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THE CREATION OF CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT

Critical discourse analysis provides an interdisciplinary analytic approach and a flexible metalanguage for the sociological analysis of texts and discourses. The emergence of critical discourse analysis has at least three interrelated implications for educational studies and the sociology of education. First, it marks out a retheorisation of educational practice. Educational theory and practice historically has relied on foundational metaphors of the unfolding child, the industrial machine, the individual rationalist mind, and, most recently, the digital computer. The metaphor offered by poststructuralism is that of the text as an interpretable phenomena that is constitutive of all educational and intellectual endeavour. Critical discourse analysis provides a means for educational sociology to examine new phenomena, including: (a) New workplaces, communities and civic spheres, (b) New texts, genres and discourses, and (c) New social identities.

Keywords : *discourse, analysis, creation*

INTRODUCTION

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.Therefore, we will continue to use CDA exclusively here (see Anthonissen, 2001; Chilton and Wodak, 2007 for an extensive discussion of these terms and their history). The manifold roots of CDA lie in Rhetoric, Text linguistics, Anthropology, Philosophy, Socio-Psychology, Cognitive Science, Literary Studies and Sociolinguistics, as well as in Applied Linguistics and Pragmatics.

Nowadays, some scholars prefer the term Critical Discourse Studies (CDS). Despite their different disciplinary backgrounds and a great diversity of methods and objects of investigation, some parts of the new fields/ paradigms/linguistic sub-disciplines of semiotics, pragmatics, psycho- and sociolinguistics, ethnography of speaking, conversation analysis and discourse studies all deal with discourse and have at least seven dimensions in common (see Van Dijk, 2007a;Wodak, 2008a): an interest in the properties of *'naturally occurring' language use* by real language users (instead of a study of abstract language systems and invented examples)

- a focus on *larger units than isolated words and sentences* and, hence, new basic units of analysis: texts, discourses, conversations, speech acts, or communicative events
- the extension of linguistics *beyond sentence grammar* towards a study of action and interaction
- the extension to *non-verbal (semiotic, multimodal, visual) aspects* of interaction and communication: gestures, images, film, the internet, and multimedia
- a focus on dynamic (socio)-cognitive or interactional moves and strategies
- the study of the functions of (social, cultural, situative and cognitive) *contexts of language use*
- an analysis of a vast number of *phenomena of text grammar and language use*: coherence, anaphora, topics, macrostructures, speech acts, interactions, turn-taking, signs, politeness, argumentation, rhetoric, mental models, and many other aspects of text and discourse.

THEORIES

The significant difference between DS and CDS (or CDA) lies in the *constitutive problem-oriented, interdisciplinary approach* of the latter, apart from endorsing all of the above

points. *CDA is therefore not interested in investigating a linguistic unit per se but in studying social phenomena which are necessarily complex and thus require a multidisciplinary and multi-methodical approach.* The objects under investigation do not have to be related to negative or exceptionally 'serious' social or political experiences or events – this is a frequent misunderstanding of the aims and goals of CDA and of the term 'critical' which, of course, does not mean 'negative' as in common-sense usage (see below).Any social phenomenon lends itself to critical investigation, to be challenged and not taken for granted.We will return to this important point and other common misunderstandings of CDA below. We would also like to emphasize right at the beginning of this volume that it is obvious that the notions of *text* and *discourse* have been subject to a hugely proliferating number of usages in the social sciences.Almost no paper or article is to be found which does not revisit these notions, quoting Michel Foucault, Jürgen Habermas, Chantal Mouffe, Ernesto Laclau, Niklas Luhmann, or many others.

Thus, *discourse* means anything from a historical monument, a policy, a political strategy, narratives in a restricted or broad sense of the term, text, talk, a speech, topc related conversations, to language per se. We find notions such as racist discourse, gendered discourse, discourses on un/employment, media discourse, populist discourse, discourses of the past, and many more – thus stretching the meaning of *discourse* from a genre to a register or style, from a building to a political programme.This causes and must cause confusion – which leads to much criticism and more misunderstandings (Blommaert, 2005; Reisigl, 2007; Wodak, 2008a; Wodak and deCillia, 2006). This is why each contributor to this volume was asked to define their use of the term integrated in their specific approach.

The practical techniques of critical discourse analysis are derived from various disciplinary fields. Work in pragmatics, narratology and speech act theory argues that texts are forms of social action that occur in complex social contexts. Research and theory in systemic functional linguistics (Halliday 1985) shows how linguistic forms can be systematically related to social and ideological functions. Critical discourse analysis uses analytic tools from these fields to address persistent questions about larger, systemic relations of class, gender and culture. In educational research, this work has been turned to the examination of how knowledge and identity are constructed across a range of texts in the institutional "site" of the school.

Critical discourse analysis begins from the assumption that systematic asymmetries of power and resources between speakers and listeners, readers and writers can be linked to their unequal access to linguistic and social resources. In this way, the presupposition of critical discourse analysis is that institutions like schools act as gatekeepers of mastery of discursive resources: the discourses, texts, genres, lexical and grammatical structures of everyday language use. What this suggests is a reframing of questions about educational equality in terms of how systematically distorted and ideological communication may set the conditions for differential institutional access to discursive resources, the very educational competences needed for social and economic relations in information-based economies.

Discourse and language in everyday life may function ideologically. They may be used to make asymmetrical relations of power and particular textual portrayals of social and biological worlds appear given, common-sensical and `natural'. Accordingly, the task of critical discourse analysis is both deconstructive and constructive. In its deconstructive moment it aims to disrupt and render problematic the themes and power relations of everyday talk and writing. In its constructive moment, it has been applied to the development of critical literacy curriculum that aims towards an expansion of students' capacities to critique and analyse discourse and social relations, and towards a more equitable distribution of discourse resources (Fairclough 1992a).

Critical discourse analysis also focuses on sentence and word-level analysis, drawing analytic methods from systemic functional linguistics. Halliday (1985) argues that lexical and grammatical features of texts have identifiable functions: (a) they represent and portray the social and natural world ("field"); (b) they construct and effect social relations ("tenor"); and, (c) they develop conventions as

coherent, identifiable texts in particular media ("mode"). A range of other descriptions of language functions have been developed. According to Kress (1989), written and spoken texts represent particular selective views of the world or "subject positions" (i.e., field) and they set out social relations of "reading positions" (i.e., tenor). By establishing reading positions, texts can interpellate readers, situating and positioning them in identifiable relations of power and agency in relation to texts.

The study of subject positions of textbooks has focused on selective traditions of values, ideologies, `voices', and representations. In addition to describing the cultural assumptions expressed in the text macrostructure, analysis can describe particular lexical choices (e.g., "wordings", "namings") and the grammatical representation of agency and action (e.g., transitivity, mode and modality). The use of an active or passive voice in a history textbook description of the "colonisation" of the Americas, for example, may have the ideological effect of foregrounding or backgrounding Anglo/European agency. The lexical choice of "colonisation" rather than "invasion", and the verbs and adjectives affiliated with indigenous people would represent a particular version of the historical event. Critical discourse analysis thus can document how the world is portrayed, how human, biological and political actions are represented, sanctioned and critiqued in the official texts of educational institutions (see, for example, Muspratt Luke and Freebody 1997).

Critical discourse analysis, thus, employs interdisciplinary techniques of text analysis to look at how texts construct representations of the world, social identities, and social relationships. This has already enabled the detailed study of policy texts, official curriculum documents, textbooks, teachers' guidebooks, and student writings. It has also been used to look at a range of formal and informal spoken texts, including classroom talk, administrators' public talk, staffroom talk and parent-teacher interviews. Several recent studies of the social construction of school knowledge attempt to track different discourses across a range of texts within school systems (Corson 1995). In her study of social science education in Australian secondary schools, Lee (1996) examined syllabus documents, textbook forms, teacher commentaries on students and student work, classroom talk, and students' written assignments.

DISCUSSION

In general, CDA as a school or paradigm is characterized by a number of principles: for example, all approaches are problem-oriented, and thus necessarily interdisciplinary and eclectic (see below). Moreover,CDA is characterized by the common interests in de-mystifying ideologies and power through the systematic and retroductable investigation of semiotic data (written, spoken or visual). CDA researchers also attempt to make their own positions and interests explicit while retaining their respective scientific methodologies and while remaining self-reflective of their own research process. The start of the CDA networkwas marked by the launch ofVan Dijk's journal *Discourse and Society* (1990), as well as by several books which were coincidentally (or because of a *Zeitgeist*). The Amsterdam meeting determined an institutional start, an attempt both to constitute an exchange programme (ERASMUS for three years)4, as well as joint projects and collaborations between scholars of different countries, and a special issue of *Discourse and Society* (1993),which presented the above-mentioned approaches. Since then, new journals have been created, multiple overviews have been written, and nowadays

CDA is an established paradigm in Linguistics; currently, we encounter *Critical Discourse Studies,The Journal of Language and Politics*, *Discourse and Communication* and *Visual Semiotics*, among many other journals; we also find several e-journals which publish critical research, such as *CADAAD*. Book series have been launched (such as *Discourse Approaches to Politics,Culture and Society)*, regular CDA meetings and conferences take place, and handbooks are under way. In sum, CDA (CDS) has become an established discipline, institutionalized across the globe in many departments and curricula.

Studies of UK, US and Australian classrooms have focussed on how classroom talk can shape and reshape what will count as knowledge, subjectivity, legitimate social relations and textual practices. Classroom talk is a primary medium through which teachers and

students construct `readings' of textbooks, in effect reshaping text structures, features and knowledge into authoritative interpretations. The turn-taking structure of classroom lessons and other spoken texts can be analysed for its topic and propositional macrostructure, to document patterns of who can speak, when, about what topics and with what officially recognised authority and force. As noted, ethnomethodological studies of classroom talk detail many of the typical discourse moves and techniques with which teachers regulate classroom knowledge. Recent studies of gender and cultural identity document how students' resistance can reshape school knowledge and social relations (see, for example, Gutierrez Larsen and Kreuter 1995).

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At the same time, we can analyse texts in terms of how they structure and stipulate social relations between human subjects. As noted, teachers and students in classroom talk tend to reconstruct text features and knowledge, often in resistant and idiosyncratic ways. However, educational texts hail readers, and position them in ideological relations through various lexical and grammatical devices.

In its constructive moment, critical discourse analysis is being used as the basis for the teaching of "critical language awareness" and "critical literacy" to students in Australia and the UK (Fairclough 1992a). Critical deconstruction and social critique are key teleological principles of, respectively, poststructuralist discourse theory and Frankfurt School social analysis. The assumptions of such curricula are: (a) that students can be taught how to critically analyse the texts of the culture around them as part of literacy and social science education; and, (b) that critical literacy is the `new basic' for postmodern conditions.

CONCLUSION

Discourses constitute what Wittgenstein called "forms of life", ubiquitous ways of knowing, valuing and experiencing the world. They can be used for the assertion of power and knowledge and they can be used for purposes of resistance and critique. They are used in everyday local texts for building productive power and knowledge and for purposes of regulation and normalisation, for the development of new knowledge and power relations, and for hegemony.

The emergence of critical discourse analysis has at least three interrelated implications for educational studies and the sociology of education. First, it marks out a retheorisation of educational practice. Educational theory and practice historically has relied on foundational metaphors of the unfolding child, the industrial machine, the

individual rationalist mind, and, most recently, the digital computer. Second, critical discourse analysis marks out a new set of methodological techniques and possibilities. The assumption shared by many quantitative and qualitative approaches to sociological research has been that observable realities, truths and social facts have an essential existence prior to discourse. Third, critical discourse analysis marks out the grounds for rethinking pedagogical practices and outcomes as discourse. This article began by describing the challenges posed by information-based, multicultural economies and nation states for the sociology of education. Critical discourse analysis provides a means for educational sociology to examine new phenomena, including:

(a) New workplaces, communities and civic spheres: Shifting population demographics, new social geographies, multiculturalism and new information technologies are altering social relations and how discourse is learned and used. There is a need for detailed study of new textual demands and practices in these institutions.

(b) New texts, genres and discourses: The conditions are encouraging the articulation and commodification of new, unprecedented modes of expression. There is a need for the study and critique of hybrid written forms (e.g., newspaper formats that emulate TV "soundbites"), new popular cultural forms of textual expression (e.g., rock videos, infomercials), electronic genres (e.g., email, home pages), and "creolised" intercultural and interlingual communications.

(c) New social identities: In these contexts, youth have access to unprecedented symbolic and material means for the construction of social values, beliefs and identities. From the discourse analytic perspective presented here, youth identities and affiliated phenomena as "class", "race" and "gender" can not be viewed as having prior essential characteristics independent of their formation and representation in discourse. There is a need for study of how and to what end youth are using texts and discourses to construct and reconstruct new identities and communities.

The application of critical discourse analysis to educational research will require nothing less than the development of a new sociology of educational discourse. Critical discourse analysis enables us to model of how language, text and discourse figure in the production and reproduction of educational outcomes. The focus of educational sociology historically has been on the structures, processes and consequences of educational institutions. A turn to the study of languages, discourses and texts will be needed if indeed we are to understand how educational institutions might make a difference in postmodern economies, nation states and cultures.

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