**b-** **Socio-cognitive approach**

* This approach was developed by ***Teun Van Dijk*** who prefers to speak of ***Critical Discourse Studies (CDS)*** instead of ***CDA***. Because critical approach not only involves critical ***analysis***, but also critical ***theory***, as well as critical ***applications***. And it makes use of a large number of methods, both from Discourse Studies itself, as well as from the humanities, psychology and the social sciences. The designation ***CDS*** may also avoid the widespread ***misconception*** that a critical approach is a ***method*** of ***DA***.
* ***Van Dijk*** regards discourse as a communicative event, a kind of manifestation pattern of a variety of meanings. He places particular emphasis on text linguistics and cognitive linguistics, and concentrates on ***analyzing discourses in a Social Cognitive Approach***. This approach ***relates discourse structures to social structures via a complex socio-cognitive interface***. It deals with communicative Common Ground and the shared social knowledge, as well as attitudes and ideologies of language users as current participants and members of social groups and communities.
* Socio-cognitive approach shows that many structures of discourse can only be adequately described in terms of notions of cognition such as ***information, knowledge, attitude, ideology, or beliefs*** etc. of participants. It thus, makes explicit the link between ***discourse***, ***cognition*** and ***society*** that formulate the ***triangle model***.
* **The discourse–cognition–society triangle**
* It values the fundamental importance of the study of *cognition* (and not only that of society) in the critical analysis of discourse, communication and interaction.
* Interest in the study of ***mental representations*** and the ***processes*** of language users when they ***produce*** and ***comprehend*** discourse and participate in verbal interaction, as well as in the knowledge, ideologies and other beliefs shared by social groups. At the same time, such an approach examines the ways in which such cognitive phenomena are related to the structures of discourse, verbal interaction, communicative events and situations, as well as societal structures, such as those of domination and social inequality, as mentioned above.
* In practice, it involves the analysis of topics (or macrostructures), local meanings (relating to phenomena such as word choice), context models and mental models (involving knowledge, attitudes and ideologies) and the relationship between discourse and society.
* **Properties of Critical Discourse Studies (CDS)**
* Although it is virtually impossible to briefly and adequately define a type of scholarly investigation, critical studies of discourse typically have the following properties:
* They aim to analyze, and thus to contribute to the understanding and the solution of, serious social problems, especially those that are caused or exacerbated by public text and talk, such as various forms of social power abuse (domination)and their resulting social inequality.
* This analysis is conducted within a normative perspective, defined in terms of international human rights, that allows a critical assessment of abusive, discursive practices as well as guidelines for practical intervention and resistance against illegitimate domination.
* The analysis specifically takes into account the interests, the expertise and the resistance of those groups that are the victims of discursive injustice and its consequences.
* ***Van Dijk’s model for CDS:*** he suggests concentrating the analysis upon linguistic markers as follows:
* stress and intonation - word order - lexical style – coherence - local semantic moves such as disclaimers - topic choice - speech acts - schematic organization - rhetorical figures - syntactic structures - propositional structures - turn-takings –hesitation.
* It supposes that most of these are exemplary forms of interaction which are in principle susceptible to speaker control, but in practice mostly not consciously controlled. Other structures, such as the form of words and many structures of sentences, are grammatically obligatory and contextually invariant and hence usually not subject to speaker control and social power.
* ***Van Dijk’s model of CDA***
1. ***Van Dijk’s suggests six steps of analysis:***
2. The analysis of semantic macrostructures: topics and macro propositions.
3. The analysis of local meanings, where the many forms of implicit or indirect meanings, such as implications, presuppositions, allusions, vagueness, omissions and polarizations are especially interesting.
4. The analysis of ‘subtle’ formal structures: here, most of the linguistic markers mentioned are analyzed.
5. The analysis of global and local discourse forms or formats.
6. The analysis of specific linguistic realizations, e.g. hyperbole, litotes.
7. The analysis of context.
8. In the discourse, we find indicators that with which can be distinguished between Us (self/good) and Them (others/bad). By using those indicators the producer of the discourse tend to prove how his group is right and the other group is wrong. Van Dijk mentioned 38 indicators, here are some of them:
9. **Actor description**: representation of the self as positive, representation of the other as negative.
10. **Authority**: can be a person, an organization, a book… it is influential, a higher or a superior power that exerts control, gives orders and enforces obedience in any situation.
11. **Disclaimer**: discourse producer disclaim and deny anything wrong has been done.
12. **Evidentiality**: provide certain evidences that to prove that the discourse producer (Us) is right and the opponent (Them) is wrong.
13. **Comparison**: between Us and Them
14. **Polarization**: two opposite groups (Us vs Them)
15. **Euphemism**: replacing unpleasant or offensive words or expressions with some pleasant ones.
16. **Hyperbole**: deliberate exaggeration
17. **Irony**: for the purpose of humor or emphasis.
18. **Victimization**: Us victims, Them aggressors
19. **Generalization**: taking specific events and examples and generalize them to something broad
20. **Presupposition**: delivering information that the discourse producer assumes that are known to the audience.
21. **Vagueness** **and hedging**: used when precise statements are not appropriate or incorrect.
* A large part of ***Van Dijk***'s practical investigation deals with stereotypes, the reproduction of ethnic prejudice, and power abuse by elites and resistance by dominated groups.
* For example, in ***Van Dijk***'s studies on racism (1984, 1987, 1991) and ideology (1998), both social and mental phenomena are investigated through his analytical approach. Recently, ***Van Dijk*** attaches more attention on the reproduction of social inequalities and the abuse of power. Besides, he also makes great efforts to explore the importance of context on discourse production and discourse understanding by presenting his context models. What he firmly believed is that it is context models that managed the ways in which we produce and receive discourses.
* ***Van Dijk*** also emphasizes the control of discourse dimensions as a means to gain access to power.