

### 13 Critical Discourse Analysis and Stylistics

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) attempts to disclose the ways societal structures and processes are encoded in the discourse practices. Understanding discourse as a socio-semiotic process (M.A.K.Halliday), exponents of CDA assume that public discourse not only reflects patterns of (asymmetrical) societal organization (i.e., hierarchy, power, hegemony), but also helps construct, re-inforce and reproduce them. By raising the public awareness of the encoded **ideologies** (systems of values and sets of beliefs) which pervade the strategies of influence, manipulation, persuasion employed by those in power (e.g., structures of politics, popular media and consumer industry) these practices can not only be disclosed ('demystified'), but also altered.

The methodology of CDA (also called *radical stylistics*) is applied in the research into institutional discourse, esp. the language of politics (e.g., *nukespeak* of the 1980s) and administration (e.g., *bureaucratese* as a specific style of language characterized by circumlocutions, euphemisms, buzzwords, abstractions), journalism (*journalese* as a style of language full of clichés, occasional neologisms, archness, sensationalizing adjectives, unusual or faulty syntax, etc.), massmedia and advertising.

CDA sees discourses primarily as linguistic constructs and concentrates accordingly on their linguistic properties (hence CDA is referred to as *critical linguistics*). The following linguistic means have been given considerable attention: a) *modality* and grammatical means for conveying attitude (modal auxiliaries and modal adverbs, evaluative adjectives, verbs of knowledge, prediction and evaluation), b) the *model of transitivity*, i.e., how the meaning is represented in the clause in terms of the participants (actor, goal), process (action, event) and circumstances, c) the *pragmatic* model of meaning, d) the category of *gender* (disclosing sexist bias in language, cf. *feminist linguistics*, Hoffmannová 1995), e) the *speech acts* theory, f) lexical means (metaphors, euphemisms, weasel words, words of abuse and endearment, etc.) were successfully applied on the study of narrative fiction and news stories (Simpson 1993, Freeborn et al. 1993, Fowler 1991). Highly persuasive strategies in advertising come under scrutiny while noting the trend towards increased 'conversionalization' (employing strategies of informal conversation) and evocation of casualness and intimacy.

R. Fowler (1991) claims that news is always rendered from a particular angle; as a social construct it reflects certain 'news values' (Galtung and Ruge 1973): *frequency, threshold, unambiguity, meaningfulness, consonance, unexpectedness, continuity, composition, reference to elite nations, reference to elite people, reference to persons, and reference to something negative.*

N. Fairclough (1995a) identifies three pervasive features of the contemporary 'orders' of discourse: a) *conversationalization* (colonization of the public domain by the practices of the private domain), b) *democratization* (reduction of overt markers of power asymmetry between people of unequal institutional power) and c) *marketization* or *commodification* (the reconstruction of social life on a market basis). In his *Media Discourse*, Fairclough (1995b) provides a survey of approaches forming an analytical framework for the study of media discourse: linguistics, sociolinguistics, CA, CDA, semiotics, critical linguistics, van Dijk's 'social-cognitive' model and the cultural-generic approach