Discourse Analysis Essay

100 possible points

Purpose: In this paper you will be analyzing the recorded conversational encounter that was the focus of your transcription assignment. The purpose of the analysis is to illustrate your understanding of how the analytic concepts we have discussed are related to identity-work in talk by showing how the ideas apply to the conversation data you have transcribed.

Specifics
 ✓ Make sure to define and cite each concept you use. Emphasize the concepts that enable you to do a more thoughtful, interesting paper.
 ✓ A strong paper will provide persuasive discursive evidence for the claims that are made. Give examples of what a person said that illustrates the points you are making. If you transcribed wisely you will have good instances ready to pull into your paper. Make sure you avoid treating the instances as transparent evidence. Provide an analysis in which you unpack how the excerpts reveal what you say they do. For instance, if you assert that one partner had a more liberal political stance than the other did, describe and explain what the stance indicators were. For some stances, it may be valuable to count how often something happened for one person versus another.
 ✓ The paper is to be 5-7 typed double-spaced pages and use 1-inch margins and 12 point font.
 ✓ Make sure to proofread your paper carefully before turning it in.
 ✓ Use APA style.

Recommended structure for the paper

• Introduction (0.5-1 page)
  o Purpose of paper (linking discourse to ID)
  o What discursive practices you are analyzing (introduce the data)
  o Your analytic focus (what concepts will you be using?).
  o Preview of the parts of the paper ("I will first do X, then I'll do Y… Finally, I will conclude by pointing out Z…").
• Analysis (3-5 pages)
  o Present at least three data segments and make analytic claims about them
  o Explain what your claims illustrate about the relationship between interaction and ID
• Discussion (1-2 pages)
  o *Evaluate* the aspect of the relationship between ID and discourse that you were able to illustrate
  o Consider the implications of this finding (i.e., answer the "*So what?*" of your findings)
  o Consider the *limitations* to your findings
• Conclusion (0.5 pages)
  o Summarize your argument and key points.
  o State any final thoughts and tie up any loose ends.

Evaluation of Analysis Papers

General Expectations

Papers are expected to be submitted on time. Late papers will be accepted for up to a week but will be penalized 3 points for each additional day of the week that they are late (i.e., 3, 6, 9, etc.). **Papers should not be sent by email or CULearn.** Hard copy (paper) submissions only, please.

Each paper will be evaluated on the detail, reasonableness, and insight of the analysis (the primary criteria) and the quality of the paper's writing (a secondary criterion). I will specifically look at the following items as I evaluate your essay:

- Connection between DP and ID
- Specific, clear, interesting claim
- Claim is well supported by findings in analysis
- Data excerpts are appropriate, helpful in making your argument, and well explained
- Analytic concepts are defined and used appropriately
- Empirical focus
- Assertions, evaluations, etc. are sufficiently unpacked/explained
- Paper length and pacing meet expectations
- Paper is well organized and formatted (using APA conventions)
- Spelling, grammar, style, and other features of the writing are appropriate

Points will be awarded in the following manner.

F (59 & below): The paper is not addressing the assigned topic or it is markedly shorter than expected.

D (60-69): The paper misses important components of the assignment; serious misunderstanding of major terms; and there are many writing errors.

C: (70-79): The paper addresses the assignment and makes some good points but there is confusion about course concepts, the analysis is not sufficiently detailed, and/or opinions are asserted rather than developed through argument. Organization is partial; writing errors occur with some frequency.

B (80-89): A good paper, one that satisfies the main thrust of the assignment. Analysis makes interesting points and is reasonably organized. Course concepts are understood and applied appropriately. There may be a few writing errors but there are not many.

A (90-100): An excellent paper, one that is largely error-free in writing; analysis is interesting, insightful and organized. The analysis brings a vividness to what is being written about; it serves as an exemplar to deepen another person's understanding of how talk does identity-work.

Helpful Hints on Paper Writing

Below are some tips to help you write a good analysis paper. These guidelines were developed in terms of the kind of analysis assignment you are receiving in this class, but the guidelines should be helpful for other college writing assignments.

(1) **Using Excerpts from a Transcript**
When you quote a very short segment of talk from your transcript (less than a one full line in the transcript) you can simply put that segment in quotes and indicate the transcript line numbers in parentheses. However, most excerpts you use in your analysis should be separated from the main body of the text. To do this, copy and paste the excerpt you want to use into your analysis. Match the font (Times New Roman), make the size 10 (instead of 12), bring in the left and right margins by 0.5 inches, and make the excerpt single-spaced. Also, remember to give the excerpt a title that includes a number (e.g., Excerpt 1), any vital contextual information (e.g., who is talking), and the line numbers of the passage in the transcript. The text below is an example of what an excerpt should look like (with a bit of introductory text before the excerpt is given):

"Any combination of the four kinds of identity can be simultaneously constructed or reflected.

An example of an utterance that is doing identity-work on more than one level is in excerpt 1.

> Excerpt 1 (Linda Krieger to panel of legislators, lines 104-109)
> Denying children the right to be adopted by or placed in foster care with responsible, ethical, devoted lesbian and gay parents who send them to school, who teach them to be kind and responsible, bandage their wounds, help them with their homework, and send them to college, as I did for my son, this would harm children.

Excerpt 1 is a narrative in Krieger's opening remarks that constructs her identity on at least two

levels. First…" blah blah blah.

(2) **Using Course-Relevant Terms in the Analysis**
A good analysis paper uses the concepts from the course in ways that reveal a writer's accurate understanding of the theoretical terms and an ability to apply the terms in appropriate ways to what is being examined. It is not necessary to define every single course concept, but good papers include definitions of key terms, usually as the concepts are first introduced. A good paper also applies the course concepts to the specifics of the object of analysis in ways that tie the specifics of what is heard (and/or seen) to the theoretical issues that are central in a class or the focal intellectual traditions. In analysis papers in communication courses a typical problem is one where the writer drifts into an analytic mode that reflects people's everyday ways of talking about and analyzing action, rather than the conceptual framework developed in the class.

(3) **Being Adequately Detailed AND Sufficiently Abstract**
Analysis papers tend to err in one of two directions. On the one hand, a paper may not be sufficiently detailed and specific about the object of analysis: Multiple examples of what is said and done are not provided. On the other hand, a paper gives a blow-by-blow description of what was said and done but fails to illuminate the meaning of the specifics in terms of the abstract issue of interest. A good analysis paper is both adequately detailed and links to the theoretical issue of interest.

(4) **Being "Well Written"**
A good analysis paper is well written. Besides beginning with an overview of the paper in the introduction, it uses transitions to mark movement between sections, uses internal summaries where needed, and has a conclusion. Good papers have been proofread to insure that they adhere to college-level English writing expectations. Spelling is accurate; punctuation is used appropriately; sentences neither run on nor are incomplete expressions. In addition, a well-written paper shows careful attention to word choice, recognizing that words provide the way into the writer's intended meanings.