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AN INTRODUCTION TO CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS IN EDUCATION

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Chapter 2

Discourse Analysis: What Makes It Critical?

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CENTRAL CONCEPTS

All discourse analysis that intends to make empirical claims is rooted in specific viewpoints about the relationship between *form and function* in language, although these are rarely spelled out in discourse analytic work in education. Further, empirically motivated work in discourse is based, in part, on *specific analytic techniques* for relating form and function in oral and/or written texts. Critical discourse analysis (CDA) involves, beyond relating form and function in language, specific empirical analyses of how such form–function correlations *themselves* correlate with specific *social practices* that help constitute the very nature of such practices. Because social practices inherently involve social relationships where issues of solidarity, status, and power are at stake, the flow is bottom–up from work in CDA and are themselves empirical claims. *Learning* is a type of social interaction in which knowledge is distributed across people and their tools and technologies, dispersed at various sites, and stored in links among people, their minds and bodies, and specific affinity groups. Such a view of learning allows an integration of work in CDA, situated cognition, and sociocultural approaches to language and literacy.

INTRODUCTION

What makes a piece of research discourse analysis? What makes it critical discourse analysis? I offer one opinion about these questions in this chapter. My considerations are basic because I want to illuminate what I take to be fundamental issues—ones often obscured in work in education where

discourse analysis sometimes means no more than anecdotal reflections on written or oral texts. As to critical discourse analysis, sometimes this seems to amount to proselytizing for one's own politics in the absence of any close study of oral or written language.

A note before I start: I personally associate the term (letters) *CDA* with Fairclough's (1992, 1995) approach to discourse analysis and the term (spelled out) *critical discourse analysis* with a wider array of approaches, including Fairclough's, my own, and others. When I get to the question, "What makes something *critical* discourse analysis?" (as opposed to plain old discourse analysis), I mean this question generally, and not just about Fairclough's work.

Although both Fairclough and I have been influenced by poststructuralist thought (e.g., Foucault, Bourdieu, and Bakhtin) and neo-Marxist critical theory (e.g., Althusser, 1971; Gramsci, 1971), the linguistic side of Fairclough's work is based on (his own version of) a Hallidayian model of grammatical and textual analysis (Halliday, 1994)—a model more pervasive in England and Australia than in the United States. The linguistic side of my own work is based on (my own version of) American non-Hallidayian models of grammatical and textual analysis (e.g., Chafe, 1979; Givon, 1979) and sociolinguistics (Gumperz, 1982; Hymes, 1974, 1981; Labov, 1972a, 1972b), combined with influences from literary criticism (e.g., Chatman, 1978). The two models are not incompatible, and the differences reflect differences in training and background and not (for the most part) principled disagreements.

Approaches to discourse analysis that avoid combining a model of grammatical and textual analysis (of whatever sort) with sociopolitical and critical theories of society and its institutions are not forms of critical discourse analysis. At the same time, there are many, especially in education, who combine aspects of sociopolitical and critical theory with rather general (usually thematic) analyses of language not rooted in any particular linguistic background or theory. Such work is a form of critical discourse analysis, although it may not always be referred to as such.

Much work in discourse analysis, especially in the field of linguistics, has no particular interest in education or issues germane to education. This is true of work in critical discourse analysis as well. My own work in both areas (Gee, 1992, 1996, 1999) has often centered on education, although not always on schools. In this chapter, from time to time, I discuss the relevance of discourse analysis and critical discourse analysis to controversial issues in education.

SOME CRUCIAL DISTINCTIONS

At the outset, I want to make a couple of distinctions that are important from a linguistic point of view, although often ignored in discourse-related work in education. The first distinction, one with a long and controversial history in linguistics and the philosophy of language, is between *utterance-type meaning* and *utterance-token meaning* (Levinson, 2000).

When we interpret any piece of language, we have *general expectations* about how our language is normally used. Another way to put this is to say that any word or structure in language has a certain "meaning potential"—that is, a range of possible meanings that the word or structure can take on in different contexts of use. Thus, for example, the word *cat* has to do broadly with felines; the (syntactic) structure "subject of a sentence" has to do, broadly, with naming a "topic" in the sense of "what is being talked about." This is utterance-type meaning. Utterance-type meanings are general meanings, not situation-specific meanings (although we could say that they are, in reality, connected to the prototypical situations in which a word or structure is usually used).

In actual situations of use, words and structures take on much more specific meanings within the range of (or at least related to the range of) their meaning potentials. This is utterance-token meaning, or what I call *situated meaning* (Gee, 1996, 1999). Thus, in a situation where we are discussing species of animals and say something like, "The world's big cats are all endangered," *cat* means things like lions and tigers; in a situation where we are discussing mythology and say something like, "The cat was a sacred symbol to the ancient Egyptians," *cat* means real and pictured cats as symbols; and in a situation where we are discussing breakable decorative objects on our mantel and say something like, "The cat broke," *cat* means a statue of a cat.

Turning to structures, rather than words: Although the subjects of sentences are always topiclike (this is their utterance-type meaning) in different situations of use, subjects take on a range of more specific meanings. In a debate, if I say, "The constitution only protects the rich," the subject of the sentence ("the constitution") is an entity about which a claim is being made; if a friend of yours has just arrived and I usher her in saying, "Mary's here," the subject of the sentence ("Mary") is a center of interest or attention; and in a situation where I am commiserating with a friend and say something like, "You really got cheated by that guy," the subject of the sentence ("you") is a center of empathy (signaled also by the fact that the normal subject of the active version of the sentence—"That guy really cheated you"—has been "demoted" from subject position through use of the "get-passive").

The second distinction is between vernacular styles of language and nonvernacular styles (Labov, 1972a, 1972b). Save in the case of massive social disruption, every human being acquires a native language in his or her early years. Most linguists, at least in the United States, believe that this process of native language acquisition is partly under biological control (Chomsky, 1986, 1995; Pinker, 1994). That is, for human beings, language is akin to an instinct (like the instinctual knowledge some bird species have

of how to build their species-specific nest or sing their species-specific song). Faced with input from a specific human language (e.g., English or Russian), the child builds a language out of those resources that, although superficially different from other languages, is, at a level of basic design features, fundamentally the same as all other languages. No teaching is required. This argument means that people's native languages, or native dialects within a larger language like English or Russian, are all "equal," in the sense of being equally rule-governed, complex, and fully communicative (Chomsky, 2002). (Perhaps I should point out here as well that, although Chomsky's work is of a major importance, not least because it clearly demonstrates that at a grammatical level all languages and dialects are equally good, his work offers little help in analyzing language in use at the discourse level. His work is focused on sentence-level grammar [for the most part] and deals with the most basic aspects of grammatical structure, not the full set of communicative resources people put to use in specific instances of verbal interaction.)

People use their native language initially and throughout their lives to speak in the vernacular style of language—that is, the style of language they use when they are speaking as "everyday" people and not as specialists of various sorts (e.g., biologists, street-gang members, lawyers, videogame adepts, postmodern feminists, etc.). Thus, another way to put the claim in the last paragraph would be to say that everyone's vernacular style is as good as anyone else's. Of course a given society can designate one variety as *standard* and others as *nonstandard*, but this distinction is social and political (Milroy & Milroy, 1991). From a linguistic point of view, it is meaningless because each native speaker speaks a dialect of his or her language that is, again, from a linguistic point of view equally as good (complex, communicative, rule governed) as anyone else's.

Of course this claim—commonplace among linguists—bears importantly on issues in education. From a linguistic point of view, no child comes to school with a worse or better language than any other child's (barring massive social disruption—simply being poor does not count or at least need not count as massive social disruption, which is meant to cover cases like putting children in closets or otherwise depriving children of access to linguistic data and social interaction). A child's language is not lesser because that child speaks a so-called *nonstandard* dialect. These claims are not politically contentious in modern linguistics, they are simply empirical. At the same time, a good deal of educational research is devoted to showing the social and political advantages middle-class children gain from bringing a dialect close to the standard to school, thanks to the fact that schools value these dialects more positively and build on them more adeptly.

Nearly everyone comes to acquire nonvernacular styles of languages later in life, styles used for special purposes such as religion, work (e.g., a craft), government, or academic specialties. Let us call all these *social languages* (Gee, 1996, 1999) and say that, although everyone acquires a vernacular social language (a different dialect for different groups of people) connected to his or her native language (e.g., English), people usually also go on to acquire different nonvernacular social languages connected to different social groups (e.g., one person may become adept at the language of Christian fundamentalist theology and someone else at the language of modern mathematics).

Although the process of acquiring a vernacular form of one's language is biologically specified and every later social language does indeed build on the resources of one's vernacular, acquiring various nonvernacular social languages is not a process that is biologically specified (Gee, 2001). Evolution surely aided humans in acquiring the capacity for language in the sense of one's native vernacular (or we humans, like the other primates, would have no language at all), but it did not aid us in acquiring the social language of physics, for instance, because physics and its style of language have been around way too short a time to have been given any evolutionary aid beyond the basic language resources that the language of physics, like all other later social languages, draws from vernacular forms of language.

Thus, consider the following two sentences:

1. Hornworms sure vary a lot in how well they grow.
2. Hornworm growth displays a significant amount of variation.

The first sentence is a vernacular style of language. Everyone who is a native speaker of English, regardless of their dialect, can utter some equally good variant of this sort of sentence (if they know what hornworms are—green caterpillar-like creatures with yellow horns). The second sentence is in an academic social language. Although every native speaker's grammar contains all the grammatical structures that this sentence contains (e.g., nominalizations), not every speaker knows that *combining them in just this way* is called for by certain social practices of certain academic (and school-based) domains ("Discourses"). *This has to be learned, and this knowledge is not acquired on the basis of any biological capacity for language.* It is manifestly the case that many children in school struggle to acquire forms of language like that in Sentence 2, although none (if they are native speakers) struggles with the forms of language like that in Sentence 1.

Again every native speaker of English has a grammar that contains all of the grammatical structures used in Sentence 2. All of them are used at times in vernacular forms of language. However, to produce a sentence like 2, you must know more than this. You must know that, in this style of language, verbs naming dynamic processes (e.g., *grow* and *vary*) are turned into nouns naming abstract things (e.g., *growth* and *variation*). You have to

know that in this form of language emotive markers like *sure* are not used. You have to know that in this form of language a vague phrase like *a lot* must be replaced by a more explicit one like *significant variation* (where *significant* has a fairly precise definition in areas like biology). You have to know that subjects of sentences in this form of language will often not be simple nouns (like *hornworms*), but nominalizations (like *hornworm growth*) expressing a whole clause worth of information (i.e., hornworms grow) as an abstract concept. Most important, you have to know all these things together and that these linguistic features, in fact, tend to go together—to pattern together—in this form of language.

By *patterning* I mean only that certain grammatical devices go or hang together in a certain way—for example, nominalizations, a lack of emotive markers, technical terms, copulative or presentational verbs, and complex subjects in the case of sentences like the one in 2. Just as a person wearing a sun hat, tank top, swim suit, and open sandals tells us that that person is ready for the beach or some other outdoor activity in the sun (because these items of clothing go together or pattern together for that sort of purpose), so too these grammatical devices go together to tell us that this sort of sentence belongs to an academic form of language used for certain sorts of characteristic activities.

This discussion bears importantly on a current educational debate. Many pro-phonics advocates have made the following sort of argument (see Gee [2001] for further discussion). The acquisition of one's native oral language is biologically specified (aided by our human biological capacity for language) and, thus, requires no overt teaching or learning. Yet written language has been on the historical scene too short a time to have this sort of biological support. Thus, it is not acquired in the same way that one's native oral language is—that is, through immersion in practice (exposure to data), but requires overt teaching and learning through which the child is overtly told the nature of the code (the mapping between phonemes and graphemes).

This argument does not work despite that some linguists have made it. Social languages like the one represented in Sentence 2 often have both oral and written forms (not necessarily the same). Their oral versions, as we have seen, are not supported by biology—indeed children manifestly struggle to acquire them in school, and different children acquire them better and worse than others (which is not true of people's native vernacular dialects). Nonetheless, there is no evidence that social languages are primarily learned through overt instruction. Although teachers calling students' attention to some of their features and developing a common meta-language within which to talk about those features with their students is probably efficacious (Gee, 2002; Martin, 1990), no one knows how to describe—and, thus, to overtly tell—all the features and combinations of features that

make up such academic social languages. It is unlikely that any physicist, for instance, believes he or she learned the social language of physics through grammar drills or overt instruction on its features and combinations of features. It seems that immersion in practice and participation with those who speak (and write) such social languages is still crucial. Furthermore, the contrast between oral and written language development, in the case of nonvernacular social languages, is not as sharp as some linguists and pro-phonics advocates have claimed (Gee, 2001, 2002).

None of this says phonics is right or wrong. What is says is that, from a sociolinguistic point of view, people learn new styles of oral and written language (new social languages) in school and later in life—styles that are not biologically specified, but rather the results of history and culture. Immersion and participation surely play a strong role in this process, as does active intervention and help from teachers, although we know little about what are the most effective overt teacher interventions. It may be better to give people overt information in the midst of practice, when they need it, rather than outside practice—but much remains to be studied here despite simplifications common among the advocates of things like scripted instruction.

TWO TASKS: THE UTTERANCE-TYPE MEANING TASK

Discourse analysis of any type (Jaworski & Coupland, 1999; van Dijk, 1997a, 1997b), whether critical or not, can undertake one or both of two related tasks. One task is what we call the *utterance-type meaning task*. This task involves the study of correlations between form and function in language at the level of utterance-type meanings. *Form* here means things like morphemes, words, phrases, or other syntactic structures (e.g., the subject position of a sentence). *Function* means meaning or the communicative purpose a form carries out.

The other task is what we call the *utterance-token meaning* (or situated meaning) *task*. This task involves the study of correlations between form and function in language at the level of utterance-token meanings. Essentially, this task involves discovering the situation-specific or situated meanings of forms used in specific contexts of use.

Failing to distinguish between these two tasks can be dangerous because different issues of validity come up with each of these tasks as we see later. Let me start with an example of the utterance-type meaning task. Specific forms in a language are prototypically used as tools to carry out certain communicative functions (i.e., to express certain meanings). For example, consider the following sentence labeled (1) (adapted from Gagnon, 1987):

1. Though they were both narrowly confined to the privileged classes, the Whig and Tory parties represented different factions.

This sentence is made up of two clauses: an independent (or main) clause ("the Whig and Tory parties represented different factions") and a dependent clause ("Though they were both narrowly confined to the privileged classes"—the conjunction *though* here marks this clause as subordinated to, dependent on, the following independent clause). These are statements about form. An independent clause has as one of its functions (at the utterance-type level) that it expresses an assertion—that is, it expresses a claim that the speaker/writer is making. A dependent clause has as one of its functions that it expresses information that is not asserted, but rather assumed or taken for granted. These are statements about function (meaning).

Normally (i.e., technically speaking, in the unmarked case) in English dependent clauses follow independent clauses—thus, Sentence (1) might more normally appear as: "The Whig and Tory parties represented different factions, though they were both narrowly confined to the privileged classes." In Sentence (1), the dependent clause has been fronted (placed in front of the whole sentence). This is a statement about form. Such fronting has as one of its functions that the information in the clause is thematized (Halliday, 1994)—that is, the information is treated as a launching-off point or thematically important context from which to consider the claim in the following dependent clause. This is a statement about function.

In summary, in respect to form–functioning mapping at the utterance-type level, we can say that Sentence (1) renders its dependent clause ("Though they were both narrowly confined to the privileged classes") a taken-for-granted, assumed, unargued for (i.e., unasserted), although important (thematized), context from which to consider and, perhaps, argue over the main claim in the independent clause ("The Whig and Tory parties represented different factions"). The dependent clause is, we might say, a concession. Other historians might prefer to make this concession the main asserted point and, thus, would use a different grammar, perhaps saying something like: "The Whig and Tory parties were narrowly confined to the privileged classes, though they represented different factions of those classes."

All approaches to discourse analysis, in their consideration of form, go beyond grammatical structures as traditionally construed (which are restricted to relationships within sentences) to consider structures or patterns across sentences. For example, consider the following two sentences (adapted from Gagnon, 1987):

2. The age of popular democracy lay far ahead. But the principle of representative government was already secure, as was the rule of law, which promised to protect all citizens from arbitrary authority of any kind.

The first sentence has the subject "the age of popular democracy," and the second has the subject "the principle of representative government." The subject position (a form) in a declarative sentence is a grammatical structure that expresses the "topic" (a function) of the sentence in the sense of naming the entity or topic about which a claim is being made and in terms of which the claim should be disputed. The conjunction *but*, beginning the second sentence, is a form that sets up a contrast in meaning (a function) between these two topics (i.e., "the age of popular democracy" and "the principle of representative government"), making it clear that for the author a government could be representative without representing all the people in a country (i.e., being popular democracy). Here we see how patterns of form across sentences, not just within sentences, relate to functions (meanings).

At a fundamental level, all types of discourse analysis involve, however tacitly they may be acknowledged, claims about form–function matching at the utterance-type level. This is so because if one is making claims about a piece of language, perhaps at a much more situated and contextualized level than we are now talking about, but these claims violate what we know about how form and function are related to each other in language at the utterance-type level, then these claims are quite suspect unless there is evidence that the speaker or writer is trying to violate these sorts of basic grammatical relationships in the language (e.g., in poetry).

Of course different approaches to discourse analysis have different viewpoints on how to talk about form and function. For instance, some approaches have an expanded notion of form in which not only grammatical and cross-sentence patterns are considered, but also things like pausing, repetitions, repairs, eye gaze, speech rate, and timing of turn taking (Ochs, Schegloff, & Thompson, 1997). Each of these latter are, in turn, related to various utterance-type functions they serve in interaction (as well, of course, to more specific situated or contextualized meanings of the utterance-token type).

Furthermore, different approaches to discourse analysis have different views about how to explicate what it means to say that form *correlates* with function at the utterance-type level. One perspective with which I am sympathetic would explicate this idea as follows: A particular form, thanks to a history of repeated and partially routine interaction among a group or groups of people, comes to function so as to have a particular sort of prototypical meaning or expected range of meanings when considered apart from any specific context of use.

As already indicated, the meanings with which forms are correlated at the utterance-type level are rather general (meanings like "assertion," "taken-for-granted information," "contrast," etc.). In reality, they represent only the meaning potential or range of a form or structure, as we have said.

The more specific or situated meanings that a form carries in a given context of use must be figured out by an engagement with our next task—the utterance-token (situated) meaning task discussed in the next section.

When one asks what makes a piece of discourse analysis valid at the utterance-type level, the matter is settled by appeal to theories of grammar in the sense of theories about how form and function correlate in language, both at the level of language universals (e.g., dependent clauses are never assertions) and in the case of specific languages. Of course one can argue over who has the best theory of grammar in this sense. Yet once one accepts a given theory and accepts that the data have been described adequately (e.g., that the researcher has correctly identified main and dependent clauses), the issue of validity is settled.

There is a problem, however. Thanks to the prevalence of varieties of Chomskian theories of grammar, theories that have little or nothing to do with form–function mappings in language, there has been, especially in the United States, much less work—and much less agreement—on functional theories of grammar of the sort we have been discussing. The best-known functional theory (although in reality it is but one of several) is Halliday's (1994) work. See also Martin, Matthiessen, and Painter's (1997) theory of systematic functional grammar, a theory much less used in the United States than in England and Australia (Halliday might say that the utterance-type and utterance-token meaning distinction I have made is a matter of the "delicacy" of one's analysis).

TWO TASKS: THE UTTERANCE-TOKEN (SITUATED) MEANING TASK

A second task that any form of discourse analysis, critical or otherwise, can undertake is what I called the utterance-token (situated) meaning task. For simplicity's sake, I now call this the *situated meaning task*. As I pointed out earlier, language forms have both utterance-type and utterance-token meanings. At the utterance-type level, we are concerned that there are certain *types* of forms in a language like English (words, morphemes, phrases, and other structures) and they are associated with certain *types* of functions—what I called *meaning potentials* previously. However, when we actually utter or write a sentence, it also has what I called an *utterance-token meaning* or what I call here a *situated meaning* (Gee, 1996, 1999). Situated meanings arise because particular language forms take on specific or situated meanings in specific contexts of use.

Context refers to an ever-widening set of factors that accompany language in use (and thus is often used in the plural, *contexts*). These include the material setting, the people present (and what they know and believe), the language that comes before and after a given utterance, the social relationships of the people involved, and their ethnic, gendered, and sexual identities, as well as cultural, historical, and institutional factors. Most contemporary approaches to discourse analysis assume a reflexive view of the relationship between language and context. *Reflexive* here means that, at one and the same time, an utterance influences what we take the context to be, and context influences what we take the utterance to mean. For example, if I say "How are ya?" versus "Whatinthehell is wrong with you?" as I pass you in the corridor, these utterances lead you to construe the context in a certain way (friendly vs. hostile), although everything else going on may make you interpret each utterance in quite specific ways—for example, you may hear the latter utterance as just kidding.

Consider the word *coffee* as a simple example of how situated meaning differs from utterance-type meaning. *Coffee* is an arbitrary form (other languages use different sounding words for coffee) that correlates with meanings having to do with the substance coffee (this is its meaning potential). At a more specific level, however, we have to use context to determine what the word means in any situated way. In one context, *coffee* may mean a brown liquid; in another one, it may mean grains of a certain sort; in another, it may mean berries of a certain sort; and it will mean other things in other contexts (e.g., a certain flavor or skin color).

To see a further example of situated meanings at work, consider Sentence (1) again ("Though they were both narrowly confined to the privileged classes, the Whig and Tory parties represented different factions"). We said earlier that an independent clause represents an assertion (a claim that something is true). Yet this general form–function correlation can mean different specific things in actual contexts of use and can indeed even be mitigated or undercut altogether.

For example, in one context, say between two like-minded historians, the claim that the Whig and Tory parties represented different factions may be taken as a reminder of a fact they both agree on. However, between two quite diverse historians, the same claim may be taken as a challenge (despite *your* claim that shared class interests mean no real difference in political parties, the Whig and Tory parties in 17th-century England were really different). Of course on stage as part of a drama, the claim about the Whig and Tory parties is not even a real assertion, but a pretend one.

Furthermore, the words *privileged, contending,* and *factions* take on different specific meanings in different contexts. For example, in one context, *privileged* might mean "rich," whereas in another context, it might mean "educated," "cultured," "politically connected," "born into a family with high status," or some combination of these or something else altogether.

To analyze Gagnon's sentence, his whole text, or any part of it at the level of situated meanings—that is, to carry out the situated meaning task—

would require a close study of some of the relevant contexts within which that text is placed and that it, in turn, helps to create. This might mean inspecting the parts of Gagnon's text that precede or follow a part of the text we want to analyze. It might mean inspecting other texts related to Gagnon's. It might mean studying debates among different types of historians and debates about educational standards and policy (because Gagnon's text was meant to argue for a view about what history should be taught in schools). It might mean studying these debates historically across time and in terms of the actual situations Gagnon and his text were caught up in (e.g., debates about new school history standards in Massachusetts—a state where Gagnon once helped write a version of the standards). It might mean many other things as well. Obviously there is no space in a chapter of this scope to develop such an analysis.

The issue of validity for analyses of situated meaning is quite different than the issue of validity for analyses of utterance-type meanings. We saw before that the issue of validity for analyses of utterance-type meanings basically comes down to choosing and defending a particular grammatical theory of how form and function relate in language at the level of utterance-type meanings, as well as of course offering correct grammatical and semantic descriptions of one's data. However, the issue of validity for analyses of situated meaning is much harder. In fact it involves a deep problem known as the *frame problem*.

The frame problem is this: Any aspect of context can affect the meaning of an (oral or written) utterance. Context, however, is indefinitely large, ranging from local matters like the positioning of bodies and eye gaze, through people's beliefs, to historical, institutional, and cultural settings. No matter how much of the context we have considered in offering an interpretation of an utterance, there is always the possibility of considering other and additional aspects of the context, and these new considerations may change how we interpret the utterance. Where do we cut off consideration of context? How can we be sure any interpretation is right if considering further aspects of the context might well change that interpretation?

Let me give an example of a case where changing how much of the context of an utterance we consider changes significantly the interpretation we give to that utterance. Biologist Roger Lewontin (1991) pointed out in his book *Biology as Ideology* that it is a truism in medical science that the cause of tuberculosis is the *tubercle bacillus*. Lewontin went on to point out that tuberculosis was a common disease in the sweatshops and factories of the 19th century, whereas it was much less common among rural people and in the upper classes. So why don't we conclude that the cause of tuberculosis is not the *tubercle bacillus*, but unregulated industrial capitalism? In fact in light of the history of health and disease in modern Europe, that explanation makes good sense. An examination of the causes of death, first system-

atically recorded in the 1830s in Britain and a bit later in North America, shows that most people did indeed die of infectious diseases. As the 19th century progressed, however, the death rate from all these diseases continuously decreased:

> Smallpox was dealt with by a medical advance, but one that could hardly be claimed by modern medicine, since smallpox vaccine was discovered in the eighteenth century and already was quite widely used by the early part of the nineteenth. The death rates of the major killers like bronchitis, pneumonia, and tuberculosis fell regularly during the nineteenth century, with no obvious cause. There was no observable effect on the death rate after the germ theory of disease was announced in 1876 by Robert Koch. The death rate from these infectious diseases simply continued to decline as if Koch had never lived. By the time chemical therapy was introduced for tuberculosis in the earlier part of this century, more than 90 percent of the decrease in the death rate from that disease had already occurred. (Lewontin, 1991, pp. 43–44)

It was not modern sanitation or less crowding in cities that led to the progressive reductions in the death rate because the major killers in the 19th century were respiratory and not waterborne, and parts of our cities are as crowded today as they were in the 1850s. More likely, Lewontin argued, the reduction in death from infectious diseases is due to general improvement in nutrition related to an increase in the real wage in developed countries: "In countries like Brazil today, infant mortality rises and falls with decreases and increases in the minimum wage" (Lewontin, 1991, p. 44).

Lewontin showed that the meaning—in this case, even the truth value that one attaches to a statement like "the cause of tuberculosis is the tubercle bacillus"—changes as one widens the context within which the meaning of this statement is considered. In this case, he widened the context from medicine as an academic research area to include social and industrial concerns.

What this example shows is that the frame problem is something of a double-edged sword for discourse analysis. Discourse analysts can change the contextual frame of utterances to bring out new meanings—ones that may change how we think about certain issues. At the same time, critics can always ask of any discourse analysis whether the situated meanings attributed to pieces of language in the analysis would not change, perhaps even significantly, if the analyst had considered other aspects of the context (wider aspects or just additional features at the same level of detail). We should point out that everyday people in interpreting any language directed to them face the frame problem just as do discourse analysts when they seek to analyze discourse. Everyday people must, however unconsciously, apply (in part culturally relative) standards of what constitutes relevant and irrelevant aspects of context in interpreting utterances. That is,

they must cut off the consideration of context *someplace* if they are to get about the business of communicating and leading their lives. Indeed an important topic of some research in linguistic semantics and the philosophy of language is the specifics of such standards of relevance (e.g., Sperber & Wilson, 1986).

All discourse analysts can do to deal with the frame problem is offer arguments that the aspects of context they have considered, in a particular piece of research, are the important and relevant ones for the people whose language is being studied and for the analytic purpose of the researcher. Further, the researcher or other researchers can seek out additional aspects of context and see if this changes, in significant ways, the original analysis offered. Of course they can never exhaust all potentially significant aspects of context—that is indeed what the frame problem is all about. In that sense, discourse analysis, at the level of situated meanings, is always open to further revision as we learn more about the context of the data analyzed. This is indeed typical of all interpretive methods of research.

Reflection and Action

Deciding which social, cultural, political, economic, and geographic contexts to include in CDA is part of what Gee referred to as the *frame problem*. The lens researchers bring to their analysis is another part of the frame problem. Consider the various aspects of the frame problem in your work as a critical discourse analyst.

CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

Some forms of discourse analysis add a third task to the two (the utterance-type meaning task and the situated meaning task) discussed so far. They also study the ways in which either or both language–form correlations at the utterance-type level (Task 1) and situated meanings (Task 2) are associated with social practices (Task 3).

It is here where critical approaches to discourse analysis diverge from noncritical approaches. Noncritical approaches (e.g., Pomerantz & Fehr, 1997) tend to treat social practices solely in terms of patterns of social interaction (e.g., how people use language to *pull off* a job interview). Thus, consider again the sentence from Gagnon we discussed above:

1. Though they were both narrowly confined to the privileged classes, the Whig and Tory parties represented different factions.

A noncritical form of discourse analysis could point out that using "though they were both narrowly confined to the privileged classes" as a dependent (and, thus, assumed and unasserted) clause sets up a social relationship with the reader in terms of which the reader should accept as given and assumed. That is, that distinctions of wealth in a society are less central to the development of democracy than political differences within elites in the society (which the main asserted clause is about). Readers who do not want to make this assumption without argument, which the use of the dependent clause encourages them to do, are going to find this relationship uncomfortable. Of course people with a political bent are liable to find this sort of claim full of potential important for issues of power, inside and outside academic history, but the noncritical discourse analyst need not pursue the matter further, beyond explicating what sort of position the reader is placed in by the text (or encouraged to take up).

Critical approaches (e.g., Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999; Fairclough, 1992, 1995; Gee, 1999; Luke, 1995; van Dijk, 1993; Wodak, 1996), however, go further and treat social practices not just in terms of social relationships. They also treat social practices in terms of their implications for things like status, solidarity, distribution of social goods, and power (e.g., how language in a job interview functions as a gate-keeping device allowing some sorts of people access and denying it to others). In fact critical discourse analysis argues that language in use is always part and parcel of, and partially constitutive of, specific social practices, and that social practices always have implications for inherently political things like status, solidarity, distribution of social goods, and power.

Social practices are (partially) routine activities through which people carry out (partially) shared goals based on (partially) shared (conscious or unconscious) knowledge of the various roles or positions people can fill within these activities. Practices are embedded within practices. Thus, one session of a graduate seminar is a social practice, as is the whole seminar course. Some practices are more routinized than others that may be more open ended and fluid. The world is full of social practices: a medical exam; eating in a fancy restaurant; exercising in a health club; engaging in a gang drive-by shooting; a police interrogation; a direct instruction reading lesson in a first-grade classroom; an election; giving a political speech; applying for a prestigious college; trading Pokemon cards; advocating for what history should be taught in schools (as Gagnon is); and so forth through an endless array.

One way in which we can define *politics* is to say that it *involves any social relationships in which things like status, solidarity, or other social goods are potentially at stake*. In this sense of politics, social practices are inherently and inextricably political because by their very nature they involve social roles or positions that have implications for potential social goods, such as who is an insider and who is not to the practice (and its associated social groups). Because critical discourse analysis argues that language in use is always part

and parcel of, and partially constitutive of, one or more specific social practices, language in use is inherently and inextricably political.

So the issue becomes this: Is it enough to leave the analysis of the social at the level of how talk and texts function in social interactions or do we need to go further and consider, as well, how talk and text function *politically* in social interactions (using politics in the sense developed earlier)? Does the latter task render discourse analysis—and, thus, perforce critical discourse analysis—unscientific or unacademic a mere matter of advocacy?

My view is that there are solid linguistic, even grammatical, grounds on which to argue that all language in interaction is inherently political and, thus, that all discourse analysis, if it is to be true to its subject matter (i.e., language in use) and in that sense scientific, must be critical discourse analysis. Sociolinguists have known for years that all social languages, vernacular or otherwise, regardless of the larger language from which they are drawn (e.g., English, Russian, etc.), display variability (Labov, 1972a, 1972b; Milroy, 1987a, 1987b; Milroy & Milroy, 1991). One sort of variability that any social language displays is variation on a continuum that runs between informal and formal forms. Another related sort of variability that any social language displays is variation on a continuum that runs between marking solidarity (lack of deference) with others and marking status or deference between or among people. All languages and social languages have grammatical ways to mark these distinctions—that is, degrees of informality and formality and degrees of solidarity and deference—and can in fact do so in complicated ways.

For example, consider first the following two excerpts (Gee, 1996). In sentence (3), a young woman tells her parents about how she ranked, on a scale of morality, some characters in a story she had heard in a class she was taking at a university. She tells her boyfriend the *same thing* in sentence (4):

3. Well, when I thought about it, I don't know, it seemed to me that Gregory should be the most offensive. He showed no understanding for Abigail, when she told him what she was forced to do. He was callous. He was hypocritical, in the sense that he professed to love her, then acted like that.
4. What an ass that guy was, you know, her boy friend. I should hope, if I ever did that to see you, you would shoot the guy. He uses her and he says he loves her. Roger never lies, you know what I mean?

These two texts are both in versions of the vernacular—that is, in neither case is the young woman trying to speak like a specialist in some specialized social language (but see later text about the connections between the form of language in (3) and school). However, the first text (3) is more formal and creates a certain sense of deference in talking to her parents, whereas the second text (4) is more informal and creates a certain sense of solidarity with her boyfriend.

Some of the grammatical markers that create these distinctions in these two texts are: To her parents, the young woman carefully hedges her claims ("I don't know," "it seemed to me"); to her boyfriend, she makes her claims straight out. To her parents, she uses formal terms like *offensive, understanding, callous, hypocritical,* and *professed*; to her boyfriend, she uses informal terms like *ass* and *guy*. She also uses more formal sentence structure to her parents ("it seemed to me that . . . ," "He showed no understanding for Abigail, when . . . ," "He was hypocritical in the sense that . . .") than she does to her boyfriend (". . . that guy, you know, her boy friend," "Roger never lies, you know what I mean?").

The young woman repeatedly addresses her boyfriend as "you," thereby noting his social involvement as a listener, but does not directly address her parents in this way. In talking to her boyfriend, she leaves several points to be inferred—points that she spells out more explicitly to her parents (e.g., her boyfriend must infer that Gregory is being accused of being a hypocrite from the information that, although Roger is bad, at least he does not lie, which Gregory did in claiming to love Abigail).

Although different dialects would mark such distinctions in formality and deference differently, all people have vernacular forms of language in which they can and do do such things. However, an important and much studied educational issue arises here. Formal forms of the vernacular in the style of (3)—roughly (very roughly), more formal forms of standard English—are often well utilized and privileged in school as a bridge to academic social languages. Formal forms of the vernacular in other dialects are usually poorly utilized and unprivileged, if not even demonized. (By the way, it does not matter whether we call [3] and [4] two styles of a vernacular social language or two different vernacular social languages.)

It is not just the vernacular that marks out these sorts of distinctions around formality/informality and deference/solidarity. Specialist social languages do so as well. Indeed any use of language must mark where it is in terms of these sorts of distinctions; it is part of the grammar of languages to do so. Thus, consider the two excerpts from the following written texts, both written by the same biologist (Myers, 1990). The first appeared in a professional biological journal, the second in a popular science magazine:

5. Experiments show that *Heliconius* butterflies are less likely to oviposit on host plants that possess eggs or egg-like structures. These egg-mimics are an unambiguous example of a plant trait evolved in response to a host-restricted group of insect herbivores.

6. *Heliconius* butterflies lay their eggs on *Passiflora* vines. In defense the vines seem to have evolved fake eggs that make it look to the butterflies as if eggs have already been laid on them.

It does not matter whether we say that these two excerpts are from different, but related, social languages (professional biology and popular biology) or are stylistic variants of the same social language (a certain type of biology), although my preference is the first choice. The fact remains that the first excerpt (5) is more technical and formal in a way that creates solidarity with other professional biologists, but separation from nonprofessionals. Note that *more* formality here, unlike in the case of the vernacular, creates *more* solidarity, in part, because it creates separation of specialists from nonspecialists. The second excerpt, although still formal when compared with the vernacular variant in (4), is less formal than the excerpt in (5). It creates much less of a separation from the nonprofessional audience, although it is still not anywhere near as "bonding" as the vernacular form in (4).

Again these differences—that is, those between (5) and (6)—are marked grammatically. The first extract, from the professional scientific journal, is about the conceptual structure of a specific theory within the scientific discipline of biology. The subject of the initial sentence is *experiments*—a methodological tool in natural science. The subject of the next sentence is *these egg mimics*: Note how plant parts are named not in terms of the plant itself, but in terms of the role they play in a particular theory of natural selection and evolution—namely, coevolution of predator and prey (i.e., the theory that predator and prey evolve together by shaping each other). Note also, in this regard, the earlier host plants in the preceding sentence, rather than the vines of the popular passage.

In the second sentence, the butterflies are referred to as "a host-restricted group of insect herbivores," which points simultaneously to an aspect of scientific methodology (like experiments did) and the logic of a theory (like egg mimics did). Any scientist arguing for the theory of coevolution faces the difficulty of demonstrating a causal connection between a particular plant characteristic and a particular predator when most plants have so many different sorts of animals attacking them. A central methodological technique to overcome this problem is to study plant groups (like *Passiflora* vines) that are preyed on by only one or a few predators (in this case, *Heliconius* butterflies). "Host-restricted group of insect herbivores," then, refers to both the relationship between plant and insect that is at the heart of the theory of coevolution and to the methodological technique of picking plants and insects that are restricted to each other so as to control for other sorts of interactions.

The first passage, then, is concerned with scientific methodology and a particular theoretical perspective on evolution. The second extract, from a popular science magazine, is not about methodology and theory, but about animals in nature. The butterflies are the subject of the first sentence, and the vine is the subject of the second. Further, the butterflies and the vine are labeled as such, not in terms of their role in a particular theory.

The second passage is a story about the struggles of insects and plants that are transparently open to the trained gaze of the scientist. Further, the plant and insect become intentional actors in the drama: The plants act in their own defense and things look a certain way to the insects; they are deceived by appearances as humans sometimes are.

These two examples replicate in the present a historical difference. In the history of biology, the scientist's relationship with nature gradually changed from telling stories about direct observations of nature (in a form closer to the vernacular, although still different from it) to carrying out complex experiments to test complex theories (Shapin & Schaffer, 1985) using a form of language far removed from the vernacular. In fact, Myers (1990) argued that professional science is now concerned with the expert "management of uncertainty and complexity" and popular science with the general assurance that the world is knowable by and directly accessible to experts. This change in science also coincided with the growth of the sharp separation between amateurs and professionals doing science—a separation that previously was not that strong.

If all this is right—that is, that all social languages, whether vernacular forms or not, must mark out, grammatically, distinctions having to do with things like status, deference, solidarity, separation, and bonding—then all social languages are inherently political because these things (i.e., status, deference, solidarity, separation, and bonding) have clear implications for the distribution of obvious social goods in society. They have to do with who is or can be an insider or outsider vis-à-vis the social groups and social practices in a society. If this is part and parcel of the workings of all language—indeed part of the form–function mapping and situated meanings of all language—then any form of discourse analysis, if it is to be complete, must be critical and political. This amounts, then, not (just) to a political claim, but to an empirical one.

In terms of our earlier remarks about patterning, I should point out here that, once again, what is at stake is how various grammatical features "hang together," not any one feature in and of itself. For example, hedges, Latinate terms (like *offensive*), more complex syntax (e.g., "it seemed to me that . . ."), a degree of vagueness, address as "you," and other features all go together to make (3) less formal and more bonding than (4).

Reflection and Action

Gee (1999, chap. 5) presents six building tasks (e.g., semiotic building, world building, activity building, relationship building, political building, and connection building) and the grammatical devices that accompany each of these building tasks. In light of Gee's prior discussion about patterning, what connections can you make between the tasks to correlate the form and function of utterances with particular social practices?

LEARNING

If one is going to engage in discourse analysis applied to educational issues, the notion of *learning* becomes crucial. Because discourse analysis is about the inextricably political marriage between form and function within social practices, some perspectives on learning fit better with discourse-analytic research than do others. For example, a view of learning that focuses only on changing representations inside people's heads fails to engage with form and function out in the world of social practices. Discourse analysis is as much (or more) about what is happening among people out in the world (sociology) than it is about what is happening in their minds (psychology).

The approach to learning that is most compatible, in my opinion, with discourse analysis is one that defines *learning* as *changing patterns of participation in specific social practices* (Lave, 1988, 1996; Lave & Wenger, 1991; Rogoff, 1990; Rogoff & Lave, 1984; Wertsch, 1985, 1991). Because social practices set up roles or positions within which people become insiders, outsiders, or marginal with respect to the social groups whose practices these are, it follows that social practices create what we can call *socially situated identities* (e.g., tough-guy cop, rookie, by-the-books cop; devout Catholic, lapsed Catholic, Catholic in name only; veteran street-gang member, core younger member, hanger-on; etc. through a great many distinctions for which the labels do not matter, only the ways in which people, often unconsciously, recognize and react to each other within various and specific social practices). It follows, then, that changes in one's patterns of participation with specific social practices constitute changes in these socially situated identities. Thus, in these terms, learning is change in a socially situated identity.

This view of learning requires us to see that people's activities are often part of larger communities of practice—that is, groups of people ongoingly engaged in (partially) shared tasks or work of a certain sort, whether these be people in an elementary school classroom, members of a street gang or an academic discipline, affiliates of a cause (e.g., *greens*), or participants in a

specific business organization. Such communities of practice produce and reproduce themselves through the creation of a variety of characteristic social practices, and within these they *apprentice* new members.

Communities of practice, then, in this respect, are related to institutions. Indeed institutions are often composed of a variety of communities of practice, although communities of practice can be more or less institutionalized (they are always institutionalized to a some extent). When we define *learning* as changing patterns of participation in specific social practices within communities of practice, it becomes apparent that we can equally talk about individuals' learning or communities of practice (or organizations or institutions) themselves, in whole or in part, learning (Senge, 1991). A discourse analytic analysis of learning, then, needs to show how a distinctive community of practice is constituted out of specific social practices (across time and space) and how patterns of participation systematically change across time, both for individuals and the community of practice as a whole (or distinctive parts of it).

Some have criticized the notion of a *community of practice* because groups of people engaging in repeatable sorts of social practices need not be a *community* in any romantic sense of this term. There is, of course, "honor among thieves," as they say, and communities of practice in a modern business may share little, besides their practices, beyond the desire for profit (e.g., Bauman, 1995).

A related term that has sometimes been used for a notion closely related to communities of practice is *Discourses* (used with a capital "D" to clarify that it means more than just using language to discourse about something; Gee, 1996, 1999). Discourses are distinctive ways people talk, read, write, think, believe, value, act, and interact with things and other people to get recognized (and recognize themselves) as a distinctive group or distinctive kinds of people (Hacking, 1986). They do so by engaging in distinctive and repeatable social practices, whether these be members of an L.A. street gang, lawyers or biologists of a certain sort, mental patients of a certain type, or members of a first-grade classroom.

Forms of discourse analysis that marry the study of form and function with the study of social practices, on the one hand, and the study of changing patterns of participation within communities of practice or Discourses, on the other, tend to place the study of socially situated identities at the heart of the enterprise. It is here, too, that a good deal of the educational implications of such work follows. Schools recruit culturally and historically distinctive social languages, social practices (within which specific situated meanings are formed), and Discourses to form and reform, reward and punish, distinctive kinds of people (i.e., distinctive socially situated identities) with sociopolitical implications that shape our lives and societies. Because discourse analysis, construed in the sorts of ways I have here con-

strued it, can speak to such matters, it is a potentially powerful tool for research in education.

CULTURAL MODELS

When people participate in a community of practice or enact and recognize a Discourse (socially situated identity), they learn cultural models. Cultural models (Strauss & Quinn, 1997) are everyday theories (i.e., storylines, images, schemas, metaphors, and models) about the world that tell people what is typical or normal, not universally, but from the perspective of a particular Discourse.

For example, certain types of middle-class people in the United States (Harkness, Super, & Keefer, 1992) hold a cultural model of child development in terms of which a child is born dependent on her parents and grows up by going through (often disruptive) stages toward greater and greater independence (and independence is a high value for this group of people). In contrast, certain sorts of working-class families (Philipsen, 1975) hold a cultural model of child development in terms of which a child is born unsocialized and with tendencies to be selfish. The child needs discipline from the home to learn to be a cooperative social member of the family (a high value of this group of people).

These different cultural models are not true or false. Rather, they focus on different aspects of childhood and development. Cultural models are partially in people's minds (by no means always consciously) and partially in the objects, texts, and social practices that surround them. For example, many guidebooks supplement and instantiate the above middle-class cultural model of childhood and stages. In contrast, many religious materials supplement and instantiate the above working-class model of childhood.

Sometimes people get confused over the distinctions among situated meanings, cultural models, social languages, and Discourses. A situated meaning is the meaning a word or phrase is given in an actual context of use (e.g., "Get the mop, the coffee spilled" vs. "Get the broom, the coffee spilled"). A cultural model is an often tacit theory or story about how things work in the world (e.g., children throw tantrums because they are undergoing stages toward greater independence). A social language is a pattern of grammatical devices associated with a given social practice, activity, or socially situated identity (e.g., "Experiments show that *Heliconius* butterflies are less likely to oviposit on host plants that possess eggs or egg-like structures"). A Discourse is a whole package: a way of using not just words, but words, deeds, objects, tools, and so forth to enact a certain sort of socially situated identity (e.g., a Latino street-gang member in L.A.).

Discourses recruit specific social languages (ways with words) and cultural models (taken-for-granted stories), which in turn encourage people to construct certain sorts of situated meanings—that is, encourage them to read context in given ways. For example, many academic Discourses (e.g., professional biology) use social languages (like the one in "Hornworm growth displays a significant amount of variation" as opposed to "Hornworms sure vary a lot in how well they grow") that disallow markers of affect or emotion (or, more generally, involvement). This is related to a cultural model that is something like this: Emotion clouds reason and leads to a lack of objectivity; dispassionate people reason better and are objective. In turn, this may lead people in these sorts of Discourses to interpret words and phrases in their social languages, in actual contexts of use, in certain ways. For example, a word like *significant* in "Hornworm growth displays a significant amount of variation" may, in context, take on a meaning of not just statistically significant, but more real and truthful than claims made on nonquantifiable bases.

Reflection and Action

Think about the multiple situated identities you embody in your work as a teacher educator, teacher, researcher, or educational advocate. What discourse practices are associated with each identity? How does your identity fluctuate across the contexts in which you work? What cultural models comprise each situated identity?

ONE STYLE OF CDA

My own work (Gee, 1996, 1999) represents but one approach to critical discourse analysis. It primarily appeals to four analytic tools: social languages, situated meanings, cultural models, and Discourses (with a capital "D"). In the following, I elaborate on each of these a bit more. Because there is no space here for anything like a full discourse analysis, I merely want to show the sorts of questions and issues to which these tools can give rise with regard to specific pieces of data.

Social Languages

My approach to social languages (what are sometimes called *registers*) is to define them as follows: A social language is a way of using language so as to enact a particular socially situated identity (i.e., to be a specific socially meaningful "kind of person"). For example, there are ways of speaking like a (specific type of) doctor, street-gang member, postmodern literary critic,

football fanatic, neoliberal economist, working-class male, adaptationist biologist, and so on through an endless array of identities. Of course often we can recognize a particular socially situated "kind of person" through his or her use of a given social language without actually being able to enact that kind of person.

In no way do I wish to imply that enacting and recognizing *kinds of people* (Hacking, 1986; Hicks, 2000) is a matter of people falling into rigid kinds. Enacting and recognizing kinds of people is all about negotiating, guessing, and revising guesses about kinds of people; it is all about contesting and resisting being positioned as a certain kind of person. Thus, there are often no strict boundaries to social languages.

In examples 1 to 4, we saw different social languages (i.e., two styles of a vernacular social language or two different vernacular social languages depending on how one wants to put the matter, and two styles of a biological social language or two different biological social languages, again depending on how one wants to put the matter).

Consider the following two short passages from an interview with a middle-school teacher (7) from an impoverished postindustrial urban city and a college professor (8) from the same city. Both women were being interviewed about their views on racism and poverty in their city (see Gee [1999] for the transcription conventions used next).

7. *Interviewer: . . . would you ever tie that into like present power relations or just individual experiences of racism in their* [her student's] *lives or something like that.*

   Uh I talk about housing,

   We talk about the [????] we talk about a lot of the low-income things.

   I said "Hey wait a minute,"

   I said, "Do you think the city's gonna take care of an area that you don't take care of yourself?" [I: uh-huh]

   I said, "How [many of] you [have] been up [NAME] Street?"

   They raise their hands.

   I say "How about [NAME] Ave.."

   That's where those gigantic houses are,

   . . .

   I said, "How many pieces of furniture are sitting in the front yard?" [I: mm-hm] "Well, none."

   I said "How much trash is lying around?" None."

   I said, "How many houses are spray painted?

   How many of them have kicked in, you know have broken down cars

8. *Interviewer: . . . How, do you see racism happening, in society, let's put it that way.*

   Um, well, I could answer on, on a variety of different levels. [I: uh-huh]

   Um, at the most macrolevel, um, I think that there's um, um,

   I don't want to say this in a way that sounds like a conspiracy, [I: mm-hm]

   But I think um, that um, basically that the lives of people of color are are, are irrelevant to the society anymore. [I: mm-hm]

   Um, they're not needed for the economy because we have the third world to run away into for cheap labor, [I: uh-huh]

   Um, and I think that, that the leadership, this country really doesn't care if they shoot each other off in in the ghettos,

   Um, and, and so they let drugs into the ghettos,

   And they, um, they, let people shoot themselves, shoot each other,

   And they don't have, a police force that is really gonna, um, work,

   And they cut the programs that might alleviate some of the problems, and, um.

   So I think there's, that it's manifested at, at the most, structural level as, um, you know, a real hatred, of, of, of uh people of color.

In these passages, these two women are using different social languages. The middle-school teacher uses a style of language in which often when she is asked about her classroom or her students, she mimics a dialogue she might have with her students, using a fairly informal vernacular style of language. We found this style not only with this teacher, but with a number of other teachers in this city. The college professor—a professor of anthropology—uses a social language that mixes a somewhat more formal vernacular style with some features from a style of language from the social sciences ("different levels," "macrolevel," "the third world," "structural level," etc.).

The middle-school teacher's style is certainly a distinctive style of language, recruiting its own special grammatical resources. Identifying it as a grammatical pattern is only one step in the analysis, however. We have to go on to form hypotheses about what communicative function or functions it serves (at the utterance-type and/or utterance-token level) and how it helps, with a great many other things to constitute particular socially situated identity for this teacher and other teachers in her city (not all of course). The grammatical pattern, then, leads us to look in a particular way for particular things, and that is of course one of the reasons for using discourse analysis as a research tool. The same could be said of the college professor.

There are a good many other differences between the two forms of language shown earlier. For example, the college professor uses lots of words and phrases for things that are social, but general and abstract (e.g., *people of color, the society, the economy, third world, cheap labor, the leadership, this country, our leadership*). The middle-school teacher uses more colloquial and concrete terms (e.g., *a little bit, playing the game, teaching the kids, the low-income things, wait a minute, gigantic houses, lying around*). There are syntactic and discourse-level differences as well.

It is also important to note that these two women co-construct the social language they use with the interviewer. In these interviews, the interviewer nearly always asks the middle-school teacher her views as they are related to or affect her role as a teacher in her classroom. Of course this encourages answers that are local to her classroom, although it does not necessitate constructing mini-dialogues. However, the interviewer never asks the college teacher about her views on racism and poverty in relation to her teaching or even her city, but in a more global way, encouraging the college professor to answer in a more theoretical and nationally focused way.

Situated Meanings

As we saw earlier, within social languages, words do not have just utterance-type meanings. They also have meanings that are specific and situated in the actual contexts of their use. Words, phrases, and utterances in use act as clues or cues that guide active construction of meaning in context.

The most interesting issue of situated meaning in the college professor's text involves trying to understand what her words for the social but abstract agents she so emphasizes might mean: words like *society* (which can find certain sorts of people irrelevant), *the leadership* or *this country* (which cannot care and can view certain sorts of people as expendable), or *people in power* (which can have a point of view). The situated meaning of these terms seems to be something like a "deep, hidden, and all-powerful structural agent, operating at a national or global level, that operates behind the scenes to cause effects on local circumstances whose real significance is not readily apparent."

In the middle-school teacher's text, we might consider what situated meanings can be attributed to words and phrases like *job, white middle-class brought up person,* and *low-income things.* Given the rest of her interview not printed here, it is clear that *job* here means something like "low, entry-level service job." *White middle-class brought up person* does not seem to mean only White people, but people who, in situations where power and status are at stake, "play the game." Coupled with *job* as *service job* here, it seems to mean also "people who behave subserviently even in lowly positions in something like a Horatio Alger way." *Low-income things* seems to mean, in the context of this text, "the sorts of nonmiddle-class behaviors and neighborhood settings that lead one to be rejected by middle-class people as untrustworthy and undeserving."

Cultural Models

The situated meanings of words and phrases within specific social languages trigger specific cultural models in terms of which speakers (writers) and listeners (readers) give meaning to texts. Cultural models are not static (they change and are adapted to different contexts; Gee, 1992), and they are not purely mental (but distributed across and embedded in socioculturally defined groups of people and their texts and practices).

People sometimes pick up cultural models overtly by being told or having read them. More often they pick them up as *found* items in the midst of practice in a particular domain (often inside particular institutions), whether this be romance, doing literacy in school, raising children, playing computer games, going to a doctor, engaging in Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) sessions, and so on (see Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner, & Cain, 1998). People more adept at the domain pass on cultural models through shared stories, practices, and procedures that get newcomers to pay attention to salient features of prototypical cases in the domain—the ones that best reflect the cultural models in a domain. In turn cultural models get reinforced and relatively ritualized as they are used in repeated practice. The models and allegiance to the models also become an important bonding cement within the social groups associated with a given domain of practice.

Cultural models are a good analytic device with which to deal, in part, with the frame problem mentioned earlier. Cultural models help people determine, often unconsciously, what counts as relevant and irrelevant in given situations. The college professor applies a widespread academic cultural model in terms of which actual behavior or events (the appearances) follow from larger, deeper, more general, underlying, and hidden causes. This model, in fact, is at the foundation of many of the sciences. Appearances are deceiving, and a deeper, truer reality lies behind the appearances. This deeper reality (the real reality) is discoverable only by people with special knowledge, tools, or insight, not by common (everyday, colloquial language-speaking) people. Plato's myth of the shadows in the cave is one early instantiation of this cultural model in Western culture.

The middle-school teacher applies a widespread cultural model in terms of which people's problems flow from their own behaviors as individuals, and it is through correct behavior and proper appearances that one achieves success. In terms of this model, victims are responsible for their own problems, which they bring on themselves by their own refusal to behave properly (i.e., like a middle-class person). This cultural model has

long roots in Anglo history, where the model citizen is someone who owns enough to be motivated to behave in such a way as to uphold the social and political structures that protect his or her property (John Locke is a key figure here).

Ironically, the college professor's cultural model is almost the inverse of the middle-school teacher's. In terms of the college professor's model, people's actual behavior and interactions are really the effect of deeper and hidden causes over which they have little control. In terms of the middle-school teacher's model, people's poverty and powerlessness are not due to the workings of power and the forces of politics, but rather to their own attitudes and behaviors. These two models clash in the public sphere of our political life.

Discourses

A person cannot enact a particular kind of person all by themselves and by using only language. A *Discourse* (with a capital "D"—I use "discourse" with a little "d" just to mean language in use) is a distinctive way to use language *integrated* with "other stuff" so as to enact a particular type of (however negotiable and contestable) socially situated identity (type of person).

What is this "other stuff"? It is distinctive ways of thinking, being, acting, interacting, believing, knowing, feeling, valuing, dressing, and using one's body. It is also distinctive ways of using various symbols, images, objects, artifacts, tools, technologies, times, places, and spaces. Think of what it takes to be/do a tough-guy detective (in the Philip Marlowe mode, say), a traditional Catholic nun, or a Gen-X e-entrepreneur in the new economy (magazines like *Fortune* regularly discuss—or did so before the collapse of e-stocks—the details of this latter Discourse).

Discourses are always defined in relationship to other Discourses. For example, the Discourse of Los Angeles African-American teenage gang members exists and has changed through history in reciprocal relations with the Discourse of Los Angeles policemen, as well as a good many other related civic-, community-, and church-related Discourses. So, too, the Discourse of neo-Darwinian biologists exists and has changed through history in reciprocal relations with various religious Discourses, including, especially since the 1950s, the Discourse of American creationists.

We have no space here to do justice to all the elements involved in the professor's and teacher's respective Discourses. Hence, let me consider just one example here of how language relates to or aligns with nonlanguage stuff. The middle-school teacher's text aligns her with her *local* area and her specific classroom. The college professor's text aligns her with the *national–global* world. As pointed out earlier, the interviewer co-constructs this alignment, always forming her questions and responses to the teacher and

professor so as to assume and invite these orientations—orientations that neither interviewee ever rejects or attempts to break out of.

Both the middle-school teacher and college professor are of course speaking out of professional Discourses. However, the middle-school teacher enacts her expertise in terms of a more colloquial (everyday) social language and in terms of the actual dialogues and procedures of her day-to-day work. Thus, her expertise is aligned not only with the local, but with the everyday and with her specific actions as a teacher. The professor enacts her expertise in a specialist, noncolloquial language and in terms of distanced viewpoints, not in terms of the actual dialogues and procedures of her day-to-day work.

We can note, too, that the teacher's Discourse is aligned with the local and colloquial, in part, because of the ways it is currently and has been historically positioned in terms of status and power in relation to the professor's Discourse and in relation to other Discourses, such as those of professors in Schools of Education (which mediate between noneducational specialist Discourses and the multiple Discourses of teachers and schools). This is not to say, by any means, that one or other of these Discourses is always and everywhere the more (or less) politically powerful one.

To see that power can run in both directions, one need only look at the current stance of many neoliberal politicians (e.g., George W. Bush). On the one hand, such politicians tend to privilege certain specialist Discourses (e.g., in testing and reading instruction) over teacher Discourses in determining curricula, pedagogy, and accountability. On the other hand, they tend to consider academic Discourses like that of our college professor as elitist viewpoints in relation to the everyday and populist wisdom of the teacher's colloquial language and cultural models (models that hold that anyone can *make it* if they just behave correctly).

In the end, I would argue that critical literacy involves using discourse analysis in such a way that we see that language is always fully situated in social and political contexts. It is always caught up with the ways individuals must, in using language, give voice to Discourses in interaction, now and throughout history, with each other. These interactions are the sites where power operates. They are also the sites at which humans can make and transform history.

This chapter has given a few hints at how the analyses of social languages, situated meanings, cultural models, and Discourses can lead to certain sorts of hypotheses and the consideration of certain sorts of issues. These hypotheses and issues, in turn, can often lead to fruitful collaborations between discourse analysis and other methods of research in areas like sociology, political theory, anthropology, and so forth.

Many of the chapters in this volume take off from the sorts of basic considerations about discourse analysis discussed here and move more broadly

into other areas, often utilizing other forms of research as well—forms that they fruitfully combine with discourse analysis of language proper. In my view, however, the basic premise of the whole enterprise of discourse analysis is this (see also Scollon & Scollon, 1981): *How* people say (or write) things (i.e., form) helps constitute *what* they are doing (i.e., function). In turn, *what* they are saying (or writing) helps constitute *who* they are being at a given time and place within a given set of social practices (i.e., their socially situated identities). Finally, *who* they are being at a given time and place within a given set of social practices produces and reproduces, moment by moment, our social, political, cultural, and institutional worlds.

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