

A Review of Critical Discourse Analysis

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Abstract:

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), a new branch of modern linguistic researches rose abroad in recent years, aims to reveal the interrelationship among language, ideology and power. During the thirty years' development process, studies of CDA present different characteristics in different phases. So far, both in Egypt and abroad, great achievements concerning CDA has been made. Through reviewing the multiple perspective studies of CDA at home and abroad, classical theories and analytical approaches related to CDA are elaborated, some new trends of CDA are also discussed and explained. The aim of this paper is to help scholars to get a comprehensive understanding of the development of CDA, with the ultimate purpose of promoting related academic researches.

Key words: critical discourse analysis, review, development, Education

I. Introduction:

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) holds much promise for educational re- search. Researchers using CDA can describe, interpret, and explain the relationships among language and important educational issues. One such issue is the current relationship among the economy, national policies, and educational practices. In what Gee and the New Literacy Scholars refer to as fast capitalism, the top-down model of business (and classroom) leadership has been abandoned for a “community of practice” model (e.g., Wenger, 1998; Wenger, McDermott, & Snyder, 2002) characterized by flattened hierarchies, the construction and distribution of knowledge, joint problem solving, and flexible and creative workers. Many new literacy classrooms fit this description. There is also a back-to-the-basics backlash at national and state levels—to return to an educational system reminiscent of factory models of education. Gee (2001) pointed out the contradictions embedded in such policies, especially when the world of work is moving in the opposite direction.

CDA is amply prepared to handle such contradictions as they emerge and demonstrate how they are enacted and transformed through linguistic practices in ways of interacting, representing, and being. Locating such relationships are at the heart of a CDA agenda, but are often difficult to pinpoint. To understand the power-knowledge relationships operating in a committee on special education meeting or in a second-grade classroom, analysts need to understand the relationship between language form and function, the history of the practices that construct present-day practices, and how social roles are acquired and transformed. Each of these are threads that run through this book.

The multiple meaning of critical discourse analysis :

What is critical about CDA? Is all analysis of discourse, assuming that language is social and political, a CDA? Is there a specific sequence of methodological steps that qualifies an analysis as CDA? What aspects of language are important to analyze in conducting CDA? How do we assess the validity and trustworthiness of such research?

CDA is both a theory and a method. Researchers who are interested in the relationship between language and society use CDA to help them describe, interpret, and explain such relationships. CDA is different from other discourse analysis methods because it includes not only a description and interpretation of discourse in context, but also offers an explanation of why and how discourses work. CDA is a domain of critical applied linguistics (e.g., Fowler, Hodge, Kress, & Trew, 1979; Kress & Hodge, 1979; Parker & the Bolton Discourse Group, 1999; Pecheux, 1975; Pennycook, 2001; Willig, 1999). There are many different approaches to CDA, including French discourse analysis (e.g., Foucault, 1972; Pecheux, 1975), social semiotics (Hodge & Kress, 1988), sociocognitive studies (van Dijk, 1993), and the discourse historical method (Wodak, 1996, 1999). Each of these perspectives on CDA can be applied to issues in education.

Fairclough and Wodak (1997) offered eight foundational principles of CDA. These principles are a useful starting point for researchers interested in conducting CDA. These are:

CDA addresses social problems

Power relations are discursive

Discourse constitutes society and culture

Discourse does ideological work

Discourse is historical

A sociocognitive approach is needed to understand how relations between texts and society are mediated

Discourse analysis is interpretive and explanatory and uses a systematic methodology

CDA is a socially committed scientific paradigm

Over the past two decades, much research has been conducted using these principles (see Rogers et al. [in progress] for a literature review). CDA is beginning to take hold in educational research in North America (see Siegel & Fernandez [2000] for an overview of critical approaches). Educational researchers are interested in how texts are put together (e.g., Bloome & Carter, 2001; Lemke, 1992; Peyton-Young, 2001), studies of policy (Collins, 2001; Corson, 2000; Woodside-Jiron, 2002, in press), and interactions in classrooms and schools (Bloome & Egan-Robertson, 1993; Kumarakrishnan, 1999; Moje, 1997; Rogers, 2003). All of these studies are linked in their inquiry into the relationship between language and social configurations of education. Although there is no formula for conducting CDA, researchers who use CDA are concerned with a critical theory of the social world, the relationship of language and discourse in the construction and representation of this social world, and a methodology that allows them to describe, interpret, and explain such relationships. As outlined in

the next section, approaches to CDA may vary at the “critical,” “discourse,” or “analysis” sections of the method, but must include all three parts to be considered a CDA.

What Is the “Critical” Part of CDA?

The term critical in CDA is often associated with studying power relations. This concept of critical is rooted in the Frankfurt school of critical theory (Adorno, 1973; Adorno&Horkheimer, 1972; Habermas, 1976). Critical research and theory is a rejection of naturalism (that social practices, labels, and programs represent reality), rationality (the assumption that truth is a result of science and logic), neutrality (the assumption that truth does not reflect any particular interests), and individualism. Critical research rejects the overdeterministic view of social theory espoused by Marxists and instead argues for dialectic between individual agency and structural determinism. As with all research, the intentions of critical discourse analysts are not neutral. Corson (2000) wrote that his aim is to, “explore hidden power relations between a piece of discourse and wider social and cultural formations” and have an interest in “uncovering inequality, power relationships, injustices, discrimination, bias, etc” (p. 95). Corson raised an important point concerning the nature of critical discourse work. The intentions of the analyst always guide the theory and method of CDA. Within this framework of “critical,” the analyst’s intention is to uncover power relationships and demonstrate inequities embedded in society. In this framework, the analyst may believe that the uncovering of power relationships in their analysis may lead to disrupting the power relations in the social contexts in which they study. They do not, however, include such political and social disruption in their analysis.

Another interpretation of the “critical” in CDA is an attempt to describe, interpret, and explain the relationship between the form and function of language. The form of language, as expanded on in a later section, consists of grammar, morphology, semantics, syntax, and pragmatics. The function of language includes how people use language in different situations to achieve an outcome. Critical discourse analysts believe there is a relationship between the form and function of language. Further, they start with the assumption that certain networks of form–function relationships are valued in society more than others. For example, the informal genre of storytelling combined with the anecdotal information a parent shares about their child as a reader at home carries less social value within the context of a Committee on Special Education (CSE) meeting than the formal genre of presenting test scores. A critical discourse analyst’s goal is to study the relationships between language form and function and explain why and how certain patterns are privileged over others. In the sense that all systems of meaning are linked to socially defined practices that carry more or less privilege and value in society, such exploration is also an exploration into power and language. As Chouliaraki and Fairclough (1999) stated, “our view is that the links between particular discourses and social positions, and therefore the ideological effects of discourse, are established and negotiated in the process of articulation within a practice” (p. 150). The implication, in this perspective of “critical,” is that although ideology inevitably exists, it is explicitly studied. In this perspective, the intention of the analyst is to explore the networks of discourse patterns that comprise social situations.

Another interpretation of “critical” is that CDA explicitly addresses social problems and seeks to solve social problems through the analysis and accompanying social and political action. The intention of the analyst in this view of “critical” is explicitly oriented toward locating social problems and analyzing how discourse

operates to construct and is historically constructed by such issues. In this perspective, analysts believe that analyzing texts for power is not enough to disrupt such discursive powers. Instead the analyst must work from the analysis of texts to the social and political contexts in which the texts emerge. This is an explicitly action-oriented stance and is most often referred to as a form of critical language awareness.

What Is the “Discourse” Part of CDA?

Analysts of language have defined discourse in a broad number of ways. Stubbs (1983) defined it as, “language above the sentence or above the clause” (p. 1). Brown and Yule (1983) wrote, “The analysis of discourse is, necessarily, the analysis of language in use. As such, it cannot be restricted to the description of linguistic forms independent of the purposes or functions which these forms are designed to serve human affairs” (p. 1). Fairclough (1992a) wrote, “Discourse is, for me, more than just language use: it is language use, whether speech or writing, seen as a type of social practice” (p. 28).

Discourse within a CDA framework traces its linguistic genealogy to critical linguistics and systemic functional linguistics (Fowler et al., 1979; Kress & Hodge, 1979). Within a functional approach to language (an area I address in depth later), linguists believe that language responds to the functions of language use and has different work (or functions) to perform. Within this discipline, discourse is a system of meanings or “systematically organized set of statements which give expression to the meanings and values of an institution” (Kress, 1985, p. 6).

Within a CDA framework, analysts of discourse start with the assumption that language use is always social and that analyses of language occur above the unit of a sentence or clause (e.g., Jaworski & Coupland, 1999). In this view, discourse both reflects and constructs the social world and is referred to as constitutive, dialectical, and dialogic. Discourse is never just a product, but a set of consumptive, productive, distributive, and reproductive processes that is in relation to the social world.

Gee (1996) made a distinction between little “d” and “D” discourse. Little “d” refers to language bits or the grammar of what is said. “Discourse refers to the ways of representing, believing, valuing, and participating with the language bits. Big Discourse includes language bits, but it also includes the identities and meanings that go along with such ways of speaking. This distinction helps us see that the form of language cannot exist independent of the function of language and the intention of speakers. Further, Gee (chap. 2, this volume) asserts that Discourse is not merely a pattern of social interactions, but is connected to identity and the distribution of social goods. Gee (1996) set forth a number of theoretical propositions about Discourses:

Discourses are inherently ideological:

They crucially involve a set of values and viewpoints about the relationships between people and the distribution of social goods, at the very least, about who is an insider and who is not, often who is “normal” and who is not, and often, too, many other things as well.

Discourse-defined positions from which to speak and behave are not, however, just defined internally to a Discourse, but also as standpoints taken up by the Discourse in its relation to other, ultimately opposing, Discourses.

Any Discourse concerns itself with certain objects and puts forward certain concepts, viewpoints, and values at the expense of others. In doing so, it marginalizes viewpoints and values central to other Discourses. In fact, a Discourse can call for one to accept values in conflict with other Discourses of which one is also a member.

Discourses are intimately related to the distribution of social power and hierarchical structure in society, which is why they are always and everywhere ideological. Control over certain Discourses can lead to the acquisition of social goods (money, power, status) in a society. These Discourses empower those groups that have the least conflicts with their other Discourses when they use them. Let us call Discourses that lead to social goods in a society dominant Discourses, and let us refer to those groups that have the fewest conflicts when using them as dominant groups.

Critical discourse analysts treat language differently than linguists, sociolinguists, or conversation analysts. Discourse within a CDA framework is not a reflection of social contexts, but constructs and is constructed by contexts. Discourses are always socially, politically, racially, and economically loaded.

What Is the “Analysis” Part of CDA?

Although there are many principles about discourse that unite the research of CDA, there is also dissension within the community of CDA. Oftentimes this dissension revolves around analytic procedures.² The analytic procedures depend on what definitions of critical and discourse the analyst has taken up as well as his or her intentions for conducting the analysis. There are more and less textually oriented approaches to discourse analysis. Some methods are less linguistically focused and more focused on the context in which the discourse arises. Other methods are interested in the historical emergence of a set of concepts or policies. Other methods pay equal attention to language and social theory. Fairclough (1992a) referred to this method as a textually oriented approach to discourse analysis. The chapters in this book engage in textually oriented approaches to discourse analysis. Two of the most common sets of methodologies used by educational researchers are those of Gee (1999) and Fairclough (1992a, 1992b, 1995).

Fairclough's (1992, 1995) analytic procedures include a three-tiered model that includes description, interpretation, and explanation of discursive relations and social practices at the local, institutional, and societal domains of analysis. The local domain may include a particular text (e.g., a newspaper, political speech, or school board meeting). The institutional domain is the next level of abstraction and includes the social institutions that enable and constrain the local domain (e.g., political affiliation of the newspaper company, schools). The societal domain is the next level of abstraction and includes the policies and meta-narratives that shape and are shaped by the institutional and local domains. Each of these domains is in an ongoing dialogue with each other. Chouliaraki and Fairclough (1999) developed this analytic scheme even further by incorporating elements of systemic functional linguistics into the analytic framework. They referred to genre, discourse, and style as the three properties of language that are operating within and among the local, institutional, and societal

domains. A critical discourse analyst using this set of procedures will continually move between a micro- and microanalysis of texts. This recursive movement between linguistic and social analysis is what makes CDA a systematic method, rather than a haphazard analysis of discourse and power.

Gee's (1999) analytic procedures include a set of connection-building activities that includes describing, interpreting, and explaining the relationship between language bits (small "d") and cultural models, situated identities, and situated meanings (big "D"). The connection-building activities include six that allow the analyst to construct meaning from a network of discourse patterns. The tasks include: semiotic building, world building, activity building, socioculturally situated identity building, political building, and connection building. Gee provided a useful list of questions to ask of each task. The questions consist of various aspects of grammar. For example, within "semiotic building," Gee asked the question: What sign systems are relevant (and irrelevant) in the situation? In world building, Gee posed the question: What are the situated meanings of some of the words and phrases that seem important in the situation? (see chap. 11 for a full discussion of Gee's methodology in relation to Fairclough's).

The CDA, then, is an analysis of not only what is said, but what is left out—not only what is present in the text, but what is absent. In this sense, CDA does not read political and social ideologies onto texts. Rather, the task of the analyst is to figure out all of the possible configurations between texts, ways of representing, and ways of being, and to look for and discover the relationships between texts and ways of being and why certain people take up certain positions vis-à-vis situated uses of language.

There are no formulas for conducting CDA. Deciding which set of analytic procedures to use depends on the practical research situation you are in, the texts you are studying, and your research questions. Each of the authors in this volume has chosen a different entry point for his or her analysis. What is necessary is attention to critical social theories and linguistic analysis of texts. What is important is that all three components of CDA (critical, discourse, and analysis) are embedded within a methodology. In this book, each of the authors attends to these components of CDA. We have also targeted three issues that we believe are important for CDA in educational research. The first is attention to the relationship between language form and language function. The second is attention to the relationship between discourse and contexts. The third is attention to what insights CDA provides us about learning. The following introduces some of the important concepts that appear in each of the chapters.

THE MAKING OF MEANING: FORM AND FUNCTION

Systemic functional linguistics is the linguistic backbone of CDA (Halliday, 1994; Halliday&Hasan, 1989). Systemic-functional linguistics (SFL) is a theory of language that focuses on the function of language. Although SFL accounts for the syntactic structure of language, it places the function of language as central (what language does, and how it does it), in preference to more structural approaches, which place the elements of language and their combinations as central. SFL starts at social context and looks at how language both acts on and is constrained by this social context.

But simply, there are hard and soft structures to language. Hard structures include aspects of the linguistic system such as adjectives, nouns, and verbs. Soft structures include the function of language. They are

referred to as soft structures because of the level of abstraction. The goal of an empirically based CDA is to describe, interpret, and explain the relationship between the hard and soft structures of language Halliday (1975).

One of the underlying assumptions of SFL is that the object of language study should be a whole text, not a decontextualized sentence or utterance. SFL is committed to a view of language that focuses on meaning and the choices people make when making meaning. Unlike structural aspects of language systems (e.g., generative models of grammar), there are no sharp distinctions between the system (form) and the use of language (function). This means that the analyst can look to speech (discourse) as an artifact of the relationship between language and structure.

The assumption that language and literacy practices are socially situated and have underlying systems of meaning underlies an SFL approach to language. According to Halliday (1978), there is a deep organizing principle in the grammars of human language that distinguishes between the functions available in language. Halliday stated, “There is a systematic correspondence between the semiotic structure of the situation type (field, mode, tenor) and the functional organization of the semantic system” (p. 32). Within SFL, language is encoded in particular genres (e.g., poetry, sermon, informal talk among friends, political speech). This is referred to as the mode of language and is a primarily textual function. Every utterance also enacts certain social relationships. This is the tenor of the utterance, and the function is primarily interpersonal. Last, every utterance operates within a larger framework of what is possible given cultural constraints. This is referred to as the field of language, and the primary function is ideational. In other words, every utterance is made up of three different functions—textual, interpersonal, and ideational. There are parallels among SFL mode, tenor, and field and genre, discourse, and style within CDA (this relationship appears in chaps. 3, 6, and 11, this volume).

Another distinguishing feature of SFL is the conscious or unconscious choice of meaning. A set of options such as singular/plural, past/present/ future tense, and positive/negative polarity is available to every speaker and is called a system—thus the name systemic linguistics. When language is described this way, every choice made also signifies choices not made. It would be naïve to think that all people have equal access to options when speaking. Indeed Fairclough (chap. 10, this volume) argues that social practices control the selection of certain structural possibilities and the exclusion of others.

Despite the centrality of SFL in discourse studies in general and CDA in particular, educational researchers in the American context have been reluctant to take up the work of SFL (Christie, 2002; Cope & Kalantzis, 2000; Goatly, 2000; Schleppegrell, 2001). Gee (chap. 2, this volume) points out that American linguists have a historical link to a Chomskian model of linguistics. This is a problem because autonomous models of syntax associated with Chomskian models of linguistics privilege language study as autonomous and disassociated parts—antithetical to the theoretical assumptions about discourse to which many analysts prescribe (see also Gee, chap. 2, this volume). In this volume, we argue that analysts should explicitly attend to theories of language and the relationship between form and function.

Context and discourse:

CDA starts with the assumption that language use is always inevitably constructing and constructed by social, cultural, political, and economic contexts. Fairclough (1995) outlined three contexts that are important for CDA: local, institutional, and societal. These contexts are especially relevant to educational researchers studying the interactions between teachers and students, curriculum documents, institutional meetings, state think tanks charged to address current educational issues, and so on.

We may also think about the CDA making up a context. For example, in an analysis of a conversation between a teacher and student, we may analyze the way in which the teacher and student are interacting (genre, mode), the relationship between them (tenor), and the way they call on larger discourses of achievement (field). This analysis of the way in which discourses are linked together is a context. What is important to remember is that every context has a history of discourse links and practices that are chained together in particular ways.

The relationship between context and discourse has a long and tumultuous history in linguistic analysis (for a current discussion, see Blommaert, 2001; Heller, 2001; Slembrouck, 2001). For conversation analysis, context is defined in terms of the immediate “here and now” of co-participants in a dialogue. Accordingly, the most important context for participants as well as analysts is the linguistic one (i.e., what has been said immediately prior to an utterance). In conversation analysis, the immediate physical context is of equal importance to the reconstruction of the meaning of a given utterance. Yet Linell (1998) argued that, for methodological reasons articulated most clearly in Schegloff (1991), larger sociocultural contexts have generally been ignored in conversation analysis (CA).

As a result, CA does not pay close attention to the social and political contexts in which the everyday interactions it chooses for analysis take place. Ethnographies of speaking (Briggs, 1996), interactional sociolinguistics (Gumperz, 1982), forms of discourse analysis (Linell, 1998; Rommetveit & Blakar, 1979; Scollon, 2001), as well as CDA (Fairclough, 1995; Gee, 1999) have used CA methods. Indeed to carry out CDA, the analyst must attend to traditional conversation analysis. These analyses have extended the account of what constitutes meaningful contextual resources (Linell, 1998) to include some of the culturally, historically, and institutionally situated affordances and constraints on ways of speaking that shape speakers’ meaning-making activity (see Jaworski & Coupland [1999] for an overview of approaches).

CDA, in contrast, although making social and political analyses and claims, has often been critiqued for decontextualizing the discourse analyses, erring by either attending to social theory or detailed linguistic analyses (Widdowson, 1998). Blommaert (2001) stated, One of the most important methodological problems in discourse analysis in general is the framing of discourse in particular selections of contexts, the relevance of which is established by the researcher but is not made into an object of investigation . . . this problem is especially pressing in the case of CDA, where the social work of discourse data is crucial and where context is often taken to include broad systematic and institutional observations. (p. 5)

CDA insists on an analysis of context to understand language in use. As Gee (chap. 2, this volume) states, an issue for the analyst is determining which context to include—or what he refers to as the frame problem. Obviously a CDA cannot attend to all contexts at the same time. What is important to remember is that

there is attention paid to the ways in which the local, institutional, and societal domains construct and are constructed by discourses and how these contexts change over time. Such contexts must be linked to the questions that are asked and the assertions that can be made from the analysis.

Critical discourse analysis in Education settings:

The current state of educational affairs is a result of interlocking social, cultural, economic, and epistemological factors. As Young (1990) wrote, the modern educational crisis is a product of the one-sided development of our capacity for rational management of human affairs and rational problem solving. The institution of mass schooling can be either a source of the problem or a possible vehicle for the changes in learning level we require. (p. 23)

The crisis is an educational one because powerful groups seek to use educational means to bring about what they see as resolutions to current problems. For schooling to continue to be educational, it must solve the modern educational problem.

The contributors to this volume define education as including informal and formal learning opportunities for preservice and inservice teachers for elementary and adult students. Learning opportunities occur in the local community, within the school building (e.g., in classrooms as well as meeting rooms), and are shaped by the national policies. One of the central concerns in education is the discrepancy in achievement between mainstream and working class and minority children. The No Child Left Behind Act rhetorically argues for the importance of reading policies and practices that are scientific, reliable, and replicable so that every child has the opportunity to learn how to read. As researchers interested in discourse, we understand that opportunity is a cultural model that can take on different meanings depending on the speaker's intention, when we talk about matters of achievement, within the national rhetoric of achievement; we often measure achievement as an in-the-head phenomenon rather than a set of practices that are socially and culturally situated. Further, achievement is often measured in terms of a set of outcomes (e.g., proficiency in math problems, an increase in reading levels).

The methodologies that are espoused as valuable are increasingly positivistic, reliable, and replicable. Only methodologies that are rational and replicable are given credence. Such a narrow methodology can only examine learning (and other educational issues) from one point of view.

In educational settings, language is the primary mediational tool through which learning occurs. Sociocultural learning theorists have not attended to matters of inequity and privilege, nor have critical discourse theorists attended to matters of learning. In this volume, we argue that CDA contributes to an understanding of learning in two primary ways. First, analyzing discourse from a critical perspective allows one to understand the processes of learning in more complex ways. Indeed the close analysis of the networking of language allows the analyst insight into aspects of learning that other theories and methods might have missed. Second, in the process of conducting CDA, researchers' and participants' learning is shaped (also an aspect of reflexivity addressed in chap. 11).

Discourse theories have not historically attended—or been applied—to matters of learning. Gee (1992, 1994, 1996, 1997, 1998, 2000) is an exception. Gee (2000) wrote, “knowing is a matter of being able to participate centrally in practice and learning is a matter of changing patterns of participation (with concomitant

changes in identity)” (p. 181). After Tomasello (1999), Gee defined his approach to learning as pattern recognition.⁴ As Gee points out, one can only generate paradoxes or problems about learning with regard to specific perspectives on what learning is, and the problems and paradoxes shift with different perspectives.

This is where Gee’s (1996) theory of learning and acquisition adds to a discussion of shifting identities across contexts. Gee distinguished between learning and acquisition. He defined learning as:

A process that involves conscious knowledge gained through teaching (though not necessarily from someone officially designated as a teacher) or

Michael Tomasello is a cognitive psychologist who asserts that learning is a form of pattern recognition. He suggests that linguistic competence and performance is one example of learning how to negotiate pattern recognition. From a cognitive psychology perspective, Tomasello argues for the cultural and social origins of language acquisition. His work is important for critical discourse theory and learning because it provides a starting point for theorizing about the way in which negative or self-defeating “cultural models” are acquired as individuals interact with the social world. Through certain life experiences that trigger conscious reflection. This teaching or reflection involves explanation and analysis, that is, breaking down the thing to be learned into its analytic parts. It inherently involves attaining, along with the matter being taught, some degree of meta-knowledge about the matter. (p. 138)

According to Gee, learning occurs within secondary institutions (e.g., schools and businesses). Acquisition occurs within primary discourses (e.g., home, community, church in some communities). Other research (Rogers, 2002) has pointed out that the boundaries between learning and acquisition are not so clearly defined. Indeed negative ideologies are acquired on a routine basis in schools. Learning involves changes in participation and the subsequent shifts in identity. Such changes construct and are constructed by social change or social transformation. Wenger, McDermott, and Snyder (2002) wrote, “the knowledge of experts is an accumulation of experience—a kind of ‘residue’ of their actions, thinking, and conversations—that remains a dynamic part of their ongoing experience” (p. 9). Lave (1996) argued that learning may be traced through changing participation and the related changes in identity in social practices. In this view, learning is related to social transformation.

Learning as social transformation is important to realizing a vision of democratic education. Systems of education—including school systems and higher education—are not the only vehicles for which such learning can be realized. However, schools are highly organized institutions through which critique of society can be coupled with hope and possibility of constructing more social just spaces. CDA holds much promise for educational research—as we see in each of the chapters in this volume—because it starts with the contradictions or what Fairclough (1995) referred to as cruxes.

Critiques of CDA:

CDA could not be considered a critical methodology if it did not attend to critiques of theory and method. A number of position papers and reviews (Bloome, 1997; Fairclough & Wodak, 1997; Janks, 1997; Wodak, 1999), theoretical papers (Blommaert, 2001; Hammersely, 1997; Kress, 1993), and critiques and responses to critiques (Flowerdew, 1999; Pennycook, 2001; Price, 1998; Toolan, 1997; Tyrwhitt-Drake, 1999;

Verschueren, 2001; Widdowson, 1998) have been written concerning the theoretical and methodological basis of CDA. CDA is often critiqued around the following dimensions (e.g., Tyrwhitt-Drake, 1999; Widdowson, 1998). First, political and social ideologies are projected onto the data rather than being revealed through the data. This means that analysts begin their analysis knowing what they are going to “find” before they begin, and their analysis simply confirms what they suspected.

A second critique is that there is an unequal balance between social theory and linguistic method. Depending on the background and training of the analyst (e.g., either as a Chomskian linguist or an ethnographer), the analysis may more strongly attend to descriptions of language or the context in which the language use unfolds. A third critique is that many discourse analyses are extracted from social contexts. This is the case in many discourse analyses conducted on political speeches, government documents, and newspaper reports (e.g., written documents). A fourth critique is that the methodology is not systematic or rigorous. In this volume, the authors add two additional critiques of CDA. One is that CDA has not been applied to or attended to matters of learning—an issue addressed in the previous section. The second critique is that there has been little attention paid to the nonlinguistic aspects of discourse such as activity and emotion. This absence is ironic given that emotions are the stronghold of ideology.

Although there are conflicting opinions on the extent to which the linguistic analysis should and can be “systematic” (Bucholtz, 2001; Flowerdew, 1999; Pennycook, 2001; Price, 1998; Widdowson, 1998), what researchers engaging with CDA want to avoid is what Widdowson (1998) referred to as an analysis that is, “a record of whatever partial interpretation suits your own agenda” (p. 149). Fowler (1996) agreed that critical linguistics might represent theoretical positions rather than empirical insights. He wrote, the original linguistic model, for all its loose ends, at least possessed a certain theoretical and methodological compactness, and I think it is important now to consolidate and develop this (essentially Hallidayian) model. If this is not done, the danger is that “critical linguistics” in the hands of practitioners of diverse intellectual persuasions will come to mean loosely any politically well-intentioned analytic work on language and ideology, regardless of method, technical grasp of linguistic theory or historical validity of interpretations. (p. 6)

When critical is interpreted as the disruption of power relations rather than as the systematic investigation of the relationships among genres, discourse, and style, and how some meanings are privileged over others, such critiques may be warranted. Indeed Widdowson (1998) pointed out, “if all discourse is ideological then ideological significance can never be discovered, for it is always a function of a particular ideological partiality” (p. 149). What Widdowson left out is that it is the task of the analyst to study how discourse practices construct (and are constructed by) social practices. Ideology is not a static set of relations.

Finally, Pennycook (2001) wrote, if we take power as already sociologically defined and we see our task as using linguistic analysis of texts to show how that power is used, our task is never one of exploration, only of revelation. If, on the other hand, we are prepared to see power as that which is to be explained, then our analyses of discourse aim to explore how power may operate, rather than to demonstrate its existence. (p. 93; italics added)

To be a critical social scientific method, CDA needs to reflexively demonstrate the changing relationship between social theory and linguistic structures and how this fits into evolving social and linguistic theories and methodologies.

Summary:

Critical Discourse Analysis dedicates to explore the interrelationship among language, ideology and power, and has achieved a lot in developing its theoretical framework and analytical approaches. Meanwhile, a considerable newly emerged linguistic theories and approaches have continuously injected vitalities into both the theoretical and empirical studies of CDA, e.g., the corpus linguistic approach, the cognitive linguistic approach, the combinations of CDA with multimodal discourse analysis and a variety of other disciplines such as psychology, sociology, humanity, etc.

Through the above reviews and discussions of the orientation and development of CDA, significant achievements both in the theoretical category (theoretical basis and analytical approaches) and in the practical category (real applications of CDA theories in empirical studies) are presented from different perspectives. Lots of scholars and linguists make contribution to the theoretical innovation of CDA and develop some new analytical approaches which can offer valuable points of view in analyzing various types of discourses. Generally speaking, along with specific methodologies and research methods, each approach has its own theoretical position in developing CDA studies. As is noted by Kress, "Every theoretical approach in CDA is inherently interdisciplinary because it aims at investigating complex social phenomena which are inherently interdisciplinary and certainly not to be studied by linguistics alone". (Kress, 2007)

CDA has a relatively longer history in western countries than it has in Egypt. Like other newly developed things, CDA has been criticized a lot by some scholars through its decades of development. Some critics hold the view that CDA tends to always develop itself along with the stream of linguistic development since it doesn't have solid theoretical foundations. Others question the unidirectional research process employed in CDA, which is seen as having little impact on linguistic theoretical construction and development. However, beyond the critical essence of these critical ideas to Critical Discourses Analysis, they are also beneficial to the development of CDA in the new developing phase, in that these critiques do provide new research methods, and broaden the horizons and fields for the study of Critical Linguistic Analysis. It's believed that by drawing strength from various disciplines that belong to different research fields, CDA will likely to free itself from its own limitations, thus shine a new life for its future developments.

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