Structures and Strategies in the Process of Evaluating University Teaching Quality in China

A critical discourse analysis of a teaching quality evaluation report in a Chinese University

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Terms specified

- Discourse: way of representing
- Discursive construction: construction of social entities by way of representing
- Discourses of the teaching quality: by the university and by the evaluating group
- Discourse about the teaching quality: newspaper article, by the university
- Critical discourse analysis (CDA): Fairclough and Wodak’s versions
- Structures: social differences shown in the use of language
- Strategies: the linguistic devices that help achieve social position in the structured society
Theoretical background: Fairclough’s Analytical Framework

Stage 1 Focus on a social problem that has a semiotic aspect.
Stage 2 Identify obstacles to the social problem being tackled.
You can do this through analysis of:
A. the network of practices it is located within
B. the relationship of semiosis to other elements within the particular practice(s) concerned
C. the discourse (the semiosis itself) by means of
   (i) structural analysis: the order of discourse
   (ii) textual/interactional analysis – both interdiscursive analysis and linguistic (and semiotic) analysis

Stage 3 Consider whether the social order (network of practices) ‘needs’ the problem.
Stage 4 Identify possible ways past the obstacles.
Stage 5 Reflect critically on the analysis (Stage 1-4).

(Fairclough 2003: 209-210)
Order of discourse:
An order of discourse is a social structuring of semiotic difference -- a particular social ordering of relationships amongst different ways of making meaning, ie different discourse and genres (Fairclough 2003:206).

Thus, one aspect of this ordering is dominance: some ways of making meaning are dominant or mainstream in a particular order of discourse, others are marginal, or oppositional, or ‘alternative’.

The involvement of order of discourse in the analysis of discourse itself at this sub-stage unavoidably results in the exploration of the interdiscursively mediated connection between what is going on socially and what is going on in the text. In other words, the analysis of orders of discourse tries to specify the social structuring of semiotic/discourse diversity.
**Fairclough: interactional/textual analysis**

**Interactional analysis** is referred to as the analysis of actual conversations, interviews, written texts, television programmes and other forms of semiotic activity (Fairclough 2001:239).

**Interactional analysis** includes both linguistic/semiotic analysis of text and interdiscursive analysis of interaction (see the framework). The linguistic analysis concerns the analysis of the text, including the analyses of: whole-text language organization, clauses combination, clauses and words. Interdiscursive analysis works both paradigmatically in identifying which genres and discourses are drawn upon in a text, and syntagmatically in analyzing how they are worked together through the text.

If structural analysis explores how the social is structured through the analysis of order of discourse, the interactional analysis then focuses on what actually goes on in specific texts and interactions.
Theoretical background: Wodak’s Analytical Framework

Step 1 Establishing the specific contents or topics of a particular discourse
• historical background is provided to contexturalize the contents and topics concerned.
• The fields of action, genre, and discourse topics are

Step 2 Investigating the interdiscursive and intertextual relationships
• The interrelationship between discourses
• The interrelationship between texts in a discourse or in discourses
• The interrelationship between text in a discourse and the discourse

Step 3 Examining genre and text
• The linguistic strategies

(Based on Wodak 2001)
Wodak’s Analytical Framework

Step 2 Investigating the interdiscursive and intertextual relationships

Interdiscursive relationship between discourses and intertextual relationship between texts and topics in the analysis of the “Austria First’ Petition (Reisigl & Wodak 2001:39)
Strategies
1) referential strategies or nomination strategies, by which one constructs and represents social actors, such as ingroups and outgroups.
2) predicational strategies, which are realized as stereotypical, evaluative attributions of negative and positive traits in the linguistic form of implicit or explicit predicates. These strategies aim either at labeling social actors more or less positively or negatively, deprecatorily or appreciatively.
3) argumentation strategies and a fund of topoi, through which positive and negative attributions are justified, through which, for example, it is suggested that the social and political inclusion or exclusion, the discrimination or preferential treatment of the respective persons or groups of persons is justified.
4) perspectivation, framing, or discourse representation, by means of which speakers express their involvement in discourse, and position their point of view in the reporting, description, narration or quotation of discriminatory events or utterances.
5) intensifying strategies on the one hand, and mitigation strategies on the other. Both of the them help to qualify and modify the epistemic status of a proposition by intensifying or mitigating the illocutionary force of racist, anti-semitic, nationalist or ethnicist utterances.
# CDA analytical frameworks: a tentative comment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fairclough’s analysis of discourse</th>
<th>Wodak’s analysis of discourse</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) Structural analysis</td>
<td>1) Investigating the interdiscursive and intertextual relationships</td>
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<tr>
<td>Order of discourse</td>
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<tr>
<td>Generic chain</td>
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<tr>
<td>2) Textual/interaction analysis</td>
<td>2) Examining genre and text</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interdiscursive analysis</td>
<td>Linguistic strategies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linguistic analysis</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Both of the two frameworks involve similar elements in the actual analysis of discourse though they formulate them in different ways, e.g. some elements are more focused upon than others, or some are put in more priority than others. This different formulation creates potential for a mixed one that may bring all the essential points together and at the same time is applicable to the present study.
Structures and strategies: My analytical framework

• **Contextual analysis:** identifying objects of research

• **Interdiscursive analysis:** investigating the structural differences of power relations

  order of discourse: a particular social ordering of relationships amongst different ways of making meaning

  generic chain: regular ordering relationships between different genres.

  interdependence of texts

• **Genre analysis:** investigating strategic devices in achieving purposes

  linguistic devices
**Empirical study**
Contextual analysis: identifying objects of research

a. why the evaluation

After an expansion of recruitment in Chinese universities, teaching quality becomes the main concern of both educational bureaucrats and universities. To ensure the maintenance of teaching quality in universities, the practice of teaching quality evaluation is now introduced to Chinese universities.

b. how to evaluate

1) A set of evaluation criteria is set up
2) The university to be evaluated usually spent 2-3 years preparing to meet the criteria
3) A team of experts (evaluation group) will be sent to the university to investigate the situation.

c. what to achieve

Maintenance of high teaching quality in terms of practical goals, efficient facilities, qualified teachers, and a clear uniqueness.
Empirical study
Contextual analysis: identifying objects of research

The result of the evaluation is important for the university as it is taken as an indicator of the university’s social prestige.

The teaching quality evaluation began with a good intention but has not achieved what it intended to achieve.
**Empirical study**

Contextual analysis: identifying objects of research

Research question: How is the practice of teaching quality evaluation influenced by the power relations between different evaluators? What are the discourse strategies applied in discourses of evaluation that construct the teaching quality?

I’ll examine a teaching quality evaluation report made by an evaluating group in relation with the teaching quality evaluation report made by the university’s president, and with newspaper articles that report the university’s teaching quality. I’ll see how these discourses are interrelated and how they discursively construct the teaching quality. By examining the discourse of teaching quality and discourses about the teaching quality I explore the social structures in the teaching quality evaluation practice and the linguistic strategies applied in constructing teaching quality.
Empirical study
Interdiscursive analysis: investigating the structural differences of power relations
The president’s self-evaluation report: an outline

一、学校发展历程
二、办学指导思想
三、评建工作成效显著

1、教学工作的中心地位更加牢固
2、教学改革不断深化
   (1) 强化培养目标要求，提高专业建设水平
   (2) 深化课程体系与教学内容的改革，全面加强课程建设
   (3) 加强教学研究，促进教学改革
   (4) 突出实践要求，强化能力培养
   (5) 加强教学管理，强化质量监控
3、师资队伍发生了显著变化
4、育人环境进一步优化
5、进一步促进了教风、学风建设

四、人才培养和办学特色
五、未来展望

To Framework Back
教育部专家组关于***学院本科教学工作水平评估的考察意见

Evaluation Report by the Evaluation Group of the Ministry of Education

受教育部委托，以***教授为组长的普通高等学校本科教学工作水平评估专家组一行11人，于2006年11月5日至11月10日，对***学院进行了为期6天的实地考察。

进校前，专家们认真审阅了学院的自评报告等材料；考察期间听取了院长***教授所作的自评工作报告；考察了文科综合实验中心、包装工程实验室、食品工程实验室等13个基础和专业实验室以及图书馆、教学楼、现代教育技术中心、网络中心、集中办公区、新实验楼、国际教育中心、正在建设中的风雨操场、学生公寓、食堂等教学、生活设施，并在学生食堂与学生一起就餐；走访了管理学院等11个教学单位、教务处等11个职能部门；访问了11个用人单位；分别召开了校领导、学院院长、老干部、督导组专家、教学管理干部、教师代表、具有博士学位的教师、学生干部、学生代表等10个座谈会；对随机抽取的15名学生的英语听说能力、30名学生的会计基础、21名学生的计算机和25名学生的物理实验技能进行了检测；巡视了晚自习情况；观看了素质教育汇报演出“奋进中的天津商学院”；学院女子水球队教学表演和学生的调酒、茶道技能表演；参观了“大学生研究训练计划”成果展；深入课堂听课39门；调阅了毕业论文和毕业设计663篇，其中重点评阅了45篇；调阅了试卷1620份，其中重点评阅了18门课程的试卷；调阅实验报告和实习报告402份、考试成绩单33分；查阅了学校提供的有关背景材料。在全面考察的基础上，依照教育部《普通高等学校本科教学工作水平评估方案（试行）》（教高厅[2004]21号文件），专家组经过认真讨论和研究，形成了如下考察意见。

一、总体印象

多年来，在天津市委、市政府的领导和支持下，学员党政领导班子和全校师生员工，解放思想，实事求是，开拓创新，在学科专业建设、人才培养、教学规范化管理和校园基本建设等方面取得了显著的成绩，办学条件改善，办学水平和社会声誉不断提高。

学院认真贯彻“以评促建、以评促改、以评促管、评建结合、重在建设”的方针，思想统一，认识明确，措施得力，工作扎实。通过本科教学工作水平评估，凝聚了人心，增强了实力，学员整体面貌发生了巨大变化，各项工作上了一个新台阶。（Topic 1）
教育部专家组关于***学院本科教学工作水平评估的考察意见

主要成绩
1. 学院在总结26年办学历史经验的基础上，以科学发展观为指导，以办人民满意的大学为宗旨，更新教育思想和教育观念，形成了明确的办学指导思想；学院高度重视本科教学工作，确立了教学工作在学校各项工作中中心地位；学院确定的教学性的类型定位，以本科教育为主的层次定位，以管理学、经济学、工学为主，多学科相互支撑、协调发展的学科定位，培养复合型应用人才的培养目标定位，立足天津，面向全国的服务面形定位，符合学院建设与发展的实际。(Topic 2)

2. 学院重视学科专业建设，不断优化专业结构，基本形成了以自己优势学科做支撑的本科专业结构与布局；积极推进教学内容、课程体系和教学方法与手段的改革，重视现代化教育技术的使用和推广，课程建设成效明显，建成市级精品课程8门，取得了较多的市级优秀成果；重视实践教学，建成了一批能满足教学需要的实习实训基地，为培养学生的创新意识和实践动手能力提供了保证。(Topic 3)

3. 学院教学质量意识强，教学管理制度健全、规范，教学质量保障与监控体系完善，运行良好；教学管理队伍结构合理，整体素质高，服务意识强，保证了学校教学改革和建设的举措得以落实。(Topic 4)

4. 学院高度重视师资队伍建设，有规划、有措施，实施了“千百人才工程”，从国内外引进高水平教师222名，并重视对在职教师的培养，师资队伍结构趋于合理，且发展趋势好。广大教师教书育人，爱岗敬业，教学水平不断提高。(Topic 5)

5. 学院注重学风建设，营造了良好的育人环境，学生勤奋学习，积极向上，形成了良好的学风；学院注重第二课堂对学生的科研训练，学生的创新精神和实践能力得到了培养，成效明显；学生适应面广，就业率高。(Topic 6)
教育部专家组关于***学院本科教学工作水平评估的考察意见

6、学院多渠道筹措资金，加大投入，不断加强校园基本建设，改建和新建了一批高水平的教学设施，增加了一批先进的教学科研仪器设备，办学条件和校园环境显著改善，较好地满足了教学科研的需要。(Topic 7)

三、办学特色
学院根据社会发展需要和现代商业特点，在办学过程中，主动适应人才市场需要，坚持“商学素养与专业能力结合、知识学习与实践能力并重、诚信做人与创新能力兼备”的育人理念，形成了“立足商科，培养服务于现代商业的复合型高级应用人才”的鲜明办学特色。(Topic 8)

四、希望和建议
1、进一步加强师资队伍建设，不断提高师资队伍的教学水平和学术水平，加大学科带头人的引进和对青年教师的培养力度。
2、进一步加强理工科专业的实践教学。
3、在重视规范管理的同时，着力提高毕业论文（设计）的水平。
   建议天津市委、市政府进一步加大对天津商学院的政策支持和经费投入，改善办学条件，优化周边环境，推进天津商学院“五年前进一大步、十年跨上新台阶，力争2020年跻身全国财经类大学前列”办学目标的实现。
3. Empirical study
Interdiscursive analysis: investigating the structural differences of power relations

Topics in the text by the evaluating group:

Topic 1: the university’s attitude toward the teaching quality evaluation practice

Topic 2: the Guiding policy, the teaching and the university’s type

Topic 3: the specialties, the taught courses and the practice modules

Topic 4: the teaching administrative regulations and the administrative staff

Topic 5: the teaching staff

Topic 6: the students’ learning style, the extra-curriculum activities

Topic 7: the facilities and the environment

Topic 8: the uniqueness of the university

To Framework
3. Empirical study
Interdiscursive analysis: investigating the structural differences of power relations

Interdependence of texts: newspaper articles, the president’s self evaluation report, the evaluating group’s report are interdependent in the ways that

Topics are intertextualized: they all address (or include) the eight topics;
Phrases are intertextualized: many evaluation phrases occur in all the texts,

E.g. Topic 2 The Guiding policy, the teaching and the university’s type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Newspaper articles</th>
<th>Self-evaluation</th>
<th>Experts’ evaluation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Guiding</td>
<td>进一步明晰并得到确立</td>
<td>形成了明确的办学指导思想</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy</td>
<td>clearer and clearer</td>
<td>being set up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching</td>
<td>牢固树立</td>
<td>两张工作中的中心地位更加巩固</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>trying to focus on teaching</td>
<td>more focus on teaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orientation</td>
<td>符合学院建设与发展的实际</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3. Empirical study
Interdiscursive analysis: investigating the structural differences of power relations

generic chain: the intertextualized topics and phrases originate from the university’s discourses. The president’s self evaluation, the newspaper articles, and the evaluating group’s report are different genres and form a generic chain. In generic chain one genre is framed by others. So the evaluating group’s report is preceded by the president’s report and the newspaper articles, which provide the basic information, introduce the achievements, and even set the tone for the evaluation. In such a situation, the evaluating group’s evaluation is likely to be a result of the university’s promotional summary.

order of discourse: The self-evaluation by the president, the newspaper articles, and the evaluating group, all make evaluations of/about the teaching quality, but seen from the intertextualized topics and phrases and the generic chain, the evaluating group’s report draws much on the previously made self evaluation either by the president or by the promotional newspaper articles. In this sense, it is safe to say that the self-evaluation is a dominant way of evaluating the teaching quality, and the evaluating group’s is marginal, or oppositional, or ‘alternative’. But the normal should be vise versa.

To Framework
3. Empirical study
genre analysis: examining linguistic strategies of evaluating teaching quality

**The evaluating group’s evaluation report**
1) The Evaluation genre:
a) Word choice
Commissioned by the Ministry of education……
The experts carefully read the self-evaluation report and other materials, examined……
b) Generic structure
Work description → Investigation → General impression → main achievements
→ the university’s uniqueness → hopes and suggestions

2) Linguistic strategies
a) More relational process applied:
**prominent** achievements have been gained in ……
**great** changes have taken place in every aspect of the university.

b) Use of subject
Subject are mostly “学校(xuexiao).”

c) More assertive
通过本科教学水平评估，凝聚了人心，增强了实力，学院整体面貌发生了巨大变化。学院高度重视本科教学工作，确立了教学工作在学校各项工作的中心地位。

To Framework
3. Empirical study
genre analysis: examining linguistic strategies of evaluating teaching quality

The president’s self evaluation report
1) The Self-evaluation genre:
a) Word choice
我代表***学院就学校本科教学工作向各位专家和领导汇报。
(列举了各级领导的关怀之后)对此，我们常怀感激之情。
b) Generic structure
Salutation            Introduction              Guiding policy main achievements
                       the university’s uniqueness     prospect

2) Linguistic strategies
a) More material process applied:
为保证教学的中心地位，我们在安排全局工作、处理学校整体关系时，\textit{坚持做到“四个优先”}：
我们根据学校实际，围绕培养复合型高级应用人才的要求，\textit{抓教学关键点、促整体工作面。}

b) Use of subject
Subjects are mostly “we” and “I”.

c) More performative
我们坚持以行为养成教育为切入点，以诚信教育为主要内容，以校园文化营造氛围，以教育、管理与服务相结合为保障，\textit{强化学风建设。}
To Framework
5. Findings and implications

Social Structures
• the university mobilizes the mainstream media to construct a high teaching quality in the university;
• the evaluating group’s report draws much on the media report and the president’s self-report;
• the evaluating group is in a dominant position and has a decisive role to play, but it is influenced to a great extent by the discourses produced by the university when it produces its evaluation report;
• the discursive analysis reveals an order of discourse with the university in a dominant position though it is the university that is to be evaluated.

Linguistic strategies
• different linguistic strategies applied in the production of the evaluating report and the self-evaluation report;
• different genres are applied.

Implications for discourse studies:
• Discourse is a site of struggle through which the evaluatee and the evaluator negotiate by means of language;
• Discourse is a means by which the evaluatee and the evaluator construct their teaching quality.
Thank you!

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Comments and questions are welcome!
优秀商贸人才的成长沃土
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编织优秀商贸人才成长的摇篮

首届服务管理

国际服务管理

国际服务管理
Terms specified

• Discourse: way of representing social entities
• Discourses of the teaching quality: produced by the university itself, and produced by the evaluating group
• Discourse about the teaching quality: produced by the university to report the measures taken to raise the teaching quality
• Discursive construction: construction of social entities by way of representing, thus discursively constructed entities may not be the same as the real entities
• Critical discourse analysis (CDA): Fairclough and Wodak’s versions
• Structures: social differences shown in the use of language, the orders of discourse
• Strategies: the linguistic devices that help achieve social position in the structured society