

Discourse Analysis in 9 Steps

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| Establish the context | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who is speaking? • What are they speaking about? • When are they speaking? • Where are they speaking? • Why are they speaking about this at this place and time? |
| Consider the medium | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Through what medium are they speaking? • How was this medium produced? • How does this particular medium for communication impact what comes across in speaking? |
| Discern the intended audience | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who is the speaker addressing? • Why are they addressing this particular audience? • How receptive do you think the audience will be to the message? |
| Assess assumptions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What worldviews shape how the speaker approaches communication? • What does the speaker suggest to be ‘given’ or ‘certain’? • What binary oppositions structure the speaker’s speech? |
| Identify cultural cues and references | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What metaphors does the speaker use? • What cultural references does the speaker make that might provide clues as to the context from which they are speaking? |
| Evaluate rhetorical strategies | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the tone of the message? • What adjectives, adverbs, and verbs does the speaker use to persuade others? • How does the speaker justify their claims? |
| Consider the social structure the discourse operates within | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the speaker communicate from a place of power and privilege or from a place of marginalization? • Is the speaker confirming a “dominant discourse” or challenging a dominant discourse? • How might societal power structures shape what is being said? |
| Assess how the discourse disseminates | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who might hear this discourse? • How might it reach them? |
| Reflect on what is not said or who is not included | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who or what is ignored in the discourse? • Do you believe that this omission was purposeful? |