PhD Course in Discourse Analysis  
Departments of Business Studies, Uppsala University  
Spring 2011

Basic information

Participants: Open to all PhD students in Sweden. Students of The MIT (Management & Information Technology) Research School are prioritized. A fee of SEK 5,000 applies to participants from institutions not a part of the MIT Research School, the U6 group, and the Stockholm School of Economics. Post-docs from member institutions of the MIT School are welcome to participate subject to availability.

Head teacher: Professor Frank Mueller, School of Management, University of St Andrews

Assistant teachers: Dr Lars Frimanson, Department of Business Studies, Uppsala University  
Dr Andrea Whittle, Cardiff Business School, University of Cardiff

Credits: 7,5 hp

Format and dates: 4 day intensive course, 26-29 April (Tue-Fri), 2011, in Uppsala with plenty of time for social interaction with teachers.

Location: Uppsala University, Campus Ekonomikum (Kyrkogårdsg. 10C, 1 stairs up, left, Dept. of Business Studies)

Accommodation: Booked and paid by participants. See the link below for a list of recommended hotels and other useful information:

http://www.fek.uu.se/forskarutbildning/index.asp?page=doktorandkurser

Meals: Paid by participants, except for two dinners. Participants otherwise welcome to dine with teachers.

Information & sign-up: Please contact Elisabeth Hallmén: elisabeth.hallmen@fek.uu.se
Course description

Who is this course aimed at?
The course is designed for those at an early stage of their research career, such as PhD students or post-docs, or those more experienced faculty with limited experience of qualitative methods of analyzing talk and text.

What is the course about?
Talk (what we say) and text (what we write) are the central medium of social science research. The term ‘discourse analysis’ is typically used to refer to a style, approach or method of analyzing talk and text, which treats talk and text as significant for the process of social construction of reality, not as a neutral medium through which to access reality i.e. as a source of information about the world (events, facts or mental processes). If you are gathering any of the following data sources in your research, you are working with talk and text, and could therefore benefit from this course:

– Interviews
– Focus groups
– Participant or Non-participant observation
– Field-notes
– Publicly available data (e.g. media reports, government speeches etc)
– Documents/reports
– Electronic/virtual media

What will the course cover?
The course is split into two parts.

Phase 1: Foundation

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<th>Day</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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The first ‘foundation’ phase (Day 1, Topics 1-2) offers an overview of six key approaches to analysing talk and text. It will also offer participants an opportunity to undertake practical, hands-on analysis of empirical material.

1. Content Analysis
2. Critical Discourse Analysis
3. Foucauldian Discourse Analysis
4. Interpretive Repertoire Analysis
5. Narrative Analysis
6. Conversational Analysis
(Note: Realist Analysis will also be discussed to compare the above with what is not discourse analysis)

Phase 2: Application

The second ‘application’ phase (Topic 3-5) will demonstrate how to apply discourse analysis to different topics of analysis and different sources of data.
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<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Data source</th>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>3. Organizational Change</td>
<td>Non-participant observation</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>4. Interests</td>
<td>Semi-structured interviews</td>
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<td>5. Financial crisis</td>
<td>Publicly available data (public hearing)</td>
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**Schedule**

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<td>26 April</td>
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<td>27 April</td>
<td>28 April</td>
<td>29 April</td>
<td>Two weeks after course closure (PhD students only): Submission of exam paper</td>
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<td>9-10</td>
<td>Room: K320 *) Welcome &amp; Introduction</td>
<td>Student assignment work</td>
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<td>Two weeks after course closure (PhD students only): Submission of exam paper</td>
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<td>10-12</td>
<td>Room: K320 *) Lecture 1</td>
<td>Room: K320 *) Lecture 3</td>
<td>Room: K320 *) Lecture 4</td>
<td>Room: K320 *) Lecture 5</td>
<td>Two weeks after course closure (PhD students only): Submission of exam paper</td>
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<td>12-14</td>
<td>Working lunch</td>
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<td>Two weeks after course closure (PhD students only): Submission of exam paper</td>
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<td>14-16</td>
<td>Room: K320 *) Lecture 2</td>
<td>Room: K312 *) Presentation of assignment &amp; seminar</td>
<td>Room: K320 *) Presentation of assignment &amp; seminar</td>
<td>Room: K320 *) Presentation of assignment &amp; seminar</td>
<td>Two weeks after course closure (PhD students only): Submission of exam paper</td>
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<td>16-17</td>
<td>Room: K320 *) Seminar</td>
<td>Student assignment work</td>
<td>Student assignment work</td>
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<td>Two weeks after course closure (PhD students only): Submission of exam paper</td>
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<td>19.00</td>
<td>Course dinner</td>
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<td>Two weeks after course closure (PhD students only): Submission of exam paper</td>
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*) Room: K312 (Kyrkogårdsg. 10C, 1 stairs up, left)  
Room: K320  -"-
### Detailed Programme and Reading List

#### Topic 1– Approaches to Discourse Analysis

This session will cover six of the main approaches to doing discourse analysis (including realist analysis as a comparison):

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Approach</th>
<th>Core Principles</th>
<th>Suggested Readings</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Content Analysis</td>
<td>Discourse is analysed for the number of occurrences of particular words, phrases, metaphors etc. to understand their prevalence.</td>
<td>Suddaby, R. and Greenwood, R. (2005) ‘Rhetorical Strategies of Legitimacy’, <em>Administrative Science Quarterly</em> Vol. 50, Iss. 1.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conversational Analysis</td>
<td>Discourse is analysed for the way in which interactional order is maintained eg. Turn-taking, repair mechanisms etc.</td>
<td>Samra-Fredericks, D. (2003) ‘Strategizing as Lived Experience and Strategists’ Everyday</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Narrative Analysis | Discourse is analysed for the way in which it arranges events and persons in a meaningful way, with a plot that arranges actions and characters into a more or less coherent story. | Efforts to Shape Strategic Direction, *Journal of Management Studies*, 40(1): 141–174.


The session will outline the key tenets of each approach and illustrate their application with reference to a journal article in a top-rated Management and Organization Studies journal, as indicated by the suggested reading.

Participants are encouraged to read those suggested readings of approaches that interest them most: however, this is not compulsory because an overview of each study will be provided in the session. The following required readings offer a good synthesis and overview:

**Required Readings**


[Note: This book also includes Laclau and Mouffe’s approach to discourse analysis, which participants are welcome to read about if they are interested.]
**Topic 2 – Studying Text in Context**

Few people would disagree with the idea that any text should be analysed in its 'context'. But what do we mean by the term 'context'? The way we define what context is, and how it should be studied, have significant implications for how research is (or should) be done. For example, should context be understood at the level of the immediate social situation (eg. research interview, doctor-patient interaction), or should it also include the wider organizational or institutional context (eg. hierarchy, institutional norms), or perhaps even wider to include the dominant power structures at a particular point in history, or in a particular society (eg. patriarchy, capitalism etc).

This session will help participants to understand the way in which context is understood in the six approaches to discourse analysis covered in Day 1. The session will cover the following key questions:

- What do we mean by the term context?
- What elements should be included (and excluded) under the term context?
- What does each approach to discourse analysis help us to “see”, and what does it “miss”?
- Should context be used to explain or understand social action? Does context exert causal forces over people, or provide the ‘conditions of possibility’?
- How far ‘back’ (i.e. in time) or ‘out’ (i.e. to wider phenomenon) should the analyst go? How does the analyst know when to stop going ‘back’ or ‘out’?
- Should the analyst stick to, or go beyond, the understanding of context used by participants themselves? What justifications do we have for both approaches?
- How should the ‘material context’ be understood?
- What does it mean to say that context is “multi-layered”? Are some ‘layers’ more important than others?
- What does the invocation of context do for participants (and the analyst), in a performative sense (i.e. what social actions does it achieve)?

**Required Readings**


Two debates to be read in sequence are as follows:

1. Schegloff-Wetherell debate:


2. Billig-Schegloff debate:


Topic 3 – Studying Organizational Change

In management, few topics are studied more frequently than ‘organizational change’. However, in this session we will present a reasonably novel approach of ‘making sense’ of organizational change. The emphasis is on the discursive devices that participants employ in the context of change situations.

The session will enable participants to understand the relationship between language and organizational change. The session will cover the following key questions:

- Why should we use Discursive Psychology in order to study organizational change?
- How do we study organizational change?
- What are ‘discursive devices’? How do we identify them?
- What do discursive devices do within a change process? How can they ‘smooth the ground’ for the implementation of change?
- Is ‘talk’ different to ‘action’ or ‘implementation’? Can talk be considered a form of action or implementation in its own right?
- What role does flexibility, variation and contradiction play in the implementation of new management ideas?

Required Readings

**Topic 4 – Studying ‘Interests’**

‘Interests’ are frequently invoked in order to ‘explain’ that something happened: whether this is an individual act, or an organisational event or a broader historical event. Often, we are told that x happened because it was ‘in the interest of’ y’. We will be proposing that DP is a useful approach in order to ‘de-construct’ (i.e. critically interrogate) the notion of interest.

This session will help participants to understand the way in which interest can be understood more fruitfully. The session will cover the following key questions:

- What do we mean by the term interest?
- How do we study ‘interests’ from a Discursive Psychology perspective?
- What discursive devices are typically in the context of ‘interest’ talk?
- What is meant by the terms stake inoculation, stake confession and stake attribution?
- What does talk about interests do for those involved i.e. what social actions does it perform?

**Required Readings**


**Topic 5 – Studying the Financial Crisis**

A number of perspectives (conversation analysis, ethnomethodology, sensemaking) have been employed in order to study public enquiries and the testimonies associated with them. We will be studying a UK Treasury Select Committee inquiry of the four senior executives associated with the banks in receipt of U.K. bailout funds. This session will help participants to understand the way in which discursive devices are employed by participants in order to deal with potential attribution of blame, questions of causality (who caused the financial crisis etc), responsibility, agency (or lack of it). The session will cover the following key questions:

- In what way are public enquiries suitable datasets? How do we use these publicly available data-sets?
- How do we apply a discursive devices approach to these datasets?
- How is a discursive devices approach different from (or complimentary to) a storytelling/narrative and sensemaking perspective?
- How do plots and characters get weaved together in the back-and-forth of conversation?
- What is meant by the term ante-narrative?

**Required Readings**


Whittle, A and Mueller, F Bankers in the Dock: Moral Storytelling in Action. (under review at *Human Relations*)