

## **EXPLORING TEACHER EDUCATION FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF DISCOURSE ANALYSIS**

### **The structure of the symposium:**

- Introduction: Discourse analysis and the construction of meaning in educational processes – Kupferberg
- Leading Israeli teacher educators' professional discourses and languages – Shimoni
- Discourse development of prospective mathematics teachers – Nachlieli
- Exploring teachers' self-construction in interactive digital communication : a method of analysis – Kupferberg
- Discussant – Zeller Mayer

### **INTRODUCTION: DISCOURSE ANALYSIS AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF MEANING IN EDUCATIONAL PROCESSES**

#### **I. Kupferberg**

Levinsky College of Education, Tel Aviv

There is a consensus among practitioners and theoreticians in teacher education that the understanding of ongoing *discursive processes* may illuminate important aspects of the interaction and enhance the understanding of learning, self-construction and change. These processes are often unfolded in spoken, written and computer-mediated discourse in face to face and computer-mediated classroom interaction, peer meetings, and written documents. Discourse analysis is broadly defined as *the study of language produced in action* (Hanks, 1996). The domain comprises theory- and data-oriented approaches that offer theoretical, methodological and methodical tools that may be useful in the analysis of processes that take place in teacher education. Sharing the tenets presented earlier, the participants in this symposium use various approaches and methods to probe meaning in teacher education in the Israeli context. The discussant will summarize the conclusions gleaned from the three studies and focus on the centrality of discourse analysis in learning environments.

## LEADING ISRAELI TEACHER EDUCATORS' PROFESSIONAL DISCOURSES AND LANGUAGES

S. Shimoni

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This study aimed at identifying and interpreting the current leading professional discourses in the Israeli teacher education "galaxy". Using thematic analysis, the author intensively studied books and journals that were written by Israeli leading teacher educators in the last 10 years. From those written texts that probed and discussed the current major issues and trends concerning Israeli teacher education, one can discern three different professional discourses. Each discourse revolves around *its own mental image of the future teacher* that teacher educators feel they ought to educate. This mental image is usually grounded in a wide theoretical playground where ideas about the worthy learning environment one should create, the pedagogies one should practice, the epistemology one should embrace and the social interactions that are relevant for bringing all the former ideas to life, are probed, played with and elaborated on. *The behavioral-positivist discourse* revolves around defining and instructing teaching competencies that are scientifically proven as effective. Some of its key words are 'Standards', 'Transparency', and 'Accountability'. *The constructivist- post positivist discourse* revolves around encouraging reflection, meta-cognition and self-studying for the improvement of practice. Some of its current key terms are: 'Constructivism', 'Reflection', 'Action research', and 'Self- study'. *The radical- critical discourse* revolves around developing students' political consciousness and critical awareness. Some of its current key terms are 'Distribution of power', 'Voice' and 'Narrative.' The three different discourses might converge and join forces in some teacher education institutes or, alternatively, cause intellectual as well as practical disputes and misunderstandings.

## DISCOURSE DEVELOPMENT OF PROSPECTIVE MATHEMATICS TEACHERS

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In current years, linguistic theories have become a resource for mathematical educators to make meaning of classroom communication. This talk suggests a way to adopt *systemic functional linguistics* (SFL) as a lens to capture complexities of classroom practice in general and of mathematizing (communicating about mathematics) in particular. According to Halliday & Matthiessen (2004), language is a resource for making meaning through choice. The sets of possible choices were clustered in terms of the functions that they serve (metafunctions): (1) *ideational* – the content function of language, what is talked about; (2) *interpersonal* – the participatory function of language; and (3) *textual* – the organization of the text, which "makes language relevant." (Halliday, 1978. p. 112.). Inspired by this theoretical framework, we asked the following *research questions*:<sup>1</sup> (1) What were the modifications in students' ways of mathematizing? (2) How did the teacher's and students' actions promote those modifications? Data comprise transcripts of 14 videotaped lessons of a 1<sup>st</sup> year course about functions for prospective elementary school teachers in a college of education in Israel. The lens of SFL metafunctions is used to differentiate between three discourses that compose the classroom discourse. The ideational refers to the mathematics discourse, the interpersonal - to the ways by which people orient to mathematics, to themselves or others, and by which they develop social relationships and learning communities, and the textual - to what it is that one (usually the teacher) assumes others (usually the students) already know and what is assumed new. As suggested by SFL, those discourses are simultaneous. Becoming a central participant in a discourse should include active participation in discussions about the various sub-discourses that subsume the relevant discourse, preferably in different settings.

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## **EXPLORING TEACHERS SELF-CONSTRUCTION IN INTERACTIVE DIGITAL COMMUNICATION: A METHOD OF ANALYSIS**

**I. Kupferberg**

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The paper will present The Four World Method of analysis for the study of self-construction in interactive computer-mediated communication. The method is inspired by a theoretical framework combining Discursive Psychology and Conversation Analysis. It also adopts the theoretical, and methodical frameworks of The Four World Approach (Kupferberg, 2008, 2010). The method allows the minute-by-minute exploration of self-construction in computer-mediated communication. It is argued that this approach is suitable for the study of CMD, when the major traces of self are imprinted in *language resources – the building blocks of human communication*. The approach also foregrounds the process of *discursive positioning* – a central theoretical construct and a methodological principle. The method will be illustrated via text analysis of a thread of messages produced by seven MEd students participating in a forum inaugurated for the presentation and negotiation of professional problems. The analysis will show how an inexperienced teacher changes her positioning from being self-centered to being classroom-centered in the course of a computer-mediated discussion with her class mates.