication, there are a few worth mentioning as relevant to this book. According to van Riel (1995, 26), ‘corporate communication’ is characterised as “an instrument of management by means of which all consciously used forms of internal and external communication are harmonised as effectively and efficiently as possible, so to create a favourable basis for relationships with groups upon which the company is dependent”, whereas Yamauchi (2001, 132) defines ‘corporate communication’ as “the act of effectively conveying to a company’s stakeholders the corporate philosophy that the company regards as the ultimate expression of its corporate culture”. Moreover, as Goodman and Hirsch (2010, 15) claim

Corporate communication is the term used to describe a variety of strategic management functions. Depending on the organization, corporate communication includes: public relations; crisis and emergency communication; corporate citizenship; reputation management; community relations; media relations; investors relations; employee relations;

government relations; marketing communication; management communication; corporate branding and image building; advertising.

In addition, van Riel and Fombrun emphasise the significance of corporate communication by comparing it to “the lifeblood of all organizations” and to the medium used by corporations to access the vital resources required to proper function (2007, 1), whereas Goodman (2001, 118) points that “[i]n the information driven age, communication is an integral part of corporate strategy”. What is more, as van Riel and Fombrun claim, corporate communication allows corporations to “acquire the *primary* resources they need (such as capital, labour, and raw materials), and build up valuable stocks of *secondary* resources (such as ‘legitimacy’ and ‘reputation’) that enable them to operate” (2007, 1). Also, Katz recognises the role and functions of corporate communication and argues that “[c]ommunication in business is an exchange of ideas, messages and concepts, relating to the achievement of set commercial objectives” (1989, 4 cited in Bargiela-Chappini and Harris, 1997, 12). Considering the already mentioned definitions and following Cornelissen (2011, 5), it can be acknowledged that corporate communication is “complex in nature” and should be defined as “a management function that offers a framework for the effective coordination of all internal and external communication with the overall purpose of establishing and maintaining favourable reputations with stakeholder groups upon which the organization is dependent” (see Figure 1-1).

Figure 1-1: Cornelissen’s visualisation of corporate communication for an integrated framework for managing communication (Cornelissen 2011, 5)



Also, Breeze (2013a, 20) argues that “[r]ecent trends in corporate communications are moving towards a coherent, overall corporate

communications strategy that groups all the different aspects of communication under one heading, perhaps placing them under the authority of a single department". Such a corporate manoeuvre aims to "project one uniform and unambiguous image of what the organization is and stands for" (Christensen 2002, 162). A similar point of view is presented by Christensen, First, and Torp (2008, 428) who point out that "[c]orporate communications conceives itself as the integrated communication discipline *par excellence*, supplying an all-encompassing framework that includes all possible communication disciplines". Moreover, a company desires to achieve

A strong corporate culture; a coherent corporate identity; a genuine sense of corporate citizenship; an appropriate and professional relationship with the press; a quick and responsible way of communicating in a crisis or emergency situations; an understanding of communication tools and technologies; a sophisticated approach to global communication. (Goodman 2000, 70)

Similarly, Yamauchi (2001, 134) indicates that there is a necessity to unite the entire organisation "behind single philosophy" and to communicate information "on both a permanent and daily basis". Such frequent communication would only be feasible thanks to the use of computer technology and the internet. One of the ways of digital communication used by companies with the object of providing regular contact with their stakeholders is a corporate blog which not only enables daily communication but also constitutes a tool to promote a particular corporation as well as to engage and persuade prospective customers to cooperate.

Nowadays, computer technology has had a great impact on the ways corporations communicate with their stakeholders, which has resulted in a change of the corporate communication paradigm (Ihator 2004, 250). According to Ihator (2004, 251), "[b]usinesses are beginning to equally focus on both products and consumers, and have been moving from the traditional unidirectional approach to contemporary multidirectional approaches to integrated communication". Yamauchi (2001, 132) has a similar point of view and claims, in order for corporations to succeed in the global marketplace, they need to meet new requirements stemming from changes in corporate values by anticipating these changes and developing a clear vision of the future which will be transparent to the general audience worldwide and which will gain the acceptance of stakeholders.

Fast global information flow and the increasing number of international businesses have contributed to recognising modern information technology

as a tool enabling communication with national and international audiences in more creative ways which leads to the conclusion that “[c]omputer technology is empowering business” (Ithator 2004, 250–251). Thus, social media can be acknowledged as one of the commonest and most beneficial ways used by corporations and other business organisations to communicate with their stakeholders worldwide in order to attract their attention, encourage, persuade and, in consequence, not only to establish long lasting relationship but also to tighten the existing ones. In addition, all of the mentioned types of social media can be accessed by everyone; therefore, corporations are conscious that there is a necessity to portray their positive public image to a wider audience and even to the world at large (Breeze 2013a, 18). For instance, corporate websites can be considered as “the ‘shop front’ that most people encountered first” (Breeze 2013a, 18) and therefore they are treated as “a viable corporate image and identity enhancement tool [...] used to demonstrate corporate citizenship, social responsibility, and to advance policies and sometimes influence public behaviour” (Ithator 2004, 250). Moreover, corporate websites and other types of compute-mediated communications are used by corporations to build positive relationship with the world’s media and critics. According to Breeze (2013a, 18), “[s]uch communication is particularly important in times of crisis, or when a particular sector has been in the public eye for malfeasance of one kind or another”. Thus, in a digital society among the corporation’s most significant assets, as Yamauchi (2001, 134) indicates, “the value of the information it communicates and makes available to the public, its brand assets, and its communication skills” can be enumerated. Additionally, Breeze (2013a, 43–45) draws attention to the fact that corporate communication is often multimodal which means that message is communicated not only textually but also through various paralinguistic ways, such as different types of print, sound, image, and colours. Such multimodal elements are also found in corporate blogs and will be discussed in Chapter 5.

### 1.3. Corporate discourse

A vast majority of business-related activities are strictly connected with the use of language, especially the English language since international communication is commonly associated with English (Bargiela-Chiappini and Harris 1997, 5). As Bargiela-Chiappini and Harris (1997, 5) claim, English is “*the* language of management, as well as the language of business”. This is caused by a number of factors, such as the presumption that its foreign counterparts are based on the English language and the Anglo-Saxon paradigm. In addition, “doing business” and using materials

in English, which are then disseminated all over the world, contribute to the promotion of the “American version of organisational theory and practise”. Also, Salvi and Bamford (2007, 2–3) indicate that English is regarded as “a lingua franca in business” and as the “means of communication of the globalized economy”.

Companies have to adjust to various and sometimes rapidly changeable situations which they encounter daily. Dealing with customers, solving problems, answering questions, and signing documents and contracts, etc., require and generate a number of various types of texts, both spoken and written. In addition, Breeze, whose studies focus on the language used in corporations, refers to “the kinds of languages used across a vast range of social functions within companies as aspects of ‘corporate discourse’” (2013a, 29). Given the heterogeneous nature of corporate discourse, it is difficult to determine and define it. As Salvi and Bamford (2007, 1) claim, corporate discourse can range from formal to informal and from written to oral; it can also exploit a variety of channels and make use of different registers and genres. However, Breeze (2013a, 30–31) highlights the need to analyse discourse because it can lead to the identification of the ways of using linguistic and other semiotic resources; a better understanding of the patterns emerging in various contexts; exploring the usage of language which serves ideological ends; and tracking changes over time. She (2013a, 25) also proposes three methods of corporate discourse analysis. The first one aims at exploring “how each genre is the instantiation of a particular social function that is realized through discourse”. The second method focuses on grouping the most important genres in corporate communication in terms of their intended recipients. Thus, it allows one to “consider genres in their most essential sense as socially grounded instantiations of communicative action between particular agents for a particular purpose”. With reference to the third form of corporate discourse analysis proposed by Breeze, the classification of discourse into types or categories is based on the functions it fulfils. Among the examples of such discourses, Breeze (2013a, 25–26) mentions the ‘promotional discourse’ typical of advertising or public relations activities which aims at “presenting its object in a positive light and persuading the audience to accept or perhaps purchase it”, and ‘informative discourse’ which “is fundamentally concerned with conveying information, facts or news”. In the same vein, Salvi and Bamford (2007, 1) focus on communicative functions of corporate discourse and categorise it into “promotional, informative, interactional, directive and persuasive”. Interestingly, what is characteristic for corporate discourse is that all or some of the mentioned communicative purposes are to occur simultaneously in business types of texts. Moreover, Breeze (2013a, 26)

highlights that “the interest lies precisely in the adaptation and fine-tuning of general discourse types to connect with different addresses, and in the blending or hybridization of discourse types in the attempt to make a particular effect on the target audience”.

According to Breeze (2013a, 19), corporate discourse includes “the set of messages that a corporation chooses to send to the world at large, and to its target markets or existing customer” as well as “messages that are intended for internal consumption only, such as those used to communicate with employees, or those intended for a predefined set of stakeholders, such as those who hold shares in the company”. Mumby and Clair (1997, 181) highlight the role and importance of corporate discourse and point out that

Organizations exist only in so far as their members create them through discourse. This is not to claim that organisations are ‘nothing but’ discourse, but rather that discourse is the principle means by which organisation members create a coherent social reality that frames their sense of who they are.

In the same vein, Potter and Wetherell (1987, 6) focus on discursive practices applied in corporations which, as they argue, “do not just describe things, they do things”. This indicates that various discursive practices affect and shape the attitudes and behaviours of the members of corporate community. Also, Breeze extends her view on corporate discourse and claims that it should be recognised as “a discourse system, a set of social practices which includes a range of texts and genres, but which is not limited to them, because at any time it may generate new realisations that will still recognisably embody corporate discourse” (2013a, 23). In addition, corporate discourse undergoes a constant process of being renewed and revised; however, any sweeping changes need time to be applied in view of the significant size and complexity which characterises this discourse system (Breeze 2013a, 23). Moreover, as Breeze claims (2013a, 30), “discourse both shapes and is shaped by the specific contexts and by the whole society in which it is used”. It is noticeable that Breeze’s approach to discourse analysis is inspired by Foucault’s understanding of discourse as “identifiable collections of utterances governed by rules of construction and evaluation which determine within some thematic area what may be said, by whom, in what context, and with what effect” (Gordon 2000, i–xli) and by Fairclough (1992, 3) who claims that “[d]iscourses do not just reflect or represent social entities and relations, they construct or ‘constitute’ them”. In addition, Breeze (2013a, 23) suggests that “corporate discourse can also be understood as being underpinned by a cohesive, though not explicit, ideological system”.