Linguistic Archaeology: Excavating our assumptions from everyday language

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Most content and text analysis

Focuses on:

1. **What is said**
   - Topics, narratives, frames, linguistic strategies

2. **How it’s said**
   - Positive/negative tone, with uncertainty
Buried in our language are also differences in the degree to which we take for granted the beliefs we express.

For example

Sometimes we talk about surface beliefs, or beliefs that are top of mind.

Other times we need to excavate the assumptions underlying these beliefs.
Why?
Why do you go to conferences?

bc I want to share my ideas with others, bc sharing ideas is important.
bc that is how science works.
bc science is a collective effort...and you know what, go find your iPad.


increasing taken-for-grantedness
How might we study this dimension of taken-for-grantedness?
The Toulmin Model of Argument

A model of how people explain/justify things in normal life

Of course, in a world where every idea or belief is perfectly taken-for-granted, there would be no need for explanation.
The Toulmin Model of Argument

A model of how people explain/justify things in normal life

Data → Claim

Warrant

Backing

bc it seems really popular at AOM this year

topic modeling is important

this is good evidence of my claim bc popularity is often a signal for importance

it’s a signal of importance because theories about the way society organizes itself suggest...
The Toulmin Model of Argument

A model of how people explain/justify things in normal life

- **Data** → **Claim**
- **Warrant** → **Claim**
- **Backing** → **Claim**

- Increasing taken-for-grantedness
Green, Li, & Nohria (2009, AMJ)

What does it mean if you observe these components of speech disappearing from discourse in a sequential fashion?
Harmon (2019, ASQ)

What happens when a prominent leader reaffirms something we all take for granted in order to bolster confidence?
If you take away anything...it’s this:

1. Taken-for-grantedness matters
2. There are ways to measure it in language
3. We could benefit from more research on this topic
If you’re interested in these ideas...

The basics:

- **Introduces the Toulmin Model**

- **Lays out the argument in the presentation in detail**

Empirical papers that have used these ideas:


Thank you!
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