

# Letting data speak: Enunciative Modalities of Correspondence Analysis

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After a fateful meeting with J.P. Benzecri in Paris in the mid 80s, while returning to Australia from Cambridge, the full force of Correspondence Analysis dawned upon me: well might it reduce multivariate data and tables to efficient summaries and compelling displays, but its real power to me was how it provoke original thoughts mediated by data. Practically this becomes a quest to convert visualizations to “verbalizations”; to produce a rhetoric (in the classical sense) of data. So from the simplicity of a proportion producing a sentence; to a three-way table producing several paragraphs; to dimensions prompting “names” of underlying factors and the whole “duality-diagram” providing a way by which expertise on a subject (inter-variable relations) can be mapped into on-the-ground experiences of the same subject (inter-object relations). Whole modalities of speaking come into alignment hitherto not disciplined by a rationality deep enough to encompass both. A matrix of data can, once rendered as a space, can reveal destinies prompting discourses never before imagined.