CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

Some important concepts and considerations

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WHY DISCOURSE ANALYSIS?

Qualitative Methods and/or Discourse Analysis in the Social Sciences
Developments and synergies

- ‘An interest in the properties of ‘naturally occurring’ language use by real language users (instead of a study of abstract language systems and invented examples)’

- ‘A focus on larger units than isolated words and sentences, and hence, new basic units of analysis: texts, discourses, conversations, speech acts, or communicative events’.

- The extension of linguistics beyond sentence grammar towards a study of action and interaction.
  
  (Wodak 2008, van Dijk 2007)
Developments and synergies

- ‘The extension to non-verbal (semiotic, multimodal, visual) aspects of interaction and communication: gestures, images, film, the internet, and multimedia’
- ‘A focus on dynamic (socio)-cognitive or interactional moves and strategies’
- ‘The study of the functions of (social, cultural, glocal, and cognitive) contexts of language use’
- ‘Analysis manifold phenomena of text grammar and language use: coherence, cohesion, macrostructures, speech acts, turn-taking, signs, politeness, argumentation, rhetoric, and so forth’.

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Dealing with interviews of all kinds
Dealing with focus group discussions
Dealing with policy papers
Dealing with media (visual, broadcasts, press, Internet, blogs, youtube...)
Dealing with records, minutes, etc. when doing ethnography
CHALLENGES II

- ‘DISCOURSE’ – ‘EMPTY SIGNIFIER’
- INTEGRATION OF CONTRADICTORY EPISTEMOLOGICAL APPROACHES
- NO KNOWLEDGE ABOUT THE SALIENCE OF ‘GENRE’ AND RELATED INHERENT CHARACTERISTICS
- DISTINGUISHING BETWEEN ‘DISCOURSE’ AND ‘TEXT’
- ANALYSING ‘DISCOURSE’ – ‘ANALYSING TEXT’
- ‘CHERRY – PICKING’

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Functions of text material
(Titscher et al. 2000, 32)

The Text

as Text (1.)

as Representation

of Features of the Groups Investigated
(2.1.)

of Features of the Situations Investigated
(2.2.)

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DEFINING ‘DISCOURSE’?

Discourse, Genre, Text, Context
FOR EXAMPLE....

- A SPECIFIC ‘DISCOURSE’ (Racist, Sexist, national, liberal, conservative, historical,...)
- ‘DISCOURSE OF’ (Discourse of the EU, Discourse of an organisation, of men or women, of Hillary Clinton, ....)
- ‘X + DISCOURSE’ (security discourse, globalisation discourse...)
- ‘DISCOURSE ABOUT’ (unemployment, racism, enlargement...)
- ‘MODE + DISCOURSE’ (visual discourse, written discourse, spoken discourse...)
- DISCOURSE as lieu de mémoire, as building, as language, as image....
- Different language-specific meanings (‘spoken language’, ‘structures of knowledge’...)

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‘CDA highlights the substantively linguistic and discursive nature of social relations of power in contemporary societies. This is partly the matter of how power relations are exercised and negotiated in discourse. It is fruitful to look at both ‘power in discourse’ and ‘power over discourse’ in these dynamic terms’

(Wodak 1996)
CDA’S DISCOURSE-HISTORICAL APPROACH

1. “The approach is problem-oriented, not focused on specific linguistic items’

2. The approach is interdisciplinary

3. ‘The approach is abductive: a constant movement back and forth between theory and empirical data is necessary’.

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4. ‘The categories and tools for the analysis are defined according to all these steps and procedures as well as to the specific problem under investigation.’

5. Application is aimed at.
DHA: Beginning, Domains of Research

☐ Studying the ‘Waldheim Affair’ in Austria – Detecting nationalist/chauvinistic and racist/anti-Semitic rhetoric in various public domains

☐ Identity Politics

☐ Organisations: Insiders/Outsiders


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KEY CONCEPTS
OF DHA

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DISCOURSE, GENRE & TEXT

- *Discourse* implies patterns and commonalities of knowledge and structures;
- *Text* is a specific and unique realization of a discourse. Texts belong to “genres”.
- ‘Genre’ characterised as ‘a socially ratified way of using language in connection with a particular type of social activity’ (Fairclough 1995: 14), used by ‘communities of practice’ with specific ‘functions’ (Swales 1992).
- *Text creates sense* when its manifest and latent meanings are read in connection with knowledge of the world (‘context models’, ‘shared knowledge’, ‘collective memories’ ‘Resonance’)

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Interdiscursive and intertextual relationships between discourses, discourse topics, genres, and texts
US and THEM

The discursive construction of “US” and “THEM” is the foundation of prejudiced and racist perceptions and discourses.

This discursive construction starts with the labelling of the social actors, proceeds to the generalization of negative attributions and then elaborates arguments to justify the exclusion of many and inclusion of some.

The discursive realizations can be more or less intensified or mitigated, more or less implicit or explicit, due to historical conventions, public levels of tolerance, political correctness, context and public sphere. (Reisigl and Wodak 2001)
Analyzing positive self- and negative other presentation

☐ How are persons named and referred to linguistically?
☐ What traits, characteristics, qualities and features are attributed to them?
☐ By means of what arguments and argumentation schemes do specific persons or social groups try to justify and legitimize the exclusion of others or inclusion of some?
☐ From what perspective or point of view are these labels, attributions and arguments expressed?
☐ Are the respective utterances articulated overtly, are they even intensified or are they mitigated?

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Objectives</th>
<th>Devices</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>referential / nomination</td>
<td>Construction of in-groups and out-groups</td>
<td>Membership categorization metaphors and metonymies Synecdoches (pars pro toto, totum pro pars)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Predication</td>
<td>Labelling social actors positively or negatively</td>
<td>Stereotypical, evaluative attributions of negative or positive traits implicit and explicit predicates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>argumentation</td>
<td>Justification of positive or negative attributions</td>
<td>topoi; fallacies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perspectivation, framing or discourse representation</td>
<td>Expressing involvement Positioning speaker's point of view</td>
<td>reporting, description, narration or quotation of events and utterances</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>intensification, mitigation</td>
<td>Modifying the epistemic status of a proposition</td>
<td>intensifying or mitigating the illocutionary force or (discriminatory) utterances</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Four-Level Model of ‘Context’

- the immediate, language or text internal context;
- the intertextual and interdiscursive relationship between utterances, texts, genres and discourses;
- the extralinguistic social/sociological variables and institutional frames of a specific “context of situation”;
- the broader socio-political and historical contexts, to which the discursive practices are embedded in and related. (Wodak 2001, 2004, 2008)
RECONTEXTUALISATION

- CONTEXTUALIZATION - to provide a context with some discursive element
- DECONTEXTUALIZATION - to take an element out of its context
- RECONTEXTUALIZATION - to put an element into a new context

Transfer and Transformation of Information:

- New Sequence
- Addition
- Deletion
- Substitution

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CDA - Procedures

Balancing between linguistic expertise and the needs of qualitative research
SUGGESTIONS

- DEFINE PROBLEM/OBJECT UNDER INVESTIGATION
- EXPLORE THROUGH ETHNOGRAPHY
- DEFINE DISCOURSE RELATED TO MACRO-TOPIC & CONTEXT
- CHARACTERISE RELEVANT GENRES
- CHOSE TYPICAL TEXTS
- CHOSE ADQUATE ‘TOOLS’ FOR ANALYSIS
RECURSIVE STEPS

1. Activation and consultation of preceding theoretical knowledge
2. Systematic collection of data and context information (depending on the research question, various discourses and discursive events, social fields as well as actors, semiotic media, genres and texts are focused on).
3. Selection and preparation of data for specific analyses (selection and downsizing of data according to relevant criteria, transcription of tape recordings, etc.).
4. Specification of the research question and formulation of assumptions.
5. Qualitative pilot analysis (allows testing categories and first assumptions as well as the further specification of assumptions).
6. Detailed case studies (of a whole range of data, primarily qualitatively, but in part also quantitatively).
7. Formulation of critique (interpretation of results, taking into account the relevant context knowledge and referring to the three dimensions of critique).
8. Application of the detailed analytical results (if possible, the results might be applied or proposed for application).

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