CRITICAL LINGUISTICS AND CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

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1. Definitions

The terms Critical Linguistics (CL) and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) are often used interchangeably. In fact, recently the term CDA seems to have been preferred and is being used to denote the theory formerly identified as CL. Thus, I will continue to use CDA exclusively in this paper (see Anthonissen 2001 for an extensive discussion of these terms). The roots of CDA lie in classical Rhetoric, Text linguistics and Sociolinguistics, as well as in Applied Linguistics and Pragmatics (see also Wodak & Meyer 2001; Fairclough 2003; Wodak 2004; Renkema 2004; Blommaert 2005).

Deconstructing the label of this research program – I view CDA basically as a research program, the reasons for which I will explain below – entails that we have to define what CDA means when employing the terms “critical” and “discourse”. Most recently, Michael Billig (2003) has clearly pointed to the fact that CDA has become an established academic discipline with the same rituals and institutional practices as all other academic disciplines. Ironically, he asks the question whether this might mean that CDA has become “uncritical” – or if the use of acronyms such as CDA might serve the same purposes as in other traditional, non-critical disciplines; namely to exclude outsiders and to mystify the functions and intentions of the research. I cannot answer Billig’s questions extensively in this chapter. But I do believe that he points to potentially very fruitful and necessary debates for CDA.
It is necessary to stress that CDA has never been and has never attempted to be or to provide one single or specific theory. Neither is one specific methodology characteristic of research in CDA. Quite the contrary; studies in CDA are multifarious, derived from quite different theoretical backgrounds, oriented towards different data and methodologies. Researchers in CDA also rely on a variety of grammatical approaches. The definitions of the terms “discourse”, “critical”, “ideology”, “power” and so on are also manifold. Thus, any criticism of CDA should always specify which research or researcher they relate to. I myself would suggest using the notion of a “school” for CDA, or of a program, which many researchers find useful and to which they can relate. This program or set of principles has changed over the years (see Fairclough & Wodak 1997).

Such a heterogeneous school might be confusing for some; on the other hand, it allows for open discussions and debates, for changes in the definition of aims and goals, and for innovation. In contrast to “total and closed” theories, like for example Chomsky’s Generative Transformational Grammar or Michael Halliday’s Systemic Functional Linguistics, CDA has never had the image of a “sect” and does not want to have such an image.

This heterogeneity of methodological and theoretical approaches that can be found in this field would tend to confirm Van Dijk’s point that CDA and CL “are at most a shared perspective on doing linguistic, semiotic or discourse analysis” (Van Dijk 1993b: 131). Below, I summarize some of these principles, which are adhered to by most researchers.

Most importantly, CDA sees “language as social practice” (Fairclough & Wodak 1997), and considers the “context of language use” to be crucial (Wodak 2000, Benke 2000):

“CDA sees discourse – language use in speech and writing – as a form of ‘social practice’. Describing discourse as social practice implies a dialectical relationship between a particular discursive event and the situation(s), institution(s) and social structure(s), which frame it: The discursive event is shaped by them, but it also shapes them. That is, discourse is socially constitutive as well as socially conditioned – it constitutes situations, objects of knowledge, and the social identities of and relationships between people and groups of people. It is constitutive both in the sense that it helps to sustain and
reproduce the social status quo, and in the sense that it contributes to transforming it. Since discourse is so socially consequential, it gives rise to important issues of power. Discursive practices may have major ideological effects – that is, they can help produce and reproduce unequal power relations between (for instance) social classes, women and men, and ethnic/cultural majorities and minorities through the ways in which they represent things and position people.”

(Fairclough and Wodak 1997: 258)

Of course, the term “discourse” is used very differently by different researchers and also in different academic cultures. In the German and Central European context, a distinction is made between “text” and “discourse”, relating to the tradition in text linguistics as well as to rhetoric (see Brünner & Graefen 1994; Wodak 1996 for summaries). In the English speaking world, “discourse” is often used both for written and oral texts (see Schiffrin 1994). Other researchers distinguish between different levels of abstractness: Lemke (1995) defines “text” as the concrete realization of abstract forms of knowledge (“discourse”), thus adhering to a more Foucauldian approach (see also Jäger et al. 2001).

The shared perspective and program of CDA relate to the term “critical”, which in the work of some “critical linguists” could be traced to the influence of the Frankfurt School and Jürgen Habermas (Thompson 1988: 71ff; Fay 1987: 203; Anthonissen 2001). Nowadays this concept is conventionally used in a broader sense, denoting, as Krings argues, the practical linking of “social and political engagement” with “a sociologically informed construction of society,” (Krings et al. 1973: 808). Hence, “‘critique’ is essentially making visible the interconnectedness of things” (Fairclough 1995: 747; see also Connerton 1976: 11–39). The reference to the contribution of Critical Theory to the understanding of CDA and the notions of “critical” and “ideology” are of particular importance. (See Anthonissen 2001 for an extensive discussion of this issue)

Critical theories, thus also CDA, are afforded special standing as guides for human action. They are aimed at producing “enlightenment and emancipation”. Such theories seek not only to describe and explain, but also to root out a particular kind of delusion. Even with differing concepts of ideology, critical theory seeks to create awareness in agents of their own needs and interests. This was, of course,
also taken up by Pierre Bourdieu’s concepts of “violence symbolique” and “méconnaissance” (Bourdieu 1989). One of the aims of CDA is to “demystify” discourses by deciphering ideologies.

In agreement with its Critical Theory predecessors, CDA emphasizes the need for interdisciplinary work in order to gain a proper understanding of how language functions in constituting and transmitting knowledge, in organizing social institutions or in exercising power (see van Dijk 2002; Graham 2002; Lemke 2003; Martin 2002; Gee 2004; Blommaert 2005).

An important perspective in CDA related to the notion of “power” is that it is very rare that a text is the work of any one person. In texts discursive differences are negotiated; they are governed by differences in power which is in part encoded in and determined by discourse and by genre. Therefore texts are often sites of struggle in that they show traces of differing discourses and ideologies contending and struggling for dominance.

Thus, defining features of CDA are its concern with power as a central condition in social life, and its efforts to develop a theory of language, which incorporates this as a major premise. Not only the notion of struggles for power and control, but also the intertextuality and recontextualization of competing discourses in various public spaces and genres are closely attended to (Iedema 1997, 1999; Muntigl et al. 2000). Power is about relations of difference, and particularly about the effects of differences in social structures. The constant unity of language and other social matters ensures that language is entwined in social power in a number of ways: language indexes power and expresses power; language is involved where there is contention over and a challenge to power. Power does not derive from language, but language can be used to challenge power, to subvert it, to alter distributions of power in the short and the long term. Language provides a finely articulated vehicle for differences in power in hierarchical social structures.

CDA might thus be defined as being fundamentally interested in analyzing opaque as well as transparent structural relationships of dominance, discrimination, power and control when these are manifested in language. In other words, CDA aims to investigate critically social inequality as it is expressed, constituted, legitimized, and so on, by language use (or in discourse). Most critical discourse analysts would thus endorse Habermas’s claim that “language is also a medium of domination and social force. It serves to legitimize relations of
organized power. Insofar as the legitimizations of power relations, ..., are not articulated, ...., language is also ideological” (Habermas 1967: 259).

2. **Historical note**

In the 1960s and 1970s, many scholars adopted a more critical perspective in language studies. Among the first was the French scholar Pêcheux (1982), whose approach traced its roots to the work of Russian theorists Bakhtin and Vološinov, who had postulated an integration of language and social processes in the 1930s. In the late 1970s, a group of Hallidayan linguists at the University of East Anglia began applying the term ‘critical linguistics’ (CL) in their research on language use in different institutions (see e.g. Fowler et al. 1979; Kress & Hodge 1979). Kress & Hodge assumed strong and pervasive connections between linguistic structure and social structure, claiming that discourse cannot exist without social meanings. The authors reacted strongly against contemporary trends in pragmatics (e.g. speech act theory) and Labovian quantitative sociolinguistics. Since 1979, this general approach has been refined, broadened, changed and re-applied by other linguists coming from very different traditions, many of whom believe that the relationship between language and the social, because of its complex and multifaceted character, requires interdisciplinary research. Scholars from backgrounds including sociolinguistics, formal linguistics, social psychology and literary studies have contributed to the growth of the tradition, and have directed CL research into subject domains such as racism, ethnicity, gender studies, political oratory, etc.

3. **Principles of CL**

Some of the basic questions informing critical linguistic research include: How does the naturalization of ideology come about? Which discursive strategies legitimate control or ‘naturalize’ the social order? How is power linguistically expressed? How are consensus, acceptance and legitimacy of dominance manufactured? Who has access to which instruments of power and control? Who is
discriminated against in what way? Who understands a certain discourse in what way with what results? In order to be able to answer these very complex and broadly formulated questions, we might suggest the following general characteristics, aims and principles as being constitutive of CL and CDA.

1. **The approach is interdisciplinary.** Problems in our societies are too complex to be studied from a single perspective. This entails different dimensions of interdisciplinarity: the theories draw on neighbouring disciplines and try to integrate these theories. Teamwork consists of different researchers from different traditionally defined disciplines working together. Lastly, also the methodologies are adapted to the data under investigation.

2. **The approach is problem-oriented, rather than focused on specific linguistic items.** Social problems are the items of research, such as “racism, identity, social change”, which, of course, are and could be studied from manifold perspectives. The CDA dimension, discourse and text analysis, is one of many possible approaches.

3. **The theories as well as the methodologies are eclectic;** i.e., theories and methods are integrated which are adequate for an understanding and explanation of the object under investigation.

4. **The study usually incorporates fieldwork and ethnography to explore the object under investigation (study from the inside) as a precondition for any further analysis and theorizing.** This approach makes it possible to avoid “fitting the data to illustrate a theory”. Rather, we deal with bottom-up and top-down approaches at the same time.

5. **The approach is abductive: a constant movement back and forth between theory and empirical data is necessary.** This is a prerequisite for principle 4.

6. **Multiple genres and multiple public spaces are studied, and intertextual and interdiscursive relationships are investigated.** Recontextualization is one of the most important processes in connecting these genres as well as topics and arguments (topoi). In our postmodern societies, we are dealing with hybrid and innovative genres, as well as with new notions of “time”, “identity” and “space”. All these notions have undergone significant change; for example, “fragmented” identities have replaced the notion of “holistic identities”.

7. **The historical context should be analyzed and integrated into the interpretation of discourses and texts.** The notion of “change” (see principle 6) has become constitutive for the study of text and discourse.
8. The categories and tools for the analysis are defined in accordance with all these steps and procedures and also with the specific problem under investigation. This entails some eclecticism, as well as pragmatism. Different approaches in CDA use different grammatical theories, although many apply Systemic Functional Linguistics in some way or other.

9. Grand Theories might serve as a foundation; in the specific analysis, Middle-Range Theories serve the aims better. The problem-oriented approach entails the use and testing of middle-range theories. Grand Theories result in large gaps between structure/context and linguistic realizations (although some gaps must necessarily remain unbridgeable).

10. Practice and application are aimed at. The results should be made available to experts in different fields and, as a second step, be applied, with the goal of possibly changing certain discursive and social practices.

4. Trends

4.1 Social Semiotics

As early as 1970, M. A. K. Halliday had stressed the relationship between the grammatical system and the social and personal needs that language is required to serve. Halliday distinguished three interconnected metafunctions of language: (1) the ideational function through which language lends structure to experience. The ideational structure has a dialectical relationship with social structure, both reflecting and influencing it. (2) The interpersonal function which accounts for relationships between the participants, and (3) the textual function which accounts for coherence and cohesion in texts.

Gunter Kress was heavily influenced by the Hallidayan school of thought. His work serves as an example of the tradition which labelled itself CL from the start. He has developed his model and methodology ever since his early work in 1979, shifting over the years to a more social-semiotic mode of working. Kress is concerned with the central notion of the sign as an indissoluble conjunct of meaning and form. In his own words, he wants “to connect the specificities of semiotic forms, in any medium, with the specificities of social organizations and social histories” (Kress 1993: 176f). This theory in turn has the effect that language is seen as a semiotic system in which meaning is made directly, rather than as a
linguistic system and in which meaning is indirectly associated with linguistic form. Kress’ work has displayed a growing interest in the description, analysis and theorizing of other semiotic media, in particular visual media (e.g. Kress & van Leeuwen 1990). Kress concentrated on the ‘political economy’ of representational media: that is, an attempt to understand how various societies value different modes of representation, and how they use these different modes of representation. A central aspect of this work is the attempt to understand the formation of the individual human being as a social individual in response to available ‘representational resources’. His present position as part of an institute on educational research has oriented much of Kress’ efforts into thinking about the content of educational curricula in terms of representational resources and their use by individuals in their constant transformation of their subjectivities, the process usually called ‘learning’. One by-product of this research interest has been his increasing involvement in overtly political issues, including the politics of culture.

More recently, the theory put forward by Kress & van Leeuwen (1996) should be mentioned here, as this provides a useful framework for considering the communicative potential of visual devices in the media. Van Leeuwen studied film and television production as well as Hallidayan linguistics. His principal publications are concerned with topics such as the intonation of disc jockeys and newsreaders, the language of television interviews and newspaper reporting, and more recently, the semiotics of visual communication and music. Van Leeuwen developed a most influential methodological tool: the Actors Analysis (1993). This taxonomy allows for the analysis of (both written and oral) data, related to agency in a very differentiated way. The taxonomy has been widely applied in data analysis.

Recently, van Leeuwen focussed on some areas of visual communication, especially the semiotics of handwriting and typography and the question of colour. He is increasingly moving away from using a systemic-functional approach as the single model and feels that it is important for social semiotics to realise that semiotic discourses and methods are linked to semiotic practices, and that grammars are one type of semiotic discourse which is linked to a specific kind of control over specific kinds of semiotic practices. To give an example of a very different type of discourse, histories of art and design focus on the semiotic innovations of specific individuals in their historical contexts, rather than on a synchronous approach to semiotic systems. However, they, too, are linked to the specific ways in which
production and consumption is regulated in that area. It is important for social
semiotics to provide models of semiotic practice that are appropriate to the prac-
tices they model, and as different semiotic practices are very differently organised,
it is not possible to apply a single model to all. All of this is closely related to the
role and status of semiotic practices in society, and this is currently undergoing
change as a result of the fact that it is increasingly global corporations and semiotic
technologies, rather than national institutions, which regulate semiotic production
and consumption.

This emphasis on regulatory practices has led to a research approach in three
stages, starting with the analysis of a particular category of texts, cultural artefacts or
communicative events, then moving to a second set of texts (and/or cultural artefacts
and/or communicative events), namely those that seek to regulate the production
and consumption of the first set, and finally moving to a third set of texts, namely
actual instances of producing or consuming texts (etc) belonging to the first set.
For instance, in a study of baby toys, van Leeuwen and his team analysed the toys
and their semiotic potential, as objects-for-use and as cultural icons, then studied
discourses seeking to influence how they are used, e.g. relevant sections of par-
tenting books and magazines, toy advertisements, texts on toy packaging etc., and
finally transcribed and analysed videos of mothers and babies using these same toys
together (Caldas-Coulthard and van Leeuwen 2002). This type of work leads to a
particular relation between discourse analysis, ethnography, history and theory in
which these disciplines are no longer contributing to the whole through some kind of
indefinable synergy or triangulation, but are complementary in quite specific ways.

Jay Lemke and Ron and Suzie Scollon also have to be mentioned in this
context. In the last few years Lemke’s work has emphasized multimedia semio-
tics, multiple timescales, and hypertexts/traversals. He extended his earlier work
on embedded ideologies in social communication from analysis of verbal text to
integration of verbal text with visual images and other presentational media, with a
particular focus on evaluative meanings. This work emphasizes the implicit value
systems and their connections to institutional and personal identity.

The work on multiple timescales is an extension of earlier work on
ecological-social systems as complex dynamical systems with semiotic cultures.
It is very important in considering all aspects of social dynamics to look across
multiple timescales, i.e. how processes and practices which take place a relatively
faster rates are organized within the framework of more slowly changing features
of social institutions and cultures. This is a promising practical approach to the so-called micro/macro problem, both theoretically and methodologically (Lemke 2000, 2001). His newest work has combined both these themes to develop the idea that although we tell our lives as narratives, we experience them as hypertexts. Building on research on the semantic resources of hypertext as a medium, he proposed that post-modern lifestyles are increasingly liberated from particular institutional roles and that we tend to move, on multiple timescales, from involvement in one institution to another, creating new kinds of meaning, less bound to fixed genres and registers, as we “surf” across channels, websites, and lived experiences. This is seen as a new historical development, not supplanting institutions, but building up new socio-cultural possibilities on and over them.

In all this work, Lemke uses critical social semiotics as an extension of critical discourse analysis, combined with models of the material base of emergent social phenomena. His concern is with social and cultural change: how it happens, how it is constrained, and the ways in which it is expectably unpredictable.

The problem Ron and Suzie Scollon address in recent work is to build a formal theoretical and a practical link between discourse and action. It is an activist position that uses tools and strategies of engaged discourse analysis and thus requires a formal analysis of how its own actions can be accomplished through discourse and its analysis. The problems in developing this framework are that action is always multiple both in the sense that there are always simultaneous parallel and interacting actions at any moment we chose to analyze as well as in the sense that these multiple actions operate across differing timescales so that it is not at all clear that we can see ‘higher level’ actions as simple composites of ‘lower level’ actions. The linkages are more complex. Jay Lemke’s work is, of course, an important resource in studying this problem.

Ron Scollons recent work elaborates the idea developed in Mediated Discourse: The Nexus of Practice (2001) suggests that practice in general is most usefully understood as many separate practices which are linked in nexus of practice. The relations between discourse and a nexus of practice are many and complex and rarely direct. His current interest is in trying to open up and explicate these linkages through what could be called nexus analysis. This work is being done now in two projects. In the first which Ron and Suzie Scollon have written about in Discourses in Place: Language in the Material World (2002) is a kind of ‘geosemiotics’ which is the integration of social interactionist theory.
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(including, of course, all forms of spoken discourse), visual semiotics, and ‘place semiotics’, especially the built environment. Their interest in this work has been to theorize the link between indexicality in language (and discourse and semiotics more generally) and the indexable in the world. This could also be understood as theorizing the link between producers of communications and the material world in which those communications are placed as a necessary element of their semiosis.

4.2 ‘Orders of discourse’ and Foucauldian poststructuralism

Norman Fairclough (1985, 1989, 1992, and 1993) sees the value of CDA as a method to be used alongside others in research on social and cultural change, and as a resource in struggles against exploitation and domination (1993: 133–134). Fairclough is mainly concerned with the study of power and institutional discourse, stressing the intertextuality of different forms of social practice, like for example the relationships between the social practices ‘education systems’ and ‘advertising’. In his view, language use is always simultaneously constitutive of social identities, social relations and systems of knowledge and belief. Like Kress and van Leeuwen, Fairclough also relies on Hallidayan linguistics for his analysis of discursive events.

Conventions underlying discursive events are termed orders of discourse (interdiscourse) in this framework. The order of discourse of some social domain is the totality of its discursive practices, and the relationships (of complementarity, inclusion/exclusion, opposition) between them. The order of discourse of a society is thus the set of these more ‘local’ orders of discourse, and the relationships between them (e.g. the relationship between the orders of discourse of the school and of home). The boundaries and insulations between and within orders of discourse may be points of conflict and contestation, open to being weakened or strengthened, as a part of wider social conflicts and struggles (1993: 135ff). In his investigation of several examples of university discourses on the background of an extensive analysis of the contemporary ‘post-traditional’ society, Fairclough claims that a new discourse, a consumer culture discourse, influences many other domains, thus also the universities. Traditional genres, like the curricula vitae are suddenly created in the mode of advertisements (the ‘marketization of public discourse’).
These changes naturally have an impact on the institutions, on hierarchy structures and on the identities of scholars.

Later, Chouliaraki & Fairclough (1999) explain and elaborate some advances in CDA, showing not only how the analytical framework for researching language in relation to power and ideology developed, but also how CDA is useful in disclosing the discursive nature of much contemporary social and cultural change. Particularly the language of the mass media is scrutinized as a site of power, of struggle and also as a site where language is often apparently transparent. Media institutions often purport to be neutral, in that they provide space for public discourse, reflect states of affairs disinterestedly, and give the perceptions and arguments of the newsmakers. Fairclough shows the fallacy of such assumptions, and illustrates the mediating and constructing role of the media with a variety of examples.

Fairclough has also been concerned with the “Language of New Labour” (2000). His work has centered around the theme of “Language in New Capitalism” – focusing on language/discourse aspects of the contemporary restructuring and ‘re-scaling’ (shift in relations between global, regional, national and local) of capitalism. He has also worked with sociological theorists Bob Jessop and Andrew Sayer in theorizing language (‘semiosis’) within a critical realist philosophy of (social) science (Fairclough, Jessop and Sayer 2002).

Phil Graham elaborates the research on the problems of New Capitalism (Graham 2002, 2003a, b). The historical investigation of hortatory genres compares the emergence and struggles between Church, “Divine Right” Royalties, and secular forces over legitimate uses of the sermon form in Western Europe between the tenth and fourteenth centuries with contemporary struggles over genres that are used to motivate people on a mass scale. The main focus of the study is to explore and explain the relationships between new media, new genres, institutions, and social change at a macro level. The perspective is primarily historical, political-economic, relational, and dynamic. Genres are produced, textured, and transformed within institutional contexts over long periods of time. In turn, institutions invest years — in some cases, millennia — developing, maintaining, and adapting generic forms to changing social conditions in order to maintain or to gain power. Graham believes that at certain times in history, specific genres become very effective for motivating or manipulating large sections of society. Because genres are developed within institutions, and thus within the realms of vested interests, they display inherent
axiological biases (quite a few critical discourse analysts have become more and more concerned with the link between history, historical sources and discourse theory; see also Fairclough 1992; Martin & Wodak 2003; Blommaert 2005; Ensink & Sauer 2003; Thiesmeyer 2004; Flowerdew 2002; Reisigl & Wodak 2001; Wodak et al. 1990, 1994, 1999, 2001 and below).

4.3 The socio-cognitive model

The main representative of this approach is Teun van Dijk, most of whose critical work focuses on the (re)production of ethnic prejudices and racism in discourse and communication. Thus, earlier studies examined the ways white Dutch and Californians talk about minorities (van Dijk 1984, 1987). Besides identifying various structures of such talk, the study also aimed at reconstructing ethnic attitudes and ideologies from everyday conversation. An analysis of ‘frequent’ topics, for instance, suggests what speakers ‘have on their minds’, or as he explains it, “what the hierarchies are of their personal mental models of ethnic events as well as the structures of ethnic attitudes”. The overall strategy of talk about “Others”, according to van Dijk, combines strategies of positive self-presentation with negative other-presentation.

In another study, van Dijk examined the role of the news media in the reproduction of racism (van Dijk 1991). Combining both quantitative and qualitative analyses of thousands of news reports in the British and Dutch press, van Dijk concluded that the most frequent topics on racism in the press corresponded to prevailing ethnic prejudices expressed in everyday talk: immigration as invasion, immigrants and refugees as spongers, crime, violence and problematic cultural differences. These pervasive topics were also reflected in the style, rhetoric, and the local semantic moves of news reports, ‘Op Ed’ articles and editorials, especially in the conservative and tabloid press.

In another book on discourse and racism, van Dijk investigated a hypothesis which increasingly suggested itself in the previous studies, namely, that the elites play a crucial role in the reproduction of racism (van Dijk 1993a). In an analysis of parliamentary debates, corporate discourse, textbooks and media, van Dijk claims that in many ways the elites preformulate and thus instigate popular racism. Among the many strategies of what he describes as elite racism are the consistent denial
of racist beliefs and the attribution of racism to others: people in other countries, people from earlier times, or poor whites in the older cities.

van Dijk has also turned to more general questions of abuse of power and the reproduction of inequality through ideologies. In his view, which integrates elements from his earlier studies on cognition, those who control most dimensions of discourse (preparation, setting, participants, topics, style, rhetoric, interaction, etc.) have the most power. He argues that no direct relation can or should be constructed between discourse structures and social structures, but that they are always mediated by the interface of personal and social cognition. Cognition, according to van Dijk, is the missing link of many studies in CL and CDA, which fail to show how societal structures influence discourse structures and precisely how societal structures are in turn enacted, instituted, legitimated, confirmed or challenged by text and talk.

Most recently, Teun van Dijk has taken up a more detailed study of the role of knowledge in discourse. Another topic in his research is a new approach to the study of context. One of the main arguments of this research is that there is much interest in context and contextualization, but hardly any in theory of context. Van Dijk proposes to define context in terms of context models in episodic memory, that is, in terms of subjective, dynamic representations of the ongoing communicative event and situation. It is these context models that, in van Dijk’s view, control all discourse and communication, and especially all dimensions of discourse that adapt it to the current situation — as it is understood by the participants — such as style and rhetoric. (Van Dijk 2001, 2003, 2005).

4.4 Discourse-Historical Approach

Ruth Wodak (now Lancaster) and her group in Vienna base their model on sociolinguistics in the Bernsteinian tradition, and on ideas of the Frankfurt school, especially those of Jürgen Habermas. Wodak conducted studies on institutional communication and speech barriers in court, in schools and in hospital clinics, and more recently, she has focused on sexism, and contemporary antisemitism and racism in settings of various degrees of formality as well as on national and trans-national identity politics. One of the group’s major aims is the practical application of critical research, e.g. in guidelines for non-discriminatory language use towards women, in guidelines for doctors on how to communicate more effectively with their patients,
and in providing expert opinions for courts on antisemitic and racist language use by journalists in newspapers.

In an interdisciplinary study of post-war antisemitism in Austria completed in 1990, Wodak and her colleagues devised what they have termed the *discourse historical approach*. The distinctive feature of this approach is its attempt to integrate systematically all available background information in the analysis and interpretation of the many layers of a written or spoken text. The study in which and for which this approach was developed attempted to trace in detail the constitution of an antisemitic stereotyped image as it emerged in public discourse in the 1986 Austrian presidential campaign of Kurt Waldheim. The study addressed the problem of ‘antisemitic language behavior’ in contemporary Austria, in other words, linguistic manifestations of prejudices towards Jews. Wodak et al. (1990) were able to show that the context of the discourse had a significant impact on the structure, function, and content of the antisemitic utterances (see also Reisigl & Wodak 2001; Wodak & Reisigl 2002; Wodak 2004b; Pelinka & Wodak 2002).

Several other studies on prejudice and racism have led the group in Vienna to more general and theoretical considerations on the form and content of racist discourse about foreigners, indigenous minorities, immigrant workers etc. Although the forms of racist and prejudiced discourse may be similar, the contents vary according to the stigmatized groups as well as to the settings in which certain linguistic realizations become possible. In comparing antisemitic with racist discourse, for example, Wodak & Matouschek (1993) suggest that the norms and taboos controlling the utterances about foreigners and Jews differ, depending on the targeted discriminated group and the specific historical traditions and socio-political contexts of the speakers and discourses. In the anonymous contexts of conversations tape-recorded on the street, sexist, racist and antisemitic prejudice stories were interwoven and expressed in the same discursive event, whereas in official discourse (print and electronic media, speeches of politicians) explicit antisemitic utterances are taboo, yet explicit racist remarks towards foreigners are not. The discourse-historical approach is designed to enable the analysis of indirect prejudiced utterances, as well as to identify and expose the codes and allusions contained in prejudiced discourse. Wodak & Van Dijk (2000) was able to study and compare parliamentary discourses in six European countries on issues of immigration (see also Blommaert & Verschueren 1998). This study illustrates overriding discourses in the European Union on the one hand, and context-dependent, historically
rooted arguments on the other, when immigration and Human Rights issues are discussed.

More recently, Ruth Wodak has been concerned with investigating identity politics and patterns of decision-making in EU organizations. Fieldwork in European Union organizations and at the European Convention have allowed insight in “doing politics” “behind closed doors” (Muntigl et al. 2000; Wodak & Weiss 2005; Krzyżanowski 2005; Oberhuber 2005; Oberhuber et al. 2005; Wodak et al. 1999). In this research, together with sociologists and political scientists, models were proposed to explain the context-dependent tensions and contradictions which necessarily arise in such a historically complex “entity” as Europe. EU officials were interviewed, policy documents analyzed, political speeches on “a vision of Europe” collected, and media reporting on EU events confronted with the inside view of EU organizations. The analysis of various genres illustrates the recontextualization of salient topoi and arguments (*leitmotifs*) in the transnational and national contexts.

4.5 Lexicometry

The combination of political science and political philosophy (predominantly under a strong Marxist influence) on the one hand and French linguistics on the other hand is typical of French critical discourse analysis. Basically, two different approaches may be distinguished.

The first is ‘political lexicometry’, a computer-aided statistical approach to political lexicon, developed at the École Normale Supérieure at Saint-Cloud. A text corpus (e.g. texts of the French Communist Party) is prepared. Texts are then compared on the basis of relative frequency (cf: Bonnafous & Tournier 1995). One study shows, for example, how the relative frequency of the words ‘travailleur’ and ‘salaire’ varies significantly between French trade unions, reflecting different political ideologies, and how the frequency changes over time. (Groupe de Saint-Cloud, 1982; Bonnafous & Tournier 1995).

Althusser’s theory on ideology and Foucault’s theory were major points of reference for the second tendency in French discourse analysis, notably the work of Michel Pêcheux (1982) (see above). Discourse is the place where language and ideology meet, and discourse analysis is the analysis of ideological dimensions of
language use, and of the materialization in language of ideology. Both the words used and the meanings of words vary according to the class struggle position from which they are used – according to the ‘discursive formation’ they are located within. For instance, the word ‘struggle’ itself is particularly associated with a working class political voice, and its meaning in that discursive formation is different from its meanings when used from other positions. Pêcheux’s main focus was political discourse in France, especially the relationship between social-democratic and communist discourse within left political discourse. Pêcheux stresses the ideological effects of discursive formations in positioning people as social subjects. Echoing Althusser, he suggests that people are placed in the ‘imaginary’ position of sources of their discourse, whereas actually their discourse and indeed they themselves are effects of their ideological positioning. The sources and processes of their own positioning are hidden from people. They are typically not aware of speaking/writing from within a particular discursive formation. Moreover, the discursive formations within which people are positioned are themselves shaped by the ‘complex whole in dominance’ of discursive formations, which Pêcheux calls ‘interdiscourse’ – but people are not aware of that shaping. Radical change in the way people are positioned in discourse can only come from political revolution.

Pêcheux and his colleagues changed their views on this and other issues in the late 1970s and early 1980s (Pêcheux 1988; Maingueneau 1987). The influence of Foucault increased, as did that of Bakhtin. Studies began to emphasize the complex mixing of discursive formations in texts, and the heterogeneity and ambivalence of texts (see, for example, Courtine 1981). Some other French researchers investigate detailed rhetorical patterns, for example in the presidential campaigns of 1988 and 1995 (Groupe de Saint Cloud 1995). Also the influence of Anglo-Saxon pragmatics is prominent, and that of the French linguist Benveniste (1974), whose work on ‘enonciation’ focused on deictic phenomena. In this framework, Pierre Achard produced detailed accounts of the political functioning of a very wide range of text types (Achard 1995). (See Fairclough & Wodak 1997; de Cillia & Wodak 2005; Wodak & de Cillia 2005 for more details).

4.6 “Lesarten” Approach

National Socialist language first became the object of critical philological observations by Viktor Klemperer (Klemperer 1975). Utz Maas, however, was the first
linguist and discourse-analyst to subject the every-day linguistic practice of National Socialism to an in-depth analysis: he used NS texts to exemplify his approach of “Lesweisenanalyse” (Maas 1984, 1989a, 1989b). His historical “argumentation analysis”, based on the theories of Michel Foucault, demonstrates how NS discourses were determined by the German society and NS ideology, i.e. in what may be termed “a social practice”. In his analysis of language practices during the National Socialist regime between 1932 and 1938 he illustrates how the discursive practices of society in Germany were impacted by the NS discourse characterized by social-revolutionist undertones. Nazi discourse had superseded almost all forms of language (practices), a fact that made it difficult for an individual who did not want to cherish the tradition of an unworldly Romanticism to use language in a critical-reflective way.

Discourse is basically understood as the result of “collusion”: the conditions of the political, social and linguistic practice impose themselves practically behind the back of the subjects, while the actors do not guess the rules of the game (cf. also Bourdieu’s ‘violence symbolique’). Discourse analysis identifies the rules, which make a text, for example, a fascist text. In the same way as grammar characterizes the structure of sentences, discourse rules characterize utterances/texts that are acceptable within a certain practice. The focus is not on National Socialist language per se, but the aim is to record and analyze the spectrum of linguistic relations based on a number of texts dealing with various spheres of life. These texts represent a complicated network of similarities, which overlap and intersect. Therefore it is also important to do justice to the “polyphony” of texts resulting from the fact that societal contradictions are inscribed into texts. Texts from diverse social and political contexts (cooking recipes, local municipal provisions on agriculture, texts by NS politicians, but also by critics of this ideology, who are ultimately involved in the dominant discourse) are analyzed in a sample representative of NS discourse.

The method of “reading analysis” proposed by Maas may be described as a concentric hermeneutic approach to the corpus in five systematic steps.

A) Statement of the self-declared content of the text, B) description of the “staging” (Inszenierung) of the content, C) analysis of the sense and meaning of the “staging”, D) provisional summary of the analysis, and E) discussion of competing readings. (Maas 1984: 18) In this context it should be stressed that competing readings of texts may result from disclosing the difference between
self-declared and latent content. Applications of this method (Titscher et al. 1998: 232) can be found in Januschek’s analysis of Jörg Haider’s allusions to NS discourse (Januschek 1992) and in Sauer’s analysis of texts of the Nazi occupation of the Netherlands (Sauer 1989, 1995).

The Duisburg School of CDA (Jäger 1993, 1999, 2001) draws on Foucault’s notion of discourse. According to Jäger (1999: 116) discourse is “materiality sui generis” and discourse theory is a combination of the “materialistic cultural theory”, on the one hand, and Alexej N. Leontjev’s “speech activity theory” (Leontjev 1984) and Jürgen Link’s “collective symbolism” (Link 1988), on the other hand. As institutionalized and conventionalized speech modes, discourses express societal power relations, which in turn are influenced by discourses. This “overall discourse” of society, which could be visualised as a “diskursives Gewimmel” (literally: “discursive swarming”), becomes comprehensible in different discourse strands (composed of discourse fragments on the same subject) at different discourse levels (science, politics, media, and so on). Every discourse is historically embedded, and has repercussions on current and future discourse. In addition to the above levels, the structure of discourse may be dissected into: discursive events and discursive context, discourse position, overall societal discourse and interwoven discourses; themes, bundles of discourse strands, history, present and future of discourse strands. Discourse Analysis makes a contribution to (media) impact research, as it analyzes the impact of discourse on individual and collective consciousness. Individual discourse fragments are selected from the archived material for concrete analysis. These fragments are analyzed in five steps (institutional framework, text “surface”, linguistic-rhetorical means, programmatic-ideological messages, and interpretation), for which a range of concrete questions regarding the text is formulated (Jäger 1999: 175-187). The uniformity of the hegemonic discourse implies that analysis requires only a “relatively small number of discourse fragments”.

5. Conclusion

The fields of CL and CDA are developing fast, and the ‘critical’ perspective is penetrating in more and more fields of investigation of language usage. The critical dimension of linguistic pragmatics was forcefully advocated by Jacob Mey (1985),
and the lack of critical awareness in traditional sociolinguistics was exposed by Williams (1992). In the meantime critical approaches to specific topics in language studies have emerged (see e.g. Meeuwis ed. 1994 on intercultural communication) and more and more researchers are arguing that the study of language should be based on a sound socio-political intellectual basis allowing for better analyses of power in language and language usage (see e.g. Heller 1988; Woolard 1985; Rickford 1986; Meeuwis & Blommaert 1994). CL and CDA are also developing into interdisciplinary research domains *par excellence*, and thus offer interesting perspectives for integrated research on language in society.

**Note**

1. In the 1960’s, many scholars adopted a more critical perspective in language studies. Among the first was the French scholar Pêcheux (1982 [1975]), whose approach traced its roots to the work of Russian theorists Bakhtin (1981) and Volosinov (1973), both of whom had postulated an integration of language and social processes in the 1930’s. The term itself was apparently coined by Jacob Mey (1974).

**References**


