Book Review

Research and Practice in Applied Linguistics: Exploring Discourse in Context and in Action, Christopher N. Candlin, Jonathan Crichton, & Stephen H. Moore (2017), Palgrave Macmillan, ISBN 978-0-230-25270-7

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1. Introduction

For many discourse analysts, including myself before reading this book, discourse simply means anything beyond the sentence. This view, I understood after reading *Exploring Discourse in Context and in Action* co-authored by Candlin, Crichton, and Moore (2017), is short-sighted and very much an underestimation of the field.

Discourse, one should bear in mind, is a complex process that not only goes beyond the sentence but also exceeds individual and group characteristics, embracing ideologies, policies, hegemonies, power relations, and all human abilities— it is a 'mixed game' to use Weigand's (2010) terminology. The book is an interactive work that helps the reader to build his/her own view of discourse as s/he moves forward through the chapters.

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Indeed, the authors have unambiguously implied that the field of discourse is so dynamic that it is not reducible to some fixed theories or viewpoints. The authors propose the idea of 'peopling' whereby the role of individuals' judgments, intentions, and interpretations (*inter alia*) is emphasized in shaping research on discourse. The book is a useful tool for students and researchers across a broad spectrum of fields such as Applied Linguistics, TESOL, Language Education, and Communication Studies. It focuses on research and practice and argues that the two are interconnected. The book covers a variety of subthemes and is divided into three parts: Part I deals with theoretical underpinnings of the field; Part II looks at proposed guidelines for a workable research perspective; and Part III details useful resources for practitioners in the field of discourse analysis.

2. Chapter 1: Introduction

Chapter 1, Part I, deals with a general definition of discourse and proposes "a multiple methodology associated with different approaches to discourse analysis-based research" (p. 3). The authors draw on Scollon and Scollon's (2001) definition of discourse which is anchored in the study of grammatical and syntactic features of language, language in social contexts, and language as a system of communication. A differentiation is made between *Discourse* and *discourse* in that the former pertains to members' practices and the latter is related to general principles guiding all kinds of Discourses. The chapter, moreover, introduces macro and micro practices as social formation and discursive practices, respectively. Like Weigand (2010), the authors introduce the rules of discourse as the rules of the game whereby meaning is created by interaction among all human abilities.

3. Chapter 2: Discourses on Discourse

Chapter 2 draws on ideas from Pierre Bourdieu, Michel Foucault, and Jurgen Habermas to elucidate key concepts of discourse analysis. The chapter starts with a discussion on '*the sites*' as the location of Discourse practices. The chapter mainly talks about 'communities of practice' and '(crucial) sites and (critical) moments'. The concept of

habitus is linked to the definition of *site* which is explained as the individuals' experiences, interpretations, and conventions. Field, market, and capital, the other concepts of discourse, are compared with Goffman's notion of *dramaturgy* which is akin to the rules of a game. Shared presuppositions are argued to keep field, market, and capital unified. The authors refer to the Foucauldian notion of *énoncé* as a 'dynamic event' which in turn gives rise to *discursive formation*. In line with distorted discourse, the authors believe that 'therapeutic talk' is not conversational. The chapter ends with a discussion of dramaturgy, referring to stages or "windows into what people think" (p. 37). The authors argue that there are crucial sites and critical moments that influence interlocutors' engagements in dialogue.

4. Chapter 3: Who's Involved in Discourse?

In Chapter 3, the nature of actors and the discourse analytical program is discussed. Based on Sarangi and Roberts (1999), the authors note that there are three identities in relation to discourse: "a professional identity, an institutional identity and a (inter)personal identity" (p. 45). Professional membership is the overall skill and knowledge; institutional membership is the exercise of authority; and personal membership is defined as the human experience. Goffman's (1959) idea of front and back stages are dealt with and also how 'performance', 'stage', and 'actors' are closely related to the concept of 'script' which is defined as "permissible or impermissible behaviour" (p. 50). Events, activity types, and genres are pinpointed as being useful to provide a better conceptualization of Goffman's definition of stage. However, the authors argue that the ideas proposed by Goffman (as well as Bourdieu, Foucault, and Habermas) are too structuralist in that they are incapable of accounting for individuals' purposes and actions. The chapter also puts emphasis on contextualization and exploration as being "a descriptive and interpretive means of accounting for discourse" (p. 65). The chapter ends with an elaboration on accountability, reflexivity, and indexicality as the major factors in "the process of sense-making" (p. 73).

5. Chapter 4: 'What is it that's Going on Here?'

The process of interpreting discourse is discussed in Chapter 4 drawing on Goffman's concept of *frame*. The idea of frame is defined as individuals' experiences. By virtue of 'frame mismatch' and 'frame shift', the authors argue that different participants have different perceptions based on the constitution of frames. It is asserted that frame and schema(ta) are somewhat the same while their differences lie in the fact that the former "seems more to be a term within the province of anthropology and sociology", while the latter "is more drawn upon in artificial intelligence and cognitive psychology" (p. 88). The authors refer to analytic constructs named as *stripes* as 'happenings' that "can tell us something about how participants orient to what they and others are saying and/or doing" (p. 94). The concept of *footing*, or what Levinson (1988) argues as 'participant role', is discussed as the changing of speakers' alignment that leads to different types of roles. The relation between face management and politeness theory is also discussed. The chapter ends with a focus on methodological aspects. The authors hold that the exploration of discourse should be done through ethnomethodology. Moreover, challenges and duties of ethnographers as well as features of "ethnographic approaches to research" (p. 111) and "linguistic ethnography" (p. 115) are discussed. It is also stated that 'reflexivity' and 'thick participation' are two major characteristics of ethnographers. The idea of 'multiple voices' is advocated by both reflexivity and thick participation.

6. Chapter 5: How Do You Know That?

Chapter 5 mainly discusses inferences and intentionality as negotiative processes and cognitive actions. Inferences are defined as mental operations and interpretive processes which are based on power relations and cultural typifications (Gumperz, 2001). The notion of interactional sociolinguistics is put forward and key constructs are presented using examples and explanations. A comparison is made between interactional sociolinguistics and contextualization cues and it is argued that both rely heavily on discourse level signs. The two key issues of ecological validity and participant accounts are the focus of this chapter. The "tacit knowledge of researchers and participants" (p. 139) is proposed as the core issue in ecological validity. Participants' and analysts' perspectives are emphasized to have an influence on the interaction. Finally, the researcher/participant paradoxes, researcher role, and stance are discussed and an emphasis is once again placed upon 'thick participation' which means that the researcher should "go beyond data gathering and data interpretations" (p. 144) and should move towards "the provision of feedback and the facilitation of conditions for potential uptake of discourse analytical findings" (p. 144).

7. Chapter 6: Why That Now?

Chapter 6 is about real utterances and their analysis. The chapter works extensively on Conversation Analysis (CA) and Ethnomethodology. The latter is defined as the speakers' production of "the features of everyday life in any actual, concrete, and not hypothetical or theoretically depicted setting" (p. 158). Ethnomethodology is closely related to indexicality and reflexivity. Key points of CA are discussed and it is argued how CA is mainly a "process of meaning-making in discourse context" (p. 164). Lastly, in this chapter, the mechanics of conversation are discussed and elaborated upon.

8. Chapter 7: What Actions are Being Taken Here, by Whom and Why?

The concept of Mediated Discourse Analysis (MDA) is the focus of Chapter 7. The idea of *tools* is proposed and the authors discuss how discourse is just one tool that participants use during conversation. Discourse is stated to create a *nexus* that focuses on "what is being done, or accomplished" (p. 184). Further to this discussion, the central constructs of MDA are mentioned and it is argued how discourse should be located within a context. Based on Goodwin's (1994) work, practices of 'Professional Vision' (coding, highlighting, and producing/articulating representations) are discussed. The final part of this chapter deals with social psychological approaches to discourse analysis (Identity and Communication Accommodation Theory). The focus is on aspects of research methodology and theoretical models.

9. Chapter 8: How Do Discourse and Social Change Drive Each Other?

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), being another aspect of the social psychological approach to discourse analysis, is covered in Chapter 8. The field is heavily influenced by the work of Fairclough (2010). The meaning of the term *critical* is elaborated upon from the outset. The chapter talks extensively about works done by Fairclough, a key pioneer of CDA. The authors talk about the theoretical and practical aspects of CDA and they mention how the practical dimension has had a more powerful effect on scholars in this field. CDA is claimed to be about "developing one's own […] communicative capacity so that you could make a change in your social and personal circumstances by the way you could challenge and question, you could raise your voice, you could put your ideas forward" (p. 223). Therefore, the main impetus, as the authors argue, that motivated scholars towards CDA in the early 1980s was a gap among practitioners regarding "matters of social change in any especially practice-oriented way" (p. 223).

10. Chapter 9: What Next?

The beginning of Part II, Chapter 9, focuses on research in discourse analysis. The authors put emphasis on individuals' appraisals of events and the importance of these appraisals in understanding others and oneself while positing that "the perspectives of participants are taken as foundational to our understanding of discourse analysis" (p. 242). The authors, in addition, postulate that for a sound argument over questions of accountability and relevance, a *multiperspectival approach to discourse analysis* should be drawn upon. It is stated that this approach is a useful way of "creating and opening up new research agendas and foci as part of a broader research program in discourse analysis" (p. 244). The rest of the chapter deals with the layout of the approach. Ecological validity is once again highlighted and it is claimed that researchers' and participants' knowledge is a key factor in shaping research methodology and data. Research methodologies and techniques are discussed and the idea of the 'peopling' of discourse research is proposed, being conceptualized as "mutual identification of

potential focal themes" (p. 265) on the part of researcher and participant.

11. Chapter 10: Key Sources

The last chapter, Part III, tackles key sources related to the field of discourse. Monographs and books, edited collections, handbooks, discourse (related) journals, conferences and associations, internet sites, data analysis software, and other related sources are mentioned which would be of practical use for the practitioners in this field.

12. Concluding Remarks

The book refers to the ideas of key scholars and uses these as benchmarks in order to shape the authors' intended message. Generally speaking, the authors advocate a socio-psychological view of discourse throughout the book. There are many examples and reflection tasks that have made the book user-friendly and easy to follow. An interesting and informative feature is the *case study* section at the end of each chapter which provides an opportunity for novice researchers to become familiar with patterns of research in the field of discourse analysis. The book is organized clearly and most chapters are interconnected. Nonetheless, the chapter on research methodology (Chapter 9) is unhelpfully brief and less-than-informative inasmuch as it does not take into consideration issues such as qualitative and quantitative research designs in the field. Another issue is the naming of chapters which does not clearly embrace their content. For instance, topics such as 'Why That Now?' (Chapter 6) and 'What is it that's Going on Here?' (Chapter 4) are vague and the referents of the deixis used in the chapter titles is unclear. I think it would be much more informative if the wordings of the titles were specifically related to technical words within the field of discourse. Moreover, the difference between pragmatics and discourse analysis is not accounted for properly. It is mentioned in Chapter 7, albeit briefly, that pragmatics is related to "language is action" while discourse analysis, as stated by Scollon (2001) and cited by the authors, "is not just the action, not just the language; it is the bit of language as it is used in taking an action" (p. 213). Since it is a challenging issue, a chapter dealing with the differences and similarities

between discourse analysis and other similar fields such as pragmatics and semiotics would be more ideal. In addition, since discourse analysis deals with real-world contexts and takes individuals, society, and culture into consideration, devoting a chapter to ethical issues in discourse analysis would be both necessary and informative.

All in all, the book is thought-provoking and helps the reader to build a sound idea of the concept of discourse based on the reflection tasks and case studies provided within the book. The book is powerful in that it takes into account the theoretical and philosophical aspects of discourse by citing key scholars in the vast and complex field of discourse.

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