

Research Report: Major Research Centers in Discourse Analysis in France

Johannes Angermüller

1. Introduction

In France, discourse analysis is practiced in a number of institutional contexts. While most of the pioneering centers of the 1960s and 70s like *Centre de recherche de lexicologie politique de l'École Normale Supérieure de St. Cloud* (Maurice TOURNIER) and the group of the University of Paris 10 (Jean DUBOIS) no longer exist, new centers have been founded since the 1990s such as CEDITEC (1999), the CEDISCOR (1989), and the LASELDI (2000), which are presented in detail below. More centers have to be cited such as CAD (*Centre d'analyse du discours*), Paris 13, directed by Patrick CHARAUDEAU, which is specialized in communication studies, the tendencies around the psychoanalytically influenced linguist Jacqueline AUTHIER-REVUZ from the University of Paris 3, and the group GTAD (*Groupe de travail en analyse du discours*, directed by Isabelle LÉGLISE and François LEIMDORFER) at MSH (*Maison des Sciences de l'Homme*, Paris), founded by Pierre ACHARD. Members of these various groups are involved in major French journals of discourse analysis such as *Mots* (e.g. CEDITEC), *Semen* (LASELDI), *Langage et société* (e.g. GTAD). [1]

These research centers typically comprise a significant number of researchers (20-50) and doctoral students (10-40) from various disciplinary backgrounds, often from linguistics, but also from media and communication studies, education, history, sociology, political science. Most of these groups deal in one way or the other with the linguistic, communicative and pragmatic dimension of discourse. While structuralist theory has largely been replaced by enunciation (pragmatic) linguistics, some of the theoretical impulses from the beginning remain present, e.g. some Lacanian theory in the AUTHIER-REVUZ group or post-Foucauldian linguistics at CEDITEC (see the [interview with Dominique MAINGUENEAU](#) in this issue). Michel PÊCHEUX, who was the major discourse theorist of the 1970s, remains a forceful presence in GTAD, where linguists collaborate with sociologists. Lexicometric approaches and computer aided text analysis are especially well established at Paris 12 (CEDITEC-TEXTOPOL, Pierre FIALA), at the University St. Yvelines-Versailles (research center PRINTEMPS [*Professions, Institutions, Temporalités*], software: *Alceste*, Max REINERT), Paris 3 (SYLED [*Systèmes Linguistiques, Enonciation et Discours*], André SALEM, software: *Lexico 3*), the latter of which reuniting some of the researchers from the St. Cloud cluster just like CEDITEC. While much of the non-quantitative research comes from linguistics, qualitative approaches remain an exception even though there are qualitative social scientists at CEDITEC and especially at PRINTEMPS. CEDITEC, like much of early discourse analysis, focuses on political discourses, whereas CEDISCOR is somewhat more oriented towards didactic and intercultural discourses. Technologies of Information and Communication (TIC) have come to play a major role in all these centers in the last five years.

International ties are especially close with Latin America (e.g. Brazil) and the Mediterranean world. Given the overlap between these groups, they do not represent full-fledged schools. Rather, they constitute interdisciplinary platforms for theoretical and empirical research in discourse analysis. [2]

2. CEDISCOR: Research Center on Ordinary and Specialized Discourses; Centre de recherche sur les discours ordinaires et spécialisés

Founded in 1989 by linguist Sophie MOIRAND, CEDISCOR reunites scholars from various French universities as well as doctoral students around a common topic: the analysis of discourses of knowledge transmission, of social, media, and economic life, no matter whether these discourses are mediated by traditional supports (press, radio, television, recordings of oral situations) or by any digital technology (online communication). [3]

The research work done at CEDISCOR emphasizes a theoretical frame for discourse linguistics. The aim is to discover the inscription of meaning in the materiality of originally oral texts and to describe the way they work. At the same time, this approach has recourse to other disciplinary fields (ethnology, history, natural logics, media studies, sociology etc.) when it comes to the constitution of corpuses, to the analysis and interpretation of data. [4]

Three basic options explain the succeeding reorientations and the evolutions of the team:

- a methodological option which starts from lexical and enunciative operations in order to account for the didactic dimension of mass media discourses on the sciences;
- a descriptive option, i.e. the constitution of a number of corpuses: didactic and educational discourses, scientific discourses, discourses of vulgarization, of media and professional discourses as well as to comparisons between genres, between cultures and between different languages;
- a theoretical and epistemological option which asks about the relations between language (langue) and discourse, between language (langage) and communication in a diversity of theoretical frameworks and the inevitable cleavages (indexical enunciation, pragmatics, construction of reference, approaches of argumentation in language or in discourse etc.) and which attempts to articulate linguistic and discursive categories around the question of genres and the encounter of discursive communities. [5]

Address: SYLED-CEDISCOR, EA 2290, Université Paris 3 – Sorbonne nouvelle
UFR DFLE, 46 rue Saint Jacques F-75230 Paris cedex 05

Director: Sophie Moirand. Responsible adjunct: Sandrine Reboul-Touré

Internet: <http://www.cavi.univ-paris3.fr/ilpga/syled/index.htm>

Contact: Sandrine Reboul-Touré (Sandrine.Reboul-Toure@univ-paris3.fr)

3. CEDITEC: Centre for the Study of Discourses, Images, Texts, Writings, Communication; Centre d'étude des discours, images, textes, écrits, communications

CEDITEC reunites researchers from communication studies, linguistics, political sciences, sociology and philosophy. Created in 2000 at the University of Paris 12 (EA 3119), the Centre counts 23 full-time teachers, 22 doctoral students and six associated members. [6]

Understood as symbolic praxis tied to certain institutional contexts of production, discourse, particularly in the fields of politics and knowledge, constitutes the central object of the research done by the team. A multidisciplinary field articulating the social and human sciences with linguistics, discourse analysis is a major resource for the members of CEDITEC, whose most important fields of specializations are: the epistemological reflection on the methodology of discourse analysis in the social and human sciences, methods of discourse analysis such as the "computer aided discourse processing" (TEXTOPOL), enunciative approaches in discourse linguistics. Finally, among the objects studied by CEDITEC, the focus is on political and media discourse, the discourse on women as well as "constituting" discourses like philosophical, religious and literary discourse. [7]

Address: CEDITEC, EA 3119, Université de Paris 12 Val de Marne 61 avenue du Général de Gaulle, F-94010 Créteil

Director: Simone Bonnafous

Internet: <http://www.univ-paris12.fr/www/labos/ceditec/>

Contact: Johannes Angermüller (johannes.angermueller@gse-w.uni-magdeburg.de)

4. LASELDI: Semiotics, Linguistics, Didactics, Information Technology Research Team; Laboratoire de Sémiotique Linguistique Didactique Informatique

The LASELDI gathers researchers whose field of activity is essentially rooted in language sciences, without cutting off from communication and information sciences, literature, foreign languages, computerized linguistics, language didactics and sport teacher training didactics. The team, which is officially registered as RT (Research Team) n°2281, has existed since 2000 after merging

former teams from the University of Franche-Comté. It includes sixty teachers and researchers, seventy two postgraduates and four fellow members. [8]

Discourse emerges from all the issues of the team. It is linked, for example, with the interactions within a didactic context or with language awareness. Discourse is considered as being at the crossroads of socio-historical dynamics and textual configurations and it is the main target of three out of four research programs in such matters as: observation and corpus analysis systems, more specifically computer-aided text analysis; the role of discourse mediations in the implementation of knowledge; the elaboration of an epistemology in the social and human sciences in close relationship with speaker-and-enunciation-based theories; the articulation of semiotics and communication studies in order to account for hybrid discourses and their ideological and cultural developments. The analyzed discourse objects essentially refer to the fields of the media, the Internet, literature and didactics. Discourse analysis in use within the team is not to be dissociated from theoretical reflection. It specifically favors taking plurimodality into account, scrutinizing generic bases, trying to make a link with, on the one hand, text sciences, and, on the other hand, both implemented and investigated digital technologies. [9]

Address: LASELDI, EA 2281, Université de Franche-Comté, UFR SLHS, 30-32 rue Mégevand F-25030 BESANCON

Board of directors: Daniel Lebaud, Andrée Chauvin-Vileno, Philippe Schepens

Internet: <http://laseldi.univ-fcomte.fr/>

Contact: Andrée Chauvin-Vileno (chauvinad@club-internet.fr)

Author

[Johannes Angermüller](#)

Citation

Angermüller, Johannes (2007). Research Report: Major Research Centers in Discourse Analysis in France. *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung / Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, 8(2), <http://nbn-resolving.de/urn:nbn:de:0114-fqs0702P46>.