Construal of the Other

A Qualitative-Quantitative Study of the Evaluation of Asylum Seekers in Media Discourse

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Aim of the Study

Improving tools to identify discursive construal (or construction in CDA) for critical discourse analysis.
**Problem:** Discourse in Cognitive Linguistics:

Cognitive Models and the notion of construal (Lakoff 1991, 1996 *et alli*)

**Analysis:** Although powerful tools, do not account for social variation.

**Method:** Based on introspection and making falsification difficult.
Analytical Proposal: Appraisal (Martin and White 2005)

A system of interpersonal meanings in Systemic Functional Linguistics (Halliday 1994)

Appraisal has been widely used to study evaluation.

The category of ATTITUDE

Figure 1: Judgement (Martin and White 2005)
ATTITUDE (Martin & White 2005: 42)

Affect
Registering positive and negative feelings: do we feel happy or sad, confident or anxious, interested or bored?

Judgement
Construing attitudes of people and the way they behave. Judgement based on morals and ethics.

Appreciation
Construing evaluations of ‘things’, especially things we make and performances we give.
Construal of Asylum Seekers: Positive vs. Negative Judgement

Figure 2: Types of Judgement
Methodological Proposal

Multifactorial Usage Feature Analysis / Behavioural Profile Approach

**Step 1:** Qualitative analysis (discourse) analysis of large sample
  Manual analysis involves the operationalization of the research question into a set of ‘usage-features’
  Annotation of contextualized examples for these features
  (This is already being done in CDA)

**Step 2:** Multivariate quantitative (statistical) analyses of results of discourse analysis.
  Exploratory techniques: identify patterns of discourse use
  Confirmatory/ predictive modelling of these results
Case Study: French and English Media

Asylum seekers representation in written media (newspapers)

Question

Do Right and Left wing construe asylum seekers differently?
Data

4 British daily newspapers
2 Tabloids: Daily Mail, Daily Mirror
2 Broadsheets: Daily Telegraph, The Guardian

4 French daily newspapers
2 Tabloids: Aujourd’hui France, Libération.
2 Broadsheets: Le Figaro, Le Monde

News editorials (Jan- Dec 2016)

960 examples referring to asylum seekers

120 examples per paper
Asylum seekers - Identifying referential units / tokens

Referential units: lexeme or expression used to refer to asylum seekers

For example; ‘Outsiders’ (Daily Mirror 01/2016)

Undocumented aliens (Daily telegraph 03/2016)

Influx of migrants (Daily mail 06/2016)
**Analysis: Features Analysis**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Explanatory factors</th>
<th>Usage-features</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Judgement - Esteem</td>
<td>Normality, Capacity, Tenacity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judgement - Sanction</td>
<td>Veracity, Propriety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other types of Judgement</td>
<td>Affective - Jud, Appreciative - Jud</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Referent Explicitness</td>
<td>Explicit, Implicit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verifiability</td>
<td>Verifiable, Non - Verifiable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proposition type</td>
<td>Evidential, Epistemic, Propositional (factual)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation</td>
<td>Overt, Covert</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Analysis: Examples of Annotation

Judgement - Esteem - Tenacity (how dependable)

(1) It doubles Britain's existing £250 million commitment to feed and clothe desperate refugees who have fled there over the border from war-torn Syria.

Jud-Sanction-Veracity (how honest)

(2) Of those applicants who claimed asylum after overstaying, 19.200 were either successful or given permission to remain in the country for another reason.

Judgement-Sanction-Propriety (how far beyond reproach)

(3) Tous ceux qui avaient peur de voir arriver des criminels et des terroristes parmi les refugies se sont sentis confirmés dans leur argumentation.

(All those who were afraid of the arrival of criminals and terrorists among the refugees felt confirmed in their arguments)
Analysis: Examples of Annotation (suite)

Affective - Judgement

(4) Les nouvelles crises qui a bouleversé le continent, la crise des migrants et des réfugiés…

(New crises that devastated the continent, the crisis of migrants and refugees …)

Appreciative - Judgement

(5) The figure for July was 1,700.
Results (Step 1): Identifying Usage Profiles

Figure 3: Multiple Correspondance Analysis

Principal inertias (eigenvalues):
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>dim</th>
<th>value</th>
<th>% cum% score plot</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.035172</td>
<td>51.8 51.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.009713</td>
<td>14.3 66.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.003632</td>
<td>5.1 71.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.000951</td>
<td>0.1 71.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Cognitive linguistic research in metonymy, metaphor, constructions and frames: scope, models and methods
Results (Step 2): Verifying usage profiles

Political.orientation ~ Proposition.type + Verifiability

**Left wing correlation/prediction**  
**Right wing correlation/prediction**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predictors</th>
<th>Correlation</th>
<th>Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Proposition.type-Evidential</td>
<td>1.6138</td>
<td>6.259 3.88e-10 ***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proposition.type-Propositional</td>
<td>0.8885</td>
<td>3.910 9.23e-05 ***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verifiability-Verifiable</td>
<td>-1.3445</td>
<td>-8.902 &lt; 2e-16 ***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Significance codes: 0 ‘***’ 0.001 ‘**’ 0.01 ‘*’ 0.05 ‘.’ 0.1 ‘ ’ 1  
Pseudo R2: 0.137  C: 0.679  
VIF: max: 3.0228
Conclusion

Appraisal, although portrayed problematic in terms of categorisation, remains a powerful analytical tool to operationalize attitudes in discourse.

Representation in text is always from a particular point of view; representation is ideological. Construal is therefore ideological.

Quantified results in discourse can be falsified through repeated analysis.
References


Thank you!

Questions

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