

Notes for Norman Fairclough's *Analysing Discourse*

(Version 2.1)

Chapter 3: Intertextuality and Assumptions**Introduction**

- 39A **Intertextual relations** are part of the 'external' relations of a text, but they are unusual external relations because they are brought *into* the text in some way. Fairclough defines Intertextuality very broadly to include various external relations between texts, such as:
- | | |
|---|--|
| quotations | e.g. <i>Jane said, 'I will be late tonight'.</i> |
| reported speech | e.g. <i>Jane said she would be late tonight.</i> |
| texts which are incorporated into another text <u>without attribution</u>. | e.g. <i>'Jane will be late tonight'.</i> |

40A Texts always make assumptions.

Assumptions = various types of implicitness, especially 'presuppositions').

Assumptions are similar to intertextuality.

"What is 'said' in a text is 'said' against a background of what is 'unsaid', but taken as given."

e.g. *Globalisation is a painful process.* This assumes both that globalisation really exists and that it really is a process. [see pp 56-57 for more on this topic]

"The **difference between assumptions and intertextuality** is that the former are not generally attributed or attributable to specific texts". Assumptions are more vague.

Assumptions are an example of the more general concept of **implicitness** (see p 45)

40B Both intertextuality and assumptions are **claims** by the author about what has been said or written by other people. Such claims may be deliberately or accidentally false.

40C Three social research themes of this chapter are:

1. Social *Difference* [and how texts deal with it]
2. How texts represent *Particular* things as being *Universal* [**hegemony**]
3. *Ideology* [The ideological significance of assumptions in texts]

Def. Hegemony

= 'the establishment, maintenance and contestation of the social dominance of particular social groups'

Difference and Dialogicality [Social Research Theme 1]

41A Concerning Difference, there is a contrast between Intertextuality and Assumptions:

Intertextuality opens up difference (by bringing various other 'voices' into a text)

Assumptions reduce difference (by assuming the existence of 'common ground' between voices) [See also 46C, 48C]

Anthony Giddens, a leading British sociologist (and 'guru' of Tony Blair's 'New' Labour Party!) claims that 'the production of interaction' has three elements:

1. Interaction must be **meaningful**
2. Interaction must reflect the **moral order** of a society
3. Interaction reflects the operation of **relations of power** in a society

Each of these elements is 'oriented' (= related) to Difference:

1. Interaction involves the negotiation of difference of meaning.

2. Interaction involves the negotiation of different social norms (of behaviour, etc.)
3. Power (including the 'relational' power to control other people) is differently available to different people and groups.

41B **Five 'Scenarios' (=Types) of Orientation to Difference**

- (A) *Openness* to difference ('Dialogue') -- Fairclough values this highly!
- (B) *Conflict* over difference
- (C) *Resolution* of difference
- (D) *Bracketing off* of difference
- (E) *Consensus* which suppresses difference

42A Social events and texts may combine these scenarios in various ways.

42B **Gunther Kress** (a German discourse scholar) pointed out the importance of difference in texts, but he only considered Scenario C.

Difference is most clearly shown in dialogue texts, but is present in monologue texts too.

Difference relates to texts at (at least) two levels:

1. Social Event Level: Difference is often a basic part of an interaction (a particular social event), such as in an argument between two people.
2. Social Practice Level: There are differences between discourses (social practices) and these differences are *instantiated* in particular social events.

42C **The Dialogical Theory of Language** of **Mikhail Bakhtin** (he was a very influential early Russian discourse scholar, 1895-1975 – see Glossary, p. 226). Bakhtin said that the basic linguistic act is the **utterance**, [equivalent to Fairclough's use of the term 'text']. Utterances get their meaning from their 'dialogic' relationship to all other (different) utterances within the social and cultural context. All utterances have some kind of dialogic relationship, but some are more dialogic than others. Scenario E is the extreme case where the dialogic relationship is actually the rejection of dialogue.

Examples of Orientations to Difference in Texts

43A Ex.1 (Interview with factory manager) This text shows a situation which is common in texts: some elements are dialogized but others are not: there is an orientation to difference in some things, but not in others.

43B Ex. 4 (EU Policy Paper on Competitiveness) The text is the result of a lot of negotiation (between employers and trade unions), but it is not a dialogical text: so ...

What Scenario is it? Fairclough says that it *may be seen as* an example of Scenarios C and D, but it may *also* be seen as an example of Scenario E, a consensus text which has suppressed the differences of the negotiations.

Q. Which of Fairclough's interpretations do you think is best? How can we decide? Do you feel comfortable with this lack of clarity about which Scenario the text belongs to? Shouldn't Fairclough try to be more precise, for example by providing clearer criteria and analyzing the text more closely? Or is that level of clarity impossible or inappropriate for this kind of analysis?

The text makes several **assertions** (about globalization, social cohesion etc.) which are based on some questionable assumptions.

The Public Sphere

44A Ex. 8 (A so-called TV 'debate' about the monarchy (Royal Family) in Britain) Fairclough doubts that this kind of programme is truly a debate.

44B Fairclough thinks that such programmes do not constitute an effective ‘public sphere’.

Def. Public Sphere

= ‘a part of social life **outside** the state and the economic system where issues of common concern are debated in ways which may contribute to the formation of public policy’

Fairclough says ‘Without that element [= the exploration of differences and efforts to resolve them to reach agreement and form alliances] it is difficult to see how ‘debates’ [like this TV one] can influence the formation of [public, political, governmental] policy.’

Q. Do you agree with him?

Hegemony, Universal and Particular [Social Research Theme 2]

45A In the philosophy of Italian Marxist **Antonio Gramsci**, the struggle to achieve hegemony is a key idea for understanding the nature of political power.

This view of power emphasizes:

- A. how the successful use of power by dominant people depends on achieving the active consent (or at least passive acquiescence) of the dominated people.
- B. the importance of ideology in sustaining relations of power

More recently, two ‘Post-Marxist’ thinkers, **Ernesto Laclau** and **Chantal Mouffe**, have linked the concept of hegemony to **discourse theory**. They say hegemony involves a struggle between different (*particular*) discourses (which each contain different, particular visions and representations of the world) to be accepted as *universal*.

45B Neo-liberal political and economic discourses about globalization and its associated economic changes (such as Ex. 4) are a good example of this. There are some alternative, competing discourses which have different visions and representations of these things, but they seem (for the time being only, perhaps!) to be losing the struggle.

45C Particular discourses have particular representations and visions of things, such as globalization. Such representations and visions vary in how much they assert and assume about the ‘facts’ of something. The extract from the British government’s educational pamphlet assumes (takes for granted) globalization.

46A ‘A measure of the successful universalisation of such a particular representation [as for example this leaflet’s representation of globalization] is the extent to which it figures in this way as a background assumption [or ideology] in a wide variety of texts.’

46B Ex. 1 is another example of a ‘**universalisation of a particular**’, in this case a particular view of management.

46C The contrast made in 41A between Intertextuality (opening difference) vs. Assumptions (reducing difference) is too simple. We should think of these as forming a *range* of options for dialogical relations.

| | | |
|--------------------------|-------------------------|---|
| Most dialogical: | Attribution, Quotation | A said ‘ <i>There is X</i> ’; B said ‘ <i>It is Y</i> ’ |
| | Modalized assertion | There may be X; Perhaps it is Y |
| | Non-modalized assertion | There is X; It is Y |
| Least dialogical: | Assumption | Given X and Y, we should do Z. |

Intertextuality

47A ‘For any particular text or type of text, there is a set of other texts and a set of voices which are potentially relevant, and potentially incorporated into the text’

We can begin our analysis of intertextuality in a text by asking: What texts and voices are included, which are excluded, and what *significant* absences are there?

47B Tony Blair's speech about the September 11th 2001 terrorist attack includes quite a lot of non-attributed intertextuality.

Such non-attributed intertextuality is common in spoken language.

47C The text of Blair's speech shows a pattern of '*denial followed by assertion*' or negative clause followed by positive clause. His denials *imply* that the assertions that he is denying here *has actually* been asserted by other people (who protest against globalisation). This may not be true: they may not have asserted such things.

48A Intertextuality may be attributed clearly to particular people or attributed vaguely. Blair's speech has some examples of vague intertextual attributions ('*Don't overreact, some say.*')

48B Using vague attribution makes it more difficult for other people to challenge than if we use specific attribution. That is why Blair prefers to use vague attribution here.

48C **Reporting** is a form of intertextuality. When one text reports the speech, writing or thought of another person, it means that two texts or voices (and therefore, two perspectives, interests, visions etc.) are brought into a relation of dialogue with each other. This was first described by the early Russian linguist **Valentin Nikolaevic Voloshinov** (1894-1936). He was associated with (or, as some people think, *the same person as*) Mikhail Bakhtin. His ideas about language (such as **heteroglossia**) have been very influential.

There is likely to be some *tension* between the reporting text and the reported text, in terms of their meanings, ideologies, discourses, etc.

There are various ways of reporting. In fact, reporting, as a form of intertextuality, contains much of the range of orientations to difference summarized in the Five Scenarios in 30A.

49A Varieties of Reporting

Direct reporting (e.g. *She said: 'He'll be there by now'*)

Indirect reporting (e.g. *She said he'd be there by then*)

Free indirect reporting (e.g. *Mary gazed out of the window. He would be there by now. She smiled to herself*) * Something like 'She thought ...' is implied in the second sentence.

Narrative report of speech act (e.g. *She made a prediction*)

50A Ex.2 is the article/advertisement about a town in Hungary (sadly missing from our copy of the book!). Apart from the author's own voice, it includes two other voices: of local government (the mayor) and of local business (an entrepreneur). Other local voices are not included. Most of the information in this text probably comes from interviews with the two local officials, but it is distributed in the text in three ways: authorial account (the journalist's 'own' words, although many of the ideas originally came from the two officials), direct report and indirect report (of the officials words) This is a typical pattern of the **genre of press reports** (newspaper stories).

50B In Ex. 2 the relationship between authorial voice and attributed speech of others is quite simple. But in the extract from the New Labour 'Green Paper' [= a government 'discussion-about-future-policy document'] on Welfare Reform the relationship is more complex.

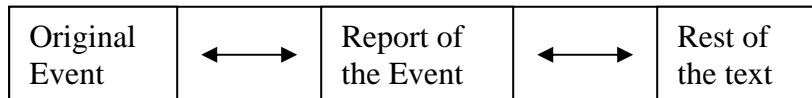
50C As a whole, the document lacks **dialogicality** (there is very little reported speech, few other voices) *except* in this extract (which is discussing the government's 'New Deal' programme for Lone Parents.) Even here, what is represented is the thoughts (especially attitudes) of others, rather than their speech or writing.

50C+ Moreover, the attitudes represented are generalized ones, not specific statements. The effect of this way of reporting is to give an impression of *consensus* amongst the various groups, even though it is unlikely that such a consensus really existed.

Fairclough thinks that New Labour's 'strategic and rhetorical motivation' for using this form of reporting is based on general tendencies concerning the use of '**public opinion**' in modern politics and governance. [He thinks that one such tendency is for governments to use more and more market research into public opinion (e.g. surveys, opinion polls, focus groups) as a method (or 'technology' in Foucault's sense) for *legitimising* the government's claim that it is speaking *on behalf of* the public when it talks about its *own* policy plans.]

51A Intertextuality is a form of **Recontextualisation** [see 32C]. Therefore, in the case of reported speech, we must consider two issues:

1. the relationship between the original event and the report about it;
2. the relationship between the report and the rest of the text in which it occurs, the (ideological) 'work' the report is doing in the text.



51B In Ex. 2 ('Festival Town Flourishes'), the reports (of the officials' words) work to *substantiate* the authorial claims (of the journalist).

In the Green Paper extract, the reports (of lone parents, etc.) help *legitimise* the government's welfare policies by making readers think that there is a consensus about them.

51C Ex. 6 is from a BBC radio news broadcast about the 'Lockerbie Bombing' terrorist incident. Specifically, it is about the extradition (= legally making a person who is suspected of committing a crime in a foreign country go back to that country for a court trial) of two men from Libya in North Africa.

51C* The extract – see it.

52A At first sight, the report seems to be quite 'balanced' between the voices of the west and the Libyans. But a closer examination of how the various voices are '**textured**' together shows this is not so.

53A **Framing** One aspect of texturing which is important here is framing. This refers to how reported voices are 'framed' (or contextualised) *inside* the main authorial voice of the text. In Ex. 6 the words of the Libyan officials are framed in various ways that make them look like the 'bad guys' and the western and UN voices look like the 'good guys' in this story.

53B Framing not only involves the relation of a reported voice to the authorial voice, but also the relation of various reported voices to *each other*. In the *mainly indirect* reports of various actors in this story the extradition of the men is often represented negatively as the men being 'handed over'. In contrast, the more positive representation as the men 'submitting themselves for jurisdiction' is only used once.

This imbalance in the relationship of the two voices reflects the western-biased view of the story.

Q. Is it surprising that a British radio broadcast will have a pro-western /anti-Libyan bias? In general is it surprising that national broadcasters have a bias in favour of their own country? (e.g. think of how differently the Japanese media and western media represent the issue of whale hunting). It may not be very surprising, but is it a good or a bad thing?

53C This long paragraph lists various examples of framing in the extract.

The negative 'hand over' representation of the extradition process forms a frame for the story as a whole because it is used in the two most salient (= important) positions in the broadcast, namely the headline at the beginning and the 'wrap-up' section at the end.

The Correspondent's Report section of the broadcast has an antagonist (= Libyan) - protagonist (the west/UN) structure, with the Libyan voices more prominent near the beginning (= the problem), and the western voices more prominent at the end (= the solution).

The use of sentence connectors (*however, meanwhile*) and a conjunction (*but*) indicates how the different voices in the text are ordered (related) to each other, again in ways that make the Libyans look bad.

54A Representing a social event (e.g. the extradition of the men from Libya) in a particular way (e.g. as a 'hand-over') involves choosing to use a particular discourse.

Different voices draw on different discourses

Voices can be represented more or less concretely or abstractly:

| | |
|----------------------|--|
| More concrete | Direct reporting of what was actually said in a certain event |
| | Indirect summary of what was actually said in a certain event |
| | Generalised representation of what people typically say (or are thought to say) |
| Less concrete | Evocation of a voice by drawing on a discourse which is associated with it. |

The extract from the UK government's pamphlet about education [see 45C] contains an evocation of a voice. It uses the expression 'global marketplace' which belongs to the dominant neo-liberal economic and political discourse. This phrase evokes the dominant voices of economics and politics.

55A Intertextuality is selective in terms of what is included in, and what is excluded from, texts (and events).

This kind of **intertextual selectivity** is related to **genre** (e.g. the way in which people speak is often clearly represented in novels, but not in other genres such as news reports where the focus is on the representational meaning of what people say, not on how they say it.)

Assumptions

55B Implicitness. All social interactions depend on a 'common ground' of shared, taken-for-granted meanings. The power to influence this common ground is part of the social power of dominant groups. That is why assumptions (and implicitness more generally) are related to ideology.

55C There are three main kinds of assumptions:

Existential Assumptions about what exists and what does not.

'There is such a thing as X' of 'X exists'

Propositional Assumptions about what is, or will be, or can be the case.

'X is Y' and 'X has Y'

Value Assumptions about what is good or desirable

'X is good/desirable, etc.'

Q Can you think of any other kinds of assumptions that are not included in these categories?

56A According to Stephen Levinson (in his classic 1983 book on **pragmatics**), each of these kinds of assumptions can be 'triggered' (marked, indicated) by linguistic features of texts. Thus:-

Existential: triggered by definite articles and demonstratives (e.g. *the, this, that, these, those*)

e.g. 'Have the inspectors in Iraq found *the* weapons of mass destruction yet?' assumes that there *really were* some such weapons.

Propositional (or Factual): triggered by 'factive' verbs (e.g. *realize, forget, remember*)

e.g. 'I *realize* that George Bush is a genius.' assumes that he *really is* a genius.

Value: triggered by certain verbs (e.g. *help*)

e.g. 'Threatening poor countries with trade sanctions can *help* develop free trade' assumes that free trade *really is* desirable'.

56B Sample sentences from Ex. 4, the European Union policy paper, which contain assumptions.

56C Analysis of Existential and Propositional assumptions in Ex. 4 sentences.

Q Fairclough points out some of the assumptions in these sentences. However, not all of them seem very ideological. Can you arrange them roughly in order from most to least ideological?

56C+ **Bridging assumptions** These are assumptions which are necessary to make a coherent semantic ‘bridge’ or logical link between different parts of a text. They help ‘texture’ a text, to give it a sense of coherence.

e.g. We must follow the writers in making the assumption that globalisation (‘it’) in S1 is the same thing as ‘economic progress’ in S2, otherwise the text is not coherent.

57A Value Assumptions. Evaluation in texts is sometimes explicit (‘What a great leader George Bush is!’) but most evaluation in texts is assumed *implicitly*.

Q Do you think that Fairclough’s claim is true? I wonder what the ratio of evaluations is in, for example, a newspaper story: e.g. 10% explicit: 90% implicit. Do different genres typically show different ratios? Are there ideological reasons for the differences?

Sometimes implicit value assumptions are triggered. For example, when someone says ‘X is a threat to Y’, the word *threat* triggers the assumption that ‘X is bad and Y is good’.

Sometimes implicit value assumptions are not triggered. We interpret the phrase ‘a sense of unease, inequality and polarisation’ as being undersirable based on our knowledge of the ‘value system’ of the the text.

We need to have knowledge of the text’s value system in order to be able to *interpret* the value assumptions which the text makes. However, we do not have to *agree* with the text’s value system to be able to do this.

Q In fact, CDA researchers usually study texts (such as neo-capitalist ones, or racist ones or sexist ones) whose value systems they strongly disagree with. Why do you think this is so?

57B Implicitness and assumptions are studied by the field known as ‘Linguistic Pragmatics’. This is a useful field for CDA, but in Fairclough’s opinion it is not political enough.

Ideologies and assumptions [Social Research Theme 3]

58A All three kinds of assumptions may be specific to (or connected with) particular discourses. For example, the value assumption (or ‘assumed meaning’) that anything that enhances ‘efficiency and adaptability’ is desirable is connected to the neo-liberal economic and political discourse. *Sometimes*, the assumptions (and the discourses they are connected with) are ideological.

Q How can we know when an assumption or discourse is ideological and when it isn’t?

Def. Ideology

= ‘**meaning in the service of power (Thompson, 1984 - one of Fairclough’s favourite books!): ideologies are meanings which help sustain or challenge relations of power**’ [see 9A]

[Note: this definition was in the original manuscript version of this book but is not in the published version! I wonder why it was removed.]

Ideology works best when meanings are widely accepted. Assumptions are related to ideology because they are a way of achieving hegemony, that is, of universalizing particular meanings.

e.g. In Ex. 4, the assumptions that (a) globalisation is a reality and (b) that globalisation means economic progress ‘might be seen as doing ideological work’.

58B To be able to reasonably make a claim like in the above example we must go beyond the level of *textual* analysis [to the level of *social* analysis].

58B* Horoscope for Virgo.

59A This horoscope text contains various assumptions; some of them seem to be quite ‘innocent’ but others seem to be rather ‘ideological’, for example:

Existential: e.g. the assumption that there exist things called ‘souls’.

Propositional: e.g. the dualist/religious assumption about the difference between the body and the soul.

59B ‘To claim that [(for example) the existence of souls] is an *ideological* assumption, one would need a plausible argument that it is indeed effective, along with other related [religious] propositions and beliefs, in sustaining relations of power. This would need to be based on a complex social scientific analysis of the relationship between religious beliefs and power relations.’

‘Certainly, one cannot simply look at a text, identify [its] assumptions, and decide [on textual evidence alone] which of them are ideological.’

Q How, more specifically, can the social analysis help? What sort of *evidence* would be necessary? What sort of *methods* are needed for gathering such a kind of evidence? How should the evidence be interpreted?

Other types of assumptions

59C Fairclough lists four types of ‘implicit’ meanings:

Assumptions (or Presuppositions) (‘The most interesting type’ according to Fairclough.)

Logical implications

Standard conversational implicatures

Non-standard conversational implicatures (The second most interesting type)

60A Logical implications

These are meanings that can be inferred from the grammatical or vocabulary features of a text.

e.g. The choice of tense in ‘I *have been* married for twenty years’ implies that I am *still* married.

Standard conversational implicatures

These rely on the normal assumption that when people use language they usually obey four conversational rules (called ‘maxims’ by the philosopher **Paul Grice** who first described them).

[If someone breaks (or ‘flouts’) one of these maxims it is usually for a special reason]

Grice’s Four Maxims:

Quantity: Give just as much information, and no more, than is required in the context.

Quality Try to speak the truth.

Relevance Be relevant.

Manner Be clear.

60B Q. What do you think of this example?

60C **Non-standard conversational implicatures** [This section is a little difficult to follow, for me!]

Implicatures are inherently strategic (or deliberate): people use them deliberately to imply certain things. They may use them like this for ideological reasons.

Assumptions are usually more straightforward. But some assumptions *may* be strategic too.

For example, sometimes people strategically assume something is known or believed when they know it really isn’t. (e.g. Saying ‘I didn’t realize that Tony Blair was paid by the CIA’ in order to make your listener to accept this as true.)

60D Implicatures occur when people who *appear* to be flouting one (or more) of Grice’s maxims are actually obeying them implicitly. E.g. the job reference letter which refers to the candidate as ‘well-dressed and punctual’, implying that since these are the only good things to say about him that he is not suitable for the job.

Summary

61A See it. **END**