



Exploring Multimodal and Critical Dimensions in Discourse Analysis: Theoretical Foundations and Methodological Approaches

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Abstract— This paper delves into the theoretical underpinnings of discourse analysis, specifically examining its multimodal and critical dimensions. As a starting point for comprehending discourse's multimodal character, it looks at the Hallidayan Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) method and Mediated Discourse Analysis (MDA). While Michael Halliday's SFL places an emphasis on language's social functions and its role in meaning construction across modes, Ron Scollon's MDA places an emphasis on the significance of mediated social action in discourse. Following this, the paper moves on to Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), dissecting two seminal methods: Teun van Dijk's Sociocognitive Approach (SCA) and Ruth Wodak and Martin Reisigl's Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA). By utilising these critical approaches, one can effectively analyse discourse for its power dynamics, ideology, and the way social identities are constructed. This paper seeks to provide a thorough understanding of the ways in which discourse is influenced by and shapes larger social, cognitive, and historical contexts by combining insights from critical theory with those from multimodal approaches.



Keywords— Discourse Analysis, Multimodal Analysis, Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), Mediated Discourse Analysis (MDA), Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), Sociocognitive Approach (SCA), Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA).

INTRODUCTION

Understanding how language creates, sustains, and questions social realities is the goal of discourse analysis, a vast and ever-evolving field. It incorporates various theoretical frameworks, each of which sheds light on the social role of language in unique ways. Mediated Discourse Analysis (MDA) and Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) are two examples of multimodal approaches that are essential for understanding the dynamic relationship between language and nonverbal cues like pictures, sounds, and gestures. Language, according to Michael Halliday's SFL (Halliday and Matthiessen, Introduction to Functional Grammar 14), is a social semiotic system that builds meaning through three interrelated meta functions: ideational, interpersonal, and textual.

Alternatively, critical methods that place greater emphasis on the power relations inherent in discourse include the Sociocognitive Approach (SCA) and the Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA). Using cognitive psychology and discourse analysis, Teun van Dijk created the SCA to investigate the ways in which mental models and socially shared knowledge impact discourse practices (van Dijk, Discourse and Context 10). In contrast, the Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA), which was first proposed by Ruth Wodak and Martin Reisigl, places an emphasis on the significance of revealing the ideological foundations and power dynamics embedded in texts by examining their historical and sociopolitical settings (Wodak and Reisigl, The Discourse-Historical Approach 21).

Discourse

There has been a lot of interest in discourse studies. The term "discourse" comes from the Latin 'discursus,' meaning 'running to and fro.' It was first used by René Descartes in his *Discourse on Method* (1637), but Michel Foucault reinterpreted it in *Archaeology of Knowledge* (1972) to mean statements that are influenced by specific historical contexts, shaped by power, social structures, and institutions. Beyond the realm of pure language, Foucault argued that discourse affects social behaviours and things of understanding via the practice and generation of knowledge (Hall 291; Foucault 49). "Discourse analysis" was first proposed by Zellig Harris, a structural linguist, who looked for formal regularities in language outside of clauses (Harris 3; Cook 13). Subsequently, Guy Cook and McCarthy developed this idea further by stressing how users and contexts influence discourse (Cook 13; McCarthy 10).

Analysing Discourse

Since the idea of discourse is complex and multidimensional, it has various definitions in different academic disciplines, such as philosophy, sociology, and linguistics. Fairclough distinguishes between oral and written discourse, focussing on the more abstract organisational characteristics and interactional dynamics of the former (Fairclough, *Discourse and Social Change*, 3; Widdowson, "Discourse Analysis," 157), while Widdowson emphasises the contentiousness of the latter. Discourse is defined by Stubbs, Brown, and Yule as "language in use," which is directly related to its environment and its potential uses (Stubbs; Brown 1). By tying speech to deeds, beliefs, and social constructions, Gee brings a sociopolitical dimension to the discussion (Gee 11). By expanding this perspective to include discourse as ever-changing and influenced by its audience, setting, and history, van Dijk highlights the multidisciplinary nature of discourse and its importance in fields as diverse as sociology, psychology, and linguistics (van Dijk, *Text and Context*, 2). Discourse is shown by scholars like Fairclough and Foucault to be both a reflection and a constitutive of social structures and power dynamics; it shapes knowledge, social relations, and ideologies (Fairclough, *Critical Discourse Analysis*, 58; Mills 6). A bridge between micro-level communication and macro-level societal structures, discourse analysis delves into the linguistic, contextual, and social-cultural-political aspects of discourse.

Critical Discourse (CDA)

One critical method for studying language is Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), which views discourse as a social activity impacted by ideological, cultural, and contextual elements (Fairclough & Wodak, *Critical Discourse Analysis* 258). Drawing on neo-Marxist

principles, critical discourse analysis (CDA) seeks to expose and critique prevailing ideologies that uphold inequality by investigating the relationship between language, power, and social structures. Some of the most influential thinkers in the field of critical theory have stressed the significance of interdisciplinary research, the socially constructed and shaped character of discourse, and the role of discourse in maintaining power dynamics. To examine the discourse's ideological foundations and their effects on oppressed groups, critical discourse analysis (CDA) incorporates a variety of theories and methodologies, including socio-cognitive models and intertextuality (Wodak & Myer 6, 21). Aligning with real-world social issues and transformational aims, it stands out from noncritical approaches by committing to uncovering hidden power relations (*Critical Discourse Analysis* 232–33).

Consequently, CDA delves into questions that scrutinize the interplay between discourse and power relations:

- i. How is the text situated or positioned itself?
- ii. Whose interests, if any, are being advanced through this positioning?
- iii. Whose 3, conversely, are being marginalized or undermined?
- iv. What are the ramifications of this positioning?

Hence, at the core of CDA lies the central concern of deciphering the intricate relationship between language and power dynamics. Consequently, it is evident that CDA carries neo-Marxist underpinnings, emphasizing that cultural and economic dimensions serve as the foundation for the establishment and perpetuation of power dynamics. Prominent figures in the field of CDA include Fairclough, Teun van Dijk, Gee, van Leeuwen, and Scollon. What sets CDA apart from noncritical approaches to discourse analysis is the inclusion of the term 'critical,' which significantly influences the analysis of discourse and realigns its orientation. Kinchloe and McLaren underscore that, despite varying applications across different discourse types, the term 'critical' unifies the interpretation of CDA by emphasizing a critical stance towards power dynamics within discourse (Kinchloe et.al 288). As highlighted by Kinchloe and McLaren, this critical orientation presupposes several fundamental principles:

- i. All thought is deeply rooted in socially and historically situated power relations.
- ii. The nature of reality is intertwined with values and various forms of ideological influences.
- iii. The relationship between concepts and objects, as well as between signifiers and signifieds, remains inherently unstable and is often mediated by the

social dynamics of capitalist production and consumption.

- iv. Language plays a central role in shaping subjectivity, both consciously and unconsciously.
- v. Within any society, certain groups enjoy privilege over others, and while the reasons for this privilege may vary, the perpetuation of oppression in contemporary societies is often reinforced when subordinates accept their social status as natural, necessary, or inevitable.
- vi. Oppression manifests in diverse forms, and focusing exclusively on one facet, such as class oppression versus racism, can obscure the interconnectedness among them.
- vii. Mainstream research practices, often unwittingly, contribute to the perpetuation of systems of class, race, and gender oppression (Kincheloe et.al 288). As articulated by Fairclough and Wodak, discourse is "socially constituted and socially constitutive," shaped by the backdrop of sociocultural and political forces. Therefore, the analysis of discourse in CDA serves as a tool for unearthing and understanding the complex web of social realities that language both reflects and shapes (Fairclough, "Critical Discourse Analysis" 258). This elucidates the rationale behind CDA's inclination to adopt the perspective of those who endure hardship, critically scrutinizing the language employed by those in positions of authority. These individuals bear responsibility for perpetuating social inequalities and possess the means and opportunities to effect positive change (Wodak, "Discourse Historical Approach" 14). Given the profound influence of discourse on society, questions of power emerge as pivotal. Discursive practices can yield significant ideological effects, contributing to the creation and perpetuation of unequal power dynamics across social classes, genders, and ethnic or cultural majorities and minorities. The ways in which discourse represents things and positions individuals can obscure both the ideological underpinnings of specific language usages and the underlying power dynamics, often remaining opaque to individuals. CDA seeks to bring these less visible aspects of discourse to the forefront (Wodak, "Critical Discourse Analysis" 2014 p 303).

Fairclough and Wodak delineate the fundamental principles that underpin Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA):

- i. CDA directs its focus toward the examination of social issues. It takes an interdisciplinary approach, concerned not exclusively with language use but also

with the linguistic aspects of sociocultural processes or problems.

- ii. In CDA, power and discourse are intertwined subjects of investigation. For instance, political interviews exemplify the discursive nature of power, demonstrating how power relations are mediated and negotiated through discourse. A rigorous analysis seeks to uncover the immediate and long-term effects of power dynamics managed through discourse.
- iii. Society and culture are influential forces in shaping discourse, and in turn, discourse plays a role in shaping society and culture. Social existence encompasses representations of the world, interpersonal relationships, and personal identities, and language usage plays a pivotal role in either perpetuating or altering these constructs, thus influencing society.
- iv. Ideologies serve as the tools for establishing or dismantling power relations, whether through spoken or written communication. Language use in texts is inherently ideological, making it essential to scrutinize texts for their interpretative and consequential aspects. This approach is necessary to gain an understanding of social reality and its representations.
- v. Discourses are interconnected with their predecessors or contemporaries and are deeply embedded in ideology, culture, and history. Their comprehension necessitates reference to these broader contexts.
- vi. The link between text and society is indirect but can be elucidated through various approaches such as 'orders of discourse' (Fairclough), a socio-psychological perspective (Wodak and Meyer), and a socio-cognitive model (Teun van Dijk).
- vii. CDA is a systematic and interpretative method with an explanatory dimension. It examines the interplay between text, society, ideologies, power dynamics, evolving contexts, and information to analyse and shed light on prevailing social conditions. Importantly, interpretations and explanations are not static but rather open and dynamic.
- viii. CDA is characterized as a socially committed scientific paradigm that views discourse as a form of social behavior. Its central aim is to unveil opacity and power relationships. As a self-reflexive approach, it makes its interests explicit and is attuned to practical concerns (Fairclough, Mulderrig, and Wodak 258).

CDA permits a detailed exploration of the relationship between language and other social processes, illuminating how language operates within power dynamics. Weiss and

Wodak perceive CDA as an interdisciplinary approach, embracing the tenets of 'interdisciplinarity' and 'transdisciplinary.' CDA does not adhere to a singular model but rather amalgamates various models rooted in diverse theoretical foundations and data sources. The foundational concepts of power, ideology, and discourse, integral to CDA, draw from a plethora of disciplines. As Wodak and Myer observe, providing a uniform theoretical foundation

for CDA proves challenging, as multiple approaches coexist (6). Within CDA, a diverse array of epistemological theories, general social theories, middle-range theories, micro-sociological theories, socio-psychological theories, discourse theories, and linguistic theories find their place, reflecting its interdisciplinary nature (24). Wodak and Myer illustrate the transdisciplinary nature of CDA as depicted in the following diagram:

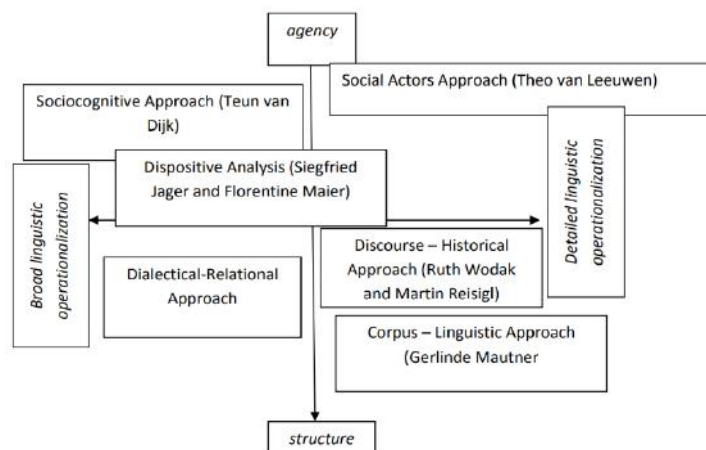


Fig.2.3 Linguistic Depth of Field and Level of Aggregation

Adapted from: Wodak, Ruth, and Michael Meyer, editors. *Methods of Critical Discourse Studies*. 3rd ed., SAGE Publications, 2015. Page 20)

Several prominent approaches have been proposed, including the Corpus Linguistics Approach (CLA), the Socio-Cognitive Approach (SCA), the Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA), and the Dialectical-Relational Approach (DRA).

The basis of CDA is the **Dialectical-Relational Approach (DRA)**, which is mainly related to Norman Fairclough. It places a strong emphasis on evaluating the discourse's power structure and how those in positions of authority use it to uphold social control (Fairclough, 1989). This method incorporates a transdisciplinary viewpoint to examine social changes, proposing that discourse and other social components are intricately entwined—a relationship that Fairclough refers to as "semiosis" (Fairclough, 2013 p.226). DRA studies the dialectical relationship between discourse and society, interacting with sociological theories to comprehend how discourse enacts and reflects social conflicts. To uncover the language expressions of dominance and resistance, DRA frequently refers to Marxist theory.

Teun A. van Dijk is a proponent of the **Socio-Cognitive Approach (SCA)**, which emphasises the relationship between discourse, cognition, and society. According to Van Dijk, comprehending discourse necessitates looking at the cognitive processes that underlie it, such as mental models and knowledge structures that affect how people create and

interpret texts (2009, p. 62). This method places a strong emphasis on the study of social cognition and how discursive practices maintain societal structures like inequality and dominance. The idea of "discursive injustice," which examines how particular texts and conversations contribute to social inequality and violate human rights, is fundamental to SCA (Van Dijk, 2009, p.63).

The **Corpus Linguistics Approach (CLA)** uses sizable text corpora that are electronically stored to perform discourse analysis in both quantitative and qualitative ways. CLA provides insights into more general social issues like racism and ageism by examining patterns and frequencies of linguistic features through the analysis of authentic language use (Mautner, 2009 p. 154). By extending the empirical base and enabling researchers to work with large amounts of text data, this method enhances CDA by lowering individual bias and boosting the reliability of findings (Mautner, 2009, p 154). To comprehend the co-textual environment and make deductions about the social meanings ingrained in language use, CLA frequently combines interpretative analysis with descriptive statistics (Biber et al., 1998 p. 230).

The representation of social actors in discourse is the focus of **Theo van Leeuwen's Social Actors Approach** in Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). This method reveals

underlying ideologies and power relations by analysing the linguistic and semiotic strategies used to include, exclude, or categorise social actors in various forms of text and talk (van Leeuwen, "The Representation" 41). According to Van Leeuwen's framework, various strategies, including role allocation, categorisation, exclusion, and nomination, influence how various groups are viewed and comprehended in social contexts (van Leeuwen, "The Representation" 41). The goal of the Social Actors Approach is to identify the processes by which language shapes social reality and upholds or modifies power structures. Nomination and categorisation, for example, have the power to shape public opinion by individualising or collectivising social actors (van Leeuwen, "The Representation" 41). Scholars can gain a deeper understanding of how discourse influences the marginalisation or empowerment of specific groups by examining these representational strategies; this approach is especially pertinent to studies on identity, immigration, and media representation (Mayr and Machin 78).

Another important method within CDA that looks at the connection between discourse, power, and knowledge is **Dispositive Analysis**, which has its roots in Michel Foucault's work. A network of discursive and non-discursive components, such as language, institutions, laws, and practices, collectively shape and govern social reality, is referred to as "dispositive" (Jäger and Maier 2016 p.109-136). The goal of dispositive analysis is to comprehend how these components work together to create a "regime of truth" that establishes social norms and acceptable behaviour (Foucault 194). This method places a strong emphasis on the institutional and material components of discourse, acknowledging that power is not only expressed through language but also through the practices, architectures, and technologies that shape daily existence (Jäger 2001 p.48). Through dispositive analysis, CDA researchers seek to illuminate the ways in which power is ingrained in social structures and shapes people's attitudes and actions. Dispositive analysis emphasises the interdependence of diverse power mechanisms, making it especially helpful for investigating issues pertaining to governance, institutional control, and surveillance.

The intricate web of connections among language, authority, and society can be better understood by employing any of these Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) methods. They stress the need to examine discourse in its cognitive, social, and historical settings to determine how language can either uphold or oppose social inequality. In this paper, we will take a closer look at the Social Actors Approach and the Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA), dissecting their methodology, theoretical underpinnings, and real-world uses.

The Social Actors Approach: Theory, Methodology, and Use

A key part of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is the Social Actors Approach (SAA), which looks at how people and groups are shown in texts and conversations. To fully grasp how language shapes and maintains power relationships, social identities, and group dynamics, this approach is very important (van Leeuwen, 1996; Fairclough, 2003). It gives us a way to look at how social actors are included, left out, activated, passive, or represented in ways that show how larger social and political structures work.

The Social Actors Approach is mostly based on the work of Theo van Leeuwen (1996, 2008), who said that how social actors are talked about in discourse is an important part of how people make sense of the world. According to van Leeuwen, discourse not only shows how things are in society, it also shapes them in important ways. This method is based on systemic functional linguistics (Halliday, 1978) and social semiotics, which focusses on the semiotic tools that are used to include or exclude certain social actors and put them in certain social roles (van Leeuwen, 2008).

Van Leeuwen (1996) named a few important ways that social actors are shown in discourse, these are some of them:

Exclusion and Inclusion: Whether a social actor is mentioned at all or left out on purpose (for example, when passive voice is used to say "mistakes were made"). Role allocation is how people are put into two groups: active doers (agents) and passive receivers of actions (patients).

When people are talking about actors, they are either called individuals or members of a larger group (for example, "migrants" vs. "a migrant family"). It refers to how people can be identified by name or by their social roles, statuses, or memberships in groups (for example, "President Biden" vs. "the government").

Functionalisation and Identification: Whether people are named for what they do (like "workers") or for who they are (like "immigrants"). A systematic look at how language choices show and reinforce power dynamics in discourse is part of the SAA methodological framework. In most cases, this includes:

How to figure out the social actors portrayed in a text?

- (i) Looking at the patterns of who is included and who is left out to find out which groups are highlighted or veiled.
- (ii) We will look at the activation and passivation strategies used to see who is given control and who is shown as passive.

- (iii) Comparing these choices to bigger social and political situations in order to figure out what they mean from an ideological point of view (Fairclough, 2003; Wodak & Meyer, 2009).
- (iv) When the media talk about issues, they often show marginalised groups in passive ways that hide their power, while they show dominant groups as active forces for change (Machin & Mayr, 2012). This shows bigger problems with power in society and how language can either fix these problems or make them worse (Richardson, 2007).

SAA has been used a lot in many fields, such as organisational analysis, political communication, and media studies. For instance, Reisigl and Wodak (2001) used this method to look at political speeches and showed how language is used to build national identities and support policies that keep some people out. In the same way, van Leeuwen (2008) looked at corporate communication to show how companies try to look responsible while downplaying their effects on society or the environment.

In the past few years, SAA has also been used in digital discourse, where algorithmic filters and user-generated content represent social actors (KhosraviNik, 2017). This shows how the approach can be changed to fit new media environments and the changing ways that online social identities are made and contested.

Discourse Historical Approach

Within the larger field of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), the Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA) was initially applied to analyse anti-Semitic stereotypes that surfaced during Kurt Waldheim's 1986 Austrian presidential campaign, revealing his covert Nazi affiliations (Datondji, André Cocou, and Franck Amousou 70). From this research, DHA developed four key features: an interdisciplinary approach, a focus on real-world issues, a reliance on teamwork, and a systematic principle of triangulation. This multidisciplinary approach brought together sociological, historical, and linguistic analysis to create a framework that was used in real-world situations, like the University of Vienna's "Postwar Anti-Semitism" exhibition (70). From its inception, DHA has developed and is currently guided by several fundamental ideas, such as interdisciplinarity, problem-orientation, integrating theories and methods, using ethnography, and emphasising the connection between theory and empirical data. It also takes into account various genres and public areas, gives historical background, makes use of adaptable categories and instruments, applies moderate theories, and places a strong emphasis on the real-world applications of the findings. It also considers various genres and environments in public, gives historical background, makes use of adaptable

categories and instruments, applies moderate theories, and places a strong emphasis on the real-world applications of the findings. DHA stands out due to its emphasis on identity formation, unfair discrimination, and its theoretical foundations in the Frankfurt School's critical theory, particularly in Habermas's philosophy of language. To minimise subjectivity, triangulation—which incorporates a variety of data, methods, theories, and background information—is essential in DHA (Wodak, "The discourse of politics in action", 2009 p. 65). When analysing discursive events, DHA also highlights the significance of historical knowledge by considering the historical contexts and sources.

The focus of DHA is the methodical analysis of context and how meaning is constructed. Van Dijk contended—quoted by Wodak (2009, p. 13–14)—that critical discourse studies frequently fell short of completely elucidating the relationship between text and context. According to Van Dijk (2008), context is the mentally constructed arrangement of social situational elements that are important for the creation or understanding of discourse (p. 417). He emphasised that the notion that discourse is historical is a fundamental tenet of critical discourse analysis. DHA is one of the most well-known and adaptable critical approaches to discourse analysis, according to Reisigl (2017) (p. 44).

DHA is one of the most well-known and adaptable critical approaches to discourse analysis, according to Reisigl (2017) (p. 44). Asserting that discourse is always historical, that is, it is connected synchronically and diachronically with other communicative events which are happening at the same time, or which have happened before supported Van Dijk's (2008) viewpoint. Wodak (2001: 65) went on to say that DHA aims to include a great deal of historical information about the social and political contexts in which discursive events take place. To put it another way, a thorough analysis must incorporate past experiences, current events, and future goals when performing CDA using DHA (Wodak, 2009: 11).

While there are some similarities between DHA and other CDA approaches, there are also some unique characteristics. First, although DHA is in line with Critical Theory, it prioritises historical analysis and the discourse model over general social theory, considering context essentially as historical. Second, compared to other CDA techniques, DHA employs the triangulation principle more methodically, especially in large-scale research endeavours. Triangulation entails considering a broad variety of empirical observations, theories, techniques, and contextual data. Third, DHA frequently highlights the useful application of analytical discoveries, such as promoting the

use of language that is non-discriminatory. DHA, for example, criticises discourses that uphold patriarchal social structures, which systematically disadvantage and disempower women while favouring men as a social group. Fourth, compared to other CDA approaches like Van Dijk's Social-Cognition and Fairclough's Dialectical-Relational Approach, the concept of "rhetoric" is more important in DHA (Datondji, André Cocou, and Franck Amousou 77). Argumentation is a key component of rhetoric in DHA, with the argumentative step building on the observational, descriptive, and explanatory steps of CDA. Fifth, DHA takes a multi-perspectival approach to discourse, considering different perspectives on social scales, in contrast to the mono-perspectival concept of discourse put forth by Fairclough and Van Leeuwen, which sees discourse as relating to a single perspective on social reality. Sixth, compared to other discourse analysts, DHA practitioners make more references to Functional Pragmatics. Compared to other CDA techniques, DHA places more of an emphasis on historical topics and anchoring because of these special qualities. However, DHA practitioners also collaborate with proponents of other CDA methods.

To understand the Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA) better, it's helpful to know how to identify and analyze its specific patterns. According to Wodak (2015a 10), a thorough discourse-historical analysis ideally follows an eight-stage process, which is often applied in a recursive manner. These stages are:

- (i) Literature Review and Theoretical Knowledge Activation: This involves reviewing previous research, reading relevant literature, and engaging in discussions to activate existing theoretical knowledge.
- (ii) Systematic Data and Context Collection: Data and contextual information are gathered with an emphasis on diverse discourses, genres, and texts, contingent upon the research questions.
- (iii) Data Selection and Preparation for Analysis: All relevant preparations, such as recording transcription, are completed, and the gathered data is narrowed down based on predetermined criteria.
- (iv) Research Questions and Assumptions: Specific research questions are developed and assumptions are made in light of the literature review and preliminary data analysis.
- (v) Qualitative Pilot Analysis: To help focus the research questions, a preliminary analysis is carried out to test assumptions and categories.
- (vi) Detailed Case Studies: A thorough examination of various data sets is carried out, mostly through

qualitative techniques and some quantitative analysis.

- (vii) Critique Formulation: Considering the three dimensions of critique, the findings are interpreted with an emphasis on pertinent context.
- (viii) Application of Analytical Results: The conclusions are use or suggested for use in practice whenever possible.

Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis

Multimodal Discourse Analysis (MDA) is an advanced methodological approach within discourse studies challenging the conventional monomodal perspective of communication (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2001). Discourse is, according to academics, intrinsically multimodal; failing to recognise this complexity leads to a distorted view of communication (Scollon & Levine 1). Influenced by the availability of audiotape recorders and typewriters, the historical restriction of discourse analysis to text and audio recordings limited the scope of analysis and focused mostly on verbal interactions while overlooking other modes of communication (Erickson qtd. in Scollon & Levine 2). But technological developments—especially the arrival of digital tools and video recording—have increased the analytical opportunities of discourse studies by enabling researchers to record complex interactions combining speech, body language, and visual cues (Jewitt 5). MDA has been quite helpful in professional and educational environments when examining workspaces, in which discourse spans material objects, spatial configurations, and digital interfaces outside of spoken language (Whalen et al. qtd. in Scollon & Levine 3). Furthermore, the growth of the internet and social media has helped new discourse forms to arise and calls for fresh analytical approaches (Jones et al. qtd. in Scollon & Levine 4.). Scholars have looked at how web-based platforms create original multimodal interactions, including identity building, performative discourse, and mediated social interactions (Goddard et al. qtd. in Scollon & Levine 5). In studies of social action, MDA has shed light on the interaction of linguistic and non-linguistic components, including in immigration interviews, home settings, and visually impaired communication (de Saint-Georges et al. qtd. Scollon & Levine 6). Video ethnography's contribution to discourse studies has shown even more how often participants in social interactions give nonverbal cues top priority over auditory elements, so subverting presumptions about the primacy of spoken language (Kuipers qtd. in Scollon & Levine 7). Beyond the conventional teacher-student-textbook model, MDA has been vital in analysing how technology-mediated learning environments affect communication in educational research. Digital interfaces, multimedia content, and

software-mediated pedagogies (Jewitt & Erickson qtd. in Scollon & Levine 8) have all been examined. Deeper understanding of educational discourse and pedagogical changes (Erickson qtd. in Scollon & Levine 9) thanks to the evolution of recording technologies has made longitudinal discourse studies able to capture patterns across long periods feasible. MDA is essential in the context of social media, especially Instagram, in examining how multimodal food narratives are created using textual descriptions, hashtags, visual aesthetics, and interactive elements (Page 12). MDA reinforces its importance as a vital methodological tool in modern discourse analysis since, given the growing relevance of digital discourse, it provides a thorough framework for understanding how different semiotic resources contribute to meaning-making, ideology construction, and social interaction.

Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) by Halliday

Halliday has made a significant impact on the study of discourse by defining it as a larger-than-a-sentence linguistic unit that is intrinsically tied to a particular setting. Halliday uses Bronislaw Malinowski's idea of the "context of situation" to delve into the complex link between language use and social interaction in his 1978 book, *Language as Social Semiotic: The Sociological Interpretation of Language and Meaning*. Halliday agrees with Malinowski that even when translated into one's own language, texts written by members of a particular society may still be difficult for those outside of that society to completely understand. The difficulty stems from the fact that written works contain more than meets the eye in terms of meaning. Only by placing them in their original historical and cultural contexts can their hidden meanings be revealed. The real sentences and words we meet in language acquire their meaning from what they might stand for, as Halliday stresses. He goes on to say that languages are not static but rather emerge from their contexts (28). The meaning of what is communicated is always shaped by the context in which it is experienced, which is a combination of people, actions, and events. That idea is called the "situation," and language is said to operate within these "contexts of situation." It is highly unlikely that any study of language that fails to include the situation as an essential component will be artificial and disappointing. Field, tenor, and mode are the three main ideas that underpin Halliday's paradigm for contextual analysis. All socio-linguistic situations can be effectively illustrated by combining these three categories:

i. The **field of discourse** includes not only the topics covered in the text but also the actions taken by the participants in the discourse. It entails taking into consideration multiple factors, such as who is involved,

when and where something is happening, why it is happening, and what is happening.

ii. The social relations between the people involved in a speech situation are referred to as the **tenor** of the discourse. It considers the participants' roles, the level of formality, the dynamics of power, and the emotional connections between them. Members of the language system make interpersonal choices governed by the tenor, which affects the strategies and structures used to enable language exchange.

iii. Dialect is a way of describing the function and use of language in interactions through speech. Considerations such as the **mode** of transmission (oral, written, written for oral delivery, etc.), rhetorical framework, and linguistic goal (explanatory, instructive, persuasive, etc.) are all part of it. Halliday stresses that the "context of situation" is more narrowly defined than the "context of culture" as a whole (28). While the "context of culture" includes the broader institutional and cultural settings, in his view, the "context of situation" refers only to the more immediate and specific surroundings of a textual event.

Linguistic Study of Text and Discourse (2006) by Halliday explores three functions of language that cover the main roles that language plays. Here are the functions:

i. The meanings derived from the ways language portrays an interlocutor's experiences constitute the **ideational function** of language. Essentially, it deals with the portrayal of actions taken by individuals in particular contexts within the actual world, and how language reflects either the interlocutor's internal or exterior reality.

ii. Concerned with the impact of language on interpersonal relationships, this is the **interpersonal function**. It includes things like asking for and giving information, convincing people to do things, and making offers. Evaluations of necessity, desirability, and likelihood are all part of the expressed opinions and attitudes covered in this area. At its core, it is a system that uses language to organise the social dynamics among people.

iii. The **textual function** is concerned with the way language is structured in respect to its context, specifically how it helps to create coherence within a specific text. Using a variety of linguistic resources to create connections and coherence among a text's various linguistic elements is the textual function (Halliday 9).

These roles are fundamental to the overarching goals for which language has developed, and they reflect various aspects of the meaning potential within language. Understanding the various contexts in which language operates, conveying meaning and facilitating social interaction, requires a framework that includes these categories and functions. The organisation of linguistic

resources and Halliday's model of language functions are in perfect harmony, as are his categories of context. Halliday identifies three distinct roles for language: the tenor with interpersonal functions, the field of discourse with

ideational functions, and the mode with textual functions. The following tables provide a concise summary and explanation of this relationship.

CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS		
Discourse Categories	Context	Questions Leading to Analysis
GENRE	Name	What is the name of the genre of which this text is an example?
FIELD	Social context	In what social setting is this kind of text typically produced? What constraints and obligations does this setting impose on speakers' listeners/writers and readers?
	Communicative purpose	What is the communicative purpose of this text (this may involve explicit and implicit factors)?
TENOR	Roles	What roles may be required of writers and readers in this genre?
	Cultural values	What shared cultural values may be required of speakers' listeners/writers and readers in this genre?
MODE	Text context	What knowledge of other texts may be required of speakers' listeners/writers and readers in this genre?
	Formal text features	What shared knowledge of formal text features (conventions) is required to participate effectively in this genre?

Discourse Categories	Language Function	Questions leading to Analysis
FIELD	Ideational: experiential/logical metafunction	Focus on lexico-grammar: What is the text about? How are the logical relationships in the text signaled?
TENOR	Interpersonal metafunction	How is the relationship between the writer and reader constructed? How is the power relationship between the writer and reader signaled? How does the writer signal evaluations (approval/disapproval, acceptance/rejection, certainty /uncertainty, etc.)?
MODE	Textual metafunction	How is the text organized at a micro level (Theme / Rhyme) and as a series of larger units of meaning (e.g. discourse moves such as Situation, Problem, Response, etc)?

Mediated Discourse Analysis

A method for analysing discourse that was created in the early 2000s by Ron Scollon and colleagues is known as Mediated Discourse Analysis (MDA). The relationships between speech and deed in multi-faceted social settings are the primary emphasis of this theoretical framework. Two main types of questions that other methods have neglected to adequately investigate are addressed by MDA. The study begins by looking into the function of texts in social actors' activities, including the reasons behind and methods for using texts in these actions. The second aspect of MDA is

its investigation into the production process, specifically how texts are born out of social interaction.

The standard procedure for MDA to begin an investigation is to ask questions like:

Can you tell me what people are doing and why they are doing it in this context?

- What role does speech play in facilitating these behaviours? Who makes it, why, and what are their driving forces?

Unlike methods that rely on textual analysis alone to decipher meaning, MDA questions the idea that meaning

can always be inferred from text alone. On the contrary, it places an emphasis on evaluating texts in their actual social interaction contexts as tools used by individuals in real-time, concrete actions.

Essentially, MDA aims to connect discourse analysis—which doesn't always take social actions into account—with social analysis—which doesn't always take discourse into account. Ron Scollon first developed the core ideas of MDA in the late 90s, based on his research that spanned more than 50 years.

As a result of his interest in stories, Scollon delved into new literacy studies (Scollon and Scollon 1981) and the ethnography of communication (Scollon and Scollon 1979). Following this, he investigated media discourse and conducted an extensive study of Nexus Analysis (Scollon and Scollon 2004; Scollon 1998). In addition, he brought a theoretical framework based on the nexus of practice to his earlier work on first language acquisition (Scollon 2001a).

A major focus of MDA is deciphering the ways in which larger macro-social-political discourses, like religious or nationalist discourses, permeate our lived experiences. The function of embodied actions in the foretelling or creation of particular events, states, or behaviours is another area that has been the subject of research into the dialogic relationship between discourse and action. The political sphere is interested in showing how micro-interactional embodied actions give rise to macro-level policies and regulations, rather than the other way around. Thus, activities at this level can also impact these rules and regulations (Scollon 2008). A man in Oman who is quadriplegic makes strategic use of narratives and anticipatory discourses, as discussed by Al Zidjaly (2006). By telling these stories, he convinces his carers to change a law that affects people with disabilities. In a similar vein, Dunne (2003) delves into the various interests that shaped Egyptian President Mubarak's speeches and the meanings of "democracy" that were communicated. Both studies highlight how regulations and "politics" start off as a web of small-scale actions and practices, eventually reaching larger-scales and influencing the lives of others.

Investigating the anticipatory stances people take regarding their ability to bring about change in the future, Al Zidjaly furthers the work of others (S Scollon, 2001; de Saint-Georges, 2003, in press). The repercussions of not integrating the practices and discourses of one group with another can be revealed when we focus on larger discourses and actions, but we can also gain insight into cases where these discourses do not resonate with the actors they aim to reach. Public media portrayals of AIDS/HIV and the identities and behaviours of social actors involved in risky sexual practices or drug use are drastically different, as

Jones (1999, 2007) shows in presenting the main results of the groundbreaking study in MDA. People are encouraged to disassociate their sexual conduct from the possibility of contracting AIDS/HIV by the official claim that quality individuals do not get the virus. Because of this divide, public health discourses are mostly useless in changing people's behaviour, which leads to predictable results.

Research by R. Scollon (1997), S. Scollon (2001), Jones (1999, 2007), and Wohlwend (2009b) and others has provided strong evidence of the complex network of social practices through which people build their social identities, assign those identities to others, and renegotiate the scripts connected to their social roles. Additionally, they illuminate the ways in which people piece together these identities by selectively incorporating or omitting parts of circulating discourses (Norris 2005), which can have significant consequences at times. This common thread running through many MDA studies highlights an underlying fascination with human action, both as a theoretical matter and as the bedrock of societal transformation (Johnston, 2004) and personal growth. As a result, many MDA scholars have focused on important societal problems.

These projects may focus on different parts of MDA and tackle different issues, but they all have a few things in common. To begin, they embrace a wide-ranging understanding of discourse, which includes not only verbal and written expressions but also the larger social and historical "Discourses" (Gee, 1996: 132) embedded in the physical space, individual actions and beliefs, and material possessions. Many kinds of ideas, attitudes, and representations are on display in these discourses. Secondly, because the topics and practices they study are complex, these researchers often use a wide range of methods, combining and selecting those that work best for the analysis problems they're facing.

In addition, MDA often goes beyond the immediate context, investigating the connections between present and future discourses, since complicated issues often cross both geographical and temporal boundaries. Unlike many other discourse approaches, this one takes a broad view of discourse analysis that extends beyond its conventional limits (R Scollon 2001b; de Saint-Georges, 2005). Because it draws on so many different theoretical frameworks, MDA is fundamentally multidisciplinary. Jensen (2007) lists the following fields as its ancestors: cultural geography, multimodal discourse analysis, social semiotics, practice theory, anthropological linguistics, conversation analysis, linguistics (including communication ethnography), anthropological linguistics, social semiotics, the New Literacy Studies, and social interaction. MDA is not afraid to mix these frameworks, even if they aren't compatible

with each other in other places. The understanding that multi-faceted approaches are necessary to tackle complicated social issues is what drives this eclectic approach.

In their own special ways, the frameworks illuminate different facets of social practices from an MDA standpoint. The goal of both MDA and critical discourse analysis is to understand social issues and conflicts, for example. Discourse analysis, according to both schools of thought, can shed light on power dynamics at the heart of social practice and on social problems that are primarily constructed through discourse. Discursive practices are not, according to MDA, the fundamental or constitutive social practice from which all power relations and society emerge. On the contrary, MDA argues that discourse is one of how culture and society are moulded. It argues that non-discursive practices and the material goods of society, like photography, skateboarding, and customs, also shape society and culture (Jones, in press).

The goal of MDA is to broaden this theoretical framework to include every kind of mediation technique. Specifically, it argues that practices mould not just literacy but all mediators of actions. When compared to conventional social theory, which uses social classes or groups as its primary analytical unit, MDA takes a different tack. Individuals within social groups are frequently seen as interchangeable in these theories, which hold that social groups are the primary social units that impact society and the world at large. Theories like these often revolve around questions about the chain reaction that begins with interactions between different social classes or groups, culminates in the formation of an ideology, and then finds its way into the bodies of its individual members, giving those groups a sense of stability and permanence. Where these conflicts take place, social institutions function as ontological entities, and individuals are only meaningful insofar as they are seen as symbols of these institutions (Wertsch 1991).

As a counterargument, MDA embraces what is known as a "individual ontology," which is also called cognitive ontology. This view holds that human agency, values, and will are the building blocks of reality. Although some people may tap into the collective strength of groups that share similar objectives or passions, the emphasis is on the individual or interindividual level when thinking about challenges, disputes, or productive interactions. A labour union, which consists of many individuals working together, might go on strike for better pay, for instance. As the main field from which all other parts of this cognitive ontology stem, cognitive psychology takes centre stage within it. The major focus of MDA, on the other hand, is on

social actions performed by social actors via a variety of mediational mechanisms (Wertsch 1991).

These encompass the whole range of material and immaterial "objects" that facilitate human behaviour and interaction by acting as channels for past and present culture. From physical instruments like drills and bottle openers to more abstract representational tools like language, diagrams, mnemonic techniques, intonation, pitch, and genres, they cover a vast array of uses. A mediating mechanism's efficacy is conditional on the degree to which an individual internalises its use over the course of their lifetime, and it is limited in its ability to facilitate all actions.

CONCLUSION

This paper has gone into a lot of detail about multimodal and critical approaches in discourse analysis, focussing on their theoretical bases and practical uses. Putting Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) and Mediated Discourse Analysis (MDA) together has shown how important language is as a social semiotic resource and how actions that are mediated play a part in making sense of things. These points of view show how important it is to look at both linguistic structures and social settings when trying to understand discourse.

Also, the Social Actors Approach (SAA) and the Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA) have shown how important the critical aspects of discourse are in shaping social identities, supporting ideologies, and keeping power dynamics in place. These critical approaches stress how important context is for finding the hidden ways that language either reinforces or challenges social inequality. Context includes cognitive, historical, and social factors. The analysis showed that multimodal and critical approaches to discourse are not just interested in how language is put together; they are also interested in how it affects society and how it serves ideologies. Researchers can better understand the complexity of discourse in both traditional and digital media settings by combining ideas from these different frameworks. This all-around approach is very important for finding out how language affects cultural identities, power structures, and social relationships. This is why critical discourse analysts need it so much.

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