

Advanced Qualitative Methods

Workshop:
Discourse Analysis

Overview

- Presentation by Eva Herschinger
- Recap: discourse and discourse analysis
- Analyzing context
- Analyzing syntax
- Analyzing semantics
- Rhetorical analysis
- Analyzing pragmatics
- Analyzing argument
- Critical analysis: ideology and power
- Discourse analysis and other methods for data analysis
- Summary

Recap: discourse analysis

Recap: what is ,discourse‘?

- General:
„We define discourse as an interrelated set of texts, and the practices of their production, dissemination, and reception...” (Phillips & Hardy, 2002, p. 3).
- Specific:
 1. *Linguistic descriptive tradition*: Discourse refers to actual practices of talking, writing and interacting
 2. *Normative critical tradition*: Discourse is a system that regulates the formation of statements (Foucault)

Recap: discourse analysis – the basic ideas

General distinction:

1. *Discourse as theory* = can be applied to different phenomena (such as: language and power)
2. *Discourse as methodology* = discourse analysis
 - does not simply comprise a set of techniques for conducting analysis but involves a set of assumptions about language and its relation to ,reality‘

Recap: discourse analysis - the basic ideas (cont'd)

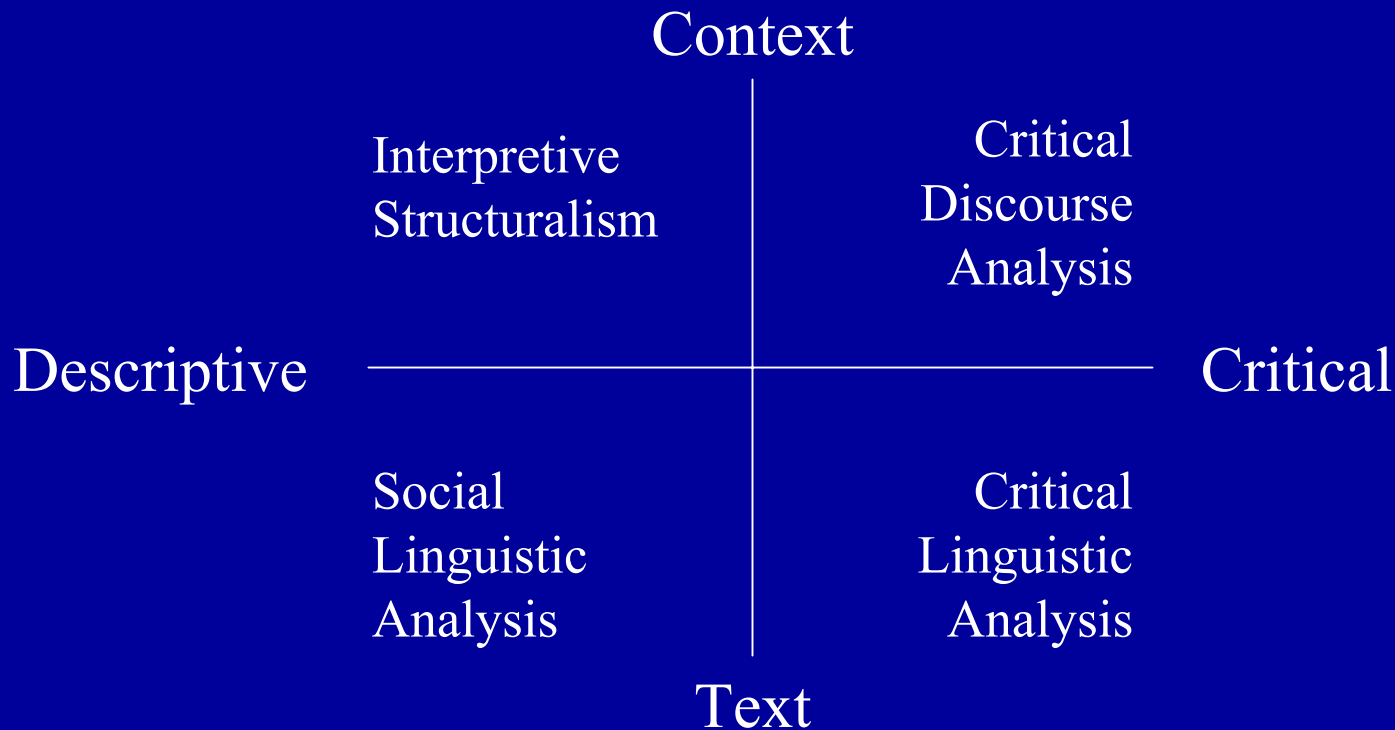
- Language **constructs** social reality instead of representing it.
- Texts are not meaningful per se, but they **become** meaningful via discourse.
- Texts do not become meaningful in a vacuum. In analyzing discourse, one must take into account:
 - The interconnections between one text and other texts
 - The context in which discourse takes place.
- Reality is always perceived ,through‘ discourse.
- Discourse analysis is invariably reflexive.

Philosophical roots of discourse analysis

1. Wittgenstein, Austin's speech act theory > works drawing on operational ideas from linguistics
2. Foucault > works investigating (historical) discursive practices
3. Derrida, Lacan > works drawing on the idea of a dynamic system of discourse

Theoretical perspectives in discourse analysis

(Phillips & Hardy, 2002, p. 20)



Recap: dimension 1: How much context?

- Proximate (local) context:
Who is the speaker / author, who is the recipient, which genre of interaction is taking place, which text precedes and which text follows the relevant utterances?
- Distal context:
Wider social context and the texts surrounding the texts you are analyzing: how does your text relate to the other texts?

Recap: dimension 2: descriptive or critical stance

- Descriptive: focus on how certain phenomena are created (typically rooted in linguistics and applied to natural texts)
 - Critical: focus on aspects of dynamics, power, and ideology, usually from a critical perspective (unmasking of privileges; Foucault)
- You always have to describe what is there before conducting a critical analysis. Evaluation presupposes description.

Analyzing context

Context: aspects (van Dijk, 1997)

- Participants
- Interaction
- Setting
- Props
- Action
- Knowledge
- Global context
- Intertextuality

Context: aspects (cont'd; van Dijk, 1997)

- Participants:
Who are they in terms of gender, age, class, education, social position, ethnicity, profession?
Are the participants acting out of a particular social or institutional role?
- Interaction:
How do the characteristics of the participants relate to each other? Is the interaction symmetrical or asymmetrical, and in what terms?

Context: aspects (cont'd; van Dijk, 1997)

- Setting:
 - Time
 - Place
 - Location
 - Written or oral communication; monologue, dialogue (implicit or explicit), ,trialogue'? Who is the addressee?
 - Private or public?
 - Institutional / formal or informal?
- Props
- Action
- Knowledge and intentionality

Context: aspects (cont'd; van Dijk, 1997)

- Global context, for instance:
 - Racism
 - Systems of politeness
 - ...
- Intertextuality

Activity

- In small groups, analyze the context of your own material in terms of:
 - Participants
 - Their interaction
 - Setting
 - Props and action
 - Globalized context, if relevant
 - Specifying what other texts might be relevant for the contextualization of your text(s)

Analyzing syntax

Levels of analyzing language in use (Chilton & Schäffner, 1997)

- Syntax: the internal organization of sentences
- Semantics: meaning, words, structure of lexicon
- Pragmatics: interaction among speakers and hearers; „speech acts“

Syntax: surface and deep structure

- Surface structure: the sentence as it is uttered / written
- Deep structure: propositions = predicate structures underlying what is said

Syntax: propositions

- Propositions: the verb (predicate) and its arguments: (Verb, agent, object, ...)
- Example 1:
 - Surface structure: The government sent troops to the Balkans.
 - Proposition: (to send, the government, troops, to the Balkans)
- Example 2:
 - Surface structure: IUB will be marketed under the brand name „Jacobs University Bremen“ in the future.“
 - Proposition: (to market, ?, IUB)

Syntax: important thematic roles

- Who (agent)
- Is doing what (verb; processes of doing sth.)
- To whom (patient)
- Where (location)
- By what means (instrument)

Analysis of thematic roles for agency: example

(Chilton & Schäffner, 1997)

| Subject | Verb | Object | Prepositional phrases |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------|---|
| The government <i>agent</i> | Sent <i>cause</i> | Troops <i>theme</i> | To the Balkans. <i>goal</i> |
| Troops <i>theme</i> | Were sent <i>cause</i> | | By the government <i>agent</i> To the Balkans |
| Troops <i>theme</i> | Were sent <i>cause</i> | | To the Balkans. <i>goal</i> |
| Troops <i>agent</i> | Went <i>cause, motion</i> | | To the Balkans. <i>goal</i> |

Verb forms, nominalization, and agency: example (Chilton & Schäffner, 1997)

- Transitive verb form, agency asserted:
„... We have to change attitudes...”
- Intransitive verb form, no agency:
„The political landscape has changed...”
- Nominalization, agency shifted:
„The changes taking place are truly awesome...”

Activity: analysis of syntax

Analyze this excerpt from The State of the Union Address by George Bush for agency in syntactic terms (thematic roles, verb forms, nominalization):

The road of victory is the road that will take our troops home. As we make progress on the ground, and Iraqi forces increasingly take the lead, we should be able to further decrease our troop levels -- but those decisions will be made by our military commanders, not by politicians in Washington, D.C.

Analyzing semantics

Semantics: the sign (Saussure)

- Definition: the sign = the basic unit of language
- Components:
 - The signified: a concept or object
 - The signifier: a sound or image attached to the signified
- Object in the world to which the sign refers: referent
- The relationship between the signifier and the signified will usually be arbitrary. The stability of this relationship depends on the difference between one sign and other signs.

Semantics: denotation and connotation

- Denotation:
that which is represented
- Connotation:
ideas and values represented through that which is depicted and the way in which it is depicted

Denotation and connotation: example

Dictatorships shelter terrorists, and feed resentment and radicalism, and seek weapons of mass destruction. Democracies replace resentment with hope, respect the rights of their citizens and their neighbors, and join the fight against terror. Every step toward freedom in the world makes our country safer -- so we will act boldly in freedom's cause.

Denotation:

- Distinction between two types of state forms: dictatorships and democracies
- Characterization of dictatorships
- Characterization of democracies

Denotation and connotation: example (cont'd)

- Dictatorships – connotations:
 - Terrorists
 - Resentment
 - Radicalism
 - Mass destruction
 - → danger, fear, death – evil
- Democracies – connotations:
 - Hope
 - Respect
 - Fight for justice
 - Freedom
 - Safety
 - → good

Semantics: syntagmatic and paradigmatic analysis of signs

- Syntagmatic analysis:
sign gains its meaning from the signs that precede / follow it in a sequence
- Paradigmatic analysis:
sign gains its meaning from the contrast to all other possible signs

Syntagmatic and paradigmatic analysis: example

Sometimes it can seem that history is turning in a wide arc, toward an unknown shore. Yet the destination of history is determined by human action, and every great movement of history comes to a point of choosing.

Lincoln could have accepted peace at the cost of disunity and continued slavery. Martin Luther King could have stopped at Birmingham or at Selma, and achieved only half a victory over segregation. The United States could have accepted the permanent division of Europe, and been complicit in the oppression of others. Today, having come far in our own historical journey, we must decide: Will we turn back, or finish well?

Semantics: metaphor

- When are you dealing with a metaphor?
 - If a word or phrase (in a particular context) has more than just a literal meaning
 - If the literal meaning stems from a specific source area
 - And if the meaning is transferred from the source to a target area
- Example: „The J-Bomb“From:
http://www.pulseoftheworld.com/index.php?subaction=showfull&id=1162502926&archive=&start_from=&ucat=1&; retrieved Nov. 9, 2006.
- Metaphors are not just rhetorical devices. They structure and shape the way we think about and the ways in which we act in and towards the „target area“.

Semantics: the analysis of metaphors

- The analysis of single metaphors:
 - Identification of the metaphor
 - How can the metaphor be used to structure the target area?
 - Which aspects of the target area are highlighted by the metaphor („resources“)?
 - Which aspects of the target area are sidestepped by the metaphor (limitations)?
 - Which actions in the target area are motivated by the metaphor?

Semantics: the analysis of metaphors applied to a target area

- Identification of metaphors in source material
- Comparison of metaphors
- Analysis of individual metaphors
- Analysis of the relations between metaphors (conflict?)
- Is anything missing?

Semantics: lexical fields

- Different fields of activity elaborate their own vocabularies which can be described in terms of ‚lexical fields‘. Lexical fields are related to cognitive schemata; they consist of related terms which organize knowledge about objects and activities.
- For instance:
 - Marketing
 - War
 - Medicine

Lexical fields: example

- A hopeful society acts boldly to fight diseases like HIV/AIDS, which can be prevented, and treated, and defeated.
 - War: fighting; disease as the enemy; an enemy can be overcome; but in order to do so, weapons are needed; what about the ,soldiers‘?
 - Medicine: disease; disease prevention; disease treatment; what about the patients, the doctors, the medication?

Activity

- In small groups, analyze the metaphors in a text of your choice.
 - Identify the metaphors.
 - How do they structure the target area?
 - Which aspects are highlighted?
 - Which aspects are neglected?
 - Which actions are motivated?
 - How do the metaphors relate to each other?
 - Are the metaphors part of a larger lexical field? Which other words / phrases are part of that field?

Rhetorical analysis

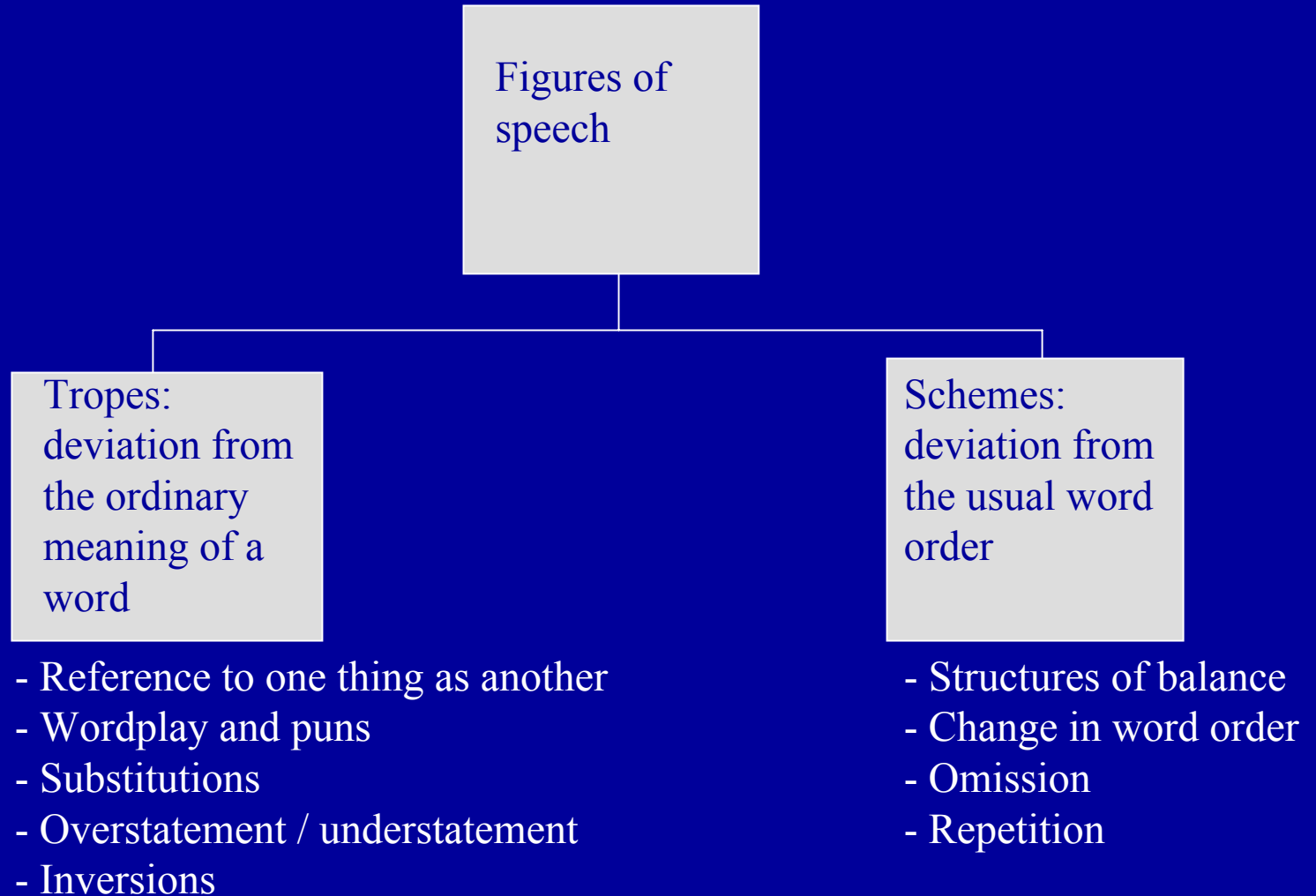
Across syntax and semantics: rhetoric (Silva rhetoricae)

- Rhetoric is concerned with the means of writing and speaking effectively, i.e. in such a way as to persuade the audience. To analyze a text in terms of rhetoric is thus to analyze it in terms of the means by which it achieves its effects.

‚Canons‘ of rhetoric (Silva rhetoricae)

- Rhetoric has been divided into five areas or canons.
 - Invention: the ‚sources‘ of what to say
 - Arrangement: the order in which something is said
 - Style: how something is said / phrased
 - Memory: how to remember what to say
 - Delivery: how something is said / delivered

Style: figures of speech



Tropes

- Reference to one thing as another
 - Metaphor: reference to one thing as another, implying a comparison
 - Simile: explicit comparison of one thing to another
 - Synecdoche: a whole is represented by naming one of its parts, or vice versa
 - Metonymy: reference to something or someone by naming one of its attributes
 - Personification: reference to abstractions or inanimate objects as though they had human qualities or abilities.

Tropes (cont'd)

- Wordplays and puns
- Substitutions
 - Periphrasis: Substitution of a descriptive word or phrase for a proper name or of a proper name for a quality associated with the name
- Over-/Understatement
 - Hyperbole: rhetorical exaggeration
 - Litotes: rhetorical understatement
- Semantic inversions:
 - Rhetorical question, irony, oxymoron, paradox

Schemes

- Structures of balance
 - Parallelisms: similarity of structure in a pair or series of related words, phrases, or clauses
 - Antithesis: juxtaposition of contrasting words or ideas
- Repetitions of sounds, words, clauses, such as:
 - Alliteration: repetition of the same letter or sound within nearby words (usually consonants)
 - Antimetabole: repetition of words, in successive clauses, in reverse grammatical order

Activity

- In small groups, analyze your material for figures of speech. If your material is not suitable, analyze Bush's „State of the Nation“ address instead.

Analyzing pragmatics

Pragmatics: speech act theory

- ‚Components‘ of the speech act:
I promise that the workshop will finish at 5 pm.
 - Locution: that which is said (propositional content)
(finish, workshop, at 5 pm)
 - Illocution: that which is done
promising something
 - Perlocution: any additional effects
You feel relieved.

Speech act theory: illocutionary acts

- Types of illocutionary acts:
 - Assertives (truth claims)
 - Directives (commands, requests)
 - Commissives (promises, threats)
 - Expressives (praising, blaming)
 - Declaratives (proclaiming, announcing, declaring)
 - ...

Speech act theory: illocutionary acts (cont'd)

- The success of illocutionary acts is tied to felicity conditions. Felicity conditions ,cast‘ the speaker and the listener into specific roles.
 - *Could you promise me that the workshop will end at 5pm?*
 - *If you did, would it still be a promise?*

Speech act theory: (in)direct speech acts

- Direct speech act:
The illocution performed corresponds to the illocution the speaker intends the listener to understand.
It is cold in here (representative).
- Indirect speech act:
The illocution performed differs from the illocution the speaker intends the listener to understand.
It is cold in here (representative).
→ *Please turn on the heating (request).*

Speech act theory:

(in)direct speech acts (cont'd)

- How to tell whether you are dealing with an indirect speech act:
 - The speaker shows you that she means something different from what she says.
„It is cold in here“ – and throwing you a meaningful look.
 - The speaker repeatedly uses this type of indirect speech act.
„It is cold in here“ – and you know that the speaker is always too lazy to get up and turn on the heating herself.
 - It is clear to both the speaker and the listener that the felicity conditions are not fulfilled.
The students promise the instructor that the workshop will finish at 5pm.
 - One of the „Gricean maxims“ is flouted

But: failing to meet a felicity condition does not...

- ... Necessarily indicate an indirect speech act.
Failing to meet the felicity conditions of an illocution can mean (at least) three things:
 - The speaker is not aware that the felicity conditions are not met – she deceives herself in some way.
 - The speaker knows that the felicity conditions are not met and hopes that the listener will not notice: the speaker is trying to deceive the listener (sincerity condition).
 - Both speaker and listener know that the felicity conditions are not met and they are aware of each other's knowledge: indirect speech act.

Pragmatics: the cooperative principle (Grice)

- „Make your contribution such as it is required, at the stage at which it occurs, to the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged.“
- Assumption that people adhere to this principle in their conversations; specified further as four conversational maxims

Grice: the conversational maxims

- Maxim of quantity:
 - Make your contribution to the conversation as informative as necessary.
 - Do not make your contribution to the conversation more informative than necessary.
- Maxim of quality:
 - Do not say what you believe to be false.
 - Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence.
- Maxim of relevance:
 - Be relevant.
- Maxim of manner:
 - Avoid obscurity of impression.

Grice: conversational implicature

- If a speaker flouts one of the maxims in such a way that it is obvious to the listener that a deliberate flouting is taking place and that the speaker means for the listener to be aware of this, the flouting serves as a signal to the listener that the speaker means something different from what s/he says.

In other words: the speaker *implicates* something.

- Example:

A: You know that I missed class again the other day, and there will be another quiz next week. Could I have a look at your notes?

B: No.

Pragmatics in the analysis of discourse

- What kind of speech act is performed (illocution)?
- What are the ‚felicity conditions‘ for this type of illocution?
 - Are they fulfilled?
 - What are the corresponding roles for the speaker and the listener?
- Is it a direct or an indirect illocution?
- What might be the perlocutionary effects on the listener, be they intentional or unintentional?
- Are any (other) of the Gricean maxims flouted? What might be the conversational implicature of these utterances?

Example: illocutions

Our own generation is in a long war against a determined enemy -- a war that will be fought by Presidents of both parties, who will need steady bipartisan support from the Congress. And tonight I ask for yours. Together, let us protect our country, support the men and women who defend us, and lead this world toward freedom.

- Representative
- Representative or commissive or declarative?
- Representative or request
- Request
- Directive and request
- Directive, request, and declarative

Activity

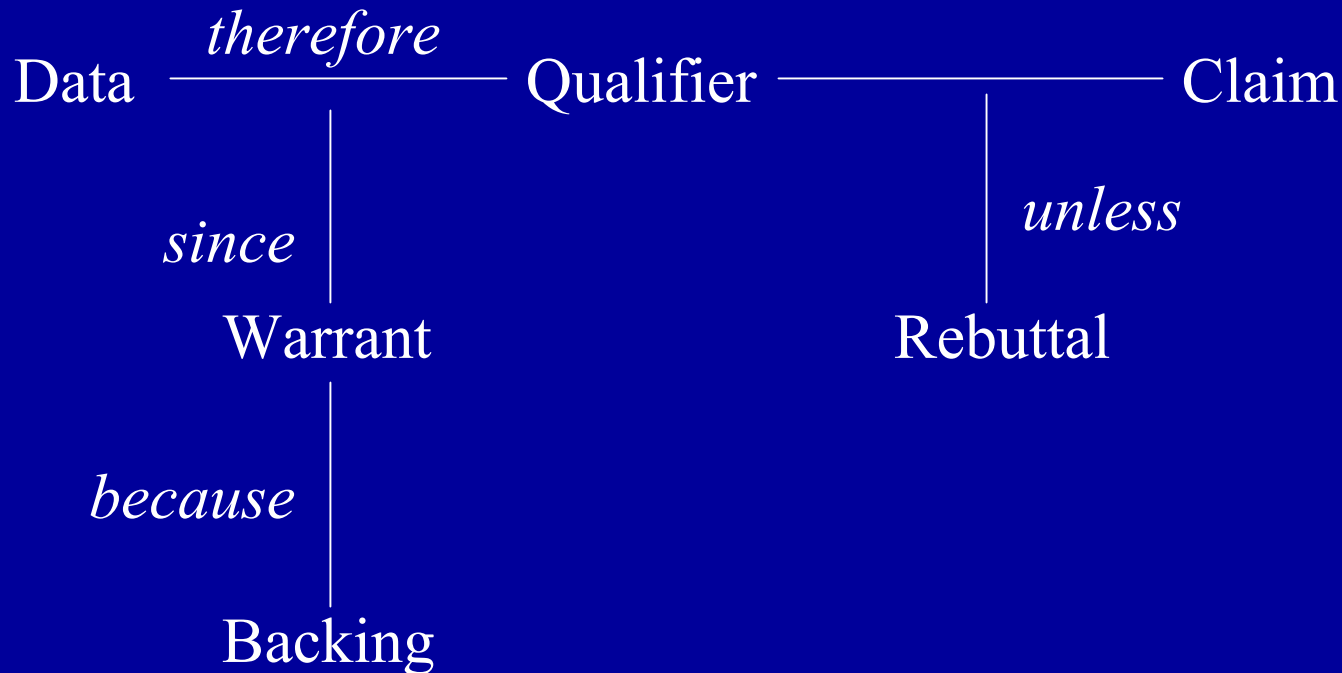
- In small groups, analyze part of your material making use of concepts from pragmatics. Or use this excerpt:
Our men and women in uniform are making sacrifices -- and showing a sense of duty stronger than all fear. They know what it's like to fight house to house in a maze of streets, to wear heavy gear in the desert heat, to see a comrade killed by a roadside bomb. And those who know the costs also know the stakes. Marine Staff Sergeant Dan Clay was killed last month fighting in Fallujah. He left behind a letter to his family, but his words could just as well be addressed to every American. Here is what Dan wrote: "I know what honor is. ... It has been an honor to protect and serve all of you. I faced death with the secure knowledge that you would not have to.... Never falter! Don't hesitate to honor and support those of us who have the honor of protecting that which is worth protecting."

Analyzing argument

Analyzing argument

- Argument structure
- Arguments pro and con

Argument structure (Toulmin)



Argument structure: example

DATA:

The instructor *therefore*
said so.

QUALIFIER:

most likely

CLAIM:

The workshop
will finish at
5pm.

since

WARRANT:

It is written in
the syllabus.

unless

REBUTTAL:

The students
want to finish
later.

because

BACKING: It is a
rule that the syllabus
should not be
changed.

Example

Keeping America competitive begins with keeping our economy growing. And our economy grows when Americans have more of their own money to spend, save, and invest. In the last five years, the tax relief you passed has left \$880 billion in the hands of American workers, investors, small businesses, and families -- and they have used it to help produce more than four years of uninterrupted economic growth. (Applause.) Yet the tax relief is set to expire in the next few years. If we do nothing, American families will face a massive tax increase they do not expect and will not welcome.

Because America needs more than a temporary expansion, we need more than temporary tax relief. I urge the Congress to act responsibly, and make the tax cuts permanent.

Argument structure: example 2

DATA:

Else the economy will shrink.

therefore

QUALIFIER:

CLAIM:

Tax cuts should be made permanent.

since

?

unless

WARRANT:

The economy will grow only if people have enough money to spend.

REBUTTAL:

because

?

BACKING: The economy grew during the past years when people had the money from the tax cuts to spend.

Argument structure: example 2

(cont'd)

DATA:

The economy *therefore*
would shrink.

QUALIFIER:

since ?

WARRANT:

If the economy shrinks,
the USA will no longer
be competitive.

because

BACKING: It is good
/ important to be
competitive in the
world market.

CLAIM:

It would be
irresponsible not to
make the tax cuts
permanent.

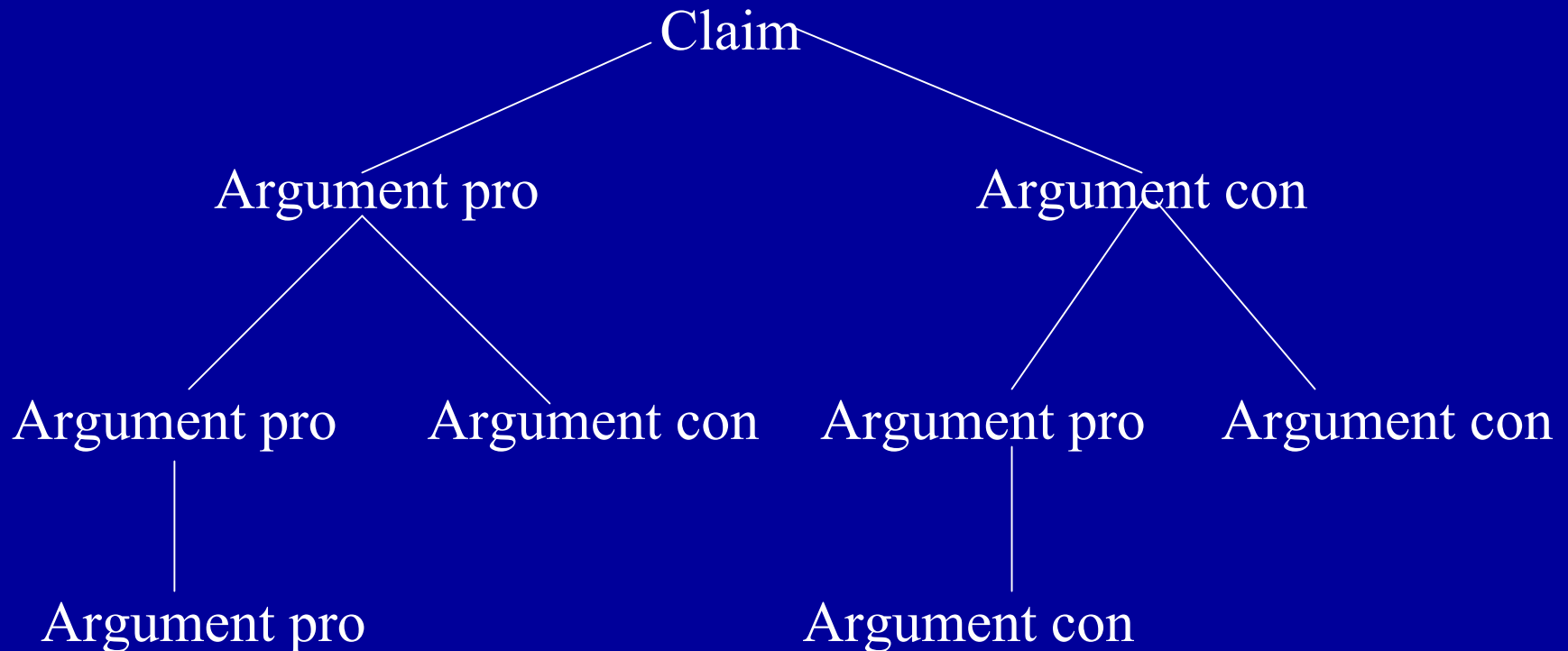
REBUTTAL:

unless

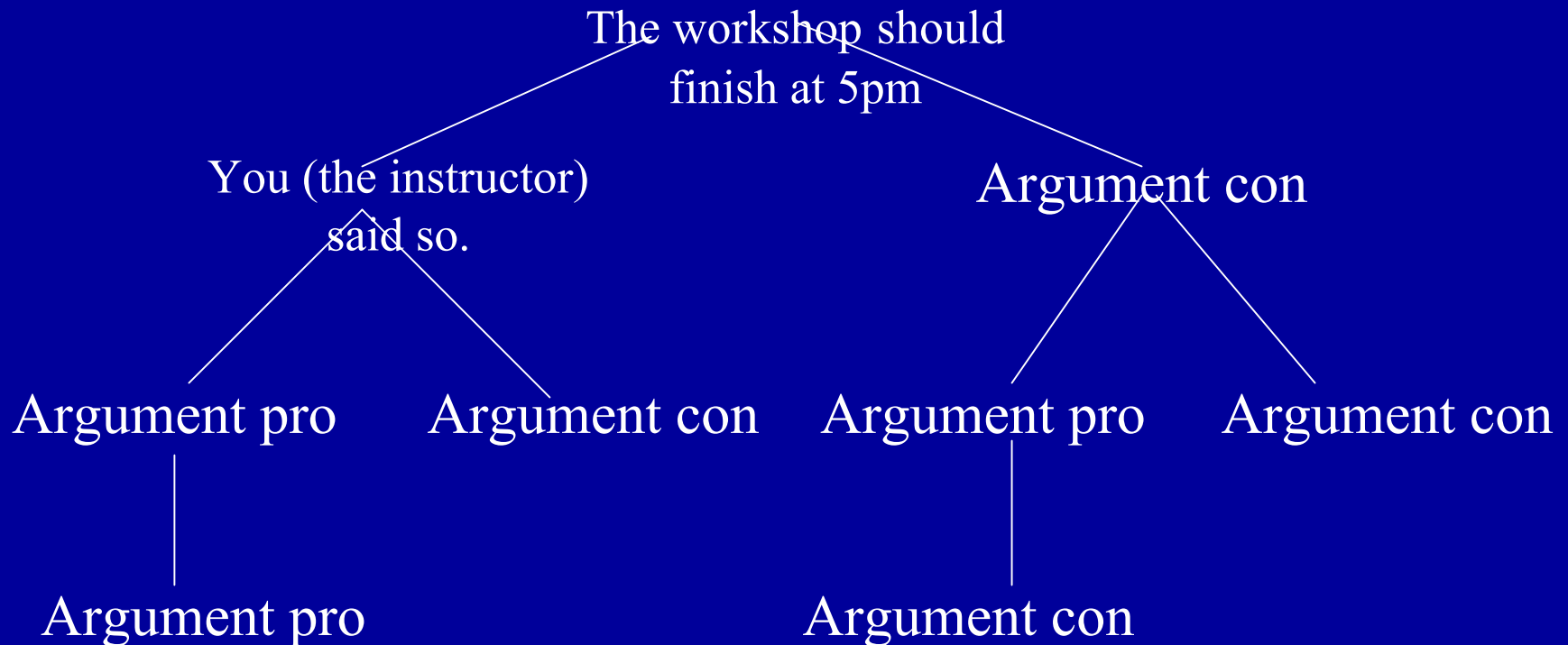
Arguments pro and con

- Argument pro: used to support a claim
- Argument con: used to weaken a claim
- If two claims are mutually exclusive, an argument that supports claim 1 will necessarily also weaken claim 2. But this only works if the two claims are truly mutually exclusive – and often they are not.

Arguments pro and con (cont'd)



Arguments pro and con: example



Example

Keeping America competitive begins with keeping our economy growing. And our economy grows when Americans have more of their own money to spend, save, and invest. In the last five years, the tax relief you passed has left \$880 billion in the hands of American workers, investors, small businesses, and families -- and they have used it to help produce more than four years of uninterrupted economic growth. (Applause.) Yet the tax relief is set to expire in the next few years. If we do nothing, American families will face a massive tax increase they do not expect and will not welcome.

Because America needs more than a temporary expansion, we need more than temporary tax relief. I urge the Congress to act responsibly, and make the tax cuts permanent.

Topoi of invention

- Figures of thought
 - Similarity / Difference
 - Cause and effect
 - Contraries
 - Contradiction
 - The possible and the impossible
 - Topoi of testimony: Experts or authorities, Eye witnesses, Maxims or proverbs, Rumours, Documents, Law, Precedent

Topoi of invention (cont'd)

- Figures of reasoning
 - Sorites
a chain of claims and reasons which build upon one another
 - Ratiocinato
Reasoning, typically with oneself, by asking questions. More specifically, ratiocinatio can mean making statements, then asking the reason (*ratio*) for such an affirmation, then answering oneself.
 - Antypophora
A figure of reasoning in which one asks and then immediately answers one's own questions (or raises and then settles imaginary objections). Reasoning aloud.
 - Expeditio
After enumerating all possibilities by which something could have occurred, the speaker eliminates all but one.
 - Paromologia
Admitting a weaker point in order to make a stronger one.

Activity

- In small groups, take a claim and arguments to support it. For the claim, use either that the workshop should finish at five or that the tax relief in the US should be extended. Phrase the claim in different ways, making use of
 - Two figures of thought
 - Two figures of reasoning

Activity

- In small groups, analyze part of your material from the point of view of the claims made and the arguments used. Make use of:
 - Argument structure according to Toulmin
 - The distinction between arguments pro and con
 - Figures of thought and figures of reasoning

Critical discourse analysis

Key concepts in critical discourse analysis

- Action
- Wider context
- Power
- Ideology

Action

- In discourse, the participants are actors, and ,action‘ is by definition intentional. Yet it is almost impossible to say anything about the actors‘ intentions on the basis of discourse alone.
- Consequently, the focus of discourse analysis is how discourse can reasonably be interpreted as action, not on speakers and their intentions. This includes:
 - What might be the consequences of these actions on the immediate hearers and on a wider audience?
 - To what extent should the speaker be aware of such potential consequences?

Power and power abuse

- Power can in broadest terms be defined as control over:
 - Action, though: coercion, commands, persuasion, hegemonic shaping of discourse
 - Access
 - Discourse structures
- Power as such is not the problem, but power abuse, that is to say the use of power against the interest of others by violating their rights.

Ideologies

- Ideologies are socially shared mental representations that coordinate the beliefs and the actions of the members of one group vis-a-vis the members of other groups. This includes representations of:
 - Group membership and access: who are we, and who belongs to us?
 - Actions and aims: what do we do, and why?
 - Norms and values: what is good and bad (for us)?
 - Relative social position to other groups: where are we?
 - Special resources of the group: what do we have?

How to recognize ideology

- Speakers are acting as group members (we, us, them...).
- Manifestations of the ‚ideological square‘:
 - Positive presentation of the self
 - Negative presentation of the other(s)

Activity

- Analyze your own material or the following excerpt for manifestations of ideology:

Abroad, our nation is committed to an historic, long-term goal -- we seek the end of tyranny in our world. Some dismiss that goal as misguided idealism. In reality, the future security of America depends on it. On September the 11th, 2001, we found that problems originating in a failed and oppressive state 7,000 miles away could bring murder and destruction to our country. Dictatorships shelter terrorists, and feed resentment and radicalism, and seek weapons of mass destruction. Democracies replace resentment with hope, respect the rights of their citizens and their neighbors, and join the fight against terror. Every step toward freedom in the world makes our country safer -- so we will act boldly in freedom's cause.

Discourse analysis in comparison

Discourse analysis **shares** with other qualitative approaches the concern with meaning, but is more concerned with deeply questioning the status of this meaning (precarious status).

| Discourse analysis | Other qualitative methods |
|---|--|
| Tries to explore how socially produced ideas and objects populating the world are created plus maintained → How? | Assume the existence of a social world; seek to understand empirically and systematically the meaning of the world for the participants → What? |
| Endeavours to uncover the way social reality is produced → Process | Work to understand or interpret social reality as it exists → State |

Discourse analysis in comparison: but...

- „What makes a research method discursive is not the method itself but the use of that method to carry out an interpretive analysis of some form of text with a view to providing an understanding of discourse and its role in constituting social reality.“ (Phillips & Hardy, 2002, p. 10).

Making coding or content analysis part of discourse analysis

- How?
 - For the description of content
 - For the description of form: codes and categories in content analysis need not refer to content. They can equally be used for the description of text with respect to form: the argument role of an utterance, the use of a verb or a noun, the figure of speech used, etc.

What method to use?

When to use discourse analysis:

- When you are interested in how language is used
- When you are interested in exploring the microphenomena of discourse
- When you are interested in conducting a critical analysis

When to use coding or content analysis (on its own):

- When you are interested in what is said
- When you are interested in themes
- When you are interested in cross-case comparison

(Dis-)advantages of discourse analysis

Advantages

- It can be a very powerful instrument in demonstrating how social reality is created and maintained through language and its use

Disadvantages

- There exists a multiplicity of methods – so what exactly is DA?
- There are no clear guidelines for how to actually do it
- There is often no quality control, i.e. conclusions are often very subjective, especially when they go beyond the text

Summary discourse analysis

- Types of discourse analysis can be distinguished concerning the extent of the context taken into account and the descriptive as opposed to critical stance. A critical discourse analysis will always entail a description!
- In the analysis of context, the participants, their interaction, the setting, props and actions supplementing the discourse should be described. Analysis of the wider context will also include global context and intertextuality.
- Descriptive analysis can relate to: syntax, semantics, rhetoric, pragmatics, argument structure, among others.
- Critical analysis will take into account language use as action, aspects of power and ideology.

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