

Reading 1: Introduction to CDA

Due Tuesday by 11:59pm **Points** 10 **Submitting** a student annotation

For this assignment, I would like you to read the assigned chapter and to annotate it (mark-up and comment) on parts that stand out for you. Your next assignment will be an analysis of language use and the ideas buried in that language.

For your paper you will analyze how ideologies and power structures are imbedded in language use. Thus, for your reading of this article, it is imperative to focus on relationship between statements and power. Of course, you should have a better understanding of this relationship after reading this chapter.

This is the first time I have used Perusal in any class or this type of assignment in an online class. From my understanding of perusal, it may show everyone's annotations. This means that those who read and annotate first will have an advantage of coming up with original responses. I have set up the assignment so that you are divided into groups of five. Only your group will have access to your annotations. Though other instructors who have used Perusal highly recommend it, I have some reservations. For instance, it may get a little messy. Why am I using it? First off all, because it is highly likely that you can learn from one another. Keep in mind that sharing observations about the reading should help you understand, internalize, and apply the points better. It also adds a bit of community to your reading. I have always found it more rewarding and enriching to share my reading responses with others. This, by the way, is probably why so many book clubs exist.

If you have problems accessing or doing any part of this assignment, please post a question on Piazza. This is new for me and probably most of you.

Student Annotation

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INTRODUCTION SHAPING THE WORLD THROUGH LANGUAGE

WHY CARRY OUT DETAILED ANALYSIS OF LANGUAGE?

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) provides a set of tools for analysing texts and spoken language. Such tools have been shown to be highly useful to scholars working across a range of academic fields. This has been particularly so in media and communications studies, but also in health communication, business studies, marketing, political communication, legal studies and others. The tools provided by CDA can be used to reveal aspects of instances of talk or writing that would be less apparent to the casual observer. In other words, they allow us to look beneath the surface level of language and to point to the evidence in a text that reveals what is 'really' being communicated. But what does that mean, what is really being communicated? Consider the following sentence:

The global economy is flourishing.

At one level, this sentence seems clear enough. But, in CDA **we would want to ask what assumptions are buried beneath the surface of such a sentence.** Here, the word 'flourishing' suggests something positive. It is a metaphor and a term usually used to refer to plants or an animal species when they thrive. Here the global economy, therefore, is described like a plant or species that is healthy and thriving in habitats around the planet. In this sentence it is also assumed that there is something that can be simply identified as 'the global economy' which everyone would agree upon and regard as positive. But we might ask if this would mean the same thing to a stock market trader in London, an unemployed former factory worker in the United States or to a peasant sweat shop worker in a South American country, to where production has been shifted?

We are also told that it is flourishing. So is it doing this by itself? The global economy, unlike plants or animals, is not something that acts alone. It requires an agent, in other words someone, to drive it, to make it flourish. This formulation does not include such an agent. And in CDA we might want to know why there is such an absence. What we do know is that global trade involves struggle and competition over resources. And the idea that there is and should be a global economy with unrestricted free trade is based on very specific forms of policymaking and agreements stemming in particular from US strategies in the 1980s. It is embodied in entities such as the World Trade Organization (WTO), the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). All of these have been highly criticised for the way they favour countries that are already wealthy and powerful.

What we mean by the real meaning buried in language, therefore, can be captured in the sense that the speaker, or writer, seeks to foreground not the complexity, the tensions, nor the political

nature of the notion of a global economy, but that it is a natural, inevitable and even desirable thing.

Statements using CDA seek to reveal not just the surface meaning of a text, but also the underlying assumptions and power relations that shape it.



Test Student

A focus of CDA are the buried or hidden messages/assumptions.

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