

# CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

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■ **Abstract** This paper provides a survey of critical discourse analysis (CDA), a recent school of discourse analysis that concerns itself with relations of power and inequality in language. CDA explicitly intends to incorporate social-theoretical insights into discourse analysis and advocates social commitment and interventionism in research. The main programmatic features and domains of enquiry of CDA are discussed, with emphasis on attempts toward theory formation by one of CDA's most prominent scholars, Norman Fairclough. Another section reviews the genesis and disciplinary growth of CDA, mentions some of the recent critical reactions to it, and situates it within the wider picture of a new critical paradigm developing in a number of language-oriented (sub) disciplines. In this critical paradigm, topics such as ideology, inequality, and power figure prominently, and many scholars productively attempt to incorporate social-theoretical insights into the study of language.

## INTRODUCTION

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) emerged in the late 1980s as a programmatic development in European discourse studies spearheaded by Norman Fairclough, Ruth Wodak, Teun van Dijk, and others. Since then, it has become one of the most influential and visible branches of discourse analysis (as can be seen in the anthology by Jaworski & Coupland 1999). We provide an overview of the main thrusts of this movement, discuss critically its main foci of attention, and situate it in a wider panorama of developments in linguistics. In so doing, we hope to show that the critical turn in studies of language is by no means restricted to any single approach but represents a more general process of (partial) convergence in theories and practices of research on language. CDA provided a crucial theoretical and methodological impetus for this paradigm, but it could benefit from a closer integration with new developments.

## CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

### The CDA Program

The purpose of CDA is to analyze “opaque as well as transparent structural relationships of dominance, discrimination, power and control as manifested in language” (Wodak 1995:204). More specifically, “[CDA] studies real, and often extended, instances of social interaction which take (partially) linguistic form. The critical approach is distinctive in its view of (a) the relationship between language and society, and (b) the relationship between analysis and the practices analysed” (Wodak 1997:173).

CDA states that discourse is socially constitutive as well as socially conditioned. Furthermore, discourse is an opaque power object in modern societies and CDA aims to make it more visible and transparent.

It is an important characteristic of the economic, social and cultural changes of late modernity that they exist as discourses as well as processes that are taking place outside discourse, and that the processes that are taking place outside discourse are substantively shaped by these discourses.

Chouliaraki & Fairclough (1999:4)

The most elaborate and ambitious attempt toward theorizing the CDA program is undoubtedly Fairclough’s *Discourse and Social Change* (1992a). Fairclough constructs a social theory of discourse and provides a methodological blueprint for critical discourse analysis in practice. [Other programmatic statements of CDA can be found in Fairclough (1992b, 1995b), Chouliaraki & Fairclough (1999), van Leeuwen (1993), van Dijk (1993a,c, 1997), and Wodak (1995, 1997).]

Fairclough (1992a) sketches a three-dimensional framework for conceiving of and analyzing discourse. The first dimension is discourse-as-text, i.e. the linguistic features and organization of concrete instances of discourse. Choices and patterns in vocabulary (e.g. wording, metaphor), grammar (e.g. transitivity, modality), cohesion (e.g. conjunction, schemata), and text structure (e.g. episoding, turn-taking system) should be systematically analyzed (see below for CDA’s reliance on certain branches of linguistics). The use of passive verb forms in news reporting, for instance, can have the effect of obscuring the agent of political processes. This attention to concrete textual features distinguishes CDA from germane approaches such as Michel Foucault’s, according to Fairclough (1992a).

The second dimension is discourse-as-discursive-practice, i.e. discourse as something that is produced, circulated, distributed, consumed in society. Fairclough sees these processes largely in terms of the circulation of concrete linguistic objects (specific texts or text-types that are produced, circulated, consumed, and so forth), but keeping Foucault in mind, remarkably little time is spent on resources and other “macro” conditions on the production and distribution of discourse. Approaching discourse as discursive practice means that in analyzing vocabulary, grammar, cohesion, and text structure, attention should be given to speech

acts, coherence, and intertextuality—three aspects that link a text to its context. Fairclough distinguishes between “manifest intertextuality” (i.e. overtly drawing upon other texts) and “constitutive intertextuality” or “interdiscursivity” (i.e. texts are made up of heterogeneous elements: generic conventions, discourse types, register, style). One important aspect of the first form is discourse representation: how quoted utterances are selected, changed, contextualized (for recent contributions to the study of discourse representation, see Baynham & Slembrouck 1999).

The third dimension is discourse-as-social-practice, i.e. the ideological effects and hegemonic processes in which discourse is a feature (for CDA’s use of the theories and concepts of Althusser and Gramsci, see below). Hegemony concerns power that is achieved through constructing alliances and integrating classes and groups through consent, so that “the articulation and rearticulation of orders of discourse is correspondingly one stake in hegemonic struggle” (Fairclough 1992a: 93). It is from this third dimension that Fairclough constructs his approach to change: Hegemonies change, and this can be witnessed in discursive change, when the latter is viewed from the angle of intertextuality. The way in which discourse is being represented, respoken, or rewritten sheds light on the emergence of new orders of discourse, struggles over normativity, attempts at control, and resistance against regimes of power.

Fairclough (1992a) is explicit with regard to his ambitions: The model of discourse he develops is framed in a theory of ideological processes in society, for discourse is seen in terms of processes of hegemony and changes in hegemony. Fairclough successfully identifies large-scale hegemonic processes such as democratization, commodification, and technologization on the basis of heteroglossic constructions of text genres and styles (see example below). He also identifies the multiple ways in which individuals move through such institutionalized discursive regimes, constructing selves, social categories, and social realities. At the same time, the general direction is one in which social theory is used to provide a linguistic metadiscourse and in which the target is a refined and more powerful technique of text analysis.

CDA’s locus of critique is the nexus of language/discourse/speech and social structure. It is in uncovering ways in which social structure impinges on discourse patterns, relations, and models (in the form of power relations, ideological effects, and so forth), and in treating these relations as problematic, that researchers in CDA situate the critical dimension of their work. It is not enough to lay bare the social dimensions of language use. These dimensions are the object of moral and political evaluation and analyzing them should have effects in society: empowering the powerless, giving voices to the voiceless, exposing power abuse, and mobilizing people to remedy social wrongs. CDA advocates interventionism in the social practices it critically investigates. Toolan (1997) even opts for a prescriptive stance: CDA should make proposals for change and suggest corrections to particular discourses. CDA thus openly professes strong commitments to change, empowerment, and practice-orientedness.

## Methodology

On a methodological level, CDA presents a diverse picture. For historical reasons (see below), the use of systemic-functional linguistics is prominent, but categories and concepts have also been borrowed from more mainstream discourse analysis and text linguistics, stylistics, social semiotics, social cognition, rhetoric, and, more recently, conversation analysis. Wodak and her associates have developed a discourse-historical method intent on tracing the (intertextual) history of phrases and arguments (see, for example, Wodak 1995, van Leeuwen & Wodak 1999). The method starts with original documents (e.g. in their analysis of the Waldheim affair, Wehrmacht documents on war activities in the Balkan), is augmented by ethnographic research about the past (e.g. interviews with war veterans), and proceeds to wide-ranging data collection and analysis of contemporary news reporting, political discourse, lay beliefs, and discourse.

Some practitioners of CDA welcome the diversity of methodology (Chouliaraki & Fairclough 1999:17); others strive for a systematic and focused framework, based, for instance, on concepts of genre and field and on the sociosemantic representation of social actors (van Leeuwen 1993, 1996).

Although such scholars as Kress (1997) and Kress & van Leeuwen (1996) (see also Slembrouck 1995) emphasize the importance of incorporating visual images into concepts of discourse and move toward broader multimodal conceptions of semiosis, the general bias in CDA is toward linguistically defined text-concepts, and linguistic-discursive textual structures are attributed a crucial function in the social production of inequality, power, ideology, authority, or manipulation (van Dijk 1995).

## Preferred Topics

CDA's preference for work at the intersection of language and social structure is manifest in the choice of topics and domains of analysis [panoramas can be found, for example, in Schäffner & Wenden (1995), Caldas-Coulthard & Coulthard (1996), Blommaert & Bulcaen (1997)]. CDA practitioners tend to work on applied and applicable topics and social domains such as the following.

1. *Political discourse* See, for example, Wodak (1989), Chilton et al (1998), Fairclough (1989, 1992a), and Fairclough & Mauranen (1997).
2. *Ideology* Discourse is seen as a means through which (and in which) ideologies are being reproduced. Ideology itself is a topic of considerable importance in CDA. Hodge & Kress (1979) set the tone with their work. More recently, van Dijk (1998) has produced a sociocognitive theory of ideology.
3. *Racism* Particular attention within this study is given to racism. Van Dijk stands out as a prolific author (1987, 1991, 1993b), but the topic has also been covered by many others (for a survey, see Wodak & Reisigl 1999). Related to the issue of racism is a recent interest in the discourse on

immigration (e.g. Martín Rojo & van Dijk 1997, van Leeuwen & Wodak 1999).

3. *Economic discourse* See, for example, Fairclough (1995b). The issue of globalization has been formulated as an important preoccupation for CDA (Slembrouck 1993, Chouliaraki & Fairclough 1999:94).
4. *Advertisement and promotional culture* See, for example, Fairclough (1989, 1995b), Slembrouck (1993), and Thornborrow (1998).
5. *Media language* See, for example, Fairclough (1995a), van Dijk (1991), Kress (1994), and Martín-Rojo (1995).
6. *Gender* See especially the representation of women in the media (e.g. Talbot 1992; Caldas-Coulthard 1993, 1996; Clark & Zyngier 1998; Walsh 1998; Thornborrow 1998).
7. *Institutional discourse* Language plays a role in institutional practices such as doctor-patient communication (e.g. Wodak 1997), social work (e.g. Wodak 1996, Hall et al 1997), and bureaucracy (Sarangi & Slembrouck 1996)
8. *Education* See, for example, Kress (1997) and Chouliaraki (1998). Education is seen as a major area for the reproduction of social relations, including representation and identity formation, but also for possibilities of change. Fairclough and associates have developed a critical language awareness (CLA) approach that advocates the stimulation of critical awareness with students of pedagogical discourses and didactic means (cf Clark et al 1989, 1990; Fairclough 1992c, Ivanic 1998).
9. *Literacy* CDA studies of literacy have linked up with those anthropological and sociolinguistic analyses that view literacy as “situated practices” (e.g. Heath 1983, Street 1995), e.g. in the context of local communities (Barton & Hamilton 1998) or education (Baynham 1995, New London Group 1996, Cope & Kalantzis 2000). Scholars working in these “new literacy studies” have joined efforts in a new book series (Barton et al 2000, Cope & Kalantzis 2000, Hawisher & Selfe 2000).

In all these domains, issues of power asymmetries, exploitation, manipulation, and structural inequalities are highlighted.

## Social Theory

CDA obviously conceives discourse as a social phenomenon and seeks, consequently, to improve the social-theoretical foundations for practicing discourse analysis as well as for situating discourse in society. A fundamental aspect of CDA is that it claims to take its starting point in social theory. Two directions can be distinguished. On the one hand, CDA displays a vivid interest in theories of power and ideology. Most common in this respect are the use of Foucault's (1971, 1977) formulations of “orders of discourse” and “power-knowledge,” Gramsci's

(1971) notion of “hegemony,” and Althusser’s (1971) concepts of “ideological state apparatuses” and “interpellation.” Works in which connections between discourse and power processes are being spelled out are also widely cited, such as Laclau & Mouffe (1985) and Thompson (1990). In Fairclough (1992a), for example, these theories and concepts are given a linguistic translation and projected onto discourse objects and communicative patterns in an attempt to account for the relationship between linguistic practice and social structure, and to provide linguistically grounded explanations for changes in these relationships.

The second direction that can be distinguished is an attempt to overcome structuralist determinism. Inspiration here is usually found in Giddens’ (1984) theory of structuration, where a dynamic model of the relationship between structure and agency is proposed. Giddens serves as the theoretical background to CDA’s claim that actual language products stand in dialectic relation to social structure, i.e. that linguistic-communicative events can be formative for larger social processes and structures. Obviously, when the relationship between linguistic-communicative (or other semiotic) action and social processes is discussed, frequent reference is also made to the work of Bourdieu (1991) and Habermas (1984, 1987). Bourdieu’s work is also influential in studies on educational practices.

The use of these theories can be partly traced back to the influence of cultural studies on CDA, in particular the seminal activities of the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies of the University of Birmingham. CDA still holds pace with cultural studies in that it continually, though critically, engages with new research trends in, for example, postmodern, feminist, postcolonial, and globalization studies [for a “rethinking” of CDA that intends to ground it more firmly in social theory, see Chouliaraki & Fairclough (1999)].

It is important to realize that despite the input from a variety of social-scientific disciplines, CDA should primarily be positioned in a linguistic milieu, and its successes should be measured primarily with the yardstick of linguistics and linguistically oriented pragmatics and discourse analysis.

## An Example: Conversationalization

To Fairclough, many fields of contemporary public life are characterized by “a widespread appropriation of the discursive practices of ordinary life in public domains” (Fairclough & Mauranen 1997:91). The new economic model of “flexible accumulation,” for instance, is implemented through practical changes in organizations as well as through the production of abundant managerial discourse that has become hegemonic. Flexible workforms also involve new uses of language, such as “the routinised simulation of conversational spontaneity” (Chouliaraki & Fairclough 1999:5), that have powerful and possibly damaging effects. Because of the highly linguistic-discursive character of many changes in late modernity and the increasing design and commodification of language forms, a critical analysis of discourse becomes all the more important in fields as diverse as marketing, social welfare work, and political discourse.

In the political field for instance, Fairclough & Mauranen (1997) compare political interviews over a time span of 35 years and identify a clear shift from a formal and rigid interviewing style toward a mode of interaction that resembles ordinary conversation. Recent political interviews are characterized by a casual manner, colloquial speech forms, reciprocal address forms, and repetitions. Furthermore, they note how Margaret Thatcher's 1983 speech style crosses social class lines: She "appropriates and simulates various conversational voices," whereas Harold Macmillan in 1958 "projects a consistent class-specific conversational voice" (Fairclough & Mauranen 1997:117). Thus, Thatcher's conversational style demonstrates how political discourse in the 1980s has "colonized" everyday speech genres in order to achieve hegemony and increased legitimation for the voice of authority.

To Fairclough, this development in political discourse is indicative of a wider change in orders of discourse in contemporary societies. These developments are summarized in three large categories: democratization, commodification, and technologization (Fairclough 1992a: 200–24). In general, these developments all touch on ways in which discourse genres from one sphere of life impinge on others for functional purposes, and this against a background of changes in power relationships in society. Thus, the language of advertizing has moved into the conversational domain in an attempt to align its messages with the preoccupations of individual customers (as illustrated, for instance, by the use of direct address, as in "Did YOU get YOUR Barclay's card?"). Similarly, government communication has adopted less formal and more conversational styles (e.g. allowing people to directly respond to government messages), and other professions such as welfare work have followed the same track. Although this may allow for more effective communication, it blurs the boundaries between information and persuasion, and it obscures "objective" power relationships by suggesting the equality of conversational rapport in asymmetrical institutional interactions.

In this type of research, empirical data analysis is directly fed into a larger picture of what discourse and discourse modes do in society. The question remains, however, whether such large-scale transformations in societies can be demonstrated on the basis of empirical data that are, in effect, restricted in scope, size, and time range. It would be interesting, for example, to compare the "conversational style" of Macmillan and Thatcher to that of John Major and Tony Blair.

## SITUATING CDA

### The History of CDA

In historical surveys such as Wodak's (1995), reference is made to the "critical linguists" of the University of East Anglia, who in the 1970s turned to such issues as (a) the use of language in social institutions, (b) the relationships between language, power, and ideology, and (c) who proclaimed a critical, left-wing agenda for linguistics. The works of Hodge & Kress (1979) and Fowler et al (1979) are seminal

in this respect (for surveys, see Fowler 1996, Birch 1998). Their work was based on the systemic-functional and social-semiotic linguistics of Michael Halliday, whose linguistic methodology is still hailed as crucial to CDA practices because it offers clear and rigorous linguistic categories for analyzing the relationships between discourse and social meaning (see, e.g. Chouliaraki & Fairclough 1999). Next to Halliday's three metafunctions (ideational, interpersonal, textual meaning), systemic-functional analyses of transitivity, agency, nominalization, mood, information flow, and register have been adopted by CDA. Martin (2000) reviews the usefulness of systemic-functional linguistics for CDA, suggesting that CDA should apply systemic-functional notions more systematically and consistently.

Fairclough's *Language and Power* (1989) is commonly considered to be the landmark publication for the "start" of CDA. In this book, Fairclough engaged in an explicitly politicized analysis of "powerful" discourses in Britain [Thatcherite political rhetoric and advertisement (see above)] and offered the synthesis of linguistic method, objects of analysis, and political commitment that has become the trademark of CDA.

Generally, there is a perception of a "core CDA" typically associated with the work of Norman Fairclough, Ruth Wodak, and Teun van Dijk, and a number of related approaches in CDA such as discursive social psychology (e.g. the work of Michael Billig, Charles Antaki, Margaret Wetherell), social semiotics and work on multimodality in discourse (e.g. Gunther Kress and Theo van Leeuwen), systemic-functional linguistics (e.g. Jay Lemke), and political discourse analysis (e.g. Paul Chilton).

Although the influence of Halliday's social-semiotic and grammatical work is acknowledged and verifiable, references to other discourse-analytic precursors (such as Michel Pêcheux) are post hoc and inspired more by a desire to establish a coherent tradition than by a genuine historical network of influences. One can also note that the universe of mobilized sources invoked to support the CDA program is selective. References to work done in American linguistics and linguistic anthropology are rare [with the exception of research on literacy (see above)], as are references to some precursors who have had a manifest influence on many "critical" approaches to language (e.g. Ferruccio Rossi-Landi, Louis-Jean Calvet) and to critical work in other strands of language studies (e.g. in sociolinguistics). The potential relevance of these largely overlooked traditions is discussed below.

Despite the presence of landmark publications and of some acknowledged leading figures, the boundaries of the CDA movement as well as the particularity of its program seem to have emerged in an ad hoc fashion. Scholars identifying with the label CDA seem to be united by the common domains and topics of investigation discussed above, an explicit commitment to social action and to the political left wing, a common aim of integrating linguistic analysis and social theory and—though in more diffuse ways—by a preference for empirical analysis within a set of paradigms, including Hallidayan systemic-functional linguistics, conversation analysis, Lakoff-inspired approaches to metaphor, argumentation theory, text linguistics, and social psychology.



There is some tendency within CDA to identify itself as a “school,” and a number of writings are programmatically oriented toward the formation of a community of scholars sharing the same perspective, and to some extent also sharing similar methodologies and theoretical frameworks. Fairclough (1992a:12–36) surveys a variety of discourse-analytic approaches, qualified as “noncritical,” in contrast to his own critical approach. Such boundary-shaping practices are worded in such resolute terms that they result in suggestive divisions within discourse analysis—“critical” versus “noncritical”—that are hard to sustain in reality [a comment also made by Widdowson (1998)].

CDA has known a remarkable success with students and scholars. CDA has a major forum of publication in the journal *Discourse & Society*, started in 1990 and edited by van Dijk (see e.g. van Dijk 1993c); in addition, a European interuniversity exchange program devoted to CDA is now in place, and various Web sites and electronic discussion forums offer contacts and information on CDA projects and viewpoints. This active pursuit of institutionalization has an effect on what follows. To some extent, the “school” characteristics of CDA create, to some, an impression of closure and exclusiveness with respect to “critique” as a mode, ingredient, and product of discourse analysis.

## Critical Reception

Critical reactions to CDA center on issues of interpretation and context. In a series of review articles, Widdowson (1995, 1996, 1998) has criticized CDA for its blurring of important distinctions between concepts, disciplines, and methodologies (for reactions, see Fairclough 1996, Chouliaraki & Fairclough 1999:67). First, he notes the vagueness of many concepts (what is precisely meant by discourse, text, structure, practice, and mode?) and models (how many functions and levels, and how can these be proven?). This general fuzziness is not helped by the rhetorical use of concepts from social theory. Second, Widdowson argues that, in its actual analyses, and despite its theoretical claims to the opposite, CDA interprets discourse under the guise of critical analysis. CDA does not analyze how a text can be read in many ways, or under what social circumstances it is produced and consumed. The predominance of interpretation begs questions about representation (can analysts speak for the average consumer of texts?), selectivity, partiality, and prejudice (see also Stubbs 1997). The most fundamental problem to Widdowson is that CDA collapses together signification and significance, and ultimately semantics and pragmatics. Texts are found to have a certain ideological meaning that is forced upon the reader. This rather deterministic view of human agency has also been criticized by Pennycook (1994).

Another critical debate on CDA was initiated by Schegloff (1997) and continued by others (Wetherell 1998; Billig 1999a,b; Schegloff 1999a,b; see also Chouliaraki & Fairclough 1999:7). In Schegloff's opinion, there is a tendency to assume the a priori relevance of aspects of context in CDA work: Analysts project their own political biases and prejudices onto their data and analyze them

accordingly. Stable patterns of power relations are sketchy, often based on little more than social and political common sense, and then projected onto (and into) discourse. Schegloff's own proposals are those of orthodox conversation analysis: Relevant context should be restricted to that context to which participants in a conversation actively and consequentially orient [a position equally vulnerable to critique (see, e.g. Duranti 1997:245–79)]. The problematic status of context in CDA analyses was also observed by Blommaert (1997a), who qualified the use of context in some CDA work as narrative and backgrounding and who noted the “uncritical” acceptance of particular representations of history and social reality as “background facts” in analyses.

## A New Critical Paradigm

The premise that critique derives from investigating and problematizing the connection between language and social structure is obviously not restricted to CDA. Neither is the tendency to support this premise by means of insights from other social-theoretical fields of inquiry, seeking a more sustainable social, cultural, and/or historical foundation for linguistic analysis. In fact, one can say that both elements characterize a new critical paradigm now observable in linguistic anthropology, sociolinguistics, pragmatics, applied linguistics, and other fields. There is now far more critical research than that developing under the heading of CDA alone, and one of the surprising features in the CDA literature is the scarcity of references to this plethora of work.

What follows is a brief and selective survey of this paradigm, organized on the basis of three general features: ideology, inequality and power, and social theory. The survey is not meant to imply an absolute contrast between CDA and other critical developments in linguistics. CDA is an original contribution to this critical paradigm, and some of the scholars we mention below (e.g. Cameron, Rampton) can be said to have been influenced by CDA. Also, certain branches of CDA have taken stock of critical developments in linguistic anthropology, notably the studies of literacy mentioned above.

***Ideology*** One prominent feature is the development of ideology into a crucial topic of investigation and theoretical elaboration. In linguistic anthropology, Michael Silverstein's work on linguistic ideologies has been seminal, and it has given rise to a research tradition with considerable critical punch. Starting from views of linguistic ideology as embedded in linguistic structure (Silverstein 1979), wider views of linguistic-ideological phenomena were developed (for surveys, see Woolard & Schieffelin 1994, Woolard 1998) and were used to analyze patterns of language use and interlanguage/intervariety relationships that carried clear societal power or policy connotations (Silverstein 1996, Schieffelin & Doucet 1998, Errington 1998, Spitulnik 1998). New inquiries into aspects of mediation, intertextuality, and representation (drawing extensively on such authors as Peirce, Bakhtin, and Habermas) led to important insights into authority and hierarchies

of genres and ways of speaking (Gal & Woolard 1995) and into the dynamics of contextualization and the nature of text and textualization (Hanks 1989, Bauman & Briggs 1990, Silverstein & Urban 1996). The renewed focus on ideology shaped a new way of formulating language-society relationships and opened new avenues for analyzing language practice and reflexively discussing analytical practice. Scholarly traditions were reviewed in light of these reformulated questions (Irvine 1995; Blommaert 1996, 1997b), and established views of language and society were questioned (Silverstein 1998). Apart from a widespread acceptance of the notion of "construction" in such research, an important stimulus for reflexive research into analytical practices was provided by Goodwin's (1994) work on "professional vision," which arrived at a deeply critical perspective on professional authority and expert status in contemporary society, and which demonstrated in great detail the anchoring of such status and authority in situated and contextualized social practice. Similar results were yielded by Mertz (1992) in analyses of the discursive teaching strategies of professors in an American law school.

Ideology has also become a crucial concern outside linguistic anthropology. In sociolinguistic milieus in Europe and elsewhere, similar attention to the implicit theories underlying established views of language and language practice emerged in roughly the same period. Joseph & Taylor's (1990) collection of essays broke ground in investigating the ideological foundations of the language sciences, observing that "[l]inguistics is perhaps more of a problem than a solution" in the social sciences (Laurendeau 1990:206). Williams (1992) provided a trenchant social-theoretical critique of mainstream sociolinguistics, demonstrating its Parsonian structural-functionalist underpinnings (see also Figueroa 1994). In the meantime, Milroy & Milroy (1985) had written a landmark study on linguistic purism and prescriptivism, and Cameron had both identified a number of language-ideological phenomena labeled verbal hygiene (Cameron 1995) and coauthored an important collection of critical essays on the practice of sociolinguistic research (Cameron et al 1992).

In the field of pragmatics, ideology has become a major field of inquiry (Verschuieren 1999). Reflexive awareness about the ideologies guiding scholarly practices has been attested in the critical surveys of one of pragmatics' most prominent branches, politeness theory (Eelen 1999, Kienpointner 1999). Spurred by work of Bourdieu and Latour, applied linguists have equally begun investigating the underlying assumptions of analysis in education (e.g. Alexander et al 1991) and in other domains of professional practice (Gunnarson et al 1997, Linell & Sarangi 1998).

***Inequality and Power*** A second feature of the critical paradigm is the renewed attention to inequality and power in relation to language in society. CDA is surely not alone in its predilection for political and other "powerful" discourse as an object of analysis. Linguistic anthropologists such as Bloch (1975) and Brenneis & Myers (1984) broke ground with influential collections of studies on political discourse genres in non-Western societies, and this line of work has been continued

with important theoretical results by other scholars (e.g. Duranti 1988). A precursor to CDA was work by Mey (1985), which was presented as a contribution to the theory of pragmatics. Wilson's (1990) influential study of political discourse is pragmatic in approach and objective, as are those of, for example, Diamond (1996), Harris (1995), and Kuzar (1997). Studies such as those by Flowerdew (1998) are based on rhetorical analysis. Similarly, professional settings in which power asymmetries occur have been explored by a variety of discourse-analytical traditions within pragmatics, notably conversation analysis (e.g. Firth 1995, Grossen & Orvig 1998).

An issue that has gained prominence in research is that of inequality and the positioning of individuals and groups in contemporary social and political hierarchies. Hymes' (1996) reedition of critical essays on education and narrative reopened debates on the allocation of speaking rights and linguistic-communicative resources, offered an interesting reappraisal of Bernstein (as well as of Bourdieu and Habermas), and argued forcefully for more attention to communicative inequalities in linguistic anthropology and sociolinguistics. The locus of such inequalities was found in differences between available narrative resources (e.g. colloquial, dialect, anecdotal) and (often institutionally) required narrative resources (e.g. standard, literate, logical) (cf also Ochs & Capps 1996). Similarly, two recent volumes edited by Charles Briggs (1996, 1997b), following an earlier one edited by Grimshaw (1990), placed conflict and its discursive resources high on the agenda. In particular, Briggs showed how the construction of texts and discourses across contexts—processes of entextualization—can result in powerful social effects, thus focusing on inequalities in the control over contexts (see Barthes 1956) as well as over specific genres and ways of speaking. Power depends not only on access to resources but also on access to contexts in which resources can be used. The similarities between this research program and the intertextual analysis proposed in Fairclough (1992a) are striking.

Detailed attention to narratives also provided a fertile ground for investigating history and the historical power relationships that put people in their current socio-geographical space. From different perspectives, both Collins (1998) and Fabian (1990) demonstrated how narratives of group (or local geographical) history can yield traces of past relationships between political, cognitive, and ideological hegemonies and patterns of resistance. Similar concerns of language and social history have yielded an innovative body of work in sociolinguistics, in which languages and language varieties are described in terms of politicized (or politicizable) indexicalities. We thus arrive at views of language in society that hinge on power hierarchies, power semiotics, and power effects, often related to identity politics and influenced by the work of identifiable political actors in society (Woolard 1989; Heller 1994, 1999; Jaffe 1999). The influence of Bourdieu and Gramsci is clear in this work, as is the tendency to frame the story of language in society in materialist terms and the tendency to blend large-scale political and societal observations with detailed analyses of linguistic-communicative practices [thus arriving at what Heller (1999) calls a "sociolinguistic ethnography"]. Of particular importance in

this respect is Rampton's (1995) work. Rampton addresses the ways in which local subcultural identities are being formed and manipulated by means of a variety of communicative styles among multi-ethnic adolescent groups in Britain. Drawing on a wide range of social-theoretical sources (including, prominently, Giddens, Gilroy, and Goffman), Rampton demonstrates the flexible allocation practices of communicative resources in identity work. Simple correlates between identity and speech style/variety do not hold, and what becomes clear is that linear relationships such as that between "native speaker," "competence," and a particular group identity are less than satisfactory tools for grasping the intricate work of expertise and affiliation detectable in the field.

All the approaches discussed so far give pride of place to issues of linguistic-communicative resources placed against a double background of large-scale societal processes on the one hand, and micro-level interaction events on the other. The connection between language and social structure is not made a priori; rather, it is sought in the practical interplay between concrete actions and group- or society-level forces and patterns. In work such as that by Rampton and Briggs, the blending of ethnography and sociolinguistics has led to very productive and nuanced treatments of context as produced both on-line and situationally, yet tied to larger conditions of production and circulation of semiotic resources in empirically verifiable ways. This sort of work thus offers important corrections both to conversation-analytical restrictions of context to the one-time, oriented-toward members' context (Briggs 1997a) and to the "narrative" and backgrounded context-by-definition of CDA. Needless to say, this type of work also offers advantages over work that focuses on differences without considering the ways in which differences are socially ranked and made consequential (as in much work on intercultural communication), as well as over work that assumes relatively stable relationships between linguistic varieties and sociopolitical functions (as in work in the "linguistic rights" paradigm).

**Social Theory** A third feature of the critical paradigm, already mentioned in passing, is the common desire to find social-theoretical support for analytical treatments of language. Language is studied for what it tells one about society, and linguistic method should be open to theoretical insights into the structure of societies. There is a body of literature in which calls for improved incorporation of social theory into linguistic analysis are being voiced, often advocating materialist approaches to questions of linguistic resources and the social use of language, and engaging in discussions of Marxist scholars, ranging from Gramsci and Bourdieu to Rossi-Landi (Woolard 1985, Rickford 1986, Laurendeau 1990, Irvine 1989, Gal 1989). The reassessment of Bernstein's work by Hymes (1996) has already been mentioned. An incorporation of historical theory into the analysis of language in society was attempted in Blommaert (1999). Goodwin (1994) compellingly demonstrates how professional expertise, seen in terms of situated semiotic practice involving discourse, bodily practice, and institutionalization, can be viewed as a Foucaultian "power-knowledge."

The sources for new insights are infinite, and so far little use has been made of a great number of potentially useful developments in other disciplines. Historical theory has so far hardly been used as a resource for critical studies of language, despite the obviously relevant contributions of scholars such as, for example, Marc Bloch, Fernand Braudel, Carlo Ginzburg, Peter Burke, Immanuel Wallerstein, and Edward Thompson. Equally less noticed, in the opposite direction, is the potential effect of new reinterpretations, ethnographically established, of Benjamin Lee Whorf (provided among others by Hymes and Silverstein) on social theory. The idea of metacommunicative levels in social communicative behavior as well as that of the functional relativity of languages, styles, and genres have a potential for becoming important critical tools both for linguistics and for other social-scientific disciplines in which language and communicative behavior feature—history, anthropology, psychology, and sociology immediately come to mind. The effect of these insights on the ways in which texts, narratives, documentary evidence, and so forth are treated as sources of “meaning” (or “information”) can contribute significantly to a greater awareness of small but highly relevant power features in such materials.

## ASSESSING CDA

The above selective survey is aimed at demonstrating that CDA, as an original and stimulating research discipline, should be situated within a wider panorama of common concerns, questions, and approaches developing among a much wider scholarly community. At the same time, CDA may benefit from the critical potential of these related developments in order to remedy some of its theoretical and methodological weaknesses, notably those related to the treatments of context in CDA. The latter is arguably the biggest methodological issue faced by CDA.

At the micro-level, concrete instances of talk or concrete features of text could be analyzed more satisfactorily if a more dynamic concept of context—contextualization—were used. The developments in linguistic anthropology, in which processes of contextualization [de- and recontextualization, entextualization (Bauman & Briggs 1990, Silverstein & Urban 1996)] could be a fertile source of inspiration for developing a dynamic concept of context. In general, more attention to ethnography as a resource for contextualizing data and as a theory for the interpretation of data could remedy some of the current problems with context and interpretation in CDA (for general discussions and arguments, see Duranti & Goodwin 1992, Auer & diLuzio 1992).

At the macro-level, CDA seems to pay little attention to matters of distribution and resulting availability/accessibility patterns of linguistic-communicative resources. Only the texts become objects of a political economy; the conditions of production of texts and more specifically the way in which the resources that go into text are being managed in societies are rarely discussed (e.g. with respect to literacy, control over codes, etc). At this point, recent sociolinguistic and linguistic-anthropological work, such as that of Hymes, Briggs, Woolard, Gal,

Rampton, and Heller could considerably contribute toward a more refined image of languages, genres, and styles, as embedded in flexible but highly sensitive repertoires that have a history of sociopolitical distribution. Linguistic resources are contexts in the sense that they are part of the conditions of production of any utterance or text and thus determine what can and cannot be said by some people in some situations.

The way in which CDA treats the historicity of text (largely reducible to assumptions about intertextual chains) could benefit from genuinely historical theoretical insights. On the one hand, stock could be taken of the “natural histories of discourse” perspective developed by Silverstein & Urban (1996); on the other hand, the acknowledgment of an intrinsic and layered historicity of each social event could contribute to more accurate assessments of what certain texts do in societies. The contextualization of discourse data would benefit from a more attentive stance toward the historical positioning of the events in which the discourse data are set (as well as of the historical positioning of the moment of analysis: “Why now?” is a relevant question in analysis).

CDA is still burdened by a very “linguistic” outlook, which prevents productive ways of incorporating linguistic and nonlinguistic dimensions of semiosis (apparent, for instance, in the very partial interpretation of Foucault’s “discours” in Fairclough’s work). Here as well, a more ethnographically informed stance, in which linguistic practice is embedded in more general patterns of human meaningful action, could be highly productive. Goodwin’s work could serve as an example here.

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