



ESSE-8: LONDON 2006

29 August – 2 September 2006

S25. Discourse Analysis as an Analytical Resource for Cultural Studies in English

Tuesday 29 August: 2.00-4.00pm

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Considering discourse and language as two fundamental categories for contemporary cultural theory, this seminar will explore how discourse analysis may disentangle the role of language in the constitution of cultural practices. Contributions may focus on questions like identity construction, representation, cultural consumption and regulation, the articulation of power relations, and the interaction of such variables with globalization, gender, ethnicity, class, etc. Both practical case studies and theoretical contributions will be welcomed from a wide range of fields including, but not being limited to, critical discourse analysis, language and gender, discourse psychology, ethnography of communication, pragmatics, media and communication studies, etc.

The Construction of Identity through *Small Talk* in Media Interviews

Laura Alba Juez (Spanish National Distance Learning University)

This paper examines some of the strategies and functions of small talk in media discourse. In particular, I focus on the language of interviews, and on how the strategies used in this type of discourse serve the main function of constructing identity, thereby increasing the popularity of the interviewee and building rapport between interviewer, interviewee and public. Thus these strategies are used, consciously or unconsciously, to fulfil an important function and not just to 'fill up time'.

The study is based on audio- and/or video- recordings of 20 interviews in either British English or American English. The initial research question was directed towards investigating how much small talk could be found in television and radio interviews in English, and what were its main realizations and functions. Ultimately, the intention was to be able to conclude if small talk was really 'small' or, on the contrary, 'big' and relevant to the particular speech genre under study, as several studies on the topic within other genres suggest (e.g. Aston 1988, Schneider 1989, McCarthy 2000, Drew & Chilton 2000, Cook 2000, Placencia 2004). Studies focusing on a similar genre, i.e. that of *job interviews* (e.g. Komter 1991), have shown that small talk plays an important and legitimate role in the interview process, rather than just a secondary or extra one.

The data in the corpus displays evidence of the fact that there is a tendency within media interviews to promote the use of small talk. The analysis shows that, no matter how 'serious' the interview, there is almost always a reasonable amount of small talk whose main purpose seems to be in relation with the construction of identity of the interviewee, which in turn contributes to the building of rapport among all the participants involved in the exchange.

Reporting War in Printed Media – A Discourse Approach

Igor Lakic (University of Montenegro)

This paper deals with an analysis of the reporting of three British dailies (*Guardian*, *Independent* and *Times*) on NATO airstrikes on Yugoslavia. The research combined the approach of discourse analysis (Teun van Dijk and Alan Bell) on the construction of news, and critical discourse analysis (Norman Fairclough). The paper deals with some of many aspects of the analysed texts. The analysis proved that the three dailies were not always objective, although they are known as papers not largely influenced by politics and despite the fact that they did not always have access to the statements of the warring sides, especially the Yugoslav one.

Aspects of Acculturation Demonstrated in Language: Minority (Immigrants) vs. Majority (Dominant Group)

Jitka Vlckova (Masaryk University)

Immigrants to a country wish to be accepted by the powerful majority, often not realizing that mastering the language is not enough to break prejudices against newcomers and people from different ethnic backgrounds. To be successful in the attempt, it is necessary to fully adopt the values and customs observed in the new country, which means 'to forget' one's original culture. Examples of personal advertisements submitted by immigrants in Britain and Australia demonstrate how difficult this task may be. Some of the advertisers are still in 'the permanent immigrant' state: they know the language but not the culture.

Applying Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to Cultural Studies (CS) on political, ideological, social and ethnic issues: A research summary

Dagmar Scheu Lottgen & José Saura (University of Murcia)

CS serve to interweave the notions of discourse, knowledge and power into a specific approach to study representation, thereby building the bridge towards CDA. Since CS analyze social and cultural construction and CDA is mainly concerned with power enactment by discourse production and its reception, CDA provides researchers in CS with linguistic procedures and methodological instruments for the analysis of the effects of culture on discourse and the effects of discourses on culture. Grounded on this interdisciplinary approach, we present several research projects where we examine how cultural issues, such as ideology, ethnic identity and power are constituted, reinforced or altered through discourse.

