

Commentaries on “Multiple Discourse Analyses of a Workplace Interaction”

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The web journal occasionally publishes brief commentaries on issues that are of interest to the TESOL/AL community. In this issue, we asked contributors to respond to the article, *Multiple Discourse Analyses of a Workplace Interaction* by Stubbe, Lane, Hilder, Vine, Vine, Marra, Holmes, and Weatherall (2003). The article presents an exercise rarely seen in scholarly discourse analysis journals. The authors analyze the same piece of data from a number of different approaches: conversation analysis, interactional sociolinguistics, politeness theory, critical discourse analysis, and discursive psychology. The data is a nine-minute audio recording of a naturally occurring workplace interaction between a male manager and a female subordinate. Although there are broad similarities between the analyses, the authors suggest that there are significant differences in the aspects of interaction focused upon, leading to the diplomatic conclusion that the different approaches “are not necessarily in conflict with one another – rather, they are complementary in many ways, with each approach capable of generating its own useful insights” (p. 380).

In the commentaries below, Roger Frantz takes issue with the article’s characterization of critical discourse analysis, and proposes that a more representative analysis would better showcase the strengths of the approach. Lubie Alatrisme suggests that the article sidesteps the broader (and possibly more important) issue of the applicability of discourse analysis to the world outside academic endeavor. Gabrielle Kahn questions whether the trend toward discourse analysis researchers drawing upon multiple approaches in their work should be unreservedly embraced. Finally, in a thought-provoking counter perspective to the analyses by Stubbe et al., Rebekah Johnson discusses her own interpretation of the transcript.

REFERENCES

Stubbe, M., Lane, C., Hilder, J., Vine, E., Vine, B., Marra, M., Holmes, J., & Weatherall, A. (2003). Multiple discourse analyses of a workplace interaction. *Discourse Studies*, 5, 351-388.