Critical Discourse Analysis

- Discourse analysis covers several different approaches.

- **Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)** is a perspective which studies the relationship between discourse events and *sociopolitical* and *cultural* factors especially the way discourse is *ideologically* influenced by, and can itself influence, *power relations* in society.
Critical Discourse Analysis

- CDA aims to help reveal some of the hidden and ‘out of sight’ values, positions, and perspectives

- CDA explores the connection between the use of language and the social and political contexts in which it occurs
CDA studies how social power abuse, dominance and inequality are enacted, reproduced and resisted by text and talk in social and political contexts.

CDA deals with the relationship between discourse and power (with the aim of understanding, exposing and resisting social inequality).

CDA focuses on how discourse structures enact, confirm, legitimise, reproduce or challenge relations of power and dominance in society.
Critical Discourse Analysis

“...is discourse analysis with an attitude” (van Dijk, 2001)

- awareness of the seen and unseen connection of structures of power to discursive or communicative activities/events
The basic assumption is that the relationship between the form and content of discourse is not arbitrary.

There are strong connections between linguistic structure and social structure, to the extent that linguistic meaning is inseparable from ideology.
Aims of CDA

- Fundamentally interested in not only analyzing opaque but also transparent structural relationships of *dominance*, *discrimination*, *power* and *control* as manifested in language.
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- Fundamentally interested in not only analyzing opaque but also transparent structural relationships of dominance, discrimination, power and control as manifested in language.

- Critical theories, thus also CDA, afford special understanding of human actions.
- They are aimed at producing both enlightenment and emancipation.
- CDA aims to “demystify” discourses by deciphering ideologies.
Theoretical Framework

Macro vs. Micro Levels of Analysis

- **Macro-analysis**: Power, Dominance, Inequality
- **Micro-analysis**: Language Use, Discourse, Verbal Interaction & Communication

- These two levels form one unified whole in everyday interaction and experience.
Theoretical Framework

Power as Control

- **Source of Power**: Privileged Access to Scarce Social Resources; e.g. Fame?
- **Types of Power**: Coercive Force, Money, Knowledge, Information, Authority.
- **Types of Responses**: Resist, Accept, Condone, Comply, Legitimise (Indoctrination?)
Theoretical Framework

- Text production and consumption
- Discourse practice
- Sociocultural practice

- Description
- Interpretation
- Explanation

(text analysis)
(processing analysis)
(social analysis)
CDA Roots

CDA comes from:

- **Marxism**: ideology, hegemony
- **Foucault**: discourse, discursive formation, power
- **Critical linguistics**: ‘...linguistic meaning is inseparable from ideology’ (Fowler & Kress 1979)
- CDA as a label: established in 1995 by Fairclough’s Critical Discourse Analysis: The critical study of language (Billig 2007)
CDA Pioneers

Norman Fairclough: Three dimensions of communicative event

Ruth Wodak: Discourse-historical approach

Teun van Dijk: Socio-cognitive approach
The 1970s saw the emergence of a form of discourse and text analysis that recognized the role of language in structuring power relations in society.

The works of Kress and Hodge (1979), Fowler, Kress, Hodge, and Trew (1979), Van Dijk (1985), Fairclough (1989), and Wodak (ed.) (1989) serve to explain and illustrate the main assumptions, principles and procedures of what had then been known as Critical Linguistics (CL).
**History of CDA**

- Kriss indicates that the term CL was “quite self-consciously adapted” (1990, 88) by the group of scholars at the university of East Anglia in 1970s.

- Kress (1990, 94) shows how CDA by that time “emerging as a distant theory of language, a radically different kind of linguistics”.
Fairclough and Wodak (1997) established 10 basic principles of a CDA program.

(1) The approach is *interdisciplinary*. This entails different dimensions of interdisciplinarity. Teamwork consists of different researchers from different traditionally defined disciplines working together. The methodologies are also adapted to the data under investigation.

(2) The approach is *problem-oriented*, rather than focuses on specific linguistic items. Social problems are the items of research, such as “racism, identity, social change”.

History of CDA
History of CDA

(3) The theories as well as methodologies are *eclectic*; i.e., theories and methodologies are integrated which are adequate for an understanding and explanation of the text under investigation.

(4) The study always incorporates fieldwork and *ethnography* to explore the object under investigation.

(5) The approach is *abductive*: a constant back and forth movement between theory and data is necessary.
History of CDA

(6) *Multiple genres* and *multiple public spaces* are studied, and intertextual and interdiscursive relationships are investigated.

(7) The *historical context* is always analyzed and integrated into the interpretation of discourse and texts.

(8) Different approaches in CDA use *different grammatical theories*.
History of CDA

(9) Grand theories (highly abstract theorizing) might serve as a *foundation*, in the specific analysis, middle-range theories (aiming at integrating theory and empirical research) serve the aims better.

(10) *Practice* and *application* are aimed at. The results should be made available to experts in different fields, and, as a second step, be applied, with the goal of changing certain social and discursive practices.
Main principles of CDA:
1. Social and political issues are constructed and reflected in discourse
2. Power relations are negotiated and performed through discourse
3. Discourse both reflects and reproduces social relations
4. Ideologies are produced and reflected in the use of discourse
Doing Critical Discourse Analysis

- CDA includes not only a description and interpretation of discourse in context, but also offers an *explanation* of why and *how* discourses work.

- CDA might commence by deciding what discourse type or genre of the text.

- The analysis may consider the framing of the text.

- CDA, then, takes us beyond the level of description to a deeper understanding of texts.
Doing Critical Discourse Analysis

Continue…

For instance, at the sentence level, the analyst might consider what has been:

a) “topicalized” in each of the sentences in the text
b) “agent patient relations” in the discourse
CDA has never attempted to be or to provide one single or specific theory

Methodologies differ greatly on account of the aims of the research

Small *qualitative* case studies as well as large data corpora, drawn from field work and ethnographic research are used.
Methodology

- Studies in CDA are *multifarious*, derived from quite different backgrounds, oriented towards very different data and methodologies.

- CDA and CL “are at most a shared perspective on doing linguistic, semiotic or discourse analysis” (Van Dijk 1993, 131).
In English speaking world “Discourse” is often used both for written and oral texts (Schiffrin 1992)

Lemke (1995) defines “text” as the concrete realization of abstract forms of knowledge

“Discourse” as a form of knowledge and memory, whereas “text” illustrates concrete oral utterances or written documents (Reisigl and Wodak 2001).
The practical linking of “social and political engagement” with “a sociologically informed construction of society” (Krings et al., 1973, 808).

“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, 747).
Basically, “critical” could be understood as:
- having distance to the data,
- embedding the data in the social context,
- taking a political stance explicitly,
- having a focus on self reflection as scholars doing research.
Ideology

- ideology refers to social forms and processes within which, and by means of which, symbolic forms circulate in the social world (Thompson 1990).

- Thompson (1990) sees the study of ideology as the study of “the ways in which the meaning is constructed and conveyed by symbolic forms of various kinds”.
For Eagletoon (1994), the study of ideology has to bear in mind the variety of theories and theorists that have examined the relationship between thought and social relation.

All the theories assume “that there are specific historical reasons why people come to feel, reason, desire and imagine as they do.” (1994, 15)
Texts are often sites of struggle in that they show traces of differing discourses and ideologies all contending and struggling for dominance.

Defining features of CDA are to be seen in its concern with power as a central condition in life, and in its efforts to develop a theory of language which incorporates this as a major premise.

Power is about relations of difference, and particularly about the effects of differences in social structures.
Language indexes power, expresses power, is involved where there is **contention** over power and where power is challenged. Power does not derive from language but *language can be used to challenge power*, to subvert it, to alter distributions of power both in the short and long term.

CDA takes interest in the ways in which linguistic forms are used in various expressions and manipulations of power.
Example of CDA
the following three headlines appeared in *The Observer*, *The Sunday Times*, and *The Sunday Telegraph* on 12 December, 1976:

A. *NUS regrets fury over Joseph.*
B. *Student leaders condemn insult to Keith Joseph.*
C. *Students chiefs ‘regret’ attack on Sir Keith.*
Context…

- The headlines reported a sequence of events involving the conference of the National Union of Students (NUS) and Sir Keith Joseph, a prominent right-wing member of the British Conservative opposition party in Parliament. On Friday, 10 December 1976, Keith Joseph had attempted to attend the conference as an observer, was spotted, abused, and asked to leave after a voted decision by the delegates that he should not be allowed to stay.
Context…

- All but two members of the NUS executives had voted for his expulsion. The next day, the executives issued a rather tongue-in-cheek statement which might hint an apology to Keith Joseph. The newspaper reports give a brief account of the scene at the conference, and more space to the Saturday statement and to comments by various protagonists and interested parties.
Ostensibly, these three headlines all seem to say the same thing.

Yet they have different connotations, which are consistent with the political “lines” taken by the three newspapers on close examination, appear ultimately to offer different analyses of the “reality” they report.

The different ways in which the participants are named are significant: *naming conventions are regular in English.*
The *Observer*’s “Joseph” suggests **formality** and **distance**;

the *Sunday Telegraph*’s “Sir” connotes **respect** while the first name “Keith” suggests **intimacy**.
The connotations are exactly consistent with the papers’ political characters:

- the *Observer* claims to be liberal and is not likely to be in sympathy with Keith Joseph;
- The *Sunday Times’s* “Keith Joseph” seems to be neutral and non-committal.
- The *Sunday Telegraph* is a right-wing paper likely to admire such a politician.
Nowadays, critical discourse analysis is practiced within disciplines such as social psychology, law, and politics; interdisciplinary research is growing in, e.g., medical, educational, media, and political discourse.
In-Class Exercise
Lee (1992: 91–2) comments upon a hard news report from the British newspaper, *The Guardian*, on 4 August 1976, concerning events in Soweto in South Africa. Here is the headline and first paragraph of the article which Lee reproduces:

**Police open fire as Soweto erupts again**
From STANLEY UYS, Cape Town, August 4

The black township of Soweto, which has been simmering with unrest since the riots on June 16 and the shooting of 174 Africans, erupted again today.
Soweto
Police open fire as Soweto erupts again
From STANLEY UYS, Cape Town, August 4

The black township of Soweto, which has been simmering with unrest since the riots on June 16 and the shooting of 174 Africans, erupted again today.
Arguments such as these are used by critical discourse analysts to suggest that common ways of saying something can have the effect of presenting an issue from a particular point of view.

Lee’s argument, quoted by O’Halloran, is that a newspaper article written about multi-racial South Africa presents a ‘white’ point of view because it uses words such as *simmer* and *erupted* to describe the *actions* of the *(black)* inhabitants of Soweto.
The words, as *simmer* and *erupted*, Lee argues, represent the Sowetans not as human beings but as a *destructive natural force*, such as a volcano.
What CDA tells us…

- Volcanoes are, of course, not human, and they cannot be controlled.

- Note, too, that the emotions of individuals and the actions that they give rise to are transferred onto the place where they live. It is *the township* that has been *simmering* and that now *erupts*, rather than the Sowetans experiencing feelings of anger and deciding to march.
What CDA tells us...

- The effect of these processes of metaphor . . . is arguably to distance the reader from the subjects of the report . . .

- The situation is seen as resulting from some kind of inevitable set of natural laws rather than from human feelings and decisions.
What CDA tells us...

- This tendency to downplay the agentive element in events initiated by relatively powerless groups is a general one.
Discourse and Manipulation

by: Teun Van Dijk
ABSTRACT. ‘Manipulation’ is one of the crucial notions of Critical Discourse Analysis that requires further theoretical analysis. This article offers a triangulated approach to manipulation as a form of social power abuse, cognitive mind control and discursive interaction. Socially, manipulation is defined as illegitimate domination confirming social inequality. Cognitively, manipulation as mind control involves the interference with processes of understanding, the formation of biased mental models and social representations such as knowledge and ideologies. Discursively, manipulation generally involves the usual forms and formats of ideological discourse, such as emphasizing Our good things, and emphasizing Their bad things. At all these levels of analysis it is shown how manipulation is different from legitimate mind control, for instance in persuasion and providing information, for instance by stipulating that manipulation is in the best interest of the dominated group and against the best interests of dominated groups. Finally, this theory is illustrated by a partial analysis of a speech by Tony Blair in the House of Commons legitimating the participation of the UK in the US-led war against Iraq in 2003.

KEY WORDS: Tony Blair, domination, House of Commons, ideologies, Iraq war, knowledge, legitimacy, manipulation, mental models, mind control, parliamentary discourse, persuasion, power abuse, social representations
Manipulation

- Manipulation as intended here is a communicative and interactional practice, in which a manipulator exercises control over other people, usually against their will or against their best interests.

- In everyday usage, the concept of manipulation has negative associations – *manipulation is bad* – because such a practice violates social norms.
Manipulation

- Manipulation not only involves power, but specifically abuse of power, that is, domination.

- More specifically, manipulation implies the exercise of a form of illegitimate influence by means of discourse: manipulators make others believe or do things that are in the interest of the manipulator, and against the best interests of the manipulated.
Manipulation

- Without the negative associations, manipulation could be a form of (legitimate) persuasion (see, e.g., Dillard and Pfau, 2002; O’Keefe, 2002).
- The crucial difference in this case is that in persuasion the interlocutors are free to believe or act as they please, depending on whether or not they accept the arguments of the persuader, whereas in manipulation recipients are typically assigned a more passive role: they are victims of manipulation.
Manipulation

- This negative consequence of manipulative discourse typically occurs when the recipients are unable to understand the real intentions or to see the full consequences of the beliefs or actions advocated by the manipulator.

- This may be the case especially when the recipients lack the specific knowledge that might be used to resist manipulation (Wodak, 1987).
Manipulation

- Obviously, the boundary between (illegitimate) manipulation and (legitimate) persuasion is fuzzy, and context dependent: some recipients may be manipulated by a message that is unable to manipulate others.

- Also the same recipients may be more or less manipulable in different circumstances, states of mind, and so on.
Manipulation

- Manipulation is a:
  - social phenomenon – especially because it involves interaction and power abuse between groups and social actors.
  - a cognitive phenomenon because manipulation always implies the manipulation of the minds of participants,
  - a discursive–semiotic phenomenon because manipulation is being exercised through text, talk and visual messages.
Manipulation and society

- **power dimension**: involves an account of the kind of control that some social actors or groups exercise over others.

- We also have assumed that such control is first of all a control of the mind, that is, of the beliefs of recipients, and indirectly a control of the actions of recipients based on such manipulated beliefs.

- In order to be able to exercise such social control of others, however, social actors need to satisfy personal and social criteria that enable them to influence others in the first place.
the kind of social manipulation we are studying here is defined in terms of social domination and its reproduction in everyday practices, including discourse.

In this sense, we are more interested in manipulation between groups and their members than in the personal manipulation of individual social actors.

A further analysis of domination, defined as power abuse, requires special access to, or control over, scarce social resources. One of these resources is preferential access to the mass media and public discourse, a resource shared by members of ‘symbolic’ elites, such as politicians, journalists, scholars, writers, teachers, and so on (Van Dijk, 1996). Obviously,
Manipulation and society

- We see that manipulation is one of the discursive social practices of dominant groups geared towards the reproduction of their power.

- Such dominant groups may do so in many (other) ways as well, e.g. through persuasion, providing information, education, instruction and other social practices that are aimed at influencing the knowledge, beliefs and (indirectly) the actions of the recipients.
We assumed that manipulation is illegitimate because it violates the human or social rights of those who are manipulated, but it is not easy to formulate the exact norms or values that are violated here.
Manipulation and society

- A more pragmatic approach to such norms and principles are the conversational maxims formulated by Grice (1975), which require contributions to conversations to be truthful, relevant, relatively complete, and so on.

- In actual forms of talk and text, however, such maxims are often hard to apply: People lie, which may not always be the wrong thing to do; people tell only half of a story for all kinds of, sometimes legitimate, reasons and irrelevant talk is one of the most common forms of everyday interaction.

- In other words, manipulation is not (only) ‘wrong’ because it violates conversational maxims or other norms and rules of conversation.
Manipulation and society

- Manipulation is illegitimate in a democratic society, because it (re)produces, or may reproduce, inequality: it is in the best interests of powerful groups and speakers, and hurts the interests of less powerful groups and speakers.

- Thus, manipulation, socially speaking, is a discursive form of elite power reproduction that is against the best interests of dominated groups and (re)produces social inequality.
Manipulation and cognition

- Manipulating people involves manipulating their minds, that is, people’s beliefs, such as the knowledge, opinions and ideologies which in turn control their actions.
MANIPULATING SHORT TERM MEMORY (STM)-BASED DISCOURSE UNDERSTANDING

First of all, discourse in general, and manipulative discourse in particular, involve processing information in short term memory (STM), basically resulting in ‘understanding’ (of words, clauses, sentences, utterances and non-verbal signals) for instance in terms of propositional ‘meanings’ or ‘actions’.

Such processing is strategic in the sense of being online, goal-directed, operating at various levels of discourse structure, and hypothetical: fast and efficient guesses and shortcuts are made instead of complete analyses.
Manipulation in such a case may reside in the fact that by drawing attention to information A rather than B, the resulting understanding may be partial or biased, for instance when headlines emphasize irrelevant details, rather than expressing the most important topics of a discourse – thus impairing understanding of details through top-down influence of topics.
EPISODIC MANIPULATION

STM-based manipulation takes place online and affects strategic processes of the understanding of specific discourses.

However, most manipulation is geared to more stable results, and hence focuses on long term memory (LTM), that is, knowledge, attitudes and ideologies, as we shall see in a moment.

Also forming part of LTM, however, are the personal memories that define our life history and experiences (Neisser and Fivush, 1994), representations that are traditionally associated with ‘episodic’ memory (Tulving, 1983).
EPISODIC MANIPULATION

If manipulators are aiming for recipients to understand a discourse as they see it, it is crucial that the recipients form the **mental models** the manipulators want them to form, thus restricting their freedom of interpretation or at least the probability that they will understand the discourse against the best interests of the manipulators.
Manipulation and cognition

EPISODIC MANIPULATION

- Blaming the victim is one of the forms of manipulation in which dominant groups or institutions discursively influence the mental models of recipients, for instance by the re-attribution of responsibility of actions in their own interests.
Manipulation and cognition

The Daily Telegraph
No mercy for a merciless tyrant

The Sun
Gaddafi killed by bullet in head

That's for Lockerbie
And for Yvonne Fletcher. And IRA Semtex victims.
Manipulation and social cognition

manipulation of social cognition may also involve the very basis of all social cognition: general, socioculturally shared knowledge. Indeed, one of the best ways to detect and resist manipulation attempts is specific knowledge (e.g. about the current interests of the manipulators) as well as general knowledge (e.g. about the strategies of maintaining the military budget at a high level).

It will thus be in the best interests of dominant groups to make sure that relevant and potentially critical general knowledge is not acquired, or that only partial, misguided or biased knowledge is allowed distribution.
Manipulation and Discourse

- Overall interaction strategies
  - Positive self-presentation
  - Negative other-presentation
- Macro speech act implying Our ‘good’ acts and Their ‘bad’ acts, e.g. accusation, defence
- Semantic macrostructures: topic selection
  - (De-)emphasize negative/positive topics about Us/Them
- Local speech acts implementing and sustaining the global ones, e.g. statements that prove accusations.
- Local meanings Our/Their positive/negative actions
  - Give many/few details
  - Be general/specific
  - Be vague/precise
  - Be explicit/implicit
  - Etc.
- Lexicon: Select positive words for Us, negative words for Them
- Local syntax
  - Active vs passive sentences, nominalizations: (de)emphasize Our/Their positive/negative agency, responsibility
- Rhetorical figures
  - Hyperboles vs euphemisms for positive/negative meanings
  - Metonymies and metaphors emphasizing Our/Their positive/negative properties
- Expressions: sounds and visuals
  - Emphasize (loud, etc.; large, bold, etc.) positive/negative meanings
  - Order (first, last: top, bottom, etc.) positive/negative meanings
Tony Blair and Justifying the Invasion of Iraq
Tony Blair and Justifying the Invasion of Iraq

Extract 1

1 At the outset, I say that it is right that the House debate this issue and pass judgment. That is the democracy that is our right, but that others struggle for in vain. Again, I say that I do not disrespect the views in opposition to mine. This is a tough choice indeed, but it is also a stark one: to stand British troops down now and turn back, or to hold firm to the course that we have set. I believe passionately that we must hold firm to that course. The question most often posed is not “Why does it matter?” but “Why does it matter so much?” Here we are, the Government, with their most serious test, their majority at risk, the first Cabinet resignation over an issue of policy, the main parties internally divided, people who agree on everything else –

[Hon. Members: “The main parties?”]

11

12 Ah, yes, of course. The Liberal Democrats – unified, as ever, in opportunism and error.

13

14 [ Interruption. ]
Tony Blair and Justifying the Invasion of Iraq

Extract 2

The country and the Parliament reflect each other. This is a debate that, as time has gone on, has become less bitter but no less grave. So why does it matter so much? Because the outcome of this issue will now determine more than the fate of the Iraqi regime and more than the future of the Iraqi people who have been brutalized by Saddam for so long, important though those issues are. It will determine the way in which Britain and the world confront the central security threat of the 21st century, the development of the United Nations, the relationship between Europe and the United States, the relations within the European Union and the way in which the United States engages with the rest of the world. So it could hardly be more important. It will determine the pattern of international politics for the next generation.
End of class 09