

WHAT IS CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS?

1. INTRODUCTION

Critical Discourse Analysis does not have a unitary theoretical framework or methodology. It is best viewed as a shared perspective encompassing a range of approaches instead of a school. Historically, CDA is an evolution from the Critical Linguistics developed in the late 1970s by several theorists at the University of East Anglia (Fowler *et alii*, 1979 and Kress & Hodge, 1979) following Halliday's (1978) functional view of language, but it has been influenced by other critical theorists such as Foucault, Gramsci, Pêcheux and Habermas¹.

According to Halliday (1978), language performs simultaneously three macro-functions: the ideational function (language represents the experience that speakers have of the world), the interpersonal function (language reflects the experience of speakers own attitudes and evaluations and establishes a relationship between speakers and listeners) and the textual function. This last one allows speakers to produce texts that are understood by listeners and, furthermore, connects discourse to its co-text and context.

Critical Discourse Analysts share with Halliday (1978) and Critical Linguistics the idea that choices made by speakers (regarding vocabulary and grammar) are consciously or unconsciously principled and systematic, and that they are ideologically based. "Our words are never neutral" (Fiske, 1994), they convey how we see ourselves, our identity, knowledge, values

¹ Critical Linguistics was developed in Great Britain by a group of linguistics who based their researches on the theory and methods of the systemic linguistic from Halliday, while in France Pêcheux and Jean Dubois developed a discourse analysis relying on the work of Zellig Harris and a reformulation of Althusser's proposal about Marxism ideology. This was known as the French Discourse Analysis. If we compare the two approaches we will find out that the first one highlights linguistic analysis, whereas the second one foregrounds the social perspective. Both of them, however, represent a static vision of power relations, and give a salient value to the role of discourse in the maintenance and reproduction of power relations. In the early nineties CDA emerges as a response and a new approach to the limitations of the existent Discourse Analysis Theories.

and beliefs. They are politicized, even if we are not aware of it, because they reflect the interests of those who speak. Another shared topic is the focus on the ways texts are transformed into other texts over time, such as, the production of news stories in the press, the production of various types of educational texts and the production of medical records from doctors' notes about consultations with their patients. But CDA analysts go beyond and take an explicit socio-political stance: "CDA sees itself not as a dispassionate and objective social science, but as engaged and committed; it is a form of intervention in social practice and social relationships" (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997: 258). More specifically, CDA claims that discourse always involves power and ideologies, and aims to explore often opaque relationships between discursive practices, texts and events. Critical analysts are thus concerned to uncover the ideological assumptions hidden in the structures of language to help people resist and overcome various forms of power abuse. In addition to the question of power in discourse there is the question of power over discourse, which is partly a matter of access:

By critical discourse analysis I mean analysis which aims to systematically explore often opaque relationships of causality and determination between (a) discursive practices, events and texts, and (b) wider social and cultural structures, relations and processes; to investigate how such practices, events and texts arise out of and are ideologically shaped by relations of power and struggles over power; and to explore how the opacity of these relationships between discourse and society is itself a factor securing power and hegemony (Fairclough, 1995a: 132-33).

According to Fairclough, power is not an explicit top-down relationship. On the contrary, power and dominance are subtle, indirect and in many situations they are jointly produced when dominated groups are persuaded that dominance is *natural* and it is therefore *legitimized* (van Dijk, 1993b: 250). If the minds of the dominated accept dominance and act in the interest of the powerful, dominance turns into *hegemony* (see below § 3.1).

Another claim in CDA is that discourse is not produced without context and cannot be understood without taking the current and historical context into consideration. In other words, discourse is connected to the past and the current social context, since texts can be interpreted in different ways by different people, because of their different backgrounds, knowledge, and power positions. Thus, "the right interpretation does not exist" (Fairclough, 2002 and Wodak & Ludwig, 1999).

And finally, CDA is a socially committed scientific paradigm and some scholars have been very active and have had an influence on schoolbooks and

education's prospectuses. Van Dijk's analysis of Dutch schoolbooks in terms of their potential racist implications, for instance, has led to the production of new school materials. Similar educational implications have taken place in the UK and Australia under the heading of "critical language awareness" and "critical literacy"². Gruber & Wodak (1992), on the other hand, wrote a column in an Australian tabloid which had denied the Holocaust, and their expert opinion was widely read and influenced public opinion. Critical analysis of communication patterns between doctors and patients undertaken by Fairclough has led to guidelines for different behaviour patterns, which are taught in seminars for doctors. Thus, Critical Discourse Analysts function as organic intellectuals in social struggles and discriminatory use of language; but at the same time, as Fairclough & Wodak (1997: 281) point out, "their work is constantly at risk of appropriation by the state and capital".

In the following sections we will outline Fairclough's, van Dijk's, Wodak's, and Kress & van Leeuwen's approaches to Critical Discourse Analysis. Besides their important role in shaping CDA, it may serve the readers not used to dealing with this framework as a guideline.

2. MODELS OF CDA

The following models of CDA share the idea that adopting critical goals means foremost investigating verbal interactions to see how discourse shapes and is shaped by social structures, by revisiting the text at different levels, raising questions about it, imagining how it could have been constructed differently, and mentally comparing it to related texts. But they differ in their interests. Fairclough's work has focused on relationships between socio-cultural change and discursive change and is more concerned with the analysis of media interviews, university prospectuses and consultations between doctors and patients. He and his colleagues have also stressed the educational implications of CDA, advocating *critical language awareness* as a key component of language education in schools and other institutions. Van Dijk's critical work, on the other hand, focuses on the reproduction of ethnic prejudices and racism in discourse and communication and on the role of the news media and elites discourses (basically, members of Parliament) in the surge and reproduction of racism. Wodak's discourse-historical method shifted from conducting studies on institutional communication and speech barriers in court, schools and hospitals, to the analysis of sexism, national identities and contemporary anti-Semitism. Both her work and the work of the group of Vienna have been deeply influenced by the Frankfurt school,

² For further information on this topic see Hyatt (this volume) and McInnes & James (this volume).

especially by Jürgen Habermas. And Kress & van Leeuwen, on the other hand, have been involved in developing a social semiotics exploring ways of analysing visual images and paying attention to the multi-semiotic character of most texts in contemporary society.

2.1. Fairclough's Socio-Cultural Method

Like the functional analysis of Halliday (1978, 1994), Fairclough's system of discourse analysis has three dimensions, since discourse is seen simultaneously as: a) a text (spoken or written, including visual images); b) a discourse practice production, consumption and distribution of the text, and c) a sociocultural practice. Hence, the analysis of texts "should not be artificially isolated from analysis of institutional and discursual practices within texts are embedded" (Fairclough, 1995a: 9).

2.1.1. Text and the analysis of texture

According to Fairclough, text analysis should mean analysis of the texture of texts, their form and organization, and not just commentaries on the content of texts. Fairclough (1989, 1992 and 1995a) and Huckin (1997) raise several questions to guide text analysis on:

- a) *Vocabulary*. How are words used to show ideology? In what ways are things classified? What aspects of reality are overworded? According to Fairclough, overwording is a sign of intense preoccupation, which may indicate that it is a focus of ideological struggle. Thus, the question is how are overwording, synonymy, antonymy and hyponymy used to construct ideology? How are words chosen to develop a relationship with the reader in terms of formality of vocabulary? Are there euphemisms or metaphors? What connotations do they convey? For instance, the use of the word *protestor* instead of *demonstrator* is trying to convey a negative image of those who are against the government and corporate establishment³.
- b) *Transitivity*. What patterns of transitivity are found? The agency pattern of a text can remain at the subconscious level unless made visible by the critical reader. Thus, it is important to show who is depicted as Agent, and therefore empowered and over whom (the Affected). A transitivity feature is also the degree of nominalization. The conversion of processes into nominals has the effect of

³ See Fairclough (1992: 185-199) for further information about wording and word meaning. See also Holmgren (this volume) for more information on metaphor and (neo-liberal) ideology.

backgrounding the process itself by omitting information about agents of power. This effect can also be achieved by the use of passive verbs. Thus, if both nominalization and passive are used to delete agency, what is the ideological function?⁴

- c) *Mood and modality*. How is mood enacted? Declarative, imperative or interrogative? Which values express choices of modality or, what Hodge & Kress (1988: 123) call the degree of affinity with the proposition? The modality of a text is set both with the use of specific words (verbs or prepositional phrases such as *may, might, could, will, can, must, it seems to me, without doubt* or inclusive and exclusive pronouns) and intonation patterns (speaking hesitantly, for instance) to convey the degree of certainty and authority.
- d) *Interactional control features*. Which are the interactional control features of the text? These include turn-taking (the way in which talking turns are distributed), exchange system (organization of, for instance, interviews in terms of question-answer sequences), control of topics, topic change, opening and closing of interactions, formulation (ways in which earlier parts of a text or interaction are paraphrased) and so forth⁵.
- e) *Topicality*. Which topics are chosen to fill theme position in the clause (initial position) or which are foregrounded? For example, in a media reporting about protestors, if 11 sentences refer to protestors and three to officials, the text is clearly about the protestor's actions. And in choosing what to put in the topic position, the writer creates a perspective that influences the reader's perception.
- f) *Politeness*. Which kinds of human "face wants" are enacted? Positive face (people want to be liked, understood, admired) or negative face (people do not want to be impeded by others). Brown & Levison (1987) see politeness in terms of strategies on the part of participants to mitigate speech acts which are potentially threatening to their own face. In other words, particular politeness conventions embody particular social and power relations (Kress & Hodge, 1979)⁶.
- g) *Presuppositions*. Are there presuppositions or assumptions made by a speaker or writher which are not explicitly stated and which the author appears to be taken for granted? In a peace/conflict example, a

⁴ See Halliday (1985: chap. 5) and Fairclough (1992: 177-185) for further information about transitivity and nominalization.

⁵ See Fairclough (1992: 152-158) for further information on this topic. See also Tanaka (this volume).

⁶ See Delbene (this volume) for further information on politeness.

demonstrator sign such as *give peace a chance* presupposes that the government is presently not doing so. The distinction of what is explicit and implicit in a text is of considerable importance in socio-cultural analysis as it can provide valuable information about what is taken as given, as common sense, and gives a way into ideological analysis of texts, since ideologies are mostly implicit assumptions (Fairclough, 1995a: 6). Fairclough (1995b: 106-107) establishes a scale of presence in a text, running from absent to foregrounded: absent / presupposed / backgrounded / foregrounded. Thus, if something is explicitly present in a text, it may be informationally foregrounded or backgrounded.

- h) *Ambiguity*. Are there insinuations or suggestive statements carrying double meanings, so that when the statement is challenged, the author can deny any culpability? This ability gives the originator a lot of power. Ambiguity or ambivalence can also be a useful device in the hand of less powerful participants for dealing with those with power, but those with power may respond by enforcing explicitness by asking questions such as *Is that a threat?* (Fairclough, 1989: 136)

2.1.2. Discourse practice and orders of discourse

Discursive practice refers to the set of spoken and unspoken rules, norms and mental models of socially accepted behaviours that govern individuals' thought, act and speak in all the social positions they occupy in life. They involve ways of being in the world that signify specific and recognizable social identities: students, mothers, members of an ethnic, gender or sexual group, etc.

The set of discursive practices associated with a particular social domain or institution, such as a lecture, a counselling or an informal conversation in an academic institution, and the boundaries and relationships between them are called, following Gramsci, *orders of discourse*. According to Fairclough (1995a and 1995b), texts circulate within orders of discourse and are transformed within the process of distribution. For instance, in mass media there are chains connecting public orders of discourse (politics, law, science, etc.), media orders of discourse (documentaries, news, etc.) and orders of private discourse (the domain of reception). An example of transformation is what Fairclough (1995a: 19) calls the *conversationalization* of public or institutional discourse, what he sees as a colonization of public orders of discourse by the discursive practices of the private sphere. In many media, instance, in documentaries dealing with scientific or technologic subjects, the public language presents properties of the conversational or colloquial

language, which belongs to the sphere of the private. Although science and technology are part of public, institutional life, the programmes are received and consumed overwhelmingly at home, within the family (Fairclough, 1995b: 10-11).

According to Fowler (1991: 57), this conversationalisation has an ideological function, that of naturalizing the terms in which reality is represented. However, Fairclough (1995a and 1995b) claims that to some extent it represents also some degree of cultural democratization, since conversationalisation in some documentaries help democratize technology, making it more accessible to people. And the same is true if one talks about the conversationalisation of other public discourses, such as doctor-patient counselling, corporate meetings or more widely relationships between professionals and clients, which Fairclough (1995a: 101) associates at some levels at least with increased openness to democracy and greater individualism⁷.

2.1.3. Sociocultural practice. The relationship between discourse processes of production, distribution and interpretation, and the social processes

The third dimension of discourse analysis as conceived by Fairclough is the socio-cultural context of a communicative event. Describing discourse as a social practice implies a *dialectical relationship* between a particular discursive event and the situations, institutions and social structures which frame it: discourse is shaped by situations, institutions and social structures, but it also shapes them. In other words, is “socially *constitutive* as well as socially shaped: it constitutes situations, objects of knowledge, and the social identities of and relationships between people and groups of people. It is constitutive both in the sense that it contributes to transforming it” (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997: 258). Therefore, discursive practices may have ideological effects since they can produce and reproduce unequal power relations between social classes, gender groups and ethnic or cultural majorities and minorities through the ways they represent things and position people.

According to Fairclough’s method, each text is embedded in its context at different levels: the *immediate situation* involving participants in a particular setting; the wider *institution* or organization, and the level of *society*. For example, conversations between partners can be read at three levels: in terms of their personal relationship, as partners within the institution of the family, and in terms of gender relations within the wider society.

⁷ See Olivares (this volume) for an analysis on the popularization of science in some French magazines and Nunes (this volume) for a study on the popularization of political discourse.

Media analysis can also help understand how texts are embedded in a context. The most salient topics for Fairclough are: access to the media, economics of the media, politics (in the sense of power and ideology) and the practices of text production and consumption. Fairclough (1995*b*) points out that we have to take into account the fact that media products are products to sell and therefore, they are much open to effects of commercial pressures; they work ideologically and are in the service of the elites and the state. Selection of news is mostly not determined by the nature of the events, but by the news production and institutional practices, and its dependence on officials as source of information which contributes to maintain their status quo and their hegemony. On the other hand, selection by journalists also implies choosing the sources of information; e.g., who is interviewed, who is quoted directly or whose discourse is reported or summarized. For example, contrasting with the official, ordinary people are often used as sources in order to speak about their personal experiences, but not to express opinion (Fairclough, 1995*b*: 49). But at the same time, as Fairclough (1995*b*) observes, sometimes the interests of the media are in conflict with the state, as illustrates the case of the war in Vietnam, when American television turned the public opinion against it by showing images of the war.

Text consumption is another core topic in CDA. It mainly refers to the ways in which addressees comprehend the text. Critical Discourse Analysts make also assumptions about how audiences read and comprehend texts, and even interpret the texts as the readers would do. According to Fairclough (1995*b*: 16), texts are not meaningless without the interpretation of readers. Instead, he claims that:

It strikes me as self-evident that although reading may vary, any reading is a product of an interface between the properties of the text and the interpretative resources and practices which the interpreter brings to bear upon the text. The range of potential interpretations will be constrained and delimited according to the nature of the text.

But the central question is to what extent a discourse analyst knows how the audience consume media discourse, what they comprehend and what sorts of impacts the texts may have upon them, as audience interpret texts according to their background knowledge and to the information that they already have about the subject in question (van Dijk, 1993*b*: 242)⁸.

⁸ See Pöldsaaar (this volume) for an analysis of media ideology on the topic of gender equality.

2.2. Van Dijk's Socio-Cognitive Method

Van Dijk was one of the first and principal practitioners of textual grammar, but his social commitment led him to the analysis of media texts focusing on the representation of ethnic groups and minorities (van Dijk, 1988a), and more specifically on the ways minorities are portrayed in everyday conversation and in parliamentary discourse. In the 80s, van Dijk and his disciples recorded and analysed a great deal of interviews of spontaneous conversations taking place in Amsterdam and San Diego (van Dijk, 1984 and 1987a), which revealed that conversations were quite similar and typical at every level. For instance, regarding to the topics, they found out there were a very limited set of subjects triggered when people speak about *foreigners*. Typically, these subjects were about Cultural differences, Deviations (crime, violence, etc.) and Menaces (economical, social and cultural).

Van Dijk's work also points out the fact that local coherence relations between clauses and the narrative structure of tales about minorities reflect and reproduce majority stereotypes and prejudices. As to the local coherence relations between clauses, van Dijk's research shows that people tend to use specific semantic *movements*, such as Negators of Apparent Negation (*I have nothing about black people, but...*) and Negators of Apparent Concession (*Not all black people are criminals, but...*), when they refer to immigrants. These movements enact a Positive Autorepresentation of *Us* (*We are not racist* or *We are tolerant*) and a Negative Presentation of the *Other* (often expressed through the connector *but*). Regarding the narrative structure of stories about minorities, van Dijk shows that they become Complaint stories in which the personal experiences related are the premises of negative conclusions such as *They don't want to adapt, They just live here at our expense*, etc. The style, rhetoric and other formal properties of these conversations complete this negative treatment of minorities in everyday conversation. For instance, the use of pronouns clearly underlines the social distance (Turkish neighbours, for instance, are referred to as *they* or *these people*, instead of more neutral expressions such as *my Turkish neighbours*). According to van Dijk, the way minorities are referred to in everyday conversation may influence media discourse, insofar as the professionals working in the mass media most of the times are members of the same majority interviewed in van Dijk's investigations⁹. However, van Dijk (1984 and 1987a) judges more important the media influence on the addressees. On the one hand, because the addressees often refer explicitly to the mass media

⁹ See Tileagă (this volume) for further information on racism in everyday conversations.

as a source of their opinions; and, on the other hand, because a biased opinion expressed in a media text may reach a wider audience. Thus, mass media play an important role in the maintaining (and even sometimes in the worsening) of ethnic status quo, and even in the reproduction of racism. In fact, the treatment of minorities in media texts is tantamount to that of everyday conversation.

Van Dijks' research on racism in the media has produced a great deal of publications, in which he shed new light on how media texts, especially news, reproduce racist prejudices. For instance, van Dijk (1987b) analyses the representation of *ethnic events* in news programmes in some Western countries such as United Kingdom, the United States, Western Germany and The Netherlands. In this paper he draws several conclusions about the treatment of the minorities in news media:

- a) The data furnished by the content analysis shows that mass media pay less attention to ethnic minorities, unless these minority groups were involved in violence, illegality, delinquency or a *strange* cultural behaviour, which implies a component of deviation. Thus, topics about minorities are generally negative and immigration is not considered a normal or natural phenomenon, but a permanent menace, a conflict between *Them* and *Us*. On the other hand, racism, prejudice or discrimination and immigrant status (in terms of employment conditions, education, public health or minority culture) are absent from the news, which is understandable considering both the fact that minorities are rarely used as a reliable source of information and that very few journalists belong to a minority group (journalists are, as other integrants of middle class, members of a white dominant group that expresses, manifests, legitimates and, consequently, reproduces a consensual and dominant ideological spectrum of their own class and ethnic group).
- b) Regarding the patterns of transitivity, minorities appear very rare as main agents, unless they are suspect on or accused of a negative action. They are often represented as playing a role which deviates from the norm (*They are spongers, They take advantage of our houses and jobs* or *They do not adapt nor want to do so*, etc). This coverage is explained by the fact mentioned above that there are very few journalists among the minorities and by the fact that ethnic prejudices make the journalists think that minority groups are less credible.
- c) Mass media in general and news media in particular play a central role in the production of the mechanisms of ethnic attitude and racism. Although mass media do not ever indicate to the audience what they

have to think nor that all the members of the audience must necessarily agree with the opinions transmitted by the media, it is also true that most people can just access to information about ethnic groups through mass media. Conversely, although very few people are susceptible to be a potential victim of an act of violence perpetrated by a member of a minority group, van Dijk points out that his previous studies about everyday conversation show not only that people are increasingly afraid of delinquency and violence, but also that they associate explicitly these feelings to the existence of minority groups and quote mass media as a justification of their prejudices.

Finally, van Dijk's work is also committed in showing the reproduction of racism in parliamentary discourse and how parliamentary discourse contributes to the reproduction and spread of racism because of the credibility and respectability of MPs (van Dijk 1993a, 1993b, and van Dijk 2003). Thus, the political power is not limited to political decision-making (directly restricting the rights of minorities, for instance), but it also justifies and legitimises such acts through the manipulation of public opinion, usually through mass media. The media, on the other hand, have their own repertoire to enhance and popularize the sometimes abstract opinions of politicians by spreading scare stories about *massive* illegal immigration, welfare *cheats*, housing and employment shortages attributed to minorities, *black crime* (drugs, mugging, violence), and so forth (van Dijk, 1993b: 268).

Last, but not least, what distinguishes van Dijk's approach from other critical approaches is the importance that he gives to the cognitive analysis. For him, socio-cognition mediates between society and discourse, it coinciding with "the system of mental representations and processes of group members" (van Dijk, 1995: 18). Ideologies are mental systems that organize socially shared attitudes, and these mental systems are social representations that function as "models which control how people act, speak or write, or how they understand the social practices of others" (van Dijk, 1995: 2). From this stance, it is very important in van Dijk's approach the fact that mental representations are often articulated on such a way which sets up *Us* (defined in positive terms) against *Them* (defined in negative terms), and much of his research in the last years has focused on the analysis of several discourses oriented to find out the resources employed to construct this dichotomy; for example, how native people construct their own image as *Us*

and that of the immigrants as *Them* in ordinary conversation, as we saw above¹⁰.

2.3. *Wodak's Discourse-Historical Method*

Wodak and her colleagues of the Vienna School of Discourse Analysis have developed a theory of discourse based on sociolinguistics in the Bernsteinian tradition, and on the ideas of the Frankfurt school, especially those of Jürgen Habermas. Wodak (1996) points out that:

Discourse Sociolinguistics (...) is a sociolinguistics which not only is explicitly dedicated to the study of the text in context, but also accords both factors equal important. It is an approach capable of identifying and describing the underlying mechanisms that contribute to those disorders in discourse which are embedded in a particular context –whether they are in the structure and function of the media, or in institutions such as hospital or a school– and inevitably affect communication (Wodak, 1996: 3).

Wodak (2002: 14) has focused on the interdisciplinary and the eclectic nature of Critical Discourse Analysis, since problems in our society are too complex to be studied from a single point of view. Thus, an integration of diverse theories and methods are required to understand and explain the object under investigation. In a similar way, van Dijk (2006: 13) has claimed the necessity of interdisciplinary approaches, and he quotes explicitly linguistics, poetics, semiotics, psychology, sociology, anthropology, history and mass communication research as disciplines which one must bear in mind when doing Critical Discourse Analysis.

Wodak (2002: 18) has undertaken three main researches in the Vienna School of Critical Discourse Analysis. The first one is the investigation of language in institutional settings such as courts, schools and hospital (Wodak, 1996 and Muntigl *et alii*, 2000). A second important research focus of this school is the study of sexism, and specially racism and anti-Semitism (Wodak *et alii*, 1990; Mitten, 1992 and Gruber, 1991). Thirdly, and connected with the other two issues, there is the study of identity constructions and changes of identities at national and transnational levels.

Wodak's work on anti-Semitic discourse in 1990 relies on her Discourse Historical Approach, in which the word *historical* is a crucial term, since the historical context has a significant impact on the structure, function and

¹⁰ See Sancho *et alii* (forthcoming) for further information on critical studies on media. See also Vizcarrondo (this volume) for further information on the dichotomy *Us* and *Them* in the media coverage of the Gulf War.

context of the anti-Semitic utterances (Wodak *et alii*, 1990). This method was developed to unravel the constitution of an anti-Semitic stereotyped image (or *Feinbild*), as it emerged in public discourse in the 1986 Austrian presidential campaign of Kurt Waldheim (Wodak *et alii*, 1990; Mitten, 1992 and Gruber, 1991). Aiming to study the discourse about the *Waldheim affair*, context was unravelled into various dimensions. Effectively, context was analysed from three different perspectives (linguistics, psychology and history), and the research team was shaped by analysts coming from these three disciplines. Initially every team arrived at different results as a consequence of the various theories and methods used, but in the end the team developed its own categories, which led to the *discourse-historical method* (Wodak *et alii*, 1990).

Like in many other CDA researches language manifests social processes and interaction and constitutes those processes. But Wodak & Ludwig (1999: 12-13) point out that CDA implies three consequences. First, discourse “always involves power and ideologies”. Secondly, “discourse (...) is always historical, that is, it is connected synchronically and diachronically with other communicative events which are happening at the same time or which have happened before”. And thirdly, any approach to discourse analysis has to bear in mind interpretation, so that readers and listeners, depending on their background knowledge, information and position, might have different readings of the same communicative event (Wodak & Ludwig, 1999: 12-13). More specifically, Wodak & Ludwig (1999) affirm that the right interpretation does not exist and a hermeneutic approach is necessary, since interpretations can be more or less plausible or adequate, but they cannot be true”.

The discourse-historical method has turned, among other contributions, into a study of the discourse about nation and national identity in Austria. The construction of identities is the third principal focus of Vienna School investigations. The above mentioned research was concerned with the analysis of the relationships between discursive construction of national sameness and the discursive construction of difference leading to political and social exclusion of specific out-groups. The findings suggested that discourses about nations and national identities depend on at least four types of discursive macro-strategies: constructive strategies (aiming at the construction of national identities), preservatory and justificatory strategies (heading to the conservation and reproduction of national identities or narratives of identity) and transformative strategies (targeting at the dismantling of national identities). Depending on the context, one aspect or

other connected with these strategies is brought into prominence (Wodak, 2002: 18-19)¹¹.

2.4. *Kress & van Leeuwen's Socio-Semiotic Method*

Kress & van Leeuwen have been involved in developing a social semiotics exploring ways of analysing visual images and paying attention to the multi-semiotic character of most texts in contemporary society. On the other hand, van Leeuwen's analysis of the representations of social actors and the categories described have been used by various researchers to show the ways actors are described in many kinds of discourses.

2.4.1. Functional socio-semiotics

Kress and van Leeuwen socio-semiotic method relies on the Functional Grammar developed by Halliday (1984, 1995) and their main purpose is to describe the semiotic resources. A *semiotic resource* is, for example, the point of view, which allows for the representation of people, things and places, from the top, from the bottom or at the eyesight, but also from the front part, from a side or from behind. These distinct possibilities open a potential meaning; for example, if one represents a building from the bottom (extreme low shot), the building will probably appear as an object with a big power over the observer.

Kress' and van Leeuwen's visual sociosemiotics transfer the macrofunctions Halliday's (1978) established in the verbal language to the field of visual communication. More specifically, they establish different kinds of meaning:

- a) The representational meaning (Halliday's ideational function) or the meaning represented in an image. The meaning can be narrative or conceptual. In the first case, the participants are involved in actions, events or processes. It is used mostly in advertising; for example, when a perfume advertisement portrays the image of a couple hugging, it is worth analysing the roles which the different participants perform (active or passive, for instance). In a conceptual

¹¹ For further information on national identities, see Wodak *et alii* (1998), Wodak *et alii* (1999), Reisigl & Wodak (2001), Reisigl (1998) and De Cillia *et alii* (1999). See also Nuñez-Perucha (this volume) for a study on the construction of victim's identity in the context of domestic violence; Sopeña (this volume) for an analysis of the construction of personal and social identities and Maclean (this volume) for the construction of narratives' identities in the context of holocaust survivors.

structure, on the other hand, participants are represented focusing on their essence, and symbolic attributes are recognised through size, position, colour or lighting. In advertising, for instance, watches are usually depicted in the vertical axis and thereby they are portrayed as symbols of power.

- b) The interactive meaning (Halliday's interpersonal function) or the relationships between the observers and the world represented in the image. For instance, images can show people looking at the observer. Kress & van Leeuwen (1996) call these *images of petition*, since to some extent they are symbolically asking. On the other hand, images can represent people in a close-up shot, and thereby they establish an intimate relationship.
- c) The compositional meaning (Halliday's textual function) refers to the organisation of elements in the image. Kress & van Leeuwen (1996) point out that the placement of elements portrays different informative values. For example, in the vertical axis, what is placed on the top is represented as the *ideal* and what is located at the bottom is the *real*. The top part implies also a bigger ideological charge, since it is the most outstanding part.

Kress & van Leeuwen (2001: 10-11) study the use of signs of resources which are usually found in a certain communicative context. They distinguish two principles. One of this is *provenance*, where signs come from: "the idea here is that we constantly *import* signs from other contexts (another era, social group or culture) into the context in which we are now making a new sign, in order to signify ideas and values which are associated with that other context by those who import the sign" (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2001: 10). They propose a musical example, the use of sitar by the Beatles in the 60's. The use of this instrument implied meanings which, in that *psychedelic* culture, were associated to the sitar's country of origin: meditation, drugs as expansion of consciousness, etc.

The second principle is *experiential meaning potential*. Kress & van Leeuwen (2001: 10) define this concept as follows: "(...) the idea that signifiers have a meaning potential deriving from what it is we do when we produced them, and from our ability to turn action into knowledge, to extend our practical experience metaphorically, and to grasp similar extensions made by others". An example is the sound quality of *breathiness*, which we relate in our everyday experience to situations when we are out of breath, for instance, and when we are unable to control our breathing due to excitement. Yet *breathiness* can become a signifier for intimacy and sensuality, for instance in singing styles or in the speech in television commercials for

products, that can be associated with intimacy or sensuality. The idea of *experiential meaning potential* is close to the view of metaphor elaborated in Lakoff & Johnson (1980), who found out the importance of metaphor as a means for the speakers to conceptualize unknown, more abstract and unfamiliar concepts, departing from realities which are better known, more concrete and more familiar for them.

2.4.2. Multimodality

Kress & van Leeuwen (2001) have pointed out that the media texts we are usually faced with are not made exclusively of visual and verbal components: a movie, for instance, integrates various modes of communication such as visual, verbal (mostly oral, but also written), sound and music. Texts are multimodal and a meaning can be expressed using different modes of communication. Kress & van Leeuwen (2001) define multimodality that way:

(...) the use of several semiotic modes in the design of a semiotic product or event, together with the particular way in which these modes are combined –they may for instance reinforce each other (*say the same thing in different ways*), fulfil complementary roles, (...), or be hierarchically ordered, as in action films, where action is dominant, with music adding a touch of emotive colour and sync sound a touch of realistic *presence* (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2001: 20).

In their theory on multimodal discourse they distinguish four strata: discourse, design, production and distribution, being the basis of this stratification the distinction between the *content* and the *expression* of communication, which includes a differentiation between the signified and the signifier of the signs used.

The terms used (design, production and distribution) might suggest an exclusive concentration on the producers, but Kress and van Leeuwen (2001: 8) also take into account interpretation. Every instance of communication demands an *interpretative community*. And interpreters must have specific semiotic knowledge at any level. For instance, at the level of distribution, it is important to know if one is dealing with a reproduction or with an original, and this fact has relevant consequences in their interpretation. At the level of design and discourse, one must bear in mind the role of interpreter, and in this case Kress & van Leeuwen agree that a certain type or design (e.g. a movie conceived for entertainment) has not to be necessarily interpreted this way (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2001: 8). The degree to which intention and interpretation will match depends on context: a traffic sign will be interpreted according to the intention of the producer in a crossroad, but it will be

interpreted very differently if we look at it displayed as an *objet trouvé* in an art gallery.

2.4.3. Van Leeuwen's representation of social actors

The other extremely relevant work of van Leeuwen is his analysis of the representation of social actors (van Leeuwen, 1996), which consists of a systematic form for the study of social actors and their semantic roles in different discourses. Van Leeuwen established a *sociosemantic* system network for the representation of social actors in discourse and *categorization* is the subsystem which refers to the ways actors are represented "in terms of identities and functions they share with others" (van Leeuwen, 1996: 52).

In this paper (van Leeuwen, 1996) presents a framework for describing the representation of social action in English discourse, attempting to relate sociologically relevant categories of action to their grammatical and rhetorical realization in discourse. Van Leeuwen summarises the principal ways in which social actors can be represented in discourse in the form of a network which comprises the systems involved in the realisation of representation of social actors, such as a number of distinct lexicogrammatical and discourse-level linguistic systems, transitivity, reference, the nominal group, rhetorical figures, etc. We will not describe the entire broad network, but we will focus on the three types of transformation he distinguishes:

- a) *Deletion*, including the two categories *Inclusion* or *Exclusion*. That means, if social actors are included in the discourse or not, and in which form: foregrounded or backgrounded¹².
- b) *Rearrangement*, with categories like *Activation* and *Passivation* (subjection, beneficialisation). This is referred to role allocation, which means the specific roles that social actors play in particular representation.
- c) *Substitution*, which includes 18 more systems with categories like *Personalisation* and *Impersonalisation* (presentation of actors as human beings capable of agency on the one hand, and abstraction/objectivation on the other); *Nomination* (representation of social actors in terms of their unique identity), *Genericisation* and *Specification* (representing social actors as either classes, or as "specific, identifiable individuals") and *Categorization* (representation

¹² See Vizcarrondo (this volume) for further information on the inclusion and exclusion of social actors.

of social actors in terms of identities or functions they share with others).

Van Leeuwen's framework provides an effective and thorough way of analysing the representation of social action and social actors. His taxonomy allows for the analysis of data, related to agency in a very differentiated and validated way. The author's way of understanding the creation of social actors corresponds as well to a dynamic perspective, which involves the construction of identity and subjectivity starting from a relational view of self-conception. Van Leeuwen's taxonomy has since then been widely applied in data analysis.

3. SOME USEFUL CONCEPTS

In the following sections we will focus on some interesting concepts used in Critical Discourse Analysis, such as hegemony, naturalization, technologisation and intertextuality or interdiscursivity.

3.1. *Hegemony*

Fairclough and other analysts of discourse take up Gramsci's concept of hegemony to explain the winning of consent in the exercise of power.

Hegemony is relations of domination based upon consent rather than coercion, involving the naturalization of practices and their social relations as well as relations between practices, as matters of common sense –hence the concept of hegemony emphasizes the importance of ideology in achieving and maintaining relations of domination (Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999: 24).

Thus, the concept, elaborated by Gramsci to describe Western capitalism in Western Europe, is about constructing alliances and integrating (rather than simply dominating subordinate classes), through concessions or ideological means, about winning their consent and achieving a precarious equilibrium which may be undermined by other groups.

3.2. *Naturalization*

Naturalization gives to particular ideological representations the status of common sense, and thereby makes them opaque and no longer visible as ideologies (Fairclough, 1995a: 42). It appears when a discourse type dominates alternative types that are more or less suppressed, so that the

dominant discourse cease to be seen as arbitrary and is seen as natural, as being placed outside ideology because is the only way. Naturalization is

a matter of degree and the extent to which a discourse type is naturalized may change, in accordance with the shifting 'balance of forces' in social struggle (...) A naturalized type tends to be perceived not as that of a particular grouping within the institution, but as simply that of the institution itself. So it appears to be *neutral* in struggles for power, which is tantamount to it being placed outside ideology (Fairclough, 1989: 91-92).

Thus, generation of common-sense discourse practices through naturalization serves to legitimise power and ideology¹³.

3.3. *Technologisation of discourse*

The increased importance of language in social life has led managers and institutions to control and shape discursive practices in accordance to economic, political and institutional aims. This process of control has been referred to as the *technologisation of discourse*, which entails a technologisation of thought and action. According to Fairclough (1995a: 91), the technologisation of discourse involves the combination of: research into the discursive practices of social institutions and organizations; redesign of those practices in accordance with particular strategies and objectives (usually those of managers and bureaucrats) and training of institutional personnel in these redesigned practices.

One example described by Fairclough (1995a: 106 and ff) is the technologisation of British universities, whose prospectuses reflect pressures on universities to operate under market conditions in order to sell their courses using discursive techniques from advertising. Thus, under government pressure, universities behave like ordinary businesses competing to sell their products to consumers. Or more broadly, the genre of consumer advertising has been colonizing professional and public service orders of discourse and generating many new hybrid partly promotional genres (Fairclough, 1995a: 139).

The technologisation of discourse is the application to discourse of the sort of technologies which Foucault (1979) identified as constitutive of power in modern society. Fairclough (1992: 207) uses the word *commodification* to refer particularly to the process whereby social domains and institutions, whose concern is not producing commodities or goods for

¹³ See Vaara & Laine (this volume) for further information on this topic.

sale (such as education), transfer the vocabulary of commodities (*clients, consumers*) into the educational order, for instance¹⁴.

3.4. *Intertextuality/Interdiscursivity*

Closely related to Kristevas's (1980) concept of *intertextuality* and more generally to what Bakhtin (1981) called *heteroglosia*, these terms highlight the normal heterogeneity of texts in being constituted by combinations of diverse genres and discourses. They refer to the constitution of a text from diverse discourses and genres.

Fairclough (1995a: 16) defines intertextuality as "basically the property text have of being full of snatches of other texts, which may be explicitly demarcated or merged in, and which the text may assimilate, contradict, ironically echo, and so forth". Thus, while accounts of individual genres and discourse types appear to be largely accounts of ideal types, actual texts are generally to a greater or lesser extent constituted through mixing these types (Fairclough, 1995a: 134).

There are two types of intertextuality (Fairclough, 1992: 104): manifest intertextuality, in which other texts are overtly present in a text by means of explicit signs such as quotation marks; and constitutive intertextuality, which refers to the heterogeneous constitution of texts out of elements of orders of discourse, i.e., the structure of discourse conventions that go into the new text's production: "Manifest intertextuality is the case where specific other texts are overtly drawn upon within a text, whereas interdiscursivity is a matter of how a discourse type is constituted through a combination of elements of orders of discourse" (Fairclough, 1992: 117-118). The term *intertextuality* is used to refer to both types, while the term *interdiscursivity* is drawn upon to underline that the focus is on discourse conventions associated with a socially ratified type of activity (i.e. informal chat, job interview, television documentary, poem, scientific article, etc.):

Intertextuality is related to hegemony, since the practice of transforming prior texts and restructure existing conventions (genres, discourses) to generate new ones is not available to people; it is socially limited and constrained upon relations of power (Fairclough, 1992: 102-103)¹⁵.

¹⁴ See Fairclough (1992: 207-218) for more information about commodification and technologisation. See also Antunes (in this volume) for an analysis of the technologisation of educational discourse in the context of Brazilian universities.

¹⁵ See Fairclough (1992: chap. 4) for more information on these concepts.

4. THIS VOLUME

Our monographic volume on Critical Discourse Analysis integrates different contexts of interest, covering a diversity of aspects related to this research field. The nineteen chapters that have been selected illustrate its scope of analysis and display an array of research endeavour going into the critical approach to specifically contextualised discourse practices.

The social and ideological discursive construction of social, ethnic, political groups or personae can be exemplified by the work of authors such as Cristian Tileagă, Pam Maclean or Paul Danler. Tileagă analyses the particulars of a discourse of extreme difference and moral exclusion when dealing with ethnic minorities in a Romanian socio-cultural context. Maclean focuses on video-testimonies of Holocaust survivors, where their accounts of the concentration camp experiences may translate into the recontextualization of extreme trauma discourse into adventure discourse, allowing for a social positioning different from what is often expected from *exceptionalist* discourse construction. Starting from a corpus of speeches delivered by Mussolini, Danler looks into the realization and function of markedness in political discourse, deriving conclusions for the Italian language in general and more specifically for political discourse in particular.

Critical Discourse Analysis has found important applications in institutional discourse, where power and institution, asymmetry in role-relationship, the establishment of rules, norms and hierarchical orders have made critical insights into its discourse practices not only interesting but necessary. The chapters included in our volume by Eero Vaara & Pikka-Maaria Laine *A Critical Discourse Analysis perspective on strategy*, Hiromasa Tanaka *Corporate Language Policy Change: The Trajectory of Management Discourse in Japan, the oppressed or the oppressor?* and Jeanne Strunck *Discourses on ethos and public-private partnerships* represent insightful examples of critical discursive analysis into the business institutional context. Russell DiNapoli's chapter, on the other hand, revisiting the popular case of Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti's death penalty in the midst of world-wide protests, unveils the forms of abuse of a legal system. Roxana Delbene's study represents as well a contribution to critical analysis of institutionally contextualised discourse, her work revolving around doctor-patient interaction, where the practitioner's mitigating devices when diagnosing fatal pandemic disease may result in cheating the patient.

An important body of research in Critical Discourse Analysis has gone into the context of education, where representation and transmission of knowledge or value transfer have met forms of power abuse and manipulation. Our volume includes three chapters related to this research

interest, which does as well partake of the institutional context. David McInnes & Bronwyn James invite to more reflexive considerations into academic writing pedagogy. David F. Hyatt presents in his chapter a pedagogical, analytical and heuristic tool for the critical analysis of discourses, a support for teachers to use with learners in a range of classroom contexts. Josenia Antunes Vieira, on the other hand, looks into the teacher role, attempting with her paper to analyse changes within discourse when referring to the construction of identities of professionals related to higher education in Brasil.

Critical discourse studies include or do overlap with gender studies, where gender issues often lead to biased discourse processes, to scenarios of dominance and power abuse, whose studies are present in this volume as well. Raili Põldsaar takes us to the debates surrounding gender equality legislation in Estonia, as represented in the news articles. The paper is an attempt to explain how the texts reflect the dominant ideological consensus around the concept of Estonian identity. Begoña Núñez Perucha's chapter focuses on domestic violence, looking into the discursive construction of victim identity rooted in the internalisation of patriarchal cultural models.

Recent events of important scope at international level have been object of critical analytical concern, as is still the worldwide impact produced by the aftermath of the attacks of 11th September. Doris Vizcarrondo's study is a representative example of this concern, offering a semantic macrostructural analysis of the Latin American digital press discourse covering these news. Lise-Lotte Holmgreen studies the function of metaphor whose use is influenced by neo-liberal ideology and the events encompassing the 11th September. This article emphasizes the importance of the media in the construction of reality. In fact the media lie at the very centre of critical concern: the chapter by María Valentina Noblía is about chats as a site for interaction, and of chats representing examples of double mediation (virtual and written communication). These are revealed as activating frames which trigger stereotypical sex issues and talk. Likewise, Nunes looks into the print media to consider the establishment or support of domination relationships as ideological ones, inasmuch as specific perceptions, beliefs and attitudes are discursively reinforced.

The discursive construction of identity, the social representation of identity roles and role-relationships, has received much attention from Critical Discourse Analysis, focusing on an anthropological concern about the individual and his/her discursive representations. The chapter by Amalia Sopena constitutes an example of this research interest, here integrating frames of pragma-linguistics, cognitive psychology and politeness studies. M.^a Amparo Olivares' chapter, much in this vein, presents a series of

theoretical issues, introducing notions which include the specificity of Critical Discourse Analysis.

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