CHAPTER FOUR

THE THEORETICAL FOUNDATION OF CRITICAL LANGUAGE AWARENESS

4.1. PROLOGUE

One cannot understand and analyze a language, then, without class analysis. Even though we may go beyond class boundaries to understand certain universal properties of language, we should neither reduce the investigation of language to a mechanical comprehension, nor reduce it to only social class analysis. But we have to do the latter to gain a global view of the total system under investigation (Freire and Macedo:1987:53).

> *...it would be a mistake to focus on the list of linguistic features outside of their context of use. One cannot simply make a list of linguistic features and code a transcript to illuminate power relations. ...the explication of power relations requires a dialectical prexis-- a movement back and forth among social and linguistic theories and across methodological approaches to the analysis of texts and events* (Bloome and Talwalkar:1997:109).

The fundamental point raised by these two quotes is that language study is not merely the mechanical comprehension of linguistic features outside the context of use. Language is a social phenomenon and its study should reflect that. Freire and Macedo (1987) approach the language question from the Marxist stance. Their preference to start with the social class analysis in order to gain, what they call, "the global views of the total systems", is a clear acknowledgement of the central social role of language. Although Bloome and Talwalkar (1997) choose to conceal their Marxist influence their reference to power relation does the contrary. The latter phrase itself is rooted within the social class conflict which is the ultimate tenet of Marxism. Language and the society are inseparable, hence this back and forth movement among social and linguistic theories and across methodological approaches to the analysis of a text and/or events.

Some school of thought might well argue that such theoretical and methodological cross pollination may result in the blurring of boundaries of many disciplines, let alone the absorption of all the disciplines into one. Conversely, such an exchange and interplay of theories and methodologies across disciplines widen the scope for the search of a better understanding of the world. The basic foundations of individual disciplines are not necessarily tampered with, yet the widening of the scope is a sign of dynamism -- a necessary indication that disciplines are not static but respond to the changing times.

The collective contribution of various disciplines in the pursuit of knowledge about human interaction and the world in general, is in line with the current research practice which acknowledges that no single field can provide all the answers to a multitude of questions about the world. Equally true is the fact that a conservative obsession with isolating various disciplines for the sake of maintaining their individual original purity and boundaries yields very little in the construction and reconstruction of the body of knowledge. The emphasis is on collaboration -- an interdisciplinary or transdisciplinary approach. The subject matter of language study presents contesting arguments that a universal agreement is too illusive. A discussion, for instance, about language is inevitably a discussion about our discussion of language. The content and means of our discussion are forever interchangeable (Bakker:1985:30). By merely utilizing language in our discussion we are part of what we say about language. For Berger and Luckmann the essence of language lies in its powerful coercive feature:

> *I encounter language as a facility external to myself and it is coercive*
> *in its effect on me. Language forces me into patterns...language also*
> *typifies experience* (1979:534).

Language is also seen as a powerful instrument of socialization and as the carrier of the socially shared typifications (Bower:1984:63). For the hermeneutics theorists, language is a medium, not a tool, that discloses the world. For the sociologists of knowledge, language closes the world. Phrased alternatively, man closes the world through his use of language (Bakker:1984:33). Gadamer rightly points out that:

> *To have a world one must be able to hold open before him in which that world can open up to him as it is. To have a world is at the same time to have language* (Cited by Palmer:1969:205).

Of course, here language is not merely an instrument. Its ambiguities, subtleties and ironies embedded within its ethereal pliability grant a space, an instant release in which the experience of both the reader and the listener, the writer and the speaker is either rediscovered, or realised for the first time (Bakker:1984:33). This is so because language, far from being a tool, is a medium through which meaning is shaped by both the personal uniqueness of a writer or a reader, a speaker or listener, and of the blending of their multicoloured landscapes.

It is important to note that this study approaches language study from a Critical Language Awareness perspective. The crucial point is that any language pedagogy that ignores the social context, ideological dynamics and power relations which both influence and are influenced by language use is parochial. The likely pertinent questions arising from the latter statement are: What is the theoretical foundation of Critical Language Awareness; and what is new about Critical Language Awareness? This chapter attempts to address these questions.

4.2 DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

An informative study on Critical Language Awareness (CLA) should undoubtedly give a brief reference to Discourse Analysis (DA) and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). The latter two concepts are the basic theoretical fountain that feeds and propels the theory and the practice of CLA. How the two do that is explored in the subsequent subsections. DA is often used to signal a certain theoretical sophistication in a way which is vague and sometimes obfuscating (Mills:1997:1). It is too vast, and too lacking in focus and consensus that no one is in a position to write a comprehensive account on it (Stubbs:1983:12). Anything at all, Stubbs (1983:12) concludes, which is written in DA is partial and controversial. The chronic development of its controversy is a step towards discerning some sort of focus that eventually leads to a generally agreeable yet contestable segmentation based on special fields or disciplines.

As the controversy grows, the boundaries of these disciplines collapse and gyrate into a union that defies the initial, somewhat strict, form of categorization based on the different fields or disciplines. Van Dijk (1988:18) views DA as a new interdisciplinary field of study that evolved from diverse disciplines within humanities and social sciences -- linguistics, literary studies, anthropology, semiotics, sociology, psychology, speech communication and classical studies. No wonder discourse analysts have a tendency of delving deeply into an analytical domain which is far from their initial starting point (Schiffrin:1987:2).

DA can never be a concern of a single discipline. The initial focus on linguistics and grammar has stretched towards social science. Both text and context became the actual field of discourse analytical description and theory formation.   A shift from the initial interest on fixed and written

discourse to spoken, dialogical types of talks in a variety of social contexts, primarily informal, everyday conversations took place. The focus on few discourse genres has been broadened to include many other discourse genres such as law, official discourse, textbooks, advertising, interviews, and news discourse (Van Dijk:1988:23). The theoretical framework has been enriched with new developments in formal grammar, logic, and computer-simulated Artificial Intelligent (AI) programmes, and there is a potential for more additions. Methodologically, theoretically and empirically DA has emerged as a constantly developing fully-fledged cross-disciplinary field.

4.2.1 DISCOURSE

> *... novices tend to ask when they note the ubiquitous presence of the term discourse in humanities, social sciences and even the mass media: "what exactly is discourse, anyway?"* (Van Djik:1997a:1).

Attributing the above question exclusively to novices would not be entirely fair. Established scholars in DA find the concept 'discourse' too fuzzy and too slick to be satisfactorily covered by a single definition. It is too difficult a concept, largely because there are many conflicting definitions formulated from various theoretical and disciplinary standpoints. Its conflictual nature generates uncertainty and confusion which led to resurgence of the above question, regardless of whether one is a novice or not. In linguistics 'discourse' is sometimes used to refer to extended samples of spoken dialogue, in contrast with written text (Fairclough:1992a:3).

Text analysis and DA in this sense extend beyond the limitations of linguistic analysis to sentences or smaller grammatical units to a higher-level of organizational properties of dialogue or written text. It is still uncertain here though, whether the focus of discourse is on spoken or written texts, or both. Equally hazy is the relevance of distinguishing a text from discourse in an attempt to pin down the meaning of discourse within linguistics. Crystal (1987:116) distinguishes the two terms

and ultimately acknowledges the inherent difficulty of yielding a straightforward answer. He writes:

> *[DA] focusses on the structure of naturally occurring spoken language, as found in such 'discourse' as conversations, interviews, and speeches. Text analysis focusses on the structure of written language, as found in such 'texts' as essays, notices, road signs, and chapters. But this distinction is not clear-cut, and there have been many other uses of these labels . In particular, 'discourse' and 'text' can be used in a much broader sense to include all language units with a definable communicative function, whether spoken or written. Some scholars talk about 'spoken or written discourse'; others about 'spoken or written text' (1987:116).*

Notwithstanding his treatments of text and discourse as more or less synonymous, Stubbs (1983:9) is quick to acknowledge the inherent ambiguities arising from the everyday use of the two terms:

> *...one often talks of written text versus spoken discourse. Or alternatively, discourse often implies interactive discourse; whereas text implies non-interactive monologue, whether intended to be spoken aloud or not. For example, one may talk of the (written) text of a speech* (1983:9).

Note the number of times the term discourse is used and see if it helps to understand what discourse means. It is obviously not helpful. The fact that Stubbs is unable, or at least chooses, to use the terms to clarify what it implies as in '...discourse implies interactive discourse...', indicates how complex the term is. The complexity is so intense that locating an appropriate term that captures the essence of the term becomes problematic. However, Leech and Shorts' (cited by Mills:1997:5) assertion brings a dimension that attempts to clarify what '...interactive discourse...' might mean. They argue that:

> *Discourse is linguistic communication seen as a transaction between speaker and the hearer, as an interpersonal activity whose form is determined by its social purpose. Text is linguistic communication (either spoken or written) seen simply as a message coded in its auditory or visual medium* (1997:5)

The emphasis here is on the interaction between speaker and addressee or between writer and reader, and therefore processes of producing and interpreting speech and writing, as well as the

situational context of language use (Fairclough:1992a:3). Text is regarded here as one dimension of discourse: the written or spoken product of the process of production. Benveniste (cited by Mills:1997:5) adds to this discussion by contrasting discourse with language system. He states that:

The sentence, an undefined creation of limitless variety, is the very life of human speech in action. [I] conclude from this that with the sentence we leave the domain of language as a system of signs and enter into another universe, that of language as an instrument of communication, whose expression is discourse (1997:5).

He further contrasts discourse with history, or stories, which is a distinction developed more in French than in English because of the use of different past tenses for formally narrating events and representing events within a more oral frame of reference (Mills:1997:5). Thus discourse is taken as the representation of events in a text without a particular concern about their chronology in the real-time. Fowler (cited by Mills:1997:6) focuses on the communicative dimension of discourse. He does that by contrasting discourse with ideology. In his views discourse is:

Speech or writing seen from the point of view of the beliefs, values and categories which it embodies; these beliefs etc. constitute a way of looking at the world, an organization or representation of experience- 'ideology' in the neutral non-pejorative sense. Different modes of discourse encode different representations of experience; and the source of these representations is the communicative context within which discourse is embedded (Cited by Mills:1997:6).

A reference could be made, for instance, to newspaper discourse, advertising discourse, classroom discourse or even the discourse of medical consultation (Fairclough:1992a:3). Foucault (1972:82) believes that he has added to the rather fluctuating meaning of the word discourse by:

> *treating it sometimes as the general domain of all statements, sometimes as an individualizable group of statements, and sometimes as a regulated practice that accounts for a number of statements* (1972:82).

The first definition given by Foucault is the widest one. It suggests that all utterances or texts which have meaning and which have some effects in the real world, count as discourse.   It is useful to consider this usage to be more about discourse than about a discourse or discourses. Foucault uses this definition when discussing the concept discourse at theoretical level. He frequently uses the second definition when discussing particular structures within discourses. In such cases, he would be concerned with identifying discourses, that is, groups of utterances which seem to be regulated in some way and which seem to have a coherence and a force common to them. Within this definition it would be possible to talk about a discourse of colonialism, femininity and the like. Discourse in this sense is manifested in a particular way of using language and other symbolic forms such as visual images. It is within this scenario that a Critical Language Awareness mode engages the linguistically-cum-ideological mediated building blocks of the identifiable discourse in order to establish the reasons such a discourse is adopted. The critical reflection ensconced within CLA further offers the opportunity to accept or challenge the identified discourse whilst knowing the consequence of such choices.

The third definition of discourse resonates within countless social theories and analyses. The concern appears not to be on the actual utterances or text that are produced, but on the rules and structures which produce particular utterances of a text (Mills:1997:7). It is this rule-governed nature of discourse that is particularly important in this definition. The production of discourse is controlled, selected, organised and canalized accordingly in order to produce a text which reflects the required intention. This is done by the way of adopting certain procedures or rules (Foucault:1993:10).   Such processes of discourse production could be interactively discerned,

accepted or challenged through the CLA perspective.

Foucault has been the most influential figure in locating discourse within the socio-cultural theory and analysis but he is not the only one. Bakhtin, for instance, uses the term to signify either a voice or a method of using words which presume authority (Mills:1997:8). The structuralists and post-structuralists use the term to signal a break away from the previous views of language and representation. As far as they are concerned, language is a system with its own rules and constraints, and with its own determining effect on the way that individuals think and express themselves.

Within most discourse theorists' work, these definitions are used almost interchangeably and one can be overlaid on the other. It becomes even more complex if these theorists do not specify which of these particular meanings of discourse is in use. It should be mentioned that in trying to define discourse reference can be made to either the dictionary, disciplinary context of utterance, or to terms which are used in contrast to discourse. But none of these strategies produces a simple, clear meaning of the term. They only serve to show the fluidity of its meaning. The main challenge is therefore to decide in which context the term is used, and hence what meanings have accrued to it.

4.2.2 DISCOURSE: A THREE DIMENSIONAL CONCEPT

Discourse is a three dimensional concept in that it is: A spoken or written or visual text; an interaction between people involving the process of producing and interpreting a text; and it is part of social action (Fairclough:1992b:11). The first dimension is the manifestation of language use and it could have prompted the common sense reference to discourse as a form of language use. The fundamental argument behind this dimension is that texts in contemporary society are increasingly

becoming multi-semiotic. Consequently texts whose primary semiotic form is language, increasingly combine language with other semiotics forms. A case in point is television which combines visual images, music and sound effects (Fairclough:1995a:4). The same phenomenon applies to written texts. Although photographs and diagrams are the integral part of written texts the graphic design of the page is becoming an even more salient factor in evaluation of written text. This view of a text brings in a compromised stance that off-sets the drawbacks of the two main schools of thought namely: Those that perceive a text as a purely linguistic artefact; and those that perceive a text as purely cultural artefact.

The main drawback of the first school of thought is that it is too narrow an approach since it excludes other important components indicative of the dynamism of the concept within the contemporary society. The second school of thought is rather too inclusive and very broad, thus rendering the concept of a text nebulous. It above all obscures important distinctions between different types of cultural artefacts (Fairclough:1995a:4). The important point though, is that it serves as a potential starting point for the development of models of analysis that could deal with other semiotic forms which are co-present with language, and especially on how different semiotic forms interact in the multi-semiotic text (Fairclough:1995a:4). The inclusion of the following essential components characterised by the *wh*-questions within the version of text as a language use, gives the term a more theoretical substance which is more specific and at the same time broader in application. In total the components read: who uses language; how; why and when (Van Dijk:1997a:2).

Their widespread ramification implies that a text is a social enterprise that involves people who use it in a particular way for specific reasons at a particular time and context. People use language to communicate ideas, beliefs or express emotions. They do so as part of a social event. Whatever happens in this complex communicative event moves beyond just using language or

communicating ideas or beliefs: they interact (Van Dijk:1997b:3). The moment an interactive phenomenon is implied it becomes apparent that the second dimension of discourse is under discussion, namely, discourse is an interaction between people involving the process of producing and interpreting a text. The third (discourse as part of social action), and the first (discourse as a written, spoken and visual text) dimensions automatically become operational because the three are interwoven to a point of inseparability. People are social beings existing in a social context. Their socialization is manifested through their interaction. Because this interaction takes place within a social context, discourse becomes a social action which involves social beings -- people interacting. The facilitatory vehicle of this social action is discourse. That is their interaction is carried through the medium of discourse -- a written, spoken or visual text.

The interplay among the three dimensions of discourse is continual and permanent. So it is impossible to have discourse, language use, without interaction of social beings within a social context. The latter guarantees the former and vice versa. The three dimensional form of discourse defines it as a social phenomenon. Its social function is elaborated further by the following four theoretical prepositions: Discourse shapes and is shaped by the society; it helps to constitute (and change) knowledge and its objects, social relations and social identity; it is shaped by relations of power and is infested with ideologies; its shaping is a stake in power struggles (Fairclough:1992b:8-9). It is therefore imperative that the CLA is adopted to highlight the social function of language within the society. The relevance of CLA perspective is further endorsed by the need to conscientize the society of how and why they use language to perform different social activities. The moment individual members of the society reject or accept a stance, with conscious conviction, a road towards establishing a critically accountable society is initiated. Consequence to this is a society that thrives on the continuous refinement of their identity through their own critical initiative. Cultivated within the young minds in a language class, this mode of consciousness is a serious statement that affirms and supports the planners of C2005 in their attempt to develop learners who

use their knowledge of language to critically engage social issue that affect their educational, political, economic and religious lives -- their entire existence as human beings. The key point here is to ensure a democratic participation in language classroom and beyond.

The first theoretical proposition of discourse views discourse as a text, and an arena where centripetal and centrifugal pressures battle (Fairclough:1995a:7). The centripetal pressures are forces which compel one to draw upon given conventions, of two main classes, language and the order of discourse in order to produce a text -- that is a historically particular structuring of discursive practices. On a more practical level words and sentence structures of a particular language are used and selection among genres and discourses available is done in order to produce a text in that particular language. A text has to conform to the given discursive practice. This implies a sense of a regulatory supervision in order to maintain conformity to the conventional discursive practices. The society in this case shapes the text. In most cases centripetal forces breed homogeneous text. Such a text is consonant, semantically and formally, to the convention established by the society. The typical example is the concept of appropriateness in language. This concept is used to champion the common sense assumption which purports that different varieties of a language are appropriate to different functions and contexts (Fairclough:1992b:33). Centrifugal forces are urges resisting conformity to the existing discursive practices. They operate on the premise that texts do not constantly echo one another, but are, conversely, ceaselessly inventive and challenging in new ways (Fairclough:1995a:7). They confront, challenge and even transcend the conventional parameters in their innovative attempt to expand the boundaries. At this point the text possesses an autonomy constructed in such a way, which is unique, threatening, even perhaps pernicious (Wadak:1996:24). It is at the forefront of the shaping process--shaping the society. The crucial benefit of adopting a Critical Language Awareness mode of language teaching is that it alerts learners of the existence of both the centripetal and centrifugal pressures-- and that a text is caught between these two extremes. What also needs to be noted is that being

critically aware of all these learners or readers would understand why texts, discourse, is never neutral. In fact this further helps to illustrate the complexity of subjectivity and objectivity.

The types of text produced by the centrifugal forces are relatively heterogeneous. They are realized by the modalities that are inharmonious and clashing with the prescribed conventions. These are classical indication of "disruptive" potential of discourse. Two strategies have been designed to curb this chaotic impulse of discourse. The first strategy is the principle of exclusion and reduction. This principle sets out rules and conventions, within a discursive setting, whereby many other possibilities are excluded. Only a setting with conventions and rules within a discursive space produces knowledge, and makes possible, by way of exclusion and prohibition, a communicative framework, which can altogether be defined as functional and therefore acceptable (Wadak:1996:25).

The second strategy called the internal procedures, is characterised by procedures which operate as principles of classification, arrangement, and distribution. This time it is the question of curbing another dimension of discourse-- that of the events and of chance (Foucault:1993:17). The third strategy controls the speaking individuals. Someone who possesses the necessary educational capital, for instance, is allowed to lay claim to certain discourses. The strategies mentioned can easily relate to a discourse of sociolinguistic approach. The conflictual unity of the centrifugal and centripetal forces is the necessary mechanism that shows how discourse shapes the society and vice versa. What is striking about texts is that they differ in relative weight, these two pressures depending upon social conditions, so that some will be relatively normative whereas others are relatively creative (Fairclough:1995a:7).

The three strategies just discussed could be gleaned from the text by learners or readers whose critical reflection to language use is astute. Such astuteness depends on the learners' critical

awareness of language use. This awareness affords him the ability to give a compellingly substantive interpretation, that will remain provisional. If required to articulate his interpretation according to the given norms he should do so conscious of the fact that he merely follows instruction, not that he necessarily agrees with these norms. If at the same time he chooses to break these conventions he should be well aware of the consequence of his action. The benefit of dealing with this perplexity is conceivable through the adoption of the CLA programme.

Discourse, as a text, helps to constitute (change) knowledge and its objects, social relations, social identity. The three cited social dimensions -- knowledge, social relation and social identity -- correspond with the three major functions of language: ideational function, its function in representing and signifying and our experience; its relational function, in constituting and changing social relations; its identical function, in constituting and changing social identities (Fairclough:1992b:8). These three functions are concurrently catered for in any discourse. Likewise, knowledge, social relation, and social identity are simultaneously being constituted and reconstituted in any discourse.   Knowledge, for instance, does not exist as an independent entity, but is derived from knowledge-constituting interest (Mumby:1988:23). These interests (technical, practical and emancipatory) influence everyday knowledge. It is then through the medium of discourse that everyday knowledge is shaped, prepacked and subtly or otherwise transmitted to the intended society for consumption by the knowledge-constituting interest. By viewing discourse as a labyrinth that reflects the social interaction of human beings, Critical Language Awareness accentuates the linguistic markers that are used to constitute or change knowledge, create and recreate social relations and social identity. This is done whilst elevating the strategic *why* question within the mind of a learner or any member of a given society. In his effort to search for the reasons *why* all these takes place, an element of enlightenment dawns in the learners' or the readers' mind so much so that the choices he makes are informed -- based on his autonomous conviction and which he could willingly account for. A CLA perspective is vital in that it cultivates a

sense of responsibility within individual members of a given society.

The third theoretical proposition which reads: discourse is shaped by relations of power, and invested with ideology, spells out the effects of society on discourse. One effect is the way in which particular languages and varieties are valued or devalued according to the powers of their users with the notion of standard variety legitimising and naturalising particular valuations (Fairclough:1992b:8). It is also useful to think of these effects as shaping conventions of particular discourse types which achieve a certain social stability and which are drawn upon in discourse. Power affects such discourse conventions by investing them ideologically in a particular way. Ideology reconciles contradictions as it enhances and stabilises the processes of naturalisation (Hodge and Kress:1993:210). Its forms are structural meaning (versions of social relationship) which are inseparable from a set of practices that are themselves kinds of meaning facilitating these processes. Consequently a false consensus in the form of knowledge and truth is reached and universalised. But, as Hodge and Kress (1993:210) observe, truth is constructed and reconstructed in every discourse, but no discourse has full guarantees of its own truth. It is here also that the adoption of CLA is compellingly relevant in that its critical edge to unravel the discoursally ideological power play and the manipulation of the truth is unrivalled. The true meaning of reality is explored through a CLA perspective. Accordingly, truth is therefore something which societies have to work to produce, rather than something which appears in a transcendental way (Mills:1997:18). The contesting discursive frameworks adopted by different sectors of a society would engender a multitude forms of knowledge, but not all of them would be considered as "true". Perhaps only one would be naturalised as valid and truthful. On the contrary, truth is not something intrinsic to an utterance nor is it an ideal abstract quality to which humans aspire. It is according to Foucault far more worldly and negative. He continues:

> *Truth is of the world; it is produced there by virtue of multiple*

> *constraints... Each has its regime of truth: that is the types of discourse it harbours and causes to function as true: the mechanisms and instances which enable one to distinguish true from false statements, the way in which each is sanctioned: techniques and procedures which are valorised for obtaining truth: status of those who are charged with saying, count as true* (1979:46).

Truth, Mumby (1988:29) adds, emerges and is accepted not through a correspondence with empirical reality, but rather is produced consensually through discursively generated, constraint-free testing of its claims to validity. The product thereof is a rational will that represents common sense and is generalizable. Conversely, this product in reality represents a particular interest that has been inflated and popularised to the point where it becomes common sense and generalizable. The moment it reaches a high degree of naturalisation-- it may come to be seen as simply 'there' in a common sense, rather than socially put there (Fairclough:1992b:9). Control of the constitutive discursive processes responsible for these would be a powerful covert mechanism of domination. This is a measure of extent to which powerful social forces and groups dominate a society or a particular institution. But dominant practices and conventions may be confronted with alternative ones, with different valuations of languages and varieties, or different ideological investments (Fairclough1992b:9). What is notably clear from this, is that the shaping of discourse is a state in power struggles --the fourth theoretical proposition. The imbrication of power and knowledge, and truth, points to the fact that the knowledge we have is the result or the effect of power struggle. What is studied at schools and universities, for example, is the result of struggles over which one is sanctioned (Mills:1997:21). The development of knowledge can in no way be dissociated from the exercises of power (Foucault:1988:106). On the one hand power, according to what Foucault terms 'repressive hypothesis', is negative, possession, control, coercion, exploitation and the likes. Someone seizes or takes power from someone else. It simply prevents someone from doing what he wants to do-- which is in fact a violation of someone's rights. It is after all about preventing someone from carrying out his wishes and limiting people's freedom (Mills:1997:19).

On the other hand, power is transformative – transforming the inequalities and hurtful social relations into more positive ones. Hence the equitable and democratic (re)distribution of power is not just a matter of resistance to imposition or of a new set of or group of people exercising control over others, rather the reconstruction of social life, or at least components of social life (Bloome and Talwalkar:1997:22). A distinction should be made between power-over and power-with others. Inherent between the two senses of power is the concept of power-to. This concept projects power as the capacity to do something irrespective of the consequences of the action. The consequence might either be positive or negative. The traditional views of power are aligned as power-over someone else which is in line with the repressive hypothesis mentioned above. The concept of power-with others endeavours to transform inequitable situations for mutual benefits. Although most theorists of power believe that individuals are oppressed by power relations, it is equally essential to see individuals as the effects or instances of power relations. On this issue Foucault writes:

> *The individual is not to be conceived as a sort of elementary nucleus... on which power comes to fasten... In fact, it is already one of the prime effect of power that certain bodies, certain gestures, certain discourses, certain desires, come to be identified and constituted as individuals* (1988:117).

The individual is here seen as the effect of power and not that which is acted upon by power (Mills:1997:22). Besides being (re)conditioned by power the individual (re)conditions power as he exercises it to achieve his desired goals. He has the capacity to affect an action and to use that to his advantage. This capacity can manifest itself through linguistic behaviours, allowing power to be discovered in discourse -- but not as a priori of a person (Kiesling:1994:1). It is therefore important to incorporate both the negative and transformative potentials of power relations in the analysis of power (Bloome and Talwalkar:1997:22).

The central role of social context within DA serves as the premise of the three dimensional nature of discourse. The social context is projected both as a platform and a part of the dynamism of the social process. It is ubiquitous in that its traces are evident in a wide range of topical societal issues such as gender, class, ethnicity, origin, position or other forms of group membership at all levels of discourse. The selection of particular pronouns as a form of politeness, for instance, presupposes that language users are aware of the social relations at hand. Lexical variation implies that speakers have different opinions or ideology. Speech acts such as imperatives denote unequal dialectic power relation (Van Djik:1997b:2). This relation is context-bound and is discoursally mediated. The broad account of discourse in the society could have been the precursor to studies such as discourse analysis, social discourse analysis, applied discourse analysis and critical discourse analysis. In line with the scope of this study, the next section focuses on critical discourse analysis.
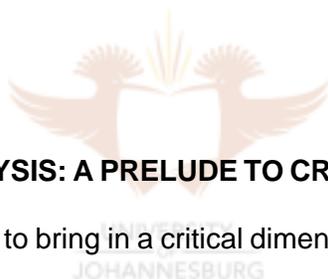
4.3 CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS: A PRELUDE TO CRITICAL LANGUAGE AWARENESS

CDA emerged because of the need to bring in a critical dimension to DA, hence Critical Discourse Analysis. Of course, it is grounded on the basic framework of DA that there is a connection between broader social contexts and social institutions and discourse practices in which people engage in their daily life, including their social interaction. CDA advances the point that a mere observation of these links, however accurate and explicit it may be as it is in the DA, is not good enough. Its stance is clear; it takes sides, and actively participates in order to uncover, demystify or otherwise challenge dominance (Van Djik:1997a:23). Its ultimate goal is not only scientific, but also social and political, namely to serve as an agent of change. A discourse analytical enterprise is therefore a political and moral task of responsible scholars:

> *... one can less study racist discourse without a moral position about racism than a medical researcher can study cancer or AIDS without taking a position about the devastating nature of the diseases, or a*

*sociologist can study the uprising of exploited without being aware of
the nature of their oppression and the legitimacy of their resistance*
(Van Djik:1997a:23).

Similar to trends in social sciences in general, CDA does not propose an abstracted or decontextualized theory of social life, it builds on sociological theories grounded in current social, economic, and political dynamics (Bloome and Talwalkar:1997:15). The result is a theory-practice link that combines structuralist elements with substantive elements that reflect current social and political dynamics. The incorporation of these dynamics emphasizes that CDA will need to evolve as the social, economic, and political dynamics evolve and change. The expression of CDA within language study is through CLA. The issue of change is carried forward within CLA. Thus humans are living in the climate of social changes and this has impact on language use and language teaching. Power relations are routinely, yet subtly, contrived and perpetuated through particular social practices. This shift from a more explicit to a more implicit exercise of power means that common-sense routine of language practice becomes important in sustaining and reproducing power relation (Fairclough:1992b:2). The substantial changes within the contemporary society is undoubtedly marked by a shift in language practice. This shift is currently typified by among others, the *politically correct* (*PC*) language or euphemisms. In adopting the *PC* language, for instance, does not "bomb something", instead "one visits the site or services the target" (Du Preez:2004:18). The severity of the problem is here camouflaged to make it easy on the conscience.

With the accomplishment of changes in language practice being perceived as a crucial element in the imposition of changes, language is increasingly becoming the victim of change. Language adopted by a dominant group may be characterised by a careful selection of diction so as to maintain its domination without raising suspicion of the dominated. The dominated may also adopt a subtle linguistic expression to assert themselves as they attempt to change a repressive social relation. By doing so, they are locating themselves in relation to structures they are trying to

discern, while being caught up in struggles to control and transform these structures (Fairclough:1997:12). This confirms that the world and social subjects are discoursally constructed in contradictory ways – as are subject-subject relations, and subject-world relations. Ostensibly, identification, social relationship, and knowing are textually executed in a contradictory way. The heterogeneity displayed indicates the presence of, and the working through dilemma -- ways of experiencing, reacting to, and trying to move beyond these contradictions. This, according to Fairclough (1997:11), is an important part of the case for CLA and its interaction with social research because the foregrounded contradiction, dilemma, and struggle serves as antidote to schematisation and determinism. Furthermore, this heterogeneity calls for the combination of linguistic analysis with the intertextual analysis. Intertextuality purports that a text is a byproduct of other texts which it refers to, echoes, challenges, and so forth. Intertextual analysis would therefore map texts into orders of discourse, the socially available resources for discursive practices. Likewise, humans draw upon, cut across, and articulate together order of discourse, genre and discourse as they textually negotiate change. CLA obliges language teachers to take into account the impact of this change on language, and the role that language plays in the changing social and power relations. Any language pedagogy that ignores these pulverises learners' chance to participate responsibly in confronting the challenges of the changing society. In the light of this, it is fair to argue that the current social circumstances oblige language teachers to think beyond the confines of LA. Fairclough eloquently sums up the essence of this point:

> *If power relations are indeed increasingly coming to be exercised implicitly in language, and if language practices are indeed coming to be controlled and inculcated, then a linguistics which contends itself describing language practices without trying to expand them, and relate them to the social and power relations which underlie them, seems to be missing the point.* ***And a language education which focussed upon training in language skills, without a critical component, would seem to be failing in its responsibility to learners... People cannot be effective citizens if their education cuts them off from critical consciousness of key elements within their physical or social environment. If we are committed***

to education establishing resources for citizenship, critical
language awareness of language practice... is an entitlement
(my bold) (1992b:6).

One sentence captures the theme of this quote: A critically oriented approach to language study within power and social relations of the society in flux. This approach would have to reflect both the negative and transformative potentials of power. Stretching this stance towards an action oriented critical position is important. An individual who is critically conscious, for example, would not necessarily be an effective citizen because his ability to critique is not translated into transformative action. However, activating his critical consciousness to effect change -- for instance questioning the common-sense assumptions, and initiating programmes to ensure transformation of social and power relations – would fall snugly within the mode of effective citizenship. This is an emancipatory intent that attempts to put CLA into action. The obligation of effective citizenry could be realized by engaging language learners in exercises which reflect the creation and the recreation of discursive social practices, and expose the reasons these practices are maintained or changed.   Jank and Ivanic (1992:230) warn that this apparent concept of emancipation or contestation are not just words in an academic paper. People endanger themselves when challenging the prevailing power structures. CLA should, nonetheless, devise means of: raising learners' critical consciousness; encourage them to participate in transformation of the sociolinguistic order-cum-socio-power relations and to value the advantage of doing so; and at the same time point at the consequence of their involvement.

Raising learners' consciousness is probably the first step towards educating them for democracy (Eldelsky: Cited by Sweeney:1997:279). It also highlights the fact that education is about letting learners explore countless possibilities as they interact with their subject matter. The challenges and skills acquired by learners during this interactive and explorative educational process are crucial for both their educational success and personal growth as critical, reflective sustainable,

autonomous learners. For language learners, language learning would then involve more than just learning the basic reading and writing skills. Learners learn to read critically the words and the world, as Freire puts it. He elaborates:

> *The act of learning to read and write ... is a creative act that involves a critical comprehension of reality. This knowledge, gained by the learners as a result of analysing praxis in its social context, opens to them the possibility of new knowledge. The new knowledge reveals the reason for being behind the facts, thus demythologizing the false interpretation of these same facts ... The reading of a text now demands a reading within the social context to which it refers (1978:24).*

Taking a critical stance to reading involves seizing the text and wrestling with its ideas and its themes (Roberts:1996:169). It is a conscious effort attempting to get beneath the surface of the object of study, whether in the process of reading the word or the world, to uncover the deeper layer of meaning. The key point is to fight the text, even though loving it -- that is to engage in conflict with the text (Freire:1978:22). To do this is to engage in a emancipatory discourse, which by its nature has to do with opposition and resistance. Such an approach to language study, CLA, empowers one to recognize the forces which lead one to fit in with the status quo, and to resist them.

A cautionary note needs to be highlighted about these forces, which Janks and Ivanic call interpellation -- placed in a subjective position (1992:308). The challenge though, is that people are interpellated when the construction, appellation or designation, seems to fit, but they rarely recognize that they have been called into subject positions. This act of accepting the subject position created by another appellation, results in the surrender of power to the interpellator (Janks and Ivanic:1992:308). Ideological dominance starts here. It acts unconsciously to anyone interpellated in such a way that its recruits subjects among individuals and transforms the individual into a subject by the very precise operation called interpellation (Althusser:1970:48). The crucial point raised by

Janks and Ivanic (1992:308) with regard to interpellation is twofold: If one has been interpellated, often below the level of consciousness, how does one step outside the interpellations to see one's own subjection? And, if one manages to see the subjection, how can one be sure that whilst resisting one is not in fact acting in a subjected or subordinated way (1992:309). Engaging oneself with these issues is to acknowledge the complexities in the interpretation and understanding. It is , above all, the act of adopting a permanent intellectual disquiet – a curious, restless, probing, searching, questioning approach to study (Freire:1978:26). It is a critical posture which requires participants to be humble enough and be sufficiently critical to respond to difficulties (Roberts:1997:153).

This culture of permanent intellectual disquiet can be cultivated in a language class by challenging learners to use reading and writing as a means of confronting: Social inequalities; language of advertisement (Huxley:2004:15); representation with regards to news coverage for example, debate on Aids (Sunday Times 23 May 2004:20), Arms Deal Corruption, Ngcuka Spy Allegations (Sunday Times 4 December 2003:4); language issues such as the choice of medium of instruction at schools and the question of official languages; crime, corruption as in R13 million parliamentary travel voucher scam (City Press 1 August 2004:1), death penalty and human rights issues in South Africa and beyond. The point is that these are contemporary issues that affect their everyday life and by engaging these issues learners assume responsibility for forging a more just society.

Learners can further be engaged in activities that encourage them to seek alternative views to the naturalised ones and look for missing or silenced voices in whatever forms of a text, asking questions such as: Is it right? Does it hurt? Is it the whole story? Who benefits and who suffers? Why is it like this (Sweeny:1997:279)? Through this mode of questioning learners are introduced to the tool that would help them to critique every idea that teaches them that they are incapable to imagine and build a fundamentally equal society (Christensen:1994:8). The most important issue underlying this, is a language teacher who strives to create curricula that will prepare learners to

build and participate in a critical democracy that is always open to new comers (Greene:1993:97).

4.4 CLA AND THE STUDY OF SOCIAL ASPECTS OF CRITICAL LITERACY

The critical posture embedded within CLA is consonant to the development of critical literacy. Expressed another way, adopting a CLA perspective is an effort that leads to a critical literate society. Central to critical literacy, is the fact that literacy is a dialectical relationship between human beings and the word, on the one hand, and language and transformative agency, on the other. Within this perspective critical literacy cannot be approached as merely a technical skill to be acquired, but as a necessary foundation for cultural action for freedom, a central aspect of what it means to a be self and socially constituted agent. Most importantly, literacy is innately a political device used by humans to either claim or reclaim their right and responsibility as readers who utilize their understanding to transform their own experience, at the same time reconstituting their relationship with the society at large (Giroux:1987:7). The issue of literacy starts with the fact of one's existence as part of a historically constructed practice within specific power relation. In this case literacy is part of the process of becoming self-critical about historically constructed nature of one's experience.

> *The starting point of analyzing human beings within a particular social and cultural formation is therefore not only on how they actively construct their own experience within ongoing relation of power, but also on how the social construction of such experience provides them with the opportunity to give meaning and expression to their own needs and voices as part of a project of self and social empowerment* (Giroux:1987:7).

Language plays an active role in constructing experience and in organizing and legitimating the social practices available to various groups in society. It is the "real stuff" of culture and constitutes both the terrain of domination and field of possibilities (Freire and Macedo:1987:8). Furthermore, language and power are inextricably intertwined and provide a fundamental dimension of human

agency and social transformation. Language is both:

> *hegemonic and counterhegemonic, instrumental in both silencing the voices of the oppressed and in legitimating oppressive social relations. In universalizing particular ideologies, it attempted to subordinate the world of human agency and struggle to the interest of dominant group. But at the same time, language [is] also viewed as the terrain upon which radical desires, aspiration, dreams and hopes [are] given meaning through a merging of the discourse of critique and possibility* (Freire and Macedo:1987:8).

A theory of critical literacy necessitates a more profound understanding of how the wider conditions of the state and society produce, negotiate, transform, and bear down on the conditions of teaching so as to either enable or disable teachers, for instance, from acting in critical and transformative way. The other central point in critical literacy is the assumption that knowledge is a relational act, and that it is not produced in the heads of experts, curriculum specialists, school administrators, and teachers (Freire and Macedo:1987:15). In its more radical sense, critical literacy means making oneself present as part of a moral and political project that links the production of meaning to the possibility for human agency, democratic community, and transformative social action.

The major point of convergence of CLA and critical literacy is further extended by the recognition that human beings' consciousness has the capacity to surpass the limitation of the objective configuration. Freire calls it "transcendence" (1985:93). Without this transcendental intentionality consciousness of what exists beyond limitations, would be impossible. Hence the common goal is to conscientize human beings so that they can offset the false consciousness of being just recipients. Instead, they should be critically conscious subjects with a deepening awareness of both socio-

cultural reality that shapes their lives and of their capacity to transform that reality. Since contemporary social life and process of social change are centrally and linguistically mediated other social sciences are unable to deal with change in its linguistic aspects without the contribution of language analysis in the form of CLA. CLA points to, among others, the radical disarticulations and rearticulations characterised by contemporary social life. The transformation of relation between states, social classes, and domain of social life is disarticulation and rearticulation of discursive practices. Discursive changes is in this perspective the creative use of existing practice in new combinations. Discursive practices are pervasively mixed (Fairclough:1997:9). And it is in this mixing of practices, this redrawing of boundaries, that identification is brought off. Powerless individuals can look after their own interest and maintain their identity through language use.

It is through CLA that language learners can be conscientized about the ways in which one variety of English, for instance, has become standardised at the expense of many other existing varieties.

Section 2.2 in Chapter Two gives an outline of the politics behind the engineering of a Standard Language. The background given is the breeding ground of a mass of language activities that could be designed to engage issues related to the complexity of the concept Standard Language. Turning the learners' critical consciousness into practice would mean challenging the view that the standardised variety is naturally better than any other, by defending the value of one's own patterns of interaction, and insisting at times one's right to use them. Sensing a feeling of being dominated, one should have self-assurance to voice one's opinion (Janks and Ivanic:1992:315).

The educational process, in this case, becomes potentially emancipatory because it takes the additional steps of exploring possibilities for contesting and questioning those practices which silence people and deny them a voice, and those that give them the platform to voice their ideas. Through CLA learners become conscious of the way in which language tends to impose the speaker's or writer's view of the world on them. By practising critical and appositional reading, listening and viewing, learners reject simultaneously the role constructed for them as readers, and

the view of the world as presented (Janks and Ivanic:1992:316). Instead of merely reading the word learners are engaged in reading both the word and the world (Freire and Macedo:1987:8).

4.5 CONCLUSION

In sum, by embracing the CLA perspective one is engaged in an emancipatory discourse. CLA gives language learners self-assurance which involves understanding social situations, knowing what the options are for action, and knowing the consequences. It shows consequences of complying to a given convention, but it does not insist on opposing it. It helps language learners to recognise that they are linguistically placed into a subject position, and it shows them when and how to wrest control. If they choose to conform to the subjection, CLA assists them to do so with open eyes, to identify the feeling about it, and to recognise the compromise they are making (Janks and Ivanic:1992:318). If they choose the contrary, the image of open eyes still applies although this time they will have to live with the consequence of their action. The responsibility of transforming an abusive social relation, for instance, is upon them. But the motivation to do that is something intrinsically generated by the recognition of their subjugated position, and their dire need to better the situation for the good of all. The key terms that sums CLA perspective is: Conscientization and transcendence; conscientize language learners so that they can either transcend or confront the socially constituted and linguistically mediated boundaries which retard a democratic social transformation. CLA contributes towards building a critically accountable society in that it initiates both the learners' and teachers' sense of political and moral responsibility.