

Briefly Noted

Typological Discourse Analysis: Quantitative Approaches to the Study of Linguistic Function

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(University of Michigan)

Oxford: Blackwell, 1992, vi + 295 pp.
Hardbound, ISBN 0-631-17614-4, \$54.95

Typological discourse analysis is the study of those factors that affect the choice of constructions in a language, taking the surrounding discourse context into account. Typically, texts from a large number of languages are analyzed quantitatively in order to discover statistical regularities between functional parameters affecting the choice of alternations. Examples of alternations are active and passive in English or subject-verb and verb-subject word order in Spanish, and parameters encode information such as "If the NP representing the agent of the action is non-human, the passive construction is relatively more likely" (p. 3).

Typological Discourse Analysis is structured as follows. The first chapter introduces typological discourse analysis. This is an extremely readable overview of what is involved in typological discourse analysis. Typical discourse parameters, such as humanness, recency of mention of referent, specificity, and affectedness of patient, are clearly illustrated, and the methodological questions of objectivity, generality, and functional classification are discussed.

The remainder of the book illustrates these issues with detailed analyses of noun-phrase types, tense and aspect, voice alternations, word-order variation, and a series of less-studied phenomena such as Spanish clitic climbing and subject marking in Korean. The final chapter concludes with a personal view of the difficulties involved in determining differences of meaning between alternations and in relating these differences to mental processes.

At first sight, this book would not appear to have much relevance for computational linguists. The approach is primarily descriptive, and more abstract explanatory principles underlying the phenomena described are generally avoided. However, there are several reasons why typological discourse analysis in general, and its presentation in this book in particular, should be of interest. Much linguistic theory, as

well as work in computational linguistics, is based on a narrow range of languages—often English and perhaps a few other European languages. Analysis is usually sentence based and syntactically oriented, so that the functional characteristics of constructions in their discourse contexts tend to receive scant consideration. However, it could be argued that any sophisticated language-understanding system needs access to such functional parameters in order to determine the meaning of a construction. This book provides sound arguments for a set of universal functional parameters and a rich set of examples of how they are applied in a range of languages.

The main usefulness of this work, however, will be for those working in language generation, as a detailed account of the functional properties of constructions is a prerequisite for the most appropriate choice of one alternation over another in a particular discourse context. As most work to date in language generation has tended to be restricted to English and a few other languages, the cross-linguistic data presented here should provide both a guide and a challenge for theories of language generation.

In sum, this book provides a detailed account of typological discourse analysis with a clear and balanced account of the methodological problems encountered in the empirical analysis of cross-linguistic data.—*Michael McTear, University of Ulster*

Creating and Using English Language Corpora: Papers from the Fourteenth International Conference on English Language Research on Computerized Corpora, Zurich 1993

Udo Fries, Gunnel Tottie, and Peter Schneider (editors)
(Universität Zurich)

Amsterdam: Rodopi (Language and computers: Studies in practical linguistics, edited by Jan Aarts and Willem Meis, number 13), 1994, ix + 203 pp.
Paperbound, ISBN 90-5183-629-5, \$35.00,
Dfl 60.00

The contents of the volume are as follows:

"ARCHER and its challenges: Compiling and exploring a representative corpus of his-

- torical English registers" by Douglas Biber, Edward Finegan, and Dwight Atkinson;
- "The International Corpus of English project —The Hong Kong experience" by Philip Bolt;
- "Towards an English–Norwegian parallel corpus" by Stig Johansson and Knut Hofland;
- "Determining the syntactic flexibility of idioms" by Henk Barkema;
- "Contrasting the Brown corpus as tagged at Brown with the Brown corpus as tagged by CLAWS1" by Nancy Belmore;
- "Discontinuous recurrent word combination in the London–Lund Corpus" by Mats Eeg-Olofsson and Bengt Altenberg;
- "Towards a grammar checker for learners of English" by Sylviane Granger and Fanny Meunier;
- "The Qsum plot exposed" by Pieter de Haan and Erik Schils;
- "Concordances or databases?" by John M. Kirk;
- "Lexical differentiators of style: Experiments in lexical variability" by Goran Kjellmer;
- "Is *see* becoming a conjunction? The study of grammaticalisation as a meeting ground for corpus linguistics and grammatical theory" by Christian Mair;
- "Diachronic issues in English adverb derivation" by Terttu Nevalainen;
- "American and British influence in Australian verb morphology" by Pam Peters;
- "The position of adjectival modifiers in Late Middle English noun phrases" by Helena Raumolin-Brunberg;
- "Analysing style variation in the East African Corpus of English" by Josef Schmied;
- "Public speaking" by Jan Svartvik, Olof Ekedahl, and Bryan Mosey;
- "An English Constraint Grammar (ENGCG): A surface-syntactic parser of English" by Aro Voutilainen and Juha Heikkilä.

Structural-Functional Approaches to Spoken Discourse – Refers to two major approaches to discourse analysis which have relevance to the analysis of casual conversation – They are the Birmingham School and Systemic Functional Linguistics. Birmingham School Model developed by Sinclair et.al (1975) for analysis of classroom discourse. Ethnography of communication is concerned with understanding the social context of linguistic interactions: “who says what to whom, when, where, why, and how”. Prime unit of analysis: speech event. Pragmatics studies about the context in which language is being used. Variation analysis studies about a Structural categories within texts. Typological Discourse Analysis book. Read reviews from world’s largest community for readers. This book gives the first account of a field of fast increa... Start by marking “Typological Discourse Analysis: Quantitative Approaches To The Study Of Linguistic Function” as Want to Read: Want to Read saving! Want to Read. topics on applied linguistics. Approaches to discourse analysis. Posted on April 20, 2012 by theworldofisnanto. Schiffrin (1987) focused on quantitative interactive sociolinguistic analysis, especially discourse markers. Her basic concern is the accomplishment of conversational coherence. She argues for the importance of both qualitative and quantitative analysis in order to determine the function of the different discourse markers in conversation. 3. Ethnography of Communication (Dell Hymes, 1972b, 1974). This theory concerned with understanding the social context of linguistic interactions: “who says what to whom, when, where, why and how”. The prime unit of analysis is speech event. Discourse analysis (DA), or discourse studies, is an approach to the analysis of written, vocal, or sign language use, or any significant semiotic event. The objects of discourse analysis (discourse, writing, conversation, communicative event) are variously defined in terms of coherent sequences of sentences, propositions, speech, or turns-at-talk. Contrary to much of traditional linguistics, discourse analysts not only study language use 'beyond the sentence boundary' but also prefer to analyze