Discourse, Politics and Media in Contemporary China

Edited by Qing Cao, Hailong Tian and Paul Chilton

After three and a half decades of economic reforms, radical changes have occurred in all aspects of life in China. In an authoritarian society, these changes are mediated significantly through the power of language, carefully controlled by the political elites. Discourse, as a way of speaking and doing things, has become an indispensable instrument for the authority to manage a fluid, increasingly fragmented, but highly dynamic and yet fragile society. Written by an international team of leading scholars, this volume examines socio-political transformations of contemporary Chinese society through a systematic account, analysis and assessment of its salient discourses and their production, circulation, negotiation, and consequences. In particular, the volume focuses on the interplay of politics and media. The book’s intended readership is academics and students of Chinese studies, language and discourse, and media and communication studies.

Table of contents
Introduction: Legitimisation, resistance and discursive struggles in contemporary China
Qing Cao

Part 1: Political discourse
Chapter 1. Disembodied words: The ritualistic quality of political discourse in the era of Jiang Zemin
Maurizio Marinelli
Chapter 2. ‘Stability overwhelms everything’: Analysing the legitimating effect of the stability discourse since 1989
Peter Sandby-Thomas
Chapter 3. A decade of change in China: A corpus-based discourse analysis of ten government work reports
Yufang Qian and Hailong Tian
Chapter 4. It’s a small world after all? Simulating the future world order at the Shanghai Expo
Florian Schneider

Part 2: Media discourse
Chapter 5. Discourse of journalism and legitimacy in post-reform China
Imgrong Tong
Chapter 6. China’s Road to Revival: “Writing” the PRC’s struggles for modernization
Florian Schneider and Yih-je Hwang
Chapter 7. China’s soft power: Formulations, contestations and communication
Qing Cao
Chapter 8. Issues in discourse approach to social transformations in China: A synopsis
Hailong Tian and Paul Chilton

Author biography
Index

“This book is to be welcomed as a contribution to elucidating important discursive aspects of the major transformations which are taking place in China.”

Norman Fairclough, Lancaster University

“This discourse, Politics and Media in Contemporary China offers a radical, innovative and timely analysis of the production and flow of discourses in modern China. Drawing together a wide range of perspectives from a team of renowned international scholars, this volume is an important contribution to our understanding of how communications, the media and politics interact with, and impact on each other in the PRC.”

Gary Rawnsley, University of Aberystwyth, UK

“Every polity has its political language, often opaque to those outside the policy world, yet something which analysts need to construe. None more so than China’s, where the world’s oldest tradition of statecraft has been infused with communist discourse and is being further injected with the jargon of market liberalism. Understanding this lore is essential to interpreting the country’s political direction and its leaders’ rationalisations. These scholars have given us invaluable multidisciplinary exegeses of many aspects of this fascinating subject.”

Hugo de Burgh, University of Westminster | Tsinghua University