This third edition first published 2012
© 2012 John Wiley & Sons, Inc

Edition History: Basil Blackwell Ltd (1e 1995); Blackwell Publishing Ltd (2e 2001)

Wiley-Blackwell is an imprint of John Wiley & Sons, formed by the merger of Wiley's global Scientific, Technical and Medical business with Blackwell Publishing.

Registered Office
John Wiley & Sons Ltd, The Atrium, Southern Gate, Chichester, West Sussex, PO19 8SQ, UK

Editorial Offices
350 Main Street, Malden, MA 02148-5020, USA
9600 Garsington Road, Oxford, OX4 2DQ, UK
The Atrium, Southern Gate, Chichester, West Sussex, PO19 8SQ, UK

For details of our global editorial offices, for customer services, and for information about how to apply for permission to reuse the copyright material in this book please see our website at www.wiley.com/wiley-blackwell.

The right of Ron Scollon, Suzanne Wong Scollon, and Rodney H. Jones to be identified as the authors of this work has been asserted in accordance with the UK Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, except as permitted by the UK Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988, without the prior permission of the publisher.

Wiley also publishes its books in a variety of electronic formats. Some content that appears in print may not be available in electronic books.

Designations used by companies to distinguish their products are often claimed as trademarks. All brand names and product names used in this book are trade names, service marks, trademarks or registered trademarks of their respective owners. The publisher is not associated with any product or vendor mentioned in this book. This publication is designed to provide accurate and authoritative information in regard to the subject matter covered. It is sold on the understanding that the publisher is not engaged in rendering professional services. If professional advice or other expert assistance is required, the services of a competent professional should be sought.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data
9780470656402 (paperback ISBN)
Scollon, Ronald, 1939-
p. cm.
Includes bibliographical references and index.
P94.6.S36 2012
dc23
2011025904

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

This book is published in the following electronic formats: ePDFs 978-1-118-14968-3;
Epub 978-1-118-14969-0; Mohi 978-1-118-14970-6

Set in 10/12 pt Ehrhardt by Toppan Beat-set Premedia Limited

1 2012
## Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>List of Figures</td>
<td>xi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Series Editor's Preface</td>
<td>xiii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preface to the First Edition</td>
<td>xiv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preface to the Second Edition</td>
<td>xvii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preface to the Third Edition</td>
<td>xviii</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 What Is a Discourse Approach?                                         1
   The Problem with Culture                                              2
     Culture is a verb                                                   5
   Discourse                                                            7
     Discourse systems                                                 8
   What Is Communication?                                               10
     Language is ambiguous by nature                                     11
     We must draw inferences about meaning                               14
     Our inferences tend to be fixed, not tentative                      15
     Our inferences are drawn very quickly                              15
     Interdiscourse communication and English as a global language      16
   What This Book Is Not                                                17
   Researching Interdiscourse Communication                              18
     Four processes of ethnography                                       19
     Four types of data in ethnographic research                         20
     Choosing a site of investigation                                    21
   Discussion Questions                                                  23
   References for Further Study                                          24

2 How, When, and Where to Do Things with Language                       25
   Sentence Meaning and Speaker's Meaning                               27
   Speech Acts, Speech Events, and Speech Situations                    27
   Grammar of Context                                                   29
     Seven main components for a grammar of context                      30
     Scene                                                               31
     Key                                                                 34
3 Interpersonal Politeness and Power
Communicative Style or Register
Face
The "self" as a communicative identity
The Paradox of Face: Involvement and Independence
Politeness strategies of involvement and independence
Linguistic strategies of involvement: some examples
Linguistic strategies of independence: some examples
Face Systems
Three Face Systems: Deference, Solidarity, and Hierarchy
Deference face system (−P, +D)
Solidarity face system (−P, −D)
Hierarchical face system (+P, +/−D)
Miscommunication
Variations in Face Systems
Social Organization and Face Systems
Kinship
The concept of the self
Ingroup–outgroup relationships
Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft
Researching Interdiscourse Communication
Exploring the interaction order
Discussion Questions
References for Further Study

4 Conversational Inference: Interpretation in Spoken Discourse
How Do We Understand Discourse?
Cohesive Devices: Lexical and Grammatical
Reference
Verb forms
Conjunction
The causal conjunction "because"
Contents

Cognitive Schemata and Scripts
  World knowledge 74
  Adjacency sequences 75
Prosodic Patterning: Intonation and Timing 76
  Intonation 77
  Timing 79
Metacommunication 82
  Non-sequential processing 84
Interactive Intelligence 86
Researching Interdiscourse Communication 88
  Collecting and analyzing spoken data 88
  Reconfiguring default settings 89
Discussion Questions 90
References for Further Study 90

5 Topic and Face: Inductive and Deductive Patterns in Discourse 92
What Are You Talking About? 92
Topic, Turn Exchange, and Timing 94
  The call–answer–topic adjacency sequence 94
  The call 95
  The answer 95
  The introduction of the caller’s topic 95
Deductive Monologues 96
The Inductive Pattern 97
  Inside and outside encounters 98
  Hierarchical relationships and topic introduction 98
  The false east–west dichotomy 99
Face: Inductive and Deductive Rhetorical Strategies 100
  Topics and face systems 101
Face Relationships in Written Discourse 103
  Essays and press releases 104
  The press release: implied writers and implied readers 105
  The essay: a deductive structure 106
Limiting Ambiguity: Power in Discourse 106
Researching Interdiscourse Communication 107
  Collecting and analyzing written data 107
Discussion Questions 109
References for Further Study 109

6 Ideologies in Discourse 110
Three Concepts of Discourse 110
The Utilitarian Discourse System 113
  The Enlightenment: reason and freedom 114
  Bentham and Mill’s Utilitarianism 115
  Forms of discourse in the Utilitarian discourse system 117
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contents</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Panopticon of Bentham</td>
<td>118</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Face systems in the Utilitarian discourse system</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internal face systems: liberté, égalité, fraternité</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The institutions of the Utilitarian discourse system</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outside discourse</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple discourse systems</td>
<td>123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Confucian discourse system</td>
<td>123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Conversations&quot;</td>
<td>126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What “Counts” as an Ideology?</td>
<td>128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Researching Interdiscourse Communication</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The relationship between small d discourse and big D Discourses</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion Questions</td>
<td>134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>References for Further Study</td>
<td>134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Forms of Discourse</td>
<td>136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Functions of Language</td>
<td>136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information and relationship</td>
<td>136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negotiation and ratification</td>
<td>137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group harmony and individual welfare</td>
<td>138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarity, Brevity, and Sincerity Revisited</td>
<td>139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theories of communication in the Utilitarian discourse system</td>
<td>139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kant's view of the &quot;public&quot; writer</td>
<td>147</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plagiarism and ideology</td>
<td>148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modes, Media, and the Materiality of Discourse</td>
<td>152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mode</td>
<td>152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media</td>
<td>154</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emplacement</td>
<td>156</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Researching Interdiscourse Communication</td>
<td>157</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion Questions</td>
<td>158</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>References for Further Study</td>
<td>159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Socialization</td>
<td>161</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Individual and “Culture”</td>
<td>161</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socialization</td>
<td>162</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education, enculturation, acculturation</td>
<td>162</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary and secondary socialization</td>
<td>163</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socialization as legitimate peripheral participation</td>
<td>164</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theories of the person and of learning</td>
<td>165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socialization in the Utilitarian Discourse System</td>
<td>168</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education vs. socialization</td>
<td>168</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socialization and face systems</td>
<td>169</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socialization and the “Historical Body”</td>
<td>171</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Researching Interdiscourse Communication</td>
<td>173</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An outline guide for the study of discourse systems</td>
<td>175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion Questions</td>
<td>176</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>References for Further Study</td>
<td>177</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Contents

9  Corporate and Professional Discourse  
Voluntary and Involuntary Discourse Systems  
  Five key discourse systems in corporate and professional life  
  The Corporate Discourse System (Corporate Culture)  
  Ideology  
  Socialization  
  Forms of discourse  
  Face systems  
  The size and scope of corporate discourse systems  
Professional Discourse Systems  
Researching Interdiscourse Communication  
Discussion Questions  
References for Further Study  

10  Generational Discourse  
Involuntary Discourse Systems  
The Ideologies of Individualism in the United States  
  Six generations of North Americans  
  The shifting ground of U.S. individualism  
  Communication between generations  
Six Generations of Chinese  
  The changing nature of collectivism  
  The shifting ground of Chinese collectivism  
Researching Interdiscourse Communication  
Discussion Questions  
References for Further Study  

11  Gender and Sexuality Discourse  
Gender and Sexuality  
Gender Discourse Systems  
  Directness or indirectness?  
  Who talks more?  
  Forms of discourse: functions of language  
  Face systems  
  The origin of difference: ideology and paradox  
  The maintenance of difference: socialization  
  Problems with the “difference” approach  
  Compromise: “communities of practice”  
Sexuality  
  Sexuality and gender  
  Performativity  
  Discourse systems and imagined communities  
“Gay Culture” and the Utilitarian Discourse System  
  Ideology  
  Face systems  
  Forms of discourse  
  Socialization
Contents

The “Tongzhi Discourse System” 261
Researching Interdiscourse Communication 264
Discussion Questions 265
References for Further Study 266

12 Doing “Intercultural Communication” 267
Discourse Systems and the Individual 267
  Intersystem communication 270
  Cultural ideology and stereotyping 271
  Negative stereotypes 273
  Positive stereotypes, the lumping fallacy, and the solidarity fallacy 274
  Othering 276
Differences Which Make a Difference: Discourse Systems 276
Intercultural Communication as Mediated Action 278
Avoiding Miscommunication 279
Researching Interdiscourse Communication 281
Discussion Questions 283
References for Further Study 283

References 284
Index 298
Figures

3.1 Deference face system 54
3.2 Solidarity face system 54
3.3 Hierarchical face system 55
3.4 The Chinese concept of the self 63
3.5 The western concept of the self 63
6.1 Discourse system 113
6.2 Bentham's Panopticon 119
6.3 The lecture theater Panopticon 119
6.4 Utilitarian discourse face systems 120
8.1 Terms for socialization 164
A number of books in the Language in Society series have dealt with topics in the field of the ethnography of speaking, broadly defined. The present volume, now in its third updated and expanded edition, draws on theoretical advances that have been made in this field over the past three decades, but also makes a very valuable contribution based on important descriptive work, including the authors' own, in the field of cross-cultural communication. This new edition is, too, notable for its extended and very helpful discussion of the terms cross-cultural communication, intercultural communication, and interdiscourse communication. The book is perhaps most noticeable, however, for the extent to which it represents an essay in applied sociolinguistics. Although theoretically founded and descriptively rich, Intercultural Communication also examines what conclusions can be drawn from sociolinguistic research for the practice of professional communication, something which is now in this third edition greatly enhanced by the addition of the new chapter, “Doing ‘Intercultural Communication’” – see for example the section on “Avoiding Miscommunication.” The emphasis on practice makes the book a pioneering work which will continue to have an impact well beyond the fields of sociolinguistics and foreign-language teaching, as the amount of interest in, and enthusiasm for, the first two editions makes very clear. As in the earlier editions, the authors’ final conclusions are sober and paradoxical, namely that expert professional communicators are those who have come to appreciate their lack of expertise. Readers of Intercultural Communication will nevertheless come to appreciate not only the amount of variation to be found between human discourse systems – as well as their similarities, as the authors point out – but also the amount of progress that has been made by sociolinguistic researchers such as the Scollons and Rodney Jones in describing and understanding such systems.

Peter Trudgill
Preface to the First Edition

This book is about professional communication between people who are members of different groups. When as westerners or Asians we do business together, when as men or women we work together in an office, or when as members of senior or junior generations we develop a product together we engage in what we call “interdiscourse communication.” That is to say, the discourse of westerners or of Asians, the discourse of men or women, the corporate discourse or the discourse of our professional organizations enfold us within an envelope of language which gives us an identity and which makes it easier to communicate with those who are like us. By the same token, however, the discourses of our cultural groups, our corporate cultures, our professional specializations, or our gender or generation groups make it more difficult for us to interpret those who are members of different groups. We call these enveloping discourses “discourse systems.”

Interdiscourse communication is a term we use to include the entire range of communications across boundaries of groups or discourse systems from the most inclusive of those groups, cultural groups, to the communications which take place between men and women or between colleagues who have been born into different generations. In interdiscourse analysis we consider the ways in which discourses are created and interpreted when those discourses cross the boundaries of group membership. We also consider the ways in which we use communication to claim and to display our own complex and multiple identities as communicating professionals.

This is a book on intercultural professional communication in English between westerners and East Asians, especially Chinese; but it is more than that. This book is on organizational communication, especially where conflicts arise between identity in the corporate culture and in one’s professional specialization; but it is more than that. This book is about communication across the so-called generations gap; but it is more than that. This book is about miscommunications which occur between men and women; but it is more than that. This book is an interactive sociolinguistic framework for analyzing discourse which crosses the boundaries between these discourse systems. Because each professional communicator is simultaneously a member of a corporate, a professional, a generational, a gender, a cultural, and even other discourse systems, the focus of this book is on how those multiple memberships provide a framework within which all professional communication takes place.

Discourse analysis in professional communication is a new and rapidly developing field which integrates aspects of intercultural communication studies, applied interactional socio-
linguistics, and discourse analysis. We have written this book to meet the needs of students and teachers in courses in English for professional communication, English for special purposes, or other such courses where the central focus is on communication in professional or business contexts. The book is designed for either classroom use or self-study, since many of those who are involved in intercultural professional communication have already completed their courses of study and are actively engaged in their professional work.

We have two main audiences in mind: (1) professional communicators who are East Asian speakers of English, and their teachers in courses on professional communication, whether in Asia or elsewhere, and (2) professional communicators who are concerned with any communications which cross the lines of discourse systems. The book has been field-tested in Hong Kong and therefore tends to emphasize examples of most direct relevance to Chinese (Cantonese) speakers of English. Nevertheless, the research on which this book is based covers a much broader range of East Asian English communication including Taiwan, Korea, Japan, Singapore, Mainland China, North America, Great Britain, and Australia.

In over twenty years of research on intercultural intra-organizational communication in North America as well as in Taiwan and in Korea, we have seen that most miscommunication does not arise through mispronunciations or through poor uses of grammar, important as those aspects of language learning are. The major sources of miscommunication in intercultural contexts lie in differences in patterns of discourse. In our consulting work with major business, governmental, and educational organizations in North America and in Asia we have found that frequently intergroup miscommunication and even hostility arise when each group has failed to interpret the intentions of the other group as a result of misinterpreting its discourse conventions. In teaching a range of courses, from “cultural differences in institutional settings” to courses on discourse, sociolinguistics, and first and second language acquisition, we have found that careful attention to communication at this higher level of discourse analysis leads to an ability to return to original statements and to do the repair work that is needed to improve cross-group communication. In this book we have for the first time organized course topics from a range of diverse fields into a unified presentation specifically designed for the professional communicator.

Our research in Taiwan was supported by Providence University (Ching Yi Ta Hsueh), Shalu, Taiwan, and in Korea by the Sogang Institute for English as an International Language, Sogang University, Seoul, Korea. It received continued funding from the Alaska Humanities Forum, Anchorage, Alaska (a program of the National Endowment for the Humanities), and Lynn Canal Conservation, Haines, Alaska. We wish to thank these two universities as well as the two funding agencies for their support of our work. Of course, the ideas expressed in this book are not the responsibility of any of these agencies.

The principal foundation upon which we write is the ongoing discourse about discourse among our colleagues. We owe much of our general approach to discussions of intergroup discourse with John Gumperz. We wish to thank Deborah Tannen for critical reading and lively discussion of not only this manuscript but the many other papers upon which this book is based. We also thank Tim Boswood, Coordinator of the English for Professional Communication program at City Polytechnic of Hong Kong, for the pleasure of many thoughtful conversations about this material.

This book has been used in manuscript form as the textbook for several courses which we have taught at City Polytechnic of Hong Kong and Hong Kong Baptist College. Our students in those courses have provided many useful comments, raised important questions, and suggested further examples which have materially improved the clarity of this text. We
wish to thank them for their interest and for their astute observations. We are indebted to
David Li Chor Shing for many suggestions which have clarified our statements regarding
Chinese cultural matters as well as for improvements in style. We have benefited greatly too
from discussions with him of the book’s contents. Judy Ho Woon Yee and Vicki Yung Kit
Yee have also given critical and helpful readings. As well, we thank Tom Scollon for his
assistance in preparing the figures and Rachel Scollon for her editorial assistance. While we
are deeply indebted to all of these people as well as to many others for their help in making
our ideas clearer, we ourselves remain responsible for infelicities, eccentricities, and failures
to get it right.
Preface to the Second Edition

*Intercultural Communication: A Discourse Approach* first appeared in 1995. We were pleased to see it come into print as we had used the substance of the book in manuscript form for two years before that with classes at the City University of Hong Kong (then Polytechnic) and at Hong Kong Baptist University (then College). We were confident that the book would find an audience in Asia and in North America, the UK, and Europe where readers had a concern with intercultural communication dealing with Chinese and other Asians. Where we have been pleasantly surprised in the five years since the book's first appearance is with the widespread appeal the book has had for readers quite outside this primary audience for which we had imagined it. We have now heard from readers and from teachers of intercultural communication in many parts of the world who have used the book to good effect and who have also sent us questions and comments which have been most helpful in shaping this revised edition. We wish, then, to begin by acknowledging these many correspondents for their help in focusing our attention on points which needed clarification and, in particular, in helping us to see how to shape the entirely new chapter 12 with which the book now ends.

This revised edition retains substantially the full text of the original edition. To this text we have added clarifications of points for which readers have asked for further elaboration. The first chapter now includes a section in which we set out our distinction between *cross-cultural communication* and *intercultural communication* or, as we prefer to call it in most cases, *interdiscourse communication*. There is another section which outlines the methodology of ethnography which is the practical basis of our research. In the full new final chapter, chapter 12, we return to this methodology and show how we and others have been able to use it and this book to do new research in intercultural communication and how this work has been used in conducting training and consultation programs.
Preface to the Third Edition

A lot has changed in the world since the first edition of *Intercultural Communication* was published in 1995. Dramatic advances in information technology, especially the growth of the World Wide Web, and the rapid globalization of the world's economy have in many ways brought people closer together, while at the same time, wars, terrorism, environmental devastation, and massive changes in the world economic order have resulted in greater political and social fragmentation. There have also been considerable advances in the fields of anthropology and linguistics, which lie at the heart of the work described in this book, particularly in fields dealing with things like gender, sexuality, and computer mediated communication. Finally, our own thinking and research has also evolved since the notion of *discourse systems* was proposed in this book more than fifteen years ago. Perhaps the most significant aspect of this evolution has been our development over the past decade of the theoretical framework of *mediated discourse analysis*, an approach to discourse which focuses less on broad constructs like "culture" and more on the everyday concrete actions through which culture is produced.

It would be impossible to account thoroughly for all of these changes without writing an entirely new book. What we have tried to do in this new edition is to strengthen the theoretical framework and make it more user friendly and relevant to the present day. The source of these revisions comes not just from our own continued research in the fields of intercultural communication and discourse analysis, but also from many years of experience using this book with our students, as well as the valuable feedback from many others who have made use of it in their teaching and research.

Although we have tried to preserve as much as possible of the original line of argument and most of the material from the original text, this edition does represent a substantial revision. The changes are of three types. First, we have tried to improve on the organization of the material, specifically by introducing the framework of *discourse systems* earlier and devoting a full chapter to each of the four components of this framework: face systems, ideology, forms of discourse, and socialization. Second, we have tried to make the book more useful for students by adding at the end of each chapter a section giving step-by-step advice on how to apply the concepts developed in that chapter to a research project on interdiscourse communication. We have also added at the end of each chapter a list of questions to guide classroom discussions and a list of references for further study. Finally, we have tried to develop the material from the first two editions by updating it to take into consideration
the social and technological changes that have more recently affected intercultural communication as well as new research by us and others. This includes especially the addition of new material in the chapter on Generational Discourse describing the generations currently entering the workforce and analyzing generational shifts in China, and the addition of new material in the chapter on Gender Discourse, giving a more balanced account of the debates around discourse and gender and adding a section on discourse and sexuality. Especially in the last two chapters we have attempted to problematize and refine the framework of discourse systems in line with our current thinking around mediated discourse analysis.

It is fitting that we finished this manuscript on the second anniversary of Ron Scollon’s death. From the start we approached this project first and foremost as a tribute to Ron’s life and work, and as much as possible we have tried to be true to the spirit if not the letter of Ron’s thinking as it developed in the last years of his life. One of the advantages of collaborating with a dead man is that he cannot object to your editorial decisions. While we must give Ron full credit for the strength and flexibility of the argument that is at the core of this book, we take full responsibility for any omissions, distortions, or factual errors in this revision.

We must also take this opportunity to thank those who share with us Ron’s intellectual legacy and have given us invaluable advice and support along the way, especially his students Najma Al Zidjaly, Cecilia Castillo-Ayometzi, Ingrid de Saint-Georges, Andy Jocuns, Jackie Jia Lou, Sigrid Norris, and many others. As always, while we are deeply indebted to these people, the responsibility for any inaccuracies or infidelities in this work is ours alone.

Rodney H. Jones, Hong Kong
Suzanne Wong Scollon, Seattle
July, 2011