1 Overview of Discourse Analysis

Introduction

As an applied linguist who does discourse analytic work, I introduce myself sometimes as an applied linguist and sometimes as a discourse analyst. Like many of my colleagues across the globe, we are discourse analysts in linguistics, applied linguistics, education, sociology, anthropology, psychology, gender studies, culture studies, communication studies, English language and literature, and other disciplines. We are housed in a vastly diverse array of academic programs or departments, most of which don't have "discourse analysis" in their titles. As the British linguist Michael Stubbs (1983) wrote more than 30 years ago:

> No one is in the position to write a comprehensive account of discourse analysis. The subject is at once too vast, and too lacking in focus and consensus. . . . Anything at all that is written on discourse analysis is partial and controversial.
>
> (p. 12)

Decades later, the vastness and disparity remain but have in some ways been cast in a more positive light. In their second edition of the *Handbook of Discourse Analysis*, Schiffrin, Tannen, and Hamilton (2015) wrote:

> Our own experiences in the field have led us to the conviction that the vastness and diversity of discourse analysis is a strength rather than a weakness. Far from its being a liability to be lamented because of the lack of a single coherent theory, we find the theoretical and methodological diversity of discourse analysis to be an asset.
>
> (p. 5)

Aim of the Book

Appreciating the vastness and diversity of discourse analysis is one thing, and attempting to introduce that vastness and diversity to beginning students of

discourse is quite another. In this book, I make this attempt by organizing such vastness and diversity around the kinds of questions discourse analysts ask and how they answer them. By placing the questions that drive discourse analysts at the center stage, I hope to provide a spine that brings together what may otherwise appear to be a disparate set of facts about discourse, thereby alleviating the difficulty students often have in efficiently developing and articulating a coherent understanding of the subject. Considering how each broad question is systematically approached by analysts of different empirical persuasions also affords the possibilities for synthesis, integration, and a multidimensional understanding of the core issues that preoccupy discourse analysts. As such, it sidesteps the potential pitfall of a method-driven orientation that may at times constrain rather than inspire. Without considering the question each method is addressed to, for example, discussions on its strengths and weaknesses are ultimately unproductive. As students of discourse are sometimes observed to grapple with "Am I using the method correctly?" or "Is X allowed in this method?" rather than "Am I answering the question adequately?", this book is written in part to set the priorities straight.

Origins of Discourse Analysis

Before we proceed, one clarification is in order. In this book, I use discourse analysis as a general label that encompasses various approaches to discourse such as conversation analysis, interactional sociolinguistics, and critical discourse analysis (e.g., Cameron, 2001; Schiffrin, 1994). It is important to acknowledge, however, that the term "discourse analysis" is sometimes reserved for more specific traditions or approaches. In sociology and social psychology, for example, discourse analysis originated in the sociology of scientific knowledge associated with the work of Nigel Gilbert and Michael Mulkay (Wooffitt, 2005). By collecting various kinds of qualitative data including recorded interviews, Gilbert and Mulkay (1984) were trying to discover the processes through which scientists resolve a scientific dispute. Although they set out to provide a coherent account of how scientific knowledge was produced, what they found was the variability in accounts. There is, in other words, no such thing as "what really happened." They proposed, as a result, discourse analysis as a method to study the nature of that variability. This method of discourse analysis was later crystallized in Potter and Wetherell's (1987) classic volume *Discourse and Social Psychology* (also see *discursive psychology* in Edwards & Potter, 1992).

In linguistics, the enterprise of discourse came about as an attempt by linguists to go beyond the sentence level in the study of language. The belief was that just as sentences were built from identifiable elements and rules, so should be discourse. Scholars would take this search for structures beyond the sentence level in several directions: some discovered structures and rules for stories and narratives (Kintsch & Dijk, 1978; Labov & Waletzky, 1967), some

proposed mapping rules and sequencing rules for conversation (Labov & Fanshel, 1977), and some identified IRF (initiation-response-feedback) as a distinct feature of classroom discourse (Sinclair & Coulthard, 1975). As the terms used to characterize language at or below the sentence level are no longer adequate for describing discourse, some have turned to concepts such as topic, "staging," information structure and the like, and efforts were made to understand the nature of reference and other cohesive ties in building text coherence (Brown & Yule, 1983; Halliday & Hasan, 1976). Because of the preoccupation with units and rules, linguistically oriented discourse analysis is often tied to the practice of imposing predetermined categories onto natural or even invented data, and in this regard, stands in stark contrast with other approaches such as conversation analysis, which features "unmotivated looking" into naturally occurring talk (Psathas, 1995). Levinson (1983), for example, made the distinction between conversation analysis and discourse analysis.

Returning to our consideration of discourse analysis as a superordinate category then, in this chapter, I provide a preview of the four broad questions that preoccupy discourse analysts—questions that provide some much-needed but ever-elusive coherence to the field. I also offer an initial sampling of how these four broad questions may be answered through the analysis of discourse. The goal is to pique the reader's interest in matters of discourse and to stage a road map for the kinds of expeditions we will embark on for the rest of the book. The chapter ends with a discussion on the question of why discourse analysts do the work they do or what real-world impact the work of discourse analysis can have. But first, a book on discourse analysis cannot begin without tackling two seemingly straightforward questions: (1) What is discourse, and (2) what is discourse analysis?

Discourse and Discourse Analysis

Task 1: Poll 10 people with the question, "What is discourse?" Compile your answers and report to the class. Try to reach some consensus regarding your definition of discourse. On the basis of this definition, consider whether the following are examples of discourse. Check "yes" or "no." Explain your choices.

1. _____ political speech
2. _____ gossip
3. _____ lecture
4. _____ group discussion
5. _____ music
6. _____ lyrics.

Here are some answers gathered from a casual poll in a university administrative office:

- communication or dialog between two people
- conversation between two or more people with an emphasis on content not relationships
- one's means of communication
- ((sigh))
- back-and-forth of conversation
- speech
- a fancy word for *talking*
- talking things over
- the act of conversation
- talking or a conversation that has a beginning and an end.

Some recurring words are *talking*, *conversation*, and *communication*. Our vernacular understanding of discourse seems to revolve around social interaction. Would an academic definition of discourse be any different?

Defining Discourse

One can approach the question by considering the sorts of things discourse analysts study. A cursory survey of the recent issues of major discourse journals such as *Text & Talk*, *Discourse Studies*, *Discourse Processes*, *Journal of Pragmatics*, and *Research on Language and Social Interaction* yields a rich assortment of interests including humor, reported speech, intercultural impoliteness, disaffiliation in Japanese interaction, discourse of resistance to racism, conversational style on Twitter, deception in computer-mediated communication, turn-taking in the skating pool, topical themes in research articles, plagiarism policies in Australian universities, and negotiating knowledge bases in pedagogical discourse. Like the responses gathered from the casual poll at a university office, the list here roughly points to an understanding of discourse as actual instances of language use in the real world as opposed to language as an abstract system, which would accommodate invented instances of language such as *Colorless green ideas sleep furiously* (Chomsky, 1957). The study of language as an abstract system, for example, is documented in *Language*, the flagship journal of the Linguistic Society of America, where topics such as case alternation, polarity particle, and patterns of contrast in phonological change are dealt with in great depth. As wide a chasm as there appears to be between (theoretical) linguistics and discourse analysis nowadays, there was a time when the study of discourse was simply the study of linguistics. In reflecting upon her foray into the field of discourse analysis, Deborah Tannen recalls an era devoid of any journals with "discourse" in their titles, where she did not think of what she was doing as anything but linguistics, and in searching for a label for the different kind of linguistics she was studying,

she came to redefine her work as neither linguistics, nor sociolinguistics, but "discourse analysis" (Schiffrin et al., 2015, p. 3).

Beyond the commonality of highlighting language use in the real world between the vernacular and the academic lists, the information from the discourse journals also gives us a sense of what specific aspects of *talking*, *conversation*, and *communication* constitute objects of scientific investigations for discourse analysts. In other words, from the scholarly journals, we are afforded greater specificity in understanding what constitutes discourse. In the spirit of further pursuing such specificity, I make three additional observations in attempting a more comprehensive answer to the question of *what is discourse?* First, discourse is clearly not limited to face-to-face interaction but instead includes text and talk delivered through a variety of technologies (e.g., pen, phone, computer) and platforms (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, online learning management systems). Second, discourse is not limited to language but includes manifold semiotic resources such as gaze, gestures, body movements, artifacts, and the material setting. Indeed, topics such as gesture, multimodality, and embodied action are featured in the second edition of *Handbook of Discourse Analysis* (Tannen, Hamilton, & Schiffrin, 2015) and constitute the theme of the groundbreaking volume *Embodied Interaction: Language and Body in the Material World* (Streeck, Goodwin, & LeBaron, 2011; also see Nevile, 2015). This "language and beyond" notion of discourse provides a perfect segue into our third, related point that specifies what constitutes discourse. An influential dichotomy in the field of discourse analysis is that between the little "d" discourse and the Big "D" discourse (Gee, 2011).

> **The little "d" discourse** refers to "any instance of language-in-use" (spoken or written) (Gee, 2011, p. 205), and the **Big "D" discourses** "ways of combining and integrating language, actions, interactions, ways of thinking, believing, valuing, and using various symbols, tools, and objects to enact a particular sort of socially recognizable identity" (Gee, 2011, p. 201).

In other words, Gee's Big "D" refers to a full ensemble of resources one employs to enact a particular identity; notably, it goes beyond language and multimodal resources to include one's beliefs and values, much of which, as I suspect, may be located in the actual use of language and multimodal resources. Being a first-time mom, for example, is more than the language one speaks. The Big D of a first-time mom includes not only her use of vocabulary such as *diapers*, *naps*, and *snacks* but also the nursery rhymes she learns, the Internet sites she visits, the section of the wood floor she learns to walk on in order not to wake up the baby, and much more. The Big D

of a first-time mom is an entire way of comporting, behaving, and living, through close observations of which, we also become privy to what she thinks, believes, and values.

So where do all these specifications leave us? Are we in a better place to define what discourse is? I believe we are. Considering how the word *discourse* has been used in all its incarnations both vernacularly and academically, in this book, we define discourse as follows.

> **Discourse** refers to the actual use of language along with other multimodal resources (e.g., facial expression, gazes, gesture, body movements, artifacts, and the material settings) to accomplish actions, negotiate identities, and construct ideologies.

Task 2: On the basis of the definition of discourse we have discussed so far, decide whether the following are examples of discourse:

1. Political speech
2. Gossip
3. Lecture
4. Group discussion
5. Music
6. Newspaper article
7. Stop sign
8. Photograph
9. Painting
10. Book cover.

Defining Discourse Analysis

Once we have figured out what discourse is, the definition of discourse analysis cannot be more obvious, or so it seems. If discourse is the actual use of language along with other multimodal resources to accomplish actions, negotiate identities, and construct ideologies, discourse analysis must be the analysis of such actual use. But what is analysis? You are probably familiar with terms such as political analysis or psychoanalysis. If you are a linguistics or applied linguistics major, you have perhaps already done grammar analysis, phonetics analysis, sociolinguistic analysis, or interlanguage analysis. In the popular U.S. TV show *CSI Miami*, crime scene investigators conduct forensic analyses of a wide range of evidence in order to solve a criminal case.

Task 3: What kinds of analyses have you done? What is involved in those analyses?

In doing analyses, you look closely, you make observations, you ask questions, you pull things apart, you make connections, you uncover meanings, you conduct evaluations, or you identify problems and devise solutions. To various extents, we do all these things to discourse when we engage in discourse analysis. In an e-mail exchange I was carbon copied on, one writes, "Btw—Seeing as I'm the 'to' in your message, no need to emphasize my name again (inferring impatience) at the end of your sentence." The writer of the message is assigning the meaning of impatience to the mention of her name, arguing that such mention is otherwise unnecessary given her clearly marked recipient status. In her own way, she is doing a form of discourse analysis in this very e-mail message! In an academic tenure review, the committee members engage in repeated close readings of the candidate's dossier: They observe patterns, point to the presence or absence of particular indicators, and note items of greater or lesser values. They participate in a collective discourse analysis of the candidate's CV, statement, publications, teaching evaluations, and letters from external reviewers. In the United States, each time after the president has addressed the nation in a televised speech, a panel of pundits would analyze that speech on multiple television stations immediately thereafter. They would comment on what is highlighted, what is omitted, what they are hearing for the first time, what effects the president's remarks would have on various political contingencies, and so on. They too are engaging in a form of discourse analysis.

Discourse analysis refers to the close reading of *actual use of language along with other multimodal resources* for the purpose of dissecting its structures and devising its meanings.

Task 4: What informal discourse analyses have you done at home, at work, or in any other social situations? What were your findings?

Questions and Analyses

In this section, I provide an initial sampling of what the work of doing discourse analysis looks like, that is, what doing *close reading* means in actual discourse analytic work, and I do so by presenting examples of discourse

analysis in response to four broad questions discourse analysts ask: (1) how is discourse structured (e.g., what are the components of X?), and how does such structuring contribute to meaning making? (2) how are social actions (e.g., build rapport, manage conflict, balance work and play) accomplished in discourse, (3) how are identities (e.g., survivor, concerned parent, novice teacher) negotiated in discourse, and (4) how are ideologies (e.g., heteronormativity, gender discrimination, racial ideologies) constructed in discourse? It is important to register from the outset that these questions are not mutually exclusive but jointly elaborative. Understanding the structure of X can be the basis for understanding the work involved in accomplishing actions, negotiating identities, and constructing ideologies. It may also be argued that by performing a particular social action, one is inevitably engaged in some sort of identity work or even perhaps signaling a particular ideology. Regardless of such interwoven links, however, individual discourse analysts would typically choose to foreground one aspect of discourse over another in the presentation of their work, as evidenced, for example, in the title of the work, the research questions asked, and the contributions highlighted. For a useful discussion on what doing discourse analysis entails, see Antaki, Billig, Edwards, and Potter (2003).

How Is Discourse Structured?

The issue of discourse and structure will be addressed in greater detail in Chapters 2–3. As will be shown, discourse analysts have gone to great lengths to detail the structure of narrative, conversation, classroom discourse, various genres of text, and so on. The structure of a summary, for example, may be of interest to many. From second grade on and throughout graduate school, we are asked to summarize stories, articles, studies, books, speeches, arguments, and so on. Summary appears to be such a simple and straightforward genre, and yet young children are often at loss as to where to begin, and even graduate students can hand in summaries of a research article that miss key elements of that article. How do you teach someone to write a summary? A helpful answer may be found in Li and Hoey's (2014) analysis of strategies of writing summaries based on 80 hard news texts and summaries written by information retrieval experts. The authors addressed the question of how summaries are structured by identifying how summaries are assembled in the first place—via the strategies of deletion, substitution, and abstraction. **Deletion** involves omitting trivial and unimportant information and is found to be the first and easiest strategy to acquire in learning to do summaries. **Selection** is the next stage in the developmental sequence of summary writing and entails selecting a part of the original text as important to be repacked through nominalization, paraphrase, and the replication of linkages that do or do not occur in the original texts. **Abstraction** is the highest-level strategy and the most difficult to acquire because it requires one to combine several partial acts or events into an overall macroact or macroevent.

Li and Hoey made it very clear that a prerequisite of implementing the three summary strategies of deletion, substitution, and abstraction is a solid understanding of how the original text is structured. In order to make decisions on what to delete and what to select, for example, one needs to begin with a clear understanding of how the different parts of the texts relate to each other, and where such relationships are often signaled by linguistic devices such as subordinators, conjuncts, lexical repetitions, and parallelism. Propositions stated in the independent clauses in the leads of the original news stories, for example, are more likely to be considered core information to be included by summary writers. In the case of abstraction, for example, the original texts present a series of instances in support of a common theme without explicitly stating such a theme, and the equal status among the instances is signaled by their parallel structure created through repetition.

Task 5: Consider the following text taken from Li and Hoey (2014, p. 100). All the sentences are numbered for easy reference. Identify the relationships among the propositions in this text and any parallel instances that illustrate a common theme, and identify the common theme.

> BEIJING—(1) A new circular by Fujian's provincial education department on Tuesday has targeted academic plagiarism by college teachers, amid increasing worries over the practice. (2) College teachers in Fujian may also be dismissed if they spread misinformation against the country's laws and regulations to mislead students, the circular said. (3) An increasing number of teachers in universities in China are turning to the Internet or other academics' research to advance their own careers. (4) Shen Yang, a professor at Wuhan University who released a research paper in 2009, said the country lacks an effective thesis supervision system and the convenience brought by the Internet drives the booming ghostwriting market. (5) His study shows there were more than 1.1 million full-time teachers in universities and colleges across the country in 2007. (6) They had to publish more than half a million theses within two years in nearly 1,800 important periodicals to keep their positions. (7) Other banned practices include teachers abusing their power for personal benefit and teachers acting fraudulently on student enrolment, assessment and exams. (8) The circular also emphasized that teachers will lose out on promotion opportunities and pay rises if they are irresponsible in students' safety or induce students to participate in any "illegal or superstitious activities". (9) It said teachers were not allowed to use "physical punishment on students or insult them". (10) Violators will have any academic award and honor canceled, and will not be able to apply for new research projects for specified periods.

Here are the three one-sentence summaries of the previous text written by experienced summary writers in Li and Hoey (2014):

(1) Circular was published to punish errant teachers in Fujian.
(2) Fujian published new circular to punish misbehaving teachers.
(3) New circular published by Fujian aims to punish misbehaving teachers.

As can be seen, *punish* and *misbehaving* are used to capture the common themes embedded in multiple sentences in the original text.

Thus, analyzing the structure of discourse involves identifying the recognizable components of a particular piece of text or talk. Insofar as understanding the structure of X often provides an effective entry point into understanding its meaning, discourse analysis offers an important resource for discovering such structures in the first place.

How Are Social Actions Accomplished in Discourse?

Questions such as how to request, compliment, built rapport, or manage conflicts, as will be discussed in great depth in Chapters 4–5, are in many ways the central preoccupation of discourse analysts. Take line 04 in the following extract for example (Schegloff, 1988, pp. 119–120). What is it doing? (Key: brackets = simultaneous speech; equals sign = second utterance latched onto first without perceptible break; colon = sound stretch; CAPS = loud speech; hehehheh = laughter.)

(1) Ice cream sandwich

01			((door squeaks))
02	Sherri:		Hi Carol.=
03	Carol:		=[Hi::.]
04	Ruthie:		[CA:RO]L, HI::
05	Sherri:	→	You didn't get an ice cream sandwich,
06	Carol:		I kno:w, hh I decided that my body didn't need it.
07	Sherri:		Yes but ours di:d=
08			=hh heh heh heh heh heh heh .hhih

Schegloff (1988) offers an elaborate account of how Sherri's turn in line 05 is produced and recognized as a complaint. He does so by looking at how the turn is composed and how it is responded to. For example, *You didn't get an ice cream sandwich* is a negative observation of a failure. And Carol responds to that negative observation with an account, which is one of the ways complaints are typically responded to. Aside from answering this question of how social actions are accomplished in a single conversational turn such as this, discourse analysts have also tackled questions based on larger collections such as how agreements or disagreements are done. Agreements, according to Pomerantz (1984, pp. 65–68), are done as an upgrade, the same,

or a downgrade *vis-à-vis* the prior speaker's talk and done so without any delay, mitigation, or account, as shown in the following three examples:

(2) Upgrade

01 A: It's a beautiful day out isn't it?
02 B: → Yeh it's just gorgeous . . .

(3) Same

01 A: . . . She was a nice lady—I liked her.
02 B: → I liked her too.

(4) Downgrade

01 A: That's beautiful.
02 B: → Isn't it pretty.

Task 6: Consider the following data taken from Pomerantz (1984, pp. 71, 75). In what ways are disagreements done differently from the agreements? (Key: number in parentheses = length of silence in seconds; italics = stress)

(1)

01 C: . . . You've really both basically honestly gone
02 your own ways.
03 D: → Essentially, except we've had a good relationship
04 at home.

(2)

01 A: . . . You sound very far away.
02 → (0.7)
03 B: → I do?
04 A: Yeah.
05 B: No I'm no:t,

As Pomerantz (1984) pointed out, disagreement generally features delay (e.g., silence, questions, reluctance markers, agreement preface), mitigation (e.g., *essentially*), and accounts (e.g., *except we've had a good relationship at home*).

How Are Identities Negotiated in Discourse?

Another central question for discourse analysts concerns the role discourse plays in identity negotiation—an issue to be discussed in greater detail in

Chapters 6–7. Identities such as upper-class British vs. Jewish New Yorkers, for example, can become visible in their diverging conversational styles (Tannen, 1984, p. 120). In the following dinner conversation, for example, Sally's telling of her airplane meal encounters incurs multiple interjections from her co-participants, which are intended as cooperative prompting. (Key: *acc* = spoken quickly; two dots = less than half a second pause; three dots = half a second pause; four dots = full second pause; brackets = simultaneous talk)

(5) Bagel and cream cheese

01	Sally:	Oh I was amazed to see the uh .. the meal on the
02		airplane today.
03	Peter:	What was it?
04	Sally:	It was .. a bagel with cream cheese . . . .
05	David:	[What's this?
06	Peter:	[For lunch?
07	Sally:	At lunch, . . . a bagel with cream [cheese
08	Peter:	[That's .. that's
09		Air Canada, right? . . . um Pacific=
10	Deborah:	=A .. a bagel [and cream cheese?
11	Sally:	[It was United.
12		A bagel and cream cheese, . . .
13		*acc*
14		and a whole pile of <u>ham</u>.
15		[laughter]

As Tannen observed, when Sally ends with *bagel and cream cheese* in steady intonation and a pause in line 04, the others thought she was done. But Sally keeps going back to *a bagel and cream cheese* first in line 07 and then in line 12, the latter of which is done with accelerated speed, clearly indicating that the point of her story is yet to come. It turns out that her point is not that bagel and cream cheese were served as lunch but that these Jewish food items were served with the nonkosher ham (line 14)! During playback interviews where the participants listened to their own talk and made comments, Tannen (1984) found that the cooperative prompting offered by herself (Deborah) and Peter (Jewish New Yorkers) were considered obstructive by Sally (upper-class British) who "couldn't understand why Peter kept interrupting her story to question her about irrelevant details" (p. 121). In this case, the same linguistic conduct is intended as cooperative but interpreted as obstructive. Tannen attributed this style difference in part to geographic and ethnic differences (e.g., upper-class British vs. Jewish New Yorkers).

In a study on a family political identity, Gordon (2004) showed how a 4-year-old boy and his parents collaboratively create their shared identity as Democrats and supporters of Al Gore. They do so by, for example, using referring terms that create closeness to Gore and distance from Bush (Gordon, 2004, pp. 617–618). (Key: angle brackets = enclose descriptions of vocal

noises; <*manner*>words> = angle brackets enclose descriptions of the manner in which an utterance is spoken; square brackets = enclose simultaneous talk.)

(6) We want Al

01	Jason:	So they—
02		And we're also voting for President at my school too.
03	Neil:	<*exaggerated surprise*> For President?>
04		[Or just ice cream?]
05	Jason:	[(They're) talking] about the President.
06	Neil:	<*louder*> Oh well you tell 'em you're votin' for **Al Gore**.>
07	Jason:	[Yea:h!]
08	Clara:	[Yea:h!]
09	Neil:	Not **that ['W' guy**.]
10	Clara:	[(That's the one.)]
11		Not **W**!
12	Neil:	Say no **W**.
13	Clara:	No [**W**!]
14	Neil:	[We] want **Al**.
15	Clara:	<*louder*> We want **Al**.>
16	Jason:	Who's Al?
17	Neil:	**Al Gore**.
18		He's a **cool guy** [that we–]
19	Clara:	[He's **Daddy's] friend**.
20	Neil:	That's right.
21		He's **my friend**.
22		He's gonna be President.
23	Clara:	We hope.
24	Neil:	We hope.
25	Clara:	He's **Jackie's friend** too.
26	Neil:	<*sniffs*>
27		That's right,
28		Jackie knows him.

As shown, the democratic nominee Al Gore is referred to affectionately as *AL* (line 15), *a cool guy* (line 18), *Daddy's friend* (line 19), *my friend* (line 21), and *Jackie's friend* (line 25)—the person the family wants to be president (line 22). Republican nominee George W. Bush, on the other hand, is dismissed as *That 'W' guy* (line 09) or just *W* (lines 11–13)—the guy that they as a family *say no* to (lines 11–13).

Task 7: Consider the following extract taken from Gordon (2004, p. 622), where Jason is watching TV with his mom. What discourse

evidence is there to show how the family identity of Democrats is being constructed?

01	Clara:	That's the man that Daddy doesn't like.
02	Jason:	Who.
03		Where.
04	Clara:	That guy.
05		Bu- GW.
06		*<coughs>*
07	Jason:	(Is that the guy?)
08	Clara:	That's the one.
09	Jason:	Oh.. how come they're all clapping about him.
10	Clara:	Um,
11		I guess some people like him,
12		but- but I think–*<sighs>*
13		I think it's the hunters,
14		and the pe- the other people who don't know any better.

How Are Ideologies Constructed in Discourse?

Aside from performing actions and negotiating identities, discourse is also, as will be discussed in greater detail in Chapters 8–9, a crucial means through which ideologies are constructed. In his effort to elucidate how anti-immigration ideology is perpetuated in a 1989 article published in the British tabloid the *Sun*, Dijk (1996) called attention to the large banner headline **"Get Lost, Spongers!"**, the adjectives *bogus* and *phony* used to describe immigrant students and the colleges that admit them, and the popular rhetorical styles ("get lost," "spongers," etc.) engaged to legitimize what is assumed to be the popular resentment against immigration.

Task 8: Consider the note pasted on our office refrigerator years ago. Is there any particularly notable choice of language? If yes, how does the choice construct realities in a certain way? What ideology is manifested in the choice?

Please help keep this room clean!
No one's mother works here!
Montse works here, but it's not her job.
Jessie works here, but it's not her job.

. . . IT'S YOUR job to keep it clean!
~the Anti-Cockroach Coalition

One might note the use of "mother" in this message, wherein "mother" is constructed as the resident cleaning person. Consider the alternative: "No one's father works here!" Some would say it doesn't make sense, or it's not natural. The message reveals the writer's understanding of a world in which the job of cleaning belongs to the female parent. It naturalizes the view that mothers are there to clean after you, thereby making it unquestionable. It advances a particular ideology.

Clearly, there are many different ways of doing discourse analysis. In the previous illustrations, for example, the analysis of news summaries would be typically identified as a type of genre analysis, the study of agreement and disagreement is presented as one of conversation analysis, the exploration of family political identity is done within the interactional sociolinguistic approach and, finally, the scrutiny of anti-immigration ideology in newspaper papers is an example of critical discourse analysis. Crucially, however, it is important to register that genre analysis is not the only approach to addressing issues of discourse and structure, nor is conversation analysis the only approach to answering questions of discourse and social action, or interactional sociolinguistics the only approach to investigating discourse and identity. Even with issues of discourse and ideology, which are often considered a specialty for critical discourse analysis, these too can be dealt with from multiple perspectives.

Approaches and Transcriptions

As a matter of fact, not all scholars in discourse analysis would identify their work with a specific approach; some simply frame their studies as discourse analytic. Still, it might be useful to highlight some key features of a few approaches that are relatively distinct from each other and will make repeated appearances throughout the book (for a comprehensive treatment of approaches to (spoken) discourse, please consult the seminal texts of Cameron, 2001; Schiffrin, 1994).

With its origin in sociology and a commitment to "naturalistic inquiry" (Schegloff, 1997, p. 501), **conversation analysis (CA)** insists on using data collected from naturally occurring interaction as opposed to interviews, field notes, native intuitions, and experimental methodologies (Heritage, 1984, p. 236). Analysts work with audiorecordings or videorecordings along with the transcripts of these recordings, using transcription notations originally developed by Gail Jefferson to capture a full range of interactional details such as volume, pitch, pace, intonation, overlap, inbreath, smiley voice, the length of silence as well as nonverbal conduct. The goal of conversation analysis is to uncover the tacit methods and procedures of social interaction. Analysis begins with the meticulous inspection of single instances and is guided by the question "Why that now?" (Schegloff & Sacks, 1973), that is, why a particular bit of talk is produced in that particular format at that particular time: What is it accomplishing? It is in these minute details that evidence is

located for how social actions such as requesting or complaining are accomplished by the participants themselves. This obsession with participant orientation or members' methods as made evident in their own conduct is what mainly distinguishes conversation analysis from other methods of qualitative research (for an extended discussion on conversation analysis as a methodology including how issues such as validity, reliability, and generalizability are dealt with, see Waring, 2016; also see Have, 2007 on how to do conversation analysis). Two approaches closely related to conversation analysis are discursive psychology (Edwards & Potter, 1992) and interactional linguistics (Couper-Kuhlen & Selting, 2001). In the case of discursive psychology, conversation analysis is drawn upon to respecify traditional matters of psychology such as memory and emotions. In the case of interactional linguistics, central issues of linguistics such as grammar and prosody are reconceptualized with the analytical tool of conversation analysis.

Interactional sociolinguistics (IS) is a qualitative, interpretive approach to the analysis of social interaction developed at the intersection of linguistics, anthropology, and sociology. Broadly speaking, it is concerned with how speakers signal and interpret meaning in everyday communicative practice with special attention to the taken-for-granted background assumptions recruited in the course of negotiating shared interpretations (Gumperz, 1999). Working with audiorecorded or videorecorded materials, interactional sociolinguists have produced illuminating accounts of phenomena such as miscommunication, stereotype, and discrimination as well as culture-specific discourse strategies, using a set of analytic concepts such as contextualization cues, frame, or intertextuality. In addition to transcripts of naturally occurring interaction, analysts sometimes also consult the participants' perspectives through (playback) interviews, where the participants are invited to comment on recordings of their own interaction (see Tannen, Kendall, & Gordon, 2007 for a collection of interactional sociolinguistics studies).

The attempt to link the micro and the macro in interactional sociolinguistics (Gordon, 2011) is also reflected in other ethnography-related discourse analytic approaches, such as ethnography of communication (Hymes, 1974), sociocultural linguistics (Bucholtz, 2011), linguistic anthropology (Goodwin, 2006; Wortham & Reyes, 2015), or **microethnography**—a term coined by Frederick Erickson to capture the kind of approach that combines participant observation with detailed analyses of audiovisual recordings that capture "key scenes in people's lives—often scenes in which people from different speech communities meet to do business that is important to them" (Erickson & Mohatt, 1982, p. 133). Microethnography, according to Erickson (2004), is most similar to John Gumperz's interactional sociolinguistics. Contemporary microethnographic studies, however, tend to employ conversation analysis as its core analytic method, often without consulting the participants' perspective through interviewing (Streeck & Mehus, 2005). Ethnography-related approaches to discourse

analysis typically feature a wide range of data sources beyond audiorecordings or videorecordings of social interaction such as interviews, field notes, surveys, and various artifacts.

Finally, **critical discourse analysis (CDA)** is devoted to studying the relationships between language and power (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997; also see Chapter 8). Scholars in critical discourse analysis view language along with its meaning and use as inherently historical, political, and ideological. As such, their work centers on critically examining the processes through which power, dominance, discrimination, gender inequality, racism, and so on get signaled, legitimized, and naturalized through discourse, using various methods ranging from small-scale case study and ethnographic research to large-scale corpora analysis. For systematic accounts of how critical discourse analysis can be done, see Gee (2014a, 2014b) and Wodak and Meyer (2009).

The differences in approaches are in part observable in the different transcription conventions employed (e.g., Edwards & Lampert, 1993), which reflect to various degrees the researchers' theoretical assumptions (Ochs, 1979). Conversation analysts, for example, believe that no detail can be dismissed *a priori* because it is in these very details that tacit methods of social interaction are uncovered. As such, conversation analytic transcripts tend to be extremely detailed (Jefferson, 1983), and part of such detail entails, especially in first-generation conversation analysis studies (Lerner, 2004), the use of "eye dialect" where, for example, *to* is transcribed as *tih*, *was* as *wuz*, or *and* as *en*. Some scholars, on the other hand, believe that too much detail in a transcript can hinder readability and that "[a] more useful transcript is a more selective one" (Ochs, 1979). As will become evident, transcription conventions vary in the degrees of details documented as well as the symbols used to represent specific speech or nonspeech activities. Table 1.1 lists a set of baseline transcription symbols commonly used by discourse analysts across different approaches. Throughout the book, variations as well as additional notations specific to particular methodologies or individual scholars will be noted as they arise. Rather than standardizing the transcription conventions for this book, I have made an effort, to the extent feasible, to remain faithful to the notations employed by various scholars in their original studies for the exact purpose of exposing the reader to the different systems of documenting discourse. For a recent treatment of transcribing in social research, see Hepburn and Bolden (in press).

Task 9: Audiorecord or videorecord a two-party conversation. Transcribe 30 seconds of that recording using the notations listed in Table 1.1. Create any additional notations to capture any verbal or nonverbal features that cannot be captured by those notations.

Table 1.1 Transcription Notations

Symbol	*Meaning*
.	(period) falling intonation
?	(question mark) rising intonation
,	(comma) continuing intonation
-	(hyphen) abrupt cutoff
word	(underline) stress
:	(colon(s)) sound stretch
WORD	(all caps) loud speech
[ ]	(lined-up brackets) co-occurrence involving speech or nonspeech activities
=	(equals sign) latch between utterances without perceptible break or contiguous utterances of the same speaker
(.)	(period in parentheses) micropause
(word)	(parentheses) uncertain transcription or indecipherable speech
((*gazing*))	(double parentheses) nonspeech activity

Applications of Discourse Analysis

Why do discourse analysts do the work they do? Discourse analysis is done for various reasons, the most basic of which is to develop a better understanding of language use. As Cameron (2001) wrote, "When linguists and other social scientists analyse spoken discourse, their aim is to make explicit what normally gets taken for granted; it is also to show what talking accomplishes in people's lives and society at large" (p. 7). As with most academic disciplines, better understanding is the aim. Knowledge is the goal in and of itself. Some might say that's not a reason: that's just what discourse analysis is. But knowledge is power—it is useful, and it can make the world a better place.

In the illustrations offered earlier, for example, the knowledge of how summaries are structured makes it possible to teach that structure to students who are emerging writers, the knowledge of how agreements or disagreements are done in English can be usefully drawn upon to develop authentic language learning materials, the knowledge of how the same linguistic behaviors are interpreted differently by different social or ethnic groups can be leveraged to achieve greater harmony among these groups and, finally, the knowledge of how anti-immigration ideologies are perpetuated in media outlets can raise public awareness and rally public support for fighting against that ideology. As James Paul Gee (2005) so eloquently wrote,

> When we sit back and reflect on what people have said and written—a luxury we have too little in life, but the basis of discourse analysis—we often discover better, deeper, and more humane interpretations. The small child whom the teacher assumed made no sense at sharing time

> looks a lot smarter after a little reflection, which can be helped along by recording the child for a later, more reflective listening. A person from a different race, class, or culture looks, on reflection, if the reflection is based on any knowledge, to have made both a better point and a better impression on second thought than on first.
>
> (pp. xi–xii)

Some analysts are driven by real-world concerns from the outset. Critical discourse analysts may begin with the assumption that the world is an unjust place, and to unveil that injustice becomes their mission. Interactional sociolinguists have produced important work to salvage relationships and to eliminate misunderstandings. John Gumperz, for example, served as a consultant on BBC's *Crosstalk*—a television program designed to raise awareness of possible causes of intercultural miscommunication in workplaces and of the role of language in stereotyping and discrimination. Conversation analytic work has become instrumental in improving doctor-patient communications, human-computer interactions (HCI), and even public speaking techniques. Max Atkinson, whose book *Lend Me Your Ears* is considered a bible for many politicians seeking the art of effective speaking, began as a conversation analyst investigating speaker-audience interaction. As Paddy Ashdown, the former leader of the British Liberal Democrats, wrote, "There was scarcely a single speech in my eleven years as leader of the Liberal Democrats that I made without benefiting from Max Atkinson's personal advice and help" (Atkinson Communications, 2013). More recently, the conversation analyst Elizabeth Stokoe developed CARM (Conversation Analytic Role-Play Method)—a training program aimed at improving communication skills in any workplace or institutional encounter (www.carmtraining.org). In fact, as documented in a special issue of *Research on Language and Social Interaction* ("Conversation Analysis and Intervention," 2014), conversation analysts have been actively engaged in intervention work to improve aphasic conversations, enhance effectiveness in telephone help line services, promote more accurate diagnosis of seizure, influence policy changes concerning service delivery to government benefits claimants, and inform the design and development of a prototype communication system. Because of the work discourse analysts do, professional practices are enhanced, relationships are saved, and the world is becoming a less prejudiced place.

As an applied linguist with a particular interest in language learning and teaching, I do discourse analysis for two reasons, that is, to help solving two larger jigsaw puzzles: *what to teach* and *how to teach*. Insofar as the goal of language teaching is to help learners develop their communicative competence, findings of discourse analysis are integral to specifying the stuff that communicative competence is made of. Becoming communicatively competent in a second language is more than learning its vocabulary, mastering its grammar, and appropriating its pronunciation. As Rintell and Mitchell (1989) wrote, "No 'error' of grammar can make a speaker seem so incompetent, so

inappropriate, so foreign, as the kind of trouble a learner gets into when he or she doesn't understand or otherwise disregards a language's rules of use" (p. 248). Discourse markers such as *but*, *also*, *anyway*, and *actually* can present grave challenges for nonnative speakers, who often use the markers literally, overuse them, or misuse them. Tyler (1992) showed that part of the difficulties international teaching assistants (ITAs) have in getting themselves understood has to do with the use of discourse markers. According to Jung (2009), there is a subtle difference in the use of *but* in her data: nonnative speakers (NNS) of English use it to preface their disagreement (e.g., *but you're wrong*), whereas native speakers (NS) use it to preface a softening move (e.g., *It's not X, but lots of people make the same mistake*). The nonnative speakers come off as unduly abrupt and argumentative. These are subtle functions that cannot be easily explained by a native speaker of English, and they are not even immediately apparent to a researcher. It is up to discourse analysts to uncover them. Knowledge of how to use discourse markers appropriately is but one small indication of the kinds of materials that need to be worked into our language teaching curriculum. Wong and Waring (2010), for example, brought together a large body of conversation analytic findings on interactional practices, which are the foundational skills a language learner must master in order to become interactionally competent in a second language.

I do discourse analysis also with the question of *how to teach* in mind. I analyze classroom interaction, for example, to unveil how instructional practices can block or promote participation, and by extension, learning. I discovered that within certain contexts, the use of explicit positive assessments such as *very good* can deliver the news of "case closed"—no further discussion warranted. By not providing any interactional space for questioning, exploring, or simply lingering upon any specific pedagogical point at the time, explicit positive assessments (EPAs) can effectively remove the opportunities for voicing understanding problems or exploring alternative correct answers, that is, the opportunities of learning (Waring, 2008; Wong & Waring, 2009). A detailed look into classroom interaction can also reveal that tasks do not always unfold as planned. Mori (2002) showed, for example, that what was planned as a "discussion meeting" for learners of Japanese to have an opportunity to converse with native speakers turned into a structured interview, and part of the problem was that the learners were not equipped with the sequential resources to implement some of the required activities. Although they were largely successful with initiating actions such as asking the visitors about their fathers, they had difficulty fulfilling the task of telling the visitors about their own fathers, not knowing how to do that without being asked. Findings such as this force us to think twice about task designs in language teaching. Are we so narrowly focused on outlining the macroprocedures of task planning at the expense of the microinteractional resources necessary to bring about those steps? Discourse analytic work in education settings such as classrooms or tutoring settings play an important role in boosting the efficacy of the practices in those settings. It contributes to answering the question of *how to teach*.

Task 10: Given your understanding of discourse analysis so far, how can knowledge of discourse analysis benefit you in any way? Hypothetically, what would be your personal purpose for doing discourse analysis?

Overview of the Book

Parts II–V of this book are addressed in turn to Discourse and Structure, Discourse and Social Action, Discourse and Identity, and Discourse and Ideology. Each part contains a chapter on classics and one on empirical endeavors. Although the book is not organized around approaches to discourse, through the chapters on empirical endeavors, the reader will be introduced to the actual working of the various approaches in the context of answering the four overarching questions of discourse analysis. In the chapters on the classics, on the other hand, the reader will be exposed to the theoretical groundings and key analytical concepts of the various approaches. While a structural concept such as *adjacency pair* is introduced in the classics chapter in Discourse and Structure, it is an analytical tool deployed to answer questions beyond discourse and structure and therefore will inevitably make its appearance in other parts of the book. Cross-references will be made in the event of such cross-chapter reappearances of key analytical concepts. A final caveat to heed is that the division between "classics" and "empirical endeavors" is a somewhat arbitrary one, as most of the classics are themselves empirical studies. They are treated as classics in this book in part because they are well-known and widely cited early works and, more important, they were the trailblazing investigations that in many cases established the foundations for later inquiries and discoveries.

Key Points

- Discourse refers to the actual use of language along with other multimodal resources.
- Although the term "discourse analysis" sometimes takes on specific disciplinary meanings, it is used in this book as an overarching term to capture the various analytical endeavors to study the actual use of language along with other multimodal resources.
- Discourse analysts ask a set of core questions, each of which can be addressed with multiple approaches.
- The four overarching questions discourse analysts ask are: how is discourse structured, how are social actions accomplished, how are identities negotiated, and how are ideologies constructed?
- Approaches to discourse differ in their origins, goals, types of data, and methods of analyses.

- Transcription systems vary in the extent to which details are recorded and the types of symbols used to represent any speech or nonspeech activities.
- Discourse analysis is done to gain a better understanding of language use along with other multimodal resources, and out of that understanding, real-world problems may be solved.

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