

Critical Discourse Analysis

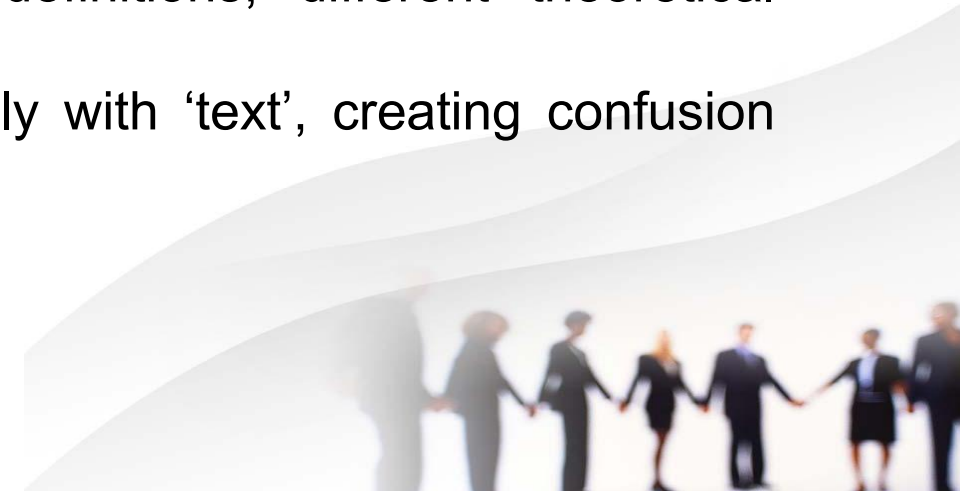
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CH.1



What is critical discourse analysis?

- CDA → power abuse, dominance, and inequality are enacted, reproduced, or resisted through text and talk.
- Aim → how discourse structures are used to produce (or challenge)
- Explores the ideological implications of language use.
- Offers a useful framework for translation studies, linking language and ideology.
- Understanding discourse = fundamental to CDA research.
- Fairclough, 1992; Baker, 2018 → many conflicting definitions, different theoretical perspectives.
- Widdowson (2004) adds that it's often used interchangeably with 'text', creating confusion about their distinction.



Discourse: a multiplicity of definitions

- Highly abstract and open to conflicting interpretations (Stubbs, 1983; Widdowson, 2004).
- Used across disciplines, often without a fixed definition.
- **Linguistics** → Brown & Yule: “language in use.”
- Sinclair & Coulthard: “the way units above clauses are related”
- Georgakopoulou & Goutsos: communication in context.
- **Sociolinguistic** → concerned with context, ideology, identity, and institutions
- Wodak: discourse constructs knowledge and relationships.
- Mills: discourse shapes perception of reality, not just language.



Foucault's Perspective

- Discourse → regulated practice linking power and knowledge.
- Discourse = means of oppression + a form of resistance.

Fairclough's Contribution

- Discourse → social interaction that represents and constructs social practices.
- Bridges linguistic and sociological views of discourse.

Two Main Understandings of Discourse (Angermuller et al., 2014)

- Pragmatic → discourse as language in use (the situated, contextual practice of producing speech acts, turn-taking)
- Socio-historical → discourse as broad verbal/non-verbal practices tied to power and social communities.

Discourse = interaction of language, power and ideology.



Reisigl and Wodak's Definition (2009)

- Discourse = context-dependent semiotic practices.
- Situated in social actions, socially constituted and constitutive.
- Linked to major topics (e.g., politics, ideology).
- Involves multiple social actors with diverse perspectives.

Discourse → shapes and is shaped by institutions/ideologies/ social practices.

Themes in Discourse Studies = ideology/power/politics/racism/gender/media/globalization.

Text = linguistic product.

Discourse = the broader social and contextual use of language.



Discourse: three main features

1. Authentic, interactive, and naturally occurring language

- Discourse → a form of power + a site of social interaction= abstract
- Often confused with text; requires clearer parameters (Widdowson 2004).

Bax's Six Dimensions (based on Stubbs, 1983)

1. Authentic, interactive and naturally occurring language
2. Real texts of any size
3. Context-based consideration
4. Intertextuality
5. Ideology/viewpoints
6. Socio-political implications



- Stubbs (1983) → language + action + knowledge = inseparable
- Discourse ≠ an isolated text = a dynamic exchange
- Fictional language can become discourse if used socially.
- Discourse ≠ limited by mode = it can appear in written or spoken forms
- Hansen (2016): analysis of public comments on Banksy's No Ball Games and
- Sirulhaq et al. (2023): CDA of hate speech and political discourse

showing that discourse can be both linguistic and visual when it reflects authentic human interaction and social significance.



2. Both verbal and non-verbal material: context, context, and context!

- Context → central to discourse analysis
- Blommaert (2005) → context as “the totality of conditions under which discourse is produced, circulated, and interpreted”
- van Dijk (2005) → “the cognitive, social, political, cultural, and historical environments of discourse.”
- Discourse = verbal language + non-verbal elements
- Stubbs (1983) → “language in use in social contexts”
interaction between speakers and the interpretive role of the audience.

Meaning-making → dependent on the surrounding context + the shared ideological + social values of the participants involved.



- Widdowson(2007) & Flowerdew(2017)→ context is not static or merely external
- CDA scholars (Foucault and Fairclough) → the mutual relationship between discourse and context
- Fairclough → “form of social practice”
- Discourse → existing power structures while also having the power to challenge and transform them

Historical examples:

- Patriarchal discourse of early 20th-century Britain and mid-20th-century America:
- Rise of second-wave feminist discourse in the 1960s challenged and reshaped these ideologies, leading to greater gender equality.

Discourse → mirrors social realities + constructs and transforms them,
influencing how people think, act, and interact within their cultural and political worlds.

