Critical discourse studies

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Introduction

Writing a chapter for a handbook section titled 'Theoretical and methodological approaches'

always involves an uncomfortable exercise in boundary-setting: not only does one need to define

critical discourse studies (CDS), but, by the same token, it also needs to be delineated from

neighbouring disciplines. This means excluding valuable work as "not CDS" and inevitably

raises the question on what the writer's authority to declare something within or beyond the pale

rests. It is with this latent discomfort that I give an overview of workplace CDS research.

I do so because such an overview is useful and important. CDS research into workplace language

rather pales against, say, conversation analytical or pragmatic studies, making it necessary to

raise the profile of the work that *has* been done, point out how it ties in with other studies whose

authors do not see themselves as working in a critical tradition, and discuss what could help or

hinder an increased uptake of critical studies of workplace discourse.

CDS: some defining characteristics

In a nutshell, CDS addresses social problems in their discursive aspect, using semiosis, i.e.

meaning-making through signs, including linguistic signs, as an entry point. As such, CDS is

premised on the belief that language and society are mutually constitutive and mediated by

discourse. In simple terms, we can define discourse as language use as social practice that is

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determined by social structures (Fairclough 2015). In other words, discourse is the way in which people use linguistic and other signs, and the way they behave in conversations, in order to relate to others and project an identity for themselves and others. Such language use, however, is restricted by power (e.g. seniority at work), material practices (e.g. office design) and institutions (e.g. ~~e.g. the~~ organizational structures~~workplace itself~~). To further unpack the phrase "critical discourse studies", we can understand "critical" as meaning that the starting point is a social problem that needs to be described, explained and solved, or at least suggestions made as to how it could be solved. Accordingly, CDS has been defined as a

> problem-oriented interdisciplinary research movement, subsuming a variety of approaches, each with different theoretical models, research methods and agenda. What unites them is a shared interest in the semiotic dimensions of power, injustice, abuse, and political-economic or cultural change in society. (Fairclough, Mulderrig, and Wodak 2011, 356)

The notion of bringing about change in society raises the question if CDS is, or should be, a form of political activism itself, or whether it merely lays the groundwork for activists to draw on. Fairclough is outspoken in his belief that CDS ought to lead to actions to improve inequality and discrimination:

> the point is not just to analyze and criticize discourse … and perhaps suggest changes … It is to analyze and criticize, and ultimately to change, the existing social reality in which such discourse is related in particular ways to other social elements such as power relations, ideologies, economic and political strategies and policies. Analyzing and criticizing

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representations … and envisaging alternatives is an important thing to do, but in CD[S] it is just a part of a wider set of objectives. (Fairclough 2015, 5)

While this remains a matter of debate, we can posit that any contribution to social change requires (a) applied work, e.g. guidelines and consultancy on language use and its relation to institutional cultures, and (b) a recontextualization of research findings in non-academic discourses, making it necessary for the researcher to become conversant with non- or semi-academic genres such as blogs or conversations with, and presentations for, research partners. For studies on workplace language, this could mean identifying a social problem that has repercussions in the workplace, for example a lack of social mobility in a society that translates into corporate mono-cultures which in turn exclude employees from non-hegemonic groups from positions of power. A CDS researcher would look for a semiotic entry point into understanding how the problem is perpetuated, e.g. how the conversational norm in conference calls leads to the (self-)exclusion of less powerful participants (see Murphy 2015). Understanding the role of language in maintaining exclusion and power imbalances also requires looking at the discursive social practices between members of a community: who can engage in what sort of activity types - defined as "goal-defined, socially constituted, bounded events with constraints on participants, setting …, but above all on the kinds of allowable contributions" (Levinson 1979, 69) - and what can they legitimately say or write when taking part? Finally, the CDS researcher would go back to the broader social context to see how it can account for, and is reinforced by, exclusion at the micro-level.

These three levels of CDS are represented in Figure 3.1 (adapted from Fairclough 2010, 133; see also Koller 2014, 153).

<INSERT FIGURE 3.1 HERE>

This model lends itself to a bottom-up analysis proceeding from the description of the text to an explanation of the textual findings by analysing the meso- and macro-level contexts. Because language and society are seen as constituting each other via discourse, a full-fledged analysis then returns to the text level to discuss how its text producers are not only influenced by contexts, but influence them in turn, constructing, reinforcing, negotiating and challenging social relations and identities through the use of language and conversational behavior.

Before progressing to notions of critique, it seems appropriate to briefly explain the terms "linguistic devices", "discourse features", "discourse functions" and "discourse goals" from Figure 3.1. These relate to a model of discourse analysis, – first introduced in Koller (2014), – that can be applied both bottom-up and top-down (Table 3.1). Discourse goals at the context level - roughly equivalent to the meso-level in Figure 3.1 - refer to the overall aim that the discourse producer pursues by using language as a social practice and are realized by discourse functions, which are effects of language use. For example, one way to realize the goal to persuade an audience is positive evaluation of the self. Discourse functions are in turn realized by discourse features, which take the form of particular linguistic or conversational devices. In

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the example, evaluation can be an effect of attribution, which can take the form of adjectives. The sample sentence at the bottom of Table 3.1 highlights the linguistic device in question.

<INSERT TABLE 3.1 HERE>

Needless to say language use rarely happens in individual sentences, nor is it always written. In actual texts, various linguistic devices and discourse features accumulate, meeting similar or indeed different functions. Also, spoken interaction comprises both linguistic and conversational devices; disagreeing with someone's negative assessment of what one is or does, for example, can also feed into the discourse goal of persuasion.

No matter which model is chosen for analysis, we have seen above that description and explanation alone do not make for a CDS study; for that, we need to bring in critique and arguably engage with discourse producers, distributors and receivers with a view to changing their practices. Focusing on critique, we can distinguish five forms, again moving from text to context:

1. Immanent critique, which "aims to discover inconsistencies, (self-)contradictions, paradoxes and dilemmas in text-internal … structures." (Reisigl and Wodak 2015, 25)
2. Socio-diagnostic critique, which "is concerned with uncovering the - particularly latent - persuasive … character of discursive practices. Here, we rely on our contextual knowledge and draw on social theories … to interpret discursive events." (Reisigl and Wodak 2015, 25)

3. Explanatory critique, which "seeks to explain why social realities are as they are, and how they are sustained or changed." This form of critique sees the meso- and macro-levels (Figure 3.1) as constituting each other, in that it "includes both explanations of particular types and forms of discourse as effects of social causes and explanations of social phenomena … as partly effects of discourse." (Fairclough and Fairclough 2012, 79)

4. Normative critique, which "evaluates social realities against the standard of values taken as necessary to a 'good society' [i.e.] one which serves and facilitates human 'well-being'". This crucially "includes critique of unequal relations of power and forms of domination which are damaging to well-being and which may be manifest in discourse." (Fairclough and Fairclough 2012, 79)

5. Prospective critique, which "seeks to improve communication" (Reisigl and Wodak 2015, 25) through engaging with discourse producers and receivers, or drawing up guidelines for language use.

The third element of the phrase "critical discourse studies" also deserves a mention. Readers may be more familiar with the older term "critical discourse analysis", which was first mentioned in the title of a pamphlet: "Critical discourse moments and critical discourse analysis" (Chilton 1988). It became popular with the first edition of Fairclough's book *Critical Discourse Analysis* ([1995] 2010) and has been used in the titles of countless publications since. However, more recently a number of scholars have argued that "studies" is a more comprehensive notion than "analysis", because the latter suggests a certain method, when CDS in fact takes an eclectic approach to methods of analysis, and "also has theoretical and applied dimensions"

(http://www.discourses.org/projects/cda/). A journal founded in 2004 is likewise called *Critical Discourse Studies*,[1] but the best indicator of the shift in terminology is perhaps that the first two editions (2001, 2009) of Ruth Wodak and Michael Meyer's widely-used edited book were titled *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis*, while the most recent third edition (2015) is called *Methods of Critical Discourse Studies*.

Approaches to workplace discourse

Macro-level approaches: organizational discourse studies

Organizational discourse studies is a well-established field whose influence on critical management and organization studies is hard to dismiss. (See Fairhurst and Putnam 2014; Grant et al. 2004.; Mumby and Clair 1997 for overviews and edited collections.) Indeed, discourse studies of all descriptions have become so popular in organizational studies that Alvesson and Kärreman (2011, 1142) caustically observe that "[t]he only thing that unites much discourse work is the use of the term discourse". The authors go on to state that the meaning-constituting function of discourse is often assumed rather than demonstrated and demand that researchers in organizational discourse studies "cut the concept of discourse down in size, assume less, cover less, reveal more and allow a clearer space for other approaches" (1142). Their criticism is voiced against the backdrop of scholars having adopted the distinction between 'small d' discourses as text-focused analysis on the one hand and 'big D' Discourses on the other. However, much work in organizational discourse studies focuses on the latter, i.e. on "socially accepted associations among ways of using language, of thinking, valuing, acting, and interacting, in the 'right' places and at the 'right' times with the 'right' objects [texts]" (Gee 2011, 34). Together, these form a recognizable pattern of meaning enacted in a characteristic

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way of speaking, doing, and being (Ribochaud 2015, 1). Discourse thus defined is seen as shaping interactions within organizational structures or, in more radically socio-constructivist versions of the approach, as constituting organizations in the first place (Brummans et al. 2014) rather than representing or reflecting them. However, such discourse idealist positions have been criticized for rendering the notion of 'discourse' meaningless - if everything is discourse, then the term loses its explanatory power - and for neglecting material aspects of organizations, such as labour processes and space (see Fairhurst and Putnam 2014, 281-287).

Another point of critique - and the most relevant for this chapter - is that much work in organizational discourse studies restricts itself to identifying discourses, however defined, in texts or limits textual analysis to content, "cod[ing] interactions, developing] discourse themes, or draw[ing] from conceptual analyses … to analyze interaction processes and texts" (Fairhurst and Putnam 2014, 277).[2] As argued above, however, a full-fledged CDS study would engage in both macro-level context analysis and micro-level linguistic analysis (Fairclough 2005, 916). This point is underscored by Mautner (2016, 21), who argues that precisely because "one needs to look beyond language in a narrow sense" it is vital that language "should [be] analyze[d] with tools sharp enough to explain what role it plays in the constitution of discourse".

Micro- and meso-level approaches: conversation analysis and pragmatics
While some, if not most, researchers in organizational discourse studies focus on 'big D' Discourses, other work addresses 'small d' discourses or the minutiae of language use in text and talk. The underlying belief is that by using language in particular ways, members of an organization create, reinforce and challenge identities, roles and relations in the workplace.

Conversation analysis (CA) has proved very influential in these efforts (see e.g., Drew and Heritage 1992). Many chapters in Sarangi and Roberts' (1999) anthology also use CA, but the editors devote the final part to problematizing the (over-)reliance on spoken data and CA, especially the latter's tenet that context is exclusively the accomplishment of spoken interaction, which disregards the "'brought along' context of ideological and metapragmatic assumptions" (Roberts and Sarangi 1999, 391). Returning to the three-level framework for CDS introduced above, we can map ideology as a contextual factor onto the macro-level of context, while meta-pragmatic assumptions about what relationships and identities are at stake in the interaction are relevant at the meso-level of discourse practice, next to expectations about genre and discourse production, distribution and reception.

Before we proceed to explicitly critical approaches, let us look at work that combines micro- and meso-level analysis of spoken interaction, using conversation analysis as a method to answer questions about pragmatic aspects of workplace talk, such as (im)politeness, humour and the interplay of organizational and gendered and/or cultured identities. Perhaps the most wide-ranging, but certainly one of the most prolific projects to address those issues is the ongoing Language in the Workplace project at Victoria University of Wellington, which began in 1996 (www.victoria.ac.nz/lwp). The work that draws these strands together is of particular interest here: studies on how language use that achieves politeness and/or humour is influenced by, and creates, gendered identities (Holmes and Schnurr 2005, Schnurr 2009), or how ethnicity and the performance of leadership intersect in the workplace (Holmes, Marra and Vine 2011). Focusing on gender, Holmes (2009) uses analytical parameters from conversation analysis along with concepts from pragmatics to show how men enact different kinds of context-dependent

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masculine leadership identities, notably the authoritative ("hero"), paternalistic ("father") and egalitarian ("good mate") leader. The author notes that a paternalistic leadership identity is often enacted when men talk to junior female colleagues, as in this example (discussed in Holmes 2009, 198-200; transcription slightly simplified):[3]

<INSERT IMAGE 3.1 HERE>

In this in interaction, Len, the team leader, is trying to find a team member to do a verbal presentation, which Belinda, a more junior employee, refuses in an unmitigated face-threatening act (turn 2). Although she had not been given the task, she is now the focus and seeks to avoid doing the presentation by bringing forth a reason why she cannot (turns 11, 13 and 17). While she initially mitigates her statements through modal verbs and tag questions ('it wouldn't be appropriate for me to do it //would it\', turn 13), she later returns to the bluntness of her initial statement ('I'm definitely //biased Len [laughs]\', turn 22) and even issues a direct command to the team leader ('use Clive [laughs]', turn 27). Although the latter two utterances are softened by a laugh, her refusal creates potential for conflict. Len does not accept her refusal until turn 28, continuing with his point despite Belinda talking over him (turns 6-8) and diffuses the potential conflict by adopting a patient, gently humorous style (e.g. '/it may\\ well be appropriate for you to do it Belinda', turn 14). According to Holmes (2009, 200), he thereby "[e]spous[es] a paternalistic or fatherly stance" which is "another way in which male leaders may appropriately do masculinity in the workplace, whilst also accomplishing transactional and relational objectives".

Analyses such as the above do more than describe the micro-moments of building social order through talk, in that they additionally identify and discuss meso-level factors such as institutional and interactional roles as well as acknowledge gendered and ethnicized imbalances of power, often explicitly (e.g. Holmes 2000; Holmes and Stubbe 2003; Schnurr, Marra, and Holmes 2008; Vine 2004). The scope is wide, ranging from descriptions of how humour can function to both mitigate and enact face-threatening acts, to explanations of how politeness and impoliteness maintain or challenge the power of some institutional members and the analysis of how speech acts enact control over and between team members. In an interesting experiment, Stubbe et al. (2003) have drawn together multiple analyses of one workplace transcript, applying lenses from conversation analysis, interactional sociolinguistics, pragmatics (especially politeness theory), discursive psychology and critical discourse analysis (367-372). This and the work mentioned above shows how power and dominance can be reproduced or challenged in workplace talk. Yet, the focus remains on the interaction itself and its situational, institutional and cultural context, with little if any discussion of macro-level ideologies that naturalize certain structures and practices while delegitimizing others. This does not detract from the value of pragmatic studies into workplace language, but it raises the issue of why they fall outside the critical framework adopted in CDS.

Integrating the three levels: CDS

Previous research

CDS workplace research is dwarfed by the conversation analytical and pragmatic research referenced in the previous section.[4] This dearth of relevant research has been noted by Bargiela-Chiappini, Nickerson, and Planken (2013, 28), who observe that

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[t]ext-based or field-based research with a "critical" label remains in its infancy in business discourse …, since many linguists involved in the analysis of business language have shied away from a critical positioning that espouses a political agenda for social change and have preferred to maintain a more neutral stance.

This is further explained by Koester (2006, 20) when she states that "taking an overtly critical stance towards the more powerful members of an organization can be problematic". – not least for access to data sites.

Among the notable exceptions are Wodak's (1996) early studies on workplaces such as schools, outpatient clinics and courtrooms. More recently Wodak (2011, 113-155) conducted a detailed ethnographic study of a workday of a Member of the European Parliament (MEP) and his personal assistant, in which she describes an array of linguistic features, conversational styles and argumentation strategies that the MEP uses when switching between frames, context and roles. Beyond description, Wodak elaborates on how discourse practices interact with shared knowledge and the materiality of buildings to provide coherence to workplace interaction. Taking things to the macro-level, she critiques how the invisibility of politicians' backstage work leads to widespread depoliticizsation. Iedema (2003) similarly applies a discursive lens to understand how "post-bureaucratic organizations" such as local government departments and hospitals enact and record processes of organization, thereby producing and privileging certain meanings. He analyses spoken interactions, written genres and built materiality to show how the aim of worker self-regulation and autonomy lead to a growing variety and volume of meta-

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discourse about work, the production of which increasingly constitutes work itself. Iedema

argues that linguistic features such as nominalization distance employees from their work and

As a final example, we can note Wodak, Kwon and Clarke's (2011) analysis of how leaders'

discursive strategies help build team consensus in two extended meetings. Their work is intended

to address two perceived shortcomings of work in pragmatics (see above), namely disregarding

the specific contexts in which discursive functions are enacted, and failing to differentiate

between discourse functions on the one hand and the linguistic and conversational devices that

express them on the other. While the authors admit to "largely bracketing off interactions with

the physical context" (612), their analysis of topic structure, argumentation, linguistic and

conversational devices as well as pragmatic strategies allows them to identify five discourse

functions (which they call "discursive strategies") - bonding, encouraging, directing, modulating

and (re-)committing - that corporate leaders employ to build consensus. The fact that the article

closes on the relevance of the research for practitioners but does not engage in any explanatory,

normative or prospective critique demonstrates how easily discourse studies of workplaces can

become applied rather than critical.

A case study: constructing employee identities in mission statements

In an illustrative case study, I analyse the mission statements of two companies to see how

employees are represented from management's point of view and thereby constructed as having

particular characteristics and roles (for a more detailed analysis see Koller 2011.) Taking a

critical approach, the guiding question is whether this construction feeds into and expresses a

social problem, e.g. exploitative practices on part of the employer. The mission statement is

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interesting as a genre in this regard, because one if its aims is to define ideal identities of its employees and communicate those to them. Thus, one of the overall discourse goals of mission statements is to encourage employees to identify with the ideal identity constructed for them by senior management and to promote staff loyalty, in order to increase motivation, morale and, ultimately, productivity.

The two mission statements are from food and consumer products company Nestlé and from health insurance company Aflac[5]. At the micro-level, the two texts differ notably in how they construct identities for employees. Nestlé's mission statement focuses on the company, which is not only referred to ten times compared to four mentions of employees, but is also represented as exclusively active and often acting on staff in an impersonal, nominalized way: 'guidance to staff' instead of *we guide staff, 'recruitment of the right people and ongoing training and development' instead of *we recruit the right people and continuously train and develop them. Employees, by contrast, are represented as beneficiaries of the company's actions ('value that can be sustained over the long term for… employees') and proclaimed values ('fairness, honesty, and a general concern for people'). Employees are also indirectly assigned obligations - along with management - when the text producers state that 'the success of a corporation is a reflection of the professionalism, conduct and the responsible attitude of its management and employees'. In a list of stakeholders, they rank second when the writers declare that Nestlé seeks 'to create value … for shareholders, employees, consumers, and business partners'. Overall, the text is more concerned with assuring the reader that the company acts lawfully ('legislation' and 'laws' are mentioned three times in the 294-word text) and with emphasizing the importance of

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customers and their concerns ('consumers have a sincere and legitimate interest in the behavior, beliefs and actions of the Company … without its consumers the Company would not exist').

By contrast, the Aflac text includes a more balanced number of mentions of staff (ten times) and company (13 times), and both are presented as predominantly active; we find the company 'tap[ping] into the diverse talents … of our employees', just as 'every employee can contribute to AFLAC's success'. The Aflac text also suggests reciprocity between the two:

> If our company takes care of its employees, the employees will take care of the business. Engaged employees who are given what they need to grow and succeed will ensure that the business is given what it needs to grow and succeed.

When ascribed to the company, metaphoric expressions such as '<u>nurturing</u> … the many voices that comprise our workforce' and '<u>building</u> our valuable workforce', construct it as a benevolent parent and careful craftsperson. By the same token, employees are constructed as the beneficiaries of the company's (i.e. senior management's) actions, as in the prepositional phrases 'enriching opportunities for our employees' and 'good for our employees and our business'. It is probably no surprise then that the Aflac text lists employees before other stakeholders ('our workforce, our communities, our customers'). Moreover, the text makes repeated mention of employees' cognitive and emotional characteristics: thus, we find nominal references to 'the diverse talents, skills, backgrounds, viewpoints and perspectives of our employees' as well as adjectival attributions ('generations of passionate employees'). On the whole, Nestlé represents employees as a means to an end with little space to impact on the company other than raise its

credibility with customers, whereas Aflac constructs employees as active, trustworthy and entitled to benevolent care. In terms of immanent critique, we can therefore identify an inherent contradiction in the Nestlé text, whose producers claim that they have 'a general concern for people' and seek 'to create value … for … employees', but background the same employees both quantitatively, by mentioning them notably less often than the company they belong to, and qualitatively, by representing them as mostly passive.

The ideal identities created for the respective companies' employees are, in the case of Nestlé, to meet 'highest standards', and to show 'professionalism' and a 'responsible attitude', in which they need help from management in the form of 'ongoing training and development'. Aflac's ideal employees, on the other hand, are constructed as talented, dedicated and passionate, 'grow[ing] personally and professionally' and as engaged in a mutual relationship with their employer. I have shown above how discourse features and linguistic devices are used to achieve these constructions, but what part do discursive practices play? In Goffman's (1981) terms, mission statements usually express the viewpoint of senior management, who commission it as the principal. While there are examples of more participatory forms of text production, employee participation is typically granted by management rather than being a default feature of text production. The same restrictions to access do not apply to reception, however; both texts are distributed publically online, potentially reaching a very wide audience, although Nestlé's mission statement seems mostly aimed at customers, while Aflac's appears to address employees first and foremost. Instantiating the discourse function of persuasion, the latter text is therefore better aligned with the audience to be persuaded, while the former statement appears to be aimed at persuading customers of Nestlé's value, not least by constructing an ideal employee identity.

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One explanation for why Nestlé backgrounds employees in favour of consumers is that the latter have been critical of and even boycotted the company in the wake of a number of scandals faced since the late 1970s. Given the saturated and competitive markets in which the company operates, the goodwill of consumers is certainly paramount, but it is here sought at the expense of employees, who become a means to an end, further widening the institutional imbalance of power between them and management. Aflac, while not questioning power asymmetries as such, seeks a mutual relationship between employees and management, which - according to their mission statement - allows the company to thrive and, we can infer, enhance its brand image and ultimately attract customers. Indeed, Aflac has been listed among the Fortune list of 100 best companies to work for since 1998[6] and by that measure seems to foster employee wellbeing, certainly in material but also in discursive terms. Given the various potential audiences of publically available mission statements and other corporate text types, however, a focus on one particular stakeholder group may be inadvisable and text producers might do better to dedicate individual sections of a text to different groups.

Mission statements have been the butt of many jokes for their clichéd, vacuous and pompous language.[7] My own professional experience suggests that the process of drafting them, especially if it is participatory, is more important than the final product, which has very limited uptake. This may explain why mission statements seem to be less frequent now than they were ten years ago. In any case, linguistically and discursively including and appreciating employees will only prevent covert - or even overt - exploitation if backed up by material practices.

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Promoting CDS of/in the workplace

Given that work in CDS starts from a social problem, any critical analysis is useful in places characterized by power asymmetries. It therefore seems obvious that CDS is a helpful and necessary approach to researching language and discourse in the workplace. The challenge, however, is to get access to decision-makers in workplaces who could act on the critique of internal discourse. In many cases, the potential audience that can realistically be reached by the researcher will not extend beyond future employees, i.e. students: current employees are hard to access because of possible management resistance to critical research. Senior decision-makers can be an audience if they can be persuaded that critical research furthers their strategic aims, and access to that audience is often easier for linguists working in a consulting role, which limits the research question to the brief received by the client.

So why should the management of any company be interested in critical analyses of language use and discourse practices in the workplace? Why should they want to redress power imbalances or even exploitation? While there is no doubt that some decision-makers take account of ethical concerns, the ultimate aim of any for-profit business is just that: to make a profit so that the business can continue. If more diversity, flatter hierarchies, greater employee satisfaction and more participatory discourse practices lead to better bottom lines, the case has been made. This is not a cynical point: blaming companies to strive to make profits is like blaming schools to strive to teach pupils - it is their *raison d'être*. The question is if and how the profit motive can be reconciled with human wellbeing. Assuming that it can - and that is a rather contentious assumption - critical analysts are left with a dilemma: the ultimate argument for their critical analysis, if it is to have an impact beyond their own peer group, is that it can help to make

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days in which it is played out and in which the CDS scholar highlights of a particular talk there is no space to do justice to that. Mautner

(2010, 184, note 15) is ~~more~~ optimistic, <u>however,</u> affirming that "[t]he dilemma can be resolved by opting for a constructively critical approach which … shows … how linguistic resources can be deployed to convey courtesy, empathy and professionalism". While Mautner here refers to communications training in higher education institutions, the case can also be made for talking to corporate clients: a critical analysis of workplace discourse may not change the socio-economic system in which it is embedded, but it can <u>effect changes in discursive practice to make them less exclusionary and more balanced, and</u> lead to more respect and participation.

From my experience as a consultant, communicating critical research to corporate clients can be like getting a child to eat vegetables: the greens have to be smuggled in, for example by grating a courgette into a pancake. The analogy works for the critical consultant as well: the pancake may be fatty and less than healthy, but at least it can include some good components. Maybe that is how to do CDS in the workplace - to sit down with discourse participants, have a close look at their diet and suggest some healthy, holistic changes.

Further Reading

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Related Topics

Conversation analysis; (Im)politeness theory; Corporate settings; Humour; Gender; Enabling women leaders

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[1] http://www.tandfonline.com/toc/rcds20/current

2 Iedema (2003, 22) distinguishes between macro-level organizational discourse studies and more linguistically oriented organizational discourse analysis. However, given the point made earlier about reductionist understandings of the word 'analysis', it does not seem advisable to take up his distinction.

3 Transcription key:

[laughs] Paralinguistic features and other information

+ Pause of up to one second

. . . // . . . . . . \ . . . Simultaneous speech

xxx Unclear utterance

? Rising or question intonation

XF unidentified female speaker

4 While it can be argued that Baxter's work on gender and leadership in corporations (see e.g., 2010; this volume) falls within the remit of CDS, she herself rejects the label CDA/CDS and positions her work in the more discourse idealist field of feminist post-structuralist discourse analysis.

5 The texts are available at http://www.nestle.com.eg/en/aboutus/allaboutnestle and http://hartford.jobing.com/aflac-insurance (paragraphs 2-6).

6 http://fortune.com/best-companies/aflac-50/

7 See for example the 'mission statement generator' at http://www.jonhaworth.com/toys/mission-statement-generator, where employees are sarcastically referred to as 'peasants'.