Critical Discourse Studies

A critical approach to the study of language and communication

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Introduction

The theoretical frameworks reviewed in this first section have all pointed to the relevance of language and semiosis in the way politics is not only performed, but also conceptualised. Here, we add to this endeavour by introducing another, more recent way of approaching the nexus of language, discourse and politics and discussing the burgeoning field of Critical Discourse Studies (CDS, also known as Critical Discourse Analysis, CDA; see Flowerdew & Richardson 2017; Wodak & Meyer 2015 for a comprehensive overview). More specifically, we reflect on how CDS has drawn on a variety of theoretical approaches and utilised them in empirical research. In this chapter, we thus present research conducted within the framework of CDS, which deals with political issues of various kinds, exploring how it draws on a range of theories in its multi-, inter-, trans- or post-disciplinary empirical work.¹

The range of different approaches within CDS cannot be viewed as theories on their own; none of these approaches has put forward, for example, a notion of ‘discourse’ comparable in its level of abstraction with that of Michel Foucault, Jürgen Habermas or Ernesto Laclau (for more details, see Chapters 3, 4 and 6). At the same time, it would be wrong to understand approaches associated with CDS purely in terms of methodology (Angermuller et al. 2014; Hart & Cap 2014; Wodak 2013; van Dijk 2007). Indeed, while all these approaches focus on the detailed analysis of text in context and thus draw on concepts taken from argumentation theory, linguistic pragmatics, rhetoric, semantics and syntax, the underlying goal is to understand the complex workings of language within society, a concern for how socio-cultural structures influence and, at the same time, are influenced by, language use (Fairclough & Wodak 1997, p. 258). There is thus an attempt to situate ‘textually oriented discourse analysis’ (Fairclough 1992, p. 55) within (socio-)theoretical frameworks and, thereby, also to shift the boundaries of these grand theories. Accordingly, Lilie Chouliaraki and Norman Fairclough (1999, pp. 113ff.) view CDS as a principle that draws together, that is, recontextualises, different theoretical traditions while integrating them with an empirical orientation. Similarly, Gilbert Weiss and Ruth Wodak (2003, p. 9) view CDS as addressing the ‘problem of mediation’, of integrating insights from linguistic and other disciplines, the mediation between communication and structure, discourse and society. However, before
turning to a discussion of how approaches within CDS have, to varying extents, recontextualised theoretical frameworks, we consider the basic notions of ‘discourse’, ‘critique’ and ‘power’.

Discourse is a concept used in a plethora of ways – ranging from notions oriented towards Foucault (that is, describing a system of rules of formation and, later, discourse as a specific, historical power/knowledge regime) to a concept inspired by Habermas focusing on challenging, criticizing and justifying validity claims (based on idealizing presuppositions of equal rights to speak, freedom of repression and manipulation, inclusiveness and sincerity). The latter, for example, partly informs in the Discourse-Historical Approach’s (DHA) conceptualisation of discourse as centred on topic-related semiotic practices, which are socially constituted as well as socially constitutive, and which consist of truth and rightness claims involving several actors with different perspectives (Reisigl & Wodak 2009, p. 89). The former appears to inspire, for example, Theo van Leeuwen’s approach (2008, p. vii), while Fairclough’s approach in CDS has most extensively – though also critically – drawn on Foucault’s work.

Critique is supposed to make visible existing interconnections (between structure and language use, or between structures) – something that might be based on (neo-)Marxist views, or derive from a Foucault-inspired attempt to problematise (Foucault 1981a). As Paul Chilton, Hailong Tian and Ruth Wodak state:

the term ‘critical’ is associated with currents of thought whose recent sources are in the eighteenth-century European Enlightenment but whose roots are in ancient Greek philosophy. Etymologically, the verb ‘criticize’ derives from a Greek word krinein ‘to separate, decide’, in the sense of making a judgement or a distinction.

(Chilton, Tian & Wodak 2010, p. 490)

Moreover, Gunther Kress (1996, p. 15), in line with other authors, is concerned with unequal ‘distributions of economic, cultural and political goods in contemporary societies’, and thus summarises the project of CDS as follows: ‘The intention has been to bring a system of excessive inequalities of power into crisis by uncovering its workings and its effects through the analysis of potent cultural objects – texts – and thereby to help in achieving a more equitable social order.’

Martin Reisigl and Wodak (2001, pp. 32ff.) make useful, conceptual distinctions between text-immanent critique, socio-diagnostic critique and prospective (retrospective) critique. Their view of text-immanent critique is based on hermeneutics and pursues one of the early ideas of Critical Theory, namely, the unearthing of inherent contradictions via linguistic means. While text-immanent critique is inherently text-oriented, socio-diagnostic critique is based on theoretical assumptions, which go hand in hand with the analyst’s social and political commitments. At this level, the aim is also to reveal multiple interests and contradictions of text producers, on the basis of evidence in the text and its broad and narrow contexts. Prospective critique builds on these two levels to identify areas of social concern that could be addressed by direct social and political engagement in many Western polities (Reisigl & Wodak 2001, p. 34; see also Chilton, Tian & Wodak 2010, p. 495).

All approaches share a view that CDS ‘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’ (Wodak 1996, p. 18). While some approaches and/or studies favour a more traditional, Weberian definition of power, others subscribe to a productive notion of power in the post-structural tradition.
Yet, approaches generally view power as being present ‘in discourse’ (some positions will hold greater potential to influence others), ‘over discourse’ (for example, the question of access and agenda setting), ‘and of discourse’ (an understanding of power which points to latent conflicts; see Lukes 2005, p. 29).

Such an agenda cannot be built on one disciplinary foundation, but requires varying degrees of co-operation spanning disciplinary boundaries (Weiss & Wodak 2003, p. 18; van Leeuwen 2007). The extent of such co-operation might vary; for example, *multidisciplinarity* is linked to disciplines that offer different perspectives on the issue in question, usually under the lead of one discipline. In contrast, *interdisciplinarity* implies two or more disciplines that explore a problem in an equal way. *Transdisciplinarity* describes the interpenetration of methods and common theory/ies across different disciplines, which cluster around particular problems. Finally, *postdisciplinarity* (or *predisciplinarity*) postulates neglecting disciplinary boundaries in favour of pure problem orientation. Andrew Sayer (1999, p. 6), for example, has pointed to Adam Smith, who was concerned with moral philosophy and, as such, also with the social order (sociology). However, he also acknowledged psychological factors and is, today, famous for his contribution to the field of economics. As Sayer maintains, this did not result in a reductionism of any kind.

Independent of whichever perspective is subscribed to, CDS, as an overarching framework, necessarily spans disciplinary boundaries in its problem-oriented focus. Hence, middle-range theories usually provide the necessary conceptual apparatus to approach a particular problem. This does not, however, reduce the influence of more abstract frameworks through which complex issues become identified.

While focusing on how research in CDS has drawn on a range of theoretical frameworks and disciplinary fields (including sociology, history, and so forth), we first look at the most explicit references to Marx and the neo-Marxism of Gramsci before moving, second, to Foucault and the discourse theory of Laclau. We then return, third, to neo-Marxism and discuss the Critical Theory of the first generation of the Frankfurt School and Habermas. Fourth, we move on to Pierre Bourdieu’s influence on CDS before providing a brief summary of the impact of *Begriffsgeschichte* (conceptual history) on CDS. The chapter closes with a brief summary.

**CDS and the influence of Marx and Gramsci**

Marx’s understanding of society in terms of modes of (currently capitalist) production and struggle underpins many CDS approaches. This is especially the case in Fairclough’s approach, and explicitly discussed in *Marx as Critical Discourse Analyst* (Fairclough & Graham 2002). Here, Fairclough and Phil Graham that language has become ever more central in late modernity and claim (ibidem, p. 201) that, with respect to language as being produced by as well as reproducing material circumstances, practices, social consciousness and human experience, ‘Marx’s method and the methods of CDA are identical’. In one way, the authors base this claim on their reading of Marx as being well aware of the link between language use and other dimensions of the social, thus stressing the dialectics between the discursive and the material dimensions of social life. In another, the authors illustrate that even Marx engaged in empirical Critical Discourse Analysis when, for example, discussing Hegel’s concept of ‘state’. Due to reasons of space, we cannot go into more details of Fairclough and Graham’s complex analysis. Suffice to say that they illustrate how Marx, also at the level of actual language use, rejected Hegel’s claim that ‘the idea’ takes the position of the subject, that is, how Hegel endowed ‘the idea’ erroneously with agency.
Fairclough has also drawn on Antonio Gramsci’s approach (Fairclough 2010; 1992, pp. 91–96; see also Chouliaraki & Fairclough 1999; Chapter 2 in this volume). By utilising the concept of ‘hegemony’, Fairclough attempts to explain the fact that various domains of today’s society are shaped by naturalised practices and relations without being directly forced to do so. Such naturalised conventions are made transparent by means of discourse analysis.

For example, Fairclough (ibidem, p. 129) turns to doctor–patient consultations, linking such everyday experiences to conventional hegemonic relationships between doctor and patient. The cultural hegemony of this mode of interaction can, of course, be challenged – leading to struggles over hegemony (for example in and through the rise of alternative medicine). Turning to the micro-level, Fairclough analyses a conversation between a patient (an alcoholic) and a doctor, and emphasises that the doctor’s questions (‘are you back, are you back on it’), the doctor’s assessment of advice given (‘I think that’s wise’) and his directive (‘I’d like to keep you knowing you’) seem to reproduce traditional patterns of interaction. However, vague formulations (‘are you back on it’), the use of modality markers (‘I think’) and the hedged directive ‘you know’ contradict such traditional modes of interaction characterised by domination. Embedding this interpretation in a wider socio-cultural context, Fairclough presents the analysed conversation as an example of a doctor open to alternative, non-hegemonic practices, as a case of ‘conversationalisation’. This type of discourse, which emerged in the private sphere, has since colonised public institutions and bears the potential for both democratic renewal and the regression of the active subject into a consumer.

Another analysis inspired by Gramsci’s understanding of hegemony is proposed by Can Küçükalı (2015), who applies the DHA, specifically its framework of discursive strategies (nomination, predication, argumentation, perspectivisation and intensification/mitigation; see below), to the ruling Turkish Justice and Development Party’s (AKP) attempts to establish and maintain its political hegemony. Indeed, the party has managed to construct a hegemonic bloc in order to secure the (neo-liberal and religious-conservative) transformation of Turkish society. While drawing on a post-foundational understanding of politics, on conflict and contingency, Küçükalı favours a critical realist reading of Gramsci. Accordingly, language use is understood as ‘a sphere of political struggle which is based on social structures and which has material effects on society’ (ibidem, p. 51). The focus on discursive aspects of hegemonic projects implies a detailed analysis of topoi and rhetorical figures in argumentation. The following example is taken from a parliamentary reply by the-then Foreign Minister, Ahmet Davutoğlu, in 2012 in response to criticism of Turkey’s Syrian policy (ibidem, pp. 133–134).

Yesterday, I listened to a highly credible official from Syria. Filled with tears, he said: ‘My honourable minister, because a father who lost his child in an air bombardment could not go out and bury him, he put the child in the fridge to avoid a stink. I personally saw it.’ What kind of torture is this? In the past, we gave friendly advice to Syria but we didn’t impose anything. But whenever folk are overrun, then it changes at that time. [...] We cannot do it [not being interested] as humans. [...] Like the Bosnian government of the time, which struggled with snipers, I am memorizing it with appreciation; we too, should adopt a certain attitude.

(Küçükalı 2015, pp. 133–134)
a threat to the Syrian government, further supported with an *argumentum ad misericordiam* (appeal to pity), a rhetorical question, the *topos of authority* (‘highly credible official’) and the *topos of personal experience* (the pronoun ‘I’). The latter points to an interesting shift as, subsequently, the pronoun ‘we’ emphasises the power of the state and, ultimately, results in a threat (from ‘friendly advice’ to ‘not to impose anything’ to ‘a certain attitude’). This attitude is legitimised through a *topos of humanity* and an analogy with the Bosnian war, an analogy further legitimised by cutting off the flow of the argument (*parenthesis*) so as to indicate the speaker’s personal stance in support of the Bosnian government’s attitude. Here, Küçükali’s critical realist perspective on hegemony becomes manifest as he evaluates this analogy not simply in terms of meaning-making but as fallacious. While arguing that, in the first example, the indicated actor is defending his own country, Turkey, vis-à-vis Syria, is in fact an external actor intervening in another, sovereign state. In so doing, the author traces in detail how a hegemonic project is discursively realised.

**CDS and the influence of post-structuralist approaches: Foucault and beyond**

Given that the notion of discourse – and the wider shift towards an interest in language – has been closely linked to (post-)structuralist concerns for meaning-making, it is not surprising that Foucault has influenced the approaches of CDS. It has been primarily in the work of Fairclough and the Duisburg School (see below) that a strong Foucauldian influence on text-oriented discourse analysis is noticeable. Generally speaking, Fairclough (1992, pp. 55ff.), and other proponents of CDS, embrace Foucault’s view of discourse as constitutive of subjects, social relationships, objects and conceptual frameworks; the insistence that discourse practices are interdependent (thus intertextually related); the discursive nature of power, the political nature of discourse and the discursive nature of social change. This does not imply, however, that Fairclough (1992, pp. 56–61) and others have accepted every aspect of Foucault’s programme; for example, the former is critical of a too-abstract notion of discourse (without analysing actual language use), an exaggerated understanding of power and a relativist outlook. Yet, Fairclough and Siegfried Jäger, in particular, have repeatedly drawn on Foucault in a productive way, some of which we introduce briefly in the following.

First, Fairclough draws on Foucault’s notion of ‘order of discourse’ (2015, pp. 88–89; Fairclough 1992; Foucault 1981b), which he defines as particular combinations of genres (ways of acting), discourses (ways of representing) and styles (ways of being). The way these orders, modes of legitimate meaning-making, are structured is continuously contested and subject to constant struggle. Here, we refer again to doctor–patient communication (see above) – a relation, which is characterised by a particular order, which might well change over time as new styles and representations of the human body gain legitimacy.

Second, and also explicitly linked to Foucault, is the notion of the ‘technologisation of discourse’ (*ibidem*). Drawing on Foucault’s idea of technologies as constitutive of power in modern society and, more particularly, on Rose and Miller’s work on the Foucauldian idea of bio-power and ‘technologies of government’, Fairclough (*ibidem*, pp. 137ff.) views the ‘technologisation of discourse’ as a conscious effort to understand, reshape and reproduce discursive practices that benefit certain hegemonic projects and ideological effects. Examples can easily be envisaged, such as the constant demand for further training in the area of communication, which leads to particular knowledge being circulated in institutions, such as universities. Through technologisation, actors attempt to influence
these orders and change them in a certain way. This requires experts, the policing of these interventions, their design and simulation, as well as subsequent normalisation – illustrated by the analysis of an extract from a British university prospectus. Fairclough then identified a trend, which has become ever more pervasive since the early 1990s (see Rheindorf & Wodak 2015; Jessop et al. 2008).

This genre has developed from densely written texts on basic requirements to ever more colourful publications, consisting of short paragraphs and promises of opportunities. Fairclough (2010, p. 142) points out that instead of formulations such as ‘we require’, the investigated prospectus speaks of ‘you will need’; and instead of stating what is required, assurances (‘students will gain valuable experience’, the lure of employability as it is known nowadays) and descriptions (‘students pursue’) are supposed to create a positive impression. These micro-observations are then linked back to the macro level: Fairclough points to the educational system at large and the increasing significance attached to spoken language and face-to-face interaction.

Siegfried and Margaret Jäger, key proponents of the Duisburg School of CDS (see Jäger & Maier 2015), draw on Foucault’s notion of discourse, Alexej N. Leont’ev’s (1978) speech activity theory and Jürgen Link’s (1982) focus on collective symbols. As institutionalised and conventionalised speech modes, discourses express legitimate knowledge and thus societal power relations (which in turn are impacted upon by discourses). Knowledge, its effects, function, evolution and transmission, have to be reconstructed in order to analyse and problematise power relations and the ‘truths’ they legitimise. By focusing on dispositives – ‘heterogeneous ensemble[s] of discourses, institutions, architectural forms, regulatory decisions, laws, administrative measures, scientific statements, philosophical, moral and philanthropic propositions – in short, the said as much as the unsaid’ (Foucault 1977, p. 194) – the Duisburg School furthermore emphasises the intertwining of discursive and non-discursive practices as well as their materialisations.

Discourse becomes manifest in different ‘discourse strands’ (composed of discourse fragments, texts on the same topic that are launched from different ‘discourse positions’, that is, the position of the participant) on different discourse planes (science, politics, media, etc.). Every discourse is historically embedded and has repercussions for current and future discourse. The discourse of the so-called ‘new right’ in Germany was analysed by Jäger and Jäger (2008), who based their research on different right-wing print media. They identified important common characteristics, such as the use of specific symbols, ‘ethno-pluralism’ [apartheid], aggressiveness and anti-democratic attitudes, as well as significant linguistic and stylistic differences due to the different target audiences of the newspapers. Concerning ‘apartheid’, for example, Jäger (2008, p. 340) reveals the many linguistic devices employed when media and politicians make clear-cut distinctions between ‘our white people’ and ‘others’ (migrants, such as Turks or Bosnians), which subsequently enhances nativist nationalism.

Post-Foucauldian approaches, in particular Laclau’s discourse theory (DT), have been greeted with enthusiasm – as well as scepticism and attempts at reformulation. In particular, Chouliaraki and Fairclough (1999, pp. 121–126) discuss DT as a possibility to integrate Marxism with post-structuralist theories of discourse. Here, the concept of ‘articulation’ is viewed as valuable in order to understand the openness and continuous reconstitution of the social, although strong arguments are made in favour of recognising the significance of social structures, of the non-discursive, which, the authors claim, should be taken more seriously than in Laclau’s DT.

While both approaches more or less agree that meaning depends on discourse, Chouliaraki and Fairclough insist that the social arises out of dialectical relations between semiosis
(discourse) and non-discursive aspects. One case in point is Nicolina Montesano Montessori’s (2011) work on the Zapatistas and their struggle in Mexico. While attempting to design a framework that brings together CDS and DT, Montesano Montessori, among other things, draws on Fairclough’s notion of ‘orders of discourse’, his critique of what she (*ibidem*, p. 172) describes as Laclau’s ‘idealist social ontology’, and the DHA’s methodology in analysing discourse at (a) the level of topic(s), (b) discursive strategies and (c) relevant linguistic realisation(s). For example, Montesano Montessori’s (*ibidem*, p. 178) analysis of texts produced by the Ejército Zapatista de Liberación (EZLN) and the-then Mexican President Salinas results in the claim that ‘modernisation’ (a keyword in Salinas’ texts) is grammatically supported by a verbal system that indicates material achievement and progress (Montesano Montessori supports her claims by drawing on computer-assisted collocation analysis). In contrast, ‘democracy’, a keyword in texts floated by the Zapatistas, is linked to terms indicating transition and movement. There is thus a level of insecurity attached to ‘democracy’ (understood as an *empty signifier*), an openness that leaves space for various parties to join this *chain of equivalence*.

Another scholar who draws on DT is Felicitas Macgilchrist (2011), who analysed the role of journalism in the discursive construction of Russia. She draws on DT’s constructivist premises and its interest in hegemonic projects as means to fix contingent social relations, but also on CDS in order to identify how the construction of such hegemonic projects (and their possible failure) operate in detail through language.

In her research on the Russian–Chechen conflict, Macgilchrist analyses the use of metaphors in order to trace how international news coverage construes *us* and *them*. More specifically, she focuses on the articulation of metaphors and its consequences. Macgilchrist analyses what Lakoff (2002) described as two kinds of the ‘nation-as-a-family’ metaphor, that is, either the *strict father* or the *nurturing parent* model. The former envisages authority, strength, independence and the need to advise and regulate ‘the children’ – which in cases of transgression need to be punished ‘for their own good’. In contrast, the nurturing parent model endorses empathy, discussion and compromise; negotiations are favoured over displays of strength and the use of force. Among many cases, and drawing on these two models, Macgilchrist (*ibidem*, pp. 91ff.) investigates the representation of the-then Prime Minister Putin’s military response to Islamic militants entering Dagestan in August 1999 – and whether or not this representation follows a ‘*weak father* story-line’ or that of the ‘*neglectful parent*’. While a strict father would, at least, achieve a quick victory, Russia fails this test, as manifested in a German newspaper article: ‘Russia missed its opportunity, following the disaster in Chechnya, to prepare its army better to fight in the mountains. The armed forces are already underpaid, poorly equipped and have little motivation.’ Different, but yet similar in constructing the Russian ‘other’, stories about Russia as a neglectful parent focus on the worsening of the situation through military action, as in *The Guardian*’s appeal to avoid ‘excessive and badly-aimed firepower’. In sum, both projects *other* Russia, either by articulating it as incompetent and weak (and, subsequently, too brutal) or not civilised enough, not ‘in the know’ about how to solve conflicts properly.

**CDS and the influence of Critical Theory and Jürgen Habermas**

Returning to neo-Marxist influences, references to Critical Theory in CDS are prominently placed (e.g. Reisigl & Wodak 2001, p. 32; Fairclough & Wodak 1997, pp. 260ff.) – though operationalisation of these approaches in empirical research remains rare. To a certain
extent, this is surprising given that interdisciplinarity is a frequent self-description of CDS practitioners. As such, Max Horkheimer’s (1993, p. 11) call for theoretically informed, empirical investigations of the link between economy, psychology and culture (including areas such as fashion, law, public opinion, etc.) suggests the first generation of Critical Theory as a useful framework. Indeed, these scholars elaborated a rich, empirical programme, a mixture of detailed discussions of empirical data related to theoretical arguments.

In *The salaried masses*, originally published in 1930, Siegfried Kracauer (1998, p. 29), for example, provides an ethnographic study of the ‘exoticism of a commonplace existence’ of white-collar workers. Leo Löwenthal and Norbert Guterman’s (1949) book *Prophets of deceit*, a study of American agitators, resembles language-sensitive work on the contemporary far right in CDS in many ways. A study based on analyses of focus groups dealt with the legacies of National Socialism in post-war Germany (see, for example, Adorno 2010) while *The authoritarian personality* (Adorno et al. 1950), combines statistical analysis with discussions of extracts from interviews. The latter is mentioned in Reisigl and Wodak (2001, pp. 13ff.) and has been taken up in Wodak’s *Politics of fear* (2015, pp. 154ff.), in which *The authoritarian personality* informs Wodak’s analysis of right-wing populist gender politics. Drawing on Adorno, Wodak’s description of the link between authoritarian patterns and ‘pseudo-masculinity’/‘pseudo-femininity’, that is, a fantasy of masculine virility and feminine qualities, helps to explain the attraction of strong men for many (right-wing populist) voters. Pointing to a poster from the local Viennese elections in 2010 by the Austrian Freedom Party (FPÖ), Wodak (*ibidem*, p. 163) analyses the, at first glance, paradox appeal to liberate Muslim women from being coerced into wearing a headscarf.

While the in-group (‘We’) articulated by the leader of the FPÖ, H C Strache, on the right comprises the FPÖ and ‘proper’ Viennese who ‘protect[s] free women’, it is (fallaciously) juxtaposed with ‘The SPÖ [the Social-Democratic Party, until then holding an absolute majority in the local government] [protects] the compulsory wearing of head-scarves.’ The verb, ‘to protect’, is missing in this elliptic sentence, but easily inserted via implicature from the first sentence. By arguing for the prohibition of religiously connoted – more precisely, Muslim – head-scarves, the campaign suggests purging public space of ‘foreign’ presence and enforcing conformity on an idea of ‘modern’ (Christian) femininity. The brand-like slogan at the bottom of the poster, ‘WE [capitalised and thus emphasising contrast] are here for the Viennese’ signifies the in-group. The latter, the ‘proper Viennese’, consist of free women, but not of Muslims and those apparently complicit in constraining women’s freedoms and rights (the Social-Democratic Party and multicultural policies).

Compared with the influence of the first generation, Habermas’ work has had a more direct influence. The key concepts are: *public sphere* and ‘*deliberative democracy*’, in which the free and equal raising of validity claims in debate, critique and decision-making.

*Figure 9.1* FPÖ poster 2010 ‘We protect free women’ (http://www.ceiberweiber.at/index.php?p=news&area=1&newsid=541 [12.08.2014])
is enabled (Chilton et al. 2010, p. 496; Reisigl & Wodak 2001, p. 34). In line with this focus on the exchange of validity claims (Reisigl & Wodak 2009, p. 89), ‘truth and normative validity’ are a constitutive part of their definition of ‘discourse’. As part of their analysis of an intervention in debates about climate change by the-then Czech President Václav Klaus, Reisigl and Wodak analyse the following passage in Klaus’ statement.

[…] the biggest threat to freedom, democracy, the market economy and prosperity at the beginning of the 21st century is not communism or its various softer variants. Communism was replaced by the threat of ambitious environmentalism. This ideology preaches earth and nature and under the slogans of their protection – similarly to the old Marxists – wants to replace the free and spontaneous evolution of mankind by a sort of central (now global) planning of the whole world.

(Reisigl & Wodak 2009, pp. 100–118)

This entails both a *claim to truth* (‘ambitious environmentalism’ as dangerous) and a *claim to rightness* (a free society has to be protected against global planning). These claims are realised via particular lexical choices in order to label (discursive strategy of nomination) actors, objects and processes, including ideological (derogatory) anthroponyms such as ‘old Marxists’ and ‘ideology’, as well as negatively representing (discursive strategy of predication) environmentalists as a ‘threat’. In addition, these claims rest on specific argumentation schemes (formal and content-related *topoi*) and *fallacies*, such as the *topos* of comparison of communism and environmentalism (reconstructed as: since communism threatened freedom, democracy and the market economy, its contemporary equivalent ‘ambitious environmentalism’ will do the same). In this way the analysis of positive self and negative other representation is inherently substantiated by deconstructing validity claims and related argumentation schemes.

Bernhard Forchtner (2011; see also Forchtner and Tominc 2012) further elaborates the link between Habermas’ approach and the DHA by identifying weak, but unavoidable, pragmatic presuppositions of communication oriented towards understanding, as reconstructed in Habermas’ work. These presuppositions are viewed by Habermas (2008, p. 28) in terms of ‘a world of independently existing objects, the reciprocal presupposition of rationality or “accountability,” the unconditionality of context-transcending validity claims such as truth and moral rightness, and the demanding presuppositions of argumentation’. The latter, including inclusiveness, equal communicative rights, sincerity and freedom from repression and manipulation, are counter-factually presupposed in particular as soon as validity claims in communication oriented towards understanding are not any longer ‘naively’ accepted, but challenged and justified.

Forchtner and Christian Schneickert (2016) have further elaborated this line of thinking: while focusing on the aforementioned presuppositions and the subsequent possibility for collective learning processes (that is, processes through which intersubjective relations become more open and egalitarian) and their blocking, they integrate aspects of Bourdieu’s and Habermas’ approaches with the DHA. The authors draw on work inspired by Habermas in which the idea of learning processes and their blocking is conceptualised. For example, Max Miller (2006) offers a four-dimensional conceptualisation of blocked learning. Such blockage of interaction could be caused by, first, an existing consensus or a disagreement that, second, cannot be challenged due to references to an authority, be it an individual/corporate actor or an idea/institution. *Dogmatic learning* leads to consensus, which is not challenged because of legitimising references to an individual or corporate actor. *Defensive
learning views collectively shared knowledge and practices by a group as protected from criticism through reference to a particular idea or institution. Regressive learning excludes the other per se (for example through an argumentum ad hominem) from those who decide what is collectively shared. Ideological learning claims the existence of a fundamental antagonism/disagreement, which cannot be challenged by a certain idea.

For instance, ideological learning is detected in a document entitled Doctrine on research and teaching regarding Marxist-Leninist theory and the organisation of sciences in the GDR (quoted in Forchtner & Schneickert 2016, p. 303), in which certain ideas (‘e.g. of bourgeoisie sociology of knowledge’) are excluded per se on the basis of antagonism: ‘Neutralistic positions or even the uncritical adoption of principles (e.g. of bourgeoisie sociology of knowledge) and its results are incompatible with a Marxist theory of knowledge.’

This proposal is still very much linked to traditional assumptions about rational and transparent argumentation. Against this background, Forchtner (2016) combines a Habermasian perspective with a narrative approach, arguing that modes of emplotting stories (that is, the selective arrangement of events as romantic/melodramatic, tragic, comic, or ironic; see White 1973; Frye 1957) provide a more ‘realistic’ approach to assess intersubjective relations. Here, the focus is on the ways actors, events, objects and processes feature in a narrative, and the expectations, emotional states and levels of certainty and self-righteousness, of more-or-less self-critical subjects, which emerge from these stories.

Stories, which are melodramatically emplotted, depict the world as being divided into ‘black and white’, and the main protagonist of the story (with whom the audience is asked to identify) stands on the right side. Comedies too, though less clear-cut, offer reassurance to the subject (indeed, they offer a happy ending) and, thus, there is little reason for self-critique. The closure of subjectivity through these two modes does not facilitate the use of Habermasian presuppositions, or the rise of open and egalitarian exchange. In contrast, tragic stories thematise past failures, the possibility of their repetition, and difficult choices to be made by us as well as inner tensions, while ironic ones deal even more explicitly with ‘the shifting ambiguities and complexities of an unidealized existence’ (Frye 1957, p. 223), with puzzling defeats and the demise of the heroic. As such, these modes might serve as a mechanism for enabling or blocking collective learning processes. One of the examples analysed by Forchtner, while drawing on the DHA, concerns a text critical of the then looming US-led war against Iraq in 2003 by a German writer. Forchtner claims, that this contribution to the debate is characterised by comic elements, such as (European) reconciliation, rebirth and, thus, a happy ending (Forchtner 2016, pp. 171–182). Narrating past and present in such a way enables the construction of others, in this example: the United States, as lacking knowledge and having not learnt, thus facilitating self-righteousness and closure. By integrating Habermasian Critical Theory with narrative theory, this recent attempt points to both the importance of recontextualising social theories in CDS and a stronger awareness of the narrative form for CDS.

CDS and the influence of Bourdieu’s social theory

Chouliaraki and Fairclough (1999) engage in a detailed discussion of Bourdieu’s toolkit (field, habitus, symbolic capital and power) and stress his assumption of differentiated fields with their own logics. They furthermore point to his notion of ‘linguistic capital’ and the ‘linguistic market’ (see Chapter 7, this volume), while criticising a lack of theory of contemporary forms of mediation as fields (for example, the journalistic field), his view of
language use as a by-product of sociological categories that does not acknowledge the ‘generative force’ of discourse, and a lack of detailed analysis of actual interaction.

The DHA has attempted to operationalise some Bourdieusian categories; for example, the concept of *habitus* features in *The discursive construction of national identity* (Wodak et al. 2009 [1999]) as well as in Wodak’s (2011) study of frontstage and backstage politics and the manifold ways MEPs are socialised into the ‘political profession’. The habitus concept denotes Bourdieu’s attempt to overcome the objectivism:subjectivism dichotomy referring to incorporated experiences from the past (acquired through socialisation), in particular ‘beliefs or opinion’, ‘emotional attitudes’ and ‘behavioural dispositions’. Another key concept utilised in this study (and beyond) is Bourdieu’s notion of *strategy*, which describes subconscious moves in fields ‘based on the dialectic between habitus and fields’ (Bourdieu 1988, pp. 147ff.). This rejection of conscious choices has subsequently become key for understanding the notion of *discursive strategies* (Wodak et al. 2009, pp. 31ff.), one of the three levels of analysis in the DHA (see above). Moreover, the DHA distinguishes between five macro-strategies of *positive self and negative other representation* (nomination, predication, argumentation, perspectivisation and mitigation/ intensification) (Reisigl & Wodak 2001, pp. 44ff.). The authors (*ibidem*, p. 96) note, for example, that public discourse in Austria in 1986, during heated debates over the country’s involvement in the Second World War and the Holocaust during the so-called ‘Waldheim Affair’, was increasingly characterised by a shift in nomination, realised through, among others, the metonymic-synecdochic *totum pro parte* (‘Austria’) and the *pars pro toto* ‘Waldheim’ (for all ‘respectable’ Austrians). Hence, anyone who dared to criticise the-then Austrian candidate for presidency, Kurt Waldheim, was immediately implied as having criticised the entire nation-state of Austria (Wodak et al. 1990).

Finally, Forchtner and Schneickert (2016) have recently attempted to integrate the concepts of *field, habitus* and *strategy* systematically in, and with, Habermasian elements characterising the DHA (see above), thereby strengthening the explanatory power of the DHA with respect to theoretical assumptions about actions, structures and power relations. This includes, first, the reconstruction of objective *positions* from which actors in fields operate by means of principal component analysis, multidimensional scaling and correspondence analysis. Second, in order to identify and reconstruct individual and/or collective *dispositions*, that is, habitus, several methods of data collection, which belong to the DHA’s traditional repertoire (such as [biographic] interviews, ethnographic observation or argumentation-oriented analysis), could be used. Third, the more-or-less skillful positioning of actors in a specific field is linked to strategies (for example, actions by European Union politicians on the frontstage, see Wodak 2011) and can be analysed by drawing on the DHA’s traditional, text-analytical toolkit. For example, an analysis of the position of (male) professors in Germany in the 1960s reveals the hegemony of this type of actor in the academic field (see an interview with a German professor about female scholars in the 1960s discussed by Forchtner & Schneickert 2016, p. 302). This power imbalance involved utterances such as ‘logical thinking is not a quality of the woman. The work of the university professor is hard work, which requires robust strengths, a strong personality, and having a strong voice. That goes beyond the powers of a woman.’ The socialisation of university staff at German universities, which especially in the past shared a male, bourgeois disposition, puts the speaker in a dominant position in the academic field. Finally, positioning is enabled through the strategy of argumentation, the latter being realised through the *topos of male strength* (to be reconstructed as: ‘Since males are robust and strong, have a strong personality and a strong voice, certain jobs should only be implemented by them’).
CDS and Begriffsgeschichte

Ideas rooted in conceptual history (more particularly the Koselleck-inspired Begriffsgeschichte, see Chapter 8, this volume) are also influential in CDS. An interest, not in events but in the development of concepts, such as ‘democracy’ or ‘state’, characterised this academic field. Such an endeavour is necessarily concerned with lexical items. Bo Stråth and Wodak (2009) as well as Michal Krzyżanowski (2010) have pointed to the fact that both approaches share the idea that discourses and concepts are recontextualised across fields and genres. Krzyżanowski and Wodak (2011) and Krzyżanowski (2016) have analysed conceptual changes concerning the European Union’s (EU) Language and Multilingualism Policy (EULMP) between 1997 and 2015 in 35 relevant documents. This field has become a key site of the EU Lisbon Strategy 2000, an attempt at ‘modernising’ the association of states in a neo-liberal spirit (focusing on competitiveness, a knowledge-based economy, skills and lifelong learning etc.). They argue that the concept of ‘multilingualism’ was increasingly endowed with neo-liberal meaning – and that this was also the case in respect to its sister concepts, such as a ‘multilingual society’ (e.g. Krzyżanowski 2016, pp. 316ff.).

In a recent study about Austrian media debates on the so-called ‘refugee crisis’, Markus Rheindorf and Wodak (2017) analyse how prominent political actors in government are forced to publicly negotiate key terminology regarding the ‘management’ of migration and refugees. Competing terms for apparently identical entities and differing meanings ascribed to a single term represent distinct ideological positions. The study traces this mediatised struggle over meanings in the autumn and spring of 2015/16 by considering spatial metaphors in border politics, a strong interdiscursivity with debates on terrorism and concordances all of which manifest the appropriation of semantic fields. For example, the authors point to heated ideological debates over the supposedly adequate labelling of the number of refugees to be allowed to cross the border and apply for asylum – as either a ‘maximum limit’ (Obergrenze) or a ‘reference point’ (Richtwert).

Conclusion

This chapter has introduced CDS, an empirically oriented framework for discourse and text analysis, a framework that is, however, also characterised by an intimate relationship with a range of broader, (socio-)theoretical approaches. Such analyses of language in use in different political activities are thus not to be reduced to a method – even though this framework is certainly not claiming the status of a grand theory. Rather, this problem-oriented framework draws eclectically on a range of theoretical traditions and recontextualises these within distinct research programmes. Discourse, as the main concept, thus implies actual analysis, but also remains, depending on the specific approach of the respective researcher, entangled in a net of relations with sociological and philosophical concepts. In particular, we have focused on how studies conducted within the framework of CDS have utilised concepts recontextualised from authors such as Marx and Gramsci, Foucault and Laclau/Mouffe, as well as the Critical Theory of the Frankfurt School (including Habermas), Bourdieu and the tradition of Begriffsgeschichte.

As recent years have witnessed a tendency towards more and more differentiation of CDS, so too have ever more theoretical perspectives inspired CDS-studies. For example, this includes attempts to queer CDS (Thurlow 2016; Milani 2015). The wide range of theoretical approaches utilised in classic and more recent studies implies the risk of an unproductive eclecticism, a mixture of concepts and theoretical approaches which, due to
contradictory assumptions, might raise more questions than they solve. However, a careful and reflective adoption of different theoretical perspectives will certainly enrich the further study of language in use in ever more complex contexts and strengthen the explanatory power of problem-oriented critical research.

**Note**

1 For a more extensive discussion of how many of these approaches have influenced CDS, see Forchtner 2017.

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