

Investigative Discourse Analysis

Investigative Discourse Analysis

Statements, Letters, and Transcripts

SECOND EDITION

Don Rabon

Tanya Chapman

Carolina Academic Press

Durham, North Carolina

Copyright © 2012 Carolina Academic Press
All Rights Reserved

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Rabon, Don.

Investigative discourse analysis : statements, letters, and transcripts / Don Rabon and Tanya Chapman. -- 2nd ed.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references.

ISBN 978-1-59460-912-1 (alk. paper)

1. Discourse analysis. I. Chapman, Tanya. II. Title.

P302.R33 2012

401'.41--dc23

2011046986

Carolina Academic Press
700 Kent Street
Durham, NC 27701
Telephone (919)489-7486
Fax (919) 493-5668
www.cap-press.com

Printed in the United States of America

Contents

Preface	ix
Introduction	xiii
The Importance of Words in Investigative Discourse Analysis	xiv
Chapter 1 • Terms, Concepts, and Definitions	3
Concepts addressed in this chapter	3
Introduction	3
Reading Summary – MacDonald Narrative	9
Investigative Discourse Analysis Terminology	10
Words as Signs	10
Word Choices	11
Words Form Sentences	12
The Pronoun <i>I</i>	12
Introjection	12
Marker Words	13
Abjuration Terms	13
Psychological Repression	14
Temporal Lacuna	14
Modifying or Qualifying Terms	15
Collective Referencing — The Pronoun <i>We</i>	15
Psychological Distancing — The Pronoun <i>They</i>	16
Explanatory Terms	16
Denial or Negation	16
Stalling Mechanisms	17
False Supportives	17
Summary	18
Examination	19
Chapter 2 • Obtaining the Individual’s Narrative	23
Concepts addressed in this chapter	23
Introduction	23
Questions to Use in Eliciting a Narrative	24
Summary	29
Examination	29

Chapter 3 • Analysis of Narrative by Its Form	31
Concepts addressed in this chapter	31
Introduction	31
Narrative Alignments	32
Identifying the Formal Organization of the Narrative	32
Determining the Central Issue	35
Summary	44
Examination	44
Chapter 4 • Semantic Analysis of the Narrative	47
Concepts addressed in this chapter	47
Introduction	47
Salient Linguistic Indicators for Analysis	47
Lack of conviction about one's own assertions	48
Use of present tense verbs when describing a past occurrence	48
Use of more generalized statements	50
Reduced or eliminated self-references.	55
Non-confirming sentence	57
Sentences out of sequence	61
Reduced mean length of utterance (MLU)	63
Changes in referencing	66
A Semantic Analysis Walk-through	69
Summary	90
Examination	91
Chapter 5 • The Parts of Speech and the Analysis Process	101
Concepts addressed in this chapter	101
Introduction	101
Analysis Function: Verbs	101
Analysis Function: Pronouns	103
Analysis function: Nouns	104
Analysis Function: Adjectives	106
Analysis Function: Adverbs	107
Analysis Function: Conjunctions	108
Analysis Function: Prepositions	114
A Parts of Speech Analysis Walk-Through	115
Summary	118
Cumulative Examination	118
Chapter 6 • Amplification of the Narrative	121
Concepts addressed in this chapter	121
Introduction	121
The Amplification Process	121
Amplifying Questions	122

Summary	136
Examination	136
Chapter 7 • The Analysis Process and Alternate Forms of Documentation:	
Letters and Emails	139
Concepts addressed in this chapter	139
Introduction	139
The Analysis of Non-Narrative Documentation	139
Didactic Methodology Transition	140
Letters and the Analysis Process	140
Emails and the Analysis Process	160
Summary	162
Examination	162
Chapter 8 • The Analysis Process and Alternate Forms of Documentation: Transcripts	165
Concept addressed in this chapter	165
Introduction	165
Interview Summary	189
Summary	210
Examination	210
Chapter 9 • Multiple Document Analysis Synergisms	219
Concept addressed in this chapter:	219
Introduction	219
Summary	224
Chapter 10 • Sentence Deep Analysis	225
Concepts addressed in this chapter	225
Introduction	225
Summary	255

Preface

In the ensuing years since the first edition of *Investigative Discourse Analysis*, a goodly number of requests for analyses have come our way. These analysis requests provide a vehicle to keep us in a hands-on mode, with each analysis serving as a learning experience. Additionally, we have been privileged to conduct investigative discourse analysis classes via traditional and distance learning formats on a continual basis to participants from a wide variety of backgrounds and topic area applications. Each offering has deepened our knowledge base and broadened the horizon for the use of investigative discourse analysis.

As a result, we have gained a proportional degree of productive lessons learned and enhanced applications. Our intent in this edition is to apply what we, and others involved in the analysis process, have gleaned through our endeavors and to present those dynamics in a format that will serve as a Rosetta Stone. Our goal is for this edition to be a continual resource, pairing terms, concepts, and definitions with actual narratives, transcripts, and letters. Consequently, when conducting an analysis in the realm of your responsibilities, you will be able to work from **example** to **term** to **definition**, or any combination thereof.

Consequently, we recommend you place your answer in the spaces that have been provided, make notes and references throughout as you process this text. The use of different-colored highlighters to identify various linguistic components is recommended. If we address a linguistic component that will have particular functionality for you, make a note of it in the margin right then and there. Don't lose the thought. If, as we address a new concept it crosses your mind that you perhaps saw that dynamic in a narrative, letter, or transcript in a previous chapter, stop and go back to look for it. In doing so you are taking the learning effectiveness of this text to the level where it will work most effectively for you.

As a result of what we have gleaned from conducting analyses and courses, we have endeavored to make this edition more personal and more challenging than the first. And if you are going make the effort to work your way through this process with us, you deserve to know why.

First, a most critical element of investigative discourse analysis is the mindset of the person conducting the analysis and subsequent interview. This realization is reflected strongly in the flow of this edition. Toward that end of obtaining the analyst's mindset, throughout the text you will find some tasks for you to complete. These tasks are designed to provide ancillary—though no less important—points for enhancing the analysis process. To accomplish this goal of conducting a productive analysis we have endeavored not to write in an impersonal style. As much as possible, via the written word, we want to be there with you as you progress through the material, the practical exercises, and examinations. To paraphrase Charles Dickens, we want it to seem as if we are there at your side right now each step of the way.

In reading the narratives, transcripts, letters, etc., you will find misspelling, typographical errors, and incorrect punctuation. Documents for analysis will not always come across your desk in the most pristine and grammatically correct condition. In our effort to present the text in a reality-based format, the documents are presented in their original condition, grammatical errors and all.

In that vein, as you progress you will discover we pose a large number of questions for which we do not provide the answers. In our classroom settings we do the same thing. The questions are designed to guide the participant not to look for *the* answer but rather *an* answer. Once we believe we have *the* answer, we cease thinking. Only when we recognize we have *an* answer do we continue to think and process. Investigative discourse analysis is all about thinking—asking what is there and what is not there.

Second, we have made the tasks, examinations, and the search for related elements more challenging as the text progresses. The intent in the first edition was to make it easier to reference an element and to find it within the document. We now know that the learning is in the struggle. To make it easier to find the components does not enhance the learning process. More to the matter, in the real world, statements, narratives, transcripts, and letters do not arrive for analysis with convenient reference markings within the body. Consequently, this delivery format allows for more realistic application. Think of this as *tough love*. In the end you will have a fuller understanding and a higher degree of proficiency. Hold that thought as we go forward.

Within the text there are ten chapters. Each chapter is formulated to take our study deeper into the analysis process. As our knowledge and application abilities grow, each chapter serves as a stepping stone to the next. It has been said time is what prevents everything from happening at once (Wheeler). Similarly in our journey through this text, everything cannot be *presented* at once. We have placed additional information at the locations best suited for assimilation and application. As an example, we will address pronouns, in part, in one chapter and have additional information regarding pronouns in subsequent chapters. Rest assured there is a method behind the madness.

The chapters are as follows:

Chapter 1: Terms, Concepts, and Definitions

A working knowledge of the related linguistic analysis terms is a significant step toward mastery of the analysis process.

Chapter 2: Obtaining the Individual's Narrative

Securing the narrative in the proper manner provides for a productive analysis and subsequent amplification.

Chapter 3: Analysis of Narrative by Its Form

In the analysis of a narrative, form really does follow function.

Chapter 4: Semantic Analysis of the Narrative

Every word is important. Every word has meaning.

Chapter 5: The Parts of Speech and the Analysis Process

The various parts of speech open doors and windows into the world of the teller of the tale.

Chapter 6: Amplification of the Narrative

Allowing the interviewee to *meet* his or her own words is the gold standard of the interview process.

Chapter 7: The Analysis Process and Alternate Forms of Documentation: Letters and Emails

Expanding the analysis process beyond the narrative provides additional and often new avenues through which an inquiry may proceed.

Chapter 8: The Analysis Process and Alternate Forms of Documentation: Transcripts

Due to the length of a transcript, the opportunities for analysis and discovery are enhanced significantly.

Chapter 9: Multiple Document Analysis Synergisms

There are circumstances wherein the sum of one-plus-one equals more than two.

Chapter 10: Deep Sentence Analysis

There is a whole world down there.

You will discover Chapters 1 through 8 contain an examination at the conclusion of each chapter.

Lastly, in investigative discourse analysis, a working knowledge of the parts of speech is imperative. For many of us it has been a while since primary school. If needed, an internet search on the parts of speech will provide a multitude of resources. Just in case.

Introduction

Question: What is investigative discourse analysis?

Answer: It is an additional examination technique for the individual having the responsibility for making inquiry and bringing that inquiry to resolution. It places a focus on the linguistic aspect of interpersonal communication. Herein investigative discourse analysis is not presented as a methodology to replace or supplant other modalities of inquiry but rather as an additional option added to the process—the idea being the more options available the greater the possibility for a positive outcome.

Though by no means is investigative discourse analysis limited to application regarding the interview process, performing an analysis prior to conducting an interview is the gold standard when it comes to planning for the interview. Within the arena of the interview process the guidelines are: ACE:

- A - Allow the individual to provide their story;
- C - Conduct the analysis;
- E - Execute the interview.

The authors have long conceptualized investigative discourse analysis as “common sense with the accompanying labels and process.” We have found by anchoring what is already known to the appropriate linguistic terminologies a more effective transition from “knowing” to “performing” occurs.

The following definitions can serve as the foundation of our study of investigative discourse analysis. The terms, concepts, definitions, methodologies and purposes that we acquire as we proceed through our study rest upon this foundation.

Investigative: To study closely and systematically.

Discourse: Communication, expression, or interchange of thoughts, sometimes within a *narrative*, which is a statement of real or purported events, occurrences or conditions.

Analysis: The process of separating a ‘thing’ into its component parts or elementary qualities.

Investigative Discourse Analysis: The close and systematic study of the basic linking components of spoken or written communication in order to determine:

Process: how something operates or is accomplished;

Occurrence: when something happened or the manner in which it happened;

Descriptions: detailed, vague or missing;

Individual(s) involved: who did what and when;

Evaluation: good/bad - right/wrong;

Relationships: consistent or changing;

Reasons for specific word selections;

To convey or convince: the form and the semantic quality of the narrative.

The Importance of Words in Investigative Discourse Analysis

Words are things. —Mirabeau

Within discourse, words serve as the smallest units of analysis. For the person who would seek to acquire the skill of analyzing discourse, there must be an accompanying fascination with words. We will have the opportunity to examine *every word* an individual uses, for each one is crucial and worthy of evaluation. Discourse analysis is comprised, to paraphrase Emerson, of “fossil words.” Discourse analysis requires us to be verbal archaeologists, examining the entire wording to determine how each word fits with the other – or not.

Mirabeau was correct. Words are indeed “things.” And because words are things, we can, in a sense, pick them up and examine them and their relationship to the other words which we find nearby:

- *What did the individual say?*
- *What did the individual mean to say?*
- *What do we determine the individual said?*
- *What part (if any) of the discourse was meant to convey or convince?*
- *What assists you toward making the determination?*

As Ben Jonson said, “As a man speaks, so he thinks; and as he thinketh in his heart, so is he.” And therein we find the essence of investigative discourse analysis: to know the heart of the individual by the systematic analysis of what he said.

The truth really is out there. Let’s go find it.