

1 Introduction: Power, discourse and institutions

Andrea Mayr

This book is about language, power and institutions. It examines language and power across a variety of institutional settings, showing how institutions are shaped by discourse and how they in turn have the capacity to create and impose discourses. In this way, they have considerable control over the shaping of our routine experiences of the world and the way we classify that world. They therefore have power to foster particular kinds of identities to suit their own purposes.

In this book we consider a number of such institutional settings and contexts: the university, the prison, the media and the military. Each chapter deals with one particular case, describing and demonstrating a theoretical and analytical approach within a general critical discourse/multimodal framework. We also include a corpus-based approach to the critical analysis of institutional discourse. Each chapter is intended to give readers an overview of the approach and the practical steps taken in the analysis. In writing this book we see ourselves as contributing to critical voices on institutions and their capacity to produce and disseminate discourses with institutional values, meanings and positions.

Institutions' power and politics are frequently exercised through the discourse of their members. We only have to think of the news media in this respect. On the one hand, we assume that they are obliged to provide impartial and balanced coverage of important political and social events. This is an impression they certainly strive to create. But these are also large organizations that need to maintain themselves and their position. They need to operate as well-oiled machines to process and deal with the stuff of their business. What this means in practice is that to some extent it is the institutional procedures and practices that define what becomes news more so than the events themselves. In addition, these organizations are owned by ever larger corporations who have their own agenda particularly to increase revenue for shareholders. And as they push for more profits this puts new constraints on what kinds of events can become news and creates new opportunities for those organizations which are best able to respond to such changes. So to understand news texts we need to understand them as the result

of these institutional processes. It is because of these institutional, practical and financial concerns that news media offer only a partial view of the world that fits with the interests of the socially and economically powerful (e.g. war reporting that excludes acts of violence perpetrated against civilians).

The sourcing and legitimization of news is therefore bound up with the actions, opinions and values of dominant groups in society. In this way, the media tend to function ideologically, not so much due to bias, but simply through the nature of established routine practices. In simple terms this means that we find the news media blame certain social groups for economic and social decline (e.g. single mothers or 'benefit cheats') or for rising crime rates, leaving aside issues of social deprivation that marginalize certain people in the first place. They thereby gloss over and render largely invisible the material conditions of many people.

While the news media play an important role in defining what we think of as crime and criminals, other institutions have the role of processing, punishing and reforming those who break the law. Yet in the same way, these institutions promote and legitimize discourses of who is and is not a good citizen and who are the evil-doers among us. For example, prison systems support current neo-liberal discourses of crime control, which construct crime as an individual rather than structural problem and the individual offender as invested with autonomy, choice and self-responsibility. They do that through the implementation of rehabilitation programmes which target supposed personality defects of offenders. This has the effect thereby of imposing the institutionally based (ideological) assumptions of crime onto those people they process. Some of the people processed, however, might say that criminal behaviour is not always the result of choice and individual agency, and that it is poverty that may cause violent outbursts and not just personality defects and a lack of communication and social skills. Yet, just as news tell us who is bad through the definitions of the powerful who can best act as sources in the institutional value system of news organizations, helping to legitimize the world view of these individuals and the organizations they represent, so do prisons take their place in maintaining the apparent logic of these discourses where crime is simply the act of bad people. And like news organizations, prisons and other institutions are able to *legitimize* their own crucial role in the process.

This book is an investigation of the discourses that dominate institutions, and which they themselves promote. We show that these institutions seek to legitimize their own interests and existence through discourses through which they seek to transform or recontextualize social practices. As Weber (1914) reminds us, in democratic systems,

the power of institutions needs to be legitimized and justified to be accepted by people. For example, the invasion of Iraq was justified by the government and the military through the ‘rhetoric of military humanism’ (Chomsky, 1999), which argued that ridding the world of an evil dictator was necessary to ‘liberate’ the downtrodden people of Iraq.

There have been three strands of research that have been identified in the study of the relationship between discourse, institutions and power (Mumby and Clair, 1997: 195): (1) the study of how members of oppressed groups can ‘discursively penetrate the institutionalized form of their oppression’; (2) how subordinate individuals ‘discursively frame their own subordination’ thereby perpetuating it; and (3) analysis of how dominant groups ‘discursively construct and reproduce their own positions of dominance’ (e.g. van Dijk, 1993). It is this third area that we have taken up as our focus here, although we also make occasional reference to the other two. We are particularly concerned with the hegemonic rise of specific institutional discourses over others in ‘late modern’ or ‘new capitalist’ societies, such as the discourse of ‘enterprise’ which espouses a purely economic model as the model for *all* undertakings including previously ‘non-economic’ public institutions (e.g. the health service) in a wider ‘enterprise culture’.

A great deal of contemporary social research has been concerned with the nature and consequences of these changes in the new capitalism (e.g. Giddens, 1991). At the same time, the study of the language aspects of new capitalism has also developed into a significant area of research, particularly for critical discourse analysts. Fairclough (2003: 4) defines the term ‘new capitalism’ as ‘the most recent of a historical series of radical re-structurings through which capitalism has maintained its fundamental continuity’. These restructurings involve dramatic transformations not only of economic, but also political and social domains. For example, in the area of education, there has been a tendency to run universities increasingly like commercial businesses, with students being their ‘customers’. This development in turn has been promoted by the government’s pro-managerial educational discourses and policies, which espouse an entrepreneurial culture and educational system.

The reason why language plays such a significant role in the new capitalism is because of it being ‘knowledge-driven’, that is, constantly generating knowledge about the world and how people are to act in the world (e.g. in the workplace). For this, it has to rely on language or discourse, discourse that is ‘endowed with the performative power to *bring into being* the very realities it *claims* to describe’ (Fairclough, 2003: 203–4; emphasis added). Institutions play a vital role in this as they are primary sites for ‘reality construction’. The questions we might

ask ourselves are how does this discourse materialize in organizations and institutions, how is it internalized in social practices and how does it define the identities of people ('social actors')?

In the sections that follow, we investigate the relationship between language and institutions in more detail.

Institutions and institutional discourse

Institutions are not easy to define. People usually associated them with physical buildings or institutional settings, such as schools, hospitals, media organizations, prisons or courts of law. Here is an example of a popular definition of 'institution':

1. An established organization or foundation, especially one dedicated to education, public service or culture.
2. The building or buildings housing such an organization.
3. A place for the care of persons who are destitute, disabled or mentally ill. (www.thefreedictionary.com/institution)

As this definition shows, there appears to be a certain overlap in the use of the terms 'institution' and 'organization'. They are also used more or less interchangeably in the sociological and linguistic literature on the topic (e.g. Drew and Sorjonen, 1997; Jablin and Putnam, 2001), although 'organization' seems to be used more for commercial corporations, whereas 'institution' is more associated with the public organs of the state, which is what we are concerned with in the present volume.

Institutions are also seen as inextricably linked to power and serving the interests of certain powerful groups (e.g. the media). Agar's (1985: 164) definition, according to which institutions are 'a socially legitimated expertise together with those persons authorized to implement it' is important here as it suggests that institutions are not restricted to physical settings and can refer to any powerful group, such as the government or the media. Agar's definition also includes the conception of institutions as involving asymmetrical roles between institutional representatives or 'experts' and 'non-experts' or 'clients', who must comply with institutional norms and objectives.

The notion that institutions have immense power which they impose on people has informed many theoretical accounts (e.g. Weber, 1914; Althusser, 1971; Habermas, 1987). Other accounts, however, have adopted a more complex view of institutions and institutional power, in which power is achieved not by mere oppression but also by persuasion and consent and the complicity on the part of people (e.g. Gramsci, 1971; Foucault, 1979). We shall come back to these later.

Linguistic and sociological approaches to the study of institutions and their discourses generally regard language as constitutive of institutions (Deetz, 1982). In this view, language is the principal means by which institutions create a coherent social reality that frames their sense of who they are (Mumby and Clair, 1997). Accordingly, institutions – their employees and others with whom they interact (e.g. the public) – are being constructed and reconstructed in discourse practices. This view of discourse as constituting social reality does not necessarily lead to the view that discourse is all there is, but assigns discourse an important role in shaping reality, creating patterns of understanding, which people then apply in social practices.

There is now an abundance of literature on institutional discourse, interaction and practices which has been concerned with understanding the relationship between discourse, ideology and power (e.g. Mumby, 1988, 2001; Drew and Heritage, 1992; Gunnarsson et al., 1997; Mumby and Clair, 1997; Sarangi and Roberts, 1999; Cameron, 2000; Thornborrow, 2002; Iedema, 2003; Tietze et al., 2003). Issues addressed specifically in Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) are the discourse of media organizations (Fairclough, 1995a), language and education (Fairclough, 1993, 1995b; Chouliaraki, 1998); communication barriers in institutions (Wodak, 1996); ‘new’ capitalism and neo-liberalism (Fairclough, 2000), bureaucratic discourses in late modern society (Sarangi and Slembrouck, 1996; Iedema, 1998), racism in the press (van Dijk, 1993, 1997); anti-immigration discourse (Iedema and Wodak, 1999) and the reproduction of class inequalities in media discourse (Richardson, 2007).

Rather than regarding organizations and institutions simply ‘as social collectives where shared meaning is produced’, these critical studies of organizations/institutions and their discourses see them as ‘sites of struggle where different groups compete to shape the social reality . . . in ways that *serve their own interests*’ (Mumby and Clair, 1997: 182; emphasis added). For example, in new capitalist societies it is in the interest of management to articulate a social reality for employees which emphasizes supposedly egalitarian workplace practices (‘teamwork’) in which employees take ‘ownership’ of their work, while at the same time securing commitment from them and being able to realize their institutional goals.

As briefly indicated above, Habermas (1984, 1987) has made an important contribution to the study of institutional discourse. He distinguishes between ‘communicative’ uses of language – aimed at producing understanding – and ‘strategic’ uses – oriented to success and making people do things – and the displacement of the former by the latter. Habermas sees this development as a sign of the colonization

of people's lives by the systems of the economy and the state. In this way, economic models and discourses have colonized the institutional forms of what Habermas calls the 'life-world', such as education or interpersonal relations. However, this distinction between the 'life-world' ('ordinary' conversation, informality) and the 'system' (institutions, the state, formality) can no longer be upheld, as both spheres now colonize each other and share common discourse practices. This can be observed in the process of 'conversationalization' (Fairclough, 1992), the modelling of formal written and spoken public discourse on informal, face-to-face talk, as, for example, in the bureaucratic field, where institutions in the public and private domain nowadays often rely on promotional discourse reminiscent of advertising to commodify their services and to attract a wide range of people (see Sarangi and Slembrouck, 1996). This is something that has also affected universities and how they interact with students, as we will see in Chapter 2.

So while institutional discourse and power has been studied in terms of Habermas' (1987: 196) notion of the colonization of a 'natural' unspoilt life-world by rational-instrumental social systems expressed in bureaucratic-administrative discourses (e.g. Fairclough, 1992; Wodak, 1996), other studies have pointed to the *productiveness* of institutional discourses, arguing that these encode and construe 'complicity' and 'reciprocal power relations' (Foucault, 1979; Iedema, 1998), which underpin and maintain institutional and hierarchical power. The argument is that to analyse institutional practices and discourses solely from the perspective of domination, oppression and exclusions ignores how these discourses and practices 'enlist subjects to their "natural" cause' (Iedema, 1998: 497). This 'productive' view of institutional power provides an important angle for the analysis of institutional discourse and will be followed up later.

This point was also explored by Giddens (1981) in his 'theory of structuration'. Giddens argues that social actors are not completely overwhelmed by institutional power and dominance and that institutions have a potential for domination as well as emancipation. For instance, new workplace practices (e.g. teamwork), which favour a more egalitarian relationship between the management and the workforce, are often said to give workers more space to exercise their abilities and to fulfil themselves. In this way, workplaces would be enabling as well as constraining. However, while this may apply to institutional locations where domination of one group over the other is partial and contested, such as management and shop floor, in more coercive institutions, such as the prison, power relations are very real and cannot be

ignored. In this respect, Giddens may therefore have marginalized considerations of objective power relations.

So far we have discussed the centrality of discourse in the critical study of institutions. It is now time to examine the term itself in more detail.

Discourse

'Discourse' is a difficult and fuzzy concept as it is used by social theorists (e.g. Foucault, 1972; 1977), critical linguists (e.g. Fowler et al., 1979) and finally, critical discourse analysts (e.g. van Dijk, 1990), all of whom define discourse slightly differently and from their various theoretical and disciplinary standpoints. We will now elaborate on the meanings of the term and how we intend to use it in this book.

Discourse is often defined in two different ways: according to the formalist or structuralist paradigm, discourse is 'language above the clause' (Stubbs, 1983: 1). This approach to discourse focuses on the form which 'language above the sentence' takes, looking at structural properties such as organization and cohesion, but paying little attention to the social ideas that inform the way people use and interpret language.

This social aspect of language is emphasized by the second, so-called functionalist paradigm, which states that discourse is 'language in use' (Brown and Yule, 1983: 1) and should be studied as such. Brown and Yule state that

[. . .] the analysis of discourse is, necessarily, the analysis of language in use. As such, it cannot be restricted to the description of linguistic forms independent of the purposes or functions which these forms are designed to serve in human affairs.

According to the functionalist paradigm, the analysis of language cannot be divorced from the analysis of the purpose and functions of language in human life. Discourse is therefore seen as a culturally and socially organized way of speaking. As Richardson (2007: 24; emphasis in original) notes, researchers who adopt this definition of discourse 'assume that language is used to *mean* something and to *do* something' and that this 'meaning and doing' is linked to the context of its usage. If we want to interpret a text properly, 'we need to work out what the speaker or writer is *doing* through discourse, and how this "doing" is linked to wider interpersonal, institutional, socio-cultural and material contexts.' 'Text' refers to 'the observable product of interaction', whereas discourse is 'the process of interaction itself: a cultural activity' (Talbot, 2007: 9).

This view of language as action and social behaviour is emphasized in CDA, which sees discourse – the use of language in speech and writing – as a form of *social practice*. It is this definition of discourse as a social practice that is the most useful for our analysis of institutional discourse, as it implies a two-way relationship between a ‘discursive event’ (i.e. any use of discourse) and the situation, institution and social structure in which it occurs: discourse is shaped by these, but it also shapes them (Fairclough, 1992: 62). In other words, language represents and contributes to the (re)production of social reality. This definition of discourse establishes a link to our view of institutional discourse as engaged in ‘reality construction’.

A different view of discourse that has also been incorporated into the theoretical framework of CDA, especially the one developed by Fairclough (1992), is by Foucault. This is because he offers important theoretical concepts for understanding institutions as sites of discursive power. Foucault does not think of discourse as a piece of text, but as ‘practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak’ (Foucault, 1972: 49).

By discourse, Foucault means ‘a group of statements which provide a language for talking about – a way of representing the knowledge about – a particular topic at a particular historical moment’ (Hall, 1992: 291). Discourse, Foucault argues, *constructs* the topic. It governs the way that a topic can be meaningfully talked about. It also influences how ideas are put into practice and used to regulate the conduct of others. This in turn means that discourse (or discourses in the social theoretical sense) can limit and restrict other ways of talking and producing knowledge about it (e.g. discussing working-class crime as an individual problem in the media can marginalize an alternative conception of it being a social problem).

Critical Discourse Analysis

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is ‘a theory and method analysing the way that individuals and institutions *use* language’ (Richardson, 2007: 1; emphasis in original). Critical discourse analysts focus on ‘relations between discourse, power, dominance and social inequality’ (van Dijk, 1993: 249) and how discourse (re)produces and maintains these relations of dominance and inequality’. Because of their concern with the analysis of the ‘often opaque relationships’ between discourse practices and wider social and cultural structures, CDA practitioners take an ‘explicit socio-political stance’ (ibid.: 252). In this respect, CDA is different from the other main, and more descriptive, approach to institutional discourse, Conversation Analysis (CA).

CDA places particular emphasis on the interdisciplinary study of discourse, mediating between the linguistic and the social and regarding the social more than a mere contextual backdrop to texts (e.g. Chouliaraki and Fairclough, 1999; Weiss and Wodak, 2003). Unlike CA, CDA therefore addresses broader social issues and attends to external factors, including ideology, power, inequality, etc. and draws on social and philosophical theory to analyse and interpret written and spoken texts. As Fairclough (2001: 26; emphasis in original) puts it:

CDA analyses texts and interactions, but it does not *start* from texts and interactions. It starts rather from social issues and problems, problems which face people in their social lives, issues which are taken up within sociology, political science and/or cultural studies.

CDA researchers therefore typically examine how the microstructures of language are linked with and help to shape the macrostructures of society.

There is not just one way of doing CDA and the various methodologies reflect the theoretical and philosophical orientations of the researchers (Fairclough, 1992; van Dijk, 1993; Wodak, 2001). Fairclough (1992) works from a broadly Marxist perspective, arguing that the task of CDA is to identify how relations of domination and inequalities, which arise from neo-capitalist societies, are produced and reproduced in discourse. Van Dijk (1993, 2001), on the other hand, has developed a socio-cognitive framework which theorizes the relationship between social systems and social cognition. Wodak's discourse-historical approach is intent on tracing the historical (intertextual) history of phrases and arguments (see, for example, van Leeuwen and Wodak, 1999) and centres on political issues such as racism, integrating all available background information in the analysis and interpretation of the different layers of a text. An application of the discourse-historical approach can be found in Chapter 5 in our analysis of institutionalized discourses of multiculturalism in a British regional paper.

As we indicated above, CDA maintains that discourse – the use of language in speech and writing – should be regarded as a social practice. Fairclough (1992: 10) argues that every instance of language use has three dimensions: 'it is a spoken or written language text; it is an interaction between people involving processes of producing and interpreting the text; and it is a piece of social practice. Describing discourse as social practice implies dealing with issues that are important for social analysis such as the *institutional* circumstance of the discursive event and how that shapes the nature of the discursive practices and the constitutive effects of discourse (Fairclough, 1992). For example,

take the discursive event of a newspaper article about ‘benefit scroungers’ or ‘hordes of immigrants’. The article has not been written in a social vacuum, but is shaped by situational, institutional and social structures. But it also helps to *shape* them, because it may (re)produce certain (anti-immigration) attitudes or help to transform them. So the analysis of discourse as a social practice implies the analysis of the ‘social and cultural goings-on which the communicative event is part of’ (Fairclough, 1995a: 57). So with regard to institutional discourses, we might ask ourselves what are the wider institutional practices in which they are produced and in what ways do they help to perpetuate or help to stop undesirable social practices (e.g. racism).

Although the general thrust in CDA has been towards an analysis of linguistic structures, which are attributed a crucial function in the social production of inequality, power, ideology and manipulation, other scholars have emphasized the importance of incorporating visual images into concepts of discourse and moved towards broader *multimodal* conceptions (Kress and van Leeuwen; 1996; Machin and van Leeuwen, 2007), because several forms of representations, linguistic and non-linguistic, are used in its construction. For example, while political and ideological views of newspapers can be expressed in the choice of different vocabularies (e.g. ‘resistance fighters’ vs. ‘insurgents’) and different grammatical structures (e.g. active vs. passive constructions), the same applies to the visual representation of events, of what Kress and van Leeuwen (1996) have termed ‘the grammar of visual design’. Just as linguistic structures, visual structures also express (ideological) meanings and contribute to the overall meaning of texts. Most research in the area of institutional discourse has largely ignored multimodal aspects of meaning-making (see Grant and Iedema, 2005). We therefore address this issue in Chapters 4 and 5, where we demonstrate through a multimodal analysis of media discourse that images are ‘entirely within the realm of ideology, as means – always – for the emergence of ideological positions’ (Kress and van Leeuwen (1996: 13).

Ideology

Since CDA is concerned with exposing the often hidden ideologies that are reflected, reinforced and constructed in everyday and institutional discourse, the concept of ideology is crucial. Like the concepts of discourse and power, ideology is probably the one that most defies precise definition. Definitions usually fall into two broad categories: a relativist definition, denoting systems of ideas, beliefs and practices, and a critical definition, allied with Marxist theory, which sees it as working in the interests of a social class and/or cultural group. When critical

discourse analysts argue that discourse embodies ideological assumptions, they use the term ideology in a 'critical' sense. Fairclough (1992: 87) understands ideologies to be

significations/constructions of reality (the physical world, social relations, social identities) which are built into various dimensions of the forms/meanings of discursive practices, and which contribute to the production, reproduction or transformation of relations of domination.

This critical conception of ideology, which is based on Gramsci's (1971) concept of hegemony (domination by consent), links it to the process of sustaining asymmetrical relations of power and inequalities – that is to the process of maintaining domination. In the words of Fairclough (1995b: 14), ideology is 'meaning in the service of power'. Critical discourse analysts see ideologies as serving the interests of certain groups with social power, ensuring that events, practices and behaviours come to be regarded as legitimate and *common-sense*. Ideologies do this subtly, because they inform the way people interpret the world around them, hence hegemony.

Social power is defined as power belonging to people who have privileged access to social resources, such as education, knowledge and wealth. However, analysts do not see power and dominance merely as imposed from above on others, but maintain that, in many situations, power is 'jointly produced', for example, when people are led to believe that dominance is legitimate in some way or other.

The question what power is, where it is located and how it can be studied in or as language has been an important question in many critical language studies. We therefore set out to provide an overview of some of the concepts of power which have informed sociological and linguistic research on institutions.

Power: key concepts

Although power is pervasive in social systems and their institutions, its conceptualization has remained a matter of disagreement (see Lukes, 1974). Scott (2001) makes a useful distinction between what he terms the 'mainstream' and 'second-stream' traditions of power research. The mainstream tradition has tended to focus on the corrective forms of the power of the state and its institutions, whereas the second-stream has been mainly concerned with the significance of its persuasive influence. As both are important for an understanding of centrality of discourse in the workings of institutions, we will review them here.

The mainstream tradition of power research: power as domination

The classic account of the mainstream tradition goes back to Weber (1914) and his analysis of authority in modern and pre-modern states through the varying abilities of actors to secure the compliance of others, even against their resistance. Weber made the important point that power not only resides within the state, but also in other sovereign organizations, such as businesses and the church. In democratic systems, power needs to be legitimate to be accepted by people. This is generally expressed in symbolic forms by means of language: institutions legitimate themselves with regard to citizens. It is discourse that justifies official action of an institution or the institution itself. At the same time, legitimation implies that opposing groups will be delegitimated. For example, in his work on racism and the press, van Dijk (1991) found that accusations of racism on the part of ethnic minorities in newspaper reports were not only construed as doubtful and therefore as less legitimate, but they also did not go unchallenged by the (white) authorities.

The mainstream tradition culminates in Lukes' (1974) critique of power studies as limited to those forms of power that could be seen. Lukes describes three different views or 'faces' of power, two of which he found inadequate: a one-dimensional view which focuses on decisions over which there is some observable conflict of interest. This view was developed by Dahl (1957, 1961), who argued that power was a matter of individual agency, residing in individuals rather than in institutions. According to this view, power only exists in so far as it can be observed empirically in visible instances of decision-making.

This somewhat simplistic one-dimensional view, which focuses on conscious and explicit decision-making, was criticized by Bachratz and Baratz (1962). They emphasized a 'second face' to the exercise of power that prevents issues from coming to the point of decision through what they termed 'non-decision-making'. Non-decision-making may work in that the powerful do not attend or listen to demands articulated by the less powerful. The two-dimensional view focuses on mechanisms which prevent decisions from being reached on issues where conflicts of interest are apparent, thereby introducing the notion of 'bias' and defending the interests of the powerful. A case in point is how powerful groups in society use the news media for securing their powerful position.

Finally, the three-dimensional and Luke's own view is concerned with ways in which issues are kept out of politics altogether and where conflicts of interest are latent rather than actual. The third aspect is therefore far more concerned with the importance of the real interests

of which actors may not be aware. If institutions are able to shape the values of people, then they may be able to make them do things that are against their true interests. Luke's view then stresses the ways in which people, but above all groups and institutions, succeed in keeping conflict over potential issues from arising in the first place, which he sees as the most effective use of power. As Lukes (1974: 34) puts it, 'A exercises power over B when A affects B in a manner contrary to B's interest'. This happens mainly through discourse and the capacity of power to act ideologically.

Luke's conception of power as an ideological phenomenon has been prominent in many accounts on the interconnectedness between language, power and institutions. Althusser (1971) was one of the first to describe power as a discursive phenomenon and stressed the significant roles of ideologies in reproducing or changing political relations through so-called 'ideological state apparatuses', such as the church, the legal system, the family, the media and the educational system. One current example of this is the construction of citizens as 'consumers', for instance, in the language of public health materials in late modernity which construct readers as 'consumers' who should take personal responsibility for their health through proper 'life-style choices'. By accepting the role of subjects with personal choices in a consumer culture, people are reproducing the ideology of consumerism and the construction of health problems as individual rather than public or structural problems that need collective solution.

The second-stream of power research: power as persuasion

The persuasive form of power associated with the second-stream of research has provided important insights into the limitations of first-stream, orthodox accounts of power. Here the focus is not so much on specific organizations of power, but rather on strategies and techniques of power, in which language is given a central role.

A central figure in the development of this second-stream is Gramsci (1971), whose concept of *hegemony* highlights the mechanisms through which dominant groups in society succeed in persuading subordinate groups to accept their own moral, political and cultural values and their institutions through ideological means. Power is therefore not exercised coercively, but routinely. It is because CDA explores how discourse constructs ideological (hegemonic) attitudes, opinions and beliefs that often appear as common sense that it is such an important concept for critical analysis.

Like Althusser, Gramsci took the view that it is through the cultural formations of individuals ('subjects') by the institutions of civil society

(the family, the educational system, churches, courts of law, the media) that dominant groups in society can gain a more stable position for themselves than through the repressive powers of the state. An important factor in this process is 'consent': subordinate groups are said to consent to the existing social order because it is effectively presented by the state and its institutions as being universally beneficial and commonsensical. As a practice of power, hegemony operates largely through language: people consent to particular formations of power because the dominant cultural groups generating the discourse represent them as 'natural'.

This may give rise to a view of hegemony as total consent. However, domination is only ever achieved partially and temporarily, as an unstable equilibrium. As Gramsci (1971) points out, dominant groups have to work at staying dominant. They attempt to secure domination first, by constructing a 'ruling group' through building and maintaining political alliances; second, by generating consent ('legitimacy') among the population; and, third, by building a capacity for coercion through institutions such as the police, the courts and the legal system, prisons, and the military to create 'authority'. The more legitimacy dominant groups have, the less coercion they need to apply. Each of these three hegemonic functions relies on language and communication, which involves the dissemination of 'representations which inculcate identities, beliefs and behaviours confirming the practices and discourses of the ruling group' (Louw, 2005: 98).

The more commonsensical ('naturalized' in the words of Marx) the discourses and practices appear, the greater is the capacity for dominant groups to rule by 'consent'. To take an example from the media, Richardson (2007) points out that the work of mainstream journalism supports hegemony by naturalizing or taking for granted the inequalities of contemporary capitalism, mainly reporting events as they are seen by officials and sidelining other voices. However, such dominance 'arises as a property of the system of relations involved, rather than as the overt and intentional biases of individuals' (Hall, 1982: 95; quoted in Richardson, 2007: 36). This is a point elaborated in Chapter 4 on news as institutional discourse, where some of the professional and institutional practices of journalism are examined.

The other central figure to provide us with important insights into the study of the relationship between power, knowledge and institutional practices is Foucault. Foucault sees institutions as sites of disciplinary power and disciplinary 'micropractices' (Mumby, 2001: 607). In this view, power is not solely exercised from above in terms of repression and ideology through the state and other sovereign institutions. In fact, Foucault refuses to identify any particular institution or

set of practices as a constant source of power (e.g. a framing of all power relations within a capitalist system of domination). Instead, he sees power as far more diffused and dispersed, and describes it as a ‘productive network which runs through the whole social body’ (Foucault, 1980: 131), and which is characterized by a complex and continuously evolving web of social and discursive relations. Power, Foucault (1977: 194) says, ‘produces reality, it produces domains of objects and rituals of truth’ and it produces discourse. These rituals of truth can be understood as rules for what counts as true or false in any society. For example, in the more recent cultural and economic changes of late modernity, the reorganization of workers into teams has changed the way power is exercised in institutions. Control shifts from managers to workers themselves through the establishment of work teams that engage in ‘self-surveillance’. In this way, ‘power is produced from the bottom up through the everyday discursive practices that construct team members’ identities’ (Mumby, 2001: 607). This demonstrates how power does not just prohibit and negate but *produces*: it produces identities, knowledge and possibilities for behaviour and it does this through discourse.

Power, then, is inextricably linked with knowledge: ‘power and knowledge directly imply each other . . . there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations’ (Foucault, 1977: 27). Foucault shows us how knowledge can be put to work through discourse practices in specific institutional settings to regulate the conduct of its members and the general public. Imprisonment, for example, can be seen as the prime example of the symbiotic relationship between knowledge and power, in that the disciplinary surveillance of the prison creates a new kind of ‘knowledge’ of the prisoner’s body and mind which in turn creates a new kind of power. A body of knowledge about the nature of criminals is essential to justify rehabilitation and discipline.

As with Gramsci’s notion of hegemony, power, for Foucault, is ‘secured not so much by the threat of punishment, but by the internalization of the norms and values implied by the prevailing discourses within the social order’ (Mesthrie et al., 2000: 324). People are formed as ‘subjects’, that is, free but disciplined individuals. This process occurs in modern capitalist societies mainly through the work of ‘experts’ who are empowered by their formation of scientific and technical forms of discourse. Expertise has become an important feature of disciplining populations and is central to the dynamics of power in modern societies and their institutions (Scott, 2001: 92). Of course, resistance to, just as much as compliance with, institutionally preferred

discourses and disciplinary practices, is to be expected (see, for example, Silverman, 1997; Houghton, 1995; Pelissier-Kingfisher, 1966).

Foucault's views on externally imposed discipline in the form of regimentation, classification and surveillance are already well-developed in Weber's (1914) work on modern authority and administration. However, his work on how the techniques of discipline attempt to produce internal self-discipline is an important contribution to the discussion of institutional power. Experts inculcate practices of self-reflection and self-control in those they deal with. A notable development in this respect is the emergence of 'discourse technologists' in the workplace and other institutional settings who offer people guidance in linguistic and social tools ('social and communication skills training') and which are often based on therapeutic models of 'co-operative' talking. Examples of discourse technologies will be discussed in Chapter 2 on universities and Chapter 3 on prison discourse.

All the accounts covered here contain conceptualizations of language and power in institutions which are relevant to the institutional locations and contexts we cover in this book. In the next section, we introduce a practical framework for linguistic analysis that we will apply in the chapters that follow.

A practical framework for Critical Discourse Analysis

It was stated above that CDA is concerned with exposing the often hidden ideologies that are reflected, produced and reproduced in everyday and institutional discourse. To achieve this, a multifunctional view of discourse is necessary. The most influential theory of language in CDA that is socially oriented and informed is Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL). As Chouliaraki and Fairclough (1999: 139) state

It is no accident that critical linguistics and social semiotics arose out of SFL or that other work in CDA has drawn upon it – SFL theorizes language in a way which harmonizes far more with the perspective of critical social science than other theories of language.

While there are undoubtedly other theoretical models that are also critical, SFL is useful for CDA precisely because it sees language as meaningful behaviour and interprets language as a process of making meanings: 'it is not only text (what people mean) but also the semantic system (what they can mean) that embodies the ambiguity, antagonism, imperfection, inequality and change that characterize the social system and the social structure' (Halliday, 1978: 114). It is because SFL provides