

CRITICAL PERSPECTIVES TO DISCOURSE STUDIES
КРИТИЧЕСКИЕ ПЕРСПЕКТИВЫ ДИСКУРСНЫХ ИССЛЕДОВАНИЙ
DISKURS TADQIQOTLARNING TANQIDIY PERSPEKTIVALARI

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Annotation: In this article, it is discussed the critical perspective helps scholars to understand better the effect of the social dimension on the structuring of language and the roles it performs in different spheres of society.

Key words: gestures, images, film, the internet, and multimedia.

Аннотация: В данной статье обсуждается критическая перспектива, помогающая ученым лучше понять влияние социального измерения на структурирование языка и роли, которые он выполняет в различных сферах жизни общества.

Ключевые слова: жесты, изображения, кино, Интернет и мультимедиа.

Annotatsiya: Ushbu maqolada olimlarga ijtimoiy o'lchovning tilning tuzilishiga ta'sirini va uning jamiyatning turli sohalarida o'ynaydigan rollarini yaxshiroq tushunishga yordam beradigan tanqidiy nuqtai nazar muhokama qilinadi.

Kalit so'zlar: imo-ishoralar, tasvirlar, kino, Internet va multimedia.

The critical approach to language study is rooted in the theory of social constructionism. The theory which found its hold in the classical work of Berger and Luckmann's *The Social Construction of Reality* published in 1966 has its basic argument in the postulation that human beings together create and sustain all social phenomena through social practices or social actions and language is viewed as a crucial tool used for creating, sustaining or changing world realities. Critical approaches to the study of language in use therefore adopt a stance against the taken-for-granted assumptions about the ways in which language works in society and argue that language is not neutral/ transparent but largely embedded in society and culture (Fairclough and Wodak, 1997). In addition, scholars in this field argue that

discourse does not just reflect or represent social entities and relations but construct them in different ways. The critical approach therefore requires that a researcher go beyond pure description of the structures of text to closely examine the strategies which language users adopt in text production to encode ideology and power relations. So, here (in this article) we will discuss the critical perspective to discourse analysis. In addition, we will also identify and discuss the different perspectives which scholars adopt in the critical analysis of discourse.

First, let's clarify the question: What is the Critical Perspective to Discourse Study? The notion, 'critical', in discourse analysis is informed by the idea that relationships between discursive, social and cultural change are usually not obvious or transparent for people in society. According to Fairclough (2006), 'critical' implies showing via analysis connections and causes which are hidden. In addition, he notes that the idea of critical in discourse study also implies intervention or emancipation for those who might be disadvantaged by providing resources for them through change. Critical approaches to discourse analysis therefore center on subjects of dominance, inequality and injustice. This is because critical analysts view discourse as social practice, meaning that discourse shapes and is shaped by society. Sometimes, critical also refers to analysis of discourse that demonstrates resistance of oppression. Blommaert (2005) however cautions that researchers should not equate critical approaches with —approaches that criticise power| but rather that critical analysis should be the study of power effects, of outcome of power, of what power does to people, groups and societies and of how this impact comes about.

The critical perspective to discourse analysis is an ideological position which can be traced to Systemic Functional Linguistics (Halliday, 1985), critical linguistics (Fowler, et al., 1979), critical language study, critical language awareness, critical literacy and new literacy studies. It is multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary or even transdisciplinary (Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999). Critical perspectives to discourse analysis sometimes encompass linguistics, semiotics, pragmatics, anthropology, sociology, psychology, education, media and critical studies. The

three central concepts common to all research that adopt the critical perspective are power, ideology and critique. Critical analysis of discourse is traced back to influences from Aristotle, Marx, the Frankfurt School, Jurgen Habermas, Gramsci, Foucault, and Althuser among others (van Dijk, 1993). Wodak and Meyer (2003) identify at least seven dimensions common to different disciplines that adopt the critical perspectives to the study of discourse.

They include:

- an interest in the properties of ‘naturally occurring’ language use by real language users (instead of a study of abstract language systems and invented examples)
- a focus on larger units than isolated words and sentences and, hence, new basic units of analysis: texts, discourses, conversations, speech acts, or communicative events the extension of linguistics beyond sentence grammar towards a study of action and interaction
- the extension to non-verbal (semiotic, multimodal, visual) aspects of interaction and communication: gestures, images, film, the internet, and multimedia
- a focus on dynamic (socio)-cognitive or interactional moves and strategies
- the study of the functions of (social, cultural, situative and cognitive) contexts of language use
- an analysis of a vast number of phenomena of text grammar and language use: coherence, anaphora, topics, macrostructures, speech acts, interactions, turn-taking, signs, politeness, argumentation, rhetoric, mental models, and many other aspects of text and discourse.

Critical Approaches to the Study of Discourse: As stated before, scholarship in discourse analysis has also extended to critical approaches to the study of different areas where language is used in society for different purposes. Some of the fields that have adopted the critical perspective include classroom discourse analysis, media discourse analysis, political discourse analysis, studies in ethnography, multimodal discourse analysis, etc. For instance, critical classroom discourse

analysis (CCDA) investigates the sociocultural and socio-political dimensions to classroom discourse. This helps to account for the sociocultural, socio-political and sociolinguistic dimensions of classroom activities. According to Kumaravadivelu (1999), the sociolinguistic and behavioristic approaches earlier adopted in classroom discourse analysis and classroom interaction analysis respectively were not adequate to account for ideological influences on the construction of discourse in the classroom. Another example of critical approach to discourse is Social semiotics. Social semiotics is a critical approach to discourse study which views language and other modes of communication as social practice. Contrary to the traditional approach to the study of semiotics, social semioticians note that sign making is a motivated activity deployed to express meaning rather than a random use of signs. In addition, they argue that no single semiotic code can be understood in isolation since meaning resides in the multiplicity of codes deployed in texts (Hodge and Kress, 1995). Thus, social semiotic study of discourse involves analysis of the linguistic and non-linguistics resources that text producers employ in meaning making. Another approach to the critical study of discourse is Critical Discourse Analysis. Its fundamental research interest according to Wodak (2001) is to analyse opaque as well as transparent structural relationships of dominance, discrimination, power and control as manifest in language. Computer Mediated Communication (henceforth CMC) has also witnessed a critical paradigm in the study of Computer Mediated Discourse (CMD). Herring (2001) argues that despite the earlier perception of CMC as a purely neutral medium for the transfer of data and information, the genre actually exhibits influence of social conditioning based on the discourse topic and activity type.

In the conclusion, we may say that the critical study of language and indeed, other semiotic modes of discourse is an area of language that has attracted the attention of scholars over the years. On the one hand, the critical perspective helps scholars to understand better the effect of the social dimension on the structuring of language and the roles it performs in different spheres of society. On the other hand,

the critical approach helps to query the taken-for-granted assumptions of language as a transparent and neutral mode of communication, and thus helps to establish the fact that the use of language is largely conditioned by its context of use.

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