

How Critical Discourse Analysis Faces the Challenge of Interpretive Explanations from a Micro- and Macro-theoretical Perspective

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Review Essay:

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Abstract: The review starts with a brief outline of recent publications on Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and its historical roots. Next, the volume is discussed on behalf of the features its editors, Ruth WODAK and Gilbert WEISS, have attributed to CDA themselves: i.e., 1) clarification of the basic CDA-notions, 2) the interpretive explanatory as well as critical impact of providing insights into institutional, structure-related dimensions in connection with textual/discursive, action-related aspects, and 3) the formation of methodically controlled second-grade constructions. Against this background, the volume's articles bring to light remarkable theses, searching strategies, and research findings that focus on the self-reflexive critique of the "critical" or on the situation of underprivileged and discriminated group members in different fields of action. Herewith, CDA presents itself as an interdisciplinary project in process that strives to meet high empirical standards, of both linguistics and social studies. In line with this endeavour, the reviewer puts emphasis on the systematic differences between basic research and applied research as well as on the need of operationalising a theory of action in all details.

Table of Contents

[1. Overview](#)

[2. The Main Ingredients of CDA at Issue](#)

[2.1 CDA-related core concepts](#)

[2.2 The critical potentials of CDA-theories and CDA-research: Chances and obstacles](#)

[2.3 Data-driven second-grade constructions as a premise of an empirically well-founded critique by CDA](#)

[3. Final Evaluation](#)

[References](#)

[Author](#)

[Citation](#)

1. Overview

During recent years, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) has become an umbrella term for widely recognised approaches to the study of oral or written texts. Representative of recent publications are, for example, Jan BLOMMAERT (2005), and Louise PHILLIPS and Marianne JORGENSEN (2003), whose books primarily stand for comprehensive linkages between linguistic and social studies approaches; YOUNG and HARRISON (2004), who focus on CDA by virtue of

theories and tools that emanate from within Hallidayan systemic functional linguistics, which is also the primary source of BARKER and GALASINSKI (2001) in their CDA-analyses of identities from a cultural studies perspective; the theoretical and empirical attempts of Rebecca ROGERS (2003, 2004) to integrate educational perspectives into CDA by highlighting the form-function interface; and to the broad reception of CDA-approaches in the wake of Michael FOUCAULT (cf. DIAZ-BONE, 2003).¹ [1]

The roots of CDA basically go back to classical Rhetoric and Text Linguistics as well as to Socio-Linguistics, Applied Linguistics, Pragmatics and Systemic Functional Linguistics. Particularly Critical Linguistics, one of the main forerunners of CDA, has previously drawn on these different approaches (cf. HODGE & KRESS, 1979/1993; FOWLER, HODGE & KRESS, 1979; FOWLER, 1996). However, there are at least two main differences between Critical Linguistics and CDA: In contrast to Critical Linguistics, CDA has undergone the practice turn (cf. SCHATZKI, KNORR-CETINA & SAVIGNY, 2001; SCHATZKI, 2002) and readjusted its notion of "power" in line with FOUCAULT's (1977, 1978) seminal studies viewing power not as an "'always ready' domination", but rather as a structural and pragmatic feature being an integral part of social realities (IEDEMA, 2004, p.417; cf. FAIRCLOUGH, 1992). Under these premises, CDA-research always has been and still is concerned with the disclosure of undemocratic and inhumane living conditions by which minorities and underprivileged groups are affected. The operationalisation of this research agenda has confronted CDA with one of the most challenging questions ever since, i.e., how to link micro- and macro-theoretical perspectives that take into account the agent as well as the situation-bound, historically grown structures s/he has to cope with when performing her/his practices. [2]

As we will see, this micro- and macro-theoretical endeavour is also one of the main concerns to which the editors of the book at issue, Ruth WODAK and Gilbert WEISS, try to present solutions. Although Ruth WODAK has already published another volume in the meantime (WODAK & CHILTON, 2005), this preceding collection of papers should not be dismissed, as it covers well-selected and highly elaborated approaches to CDA and starts to open up the path to the critique of the "critical". [3]

Most of the volume's contributors participated in a conference on "Problems and Issues of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and Interdisciplinarity" that took place in Vienna in 2000 (p.vii). The editors, Ruth WODAK and Gilbert WEISS, view the contributions in the tradition of "a long development of theory and empirical work in the Social Sciences" (*ibid.*) covering the last two decades (p.1). Against this background, the volume's articles can be conceived as a representation of the state of the art in CDA-related disciplines at that time. The outcomes of the mostly inter- and transdisciplinary approaches are divided into three sections. The first focuses on the concept "critical" from a historical and contemporary perspective by stressing different functions of its main ingredient, "(self-)

¹ Many thanks to Terry SHORTALL for having proofread and commented on an earlier draft of my paper. I, however, take full responsibility for its contents.

reflexivity". The second part is mainly dedicated to the discussion of interdisciplinary theories and case studies. The last section presents (interim) results of more comprehensive research work on media discourses as well as on interventions in different fields of action. [4]

The authors of the book take a particular interest in the relationship between language and power, with which CDA has been concerned from its very beginnings: they analyse the problematic effects of the institutionalisation of CDA in the academy (e.g. Michael BILLIG, Phil GRAHAM), the potentials of knowledge processing being inferred from political media discourses (Teun van DIJK, Carmen R. CALDAS-COULTHARD, Christine ANTHONISSEN) and ethnographic field work (Marianne JORGENSEN, Jim R. MARTIN, Patricia O'CONNOR), the semiotic impact of everyday practices (Suzanne SCOLLON), gender and organisational discourses (Luisa Martín ROJO & Concepción Gómez ESTEBAN) as well as different dimensions of identity work and racism (Marcelo DASCAL, Patricia O'CONNOR) that are also conveyed in the shape of an autobiographical essay (Suzanne SCOLLON). [5]

2. The Main Ingredients of CDA at Issue

CDA-approaches comprise a vast variety of theories and methods. In spite of this heterogeneity, Ruth WODAK and Gilbert WEISS have found a way to provide the volume's readers with some essential CDA-tenets (Ch. 1). From the reviewer's point of view, the following tenets are adapted as guidelines for the evaluation of the collected papers:

1. "The basic theoretical assumptions regarding text, discourse, language, action, social structure, institution and society" (p.8) have to be clarified.
2. Theoretical and empirical approaches try to mediate between sociological and linguistic concepts by taking into account institutional, structure-related dimensions on the one side and textual/discursive, action-related aspects on the other side that, however, mutually determine each other (cf. pp.7ff). From these per se interdisciplinary, macro- and micro-theoretical vantage points, CDA-researchers try to understand and explain social actions and their outcomes (cf. pp.2-4). The aim of such interpretive explanations (cf. WEBER 1988/1913)² is to reveal distortions of interconnections, particularly between causes and effects, what can be identified as the *critical* impact of CDA (FAIRCLOUGH, 1995, p.747, cited on p.14). In line with this aim, CDA puts emphasis on the intertextual and recontextualised instantiation of "structural relationships of dominance, discrimination, power and control" (p.15).
3. The aforementioned features of an interdisciplinary mediation and its critical impact are closely linked with another principle: Data-driven CDA-theories are usually built on "second-grade constructions" (SCHÜTZ, 1962, pp.3ff) that follow

2 *Interpretive explanations* are a synthesis of an *interpretive understanding* that aims at reconstructing the agent's interpretations of the situation at issue including its history, and of *causal explanations* that draw linkages between certain actions/practices and the respective outcomes (cf. WEBER 1988; orig. 1913), although one has to be aware of transintentional effects like "self-fulfilling prophecy" (Robert K. MERTON) and "the invisible hand" (Adam SMITH).

scientific and methodically controlled principles—in contrast to first-grade constructions that are part of everyday discourse (cf. pp.4, 11). [6]

Quite naturally, not every paper will cover every aspect. But as we will see, almost all articles make a significant contribution to the CDA-project. [7]

2.1 CDA-related core concepts

CDA-related core concepts are clarified as intensely or briefly as necessitated for the various issues treated by each of the authors. Obviously, one of the most important concepts that the volume's authors refer to is "discourse": Its definition largely corresponds with FAIRCLOUGH's and WODAK's (1997, p.258) notion of discourse pointing to social practices and their symbolic cultural impact, which is usually analysed on the basis of texts. For example, Martín ROJO and Gómez ESTEBAN define discourses "as meaningful practices framed within a complex set of class and gender-based social relations" (p.247). "Texts" play the main part in Jay L. LEMKE's contribution: From a semiotic perspective on social realities, he conceives texts "as instances of ... material-semiotic artifacts [that] play a key role in the organization of social systems across timescales and in the widest extension of social networks" (p.130). This definition is elaborated throughout his article. There are also other papers, like the one by Carlos GOUVEIA, which do not provide one single definition of the above mentioned CDA concepts. Although they are not of primary concern to GOUVEIA's line of argument, this absence of definition could be judged as an index of how far away he seems to position himself from CDA. Another variation in dealing with core concepts of CDA is found in the autobiographical essay by Suzanne SCOLLON: The essay describes specific situations in the process of her career, in which certain analytical concepts emerged. Due to the narrative genre she has chosen, detailed definitions are rare. [8]

2.2 The critical potentials of CDA-theories and CDA-research: Chances and obstacles

From a meta-disciplinary perspective, Michael BILLIG offers an explanation of inevitable causes and effects with regard to the institutionalisation of CDA: The more CDA approaches become accepted as sub-disciplines of linguistics, communication studies, social studies, psychology or other disciplines, the more they are at risk of being subject to the competitive rules of a "marketing discourse within academic institutions", with the effect that CDA will become less reflexive and (self-) critical (p.42). Nevertheless, this process is conceived as an inevitable necessity in order to transgress and change the borderlines of disciplines, and automatically results in so-called "dilemmas of success". BILLIG notes that

"[t]he more successful CDA is in establishing itself within the university curriculum, the more students will take CDA courses and the more critical analysts will be hired to teach and to grade these students. Success will bring more records of the unequal achievements in CDA. These records will be of use to prospective employers within and without the university sector. Thus, CDA teachers, who may be committed to

egalitarianism, will find themselves professionally reproducing inequalities as a consequence of their professional commitments" (p.43). [9]

As dilemmas cannot be solved, BILLIG demands that CDA-researchers be self-reflexive and make a clear assessment of "the context, in which critical approaches operate" (p.42). Interestingly, the Swedish anthropologist, Marianne JORGENSEN, comes to a similar conclusion when she suggests a detailed investigation of the different socio-culturally situated knowledge productions with regard to the researcher and to the researched persons—a procedure that is supposed to reveal possible relations of power and the constraints of subject positions (p.80). Her approach draws on FOUCAULT's concept of "modern man" which allows her to unfold researchers' failures in understanding less "civilised" life styles properly. JORGENSEN's argument is well elaborated. In contrast to that, her writing practice partly includes sexist reference markers whenever she refers to the "modern man", and male pronouns prevail instead of mentioning both genders (pp.64ff). Is this another example of CDA-researchers assimilating themselves into mainstream conventions, particularly in an area (gender) about which they are quite concerned? Or is it just a sexist editorial practice of the publisher? [10]

Being sensitised to the potentials of disciplinary fallacies, the volume's readers may benefit from a historical perspective on the development of disciplines and the pitfalls to be avoided. In this regard, Phil GRAHAM's comprehensive investigations of changes in the disciplines' evaluative meaning potentials are quite informative. However, his diachronic descriptions lack explanatory remarks on probable reasons for the formation and variation of disciplines. Apart from that, the results of GRAHAM's research would also need to be amplified by CDA-related disciplines, as they have emerged since the 1970s. Although such a project would certainly be beyond a single researcher, I do not see an alternative, if the relevance of historical findings for contemporary developments in the disciplines' profiles is to be proved. [11]

The interface of (media) discourse and knowledge is the main focus of Teun van DIJK's contribution. Here we find a brief analysis of an editorial in the *New York Times* which illustrates the potential complexity of any research agenda that aims to promote the understanding of the media users' and producers' inner frames. [12]

So far, cross-cultural text-linguistic research has provided some evidence that even the supposedly classical standardisations of text forms and genres continuously undergo changes (e.g. VENTOLA, CASSILY & KALTENBACHER, 2004). Due to the structural and actor/text-oriented flexibility of the Internet, Jay LEMKE's argument that "hypertextual traversals"—like hypertexts, web surfing, mall cruising or career surfing—vary significantly from off-line, rather linear text processing, seems to be quite reasonable, but not yet sufficiently investigated. In addition, more data-driven support is needed for LEMKE's claim that the traversals may cause specific consequences as a result of text-mediated "social control" (p.147, cf. p.137). An empirical approach would present the task of differentiating clearly between the democratic necessity of constituting a social

order and exerting social control as well as defining the beginning of misuses by investigating how specific texts have been used in which institutional or organisational constellations for which purposes and with which consequences. From this vantage point, it would be possible, for instance, to check LEMKE's suggestion that new text types usually emerge "in the form" of texts whereas "the content becomes less critical" (p.147)—whatever "critical" is supposed to mean here. [13]

Taking into account the autobiographical essay genre that SCOLLON has chosen for her contribution, her presentation practice follows a logic of its own. Here she describes the intricate entanglements of inner and outer conditions that have led her, together with Ron SCOLLON, to develop specific concepts like Mediated Discourse Analysis. Her point of departure is the "nexus of practice", from which she outlines different possibilities to match sociological theories with linguistic tools. Readers who are interested in the methodological basis of each approach and its methodical operationalisation will have to read her oeuvre, though. [14]

A more detailed description of how the complexity of sociological organisation studies have been linked with linguistic tools is provided by Luisa Martín ROJO and Concepción Gómez ESTEBAN. Their contribution draws on first results of a comprehensive research project in progress: it focuses on stereotypes and prejudices with which female managers in Spain are confronted. The authors try to understand and explain why it is so hard for women to find a style of their own without being discriminated against once they have been placed in a leader position. As the percentage of Spanish female leaders is one of the highest in Europe (cf. FRANCO & WINQVIST, 2002), this study could produce important insights into a stage of development that perhaps other European countries still have to go through. Besides multifarious documents, Martín ROJO and Gómez ESTEBAN explore the situation in Spain on the basis of 18 interviews with (future) managers and people involved in the selection of managers. Given the project's interim status one may feel invited to ask questions and make recommendations for its further operationalisation: What kind of interview do the authors refer to? The examples given in the article come close to expert interviews being organised with the help of pre-structured questionnaires. The questions asked almost exclusively seem to elicit argumentative, rather closed, first-grade constructions, i.e., subjective theories. The authors themselves have observed that their *habitus* of asking may already suggest the format of a "good" answer (pp.257f) and that even this is met by suspicious remarks (p.259). The potential of producing artefacts could probably be reduced, if the interviewees had the opportunity to react to *open* questions by drawing on biographically and professionally relevant storied interpretations of their own (e.g., "How did you try to solve the last problem that came up in your enterprise? Please, try to remember every step of action you have taken, everything that happened."). Whatever schema of communication the authors wish to pursue, the application of specific tools of narrative or argumentative analyses is a must, if research is supposed to run into the construction of more systematic abstractions. The authors' remarkable endeavour to connect the interview data with the social and organisational constraints of role making and role taking exemplifies another

must, i.e., the systematic application of an action theory. On the basis of such a densely knit synthesis of micro- and macro-theoretical perspectives, the formation of typologies and middle-range theories would come within reach. The papers I have discussed in this section could be understood as profoundly enriching documents for searching strategies in this direction. [15]

2.3 Data-driven second-grade constructions as a premise of an empirically well-founded critique by CDA

How the contributors have developed second-grade constructions remains quite opaque throughout the whole volume. This comes as no surprise though, as detailed presentations of reconstructive procedures of analysis would certainly have exceeded the limited space of single articles. Instead, some articles emphasise the necessity of clearly differentiating between first- and second-grade constructions in order to avoid distortions of social realities: Particularly, Carmen CALDAS-COULTHARD's contribution to "recontextualisations" by the media referring to inhabitants of the Third World (pp.275ff) and Marianne JORGENSEN's article on shortcomings of anthropological research focusing on natives' lifestyles coincide with this argument. Jim MARTIN also problematises how certain writers, historians and anthropologists so far have tried to interpret and explain the Aborigines' (historical) situation in Australia by stressing their minority status. This is exemplified by (1) the amount of space Aborigines are given for their voice in contrast to (2) the amount the authors themselves give themselves for purposes of recontextualisation and (3) by prevailing representations of the indigenous people that highlight mono-cultural, almost invariant attributions like "powerless", "not cultivated", "passive". Of course, every reader will sympathise with counter-perspectives that draw on a symmetrical relationship of researchers with their informants. This does not, however, offer a solution to the risk of "going native", a challenge to any ethnographic research that must be met by clearly defined, methodically controlled principles of research in order to develop second-grade constructions and to establish a platform for connecting research. [16]

A similar evaluation holds for the activist sociolinguistic approach presented by Patricia O'CONNOR: She refers to a large sample of biographical narrative interviews with maximum-security prisoners and addicts. Her main concerns are agentive discourse elements she has found "in sites of reflexive language, particularly in frame breaks and in meta-talk or evaluative references to one's knowledge state" (p.224). In analogy to O'CONNOR's concern, it would be worthwhile to recall 30 years of experience in action research in educational sciences. One of its most crucial questions always has been: What quality of research data, methodologies, methods and results is needed, if the "new" knowledge is to be applied successfully in a specific field of action? As a result of data-driven evaluations, concepts of school development have changed, for example, from top-down to bottom-up approaches. Still, no good solution has been found to the question: How can we save pupils from ineffective or even counter-productive, though perhaps committed, teaching methods? So far, particularly politics and economics have served as fields of research

demonstrating excellent models of systematic failure due to short-cut action that has neglected the situation-bound conditions and the potentials of trans-intentional consequences (DÖRNER, 1989). Returning to O'CONNOR's heuristic, the following questions come to the fore: How does she differentiate between lived life stories and narrated life stories? Or: What makes her so sure about the agentive discourse potentials of the prisoners' accounts? How does the author know that the supposed potentials of change are not outdated by the time she reveals them and wants to make use of them? Let me just point to the well-known dilemma that empirical narratologists always have to cope with: cultural framings that emerge and/or are sustained in the interaction between interviewer and interviewee, stimulating the latter to produce "good", well-accepted stories. The relevance of another problem is supported by a specific example Patricia O'CONNOR has found in her own data, i.e., the long-term inconsistency of interview-based findings (p.229). O'CONNOR counters this problem with two strategies: On the one hand, she makes the effort of long-term involvements, thus providing her work with a diachronic research perspective (ibid.); on the other hand, she tries to enlarge her research of the so-called "nexus of practice" to the utmost extent (pp.224f, 236f)—a nice elaboration of SCOLLON's conceptualisation from an applied research perspective. For these purposes, an additional broadening of interdisciplinary perspectives with regard to interview research in social studies would probably also be of some help. [17]

3. Final Evaluation

The volume's authors undertake great efforts to postulate and operationalise interdisciplinarity. Unfortunately, the semiotic questions—how the ingredients of a discipline and their borderlines can be defined and at which point the transgression of the borderlines, (and with that interdisciplinarity begins)—remain unanswered. While, for example, Michael BILLIG argues that "academic disciplines are social and institutional practices rather than inherent qualities of academic texts" (p.24), it would have been quite interesting to learn more about the practices of each discipline that have, to date, contributed to the development of CDA. However, I should mention that a year before the volume's publication, Ruth WODAK (2001) did a very fine job in terms of tracing the inter-disciplinary roots of CDA and presenting a synopsis of different CDA-researchers and their approaches. [18]

At this point I would like to address four problems in the contemporary CDA-debate, which partly have been (and at times still are) typical of the social sciences as well. Although the editors' impressive introduction cannot be identified with any of the following shortcomings, an equivalent awareness does not seem to be present in every article of the volume. [19]

Connecting scientific knowledge with common sense knowledge: The linguist Carlos GOUVEIA propagates his vision of CDA as part of a "new science" that connects scientific knowledge with common sense knowledge. For those who are well acquainted with the sociological research on the application of knowledge in different, scientific and common sense domains (e.g. BECK & BONß, 1989) or

with its further development in educational studies (e.g. BOMMES, DEWE & RADTKE, 1996, pp.219ff; DEWE & KURTZ, 2000), such a vision seems hopelessly illusionary, as we know that both domains include separate practices and rules of processing that cannot be mixed up with each other. Probably, this is also the reason why GOUVEIA himself does not offer a solution to the problem. Nevertheless, there are possibilities of entering into a mutual process of relating between the domains' different cognitive and pragmatic dimensions, if the dignity and logic of each domain is thoroughly taken into account. The increasing amount of casework and so-called "Forschendes Lernen" in social and cultural studies (e.g. DIRKS & HANSMANN, 2002) gives some insights into such endeavours. Against this background, I agree with GOUVEIA that the linguistic contribution to coping with the gap between the different domains, indeed, is urgently needed. Apart from this, it could be helpful to distinguish between basic research and ensuing applied research: Whereas basic research may provide us with profound knowledge about the chances and constraints of actions and structures in specific practice fields, applied research would have to exploit this knowledge in order to develop and execute empirically founded interventions in conjunction with a qualitative, process-oriented evaluation that includes the actors' perspectives as closely as possible. [20]

A missing theory of context? Some authors end up with self-made definitions, even in cases where theory building and empirical evidence from other disciplines already covers a long period of time. For instance, the claim "we still lack an explicit theory of context" (p.94f) once again makes us recall the very excited discussion among some linguists who disagreed with Emanuel SCHEGLOFF's (1997) notions of text and context (cf. TEN HAVE 2006, para. 26-29). From a social studies perspective, however, the claim of a missing theory of context can easily be countered with reference to the seminal study by William I. THOMAS and Florian ZNANIECKI (1927, pp.67f)³ about the Polish peasant in Europe and America or by works of Alexis de TOCQUEVILLE, Max WEBER, Robert K. MERTON, Alfred SCHÜTZ, Erving GOFFMAN, and so forth. Arguably, the most differentiated description and application has been provided by the sociologist Hartmut ESSER (2001, pp.204, 259ff; cf. 2003) who also tries to systematically include psychological and cognitive approaches that enable him to describe and understand the matching process between the actors' inner conditions and the situation-bound outer conditions, i.e., the context. [21]

The application of a theory of action: As situations come to be real to the extent that the agents themselves perceive and experience a situation as a real one (cf. Thomas-Theorem, 1928)⁴ and as Critical Discourse Analysts do not pursue

3 "And the definition of the situation is necessary preliminary to any act of the will, for in given conditions and with a given set of attitudes an indefinite plurality of actions is possible, and one definite action can appear only if these conditions are selected, interpreted, and combined in a determined way and if a certain systematization of these attitudes is reached, so that one of them becomes predominant and subordinates the others" (THOMAS & ZNANIECKI, 1927, p.68).

4 The gist of the Thomas Theorem usually is equated with the "self-fulfilling prophecy"-phenomenon: "If men define situations as real, they are real in their consequences" (THOMAS & THOMAS, 1928, p.572). Notwithstanding this correlation, the theorem also bears on the pragmatic and cognitive features of a situation-bound processing of meaning potentials.

agentless research that is always at risk of producing artefacts being incompatible with real life, another obligatory research task consists in the question: what kind of action theory should critical discourse researchers apply? This is also the cornerstone for any attempt to understand and explain the connections between micro-, meso- and macro-theoretical perspectives on the processes and outcomes of situation-bound practices. In the volume under review this seems to be the missing, or at least neglected, link among most of the theoretical and empirical debates covered. What challenges researchers have to meet, in order to understand and explain the actors' social practices and the outcomes of their practices, is shown par excellence by SCOLLON's description of the "nexus of practice" "as the juncture between individual action and public discourse in the complex environment of contemporary societies"—here with regard to the processes and results of language learning and communicating (pp.72f). Although the "practice turn" is inherent to CDA (cf. the predominance of practice-oriented discourse concepts), the practices at issue are rarely analysed on the grounds of a theory of action, not even of a praxeological action theory, for example in the wake of the late WITTGENSTEIN, of GARFINKEL or the late FOUCAULT (cf. RECKWITZ, 2003; SCHATZKI et al., 2001; SCHATZKI, 2002). Otherwise, the often presupposed goal orientation of certain agents would probably have been discussed under different premises. [22]

The analysis of knowledge and its socio-cultural impact by proper tools: Critical Discourse Analysts of a socio-cognitive provenience are very concerned about conceptual engineering on the basis of different knowledge aggregates. These are, for example, transformed into cognitive theories of text processing by stressing their social and cultural dimensions (p.107). Therefore, it is easily understood that empirical operationalisations of a socio-cognitive approach can hardly be accomplished by only the application of descriptive semantic tools. This leads me to ask whether social and cultural meaning potentials as well as their pragmatic impact should not rather be subsumed into an amplified analysis of frames/framing (see for example ESSER, 2001, pp.259ff) and conceptual metaphors in connection with pragmatic-linguistic tools (e.g., for analysing speech acts, membership category devices, arguments, narratives). At least the application of different, topic- and genre-relevant methods would allow a more comprehensive exploration of intratextual and intertextual architectures and meaning horizons, providing a systematic platform for further abstractions to typologies and theories. Knowledge as such is not of much use in any empirical study unless its dynamic and symbolic impact is properly framed. [23]

This volume mainly covers CDA-approaches with regard to verbal texts. And yet, Ruth WODAK and Gilbert WEISS have succeeded in gathering three articles authored by Jim MARTIN, Carmen CALDAS-COULTHARD and Christine ANTHONISSEN who also integrate visual texts in their analyses. Their work deserves considerable credit and could be conceived as the opening up of new CDA-paths that pay tribute to the omnipresence of multimodal discourses in most social realities (cf. KRESS & VAN LEEUWEN, 1996, 2001; O'HALLARAN, 2004). At this point, the cultural (interpretive), social, linguistic and pictorial turn in humanities and social studies all come into play at once. This highly demanding

complexity is to be met by research projects with larger data sets, as already demonstrated by CALDAS-COULTHARD, Martín ROJO, and ANTHONISSEN in this volume—instead of the current predominance of small case studies. By drawing on the rules of a (as far as possible) methodically controlled "theoretical sampling" (GLASER & STRAUSS, 1967; STRAUSS & CORBIN, 1998) and analysis, the development of comprehensive middle-range theories (MERTON, 1967; ESSER, 2002) will be the most significant future task of CDA. As a consequence, platforms for connecting research could be provided, thereby enlarging the scientific status of CDA as an interdisciplinary research field. In addition, middle-range theories would enable us to explore empirically well-grounded ways of applying CDA-knowledge into relevant practice fields. [24]

The heterogeneity of the volume's collection makes it suitable for a broad CDA readership. Undoubtedly, it is primarily written for academics from the humanities and social studies who are involved in pragmatic-linguistics, conflict studies or media studies. In the editors' introduction to this volume, readers will find a most valuable source of orientation in the current CDA-debate. The ensuing articles offer profoundly stimulating insights into theoretical and empirical approaches that are circumspect of action- and structure-bound constraints and potentials of change. Here we find important building blocks that try to bridge the gap between cognitive and pragmatic dimensions, coming close to a cultural studies heuristic and rendering *critical* findings as a result of "good" research in line with high quality standards. [25]

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