

Discourse Analysis: The Questions Discourse Analysts Ask and How They Answer Them
Hansun Zhang Waring. New York: Routledge. 2017. Pp. xiv + 226.

To say that discourse analysis is a chameleon in the social sciences would not be an overstatement; it is a research method, a perspective, and a subject in its own right. It is employed and studied by scholars in a wide range of disciplines, including linguistics, applied linguistics, sociology, anthropology, psychology, education, and many more. The multi- and inter-disciplinary nature of discourse analysis, however, is both the reason for its appeal and a source of confusion for beginning analysts. *Discourse Analysis: The Questions Analysts Ask and How They Answer Them* sets out to identify core inquiries that discourse analysts aspire to answer. Inspired by years of teaching Discourse Analysis at the graduate level, Waring's goal is to "introduce [the] vastness and diversity [of discourse analysis] to beginning students of discourse" by presenting "the kinds of questions discourse analysts ask and how they answer them" (p. 3-4). This book, then, seeks to help readers cultivate a principled understanding of what it means to *do discourse analysis*.

The book is organized into five parts. Part I, "Overview of Discourse Analysis," begins with a definition of *discourse* and *discourse analysis*. It then introduces the principles of the main analytic approaches such as Interactional Sociolinguistics and Critical Discourse Analysis, as well as the transcription notations for each approach. Part I also outlines the four overarching themes around which the book is organized: Discourse and Structure, Discourse and Social Action, Discourse and Identity, and Discourse and Ideology. Each of the remaining four parts, Part II to V, addresses one of the above themes; each part features one chapter on classic work, which establishes the theoretical groundings and key analytic concepts and tools, followed by a chapter on empirical endeavors, which offers influential, representative studies illustrating how quality discourse analytic work is accomplished. To guide the reader, at the start of each chapter, the author provides an overview of the chapter and articulates the central analytic concern where the discussion of the chapter is anchored. At the end of each chapter, a list of key terms, summary of key points, and references are included.

Part II of the book (Chapters 2 and 3), "Discourse and Structure," directs readers' attention to discourse units and their relations. In Chapter 2, the author surveys seminal work on the structures of spoken discourse, written discourse, and non-verbal conduct. Some of the classics on talk covered in the chapter include elements of narrative structure, building blocks of conversation such as adjacency pairs and turn-taking, and the initiation-response-feedback pattern in classroom interaction. Classics on the structure of text, on the other hand, include van Dijk's Macrostructure, Halliday and Hasan's notion of cohesion, and Mann and Thompson's rhetorical structures. Landmark studies on gaze, gesture, and body movement are also introduced. Chapter 3 showcases investigations of the function of grammar in structuring narratives, the structure of text types or genres, and the structural properties of gaze and gestures. It is interesting to note that genre analysis, as an approach to analyzing written discourse, is introduced in the chapter on empirical endeavors, and would have been more fitting had it been grouped under the chapter on classics.

Part III (Chapters 4 and 5), "Discourse and Social Action," discusses how social actions are accomplished in discourse. Chapter 4 begins by introducing two philosophies underpinning

the view of language as social actions: Wittgenstein's Language Games and Austin and Searle's Speech Act Theory. The chapter then moves on to introduce Gricean implicatures, Gumperz's contextualization cue, and Bateson's framing. Chapter 5 considers two major approaches in doing empirical work exploring social action: one that starts with understanding a specific conduct (e.g., repetition or discourse markers), and another with understanding how a particular action is enacted (e.g., balancing work and play, non-granting of requests). A wide range of settings, from institutional talk to everyday conversation between family and friends, are covered in the chapter.

Part IV (Chapters 6 and 7), "Discourse and Identity," explores how identities are constructed and negotiated in discourse. In Chapter 6, the author points out that identities can be categorized into three broad types: universal identities, social identities, and interactional identities. Goffman's face-work and Brown and Levinson's politeness theory are related to universal identities as they are relevant to all contexts. Social identities, which are tied to social roles, groups, and institutional positions, can be understood through the lens of Sack's membership categorization, Erickson and Shultz's performed social identity and co-membership, as well as Ochs' social act and stance. Interactional identities, on the other hand, as the author argues, are more locally situated, and can be examined using Goffmanian concepts or positioning theory proposed by Davies and Harré (1990). Chapter 7 demonstrates how key concepts and frameworks discussed in Chapter 6 can be applied to bring to light the discursive construction of a broad range of identities such as "an urban father" and "a novice teacher."

In Part V (Chapters 8 and 9), "Discourse and Ideology," the author moves on to explicate how ideologies are constructed in discourse. Chapter 8 first touches upon the relationship between language and thought by reviewing linguistic relativism proposed by Sapir and Whorf and cognitive metaphor by Lakoff and Johnson. Three major theoretical frameworks examining ideologies, conceptualized by Fairclough, van Dijk, and Gee respectively, are then explained in detail. Given that ideology is widely considered a challenging concept to grasp, the initial definition of ideology that the author provides, despite being purposefully general, appears to be somewhat oversimplified; a more nuanced definition would be more helpful for students, the target readers of the book. In Chapter 9, the subsequent chapter featuring empirical findings, sample studies exploring gender and racial ideology are provided to illustrate how discourse analysts systematically tackle such issues. Even when tackling an elusive concept such as ideology, as the author rightly underscores, discourse analysts still endeavor to ground their analysis of ideology in the data they examine.

Overall, the strengths of the book under review are threefold. Firstly, it is an invaluable pedagogical tool and resource. Definitions of key concepts are boxed so that they stand out and are therefore easy to find. To engage the reader with the concept at hand, the chapters are punctuated with short tasks, some of which invite the reader to analyze data through the lens of a specific concept, while others encourage critical reflection on the topic of discussion and careful consideration of methods and approaches. At the end of each chapter on empirical endeavors, the author offers a thoughtful and insightful discussion synthesizing and comparing across theories, methods, and approaches. In addition, she provides a list of study questions to guide newcomers who wish to engage in empirical undertakings through the process of discourse analytic inquiry,

which further adds to the pedagogical value of the book. From a pedagogical perspective, there are considerable efforts to make book suitable for introductory courses on the subject.

The second strength is the author's unique approach to organizing the content of the book. While some books organize the content by discourse analytic approaches and frameworks (cf. Philip and Hardy, 2002), others by topics or by order of procedures when doing a study (cf. Gee, 2011; Johnstone, 2002), the book under review organizes the content around four general questions of greatest interests to the field, which, as the author argues, can "sidestep the potential pitfall of a method-driven orientation that may at times constrain rather than inspire" (p. 4). Indeed, having a strong research question and knowing how to address the question adequately is an indispensable skill to succeed in the field. However, as the author herself acknowledges, one caveat is that some of the seminal writings are in fact empirical studies, so it is no easy matter to draw a clean line between the two categories. It should also be pointed out that the author's goal is to present illustrative studies in the chapters on empirical endeavors, which inevitably results in a need to prioritize breadth over depth.

Lastly, what makes this book an excellent introductory text is the quality of the explanation, which will be illuminating to beginners and refreshing to experts. Waring uses plenty of analogies (e.g., traffic lights as the baseline orderliness of people's behavior in everyday interaction), everyday examples (e.g., signs she saw in her office and on trips), and data collected from her everyday life (e.g., conversations with coworkers and samples of her daughter's writing) to illustrate and clarify abstract concepts. As such, the book also provides a whimsical glimpse into a discourse analyst's mind—how a skillful analyst can draw on everyday life for interesting data and useful illustrations of concepts.

The book makes a unique contribution by providing a compelling overview of state-of-the-art concepts and central analytic concerns in discourse analysis. It does succeed, in a systematic and engaging way, in presenting key questions discourse analysts ask and how they answer them in their analytic undertaking. The book is well-organized, comprehensive, and accessible; it will be of great use to newcomers to the field as well as students and teachers of discourse analysis.

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