

LEARNING ABOUT LANGUAGE



CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

A PRACTICAL INTRODUCTION TO POWER IN LANGUAGE

SIMON STATHAM

Critical Discourse Analysis

This book provides a comprehensive account of the discipline of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and demonstrates multiple linguistic methods through which it exposes and demystifies ideologies that are present in institutional discourse. The book enables readers to critique the complexities of the relationship between language and power to expose the ideological operation of discourse. Proceeding from a theoretical grounding for CDA in contemporary society, the book comprises analysis of a wide range of discourse examples, including the news media, political speeches, public service leaflets and social media. Readers are guided through a diverse range of models in CDA in order to scrutinise and assess the role of language in society and to consider and challenge the principles of powerful networks, institutions and organisations.

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A Practical Introduction to Power in Language

SIMON STATHAM

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Introduction

This book provides a comprehensive account of the discipline of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and demonstrates multiple linguistic methods through which it exposes and demystifies ideologies that are present in institutional discourse. The book commences with a theoretical grounding and becomes more analytical and more specialised as it progresses. Chapter 1 presents the principles of CDA and Chapter 2 demonstrates how these principles are pursued in practice through an introductory analysis of the representation of an industrial dispute in the media. The subsequent chapters are a testament to the methodological scope of CDA, with each chapter introducing and applying a new model of analysis. These analyses also illustrate the wide range of discourse arenas which are examined by critical discourse analysts. Chapter 3 examines constructions of war through application of the transitivity framework and Chapter 4 discusses representations of environmental campaigns in the press by presenting and applying the model of Appraisal and introducing grammatical mood and modality. Chapter 5 initially focusses on an example of the discourse which has sought to recast higher education in marketised terms by investigating the cohesion and coherence of a university website. This chapter also analyses two leaflets, one from a recent election and another from governmental and public bodies which exemplifies problematic social constructions of sexual assault, in order to present the simultaneous applications of models for the analysis of the three functions of language in Systemic Functional Linguistics. Chapter 6 analyses the importance of voices in discourse, focussing on the presentation of sources alongside other institutional factors of the media. Chapter 7 considers the role of discourse in the construction of 'race' through a comprehensive account of social actor analysis. Chapters 8 and 9 exemplify the relevance of CDA for the analysis of politics. Chapter 8 deconstructs the strategic functions of a political speech and Chapter 9, in the type of exercise likely to dominate in contemporary critical linguistics, analyses the language of preliminary government responses to the Covid-19 pandemic. CDA is a multimodal discipline, and Chapter 10 illustrates the analysis of visual alongside textual discourses, whilst Chapter 11 discusses language and power online, evaluating the emancipatory potential of the internet and investigating the language used by opposing sides in the Irish abortion referendum on Twitter. In each of these investigations close linguistic analysis is strengthened by a thorough discussion of the socio-political context of the data. Chapter 12 overviews

recent developments in CDA which have engaged with corpus, cognitive and ethnomethodological approaches.

As you will read about in more detail in Chapter 1, CDA engages fully with the social and political conditions in which discourse is produced and assesses the potential motivations and institutional factors which underlie this production. CDA is a politically motivated discipline which uses close linguistic analysis to expose the operation of power in societal language. Students and practitioners of CDA are therefore called upon to be both analysts and activists. CDA is a progressive and political discipline which seeks to challenge stratified organisations of society which legitimise capitalism, racism, sexism and classism. By exposing these ideologies we partake in the political process and reject any view of discourse as objective, neutral or disinterested. Chapter 1 will expand upon the role of CDA in contemporary society and will provide you with the theoretical foundation to fully engage with the analytical content of the other chapters in the book. The divisions and conflicts through which much of contemporary society is organised are enshrined in the dialogical relationship between language and power. This book will enable you to critique the complexities of this relationship in order to expose the ideological operation of discourse. The fundamental aim of this book and of the discipline of CDA is that readers will employ linguistic scholarship to scrutinise, challenge and ultimately undermine the principles of powerful networks, institutions and organisations which thrive on these divisions.

1

Power in Language

Principles of Critical Discourse Analysis

KEY TERMS IN CHAPTER 1: power, discourse, ideology

1.1 Introduction

This book is about analysing the various forms of language in society. In particular, it is about investigating power in society and demonstrating how this power is enacted through language. We are interested in powerful institutions in society – think of the government, the media, the legal system or the church as examples of such institutions – and how they can enact influence through language. These institutions draw power through social resources such as wealth and access to knowledge and education, which in turn equip them with status and authority. In this book we will examine the network of power in society and analyse the wide-ranging ways that power is administered through language. The book provides instruction in and endorsement of the scholarly field of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). This broad discipline is dedicated to the exposure of the ideological operation of power in the social world. Chapters 1 and 2 will unpack and expand upon the principles and practice of CDA, outlining key terms and practical approaches for students who are committed to discovering, and perhaps challenging, how power and ideology are disseminated through forms of language with which we interact on a daily basis. Language often operates to persuade us of the apparent validity and ‘naturalness’ of the principles through which powerful groups and institutions wield control in society.

Before embarking upon a more in-depth explanation in this chapter and a practical demonstration of CDA in Chapter 2, it is necessary to offer some explanations of the main theoretical positions which underpin the discipline. CDA is essentially about examining and exposing how power operates through language, but this seemingly simple definition requires a good deal more consideration so that we can fully appreciate what are very significant aspirations.

1.2 Key Terms: Power, Discourse and Ideology

At the very outset of examining the relationship between power and language, it is necessary to first consider what we mean by the concept of **power** itself. Fairclough (2015), a major figure in Critical Discourse Analysis to whose work we will return throughout this book, offers a useful starting point for thinking about power:

Power is not in itself bad. On the contrary, the power of people to do things is generally a social good. We need to distinguish between the ‘power to’ do things and ‘power over’ other people, though we need to see this binary (and others) in a dialectical way: having power over people increases the power to do things; power to do things is conditional (in some cases at least) on having power over people. But ‘power over’ is not inherently bad either, as long as it is legitimate; we vote in elections for governments or councils which have various forms of legitimate power over the rest of us [...] Having and exercising power over other people becomes open to critique when it is not legitimate, or when it has bad effects, for instance when it results in unacceptable and unjustifiable damage to people or to social life.

(Fairclough, 2015:26–27)

Fairclough’s explanation essentially makes a distinction between potential and practice: power has the potential to operate in the interests of individuals and society. However, the achievement of this potential depends very much on the practical organisation of power within society itself. As we move through this book, much of what we will uncover will demonstrate that power is very often not enacted in the interests of ‘social good’. We will also point out, however, that the very process of uncovering this reality can contribute to a potential for resistance against the ‘bad effects’ of power.

At the centre of the processes of power is the extent to which power can be considered ‘legitimate’. Fairclough’s introductory gloss offers the example of democratic elections as a site of legitimate power. However, elections, like all political processes, rather than being thought of as inherently legitimate, should instead be viewed as part of the process of ‘legitimation’. This is because concepts like democracy and practices like elections, whilst generally being viewed as positive, are not inherent or natural. Despite how language might have conditioned us to think that such concepts are natural, rather they are all constructs which contribute, to varying degrees depending on the individual context, to the maintenance of society. It is for this reason, for example, that there are so many different forms of elections and so many varying perspectives on democracy; what unifies these processes is that they all operate to legitimise power. In the United States a president can be elected with fewer votes nationally than those won by an opponent; in the United Kingdom a prime minister usually leads the largest party in the House of Commons, although s/he will only

have directly received votes in one of 650 parliamentary constituencies. Both jurisdictions are pointedly different and yet both are often viewed as bastions of democracy, not without irony, as we will discover. As this book proceeds we will begin to appreciate that systems and concepts which appear as legitimate components of the ‘natural order of things’ are anything but natural.

The perspective which will be taken in this book is that power is directly connected to access to social resources, i.e. the more access to wealth, knowledge and influence possessed by an institution or an individual, the greater the power they will possess. We will primarily be focussed on the power of institutions, and many of the analyses which comprise the subsequent chapters will concentrate on ascendant institutions such as the government or the media and how they maintain, solidify and increase their power. In particular, we will focus on the role of language in these processes, thinking about how institutions use language in various ways to make themselves legitimate in the eyes of society. How power operates in practice can be somewhat more complex than simply the potential for good or bad. Some necessary theory and important terms in the next section will help to explain how power can be viewed as a legitimising process. Once this is established, the principles and practice of Critical Discourse Analysis will make much more sense.

1.2.1 Power as Domination and Persuasion

In order to fully understand the inter-relationship between power and language, it is necessary to first set some theoretical parameters for how power will be understood in this book. We will discuss two very useful types of power in this section, classified by Scott (2001) as ‘mainstream’ and ‘second stream’ power. The mainstream view of power correlates with a general, fairly one-dimensional definition of power-as-domination whilst the slightly more complex second stream concentrates on power-as-persuasion.

The mainstream view of power-as-domination represents how many people in non-scholarly contexts might define power and has its origins in traditional perspectives on the power of nation states.

Actors seek to make others do what they would otherwise not do, and they resist the attempts of others to make them act in ways contrary to their own preferences [...] power relations are seen as asymmetrical, hierarchical relations of super- and sub-ordination in which one agent can gain only at the expense of another. They must be seen in the conflicting interests and goals of the participants and the ability of some to secure the compliance of others.
(Scott, 2001:6)

This view of power is based on the work of German sociologist Max Weber ([1914] 1978), whose theory of bureaucracy continues to inform social scientific thinking on the power of premodern and modern nation states. Importantly for

the understanding of power we are aiming to build here, Weber's focus on the corrective power of the state also recognises the power of institutions such as businesses, the legal system and the church. From a mainstream perspective of power, states and these associated institutions secure the compliance of others through control and dominance. Each of these institutions possesses traditional authority over people and often has the ability to punish non-compliance or resistance.

In order to undertake critical linguistic work, or indeed any critical scholarly work, into the operation of power in society, the second stream view of power-as-persuasion is equally if not more relevant:

According to this view, power is the collective property of whole systems of cooperating actors, of the fields of social relations within which particular actors are located. At the same time, it stresses not the repressive aspects of power but the 'facilitative' or productive aspects. Of particular importance are the communal mechanisms that result from the cultural, ideological, or discursive formations through which consensus is constituted.

(Scott, 2001:9)

In this definition Scott stresses the importance of power as 'facilitative' and 'communal'. This is a perspective of power relations which transcends the limited notion that power is merely enacted from above by powerful institutions. Instead this view recognises power as persuasive and emanating from consent within society. This is not to say that there is no distinction between influential institutions and those over whom they exert control, rather the second stream view of power stipulates that the processes of this control are much more subtle than a group of powerful organisations bluntly controlling less dominant groups or individuals. This more subtle, persuasive process is represented by the work of Italian communist Antonio Gramsci (1971) and his principle of 'hegemony'. Hegemony refers to the ways in which powerful groups persuade subordinates of the importance and legitimacy of their moral, cultural and economic principles. It is through these principles that powerful groups maintain their position; persuading people that these values are legitimate and natural is much more effective than simply imposing a set of values through control and dominance. In Gramsci's model there is a relationship between powerful and less powerful groups. Powerful groups persuade those with less power of the legitimacy of socio-cultural values which inevitably serve and reinforce their position of control:

Every State is ethical in as much as one of its most important functions is to raise the great mass of the population to a particular cultural and moral level, a level which corresponds to the needs of the productive forces for development, and hence to the interests of the ruling classes.

(Gramsci, 1971:258)

So, in Gramsci's view the 'interests of the ruling classes' persuade the 'great mass of population' of the legitimacy of principles which essentially maintain a

hierarchical status quo. You might consider, for example, how often a significant number of people seriously question the legitimacy of the system of government, regardless of personal political alignments, or genuinely question concepts like ‘law and order’ or the various prevailing systems of taxation. That is not to say that these forces are malevolent in all contexts, but it is important to acknowledge that neither are they naturally occurring. The second stream view of power recognises that these systems are constructed ideologically through processes which persuade people of their legitimacy and apparent ‘naturalness’. Critical discourse analysts therefore refer to the processes of ‘legitimisation’ and ‘naturalisation’ in order to note that as power relations are constructed ideologically, they can also be deconstructed to expose and demystify those guiding ideologies. At the centre of Gramsci’s theory of hegemony is the fact that these ideologies are routinely ingrained by the institutions of civil society so that they are generally conceived as ‘common sense’. The position adopted in this book is that ‘common sense’ is constructed in a routine fashion to secure the legitimacy and acceptance of ideologies which prop up powerful groups which rely on a hierarchical and largely unfair organisation of the social world. Critical Discourse Analysis is the field of scholarship which recognises that just as language is utilised by powerful groups in securing and maintaining control, so too can linguistic analysis be used to expose this process.

Therefore a critical discourse view of language, which will be explained in more detail shortly, recognises the role which is played by language and other communicative systems in the process of the legitimisation of power. Powerful groups operate consistently to solidify and expand their position. This is achieved through the construction of networks or alliances with other powerful groups, through maintaining institutions which retain a capacity for coercion, such as the police force and the legal system, and through generating consent through language. Consent refers to the fact that subordinate subjects internalise and accept values of powerful groups and hence construct an ‘interface at which power is jointly produced’ (Statham, 2016:20). Rather than just by dominance and control or through the capacity to restrain and punish, much of the power-building work in this second stream view of power is done through language which is ideologically constructed for the purpose. Critical Discourse Analysis is the tradition of linguistic analysis which seeks to expose how these ideologies have been constructed in language at various levels; viewing language as ideologically loaded and operating persuasively in the interests of powerful groups is to recognise language as ‘discourse’.

1.2.2 Discourse and Ideology

So far we have established that power in society operates through a network of domination and consent. As the above outline explains, this is slightly more complex than simply viewing power as something possessed by dominant

institutions and exerted over society in general. Instead, society is drawn into the process of power by being persuaded of the common-sense legitimacy of dominant systems and institutions. Discourse plays a key role in this process. As Mayr (2008:8) points out, ‘In democratic systems power needs to be legitimate to be accepted by the people. This is generally expressed in symbolic forms by means of language: institutions legitimate themselves with regard to citizens. It is discourse that justifies official action of an institution or the institution itself.’

It should be fairly clear at this early stage, then, that there is an intimate relationship between power and **discourse**, and so it is also necessary to understand discourse as having a somewhat specialised meaning in the context of CDA. In most lay contexts discourse tends to be a synonym of ‘language’, and the terms are often used interchangeably. However, in critical linguistics, indeed in a range of cognate disciplines such as sociology or politics, discourse is thought of as having a purpose in the social world. Simpson, Mayr and Statham (2018:5) make a clear distinction between ‘language’ and ‘discourse’:

Basically *discourse* is what happens when language ‘gets done’. Whereas *language* refers to the more abstract set of patterns and rules which operate simultaneously at different levels in the system (the grammatical, semantic and phonological levels, for example), *discourse* refers to the instantiation of those patterns in real contexts of use. In other words, discourse works above the level of grammar and semantics to capture what happens when these language forms are played out in different social, political and cultural arenas.

(Simpson, Mayr and Statham, 2018:5)

Discourse therefore means somewhat more than how we might use the term ‘language’. Whilst the latter is an abstract system which has no meaning *per se* out of context, discourse is interconnected with real contexts of use; it refers to how language is used ideologically in the social organisation of society. Machin and Mayr (2012:20) explain that a ‘text’s linguistic structure functions, as discourse, to highlight certain ideologies, whilst downplaying or concealing others’. When we view language as discourse we are paying attention to how it operates ideologically and we are questioning the principles which are legitimised through language use. A short, introductory example will make the point clearer.

The headline below is from a British national newspaper in October 2010 and refers to an industrial dispute within the civil service:

Public sector cuts make strikes inevitable, warn unions

Without setting out any specific model of analysis at this stage (although see Chapter 6 for more in-depth examples of this type of analysis), we can say that in this headline the trade unions are represented as attributing clear blame for strike action, and by issuing a warning they have an interest in avoiding the strikes. Before reading on, have a go at the student task.

Student Task

The media, like any institution, has a number of linguistic options available for the representation of an incident. Can you think of any other ways in which the headline could have been represented linguistically? Do you think you could change the ideological position of this headline by changing only one word in the sentence?

The two sentences below are possible responses to the task where only the second verb in the headline has been changed; otherwise the sentence structure and the wording are identical.

Public sector cuts make strikes inevitable, claim unions

Public sector cuts make strikes inevitable, threaten unions

Despite the similarities of the language, the meaning of these sentences has been changed quite a bit. In the first sentence the validity of the unions' position is more uncertain: they are now merely making a claim rather than issuing a warning. The second sentence is a markedly more negative representation of the unions. Rather than an assessment of the situation, they are positioned as the subject of an altogether more aggressive verb phrase by issuing a threat.

You might be able to make an informed guess about which publications would represent trade unions in these ways based on their position on the political spectrum of the media in various jurisdictions (see further Chapter 6). The point is that in all cases the representation of the dispute has come with some form of ideology encoded into the sentence. Regardless of what your own position might be in terms of trade union politics or whether you are more aligned with the principles of the Left or the Right, you cannot claim that any of these sentences is a neutral representation. When you completed the task, you had an ideological agenda in mind, so you have not acted neutrally. The real headline here is from *The Guardian*, a centre-left British publication. So, discourse is about language in context; it is about how we think of language when it comes loaded with ideology. A central aim of CDA is to use linguistic analysis to lay bare the ideological positions which underlie the discourse of powerful institutions such as the media.

It is a central position of this book, and indeed of CDA in general, that language is part of political and socio-cultural contexts. It is influenced by and in turn influences ideology. Therefore a view of language as neutral or merely factual in a political sense is wholly rejected here. The view of **ideology** adopted in this book is that ideology operates in a close inter-relationship with the interests of social groups or institutions. Again, there is a somewhat one-dimensional view of ideology which operates in non-scholarly or non-critical contexts where ideology simply refers to the beliefs of individuals or groups. This view

is somewhat inadequate for our purposes because essentially it does not say enough about the role of ideology in light of power relations in society or in terms of the networks of domination and persuasion outlined above.

The view of ideology as operating closely with the interests of powerful groups has its origins in Marxist theory (Marx [1933] 1965), which views ideology as part of the subjugation of the proletariat by the aristocracy or the bourgeoisie. Ideology has come to be viewed slightly more broadly as a belief system possessed by social groups who operate in a range of ways, including linguistically, to maintain and legitimise their power and influence. Often this involves using language to legitimise belief systems so that powerful institutions can continue to flourish. For example, you might consider how your own relationship as students with your higher education institution is consistently cast in a narrative of consumerism, wherein students are encouraged to view themselves as customers who are ‘buying’ what is increasingly, and euphemistically, billed as the ‘student experience’. By reinforcing a belief system in which education is viewed as a commodity instead of a service, universities are in turn strengthening their institutional ability to continue what has in late modernity become a relentless pursuit of profit. Discourse has been at the heart of this strategy. We will return to the marketisation of education in extended examples in Chapters 2 and 5, and consider specifically the linguistic ways in which universities have embraced a dedication to profit over a responsibility to learning. But for now this is a good example of how language operates ideologically to strengthen belief systems which serve the interests of higher education institutions.

1.3 Critical Discourse Analysis: In Principle

The overview above sets out the major theories which underlie the view of language as discourse, in which it operates ideologically in social contexts. Critical Discourse Analysis is a field of study which recognises the interconnectedness of discourse, power and ideology and seeks to expose, and indeed to challenge, the role of powerful networks that maintain and reinforce a hierarchical and stratified organisation of society. Critical discourse analysts investigate the language produced by a wide range of institutions – the media, politics, the legal system, education and advertising, to note just a few – and in a wide spectrum of different textual modes – the visual and the aural alongside the written, and indeed in some cases all three – in order to reveal the ideologies which underpin dominant discourses in the social world. In short, CDA addresses the language which operates to construct the very principles through which we live our lives. This section will set out the origins of CDA and review the main principles which drive its proponents, which Fairclough (2015) has very purposefully called its manifesto. Chapter 2 will demonstrate how close linguistic analysis can achieve these aims.

Using linguistics to examine the ideologies of socio-political texts has its origins in ‘critical linguistics’, a term coined by Roger Fowler to classify the classic publication *Language and Control* (Fowler et al., 1979). Critical linguistics is generally viewed as the precursor to CDA, as these scholars sought to demonstrate how semantics and grammar in particular operate as ideological tools in social discourse. By focussing on how people and events are classified in texts and by close analysis of foregrounded and backgrounded elements, it is possible to draw quite significant conclusions about the ideologies which are carried by these texts. A classic example of the study of print media, which has come to form the backbone of many studies in CDA, is Tony Trew’s chapter in *Language and Control*, ‘Theory and Ideology at Work’ (Trew, 1979:94–117). In this chapter Trew analyses two divergent media representations of the same event to demonstrate that neither are neutral and that both carry particular ideologies.

We shall not replicate Trew’s analysis in full here, but a brief demonstration of his findings makes the point quite clearly. In focussing on two newspaper reports of civil disobedience in pre-independence Rhodesia which appeared on 2nd June 1975, Trew demonstrates that how this event was represented in the discourse of *The Times*, the so-called ‘paper of record’, which is largely politically conservative in its outlook, was markedly different ideologically from its representation in the left-leaning *The Guardian*. Try the task before reading on.

Student Task

Headline 1: Rioting Blacks Shot Dead by Police as ANC Leaders Meet

Headline 2: Police Shoot 11 Dead in Salisbury Riots

Which headline was produced by *The Times* and which by *The Guardian*? What impressions of the language of each headline contribute to your decision?

You are correct if you attributed Headline 1 to *The Times*. This headline foregrounds the role of ‘Blacks’, who are placed in the subject-initial position in this passivised sentence. The subject of the verb ‘to shoot’ is the ‘Police’, but their role is backgrounded by this syntactic construction. The ‘Blacks’ are also classified as rioters. Headline 2 is from *The Guardian*. Here the syntax carries a different ideological focus; the active role of the police is given appropriate prominence in the sentence whilst there is no reference whatsoever to rioting. Indeed, in the lead sentence which follows this headline, the phrase ‘African demonstrators’ is used. *The Times*, as a generally conservative newspaper which is much more ideologically welded to the maintenance of empire and colonialism than the more progressive *The Guardian*, seeks to linguistically reconstruct this event in such a way that culpability lies with the eleven dead demonstrators and not with the police.

This type of analysis, which compares different representations of the same event, is a very useful illustrative tool when explicating the ‘critical’ principles of CDA and critical linguistics which pre-dates it, and often proves a very popular assignment choice for students. In the years since the publication of *Language and Control*, newspapers and other media outlets remain hugely ideological (see further Chapter 6). With the comments above on how to begin thinking about critical language analysis of newspaper headlines in mind, try the task below. The two headlines were both produced on 22nd February 2018 and relate to industrial action taken by university lecturers whose pensions are under threat by the same market forces which now dominate higher education referred to above. Have a go at the task before reading the analysis below.

Student Task

Headline 1: More than 100,000 university and college students demand £1300 for cancelled classes as the Home Secretary tells striking lecturers to ‘get back to work’ after pensions walkout

Headline 2: University lecturers begin strike action over pensions. University and College Union sees good turnout on picket lines despite freezing weather

One of these headlines is from *The Guardian* and the other from the right wing *Daily Mail*. Carry out a lexical-semantic analysis of the headlines. What can you say about the ideologies which are present?

In your analysis you might have noted that Headline 1 is very clearly focussed on the financial implications of this industrial action. The headline constructs an opposition between students and lecturers, with the interests of the former being supported by the Home Secretary. You may also have noted here the presence of an ideology which measures education by cost. ‘University and college students’ are the subject of the verb ‘demand’, and a link is constructed between these students and the government as the Home Secretary ‘tells’ lecturers to ‘get back to work’. Students and government are linked by similar verbal acts; they both require some sort of restitution. Students and government seem to be on the same side. The phrase ‘pensions walkout’, linked later in the article to the phrase ‘mass walkout’, suggests that the lecturers’ actions are somewhat less considered and more abrupt than the long period of ballots, campaigns and negotiations which precede strike action would suggest. Our analysis can conclude, then, that this publication constructs a view of an industrial dispute which is selfish on the part of lecturers and ultimately detrimental to students, whose first priority is to recoup lost fees rather than ‘cancelled classes’.

Headline 2 is focussed exclusively on lecturers and the initial success of the action. ‘Strike action’ and ‘picket lines’ cast the incident in much more official terms than ‘walkout’. This action was preceded by the usual process of balloting members of the University and College Union, and giving this official title also serves to legitimise the strike. Lecturers are presented as measured and essentially dedicated to their position in this headline. It is always necessary when carrying out discourse analysis, even a brief and introductory one such as this, to consider what is omitted as well as what is present in a text. Whilst Headline 1 is focussed on the cost to students, there is no reference to either of these elements in the second headline, which is more ideologically approving of the action undertaken by lecturers. The divergent ideologies in these headlines are reinforced throughout the subsequent articles. Taking account of these features of language in the student task should have made it relatively easy for you to decide which of these headlines is from the *Daily Mail* (Headline 1) and which is from *The Guardian* (Headline 2).

A key principle which was developed in critical linguistics and remains at the core of CDA is the theory of language as a social practice. Hodge and Kress (1988, 1993) consistently argue that language is at the centre of how societies are regulated and maintained, and part of the way institutions naturalise and legitimise their principles and values. They point out that the ‘rules and norms which govern linguistic behaviour have a social function, origin and meaning’ (Hodge and Kress, 1993:204). This position mirrors closely the conclusions reached by Trew in his seminal analysis outlined here:

A complete understanding of the ideological nature in the coverage of the media must in the end be based not only on an understanding of what the sources in the news are, and their relation to the state and other powers, but also on an understanding of the engagement of the newspapers and other media with social relations and processes.

(Trew, 1979:116)

Trew explains that an important part of discourse, such as that produced in the media, is its ‘engagement’ with the wider social world. Critical Discourse Analysis has developed this notion of engagement somewhat further so that language is now understood as part of the social process itself. Rather than merely a relationship of engagement, we think of powerful institutions as having an internal and dialectical relationship with social realities. They engage with the social world through language, and this shapes, maintains and reinforces both society and in turn this language itself. As Fairclough (2001) puts it:

What exactly does this [language as a form of social practice] imply? Firstly, that language is part of society and not somehow external to it. Secondly that language is a social process. And thirdly, that language is a socially conditioned process, conditioned that is by (non-linguistic) parts of society.

(Fairclough, 2001:19)

Fairclough insists at several points throughout his work on CDA that a fundamental tenet of the discipline is that linguistic phenomena are social and social phenomena are linguistic; language does not exist externally to the social world which it constructs and maintains but rather it must be thought of as an integral part of that world. So when critical discourse analysts and proponents of CDA refer to the 'dialectical relationship' between language and society, they mean that society is affected by the language which describes it and that the form of this language is in turn affected by this function.

Think about this relationship when considering the negative position of the *Daily Mail* towards the higher education pension strike in the task and discussion above. The discourse is constructed in such a way that readers of the *Mail* will adopt an unsympathetic view of lecturers. In turn, the unsympathetic and ideologically driven view of the *Mail*, and of its owners and advertisers (see further Chapter 6), accounts for the negative discourse. The ideology drives the linguistic representation at the same time as the linguistic representation reinforces the ideology. CDA is therefore particularly focussed on how and why linguistic features are produced in institutional discourse.

So CDA builds significantly upon the foundations laid by critical linguistics in viewing language itself as a form of social practice and is motivated to set discourse in context. This motivation points to another of the fundamental principles of CDA, that it is openly committed to political intervention and social change. As you may have been able to extrapolate already from some of the short examples and tasks in this chapter and will appreciate quite clearly by the end of this book, CDA does not cling to the concept of objective or neutral analysis but rather it is committed to using linguistic analysis in a way that contributes to the potential redressing of the imbalances which pervade society. Bloor and Bloor (2007:4) state that the 'critical discourse analyst does not attempt the type of objectivity that is sometimes claimed by scientists or linguists, but recognises that such objectivity is likely to be impossible because of the nature of their experience'. In investigating the ideological role of language and in proffering linguistic analysis as a way to increase awareness of and present potential change to prejudice and the misuse of power, it would be somewhat naïve to claim that an analyst is a disinterested or objective participant who is engaged in a solely scholarly process. Fairclough (2010:10) is adamant that, despite the practice of CDA being somewhat broad in its application, this motivation to political intervention is one of three general characteristics which unites work in the field. He suggests that 'research and analysis counts as CDA in so far as it has all of the following characteristics':

1. It is not just analysis of discourse (or more concretely texts), it is part of some form of transdisciplinary analysis of relations between discourse and other elements of the social process.
2. It is not just general commentary on discourse, it includes some form of systematic analysis of text.

3. It is not just descriptive, it is also normative. It addresses social wrongs in their discursive aspects and possible ways of righting or mitigating them.
(Fairclough, 2010:10)

These characteristics of CDA confirm much of what this introductory chapter has set out so far; essentially that CDA proceeds through close textual analysis which recognises the position of language in the social world and that this analysis should not merely focus on the description of prevailing ‘social wrongs’ but should also look to contribute to correcting them.

1.3.1 Manifesto for CDA

In a seminal paper which demonstrates that CDA is both ‘engaged and committed’ to pursuing change in a social world hierarchically organised by the powerful, for the powerful, as it were, as well as being ‘careful, rigorous and systematic’ in the scholarship and analysis it undertakes, Fairclough and Wodak (1997:271–280) set out the central methodological and theoretical principles of CDA:

1. *CDA Addresses Social Problems*: Rather than be an analysis of the use of language alone, CDA focusses on the ‘partially linguistic character of social and cultural processes and structures’. Using the neo-capitalist discourse of Thatcherism as an example, Fairclough and Wodak demonstrate that a CDA approach to this discourse develops a critical awareness of its principles – unashamedly approving of free market capitalism and committed to the weakening of institutions of social democracy, particularly trade unions – which in turn provides the analyst with a potential resource to challenge these principles.
2. *Power Relations Are Discursive*: In acknowledging the linguistic nature of power relations, CDA also notes that ‘power relations are exercised and negotiated in discourse [...] Discursive aspects of power relations are not fixed and monolithic.’ Fairclough and Wodak point to the example of a media interview with a politician; whilst the power in such an interaction rests with the interviewer, who asks questions and should control the topic, politicians also possess what Bourdieu (1997) calls ‘cultural capital’ of their own. They possess social assets such as education, intellect and influence. Encounters such as a political interview are therefore about ‘power in discourse’ as well as the more general ‘power over discourse’. Resisting and challenging institutional norms in an interview might contribute to an increase in a politician’s general grasp on power and influence.
3. *Discourse Constitutes Society and Culture*: This position refers to the dialectical relationship between discourse and society explained above; discourse both constitutes society and culture and is constituted by them. Fairclough and Wodak state that any part of a text simultaneously constitutes representations, relations and identities. This aspect of CDA will be expanded in Chapters 3, 4 and 5 in particular, which set out the relationship between CDA and Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL).