

Article

## **A Generic Analysis of Prison Police Discourse and Prisoner Education from the Ecolinguistic Perspective**

**Changyou Zhao\***

Southwest University, China  
Qujing Normal University, China

**Chengyu Liu**

Southwest University, China

### **Abstract**

This article aims to analyze how prison police achieve the goal of rehabilitating prisoners, i.e., prisoner education, by using the staged prison discourse, particularly prison police discourse (hereafter PPD) from the perspective of ecolinguistics. Crime is the social phenomenon and disservice action which may directly or indirectly bring about detrimental effects to the parts concerned. Rehabilitating prisoners by using PPD is an efficient way to help decrease the detrimental effects of crime and rehabilitation is an essential part of state governance and social administration. The rehabilitation processes of eighteen prison policemen using PPD at Q prison in Y province of southwestern China have been recorded and transcribed for a generic analysis from an ecological perspective. The results reveal that PPD, as a special type of institutional discourse, is the main media for prisoners' rehabilitation and characterized with generic features and functions. The ecolinguistic perspective for the generic analysis of PPD offers criteria to evaluate its usefulness, especially for rehabilitating prisoners: (1) PPD that construes favorable ecology for prisoners' mental and behavioral restoration is ecolinguistically labelled as the constructive discourse to be advocated because the prisoners can be efficiently rehabilitated by making use of this kind of PPD; (2) PPD that damages the ecology for the prisoners' rehabilitation is ecolinguistically labelled as the destructive discourse to be rejected because it brings ill influence on prisoners' rehabilitation; and (3) PPD that neither construes nor damages the ecology for prisoners' rehabilitation is ecolinguistically labelled as the ambivalent discourse to be modified into a constructive one with the help of discursive strategies.

### **Keywords**

Ecolinguistics, generic analysis, prisoner education, prison police discourse

## **1 Introduction**

Crime can be both detrimental to the society and to the individuals who are involved in it. *The prison*

---

### **\*Corresponding Author**

Address: Rd. Sanjiang, District of Economics and Development, Qujing Yunnan, 655011, China  
Email: zhaochangyou1976@163.com

*law of the People's Republic of China* (2012) states that the primary goals of a prison are to rehabilitate prisoners efficiently and to decrease crime rates, which is also the mission for prison police who primarily accomplish these goals by using various PPD.

The methods and vehicles concerned with prisoners' education and reform are also stipulated in three Articles in *The prison law of the People's Republic of China* (2012):

a prison shall, with regard to prisoners, implement the principle of combining punishment with reform and combining education with labor, in order to transform them into law-abiding citizens; a prison shall exercise supervision and control over prisoners according to law, and shall, in accordance with needs of reforming prisoners, organize prisoners to engage in productive labor and conduct ideological, cultural and technical education among prisoners; activities in prison administration, execution criminal punishment, and education and reform of prisoners conducted according to law by the people's police of a prison shall be protected by law. (Articles 3, 4 and 5)

These three Articles clearly define punishment, reform, education, and labor as the primary methods for prisoners' education and reform. The purpose for prisoners' rehabilitation is to reform them into law-abiding citizens. Education, including psychological, cultural, and technical education, plays a key role in achieving prisoner reform. Discourse between the prison police and prisoners is the main media for the successful implementation of the prisoners' education and reform.

Prison police mainly achieve the goal of educating and reforming prisoners by using PPD<sup>1</sup>, one of the varieties of prison discourse<sup>2</sup>. PPD is thus the primary vehicle and content for prison police to accomplish prisoners' rehabilitation. For the vehicle, all the rehabilitating activities concerned with prisoner education must be carried out through PPD; for the content, the education and reform of prisoners' appropriate use of language both for the prison situation and for society after their release make a great part in prisoner education. In other words, prisoners' proper use of language is also prison police's contents for rehabilitation or education. However, even today we still know little about prison discourse or the usefulness of prison discourse, and even less about the generic features or functions of PPD used to educate prisoners. This analysis of PPD from the ecolinguistic perspective is to provide relatively objective criteria for the judgement of its efficiency in prisoner education and reform.

## 2 Literature on Ecolinguistics and Penitentiary Education

Sociologists pay more attention to the effects of environment on behavior patterns and ways of thinking. Stevens (2012) argues that "much of our behavior patterns and ways of thinking still reflect our adaptation to the type of environment...our bodies remember their shared evolutionary history and are still connecting to the origins of the species of animal we call human" (p. 581). More scholars find the direct influence of environment on delinquent behaviour like crime. For example, Kuo and Sullivan (2001) claim that "as a society we find less crime in areas where trees and vegetation are abundant" (p.365). Masters, Hone, and Doshi (1998) have analyzed crime figures from the FBI (Federal Bureau of Investigation) and information on industrial discharges of lead and manganese, and they found that environmental pollution seems to have a major effect on the rate of violent crimes. These studies all indicate that environment, natural or social, has direct or indirect effects on human minds and actions.

The field of ecolinguistics began with a metaphor when Haugen (1972) spoke of "interactions between any given language and its environment" (p. 325), where they compare the interaction to the ecological relations between animals and plants in and with their environment. Fill (2001) calls this metaphor mode or Haugen mode in ecolinguistics research. A different pattern of ecolinguistics research was established by Halliday (1990) in the speech entitled *New ways of meaning: The challenge to applied linguistics* at the AILA conference where they commented on the connection between language and

growthism, classism, and speciesism, which caused the development and aggravation of environmental problems. Halliday (1990) stressed the importance or role of language in solving ecological issues and environmental problems. The mode in ecolinguistics research put forward by Halliday is named the non-metaphor mode or Halliday mode, which proposes the key idea of arousing and developing language users' awareness of the issues related to environmental crisis or ecology, and the final goal of this mode is to trigger ecological behavior by using proper language. Both Haugen (1972) and Halliday (1990) share the emphasis on the connection between language and environment.

The ecological system consists of both the natural ecological system and the social ecological system which are equally important for the human society (Bookchin, 1981). Some of the theories in the former system are applicable in the latter system because both share the essence of an ecological system. Matthiessen (2009) holds that the research objective of ecolinguistics includes the social ecology of language and the ecological environment of society. Therefore, the ecolinguistic perspective is a viable approach to research on the social ecological system. In accordance with the theory of ecolinguistics, humans live in an environment in which language is one of its most important constituent elements. The methods of analyzing discourse from an ecolinguistic perspective developed into a trend in discourse analysis, namely Ecological Analysis of Discourse (Alexander & Stibbe, 2014). Alexander and Stibbe claim that ecolinguistics does not merely focus on such topics related to environment as environmental discourse, or the influence of the extinction of language on the ecology of human linguistic system (Levasseur, 2015), but it can be employed to analyze those discourses which are not directly related to environment or environmental crisis aiming at the development of our ecological awareness and triggering ecological behavior.

In this article, the prison system is seen as a social ecological system in society and the authors hold the belief that language, environment, and crime are closely connected and language can be a viable tool for solving problems related to crime; this is because language can be used to construe a favorable environment which meets consensus statements for healthy prisons laid out by the World Health Organization (1999): respect and dignity for prisoners, opportunities for purposeful activity, preparation for resettlement and a safe environment. For ecological research on discourse, or the ecolinguistic study of discourse, Naess (1995) holds that some standards and principles for the ecological analysis of discourse should be proposed so that the analysis will be carried out by following criteria used to decide the categorization of discourse. These standards and principles are the ecosophy (Naess, 1995) for the ecolinguistic study of discourse either directly related to environment or not. Stibbe (2015) claims that the ecological properties of the discourse can be recognized by referring to the ecosophy employed by discourse analysts during the process of conducting ecological discourse analysis so that the discourse can be classified into beneficial discourse, destructive discourse, or ambivalent discourse. Favorable ecological behavior can be accomplished by the advocacy of beneficial discourse, the avoidance of destructive discourse, and the transformation of ambivalent discourse. The ecosophy, to some degree, offers relatively objective standards for the categorization of the discourse analyzed. In this article, a generic analysis of the features and functions of PPD from the ecolinguistic perspective will be based on the following ecosophy: appropriate rehabilitation, just punishment, moral cultivation, successful return, and initiative accountability. This ecosophy is put forward by the clear understanding of the history and functions of Chinese prisons and Chinese traditional culture and it offers the criteria to assess whether the ecology construed through PPD is favorable for prisoners' mental and behavioral restoration as moral citizens. The usefulness of PPD can be clearly judged by checking whether PPD is the ecological element that helps construe a favorable ecology for prisoners' rehabilitation or not. Finally, we may apply the genre of beneficial PPD to further improve prisoners' rehabilitation quality.

Most prisoner education has been studied from psychological, criminological, ethnographic, and/or judicial issues. Psychologically, Marzano (2016) finds that a prisoner's self-harm is a means of releasing tension, sadness, and frustration and of being heard within an unresponsive system. Gueta and Chen's

(2016) study which examines female offenders' accounts of their pathways to substance abuse and crime and the intersection between them, indicates that the absence of a cultural discourse which encompasses the female complex of gender, victimization, and agency. A criminological case study by Hart (2016) shows that female prisoners' motivation and desire to desist from crime post-release are hindered by a responsabilization discourse and a severe lack in all forms of capital (social, cultural, economic, and symbolic). The fact that short-timers could only draw on two meager resources (family and penitentiary) to meet their aspiration is found in an ethnographic study of short-timers by Seim (2016). The literature on prison education from various perspectives indicates that several measures are currently being tried to reform prisoners. Prisoner education, or desistance from crime, involves more than psychological, criminological, ethnographic, or judicial issues, and it can be resolved from an ecolinguistic perspective through the analysis of penitentiary discourse, particularly the relationship between prisoner education and penitentiary discourse, especially PPD.

The current study reports the relationship of the generic analysis of PPD from the perspective of ecolinguistics to prisoner education. Owing to the general lack of literature in this area, the purpose of the study is to: 1) recognize the constructive, destructive, and ambivalent elements of PPD based on the ecosophy for the analysis of PPD; 2) identify the generic features of PPD, especially the constructive PPD; and 3) to find the correlation between PPD of the types recognized and the efficiency of prisoner education.

### **3 Research Methodology**

A prison is a special and separate institute that prevents ordinary people from getting close to it; further, the system does not normally allow researchers to collect data and conduct research within it, which makes research on this topic difficult. The research team for this paper, fortunately, invites some of the prison police who are not only working in the prison named Q in Y province located in southwestern China, but those who are interested in the improvement of prisoner education through the generic analysis of the discourse used by prison police to rehabilitate prisoners. The prison is further divided into isolated units by more walls in the prison and each unit houses about 300 prisoners whose daily lives take place within the unit. The prisoners in the isolated units are not allowed to move beyond the gate of their units. Twenty or thirty prisoners are grouped in a sub-unit in which two or three prisoners will work as a team. The prisoners in a team will monitor each other's behavior, and they are scored and graded based on their rehabilitation performance according to various assessing rules and regulations, which helps them learn to cooperate with each other and form rule/law-abiding habits. The prisoners' style of wearing clothes, use of language, behaviors, and other daily performance are strictly regulated by rules, regulations, and laws to make them form habits suitable for mainstream society.

The research is conducted based on the data collected from one study focusing on the linguistic features and social functions of PPD funded by Project of Philosophy and Social Science Foundation of Y province and the prison police work as both members of the project and mentors for the research team; they helped the research project go smoothly due to their guidance of the procedures and their help collecting data on PPD.

The research is conducted through a piloting survey outside Q prison and field work inside the prison. The piloting survey informed us of the operation of a prison and helped us become familiar with the rules and regulations for staff working in a prison. The field work of the research brought us close to the routine work and daily lives of prisoners and prison police and was implemented through an empirical qualitative method by means of convenience sampling which covered the process of 18 prison officers' rehabilitation of 18 male inmates. We spent three months recording and observing the prison officers' rehabilitation of the prisoners in three units in the prison. The recorded data consists of 266 minutes and 13 seconds of audio, which was transcribed into more than 60 thousand Chinese characters.

The average number of years the prison police have practiced the rehabilitation of prisoners professionally in the prison is 10 years and their average literacy level is above college. According to the inmates' files in Q prison, they are felons who were sentenced to more than 20 years in prison because they had committed such crimes as murder, drug smuggling, armed robbery, and rape. Most inmates have a literacy level below junior middle school.

The instrument for research is spot observation with note taking. The researcher observed and recorded the prison officers' processes of rehabilitation through their discourse with prisoners. The data treatment is theme analysis of meaning units from the transcribed data. Dialect, slang, or colloquial language in PPD and prisoners' discourse in the transcribed data will be kept to maintain their authenticity. Difficulties in understanding the discourse caused by the dialect, slang, or colloquial language will be explained in Mandarin with endnotes throughout the process of analyzing the data. The ecolinguistic analysis of PPD from 18 prison officers has been roughly conducted by referring to the ecosophy. The discourse between prison officer C and prisoner Z which was labelled as DCZ has been chosen as a case study. DCZ represents the typical PPD and it covers almost all the generic discursive features and functions as constructive PPD judged from the ecosophy for the analysis. The discourse is to be divided into sections according to the content and themes and different sections chosen for the case study are translated into English. Some of the information not affecting the analysis and interpretation of the discourse in each section has been omitted due to the length limitation of the article. The generic features and functions of the discourse will be interpreted by closely following the ecosophy of analyzing PPD to decide the constructive, destructive, or ambivalent elements in the discourse. DCZ can be partly revised as a model for constructive PPD for prison police to follow while rehabilitating prisoners.

The research covers the following steps: firstly, the research team is issued a letter of recommendation from the Academic Ethics Review Committee at the university where the researcher is working and the letter states clearly the exclusively academic use of the data obtained from the research and the protection of prisoner and police privacy; secondly, with the prison officers' help, we get to know the details about the rules and disciplines within the prison and the research team are granted the documents from the prison authority for the permission to enter the prison and to observe the prison officers' processes of educating prisoners; thirdly, the processes of prisoner education is recorded on the spot and the researcher takes notes for unspoken information for discourse analysis such as gestures and facial expressions which cannot be recorded; fourthly, the recording data are transcribed mainly following the rules employed by Eggins and Slade (1997) for conversation analysis; and finally, the transcribed linguistic materials are labelled for generic and ecolinguistic analysis.

## 4 Findings and Discussion

The authors were able to collect first-hand data of PPD by observing and recording prison officers' processes of rehabilitating prisoners because we were funded by the research project on PPD and authorized by the prison authority to observe and participate in the prisoners' education and reforming activities in Q prison.

As a special type of institutional discourse, PPD has generic features to define it as a distinctive genre. The concept of genre originates in literary studies but, it has been used in the fields of functional linguistics to describe the discursive features of non-literary texts. Genre is a popular field studied by many scholars from different perspectives (e.g., Eggins & Slade, 1997; Fairclough, 1995; Hasan, 1984; Martin, 1984; Martin & Rose, 2013; Michell, 1957). Hasan (1984), working in the tradition begun by Mitchell (1957), laid the foundations for the theoretical conception of genre. Martin (1984) developed a complementary theory of genre and defined genre as a "staged, goal oriented, purposeful activity in which speakers engage as members of our culture" (p. 25). In their definition, Martin puts forward "goal

and stage” as two essential elements in a genre, which indicates that a genre is a complicated cultural concept which deserves more studies from different perspectives. Martin’s definition of a genre is later elaborated by Eggins and Slade (1997) as follows:

**Staged:** a genre is staged as the meanings are made in steps; it usually takes more than one step for participants to achieve their goals.

**Goal oriented:** a genre is goal oriented in that texts typically move through stages to a point of closure and are considered incomplete if the culmination is not researched.

**Social process:** genres are negotiated interactively and are a realization of a social purpose. (p. 56)

From the perspective of critical discourse analysis, Fairclough (1995) defines a genre as “a socially ratified way of using language in connection with a particular type of social activity” (p. 14). In this definition of a genre, Fairclough points out that “to be social” is one more property of a genre, which is also an important property of discourse. He also clearly states that a genre is one method for making use of language. Eggins and Slade’s (1997) elaboration of Martin’s definition of genre focuses on the social property of a specific genre, which responds to Fairclough’s (1995) emphasis of social practice on discourse.

The discourse used by a prison officer Z to rehabilitate prisoner C (labeled as DZC<sup>3</sup>) was chosen as a case study for a generic analysis of PPD from the perspective of ecolinguistics so that the ecological panorama of the generic features and functions of PPD could be obtained. Generically, the discourse is analyzed to get to know the generic features of PPD explained by Eggins and Slade (1997). Ecolinguistically, the analysis of DZC is to explore whether it is constructive<sup>4</sup> for prisoner education.

(1) (Context: Z is a director of the subsection of Unit A at Q prison who is rehabilitating prisoner C, who is frustrated by the cost of funding his two daughters’ higher education)

Z1: 陈 XX ? (Chen XX<sup>5</sup>?)

C2: 到, 报告警官, 犯人 XX.....(Yes. Officer, inmate XX...)

Z3: 他来呢是, 主要是做一个这种课题研究。(He, the researcher, is here for a project research.)

C4: 嗯, 好好好, 嗯。(Yes, yes.)

(研究者 4= 研究, 跟这个其他的没得任何关系) (Have nothing to do with other purposes.)

C5: 是是, 我还以为是呢提审说, 我一直申诉么 .....(Yes, I misunderstand his coming for my arraignment since I have been appealing.)

**Part I**

Z6: 你这个户勤牌, 是, 掉, 掉了嚒? (How about your prisoner ID card on your coat, lost?)

.....

Z8: 你瞧瞧, 有针么, 喊他们挨你缝一哈嘛, 给是? (Ask someone who has the needle to sew it on your coat for you, ok?)

**Part II**

C9: 好好, 坐在这点 (Well, sit here?)

.....

Z14: 嗯, 嗯, 这个 ...(Eh, this...?)

**Part III**

Z16: 呢, 嗯, 这个找你来呢, 也是确实是有点事情要跟你说, 这个, 之前呢, 你说那个你不是两个姑娘读书, 家里面给是还有老母亲? (Eh, I ask you here because I really have something to talk with you. Eh, several days ago, you told me you have two daughters and they are attending college, and you also have your elder mum at home.)

.....

C27: 嗯, 嗯 ...(Eh, eh...)

**Part IV**

Z28: 你没得兄弟姊妹? (Do you have any brothers or sisters?)

C29: 哎呦, 兄弟姊妹四个么, 全部都死了 ..... (Eh, one brother and two sisters, but they all died...)

**Part V**

Z30: 嗯, 就是来跟你谈这个事情 ... (I ask you here just for this...)

.....

C33: 好好好, 么感谢感谢。(Yeah, thank you very much.)

**Part VI**

Z34: 陈 XX, 你听我讲嘛, 第二个了嘛, 我还要给你交个底, 希望不大 .....(Chen XX, listen to me, secondly, I want to tell you the truth that your appealing is achieved with very low possibility...)

.....

Z46: == 嗯嗯嗯, 呃, 当然, 你能像这样想, 你能像这样挨我说, 那我就不用担心太多 ..... (You may think about it from this point of view and tell me the truth, then I won't worry about you...)

**Part VII**

C47: 哎, 我也只是抱着试试看的 .... 能给我交上, 相当感谢你。(Eh, I only want to have a try...and you could help me hand in the application to the authority, and I really appreciate your help.)

.....

C49: 呦呦, 批下批不下都, 我相当已经感谢你了 .....(Eh, I really thank you whether the application will be approved or not...)

**Part VIII**

Z50: 这个, XX, 你莫激动, 莫激动 .....(XX, don't be so emotional...)

.....

C59: 感谢感谢! (Thank you very much.)

**Part IX**

Z60: 第三个我要说的事情就是这个 .....(Thirdly, what I want to tell you is...)

.....

C63: 嗯, 嗯。(Eh, eh.)

**Part X**

Z64: 但第二个问题, 我还要批评你, 陈 XX。(Moreover, I want to criticize you, Chen XX.)

.....

C93: 是呢是呢。(Yeah...)

**Part XI**

Z94: 当然, 你有, 你有什么困难了, 该来找我提, 么你来找我提。我能改决立马帮你改决, 改决不了, 想办法帮你改决。(Of course, if you encounter any problems, you may turn to me for help and if I can solve them, I will solve them at once; if I can't, I will ask for others' help to solve them.)

.....

C97: 是是是, 支持理解你, 我。(Yeah, I know your situation and ...)

**Part XII**

Z98: 嗯, 行, 么今天就到这点, 给要得。(Ok, so much for this time, ok?)

C99: 么, 报告 X 分警区长, 服刑人员陈, 陈 XX 谈话完毕, 请指示。(Officer Z, the prisoner Chen, Chen XX is finished the discourse for rehabilitation, please give more orders.)

Z100: 好 (Ok.)

**Part XIII**

Martin and Rose (2014) hold that a long discourse can be divided into short sections for detailed analysis according to the contents. The discourse to be analyzed has been divided into 13 sections by following Martin and Rose's suggestions for the analysis of long and complicated discourse. The generic and ecolinguistic features of PPD are to be described and analyzed with the help of the excerpts from DZC as examples.

#### 4.1 Ecolinguistic analysis of staged PPD

Achieving the goal of readapting prisoners to society demands a constellation of social activities accomplished at different stages through PPD. Accomplishing the goal of restoring prisoners' sound mind and law-abiding behavior is so strenuous a goal demanding various social activities to be conducted through different stages. The social activities mentioned in DZC may contribute to the achievement of the goal not just by simply putting them together, but by arranging them strategically according to the purpose for educating and reforming the prisoner through the effective use of PPD. To satisfy the demands of rehabilitating prisoner C in DZC, the prison officer achieved their goal through 13 stages, some of which were optional for different prison police and some were obligatory for the discourse.

As a special genre of institutional discourse, one of the distinctive staged generic features of PPD is its ceremonial beginning and ending stages. As usual, the discourse begins with the officer's unique way of greeting the prisoner by calling their name to indicate that the rehabilitation was about to start and the prisoner should make full preparations including mental and behavioral ones for their rehabilitation, which is illustrated by the following excerpt from DZC:

(2) Z1: 陈 XX ? (Chen XX?)

C2: 到。(Yes.)

At the beginning of the discourse, naming the prisoner is an obligatory stage which serves several functions: it is the starting symbol of this kind of institutional discourse; it tells the prisoner that the process of rehabilitation has been started; and it calls for the prisoner's attention to participate in the rehabilitation process. This stage of the discourse is strongly ceremonial, and we label it as the naming stage.

Correspondingly, the ending stage of DZC is strongly ceremonial and formal with its distinctive form as follows:

(3) C99: 么, 报告 Z 分监区长, 服刑人员陈, 陈 XX 谈话完毕, 请指示。

(Officer Z, the prisoner Chen, Chen XX is finished the discourse for rehabilitation, please give more instructions.)

Z100: 好 (Ok.)

Ceremonially, the prisoner symbolically asks for more instructions from the prison officer though they may not really expect more instruction. Formally, the ending stage in the discourse shows the seriousness of the rehabilitation process. The prisoner must verbally demonstrate initiative for their rehabilitation with a positive attitude at the ending stage of the discourse. This stage is labelled as the reporting stage at which the prisoner reports their current rehabilitation situation to the prison officer.

Comparing the beginning stage with the ending stage, we may find the former is started by the prison officer while the latter is ended by the prisoner. The beginning and ending stages are ceremonially fixed for the genre of PPD. These two stages can be the design features for this type of discourse genre in the special prison ecology which can be used to distinguish this typical genre from other genres.

Analyzing these stages in an ecolinguistic way, we may find that the beginning and ending stages of PPD define the seriousness, formality, and rigorousness of the social activities in the ecology of a prison, which stipulates the rules and form for carrying out the discourse between the prison police officer and the prisoner. The strict form of the discourse indicates that following the rules strictly is an important part of prisoners' lives, which is of greater importance for prisoners because many of them have not acquired a sense for abiding by rules which may have led to them committing their crimes that resulted with them being in prison. This kind of formulaic discourse helps develop prisoners' sense of regularity. These stages follow the ecosophy of appropriate rehabilitation and just punishment which makes the discourse constructive for prisoner education. The starting and ending stages are the obligatory parts in PPD which make PPD a discursive genre different from other genres. Besides these obligatory stages, many other stages may be included in PPD to make it a social process for prisoner education, which is the critical function of PPD.



## 4.2 Ecolinguistic analysis of PPD as social process

Besides the obligatory starting and ending stages of PPD, the social process of Z educating and reforming prisoner C through DZC covers such activities as empathy, rationality, confession, resolution, consolidation, and warning. Some of these activities may happen within the discourse but it is unlikely that they will happen simultaneously within one discourse because of the time limitations. If the prison police officer intends to cover all of them in one discourse, it would be a considerable investment of time and mental labor. It may not create a favorable ecology for the prisoners to attentively participate in all activities because a long PPD may make the prisoners tired of their education and reform. Therefore, the stages can be obligatory for PPD as a discourse genre at the macro level, and they can be optional stages for some specific PPD at the micro level. The efficient application of PPD to prisoners' rehabilitation greatly depends on the prison police officer's capacity for the organization of activities.

For those activities mentioned above, the chance for them to be employed by the prison officer in PPD is not balanced. Some of the activities are more frequently used while others are used less frequently. The order of the activities that happen within the discourse is not fixed and it may vary in accordance with the prison police officer's preferred methodologies and notions for the rehabilitation of prisoners.

The stages of empathy, confession, resolution, and rationality are relatively frequent stages and social activities employed in prisoner education. Prisoners' mental issues are primarily what decide the orientation for their mind and behavior. Therefore, creating empathy and arousing prisoners' conscience by PPD are the most frequent social activities and empathy can be considered as an obligatory stage to some extent. The social process of PPD for empathy in DZC happens in the fourth part of the discourse as in this example:

- (4) Z16: 嗯, 这个找你来呢, 确实是有点事情要跟你说, 这个, 之前呢, 你说那个你不是两个姑娘读书, 家里首<sup>6</sup>是还有老母亲? (Eh, I ask you here because I really have something to talk with you. Eh, several days ago, you told me you have two daughters and they are attending college, and you also have your elder mum at home.)

C17: 母亲父亲都在 (Both mum and dad alive.)

...

C27: 嗯, 嗯 ... (Eh, eh...)

The excerpt of the discourse, from turn Z16 to C27, including 12 turns, produces the social process of empathy by talking about the prisoner's familial affections. The officer starts the talk with, "have something to talk with you". The talk does not start with anything but the familial affections to obtain empathy between the officer and the prisoner, which shortens the psychological distance between the discourse participants and paves the way for further talk about the serious issues of rehabilitating the prisoner because almost all the social activities in the prison are to be centered on empathy. Analyzing this excerpt from DZC with an ecolinguistic perspective, we find that the discourse at this stage aims at arousing prisoners' affect so that a close relationship between the prison officer and the prisoner can be established to create a constructive ecology for activating more rehabilitation activities to happen. PPD of this type, at this stage, satisfies the ecosophy of "moral cultivation" in rehabilitating prisoners, thus it is constructive PPD to encourage other activities in prisoner education.

The social process of PPD as rationality is introduced into the discourse with a clear discursive marker in this excerpt from DZC:

- (5) Z64: 但第二个问题, 我还要批评你, 陈 XX。 (Moreover, I want to criticize you, Chen XX.)

C65: 是, 我接受批评。 (Yes, I accept the criticism.)

...

C93: 是呢 (Yeah..)

The prison officer Z endeavors to persuade the prisoner to be rational through a detailed excerpt including 30 turns from turn Z64 to C93, which demonstrates the difficulty in educating and reforming prisoners with little sense of regularity rational and indicates that rehabilitating prisoners is a challenging task requiring much time and energy from the prison officer. At the stage of rationality, the officer clearly announces that they are going to teach the prisoner rationality by criticizing them and showing them how to make use of the polite words and rules<sup>7</sup> in the prison ecology.

The generic analysis of PPD displays that PPD, the main media for prisoners' education and characterized with generic features and functions, is a kind of institutional discourse consisting of a fixed discursive structure, relatively stable discursive moves and turns which enable the prison police officer to effectively carry out prisoner education if they follow the moves of the discourse. An ecolinguistic perspective for the generic analysis of PPD offers criteria to evaluate and differentiate its usefulness, especially usefulness in rehabilitating prisoners. Detailed analysis of example (5) from DZC shows that PPD of this type which happens after the stage of empathy can be accepted by prisoners as mental and behavioral restoration in the prison. During the process of educating prisoners, this type of PPD can be advocated and prisoners can be successfully rehabilitated by making use of it properly.

The linguistic data about PPD has been discussed at two levels: the ecolinguistic analysis of staged PPD and the ecolinguistic analysis of PPD as social process. One more feature for a generic analysis of PPD demonstrates that PPD, especially constructive PPD, can be a kind of typical goal-oriented discourse used by prison officers to accomplish their goals for cultivating prisoners into law-abiding citizens upon their release from the prison.

### **4.3 Ecolinguistic analysis of goal-oriented PPD**

PPD is a kind of goal-oriented institutional discourse and its goal is to completely reform prisoners into moral citizens by providing them with respect and dignity, opportunities for purposeful activity, preparation for resettlement, and a safe environment. The methods for prisoner rehabilitation may change, while both the prison police officers' and prisoners' final common goal may not change. The goal is universal and relatively fixed, and the vehicle is PPD which is stable to some extent while the activities may vary in accordance with variables like different prison police officers, prisoners, and current rehabilitation situations.

An ecolinguistic analysis of PPD as a generic discourse shows that the global goal of rehabilitating prisoners can be realized through some local goals, optional or obligatory. More detailed analysis of the structure and contents in DZC indicates that the discourse is made up of 13 sections with obvious goals in each section.

The discourse started with talking about the prisoner's daily life such as the prison uniform and the rules for wearing the uniform, then the prison officer talked about the prisoner's relatives, their parents, brothers, sisters, and children. The discourse continued with a consultation about the prisoner's problems encountered in their rehabilitation and a discussion about the possible resolutions to the problems. This is followed by a criticism of the prisoner's violation of prison discipline. In addition, the officer sets examples for the prisoner on how to make use of polite speech and words in prison and finally the discourse was closed with the formulaic discourse in the third example mentioned above.

The discursive activities of the prisoner's rehabilitation were not distributed in the discourse at random, but they were arranged to achieve certain goals. The discussion about the prisoner's daily life is to soften the serious atmosphere and provide a relatively easy ecology for rehabilitation, which follows the ecosophy of appropriate rehabilitation and makes the discourse constructive for rehabilitation. Talk about the prisoner's relatives not only arouses empathy between the officer and the prisoner but also shows the former's care for the latter, which functions as moral cultivation for the prisoner. More efforts were invested into the development of a favorable ecology for the prisoner's education by the officer's

consultation about the prisoner's problems encountered in their rehabilitation. It seems that all the discursive activities taking place by this stage are not closely or directly related to prisoner education. All the previous activities, however, aim at preparing the prisoner for the solemn theme in the discourse—the criticism of the prisoner's violation of prison discipline. This part gets to the goal of just punishment in prisoner education. The officer reaches the goal of rehabilitating the prisoner with clear goals based on careful preparation made in the previous discursive activities. Moreover, the officer explains the importance of the abidance of laws and sets an example for the prisoner's abidance of laws, which is to bring about the prisoner's successful return to the society upon their release and their initiative accountability, the highest pursuit of prisoner education. An ecolinguistic analysis of PPD shows that it can be constructive for prisoner education by the prison officer's employment of goal-oriented PPD.

#### 4.4 Generic structure of PPD

The characteristic discursive structure plays a crucial role in differentiating one genre from another. Egging and Slade (1997) propose six steps involved in the analysis of the generic structure:

- (1) recognizing a chunk; (2) defining the social purpose of the chunk and labelling the genre;
- (3) identifying and differentiating stages within a genre; (4) specifying obligatory and optional stages; (5) devising a structural formula; and (6) analyzing the semantic and lexico-grammatical features for each stage of a genre. (p. 231)

Their research on genre drew a clear outline for later generic analysis. Most recently, Martin and Rose (2013) simplified a genre as a "staged, goal-oriented social process" (p. 8), and they elucidate the staged, goal-oriented, and social properties of a genre as well. Different goals of social activities will be achieved in distinct genres at different stages.

Based on previous studies of the genre of PPD from an ecolinguistic perspective, rehabilitating prisoners cannot be accomplished just by any simple discursive activities, but it must instead be accomplished through various kinds of social activities. Further analysis of DZC in our research reveals that the prison officer makes goal-oriented use of PPD to rehabilitate prisoners by passionately talking about their familial affections, appropriately reiterating the infliction of crime upon the people concerned and the prisoners themselves, strategically solving strife among prisoners, patiently persuading prisoners not to commit crimes anymore, carefully getting more information about a prisoner's process of committing crimes, considerably mastering prisoners' progress in their rehabilitation, and explaining the laws and rules related to their crime in depth. The activities mentioned are regular social activities with corresponding functions in a prisoner's rehabilitation which contribute to establish the generic structure of PPD.

The activities carried out through PPD may serve diverse functions for achieving the goal of this discourse genre. Prison officers usually talk about prisoners' affections, especially their familial affections, to arouse prisoners' awareness of affections or love, which is to create empathy between them so that prisoners can be moved to reflect on their criminal behaviors. These efforts may construct an atmosphere of kindness and emotion in the prison and they offer the chance for prisoners to recall feelings of respect and dignity. They are the most efficient and likely methods for realizing prisoners' mental restoration. This social process of educating and reforming prisoners' criminal behavior can be labelled as a function of empathy. The laws and rules related to a prisoner's crime are explained in depth to help them realize the necessity of accepting the punishment as obligation or the cost of the crime they have committed. Explanation of the related laws teaches prisoners how to obey the laws. This kind of social process as a part of PPD serves the function of developing prisoners' rationality.

Observing the rehabilitation process of prisoners carefully, we may find the essential stage of the discourse at which the infliction of pain caused by prisoners upon the people concerned has been repeatedly mentioned. This kind of strategic use of PPD aims at activating prisoners' initiative in

accepting the rehabilitation and retrieving prisoners' conscience. The function of this social activity is labelled as prisoners' confession.

The strife among the prisoners contributes much of the conflicting ecology in the prison and one of the functions of PPD is to solve this strife to make the prison ecology peaceful so that prisoners may learn to get along with others which at last is a kind of preparation for prisoners' resettlement and a safe environment. Thus, PPD serves the function of a kind of resolution to problems among prisoners.

In addition, one essential stage in PPD covers prison police officers' persuasion of prisoners, especially to those who are finishing their sentences and are to be released soon, not to commit further crimes. This process aims at warning and consolidating the previous rehabilitating achievements so that both the police officers and inmates reach their connected goal of providing a law-abiding and responsible citizen for society, which is again preparation for prisoners' resettlement and a safe environment. PPD at this time fulfils the function of consolidation. Sometimes the prisoner is asked to recount the process of committing a crime so that the officer may get more information about the criminal process on one hand, and the prisoner's sense of guilt can be recalled on the other hand. In this way, PPD becomes the warning elements in the prison ecology so that the prisoner will not forget the crime or their prisoner identity and undertake their duty as a prisoner.

One more social process involved in PPD is to know prisoners' rehabilitation status quo or progress, which contributes much to the construction of a favorable prison ecology for prisoners' rehabilitation. Firstly, this process shows that the prison officers care about the prisoners and respect their dignity through their verbal and educating attention on prisoners, which may compensate prisoners' lack of affection or love in the prison. Secondly, knowing progress allows officers to adapt rehabilitation methods and strategies. Thirdly, progress provides feedback for the efficiency of previous efforts made by officers and prisoners. In other words, the prisoners' rehabilitation progress can function as feedback which helps officers master the situation of the prisoner's rehabilitation.

Therefore, based on the detailed study of the staged and goal-oriented DZC and the analysis of DZC as social process, a representative generic formula of PPD can be generalized: Naming ^ Empathy ^ (Confession), (Resolution) ^ Rationality ^ (Consolidation) ^ (Warning) ^ (Feedback) ^ Reporting, which is one possible generic structure for PPD covering the obligatory discursive activities and optional ones in parentheses.

## 5 Conclusion

Crime can be a kind of detrimental social phenomenon which may cause direct or indirect damage to society and individuals. Fighting against committing a crime and rehabilitation is the mission and task of a prison; for prison officers this includes shouldering the responsibility for a prisoner's rehabilitation. A generic analysis of PPD from an ecolinguistic perspective demonstrates that the prison police achieve their goals of rehabilitating prisoners through various discursive activities as social process including Empathy, Confession, Resolution, Rationality, Consolidation, Warning, and Feedback at different obligatory or optional stages. As a special institutional discourse, PPD has its typically ceremonial and obligatory stages like naming and reporting stages. An ecolinguistic and generic study of PPD collected in a prison indicates that the generic structure of constructive PPD may cover all the obligatory stages and some of the optional stages in parentheses following this formula: Naming ^ Empathy ^ (Confession)<sup>8</sup>, (Resolution) ^ Rationality ^ (Consolidation) ^ (Warning) ^ (Feedback) ^ Reporting. The order of the stages may vary according to variables like the prison officer, the prisoner, the methodologies used, and the social activities which take place in the process of rehabilitating prisoners. The arrangement of the discursive activities calls for the prison officers' careful preparation and planning for PPD and their strategic use of PPD.

The generic features are obtained through ecolinguistic analysis of the discourse and all the social activities have proved helpful for construing a favorable prison ecology for rehabilitating prisoners. The pattern of the discourse may be employed to carry out the prisoners' rehabilitation on one hand, and it can be used, on the other hand, to train prison officers' discursive strategies of PPD at various levels so that a favorable educating and reforming ecology can be created within the prison.

Owing to the uniqueness and social bias towards the theme of prisons and prisoners, the applicability of this research may be limited. The sample of data collected for the current research is not rich enough to cover all prisoners because of the difficulty in accessing prisons and prisoners, which weakens the profundity of the empirical research. It is hoped that more empirical studies of PPD based on large and comprehensive samples will aid in prisoner rehabilitation to reform the prison population successfully into moral and law-abiding citizens who may contribute their efforts to the construction of a safe society.

## Notes

1. There are prison police discourses (PPD) in macro sense and micro sense. The former refers to all the discourse used by prison police whereas the latter is the discourse only used by them to rehabilitate prisoners. In the current study, the notion of PPD in micro sense has been chosen as the research object.
2. Prison discourse covers all the discourses that happen in a prison.
3. Discourse DZC lasts 12 minutes and 46 seconds and it is transcribed in 4216 Chinese characters. The discourse consists of 100 turns with Z's 49 turns and C's 50 turns, and one turn from the researcher's announcement of his research aim and the exclusively scientific use of the data.
4. Stibbe (2015) classifies discourse into beneficial, destructive and ambivalent types while he conducts the ecological analysis. In the current study, the "beneficial discourse" categorized by Stibbe is revised as "constructive discourse" so that its sharp contrast against the "destructive discourse" can be perceived.
5. The turns of the discourse are numbered from the beginning to the end with the participant's last name in the initial capital letter. The participants in the discourse are named anonymously and the original Chinese version of the discourse taken as examples is offered as well.
6. The discourse is translated into English literally to keep its originality and the Chinese version is kept in its dialect form as the prison officer often talks to the prisoners in dialect.
7. The prisoner is found to break the rules of using polite words and rules in his discourse in the prison.
8. The element in the parentheses is optional in the generic structure, i.e., Confession, Resolution, Consolidation, Warning and Feedback are optional in the generic structure of PPD.

## Acknowledgements

Sincere gratitude must be extended to anonymous reviewers, the Chief Editor and Production Editor for their constructive comments, useful suggestions, and patient proofreading. Special thanks should go to anonymous prison officers and prisoners for their participation and cooperation in the research.

## References

Alexander, R., & Stibbe, A. (2014). From the analysis of ecological discourse to the ecological analysis

- of discourse. *Language Sciences*, 41, 104-110.
- Bookchin, M. (1981). *The ecology of freedom: The emergence and dissolution of hierarchy*. California: Cheshire Books.
- Eggs, S., & Slade, D. (1997). *Analyzing casual conversation*. London: Cassell Academic.
- Fairclough, N. (1995). *Critical discourse analysis: The critical study of language*. London: Longman.
- Fill, A. (2001). Ecolinguistics: State of the art 1998. In A. Fill & P. Mühlhäuler (Eds.), *The ecolinguistics reader: Language, ecology and environment* (pp.43-53). London: Continuum.
- Gueta, K., & Chen, G. (2016). "I want to rebel, but there they hit me even harder": Discourse analysis of Israeli women offenders' accounts of their pathways to substance abuse and crime. *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology*, 60 (7), 787-807.
- Halliday, M. A. K. (1990). New ways of meaning: The challenge to applied linguistics. *Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 6, 7-36.
- Hart, E. L. (2016). Women prisoners and the drive for desistance: Capital and responsabilization as a barrier to change. *Women & Criminal Justice*, 0, 1-19.
- Hasan, R. (1984). The nursery tale as a genre. *Nottingham Linguistic Circular*, 13, 71-102.
- Haugen, E. (1972). The ecology of language. In S. Anwar (Ed.), *The ecology of language: Essays by Einar Haugen* (pp.325-339). Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Kuo, F. E., & Sullivan, W. C. (2001). Environment and crime in the inner city: Does vegetation reduce crime?. *Environment and Behavior*, 33, 343-367.
- LeVasseur, T. (2015). Defining "ecolinguistics?": Challenging emic issues in an evolving environmental discipline. *Journal of Environmental Studies and Sciences*, 5, 21-28.
- Martin, J. R., & Rose, D. (2014). *Working with discourse: Meaning beyond the clause*. Beijing: Peking University Press.
- Martin, J. R. (1984). Language, register and genre. In Z. H. Wang (Ed.), *The collected works of J. R. Martin* (pp.47-68). Shanghai: Shanghai Jiao Tong University Press.
- Masters, R., Hone, B. T., & Doshi, A. (1998). Environmental pollution, neurotoxicity, and criminal violence. In J. Rose (Ed.), *Environmental toxicology: Current developments* (pp. 13-48). London: Taylor and Francis.
- Marzano, L., Ciclitira, K., & Alder, J. R. (2016). The non-suicidal self-harm amongst incarcerated men: A qualitative study. *Journal of Criminal Psychology*, 6(4), 158-172.
- Matthiessen, C. M. I. M. (2009). Ideas and new directions. In M. A. K. Halliday & J. Webster (Eds.), *Continuum companion to systemic functional linguistics* (pp. 12-58). London: Continuum.
- Mitchell, T. F. (1957). The language of buying and selling in Cyrenaica: A situational statement. *Hesperis*, 26, 31-71.
- Naess, A. (1995). The shallow and the long range, deep ecology movement. In A. Drengson & Y. Inoue (Eds.), *The deep ecology movement: An introductory anthology* (pp.3-10). Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Seim, J. (2016). Short-timing: The carceral experience of soon-to-be-released prisoners. *Punishment & Society*, 0(00), 1-17.
- Stevens, P. (2012). Towards an ecosociology. *Sociology*, 46, 579-595.
- Stibbe, A. (2015). *Ecolinguistics: Language, ecology and the stories we live by*. London: Routledge.
- The 11<sup>th</sup> Standing Committee of National People's Congress. (2012). *The prison law of the People's Republic of China*. Beijing: Law Publishing House.
- World Health Organization. (1999). *Mental health provision in prisons: A consensus statement*. Copenhagen: WHO Office.

**Changyou Zhao**, PhD candidate in College of International Studies, Southwest University, China. He is an associate professor of linguistics from School of Foreign Languages, Qujing Normal University, China. His research interests include systemic functional linguistics, discourse studies and ecolinguistics, and he has published over 20 papers. He has hosted several projects related to teacher talk and discourse analysis.

**Chengyu Liu**, PhD, professor of linguistics, PhD student supervisor, and Dean of International College, Southwest University, China. His research interests include systemic functional linguistics, discourse analysis, multilingualism and multilingual education. He has hosted two National Social Science Funding Projects and published over 70 papers. He is also the (co)author of *Cross-cultural Communication: Theory and Practice* (2005), *A Functional Cognitive Approach to Grammatical Metaphor* (2008), *Perspectives on Language* (2012).

## 生态语言学视阈下狱警话语与罪犯教育的语类分析

赵常友

西南大学外国语学院, 中国  
曲靖师范学院外国语学院, 中国

刘承宇

西南大学外国语学院, 中国

### 摘要

本文在生态语言学的视阈下, 分析监狱警察如何利用阶段性的监狱话语, 特别是狱警话语, 教育改造罪犯, 达成教育罪犯的目标。犯罪是一种危害性的行为和社会现象, 犯罪会直接或间接地给社会和犯罪行为危及到的各方带来伤害。教育改造罪犯是国家治理和社会管理的重要组成部分, 利用狱警话语教育改造罪犯是减少犯罪危害的有效途径。本研究首先在中国西南地区 Y 省 Q 监狱, 录制了 18 名监狱警察使用狱警话语教育改造罪犯的过程。然后将录制语料转写, 在生态语言学的视阈下, 对转写的语料进行语类分析。结果表明: 狱警话语作为一种特殊的机构话语, 有其特定的语类特征和语类功能, 是教育改造罪犯的主要媒介。对狱警话语进行语类分析, 生态语言学的视阈提供了区分判定狱警话语的有效性和教育改造罪犯效率的标准: (1) 有利于构建矫正罪犯心理、行为生态的狱警话语称为建设型话语, 这类话语能够有效教育改造罪犯, 应该提倡使用; (2) 破坏矫正罪犯心理、行为生态的狱警话语称为破坏型话语, 这类话语会对教育改造罪犯产生不良影响, 应该拒绝使用; (3) 既不利于构建矫正罪犯心理、行为生态, 也不破坏矫正罪犯心理、行为生态的狱警话语称为混合型话语, 这类话语可以通过一些话语使用策略的改进, 使其成为有效教育改造罪犯的建设型话语。

### 关键词

生态语言学, 语类分析, 罪犯教育, 狱警话语

### 作者简介

赵常友, 西南大学博士研究生、曲靖师范学院外国语学院副教授。研究领域包括: 系统功能语言学、话语分析、生态语言学。在《东北大学学报(社会科学版)》、《天津外国语大学学报》等学术刊物上发表论文 20 余篇。

刘承宇, 教授、博士生导师、西南大学国际学院院长。主持国家社科基金项目 2 项、省部级教改项目 4 项。出版专著 1 部, 在《外语教学与研究》、《现代外语》、《外语界》、*Australian Journal of Linguistics* 等国内外学术刊物上发表论文 70 余篇。