DISCOURSE ANALYSIS:
WHAT MAKES IT CRITICAL?

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INTRODUCTION

What makes a piece of research "discourse analysis"? What makes it "*critical* discourse analysis"? I will offer one opinion about these questions in this paper. My considerations will be basic, since 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 Norman 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 just plain old discourse analysis), I will mean this question generally and not just about Fairclough's work.

While both Fairclough and I have been influenced by "post-structuralist" 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 (Hymes 1974, 1981; Gumperz 1982; Labov 1972a,b;), 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, though it may not always be referred to as such.

Another note: 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, though not always on schools. I will in this paper, from time to time, discuss the relevance of discourse analysis and critical discourse analysis to controversial issues in education.

SOME CRUCIAL DISTINCTIONS

At the very outset, I want to make a couple of distinctions that are important from a linguistic point of view, though 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 the 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 (though 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 prefer to 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 cat.

Turning to structures, rather than words: while the subjects of sentences are always "topic-like" (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 **non-vernacular styles** (Labov 1972a, b). Save in the case of massive social disruption, every human being acquires a native language in his or early years. Most linguists, at least in the United States, believe that this process of native language acquisition is partly under biological control (Choosy 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, while 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 (Corer 2002). [Perhaps I should point out here as well, though, that while Husky'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, video-game adepts, postmodern feminists, etc.). So, 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 "non-standard", but this distinction is social and political (Milroy & Milroy 1991 . From a linguistic point of view, it is meaningless, since 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 "non-standard" dialect. These claims are not politically contentious in modern linguistics, they are simply empirical. At the same time a good deal of good 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 non-vernacular 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, while 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 go on, as well, to acquire different non-vernacular social languages connected to different social groups, for example, one person may become adept at the language of Christian fundamentalist theology and someone else at the language of modern mathematics.

While 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 non-vernacular social languages is not a process that is itself 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, since 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 two sentences below:

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. While every native speaker's grammar contains all the grammatical structures that this sentence contains (e.g., nominalizations), not every speaker knows that c*ombining 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, though none (if they are native speakers) struggle with the forms of language like that in sentence 1.

Again, every native speaker of English has a grammar that contains all of the sorts of grammatical structures that are 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 very 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. *And most importantly 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” here I mean only that certain grammatical devices go together 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 above. 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. But 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 doesn't work, despite the fact that some linguists have made it. Social languages like the one represented in sentence 2 above 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 do 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. While 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 non-vernacular 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, though we know little about what are the most effective overt teacher interventions (e.g., it may well 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, b), whether critical or not, can undertake one or both of two related tasks. One task is what we can 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 can 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, since very different issues of validity come up with each of these tasks, as we will see below. 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 (that is, to express certain meanings). For example, consider the sentence labeled (1) below (adapted from Gagnon 1987: p. 65):

3. 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 (that is, technically speaking, in the “unmarked” case), in English, dependent clauses follow independent clauses—thus, the sentence (1) above might more normally appear as: “The Whig and Tory parties represented different factions, though they were both narrowly confined to the privileged classes”. In (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.

To sum up, 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), though 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: p. 71):

4. 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”, 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, and 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 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 I have already said, 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, but, once one accepts a given theory, and accepts that the data has 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 which 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 (though, in reality, it is but one of several) is Halliday's (1994; see also Martin, Matthiessen, & Painter 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 above the utterance-token (situated) meaning task. For simplicity's sake, I will now just call this "the situated meaning task". As I pointed out above, language forms have both utterance-type and utterance-token meanings. At the utterance-type level, we are concerned with the fact 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” above. However, when we actually utter or write a sentence it also has what I have called an “utterance-token meaning” or what I will here call 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 areya?” versus “Whatnthehell is wrong with you?”, as I pass you in the corridor, these utterances themselves lead you to construe the context in a certain way (friendly versus hostile), though 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 very 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 above that an independent clause represents an assertion (a claim that something is true). But 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 just be taken as a **reminder** of a “fact” they both agree on. On the other hand, 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). And, 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” will take on different specific meanings in different contexts. For example, in one context, “privileged” might mean “rich”, while in another context it might mean “educated” or “cultured” or “politically connected” or “born into a family with high status” or some combination of the above or something else altogether.

To analyze Gagnon’s sentence or his whole text, or any part of it, at the level of situated meanings—that is, in order 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 which 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 (since Gagnon’s text was meant to argue for a view about what history ought to 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 paper of this scope to develop such an analysis here.

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 above 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. On the other hand, the issue of validity for analyses of situated meaning is much harder. In fact, it involves a very 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. The biologist, Roger Lewontin, points out in his book *Biology as Ideology* (1991), that it is a truism in medical science that the cause of tuberculosis is the tubercle bacillus. But, Lewontin goes on to point out, as well, that tuberculosis was a very common disease in the sweatshops and factories of the nineteenth century, while 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 systematically recorded in the 1830's in Britain and a bit later in North America, show that most people did, indeed, die of infectious diseases. As the nineteenth 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: pp. 43-44).

It was not modern sanitation or less crowding in cities that led to the progressive reductions in the death rate, since the major killers in the nineteenth century were respiratory and not waterborne, and parts of our cities are as crowded today as they were in the 1850s. More likely, Lewontin argues, 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: p. 44).

What Lewontin is doing here is showing 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, widening 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 or not 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. And, indeed, what these standards of relevance might look like is the topic of some important research in linguistic semantics and the philosophy of language (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, indeed, is typical of all interpretive methods of research.

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 study, as well, the ways in which either or both of 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 non-critical approaches. Non-critical approaches (e.g., see 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:

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

A non-critical form of discourse analysis could well point out the fact 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 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 don't 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 non-critical 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, but, also, in terms of their implications for things like status, solidarity, the 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, the 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. So, one session of a graduate seminar is a social practice, so is the whole seminar course. Some practices are more routinized than others which 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 talk in schools (as Gagnon is); and so and so forth through an endless array.

One way in which we can define “politics” is to say that politics *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, since 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). Since 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 itself 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 above)? 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 or Russian or what have you), display variability (Labov 1972a, b; Milroy 1987a, b: Milroy & Milroy 1995). One sort of variability that any social language displays is variation on a continuum that runs between more informal and more formal forms. Another, and 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 two short excerpts below (Gee 1996). In the first case below (5), a young woman was telling her parents about how she had ranked, on a scale of morality, some characters in a story she had heard in a class she was taking at a university. She is telling her boyfriend the "same thing" in the second case (6):

5. 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.

6. 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 below about the connections between the form of language in (5) and school). However, the first text (3) is more formal and creates a certain sense of deference in talking to her parents, while 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 boy friend, she makes her claims straight out. To her parents she uses formal terms like "offensive", "understanding", "callous", "hypocritical" and "professed"; to her boy friend, 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 boy friend ("...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 boy friend, she leaves several points to be inferred, points that she spells out more explicitly to her parents (e.g., her boy friend must infer that Gregory is being accused of being a hypocrite from the information that though Roger is bad, at least he does not lie, which Gregory did in claiming to love Abigail).

While 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 (5) above—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 5 and 6 above 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 written texts below, both written by the same biologist (examples from Greg Myers' excellent book, Writing Biology, 1990: p. 150). The first appeared in a professional biological journal, the second in a popular science magazine:

7. 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.

8. 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), though my preference is for the first choice. The fact remains that the first excerpt (7) is more technical and formal in a way that creates solidarity with other professional biologists, but separation from non-professionals. Note that *more* formality here, unlike in the case of the vernacular, creates *more* solidarity, in part, because it creates separation of specialists from non-specialists. The second excerpt, while still formal when compared to the vernacular variant in (6) above, is less formal than the excerpt in (7) and creates much less of a separation from the non-professional audience, though it is still not anywhere near as “bonding” as the vernacular form in (6).

Again, these differences, that is, those between (7) and (8), 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 (that is, 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 to 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. On the other hand, 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 an 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, though 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) argues 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 which 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, since 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 an "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 5 as less formal and more bonding than 6.

LEARNING

If one is going to engage in discourse analysis applied to educational issues, then, the notion of *learning* becomes crucial. Since 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). Since 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; devote Catholic, lapsed Catholic, Catholic-in-name-only; veteran street-gang member, core younger member, hanger-on; and so and so forth through a great many distinctions for which the labels don't matter, only the ways in which people, often unconsciously, recognize and react to each other within various and specific social practices). It follows, then, too, 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 socially-situated identity.

This view of learning requires us to see that people's activities are very 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, though 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 for the community of practice as a whole (or distinctive parts of it).

The notion of a "community of practice" has been criticized by some because groups of people engaging in "repeatable" sorts of social practices need not be a "community" in any very 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 (see Z. Bauman 1995 for discussion of some of wider the issues here).

A related term that has sometimes been used for a notion closely related to communities of practice is the term "Discourses" (used with a capital "D" to make clear that it means more than just using language to discourse about something, Gee 1996, 1999). Discourses are ways in which people use distinctive ways of talking, reading, writing, thinking, believing, valuing, acting, and interacting with things and other people in order to get recognized (and recognize themselves) as a distinctive group or distinctive "kinds of people" (Hacking 1986) 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 particular first grade classroom.

Forms of discourse analysis which marry the study of form and function with the study of social practices, on the one hand, and with 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 very 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 construed it, can speak to such matters, it is a potentially powerful tool for research in education.

CULTURAL MODELS

One thing people learn when they participate in a community of practice or enact and recognize a Discourse (socially-situated identity) are 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 towards greater and greater independence (and independence is a high value for this group of people). On the other hand, 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 "guide books" supplement and instantiate the above middle class cultural model of childhood and stages. On the other hand, 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” versus “Get the broom, the coffee spilled”). A cultural model is a (often tacit) theory or story about how things work in the world (e.g., children throw tantrums because they are undergoing stages towards 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 non-quantifiable bases.

ONE STYLE OF CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

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"). I will elaborate on each of these a bit more than I have above below. Since there is no space here for anything like a full discourse analysis, I want merely to show the sorts of questions and issues to which these tools can give rise in 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 and so forth, through an endless array of identities. Often, of course, we can recognize a particular socially-situated "kind of person" through his or her use of a given social language without ourselves actually being able to enact that kind of person.

In no way do I wish to imply that enacting and recognizing *kinds of people* (Hacking1986; 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, too, there are often no strict boundaries to social languages.

In examples 3-6 above we saw different social languages (i.e., two styles of a vernacular social language or two different vernacular social languages, depending upon how one wants to put the matter, and two styles of a biological social language or two different biological social languages, again, depending upon how one wants to put the matter).

Consider the two short passages below from an interview with a middle-school teacher (9) from an impoverished post-industrial urban city and a college professor (10) from the same city. Both woman were being interviewed about their views on racism and poverty in their city (see Gee 1999 for the transcription conventions used below).

9. 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

10. 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 macro level, 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.

These two woman are using, in these passages, different social languages. The middle school teacher uses a style of language in which very 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", "macro level", "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 teachers 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 above. 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 important to note, as well, 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. This, of course, encourages answers that are "local" to her classroom, though it does not, of course, necessitate constructing mini-dialogues. On the other hand, the interviewer never asks the college teacher about her views about 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 have seen above, within social languages, words do not have just utterance-type meanings. They have, also, 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 can "not 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 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 non-middle 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, or engaging in Alcoholics Anonymous sessions, or what have you (also 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 I mentioned above. Cultural models help people to 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 is not due to the workings of power and the forces of politics, but rather to their own attitudes and behaviors. I might point out that these two models clash constantly 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 of using 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 1950's, 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. Let me, then, consider just one example here of how language relates to or aligns with non-language 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 I pointed out above, 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 the 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, non-colloquial 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 non-educational 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 neo-liberal 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, the 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, then, 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.

I have here only been able to give a view 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 hypothesis 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 papers in this volume take off from the sorts of very basic considerations about discourse analysis I have 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. But, in my view, 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); and, 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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