CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS AND ITS CRITICS

Ruth Breeze

Abstract

This article briefly reviews the rise of Critical Discourse Analysis and teases out a detailed analysis of the various critiques that have been levelled at CDA and its practitioners over the last twenty years, both by scholars working within the “critical” paradigm and by other critics. A range of criticisms are discussed which target the underlying premises, the analytical methodology and the disputed areas of reader response and the integration of contextual factors. Controversial issues such as the predominantly negative focus of much CDA scholarship, and the status of CDA as an emergent “intellectual orthodoxy”, are also reviewed. The conclusions offer a summary of the principal criticisms that emerge from this overview, and suggest some ways in which these problems could be attenuated.

Keywords: Critical Discourse Analysis; Analytical methodology; Corpus linguistics; Reader response theory; Critical paradigm; Contextualisation.

1. Introduction

Critical Discourse Analysis has now firmly established itself as a field within the humanities and social sciences, to the extent that the abbreviation “CDA” is widely used to denote a recognisable approach to language study manifested across a range of different groups. Indeed, some scholars have even suggested that critical discourse analysis is close to becoming “an intellectual orthodoxy” (Billig 2002: 44), an institutionalised discipline with its own paradigm, its own canon and conventionalised assumptions, and even its own power structures. Since CDA is now part of the intellectual landscape, there is a certain tendency for it to be taken for granted, simply accepted as a valid way of thinking and researching, alongside the other paradigms that have attained intellectual respectability.

It is therefore interesting to note that even scholars who would define themselves as critical discourse analysts feel some degree of discomfort at the status accorded to CDA as a critical paradigm. Some feel that the respectability of CDA entails a contradiction of the critical enterprise itself, or that its new-found status alongside other conventional disciplines is likely to close the door on the reflexivity that is an integral part of its critical agenda (Billig 2002: 36). Others emphasise the internal inconsistencies among researchers who are associated with CDA, either stressing the need for further debate and discussion before CDA can be defined as a school or rejecting the desire for consensus as illusory (Fairclough and Wodak 1997: 271; Chouliaraki and Fairclough 1999; van Dijk 2003: 352). Still others are disappointed by the largely negative nature of the body of work produced within the field of CDA, and
call for critical scholars to pay more attention to positive or potentially transformative uses of discourse (Martin 2004: 183-4; Luke 2002: 106-7).

At the same time, linguists and others who position themselves outside the borders of CDA have kept up a barrage of informed criticism which has pointed to many of the inconsistencies within the field of CDA. These critics have brought to light problems with the epistemology and theoretical framework, most particularly the instrumentalisation of theory and the failure to establish an objective standpoint for research. But they have also criticised the type of linguistic methodology that is often applied, as well as the underlying theories of language and communication, and they have shown how CDA researchers may fail to integrate context and audience satisfactorily into their analytical framework, leading to naively deterministic assumptions about the workings of discourse and social reproduction.

For these reasons, it is useful to review briefly the rise of Critical Discourse Analysis, particularly with a view to identifying its key tenets and teasing out its heterogenous intellectual antecedents, before carrying out a more detailed analysis of the various critiques that have been levelled at CDA and its practitioners, from both within and outside its disciplinary boundaries.

For the purposes of the present paper, the term CDA will therefore be used in an inclusive sense, to mean the broad body of theory and research generated by specialists who regard themselves as critical discourse analysts in one sense or another. This obviates the necessity to reduce the scope of reference constantly to “many critical discourse analysts” or “most people working within the CDA paradigm”. However, since the use of CDA as an umbrella term entails the risk of over-generalisation, an attempt will be made to identify specific particular sub-groups or authors within the CDA tradition when this proves necessary.

As a self-conscious movement with an explicit agenda, CDA abounds in definitions of what it purports to be and do. These declarations range from the highly politicised: “to explain existing conventions as the outcome of power relations and power struggle” (Fairclough 1989: 2), to the almost anodyne “to answer questions about the relationships between language and society” (Rogers 2005: 365), depending on the stance of the individual researcher. However, the general consensus is that Critical Discourse Analysis contains two essential elements: A more or less political concern with the workings of ideology and power in society; and a specific interest in the way language contributes to, perpetuates and reveals these workings. Thus the more explicit definitions all emphasise the relationship between language (text, discourse) and power (political struggle, inequality, dominance).
2.2. Intellectual antecedents

Most histories of CDA trace the origins of this politicised concern with society to authors working within a Marxist or neo-Marxist tradition, and most specifically to the Frankfurt school, particularly Adorno, Marcuse and Horkheimer. The Frankfurt school consisted of a group of thinkers who were interested in the way Marxist theory could shed light on twentieth-century developments in capitalism. They perceived that the economic determinism proposed by Marx was no longer relevant to current circumstances, and so they focused their attention on changes in capitalism which, they felt, led to the perpetuation of oppressive structures by ideological means. To understand the relevance of this background, it is important to emphasise that Marxist theorists differed from other sociologists of the day in their normative tendency: Whereas most social scientists believed that their role was to observe and interpret, rather as natural scientists might observe and interpret the natural world, Marxist social sciences believed that their task was to judge and to prescribe. Thus their stance was “critical” because they felt that they were authorised to evaluate what was happening in society, and because they felt that they had appropriate standards by which they could perform such evaluations. In short, theorists of this school believed that they had access to knowledge not only of how society is, but also of how it could and should be.

3. Criticism of Critical Discourse Analysis

3.1. Criticism of the underlying premises

As we have seen, those working within the field of CDA have rarely been slow to defend their own political standpoint, their own belief that research must be “critical” in all the senses outlined above. It is also evident that the heterogeneous nature of CDA’s intellectual inheritance sets a complex task for the researcher trying to trace exactly what the justification for a particular stance or interpretation might be. This has led some critics to accuse CDA of operating somewhat randomly, moved by personal whim rather than well-grounded scholarly principle, while others have made attempts to uncover and explicate the precise philosophical and sociological basis, concluding that its foundations are by no means as sound as its practitioners appear to believe.

The consequences that this would have for CDA’s status as an approach are far-reaching. As Hammersley points out, if the political stance on which CDA is founded turns out not to be well founded, but merely a product of decisionism, this fits ill with the strong claims made by CDA for itself and its own activities. If a central tenet of critical research is that research should be explicitly designed to fulfil political functions (exposure of inequality, dominance, injustice), rather than what would be the more conventional purpose of research (to observe and interpret phenomena), then there has to be a sound justification for this. If, in the end, the justification is only a matter of individual choice, then there is little incentive for the reader to take this type of research seriously.

CDA researchers are usually careful to make their own political commitments quite explicit before they embark on the interpretation and explanation of social phenomena. Fairclough, for example, tends to stress his old-Left leanings, even though in principle he agrees that critical research need not be left-wing, and that right-wing forms of CDA are perfectly conceivable (Fairclough 1996: 52). Two points should be
made here. One is that, if this is so, then Fairclough’s and others’ interpretations must be quite open to argument, because any left-wing interpretation might equally be challenged from the right, or from any other political dimension that might exist. Thus the whole scholarly project of CDA can be seen as heavily conditioned by political choice, rather than scientific criteria, which might be thought to take on a secondary role. Secondly, the fact that CDA’s adherents regularly bow in the direction of transparency and truthfulness by stating their political affiliations does not somehow mean that they are absolved from the need for objectivity in their research. Bourdieu has alluded to the perfunctory nature of many declarations of this kind, and to the role that self-definitions play in academic power struggles (1984b: 308). Indeed, in various types of post-modern framework, it is common for writers to try to circumvent serious epistemological difficulties by taking an explicit stance from the outset. This is particularly common in areas such as post-modern approaches to feminism (Harding 11-12), where the usual justification given is that a feminist perspective is needed redress the balance in a system that has been dominated by patriarchy. However, whether or not the epistemological problems of post-modernism are resolved by this, such gambits do not free the author to misrepresent the data, or to interpret the data in any way he or she chooses for some particular political purpose.

CDA is a broad church, it seems, and can contain multitudes. However, the situation has also had its critics within the fold of CDA. Fowler commented more negatively (1996: 8-12) “it seems that anything can count as discourse analysis (...) There is a danger of competing and uncontrolled methodologies drawn from a scatter of different models in the social sciences.” The consequences of operating in such an eclectic framework are obvious: Lack of coherence, indiscriminate mixing of incompatible concepts, unsystematic application of methods, and so on. Moreover, intellectual rigour aside, there are issues of disciplinary self-definition or self-understanding which clearly have yet to be resolved.

3.2. Description of the text: Criticisms of method

It would therefore seem that the linguistic framework and analytical method that CDA researchers claim to use are uncontroversial. Yet some of the most vociferous criticism that has been levelled at CDA has focused on precisely this area: The framework may be sound, the method appears promising, but in practice, much CDA research has deep methodological flaws.
These methodological shortcomings are generally recognised as existing on the level of how the data are actually obtained, and how they are subsequently interpreted. I shall focus here on the way CDA researchers obtain their data. In the section which follows this, I shall turn my attention to the issue of interpretation and the related question of reader response.

One of the most outspoken critics of CDA in this area has been Widdowson (1998, 2005). In a review of three representative studies published in the 1990s, Widdowson homes in on what he feels to be the unsystematic nature of some CDA research. He quotes Fowler (1996: 8) as stating that “critical linguists get a very high mileage out of a small selection of linguistic concepts such as transitivity and nominalisation”, which he interprets as meaning that “analysis is not the systematic application of a theoretical model, but a rather less rigorous operation, in effect a kind of ad hoc bricolage which takes from theory whatever concept comes usefully to hand” (Widdowson 1998: 136). Widdowson goes on to cite Fowler as stating that other analytical approaches (CA, schema theory, etc.) could equally well be put to use, provided they were brought into the “critical” model. Any method will do, he implies, as long as the results are the right ones.

Widdowson revisits CDA’s analyses of various key texts at length in order to illustrate what he feels to be the lack of impartiality in the way that method is applied. By focusing on particular lexical items, or by focusing on certain grammatical features (passives, nominalisations), it is possible to reach certain conclusions about ideology in the text. But, he asks, is this legitimate? Given that these features have been chosen, he feels, more or less randomly, because the researcher feels intuitively that they will provide results that have ideological meaning, it is possible that the rest of the text, which may contain contradictory data, is ignored. Widdowson does not reject the possibility that there might really be certain grammatical features (such as passives, for example) that genuinely have a “greater ideological valency” (1998: 148). But in his view, critical discourse analysts have so far not succeeded in proving that this is the case, or even addressed the issue as to how this could be proven. He proposes that corpus methodology might go some way towards resolving the problem, since its samples are larger and its methods more systematic.

However, the basic idea that discourse analysts should strive to implement objective standards and apply thoroughly scientific methods (for example, by engaging with larger samples of text or using corpus tools) is one which has informed much of the more recent work by CDA scholars (see below). Widdowson’s critique is much more pertinent when applied to the early days of CDA, and particularly to British authors such as Fowler and Fairclough.
Stubbs argues for a comparative approach based on large, representative samples. In this, he addresses the issue of method by tackling what many discourse analysts call the level of “description”. In Fairclough’s classic definition (1989), description means ascertaining what experiential, relational or expressive values the words or grammatical structures in the text have, and what textual structures or interactional conventions can be observed. In practice, many discourse analysts choose to focus on just one of these features, or one aspect of one of the features, such as the use of passives or nominalisation (Fowler et al. 1979; Fowler 1991; Fairclough 1992a, 1992b). In Stubbs’s view, the claims being made by discourse analysts on the basis of such analyses are not tenable, because the method is often simply impressionistic, or because the sample of texts is small and obtained unsystematically. Stubbs cites a study by Fairclough (1995), who claims that public language (academic writing, political debate) is becoming less formal. The essence of Stubbs’s criticism is that Fairclough provides no quantitative evidence for this, and particularly, no quantitative diachronic evidence that the degree of informality is increasing. In fact, although Fairclough’s claims would seem plausible, the methods he uses to obtain his evidence are not explained, and his findings are not set out in such a way that anyone else could challenge them. In fact, when some CDA studies are examined closely, it turns out that much of the argument hinges on just a few words (such as the example of the word “enterprise” in Fairclough 1995). Yet, as Stubbs reminds us, “registers are very rarely defined by individual features, but consist of clusters of associated features which have a greater than chance tendency to co-occur” (1997: 3).

Although it is impossible to generalise about the methods used in CDA, the main force of Stubbs’s argument holds, because some critical analysts, particularly in the 1980s and 1990s, paid scant regard to issues of methodological consistency, and provided little if any justification of their own methods. Although their work may contain genuine intuitions, it lacks the kind of rigour expected in academic research. Stubbs points out that “there is very little discussion of whether it is adequate to restrict analysis to short fragments of data, how data should be sampled, and whether the sample is representative” (1997: 7). What is more, there is a danger that fragments can be presented as representative, without any explanation as to how this representativeness has been established.

Stubbs is not intrinsically hostile to CDA, but the main brunt of his argument is that the methods used are not sound enough to justify the results that are supposedly obtained, with the consequence that the interpretations and explanations must be regarded as suspect.
In fact, by the time that Stubbs was writing, many discourse analysts had already become sensitive to the need for a more systematic approach applied across larger, more representative samples of discourse (cf. Wodak et al. 1990; van Dijk 1993; Hoey 1996: 154; Wodak 1996). In fact, there has been a growing trend to draw on corpus methodology to provide a more solid methodological framework for use in CDA (Mautner 2001: 122; Partington 2003: 12; Partington 2006: 267; Baker et al. 2008: 277-283). Fairclough himself, who formed the butt of much of the original criticism regarding methods in CDA, subsequently published a study of the language of “new Labour” based on large quantities of empirical data and incorporating the use of corpus linguistic tools in order to obtain a more representative picture (Fairclough 2000: 17).

In fairness to Fairclough and CDA in general, it must be said that Stubbs’s background in corpus linguistics would tend to bias him in favour of studies based on large samples of text, particularly contrastive studies that are designed to bring out the distinctive features of different genres or registers, using statistical methods to establish significance. However, this is far from being the only way to study language data. It would certainly be wrong to rule out qualitative approaches to textual analysis, since it is clear that these offer a viable alternative to quantitative methodology, which also has many flaws and inconsistencies. Similarly, it would be wrong to discard the findings of CDA simply because they have not been obtained in this way. Close, qualitative analysis of a small sample of text might be the only way of analysing certain types of discourse, for example, the discourse of a particular politician or party.

3.3. The reader and the text: Reception and response

On this basis, several critics have targeted CDA’s understanding of the relationship between texts and readers. Some authors have identified what they call “the familiar Whorfian notion of linguistic determinism” (Widdowson 1998: 139), not in its original form whereby the possibilities of a particular language code determine the habitual thought processes of the language users, but in an extended form in which discourses similarly produce, condition and restrict the thought processes of the recipient/user. It is uncontroversial to assume the existence of a significant relationship between discourse and people’s view of reality. However, it is equally obvious that in a globalised world people are exposed to many different discourses, and that they learn to navigate them, ignoring many, accepting some, rejecting others. Despite the evident truth of this, much CDA research proceeds on the basis that there is a simple, one-to-one relationship between the text and its reader, or the discourse and its recipient. It would be at once more subtle and more realistic to acknowledge from the outset that some discourses are more powerful or influential than others, and to focus attention on those that are particularly likely to have an impact on a large audience, or to attempt to determine what factors make such an impact probable.
In Stubbs’s view (1997), if researchers want to make claims about what people think on the basis of what they read or hear, they really ought to obtain non-linguistic evidence about their beliefs, or examine their behaviour. None the less, his criticism stands, because it is unreasonable to assume a one-way influence from discourse to thought, and methodologically unsound to operate as though the existence of such an influence were unproblematic.

The problem of obtaining evidence about the effects of the text on the reader or listener is one that is rarely even raised in CDA research. The bodies of research that exist in media studies or ethnography of communication are rarely even alluded to by CDA practitioners, and in general it can be stated that CDA lacks a cogent theory of audience effects and audience response that would provide support for its assertions about the influence of discourses on human subjects.

3.4. CDA and context: Too much or too little?

One of the fundamental tenets of CDA is that discourse is socially embedded: It is at once socially constructed, and also plays a role in constructing and perpetuating (“reproducing”) social structures and relations. CDA also declares itself to be socially committed (Fairclough and Wodak 1997), with an explicit purpose of raising its readers’ consciousness “of how language contributes to the domination of some people by others, because consciousness is the first step to emancipation” (Fairclough 1989: 1). Language viewed in a social framework is a highly complex phenomenon, since it both constitutes and challenges social relations, and different linguistic media are intermeshed with each other and with non-language media, generating an intricate web of intertextuality and multimodality. It is therefore striking that one criticism levelled at CDA is that the most specifically social aspects of discourse, namely the social contexts in which discourse is embedded, have often been ignored.

The critiques that question CDA’s claims to offering an interpretation of the social world have originated in the areas of conversation analysis, on the one hand, and the ethnography of communication and pragmatics, on the other. In essence, these approaches tend to differ from CDA in their emphasis on the need to follow a bottom-up approach (Peace 2003: 164). Both conversation analysis and ethnography require meticulous data-gathering techniques involving the use of recordings and detailed transcripts, and both disciplines are committed to the notion that interpretations should emerge from the data. Pragmatics is concerned with the functions fulfilled by language in real contexts, and with the complex relationships between form and social function, and also focuses on the detailed study of specific instances of language use. Although CDA practitioners frequently call for “triangulation” in the sense of obtaining multiple perspectives on the phenomenon under observation (Reisigl and Wodak 2001: 33ff;
Rogers et al. 2005: 382; van Dijk 2006: 359ff; Wodak 2007: 203), or at least for “constant movement back and forth between theory and data” (Meyer 2001: 27), there is an observable trend for work carried out in CDA to operate in a top-down manner, in that it presupposes a particular theory of social relations, and looks at language data from that perspective, or singles out interesting aspects of language that tie in with a particular theoretical view, rather than embarking on an all-round, in-depth study covering the multiple dimensions of a text to determine how language works in a particular setting.

From the area of pragmatics, some critics have argued that CDA does not always look closely at the linguistic features of interactions, but that there is a tendency to jump too quickly to the macro context, making assertions as to how macro relations might be mapped onto micro interactions (Widdowson 1998). The immediate context, which determines the type of interaction in social settings, is often ignored completely (cf. Verschueren 2011). In the words of Verschueren (2001: 60), the lack of methodological rigour and, particularly, the way that context may be left out of the equation, means that CDA, particularly in its early days, was responsible for “subjecting the media, as well as other institutions, to a circus trial, playing fast and loose with the observable facts in order to support preconceived claims.”

From a rather different point of view, it is also possible to criticise CDA for failing to take context into account, since it often concentrates on decontextualised samples of language, so that texts or parts of texts are analysed without regard to their production, distribution or consumption. Other scholars, particularly ethnographers of communication, have raised the question of the need to take context seriously, since texts are embedded in social contexts and cannot be understood without insights into the mesh of social relations within which they came into being.

Blommaert (2001: 15) notes how critical discourse analysts tend to work from a priori notions concerning the main players in a particular context, such as “politicians are manipulators” or “the media are ideology-reproducing machines”, as well as stereotyped socio-theoretical constructs such as “business”, “institutions” or “traditional medicine”.

3.5. **CDA as essentially negative**

CDA practitioners repeatedly emphasise that their enterprise is essentially aimed at creating a better world, effecting transformation and empowering the oppressed: “CDA is essentially political in intent with its practitioners acting upon the world in order to transform it and thereby help create a world where people are not discriminated against because of sex, colour, creed, age or social class” (Caldas-Coulthard and Coulthard 1996: ix).
Given the assumptions made in CDA about the nature of society, and the overwhelming interest in exposing ideological manipulation that shapes and perpetuates power imbalances through discourse, it is hardly surprising that language scholars of this school find it easier to deconstruct than to construct. In an article calling for more positive work in discourse analysis, Martin draws particular attention to the negative facets of CDA, locating CDA among “a pathological disjunction in 20th century social sciences and humanities research which systematically elides the study of social processes which make the world a better place in favour of critique of processes which disempower and oppress” (2004: 186) and calls for a serious attempt to be made to reconfigure CDA in a more positive sense.

In a similar vein, Luke (2002: 98) argues that if CDA is to develop its full potential, it needs to move beyond ideological critique, and to explore what he calls “the productive use of power” and, in Freirean terms, “emancipatory discourse”. Like Martin, he asserts that “if CDA is a normative form of social science and political action, it must be able to demonstrate what ‘should be’ as well as what is problematic” (2002: 105). If not, he argues, CDA will remain entrenched in a deterministic negative paradigm in which all media are forms of central ideological control, and CDA practitioners have the “enlightening” role of the Gramscian intellectual, to raise awareness and mobilise the people against the hegemony. Since this would be reductive (and, we might add, assumes certain premises about the nature of the audience and the workings of the media that are highly questionable), Luke proposes that a new, positively-oriented CDA should focus on minority discourses and diasporic voices, emergent counter-discourses, reinterpretations of mainstream discourses by different groups of subjects, and strategies of resistance. In the face of globalisation, for CDA to remain locked in dialectical analyses of economic disparity and political oppression would be to miss an opportunity, and ultimately to fail to come to terms with new cultural configurations, new ways of negotiating identity, new counter-discourses and voices of resistance. To meet this challenge, from a theoretical point of view, it will be necessary to stop thinking in terms of outdated dichotomies, while in methodological terms, it will be important to seek out evidence and develop appropriate methods for investigating the new discourses and new media that characterise life in the 21st century.

3.6. **CDA as an intellectual orthodoxy**

Critical Discourse Analysis began as a revolutionary form of language study. Although, as we have seen, the term “critical” is polysemous, if not vague, there is no doubt that what unites the people who apply the name CDA to their activities is the belief that they
can stand back from their data and apply techniques of critical analysis – to the texts or interactions themselves, and to the society in which these occur. As we have seen, their critique is generally political, concerned with issues of power and inequality. At the outset, CDA certainly seemed radical and new, an approach to language study in which old orthodoxies could be challenged in the name of social commitment.

However, as is inevitable in the case of successful new movements of any kind, in the twenty years or so in which CDA has gathered momentum there has been a gradual move towards establishment and respectability. Some authors even claim that CDA scholars are actively engaged in an attempt to establish CDA as an approach or school in itself (Verschueren 2001: 67). Billig (2002) documents this change and sketches out what this may mean for a “revolutionary” discipline, calling for greater self-awareness and self-criticism on the part of CDA practitioners.

4. Conclusions

Critical Discourse Analysis offers a promising paradigm for identifying and interpreting the way ideology functions in and through discourse. Its particular strength is that it bridges the gap between real language phenomena and the workings of power in society. It would be unfortunate if this important mission were to be undermined by methodological flaws and theoretical shortcomings. The following tentative conclusions are intended to summarise the main criticisms that have been levelled at CDA over the years, and to evaluate their relevance for linguists who read work by CDA practitioners, or who wish to carry out research within the CDA paradigm.

1. Critical discourse analysis is fundamentally defined by its political aims. Researchers are usually explicit about their political commitments, at least in a general sense. These commitments should always be borne in mind when we interpret their work.

2. Critical discourse analysis draws on a wide range of theories about language and society. These theories are not always clearly defined, and there is a tendency to draw on an eclectic mix of concepts from different intellectual traditions, not all of which are compatible. Researchers should endeavour to clarify the theoretical background to their work, while readers should feel free to adopt a critical stance towards the theoretical apparatus encountered in CDA studies, or even to challenge its bases.

3. CDA practitioners have frequently been accused of using “impressionistic” methodology for analysing text. Care should be taken to apply the same standards of rigour when handling language data as in any other area of linguistics. One solution might be to apply the techniques of corpus linguistics, in order to obtain a more representative overview across a larger sample of language. Another might be simply to be less selective and more disciplined and systematic in analysing the text. Particularly when spoken language is analysed, the pragmatic dimension should always be taken into account.

4. Critical discourse analysts have sometimes been said to move too quickly from the language data to the stage of interpretation and explanation of those data in terms of social theory. If this is the case, then readers should take care to test interpretations against the available data objectively. In general, researchers need to do justice to the text itself, so that their interpretations are well-grounded.

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5. CDA has an inadequate theory of the way texts work in social contexts. Reader response or audience reception is often naively assumed on the basis of the researcher’s interpretation of the text. Readers should contrast conclusions of this kind with work carried out in media studies which provides deeper insights into the relationship between texts and subjects. CDA researchers need to pay more attention to this dimension, and find ways of exploring real responses.

6. Though critical discourse analysts have always widened their field of vision to the macrocontext, they have sometimes paid insufficient attention to features of the immediate context, which has led to interpretations which are pragmatically inappropriate or remote from the concerns of the participants. The specific features of the immediate context should be treated seriously by readers and researchers alike.

7. In the last twenty years, CDA has mainly researched the way ideology works through discourse to maintain unequal power structures. Perhaps because of CDA’s self-image as a “critical” force, the focus of this work has been overwhelmingly negative, and seems to propagate a deterministic vision of society. Discourse analysis that explores emancipatory discourses or positive changes in social language use would be useful, because it would provide information about the way that positive transformations can be brought about.

References


*RUTH BREEZE* has a Ph.D. in Applied Linguistics and has researched and published widely in the area of discourse analysis applied to media language and specialised language. She is Director of the Institute of Modern Languages at the University of Navarra, and is a member of the GradUN Research Group. Address: University of Navarra, Navarra, Spain. E-mail: rbreeze@unav.es