Review of *How to Analyse Texts*

Reviewer:	Rui Sousa-Silva
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SUMMARY

It's been over three decades since Malcolm Coulthard first published 'An Introduction to Discourse Analysis' (1977), 'Advances in Spoken Discourse Analysis' (1992) and 'Advances in Written Text Analysis' (1994). Taken together, the three books, which were preceded by Sinclair and Coulthard's 'Towards an Analysis of Discourse: English Used by Teachers and Pupils' (1974), provide beginners and advanced learners, native and non-native speakers of English alike, with an in-depth knowledge across all areas of applied linguistics, and guidelines on how to analyse the different instances of written and spoken text. 'How to Analyse Texts: A Toolkit for Students of English' recalls these books for several reasons: not only is the book aimed at students of English across the world, but also, as a textbook, it encourages the readers to think about language use in everyday texts. As it focuses on language patterns both intrinsically and extrinsically, it is a step-by-step resource for understanding and interpreting different texts.

The book is organised into three different parts, each covering a step of text analysis. Part I introduces the reader to a set of basic research principles underlying the complex process of analysing texts. It shows the readers how to adopt some learning and research routines. In particular, it provides the readers with step by step instructions on how to collect, store/archive and approach the data, and how to choose the right research methods. The authors encourage the learners to conduct independent analysis, especially by illustrating how to take notes, how to go about analysing the texts confidently, and how to report on the research findings. Part II approaches texts intrinsically; it focuses on some of the structural aspects of language to discuss and explain how texts are structured. This part is divided into three different sections, each covering a different structural aspect of language: the first section focuses on language as

a semiotic system, and covers graphological and phonological aspects; the second section discusses lexis and semantics, showing readers how words and expressions contribute to making meaning in texts; the third section, which covers aspects of grammar, directs learners to how grammatical structures are used to shape meanings in texts. Part III adopts a more text-external perspective; it approaches questions about how texts represent the world, by discussing some contextual aspects of interpretation. Some of the core elements covered in this part are place and time, perspective and point of view, culture and gender, and genre and intertextuality.

The three parts contribute to a very coherent volume. Part III complements the text-internal approach of Part II, and both contribute to improving the research skills of Part I. With each part, Ronald Carter and Angela Goddard provide a number of activities, ideas for assignments and commentaries on most of the examples presented, as well as a glossary of key terms and a summary checklist covering the different topics discussed in the book.

EVALUATION

Carter and Goddard's book adds to an already substantial body of literature. Indeed, over the last decades many other books have been published on text and discourse analysis that provided useful analytical tools across all areas of linguistics and discourse, focusing especially on English.

In 'Worlds of Written Discourse' (2004), Bhatia attempts to analyse written discourse in real-life contexts other than language teaching and learning. Conversely, Fairclough (2003), in 'Analysing Discourse: Textual analysis for social research', targets students and researchers in social science and humanities - with little or no background in language analysis -, as well as linguistics students and researchers. Both Johnstone (2002) and Paltridge (2006), in their books called 'Discourse Analysis', aim to provide undergraduate and beginning graduate students with a discourse analysis toolkit, explicitly (in the case of Johnstone) or implicitly (in the case of Paltridge). Both authors provide the readers with a discussion and summary of the topic approached in each chapter, as well as directions for further reading. Cameron (2001) shifts from written discourse to provide a textbook for linguistics students on 'Working with Spoken Discourse'. The aim of reinforcing the practical side of discourse analysis, in addition to the theoretical explanations, is met as the book abounds with practical examples, chapter summaries and suggestions for further reading. Kress and van Leeuwen (2001), in 'Multimodal discourse: the modes and media of contemporary communication', and Kress (2010), in 'Multimodality: a social semiotic approach to contemporary communication', focus on a specific area of discourse analysis - multimodality - to provide a theoretical background for advanced readers on how to analyse discourse produced by different modes, and not only written and spoken text. Last, but not least, in 'Language: Its Structure and Use' Finegan (2004) provides students, both at beginner and advanced level, with an invaluable resource for

conducting linguistic analyses of all sorts, from lexicon and morphology to phonetics and phonology, and including syntax and semantics, pragmatics, language variation and language acquisition. The strong theoretical explanations provided are always accompanied by practical examples that make it very easy for students to understand the theory, and the international edition suits well non-native learners of English.

Notwithstanding, 'How to Analyse Texts' provides several reasons for deserving a place of its own among the existing body of literature, owing in particular to the practical nature of the book: more than providing a theoretical description of language use and how texts can be analysed, the book works as a toolkit that provides learners with the tools required to analyse texts, and furthermore shows them how to use those tools. The book therefore aims to encourage an active learning process, whereby practical applications and activities encourage the readers to acquire real analytical skills.

'How to Analyse Texts' competently addresses its main audience: learners of 'World Englishes', although it is also a valuable resource for learners of English across the world. The book is logically and coherently organised: it starts with the basic research principles, continues with text-internal analysis and ends with text-external analysis. The volume is written in a style that is accessible to less advanced readers, including to non-native learners of English, without compromising its accuracy and its commitment to the discipline. The core concepts are clearly defined and often explained by resorting to analogy (including visual analogy); and the theoretical points raised throughout the book are explained and complemented by concrete and detailed examples, including commentaries. The wide range of examples and exercises for self-study from a diversity of text types and genres provided is particularly helpful for undergraduate students, who will gain the skills required to understand and interpret texts. Beginning learners will certainly benefit from the guidelines and examples of how to appropriately conduct a research project, including how to use quotation and citation conventions; on this point, Carter and Goddard go much farther than just showing how to analyse texts.

'How to Analyse Texts' can, on the other hand,, be less exciting for more advanced learners, who may be disappointed by some of the topics covered in the book. This audience will, however, find the suggestions for more sustained research in the longer term extremely useful. One of the main merits of the book is that advanced learners are encouraged to apply the analyses of the texts in English to texts in their own languages as well, while the analyses conducted by the authors can serve as models for how to write about the aspects covered. As they provide a contextualisation of the analyses of the English language texts, while suggesting that the readers should work on their own mother tongue for comparison purposes, the authors encourage the learners to develop their text analysis skills further. The book thus presents very good suggestions for future empirical research in the area.

In addition to the topics usually discussed in linguistics textbooks, such as writing, speech and critical discourse analysis, 'How to Analyse Texts' also covers other analyses and applications, such as multimodality and multimodal contexts and situations, as well as forensic linguistics. Regrettably, some of these are covered very superficially, and occasionally inconsistently. An example of the latter is the explanation of the terms 'text' and 'discourse': although in the introduction the authors argue that the two terms are often used as synonyms despite the differences between them, in Chapter 4 'text analysis' and 'discourse analysis' are used as synonyms to refer to the same research method.

In addition, the book would benefit from a more detailed explanation of corpora, although the appendix on corpus resources and projects towards the end of the book can direct the reader to past and present corpora research projects. Likewise, the explanation of multimodality does not account for the complexity of the analysis, and neither do the guidelines provided in this respect compare to the other topics covered. Although the book provides examples of some forensic applications of linguistic analyses, such as accent identification for court cases, this application is not given much attention or detail; on the contrary, the information provided is supplemented only with further reading suggestions on more scientific applications of phonetics, and no further suggestions are made to readings on forensic linguistics in general. Maybe as a result of these being paid less attention, the use of the expression 'linguistic fingerprints' as a synonym of 'idiolect' can be misleading and inaccurate, as argued by Coulthard (see e.g. Coulthard & Johnson 2007). Although these shortcomings do not overshadow the merits of the book, future editions of the volume could be improved in this regard.

'How to Analyse Texts: A Toolkit for Students of English' was written by Ronald Carter and Angela Goddard, two experienced and renowned teachers of English, and that reflects on the pedagogical nature of the book: as a result of the wording used, of the organisation of the book, and of the quality and diversity of the data analysed, this volume undoubtedly encourages the active learning of its readers. 'How to Analyse Texts' is therefore key reading for beginning students and a good reference resource for more advanced readers. The authors have definitely achieved their goals with the book, which will have its own place among the existing extensive body of literature.

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Rui Sousa-Silva is assistant professor of the Faculty of Arts and post-doctoral researcher at the Linguistics Centre (CLUP) of the University of Porto, where he is currently conducting his research into Forensic Linguistics and Cybercrime. He has a PhD in Applied Linguistics from Aston University (Birmingham, UK), where he submitted his thesis on Forensic Linguistics: 'Detecting Plagiarism in the Forensic Linguistics Turn'. He studied cross-cultural attitudes to plagiarism, and proposed an approach to translingual plagiarism detection. He also authored and co-authored several papers on (computational) authorship analysis, and is co-editor of the recently founded international bilingual journal Language and Law / Linguagem e Direito.