

A Study on Discourse Strategies of All-employee Letters Within a Model of Trust-Repair Discourse

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Abstract: *The all-employee letter of the enterprise is the bridge of communication between the managers and the employees of the enterprise. At the same time, enterprises can rely on this kind of discourse to repair their corporate image in times of crisis and unite their strength in order to ensure their long-term sound development. This study builds a new framework model based on the trust repair discourse model constructed by Fuoli and Paradis (2014). By means of discourse analysis, this study selects all-employee corporate letters issued by Pinduoduo, ByteDance, Huawei and Jingdong Mall in response to negative public opinion from the top ten Internet companies in China as the corpus to explore their discourse behaviours and discourse effects. This study aims to provide new insights to promote the development of trust and discourse research, and to assist enterprises in crisis contexts to facilitate effective communication with the public, alleviate the trust crisis, and repair the image of trust.*

Keywords: All-employee letters; Trust-repair; Discourse analysis.

1. BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

1.1 Research Background

Trust is defined as the generalized expectation and belief that individuals communicate sincerity, goodwill, and truthfulness to others, either verbally or in writing. It is one of the basic dynamics essential to the development of human society (Rotter 1967; Wrightsman 1991). Trust is a reciprocal and mutual phenomenon. Trust is gradually formed in the context of long-term interpersonal interactions and serves as a crucial foundation for the establishment of interpersonal relationships (Garfinkel, 1963). It pervades all facets of human daily life and is a dynamic discourse construct, shaped and acquired through discourse in communication (Pelsmaekers et al., 2014). As a prominent topic in the humanities and social sciences, trust has garnered significant interest from scholars in diverse fields, including management, economics, sociology, political science, psychology, and linguistics. For example, Fuoli and Paradis (2014) posit that trust is not a static, one-size-fits-all phenomenon, but rather a dynamic, evolving construct. They argue that trust is constantly renegotiated and reconstructed through discourse in the formation and maintenance of interpersonal relationships.

In recent years, there have been numerous instances where companies have been embroiled in crises of trust due to inadequate regulatory frameworks. For businesses, trust represents a valuable asset. For an enterprise to be well-funded and to experience steady growth, it is imperative that it first succeed in winning the trust of its shareholders. Negative corporate behavior not only results in the loss of trust from shareholders and consumers, but also hinders the company's own growth and development. Such abrupt crises result in irreparable damage to a company's reputation, a precipitous decline in its stock price, and a catastrophic loss of trust. Consequently, corporations are compelled to adopt discursive strategies to swiftly repair the damage (Xueyu Wang and Daoxiang Liu). Consequently, during the same year in which the crisis occurred, the internal letter that was both the most visible and the most widely received was of crucial importance (Hyland 2004). In such an urgent crisis context, it is imperative for companies to rely on the persuasive power of discourse to rebuild trust with their audience and attempt to recuperate any losses incurred. In the contemporary era, domestic Internet enterprises are undergoing a period of rapid development. The rapid development of the Internet has resulted in the increased scrutiny of Internet enterprises by both domestic and foreign netizens. The potential for negative events to gain significant public attention is amplified by the reach of the Internet. In the context of public opinion, the credibility of the enterprise is damaged, customers and investors lose confidence, and the image of the enterprise becomes tarnished. Consequently, this study selects as its corpus the internal letters issued by four of the top ten domestic Internet companies: Huang Zheng, Chairman of Pinduoduo; Zhang Yiming, Founder of ByteDance; Ren Zhengfei, President of Huawei; and Liu Qiangdong, Founder of Jingdong Mall, in response to negative public opinion.

1.2 Significance of the Study

This study employs a comprehensive and dialectical approach to analysing and evaluating the repair discourse of internal corporate letters. It does so through a range of discourse analysis dimensions, thereby addressing the shortcomings of some existing corporations in the use of discourse strategies and advancing the diversified development of trust repair research. This study will provide discourse strategies for enterprises to more effectively navigate trust crises, maintain corporate image, and repair mutual trust in the future. This will help to mitigate conflicts and barriers between corporate managers and shareholders, and delay the impact of crises on corporate image and credibility. The aim is to repair the corporate image and maintain the investment relationship, ensuring the long-term and sound development of the enterprise.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Literature Review on Trust and Discourse Behaviour

2.1.1 Foreign Literature Review

Since the 1950s, researchers from abroad working in the fields of psychology, sociology and even economics have begun to conduct in-depth research into the concept of trust. As the intensity of the discussion and the number of studies have increased, so too has the enthusiasm for exploring trust. In the past, the research on trust also attracted the attention of some researchers in the field of linguistics. However, the results of their research were not particularly fruitful. Nevertheless, the passage of time has yielded some results, despite the fact that the linguistic method of trust research is not yet fully mature.

The perspectives and new findings of foreign researchers on trust and discourse behaviour are numerous and can be broadly categorised into four levels.

Firstly, studies have been conducted which describe the relationship between trust and discourse. Garfinkel (1963) posits that trust is a necessary condition for human social interaction and that discourse plays an important role in human communication and interaction. Verschueren and Brisard concur with Grice's viewpoint that trust constitutes 'conversation co-operation' and propose the concept of 'conversation co-operation'. Verschueren and Brisard concur with Grice's assertion that trust is a fundamental aspect of conversational cooperation and posit that trust is a crucial element in everyday speech behaviour (Verschueren & Brisard, 2009). These scholars are pioneering researchers in the field of trust and discourse behaviour.

Secondly, there are a number of theoretical and empirical models that have been developed to explain the role of trust and discourse behaviour in social interaction. Mayer et al. (1995) proposed a tripartite classification of trust, comprising discourse effects, communicative behaviour and discourse as text. In 1995, Fuoli and Paradis built upon the work of Mayer et al. by using the letter published by the CEO of BP following the Gulf of Mexico crude oil spill as the basis for their research. They constructed a discourse model of trust restoration, which provided a theoretical framework for subsequent scholars in the field of trust in discourse.

A further study of trust and discourse is conducted from an institutional perspective. Scholars employ multimodal discourse analysis and systemic functional linguistics, situating themselves within institutions such as government, healthcare, education and news media, to investigate how trust is constructed through discourse (Pelsmaekers et al., 2014). Such studies provide a foundation for subsequent researchers who seek to undertake a comprehensive examination of trust and discourse from institutional perspectives.

Finally, studies have been conducted on the strategies employed to construct trust. Fuoli and Hart adopted a controlled experimental approach to analyse the role and effectiveness of trust-constructing strategies in corporate discourse (Fuoli & Hart, 2018). Sudajit-apa explored how the Thai Prime Minister used stance markers in his weekly televised speeches to build a relationship of trust with the public based on the framework of critical discourse analysis (Sudajit-apa, 2019). These scholars investigate trust and discourse behaviour, elucidating sophisticated strategies for the construction of trust. Their work contributes to the advancement of knowledge in the field of linguistic resources.

2.1.2 Domestic Literature Review

The investigation of trust and discourse behaviour by domestic scholars commenced at a relatively late stage, resulting in a corpus of research findings that exhibit a notable degree of homogeneity. The majority of domestic research in this field is concerned with two distinct lines of enquiry. The first of these is the analysis of existing discourse models of trust repair, while the second is the construction of new discourse models of trust repair from a pragmatic perspective.

From a pragmatic perspective, Wu Ying and Wang Xueyu (2019) examined the process of trust construction in the discourse behaviour of doctor-patient interactions, thereby establishing a reference point for domestic discourse analysis research on doctor-patient interactions. Subsequently, Wang Xueyu and Liu Daoying (2019) reconstructed Fuoli and Paradis's (2014) trust repair discourse model for subsequent researchers to draw upon, and conducted an in-depth study of the trust repair strategy employed by BP's president in the letter to shareholders, based on this new reconstructed model. The study indicates that the functions of 'emphasising the positive' and 'neutralising the negative' in the model are to construct corporate competence and highlight corporate quality, respectively. Furthermore, the incorporation of 'appealing to emotions' in the revised model is employed to convey corporate goodwill. The 'appeal to emotion' is a new addition to the model, and is used to express corporate goodwill. Subsequently, Chen Xi (2022) employed Wang Xueyu's and Liu Daoying's revised trust repair discourse model to investigate doctor-patient interaction discourse. The study focused on the specific content of the trust dimension, discourse strategy and post-speech effect of the discourse in the construction of the doctor-patient trust relationship.

It is evident that the findings of domestic researchers have significantly advanced the understanding of the relationship between trust and discourse, both in theoretical and practical terms. Moreover, they have established a foundation and point of reference for future researchers engaged in similar endeavours. However, it is noteworthy that the aforementioned studies have primarily focused on the examination of trust and discourse behaviour through the lens of foreign language texts. In contrast, only a limited number of scholars in China have delved into the intricacies of trust in discourse as reflected in local texts. This highlights a persisting dearth of comprehensive discourse on the subject within the domestic research landscape.

2.2 A Model of Trust-repair Discourse

In their initial formulation, Mayer et al. distinguished between three levels of trust: 'discourse effects', 'communicative behaviour' and 'discourse as text' (Mayer et al., 1995). Subsequently, Fuoli and Paradis built upon this model, developing a trust repair discourse model (Figure 1) based on the three aforementioned dimensions (Fuoli & Paradis, 2014).

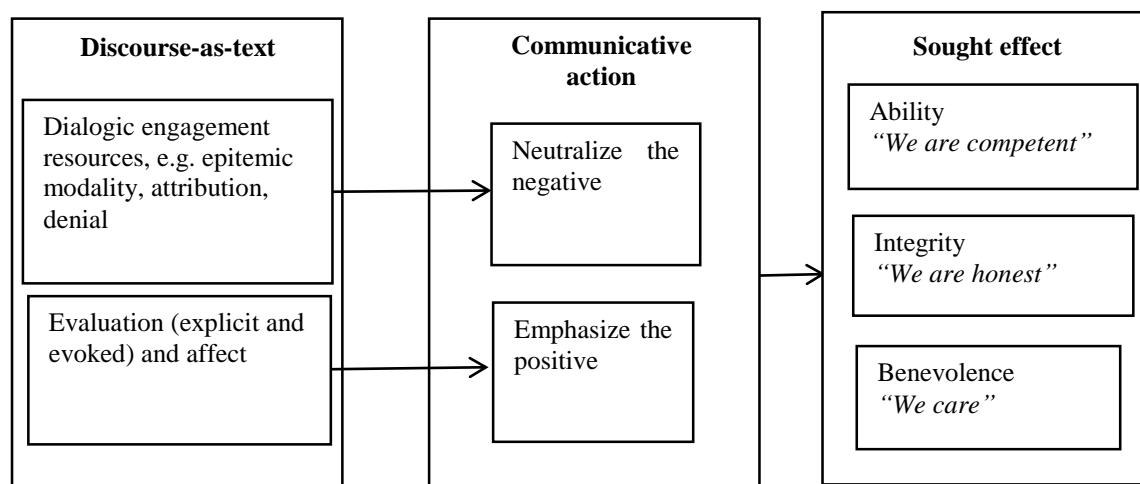


Figure 1

The concept of "sought effective" is comprised of three dimensions of trust: ability, integrity, and benevolence. The term 'ability' is used to describe a party's professional knowledge or skills in a particular area of expertise. It conveys to the audience that 'we are competent'. The term 'integrity' is used to describe a party's moral values, such as integrity. Such values as honesty and fairness are also conveyed, thus promising the audience that "we are honest." Additionally, the degree of concern that one party has for the other, or what is referred to as "benevolence" is also expressed. This conveys to the audience that "we care." The objective of discourse effects is achieved through communicative behaviours that are based on the two main discourse strategies of trust repair, namely

neutralising the negative and emphasizing the positive. The neutralisation of negative information, which entails a prompt and effective response to unfavourable data in order to mitigate its detrimental impact on the enterprise, and the emphasizing positive aspects, which involves a proactive demonstration of the enterprise's favourable image and reputation, are two key discourse strategies. The former discourse strategy, which involves neutralizing the negative, is achieved at the linguistic level with the help of a range of resources, including cognitive mood, attribution, negation markers, discourse markers and turn-taking discourse markers (Martin & White, 2008). The latter discourse strategy, which emphasizes the positive, is achieved through the use of similar resources. The latter discourse strategy of 'emphasizing the positive' is achieved through the linguistic resources of adjectives expressing evaluative and affective meanings. This model provides a framework for the study of trust repair discourse and a paradigm for scholars to continue to explore in depth the mechanisms of trust repair and the discourse strategies underlying it.

The discourse model of trust repair proposed by Fuoli and Paradis provides an excellent framework for this study; however, there is scope for improvement in the categories of 'communicative behaviour' and 'discourse effects' within the model. Firstly, the model does not take into account the purpose of discourse, which is the reason for speech production (Liao, 2005). It is therefore recommended that the 'communicative acts' of the study be centred on the purpose, with a particular focus on the specific discourse acts and their relationship to the purpose of the discourse. Furthermore, it should be noted that 'discourse effect' is not determined by the speaker alone, but also by the audience. In light of this, it can be argued that the results of the construction are somewhat deficient and in need of improvement.

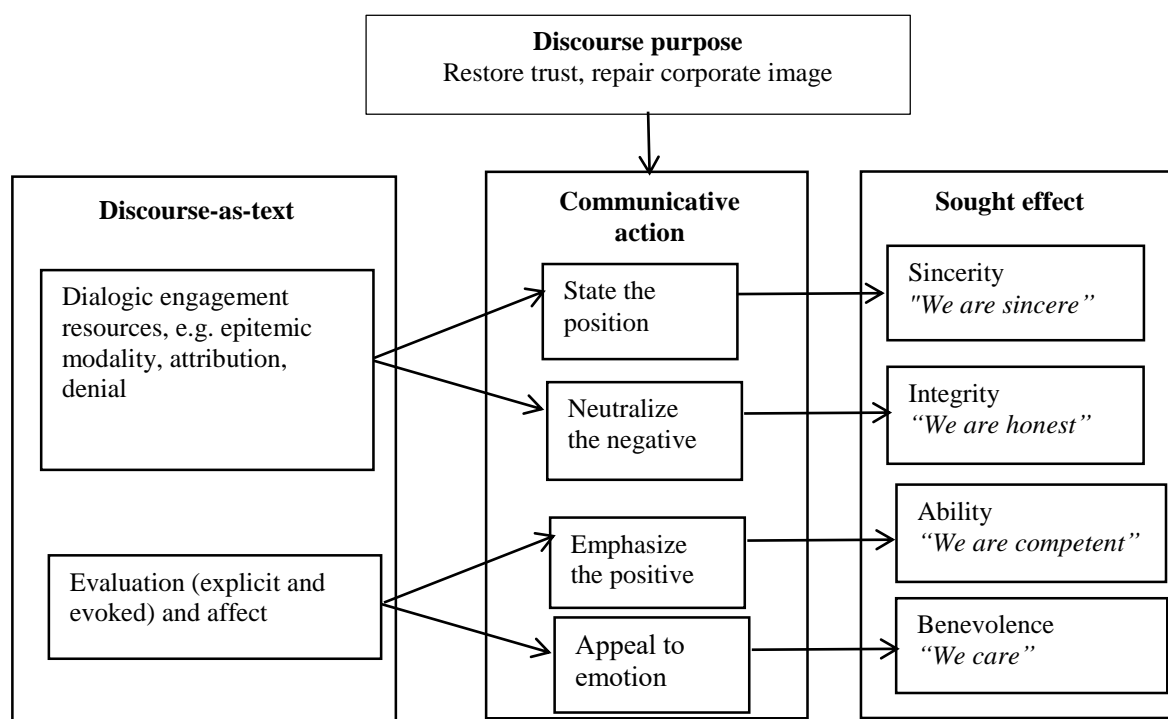


Figure 2

In conclusion, this study will utilize the model of trust-repair discourse constructed by Fuoli and Paradis (2014) as a foundation and refer to the framework model reconstructed by Xueyu Wang and Daoying Liu (2019). The discourse content and form of the internal corporate letter will be emphasized, and the 'Sought effects' that need to be conveyed to the audience groups will be highlighted. This will enable the construction of a new framework model (Figure 2). The new framing model is presented in Figure 2. The framework examines the discursive behaviours of internal letters from enterprises in a crisis within a specific context and socio-cultural context. It begins with the purpose of trust repair discourse, which determines the dimensions of trust repair. This is achieved through the use of the following strategies: 'state the position', 'neutralizing the negative', 'emphasizing the positive', and 'appeal to emotion'. The discursive behaviours of "state the position," "neutralizing the negative," "emphasizing the positive," and "appealing to emotions" are employed to establish and repair the "sincerity," "integrity," "benevolence," and "ability" of the company. The objective is to gain audience support by demonstrating competence and goodwill. Discourse acts are constituted by the use of intervening resources, including cognitive moods, attributive and negative markers, and linguistic resources that express evaluative

(explicit or implicit) and affective meanings.

2.3 Internal Corporate Correspondence

The primary focus of domestic research in business letters is the study of letter writing (Fan Jiying, 2019), the comprehensive examination of business text translation (Gao Limin and Liu Jinlong, 2014), and the analysis of business correspondence corpora (Fang Junxia, 2021). A review of the existing literature reveals that while a considerable body of research has been conducted on the external business correspondence of enterprises, there is a notable gap in the study of their internal correspondence. In light of the aforementioned considerations, this study endeavors to examine the discursive strategies employed by the internal correspondence of Pinduoduo, ByteDance, Huawei, and Jingdong Mall in response to adverse public opinion. Through discourse analysis, it aims to offer valuable insights for future researchers engaged in in-depth explorations of internal correspondence.

3. RESEARCH ANALYSIS

On 31 July 2018, Pinduoduo Chairman and CEO Huang Zheng was subjected to a rare public opinion attack. This involved the promotion of a number of products that had never appeared on the Pinduoduo platform. These included items such as 'Pinduoduo rotary razor', 'Pinduoduo door lock type camera' and 'Pinduoduo small piece of black mask'. The promotion of these products was carried out through organised postings on the Internet. In response, Huang Zheng released a letter to employees. He urged them to adhere to their core competencies and to view even malicious attacks with benevolence. At noon on 3 August 2020, Zhang Yiming, the founder of ByteDance, distributed a letter to the entire company in response to the TikTok's U.S. business facing the issue of being forced to sell. He also retraced the encounters of TikTok in North America. In the preceding year, the United States has yet to reach a definitive conclusion. On August 22, 2022, Ren Zhengfei, the principal founder and president of Huawei Technologies Co., Ltd., distributed an internal correspondence during a challenging period for research and development. In this letter, he asserted that the company will undergo a qualitative transformation over the next three years and that its business strategy will transition from the pursuit of A shift in focus towards the pursuit of profits and cash flow was also observed. In the same year, 22 November, Jingdong Mall founder, chairman of the board and chief executive officer Liu Qiangdong released an internal letter to all employees, which prompted a national debate. This was in response to negative public opinion expressed by some netizens regarding the commitment of the Jingdong logistics, 'Jingdong will never allow an outsourcing'.

This study employs the internal corporate letter discourse of Huang Zheng (Chairman of Pinduoduo), Zhang Yiming (Founder of ByteDance), Ren Zhengfei (President of Huawei), and Liu Qiangdong (Founder of Jingdong Mall) as its corpus for discourse analysis. This approach enables the examination of their discourse strategies and their role in the construction of trust.

3.1 Discourse Effects Analysis

3.1.1 Sincerity

Sincerity refers to impressing the other party and gaining trust through sincere and honest treatment. In the internal letters of the enterprise, the enterprise leader conveys the attitude position of the enterprise to the staff and readers through sincere words, and draws the distance between the enterprise and the staff closer, so as to win the trust of the enterprise and the readers. For example:

(1) We practice the corporate philosophy of 'one day Jingdong people, life-long Jingdong love' with practical actions! ('Jingdong internal letter')

(2) We are all together is fate, can meet Pinduoduo is our luck, to be brave to take responsibility, continue to bear the questioning and even wrongdoing. (Pinduoduo Letter to Employees)

(3) Our life breathing period is 2023 and 2024, these two years we can not break out, now is not sure, so each mouth should not tell the story again, must talk about the realisation, first of all to live, live there is a future!. ('Huawei internal letter')

In the eyes of the masses, action is far better than eloquence. Words such as 'practical action,' 'taking responsibility,' and 'breaking through' show the company's commitment to solving immediate problems.

Demonstrates the company's sincerity and determination to resolve the public opinion situation at hand. By publishing an internal letter, the company announces its future plans in a low-cost and widely distributed manner. Every reader who is deeply affected will become a monitor, thus promoting the fulfilment of the company's promises and building a relationship of trust between the two parties. 3.1.2 Integrity

The relationship between quality and trust involves the identification of the trusting party with the quality of the trusted party's enterprise. In internal communications, companies tend to emphasise their unique qualities in order to neutralise the crisis of trust caused by negative public opinion, and their good qualities underline the good image of the company. For example:

(4) Deppon's existing employees, whether outsourced or owned, are our brothers. Since 1 January 2023, we have gradually paid all the five insurance and one gold for more than 100,000 Deppon brothers to ensure that each Deppon brother can 'have a sense of security in old age and medical care for the sick', and to provide basic protection for our brothers. ('Jingdong internal staff letter')

(5) To embrace the public and the supervision of competing pairs, ignore the volatility of the stock price, and take out the spirit of nails to solve practical problems one by one in a solid manner. ('Pinduoduo's Letter to Employees')

(6) As always, our team is especially united in times of difficulty, and everyone is optimistic and resilient. ('Letter to All Employees from ByteDance')

In the above examples, Liu coincides with the portrayal of social construction to improve people's livelihoods in the report of the 17th Party Congress, highlighting his strong sense of social responsibility. The socially hotly debated challenge of salary protection for grassroots employees, especially outsourced employees, is resolved in the content of this letter. With the accumulation of trust in the company, the bond of trust between employees and the company is getting stronger. Jingdong's move has set a benchmark for the industry in terms of management addressing the issue of pay protection for grassroots employees, neutralising negative comments and creating a good image of the company as being approachable and reliable. Pinduoduo and ByteDance have respectively highlighted the good corporate qualities of nail spirit and optimism and resilience, which have neutralised the negative sentiments of consumers and users towards them and built a good corporate image of honesty and reliability.

3.1.3 Ability

Enterprise capability is the sum of the internal resources of an enterprise that are integrated, coordinated and effective in achieving its goals, mainly including operational capability, management capability and technological innovation capability. The establishment of enterprise capability system gives enterprises an advantage to keep their position in the fierce market. Demonstrating competence is an important means for enterprises to emphasise positive aspects in their internal communications. For example:

(7) After more than a decade of burying our heads in the sand, Jingdong has finally ushered in an important moment of full profitability, which demonstrates that our long-term strategy of focusing on customer experience is correct, and that our team's adherence to long-termism and down-to-earth execution of the company's strategy is effective. ('Jingdong's internal all-employee letter')

(8) We will do everything we can to protect TikTok's unique presence and want the TikTok user experience to be unaffected. ('ByteDance All-Hands Letter')

'Fully Profitable' and "Doing Our Best" show the recognition of Jingdong Mall and ByteDance of their own corporate capabilities. The two appropriately show their corporate ability and highlight their corporate strength, which can highlight the emphasis on positive corporate evaluation. With their own unilateral recognition to drive the multi-dimensional recognition of staff and readers, to restore the trust of consumers and users of the enterprise, so as to achieve the miraculous effect of repairing the corporate image.

3.1.4 Benevolence

Goodwill means that the trusting party believes that the trusted party will do what is right for him or her or fulfil

his or her needs, rather than seeking only personal gain. Communicating goodwill to employees is an integral and important part of internal corporate letters. For example:

(9) To firmly grasp the consumer-oriented, from the consumer's most immediate point of interest, start to change, and continue to change. ('Poundland's Letter to Employees')

(10) The Group has put aside RMB 10 billion to set up a 'housing security fund' for all the Group's grassroots employees, including all the Deppon brothers, and I hope that this move will realise the desire to buy a home for all employees who have worked for more than five years, including every courier brother and customer service brother. ('Jingdong internal all-employee letter')

Consideration from the perspective of consumers and employees of the enterprise, in order to effectively seek their interests. It is because Pinduoduo and Jingdong Mall for the interests of consumers and employees and initiative to give up the vested interests of enterprises, in order to better strengthen the bridge of trust with consumers and employees.

3.2 Discourse Behaviour Analysis

3.2.1 State the position

Position is the position and attitude in recognising and dealing with problems. In internal corporate communications, it is extremely important to take a position in good faith and at the right time. The root causes of the crisis of confidence can be explored from a number of positions, but an enterprise's position should be in line with the country, contributing to the society, serving the people and improving itself. For example:

(11) Our team's adherence to long-termism and down-to-earth execution of the company's strategy is effective. ('Internal All-employee Letter of BOE')

(12) We must stick to our roots and seek to blame ourselves first in the face of doubts. ('Poundland's Letter to Employees')

(13) We will not treat it as a lifeless asset. In the process, we will do our best to protect TikTok's unique existence and hope that TikTok's user experience will remain unaffected. (ByteDance All Hands Letter)

Liu Qiangdong shows that he recognises the company's strategy through the data in its annual report; Huang Zheng believes that companies should be humble and uphold an attitude of introspection; and Zhang Yiming confesses that he will spare no effort to preserve TikTok's user experience. The three companies firmly stated their positions, responding to public opinion while laying the foundation for the companies' next short-term goals. Sincere candour will ultimately win the trust of consumers.

3.2.2 Neutralize the Negative

In internal corporate letters, companies often neutralise negativity to reduce the extent of damage to the trust relationship caused by negative information, while at the same time suggesting the good qualities of the company from the side, which has an excellent effect of trust restoration under its dual action. This type of discourse often uses negative markers and transitive discourse markers. For example:

(14) I hope the executives will understand and support this decision! I'm sorry for these two dry and more executives brothers, I apologise to you! If, within two years, Jingdong's performance returns to high growth, the Group can restore everyone's cash compensation at any time. ('Jingdong internal all staff letter')

(15) One-sided positive is not what we are pursuing, and one-sided negative is never the real Pinduoduo. ('Pinduoduo's Letter to Employees')

(16) CFIUS has determined that ByteDance must sell TikTok's U.S. business, despite our repeated emphasis that we are a private company and our willingness to pursue more technical options to address concerns. (ByteHop All Hands Letter)

A relative balance was struck by significantly increasing investment in grassroots employees while decreasing

spending on senior employees. Although the decision is very wise and forward-looking from an objective point of view, Liu Qiangdong still sincerely apologised to the executives who had their salaries reduced in a low profile, which won the goodwill of all employees and netizens; Huang Zheng flexibly used negative markers to imply that the public opinion was one-sided and false accusations, and appealed to netizens to objectively and dialectically look at such inaccurate information; and Zhang Yiming reduced the negative impact of the fact that he had to sell the TikTok US business by using transitive discourse markers. business.

3.2.3 Emphasize the Positive

At the linguistic level, speakers achieve the purpose of emphasising the positive through evaluative resources. Evaluative resources are linguistic expressions used to evaluate specific people, objects and events positively or negatively (Zhang Lijiao 2017). In internal corporate letters, the emphasis on positive images is a recipe for internalising corporate competence and externalising corporate image. For example:

(17) TikTok has become part of the global culture, serving as a window, canvas, and bridge for users. Hundreds of millions of users gather on the platform we've built to create, connect with each other, and bring users a lot of joy and information. (ByteDance All Hands Letter)

(18) I think you have seen the third quarter results or briefings released by the Group as well as Logistics and Health one after another! (Jingdong internal all staff letter')

Zhang Yiming and Liu Qiangdong use the number of users and excellent performance to deepen employees' and readers' positive impression of the company, while at the same time reflecting from the side that the company has great strength, thus deepening its positive image of the company again.

3.2.4 Appeal to emotion

Appealing to emotional behaviours can convey corporate good intentions and empathy. When communicating with others in a particular linguistic context, speakers should pay attention to the material and spiritual needs of the other party, respect and understand the other party, and satisfy their needs (Ran Yongping 2007). In internal letters, companies should think differently from the perspective of employees and consumers, appealing to emotions and conveying goodwill. For example:

(19) Even if you work for Jingdong (including Deppon, etc.) for one day, whether because of work-related or non-work-related injuries, as long as there is a major misfortune resulting in the loss of the ability to work or the loss of life, your children will be supported by this fund up to the age of 22 years old until they graduate from college! (BOE internal all-employee letter)

(20) Even malicious attacks should be interpreted with kindness. ('Pinduoduo's Letter to Employees')

Liu Qiangdong and Huang Zheng's commitment presents the enterprise practically putting heart and soul with employees and consumers, revealing the enterprise's pattern consciousness and humanistic care. From a humanitarian point of view, the two companies empathise with their employees and consumers, avoiding a series of contradictions and insurmountable gaps caused by the formation of confrontation at the emotional level. The corporate image established by the genuine feelings exuded by the companies is extremely humane.

Since Pinduoduo was listed in the United States in 2018, the issue price has soared from \$19 per share to \$92.17 per share today; ByteDance and Jingdong Mall's public opinion has dissipated, and they have once again become enterprises trusted by the nation; and Huawei has fulfilled the common expectations of the Chinese people by developing the Kirin chip, which is uniquely China's own. Undoubtedly, enterprises can not turn from danger to safety without the help of internal letters. The above analysis of the discourse of internal corporate letters issued by Pinduoduo, ByteDance, Huawei and Jingdong Mall verifies the feasibility of the new model of trust repair discourse constructed in this study and the applicability of the model to the new field of internal corporate letter practice.

4. CONCLUSION

This study employs the recently developed trust discourse repair model to analyse the internal corporate

correspondence issued by the executives of Pinduoduo, ByteDance, Huawei and Jingdong Mall in response to negative public opinion. This constitutes the corpus for the discourse analysis. It can be observed that the executives utilise the aforementioned discourse behaviours in order to highlight the aforementioned dimensions and effects of trust, as well as to facilitate effective communication, alleviate the trust crisis, and repair the image of trust. This is done with the help of the discourse behaviours of taking a stand, neutralising negativity, emphasising positivity, and appealing to emotions, in accordance with the purpose of the discourse, which is to regain the trust of the audience and repair the corporate image. It is recommended that in the future, enterprises in crisis consider the model and discourse strategy of this study as a potential reference point for the creation of more effective internal letters, with the aim of turning the situation around, repairing trust and rebuilding their image.

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