

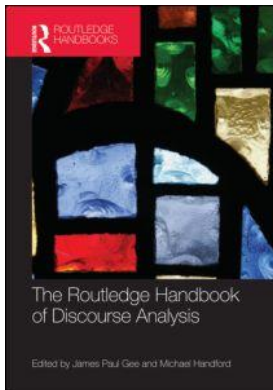
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Discourse and power

Adrian Blackledge

Introduction

Research on discourse and power focuses on the ways in which language is central in constituting and reproducing relations of power that result in forms of inequality. This chapter begins by summarizing some of the key studies in this emergent research tradition, focusing on the development of critical discourse analysis (CDA). I also review critical perspectives on research on discourse and power. The chapter goes on to propose that recent studies have paid detailed attention to interactional patterns of language use, as researchers take ethnographic approaches to analysis of discourse and power. The chapter further considers perspectives that engage with the notion of 'voice'. Data from current research offer exemplification of the concept of 'voice' in a brief episode of interactional speech. Here I finally argue that the analysis of voice offers critical insight into processes of discourse and power in contemporary societies, and that such an analysis has great potential to illuminate objects of investigation across subject territories and disciplines.

Key studies in discourse and power

A relatively recent progression in research on discourse and power has been the development of CDA. As CDA is discussed elsewhere in this volume, I will only briefly summarize these developments. There is no single theory or method that is uniform and consistent throughout CDA (Meyer, 2001; Fairclough, 2003a, b; Weiss and Wodak, 2003). Martin and Wodak (2003) point out that CDA has never been one single specific theory or methodology. Titscher, Meyer, Wodak and Vetter suggest that this plurality is born out of the concern of CDA with the social rather than the purely linguistic:

CDA is concerned with social problems. It is not concerned with language or language use per se, but with the linguistic character of social and cultural processes and structures.

(Titscher et al., 2000: 146)

It is this concern with social life, and with the role of discourse in social life, that is most characteristic of CDA. Fairclough (2003c) points out that CDA developed as a response to the traditional divide between linguistics and areas of social science such as sociology. Van Dijk (2001) presents a harder edge to the claim that CDA is concerned with social problems, representing it as 'discourse analysis with an attitude' (p. 96). In van Dijk's view, CDA emphatically opposes those who abuse text and talk in order to establish, confirm or legitimate their abuse of power: 'CDA does not deny, but explicitly defines and defends its own sociopolitical position. That is, CDA is biased – and proud of it' (p. 96). CDA is fundamentally political in its orientation, interdisciplinary

in its scholarship and diverse in its focus. However, there are a number of identifiable characteristics of theoretical positions adopted in CDA research.

First, CDA sees language as social practice. Social life can be seen as networks of diverse social practices, including economic, political, cultural, familial practices and so on. Social practices are more or less stable forms of social activity, which always, or almost always, include discourse. The role of discourse in social practices cannot be taken for granted, but must be established through analysis. Second, CDA takes a particular interest in language and power, and argues that 'the language element' of critical social research has become more salient, more important, and a crucial aspect of making sense of changes and transformations in societies (Fairclough, 2003a: 203). CDA is centrally interested in language and power because it is usually in language that discriminatory practices are enacted, in language that unequal relations of power are constituted and reproduced, and in language that social asymmetries may be challenged and transformed. Third, the shared perspective of approaches to CDA relates to the understanding that language is not powerful on its own, but gains power through the use powerful people make of it. An important perspective in CDA is that a text is rarely the work of any one person, but often shows traces of different discourses contending and struggling for dominance (Weiss and Wodak, 2003: 15). That is, texts relate to other texts, and they relate to the social and historical conditions of their production.

The notion of intertextuality does not suggest that just any voice has equal opportunity to inform authoritative and powerful discourse. To develop an understanding of how the voices of social actors are shaped in the process of their transformation, we turn to the work of Russian theorists Bakhtin and Voloshinov.¹ Bakhtin emphasized the dialogicality of language, in the sense that a text is always aware of, responding to, and anticipating other texts, and also in the sense that discourse is at times 'double-voiced'. In Bakhtin's theory of language as responsive to the social world, discourse is dialogic, shaped and influenced by the discourse of others. For Bakhtin, dialogical relationships are possible not only between entire utterances; the dialogical approach can be applied to any meaningful part of an utterance, even to an individual word, 'if we hear in that word another person's voice' (1973: 152). That is, the way in which speech is constructed is determined by awareness of, and reaction to, the speech of the other. Dialogical relationships can penetrate an utterance, or even an individual word, so long as two voices collide within it. In dialogic discourse more than one voice is evident in a single utterance, shaping and re-shaping the word, so that the author's thought no longer completely dominates, and it responds to the voice of the other. This is a *social* model of language – that is, the relation between the various voices within an utterance is subject to relations of power within society. The authority of the authorial voice is likely to be maintained where it belongs to those in powerful positions in society. Its discourse may nevertheless be double-voiced, where it dismisses or deletes voices that contradict its perspective.

Critical perspectives on discourse and power

A number of criticisms have been made of research on discourse and power, and of CDA in particular. Schegloff (1997) takes the position that text analysts should produce description of texts first, and only then should critical analysis be conducted. Schegloff's concern is that in CDA the researcher can introduce into the analysis pre-ordained categories, which arise from the bias of the researcher rather than from the text itself. Widdowson (1995, 1998, 2000) also warns against the dangers of bias in CDA, as researchers may start from a particular ideological position, then select for analysis only those texts that support this position. Slembrouck (2001) expresses his concern that, far from diminishing unequal relations of power, CDA potentially ignores the voices of those subject to inequalities. By erasing the messiness and complexity of the voices of social

actors, CDA potentially offers a view from above rather than from below. Whereas an ethnographic approach represents the perspective of social actors, CDA may limit its gaze to structures of power in society. Blommaert (2005) acknowledges that CDA offers considerable potential in conducting research on discourse and power, but proposes that there are three main problems. First, he argues that CDA is guilty of ‘linguistic bias’, privileging systemic–functional linguistics over other available means of analysis. Second, Blommaert argues that ‘CDA overlooks sociolinguistics’ (2005: 36). That is, much of the research hitherto undertaken in CDA is situated in late modern, post-industrial, Western contexts, and has rarely ventured into developing world contexts. Third, there is an absence of historical analysis in CDA. Blommaert argues that a critical analysis of discourse must transcend the present and address the historical. In relation to this third point, though, we might reflect again that there is no *single* CDA. Wodak and her colleagues have developed a ‘discourse-historical approach’ (Wodak *et al.*, 1999; Reisigl and Wodak, 2001; Martin and Wodak, 2003), which insists that discourse analysis is firmly situated in its historical context.

Current research on discourse and power

In recent times researchers investigating discourse and power have turned to ethnographic approaches. Heller (2008: 250) suggests that doing ethnographic research allows us to tell our story of someone else’s experience, ‘a story which illuminates social processes and generates explanations for why people do and think the things they do’. Blommaert (2005: 16) suggests that in an ethnographic approach the analysis of small phenomena is set against an analysis of big phenomena, in which ‘both levels can only be understood in terms of one another’. Ethnography is discussed elsewhere in this volume. For the purposes of this discussion, however, I will dwell briefly on recent developments in ‘linguistic ethnography’ and on its potential as a means of understanding discourse and power.

Linguistic ethnography is a theoretical and methodological development orienting towards particular established traditions, but defining itself in the new intellectual climate of late modernity and post-structuralism. Traditions combined in linguistic ethnography include interpretive approaches from anthropology, applied linguistics, cultural studies and sociology. Linguistic ethnography has been shaped by developments in linguistic anthropology in the mid-twentieth century in the US (Rampton *et al.*, 2004; Rampton, 2007; Creese, 2008). Particular strands of linguistic anthropology that have influenced linguistic ethnography are the ethnography of communication (Hymes, 1974, 1980), interactional sociolinguistics (Gumperz, 1982, 1999) and micro ethnography (Erickson, 1990, 1996). Oriented towards these traditions, linguistic ethnography argues that ethnography can benefit from the analytical frameworks provided by linguistics, while linguistics can benefit from the processes of reflexive sensitivity required in ethnography. In linguistic ethnography, linguistics offers an ethnographic analysis of a wide range of established procedures for isolating and identifying linguistic and discursive structures. In linguistic ethnography, ethnographic analysis offers linguistic analysis a non-deterministic perspective on data. Because ethnography looks for uniqueness as well as for patterns in interaction, it ‘warns against making hasty comparisons which can blind one to the contingent moments and the complex cultural and semiotic ecologies that give any phenomenon its meaning’ (Rampton *et al.*, 2004: 2). A linguistic ethnographic analysis, then, attempts to offer close detail of local action and interaction embedded in a wider social world. It draws on the relatively technical vocabularies of linguistics to do this. Rampton suggests two tenets which underpin the development of linguistic ethnography: (1) ‘meaning takes shape within specific social relations, interactional histories and institutional regimes, produced and construed by agents with expectations and repertoires that have to be grasped ethnographically’; and (2) ‘meaning is far more than

just an “expression of ideas”, as biography, identifications, stance and nuance are extensively signalled in the linguistic and textual fine-grain’ (2007: 585). It is precisely the linguistic and textual fine-grain of multilingual urban settings to which linguistic ethnography attends.

Like CDA, linguistic ethnography has found Bakhtin’s notion of dialogic discourse and his focus on ‘voice’ to offer a valuable perspective on discourse and power. Bailey (2007: 269) argues that a Bakhtinian perspective ‘explicitly bridges the linguistic and the sociohistorical, enriching analysis of human interaction’, as it is ‘fundamentally about intertextuality, the ways that talk in the here-and-now draws meanings from past instances of talk’. Rampton (2006: 364) adopts Bakhtin’s analysis to understand the linguistic practices of students in an inner-city high school, and especially the ‘spontaneous moments when these youngsters were artfully reflexive about the dichotomous values that they tacitly reproduced in the variability of their routine speech, moments when they crystallized the high-low structuring principles that were influential but normally much more obscure in their everyday variability’. Lin and Luk (2005: 86) engage with Bakhtin’s notion of ‘carnival laughter’ to understand the creative linguistic practices of English language learners in Hong Kong schools. They demonstrate that students are able to resist the routines of regular classroom practice by populating prescribed utterances with playful, ironic accents.

Linguists have increasingly turned to the works of Bakhtin and Voloshinov because their theories of language enable connections to be made between the voices of social actors in their everyday, here-and-now lives and the political, historical and ideological contexts they inhabit. As we saw in the earlier discussion of CDA, Bakhtin argued that voices relate to other voices by representing within their own utterance the voices of others. In doing so, a voice may be hostile to other voices or may be in complete harmony with them, or it may suppress them, leaving only a suggestion that they are in any way present. Luk (2008: 129) suggests that, according to Bakhtin, ‘our speech, that is all our utterances, comes to us already filled with the words of others’. Discourse bears the traces of the voices of others, is shaped by them, responds to them, contradicts them or confirms them, in one way or another evaluates them (Bakhtin, 1981: 272). Bakhtin argued that language is ‘historically real, a process of heteroglot development, a process teeming with future and former languages ... which are all more or less successful, depending on their degree of social scope and on the ideological area in which they are employed’ (Bakhtin, 1981: 357). Rampton (2006: 27) notices in the speech of students in British secondary schools that young people at times break into ‘artful performance’, when the act of speaking itself is put on display for the scrutiny of an audience. Rampton refers to a particular kind of spoken performance, ‘stylization’, in which ‘accent shifts represent moments of critical reflection on aspects of educational domination and constraint that become interactionally salient on a particular occasion’. That is, in producing an artistic image of another’s language (in Rampton’s study, ‘posh’ or ‘Cockney’ accents), speakers position themselves interactionally in relation to certain ideologies. Bakhtin argued that the importance of struggling with another’s discourse, and its influence in the ‘individual’s coming to consciousness’ (1981: 348), are enormous.

In his seminal work *Rabelais and His World* (1968), Bakhtin analysed three arenas of significance in what he called the language of carnival (Bakhtin, 1994: 196): (1) festivities; (2) parody; and (3) the language of the market-place. For Bakhtin, carnivalesque language is full of ‘the laughter of all the people’ (1994: 200) and includes ritual spectacles, festive pageants, comic shows, parodies, curses and oaths. In medieval Europe, carnival festivities were characterized by comic parodies of serious official, feudal and ecclesiastical ceremonies. Carnival was ‘the feast of becoming, change, and renewal’ (Bakhtin, 1986: 10). The notions of change and renewal, and of ‘becoming’, are crucial to Bakhtin’s understanding. The festive laughter of carnival is ambivalent, at one and the same time triumphant and mocking, asserting and denying, burying and reviving. Parody was a widespread feature of these festivities. Bakhtin demonstrated that carnivalesque parody was often

tolerated by the powerful, as it was no more than a temporary representation of the usurping of traditional hierarchies. Bakhtin pointed out that the language of carnival was the language of degradation, a language that, in its debasement, debased power and was at the centre of all that was unofficial. At once positive and negative, speaking both of decay and renewal, ‘the beginning and end of life are closely linked and interwoven’ (Bakhtin, 1994: 234), as each image creates a ‘contradictory world of becoming’ (Bakhtin, 1968: 149).

Approaches to analysing discourse and power

In order to exemplify the potential of Bakhtin’s thought for research on discourse and power, in this section I present a small fragment of interactional classroom data. The research reported here is from a comparative sociolinguistic study of complementary (‘heritage language’, ‘community language’, ‘supplementary’) schools in four cities in the UK (ESRC-RES-000-23-1180). These are non-statutory schools, run by their local communities, which students attend in order to learn the language normally associated with their ethnic heritage. The study focused on Gujarati schools in Leicester, Turkish schools in London, Cantonese and Mandarin schools in Manchester and Bengali schools in Birmingham. The children were audio-recorded during the classes observed – in all, we collected 192 hours of audio-recorded interactional data, wrote 168 sets of field notes, made 16 hours of video-recordings, and interviewed 66 key stakeholders, as we investigated how the linguistic practices of students and teachers in these language schools are used to negotiate young people’s multilingual and multicultural identities (Creese *et al.*, 2008; Blackledge and Creese, 2010, 2009a, b, 2008). In this chapter I focus on just one key classroom episode, which reveals something of the ways in which the participants’ linguistic practices constituted and were constituted by their social, political and historical contexts and extended our understanding of discourse and power in the young people’s linguistic (and other semiotic) meaning-making. The classroom activity was recorded in one of the Turkish schools in London.

In this episode the teacher is teaching Turkish through content related to a traditional Mother’s Day celebration. The participants are the teacher (T); a student (S1) who wears a digital audio-recorder; and other students (Ss). The episode begins with the teacher dictating to the students the lyrics of a traditional song. S1 is engaged in conversation with other students, inaudible to the teacher.²

Example 1

- T: başlık yazın annenize başlık. evet yazıyoruz < *write the title. for your mother. yes we are writing* > yazıyoruz annenize < *we are writing to your mother* > bu şarkıyı ben söylicem siz yazıyorsunuz < *I will tell you the lyrics you’ll write it* > [some of the students are playing with their mobile phones]
- S1: [to a student] yea you dickhead (.) suck my balls man suck my balls suck it no I’m not accepting it suck my balls
- T: çocuklar yazdığımızı okuyorum. < *kids, I am reading the lyrics that you were trying to write* > yani anlayacağımız o kadar çok zahmet çekiyor ki kimsenin güleceği yok. Bunu yazdınız mı? < *that is to say that she is toiling away to such an extent that nobody feels like smiling. Have you written this?* >
- Ss: yazdık < *yes, we have* >
- T: ikinci kıtaya geçiyoruz. < *now we are going to the second verse* >
[plays music on cd system. some students are talking]
- S1: I bet it’s a man who’s high (.) yani gelin çiçek toplayalım [sings, exaggeratedly imitating the high-pitched voice of the singer] ey he’s taken helium he’s taken helium the person singing is a man who’s taken helium man

- T: dinliyoruz < *we are listening*> [stops the music] Yazmaya devam edeceğiz. <*we will continue writing*>
- S1: [to a student] shut the (.) s-t-f-u (.) you know what s-t-f-u means?
- T: [reading the lyrics of a song] yollarına serelim. Yani gelin çiçek toplayalım. <*let's cover her way with flowers. So let's collect some flowers*> kimin yollarına seriyorlar? <*whose way are they covering with flowers?*>
- Ss: annelerinin <*their mother*>
- T: annelerinin <*their mother*>
- S1: exactly it means shut the fuck up
- T: çok önemli anneler gününde. <*it is very important especially on Mother's Day*>
- S1: [to a student] I am not accepting man
- T: sevgi dolu türkülerle. < *and with songs full of love*> Melis yazıyor musun? annesini senenler yazıyor. sevgi dolu türkülerle. annemize verelim. <*are you writing Melis? If you love your mother you will write this. And give the flowers to your mother*>
- S1: I don't like my mum (.) I love her
- T: seni annene şikayet edeceğim. <*I will complain to your mother about you*>
- S1: eh fat boy eh the one who sucks your dad's dick eh the one that sucks dick the one that's not gay I want the one that's not gay.

(classroom audio-recording, Turkish school)

The teacher dictates the lyrics of a traditional Turkish song. As he speaks, some of the students continue to use their mobile phones to send songs to each other. S1 uses abusive language to insist on his negotiating position in relation to swapping music files with another student. He is 'not accepting' the file the other student wants to send, and argues this emphatically, in what Bakhtin called the language of the market-place, three times repeating 'suck my balls'. The teacher appears to be unaware of this interaction, or else judiciously ignores it. He continues with the dictation and plays a traditional Turkish song to the class on an audio system. The 'official' activity of the classroom continues, with the complicity of most of the students. S1 immediately takes up the opportunity to ridicule the song, joining in with the singer in a mocking, high-pitched voice. He argues that the voice of the female singer is probably that of a man 'who's taken helium', further ridiculing the song. However, this is double-voiced discourse, as, in order to exaggerate and mock the voice of the singer, he also participates and becomes at least minimally involved in the celebration of Mother's Day. The student on the one hand does what he is supposed to do, while on the other hand he simultaneously makes space for activities more to his liking. The teacher stops the music and tells the class that they will continue writing. S1, denied his opportunity for subversion, again invokes the language of curses and oaths. His discourse appears to be quite literally that of the 'market-place', the language in which to negotiate the swapping of sound files on his mobile phone. S1's language creates a second, unofficial world, a discursive space in which to do business quite unrelated to the official activity of the classroom. At the same time he is able to move between the two floors, at one moment negotiating with oaths and curses that distinguish the discourse of the market-place, and are only for the ears of other students, and in the next re-joining the more public discussion of the Mother's Day celebration. Ironically in the context of the planned activity, the teacher now uses S1's mother as a threat. S1, having made his brief incursion into the official, public world of the classroom, returns to his semi-private space of oaths, curses and degradation, again invoking ribald reference to genitals and sexual activity. This is discourse at the centre of all that is unofficial. It is discourse that, in its grotesque imagery, creates a second life, one that opposes power without opposing it, that undermines the official activity without undermining it. This is the language of the market-place, in its debasement debasing power, if only ephemerally.

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The next excerpt is from the same class, recorded two minutes later. Now other students, S2 and S3, become audible. The teacher switches on the music again.

Example 2

T: [switches music on again] dinliyorsunuz. sizde söyleyin dans yapabilirsiniz <you are listening. you can sing along too, you can dance>

S1: hadi <let's do it>

S2: hey dance Turkish style. Turkish style 'düğün' <wedding ceremony> [laughs]

S1: hadi halay çekelim. halay çekelim <let's do folk dancing.. let's do folk dancing> do you know how to halay çek? hadi halay çekelim <do you know how to do folk dancing? let's do folk dancing.> whoever is doing it with me? Halay çekelim.<let's do folk dancing> hey just come, just come, just come man. fuck you. it's gonna be joke. hey, hey [dancing] I know how to do it. AAHH MY PENIS!

S3: [laughs uncontrollably]

T: [switches music off. wants students in two groups so that they can sing together. switches music on again]

S1: wait. shush I'm gonna sing [coughs to clear his throat] evet <right>

T: söylüyoruz. <we are singing>

S1: hoy Ismet, let's sing. kimsenin güleceği yok kimsenin güleceği yok [singing along to music] LA LA LA LA LA LA LA LA [exaggerated, loud] yeah. [to a student] give me that ball please. please

[T is singing, some students are singing and clapping]

T: Gökhan dışarı. <Gokhan get out> sen dışarı. <you get out> Hakan dışarı.. <Hakan get out> başkanı yanına gidiyorsunuz. annelerinize söyleyin beni görsün. <you are to see the principal.. tell your mother to see me>.

(classroom audio-recording, Turkish school)

S1 again seizes an opportunity to subvert the activity, bursting with enthusiasm when the teacher suggests that the students can dance to the traditional music. The second student picks up on S1's intonation and suggests that they should dance 'Turkish style', in the way that would be typical at a Turkish wedding. The Turkish word *halay* refers to a folk dance performed in a circle. Here S2 invokes the wedding, appropriating one traditional ritual (the wedding) in order to mock and subvert another (celebration of Mother's Day). S1 continues in English and Turkish, inviting all to 'just come'. At this point S1 is shouting loudly, while S3 is laughing uncontrollably. Our field notes for this session read as follows: 'The music plays and the boys rap dance, make odd faces and produce funny noises. S2 is now setting the tone in the group of boys. They are imitating folk dance movements'. The students here introduce elements of popular culture ('rap dance'), and at the same time parody traditional folk dance. By both means, hostility to the official, traditional, authorized activity is constituted. It is an act of sameness and difference, based in the traditional, in traditional music, but at the same time creating something new, making change through recontextualization. This is not mere repetition but appropriation, the subversion of ritual by presentation of a new version of the traditional, which creates a momentary suspension of conventional hierarchies. The introduction of 'rap dance' is comic, not least because it is anachronistic – an element of the 'folk-culture' of the people that impinges on the authorized heritage of school activity. The mockery of the traditional dance (odd faces and funny noises) becomes a comic parody of the official discourse. Notwithstanding this, there is again a sense in which the creation of the parody partakes of the activity that the teacher is seeking to create. This is very different

from non-participation. It is participation, but on the terms of the students rather than of the teacher. They use the tradition, the heritage, to create their own order, to challenge the existing hierarchy and to claim their freedom, however ephemeral. They populate traditional discourse with their own local social languages and voices for their own purposes (Lin and Luk, 2005: 89). In mocking the dance they mock tradition, but at the same time they mock themselves. This is ambivalent laughter, at once positive and negative, creating a 'contradictory world of becoming' (Bakhtin, 1968: 149). It is as if the students will only participate in the 'heritage' they are offered if they can put their own stamp on it, taking it as their own and usurping it. S1 dances, but ends the dance with a cry of 'AAH MY PENIS!' as reference to the genitals becomes once again the centre of the unofficial world. S1's cry subverts the formality of the dance, but at the same time he mocks himself and, perhaps, all males. This is an inclusive joke, a laugh at the expense of the people, but also with the people. At this point the teacher attempts to organize the students to sing the Mother's Day song. Again taking his cue for subversive action, S1 is quick to take the floor. He clears his throat with a cough which exudes seriousness and respect. Here 'evet' is stylized, adopting the voice of a professional singer, as he prepares to sing. At first he calls on another student (Ismet) to help him with the song, just as he had called on others to help him with the dance. Ismet does not join in, but S1 goes ahead, at first singing the song rather hesitantly, but apparently respectfully. After a few moments he changes tone, singing 'LA LA LA LA LA LA LA' in a comic, grotesque, exaggerated voice, which serves to undermine the activity. It may be that S1 did not know the words of the song very well, and so lost confidence and reverted to the comic. Whatever the reason, there is more than one voice evident here: the voice that attempts to participate in singing the Mother's Day song, and the voice that subverts the celebration and exudes hostility to the authorized heritage. Although some students are engaged in the activity, the teacher breaks off from this to admonish the group of boys who have treated Mother's Day as an opportunity for carnivalesque humour, and dispatches them from the classroom with another threat to involve their mothers.

Rampton (2006: 31) builds on Bakhtin's (1986) notion of 'speech genres' in arguing that, in classrooms as elsewhere, certain roles and relationships, certain patterns of activity come to be expected, but 'generic expectations and actual activity seldom form a perfect match, and the relationship between them is an important focus in political struggle'. In the classroom we investigated there appeared to be more than one set of expectations for the students: the 'official' genre of teacher-directed discourse, and the 'unofficial', carnivalesque genre of the market-place. The discourses of the students parodied 'cultural/heritage' practices. In the complementary schools, while teachers and administrators often believe that teaching 'language' and 'heritage' is a means of reproducing 'national' identity in the next generation, the imposition of such identities is often contested and re-negotiated by the students, as classroom interactions became sites where the students occupied subject positions that were at odds with those imposed by the institutions. In the brief episode examined in this chapter we saw students in the Turkish classroom parody 'heritage' songs associated with a traditional festival and engage in a parodic, mocking version of a traditional Turkish wedding-dance. The students moved between subject positions, or maintained more than one subject position simultaneously, as they both participated in the activity and derided it. The students' discourse became a battleground on which to play out oppositions between the 'heritage' identity imposed by the school and the students' contestation and re-negotiation of such impositions. Their clowning and laughter, hostile to the reified, 'immortalized and completed' (Bakhtin, 1968: 10) version of heritage, created a moment of freedom from the school's imposed ideological position. Contrary to the official world of teaching and learning, the student's grotesque realism was an accepted discourse in the second life in the classroom. At the same time positive and negative, this was a language that was hostile to all that was completed,

immortalized and official, but a language that generated a world of creativity and laughter in which unofficial business could be transacted. These negotiations are not simply between a 'dominant' and a 'dominated' group. They are altogether more subtle and nuanced interactions, which can be described at the 'micro/macro' dimension, as students and teachers use discourse to move in and out of more and less powerful subject positions.

Future directions in discourse and power

There are many approaches to the study of discourse and power, many of them represented in this volume. In this chapter I argue for an analysis of *voice* because, in Blommaert's words, '[v]oice is the issue that defines linguistic inequality (hence, many other forms of inequality) in contemporary societies' (2005: 5). Analysing voice means analysing the effects of power and the conditions of power. A Bakhtinian analysis enables us to identify how meaning-making emerges as an ongoing dialogic process at a number of different interrelated levels. The voices of the students in the examples here are common: mocking voices, complicit voices, parodic voices, voices that clash with each other and are hostile to each other, voices that represent and recontextualize other voices, voices of oaths, curses and abuses, and voices of what Bakhtin calls the 'bodily lower stratum' (1968: 20). Adopting a theoretical and analytical perspective that combines the ethnographic with the linguistic and engages the dialogic thought of Bakhtin, we are able to tell a story that connects a cacophony of linguistic practice with histories and territories, with traditions and heritages, with pedagogies and ideologies, and with the changing worlds of digital communication and globalization.

Analysis of voice offers an opportunity to take a perspective on language as intrinsically tied to social context. For Bakhtin, the utterance

is entangled, shot through with shared thoughts, points of view, alien value judgements and accents, weaves in and out of complex interrelationships, merges with some, recoils from others ... and having taken meaning and shape at a particular historical moment in a socially specific environment, cannot fail to brush up against thousands of living dialogic threads.

(Bakhtin, 1981: 276)

That is, to analyse voice requires us to look not only synchronically, but also diachronically, to look in all directions at once, including to the future and to the past. This is an approach that incorporates intrinsically historical concepts. Terms such as intertextuality, interdiscursivity and entextualization, especially in their rich Bakhtinian interpretation, explain the textual present in relation to textual histories (Blommaert and Huang, 2009). Entextualization refers to 'the process by means of which discourses are successively or simultaneously decontextualised and metadiscursively recontextualised' (Blommaert, 2005: 47). Original bits of discourse are lifted out of their original context and inserted into a new context. In the example from the Turkish classroom, as the traditional wedding-dance is first performed, then parodied, then replaced with a 'rap' dance, and as the traditional song is first performed and then mocked, our analysis looks to the historical space and time of tradition and the homeland; to the globalized popular cultural form; to classroom norms and peer-group expectations; and to family practices. These links are made intertextually – through concepts introduced by Bakhtin, developed in CDA and elaborated upon in an ethnographic approach that takes language as its focus.

It is the interdisciplinary nature of linguistic ethnography that allows us to look closely and locally, while tying our observations to broader relations of power and ideology. Rampton argues that linguistic ethnography is 'a site of encounter where a number of established lines of research interact, pushed together by circumstance, open to the recognition of new affinities, and sufficiently

familiar with one another to treat differences with equanimity' (2007: 585). Recent research into linguistic interaction has begun to emphasize the advantages of combining analytical approaches rather than relying on only one approach or framework (Rampton *et al.*, 2002; Zuengler and Mori, 2002). Stubbe *et al.* (2003) also consider the benefits of using different discourse analytic approaches to interpret talk in interaction. They conclude that each approach provides 'a different lens with which to examine the same interaction' (p. 380), noting that different approaches are not necessarily in conflict with each other, but may be used in complementary ways.

Tusting and Maybin (2007: 576) argue that linguistic ethnography, in particular, lends itself to interdisciplinary research and offers a practical and theoretical response to 'the turn to social constructionism and to discourse across the social sciences', in its ability to probe in depth the interrelationship between language and social life. According to Blommaert, the autobiographical–epistemic dimension of ethnography lends itself to interdisciplinary engagement:

This 'deeper' dimension allows ethnography to be inserted in all kinds of theoretical endeavors, to the extent of course that such endeavors allow for situatedness, dynamics and interpretive approaches. Thus, there is no reason why ethnography cannot be inserted e.g. in a Marxist theoretical framework, nor in a Weberian one, nor in a Bourdieuan or Giddensian one.

(Blommaert, 2001: 3)

Tusting and Maybin (2007) argue that in recent years, alongside a broadening and diversifying of interests among sociolinguists, the boundaries between the traditional variationist, sociological and ethnographic branches of sociolinguistics have become more blurred. Rampton (2006: 22) proposes that sociolinguistics should be able to participate in broader debates about the contemporary world, and, since post-structuralist perspectives in social science attach special importance to discourse, sociolinguists may be able to use their specialist expertise to make a distinctive contribution.

In this chapter I have commented on the value of CDA as a means of analysing discourse and power, and I have argued that an ethnographic approach, which takes language as its focus of analysis, also offers a valuable means of understanding language and inequality. These paradigms rarely intersect, being often separated by territorial borders. My argument is that, in taking an approach that places analysis of *voice* at the centre of our investigations of discourse and power, we can see the interactional in the ideological and the ideological in the interactional. This dynamic is always present, of course, but at times we lack the means to make it visible. If CDA potentially ignores the perspective of those subject to inequalities, and ignores the messiness and complexity of the voices of social actors, offering a view from above rather than from below, it is in engaging with *voice* that these perspectives can be heard. And, by the same token, if ethnography potentially misses the historical (Blommaert and Huang, 2009), it is in engaging with *voice* that the threads of history become visible in interaction. I propose that the analysis of voice may enable us to take at least a tentative step forward in the analysis of discourse and power.

Further reading

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Notes

- 1 Some scholars have suggested that the works of Voloshinov were in fact written by Bakhtin. Others disagree. In the absence of irrefutable evidence either way, I am adopting the usual convention of citing Voloshinov's works separately.

2 Transcription conventions followed in this chapter are as follows:

Plain font: original speech

Italicized font: translated speech

[brackets]: comment or 'stage directions'.

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