Department of Linguistics

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Peter the Great St. Petersburg Polytechnic University (4/10/2019)

There's Meaning Beyond Texts
Linguistic Pathways to Discourse

1 Discourse Theory

Intertextuality

Михаи́л Миха́йлович Бахти́н (1895–1975)
Валенти́н Никола́евич Воло́шинов (1895–1936)

Knowledge

> "[…] one cannot speak of anything at any time; it is not easy to say something new; it is not enough for us to open our eyes, to pay attention, or to be aware, for new objects suddenly to light up and emerge out of the ground." (Foucault [1969] 1972: 44–45)

> "[…] the use of the word knowledge (*savoir*) […] refers to all procedures and all effects of knowledge [better translation: understanding; J. S.] (*connaissance*) that are acceptable at a given point in time and in a specific domain." (Foucault [1990] 1997: 60)

Discourse

> "[…] the term *discourse* can be defined as the group of statements that belong to a single system of formation; thus I shall be able to speak of clinical discourse, economic discourse, the discourse of natural history, psychiatric discourse." (Foucault [1969] 1972: 107–108)

Knowledge by Acquaintance vs. *Knowledge by Description*

Russell (1910/1911)

Discourse and Knowledge Production

> "[Discourse analysis is a] task that consists of not – of no longer – treating discourses as groups of signs (signifying elements referring to contents or representations) but as practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak. Of course, discourses are composed of signs; but what they do is more than use these signs to designate things. […] It is this 'more' that we must reveal and describe." (Foucault [1969] 1972: 49)

2 Linguistic Discourse Analysis

– Busse/Teubert (1994)

– Spitzmüller/Warnke (2011)

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"CDA is biased – and proud of it." (van Dijk 2001: 96)

Discourse Analysis as *Historical Semantics*

"Historical discourse semantics construes […] the scenario of the collective knowledge of a given discourse community in a given era with regard to the thematic field or the field of meaning or the discourse formation, that has been selected as a subject of research. […] The description of collective knowledge can only cover that section of discourse that is taken under analytic consideration. […] Thus the scenario only describes the surrounding of a separate field, it cannot grasp the complete collective knowledge of a given era." (Busse 1987: 267, my translation)

"The scope of the semantically relevant knowledge must be set much wider. […] In this context, I am talking of the area of *knowledge relevant to meaning* or to *knowledge relevant to understanding*, a knowledge that is to be explicated in a comprehensive semantic analysis." (Busse 2000: 42–43, my translation)

3 How To?

Analyzing Climate Change Discourse

Guiding Questions

– How is knowledge about climate change *constructed*, *negotiated* and *displayed* in texts?
– Are there *typical* forms of knowledge construction and display that can be identified in *many* texts from a given culture and time?
– What do people take for *granted* when they discuss this topic?

Keywords[1]

"Ted Cruz says *climate change* is a '"pseudoscientific theory."'" (MotherJones)

"And I can tell you, from California, *climate change* is not a hoax. We're dealing with it" (CSMonitor)

"young people who seem to have lost hope for the *future* because of climate change" (NPR_Science)

"United States continues to shirk its *responsibilities* on climate change" (WashMonth)

"Those who believe we can stop climate change are kidding themselves. But we can still live in a sustainable environment" (NaturalHist)

"'I'm not a firm believer that *men* are a source of climate change,' says Brandon" (USAToday)

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[1]Examples taken from the *Corpus of Contemporary American English*, *https://www.english-corpora.org/coca/*

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Lexical Stance Markers

"But we face a *climate crisis* now that is the most serious challenge our civilization has ever confronted." (*https://www.english-corpora.org/coca/*, PBS: PBS Newshour)

"The beauty of the *climate lie* is that it is not only promulgated by scientifically illiterate stenographers who write up the news but by people in white coats with scientific credentials." (*http://catallaxyfiles.com*)

"*Climate Hysteria* Is Harming Our Kids" (*https://ricochet.com/*)

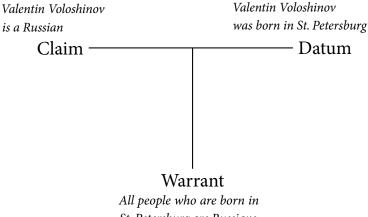"Germany: *Climate killer* No. 4" (*https://www.greenpeace.de*)

"The *climate mafia* is exploiting Greta Thunberg to lower the living standards that we have achieved over the last hundred years" (*https://euvsdisinfo.eu*)

Collocations

Table 3: The 25 strongest collocations of 'climate change'

2007 Collocate	Frequency	LogDice	2012 Collocate	Frequency	LogDice
Combat	19	10.935	Challenge	19	9.933
Intergovernmental	9	9.990	Mitigation	11	9.845
Address	13	9.642	Induce	9	9.835
IPCC	7	9.622	Risks	9	9.830
Approach	13	9.474	Address	18	9.828
Global	18	9.283	Managing	8	9.578
Concern	10	9.264	Relate	21	9.329
Energy	45	9.236	Physical	8	9.289
Issue	22	9.190	Mitigate	8	9.279
Greenhouse	9	9.181	Framework	11	9.223
Biodiversity	8	9.014	Convention	6	9.184
Nations	5	8.925	Risk	39	9.150
Action	10	8.877	Intergovernmental	5	9.065
Policy	17	8.873	IPCC	5	9.050
Impact	12	8.770	Impact	24	9.049
Challenge	7	8.755	Strategy	16	8.990
Framework	6	8.721	Response	8	8.754
Goal	7	8.670	Nations	5	8.741
Fossil	4	8.616	Resource	13	8.733
Measure	10	8.452	Tackle	4	8.715
Carbon	6	8.428	Future	11	8.710
Awareness	4	8.303	Against	6	8.613
Technology	10	8.297	Extreme	4	8.608
Initiative	7	8.278	Disaster	4	8.595
Emission	9	7.960	Influence	5	8.427

(Jaworska/Nanda 2016: 391)

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	Collocate	logDice	Freq.
1.	*menschengemacht* ('man-made')	7.6	63
2.	*verursacht* ('caused')	6.7	58
3.	*global*	6.5	227
4.	*Vorbote* ('harbinger')	6.5	40
5.	*anthropogen* ('man-made')	6.3	25
6.	*Anpassung* ('adjustment')	5.7	96
7.	*menschgemacht* ('man-made')	5.6	15
8.	*Auswirkung* ('effect')	5.5	193
9.	*Umweltverschmutzung* ('pollution')	5.5	19
10.	*Folge* ('consequence')	5.4	655

Source: *https://www.dwds.de/wp/Klimawandel* <25/09/2019>

Argumentation

Valentin Voloshinov is a Russian

Claim ———————————————— Datum

Valentin Voloshinov was born in St. Petersburg

Warrant

All people who are born in St. Petersburg are Russians

(Simplified from Toulmin 1958)

Topoi

– *Topos* (plural: *topoi*) (from Greek τόπος *tópos*, '[common]place'): A warrant statement that backs up many argumentations in a given discourse corpus.

Argumentation: Examples

Claim:

"climate change is natural and not man-made"

Argument:

"A large body of scientific research suggests that the sun is responsible for the greater share of climate change during the past hundred years." (*https://forums.tesla.com/de_AT/forum/forums/100-reasons-why-climate-change-natural-and-not-manmade*)

Warrants:

1. The sun is a natural cause.
2. If a process is caused by the sun, it cannot be caused by men at the same time (*mono-causal* reason).
3. If a large the body of scientific research suggests something, it is (probably) true (reasoning *from authority*)

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Topoi: Examples

Topos of (Non-)Responsibility:

– If some bad effect is caused by somebody, then this person has the responsibility to counter-act.

  "Government must act now to halt biodiversity loss and reduce greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by 2025." (*https://rebellion.earth/the-truth/demands/*)

– If some bad effect is *not* caused by somebody, then this person does *not* have the responsibility – or: the *power* – to counter-act.

  "Since the cause of global warming is mostly natural, then there is in actual fact very little we can do about it. (We are still not able to control the sun)." (*https://forums.tesla.com/de_AT/forum/forums/100-reasons-why-climate-change-natural-and-not-manmade*)

4 Conclusion

"Our house is burning." (Emmanuel Macron, source: *https://twitter.com/EmmanuelMacron/status/1164617008962527232*)

"Our house is on fire." (Greta Thunberg, source: *https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2019/jan/25/our-house-is-on-fire-greta-thunberg16-urges-leaders-to-act-on-climate*)

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The presentation slides are available at *http://www.spitzmueller.org/docs/pres-SPbPU-discourse-2019.pdf.*