An Analysis of Boeing's Trust-Repair Discourse

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Abstract

Trust is a valuable asset for business organizations and is vital for an organization's survival. After two air clashes, Boeing is facing trust crisis and is making great efforts to earn trust back. Corporate communication is a common and important means for the management to demonstrate the company's attitude and to persuade the audience that they are reliable. This paper aims to elucidate the role of corporate communication in recovering the damaged trust of Boeing. The paper applies the model of trust-repair discourse established by Fuoli and Paradis to analyze Boeing's CEO's address to shareholders following the two fatal crushes. It is found that the CEO repairs the company's trustworthiness from three aspects, namely, ability, integrity and benevolence. To fulfill this purpose, the CEO adopts such strategies as neutralizing the negative and emphasizing the positive. Through the use of evaluating and dialogic engagement resources, the CEO discursively rebuilds and renegotiates the company's trustworthiness.

Keywords: trust-repair discourse, Boeing, trustworthiness

1. Introduction

On October 29, 2018, a Boeing 737 MAX of Lion Air Flight 610, crushed into the Java Sea shortly after taking off from Indonesia, with a total of 189 people killed. When people were still immersed in grief and this air crash was still under investigation, another 737 MAX plummeted. Ethiopian Airlines Flight 302 crushed minutes after taking off, resulting in the death of 157 people on this flight. Within only a few months, two deadly air crushes killed 346 people. Both of these two airplanes belong to Boeing 737 MAX fleet. These two crushes led to people's suspicion of Boeing's design. Their automated system is in the center of inquiries, also known as the Maneuvering Characteristics Augmentation System (MCAS). According to the most recently issued official final report on Lion Air 610, this suspect has been confirmed. Boeing is to be blamed for these two fatal crushes, because it turned out that the MCAS was activated erroneously by faulty data, resulting in the two air crushes. Facing these two accidents and critics from various parties, Boeing is undergoing one of the worst crises in its 103-year history.

These two incidents have not only directly broken the heart of the victims' friends and families, but also resulting in the loss of faith and trust of Boeing's other stakeholders (e.g., pilots, shareholders, and the common passengers). As a 737 pilot of the American Airlines and spokesman of the American Pilots Union, Captain Dennis Tajer, who once held high level of confidence in Boeing, said, "Oh, it's been shaken. Absolutely. Boeing is still an incredible company but they horridly fouled up this aircraft." when he was asked about his trust in Boeing now. Meanwhile, a survey was conducted among two thousand air travelers. It indicates that over 80 percent of these 2000 travelers claim they would not take a 737 MAX in its first six months back, and more than half would rather pay a higher cost to avoid flying on a 737 MAX (Schaper, 2019). Besides, Boeing is also accused of hiding the evidence that it has already known about the problem of MCAS during its certification process in 2016. With all these charges and the two fatal crushes, Boeing's reputation is at stake. The public is questioning Boeing's integrity and ability to ensure the safety. How to earn back trust from the public has thus become Boeing's top priority.

Trust is defined as "willingness to take risks." (Johnson-George & Swap, 1982, p. 1306). It is a valuable asset for business organizations and is vital for an organization's survival. For Boeing, trust is definitely of great importance, as it affects its image in the eyes of the public and attracts resources and support from different parties. Thus, facing trust crisis, like financial and technical scandals, organizations will make great efforts to

earn trust back. Corporate communication is a common and important means for the management to demonstrate the company's attitude and to persuade the audience that they are reliable.

This paper aims to elucidate the role of corporate communication in recovering the damaged trust of Boeing. As the leader of a company, CEO represents the whole company and his/her discourses play an important role in engaging with the target audience. It is common that CEOs actively engage with putative audiences on important issues, especially in crisis contexts. The discourse of CEOs is regarded as a possibly influential "ideology-creator" to shape or influence organizational audiences' impressions of the organization. The words of CEOs not only have impact on the perceptions of stakeholders and society, but also create ideology (Craig & Amernic, 2004, p. 44). King and Fine (2000, pp. 71−72) also said, "the reputation of the business leader is a major asset that businesses use to extend their influence over government, workers, and the consumer market …" Hence, this paper focuses on analyzing a speech from Boeing's CEO, Dennis Muilenburg, when he addressed to the shareholders in April 2019, right after the two disasters. We adopt the analytical model of trust repair established by Fuoli and Paradis (2014) to explore how Muilenburg's address functions in trust recovery by analyzing the resources used in the discourse, the communicative strategies adopted and the trust-repairing dimensions.

Specifically, in this research, Muilenburg's speech is used as a case study to answer the following two questions:

1) What is the distribution of evaluating and dialogic engagement resources in the speech?

2) How are the strategies utilized to repair the three-dimension of trust?

2. Literature Review

2.1 Trust

Trust is defined as expectation on general moral orders as well as specific norms of ability and responsibility (Barber, 1983). Many scholars give similar definition to trust. Originated from business management literature, Mayer's trust model is one of the most important trust-repair models. Now it has been widely used in the analysis of many other academic fields. Mayer et al. (1995, p. 712) define trust as "the willingness of a party to be vulnerable to the actions of another party based on the expectation that the other will perform a particular action important to the trustor, irrespective of the ability to monitor or control that other party". The trustor becomes vulnerable to the trutee's behaviors. Based on the assessment of the trustee's trustworthiness, the trustor generally believes that the trustee will behave beneficially to them.

According to Mayer et al. (1995), ability, integrity and benevolence are the three criteria used to assess other people's trustworthiness. Ability is related to the trustee's capability and expertise in a specific domain. Integrity represents the trustee's moral and ethical values. Benevolence is concerned with trustee's care and goodwill to the trustor.

Figure 1 provides a general description of Mayer's model. As illustrated by the figure, trust is assessed from ability, integrity and benevolence and mitigated by the trustor's propensity. The trustor's propensity refers to the general willingness to trust others, which is concerned with the trustor's personality, experience and cultural background. Trust is a kind of willingness to assume risk, so there is no risk in holding such attitude. However, trust leads to risk in relationship, which is a kind of behavioral trust. The behavioral manifestation of the willingness is inherent in risking something of the trustor (Mayer et al., 1995). The outcome of risk taking in relationship can be positive or negative, which will directly influence the trustor's perception and re-assessment of the trustee's ability, benevolence and integrity.
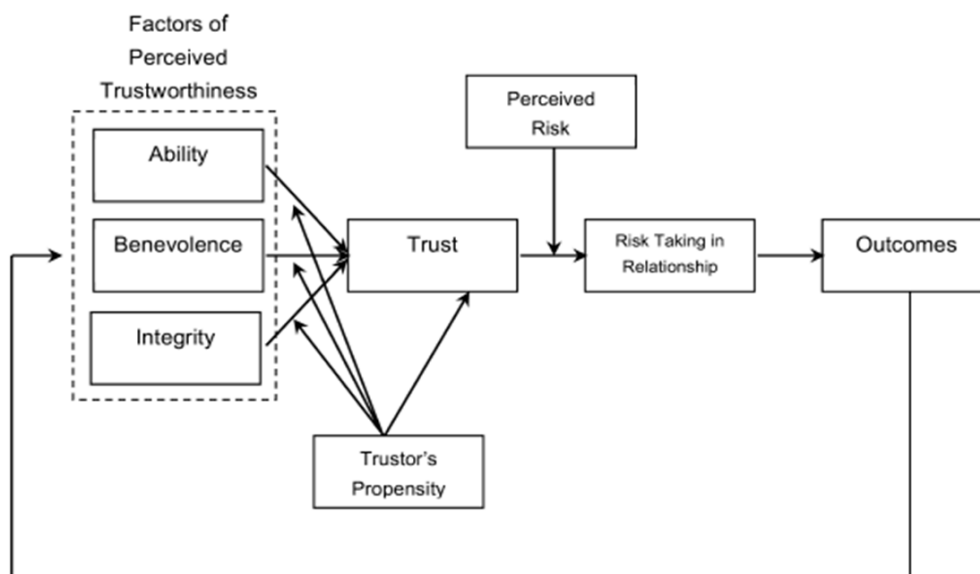
Figure 1. Mayer Davis and Shoorman's model of trust (Mayer et al., 1995)

The outcome of risk in relationship will result in the trustor's re-evaluation of the trustee's trustworthiness (Mayer et al., 1995). In some cases that the outcome turns out violating the trustor's expectation, the trustor may reappraise the trustee's ability, integrity and benevolence. Their trust then will be damaged or even completely lost. In response to this critical situation, the trust-breaker will take a series of actions to restore people's trust. Corporate communication is a common measure to repair trust.

2.2 A Brief Review of Researches on Trust

Trust has aroused many scholars' interest and researches on trust have been extended to a great range of disciplines. However, studies on trust from the perspective of linguistics are comparatively sparse. Recently, the number of researches on trust and discourse from linguistic perspective is increasing. Research on trust and discourses can be dated back to Grice (1975) who took trust as language interaction background. Gradually, some collections of articles on trust and discourse are published, which propel the development of study on trust discourse, for example, Trust and Discourse: Organizational Perspectives (Palsmaekers et al., 2014).

In general, prior studies mainly include the following aspects. Some scholars (e.g., Palsmaekers et al., 2014) focus on the relation between trust and discourse. They believe trust is constructed, negotiated and maintained through discourse. Fuoli and Paradis (2014) are representatives of the theoretical researches on trust and discourse. They proposed an innovative analytical model for trust-repair discourse. Wang and Liu (2019) also contribute to the analytical model of trust-repair discourse by modifying Fuoli and Paradis' model. Fuoli and Hart (2018) proposed trust-building strategies in corporate discourse by an experimental approach. A majority of previous studies are centered on unraveling how trust is built and rebuilt under specific contexts. Previous studies discuss trust-building strategies in respect of government, corporations, medical and so on. Mavis Jones and Brian Salter (2003) analyze policy discourse for exploring the politics of the relationship between human genetics governance and public trust. Hart (2014) analyses the CSR reports of Coca Cola, Nike and Nestle and explores how these resources are used to alignment between the social values of the organization and those of the public to gain public trust. Xingbin Liu (2009) analyzes trust mechanism of the discourse interaction between doctors and patients.

3. Theoretical Foundation

3.1 The Appraisal System

Martin and White put forward the appraisal theory in 2005. The appraisal system is mainly concerned with interpersonal meaning. It is divided into three sub-systems: attitude, engagement and graduation. Attitude is related to our feelings, which includes three aspects: emotional reaction, judgement of behavior and evaluation of things. Attitude is mainly about evaluation and affect. Positive or negative linguistic resources are employed to assess people, events or things. Evaluation is realized in discourse by using attitudinal lexis. Adjective and adverb are two primary language forms to express evaluation. With certain markers, like adjective, the

appraiser's attitude is inscribed, but in some condition, the evaluation of certain objects is invoked, like "they fenced them in like sheep" (Martin & White, 2005).

Graduation is a phenomenon of grading, intensifying or mitigating. Engagement is about scouring the attitude and the voices around the opinions in discourse. It usually directly or indirectly represents the addresser's stance. Dialogical engagement refers to that the addressers take a stance by positioning themselves among alternative voices. It involves a negotiation of alignment and disalignment. Martin and White (2005) categorize dialogical engagement into two types: dialogic expansion and dialogical contract. The former deals with allowance for dialogically alternative positions and opinions; the latter is concerned with acts to challenge, fend off or restrict the scope of those voices. Expansion is subdivided into entertain and attribution. Entertain is to make space for alternative voices by the use of epistemic modality (modal verbs: *may*, *might*, *could*, *must*; certain mental verb/attribute projections: *I suspect that*, *I think*, *I believe* and so on) and evidentiality (*it seems*, *it appears*, *apparently*, *the research suggests* …). Attribution "deals with those formulations which disassociate the proposition from the text's internal authorial voice by attributing it so some external source" (Martin & White, 2005, p. 111). It is achieved through directly or indirectly employing reported speeches or thoughts like communicative process verbs (e.g., *Mr. Mandela said*…), or verbs which reference mental processes such as *believe* and *suspect* or nominalizations of these processes (e.g., *Chomsky's belief that*…) and various adverbial adjuncts such as *according to* and *in X's view*. In general, the dialogical engagement is realized through language recourse of modality, concession and projection (Martin & White, 2005). Dialogic contraction includes disclaim and proclaim. Disclaim is a formulation by which those external voices are directly rejected or overruled. Negation/denial is a major form of disclaim (e.g., *no*, *not*, *never*). Proclaim are those formulation which limit the scope of dialogistic alternatives through internal intervention (*of course*, *naturally*, *not surprisingly*, *admittedly*).

3.2 Fuoli and Paradis' Trust-Repair Model

Fuoli and Paradis (2014) established a three-level model based on Mayer's theory on the dimensions of trust: ability, integrity and benevolence. They put forward that by the usage of linguistic resources, communicative strategies of neutralizing the negative and emphasizing the positive are taken to restore corporate trust from those three dimensions. In their model, Martin and White's appraisal theory is adopted at the micro level for the analysis of the text. At the meso level, the communicative actions are realized by using evaluation and dialogic engagement resources. And the macro level includes the repairing dimensions.

Fouli and Paradis' model provides a logic approach to the analysis of trust repair, which bridges the gap between discourse analyses and management theory on trust. However, some scholars questioned the rationality and feasibility of the communication actions proposed by Fuoli and Paradis, because these strategies are proposed base on the direct observation and analysis of some specific data. However, Mayer et al. (1995) think positive information is more useful to justify the trustee's ability and negative information is usually used to shade a light on the trustee's integrity. Therefore, the manipulation of positive or negative information can be helpful to restore the trust-breaker's trustworthiness. Mayer's rationale justifies the feasibility of the communicative actions: neutralizing the negative and emphasizing the positive. Figure 2 illustrates Fouli and Paradis' trust-repair model.
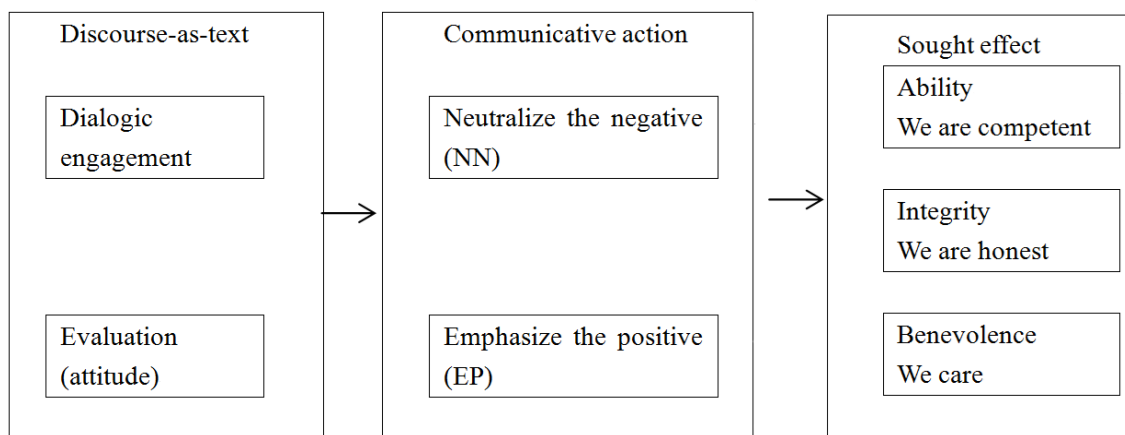

Figure 2. Fuoli and Paradis' model of trust-repair discourse (2014)

At the micro level, evaluating resources and dialogic engagement resources can be identified to analyze the CEO's speech, through which the discursive strategies are realized. At the meso level, communicative actions are neutralizing the negative and emphasizing the positive. Neutralizing the negative is concerned with "engaging with the discourses that constitute an actual or potential source of distrust" (Fouli & Paradis, 2014). The trust-breaker intends to neutralize the negative effect of voices that doubt their trustworthiness. Mostly, neutralizing the negative is realized by dialogic engagement resources. Emphasizing the positive refers to providing positive and solid evidence to discursively enhance their trustworthiness, which is usually realized by language resources that are used to express evaluation. We use language to "do things". Through the usage of certain discourses, some sought effects are realized. In trust-repair discourse, the trust-breaker discursively renegotiates their trustworthiness from three dimensions: ability, integrity and benevolence so as to change the trustee's impression and reaffirm that "we are competent", "we are honest" and "we care".

4. Results

4.1 Data Processing and Results of Statistics

The text of the speech is directly collected from Boeing's official website, which is 2015 words long. Then we process the text in the following way. At the textual level, the data was transferred into TXT format and fully analyzed with the help of UAM Corpus Tool. UAM is an annotation tool, which is widely used in discourse analysis, especially for studies concerning systemic functional linguistics. This study also uses UAM to annotate the language resources in the CEO's speech. With the help of UAM Corpus Tool, totally 156 appraisal recourses (evaluation and dialogic engagement) are identified. The results are illustrated by the following tables.

Table 1. The overall linguistic resources in Boeing's CEO speech

System	Sub-system	Frequency	Percent
Evaluation (attitude)	Affect	18	15.65%
(115, 73.72%)	Judgement	54	46.96%
	Appreciation	43	37.39%
Dialogical engagement	Contract	12	29.27%
(41, 26.28%)	Expansion	29	70.73%
	Total	156	100%

Table 2. The features of attitude resources

Feature	Sub-category	Frequency	Percent
Explicitness	Inscribed	105	91.30%
	Invoked	10	8.70%
	Total	115	100%
Polarity	Positive-attitude	99	86.09%
	Negative-attitude	16	13.91%
	Total	115	100%

Table 3. The frequency of affect resources

	Sub-system	Frequency	Percent
Affect	un/happiness	10	55.56%
	dis/satisfaction	1	5.56%
	in/security	3	16.67%
	dis/inclination	4	22.22%
	Total	18	100%

Table 4. The frequency of judgement resources

	Sub-system	Frequency	Percent
Judgement	normality	9	16.67%
	capacity	27	50.00%
	tenacity	8	14.81%
	propriety	2	3.70%
	veracity	8	14.81%
	Total	54	100%

As we can see from Table 1, evaluating language resources are widely employed in the speech. Evaluation (attitude) takes a large proportion, up to 73.72%, of which judgement takes up nearly half of the attitude resources. Judgement is concerned with the assessment of human behaviors, personalities and so on. It mainly includes five aspects and their frequency of distribution is shown in Table 4: normality (16.67%), capacity (50%), tenacity (14.81%), propriety (3.7%) and veracity (14.81%). Capacity is the most frequently used resources like talent, top, and expertise, which are mostly related to the description of ability. Affect is a way of expressing the addresser's emotions. Here it is closely related to the expression of condolence and sadness, like sorry and tragedy. Table 3 shows the frequency of affect resources. In most cases, the evaluation resources are expressed directly, but some are indirect. According to Martin and White (2005), they are termed as inscribed (91.3%) and invoked (8.7%), with frequency of distribution as shown in Table 2. Dialogic engagement also plays a role in expressing authorial voice so as to persuade the target receivers. Modality and denial are two prominent resources in the speech. Modal verbs, such as will, can be easily found in the data. They usually embody a meaning of probability and inclination, which not only to some degree indicate the speaker's attitude, but leave a space for alternative voices. Denial/negation is mostly about neutralizing the negative effect.

Then, according to the annotation, we identify the specific strategies used to repair each of the three dimensions of trust. Table 5 summarizes our analysis.

Table 5. Overview of the analysis of strategies adopted to repair trust

	Neutralize the negative Negation/denial	Emphasize the positive Positive attitude
Ability		Boeing responds quickly after disasters. Boeing is capable of building safe plane. Boeing made achievements in 2018. Boeing will create more opportunity in the future.
	Boeing can ensure the software problem will not happen again.	Boeing's leadership is recognized.
Integrity	Boeing does not prioritize profit over safety. Boeing's pursuit of excellence is never ending. Boeing will learn from the lesson.	Boeing is committed to eliminate this risk. Boeing's top priority is safety and quality. Boeing is cooperative and honest in the investigation.
	No single reason caused the accident.	
Benevolence	Boeing recognizes the devastation of victims.	Boeing works tirelessly to solve the problem. Boeing cares about the safety of people. Boeing is sorry for the loss of the tragedies.

4.2 Analysis

4.2.1 Ability: We Are Competent

According to the preliminary research, the reason for the two deadly air crushes is directly pointed to Boeing Company. There are design flaws within the aircraft's maneuvering characteristics augmentation system (MCAS) system. Thus, these two accidents severely damaged stakeholders' trust in Boeing's technical ability. Instead of justifying their failure in the design flaws, Boeing mainly adopts strategies to emphasize that they are putting efforts to remedy and are capable of eliminating the risks and building the safe plane. The accidents happened due to the design flaw, thus, using too much strategy of NN could leave people an impression that Boeing is passing the buck. The communicative strategy of emphasizing the positive can be easily found to outline their ability and attitude resources, especially those embodying with positive meaning.

Example 1: From the days *immediately* [judgement, +] following the Lion Air accident, our *top* [judgement, +] engineers and technical *experts* [judgement, +] have been working tirelessly in collaboration with the Federal Aviation Administration.

Example 2: When debris was found aboard delivered aircraft, we took *immediate* [judgement, +] next steps in partnership with the customer to develop and implement a corrective action plan and strengthen our processes.

Example 3: We're making *steady* [appreciation, +] progress on the path to certification, having completed the official engineering test flight of the software.

As we can see from the first two examples, Muilenberg employs *immediately* and *immediate* to show that

Boeing's response to the disasters and risks is quite quick. Positive words like *top* and *experts* are employed to describe their employees, which indicates that Boeing is presenting that they have many talents who are capable of resolving the problem. In example 3, *steady* progress directly assures the addressees that Boeing can rectify the design flaws in MCAS and they have made some progress.

Dialogic engagement resources play a vital role in repairing ability. Mostly, dialogic expansion, including entertain and attribution, is used in this speech. On one hand, entertain leaves a space for the external voices and makes the authorial opinion more objective. On the other hand, the external voice is also adopted to stress the company's competency. The external voices, especially those from authorities in certain fields, are more convincing.

Example 4: We *know* [entertain] we *can* [judgement, +] break this link in the chain.

Example 5: We *forecast* [entertain] a need for nearly 43,000 new commercial airplanes over the next 20 years, effectively doubling the size of today's global fleet.

Example 6: The National Safety Council also *recognized* [attribution] Boeing with the 2018 Robert W. Campbell Award for *leadership and excellence* [judgement, +] in incorporating environment, *health and safety* [appreciation, +] values and best practices at every level of our company.

Examples 4 and 5 also adopt the EP strategy. Example 4 shows the CEO's confidence of solving the flaws in MCAS. By the use of *know*, he indicates the statement is based on certain facts. In example 5, Boeing's optimistic predication is introduced by *forecast*, which projects the speaker's subjective assessment on their future business development. By projection, the word "*forecast*" conveys a sense of objectivity, which reinforces the credibility of the CEO's claim. In example 6, the proposition uses evaluating resources like *leadership and excellence* and *health and safety* to describe Boeing as a company with strong leadership and excellent competency. By using *recognized*, the authority's voice is introduced, thus, the statement's credibility is further enhanced and more convincing.

4.2.2 Integrity: We Are Honest

Since the two air crushes, Boeing is facing threats to their image. Boeing is alleged 1）hiding the truth that they already know the flaws in their software design before the two crushes; 2）rejecting a safety system to minimize costs to put a priority on profit; and 3) imposing high pressure on production teams so as to hit the deadline (David Gelles et al., 2019). The CEO confronts all these allegations with the combined strategies of EP and NN. By EP, the CEO intends to construct an honest image for the company. By NN, the addresser tries to mitigate the negative effects of those allegations.

Example 7: We hold ourselves to the *highest standards* [appreciation, +] of safety, quality and integrity in our work.

Example 8: As we work through this challenging time and in everything we do, we act *with integrity* [judgement, +].

In both examples 7 and 8, the CEO adopts the communicative strategy of EP. In example 7, Muilenberg uses *highest standards* to directly emphasize that Boeing Company is honest and always puts safety and quality in the first place. In example 8, he further stresses that Boeing is upright by implying that even if they are facing great pressure and challenges, they will behave righteously and will not make safety optional.

What's more, NN plays a prominent role in recovering Boeing's integrity. Dialogical engagement, which refers to the interaction and negotiation of various voices, is used to realize this strategy. Negation/denial is the most widely used method in this trust-repair discourse. Martin and white (2005) propose that the language resources in dialogic engagement include cognitive modality, evidential markers, turning discourse markers and negation. Negation is used to directly reject or overrule external voices. In the CEO's speech, it is an important way to offset the allegations to Boeing.

Example 9: When it comes to safety, there are *no* [denial] competing priorities.

Example 10: There is *nothing* [denial] more important to us than the safety of our airline customers and their passengers.

Example 11: We *don't* [denial] make safety features optional.

As the examples listed above, the CEO uses *no*, *nothing* and *don't* to directly deny the allegation that Boeing prioritizes profit and disregards people's safety. Meanwhile, it represents Boeing's stance that customers' safety is always their first priority.

Besides direct denial, third party's voice is also introduced to mitigate the negative influence.

Example 12: MCAS, something that initial investigation reports *indicate* [attribution] occurred in both MAX accidents, as one link in a longer chain of events. We know we can break this link in the chain. It's our *responsibility* [judgement, +] to eliminate this risk.

In the context of the crisis, Boeing is regarded as the main responsible party, and has been criticized by the public. The CEO not only neutralizes the negative information by denial, but also reports the external voice by dint of cognitive modality and evidence markers to negotiate and communicate with the hearers so as to minimize the harm of negative information to the company image. By introducing the reported voices, Boeing implies that they trust the investigation and get nothing to hide. In response to the accusation, Muilenberg implies that Boeing is not the only party to blame by the usage of evidence marks like *indicate* in example12. He highlights that MCAS is only one of a series of factors which contributed in the two crushes. Immediately, he proclaims that Boeing has the ability to remedy the mistake, and by using *responsibility*, both Boeing's integrity and ability are emphasized again.

4.2.3 Benevolence: We Care

Since the two planes crushed, Boeing's benevolence towards the victims and their families and friends has been under public scrutiny. Empathy is a critical method to express Boeing's benevolence and to show that Boeing shares people's concern and pains caused by these fatal accidents. EP is the major strategy to repair the benevolence aspect of Boeing's trustworthiness. Affect resources are ubiquitous in the CEO's speech, including adjectives, verbs and nouns which achieve emotional resonance with the addressees. At the beginning as well as the end of the speech, Muilenberg directly expresses the condolence and shows that they do care for the devastation of the victims and their loved ones.

Example 13: We at Boeing are sorry for the loss of life in these *tragedies* [affect, -], and they continue to *weigh heavily on us* [affect, -]. We *recognize* [entertain] the *devastation* [affect, -] of the families and friends of the passengers and crew members and extend our deepest *sympathies* [affect, -] to all of them.

As it is shown in example 13, negative affect resources like *sorry*, *tragedies*，*weigh heavily on us*, *devastation*, and *sympathies* are repeatedly used in such a short excerpt. By using the affect resources, Boeing sets a common ground of shared feeling with the victims. All these emotional words function as a bridge to connect Boeing Company and the victims of these two crushes. This strategy can be seen as EP, which directly stresses Boeing's concern and benevolence towards the victims. At the same time, NN is also employed in the example, by using *recognize*, the idea that Boeing disregards the life and safety of travellers is fended off. The opinion that Boeing is benevolent is reaffirmed.

Example 14: We also *regret* [affect, -] the impact the grounding has had on our airline customers and their passengers and on our supply-chain partners, many of which are small to medium-sized businesses.

Besides the victims of the two crushes, many other parties are also affected by the accidents such as the shareholders and their business partners. Since the airplanes crushed, the stock price of Boeing plummeted, which caused great loss to Boeing and its shareholders. What's more, the two crushes resulted in the grounding of 737 MAX. Not only does Boeing suffer a loss, but also his suppliers and customers are badly influenced. In example 14, the CEO showed his concern and regret to various parties because of the grounding of 737 MAX. The fact that 737 MAX is grounded is hardly their intention. They also care for the interest of all their business partners.

4.3 Discussion

The trust crisis following the two catastrophic air crushes forces Boeing to counteract in order to rebuild the relationship with the stakeholders. To achieve the purpose, many measures are taken, one of which is the corporate communication. Language can be used to do things (Austin, 1962). Thus, trust-repair discourse is used to restore the public trust on Boeing. Among all the corporate communications, the CEO's discourse is of great importance. Here in Muilenbeurg's speech, he takes the view of the audience into account to renegotiate the trustworthiness. By neutralizing the negative and emphasizing the positive, Boeing aims to realign its norm and value with the audience to restore their badly damaged trustworthiness. Muilenberg's speech uses evaluation and engagement with the audience, by which Boeing is constructed as a competent company in line with social norms which is characterized by honesty, responsibility and benevolence.

At the micro level, evidence shows that evaluating and engagement resources are widely used in the speech. These two kinds of language resources distribute differently in the speech. Evaluating resources are more widely used. By evaluation, the strategy of EP is realized. Boeing is presented as a competent company that they can

build the safest planes and they can solve the design flaws in MCAS. Evaluating resources like *responsibility*, *committed, care, sorry*, etc. are also used to emphasize that Boeing is integrate and benevolent. By engagement, the CEO tries to align his stance toward Boeing with that of the audience and to rebuild the company's trustworthiness. By comparing evaluation with engagement, we find that evaluating resources are far more than engagement. One reason is that description of the three dimensions of trust inevitably involving positive resources to stress and negative resources to show condolence. Nevertheless, engagement resources are mostly employed to mitigate the negative opinions on Boeing. Due to the fact that the crisis is still unsolved and Boeing is a major party to be blamed, too many discourses to confront the negative comments will make Boeing an irresponsible and unreliable company. Consequently, NN is less used than EP. All these suggest that Boeing's CEO strategically used the discourse to repair the audiences' trust.

The speech is given by Muilenberg, which is directly addressed to the shareholders. However, as we can see from the analysis above, the target audiences include not only the shareholders but also other parties such as the victims, the customers and business partners. The speech is a public speech. Not only can the shareholders hear, but also the media and many other people can watch through Internet. More importantly, besides reassuring the shareholders, Boeing intends to earn trust back from all other stakeholders. Taking all the stakeholders into consideration, the CEO projects a positive and trustworthy image.

5. Conclusion

Through the analysis of the CEO's speech after the two detrimental crushes, we find that the model proposed by Fuoli and Paradis provides a scientific approach to the analysis of trust-repair discourse. It is also found that Boeing adopts the NN and EP strategies to repair its trustworthiness by the use of evaluating and dialogic engagement.

Limitations also exist in our analysis. First, we only focus on one speech. More corporate communications for a longer period of time can be included for further exploration. Second, the analysis is only focused on the discourse level. The effects of this speech on the audience and their responses are not discussed here. Further researches can be done with more texts of speech and some investigations on the audience's responses.

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