INFXXXX: Assignment #3

Language in Action: Critical Discourse Analysis in Information Studies

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While terms such as "objective fact" still slip into casual conversation, social science and humanities researchers, for the most part, have abandoned the notion that any piece of information (assuming you can actually label something as a "piece of information") could ever be considered an absolute, irrefutable fact or statement. For information scholars, this has meant that the very object of their research has been called into question. While this has led some researchers to consider information-related issues from a cognitive or philosophical perspective, others have moved in a different direction, paying closer attention to how information *acts* within specific socio-cultural contexts. From such a perspective, information is never a neutral artefact. Rather, it is always inextricably linked with those who produce and consume it, and mirrors the expectations, desires, and ambitions of specific individuals and institutions. Information, moreover, to continue this line of thinking, is not produced and disseminated in an egalitarian fashion. Instead, it is usually the case that a select group of agents wield a disproportionate amount of power, or perhaps clout, with respect to spreading their information, and therefore their beliefs, into wider cultural networks. Their power is so great, in fact, that they are able to subtly influence language practices so that their ideas are presented as objective fact. From such a perspective, even seemingly everyday conversation serves to legitimize their dominance. If we pay attention, we may begin to recognize the inherent biases and assumptions embedded within specific interactions. Why is it, for example, that the doctor-patient relationship is so traditionally lopsided? Why do we so readily accept and respect the authority of law enforcement officers? Why is it that discussions related to organized labour become so radically polarized so quickly? It would seem that we have a tendency to adopt and assume specific roles in such situations, and then act out these roles. Why does this happen?

In recent decades, scholars coming from diverse academic backgrounds have begun to engage with the ways in which language and media create and confirm the typically unequal relationships that exist between people and institutions. An important component of this research is labelled *critical discourse analysis* (CDA), and CDA research has been ongoing on a number of fronts for many years now. So what exactly is critical discourse analysis? The answer to this question can be quite short or rather long, depending on how and where you want to focus. Fairclough is generally deemed to be the "founder" of the field, in the sense that he produced the first text that explained its goals and methods. But Fairclough's approach is now just one of many that confront the same issues in similar, but not identical ways. Moreover, some of the research material deemed to be worthy of CDA analysis by Fairclough, such as images and other non-linguistic texts, has fallen largely under the purview of other disciplines such as social semiotics.

For the purposes of this essay, however – that is, the study of CDA from the perspective of information studies – it just so happens that Fairclough features prominently as a major character in the story. This is, arguably, due in large part to the influence of Stevenson, who has borrowed from his methods to critically analyze vital trends in library and information studies, such as anxiety over the "digital divide" and the efforts of corporate philanthropists such as Bill Gates to "close" this divide. Stevenson's work, as I will discuss in more detail below, demonstrates how the very discussions that are taking place in the public sphere with respect to these issues are, in fact, legitimizing and supporting a neoliberal worldview that diverts attention from the true sources of unemployment and poverty. This is not happening because of a concerted propaganda campaign, or because important information is being supressed. Rather, it is because those with the power to do so employ language that subtly

confirms their own worldview(s), and disseminate this language through a wide variety of communication channels. It is this process – that is, the creation and deployment of discourse – that is the focus of CDA.

This paper, then, will trace the brief history of CDA from an information studies perspective, which means that I will dwell at length on the work of Fairclough, and then the work of Stevenson. I will also connect their research methods with wider trends in scholarly research, and discuss why their work has been so successful. However, I will also outline the criticisms that have been levelled at Fairclough, particularly with respect to the lack of attention he pays to the cognitive effects of discourse. From here, I will introduce Wodak's concept of the *discourse-historical approach* (DHA), a variant of CDA that does in fact account for cognition with respect to the audiences that receive, and respond to, specific discursive strategies. Finally, I will provide an example of research from outside information studies (at least in the academic sense) that incorporates a DHA approach, and I will discuss how DHA might inform current CDA-based information research practices.

Beginnings

CDA emerged out of ideas circulating in the field of linguistics at a particular point in time – Fairclough made that quite clear by titling his first major work on the subject *Language and Power*. But Fairclough also emphasized that his theories and methodologies were designed to address what he believed to be major deficiencies in linguistics research. Specifically, Fairclough criticized sociolinguistics, a subfield that emerged in the 1960s that promoted "a blending of sociologists and linguists in a combined effort to see how language and society are related," with linguists Fishman and Ferguson performing much of the

foundational work (Spolsky, 2010, p. 7). Fairclough made his case against sociolinguistics quite clear:

> Linguists, and especially those working in sociolinguistics (which is often said
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> to deal with 'language in its social context') have had quite a lot to say about
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> language and power, but they have not in my opinion done justice to the rich
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> and complex interrelationships of language and power (2001, p. 1).

Power is obviously a crucial area of concern here, and power has since become an integral aspect of CDA. As a consequence, much of the work done by CDA extracts and draws attention to those social, cultural, economic, and political agents that leverage power for their own interests. That is not to say that CDA scholars are single-mindedly against power and those who hold it, however, as Blommaert explains:

> Power is not a bad thing – those who are in power will confirm it. They will
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> argue convincingly that power is necessary in every system, for it is often that
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> which allows the system to function in particular ways...Yet, power is a *concern*
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> to many people, something that is easily translated into topics of discussion or
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> narration (Blommaert, 2005, p. 1).

To expand on this, CDA scholars are generally more interested in shining a light on the ways in which power is wielded, rather than on making value judgments on those who wield it. Having said this, it would be impossible to claim that CDA scholars are apolitical. But this is not necessarily problematic. As a critical approach, CDA, in fact, inherently denies that such objectivity could ever be developed. When we communicate, we necessarily must adopt language systems that others can understand. Such systems, of course, have grown and changed over centuries, and are embedded with all of the contextual meanings that have been

acquired during this time. Some meanings are privileged over others, for various reasons.

Communication, therefore, implicates us in a vast network of meanings that cannot be

removed, at least according to discourse theory.

What concerned Fairclough most about power, then, was the ways in which it was

subtly expressed, and therefore defined, in language. Specifically, he claimed that the

language used in any form of social interaction was embedded with "common-sense"

assumptions that legitimized specific power relationships. As a simple example, he discusses

the doctor-patient relationship as it is commonly expressed in Western medicine. According to

Fairclough, typical interactions between doctors and patients "embody 'common-sense'

assumptions which treat authority and hierarchy as natural – the doctor knows about medicine

and the patient doesn't; the doctor is in a position to determine how a health problem should be

dealt with and the patient isn't" (2001, p. 2). Whenever we visit a doctor, according to

Fairclough, we assume the role of passive patient, and the doctor assumes the role somewhat

akin to a medical dictator, rendering pronouncements and prescriptions that may not be

questioned, or at least not seriously questioned. Moreover, every time that this interaction

takes place, these roles and hierarchies are further legitimized, meaning that appear

increasingly "natural" and above judgment.

These simple examples are interesting, but what concerned Fairclough the most was the

ways in which this sort of language could be used by powerful individuals and institutions to

shape *ideologies*. Specifically, he believes that ideologies – that is, the "ideological workings

of language" – were playing an increasingly vital role in shaping and supporting the very

power relationships that define the modern nation-state (2001, p.2). "Society" for Fairclough

meant Thatcher-era Britain, a time when Prime Minister Thatcher and her Conservative

government were, so he claimed, employing a formidable discursive "offensive" in order to redefine the ideas and narratives that shaped British self-identity. The new identity that they crafted, moreover, matched their economically and socially conservative agenda. Concerns over this agenda, as well as related issues, helped shape Fairclough's conception of *discourse* and its role in contemporary Western societies.

Before discussing discourse in more detail, it is important to note that Fairclough did not "officially" label his methodology as critical discourse analysis at first, nor did he immediately identify discourse as the primary focus of his research. The reason for this, quite simply, is that there was no pre-existing definition of discourse that included all of the characteristics that Fairclough required. Drawing from his background in linguistics, he instead considered his work to be *critical language study* (CLS), and, while he used the terms "discourse" and "discourse analysis" quite often in his early work on CLS, he did so in a way that distanced his work from previous discourse theory – at one point he stated that "there are strands within discourse analysis…which are close to what I am calling CLS" (2001, p.9). But these "strands" did not match up exactly with his own critical approach to language.

Quite quickly, however, as CLS became recognized and praised, Fairclough engaged in a project of renovation, bringing together elements of discourse as defined in linguistics and in social theory that he would fuse to create a definition for the term that was inextricably linked with his own methodology. From linguistics, he adopted the notion that discourse refers to "extended samples of either spoken or written language," while from social theory, he adopted the concept of discourse as a means "to refer to different ways of structuring areas of knowledge and social practice" (1992, p. 3). As he explains it, this dual approach is key: "It is vital that critical discourse analysis explore the tension between these two sides of language

use, the socially shaped and socially constitutive…Language use is always simultaneously constitutive of (i) social identities, (ii) social relations and (iii) systems of knowledge and belief" (1993, p. 134). Discourse, then, as Fairclough devises it, is language "as a form of social practice," or language "as a mode of action" (1993, p. 134).

Drawing on this concept of discourse and bringing in his CLS methodologies, Fairclough would go on to develop what he described as *textually-oriented discourse analysis* (TODA), which became his primary approach to CDA. TODA, as he explains it, is his attempt to operationalize the study of discourse "in the form of a framework which will be suitable for use in social scientific research, and specifically in the study of social change" (1992, p. 62). This is perhaps best understood as an extension and elaboration of the CLS he outlined previously, but, arguably, it could also be seen as the application of necessary constraints on his previous methodology in order to further focus research and analysis work. Specifically, Fairclough advocates that such work be approached along three "dimensions" of analysis, which are worth defining in full here. According to Farclough, "Any discursive 'event' (i.e. any instance of discourse) [may be] seen as being simultaneously" as the following (all citations from Fairclourgh, 1992, p.4):

- A "piece of text", which may be analyzed linguistically.

- An "instance of discursive practice", which describes "the nature of the processes of text production and interpretation."

- An "instance of social practice," which describes "the institutional and organizational circumstances of the discursive event and how that shapes the nature of the discursive practice."

From this perspective, a discursive event is "a mode of action, one form in which people may act upon the world" (1992, p. 63). Language and action are inextricably intertwined, much like the signifier and signified in Saussure's version of semiotics. Indeed, Fairclough borrows from this line of thinking by stating that "discourse is a practice not just of representing the world, but of signifying the world, constituting and constructing the world in meaning" (1992, p. 64). His three dimensions are intended to allow researchers to elucidate and examine such discourses, and to provide them with a model upon which to frame their own findings.

CDA in Information Studies

As indicated in the introduction, Fairclough is but one of many scholars who recognized the value of critical linguistics across other disciplines. In LIS, Frohmann stands out as arguably the earliest advocate for applying discourse theory to the field. Like Fairclough, he links back to Foucault's conception of discourse as a social act. He then discusses the usefulness of this construct for LIS research by noting the following:

> From at least 1876 to the present day, the discourses of LIS are thoroughly
> intertwined with specific institutional forms through which power over
> information, its users, and its uses is, has been, and will continue to be exercised
> (1994, p. 121).

Such discourses include "specialized talk about information, its organization, who uses it and who does not... the social and cultural roles of the organizations in charge of it... and the programmatic pronouncements of its theorists who speak about how these things should be spoken about" (p. 121). Frohmann essentially called for discussions on such topics to take a more reflexive tone. LIS and IS research had, historically, quite often come off as positivist

and deterministic, particularly when discussing the connections between people and information. Rather than discussing how best to organize and distribute documents and other texts to those that (ostensibly) need them, the field would benefit, according to Frohmann, if researchers also explored why such transactional models were so important to those who engaged in LIS research.

Since the publication of Frohmann's article, other LIS scholars such as Budd have advocated for the advantages of discourse analysis (see Budd & Raber, 1996, & Budd, 2006). Yet there was still a lack of focus on Fairclough's particular brand of discourse analysis. More recently, however, scholars such as Stevenson have applied Fairclough's TODA methods directly to LIS-related texts and issues, yielding compelling results. Stevenson uses these tools in order to highlight aspects of public policy and philanthropy that are often contradictory with respect to the stated intentions of those involved. The focus of much of her work up to this point has been the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, a charitable organization that focused in part on the provision of ICT equipment to public libraries. As she indicates, "between 1998 and 2004, the BMGF installed 47,200 Internet-ready PCs in almost 11,000 libraries across the United States" (Stevenson, 2009, p. 12). While these donations have generally been accepted and praised, they in fact served to legitimize the sharp differences in class, wealth, and power that engendered the very issues that the Foundation was meant to address. Gates' actions in this area, moreover, echoed those of Andrew Carnegie and other "gilded age" industrialists, whose philanthropy also served contradictory purposes.

To take one specific example of Stevenson's CDA/TODA work, in an article published in 2009 she examines discourses surrounding the "digital divide" – as defined largely by policy documents from various levels of government in the United States – and then presents the ways

in which the Gates Foundation plugged into these same discourses to advance its interests, for better or worse.[1] Fairclough's three dimensions serve as the foundation for her analysis, though she is quick to point out that she does not apply his methods in a positivist, sequential, manner. Rather, she notes that "there exists a dialectical relationship among and between the three dimensions," and engages with her sources while flexibly applying Fairclough's model.

Stevenson situates her earliest documents within the socio-cultural climate of the 1990s, noting that this was a period when neoliberalism was in the ascendancy as both a political and economic ideology. In the United States and elsewhere, this entailed intense deregulation of key pieces of infrastructure, including telecommunications networks, and the promotion of corporate-friendly policy issues such as the regulation and protection of intellectual property. The 1996 *Telecommunications Act*, according to Stevenson, served as a key instrument in the establishment of a discursive framework that would benefit private industry and minimize the problems associates with rising income inequality, shifting the policy debate from one of "universal service" to "universal access". This helped pave the way for publication of the *Falling Through the Net* series of documents developed by the U. S. Department of Commerce, about which she states the following:

> It could be argued that the series provided the discursive blueprint for social ICT
> policies and initiatives from the mid-1990s, not the least of which was the
> stabilization of the problem of the wealth gap as one of access to the technology
> and not shifting social relations of production (p. 10).

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[1] It is worth noting here that Stevenson strives to refrain from value judgments in her work with respect to the intentions of Bill and Melinda Gates and the Foundation that they operate. While CDA work exposes objectives and interests that often remain hidden and that tend to legitimize specific actions and relationships, the thoughts and feelings of individual actors and agents are beyond the scope of her work, and the work of most other CDA scholars.

It is through these DoC documents that the term "digital divide" was popularized, casting socio-economic status with access, or lack of access, to information technology.

Here, then, we are able to see all three of Fairclough's dimensions of TODA in play. In terms of textual content, phrases like "universal access" and "digital divide" serve to cast issues of social and economic inequality in a way that remained consistent with neoliberal beliefs and practices. In terms of discursive practices, *Falling Through the Net* supported and legitimized discourses that pointed to private capital as the fundamental source of solutions to problems of access. To put this more accurately, these documents served to both legitimize the discourse of universal access/digital divide – which had been shaped by previous texts – and to legitimize the use of private capital to expand access to ICT and therefore (according to the discourse) enable those who were provided access to produce their own wealth. The composition of this "needy" population, Stevenson indicates, were determined by matching census data with a set of criteria that served to "contribute to a reading of the problem as small and relatively contained," as well as to "discursively reinforce racial and gender stereotypes of the disenfranchised in America" (pp. 13-14).

Working from these observations, Stevenson, as indicated above, elucidates the ways in which the charitable work performed by the Gates Foundation echoes the discursive relationships established by the digital divide issue via its provision of public access computers (PACs) to libraries and other related organizations. This activity falls under the third dimension of TODA, in which practices and actions are employed to further support specific discursive strategies. These PAC donations, then, legitimized the notion that computer technology in and of itself could enable users to train, find work, gain access to education and information, and otherwise "improve" themselves. Such a discourse is aggressively

deterministic, and connects with larger narratives in American culture around individuality and equal opportunity. It also affords all agency – and therefore all of the blame – to disadvantaged individuals who cannot find work and/or are otherwise impoverished. The discursive chain is carefully crafted: since access to information technology is limited with respect to specific population groups, giving them access to this technology via PACs should help lift them into the upper echelons of society. If/when this does not happen, they only have themselves to blame. By using CDA and TODA, Stevenson illustrated how these problematic discourses evolved out of seemingly innocuous (or perhaps value-neutral) policy documents.

CDA Criticisms

Like any new and successful methodology, CDA attracts its fair share of criticism. This is, of course, an effective and arguably necessary consequence of its perpetuity. Such criticism proceeds from a number of positions. I will begin this section with an observation that I have made with respect to the materials studied via CDA methods, and then focus on issues that are more philosophical in character. Following this section, I will discuss the development of the discourse-historical approach, and the ways in which it attempts to address these more fundamental issues.

In terms of the materials subjected to critical discourse analysis, I want to cite from one of Fairclough's foundational CDA works, when he discusses what, in terms of scope, could or should qualify as discourse:

Like many linguists, I shall use discourse to refer primarily to spoken or written language use, though I would also wish to extend it to include semiotic practice

in other semiotic modalities such as photography and non-verbal (e.g. gestural) communication (1993, p. 134).

This is a powerful statement, indicating that CDA could, and perhaps should, be used to study discourses expressed via non-linguistic systems. Images, for example, often carry powerful discourses, and much of modern politics is built on ceremony and performance. The problem is that CDA work – at least the work that is typically referenced and cited – deals with language almost exclusively. As a consequence, I believe that it could be argued that CDA has ceded ground unnecessarily to academic disciplines more conducive to "multimedia" texts, such as semiotics and social semiotics. As Wodak and Meyer indicate, scholars such as Kress, who had helped to shape CDA in its earliest years, have now distanced themselves from it (Wodak & Meyer, 2009). Though they do not explain this situation any further, it is worth noting that Kress is considered one of the founding researchers in the field of social semiotics, which takes a similar critical approach to CDA, but is more overtly targeted towards non-linguistic sources of meaning (see, for example, Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006; note also that van Leeuwen was among the early CDA scholars noted by Wodak & Meyer).

While I will not try to analyze this issue in detail here, I will offer some possible reasons for why CDA has become so focused on language. A key issue, I believe, is a tendency for CDA scholars, beginning with Fairclough, to produce detailed, step-by-step approaches to research and analysis of cultural texts. This falls in line with the discourse as "piece of text" dimension of Fairclough's TODA model, which also figures prominently in his earlier CLS approach. In both cases, language is explicitly studied at the levels of vocabulary and grammar, and specific instructions are given for how to label and categorize specific words and structures. The DHA approach outlined by Riesigl and Wodak also includes specific,

prescriptive instructions, as do other CDA variants. Such detailed procedures seem to exclude non-linguistic texts from "proper" analysis. Making things more difficult is the fact that this stage of CDA is often presented as the first, with more high-level analysis to follow. So, right from the start, such work is cast along rather narrow lines.

Beyond these somewhat mechanical objections to CDA, criticism has come from those who believe that it lacks a solid philosophical grounding. Hammersley stands out as an early, and rather virulent, opponent, stating the following:

> It is characteristic of CDA, and of much 'critical' work in the social sciences, that its philosophical foundations are simply taken for granted, as if they were unproblematic. This reflects the fact that, in many ways, the term 'critical' has become little more than a rallying cry demanding that researchers consider 'whose side they are on' (1997, p. 244).

Hammersley actually offers a few different options as to how CDA could address this issue, but then explains how none of his options would actually work, given what he sees to be inherent flaws in CDA research. Interestingly, he refers both to the Frankfurt School of neo-Marxist philosophy, as well as the work of Habermas, during this discussion. As we will see, certain CDA scholars have actually turned to both in order to ground their own work, thereby implicitly and/or explicitly rejecting Hammersley's opinions.

While Hammersley is perhaps somewhat harsh in his criticism, he does point to a rather glaring, and perhaps vital, element that is missing from CDA, at least as envisioned by Fairclough. While Fairclough's approach is extremely effective for the purposes of analyzing texts, and analyzing chains of texts, the human element – that is, the people who construct, and especially the people that consume discursive texts – is somewhat lacking. In Stevenson's

article, for example, she covers in great detail the composition, content, context, and distribution of documents and texts, and she refers to powerful organizations such as the U. S. Department of Commerce and the Gates Foundation, as well as disadvantaged groups of people as determined by census data. But there is no mention of specific interactions between texts and individuals. Wodak, in a 2006 article, expressed this problem with CDA with a series of questions:

> How do we understand/deconstruct utterances in context? Why is the same text
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> or utterance understood in significantly different ways by different groups of
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> listeners/writers/viewers? Does this depend on their cognitive/conceptual
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> background and stored knowledge? (p. 182)

What seems to be missing is a philosophical, or, more specifically, an ontological perspective from which to frame CDA work. It may, of course, be argued that such a framing is simply not necessary. We might say that the perpetuation of a discursive agenda temporally through a chain (or chains) of texts and documents is proof enough that this agenda is succeeding, and that there is therefore no need to consider how audiences cognitively interpret such cultural artefacts. But, as Wodak points out, documents alone do not tell us the whole story. For evidence of this she refers to her extensive research in anti-Semitism as it is expressed in a variety of cultures. As she explains it, such behaviour is constructed by communities and cultures, and becomes embedded within cultural memory as it passes through generations.[2] The end result is that those individuals within these cultures who are anti-Semitic will interpret certain texts, and therefore certain discourses, in ways that are often unexpected. A "'positive' anecdote" about a Jewish member of a community (or outside the community), for example,

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[2] This is not to say that any culture is uniformly anti-Semitic or racist, merely that the cultural resources upon which such behaviour is built is available, though opinions and beliefs certainly do evolve over time.

may be "processed as an exception because it is schema-inconsistent," whereas "a 'negative' experience lends itself as 'proof or evidence' for already stored anti-Semitic beliefs" (2006, p. 185). In both cases, the communication of discourses is distorted. The authors of a "positive" text, for example, almost certainly would not expect – or, at the very least, would not desire – that their work would be interpreted as an "exceptional" case with respect to the individuals discussed. By what mechanism(s), then, do these misinterpretations come about? It is here that Fairclough's tools would seem to come up short.

DHA – A Contextual/Cognitive Approach to CDA

Wodak has been engaging with issues of knowledge comprehension and cognition for many years. In the late 1980s she published research findings related to public reception of television news broadcasts (as discussed in Wodak, 2006). As she explains it, such broadcasts are analyzed cognitively by viewers via the construction of *mental representations*, which are aggregated over time into *mental models* that link seemingly similar news stories. These *cognitive frames*, then, serve to inform the various ways in which diverse individuals and cultures understand and "process" news broadcasts. This information was gleaned through interviews, and by having participants summarize their impressions of various stories. Based in part by her findings from these early research projects, Wodak and like-minded colleagues would develop the *discourse-historical approach* to CDA. DHA, as we will see, incorporates cognitive and contextual models in order to try and understand how such cognitive frames affect the reception and dissemination of discourse.

Forchtner, formerly of the University of Lancaster, has studied the work of Wodak and other DHA scholars quite extensively, and it is worthwhile to examine his research here, since

he brings a somewhat "outsider" perspective into the discussion. As he explains it, DHA scholars such as Wodak acknowledge the influence of the so-called "Frankfurt school" of neo-Marxist scholars (Forchtner, 2011). From this foundation, DHA adopts an ardently political stance described as "emancipatory" by Wodak. While Fairclough almost certainly intended his work to be used as a platform for social activism, at least in terms of exposing the legitimizing discourses used by powerful individuals and institutions, such talk of emancipation would appear to take this aspect of CDA work even further, to the point where the goal is to remove these individuals and institutions from their positions of power.

It could be argued that the work of Stevenson and similar scholars actually does promote such activism, so that DHA is hardly unique in this respect. Perhaps it is better, then, to focus on the intellectual heritage that DHA connects with in order to elucidate its differences. This is essentially the approach taken by Forchtner, which leads him into the work of Habermas, who it cited often by Wodak and others as a key influence. Forchtner highlights Habermas' conception of the *communicative act*, which is founded on the notion of the *validity claim*. Distilling these concepts, Forchtner notes that, according to Habermas, "whenever we say something meaningful, we implicitly or explicitly raise the claim that our utterance is true, right and/or truthful" (2011, p. 6). All forms of communication, then, including everyday conversation, are shaded with unspoken assumptions about what is and is not truthful and real. So, for example, a classroom in a school or university building is only conceived of as a classroom because those who engage with it – teachers, students, administrators, and support staff – treat it as such via communicative acts. This is and of itself is not necessary problematic, but in reality such communicative communities are dominated by a subset of agents who play a disproportionate role in shaping the content and character of the subjects

under discussion. This thinking led Habermas to conceive of what he calls the *ideal-speech situation* (ISS), an idealistic space in which communicative acts could occur, but where power dynamics would not come into play. Such a space, as Forchtner explains it, would meet four primary requirements: "publicness, absence of coercion, sincerity on the part of the participants, and inclusivity/the same rights for all participants" (2011, p. 7). The ISS is essentially a model by which we may contrast real communicative spaces and recognize their limitations.

To take an example of DHA-influenced scholarship that echoes the theoretical work of Habermas (and that was not produced by one of the "canonical" DHA scholars), Bhatia, now working out of the Department of English at the City University of Hong King, published a study of political press conferences that was founded on DHA principles (Bhatia, 2006). Though she borrows from other approaches to CDA and linguistics to refine her analysis, she indicates that Wodak's work was her primary influence. Her analysis, then, treats the political press conference as a discursive space in which statements that operate as validity claims (note that Bhatia never uses this specific term) legitimize and perpetuate the relationships of the actors. She focused on press conferences that involved leaders from two different, and often at least partially antagonistic, nations, such as a conference held by former Chinese President Jiang Zemin and former American President George W. Bush. Using the DHA concept of discourse in historical context, she notes that such conferences attract a diverse audience:

> The receivers and hearers are journalists, and other press and media authorities
> closely watching the developments; however, the ultimate audience is the
> international community of politicians, and more importantly, the general public
> who are being represented by their leaders (2006, p. 177).

The content of political press conferences, then, is adjusted in relation to the audience(s) that will receive it. What this means, generally, is that positive statements about mutual admiration and shared interests are used to portray an atmosphere of congeniality. In addition, however, contentious issues are also raised using carefully calculated linguistic strategies. For example, the use of "urges and stresses" statements – such as "I *stressed* the importance of negotiations" – couch what are often extremely polarizing disagreements (2006, p. 189). These dual strategies are intended to demonstrate to the wider audiences of political press conferences that their leaders can be diplomatic and cooperative, but that they will also attempt to impose their viewpoints upon other nations, which is particularly important with respect to powerful (and powerfully ideological) countries such as China and the United States. This approach will not please everyone, certainly, but it is something of a best-fit strategy designed to appeal to as many viewers as possible.[3] As Bhatia explains it:

> The discourse of press conferences interestingly represents an complex interplay
> of opposites: so far as the two main participants (politicians) are concerned, we
> see positivism versus conflict of interests; deep ideological divisions versus
> constructive, cooperative face; controlling specific and transparent contributions
> from other participants (pp. 195, 200).

Such a complex discursive system, it might be argued, is difficult to analyze without examining the context within which it operates from the perspective of the audiences that receive and interpret the information produced by such a system. There are important reasons why these antonymic discourses are employed that almost certainly have to do with audience expectations, at least in part.

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[3] The character of such audiences is, of course, not uniform. In places like China where access to media is generally more limited as compared to the United States, strategies would presumably be adjusted accordingly.

Fairclough certainly discusses the importance of context when engaging in CDA. But I think it is fair to say that CDA contexts are generally discussed with respect to texts and documents, not people. For example, in Fairclough's detailed analysis of the discursive strategies of Thatcher and her Conservative party, there is little to no discussion around the circumstances that led to her election. If her policies were so problematic, why did she and her party gain the support of so many voters? Understanding the perspective of the voters – that is, the cognitive frames within which they were acting – could prove highly insightful when considering the discourses that were then deployed once the Conservatives took power. DHA allows for such an approach to be introduced.

Conclusions

CDA has arrived at a time when positivist and quantitative approaches in many disciplines have fallen out of fashion. In LIS and IS work, concepts such as *information retrieval* have evolved into less deterministic categories such as *information behaviour*. Statistical analysis has been supplanted in large part by methods such as interviews and ethnographies. Data, analysis, and results are typically qualified and contextualized. Grand theories are not invented, nor applied. The personal and the political are emphasized, not minimized. Researchers strive to expose the corruptive aspects of power, not to conceal them.

This, at least, is a narrative that frames much of the critical work now underway in the social sciences and humanities. Like any narrative, it exaggerates some details and leaves out many nuances. Having said this, it is impossible to deny that critical linguistics and the issue of discourse have had a substantial impact on research in these areas, both in terms of enabling the construction of new methodologies and elucidating new ontological and epistemological

principles upon which to build research. Critical discourse analysis has provided a means by which to view old ideas from perspectives that reflect contemporary concerns over the reach and influence of corporate and political power. Fairclough developed his methods at a time when a novel form of conservative politics was enacting profound political, economic, and social change, and others scholars followed in his wake as the post-Cold War world has emerged, with discourses such as "globalization" and "Web 2.0" shaping the ways in which this world is presented to us. For information scholars, CDA does not provide a master key to unlock these discourses, but it provides a pathway – or, rather, a series of related pathways – from which to explore how such discourses are formed and supported, and what purposes they serve for those who employ them. Moreover, CDA offer LIS and IS tools by which these disciplines may evaluate their own work, and the role that information research plays, or could or should play, in terms of shaping wider critical work. Approaches such as DHA, moreover, suggest that CDA may be brought closer to the cognitive research underway in the same fields, thereby forming a wide platform from which to build new research and new methodologies.

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