



Critical Discourse Analysis

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What is it?

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), also called Critical Linguistics or Critical Discourse Studies, addresses issues of power and inequalities in linguistic interactions between individuals, as well as between and within groups. Investigating the role of power in the social construction of difference, CDA examines how it is created, reproduced, questioned or deconstructed, through language practices and interactions. A major goal is not just description, but providing information for the potential to change.

Who uses the concept?

CDA involves a great variety of methodological and theoretical approaches, and views interdisciplinary work as fundamental to the ways in which language reveals, hides, maintains or challenges representations of the self and others, as well ideologies of power. It thus intersects many disciplinary fields, from Applied Linguistics to Social Studies, Cultural Studies, Anthropology, Linguistic Anthropology, Ethnography of Communication, Intercultural Studies, Intercultural Education, and Critical Pedagogy. Within Communication, it is most often used by scholars of Language and Social Interaction.

Fit with intercultural dialogue?

CDA analyzes verbal interactions in context, viewing communication as an empirical process where individual and collective identities are socially and interactionally mediated and co-constructed by speakers through language, according to the linguistic resources, voices and footings they can, or can not, access or take. Constantly considering both structure and individual agency, micro and

macro levels, such an approach is particularly relevant to intercultural dialogue as it addresses critically not only the 'cultural' as a discursive construction (i.e., cultural attributions, cultural differences, etc.), but also the 'intercultural'. CDA can help to avoid stereotyping, instead considering the interactional processes and linguistic dynamics that can favour, limit or hinder intercultural communication.

What work remains?

Work remains, in particular in Education, where a critical awareness on language can engage students, as speakers and social agents, to reflect on their *own* perception and representation of self and others through language practices, as well as on how discourses inform and (re) produce social order. Second Language Education can particularly effectively take this critical perspective, as the situated and cultural relation word-world is there overtly unveiled, favouring reflexivity on language. SLE can disclose a linguistic and symbolic territory from which students can observe critically how Sameness and Otherness are constructed through linguistic practices, thus dismissing *a priori* assumptions on languages and cultures.

Resources

- Fairclough, N., & Holes, C. (1995). *Critical discourse analysis: The critical study of language*. London: Longman.
- Weiss, G., & Wodak, R. (Eds.). (2003). *Critical discourse analysis: Theory and interdisciplinarity in critical discourse analysis*. London: Palgrave.
- Wodak, R. (2011). Critical linguistics and critical discourse analysis. In J. Zienkowski, Östman, J.-O. & Verschueren, J. (eds.), *Discursive Pragmatics* (pp. 50–70). Amsterdam: John Benjamins.