Lecture 2: Lexical Analysis and Quoting Verbs

Lexical Analysis
To begin with, following Fairclough, we can analyse the basic choice of words buy the text producer, referred to simple lexical analysis. Simply we ask what kinds of words are used. Is there a predominance of particular kinds of words, for example?

This extract is taken from an East Midlands Development Agency (EMDA) document. EMDA is one of a number of regional organisations set up in Britain by the New Labour Government to 'regenerate' parts of the country that are suffering from a number of issues such as poverty, unemployment, urban decay and interracial tensions. Again we can look at the kinds of words that we find in the text and ask what kind of discourse these realise, what kind of world do they constitute and what kinds of interests do they serve.

EMDA 'mission statement'.
The vision is for the East Midlands to become a fast growing, dynamic economy based on innovative, knowledge based companies competing successfully in the global economy.
East Midlands Innovation launched its Regional Innovation Strategy and action plan in November 2006. This sets out how we will use the knowledge, skills and creativity of organisations and individuals to build an innovation led economy.
Our primary role to deliver our mission is to be the strategic driver of economic development in the East Midlands, working with partners to deliver the goals of the Regional Economic Strategy, which EMDA produces on behalf of the region.
I am committed to ensuring that these strategic priorities act as guiding principles for emda as we work with our partners in the region and beyond to achieve the region's ambition to be a Top 20 Region by 2010 and a flourishing region by 2020.

In fact when reports by these developmental agencies are read it is rather difficult to get any concrete sense of what they actually do. But maybe this isn't the point! A lexical analysis of the text reveals a predominance of words like 'dynamic', 'innovation', 'competing', 'creativity', 'strategic', 'ambition', 'challenges', 'goals' and 'strengths'. When discussing what seems like a simple matter of unemployment or poverty such terms are used and those involved, the poor and the local council workers and business that are the deal with them become 'partners' and 'stakeholders'. These kinds of terms, Fairclough and Chiapello (2002), point out come from the language of business rhetoric, describing them as the empty rhetoric of corporate-speak. The result of referring to things such as poverty as a 'challenge', the poor as 'stakeholders' and solutions in terms of 'creativity' and 'innovation' can conceal what the actual problem is and therefore what the solution would be. For Fairclough (2000) this process serves to conceal where the actual responsibility lies which is with the government and the fundamental nature of social organisation. In fact there is poverty and unemployment in the East Midlands due to changes in economic policies pushing Britain into the global economy allowing industries that formerly created employment to shift to other parts of the world where labour is cheaper (Levitas, 2005). So in certain areas whole sections of the population

live where there have been no workers in the family for often three generations. While terms like 'creativity' , 'innovation' and 'knowledge economy' sound exciting and active, they will not help is to deal with fundamental structural issues. And calling them, along with the local councillors and businesses who are to provide solutions 'stakeholders' further obscures power relations.   Of course, as Fairclough (2000) explains, this is precisely the point as we are distracted from real causes and necessary solutions.

Example of simple Lexical Analysis:
Below there are two short texts. The first is an international news agency feed received by a news organisation, Independent Radio News. The second is the text after they had reworked it for broadcast for one of their clients, based on knowledge of their client listeners. Consider the lexical changes. What is the main change of discourse in the rewrite?

APTN feed as received by IRN September 18, 2003:
One of the few suspects to express remorse over his alleged involvement in last year's bombings on Indonesia's Bali island arrived at court on Thursday to hear his sentence. Ali Imron is facing a possible death penalty, but prosecutors have asked that he receive 20 years in prison because he has shown regret and cooperated with investigators. Imran's older brother Amrozi bin Nurhasyim, and another key defendant, Imam Samudra, already have been sentenced to face firing squads for their roles in the attack, which killed 202 people – mostly foreign tourists.

IRN rewrite:
A man's been jailed for life for helping to plan and carry out the Bali bombings. Twenty-six Britons were among more than two hundred people killed in the attack in October last year. Ali Imron was spared the death sentence handed down to other suspects because he expressed remorse and co-operated with the Indonesian authorities.

Quoting verbs
Extremely revealing are the words chosen to represent how a participant has spoken. Austin (1975), Caldas-Coulthard (1994) and Fairclough (1995) argue that quoting verbs (e.g. 'warned') convey the illocutionary force of the reported discourse and they carry non-explicit meaning and interpretation. Consider the difference between the following two sentences:

The management <u>announced </u>that striking workers would be punished
The workers <u>grumbled</u> about problems with conditions

In the first case the management 'announced' while in the second the workers 'grumbled'. Yet there would have been nothing inherent in how each group spoke that warranted these word choices. The word 'said' could have served in both cases. So

The management <u>said</u> that striking workers would be punished
The workers <u>said</u> there were problems with conditions

In this case what is said is not evaluated.

Caldas-Coulthard (1994) offers a systematic breakdown of verbs of saying

Speech-reporting verbs		
Neutral structuring		say, tell, ask, enquire, reply, answer
Metapropositional	Assertives	remark, explain, agree, assent, accept, correct, counter
	directives	urge, instruct, order
	expressives	accuse, grumble, lament, confess, complain, swear, claim
Metalinguistic		narrate, quote, recount
Descriptive verbs		
Prosodic (loudness,pitch emotion)		cry, intone, shout, yell, scream
	voice qualifier (manner)	whisper, murmur, mutter
Paralinguistic	voice qualification (attitude)	laugh, giggle, sigh, gasp, groan
Transcript verb		
	relation to other parts of discourse	repeat, echo, add, emend
Discourse signalling	discourse progress	pause, go on, hesitate, continue

According to Caldas-Coulthard (p305–306), **neutral structuring verbs** introduce a saying without evaluating it explicitly (e.g. say, tell, ask). **Metapropositional verbs** mark the reporter's interpretation of a speaker. For example: 'declare', 'urge' and 'grumble' are **assertive**, **directive** and **expressive** respectively. **Descriptive verbs** categorise the interaction. For example: 'whisper', 'laugh' mark the manner and attitude of a speaker in relation to what is being said. **Transcript verbs** mark the development of the discourse (e.g. repeat) or relate the quotation to other parts of the discourse (e.g. pause). All of these can be used to make certain participants appear more authoritative or subservient, legitimate of none legitimate. They can help define the roles of sets of participants event though these might not be explicitly stated. They can direct us to consider some participants as having a negative attitude and others as being friendly.

In the example above 'announcing' sounds more official, formal, and is the stuff of official groups. 'Grumblings' are not necessarily well formulated, not coherent, not official and indicate lack of power.   In the following example we see a different kind of representation created through a different verb of saying:

Minority community leaders <u>claimed</u> that they have suffered increased levels of abuse.

Here we can see the effect of 'claim', what Caldas-Coulthard would describe as a metapropositional expressive. Claims are not factual but can be contested and the use of this word invites doubt. The word 'felt' would have a similar meaning. But in the following case the use of the word 'explain' changes the meaning.

Minority community leaders <u>explained</u> that they have suffered increased levels of abuse

This influences the way that we perceive the participants and can be seen as another part of the way that social actors are categorised. We see this clearly in the following two sentences.

Minority community leaders <u>shouted</u> that they have suffered increased levels of abuse
Minority community leaders <u>remarked</u> that they have suffered increased levels of abuse

In the second case the leaders appear reserved and official through the use of a metapropositional assertive verb of saying, but in the first emotional and perhaps threatening through the use of a prosodic descriptive verb.

In our analysis of texts we can compare the verbs of saying used to represent the utterances of different groups. Here are a few from an incident several years ago when Chinese restaurants were (wrongly and absurdly) given the blame for Foot and Mouth Disease. In reporting in the tabloid press there was a tendency to some racism and jingoism. While we don't deal with that here what was significant was that there were differences in verbs of saying.

For Chinese speakers **neutral structuring verbs** are the most popular quoting verbs. For example.

"It represents a tired old stereotype," <u>says</u> Ms Yau.

"It is all the same stereotypes. We eat funny food, we speak with funny accents. This is about ending those stereotypes and saying we are part of this country," he <u>said</u>.

If the quoting verbs in the examples above were changed from 'said' to 'insisted', 'condemned' or 'challenged' (verbs with a **metapropositional** meaning), the verbs would add more weight to the words quoted

"It is all the same stereotypes. We eat funny food, we speak with funny accents. This is about ending those stereotypes and saying we are part of this country," he <u>condemned</u>.

Ms Yau <u>challenged</u> that it represents a tired old stereotype.

The use of these **metapropositional** verbs (challenged, condemned and insisted) matches the illocutionary force in the quotations which challenges existing stereotypes and expresses discontent. Such verbs, where used, show a greater degree of interpreting and evaluating by reporters. However, in the first three examples, the reporters do not attribute any more meaning than is included in the saying. Thus, the magnitude of the challenge is minimised. Since the use of quoting verbs is highly selective and ideological, the reliance on **neutral** verbs reflects reporters' distance from what was said.

The examples below show that there was some use of **expressives** (e.g. complained, blaming) reporting the Chinese protest clearly stated their grievance. Complaints about the increased level of racial abuse were, however, interpreted as a 'claim':

'Restaurateurs <u>claim</u> that they have suffered increased levels of abuse'.

Quoting verbs for British sources
For British sources there were far more **metapropositional verbs** used, There was greater use of the **assertive verbs** 'claim' and 'point out':

'Mr Waugh (a farmer) <u>claimed</u> that a neighbouring farm collected its own swill directly from Chinese restaurants in the Newcastle area'.

'The admission that imported Army meat went to the farm at Heddon-on-the-Wall is the first time that a potential path of infection has been identified, although the MoD <u>claimed</u> yesterday that its imported meat came from farms free of the disease'.

'No restaurant, he (Bruce Jobson, a farmer) <u>pointed out</u>, has so far been cited by MAFF'.

'He (Bobby Waugh) <u>admitted</u> that he had received swill from Alan Clemant, 57, and his son, Kenneth'.

'Mr Waugh <u>confirmed</u> yesterday they had delivered swill to him for treatmen't

'A senior Whitehall source <u>confirmed</u> last night that Mr Brown was concerned that freight companies made insufficient checks on the contents of containers transported to Britain'.

'Longleat Safari Park in Wiltshire will reopen today after a two-week postponement, and English Heritage <u>announced</u> that Stonehenge would reopen next week, though visitors must stick to the paths'.

It seems that reporters represent British sources with lots more interpretation and evaluation. They seem to take much more interest in them and represent them as much more powerful. Without saying so directly Chinese sources appear flat and less engaging.

Examples
When the delegates had a meeting with Mr Brown and told him they felt under siege, he replied: "I'm under siege too."
When the delegates had a meeting with Mr Brown and complained they felt under siege, he whispered: "I'm under siege too."
When the delegates had a meeting with Mr Brown and complained they felt under siege, he grumbled: "I'm under siege too."
When the delegates had a meeting with Mr Brown and complained they felt under siege, he claimed: "I'm under siege too."

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