

A CORPUS-ASSISTED COGNITIVE DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

Keywords: corpus-assisted cognitive discourse analysis, eclectic approach.

My approach to discourse analysis applies a triangulation of theories from Cognitive Linguistics (Langacker, 2008; Talmy 1988; Lakoff & Johnson 1980) and Foucauldian Discourse Studies (Jager & Maer, 2009) in conjunction with Corpus-Assisted Discourse Studies (CADS, Partington 2004, 2013). It relies on an adaptation of the Cognitive Approach presented by Hart (2011, 2013), but also develops it further to understand the structural organization of articles, particularly the relationship between the discourse limits suggested by the metaphorical schema presented in the headline and its development throughout the text through the use of various image schemas.

There are several advantages of an eclectic approach to discourse analysis. One is that it facilitates the problem-oriented nature of the field by keeping the focus on understanding the construal of positions expressed within the discourse. Secondly, it allows the discourse analyst to apply linguistic theories that have been identified and described independently according to their role in meaning creation. This adds scientific validity to the project. Furthermore, by taking advantage of modern technology and programs available for corpus creation, one is able to check these manual analyses against a back-drop of a large set of related texts. For example, my project involved manual analysis of five newspaper articles taken from a corpus of nearly 1,000,000 words, which was analyzed electronically (Barczewska 2013, 2014). The manual and mechanical analyses confirmed one another's results; thereby at the same time adding validity to the qualitative and quantitative theories applied.

One drawback of such a method is that it often requires gathering one's own specialized corpus. In my particular analysis of the discourse on human evolution education in the U.S., not only did I have to gather the articles from several different data bases, but I also had to perform a cursory reading to segregate the articles according to the stance the journalists took on the science education legislation being discussed. Although this was quite time consuming, it also allowed me to develop an intimate relationship with my corpus and helped in the selection of articles to use for manual construal analysis.

It is my personal opinion that the more tools we can apply in analyzing discourse, the more perspectives we will be able to take on its content, construal,

and place within society. Hopefully, this will also help us to navigate around our own personal point of view, at least to a certain extent, so as not to reveal one ideology only to establish a second.

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