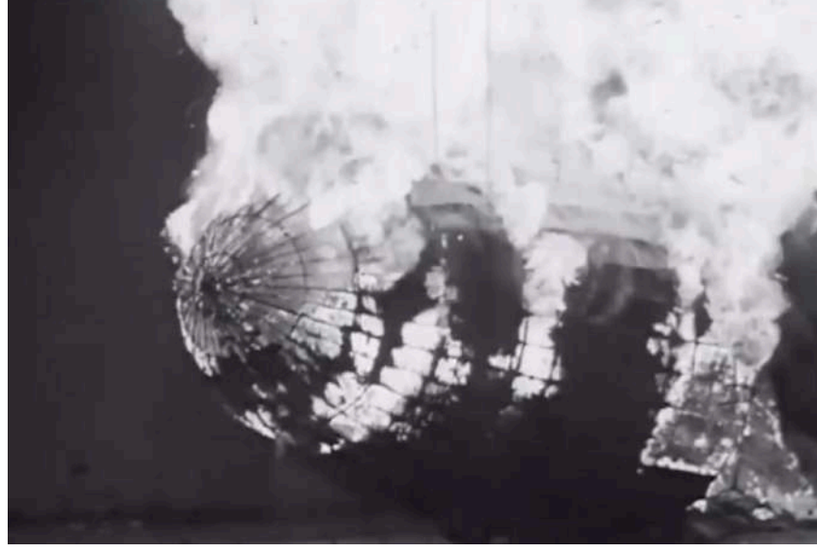

STANCE CONSTRUCTION IN MULTIMODAL, MULTI-MEDIA CONTEXTS

Theme Session: *Stance-stacking in language and multimodal communication*

Barbara Dancygier, Jennifer Hinnell, & Adrian Lou

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Kwansei Gakuin University
Nishinomiya, Japan

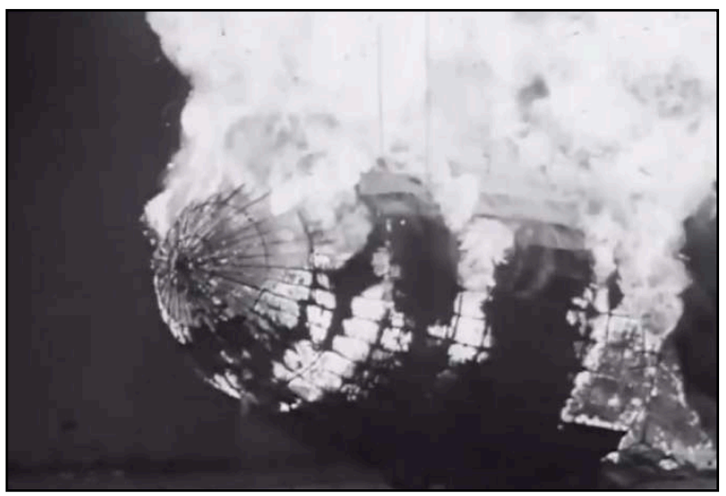
DISCOURSE PATTERN EMERGING

- Expression of stance, inappropriate to the situation

- Talk show host notes it and comments

  - Explains the inappropriateness of the stance

    - By providing an exaggerated/doctored example



CONTEXT

Stance

- Linguistic: text-based
- Multimodal, embodied
- Multimodal/multimedia, image/text

Biber & Finegan 1989, 1999
Precht 2000
Dancygier 2012
Debras 2017
Müller 2004
Dancygier & Vandelanotte 2017

Conditionals

- Alternative spaces
- Hypothetical /counterfactual meaning

Dancygier 1998
Dancygier & Sweetser 2005

It's like if construction

Lou 2017
Dancygier & Lou 2018

Construal operations

- blending, mental spaces, humour

Brône et al. 2006
Coulson 2002, 2006
Fauconnier & Turner 2002

CLUELESS PILOT EPISODE

Trump: *…we need 5000 judges on the border. What other country has judges? I said, "Where are you going to find 5000 people to be judges. How many do we have now? I don't know the number. They don't even know the number even though they're in charge, okay?*

Meyers: *No dude! You're in charge. That's the deal. That's like….if your pilot got on the PA and said, "Okay folks, I asked the tower what airport we're going to, and they said they don't know, and I certainly don't know either."*

1. Trigger event/stance

Trump: *I don't know the number. They don't even know the number even though they're in charge.*

2. Commentary (on stance)

Meyers: *No dude! You're in charge. That's the deal.*

3. Similative prompt

Meyers: *That's like …*

4. Alternative frame: analogous event/stance

…if your pilot got on the PA and said: […] "they said they don't know, and I certainly don't know either."

CLUELESS PILOT EPISODE

TRIGGER EVENT: STANCE-STACKING STARTS

Trigger: Event 1/Speaker 1

- states the need to solve border issues

Expected Stance

- positive epistemic stance
- accepting responsibility

Expressed Stance

- opposite of expected stance
- negative epistemic stance
- not accepting responsibility
- *how many?; I don't know; they don't know; they are in charge*

COMMENTARY: STACKING CONTINUES

Rejection of Expressed Stance by Speaker 2

- stance negation
- *No dude! … You're in charge*
- intonation & gesture make stance negation very clear
- (i.e. it is not the case that THEY are in charge)

SIMILATIVE PROMPT

That's…(Refers back to negative stances expressed by Speaker 1)

Like (if) + Event 2

- Sets up a scale to compare Events in terms of Stance strength
  - here, the scale is the degree of negative stance involved when someone rejects responsibility

- Event 1 is weaker stance (Trump's verbal response to natural disaster) vs. Event 2, stronger stance (pilot not knowing destination airport)

- To clarify the level to which Stance 1 is inappropriate to Event 1, the commentator puts Stance 1 on the scale as analogous to an outrageously inappropriate Stance to Event 2. Importantly, Event 2 is similar to Event 1 in terms of required stance.

ALTERNATIVE FRAME

If … (setting up an imagined situation)

- … *your pilot **got** on the PA*
  (the clause sets up a mental space of Event 2; the past tense indicates it is a hypothetical construction, suggesting an imagined situation)

- … *and **said**…*
  (elaboration of the hypothetical mental space)

- … *they don't know…; **I certainly don't know** either*
  (repetition of negative epistemic stance A-2; added stance-enhancer *certainly*)

- But overall construal of stance is higher up the scale, because abdicating responsibility in Event 2 puts lives in danger

- A **clueless pilot** is imminently more dangerous than a **clueless president**

HOW DOES THE SCALAR MEANING EMERGE?

- The discourse pattern requires three conceptual elements:
    1. an event belonging to an event type, correlated with an expected stance
    2. The perception of mismatch, when a speaker expresses unexpected stance
    3. The need to express stance, evaluating the mismatch observed
- Another event is described, which sets-up a scale of inappropriateness
- This scale is matched with the scale of evaluative stances
    - **The resulting evaluative stance emerges out of the *comparison* along the criterion created by the scalar construct**
    - **The strength of stance in these cases is negotiated constructionally, rather than lexically (as in *think* versus *know*)**

FURTHER QUESTIONS

- What linguistic means/devices can serve as similative prompts?
- How is alternativity used in this discourse pattern?
- How do multimedia means support stance-building pattern in the discourse?

Meyers: *I don't want to say that Trump is out of touch with reality, so I'll let him say it.*

Trump: *It's been a wonderful thing. As tough as it was, it's been a wonderful thing. I think even for the country to watch and for the world to watch. It's been beautiful. Have a good time everybody. I'm gonna be doing a little help over here.*

Meyers: *"Have a good time, everybody." You know, it reminds me of newscaster Herbert Morrison and his commentary during the Hindenburg disaster.*

Morrison: *Just look at those beautiful flames arching skyward from that airship. Oh, the humanity! The humanity…is having the time of their lives. Have a good time, everybody.*

1. Trigger event/stance

Trump: *It's been beautiful. Have a good time everybody. I'm gonna be doing a little help over here.*

2. Commentary (on stance)

Meyers: *"Have a good time, everybody."*

3. Similative prompt

Meyers: *You know, **it reminds me** of newscaster Herbert Morrison and his commentary during the Hindenburg disaster."*

4. Alternative frame: analogous event/stance

Morrison (voice-over): *Just look at those beautiful flames arching skyward from that airship. Oh, the humanity! The humanity…is having the time of their lives. Have a good time, everybody.*

COLBERT HINDENBURG

Colbert: *Of course, every presidential visit to a disaster area must come with some inspiring words.*

Trump: *As tough as it was, it's been a wonderful thing. I think even for the country to watch and for the world to watch. It's been beautiful. Have a good time everybody. I'm gonna be doing a little help over here.*

Colbert: *"Have a good time, everybody"? Have a good time?" That's the second worst disaster response of all time.*

Morrison *(voice-over): It's bursting into flames. People are jumping. Oh, the humanity! Have a great time, everybody. Woo!*

1. Trigger event/stance

Trump: *It's been beautiful. Have a good time everybody. I'm gonna be doing a little help over here.*

2. Commentary (on stance)

Colbert: *"Have a good time, everybody? Have a good time?"*

3. Similative prompt matched event/stance scale)

Colbert: *That's the **second worst disaster response** of all time.*

4. Alternative frame (analogous event/stance)

Morrison (voice-over): *It's bursting into flames. People are jumping. Oh, the humanity! Have a great time, everybody. Woo!*

DATA COLLECTION

28 clips from YouTube & Red Hen (redhenlab.org)

Discourse sequences from 4 late night talk shows

- *Late Night with* ***Seth Meyers***
- *Late Show with* ***Stephen Colbert***
- *Last Week Tonight with* ***John Oliver***
- *The Daily Show with* ***Trevor Noah***

Annotated for

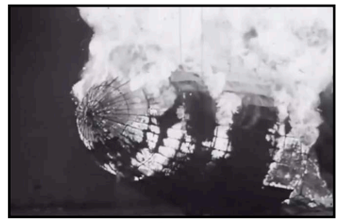
- similative prompt
- multimedia resources: audio, visual, audiovisual
- type of artifact: historical, archival, etc.

DESCRIPTION OF DATA

MULTIMEDIA	PROMPT TYPE	PROMPT EXAMPLE	EXAMPLE	N
1. Archival footage	recall (3) comparative (2) *like* (1)	*it reminds me of* *second worse/worst since* *who can forget* *sounds just like* *it's like Jesus said (2)*	e.g. Hindenburg	6
2. Fabricated quote	recall (2) comparative (1) *like* (8) epistemic stance (1)	*I believe it was Rene Descartes who said* *it's just like Churchill said* *it's like if Nero had tweeted* *I don't remember Churchill saying* *much like Lincoln said...* *that's like Paul Revere saying...* *most blatent act of nepotism since…* *we all remember + quote*	e.g. Churchill, Descartes, Bible, Jesus, Moses, Lincoln, Nero, Nixon, Paul Revere	12
3. Verbal description	*like* (9) n/a (1)	*this would be like if* *that's like saying* *that's like + scenario* *that's like if + scenario (4)* *it's like X has been saying*	e.g. pilot, psychiatrist, 5th grader	10
TOTAL				28

STANCE-STACKING: A MULTIMEDIA DISCOURSE CONSTRUCTION

that's like if…
it reminds me of…
second-worst…



TRIGGER - EVENT 1

commentary

SIMILATIVE PROMPT

EVENT 2

STANCE 1 (e.g. Trump's)

questioning/ negation of STANCE 1

STANCE 2 (reasonable/ desired)

Creates scale / analogy

STANCE-STACKING: A MULTIMEDIA DISCOURSE CONSTRUCTION

that's like if…
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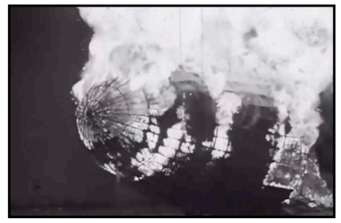

TRIGGER - EVENT 1

commentary

SIMILATIVE PROMPT

EVENT 2

ALTERNATIVE EVENT 2

STANCE 1 (e.g. Trump's)

questioning/ negation of STANCE 1

STANCE 2 (reasonable/ desired)

STANCE 1 (exaggerated)

Creates scale / analogy

STANCE-STACKING: A MULTIMEDIA DISCOURSE CONSTRUCTION

that's like if…
it reminds me of…
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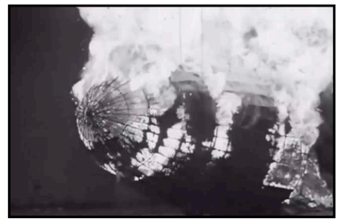


TRIGGER - EVENT 1

commentary

SIMILATIVE PROMPT

EVENT 2

ALTERNATIVE EVENT 2

STANCE 1 (e.g. Trump's)

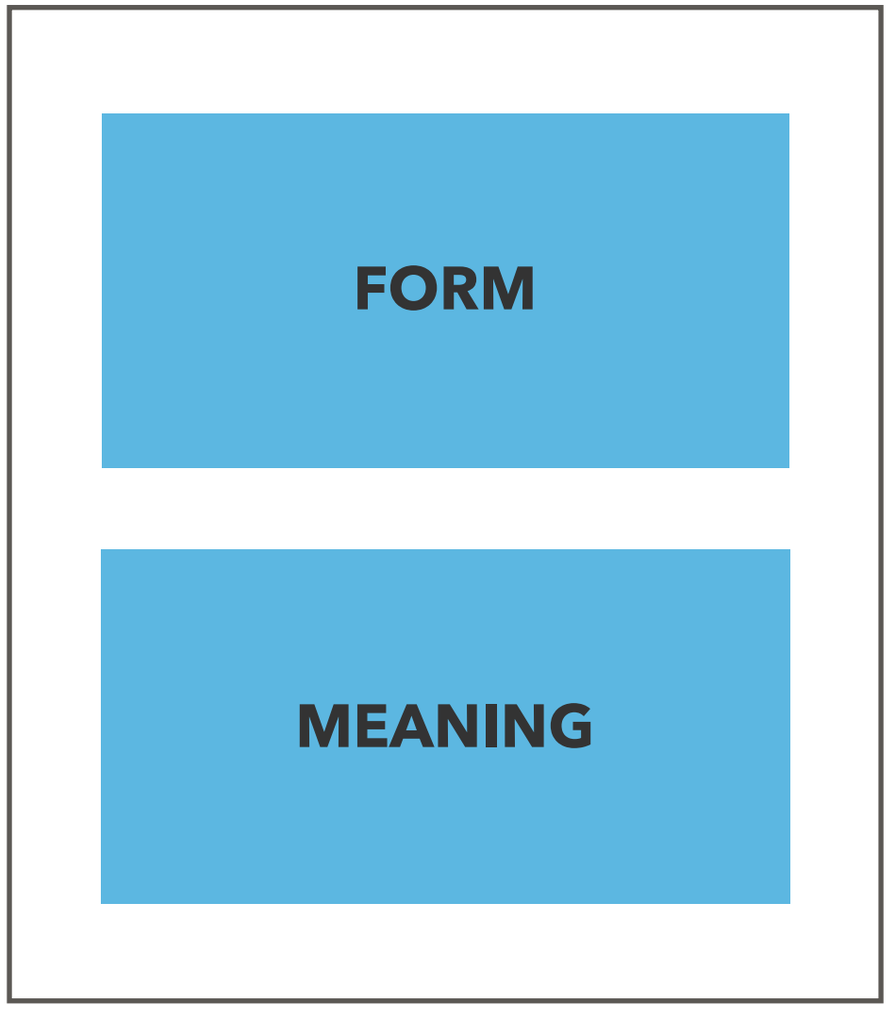
questioning/ negation of STANCE 1

STANCE 2 (reasonable/ desired)

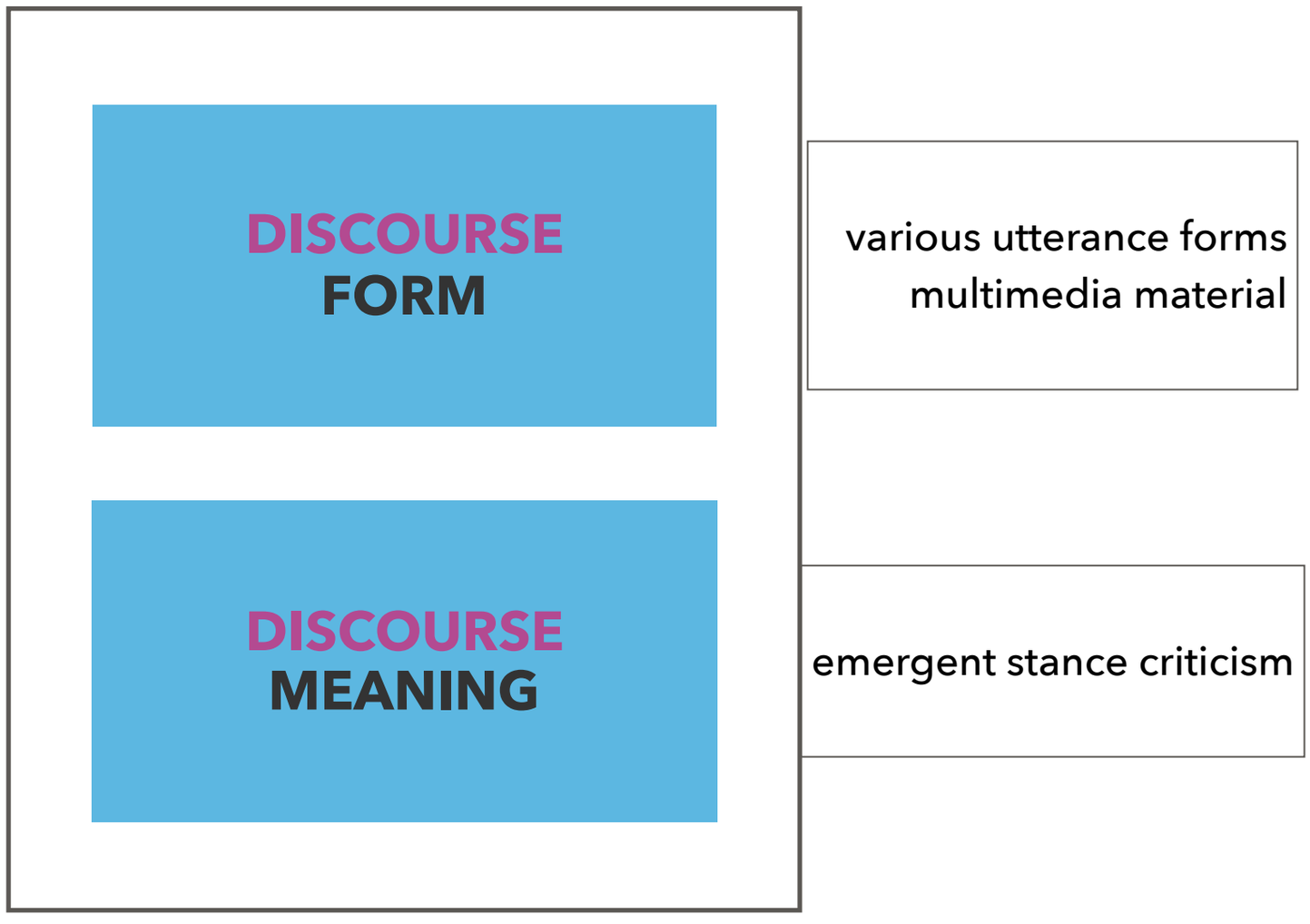
STANCE 1 (exaggerated)

Creates scale / analogy

SO… ABOUT (STANCE) CONSTRUCTIONS



SO… ABOUT (STANCE) CONSTRUCTIONS



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THANK YOU

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