

# Investigative Discourse Analysis



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*From the Assessment to the Interview*

THIRD EDITION

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# Preface

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. Every word is a choice.

## **Chapter 5: Amplification of the Narrative**

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

## **Chapter 6: Alterity and Terminology-Extrapolation within the Analysis Process**

A process for expanding upon the narrator's terminology in order to gain deeper insight into their world.

## **Chapter 7: Metaphors and the Analysis Process within the Conduct of the Interview**

Attending to the metaphors utilized by the interviewee to gain additional insight into their emotions and experience as they define it.



# Introduction

From the first edition of *Investigative Discourse Analysis* to this, the third edition, a primary goal has been to transport the analyst cognitively “closer” to the individual providing the narrative. The narrative may be presented in various forms: handwritten, as an email, on social media, as a recorded transcript or face-to-face. Investigative discourse analysis is a means to an end, not the end itself. Often, in an inquiry, the analyst will be responsible for conducting the subsequent interviews with the narrator or other inquiry-related individuals. In other circumstances, the analyst may provide a briefing of the analysis findings to others responsible for directing an inquiry and/or conducting the subsequent interview(s). Consequently, the more the analyst/interviewer understands the world of the interviewee, the greater the possibility of obtaining a successful interview outcome.

In this edition, additional emphasis is placed upon the subsequent inquiry-related interviews. Chapters one through four address the analysis process. Chapter five provides the mechanism for developing questions based upon the analysis. Chapters six and seven explore folding the analysis directly into an unfolding interview. Capability in the material of chapters one through five and adequate foundational interviewing knowledge, skill, and ability are requisite for incorporating the concepts in chapters six and seven into the conduct of the interview.

**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 are 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 versus 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.

