



Contents lists available at ScienceDirect

## Discourse, Context &amp; Media

journal homepage: [www.elsevier.com/locate/dcm](http://www.elsevier.com/locate/dcm)

# Synthesizing critical discourse analysis with language ideologies: The example of fictional discourse

Anastasia G. Stamou

Department of Early Childhood Education, University of Western Macedonia, Greece

## ARTICLE INFO

Article history:  
Available online xxxxx

Keywords:  
Sociolinguistic diversity  
Metapragmatic discourse  
Greek television  
Youth  
Hegemonic meanings

## ABSTRACT

The aim of this paper is to contribute to the emerging discussion about the necessity of getting in dialogue the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) with the Language Ideology (LI) fields (Milani and Johnson, 2008). In particular, I attempt to combine a CDA with a LI view, using, as example, the sociolinguistic study of fiction, since it has largely failed to account for the ideological role of fictional discourse to contribute to the shaping of sociolinguistic diversity. Besides, both CDA and LI have much to gain by engaging with each other. On the one hand, CDA might extend its scope of interest, by viewing language not only as a vehicle through which social inequalities are perpetuated, but also as a topic of social inequalities in itself. On the other hand, LI could be enhanced by the methods of closer textual analysis which is characteristic of CDA. Specifically, I draw on the sociocultural CDA approach of Fairclough. Moreover, I exploit both a macro-level approach of language ideologies as widely shared beliefs about language and a micro-level conceptualization of language ideologies as schemata held by speakers to construe the social meaning of particular instances of language use. To illustrate the proposed synthesis, I use one example from representations of youth language in a Greek family sitcom.

© 2017 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

## 1. Introduction

Although both the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and the Language Ideology (LI) fields share an interest in issues of language, power and ideology, they have developed over the past two decades as more or less distinct strands of research, due probably to their separate geographical and disciplinary origins (Milani and Johnson, 2008). In particular, CDA, rooted in a text-oriented Anglo-Australian tradition of critical linguistics and Hallidayan Systemic Functional Linguistics, has focused on how social reality is discursively constructed, by showing that particular power relations are sustained in society as a result of the ways texts are shaped. On the other hand, LI, linked to a North American linguistic anthropological tradition, has viewed languages/language varieties as symbolic resources unequally reproduced in society, underlining the fact that social inequality is also perpetuated simply on the basis of what language (variety) one has access to/uses.

The aim of this paper is to contribute to the emerging discussion about the necessity of getting in dialogue the CDA with the LI fields (Milani and Johnson, 2008). Specifically, I attempt to combine a CDA with a LI view, using, as example, the sociolinguistic study of fiction, namely, the recently evolving research on the mediation

of sociolinguistic diversity (e.g. geographical dialects, low-prestige sociolects) in fictional texts (e.g. film, TV series, advertising), aiming to disclose the ideological role of such texts to provide particular constructions of sociolinguistic realities (see also Stamou, 2014, and the Introduction of this Issue). Some few attempts to synthesize CDA with LI have been made in the case of news media (e.g. see Blackledge, 2005; Milani, 2007; Paffey, 2012) and politics/legislation (e.g. Blackledge, 2005; Wodak, 2014). Yet, I argue that such a synthesis has much to offer especially for the sociolinguistics of fiction, since it has largely failed to account for the ideological role of fictional discourse to construct rather than to reflect (in a deforming way) the sociolinguistic diversity 'out there'. In contrast, it has tended to adopt an inauthentic perspective towards fictional data, by attempting to look for 'inconsistencies' in comparison with non-mediated language, a practice which has been characterized as "reflection fallacy" (Androutsopoulos, 2010; see also the Introduction of this Issue).

In particular, I adopt a constructionist approach to the sociolinguistic study of fiction, taking the CDA view that (fictional) language is a form of social practice which does not reflect pre-existing sociolinguistic realities but rather shapes particular versions of the world/identities. Moreover, I highlight ideological aspects of fictional discourse, taking the LI view that fiction constitutes a "metapragmatic activity" (Agha, 2003), since fictional

E-mail address: [astamou@uowm.gr](mailto:astamou@uowm.gr)<http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.dcm.2017.04.005>

2211-6958/© 2017 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

depictions of sociolinguistic diversity do not constitute patterns of actual uses of language, but are cultural texts which underlie particular assumptions about the social meaning of language. In fact, the presuppositions (e.g. as embedded in fiction) rather than the explicit statements of metapragmatic discourse are the best place to look for language ideologies (Silverstein, 1979).

Besides, both CDA and LI have much to gain by engaging with each other. On the one hand, CDA might extend its scope of interest, by viewing language not only as a *vehicle* through which social inequalities are perpetuated, but also as a *topic* of social inequalities in itself (Milani and Johnson, 2008) as well as by focusing on less ‘serious’—but equally ideologically-laden—entertaining genres of media discourse (e.g. film, TV series; see Lippi-Green (1997) for a view of entertaining industry as one of the dominant blocs of standard language ideology), except for informational ones (e.g. the press, politics). In fact, fiction can become a privileged area of research for CDA, since, as part of popular culture:

is one of the sites where this struggle for and against a culture of the powerful is engaged: it also the stake to be won or lost in that struggle. It is the arena of consent and resistance. It is partly where hegemony arises, and where it is secured... That is why ‘popular culture’ matters

[Hall, 1981: 239]

On the other hand, LI has tended to account for the macro-level sociopolitical processes underpinning the formation of language ideologies to the expense of the material (textual) enactment of language ideological debates (for some notable exceptions, though, see the collected volume edited by Johnson and Milani, 2010). Thus, LI could be enhanced by the methods of closer textual analysis which is characteristic of CDA. In particular, providing LI with textual analyses of fiction can unveil the ways fiction, among others (e.g. see Johnstone, 2009), contributes to the “enregisterment” (Agha, 2003, 2007) of sociolinguistic diversity, namely to the process by means of which particular language forms become ideologically invested with particular social meanings/identities.

In what follows, I first give an account of what affordances from CDA and LI I utilize in my proposed synthesis, considering that both of them constitute highly heterogeneous fields, which encompass different approaches and traditions. Given the fact that this synthesis is applied to the sociolinguistics of fiction, my proposed framework is also informed by post-variationist sociolinguistic approaches to style. Then, I describe in detail the synthetic framework as applied to fictional discourse. To illustrate this synthesis, I use one example from representations of youth language in a Greek family sitcom.

## 2. Synthesizing critical discourse analysis with language ideologies in the sociolinguistics of fiction

### 2.1. Some preliminary remarks

CDA and LI are two umbrella terms gathering a range of diverse approaches and traditions (for the diversity of CDA, see e.g. Wodak and Meyer, 2001; for the diversity of LI, see e.g. Schieffelin et al., 1998). Inevitably, then, the proposed synthesis involves the use of particular strands of both of them. Moreover, my synthetic framework adopts a post-variationist conceptualization of sociolinguistic style, considering that it is applied to the sociolinguistics of fiction.

Specifically, from the diversity of CDA strands, I draw, in particular, upon the sociocultural approach of Fairclough (e.g. 1992; 2003), which is one of the most influential ones (Rogers et al., 2005). Fairclough has developed a three-dimensional framework for the analysis of (fictional) discourse: the micro-level of text, the meso-level of discursive practice, and the macro-level of social practice (see also Stamou, 2013). My proposed framework devel-

ops along these three analytical levels. First, the micro-level textual analysis concerns an account of the linguistic features of concrete instances of discourse. Second, the meso-level discursive analysis involves the rules and conventions of text production and interpretation. Under the influence of Foucauldian thinking, the Fairclough’s approach highlights the concept of “discourses”, including fields of social knowledge about what is possible to say/write at a given moment. Third, the macro-level social analysis refers to the broader social context that underlies the text and the discursive practice, including the ideological effects and power relations sustained in text.

On the other hand, focusing on issues of (fictional representations of) sociolinguistic diversity, from the heterogeneous LI field, I draw, specifically, upon ideologies of linguistic differentiation, involving the processes through which languages/language varieties are ranked according to the meanings and values prevailing in a given sociocultural context, which are tightly knitted to issues of power and linguistic discrimination (Blackledge, 2000). Following Woolard (1998), I adopt both a macro-level approach of language ideologies as widely shared beliefs about languages and dialects that circulate in society (e.g. the standard language ideology), which informs my meso-level discursive analysis (see below), and a micro-level conceptualization of language ideologies as schemata held by speakers to construe the social meaning of particular instances of language use (e.g. “metapragmatic stereotypes”: Silverstein, 1979, 1985), which informs my micro-level textual analysis (see below). In fact, both approaches are at interplay in the case of fictional discourse, since the metapragmatic stereotypes that fictional characters hold are expected to echo the wider language ideologies of creators.

My proposed framework is also informed by post-variationist approaches to sociolinguistic style (e.g. Coupland, 2007; Eckert, 2012). In particular, in contemporary (post-variationist) sociolinguistics, the notion of “style” tends to replace the traditional (variationist) concept of “linguistic variation”, which reflects a pre-determined social meaning. In particular, language use seen as “style” is conceptualized as a resource for meaning making in context, while speaker is viewed as an agent who negotiates his/her identity within a system of distinctions and possibilities. Hence, through the notion of style, sociolinguistics engages in dialogue with social constructionism, by looking into people’s moment-to-moment negotiation and projection of identities in discursive social action, and thus, it contributes to the establishment of a “non-autonomous sociolinguistics” (Rickford, 2002). To this end, stylistic research has turned to discourse analytical methods.

Although CDA belongs to constructionist discourse analytical traditions, and hence, it is in line with a post-variationist perspective, it is underdeveloped concerning the analysis of identity as an interactional phenomenon (Jørgensen and Phillips, 2002). In fact, within CDA, a number of analytical categories have developed for the representation of social groups and collective identities, such as the discursive strategies for positive self-presentation and negative other-presentation proposed by Reisigl and Wodak (2001) and the socio-semantic social actor analysis of Van Leeuwen (1996) (for an overview, see KhosraviNik, 2010). Yet, such analytical resources do not account for the interactional construction of identities, and have been largely applied to non-interactional/written texts, including newspaper articles, political speeches and print advertisements. As fictional data mostly involve interactions, as it is the case with the example analyzed below, in my micro-level textual analysis, I propose, then, the combination of transitivity (Halliday, 1994) and social actor analysis (Van Leeuwen, 1996), which are well-established CDA tools, with the “identities in interaction” model of Bucholtz and Hall (2005), which comes from the post-variationist strand of sociocultural linguistics and puts a stress on the interactional construction of identity.

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/7532575>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/7532575>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)