

# Critical Discourse Analysis: A Review of the Critique<sup>1</sup>

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*The article is a review of the main criticism targeted at Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) in recent years. It addresses such issues as the epistemological stance of CDA, the linguistic theory behind it, its cognitive framework, the role of the analyst and of the participants, the pretension to connect micro features of discourse and macro societal patterns, the treatment of context, linguistic analysis, and the issue of interdisciplinarity. Some of the changes undertaken in the field to respond to the critics and the need for a stronger impact of CDA are also discussed.*

**Keywords:** *Critical Discourse Analysis, approach, context, analysis, critique, discourse, interdisciplinarity, ideology.*

## **Análisis Crítico del Discurso: revisión de la crítica**

*El artículo es una revisión de las principales críticas hechas en torno al Análisis Crítico del Discurso (ACD) en los últimos años. Los siguientes son los tópicos tratados: la posición epistemológica del ACD, la teoría lingüística y el enfoque cognitivo que lo sustentan, el papel del analista y el papel de los participantes, la conexión entre los niveles macro y micro, el tratamiento del contexto, el análisis lingüístico, y el tema de la interdisciplinaria. Finalmente, se discuten los cambios que se han introducido para salirle al paso a la crítica y también la posibilidad de generar impacto.*

**Palabras clave:** *Análisis Crítico del Discurso, enfoque, contexto, análisis, crítica, discurso, interdisciplinaria, ideología.*

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<sup>1</sup> El artículo es uno de los productos de un macroproyecto del Colectivo Urdimbre del grupo de investigación Lenguaje y Educación de la Universidad del Norte. El nombre del macroproyecto es Interacción, Ideologías y Formación de Ciudadanos desde las Aulas de Ciencias Sociales y Ciencias Naturales. El macroproyecto se ha venido realizando en varias etapas desde el año 2002 hasta el presente.

***L'Analyse Critique du Discours: une révision de la critique***

*Cet article passe en revue les principales critiques faites à l'encontre de l'Analyse Critique du Discours au cours de ces dernières années. Il répond aux problèmes tels que la position épistémologique de l'analyse critique du discours, la théorie linguistique qui la soutient, son cadre cognitif, le rôle de l'analyste et celui des participants, la prétention de rattacher les micro-traits du discours et les macro-modèles de la société, le traitement du contexte, l'analyse linguistique et le problème de l'interdisciplinarité. Certains travaux entrepris dans ce domaine pour répondre à la critique et au besoin d'un impact plus grand sur l'analyse critique du discours ont été débattues.*

**Mots-clés:** *Analyse Critique du Discours, approche, contexte, analyse, critique, discours, interdisciplinarité, idéologie.*

## **1. Introduction**

The term Critical Discourse Analysis has been around since the last decade of the twentieth century as a continuation of the work of critical linguists whose work came to light in the 1970s. Often known as CDA, this kind of approach to discourse has attracted the attention of those interested in the complex relation between language and society. It is used as an umbrella term for a number of methodologies that try to uncover how discourse and ideology are intertwined, how social structure and power relations are represented, enacted, constituted, maintained or challenged through language.

CDA has become recognized among discourse analysts (Willig 1999, Jørgensen & Phillips 2002, Johnstone 2002, Mills 2004; Gee 2005a; Gee 2005b) as a comprehensive language research approach but it has also been the target of frequent criticism and the focus of heated debates in international journals. The following is a synthesis of some of the critique that has been voiced against CDA, its theories and methods. It is an account of what can be found in the literature without assuming it is true or false. The paper does not offer criticism or defense of the critique, nor does it discuss strengths or flaws in CDA research in particular parts of the world or attempt to review how different critical discourse (CD) analysts have responded to the critique and have defended their own work

or the ways and achievements of CDA (see for example, Billig 1999, Wetherell 1998, Fairclough 1996). It is therefore inevitable that some readers would then find that the views represented in this review are biased, selective, unrepresentative, or that they betray prejudice or ignorance about CDA research. The paper assumes certain familiarity with the research in this tradition on the part of the reader, but also an interest in a discussion of weaknesses which would alert researchers to potential red flags when engaging in this kind of analysis. A succinct description of CDA, tenets and main approaches precedes the different areas of criticism.

## **2. What is CDA**

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) is a kind of discourse analysis that considers language in use as conditioned by, but also constitutive of, social practices. Its main goal is to “describe and explain how power abuse is enacted, reproduced or legitimized by the text and talk of dominant groups or institutions” (van Dijk 1996:85). In Gee’s (2004) words, CDA is about how “form-function correlations [...] and language-context interactions [...] are associated with social practices [...] in terms of their implications for things like status, solidarity, social goods, and power” (p. 297-298). One of the tenets of CDA is that all representation is mediated by value-systems embedded in the language or that all language is ideological. Relations of dominance, discrimination, power and control in the society are constructed, reproduced or resisted through discourse practices in transparent, but also opaque, ways. Thus CDA undertakes to study discourse as it embodies structural macro relations in the society in order to expose inequalities and promote change. Not being a homogeneous approach with a single theory or methodology, it is difficult to make strong assertions as to its theoretical foundations (Wodak 2005). Perhaps what allows the general umbrella term of CDA is the emancipatory agenda and as such it is sometimes characterized as a discourse analysis ‘with an attitude’ (van Dijk 2000:96).

Fairclough's approach to CDA (1992, 1995) has become representative for many but not all analysts. Based mainly on Systemic Functional Grammar, he proposes three types of analysis: analysis of spoken or written language texts, analysis of the processes of interpretation and production, and analysis of the social conditions of situational context, its institutional and social structures. van Dijk (2001a) takes a socio-cognitive perspective in CDA. He studies the cognitive structures and strategies involved in the processes affecting social cognitions of groups, how specific discourse structures manipulate mental models of events, and how context models affect the interpretation of social situations. Wodak (1999, 2001) develops a discourse-historical approach and examines multiple discourses and interdiscursive relations in the historical contexts where they are embedded as well as diachronic changes in discourse genres. She resorts to multiple methods and data, integrating theories and methodologies according to what she judges useful for the object of investigation. The result is an eclectic method, with an explicit political stance, and a focus on self-reflection.

Most critique of CDA is not aimed at what it intends to do, but at how it undertakes its enterprise. Since the field is not homogeneous, most critique has targeted the analyses of the recognized figures in the field (especially Fairclough, and to a lesser degree van Dijk and Wodak) partly because their publications are perceived and adopted by many as models of analyses.

### **3. General epistemology**

The critique of the rationalist and scientific enterprise of CDA is expressed by Pennycook (2001) from a poststructuralist perspective. He argues that it is not possible to maintain a political and ideological stance, as most CD analysts do, and also claim to have the knowledge and the truth, because these are also political. CD analysts argue that there are deformed, distorted or disordered discourses (Wodak 1996), and opposite to these, one would assume, there are normal, non-distorted ones, or ways to

formulate discourse so that there is no power or ideology involved. Stubbs (1997) refers to this issue as the 'circularity problem': If the ideology is not transparent, it is hidden or opaque, how can we be sure that the analyst is not putting his/her own ideology into it? So what is necessary is to be self-reflexive and problematize the kind of knowledge produced (Pennycook 2001).

It seems that recent studies have started to respond to this criticism. McClean (2004), for example makes the following disclaimer at the beginning of the "Findings" chapter in his dissertation: "I have situated myself as a researcher in the midst of the research process and have presented biographical and intellectual data [...] that highlight the motivating factors that contributed to the selection of this research study [...] I am cognizant of the limitation imposed by such a process [...] I have taken great care in guarding against rampant subjectivity, paying attention to the danger of finding only what I was predisposed to looking for" (127). This statement sounds as a safeguard against potential criticism, a promise of objectivism. Unfortunately, her work does not reflect a consistent stance throughout the analysis.

Other analysts do not promise objectivity. Van Dijk (2001), for example, writes: "CDA does not deny but explicitly defines and defends its own sociopolitical position. That is, CDA is biased – and proud of it" (96). The question then becomes: To what extent is this compatible with the criterion of validity needed for qualitative social research? (cf. Meyer 2001).

More recently, some scholars associate the critical part of CDA with "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 interest), and individualism" (Rogers 2004a:3).

#### **4. Symbolicism and logical empiricism**

It is often claimed in CDA that it is necessary to make opaque relations explicit, assuming that there is something hidden to which mainly the analyst can access. At a micro level, this is

backed up with linguistic theories. Kress (1993, 1996) argues that each language feature involves a history of transformations. There is the assumption that there are a number of basic sentence patterns, or sentence types in a language - transactives, for example - that reflect the world more directly or accurately. In Systemic Functional Grammar, each grammatical metaphor has a corresponding non-metaphorical, congruent and desirable form. All nominalizations are seen as 'objectifying', and all nominals are 'thingies'. This is considered problematic. Non-straightforward forms are suspicious and likely target of criticism. These ideas about language, following O'Halloran (2003), derive from symbolism, the prevalent model in cognitive science at the time Critical Linguistics started, and, in his view, still inherent in some of the CD analyses. The symbolic model was based on logical empiricism. In this frame of mind the construction of sentences corresponds directly to the world; the meaning of sentences and parts of text construct the meaning of the whole in the same way building blocks do, and symbols can be mechanically manipulated to make meaning. The idea in CDA, O'Halloran argues, is that since it takes considerable effort to transform surface forms into canonical, original, or simple forms, events in texts get mystified.

An opposite view would consider that a linguistic form cannot be automatically associated to function. Today notions like 'indexicality' and 'orders of indexicality' developed by linguistic anthropologists and sociolinguists compel us to go beyond the symbolic meaning of language. Following Hymes' idea of 'second linguistic relativity' (1996 cited in Blommaert 2005), it is crucial to consider the variability of language functions across contexts, how language can signal different aspects in the context. That is why Hymes prefers the notion of 'sociolinguistic systems' rather than linguistic ones. In a time when texts move across contexts in unprecedented ways, it is essential to problematize this kind of 'presupposability of function' (Blommaert 2005:71) In a way, it seems adequate to think of language as 'evoking' besides representing (O'Halloran 2003) and consider contextual meanings and interpretations. The

treatment of the context, as will be seen below, has indeed been a weakness in CDA. That is why a number of studies have combined CDA with ethnography, for example.

## **5. Contradictory cognitive framework**

In some analyses, the potential reader of the analyzed text is imagined as making very strong top-down inferences from the text and drawing on prevailing Discourses to make sense of the discourse in the text. This is especially the case in the analysis of media articles, where the analyses imply an idealized 'non-critical' reader, who will make use of cues in a text to align him/herself with an ideology. For example, following O'Halloram's (2003) line of thought concerning this point, it would be possible to say in a rather simplistic way, that in the analysis of a 'Petition against the persecution of Microsoft', van Dijk (2001) (though he would perhaps not accept it) presupposes that the use of 'his', businessmen' and 'the men who have made this country great' would commit readers with sexist ideology and to a nationalist ideology of US self-glorification.

On the other hand, readers of CD analyses are often presumed unable to put in information that is omitted in a text. In the above mentioned example of the petition text, readers would not be able to recover the information about "the well known practice of forced bundling of products" not mentioned in the text. Lay 'unable' readers would also be unable to recover 'deep' structures from the transformations and syntactic structures that hide, for example, the responsible agents of social misdeeds and would be therefore likely to be manipulated - a 'deficit model in understanding other's understandings'(Mcbeth 2003). This type of contradiction was pointed out by O'Halloran (2003) when he lists the tensions between mystification analysis and socio-cognitive analysis. In the former, the reader is not usually made explicit, the inferences are weak and the processing is done bottom-up. In the socio-cognitive analyses readers are made more explicit, they are able to make stronger ideological-laden inferences and the process is more top-down oriented.

Actually, the emphasis in CDA is very much on how messages are encoded in texts, and very little attention to how these messages are interpreted or made sense of. As O'Halloran argues, the reading process in CDA is represented mainly through the 'consumption' metaphor. That is, there is usually little regard for an active reader, who can display hard work while reading a text or that can take up alternative cues from the context or prior knowledge.

Chilton (2005) also attempts to integrate a cognitive approach to CDA. He proposes that, given that a number of principles (e.g. that mind is modular, that people have 'theory of mind', that people have innate ability to mask their intentions, that people tend to essentialize categories) are innate for humans, it is possible to construct models that offer explanations of how discourse affects social cognition. It must be said, however, that the principles he assumes as 'innate' have not been demonstrated to really exist and are questionable even within cognitive psychology. This kind of approach can lead to the construction of models above models, all of them interesting, but with little grip of evidence for their existence and operation and perhaps leading away from the political mission of CDA.

The problem is arguably that this reception stage has not widely and consistently been incorporated across CDA research and that the field would benefit from more studies that could more clearly show how the models of the texts are reproduced later on in the discourses of the recipients.

## **6. Biased from above: the narratives and the analyst**

CDA has been criticized for its excessive reliance on social theory to explain discursive practices and also for its little attention to the meanings as constructed by participants as they interact (Mcbeth 2003, Slembrouck 2001, Schegloff 1999, Schegloff 1997). In defending the need for analyses that correspond to the participants' meanings and interpretations as constructed interactionally, Schegloff (1997) criticizes the "theoretical imperialism" of academics and critics, because they



are imposing the terms by which to interpret the world. By this he is referring to the social theories and to the 'orders of discourse' that are used by outsiders (CD analysts) as frameworks to interpreting and explaining discourse. CDA does not have space for individual accounts of the uses of language. "It is not individuals who speak and act, but [...] historically and socially defined Discourses speak to each other through individuals" (1996:132 in Macbeth 2003:249). So the critique is that CDA has become a totalizing account of everything, very grand narratives. Pennycook (2001) also points out this hegemony of theoretical perspective that dominates the analysis. One of these grand narratives would be the neo-Marxist structuralist determinism present in CDA, according to which ideologies are product of other social and economic factors, based on class inequality.

Indeed, CDA would not usually consider the step-by-step construction of context in interaction. For the new CD analyst, once familiarized with big tendencies as 'technologization of discourses', 'commodification of discourses' (Fairclough 1992, 1996), 'marketization of discourses' (1995) it is not difficult to skip the very fine-grained analysis of the interaction, and go straight to the explanation, especially if s/he does not have the skills to analyze the language. The rank and file applied linguists does not usually come up with new sociological explanations, but looks for the handiest ones to explain the analysis and these are offered sometimes from within CDA. While it does not seem very fruitful to explain discourse practices entirely in terms of subjectivities, care should be taken not to jump from concrete turns in interaction or from a sentence in a text into some of the grand ideological discourses.

## **7. Role of participants in the interpretation**

Pennycook (2001) criticizes the little attention given to processes of production and reception of texts. Slembrouck (2001) and Buchholz (2001), point out for the need of CDA to give more careful consideration to the interpretation participants themselves have of the discourse practices they are involved in,

to seriously consider participant-centered interpretations. O'Halloran (2003), from a cognitive perspective, also demonstrates that it is necessary to take into account what the reader brings in when dealing with a text.

According to Faiclough (1992), the participants have rationalizations about their discourses but they are not armed with theories of society and are affected by relationships of domination. Slembrouck (2001) considers that the analyst is not armed with a strong theory of the social, but only with the assumption that there should be a theory and that explanation should flow from expert to user. It does not seem wise to maintain that difference between analyst and language user and she criticizes the fact that in CDA practice 'there have been few attempts to examine contextualized interpretations of real participants in their own right' or as Sarangi and Roberts (1999:394 in Slembrouck 2001:43) put it: "CDA has been mostly doing research 'on' rather than 'with' and/or 'for' institutions". Perhaps if what CDA agenda wants is to bring about some change, it might be fruitful to start from the lay institutional members. Slembrouck demonstrates how in the process of analyses, explanation and interpretation, the voice of the analyzed can be felt (or left out), and including or omitting it can make a difference. He also points out the way some articles represent data and conclusions without due account of the dialogicity that takes place between analysts and analyzed.

One of the critical issues in CDA in the field of education is the role of the researcher who does CDA of classroom discourses. There is the ethical question of sharing the analysis and the findings with the participants (usually teachers, but could also be students). Usual problems with this research is the dichotomy between researchers and teachers, researchers and school systems, policies and discourses. CD analysts come with their own agenda and metalanguage, do the research and leave the place to do a publication. Stevens (2004) proposes dialogue around the analysis, the data and the results of the research as a means to explore and develop multiple perspectives to the discourses that happen in the classroom and how they relate to social practices;

Stevens also argues that all the analyses and results should be shared with the teachers, so that the teacher can decide which of these are significant, are defensible, which are wrong and/or inconsequential for them. If CDA is committed to change, research should not stop with the publication of the study.

### **8. The connection: can CDA make it?**

One of the key issues in CDA is the relation between macro and micro analyses. Van Dijk (1995, 2001) developed a theory of ideology according to which these are both cognitive and social and a kind of “‘interface’ between cognitive representations and processes underlying discourse and action, on the one hand, and the societal position and interests of social groups, on the other hand” (2001p. 18). In his model, ideologies control the minds of the groups, their attitudes, possibly their knowledge and beliefs (social cognition). Ideologies are thus like ‘group-schemata’ (Blommaert 2005:163) located inside the mind (s). The problem in general is that ideologies are abstract constructs which may never be unanimously defined, so it is even more difficult to determine how one can trace them down in discourse. Since we cannot see the ideologies if they are inside the mind, we may never be able to establish how cognitive patterns get inside our heads, and how the frequency of use of certain discourses affects our cognition (Blommaert 2005, Stubbs 1997). As van Dijk (2001:114) himself affirms “the theories involved here are exceedingly complex, and much of this is still obscure but we have a general picture of the main components and relationships involved”. The question here is how these complex theories of mind-functioning and ideologies contribute to the ultimate goal of CDA. What might be more relevant to study is the correlation between language in use and people’s actions in the world.

Another problem with the macro-micro connection can be found in what Schegloff (1997) calls the problem of descriptive authority: Within CDA there is almost no statistical methods or findings to back up claims about discourse changes, tendencies or about heterogeneity in discourses. The problem is: how can

the analyst know if a particular feature about the text is of social significance if there is no comparison with other contexts, or with a corpus?

## **9. Text analysis**

The critique of text analysis has been made even from within CDA. Fowlers (1996) warns against ‘any politically well-intentioned analytic work on language and ideology, regardless of method, technical grasp of linguistic theory, or historical validity of interpretations’ (1996:6).

The representativeness of the data has been questioned due to its fragmentary and exemplificatory nature. If all the features of discourse are ideologically charged and represent values and a world view, why then do analysts choose only certain features and certain passages only? Besides, a number of publications focus only on transitivity, ergativity and nominalizations. Grammar, however, interacts with other features of the text and this is sometimes ignored. Widdowson (2000) exemplifies how an analysis of ergativity (by Stubbs, 1994) as a feature describing responsibility and agency can be better understood when lexical choice is taken into account.

Unlike Widdowson (2004), for whom all the features should be ideologically charged, van Dijk (1995) insists that though all features are ideologically imbued, there are some preferent ones and he actually presents a list of these features.

For Widdowson’s (2004) CDA at times resembles literary hermeneutics where there is much interpretation and little analysis. He suggests that the difference between theoretical aspirations of CDA and actual descriptive accomplishments is a result of the confusion between approach and method. CDA should better be seen as an approach, informed with certain theoretical ideas, with the goal to expose exploitation and power abuse, interested in analyzing language as it is symptomatic of something else.

This is a strong criticism which brings justice to a number of papers which deal with the textual stage of analysis in a

superficial way. If language is redundant, there should be a number of linguistic features that signal a way of interpreting the discourse, not just one; unfortunately sometimes analyses are not technical and detailed enough, whether it be because analysts do not know the linguistic tools adequate to do it or whether because of lack of space in the journals or because they just want to propose examples of what could be happening in the text. While researchers need to be aware of the 'transitory' nature of every analysis, the aim should be in-depth, multidimensional and multiperspective analyses. The more types of analyses converge to suggest a particular interpretation, the more valid the latter would seem to be. A careful and well-grounded textual analysis should always be done. What can vary, however, is the balance between technicality and accessibility in the final presentation for different audiences and purposes.

## **10. The context**

One of the strongest criticism of CDA is the treatment of context. The critique is that context is treated superficially. Blommaert (2001), for example, points to the lack of ethnographic basis for the analysis of context and too much reliance on common sense, presuppositions and assumptions. Blommaert (2001, 2005) suggests a number of aspects of context usually forgotten: text trajectories (whether the text has shifted across contexts to the actual form), access to resources (whether the producers or the interpreters have (full) access to the linguistic resources of the text), data histories (time, place, occasion of the text). Widdowson (2004) also criticizes that some CD analysts (Fairclough, for example) pay little attention to context analysis with the exception of Wodak, who uses the 'discourse-historical method'. Still, in spite of the apparent attention to and the theoretical elaboration of context through a model of concentric circles to represent different levels of context (Wodak 1996), she does not show how to do the analysis. She does not fully instantiate her proposed framework. All she does is present a text in its historic setting and a description of the situation with

some details. But there is no explanation of why particular details and not others are identified as contextually significant. What we have, Widdowson claims, is 'ready-made interpretations which, in effect, serve as a kind of pretextual priming, designed to dispose us to read this text in a particular way" (142). Widdowson actually makes a different reading of one of Wodak's texts and derives a different but plausible interpretation to show his point.

A very striking example of how the account of context influences the interpretation is Chick's microethnography of Zulu -English interactions in the classroom done in the 80s. His analysis (1986) of the observations showed volubility from the teacher and taciturnity from the students. He explained this as solidarity strategy from the teacher and deference from the students, both acting in consistency with the interaction patterns in the culture. Ten years later, armed with new theoretical knowledge, and now aware of the importance of macrofactors in the interpretation of microethnographic data, Chicks did a new analysis and concluded that under apartheid the apparent rhythmically and smoothly co-ordinated teacher-student interaction served the actors to hide their poor command of English and inadequate understanding of academic content and simultaneously save their dignity by maintaining an appearance of effective learning taking place. Chick's latter work is categorized by Kumaravadivelu (1999) as Critical Classroom Discourse Analysis.

Thus there are two major problems associated with the context. One is in the definition of the context: what constitutes the context for a text? Where does it start, where does it end? Can the researcher account for it all? If the researcher cannot account for the whole context, she will miss what is happening with the text and its social function. The other difficulty is the following. If she can include in the context the institutional orders, for example, how can this knowledge not be reflected in the interpretation and explanation of the text? In simple words, if one knows that the text circulates in a racist society, can the researcher not conclude that the text construes racism? Would then s/he not be proving the obvious? This is a crucial issue

because determining which are the links of the discourse to social, political and historical aspects of the context can make a big difference in whether a piece of talk is perceived as something mundane, or whether it is perceived as power abuse.

## **11. Interdisciplinarity**

Interdisciplinarity in CDA has been mainly accomplished through the types of texts, fields and contexts where the analysis has been applied. The multidisciplinary in the approach, however, has not been fully accomplished. The compartmentalizing tendencies of the social sciences can conceivably be considered as an obstacle for achieving true interdisciplinarity. Scholars are often holders of ideologies that are interested in differentiation and in establishing boundaries for their disciplines (Irvine & Gal 2000). This can be the case of some CD analysts but also of non-CD analysts. Well established research traditions may not see the need to join forces with other approaches. Sometimes, it may just be lack of acquaintance with approaches outside one's own.

It seems that sometimes what is important is the tradition from where the researcher comes from. Labels like 'critical ethnography', 'critical rhetorics' point to a common critical enterprise, or attitude, but perhaps signal origin in a different tradition and different methods of data collection and analysis. Kubota (2001) analyzed how the discourse of applied linguists, revisionists discourses, and the discourses of studies on instructional practices in US schools represent the US classrooms. She links these discourses with ethnocentric views and calls for teachers to challenge the underlying ideologies. Her study, however, is not a CDA. Conversely, a dissertation (Broderick 2004) entitled "'Recovery', 'science', and the politics of hope: A critical discourse analysis of applied behavior analysis for young children labeled with autism", based on ethnomethodological and Foucauldian discourse analysis, makes no reference to any of the scholars associated with CDA, makes minimal analysis of text (at least from the list of prominent ones provided by Toolan 1997) yet it bears the label of CDA. The question is: what does it

take to be 'declared' CDA? Or further, what does a study gain or lose if it is called CDA? Or even, is it an ideology to insist in labeling and categorizing types of research?

Acknowledgment of the need for interdisciplinarity has come from outside the field, but with moderate force. In the introduction to *Critique of Anthropology* of 2001 (volume 21, number 1) the contributors concede that "CDA and LA [linguistic anthropology] in fact turn out to be complementary in their strengths and weaknesses"(6). Yet Blommaert, Slembrouck and Vershueren in their respective articles criticize the weaknesses in CDA to underline the superiority of the anthropological approach. Buchholz, however, in issue number 2 of the same volume, reflects a more conciliatory tone and acknowledges the need for hybrid approaches to discourse analysis. Still, what is important is to notice is that while there has been interest from outside, even if for the sake of criticizing CDA, this interest has not been most of the time reciprocal. The eclecticism proclaimed by Meyer (2001) refers mostly to the social theories that can be drawn upon to explain discourses. The plea for interdisciplinarity by van Dijk (2001) is limited to interest in cognitive science, even though his own work involves linguistics, cognitive and social psychology, as well as communication studies and sociology (about elites). In the recent volume edited by Wodak (2005), however, the issue of interdisciplinarity receives more explicit attention. Van Leeuwen (2005) calls for an integrationist model of interdisciplinary work in which integrated disciplines would be considered interdependent, equally valued and problem-oriented (rather than method-oriented). He focuses on how CDA could integrate with social science, history and ethnography in projects that involve team work in which different disciplines talk about action. The idea is to recognize what each discipline can do and what each cannot.

While we wait for these alliances to happen, hybrid approaches have quietly started. Lakoff & Johnson's ideas about metaphors and how metaphors influence thought, for example, have started to be associated with CDA (Charteris-Black 2004, Johnson 2005, Santa Ana 2002). Hybrid names like critical



metaphor analysis, critical classroom discourse analysis may perhaps lead to a more flexible flow across traditions with the aim of mutual enrichment. Individual researchers propose new combinations. For example, Scheuer (2003) shows the advantages of Bourdieu's notion of 'habitus' in CDA. Kumagai (2004) combines CDA and critical ethnography.

## **12. Changes**

Throughout this review it can be seen that CDA has progressively been responding to some of the criticism that has been addressed to it. For example, it has moderated its claims of truth and objectivity. Some of the most genuine attempts (though by no means the only ones) come from analysts in the education field. Rogers (2004b) acknowledges that triangulation or monitoring one's own thoughts would not diminish the claims of objectivity and scientificity. She calls for reflexivity which goes beyond reflection and introspection. It implies recognition that "the person producing the theory is included in the subject matter she is trying to understand", "part of the empirical data gathering, the framework, and the method of analysis" (250), which is partly seen in her edited volume.

In her own research Rogers (2004c) addresses some of other criticism. She addresses Widdowson's criticism by analyzing language forms first. She takes special care in describing how she collects data, she acknowledges the limitations of dealing with only interviews and addresses how she tries to make up for it. Her paper contains tables and appendices that explain how the analysis was done and the categories used for it. It must be said, that this is not always seen in traditional CDA or in some other fields..

In a number of studies in the volume edited by Rogers (2004), discrete combinations (Fairclough's approach combined with Gee's; ethnography and CDA; interactional sociolinguistics with CDA; CDA and Bernstein framework of discourses) are found. The field is now open for new options to be tried within one single study, not only in what refers to data collection, but also in the

analysis and explanation. True interdisciplinary projects would sound more realistic if such enterprises were undertaken by a team of researchers coming from different traditions, especially those that take more systematic and broader accounts of context of participants' role in interaction and interpretation. It would be particularly useful to resort to notions that linguistic anthropologists have used for identifying ideologies, like 'indexicality', 'contextualization cues', 'metapragmatics', 'iconization'. It is not common to see studies that deal with the fine-grained analyses of texts, an equally detailed analysis of the socialization of texts in a particular context (in the classroom for example), and then attempts to link it with how they both reproduce or contest broader social structures, ideologies or relations. For example, Sarroub (2004) uses interactional sociolinguistics but does not transcend to associate talk with issues of power. Rogers (2004c) focuses on the reception and interpretation stage of the discourses by her participants, because she analyzes interviews. Lewis & Ketter (2004) address the macro and the micro, but take a top-down approach: "we theorized that CDA would help us discover how our fixed discourses (liberal humanism and critical multiculturalism) persisted through or were interrupted by the interaction patterns we enacted as the group evolved" (124). Following Stubbs (1997), CDA could benefit from using a large corpus as a base and the methods employed in corpus linguistics in order to be able to make comparisons and generalizations about language use which can potentially add some authority to some analyses provided the corpora are well tagged. What is important to underline here, is that there is room for creative comprehensive approaches that combine the strengths of studies already done within and outside CDA and that share a similar agenda.

### **13. Critical Discourse Analysis and Then What?**

Some researchers would claim that their job is at the linguistic and academic level. It is for others to take action. What can educators do with the results of CDA research if they are not part

of the study (usually projects are just diagnostic) and are suddenly made aware of how discourses of textbooks, materials, policies manipulate them all? Some educators would understandably take nihilistic attitudes after being confronted with their own discourse practice and may decide that it is impossible to come out of ideological discourses. Others may feel that their duty is to engage in critical language awareness projects. Prieto (2001) reports of one such a project in which the goal was to teach students to use CDA as a tool for the critique of dominant ideologies in the media, specifically, the representation of 'others'. His account of the project, however, could leave the impression that there was a good deal of indoctrination going on in his project, and that one view was replaced by another with the complicity of the power relations in the classroom.

The question addresses the role of the critical discourse analyst: Is it ethical to go to a site, criticize and leave? What are the changes that can be concretely proposed and in what direction? Or, in general, can CDA bring about some changes? How?

As van Dijk (2001) worded it, CDA wants to "understand, expose, and ultimately resist social inequality (2001a:352). Most of the time, however, it stops at exposing. A smart analysis usually ends up in a respectable publication, a doctoral degree, or the applauses at the end of an academic presentation in front of colleagues that feed the vanity of the researcher. Following Toolan (1997), the politics of CDA usually exposes phenomena that are self evident and have long been denounced and with which the majority of people would agree. Thus he proposes moving from sexism, racism, classism, into "extended and detailed and suitably historicized accounts" (100) of discourses around more politically complex and controversial phenomena. He concretely refers to the little attention CDA has given to the discourses around Ulster, where there are multiple and sometimes conflicting forms of domination and marginalization. But, in general, his criticism refers to the need for researchers to look at local conflicts and discourses which have to be analyzed from numerous perspectives, some of them not that obvious, and the need to be alert to seemingly minor differences in the use

of language which can provide cues for us to engage in talks that can make our world better.

Note: I want to thank the two anonymous reviewers for their incisive comments on the initial version of this paper. I have tried to incorporate their suggestions in the final revision of this paper. My thanks also to Dr. Linda Waugh for encouraging me to pursue this topic.

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Fecha de recepción: 15-01-2007

Fecha de aceptación: 23-03-2007