

BRIDGING CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS TO LANGUAGE TEACHING

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ABSTRACT

The collaboration between the theory of classroom discourse and critical discourse analysis (CDA) has an importance contribution to the development of both theories. This collaboration prospectively contributes to the occurrence of a developing critical classroom discourse analysis (CCDA) theory. Hence, the idea of bridging CDA to language class is one of a significant contribution to the development of CCDA theory. This article presents the metamorphosis of classroom based analysis from the classroom interaction analysis (CIA) to classroom discourse analysis to critical classroom discourse analysis (CCDA) and the concepts of language teaching and language learning.

Keywords: *CDA, CIA, CCDA, Language Teaching, Language Learning*

A. INTRODUCTION

Bridging the issue of the importance of discourse analysis and language teaching, Olshtain and Celce-Murcia (2001: 707) present the fact that discourse analysis should provide the main frame of reference for decision making in language teaching and learning. The necessity for developing learning environment such as creating suitable context for interaction, illustrating speaker/hearer and reader/ writer exchange and providing learners with opportunities to process language within a variety of situation are all required for language acquisition and language development to take place within a communicative perspective.

Moving from sentence based analysis as the approach in language teaching, in the more recent approaches to language teaching and learning, discourse or text has become the basic unit of analysis. Here, discourse or text is taken as a basis for both understanding and practicing language use within larger meaningful context. Therefore, learners need to focus on various discourse features within any specified language activity.

It is a fact that any natural interaction contains a set of sociolinguistic features since discourse becomes the unit of analysis. Learners are expected to develop awareness of the linguistic choices which are related to the sociolinguistic features such as, age, social status, and other personal characteristics of the interactants in a communicative activity in a classroom (see Fig. 1.2). Olshtain and Celce-Murcia (2001:708) argue that learners need to gain experience in decision-making related to choices of linguistic representation that are compatible with the characteristics of communicative participants and with the pragmatic features of the given situation. So, simulated speech events become an important feature of the language classroom; although such a simulated speech event is a classroom artifact, it must represent as closely as possible a real speech event that could occur in a natural interaction.

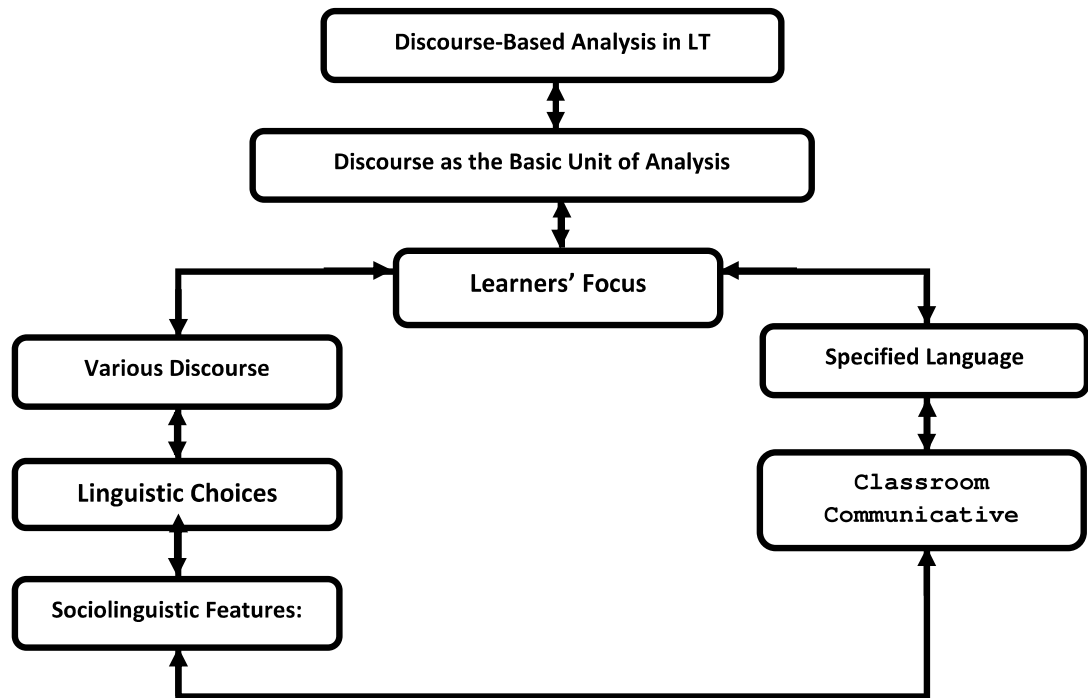


Fig. 1 Discourse-Based Analysis in Language Teaching
(Olshtain and Celce-Murcia, 2001:708)

A very important new dimension that communicative approach adds to language teaching is pointed out by Olshtain and Celce-Murcia (2001:708), that is, communication strategies. Communication strategies overcome and compensate for the lack of linguistic knowledge when learners need to use the target language for various types of communication. It can be viewed from learners' viewpoint as partly universal in nature that such communication strategies can successfully be transferred from the first language. Thus, as proposed by Olshtain and Celce-Murcia (2001:708), learners who are "good communicators" in their first language have a good chance of also becoming effective communicators in their second, although they may not know the second language nearly as well as the first. Here, what is meant by "good communicators" refers to the ability to paraphrase, use circumlocutions and gestures, among other things, during spoken communication. They predict that these abilities have the possibility to be transferable under a circumstance that the language classroom provides sufficient opportunities for using such strategies in the second language.

It seems that the communicative approach has been generally accepted and has had influenced the curriculum of language teaching and learning that the communicative approach has to be fully incorporated within it (Olshtain and Celce-Murcia, 2001:708). Within the teaching context, discourse analysis has significant application in language areas of phonology, grammar and vocabulary, which bears discourse features within it. The teaching of phonology interacts with the teaching of oral discourse. Phonology, in particular the prosodic or suprasegmental elements, provides the range of possible rhythm and intonation combination. Yet, the context is what determines the most appropriate choice of prosody in any given situated utterance. In any language class where oral skills are taught, the interaction

of discourse and prosody must be highlighted and taught, since contextually appropriate control of rhythm and intonation are an essential parts of oral communicative competence to achieve language proficiency (see Fig.3). In the area of interaction between phonology and discourse, it is important to emphasise information management. In oral interactions the difference between new and old information is signalled via prosody, and contrast and contradiction are also marked by a shift of focus in the ongoing discourse. In a more analytical view, there are social functions of intonation, which may disclose things such as the speaker's degree of interest or involvement, the speaker's expression of sarcasm, etc.

1. Classroom Interaction Analysis

According to Kumaravadivelu (1999:455), classroom interaction analysis involves the use of an observation scheme consisting of a finite set of preselected and predetermined categories for describing certain verbal behaviours of teachers and the students as they interact in the classroom. Moreover, he adds that the categories included in an observation scheme reflect the designer's assumptions about what observable teacher behaviour is necessary in order to build a classroom behaviour profile of the teacher.

The use of interaction schemes, according to Kumaravadivelu, undoubtedly resulted in a much better understanding of classroom aims and events, particularly in terms of teacher talk and students talk. Nonetheless, there are four crucial limitations shared by the interaction schemes, those are: (a) the focus are exclusively on the product of verbal behaviour of the teachers and learners and little or even no consideration to classroom process or to the learning outcomes; (b) they are depending upon quantitative measurement, thereby losing of the essence of communicative intent that cannot be reduced to numerical codification; (c) they are unidirectional, that is, the information flow is generally from the observer to the teacher, the observer being a supervisor in the case of practicing teachers or a teacher educator in the case of teacher trainees; and (d) they are uni-dimensional, that is, the basis of observation is largely confined to one single perspective, that of the observer, thus emphasizing the observer's perception of the observable teacher behaviour.

According to Kumaravadivelu (1999:458), the emphasis on social context has helped classroom discourse analysts look at the classroom event as a social event and the classroom as a minisociety with its own rules and regulations, routines, and rituals. Their focus is the experience of teachers and learners within this minisociety. Such experience, as Breen (1985: 140) writes, "is two-dimensional: individual-subjective experience and collective-intersubjective experience. The subjective experience of teacher and learners in a classroom is woven with personal purposes, attitudes, and preferred ways of doing things. The intersubjective experience derives from and maintains teacher- and learner-shared definitions, conventions, and procedure which enable a working together in a crowd". Classroom discourse that embodies such a two-dimensional experience "is a central part of this social context. In other words, the verbal interaction shapes the context and is shaped by it" (van Lier, 1988:47).

Bridging from the interactional classroom analysis to classroom discourse analysis, Allen, Frohlich, and Spada (1984:235) proposed what they called the Communicative Orientation of Language Teaching (COLT) observation scheme. The primary objectives of the scheme are to capture differences in the communicative orientation of classroom instruction (i.e., form-focused vs. meaning-focused) and to examine their effects on learning

outcomes. A significant achievement of COLT, compared with its predecessors, has been its capacity to help its users differentiate between more and less communicatively oriented instruction, thus enabling them to better connect instructional input with potential learning outcomes.

Due to some limitation shared by COLT, Allen in Allen, Fröhlich, & Spada (1984:143) finds it necessary to recommend that "the quantitative procedures based on COLT be supplemented by a more detailed qualitative analysis, with a view to obtaining additional information about the way meaning is co-constructed in the classroom".

Spada and Fröhlich (1995:10) also say that "if one is interested in undertaking a detailed discourse analysis of the conversational interactions between teachers and students, another method of coding and analysing classroom data would be more appropriate". Thus, COLT remains basically in the sense that the basis of observation is largely confined to observable, codifiable, and countable behaviour of learners and teachers. Finally, the interaction approach to classroom observation can produce only a fragmented picture of classroom reality.

2. Classroom Discourse Analysis

One of the earliest L2 classroom observation studies that embraced a discourse analytical approach is Allwright's (1980: 165-187) study on patterns of participation. Mehan's (1979:171) ethnomethodological work in general education convinced Allwright (1988) that "whatever happened in the classroom was indeed a co-production, and therefore that it no longer made sense to look at classroom interaction as if it was only the teacher's behaviour that mattered".

He posited a three-way analysis in his observational scheme: (a) a turn-taking analysis, which relates to several aspects of turn-getting and turn-giving practices; (b) a topic analysis, which relates to the use of language as instances of linguistic samples mostly meant for student imitation and of communicative expressions about the target language itself; and (c) a task analysis, which relates to the managerial as well as the cognitive aspects of classroom tasks.

The significance of Allwright's (1980: 165-187) observational scheme lies in the fact that it departed from the earlier Flandersian tradition in three important ways: (a) It made no a priori distinction between teachers' and learners' roles but instead allowed patterns of participation to emerge from the data, (b) it consisted of high-inference categories that are subject to interpretational variations, and (c) it treated classroom participants as individuals rather than as a collective mass by attempting to describe and account for their individual behaviour. And, although it involved some numerical measurements, the framework was essentially ethnographic, entailing qualitative interpretations of data.

Highlighting the need to contextualize the actions and contributions of participants in the classroom, van Lier (1988:24), who very effectively uses ethnographic means to understand classroom aims and events, takes the educational environment (with the classroom at its centre) as the crucial data resource and thus strongly emphasizes the social context in which language development takes place.

Classroom Discourse Analysis, not necessarily Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), contain interpretative nature that also entails an analysis of multiple perspective gained from the teacher, the learner and the observer or the researcher on classroom discourse (Allwright,

1980; van Lier, 1988). Kumaravadivelu (1991;1993) has attempted to show the usefulness of classroom discourse analysis that takes multiple perspectives into serious consideration. In the 1991 study, he argues that, to be relevant, any classroom discourse analysis must be based on an analysis of the potential mismatch between intention and interpretation-between the teacher's intention and the learner's interpretation, on the one hand, and between the teacher's and learner's intention and the observer's interpretation, on the other. In the 1993 study, he demonstrates how classroom discourse analysis can facilitate an understanding of the degree to which classroom participants are able or unable to create and utilize learning opportunities in class.

3. Critical Classroom Discourse Analysis

Classroom discourse, like all other discourses, is socially constructed, politically motivated, and historically determined; that is, social, political, and historical conditions develop and distribute the cultural capital that shapes and reshapes the lives of teachers and learners. The racialised, stratified, and gendered experiences that discourse participants bring to the classroom setting are motivated and molded not just by the learning and teaching episodes they encounter in the classroom but also by the broader linguistic, social, economic, political, and historical milieu in which they all grow up.

The L2 classroom is not a secluded, self-contained minisociety; it is rather a constituent of the larger society in which many forms of domination and inequality are produced and reproduced for the benefit of vested interests; therefore, an analysis of classroom discourse must necessarily include an analysis of the discursive practices and discursive formations that support the structure of dominant discourses. Moreover, the L2 classroom also manifests, at surface and deep levels, many forms of resistance, articulated or unarticulated; therefore, an analysis of classroom discourse must necessarily include an analysis of various forms of resistance and how they affect the business of learning and teaching.

Language teachers can ill afford to ignore the socio-cultural reality that influences identity formation in and outside the classroom, nor can they afford to separate learners' linguistic needs and wants from their socio-cultural needs and wants.

The negotiation of discourse's meaning and its analysis should not be confined to the acquisitional aspects of input and interaction, to the instructional imperatives of form- and function-focused language learning activities, or to the conversational routines of turn-taking and turn-giving sequences; instead, they should also take into account discourse participants' complex and competing expectations and beliefs, identities and voices, and fears and anxieties.

Classroom discourse lends itself to multiple perspectives depending on the discourse participants' preconceived notions of what constitutes learning, teaching, and learning outcomes; therefore, any CCDA needs to identify and understand possible mismatches between intentions and interpretations of classroom aims and events.

The objective of language education should be not merely to facilitate effective language use on the part of language learners but also to promote critical engagement among

discourse participants; therefore, CCDA should be concerned with an assessment of the extent to which critical engagement is facilitated in the classroom.

Teachers need to develop the necessary knowledge and skills to observe, analyse, and evaluate their own classroom discourse so that they can, without depending too much upon external agencies, theorize what they practice and practice what they theorize. Classroom interaction analysis, with its normative function, seeks to play a directive role, in effect telling practicing teachers what kind of classroom climate would be considered optimal to achieve their instructional purposes and what they need to do in order to create such a climate in their classroom.

Classroom discourse analysis, with its informative function, seeks to play a descriptive role, giving practicing teachers a profile of instructional strategies and interactional patterns and possible relationships between the two. CCDA, with its transformative function, seeks to play a reflective role, enabling practicing teachers to reflect on and cope with socio-cultural and socio-political structures that directly or indirectly shape the character and content of classroom discourse.

Language Teaching and Language Learning

1. Language Teaching

When facing a phenomena showing that new languages (second languages/L2) are acquired by some individuals living in a given societies after they have learnt their first language (L1), a principal question occurs to ask what provision must be made by society to help them to learn the second languages needed. Related to the question, here, Stern (1983:20) proposed an answer. He posted language teaching as the answer.

To clarify his proposal, Stern (1983:21) defines language teaching as the activities which are intended to bring about language learning. Moreover, here, he pointed out that language teaching is more widely interpreted than instructing a language class. Formal instruction or methods of training are included; but so is individualised instruction, self-study, computer assisted instruction, and the use of media, such as television and radio. Other supporting activities, such as the preparation of teaching materials, teaching grammars, or dictionaries, or the training of teachers, as well as making the necessary administrative provision inside or outside an educational system, are all generated under the concept of teaching.

Furthermore, Stern (1983:21) explains that based on the definition he proposed, the theory of language teaching always implies the concept of language learning. Then, he adds that a good language teaching theory would meet the conditions and needs of learners in the best possible ways. In the end, he sum up that the interpretation of language teaching includes widely all activities intended to bring about language learning. Hence, to make it more clear, teaching and learning would always be pedantic to be spoken.

2. Language Learning

Brown (2000:7) search in contemporary dictionaries that reveals the definition of learning that is “acquiring or getting of knowledge of a subject or a skill by study, experience, or instruction”. Looking back to the earlier concept of learning, a more specialised definition might read as follows: “Learning is relatively permanent change in a behavioural tendency

and is the result of reinforced practice” (Kimble & Garmezy, 1963:133). According to Stern (1983:18), learning has been greatly influenced by the psychological study of the learning process and as a result it is much more widely interpreted since it goes far beyond learning directly from a teacher or learning through study or practice. The concept involves not only the learning of skills or the acquisition of knowledge, but also refers to learning to learn and learning to think; the modification of attitudes; the acquisition of interests, social values, or social roles; and even changing in personality.

Related to the concept of learning above, Stern (1983:19) adds that language learning is also very widely conceived. It covers all kind of language learning for which no formal provision is made through teaching. He explains that, first; there is the vast area of first-language acquisition to be discussed shortly, second; in his or her life time and without any specific tuition, an individual acquires new terms, meanings, jargons, slangs, codes, or ‘register’; he or she may learn new patterns of intonation, new gestures, or postures; he or she may acquire a new dialect; in many multilingual settings, he or she may learn to function in more than one language. Stern argue that much and perhaps even most of such language learning goes on without any ‘teaching’ and some of it outside the conscious awareness of the learner. This argumentation is supported by Ferguson (1962:6). He said that much second language learning ‘take place...by relatively informal, unplanned imitation and use in actual communication situations’.

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