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Introduction: Theory, Interdisciplinarity and Critical Discourse Analysis

Gilbert Weiss and Ruth Wodak

The aim of this volume is to critically examine the foundation and basic elements of discourse-analytical research as it has been developing for roughly two decades. The focus is therefore on the elementary and paradigmatic. This is both an opportunity and a danger. There is the danger of virtually losing contact with the ground, that is, the concrete reality of research, in the Olympian spheres of the fundamental. At the same time this offers an opportunity to go beyond one’s own research practice, to reflect for a moment on the basis of this very research practice and, by doing so, ultimately reap a benefit for this practice. The range of contributions included in this volume and the quality of the authors will hopefully guarantee that the opportunity will prevail against the danger.

The concepts ‘theory’ and ‘interdisciplinarity’ refer to the conceptual and disciplinary framework conditions of discourse-analytical research. Discourse analysis has concentrated on the process of theory formation and has stressed the interdisciplinary nature of its research since its beginning (Fairclough and Wodak, 1997; van Dijk, 1997; Wodak, 2001b). It seems therefore appropriate to focus on these two aspects when examining fundamental principles and analysing the status quo. This is of particular importance as these are the very points for which discourse analysis is often criticized (see van Dijk, 1995). In the following we elaborate on the problem horizons associated with the two concepts.

Theory

Theory and practice, theory and methodology, theory and empirical research, theory and myth, theory and Weltanschauung, theory and research goals, theory and construction – the concept of ‘theory’ seems to provoke dualistic comparisons. On a very general level ‘theory’ could be defined as a coherent series of individual and universal statements, going beyond a mere
description and making it possible to substantiate, explain or understand, or even (re-)construct the object of theory as well as to establish causal relations between specific phenomena. What exactly this means is, however, hotly disputed. The two concepts of ‘explaining’ and ‘understanding’, for instance, imply two completely different approaches to the constitution of theory. These different approaches – a hermeneutic-reconstructive one on the one hand (understanding) and a nomothetic-deductive one on the other hand (explaining) – have practically drawn a dividing line through the modern social sciences. The differentiation between explaining and understanding was introduced by Wilhelm Dilthey (Rodi and Lessing, 1984), whose primary objective had been to make a distinction between the natural sciences and the humanities. Based on this approach, the natural sciences use explanation by formulating a theory of an all-embracing, causal natural relation against the background of a number of individual observations. The humanities and social sciences do not have to take this bypass but have direct access to the nexus of conscious life and culture because we are supposed to understand our own conscious life and our own cultural products ‘from within’. The differentiation between explaining and understanding was however reproduced in the social sciences, above all under the title ‘objectivism versus subjectivism’ (Giddens, 1979).

From antiquity (Plato, Aristotle) to the twentieth century, the theoretical, contemplative attitude was distinguished from a practical, action-oriented position. Even the most influential Continental philosophical approach of the last century, that is, Edmund Husserl’s phenomenology, centres on a differentiation between a theoretical attitude and a ‘relative-natural Weltanschauung’ (Janssen, 1976). According to Husserl, this natural attitude, which makes us accept the existence of the world without questioning it, has to be put in the parentheses of a ‘phenomenological reduction’ so as to radicalize the Cartesian doubt and to gain theoretical knowledge in the strict sense (Husserl, 1993). However, since the nineteenth century an increasing number of approaches have been developed (by, inter alia, Marx, Nietzsche, Heidegger, Horkheimer, Adorno, Habermas) which claim that every theory is determined by practical research goals. The main representatives of present-day Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) (see Van Dijk, 1984; Fairclough, 1989; Wodak, 1989) adhere to this school of thought as well. This approach is essentially based on a critical-dialectical concept of theory that is not limited to formulating and examining general statements about the laws of social reality. Moreover, the focus is on a criticism of scientific-theoretical results. They are challenged with other options, examined for contradictions and considered in an overall context. The aim of theoretical work in this sense is true and instructional enlightenment about the historical and social situation. This approach emphasizes the fact that the scientific work process instituted by the human has always formed part of the historical-social context it strives to identify by acts of cognition. Therefore theory in the social
sciences must always be an object-adequate form of knowledge subject to reflection and prescribed by the ‘thing’ itself. Theory should not be considered an instrument of knowledge but rather a social reality that has taken on a different shape (Berger and Luckmann, 1966). Academic interests and thus the selection and objectives of theories are deemed closely connected with the relations and contradictions between varying social interests. In the recent past this interrelation between theory and practice has been explored against the above background mainly by the sociologist Pierre Bourdieu (Bourdieu, 1977; Chouliaraki and Fairclough, 1999, p. 99).

Plato, Aristotle and – as one of the last – Schelling considered intuition or the intellectual penetration of a complex unity the supreme form of theoretical knowledge. However, since the beginning of modern times and due to the triumph of the natural sciences theory has come to be understood as a deductive system consisting of definitions, principles (axioms), final propositions and inferential statements (theorems). Hence, it must be possible to verify a theory either empirically or logically. Traditionally, a theory is required to be substantiated. Therefore a terminological distinction is made between theory and hypothesis. Unlike a hypothesis, a theory was verified and is therefore an expression of knowledge (Hügli and Lübcke, 1991, p. 569).

Due to this deductive-axiomatic model of theory, with which the natural sciences were operating highly successfully, the humanities and social sciences came under severe pressure. This was even increased by schools of scientism such as logical positivism (Carnap, 1928). As is generally known, this philosophy did not accept any theory unless it was verifiable. An opposite point of view was, for example, taken by Karl Popper, who stipulated that a theory had to meet the following requirements: (a) it need not be verifiable but it must be possible to establish its falsity; (b) it must solve more problems than any alternative theory; (c) it must have been subject to tests, and (d) must have passed them successfully (Popper, 1935). Popper’s hypothetico-deductive methodology shows optimum results if the following procedure is adopted: formulation of a problem (that is, ‘new’, surprising observations regarding recognized theories), formulation of a hypothesis (that is, proposals for a possible explanation of the problem), logical deduction of assumptions based on the hypothesis, and verification (test) of the hypothesis by observation and/or experiment.

In many respects Popper’s model is still deeply rooted in a natural-scientific model of theory. The fact that the process of establishing the truth or falsity is basically one determined by society is underrated. The intersubjectivity of theoretical positions is a problem hardly considered. Moreover, the pre-theoretical world of experience, in which every theory needs to be substantiated, is uncoupled from questions of theory as if free from problems.

It is particularly an achievement of the phenomenological-hermeneutic approach of Alfred Schutz (Schutz, 1932, 1962; Schutz and Luckmann, 1973) that intersubjectivity and the pre-theoretical world of experience were
recognized and formulated as basic questions of the constitution of theory. Based on Max Weber’s concept of a Verstehende Sozialwissenschaft and Edmund Husserl’s idea of the Lebenswelt, Schutz made one of the earliest and most significant attempts to free theory formation in the social sciences from the constraints of naturalistic and positivistic assumptions. In his essay ‘Concept and theory formation in the social sciences’ (1954) Schutz made it clear that Verstehen (understanding) in the social sciences has to be founded primarily on everyday understanding, for ‘Verstehen is… primarily not a method used by the social scientist, but the particular experiential form in which common-sense thinking takes cognizance of the social cultural world’ (Schutz, 1962, p. 56). Schutz expounded:

the common-sense knowledge of everyday life is the unquestioned but always questionable background within which inquiry starts and within which alone it can be carried out. It is this Lebenswelt, as Husserl calls it, within which, according to him, all scientific and even logical concepts originate; it is the social matrix within which, according to Dewey, unclarified situations emerge, which have to be transformed by the process of inquiry into warranted assertability; and Whitehead has pointed out that it is the aim of science to produce a theory which agrees with experience by explaining the thought-objects constructed by common sense through the mental constructs or thought objects of science. For all these thinkers agree that any knowledge of the world, in common-sense thinking as well as in science, involves mental constructs, syntheses, generalizations, formalizations, idealizations specific to the respective level of thought organization. The concept of Nature, with which the natural sciences have to deal, is, as Husserl has shown, an idealizing abstraction from the Lebenswelt, an abstraction which, on principle and of course legitimately, excludes persons with their personal life and all objects of culture which originate as such in practical human activity. Exactly this layer of the Lebenswelt, however, from which the natural sciences have to abstract, is the social reality which the social sciences have to investigate. (Schutz, 1962, p. 57ff.)

This statement stresses the Lebenswelt foundation of theory formation in the social sciences. To make a scientific understanding of social actions possible, an ‘understanding’ sociology as formulated by Schutz has to explicate how understanding works in everyday life, prior to any science. There is a direct interrelation between the objective understanding focusing on the ‘external horizons’ of action and the subjective understanding of ‘everyday activities’. The approach developed by Schutz determined the theoretical understanding of qualitative trends in the social sciences, for example, ethnomethodology, grounded theory, conversational analysis and discourse analysis (Cicourel, 1973; Strauss, 1978; Garfinkel, 1984; Heritage, 1984; Wodak, 1996; Titscher et al., 2000).
Alfred Schutz also reformulated the interrelations of problem, theory and relevance. He distinguished three forms of ‘relevance’: (1) thematic relevance, (2) interpretational relevance and (3) motivational relevance (Schutz and Luckmann, 1973, p. 186ff.). Thematic relevance refers to the basic question, ‘What is the problem to be studied?’ According to Schutz, this level of relevance is basically characterized by the fact that the study topic, the ‘problem-object’, the ‘question-able’ must always be considered against the background of an ‘order established naturally and without questioning’ (Voegelin et al., 1993, p. 56). In this respect the relevance of a theoretical problem does not differ from the ‘practical relevance’ of an everyday problem. The differentiation between the question-able and the order established without questioning is indispensible to provide the sociology of knowledge with a tool of formally dealing with questions of problem selection. According to Schutz, the next level is interpretational relevance that deals with the question, ‘Which elements of our knowledge are relevant for the interpretation of the problem subject to study?’ The relevance of a specific method is decided on this level. This is also considered the point where ‘an ideal (that is, never fully developed) method can provide guidance on the interpretative steps to be taken and the material to be used for interpretation’ (ibid., p. 57). However, the third concept of relevance, that is, motivational relevance, focuses on the question, ‘To what extent should the problem be investigated?’ In other words, ‘at what point should I content myself with the findings of the study; when do I have to stop and declare everything beyond a specific scope as “irrelevant” or at least not relevant for the problem studied?’ In the same way as he had done with regard to ‘thematic relevance’, Schutz also pointed out explicitly in respect of the other two concepts of relevance that they should be applied not only to scientific thinking but also to ‘everyday life’. The different relevance levels are not at all independent from one another but directly interrelated. This interrelation determines every theoretical study. For a problem-oriented and reflexive approach such as discourse analysis this differentiation of relevance levels is therefore imperative (Cicourel, 1964; Grathoff, 1995).

So far we have addressed the questions of theory formation only on a very general level. On this general level different types/concepts of theory can be distinguished. To summarize them once more: (1) ontological-normative, (2) deductive-axiomatic, (3) critical-dialectical, (4) phenomenological-hermeneutic. Other types or subtypes of theories could certainly be listed and, of course, the four types mentioned could be named differently (for example, empirical-nomological instead of deductive-axiomatic, and so on). Nevertheless, theory formation of the last two centuries is basically covered by listing these four types.

Let us now turn to specific theory formation in CDA. First of all, one can state that CDA has its roots in the latter two (critical-dialectical and phenomenological-hermeneutic) of the four theory types mentioned, but
apart from this it is quite difficult to make consistent statements about the theoretical foundation of CDA. There is no such thing as a uniform, common theory formation determining CDA; in fact, there are several approaches. Michael Meyer came to the conclusion that ‘there is no guiding theoretical viewpoint that is used consistently within CDA, nor do the CDA protagonists proceed consistently from the area of theory to the field of discourse and then back to theory’ (2001, p. 18; see also Wodak and Ludwig, 1999, p. 11). Meyer also points out that not only epistemological theories but also general social theories, middle-range theories, microsociological theories, sociopsychological theories, discourse theories and linguistic theories can be found in CDA. It would be outside the scope of these introductory remarks to present the different aspects stressed by the different CDA representatives in their respective approaches (although an overview will be given in this volume) or to reconstruct the individual theoretical bases (see Lemke, 1995; Chouliaraki and Fairclough, 1999; Wodak, 2000a; Wodak and Meyer, 2001). Attention should however be drawn to the fact that it is essential to be aware of the different levels of theory types proposed by Meyer. This is of particular importance since in the discourse of applied sciences the concept ‘theory’ refers to all levels without any further qualification. Let us take two philosophers as an example who undoubtedly had a strong influence on the development of CDA: Michel Foucault and Jürgen Habermas (see Foucault, 1972; Habermas, 1981; Wodak, 1996, p. 24ff.). The different levels of theory are often mixed up in the CDA reception of both Foucault and Habermas. For example, Foucault’s tools are used on both the epistemological level and the level of discourse theory (Fairclough, 1992; Lemke, 1995, p. 29; Wodak, 1996, p. 26). The approach developed by Habermas is applied as a general social theory, a microsociological interaction theory and a discourse theory (Chouliaraki and Fairclough, 1999, p. 88ff.). Of course, this indiscriminate mixing leads to inconsistencies in terms of concept and category which in turn have an adverse effect on systematics. Under the influence of other so-called ‘grand theories’ (for example, those developed by Bourdieu (1980), Giddens (1984), and Luhmann (1997)), this problem has become even more acute. On the whole, the theoretical framework of CDA seems eclectic and unsystematic. However, this can also be viewed as a positive phenomenon. The plurality of theory and methodology can be highlighted as a specific strength of CDA, to which this research discipline ultimately owes its dynamics (Wodak, 2002). Chouliaraki and Fairclough (1999, p. 16ff.) described this as follows:

We see CDA as bringing a variety of theories into dialogue, especially social theories on the one hand and linguistic theories on the other, so that its theory is a shifting synthesis of other theories, though what it itself theorises in particular is the mediation between the social and the linguistic – the ‘order of discourse’, the social structuring of semiotic hybridity (interdiscursivity). The theoretical constructions of discourse
which CDA tries to operationalise can come from various disciplines, and the concept of ‘operationalisation’ entails working in a transdisciplinary way where the logic of one discipline (for example, sociology) can be ‘put to work’ in the development of another (for example, linguistics).

This statement underlines the direct connection between theory and interdisciplinarity/transdisciplinarity that is typical of discourse analysis and explicitly addressed in this volume. We will look at transdisciplinarity in more detail below. Even if plurality of theory is undoubtedly a strength, attention has to be drawn to the fact that it is crucial to be aware of the different levels and types of theories – as, for example, listed by Meyer – and the respective operational levels.

The ‘mediation between the social and the linguistic’, referred to by Chouliaraki and Fairclough in the above quotation, is highly relevant for the theory formation process in CDA. Major difficulties of operationalization in the research process are usually related to this mediation problem (Fairclough and Wodak, 1997; Wodak, 2001b, p. 12). The CDA representatives agree to a large extent that the complex interrelations between discourse and society cannot be analysed adequately unless linguistic and sociological approaches are combined. The problem is however that sociological and linguistic categories are basically not compatible as they tend to have diverging Horizontgebundenheit – the term Husserl used to describe the fact that they were dependent on different horizons. In sociological contexts the term ‘representation’ usually denotes something different (or has a wider meaning) than in specific linguistic analyses. The term ‘institution’ is used in discourse-analytical concepts and sociological theories with a completely different meaning. A theoretical basic structure capable of reconciling sociological and linguistic categories (mediation) is therefore required. No such uniform theoretical framework of mediation has been created in CDA to date. However one can speak of a theoretical synthesis of conceptual tools developed in different theoretical schools, as practised to a certain extent by Chouliaraki and Fairclough. Tools of this kind are, for example, Foucault’s discursive formations, Bourdieu’s habitus, or register and code as defined by Halliday and Bernstein (Lemke, 1995, p. 19ff.). This synthesis of theories is by no means a monistic theory model and it does not claim to be ‘more true’ than the individual theories from which conceptual ideas are drawn. It is primarily committed to a ‘conceptual pragmatism’ (Mouzelis) focusing on ‘criteria of utility rather than truth’ (Mouzelis, 1995, p. 9). Such a pragmatic approach would not seek to provide a catalogue of context-less propositions and generalizations, but rather to relate questions of theory formation and conceptualization closely to the specific problems that are to be investigated. In this sense, the first question we have to address as researchers is not, ‘Do we need a grand theory?’, but rather, ‘What conceptual tools are relevant for this or that problem and for this and that context?’ With this
question, due regard is given to the fact that the context of discursive practices needs to be addressed adequately. Hence, some CDA representatives have concentrated on the issue of the context and the development of a context model in recent years (Wodak, 2000a; van Dijk, 2001).

The above statement by no means renders the question as to the truth of knowledge futile. However, it should not be asked on the level of the ‘conceptual tools’ if a constructive connection is to be successfully established between different theoretical approaches on the one hand and theory and empirical research on the other hand. The question of the truth or, in more general terms, the possibility of knowledge in the social sciences basically has to be dealt with on a metaconceptual level. There the focus will be on the ontological character of the social, the constitution of the subject, and so on. On the conceptual level a decision has to be made on the plausibility, that is, the usefulness of specific ‘tools’ for a specific question or specific object of research. An object of research can be characterized by different dimensions requiring conceptual tools of different theoretical contexts. Basically, the use of heterogeneous tools of different theories should not be rejected provided they may be integrated on the conceptual level.

To sum up, one could say that in order to develop an integrated theoretical framework capable of reconciling different (sociological and linguistic) perspectives without reducing them to one another (and this is where we get to the heart of the problem of interdisciplinarity) the following steps are necessary:

1. Clarification of the basic theoretical assumptions regarding text, discourse, language, action, social structure, institution and society. This is done on a level preceding the actual analysis. It constitutes the framework for developing conceptual tools, for establishing categories and for analytical operationalization. This step is vital for sociology and linguistics to arrive at a ‘mutual understanding’.

2. The development of conceptual tools capable of connecting the level of text or discourse analysis with sociological positions on institutions, actions and social structures. Conceptual tools are elements of theory allowing a connection in both directions (linguistics and sociology). As analytical interfaces (for example, the concepts of discursive formation, order of discourse, habitus, register and code) they guarantee a socio-linguistically integrated model in the strict sense. Their plausibility determines whether further categorization will be successful. In other words, if these tools do not work, it will not be possible to reconcile the respective positions in the research strategy at a later date.

   Conceptual tools do not represent a self-contained edifice of theories. They are elements that may be adopted from different theoretical approaches, schools and traditions. The principle of ‘conceptual pragmatism’ applies also here: theory formation is not a process leading up to
a final product valid for all times representing in itself the total truth of
the world, but rather a continued development of tools and resources
designed to help us understand the world. In this context, Pierre
Bourdieu uses the phrase ‘cumulative conceptualization work’:  

The striving for originality at all costs, sometimes favored by igno-
rance, and the religious devotion to this or that canonical author,
which often ends up in ritual recitation, have in common that they
often prevent an appropriate attitude vis-à-vis a theoretical tradition
that consists in affirming continuity and rupture, conservation and
innovation at the same time, that relies on the entirety of the avail-
able thinking – without fear of being accused of mere imitation or
eclecticism – in order to go beyond the predecessors by using the tools
to whose production they contributed in a new way. The ability to
actively reproduce the best products of the thinkers of the past by
applying the production instruments they left behind is the access
requirement of really productive thinking. (Bourdieu, 1997, pp. 64–5)

This statement by Bourdieu can be considered the programmatic basis for
all efforts to develop an integrated theoretical framework. If we adopt
instruments or tools from different theories, among them also those of
Bourdieu, and integrate them into the research process, this does not nec-
essarily have to lead to eclecticism in a negative sense. On the contrary,
it could be the very characteristic of an innovative and productive theory
formation, albeit a characteristic that has to prove its productivity in
empirical applicability. One should however add that an eclecticism
marked by incoherent and unrelated concepts and categories can in fact
be found in the research practice.

As we pointed out before, the most important task of conceptual tools
is to integrate sociological and linguistic positions, that is, to mediate
between text and institution, between communication and structure, and
between discourse and society. This problem of mediation not only refers
to the hyphen in socio-linguistics but also pinpoints the central problem
of modern social science, the ‘wound’ of sociological thinking in the
twentieth century, so to speak (Weiss, 1996, p. 90ff.). This ‘wound’ has
been given many names: subjectivism versus objectivism, individualism
versus collectivism, voluntarism versus determinism, and so on. In essence,
all these dualities deal with the micro/macroproblem of the reference
context of player and structure: is it actions, practices, strategies, inten-
tions of players that explain social phenomena or is it structural charac-
teristics of a specific social formation (class structures, social and cultural
codes, normative systems)? This fundamental question divided the social
sciences into two camps. On the one hand, there are approaches focusing
on the understanding of actions taken by the individual; on the other,
there are structural-functionalist approaches concentrating on the deter-
mining structures overpowering the players and leaving them little room
to manoeuvre. State-of-the-art approaches of social theory do however try
to conceptualize the context of reference of action and structure as being mutually determined/recursive and, consequently, try to treat both
levels as having equal status in analysis. In the following we would like to provide some hopefully useful details.

Communicative actions, social and symbolic practices are things that happen within wider frames of reference and contexts, such as in social systems, in a way that microcontexts would take place within macrocontexts or be embedded in them; hence it is not a box system in which one box contains another. Therefore it is misleading to state that players engage in their actions within structures and systems and it is equally inappropriate to claim that the individual is a part of society. These phrases convey the substantialist conception that social systems or societies are self-contained entities containing other self-contained entities, such as players or individuals, that is, the box system (Luhmann, 1984, 1997). This has to be rejected flatly: symbolic practices do not take place within social systems. Instead, they reproduce the latter simply by taking place; the systems reproduced in this way then retroact on the conditions of action. This means that engaging in an action equals system reproduction, or in our concrete case, text production equals system reproduction. In this sense microcontexts cannot be placed within macrocontexts – from an ontological perspective microcontext equals macrocontext. For analytical purposes it is however useful to distinguish between microlevel and macrolevel.

This reasoning is only comprehensible if a ‘duality of structure’ (Giddens, 1984) is assumed: structure as the medium and result of behaviour which it organizes in a recurrent process. The structural factors of social systems do not exist outside action but are continuously engaged in the production and reproduction of action, or, in the more drastic wording of Mouzelis (1995, p. 139): ‘rules (or structures, in Giddens’ terminology) are 100 per cent the medium and outcome of action’. Discursive practices should always be regarded as both structuring and structured actions. In text production the players reproduce the conditions that make text possible. Hence, also Pierre Bourdieu (1990) refers to ‘structured and structuring structures’.

3. After clarifying the theoretical assumptions and identifying the conceptual tools, the third basic step is the defining of categories, that is, of analytical concepts, to denote the content of specific phenomena. Categories are based on disciplinary or methodological borders only to a minor extent; they depend primarily on the object of research, that is, questions and content to be subject to study. Categories of this kind include, for example, public space, identity, legitimacy, prejudice, discrimination, power, racism, and so on. It is important to identify both parallels in and differences between the
process of analytical category formation on the one hand and categorization in everyday discourses on the other. Category formation is not the exclusive privilege of scientific theorists, it is also an important and pervasive part of people’s discourse. As Eric Voegelin (1987, p. 27) has said, ‘man does not wait for science to have his life explained to him, and when the theorist approaches social reality he finds the field pre-empted by what may be called the self-interpretation of society’.

The question of how categories are constituted in everyday discourse and what functions they satisfy is therefore – in the strictest sense of the word – a fundamental question regarding the categorization of theories. However, even though analytical categories are very closely linked to categories constructed by players in conversations, for example, to include or exclude specific social groups, they differ in one important aspect: they are instruments of an observer ‘relieved of action’. In this respect they are, to put it in the words of Alfred Schutz, *second-grade constructions*, as opposed to the *first-grade constructions*, that is, the categories of ‘everyday discourse’ (see Schutz, 1962, p. 3ff.).

This background information has been provided to present the key aspects of the complex of problems ‘theory’ in CDA at least in broad outline. Before addressing the questions of interdisciplinarity directly related to it, we would like to make a last general remark on the basic theoretical task in the social sciences. By referring to Schutz and Ricoeur, the English sociologist David Levy (1981, p. 14) established a standard which is still valid:

An objective science of social reality has a task of interpretation which encompasses several levels. It must give a true account of the systems of meanings by which men in society make sense of their lives. Then it must seek to understand the variations between such systems by reference to the particular historical circumstances of the societies in which they arise. It must relate these different systems to universal symbolic patterns of the type suggested by Schutz. And, finally, it must refer these universal symbolisms to the character of the human condition as rooted in reality that can neither be dreamed nor defined away. It must move through intersubjectivity to the objective world of which we are conscious and on which the work of consciousness builds. To use Paul Ricoeur’s terms, an interpretation of social reality cannot rest before it has shown the way in which ‘my world’, or ‘our world’, is always an aspect of ‘the world’.

**Cornerstones of CDA: discourse, ideology, power**

The roots of CDA lie in classical Rhetoric, Textlinguistics and Socio-linguistics, as well as in Applied Linguistics and Pragmatics. The notions of ideology,
power, hierarchy, gender and sociological variables were all seen as relevant for an interpretation or explanation of text. The subjects under investigation differ for the various departments and scholars who apply CDA (see Wodak 2002 for an extensive discussion of the development and characteristics of CDA). Gender issues, issues of racism, media discourses, political discourses, organizational discourses or dimensions of identity research have become very prominent. The methodologies differ greatly in all these studies on account of the aims of the research and also the methodologies applied: small qualitative case studies can be found as well as large data corpora, drawn from fieldwork and ethnographic research (see the chapters by Caldas-Coulthard, Martin Rojo and Anthonissen in this volume). CDA takes a particular interest in the relationship between language and power. The term ‘CDA’ is used nowadays to refer more specifically to the critical linguistic approach of scholars who find the larger discursive unit of text to be the basic unit of communication (see Anthonissen, 2001). This research specifically considers more or less overt relations of struggle and conflict in all the domains mentioned above.

Deconstructing the label of this research programme means that we have to define what CDA means when employing the terms ‘critical’ and ‘dis-course’. Michael Billig in this volume clearly points to the fact that CDA has become an established academic discipline with the same rituals and institutional practices as all other academic disciplines. Ironically, he asks whether this might mean that CDA has become ‘uncritical’ – or if the use of abbreviations such as CDA might serve the same purpose as in other traditional, non-critical disciplines – to exclude outsiders and to mystify the functions and intentions of the research. We cannot answer Billig’s questions extensively here, but we do believe that he points to some interesting and potentially very fruitful and necessary debates for CDA, which will hopefully arise as a result of this volume.

At this point, we would like to stress that CDA has never been and has never attempted to be or to provide one single or specific theory, and one specific methodology is not characteristic of research in CDA. On the contrary, studies in CDA are multifarious, derived from quite different theoretical backgrounds and oriented towards very different data and methodologies. Researchers in CDA also rely on a variety of grammatical approaches (see the contrast between the approaches of Jim Martin, Teun van Dijk and Jay Lemke in this volume). The definitions of the terms ‘discourse’, ‘critical’, ‘ideology’, ‘power’, and so on, are also manifold (see Wodak, 1996). Thus, any criticism of CDA should always specify which research or researcher they relate to because CDA as such cannot be viewed as a holistic or closed paradigm. We suggest using the notion of a ‘school’ for CDA, or of a programme which many researchers find useful and to which they can relate. This programme or set of principles has changed over the years (see Fairclough and Wodak, 1997).
Such a heterogeneous school might be confusing for some, but on the other hand it allows for open discussion and debate, for changes in the aims and goals, and for innovation. In contrast to ‘total and closed’ theories (such as Chomsky’s Generative Transformational Grammar or Michael Halliday’s Systemic Functional Linguistics), CDA has never had the image of a ‘sect’ and does not want to have such an image.

This heterogeneity of methodological and theoretical approaches that can be found in this field of linguistics would tend to confirm van Dijk’s point that CDA and Critical Linguistics (CL) ‘are at most a shared perspective on doing linguistic, semiotic or discourse analysis’ (van Dijk, 1993, p. 131). CDA sees ‘language as social practice’ (Fairclough and Wodak, 1997), and considers the context of language use to be crucial:

CDA sees discourse – language use in speech and writing – as a form of ‘social practice’. Describing discourse as social practice implies a dialectical relationship between a particular discursive event and the situation(s), institution(s) and social structure(s) which frame it: the discursive event is shaped by them, but it also shapes them. That is, discourse is socially constitutive as well as socially conditioned – it constitutes situations, objects of knowledge, and the social identities of and relationships between people and groups of people. It is constitutive both in the sense that it helps to sustain and reproduce the social status quo, and in the sense that it contributes to transforming it. Since discourse is so socially consequential, it gives rise to important issues of power. Discursive practices may have major ideological effects – that is, they can help produce and reproduce unequal power relations between (for instance) social classes, women and men, and ethnic/cultural majorities and minorities through the ways in which they represent things and position people. (Fairclough and Wodak, 1997, p. 258)

The term ‘discourse’ is, of course, used very differently by different researchers and also in different academic cultures. In the German and Central European context, a distinction is made between ‘text’ and ‘discourse’, relating to the tradition in text linguistics as well as to rhetoric (see Vass, 1994; Brünner and Gräfen, 1995; Wodak, 1996 for summaries). In the English-speaking world, ‘discourse’ is often used for both written and oral texts (see Schiffrin, 1992). Other researchers distinguish between different levels of abstractness: Lemke (1995) defines ‘text’ as the concrete realization of abstract forms of knowledge (‘discourse’), thus adhering to a more Foucauldian approach (see also Jäger et al., 2001). The discourse-historical approach elaborates and links to the sociocognitive theory of Teun van Dijk (1984, 1993, 1998) and views ‘discourse’ as a form of knowledge and memory, whereas text illustrates concrete oral utterances or written documents (Reisigl and Wodak, 2001).
The shared perspective and programme of CDA relate to the term ‘critical’, which in the work of some ‘critical linguists’ could be traced to the influence of the Frankfurt School or Jürgen Habermas (see above). Nowadays this concept is conventionally used in a broader sense, recognizing, in Fairclough’s words, ‘that, in human matters, interconnections and chains of cause-and-effect may be distorted out of vision. Hence “critique” is essentially making visible the interconnectedness of things’ (Fairclough, 1995, p. 747; see also Connerton, 1976, pp. 11–39).

References to the contribution of Critical Theory to the understanding of CDA and the notions of ‘critical’ and ‘ideology’ are of particular importance (see Anthonissen, 2001, for an extensive discussion of this issue). Thompson (1990) discusses the concepts of ideology and culture and the relations between these concepts and certain aspects of mass communication. He points out that the concept of ideology first appeared in late eighteenth-century France and has thus been in use for about two centuries. The term has been given a range of different functions and meanings at different times. For Thompson, ideology refers to social forms and processes within which, and by means of which, symbolic forms circulate in the social world. Ideology, for CDA, is seen as an important means of establishing and maintaining unequal power relations. CDA takes a particular interest in the ways in which language mediates ideology in a variety of social institutions. For Eagleton, moreover, the study of ideology has to bear in mind the variety of theories and theorists that have examined the relation between thought and social reality. All the theories assume ‘that there are specific historical reasons why people come to feel, reason, desire and imagine as they do’ (1994, p. 15).

Critical theories, and thus also CDA, are afforded special standing as guides for human action. Such theories seek not only to describe and explain, but also to root out a particular kind of delusion. Even with differing concepts of ideology, Critical Theory seeks to create awareness in agents of their own needs and interests. This was, of course, also taken up by Pierre Bourdieu (1989) in his concepts of ‘violence symbolique’ and ‘méconnaissance’. One of the aims of CDA is to ‘demystify’ discourses by deciphering ideologies.

For CDA, language is not powerful on its own – it gains power by the use powerful people make of it. This explains why CDA often chooses the perspective of those who suffer and critically analyses the language use of those in power; those who are responsible for the existence of inequalities and who also have the means and the opportunity to improve conditions. In agreement with its Critical Theory predecessors, CDA emphasizes the need for interdisciplinary work in order to gain a proper understanding of how language functions in constituting and transmitting knowledge, in organizing social institutions or in exercising power.

An important perspective in CDA related to the notion of ‘power’ is that it is very rare that a text is the work of any one person. In texts discursive differences are negotiated; they are governed by differences in power which is in part encoded in and determined by discourse and by genre. Therefore
texts are often sites of struggle in that they show traces of differing discourses and ideologies contending and struggling for dominance.

Thus, defining features of CDA are a concern with power as a central condition in social life and efforts to develop a theory of language which incorporates this as a major premise. Close attention is paid not only to the notion of struggles for power and control, but also to the intertextuality and recontextualization of competing discourses in various public spaces and genres. Power is about relations of difference, and particularly about the effects of differences in social structures. The constant unity of language and other social matters ensures that language is entwined in social power in a number of ways: language indexes power, expresses power, is involved where there is contention over and a challenge to power. Power does not derive from language, but language can be used to challenge power, to subvert it, to alter distributions of power in the short and the long term. Language provides a finely articulated vehicle for differences in power in hierarchical social structures. Very few linguistic forms have not at some stage been pressed into the service of the expression of power by a process of syntactic or textual metaphor. CDA takes an interest in the ways in which linguistic forms are used in various expressions and manipulations of power.

Power is signalled not only by grammatical forms within a text, but also by a person’s control of a social occasion by means of the genre of a text. It is often exactly within the genres associated with given social occasions that power is exercised or challenged.

Thus, CDA might be defined as fundamentally interested in analysing opaque as well as transparent structural relationships of dominance, discrimination, power and control as manifested in language. In other words, CDA aims to investigate critically social inequality as it is expressed, constituted, legitimized, and so on, by language use (or in discourse). Most critical discourse analysts would thus endorse Habermas’ claim that ‘language is also a medium of domination and social force. It serves to legitimize relations of organized power. Insofar as the legitimizations of power relations ... are not articulated ... language is also ideological’ (1967, p. 259).

Interdisciplinarity

‘Interdisciplinarity’, ‘transdisciplinarity’ and ‘multidisciplinarity’ have become catchwords of academic discourse, just like the ‘theory concepts’ cited above. (A website of a students’ competition in Calgary (www.ucalgary.ca/evds/intervention/1996ss/interdisciplinarity.html) presents ironical rhymes, drawings and prints alluding to the fact that in job applications one is expected to give account of one’s experience with interdisciplinarity, or at least show some interest in it: ‘If we want jobs so we don’t look like slobs – They tell us we’re going to need Interdisciplinarity.’)

In an important work by Peter Weingart and Nico Stehr (2000) the authors point out that scientific jargon has changed in the last few years. According
to them, the above catchwords have to be used to ‘belong to’ the academic community. A new ‘jargon of authentic being’ (Adorno) seems to be evolving. In his contribution Weingart outlines the concepts of a traditional discipline and of interdisciplinary research. ‘Fields’ of specialization are defended by resorting to territorial metaphors, while interdisciplinary research uses images associated with innovation, progress and flexibility. He concludes that ‘in fact, it reveals the seemingly paradoxical mechanism that the more differentiation of knowledge production the more intense will be the call for interdisciplinarity’ (Weingart, 2000, p. 30). Finally Weingart states that interdisciplinarity can be seen as the result of opportunism in the production of knowledge: researchers seize interdisciplinary opportunities to produce new knowledge; practitioners grab these opportunities as well and provide the necessary resources. From this perspective, specialization and interdisciplinarity complement each other; they are not opposites or new dichotomies, but rather they coexist. Weingart and Stehr free the concept of ‘interdisciplinarity’ from jargon-like vagueness. They also stress that the existing matrix of traditional academic disciplines is dissolving and that significant changes in the traditional canon of knowledge are imminent.

What does this mean for CDA? How can demands for interdisciplinarity or transdisciplinarity be put into practice? What are the preconditions? And what are the consequences for the theory and practice of CDA and discourse analysis in general?

Of course these questions are not new. In feminist theory and cultural studies these questions and demands have existed for some years (see, for example, L’Homme, 1995). Since its inception in the early 1990s, CDA has waved the flag of interdisciplinarity (see Wodak, 1996; Chouliariki and Fairclough, 1999). The new anthology published by Helmut Gruber and Florian Menz (2001) with the promising title Interdisziplinarität in der Angewandten Sprachwissenschaft. Methodenmenü oder Methodensalat? (Interdisciplinarity in Applied Linguistics. Methodological Menu or Hotchpotch?) addresses not only methodological questions. In the Preface the two editors outline the most important debates within discourse analysis, which all require interdisciplinary responses: questions concerning the interpretation of discourses, questions concerning the definition of ‘context’ and questions as to an ‘exhaustive description’ versus ‘abstinence from theory’. It is especially Martin Reisigl’s (2001) contribution to this volume based on a study of secondary interjections that exemplifies how much extradisciplinary knowledge is necessary to interpret individual interjections and their use.

Here we will list some reasons why interdisciplinary research may be fertile and useful.

**Innovation and creative environment**

Roger and Ellen Hollingsworth, renowned American sociologists and historians, have been examining the questions of where creativity is thriving and
how research should be conducted for many years. In 'Major discoveries and biomedical organizations: perspectives on interdisciplinarity, nurturing leadership, and integrated structure and cultures' (2000) they arrived at the conclusion that interdisciplinary teamwork at a very intensive level, that is, teams working together at the same place, is an important prerequisite for creativity. In addition they stated that these teams should include scientists of different disciplines and traditions. The Hollingsworths also emphasized that traditional hierarchical structures have an adverse effect on innovative research. 'Nurturing leadership' is required, a concept that stands for a very respectful, cooperative but at the same time firm stance of the project management: 'organizations require distinctive structural and cultural characteristics if scientists are to make major discoveries repeatedly'. The Hollingsworths investigated mainly institutions and teams in the field of natural sciences; nevertheless, we can ask ourselves to what extent their findings and proposals may also be applied to research and university institutions in the area of the social sciences and the humanities.

In this context it is also important to clarify what creativity and innovation could mean in the social sciences, for in the social sciences it will never be possible to make a 'new discovery' comparable to the relativity theory. According to the epistemological literature (see Kuhn, 1976), changes of paradigms are observable and possible also in social sciences although their quality differs from that of the natural sciences. Paradigms may coexist, different attempts at explanation may compete, and contexts may be interpreted and explained differently. In linguistics we find Noam Chomsky's pioneering approaches paralleled by structural and also descriptive, systemic theories. One theory does not replace another. Undoubtedly it can be considered an innovation to identify new causal relations, to weigh known causal relations differently or to highlight new dimensions of a study object. For example, women could be taken into account in historical, sociological, philosophical and linguistic research so as to end the attributing of universal validity to findings based on studies of white middle-class men. The step from the sentence to the text could also be interpreted as an innovation; and there are many other examples.

Why interdisciplinarity?

As can be seen from the above, there is a wealth of literature both for and against interdisciplinarity. Our brief remarks on this subject are based on, inter alia, Axeli Knapp and Hilge Landweer (1995), Roger and Ellen Hollingsworth (2000), Peter Weingart and Nico Stehr (2000), on some lectures at the conference 'Interdisciplinarity and the Organization of Knowledge in Europe' (Cambridge, 2000), on the debate between multidisciplinarity and interdisciplinarity in the cognition sciences (Yvonne Rogers, Mike Scaife and Antonio Rizzo), on Chouliaraki and Fairclough (1999), who present an extensive programme for CDA, on Gruber and Menz (2001), as well as on Moti Nissani
(1997) of the Interdisciplinary Studies Program at Wayne State University, who vehemently advocates interdisciplinary research in the social sciences and who drew up a ten-item programme.

The science sociologist Helga Nowotny outlines the concepts up for discussion briefly and very accurately:

Pluri(multi-)disciplinarity shows in the fact that the manifold disciplines remain independent. No changes are brought about in the existing structures of disciplines and theories. This form of academic cooperation consists in treating a subject from differing disciplinary perspectives.

Interdisciplinarity may be recognized in the explicit formulation of a standardized transdisciplinary terminology. This form of cooperation is used to treat different subjects within a framework of an interdisciplinary or transdisciplinary design.

Transdisciplinarity manifests itself when research across the disciplinary landscape is based on a common axiomatic theory and the interpenetration of disciplinary research methods. Cooperation leads to a bundling or clustering of problem-solving approaches rooted in different disciplines and drawing on a pool of theories. (Nowotny, 1997, p. 188ff.)

All authors agree in one respect: the difference between multi(trans)disciplinarity and interdisciplinarity is that interdisciplinary research ideally integrates theoretical approaches and thereby creates new holistic approaches, while multidisciplinary research does not modify the approaches of individual academic branches and applies them separately. Integration may however reach several levels both in the theory and the practice of research, which we describe in more detail below.

Axeli Knapp (Knapp and Landweer, 1995) presents five arguments in favour of interdisciplinary research within feminist theory. Slightly modified, they also fit applied theoretical and practice-oriented linguistics as well as CDA:

- A historical argument: the clear differentiation and specialization of individual disciplines is suited to solve individual problems very accurately and comprehensively within a specific debate in ‘normal science’, but complex new problems, such as identity research, racism research, and so on, require more than the expertise of an individual discipline. To address a current conflict without hesitation we have to point out that this triggers territorial fears and results in new borders.

- An argument related to the sociology of science: competition and careers often determine the progress in individual sectors of the traditional canon of disciplines. This progress no longer meets the requirements of the problem areas identified. Another consequence is that university training and the institutionalization of disciplines has to be re-examined and adjusted. This implies that new occupational profiles and models have to be developed and accepted.
An epistemological argument: longstanding conventions of data gathering, theory formation and validation increasingly prove an obstacle in constructing new knowledge. It becomes necessary to transcend old-established modes of thinking. These steps often break taboos and are therefore perceived as threats. Moreover, in an attempt to arrive at a holistic innovation many specialized details have to be ignored, which provokes the valid criticism of the individual disciplines. Today another Leonardo da Vinci has become impossible: the classical model of the humanist scholar and the example of academia has become obsolete due to rapid technological and social developments. In fact there is a real danger of ‘doing an amateur job’, that is, of superficially dipping into other disciplines. This is another argument in favour of teaming up specialists from different disciplines.

An argument relating to the content: cooperative and interdisciplinary research projects become the more important, the more complex social relations are. New problems are considered to be of relevance. In many cases this demand is met by resorting to eclecticism and the indiscriminate copying of approaches of individual disciplines.

Finally, a political argument: critical thinking and critical practice point to new forms and organizations as well as applications of knowledge. For example, feminists or CDA researchers are of the opinion that traditional organizational structures cannot be respected in this process. It is an open question as to whether this applies also to other disciplines.

‘Hyphen linguists’

Within applied linguistics, such as socio-linguistics or psycho-linguistics, interdisciplinary research per se was necessary and implied in the names of these research branches. William Labov and Basil Bernstein had already drawn on sociological layer models, linguistic theories (Labov, 1966; Bernstein, 1990) and psycho-linguistics, for example, in studying therapeutic communication, psycho- and social-psychological theories (Wodak, 1981, 1986). Therefore in these fields of study the fundamental question regarding interdisciplinarity no longer arises. In these branches of linguistics interdisciplinarity has to be taken into account at all levels, from theory through to methodology.

Which models are we faced with in ‘hyphen linguistics’?

1. Additive models: approaches from various disciplines and areas are added up. Here the two traditional socio-linguistic approaches mentioned above may be given as an example. In the case of Labov, sophisticated linguistics were combined with static long-established sociological variables. In the case of Bernstein, elaborate structural sociological approaches were associated with some – simple – linguistic variables. In both cases, the specialized disciplines responded with immediate criticism, and the creative potential of the two approaches was therefore often overlooked or swept aside.
2. Eclectic ad hoc models: in exaggerated terms, one could say that everything is accumulated that ‘comes in handy’, without questioning its epistemological origin and compatibility. For example, the ‘grand theories’ of Giddens, Habermas, Bourdieu, Foucault and Laclau are combined with systemic linguistics, a fact many specialized scholars view with scepticism, and rightly so. In most cases – and now we refer to our own experience of the routine practice of team research – this works as follows: somebody reads an interesting book, or hears about it; this book then develops a dynamics of its own, and – purely by accident – will soon appear in mainstream research. The more this work is quoted, the more everybody will be convinced that this book or this study is in fact a classic. Admittedly, we cannot be expected to know or to be able to assess the state of art of all disciplines involved. This is how fashions and trends develop that blur our vision of many other important works or prevent us from perceiving them.

3. Integrative (problem-oriented) models: based on research questions and problems, approaches are applied that provide meaningful, adequate and transparent interpretations and explanations. And with this we come to speak of our own work within the Research Centre for Discourse, Politics and Identity based on many individual projects conducted at the Department of Linguistics, where we jointly developed the so-called ‘discourse historical approach’ (see Reisigl and Wodak, 2001; www.oeaw.ac.at/wittgenstein). This approach is based on a pragmatic strategy similar to the one developed by Mouzelis (1995).

Interdisciplinary approach in this case is not limited to theory formation but extends to the practice of research and application. The team itself is recruited on an interdisciplinary basis. The dynamics within the team reflects all aspects and problems in microcosm that would otherwise come into play in the individual research disciplines. To give a more detailed account would go beyond the scope of this Introduction; but the degree of complexity is considerably higher than in monodisciplinary research projects. The mere fact of having to agree on a common terminology poses problems (see above): it is not merely an act of definition but implies that specific subjects, theories and perspectives have to be agreed on. And this requires time: time to read, to learn, to discuss and to analyse.

In our study on unemployment and employment policies (Muntigl et al., 2000) political scientists, sociologists and linguists teamed up. However, these were not just plain linguists but socio-linguists, conversational analysts and critical discourse analysts. The linguists’ team itself was therefore required to learn intercultural communication. We held team meetings on a regular basis to present concepts relevant to us all and to agree on a basic stock of common literature. With that, a general consensus and a canon of common knowledge was established. In long sessions we jointly analysed and interpreted text sequences; the sociologists and political
scientists were familiarized with grammar theory and discourse analysis, while we acquired basic knowledge of sociological theories. Economic consultants were called in to present theories in workshops and to support us in analysing texts. In order to acquire international know-how, we invited other experts to hold guest lectures and seminars. Supervision at regular intervals helped us to reflect on conflicts arising and to address them. Hence, the participants’ willingness to learn, their ability to deal with criticism, openness and curiosity, as well as their willingness to treat other team members as equal partners, are the indispensable requirements of the interdisciplinary research practice which make ‘innovation’ (as defined in the social sciences) possible. Other key factors are a ‘creative environment’, office space, resources, money and time.

However, in many cases we do not have that time. And this takes us to a difficult aspect, the institutional setting. If the project findings need to be available within a short period of time it will not be possible to use this approach. The institutions responsible for commissioning research projects should therefore take into account the conditions of knowledge construction and creative research. Teamwork has to be taught and learned. The model of ‘nurturing leadership’, as formulated by Hollingsworth, requires many social competencies we do not acquire systematically in traditional studies and professional careers.

**Perspectives: theory, interdisciplinarity, context**

A ‘symptomatology’ is associated with the aforementioned pragmatic approach by Mouzelis (1995). Problems manifest themselves in ‘symptoms’. Attempts are made to show systematic relations between manifestations, which do not necessarily have to be causal: social phenomena are too complex to be thought of as chains of causes and effects. The question of context is of particular relevance. If ‘context’ is understood not as a mere ‘setting’ in space/time or ‘situational framework’ but rather as something that requires a more comprehensive theoretical explanation to allow an analysis of texts and discourses, an interdisciplinary approach is almost a logical consequence (Wodak, 2000a). (Here we allude to the recent debate engaged in by Emanuel Schegloff, Michael Billig and Margaret Wetherell in *Discourse & Society* (1997–99), but without presenting it here in more detail.)

In the following we present a brief outline of our own approach to ‘mediation’ between discourse and society. For this purpose differentiation of the context concept within the discourse-historical approach is indispensable (Wodak, 2001c, 2002). One methodical way for critical discourse analysts to minimize the risk of critical baseness and to avoid simply politicizing, instead of accurately analysing, is to follow the principle of ‘triangulation’. One of the most salient features of the discourse-historical approach is its
endeavour to work interdisciplinarily, multimethodically and on the basis of a variety of different empirical data as well as background information (see Wodak and Meyer, 2001). Depending on the respective object of investigation, it attempts to transcend the pure linguistic dimension and to include more or less systematically the historical, political, sociological and/or psychological dimension in the analysis and interpretation of a specific discursive occasion.

In investigating historical and political topics and texts, the discourse-historical approach attempts to integrate much available knowledge about the historical sources and the background of the social and political fields in which discursive ‘events’ are embedded. Further, it analyses the historical dimension of discursive actions by exploring the ways in which particular genres of discourse are subject to diachronic change, that is, the intertextuality and interdiscursivity.

In accordance with other approaches devoted to CDA the discourse-historical approach perceives both written and spoken language as a form of social practice (Fairclough and Wodak, 1997). A discourse is a way of signifying a particular domain of social practice from a particular perspective (Fairclough, 1995, p. 14). As critical discourse analysts we assume a dialectical relationship between particular discursive practices and the specific fields of action (including situations, institutional frames and social structures) in which they are embedded. On the one hand, the situational, institutional and social settings shape and affect discourses, and, on the other, discourses influence discursive as well as non-discursive social and political processes and actions. In other words, discourses as linguistic social practices can be seen both as constituting non-discursive and discursive social practices and, at the same time, as being constituted by them.

Our triangulatory approach is based on a concept of ‘context’ which takes into account four levels. The first level is descriptive, while the other three levels constitute part of our theories on context:

1. the immediate, language or text internal co-text
2. the intertextual and interdiscursive relationship between utterances, texts, genres and discourses
3. the extralinguistic social/sociological variables and institutional frames of a specific ‘context of situation’ (middle-range theories)
4. the broader sociopolitical and historical contexts, which the discursive practices are embedded in and related to (see Figure 1.1).

The main challenge facing CDA representatives is to highlight gaps between theory and empirical research, between discourse and context – gaps which will in any case be unbridgeable. Theory formation has to manifest itself in an explanation of the structural and linguistic facts; discourse analysis is not practicable without integrating the theoretical approaches (see above, regarding mediation and macro/microproblems; important steps). Thus the
analysis of relevance presents a new problem: innovation by interdisciplinarity becomes possible if new relevance levels are defined by mixing new perspectives of theoretical context and discourse analyses. Ideally, this approach should be implemented consistently from the structural context analysis to the analysis of discursive practices, as demonstrated in some studies (see Muntigl et al., 2000; Wodak and Meyer, 2001). In Wodak and Meyer (2001) some CDA representatives present their respective theoretical and methodological steps by focusing on different aspects (see Fairclough, 2001; Jäger, 2001; Scollon, 2001; van Dijk, 2001; Wodak, 2001b, 2001c). We continue this debate in this volume.

The structure of the volume

Chapter 2, by Michael Billig, is a critical reading of the story of Critical Discourse Analysis. Billig recapitulates the basic claims of CDA and particularly calls for reflexivity and self-criticism in CDA vis-à-vis its own development. It is emphasized that ‘CDA itself must be subjected to critique, and this includes the very symbol “CDA”. In particular, one might ask whether the general processes of marketization are reflected in Critical Discourse Analysis’ own passage from being a “critical approach” to the capitalised entity of “CDA”.

After a tour d’horizon through ‘critical’ approaches in the history of philosophy, Billig identifies crucial features giving particular meaning to the current
use of ‘critical’. He then focuses on ‘dilemmas of success’ in the academic world as well as the social context of academic work. Finally, a certain tension between interdisciplinary or even anti-disciplinary positions (as represented by CDA approaches) on the one hand and the establishment of an academic discipline (represented by the three capitals ‘CDA’) on the other is revealed. For the author, this tension shows that ‘academic disciplines are social and institutional practices rather than inherent qualities of academic texts’.

In Chapter 3 Carlos Gouveia also asks for the specific quality of criticism in CDA. For him, the relevance and success of the latter depends on how scientific knowledge and common sense are brought together. Gouveia reflects on the emergence of CDA embedded in a broader history of epistemological breaks, starting with a first break constituting the very beginning of modern sciences, namely the Cartesian *divisio mundi*. The reductionism of modern science in approaching human realities is rooted in this break, which, according to Gouveia, represents also the break between scientific knowledge and common sense. However, the author identifies another epistemological break at the end of the twentieth century which itself breaks with the first epistemological break, so to speak. The emerging ‘new science’, for him, is represented by theorists like Prigogine, Capra, Maturana and Varela – and not least also by the formation of CDA. In this context, theory and methodology of CDA are ‘examples of tentative responses (not all of them entirely successful, though) to key factors in the general crisis that has been affecting the paradigm of modern science in the last decades of the twentieth century’. Finally, Gouveia claims that, in linking scientific knowledge to common sense again, interdisciplinarity is an important task – although not so much an advocated concept as the actual deconstruction of ‘taken-for-granted, naturalised, discourses of the disciplines’.

In Chapter 4 Marianne W. Jørgensen applies discourse analysis to epistemological problems. In particular, the author is interested in the creation of scientific subject positions in the field of anthropology. Building on Foucault’s diagnosis of ‘modern man’ and using tools from CDA, Jørgensen, although acknowledging the achievements of constructivist epistemology and ‘reflexive’ knowledge research, develops also a systematic criticism of the latter. She asks questions such as, ‘What makes the debate on reflexivity make sense?’, ‘What are its conditions of possibility?’, ‘Which view of the world is constructed?’, ‘How are the relations between knowledge, the object of knowledge and the knowledge producer constituted in reflexive texts?’, and ‘Which subject positions are thus created; from which discursively constituted positions do knowledge producers claim validity and legitimacy for their knowledge?’

Finally, Jørgensen argues that an interdisciplinary approach to the question of reflexivity provides us with a common denominator for the discussions of scientific knowledge in a number of disciplines, enabling us to analyse a range of contributions as different solutions to the same problem concerning the
Jørgensen then focuses on the discipline of anthropology, first sketching different anthropological negotiations of the problem, and then putting the developed tools at work in a closer analysis of one example, Talal Asad’s article ‘The concept of cultural translation in British social anthropology’.

Teun van Dijk, in Chapter 5, approaches one fundamental problem in CDA, namely the relation or interface between discourse and knowledge. Van Dijk demonstrates the relevance of multidisciplinary perspectives and theoretical substance par excellence. In order to grasp the complexity of the problem of knowledge, a variety of disciplines and perspectives must be included: epistemology, psychology, cultural anthropology, cognitive anthropology, sociology and linguistics. What is true for knowledge is also true for the notion of discourse. So, for van Dijk, it is evident that the interface between discourse and knowledge also needs to be multidisciplinary. This is not surprising when we realize that they need and presuppose each other mutually: Discourse production and understanding is impossible without knowledge, and knowledge acquisition and change usually presupposes discourse. Van Dijk follows aspects of knowledge and social cognition, knowledge and representation, comprehension and discourse processing. Finally, a typology of knowledge is developed which, together with an explicit theory of context, serves as a critical model of knowledge-discourse processing. What all this means for concrete texts and contexts is illustrated by a systematic analysis of an editorial in the New York Times.

In Chapter 6 Phil Graham approaches the problem of interdisciplinarity in the most direct manner. He argues that the trend towards academic specialization in social science is most usefully viewed from the perspective of evaluative meaning, and that each new discipline, in emphasizing its aspect of a broken conception of humanity, emphasizes one aspect of an already broken conception of value. Graham analyses the development of disciplines in the social sciences as the result of ‘historically constituted practices of evaluating the social world in different ways’. For him, it is precisely these different ways of evaluating the world that constitute the disciplinary boundaries. This is then the point where, for Graham, CDA comes in, because it has the analytical potential to make these evaluations transparent. CDA, qua critical social science, may therefore benefit firstly by proceeding from the perspective of evaluative meaning to understand the dynamics of social change and overcome the damage to understanding entailed by intensive specialization across the sciences. Graham then applies his critical instruments by closely following the genre-specific values and the formation of sciences. In particular, he provides examples from the disciplines of economics, political science, psychology and ethics by analysing first-issue journals of the respective disciplines.

Jay Lemke, in Chapter 7, is interested in questions of social change. According to him, texts play a crucial role in processes of social change ‘because they are the link across time and space that binds a social
system together; they are both material and semiotic objects, they have physical properties which enable their semantic content to span time and space’. Accordingly, texts can be seen as indices of changing modes of social organization and control. Lemke shows the necessity of an interdisciplinary approach to these questions. He provides a theoretical perspective integrating advanced social theory and semiotics, especially social systems theory and models of social change and linguistic analyses of texts. Within this frame he is able to identify recent developments in textuality and the respective changing modes of social organization. In particular, he investigates the development from standardized discourses to what he calls ‘hypertextual traversals’ (for example, hypertexts, web surfing, mall cruising, career surfing, and – last but not least – academic transdisciplinarity itself). He follows different forms of textscales and timescales at different levels of social organization, such as television series and film sequels. Finally, crucial aspects of textual mediation of social control in today’s globalized teleocratic regimes become transparent.

In Chapter 8 Marcelo Dascal places CDA tools in the wider frame of philosophy as an ‘essentially critical endeavour’. In his eyes, the major purpose of such a critical endeavour is ‘to detect and clear up conceptual difficulties that are often responsible for what seem to be insurmountable obstacles for the solution of practical conflicts’. The conflict approached by Dascal here is one that is observed with increasing helplessness and despair today, namely the conflict between Arabs and Jews and the respective identities in the Near East. The author makes it quite plain that interdisciplinarity is unavoidable in approaching this case. After showing the difficulties accompanying the claim for interdisciplinarity, he performs a critical analysis of the concept of ‘identity’. Out of this conceptual clarification, Dascal proposes eight points affording new horizons for the relations between Arabs and Jews in Israel. Finally, a number of obstacles making the implementation of conceptual ‘solutions’ so difficult in the case of this conflict are detailed.

Suzanne Scollon, in Chapter 9, discusses interdisciplinary practice in research extensively, using her own studies on the notion of ‘social practice’ in Tai Chi groups in Hong Kong and China as point of departure. She describes in detail how her own position and approach slowly developed, while applying eclectically important and relevant theories and parts of these theories when starting to describe and investigate Athabaskan speech communities and intercultural communication. Her approach finally ends, together with Ron Scollon, in a school of Critical Discourse Analysis – Mediated Discourse Analysis. In contrast to other CDA methodologies, Suzanne Scollon emphasizes the role of ethnography and also of semiotics. She discusses the notions of ‘habitus’ and ‘practice’, integrating important concepts of Pierre Bourdieu and Norbert Elias. Her elaborate investigation of even the smallest actions (for instance hanging your gym bag on a tree or putting it on a blanket on the ground) make it very clear how embedded such seemingly trivial actions are
in cultural and ideological traditions. They have meaning and signify certain stances. Such research is a perfect example for the necessity of an interdisciplinary approach, both in theory and in methodology.

In Chapter 10 Jim Martin takes a completely different point of departure: he compares modernist and postmodernist approaches to intercultural interaction in Australia between the white population and the Aborigines. He endorses the voicing of the powerless, and how minorities gain access to the media and to the perspective of the majority. The approach is interdisciplinary in that he has to take account on the one hand of the writings and histories of the minorities, and, on the other, of the power play between social groups. He emphasizes different modes of depicting minorities and the impact of multimodal meanings. Martin is critical of CDA pointing mostly to the powerless and de-masking the powerful. His approach is to be seen as a ‘positive’ approach: he wants to give voice to the powerless.

In Chapter 11 Patricia O’Connor suggests that an ‘activist socio-linguistics’ can emerge from certain empirical work of linguists. She has been concerned with discourses of violence and abuse for many years while investigating narratives of prisoners. O’Connor explicitly endorses a position where Critical Discourse Analysis should apply its results and actively participate in social processes. In her research on maximum-security prisoners and addicts she examines the ways in which people agentively present themselves in autobiographical discourse, not only positioning themselves in their criminal or errant pasts but also narratively constructing past selves and potential new selves in society. She claims that elements of agentive discourse are clustered in sites of reflexive language, particularly in frame breaks and in meta-talk or evaluative references to one’s knowledge state. Such breaks interpenetrate the narratives and complicate the determination of personal, moral agency because they reveal an epistemic grappling with the action taken (in the past) while showing agentive manipulation of the story (in the present). Such constructivist work places the speaker and the linguist in an interesting nexus of practice that could effect change. The reconstruction of life stories is thus seen as a possibility for changing motivations and identities, after having reflected on past actions. This, of course, reminds us in some ways of a kind of therapeutic methodology, but without the characteristic setting of psychotherapeutic discourses. Discourse serves, in these cases, not only as transmitter of information, but also as a vehicle for change.

After a presentation of examples from institutional data, O’Connor considers the issue of subjectivity when the researcher herself is part of that reflexivity in a community of uptake. She discusses her methods for beginning new research projects into narratives from those in substance-abuse treatment. People in prison have often entered such places because of drug use, addiction or illicit drug sales. This research suggests that long-term involvement in such a setting leads to a thicker and richer interpretation of data that can contribute to social change.
Interdisciplinarity is hence emphasized on at least two levels: on the level of discourse analysis and participation research, drawing multiple methodologies together; and on the level of research and political practice. Questions to be pursued in such an approach include, ‘How do attachments to (or detachment from) speakers affect data?’, ‘How can informants become co-researchers?’, ‘How do researchers form partnerships with communities?’, and ‘Does participatory action research allow for continuing relationships of inquiry?’

Luisa Martín Rojo and Concepción Gómez Esteban illustrate in Chapter 12 very precisely what it means to integrate different theoretical and methodological approaches from linguistics, gender studies, organisation studies and sociology while investigating women in management positions.

The chapter is part of an interdisciplinary research project into management models and gender. The main aim of the study is to explore whether and to what extent new theoretical models of management were encouraging the promotion of women to positions of responsibility in companies, and also leading to a correlative improvement of the image of women managers. New studies emphasize that ‘female’ models defend a more democratic view of management, and communicative and relational skills (showing empathy and requesting compliance) versus an assertive style. Specifically, as the data stem from Spanish firms, the impact of Spanish culture has to be observed as well. The analysis focuses on the way people adapt these new ‘soft’ models to traditional management situations – showing differences depending on whether the managers are men or women – and on the effects of this adaptation on the image of women managers.

The theoretical framework focuses, inter alia, on power relations in organizations. This is in fact an essential object of interest in sociological studies, which cannot be ignored when analysing the role of gender in social life. At the same time, the approach focuses on discursive practices and the ideological production, reproduction and justification of the gender relations of domination. Following this sociodiscursive approach, discursive practices are viewed as an expression of organizational structure as well as the means by which organization members create this structure and give coherence to everyday practices. Organizations are understood here not only as a social collective where shared meanings and practices are produced, but also as a ‘battlefield’ where different groups compete to try to shape the organization in ways that serve their own interests. Gender is clearly involved in this competition, and organizations thus appear as fundamentally gendered structures.

Moreover, a very practice-oriented aspect is also endorsed. The authors study this topic to be able to support models which could introduce positive action to end the discrimination experienced by female managers and indeed the entire female workforce.

Thus, interdisciplinarity is not considered – in this chapter – as the mere superposition of analyses, by different disciplines, of the same object of study, but rather as the attempt to integrate them. What underlies this sociodiscursive approach is the shared assumption that to reduce the complexity of
phenomena to a single disciplinary approach, or level of analysis, would mean reducing the comprehension and interpretation of social life. At the same time, the construction of the object of study and the analysis itself are based more than ever now on an ongoing discussion of the basic concepts and principles used.

In Chapter 13 Carmen Caldas-Coulthard examines news in the UK about Brazil and other postcolonial countries. Her approach is interdisciplinary in many respects: she employs and integrates theories from media studies, postcolonial studies, multimodality and discourse analysis. Her methodology stems by and large from functional systemic linguistics. Specifically, she focuses on processes of recontextualization and legitimation.

In all cases she investigates, the representations in the news are never neutral, without a point of view. In the age of globalization, the international distribution of power tends to make the First World a powerful transmitter of cultural ideas and ideologies. The Third World, however, appropriates these ideas and reverses them in terms of self-referentiality. She illustrates how media discourses construe states of affairs that can be harmful to many people. The awareness of their processes, strategies and points of view is of utmost importance. The discursive-analytical view taken in this chapter, together with key notions of intertextuality, recontextualization and multimodality, allow the deconstruction of discrimination through language and image. By examining textual and visual evidence, nationalistic, racist and gender-biased discourses could be unravelled. Thus, the analysis tries to demonstrate that one should be aware of the power of representation and of the goals and evaluations of any given recontextualization.

In Chapter 14 Christine Anthonissen investigates the role of censorship in South African print media before the transition to democracy. In investigating media, she applies multiple approaches: discourse analysis, the multimodal analysis of Gunther Kress and Theo van Leeuwen, and a sociopolitical interpretation of the social developments in South Africa. She labels her approach as Critical Discourse Analysis, which – she claims – must be interdisciplinary when taking on such complex objects of investigation. Her analysis uncovers several important strategies aimed at circumcapping censorship, using diverse linguistic realizations as well as semiotic modes. This case study illustrates the application of CDA while analysing a very complex political setting such as the South African media. On the other hand the study lends itself to generalization, because such strategies and modes of dealing with suppression and censorship are common in other authoritarian regimes.

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