Politics and Language: Overview

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Development of a New Field

In this overview to the section, we deal very briefly with the history of research on Language and Politics, as well as with fields that are not or are only very briefly covered in the entire section. Moreover, we propose working definitions of basic concepts fundamental to the whole field of research. Finally, we summarize some of the most important research strands according to topic-oriented questions arising out of the developments and changes in our globalized and globalizing societies.

The entries in this overview cover the most important research domains in the field of language and politics, both on a theoretical and on a methodological level. Thus, we cover aspects of classic and modern rhetoric up to more sociologically oriented methods, such as ‘frame analysis,’ as well as new and hybrid multimodal genres (the Internet). We also elaborate on such topics as politics and gender, ideology, discrimination, political speeches, and the representation of war.

History of Research in the Field of Language and Politics

The research on language and politics in the field of linguistics seems to be quite young, although rhetoric is one of the oldest academic disciplines and was already concerned with aspects of political communication in ancient times (see Rhetoric, Classical).

After World War II, Lasswell and Leites (1949) published one of the most important studies on quantitative semantics in the field of language and politics, developing approaches from communication and mass media research. The famous economist Friedrich von Hajek (1968) similarly discussed the impact of language on politics during his stay at the London School of Economics. In the same vein, research started in Central Europe, mainly in Germany, in the late 1940s (see Discourse of National Socialism, Totalitarian).

Moreover, the novel 1984 by George Orwell most certainly was a significant point of departure for the development of the entire field (see Newspeak). Of course, all this research was influenced by the massive use of propaganda in World War II and in the emerging Cold War in the 1950s.

‘Political linguistics’ (Politolinguistik) is an attempt to integrate scientific research dealing with the analysis of political discourse into an academic discipline. Klein (1998) argued that the “linguistic study of political communication,” is a subdiscipline of linguistics that developed mainly in the German-speaking area since the 1950s. He cited the critical linguistic research that started in the wake of National Socialism and was conducted by Klemperer (1947) and Sternberger et al. (1957) as paving the way for the new discipline. Because these studies provoked criticism for being inadequate from the perspective of linguistic theory, a new methodological approach emerged in the late 1960s. It drew on various linguistic subdisciplines (pragmatics, text linguistics, media research) and primarily pragmatic theories or theoretical concepts. Organizational academic structures have developed only recently: For example, the “Arbeitsgemeinschaft Sprache in der Politik” was registered as a nonprofit organization in 1991 and has been organizing major conferences every two years since 1989.

Political linguistics was characterized by Burkhardt (1996) in a programmatic article as a “subdiscipline between linguistics and political science” that to a large extent still needed to be established. Its purpose was to remedy the confusion of concepts identified by him in this research field. Burkhardt proposed the use of ‘political language’ as the generic term comprising “all types of public, institutional and private talks on political issues, all types of texts typical of politics as well as the use of lexical and stylistic linguistic instruments characterizing talks about political contexts.” It included talking about politics and political media language, as well as the so-called language of politics. Moreover, he suggested that a differentiation should be made between the ‘language of politicians’ and ‘language in politics’ as such. Burkhardt proposed the term ‘political linguistics’ (Politolinguistik) for the “hitherto nameless discipline” that was...
committed to studying political language (in the above sense).

Previous research in this field investigated, rather randomly, individual phenomena of political language. As particularly promising methods and techniques to be used for ‘ideological reconstruction,’ Burkhardt listed four different procedures: “lexical-semantic techniques” (analysis of catchwords and value words, of euphemisms, and of ideological polysemy); “sentence and text-semantic procedures” (e.g., analysis of tropes, of “semantic isotopes,” and of integration and exclusion strategies); “pragmatic text-linguistic techniques” (i.e., analysis of forms of address, speech acts, allusions, presuppositions, conversation, argumentation, rhetoric, quotations, genres, and intertextuality); and finally ‘semitic techniques’ (icon, symbol, and architecture-semiotic analysis). This catalogue of methods could be particularly useful as a checklist for the concrete task of analysts. In the future, Burkhardt suggested, political linguistics should go beyond studies critical of the present and aim at comparative analysis both in diachronic and intercultural terms so as to overcome the parative analysis both in diachronic and intercultural beyond studies critical of the present and aim at complete comparison and distance (Hymes, 1972).

In his detailed analysis of language practices during the NS regime between 1932 and 1938, Maas was able to show how the discourses in Germany were affected by NS ideology, which was characterized by social-revolutionary undertones. Nazi discourse had superseded almost all forms of language (practices), a fact that made it difficult for the individual who did not want to cherish the tradition of an unworldly Romanticism to use language in any critical-reflective way. Discourse in Maas’s approach was understood as the result of ‘collusion’: the conditions of the political, social, and linguistic practices quasi-impose themselves behind the back of the subjects, while the actors do not “see through the game” (cf. also Bourdieu’s notion of ‘violence symbolique’).

Discourse analysis thus identifies the rules that make a text into a fascist text. In the same way as grammar characterizes the structure of sentences, discourse rules characterize utterances/texts that are acceptable within a certain social practice. The focus is not on NS language per se, but rather the aim is to record and analyze the spectrum of linguistic relations based on a number of texts dealing with various spheres of life in the Nazi period. These texts represent a complicated network of similarities that overlap and intersect. Therefore, it is also important to do justice to the ‘polyphony’ of texts resulting from the fact that social contradictions are inscribed into them. Texts from diverse social and political contexts (cooking recipes, local municipal provisions on agriculture, texts by NS politicians, and also by critics of this ideology, who were ultimately involved in the dominant discourse) are analyzed by Maas in a sample representative of almost all possible texts and genres of NS discourse; discourse is understood in the sense of linguistic ‘staging’ of a certain social practice.

Ehlich (1989) proposed different methodological approaches to “language during fascism,” including content analyses, language statistics, historical philosophy, semantics, and stylistics based not only on linguistic–sociological approaches but also on ‘argumentation analysis.’ He stressed the central role of linguistic activity during fascism, in which verbal action was de facto limited to acclamation, whereas the contrafactual impression of self-motivated activity was created in a setting of mass communication. From a perspective of “linguistic pragmatics oriented towards societal analysis” (Ehlich, 1989: 31), he identified these characteristics of fascist linguistic action: the strategy of making communication phatic; the propositional reduction of communication, which in turn is closely linked to the promise of a ‘simple world’; the order as another central pattern of linguistic action characterized inter alia by the systematic elimination of the listener’s decision and consciousness and implying a “mandatory speechlessness of the addressee”; linguistic actions serving the purpose of denunciation, which become extremely common, a fact that has decisive effects on elementary linguistic actions, such as jokes entailing life-threatening risks. Given this mental terror, many people demonstrated ‘conformity’ in their linguistic actions as a form of self-protection, and sometimes linguistic action turned into linguistic suffering mainly expressed by silence. Against this background, only a minority managed to transform suffering into linguistic
resistance, which had to be anonymous and subversive. (see Discourse of National Socialism, Totalitarian).

**Language and Politics/Language Policies/ Language Planning**

The delimitation between different research areas and topics in the context of language and/in politics is by nature difficult, and the distinction between language and politics/language policies and language planning is blurred. Although this extensive area cannot be covered in detail in this section (see Language Planning and Policy: Models; Language Policies: Policies on Language in Europe), it does highlight some basic facts about language policies.

Language policies deal with two main areas: (1) political measures targeted at an individual language (e.g., the prohibition of certain terms), or (2) the relations among different languages and their social importance, function, relevance in international communication, etc. Measures that target usage of an individual language influence the awareness of speakers by prohibiting or making mandatory the use of special terms and phrases or through the government regulation of language use. In general, imposing such measures requires extensive political power and can be done more easily in totalitarian political systems. The homogenization of language use in terms of regulating specific vocabularies and prohibiting specific modes of expression under the NS regime offers illustrative examples: the absurd racist categorization of people as ‘Jews,’ ‘half-Jewish,’ and ‘quarter-Jewish’ to prepare and justify the Holocaust; the use of cynical euphemisms like ‘Crystal Night’ for the pogrom of November, 1938; or defining ‘Aryanization’ as the expropriation of Jewish property organized by the state. These examples show that there is no clear-cut distinction between language and politics, on the one hand, and language policies, on the other hand. Another example is the systematic avoidance of the term assimiljacja (assimilation) in the former Soviet Union when describing the phenomenon of switching from a mother tongue (L1) into Russian. The phrase ‘transition to the second mother tongue’ (vtoroi rodnoi jazyk) was used instead, and thus a term with a negative connotation was replaced by one with a positive connotation (see Haarmann, 1987).

However, everyday language also shows that language and politics are two overlapping subjects, which is the focus of this article. Such terms and phrases as ‘to make redundant,’ ‘Social Security scroungers,’ ‘economic migrants,’ ‘free-market economy,’ and ‘pay agreement adjustment’ convey a specific approach to reality and are partly consciously created for this purpose. This also applies to word coining aimed at political correctness (Negro–black–nonwhite–colored–African–American, as well as ‘ebonics’ for the speech and language of African–American people). An important issue in this context is gender-neutral wording, which affects not only the vocabulary but also the morphology of a language (e.g., by inserting in German nouns a capital ‘I’ and adding a female ending).

Language policies pursued to reduce the impact of English on other languages are a recent development. In some countries, such as France and Poland, legislation has been adopted to prevent the spread of Anglicisms. In France, the “Act on the Use of the French Language” was passed in 1994 (Loi Toubon, Act No. 669/94 of August 1994), making the use of Anglicisms in specific contexts — at least theoretically — a punishable offense. A terminology committee at the ministerial level prepared proposals for replacing Anglicisms by words of French origin (e.g., remue ménings for brainstorming; restovite for fast food, or bande promo for video clip) and compiled a glossary with about 3000 terms. This measure of language planning also comes under the heading ‘language and politics.’ In Poland a law similar to that in France was passed in 1999; the ‘Act on the Polish Language’ stipulated that all names of goods and services have to be Polish. This measure can be classified as ‘status planning.’ The reasons given for adopting this law were the great importance of the Polish language for the national identity and the prevention inter alia of the ‘vulgarization’ of the Polish language, as the English version of this Act reads.

A second important aspect of language policies is concerned with the status and social function of languages. This area covers such issues as the social role and significance of languages or varieties of languages, language conflicts, language and identity, measures to grant specific languages used in a state, the status of an official language in the national territory, and measures to promote languages as languages of communication and foreign languages at the international level. Two different aspects of the social function of languages have to be distinguished: (1) issues regarding language policy theory and language planning (language politics), and (2) issues concerning the concrete implementation of language policy measures adopted more or less consciously (language policies).

At the national level, governments may enact language policy and language planning measures, as well as legislation concerning the role and status of
languages spoken by the inhabitants of the state (i.e., all measures concerning the standardization, use, and active promotion of these languages within and also outside the territory of the state). Even if no consciously planned measures are undertaken and if these phenomena are ignored or rejected, this *laissez-faire* policy can be classified as a language policy. Important questions relating to the status of languages include the following: Which language fulfills the function of a national language and of an official language used as a means of communication between the state and its citizens, which languages are used as languages of instruction, and which languages are taught as foreign languages?

International language policy is influenced by the status and the significance of different languages as a means of supranational and international communication; for example, as a supraregional or global language of communication or as official and working languages in international organizations, such as the UN, the Council of Europe, or NATO and in federations of states like the EU or the former USSR. Important questions in this area include the selection and use of language/s in negotiations between two or more states and the language/s of diplomacy, or of international agreements and treaties (authentic versions). Important issues in the arena of international language policy include phenomena of linguistic imperialism, the increasingly dominant role of English as an international *lingua franca*, models of supranational communication within the EU at the European level, linguistic phenomena in the wake of European labor migration, and the emergence of new allochthonous linguistic minorities in countries experiencing large waves of migration.

In the context of immigration and in connection with the increasing deconstruction of national states, with their dwindling influence on language policy, a change of paradigms in the perception of language and the state, and also language and the individual, has taken place in sociolinguistics. Individual multilingualism and social plurilingualism are now considered the standard – “monolingualism is curable,” as the editors of the journal *Sociolinguistica* (Ammon et al., 1997) put it. Foreign language policy (which languages are taught to what extent in which countries?) as well as measures to promote the use of languages through foreign cultural policies and cultural institutes (e.g., the British Council, *Institut Français*, *Goethe Institut*, *Istituto Cervantes*) play a crucial role in international language policy.

### Discourse/Text/Politics

In this section, we first define relevant concepts and terms used in research on language and politics, then pull together the most important characteristics of significantly different approaches, and finally present some of their most important findings and studies.

Research in the field of language and politics has expanded enormously in recent years (Fairclough, 1992; Blommaert and Verschueren, 1998; Reisigl and Wodak, 2001; Wodak, 2001a; Wodak, 2001b; Gruber et al., 2003; Chilton, 2004). According to the underlying specific theoretical approach, the notion of discourse is defined in many different ways. Since the 1970s and 1980s, this notion has been subject to manifold semantic interpretations. These vague meanings have become part of everyday language use, a fact highlighted *inter alia* by Ehlich (2000), who also presented specific definitions of discourse that were linked to the British, French, and German research traditions. For example, in British research, the term ‘discourse’ is often used synonymously with the term ‘text’ (i.e., meaning authentic, everyday linguistic communication). The French *discours*, however, focuses more on the connection between language and thought; that is, the “creation and societal maintenance of complex knowledge systems” (Ehlich, 2000: 162). In German pragmatics, *Diskurs* denotes “structured sets of speech acts.” Other possible definitions range from a “promiscuous use of ‘text’ and ‘discourse’” (Ehlich, 2000), as found predominantly in Anglo-Saxon approaches, to a strict definition from the perspective of linguistic pragmatics (see Titscher et al., 2000).

We endorse Lemke’s (1995: 7) definition, which distinguishes between text and discourse in the following way:

“When I speak about discourse in general, I will usually mean the social activity of making meanings with language and other symbolic systems in some particular kind of situation or setting. . . . On each occasion when the particular meanings, characteristic of these discourses are being made, a specific text is produced. Discourses, as social actions more or less governed by social habits, produce texts that will in some ways be alike in their meanings. . . . When we want to focus on the specifics of an event or occasion, we speak of the text; when we want to look at patterns, commonality, relationships that embrace different texts and occasions, we can speak of discourses.”

The notion of politics is also defined in many different ways depending on the theoretical framework: It ranges from a wide extension of the concept...
according to which every social utterance or practice of the human as a *zoon politikon* is ‘political’ to a notion of politics referring only to the use of language by politicians in various settings and in political institutions:

“On the one hand, politics is viewed as a struggle for power, between those who seek to assert their power and those, who seek to resist it. On the other hand, politics is viewed as cooperation, as the practices and institutions that a society has for resolving clashes of interest over money, influence, liberty, and the like” (Chilton, 2004: 3).

Chilton (2004) embraced an interactive view of politics, which cuts through both these dimensions mentioned above. This is also the perspective endorsed in this article.

Furthermore, it is important to define the political domains and the genres that are relevant in this field (in the sense of Bourdieu’s theory of fields, habitus, and capitals). The most important domains are summarized in Figure 1.

The triangulatory discourse–historical approach is based on a concept of context that takes into account four levels; the first one is descriptive, whereas the other three levels are part of theories dealing with context (see Figure 2);

1. the immediate, language or text internal cotext
2. the intertextual and interdiscursive relationship among utterances, texts, genres, and discourses
3. the extralinguistic social/sociological variables and institutional frames of a specific ‘context of situation’ (Middle Range Theories)
4. the broader sociopolitical and historical contexts, in which the discursive practices are embedded and related.
The most salient feature of the definition of a discourse is the macrotopic, such as language policies. Interdiscursivity can be detected when, for example, an argument (taken from the discourse on immigration restrictions) is used while arguing for other policies to combat unemployment. Each macrotopic allows for many subtopics: Unemployment thus covers such subtopics as market, trade unions, social welfare, global market, hire and fire policies, and many more. Discourses are not closed systems at all; rather, they are open and hybrid. New subtopics can be created, and intertextuality and interdiscursivity allow for new fields of action and new genres. Discourses are realized in both genres and texts (see Genres in Political Discourse).

Inter/Trans/Multidisciplinarity

Research on language and/in politics is primarily inter- or transdisciplinary. The concepts ‘theory’ and ‘interdisciplinarity’ refer to the conceptual and disciplinary framework conditions of discourse-analytical research. Discourse analysis has concentrated on the process of theory formation and has emphasized the interdisciplinarity nature of its research since its beginning (Weiss and Wodak, 2003). The plurality of theory and methodology can be highlighted as a specific strength of the research summarized in this overview. Chouliaraki and Fairclough (1999: 16) described the eclectic nature of critical discourse analysis (CDA) as follows:

“We see CDA as bringing a variety of theories into dialogue, especially social theories on the one hand and linguistic theories on the other, so that its theory is a shifting synthesis of other theories, though what it itself theorizes in particular is the mediation between the social and the linguistic – the ‘order of discourse,’ the social structuring of semiotic hybridity (interdiscursivity). The theoretical constructions of discourse which CDA tries to operationalize can come from various disciplines, and the concept of ‘operationalization’ entails working in a transdisciplinary way where the logic of one discipline (for example, sociology) can be ‘put to work’ in the development of another (for example, linguistics).”

This statement underlines the direct connection between theory and interdisciplinarity or transdisciplinarity that is typical of discourse analysis.

The sociologist Helga Nowotny (1997: 188) outlined the concepts of inter/trans/pluri-disciplinarity briefly and very accurately:

“Pluri(multi-)disciplinarity shows in the fact that the manifold disciplines remain independent. No changes are brought about in the existing structures of disciplines and theories. This form of academic cooperation consists in treating a subject from differing disciplinary perspectives. Interdisciplinarity may be recognized in the explicit formulation of a standardized transdisciplinary terminology. This form of cooperation is used to treat different subjects within a framework of an interdisciplinary or transdisciplinary design. Transdisciplinarity manifests itself when research across the disciplinary landscape is based on a common axiomatic theory and the interpenetration of disciplinary research methods. Cooperation leads to a bundling or clustering of problem-solving approaches.
rooted in different disciplines and drawing on a pool of theories.”

**Current Research in Language and Politics**

**Some Research Dimensions**

Having reviewed the relevant theoretical concepts and studies, we present here a summary of the important research issues:

- How widely or narrowly should political action (or political language behavior) be defined? Should it be restricted to the study of traditional political genres (like speeches, slogans, debates), or are all everyday actions in some way ‘political’?
- What is the role of the political elites? Who determines political issues? Is it thus important to investigate the media; the rhetoric of politicians, teachers, and scholars, as well as managers; or the language used by ‘men and women on the street’ and their respective belief systems? This question leads to the debate about possible causalities: whether it is top down or bottom up. Do people believe what the politicians (media) tell them, or do the citizens influence the slogans in an election campaign? What about grassroots movements?
- Politics is tied to ideologies, party programs, opinion leaders, and political interests. How do ideologies and belief systems manifest themselves in various genres of political discourse? How are *topoi* and arguments recontextualized through various genres and public spaces? (see **Rhetorical Tropes in Political Discourse**).
- What are the main functions of political discourses? To answer this question, we have to examine strategies of persuasion, negotiation, polarization, etc. On the one hand, politics serves to find consensus and compromises and to make decisions. On the other hand, politics leads to wars and conflicts (see **Metaphors in Political Discourse**; **Political Rhetorics of Discrimination**; **Political Speeches and Persuasive Argumentation** and **War Rhetoric**). How do power structures influence decision-making strategies?
- Finally, what are the main settings where political practices take place (‘doing politics’)? How do the structures of various organizations and institutions influence political discourses?

There are certainly many more related questions, such as the influence of globalizing processes on language change or changes in political rhetoric and its functions over time (see **Multimodality and the Language of Politics**; Kovács and Wodak, 2003)).

**Critical Linguistics and Critical Discourse Analysis**

The terms ‘Critical Linguistics’ (CL) and ‘Critical Discourse Analysis’ (CDA) are often used interchangeably. CL developed in the 1970s and 1980s, primarily at the University of East Anglia, around the work of Roger Fowler, Tony Trew, and Gunther Kress. In more recent research, it seems that the term CDA is preferred and is used to denote the theory formerly identified as CL. CDA sees “language as social practice” (Fairclough and Wodak, 1997) and considers the context of language use to be crucial (Weiss and Wodak, 2003; Wodak and Weiss, 2004). Moreover, CDA takes a particular interest in the relation between language and power. CDA research specifically considers institutional, political, gender, and media discourses (in the broadest sense) that testify to more or less overt relations of struggle and conflict (see **Critical Discourse Analysis**).

The shared perspective of CL and CDA relates to the term ‘critical,’ which in the work of some ‘critical linguists’ could be traced to the influence of the Frankfurt School or of Jürgen Habermas. The continuity between CL and CDA is visible mostly in the claim that discourses are ideological and that there is no arbitrariness of signs. Functional–systemic linguistics has proven to be most important for the text analysis undertaken by CL (see Halliday, 1978).

CL and CDA are rooted in classical rhetoric, text linguistics, and sociolinguistics, as well as in applied linguistics and pragmatics. The objects under investigation by the various departments and scholars who apply CDA differ, although gender issues, issues of racism, media discourses, the rise of right-wing populism, and dimensions of identity politics have become very prominent (see **Media, Politics, and Discourse: Interactions**; **Gender and Political Discourse**; **Newspeak**; **Frame Analysis and Political Rhetorics of Discrimination**). The methodologies used also differ greatly: Small qualitative case studies can be found, as well as large data corpora, drawn from fieldwork and ethnographic research.

CL and CDA may be defined as fundamentally interested in analyzing both opaque and transparent structural relationships of dominance, discrimination, power, and control as manifested in language. Four concepts figure indispensably in all CDA work: the concepts of critique, power; history; and ideology.
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The notion of critique carries very different meanings: Some adhere to the Frankfurt School and others to a notion of literary criticism or to Marx’s notions (see Reisigl and Wodak, 2001 for an overview). Ideology is seen as an important aspect of establishing and maintaining unequal power relations. For Eagleton (1994), the study of ideology must consider the variety of theories and theorists who have examined the relation between thought and social reality. All these theories assume “that there are specific historical reasons why people come to feel, reason, desire and imagine as they do” (Eagleton, 1994: 15).

For CDA, language is not powerful on its own: Rather, it gains power by the use powerful people make of it. Thus, CDA focuses on processes of inclusion and exclusion, of access to relevant domains of our societies. Moreover, CDA emphasizes the need for interdisciplinary work in order to gain a proper understanding of how language functions in, for example, constituting and transmitting knowledge, organizing social institutions, or exercising power.

In critically analyzing various kinds of discourses that encode prejudice, van Dijk was interested in developing a theoretical model that explained cognitive discourse processing mechanisms related to the production and reproduction of racism. Most recently, van Dijk (2004) has focused on elaborating models of context and knowledge.

The Duisburg School of CDA draws on Foucault’s notion of discourse, on the one hand, and Alexej N. Leontjew’s “speech activity theory” (Leontjew, 1984) and Jürgen Link’s “collective symbolism” (Link, 1988), on the other hand. As institutionalized and conventionalized speech modes, discourses express societal power relations, which in turn are affected by discourses. This ‘overall discourse’ of society, which could be visualized as a “diskursives Gewimmel” (literally, discursive swarming), becomes manifest in different ‘discourse strands’ (comprising discourse fragments of the same subject) at different discourse levels (science, politics, media, etc.). Every discourse is historically embedded and has repercussions on current and future discourse. In addition to the above levels, the structure of discourse may be dissected into special discourse vs. inter-discourse; discursive events and discursive context; discourse position; overall societal discourse and interwoven discourses; themes and bundles of discourse strands; and the history, present, and future of discourse strands. These fragments are analyzed in five steps – institutional framework, text ‘surface,’ linguistic-rhetoric means, programmatic-ideological messages, and interpretation – for which concrete questions regarding the text are formulated.

The combination of political science and political philosophy (predominantly with a strong Marxist influence) and of French linguistics is typical of French discourse analysis. Essentially, two different approaches may be distinguished.

van Dijk and Kintsch (1983) considered the relevance of discourse to the study of cognitive language processing. Their development of a cognitive model of discourse comprehension gradually developed into cognitive models for explaining the construction of meaning on a societal level. The notion of ‘strategy’ proved to be fruitful for a number of studies on language and politics (see below).
A text corpus (e.g., texts of the French Communist Party) is prepared. Texts are then compared on the basis of the relative frequency of specific words. One study shows, for example, how the relative frequency of the words ‘travailleur’ and ‘salarie’ varies significantly among French trade unions, reflecting different political ideologies; it also shows how that frequency changes over time (Groupe de Saint-Cloud, 1982).

Althusser’s theory on ideology and Foucault’s theory were major points of reference for the second approach in French discourse analysis, notably the work of Michel Pêcheux (1982). Discourse is the place where language and ideology meet, and discourse analysis is the analysis of ideological dimensions of language use and of the materialization in language of ideology. Both the words used and the meanings of words vary according to the position in the class struggle from which they are used; in other words, according to the ‘discursive formation’ within which they are located. For instance, the word ‘struggle’ itself is particularly associated with a working class political voice, and its meaning in that discursive formation is different from its meanings when used from other positions.

Pêcheux’s main focus was political discourse in France, especially the relationship between social-democratic and Communist discourses within left political discourse. He emphasized the ideological effects of discursive formations in positioning people as social subjects. Echoing Althusser, he suggested that people are placed in the ‘imaginary’ position of being sources of their discourse, whereas actually their discourse and indeed they themselves are the effects of their ideological positioning. The sources and processes of their own positioning are hidden from people, who are typically not aware of speaking/writing from within a particular discursive formation. Moreover, the discursive formations within which people are positioned are themselves shaped by the ‘complex whole in dominance’ of discursive formations, which Pêcheux called ‘interdiscourse’; however, people are not aware of that shaping. Radical change in the way people are positioned in discourse can only come from political revolution.

In the 1980s, the influence of Michel Foucault increased, as did that of Mikhael Bakhtin. Studies began to emphasize the complex mixing of discursive formations in texts and the heterogeneity and ambivalence of texts (for example, see Courtine, 1981).

An increased recognition of the contribution of all aspects of the communicative context to text meaning, as well as a growing awareness in media studies of the importance of nonverbal aspects of texts, has focused attention on semiotic devices in discourse other than linguistic ones. In particular, the theory put forward by Kress and van Leeuwen (1996) provided a useful framework for considering the communicative potential of visual devices in the media. This research is closely related to the role and status of semiotic practices in society, which is currently undergoing change because, increasingly, global corporations and semiotic technologies, rather than national institutions, are regulating semiotic production and consumption.

This emphasis on regulatory practices has led to a three-stage research approach, starting with the analysis of a particular category of texts, cultural artifacts, or communicative events; then moving to a second set of texts (and/or cultural artifacts and/or communicative events) – namely those that seek to regulate the production and consumption of the first set; and finally moving to a third set of texts, namely actual instances of producing or consuming texts (etc.) belonging to the first set. This type of work creates a particular relation among discourse analysis, ethnography, history, and theory in which these disciplines are no longer contributing to the whole through some kind of indefinable synergy or triangulation, but are complementary in quite specific ways.

In the last few years, Jay Lemke’s work has emphasized multimedia semiotics, multiple timescales, and hypertexts/traversals. He extended his earlier work on embedded ideologies in social communication from an analysis of verbal texts to an integration of verbal texts with visual images and other presentational media, with a particular focus on evaluative meanings. His work has emphasized the implicit value systems and their connections to institutional and personal identity. In all this work, Lemke uses critical social semiotics as an extension of critical discourse analysis, combined with models of the material base of emergent social phenomena. His concern is with social and cultural change: how it happens, how it is constrained, and the ways in which is it expectancy unpredictable (Lemke, 1995).

Lemke’s newest work has developed the idea that, although we tell our lives as narratives, we experience them as hypertexts. Building on research on the semantic resources of hypertext as a medium, he proposed that postmodern lifestyles are increasingly liberated from particular institutional roles and that we tend to move, on multiple timescales, from involvement in one institution to another; we create new kinds of meaning, being less bound to fixed genres and registers, as we ‘surf’ across channels, websites, and lived experiences. This lifestyle is seen as a new historical development that does not
supplant institutions, but rather builds up new sociocultural possibilities on top and over them. These new lifestyles imply new forms of participation in politics as well as in the media.

The problem that Ron and Suzie Scollon address in their recent work is how to build a formal theoretical and a practical link between discourse and action. Theirs is an activist position that uses tools and strategies of engaged discourse analysis in taking action and thus requires a formal analysis of how its own actions can be accomplished through discourse and its analysis. Ron Scollon’s (2001) recent work furthers the idea developed in Mediated discourse: the nexus of practice that practice in general is understood most usefully as many separate practices that are linked in a nexus, an overlap of topical discourses. The relations between discourse and a nexus of practice are many and complex and rarely direct. His current interest is in trying to open up and explicate these linkages through ‘nexus analysis.’ The focus of his recent work has been to theorize the link between indexicality in language (and discourse and semiotics more generally) and the indexable in the world. This could also be described as theorizing the link between producers of communications and the material world in which those communications are placed as a necessary element of their semiosis. Ron Scollon is applying this model of analysis to the ‘discursive politics of food production and to the discourses of environmental politics.’
The study in which the discourse–historical approach was actually first developed tried to trace in detail the constitution of an anti-Semitic stereotyped image or ‘Feindbild,’ as it emerged in public discourse in the 1986 Austrian presidential campaign of Kurt Waldheim (Wodak et al., 1990). The discourse about the Waldheim Affair spread to different fields of political action, involving many different genres and topics. Figure 3 illustrates in simplified terms the discourse and the most relevant relationships among fields of action, genres, and discourse topics.

To illustrate this context-dependent approach, we present some of the many layers of discourse investigated in the study of the Waldheim Affair. During the 1986 election, Waldheim had at first denied active involvement with Nazism and Nazi military operations in the Balkans. To contradict his assertion, there were documents of the Wehrmacht about the war in the Balkans in general, as well as documents relating specifically to Waldheim’s activities there. There were also several statements and interviews with Wehrmacht veterans who had served with Waldheim. One step removed from these materials was the research by historians on the Balkan war in general and on Waldheim’s wartime role in particular. At still another level there was the reporting in Austrian newspapers on the Balkan war, on Waldheim’s past, and on historical research into the war and Waldheim’s role in it. There were reports in newspapers on Waldheim’s own explanation of his past; in addition, all these previously mentioned aspects were reported in foreign newspapers, especially in The New York Times. Simultaneously, the press releases and documents of the World Jewish Congress provided an autonomous informational and discursive source. Finally, there were statements of and interviews with politicians, as well as the ‘vox populi,’ on all these topics.

Though sometimes tedious and very time consuming, such a discourse–historical approach allowed us to record the varying perceptions, selections, and distortions of information. As a result, we were able to trace in detail the constitution of an anti-Semitic stereotyped image or ‘Feindbild’ of ‘the others’ as it emerged in public discourse in Austria in 1986.

The discourse–historical approach has been elaborated further in several more recent studies; for example, in studies on right-wing populist rhetoric, as developed by Jörg Haider and the Freedom Party in Austria on discourses about coming to terms with traumatic pasts; and on the discursive construction of national and European Identities (Wodak et al., 1999; Martin and Wodak, 2003; Wodak and Weiss, 2004). Particularly, the mediation between context and text has been elaborated further (see Figure 2).

Questions of identity politics are becoming increasingly important in societies full of tensions between globalizing processes and nationalistic trends (who is included and who is excluded). Five questions have proven to be relevant for new theoretical and methodological approaches:

1. How are persons named and referred to linguistically?
2. What traits, characteristics, qualities, and features are attributed to them?
3. By means of what arguments and argumentation schemes do specific persons or social groups try to justify and legitimize the inclusion/exclusion of others?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Objectives</th>
<th>Devices</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Referential/nomination</td>
<td>Construction of in-groups and out-groups</td>
<td>Membership categorization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Predication</td>
<td>Labeling social actors more or less positively or negatively, deprecatorily or appreciatively</td>
<td>Stereotypical, evaluative attributions of negative or positive traits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Argumentation</td>
<td>Justification of positive or negative attributions</td>
<td>Topoi used to justify political inclusion or exclusion, discrimination or preferential treatment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perspectivation, framing, or</td>
<td>Expressing involvement</td>
<td>Reporting, description, narration, or quotation of events and utterances</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>discourse representation</td>
<td>Positioning speaker’s point of view</td>
<td>Intensifying or mitigating the illocutionary force of utterances</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intensification, mitigation</td>
<td>Modifying the epistemic status of a proposition</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

4. From what perspective or point of view are these labels, attributions, and arguments expressed?
5. Are the respective utterances articulated overtly, are they even intensified, or are they mitigated?

To answer these questions, we are especially interested in five types of discursive strategies, which are all involved in the positive self- and negative other-presentation. We view, and this needs to be emphasized, the discursive construction of ‘US’ and ‘THEM’ as the basic fundaments of discourses of identity and difference.

By ‘strategy’ we generally mean a more or less accurate and more or less intentional plan of practices (including discursive practices), adopted to achieve a particular social, political, psychological, or linguistic aim. We locate the discursive strategies – that is to say, systematic ways of using language – at different levels of linguistic organization and complexity (see Table 1).

For example, when analyzing patterns of exclusion/inclusion, we have to demonstrate how certain utterances realized through linguistic devices point to exclusionary practices. Rightwing populist discourses employ inter alia such simplifying strategies. Ongoing research is taking these tensions, contradictions, and new tendencies into account.

**Perspectives**

Questions of identity politics are always tied to issues of difference and discrimination, as well as to globalization and localizing processes. One the one hand, we observe enormous complexity; on the other hand, we see tendencies to simplify through dichotomizing strategies. Rightwing populist discourses employ inter alia such simplifying strategies. Ongoing research is taking these tensions, contradictions, and new tendencies into account.

**Bibliography**


Introduction

This article examines the role of politics in applied linguistics and second language teaching. It begins with the traditional, mainstream understanding of the interface between politics and applied linguistics, i.e., language policy and planning, and moves from there to the rise since the 1990s of an alternative view of that interface, i.e., critical applied linguistics. The characteristics and positions of critical applied linguistics are outlined, and the major domains of applied linguistics such as international English and English for academic purposes are discussed from the perspectives of both mainstream and critical applied linguistics.

The Politics of Mainstream Applied Linguistics

Language Policy and Planning

The branch of mainstream applied linguistics inextricably tied to politics and sociopolitical relations is language policy and planning (LPP). Indeed, as Kaplan and Baldauf pointed out, LPP may be considered the ne plus ultra of applied linguistics in society,