

Advances in Critical Discourse Studies

Edited by
John E. Richardson, Michał Krzyżanowski,
David Machin and Ruth Wodak

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Advances in Critical Discourse Studies

Advances in Critical Discourse Studies collects ground-breaking scholarship and cutting-edge research which reflects significant shifts in Critical Discourse Studies, exploring the field from theoretical, analytic and methodological perspectives. Innovative chapters analyse a diverse range of discourses including journalism, mass media, political communication, policy documents, interviews, photographic archive and official bodies.

The chapters in Part I explore Critical Discourse Studies from the point of view of history, memory, identity politics and discourse, analysing salient examples of how memory and recollection of the past shapes understandings and narratives of the present, and visions of future societies. Part II explores problem-oriented analysis in Critical Discourse Studies and examines the roles that discourse plays in the formation, perpetuation and transformation of class relations. Finally, Part III explores a methodological issue by looking at the benefits of reinforcing fieldwork and ethnographic analysis in Critical Discourse Studies. The case studies throughout the book demonstrate that analytic research contributes significantly to the in-depth and in-situ research of a variety of increasingly complex social, historical, political and economic contexts.

This book was originally published as three special issues of the journal *Critical Discourse Studies*.

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Preface

This book brings together recent ground-breaking scholarship, originally published as special issues of the journal *Critical Discourse Studies* (CDS). In it, we aim to develop critical perspectives on the relationships between discourse and social dynamics and to reflect the breadth of critical research on language and discourse in contemporary society. The chapters amassed here were selected for (re)publication for two primary reasons: they explore Critical Discourse Studies from different theoretical, analytic as well as methodological perspectives; and they represent developments and innovations within this field.

The chapters in this book also represent exciting cross-fertilisation with other disciplines. That is, the book showcases both a range of ways in which scholars have begun to engage with methods and concerns developed in other academic fields and how scholars working primarily in other fields have turned to CDS, having seen value in its assumptions, analytical tools and the way it articulates its political concerns. As well as helping to address some of the criticisms made formerly of CDS – for example, that it focused insufficiently on the production of and social goings on behind texts, that texts may be chosen for analysis selectively, or for making assumptions about how such texts will be interpreted (Widdowson, 1995; Philo 2007) – these chapters point to the highly compelling reasons for integrating discourse analysis with broader more context-focused fields of enquiry, including sociology, social policy, history, museum studies, anthropology, media studies, etc. In the process, we move beyond analysis of text, while at the same time maintaining the power of the kind of close attention to semiotic detail that has been the hallmark of good CDS. These studies have demonstrated that we can integrate and compare text/talk with concrete sociological, political and/or historic analysis, allowing us to make a clear case for where social practices are de- and re-contextualised (van Leeuwen and Wodak, 1999).

These processes of recontextualisation can be marked in a variety of text- and discourse-genres, and analysed in a variety of ways. In studies of social remembering and commemoration, past events are invoked and enacted in different genres (*inter alia*, in news reports, political discourse, school books, everyday conversation and official ceremonies) to suit specific pragmatic, institutional and/or political functions. We can ask what, in concrete, these commemorated events originally encompassed and then how these events are discursively framed in and through representation. We can apply a critical analytic perspective to the kinds of images we find in museums and archives and ask: who placed these elements together, for what reasons and what interpretations or stories are foregrounded (and backgrounded) in such presentations? A similar problem-orientated approach can be taken with regard to institutional discourse: how, for

example, does changing educational policy reinforce or transform educational and social inequalities? This can be studied both at a textual level in terms of policy documents and institutional records but also in terms of decision making and the pathways of children in schools policed by these policies. We can ask similar questions (*vis a vis* power, hegemony and control) as we observe people in everyday settings in order to examine how discourses are realised and lived out in different ways by different people: what power relations are indexed and/or (re)produced; whose interests do these discourses serve; and how are these subverted and challenged? What runs through all of these integrated, context-sensitive studies is an increased awareness of the way that discourses are realised, communicated and legitimised, not only through language but also through other communicative activity. Such work also reminds us that there is a wealth of research, beyond the usual CDS and linguistic books and journals, both from which we should learn and also to which we have something important to offer.

In sum, this integration of scholarly traditions is one way that the principles, concerns and tools of CDS have been moving outwards from its core networks, taken on by scholars from other disciplines and used to frame the kinds of questions asked of data. The chapters brought together in this book in different ways are evidence of both of these new directions in scholarly research. A first grouping of chapters explores Critical Discourse Studies from the point of view of history, memory, identity politics and discourse. The dynamics of memory; the dialectical relations between remembering, and social and political contexts; and the interactions between power, hegemony, history and commemoration are fertile and generative topics for critical analysis. Whilst literature on memory studies has tended to assume a rather loose relationship between individual and collective memory, and the ways that such memories are construed and represented in discourse, CDS holds the potential to open up such relationships and explore the complex, contradictory and transformative processes enacted in and between the context-memory-text triad. Even looking past interesting critical research on the politics of commemoration – asking what is memorialised, how and why – the connections between individual experiences and understandings of history (frequently, but not necessarily terrifying or traumatic history) and the ways that such histories are collectively remembered, represented and institutionally commemorated (or not) are far from straightforward (Heer et al., 2008).

Trauma disrupts memory and so fragments any coherent sense of self identity. Given this defining feature of trauma, key issues when examining discourses of historic distress are attending to *the unsaid* and *the unsayable*. Whilst, empirically, both of these forms of utterance are of a similar textual status – both exist as *absence* in discourse – theoretically and politically they are poles apart. Whilst victims find traumatic experiences inherently difficult to recover, remember and usually to narrate, for perpetrators of violence it is the disclosure and sharing of such experiences which is most challenging – particularly when remembering and testifying constitute or support a demand for justice, reparation or redress (Assmann, 2009: 32ff.). Several chapters in this first section of the book examine instances where countries have established commissions to confront the legacies of the past (see also Verdoolaege, 2008; Anthonissen & Blommaert, 2006). Such social and institutional contexts remind us that remembering is always a political act, an act which entails the management of subjectivities as part of an agonistic process of coalescing an established historic narrative. Voice, in all its complexity, is a central issue in this process – whose voices are allowed to be heard, who is allowed to speak and who is spoken on behalf of, whose voices dominate or

silence those of others, and so on. And it is in this regard, in the detailed and systematic analysis of voice and all which that entails, that the contribution of discourse analysts can be most keenly felt. Supporting this view, the political scientist, Anton Pelinka, argues, that

it is not sufficient to debate the 'meta-level' – the meaning, the perception, the interpretation of certain facts. It is not enough to talk about the interests behind a specific narrative. It is necessary to go into the substance. It is necessary to distinguish: tragedy is not tragedy is not tragedy; mass murder is not mass murder; war is not war (Pelinka, 2009: 51).

Together, the chapters in this first section of our book analyse salient examples of how memory, recollection and discursive representation of the past shapes both understandings and narratives of the present and visions of future societies, in Europe and beyond.

Second, we move to more explicitly problem-oriented analysis in CDS and examine the roles that discourse plays in the formation, perpetuation and transformation of class relations. As we argue, class and class divisions remain central forces in social structure and the structuration of subject positions. And, since CDA traditionally involves an analysis of how discourse relates to and is implicated in the (re)production of social relations – particularly unequal, iniquitous and/or discriminatory power relations –, an analysis of how class inequality is enacted in, and reproduced through, discourse is a vital dimension of the critical literature.

Any social formation we study and/or live in is a structure-in-process (Coward & Ellis, 1977), which is actively and continually produced and transformed through complex dialectical economic, political and ideological practices, and is reified, represented and reproduced in discourse(s). Economic relations and economic practices cannot exist on their own, requiring political form and ideological rationalisation. While political practice is constituted by the contradiction between classes, this 'takes place, not as two monoliths facing each other, but through various groups, fractions of classes, alliances, etc. [...] it is the realm of the State' (Coward & Ellis, 1977: 66). Membership of such groups and fractions of classes is fluid and unsettled and, since social classes exist in conflict with each other as a result of their opposing interests, so too the boundaries, membership and entitlements of various groups are themselves managed and riven with conflict. Ideologies are 'practices which function symbolically' (Callinicos, 1983: 135) through discourse, acting to smooth over the contradictions of class society and providing 'the way in which the individual actively lives his or her role within the social totality' (Coward & Ellis, 1977: 66). However, ideology should not be treated simply as 'false ideas' which are held often contrary to people's true interests. Critical theorists, such as Marx, do not reduce ideology and ideological discourse to issues of 'logical or empirical falsity but of the superficial or misleading way in which truth is asserted' (McLellan, 1986: 18). That is, we maintain that 'classist' or ideological discourse is that which represents historically transient forms of exploitative political-economic organisation as 'eternal, natural, inevitable or "rational"' (Jones, 2001: 227).

As we demonstrate in the later chapters, an analytic focus on discourse, as situated and contextualised communicative action, represents a potentially valuable way to examine individual experiences and structural stratified inequalities. However, our

analysis needs to be targeted at more than simply 'the phrases of this world'. Certainly, identifying the hallmarks of ideological discourse is a key stage in critical analysis – and central here may be combating the discourses of 'fallacious finality' that exist in declarations of the 'end of history', or exposing the ways that processes of human action and agency are syntactically transformed into fixed relational 'states of being'. But no matter how detailed and sophisticated we make our analysis of *text*, we need always to be mindful of its dialectical relations with *context* – that denials of historical contingency in text are significant not only because they reflect inequalities, but also because they are functional for closing down the possibilities of radical social change. A critical analysis of discourse should aim to challenge structuring power within social and material contexts; to oppose the 'institutionalised rules accepted and used by the dominant class to control the discursive actions of the dominated' (McKerrow, 1989: 443); and work to increase human potentiality for all.

Third, we explore a methodological issue by looking at benefits of employing and reinforcing fieldwork and ethnographic analysis in CDS. This third section of the book recognises that, while originally associated mainly with explorations of 'lexico-grammatical meaning in written and mass-mediated texts' (Blommaert et al., 2001: 5), CDA has expanded into a wider interdisciplinary field of CDS which, unlike previously, now often leans towards more contextually-oriented and ethnography-based analysis (cf. Krzyżanowski, 2010; Muntigl, Weiss & Wodak, 2000; Wodak 2009) and allows for individual/collective agency in contextual dynamics (van Dijk, 2008). On the other hand, while basically still consisting of fieldwork and related techniques of context-sensitive explorations, ethnography has simultaneously acquired a new (i.e. broader) meaning and has become a designate of a complex and ordered, though not necessarily linear, reflexive research process (cf. Davies, 1999; Brewer, 2000; Gobo, 2008) which manifests as a certain way of conducting research practice and allows triangulation between different stages and contexts of research (Wodak, Krzyżanowski & Forchtner, 2012). These final chapters demonstrate the many advantages which discourse- and critical-analytic research brings to in-depth and in-situ ethnographic explorations of a variety of increasingly complex social, political and economic contexts. Specifically, this third grouping of chapters offers multi-perspective insights into trajectories of education experiences, interactions in mental health settings, development and evolution of language policies, dynamics of organisational cultures and identities in transnational settings and newsroom practices in international media.

By highlighting how the integration of CDS and ethnography could help forge new avenues of context-sensitive research, these chapters point to a set of research-based reasons why diverse researchers should opt for (elements of) discourse-analytic frameworks and combine them in different ways with ethnography in order to provide in-depth exploration in their problem-oriented research. It is also for this reason that these scholars are mainly associated with their objects of study and certain styles of research rather than with their allegiance to particular research movements. However, all chapters in this final section definitely recognise the fact that ethnography is increasingly indispensable for contextualisation, broadly understood, while CDA is necessary for the critical analysis of discourses produced in social and political, everyday and institutional contexts. Thus, in these final chapters in the book, we hope that multiple synergies are reflected and created between critical sociolinguistics, organisational studies and Critical Discourse Studies.

As authors and editors working within the cross- and inter-disciplinary field of Critical Discourse Studies, we maintain that discourse analytic research can contribute to research on a variety of increasingly complex social, historical, political and institutional contexts. *Critical* discourse analytic research, specifically, aims to show the contingency of such contexts, and a sense that discourse, its contexts of production and reception, and the human subjects producing and consuming text/talk, could be, and *can* be, different, with significantly differing results.

Moreover, we address important challenges to theories, methodologies, and the selection of topics for research in Critical Discourse Studies which manifest global, glocal, national, regional and local socio-political developments, in Europe and beyond. It becomes apparent that different phenomena require different approaches. And that some phenomena have been duly swept under the carpet or ignored as they do not seem to fit societies in the 21st century. We maintain, however, that complex social phenomena – such as the politics of the past as well as contemporary class politics – continue to be salient for our everyday and institutional lives. Understanding and explaining these are thus of utmost importance. It also does not suffice to restrict oneself to a small sample of genres (such as newspapers or other easily accessible data): understanding and explaining social actions and complex organisational contexts implies the relevance of ‘getting closer’ to the object of investigation via various methodologies and methods.

We offer the chapters in this book as *Advances* within this shared perspective on the study of discourse and society, and we hope that the work republished here both reflects and stimulates new thinking on the links between linguistic and social analysis.

John E. Richardson, Michał Krzyżanowski, David Machin and Ruth Wodak
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