

One of the first researchers in discourse studies to investigate the discourse aspects of news was, again, Van Dijk (1988). A good start to the media approach in discourse studies is given by Bell (1991), who was also a journalist himself. A stimulating collection of papers is presented in Bell and Garrett (1998). A good and accessible introduction to news discourse is given by Bednarek and Caple (2012). For the construction of newsworthiness see Bednarek and Caple (2017). A critical discourse-analytic account of newspaper language is offered by Richardson (2007).

14.7

A recommendable introduction to the field of discourse and health care is given by Mishler (1984). A good starting point for further study is provided by the collection of papers in Raffler-Engel (1990) and Platt (1995). See for medical narratives Epstein (1995), Frank (2013) and Smith (1996), and for medical metaphors Van Rijn-Van Tongeren (1997). The different studies in Ainsworth-Vaughn (1998) form a good basis for further study. For medical discourse in professional, academic and popular domains see the papers in Ordóñez-López and Edo-Marzá (2016). The handbook of communication in organizations and professions by Candlin and Sarangi (2011) contains a number of articles on both medical and legal discourse.

Discourse and culture

15.1 Introduction

In Chapter 13, Discourse and cognition, we have seen that the study of discourse lifts a corner of the veil over how the mind works. In Chapter 14, Discourse and institution, we have seen how the study of discourse can provide insight into the way people, in their roles of citizens, patients, etc., interact in a society. In this final chapter the view is broadened to a more general aspect of society that goes beyond specific roles of communicators: culture. Roughly speaking, culture can be defined as the deposit of knowledge, beliefs, values, attitudes and behavioral routines that a group of people share; examples are Chinese culture, youth culture, pop culture, gay culture, a company culture, etc. Culture also has a historical dimension, since patterns of knowledge and action are handed down across generations. As a result, culture is basically dynamic, context-dependent and open to change. Three questions are of special importance in discourse studies: Can we detect cultural values from discourse? If so, what can discourse tell us about how people are influenced by culture? And, is it possible to change cultural values by changing discourse?

The hotly debated hypothesis of linguistic relativity claims that languages have an influence on their speakers' perception of the world (Section 15.2). The subdiscipline of Critical Discourse Analysis investigates the ways in which power relations and societal problems are related to discourse, which is considered a type of social practice (Section 15.3). With respect to gender, research areas include sexist representations of men and women, power-related gender differences in discursive behavior as well as questions of sexual identity and orientation (Section 15.4). Studies on racist discourse have emphasized that less powerful social groups are discriminated against by means of specific discursive strategies such as victim-blaming or delegitimation (Section 15.5). Research on cross- and intercultural communication has identified dimensions of cultural difference and offered explanations for misunderstandings between members of different cultures (Section 15.6).

15.2 Linguistic relativity

When language and culture are juxtaposed, two basic directions of influence can be distinguished. On the one hand, social structure, such as a speaker's regional or ethnic background, may influence language use. Such questions are dealt with by variational linguistics, exemplified below by variational pragmatics (see Section 15.6). On the other hand, language may have an impact on society and culture. The latter aspect is addressed by the well-known and often criticized **Sapir-Whorf hypothesis**, which is named after two American researchers in the first half of the twentieth century. Edward Sapir, a linguist and anthropologist, studied Native American cultures and found many differences between their languages and the English language. One can easily observe that some languages have many different words for *ship* and others for *sand*, or that in one language people refer to the base of a mountain as *backside* and others as *foot*, or that some languages have specific verb forms for *we both* (the *dualis*).

Sapir identified many striking differences between Native American and Indo-European languages. In his view of language he was influenced by the German philosopher Wilhelm von Humboldt, who was also mentioned in the chapter on stylistics (Section 8.2), with his principle of a one-on-one relation between form and meaning. Von Humboldt was of the opinion that the way human beings “view their world” is determined by their language. So, if our language has only one word for *sand*, von Humboldt assumed that we do not perceive different sorts of sand.

Sapir defended a more subtle relation between language and **worldview**. In his opinion, language is not only an instrument for communication but the language system also creates schemata (see Section 13.2) for analyzing our world. If, for example, a language has a dualis then the speakers of that language will probably more easily differentiate between groups of two and groups of more than two. One of Sapir's students who himself became famous was Benjamin Whorf, a chemical engineer who worked as a fire damage expert at an insurance company. He studied many different languages (among them Hebrew) and visited many Native American reservations. In his work activities he found many instances of the way language influences our worldview. One of his well-known examples is the following. In an inspection into the causes of a fire at a company, Whorf found that in a description of company belongings employees described gasoline drums as empty. However, these drums had caused the fire, as they had exploded after an employee had thrown a red-hot match into a drum. The employee had not realized that an “empty” drum still contains inflammable vapors. Had the drums been described as “full”, then they would have been handled more cautiously. So, the description “empty” constructed a specific perception of the world.

The Sapir-Whorf hypothesis has raised many intense and sometimes erratic discussions about the relation between language and worldview. Although there are undisputed interrelations between language and thinking (see Chapter 13), at least three obscurities have to be clarified.

First, what is meant by language? The fact that languages vary in the number of different words for objects is not surprising. A society based on commerce by sea needs more words for different ships, but does that mean that speakers of languages with only one word for ship do not see the differences between a vessel and a coaster? And it has to be said that many examples of differences between lexical inventories are not evidence-based. The well-known example that the “Eskimos” have so many words for snow (falling snow, melting snow, hard snow, snow on the ground, old snow, etc.) is not true. As has been shown, the Inuit living in West Greenland have only two different word stems for snow in their language (*qanik* for “snow in the air” and *aput* for “snow on the ground”). By forming more complex expressions out of basic units, they can refer to many different types of snow. However, English also offers words like *sleet*, *slush* and *blizzard* as well as phrases such as *fresh snow*, *powdery snow* or *spring snow* (Yule, 2014).

Language phenomena that are more likely to produce evidence of the influence of language on worldview are the metaphor (like the *foot* or *backside* of a mountain), or grammatical characteristics. An example is that in the Navajo language an action is presented as something that happens to a person, like “Dancing is happening with White Eagle” instead of our way of saying “White Eagle is dancing”. Of course, it has to be proved convincingly that this way of presenting reality influences the worldview of English- and Navajo-speaking people.

Second, it is not clear what is meant by worldview. Is it a way of thinking? Is it the perception of reality or is it the way something is memorized (as in the Bartlett example in Section 13.2)? Or is worldview something like attitude or beliefs, or perhaps behavior? Most proponents of the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis in discourse studies seem to restrict themselves to attitude. But even then the influence of discourse on attitude has to be proved.

Third, the term **relation** is rather vague. A relation can mean “influence”, but there are many researchers who only admit that there is some kind of non-causal relation. In this weak form the hypothesis gives only a kind of parallel between language structure and the structuring of the reality. In this mitigated formulation the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis is often called the “**linguistic relativity hypothesis**”, which means that linguistic descriptions of reality are always relative.

Recent contrastive-linguistic research has shown that languages differ significantly in the way they express semantic domains such as spatial orientation, temporal estimation, color discrimination and categorization (Everett, 2013). For instance, in Russian there is a specific word referring to “light blue” (*goluboy*) in

contrast to “dark blue” (*siniy*). However, although languages suggest tendencies and preferences for world perception, they do not erect barriers that cannot be overcome, so that the strong, deterministic version of the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis has been widely rejected (Eysenck and Keane, 2015).

From the perspective of discourse studies, the idea that language somehow reflects the way reality is perceived has incited the study of the relation between discourse and culture. Accordingly, linguistic relativity is the basis for critical approaches to language if, for example, it is assumed that the avoidance of racist discourse will result in a decrease of racist attitudes and behaviors.

15.3 Critical Discourse Analysis

The most prominent approach to discourse and culture is **Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)**, a subdiscipline in which many central concepts in discourse studies play an important role (Wodak and Meyer, 2016). In this approach the aim of analysis is to detect societal problems, especially discrimination. In fact, discourse is studied from the viewpoint of linguistic relativity (see Section 15.2), with reference not to differences between language systems, but to differences in language use within one language, while the broad concept of worldview is defined as an ideological perspective (see Section 7.5 on vision). Since discourse is seen as a reflection of the power relations in society, one research focus of CDA is on control, dominance and manipulation in institutional discourse (see Chapter 14).

CDA is as old as discourse studies itself. In the first publication that contained the term *discourse* (Harris, 1952; see the bibliographical information in Chapter 1), an advertisement was analyzed with suggestions for two approaches: the internal cohesion relations and the correlation with society and culture. The last approach flourished in the socio-semiotic framework mentioned in Section 3.6, in which discourse is seen as a vehicle of meaning in a social context. Just as many socio-logically oriented conversation analysts (see Chapter 9) analyze interactions in the hope of gaining insight into how people succeed in forming a community or society, the critical discourse analysts see discourse as an instrument to gain insight into societal problems.

The term **critical** in this approach means that an analysis cannot be neutral or free of values. Many researchers in this area regard pure sociological analyses as superficial and pure linguistic and stylistic analyses as low-informative. They draw consequences from the claim that discourse (in part) constitutes its context, and aim to prove by analysis that much discourse contains biased representations of reality. The aim of this kind of analysis is not only to detect manipulation and discrimination but also to understand the essence of these societal problems. In

this critical view discourse analysis must have the aim of empowering powerless groups or minorities. In fact, discourse is seen as a form of **social action** or a political act that can be criticized.

CDA pays much attention to **power relations** and **ideology**, which are precipitated in discourse, and force the reader or hearer to perceive reality in a specific, biased way. Put in the framework of speech act theory (see Section 2.3), the illocutionary force of utterances does not depend on the utterances themselves, as the philosopher Austin seemed to claim, but on the social position of the speaker or writer. Following Habermas's validity approach (see Section 2.2) the focus is on the legitimacy of the powerful to present reality as they do in discourse. Discourse is seen as a constitutive factor of social relations and belief systems. This view is principally based on the socio-semiotic approach (see Section 3.6), in which language performs not only the ideational function of representing the world and the textual function of relating discourse and context, but also the interpersonal function of enacting social identities and relations.

How does this critical analysis work? Most analytic work is inspired by stylistics (see Chapter 8) with the central question: Why is a given content formulated in the way it is and not in another possible form? Below are two short examples concerning racism.

(1) *Britain invaded by an army of illegals*

Britain is being swamped by a tide of illegal immigrants so desperate for a job that they will work for a pittance (...) slaving behind bars, cleaning hotel rooms and working in kitchens (...)

In Van Dijk (1996) such citations are used to demonstrate that certain newspapers are strongly racist (see Section 15.5). The war metaphor in the headline signals this explicitly. Why not “Britain gets support from foreigners” or “Many foreigners want to live in Britain”? And the phrase “work for a pittance” implies that immigrants want to take the jobs from native British workers. So, CDA indicates how this rendition of reality provides a negative image of poor foreigners. Van Dijk is the chief representative of the **socio-cognitive approach** to CDA (van Dijk, 2018), which investigates social structures from the perspective of cognitive-linguistic phenomena such as metaphors (see Section 8.6.3) or mental models (see Section 13.3).

The following Example (2) is taken from a South African newspaper reporting on a black student demonstration.

- (2) Exactly how and why a student protest became a killer riot may not be known until the conclusion of an elaborate inquiry that will be carried out by Justice Petrus Cillie, Judge President of the Transvaal.

In this passage, cited in Fairclough (1995/2013), the key expression is “killer riot”. The use of “riot” implies that the students themselves are responsible and “killer” suggests the involvement in the riot. Moreover, “killer”, as in the collocation “killer whale” or “killer hurricane”, normally indicates something whose nature it is to kill. Hence, the collocation “killer riot” implies that black South Africans are monstrous.

Especially in publications on CDA with a focus on fighting **discrimination**, such elaborations are frequently found. Still, it has to be kept in mind that this approach, no matter how understandable in the light of social abuses, can be criticized itself. The following comments are from Widdowson (1998), who pleads for a more systematic and objective analysis, based on extensive corpus research and on reactions from real readers of discourse that has been analyzed as discriminatory or racist. The comment in (3) pertains to Example (1), while the comment in (4) pertains to Example (2).

- (3) 1. Why is the phrase “working for a pittance” not interpreted as a positive commiseration with the immigrants?
2. Why is “slaving” not linked to the colonial history of Britain, and analyzed as support for the poor workers, with the ambiguous “behind bars” (instead of “serving in bars”) as reference to imprisonment?
- (4) 1. How should one evaluate a counterexample like “killer instinct” in the claim that “killer” is used in the indicated way?
2. Why not label “elaborate” as a key expression? This word normally has a negative connotation because it collocates with “too” and could therefore imply some skepticism on the position of authorities.

In CDA more and more attempts are being made to ground analyses and interpretations of power relations on systematic descriptions of discourse. A promising perspective was developed by the founding father of the socio-semiotic approach, who was already introduced in Section 3.6, Michael Halliday. In an introduction to **Functional Grammar** (Halliday, 2014) he proposed analyzing clauses in a piece of discourse starting with the events or actions, and then making all the involved participants explicit. The following simple example can clarify this.

- (5) Many presents were given.

The verb *to give* has, as a syntactic pattern, so-called roles: There must be someone (the actor) to give something (the affected) to someone (the beneficiary). This phenomenon is usually referred to as **transitivity** (see also Section 14.6). Analyzing discourse in terms of actions and participants has the benefit that the analysis is independent of whether the participants are verbally mentioned. So, in (5) only the action and the affected are mentioned, which could mean that the

writer thinks that it is of less importance to mention the actor and the beneficiary. In this transitivity analysis also the specific possible functions of **passivization** and **nominalization** can be clarified. Compare the following sentences:

- (6) The police arrested a lot of activists.
- (7) A lot of activists were arrested. (*passivization*)
- (8) There were a lot of arrests. (*nominalization*)

In the passivization the actor is left out, which in this case may be advantageous to the police. In the nominalization the affected is omitted while the action of the verb is sheltered in a noun. This might be less discriminatory than passivization. The results of a transitivity analysis of discourse can be the basis for experiments in which, for example, readers have to estimate to what extent participants in the event are discriminated against.

In another approach, started by Van Leeuwen (1996), not the events but the **social actors** themselves are in focus. On the basis of thorough discourse analysis he developed a model for doing research on how actors are presented. Here are three examples.

- (9) An intake of some 54,000 skilled immigrants is expected this year.
- (10) Australians feel they cannot voice legitimate fears about immigration.
- (11) Australia is in danger of saddling itself up with a lot of unwanted problems.

Actors are not only presented as full constituents or simply skipped over as the subject of a clause. They can also be introduced in more subtle manners. In (9) one actor is skipped, the subject of “expected”, but another actor is presented in a so-called possessivation “of some 54,000 skilled immigrants”, and in this position is not foregrounded (see Section 7.4 on fore- and background information). In (10) there is one overt actor, “Australians”, but also another nearly completely hidden actor; namely, for a trace of its presence can be detected in the special kind of adjective, namely, an adjective in which a process is implied: “legitimate”. Who is the actor of legitimizing fear? In (11), which is also a sentence about “new immigrants”, there is again one overt actor, “Australia”, and one actor that has totally disappeared because it has been depersonalized as a problem. And the adjective “unwanted” leaves, as in (10), only a trace of the actor that does not want this problem. These relatively simple utterances show that an analysis of only actors who are mentioned in full constituents is not enough to answer questions about whether or not social actors have been presented in discourse.

In CDA many attempts have been made in the past decades to develop analysis models that can cope with discourse aspects in relation to discrimination. Two topics have received special attention. They are dealt with in the next two sections.

15.4 Gender and sexuality

While “sex” refers to biological and anatomical features of human beings, “gender” is regarded as culturally and socially constructed. This can be seen by the fact that ideas of masculinity and femininity may differ greatly across cultures and societies. In other words, gender is not considered a predefined and stable phenomenon but a construct that is *done* or *performed* through discourses and other social practices (Ehrlich, Meyerhoff and Holmes, 2014).

The study of gender and discourse has expanded enormously during the last decades. Many researchers try to analyze the difference between men and women in interaction or in representation in verbal material. Many other researchers try to find evidence for the dominance of men as a class over women, or to put it in a more nuanced fashion, that the relationship between men and women can result in dominance in conversation even if the individual man does not have the intention to dominate. The difference and the dominance theory have stimulated much research. Below are some examples concerning the difference between men and women.

How do we describe men and women? Can we put the possible differences in an ordered model? And, more important, do these differences really have anything to say about the way men and women differ? Here are two examples of texts about toys, presented in Caldas-Coulthard and Van Leeuwen (2002).

(12) Autumn Glory Barbie

Autumn Glory Barbie doll from the Enchanted Seasons Collection is a stunning tribute to the wonders of fall. Her fitted, metallic appliquéd bodice transitions to a long, chiffon gown shimmering in hues of copper and auburn, adorned with fall leaves, and accented with hints of purple and gold. Her earrings are shaped like graceful golden leaves. Atop her long, auburn hair sits a dark, wine-colored hat, embellished with feather and leaves, adding the final touch to this wondrous autumn portrait.

(13) Action Man Bungee

Action Man is the greatest hero of them all! Action Man leaps into the unknown with his fabulous bungee jumping kit, which includes a two-stage harness, grappling hook and super-cool sunglasses.

The differences are striking. Barbie is presented as static (“is,” “wears”). The sentence structure contains long nominal groups referring to parts of her body (“face”) or her clothes (“bodice,” “earrings”) with many evaluations from the esthetic domain: “stunning,” “shimmering”, etc. The description suggests that she has had no influence on the way she looks; she has been dressed, styled and made up by other people, as is the case with, for example, a fashion model. The Action Man, on the

contrary, is dynamic (“leaps”) and controls his own actions, even “into the unknown”. He is evaluated using terms belonging to social judgments, like “fabulous” and “super-cool”. The Barbie text belongs to a genre that could be called “catwalk texts”, which describe models to people interested in features and attributes. The Action Man text looks more like a television ad urging the audience to watch the next episode of a series.

Obviously, biased representations like these construct one-sided **gender stereotypes**. In order to deconstruct such images, job titles such as *chairman*, *fireman* or *air hostess/stewardess* have been replaced by the gender-neutral terms *chair*, *firefighter* and *flight attendant*. Correspondingly, the generic pronoun *he* has been substituted by *s/he* or “singular *they*”, as in the sentence “Everyone should bring their lunch”. Here the underlying intention is that women are no longer rendered linguistically invisible (Sunderland, 2006).

In analyzing discourse it is not difficult to find differences in language use, for example that women use more mitigated discourse and back-channel elements (*hm, oh yeah*, etc.), and that men are not focused on verbalizing their feelings and that they may display macho behavior. Analyzing is one thing, but interpreting is another. In the literature on gender and discourse up to now there has been no strong support for the claim that such differences are only caused by gender. There are so many other psychological and sociological factors in the complex process of producing discourse that it seems almost impossible to relate a phenomenon only to gender or to the dominant behavior of men.

Possibly, an important function of the study of discourse and gender is to check the so-called characteristics of female and male language in popular scientific literature. Here is one example. It is often assumed that women fill more verbal space in conversation and that they interrupt more frequently than men, not only in **back-channel behavior** but also in **taking the floor**. Deborah Tannen (1994) gives a nice personal example of a conversation in which she shows, at first sight, troublesome interrupting behavior. In this passage the author (A) is talking with a good male friend of hers (F), who is an interpreter of American Sign Language (see Section 9.2 for transcription conventions).

- (14)
- | | | |
|----|-------|---|
| 1 | F: | So: and this is the one that's Berkeley. This is the Berkeley ... sign for |
| 2 | ... | [Christmas] |
| 3 | A: | [Do you] |
| 4 | F: | (?) |
| 5 | A: | figure out those ... those um correspondences? or do- when you learn the signs, |
| 6 | does- | somebody tells you. |
| 7 | F: | Oh you mean [watching it? like] |
| 8 | A: | [Cause I can imagine] knowing that sign, ... and not ... |
| 9 | | figuring out that it had anything to do with the decorations. |
| 10 | F: | No. Y- you know that it has to do with the [decorations.] |
| 11 | A: | [Cause] somebody |
| 12 | | tells you? Or you figure it out |

- 13 F: No. Oh. ... You you talking about [me,] or a deaf [person.]
 14 A: . [Yeah] [You. You.].
 15 F: Me? Someone tells me, usually. ... But a lot of 'em I can tell. I mean
 16 they're obvious. ... The better I get the more I can tell. The longer I do it
 17 the more I can tell what they're talking [about] ...
 18 A: [Huh.]
 19 F: Without knowing [what the sign is.]
 20 [That's interesting.]

In this conversation all the woman's turns overlap the man's, while the man's turns hardly overlap. Moreover, the man makes an inaudible interruption in line 4 and utters a "No" in line 10; both can be seen as reactions to previous questions of the woman. In playbacks of the original tape one could see that the man was discomfited. In his comment on this passage the man said that he was irritated by the fast pace of all the questions. But the woman meant these overlapping questions as a display of interest, to encourage the speaker and not to take the floor. So, what can be seen as an interruption can also be seen as proof of involvement. If the same phenomenon can cause these various interpretations, then other factors must be of importance as well. For example, it may be that an overlapping question only counts as an interruption in a conversation in which the participants differ in involvement or both have a low involvement.

In the last decades much was published on gender and discourse studies; many intriguing phenomena were described in terms of **difference** and **dominance**. However, it is not yet definite whether these discourse phenomena are only gender-bound, and even if they are, it remains unclear how they should be interpreted. In any case, the results show that a possible discursive dominance of men cannot be proved by discourse analysis alone.

More recent research developments include a new focus on discursive manifestations of sexual identity and orientation. **Queer identities** have been subsumed under the acronym "LGBT", including the labels lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender. By emphasizing diversity in gender and sexuality, the binary division of male and female has been challenged. On this basis, the field of queer linguistics has been developed (Leap, 2015), with the aim of deconstructing heteronormativity in discourse. Just as masculine norms have been called into question, the normative authority of heterosexuality in gender discourses is now being critically disputed.

In which ways can queer identities be discursively constructed? Of the many diverse approaches and studies, only a few can be mentioned here. For instance, researchers have investigated the flamboyant "camp" style of drag queens, the British gay slang *Polari* as well as stereotypes of gay speech, which comprise high variability in pitch and speaking with a lisp (Queen, 2014). Koller (2008) examines collective identity construction with respect to the lesbian community. On the basis of pamphlets, magazine articles and online blogs by self-identified lesbian authors, she elaborates on changing images of this social group in the UK and the

USA from the 1970s to the 2000s. Although it becomes obvious that no homogeneous lesbian community exists, specific discursive developments can be found. They range from political and feminist beginnings in the 70s via a strengthened focus on sexual practices in the 80s up to increased individualization and commercial images used for marketing in more recent times.

Another line of research in queer linguistics is the study of the “**coming out**” **narrative genre** (see Chapter 11), which is an important discourse issue in the LGBT community. Zimman (2009) shows that transgender people stand out in this respect, since for them there are two ways of coming out: before and after their change of gender roles. While gays, lesbians and bisexuals mainly focus on questions of sexual identity in coming out stories, transgender speakers pay increased attention to their personal gender history, which includes the fact that they previously occupied another gender role, which may no longer be visible to their communicative partners. Thus, coming out narratives also provide evidence of considerable diversity within the LGBT population.

15.5 Racism

As in research into gender and discourse, the starting point of the study of racism and discourse is that racism manifests and (re)produces itself in discourse. **Racism** is usually defined as a prejudice or stereotypical belief that discriminates against a minority group (however, not necessarily of another “race”) or a group with less status than the group in power. Racism is usually mixed with ethnicism and xenophobia. Discrimination can become manifest, as van Dijk (1984) says, in seven D’s: dominance, differentiation, distance, diffusion, diversion, depersonalization and destruction. In analyzing discourse on racist phenomena, researchers aim to contribute to the fight against discrimination. Hence, research in this area has a strong societal drift. In Section 15.3 some early examples of analyses of racist discourse were cited to indicate the need for a more objective model of analysis. In this section more systematic approaches are presented.

In research by Flowerdew, Li and Tran (2002), the most important studies of racism in discourse were analyzed in respect of discourse strategies that are believed to be proof of **discrimination**. They found that in the various schemes of analysis four main strategies of discrimination could be discerned. They collected a corpus of eighty newspaper articles from a leading Hong Kong Newspaper in 1999 and 2000 concerning the topic whether immigrants from mainland China have the right-of-abode. They succeeded in categorizing all the racist phenomena under the following headings.

(15) Discriminatory discourse strategies

1. Negative other presentation;
2. Scare tactics;
3. Blaming the victim;
4. Delegitimation.

(Flowerdew, Li and Tran, 2002)

In 1, the negative other presentation, the minority received negative attributions in a scheme of “positive us” and “negative them”. Migrants were presented with negative metaphors such as a “mass influx” that imposes a “heavy burden” on society. In their corpus Flowerdew, Li and Tran found examples such as the following, here in translation:

(16) **Negative other presentation**

People are becoming less tolerant towards mainland immigrants and regard them as uneducated and unhygienic, according to a survey. (...) The survey found new arrivals were generally seen as uneducated, dirty and with little understanding of the rule of law.

By 2, scare tactics, is meant the extensive attention to the alleged threat by the minority to the privileges of the dominant group, such as in:

(17) **Scare tactics**

The arrival of thousands of migrant children could have a “serious and adverse impact” on education for Hong Kong students.

Here the privilege of education is presented as being threatened by immigrants. In 3, blaming the victim, the most salient feature is scapegoating, mixed with a general strategy of accusing a minority group of causing bad developments, such as in the following example.

(18) **Blaming the victim**

Government economist Tang Kwong-yiu said mass immigration would “pull down the standard of living, wage levels,” push up unemployment and thin out resources for economic development and improvement of living conditions.

There may be other causes for the poor economy, but these are not mentioned here. In 4, delegitimation, a minority group is considered outlawed. The result can be that the minority is discredited and disempowered. In the following example this strategy can be found in a judicial context.

(19) **Delegitimation**

“These immigrants have no right of abode in Hong Kong under the Basic Law. They have no right to enter Hong Kong illegally or to remain in Hong Kong in breach of the conditions of stay”, Mr. Justice Yeung added.

Of course, it depends on the context whether these strategies really are racist. Example (16) is not discriminating if it is presented in a newspaper article in which the preceding context actually describes the immigrants positively and it is reported that these immigrants have to face, without reason, many negative attitudes from the majority. The benefit of Flowerdew, Li and Tran’s scheme is that a discourse analysis based on these strategies is more systematic than a more or less impressionistic list of anecdotal or disputable examples.

Such schemes can be refined for more detailed research questions. The first strategy, on negative other-presentation (and positive self-presentation) as mentioned in (16), refers to the way social actors are dealt with (see also Section 15.3). These actors can be presented in different ways. In their study of the rhetoric of racism and anti-Semitism in Austria, Reisigl and Wodak (2001) developed a model for analyzing the presentation of social actors in discourse. Wodak and Reisigl are the main representatives of the **discourse-historical approach (DHA)**, which deals with issues of power and ideology within a given socio-historical framework, drawing from diverse types of data (Reisigl, 2018). Their model contains five typical discursive strategies that are related to five discursive purposes as well as five research questions with which discourse can be analyzed; see Table 1.

Table 1. Discursive strategies in the DHA (Reisigl, 2018)

Strategy	Purpose	Research question
1. <i>Nomination</i>	discursive construction of objects, events and social actors	how are persons, objects and events named and referred to?
2. <i>Predication</i>	characterization and qualification of objects, events and social actors	which characteristics and features are attributed to persons, objects and events?
3. <i>Argumentation</i>	persuading recipients of the correctness of standpoints	what kind of argumentation schemes are used?
4. <i>Perspectivization</i>	expressing the addresser’s attitude towards the issue at hand, showing distance or involvement	from which point of view are the nominations (1), attributions (2) and arguments (3) used?
5. <i>Mitigation or intensification</i>	modifying the force of an utterance in terms of conviction, likelihood, necessity, etc.	how are the discriminating utterances formulated: overtly or covertly, in an intensified or mitigated manner?

How does this scheme of analysis work? Below is one of the examples Reisigl and Wodak (2001) present. Some background information will help in understanding the gist of the passage. In Austria the head of the province of Carinthia, Karl-Heinz Grasser, has ordered that public building projects be carried out exclusively by Austrian workers. This measure elicited an intensive public debate on exclusionary practice, urging Grasser to give in. During this debate a journalist interviewed Grasser's party leader, who was known for his anti-foreigner attitude (Haider of the FPÖ).

- (20) Journalist: You will not recommend Karl-Heinz Grasser to give in?
 Haider: We never thought differently and will continue to do so. The indignation, of course, just comes from the side of those like the Carinthian guild master for construction, a socialist, who makes money out of cheap labor from Slovenia and Croatia. And if, today, one goes by one of Hans Peter Haselsteiner's "Illbau" building sites, and there, the foreigners, even down to black Africans, cut and carry bricks, then the Austrian construction worker really thinks something. Then one must understand, if there are emotions.

In this passage different techniques are used in referring to social actors (strategy 1). Compare, for example, the depersonalized actors in "cheap labor" and the individual mentioning of "the Austrian construction worker". The predications attributed to actors are also different (strategy 2). Compare the positive "we" acting in harmony in public and the "socialist guild master" who is implicitly accused of being an unsocial, capitalist socialist in hiring cheap labor from abroad. In the argumentation (strategy 3) that leads to the last sentence "Then one must understand (...) there is an unspoken argument (see Section 12.3), namely, that foreigners are robbing native Austrians of their jobs. It is this argument that has to be proved first. The perspective (strategy 4) is somewhat diffuse. An indefinable "man in the street" occurs two times ("if one goes", "one must"). Finally, in presenting the actors, intensification and mitigation are used (strategy 5). According to Reisigl and Wodak intensification can be seen in the addition of "black" to Africans. They argue that it emphasizes the "visual" difference between Austrians and "foreigners", and implies that they are "an even worse evil" than other "foreigners". Moreover, in the wording "emotions" the overt hostilities to foreigners are euphemistically toned down. This is an example of mitigation.

With this scheme of analysis Reisigl and Wodak's (2001) research aim was similar to that of Flowerdew, Li and Tran. This scheme is based on more general strategies, which makes it easier to compare data and to discuss analyses that are, inevitably, subjective to some extent.

Recent research in the DHA has identified typical features of right-wing populism that can be found in European nationalist parties as well as in the Tea Party movement in the USA (Wodak, 2015). This type of xenophobic discourse usually stresses the idea of a homeland and constructs a homogeneous native people in contrast to migrants and foreigners, using fear as a central motivation. Moreover, **populist discourses** are characterized by an anti-intellectual and anti-establishment attitude, proposing simplistic solutions to complex issues. Media debates may be strongly influenced or even dominated by strategies of populist rhetoric, as summarized in Table 2.

Table 2. Discursive strategies of right-wing populist rhetoric (adapted from Wodak, 2015)

Strategy	Explanation
1. <i>Binary division</i>	polarization between “us” and “them” without intermediate positions
2. <i>Argumentative fallacies</i>	“ad hominem” arguments if an individual is personally attacked instead of a standpoint; or “hasty generalization” fallacy if crimes of individuals are transferred to an entire social group (see Chapter 12)
3. <i>Victim-perpetrator reversal</i>	construction of a scapegoat, such as migrants “stealing” jobs
4. <i>Topos of savior</i>	construction of a charismatic leader protecting “us” from “them”
5. <i>Unreal scenarios</i>	conspiracy theories; construction of obscure powers (e.g. bankers, lobbies, parties) secretly pulling the strings
6. <i>Calculated ambivalence</i>	aggressive campaigning and provocation (e.g. anti-Semitic remarks), followed by evasive and equivocal apologies

As can be seen, there are clear overlaps with the discursive strategies found in the Hong Kong newspaper, as outlined above (Flowerdew, Li and Tran, 2002), especially regarding scare tactics and victim-blaming. This shows that racist discourse is marked by a set of typical features that transgress boundaries of time and geographical space.

15.6 Cross- and intercultural communication

The study of discourse in its social and cultural context conceivably leads to the study of communication patterns dependent on differences between cultures. In a world in which globalization and localization forces are getting stronger, it becomes more and more important to compare cultures in **cross-cultural studies** and to analyze in **intercultural studies** the impact of cultural differences when members of different cultures communicate. The concept **culture**, like many key

concepts, has many different definitions. As mentioned in Section 15.1, in the discourse approach it is usually conceived of as the system of knowledge, values, attitudes and behavior shared by a group of people.

Through knowledge about cultural differences, speakers are able to develop **intercultural communication competence (ICC)**. Although there are many approaches to this concept, two features are particularly important: ICC is based on **appropriateness**, referring to contextually adequate behavior, and on **effectiveness**, the capacity to achieve discursive aims in intercultural encounters (Bowe, Martin and Manns, 2014).

The most-cited author in the area of cross-cultural communication is the Dutch engineer and social psychologist Geert Hofstede. Mainly in the 1970s and 1980s, he collected as an employee of a big computer company a huge amount of data on cultural values in about 60 countries. He got the data by sending out about 100,000 questionnaires with more than a hundred items to the company's employees (Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov, 2010). He asked questions and gave statements like the following (some with multiple choice answers, others with a five-point scale):

(21) Some questions from the attitude survey by Hofstede

1. How important is it to you to fully use your skills and abilities on the job?
2. How satisfied are you at present with your fringe benefits?
3. Competition among employees usually does more harm than good.
4. How important is it to you to work in a department which is run efficiently?
5. Even if employees may feel they deserve a salary increase, they should not ask their manager for it.
6. Most employees have an inherent dislike of work and will avoid it if they can.

On the basis of statistical analysis Hofstede found that the differences in answers could be explained by the assumption of four, and in later research five basic dimensions.

(22) The five basic cultural dimensions from Hofstede

1. Power distance
2. Uncertainty avoidance
3. Individualism versus collectivism
4. Masculinity versus femininity
5. Long- versus short-term orientation

The first dimension, **power distance**, refers to inequality. It is defined as the extent to which the less powerful members of institutions and organizations accept and expect that power is distributed unequally. The power distance is greater to

the extent that inequality is more accepted. In India, for example, the scores are much higher than in the Netherlands. In high power-distance countries subordinates expect to be told, and in low power-distance countries subordinates expect to be consulted.

The second dimension, **uncertainty avoidance**, refers to the extent to which members of a culture feel comfortable in unstructured situations. If uncertainty avoidance is high, as in Japan, then formal rules and procedures are highly estimated. If uncertainty avoidance is low, as in India, then people can tolerate more chaos and differences are welcomed.

The third dimension, **individualism versus collectivism**, refers to the extent to which individuals are supposed to look after themselves and the extent to which the behavior of an individual is influenced by others. In cultures with low individualism or high collectivism, there are, for example, many financial and ritual obligations to relatives or there is no obligation to start or continue a conversation when people are together. In cultures with high individualism the opposite is true. The data showed that the USA has the highest rank on individualism, or – as people from countries with a medium or low score as Japan and Indonesia would probably say – has the lowest rank on collectivism.

The fourth dimension, **masculinity versus femininity**, refers to gender roles in a culture (see Section 15.4). In more “masculine” cultures, values such as self-assertion, competition and success are important, with a clear distinction between the gender roles. In more “feminine” cultures, values like unpretentiousness, solidarity and orientation towards quality are important, with more diffusion between the gender roles. In low-masculine countries, like the Netherlands and Costa Rica, there is, for example, a preference for smaller companies and shorter working weeks. In high-masculine countries, like Austria and Jamaica, there is a preference for larger companies and higher pay.

The fifth dimension, **long- versus short-term orientation**, refers to the extent to which people esteem virtues oriented towards future awards, like perseverance and thrift. In a culture with a short-term orientation, values like respect for tradition and keeping face (see Section 2.6) are of high importance. Short-term orientation is seen as more Eastern, more African, at least from the Western point of view. China has a high rank on this dimension, and the USA and Canada have low rankings, but so do Nigeria and Pakistan.

Hofstede’s study gave a strong impulse to research into **cultural differences**, although his approach also raises questions. In particular, when defining national culture, it would be an oversimplification to adopt an essentialist view, since variety within cultures is the rule rather than the exception. There is no fixed and static set of features that merely need to be listed to identify a particular culture. For instance, a U.S. citizen may be expected to speak American English and to adhere

to U.S. ways of thinking and behavior. However, there is much **intracultural diversity** in the USA at various levels, such as religion, native language, geographical region and ethnic background, which leads to cultural hybridity (Bowe, Martin and Manns, 2014). Hence, whenever the culture of a nation is discussed, it is important to note that this is a construct based on simplification and generalization.

In past decades intercultural communication has received more attention, especially **miscommunication** as a result of cultural differences. The most influential study is that by Scollon, Scollon and Jones (2001/2012). They presented a framework for functional analysis of discourse between participants from different cultures. Their analyses are very insightful and go a step further than Hofstede's framework with its more general labels. Below is just one of their examples, a passage from a conversation between an American and a Chinese businessman (*A* and *C*).

- (23) A: By the way, I'm Andrew Richardson. My friends call me Andy. This is my business card.
 C: I'm David Chu. Pleased to meet you, Mr. Richardson. This is my card.
 A: No, no. Call me Andy. I think we'll be doing a lot of business together.
 C: Yes, I hope so.
 A: (reading Mr. Chu's card) "Chu, Hon-fai." Hon-fai, I'll give you a call tomorrow as soon as I get settled at my hotel.
 C: (smiling) Yes, I'll expect your call.

In intercultural communication one can often see that partners try to be sensitive, but in doing so cause more problems. In this conversation the American and the Chinese are communicating with different **politeness** concepts (see Section 2.6). Americans in this situation normally act on the basis of solidarity politeness, insisting on communication based on first names. Chinese people normally act on the basis of respect politeness, based on *Mr.* and family names. Both seem to be aware of these differences, but both choose the wrong solution. The Chinese man knows that Americans feel comfortable on a first-name basis, and for this reason he adopted a Western name, David. The American man knows that Chinese people want to be respected in their culture and believes that using a Western name is offensive, so that he chooses the Chinese first name, Hon-fai. Moreover, the interpretation of Mr. Chu's smile causes serious problems. In American culture a smile is clearly distinguished from a nervous laugh, but in Chinese culture a smile can also be an expression of feeling uncomfortable.

With the help of such examples, Scollon, Scollon and Jones (2001/2012) show that there is much more at stake in intercultural communication than Hofstede's cross-cultural study could bring to light. In analyzing intercultural contact they incorporate not only the politeness principle but in fact many of the other concepts that were dealt with in this introduction to discourse studies.

Research on cross- and intercultural communication is the foundation for **variational pragmatics**, which investigates differences in pragmatic phenomena such as cooperation, relevance or politeness across varieties of a language (Schneider and Barron, 2008). As a subdiscipline of this field, **postcolonial pragmatics** deals with context-dependent discursive behavior in multilingual societies with a colonial background, in which English is often used as a second language and *lingua franca* (see also Section 8.6.2). For instance, in collectivistic cultures the use of speech acts may differ considerably from individualistic cultures. In West African societies, promises often have a non-binding character and thus cannot be placed among the commissive illocutions (see Section 2.3). Similarly, in India, a confirmation such as “No problem, sir” cannot always be taken at face value, since it may be based on a code of conduct that disprefers negative replies. From a Western perspective, such uses of speech acts would be considered as disregarding Searles’s sincerity condition or Grice’s quality maxim (see Sections 2.4), while in postcolonial cultures they have the function of showing respect and interest in the present well-being of communicative partners (Anchimbe and Janney, 2017).

15.7 Summary

While a deterministic relationship between language and culture cannot be verified, it is generally accepted that languages to some degree influence their speakers’ conceptualization of the world. Thus, the linguistic relativity hypothesis is a basic prerequisite for CDA, which assumes that social inequality and injustice can be reduced by unmasking and deconstructing power-related discursive practices. Accordingly, central research agendas of CDA include institutional communication in courtrooms, hospitals, newsrooms, political venues and the authorities (see Chapter 14) as well as discrimination on grounds of gender or ethnic background.

CDA has examined stereotyping in the representation of gender roles and discovered patterns of dominance in male-female verbal interaction. In addition, queer linguistics has challenged and deconstructed the discursive gender binary as well as heteronormative authority. As far as racism is concerned, the discursive historical approach has identified strategies for the discriminatory presentation of social actors and discovered common characteristics of right-wing populist rhetoric. Cross-cultural differences can be determined at a very general level by means of Hofstede’s five cultural dimensions. Awareness of such distinctions may support speakers in developing intercultural communication competence, which comprises the appropriate contextual use of features discussed in previous chapters, including cooperation, politeness, style and social interaction in conversation.

Questions and assignments

Questions

15.2.1 Two people walk through fields of barley, rye, oats and wheat. One of them is a farmer's daughter who knows all the varieties of grain, the other is a boy from town who only knows the word grain. What would the linguistic relativity hypothesis say about the differences in worldview between the girl and the boy?

15.3.1 Present a critical analysis of the following sentence (taken from Fairclough, 1995/2013):

Frightened and perhaps in real danger of their lives, the police simply leveled their carbines and Sten guns and fired at point-blank range.

Take into consideration that the following formulation also could have been used:

Frightened and in real danger of their lives, the police fired at point-blank range.

15.4.1 In the following passage (taken from Caldas-Coulthard and Van Leeuwen (2002)) a male social actor is presented with elements found in descriptions of Barbie dolls. Indicate some of the elements in this description that can be considered "feminine".

Stunning Californian man is as lovely as the State he represents in his shimmering black Caterpillar boots, felt-like crimson-hued designer pants and sensual cut-away vest, with silver and orange abstract design. The chest-hugging vest tapers dramatically to emphasize his narrow waist. His accessories include a gold diamond studded ring, wafer-thin gold watch with white gold strap, a solid shimmering gold necklace and an earring shaped like a graceful rose petal. His delicate painted face conveys the firmness of his personality. Atop his beautifully coiffured jet-black hair sits a dark wine-colored hat embellished with swan's tail feathers adding the final touch to the wondrous portrait of American manhood.

15.5.1 How many social actors (cf. the end of Section 15.3) are mentioned in the passage from the interview with Haider (see Example (20) in Section 15.5)? Is "one" in the last sentence also an actor?

15.6.1 Explain which type of knowledge is more important in overcoming intercultural miscommunication: semantic or pragmatic knowledge?

Assignments

15.2.1 Try to set up an experiment on the basis of news report research in Section 14.6, in order to test the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis.

15.3.1 Collect newspaper articles about the same social actor from different newspapers, for example, a social or cultural minority or a politician in your country. Analyze the way in which this actor is presented, using the concepts passivization and nominalization.

15.3.2 Try to find arguments for or against a pejorative meaning or negative connotation of the word *elaborate* as an adjective and as a verb by exploring the Internet. Also consider the noun *elaboration* as used in Rhetorical Structure Theory (Section 6.4) and in the Elaboration Likelihood Model (Section 12.4).

- 15.4.1 Present the passage from question 15.4.1 to male and female proofreaders. Try to find out whether there are any differences in attitude by having subjects answer such questions as “How masculine do you find Californian man?” or “How pleasant do you find Californian man?”. Try to design a dozen questions which subjects can answer with numerical judgments from 1 to 10 (from “very low” to “very high”).
- 15.5.1 Collect texts that are, in your opinion, discriminatory (e.g., towards women, the LGBT community or cultural minorities). The texts do not necessarily have to be newspaper articles. Analyze the texts according to the discriminatory discourse strategies identified by Flowerdew, Li and Tran (2002). Try to expand and refine their analysis scheme on the basis of your results.
- 15.5.2 Find prominent speeches and interviews by right-wing populists in Britain, the USA or in your own country. Which of the rhetorical techniques mentioned by Wodak (2015) can you identify and which contextual functions do they fulfill?
- 15.6.1 Consult the appendices in Hofstede (2001) and present some of his questions concerning the attitude towards a manager to subjects. Try to find out whether there are differences in views of the concept of power distance between subjects older and younger than fifty.
- 15.6.2 During your next trip abroad, take field notes of cultural differences in communication (or possible misunderstandings) between yourself and the locals. For instance, pay attention to address forms, politeness routines (see Section 2.6) and conversational features such as turn-taking or back-channel behavior (see Chapter 9).