

Introduction to Time and Discourse

Sabelis, Ida; Keenoy, Tom; Oswick, Cliff; Ybema, Sierk

Postprint / Postprint

Zeitschriftenartikel / journal article

Zur Verfügung gestellt in Kooperation mit / provided in cooperation with:

www.peerproject.eu

Empfohlene Zitierung / Suggested Citation:

Sabelis, I., Keenoy, T., Oswick, C., & Ybema, S. (2005). Introduction to Time and Discourse. *Time & Society*, 14(2-3), 261-263. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0961463X05055194>

Nutzungsbedingungen:

Dieser Text wird unter dem "PEER Licence Agreement zur Verfügung" gestellt. Nähere Auskünfte zum PEER-Projekt finden Sie hier: <http://www.peerproject.eu> Gewährt wird ein nicht exklusives, nicht übertragbares, persönliches und beschränktes Recht auf Nutzung dieses Dokuments. Dieses Dokument ist ausschließlich für den persönlichen, nicht-kommerziellen Gebrauch bestimmt. Auf sämtlichen Kopien dieses Dokuments müssen alle Urheberrechtshinweise und sonstigen Hinweise auf gesetzlichen Schutz beibehalten werden. Sie dürfen dieses Dokument nicht in irgendeiner Weise abändern, noch dürfen Sie dieses Dokument für öffentliche oder kommerzielle Zwecke vervielfältigen, öffentlich ausstellen, aufführen, vertreiben oder anderweitig nutzen.

Mit der Verwendung dieses Dokuments erkennen Sie die Nutzungsbedingungen an.

gesis
Leibniz-Institut
für Sozialwissenschaften

Terms of use:

This document is made available under the "PEER Licence Agreement". For more information regarding the PEER-project see: <http://www.peerproject.eu> This document is solely intended for your personal, non-commercial use. All of the copies of this documents must retain all copyright information and other information regarding legal protection. You are not allowed to alter this document in any way, to copy it for public or commercial purposes, to exhibit the document in public, to perform, distribute or otherwise use the document in public.

By using this particular document, you accept the above-stated conditions of use.

Mitglied der

Leibniz-Gemeinschaft

Introduction to Time and Discourse

Time, text and tuning

Ida Sabelis, Tom Keenoy, Cliff Oswick and Sierk Ybema

In organizing, the ways of tracking time, (re)constructing a sense of being and of attributing meaning to the processes of work and life become available to us through the spoken and written word, through text and talk, through story and dialogue, through metaphor and narrative (Mumby and Clair, 1997). While talking, we negotiate and enact meaning; while writing we preserve meaning over and through time; and it is through text, tone and the fine-tuning of the interrelationships between these that meaning and sense are simultaneously embedded in time and pervaded by numerous temporal modalities. 'Temporal intertextualities are visible *everywhere* in and about and around the text' (Keenoy and Oswick, 2004: 149). In its various forms, discourse analysis is increasingly recognized as an important analytic perspective on organizations and organizing and – as the articles in this special section of *Time & Society* illustrate – discourse-analytic methods are now employed to explore a very wide range of organizational phenomena. The focus is not merely on more visible phenomena, such as politics and communication in and through time, but also on the implicit temporal modes in which – perhaps unreflectively – we use time and continuously reconstruct our sense of it in our daily busyness.

The five articles which follow were originally presented at the *Sixth International Conference on Organizational Discourse* held at the Vrije Universiteit, Amsterdam in July 2004.¹ They were selected to refract the diversity of time scholarship in organizational discourse research. Collectively, they reflect both the increasing significance now accorded to the temporal and spatio-temporal aspects of organizing and the creative tuning and retuning of discourse analysis across a variety of methodological and epistemological perspectives. Since we were concerned to demonstrate the social facticity of the

spatio-temporal realm, the articles selected are all grounded in empirical research and, between them, illustrate the differing 'levels' at which text can be interrogated.

Cooren, Fox, Robichaud and Talih, utilizing an actor-network perspective, argue that 'discourse is not enough' to understand social action. Their analysis demonstrates how various objects are necessary to 'incarnate' the social and that, in consequence, we should see spacing and timing as hybrid social accomplishments. Knights and Yakhlef are also interested in artefacts. Drawing on Levinas and Foucault, they explore the subtle contradictions which confront managers in their attempts to control time 'at a distance' through technological and institutional means. Such mechanisms ineluctably engender social participation and, ultimately, the 'control of time' continually escapes the managers. Coincidentally, the following two articles are about the academic lifeworld. In a linguistic analysis of journal titles, Forray and Woodilla explore the multiple and diverse forms in which time and temporality are deployed to frame academic writing. In contrast, Keenoy analyses academics' work-talk to demonstrate how, over time, a managerialist discourse of performativity has been cumulatively translated into various organizing practices. In the process, it appears to have fundamentally reconfigured both the temporal rhythms and temporal horizons of work and work tasks. Finally, van Fenema and Räsänen, in a study of a distributed temporary organization operating within a definitive time constraint, identify what they call two 'invisible' social infrastructures – one organizational, the other relational. These emerged to facilitate communication, shape activities and create the order necessary to accommodate the multiple temporal modalities which characterize dispersed organizing processes.

As this indicates, the selection is symptomatic rather than representative of the field. However, all the articles raise important conceptual-analytic issues concerning how to understand the patterns through which people make sense of their organizational worlds in terms of timing, coordination, synchronization, politics and communication. And, in a variety of ways, each illustrates the implicit and explicit ways in which we utilize time, keep (and lose) track of time, position ourselves in the past, present and future, try to control the time and habits of others and take into account the effects of daily action in terms of future outcomes. Such processes deeply inform how we construct and reconstruct the diverse modes of time that enable us to act in the first place. More generally, the various perspectives should convey the breadth of the field and may therefore provide a stimulus to others in developing cross-disciplinary ways of uncovering the spatio-temporal features of managing and organizing.

Notes

1. See http://www.kcl.ac.uk//depsta/pse/mancen/events/org_disc_6.htm.

References

- Keenoy, T. and Osrick, C. (2004). 'Organising Textscapes', *Organization Studies* 25(1): 145–53.
- Mumby, D. K. and Clair, R. P. (1997). 'Organizational Discourse', in T. A. Van Dijk (ed.) *Discourse as Social Interaction*, pp. 181–205. London: SAGE Publications.

IDA SABELIS is Senior Lecturer at the Department of Culture, Organization and Management, Faculty of Social Sciences, Vrije Universiteit, Amsterdam, The Netherlands. Her research focuses on issues of sense making, organization and time. ADDRESS: Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, De Boelelaan 1081-c, 1081 HV Amsterdam, The Netherlands. [email: ihj.sabelis@mdw.vu.nl]

TOM KEENOY is Reader in Management and Senior Research Fellow at King's College, University of London, UK. Current research includes: organizational discourse analysis, time and organization, and the changing temper of sense making in academic work. [email: tom.keenoy@kcl.ac.uk]

CLIFF OSWICK is Professor of Organization Theory and Discourse at the Management Centre, University of Leicester, UK. His current research interests are concerned with the application of aspects of discourse, dramaturgy, narrative and rhetoric to processes of management, organization and consumption. [email: Cliffoswick@aol.com]

SIERK YBEMA is Senior Lecturer in Organization Theory and Organizational Anthropology in the Department of Culture, Organization and Management, Vrije Universiteit, Amsterdam, The Netherlands. His research focuses on the temporal construction of identity change, processes of intergroup conflict and organizational discourse. [email: sb.ybema@fsw.vu.nl]