

Discourse analysis for variationists

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Discourse analysis can be useful for variationists at a number of points in a variation study. First, it may help discover social categories as speakers orient to them in conversation. Second it may be able to help identify discourse categories themselves. Third, it may help discover what speakers are attending to in interviews. Finally, it may provide qualitative data in support of findings of the indexical meanings of variables.

In this workshop, I present several categories and methods of discourse analysis and show how these discourse methods can be used in analyses in the ways mentioned above, using extensive examples. The first section presents work at a very micro level, focusing on Conversation Analytic concepts such as turn-taking, adjacency pairs, openings and closings, and repair. The second section focuses on interactional sociolinguistic methods for understanding how speakers are orienting to frames and footings in conversations and interviews. Finally, I discuss how an analyst can explicate and discover stancetaking in interviews and conversations, using the techniques already discussed in the workshop.

In the final part of the workshop, I work through two to three examples of using these techniques. I will solicit examples or questions from participants if possible, but I will use my own examples in case there are no specific cases or questions. I'll use materials from teaching discourse analysis to give participants hands-on practice, because really the only way to learn discourse analysis is to *do* discourse analysis. I'm happy to adjust any part of this workshop to better align it with the needs of the participants. Please email me at kiesling@pitt.edu.

I've taught discourse analysis at the graduate and undergraduate level for 20 years. I firmly believe that we learn important, complementary facts about language by looking at specific interactions, especially combined with the power of the quantitative methods of sociolinguistics. I want participants to leave with a small set of powerful techniques as a place to begin doing discourse analysis.