
Talking and testing: discourse approaches to the assessment of oral proficiency. J. Benjamins Pub. Co. Å Misunderstandings arise frequently in social encounters despite our desire to communicate successfully with others. The unforeseen, and often highly unwanted, occurrence of miscommunication in social interaction raises questions concerning the circumstances in an encounter which confuse participants and lead to the creation of misunderstandings. Å Many studies which are concerned with the creation of misunderstandings in social interaction relate to cross-cultural (mis)communication. Discourse analysis is used to study language in social context. It focuses on the purposes and effects of written and spoken communication. Å Unlike linguistic approaches that focus only on the rules of language use, discourse analysis emphasizes the contextual meaning of language. It focuses on the social aspects of communication and the ways people use language to achieve specific effects (e.g. to build trust, to create doubt, to evoke emotions, or to manage conflict). Instead of focusing on smaller units of language, such as sounds, words or phrases, discourse analysis is used to study larger chunks of language, such as entire conversations, texts, or collections of texts. The selected sources can be analyzed on multiple levels. Discourse analysis is increasingly becoming a popular way in which scholars conduct social science research. Yet, there is often some understandable confusion given the wide array of assumptions, theoretical approaches, and research methods that get labeled Â‘discourse analysis.Â’ This book seeks to be a concise, accessible introduction to discourse analysis in the social sciences. It is aimed at being a guide for graduate students, advanced undergraduates, and new scholars interested in expanding their research methods. In the chapters that follow, we will provide an overview of the development...