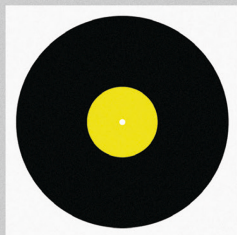
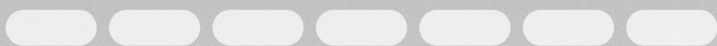


ANITA JÓRI

THE DISCOURSE COMMUNITY OF ELECTRONIC DANCE MUSIC



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Anita Jóri

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Research on electronic dance music communities has been initiated by scholars in the fields of sociology, cultural studies, public health research and others. Linguistic aspects, however, are rarely considered. Anita Jóri fills this gap of research and suggests a new perspective by looking at these communities as a discourse community. She gives an overview of the language use and discourse characteristics of this community while applying a mixed methodology of linguistic discourse analysis and cultural studies. The book is aimed at researchers and students in the fields of applied linguistics, popular music, media, communication and cultural studies.

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Motivation and personal interest

Electronic dance music has a highly diverse profile in terms of its aesthetics and audiences. Research on its communities has been initiated by scholars in the fields of sociology, cultural studies, public health research, gender studies, and so forth. However, research on the actual language use of the related communities is surprisingly uncommon.

My observations and aims attempt to fill this gap and suggest a new perspective by looking at the communities of electronic dance music as a discourse community. The *parent discourse community*¹ of electronic dance music is just as complex and diverse as the metagenre of electronic dance music itself. With the help of different methods and approaches of discourse analysis, one can analyse the discourse behaviours of the members of the discourse community with regards to community and identity constructions.

I have a clear personal interest in doing research on such communities, as I have been a member of them as an active music event visitor as well as an event organiser and lecturer for years. My main musical interest lies in the following genres: acid house, ambient, braindance, experimental electronic music, industrial techno, Intelligent Dance Music, Italo disco, and neo-classical – this interest can also be detected in the selection of the analysed linguistic data. I have organised various electronic dance music-related events in Budapest and Berlin. Just to name a few: I was part of the Budapest-based promoter team Plug & Lay (n.d.) that focuses on less dance floor-oriented genres; I co-organised the panel discussions “Polarity Shift, Women in Electronic Music” and “The Survival of Electronic Music”, and the symposium “Summer

1 See more in Chapter 2.5.2.

Solstice in Berlin: The New Age of EDM and Club Culture” at the club Kantine am Berghain in Berlin. Furthermore, I am one of the curators of Club Transmediale Festival’s Discourse Programme in Berlin. Therefore, I am in the position of being an active member of these communities as an applied linguist with a strong interest in phenomena related to discourse and music.

1.2 Research objectives and questions

The present study takes further considerations on John M. Swales’s (1990) model of discourse community by focussing on the importance of the processes of identity and community constructions. Therefore, after a broader theoretical investigation, it analyses different language samples from the discourse community of electronic dance music.

The discourse community in question has many specific characteristics in terms of language use, such as the high rate of technical terms, the often use of metaphors and metaphoric expressions, or the importance of expressing one’s own ideas (see more in Chapter 5). These features are all important – and almost hidden – signifiers and “helpers” of the community and (collective) identity constructions within smaller communities or *virtual scenes* (Peterson & Bennett, 2004). Therefore, the main aim of this study is to answer the following guiding question: what are the discourse characteristics of the discourse community of EDM? To answer this question, linguistic data – analysed in Chapter 5 – was collected from different Internet platforms dealing with the questions of electronic dance music, such as the web discussion forums We are the Music Makers Forum and Gearspace, the Facebook Groups TB-303 Owners Club and ITALO DISCO MANIACS, the classic websites Vintage Synth Explorer and Resident Advisor, and the blogs Matrixsynth, female:pressure Tumblr, and Little White Earbuds.

1.3 Current relevance

Community members of electronic dance music, or of music in general, have always been interested in technology-based communication, see, for example, in the creation of online fan networks or even *fandom*. Many of the first web discussion forums were also dedicated to music, of which several were to electronic (dance) music, e.g. We are the Music Makers Forum since 1999.

But this part of the popular music history goes back to earlier times. Even on the ARPANET, considered a precursor to today's Internet, one of the first "forum" topics was to trade set lists of the US American band Grateful Dead and to discuss their legendary concert sound system Wall of Sound (Beauchamp, 2017). This was later followed by tape trading over FTP (File Transfer Protocol) (Beauchamp, 2017), and ended up in the creation of online communities to share live concert recordings, such as *etree* (n.d.), established in 1998. These sites also evolved into peer-to-peer (p2p) networks, where alongside with sharing files, the users can also exchange ideas on diverse topics. For electronic dance music culture, an important example is *Soulseek* which was launched in 1999. Andrew Whelan (2008) also writes about breakcore communities and their communication on Soulseek in his book *Breakcore: Identity and Interaction on Peer-to-Peer* – more on that in Chapter 2. These early evolvments were predecessors of the platforms analysed for this study.

Since the era of Web 2.0 (more on this in Chapter 5) began and the Internet has become more accessible in homes, platforms such as blogs, social networks, web discussion forums, or user-generated content in general, have become even more important for the communication of online music communities and virtual scenes. Even though the main part of the research presented here was conducted between 2010 and 2016, it has a strong relevance for the current situation in the middle of the COVID-19 Pandemic in 2021. In Europe music events have been cancelled and online platforms have become the only meeting points for music communities. Events and festivals have begun to stream their programmes on different platforms (e.g. Twitch, Vimeo, YouTube) where participants can interact with each other; in some cases even with the organisers and musicians. Platforms designed for creating communities, such as Discord (n.d.), have become more important than ever (Curry, 2021),² as well as external tools for online events.

1.4 The structure and content of the book

In "Theoretical Investigation", the reader will be informed about the theoretical complexity of this interdisciplinary research. They will be given an insight

2 Discord had 10 million users in 2017, 56 million in 2019, 100 million in 2020, and it has now 140 million in 2021 (Curry, 2021).

into discourse analysis in general, but with a strong foundation in the methods of (applied) linguistic discourse analysis. The presented analytical tools of Computer-Mediated Discourse Analysis are based on Susan C. Herring's (2004a, 2004b, 2009, 2010, 2013, 2014) theories, who is a pioneer scholar in the field. Two additional analytical approaches are introduced: Multimodal Discourse Analysis (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2001; Kress, 2012; O'Halloran & Smith, 2011), because of the starkly multimodal character of the analysed platforms, and Corpus-Based Discourse Analysis (Baker, 2006; Bhatia et al., 2008b; Partington et al., 2004) since the analysed discourse pieces create a large corpus of linguistic data.

The book revisits John M. Swales's (1990) theories on discourse community based on his book *Genre Analysis. English in academic and research settings* and analyses it in correlation with other scholars' related notions, such as *speech community* (Labov, 1966; Hymes, 1974), *communities of practice* (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998, 2006), *cultural community* (Clark, 1996), *thought collective* (*Denkkollektiv*) (Fleck, 1935), *distributed knowledge* (Roelofsen, 2007), *forms of life* (*Lebensformen*) (Wittgenstein, 1958), and *rhetorical community* (Miller, 1994). After summarising the definition of online/virtual community (Bishop, 2009; Hiltz, 1985; Rheingold, 1994; Preece, 2000), the book clarifies the notion of *online/virtual discourse community*.

After laying down a theoretical base for these linguistic notions, the book shifts its focus to the research on Electronic Dance Music Culture(s). After a terminological clarification on *electronic music* and *electronic dance music*, a short history of electronic music and electronic dance music from a European and North American point of view (based on Collins et al., 2013; Holmes, 2020; Manning, 2004, etc.) will be given. The book also summarises the existing research interests on EDMC(s) but takes a closer look at cultural studies, youth-subcultural studies (or post-subcultural studies), and youth studies. It briefly goes through the earlier research topics on the rave scene in the 1990s (Anderson, 2009; Pini, 1997; Tagg, 1994; Tomlinson, 1998, etc.) and the later club culture (Bennett 1999; Redhead 1997; Thornton 1995, etc.), which then leads us to the model of (music) *scene* (Peterson & Bennett, 2004).

Based on these theoretical investigations, the main model of the book, the *discourse community of electronic dance music* and its theoretical conceptualisation are formed by the end of the second chapter. The discourse community of electronic dance music is a multi-layered entity: it includes all people who are interested in electronic dance music and willing to communicate on such topics. This means that not only are musicians and fans the part of it, but

also people who, for example, work within the scene, such as graphic designers (designing flyers, cover art, etc.), customer care agents at related companies (software/hardware companies producing equipment/instruments for electronic music production), music managers, etc.

The last part of the chapter “Theoretical Investigation” focuses on the relationship between discourse and identity. Based on Benwell and Stokoe’s (2012) theories, the book claims a discursive view of identity that is realised as discursive performance or constructed during an interaction. It also introduces two linguistic approaches that can help to analyse the phenomena of identity in discourses: Conversation Analysis (Schegloff, 1992; Drew, 2005) and Membership Categorisation Analysis (Sacks, 1992). Finally, it gives a brief overview of the very limited research findings on music-related identities in discursive processes.

The book then proposes three main research questions:

- 1 What are the discourse characteristics of the discourse community of EDM?
- 2 How do these characteristics vary in different sub- (sub-sub-, etc.) discourse communities according to the analysed samples?
- 3 How do these characteristics reflect on the community and identity construction within the analysed communities?

In “Analysis” the corpus, language sample, and the accompanying questions of ethics in the Web 2.0 environments are discussed. The coding categories of the sample are also introduced here. As mentioned earlier, I collected user-generated content for my corpus from four Internet genres: web discussion forums, “classic” websites, Facebook Groups and blogs. These provide diverse examples of online communication with different text genres (e.g. posts, threads, comments). The chosen case studies were carefully selected: each manifests a different theme, community (virtual scene) with different examples of community formation and identity reconstruction while discoursing. My aim was to cover as many topics as possible across a broad spectrum in order to “map” the discourse community of electronic dance music from different angles. Each platform is also introduced with the help of Herring’s (2007) *faceted classification scheme*.

In order to answer the research questions, the book applies Herring’s (2004) Computer-Mediated Discourse Analysis framework which is organ-

ised around the four domains of language: structure, meaning, interaction management, and social phenomena. The first two domains of language – structure and meaning – are analysed together, because they are close to each other in the scope of this research: through analysing the structure of the group's language, we can understand the negotiation of meaning too. Here the research takes a closer look at the 1) special lexis, 2) the technical terms, 3) the specific community reference words, 4) the personal pronouns and 5) the compensatory strategies. Examining 1) the special lexis of the sample brings us closer to the group-specific lexis which is understood here as a signifier of community sense: the group members understand them in a specific way that cannot be understood by an out-group person. The same can be said about the used 2) technical terms: they are also group-specific and signifiers of the common ground of a community. They also signify the members' level of knowledge on the community's common topic. The 3) specific community reference words (e.g. *friend*, *mate*) are also examined in order to take a closer look at the in- and out-group language. 4) Personal pronouns (“I”, “we” and “they”) can indicate community identification as well as individual and group identities. The analysis also focuses on the same community and identity construction phenomena in multimodal texts – emoticons, pictures, videos, etc. as 5) compensatory strategies.

At the level of interaction management, the 1) concern structures and 2) participation of the community members are analysed. Within 1) concern structures, the book takes a closer look at the frequency of linking and quoting. These refer explicitly to the content of a previous message in one's response, which can be understood as an initiation response. They also create an extended conversation exchange, as Rasulo (2008) mentions, because they incorporate juxtapositions with two turns within a single message. These concern structures are therefore signifiers of respect towards other members, and this respect also helps to construct communities and friendships. With the help of descriptive statistics, the rates of the members' 2) participation are examined in the conversations. It is intended to figure out if these rates are balanced (“harmonic”) or hierarchic within the community.

Finally, at the level of social phenomena, I was interested in the 1) interpersonal discourse behaviours and the 2) information exchanges. 1) Interpersonal discourse behaviours show divergence or convergence, signify the community partnerships, and reconstruct the level of interest in one another (Rasulo, 2008). They can introduce a new topic (for example by asking) and they are also representative of friendship building. Moreover, self-representation

and convergence towards community identity and partnerships can also be evidenced by participants' use of interpersonal discourse behaviours (Rasulo, 2008). Additionally, the features of 2) information exchanges represent how to show interest in one another, and they are evidence for mutual influence, establishing presence or significance and sense of belonging (Rasulo, 2008). The detailed findings can be found in Chapter 5 and their summary in Chapter 6.

By looking at the communities of EDM as discourse communities, the research focus is shifted from sociological and cultural features³ of the communities to the actual analysis of discourses and language use within these groups.

The book presents different examples of how identity construction works through discourse and how discourse in turn influences these mechanisms. Moreover, the processes of community construction are also described through the selected sample. With its take on the dynamic relationship between discourse, identity and community, this study goes beyond a classical linguistic scope. Ultimately, it invites the reader to consider the power of music in the formation of the human self and its connection with others.

3 Of course, one cannot analyse this field without taking these perspectives into consideration, but the focus of research here is elsewhere.

2. THEORETICAL INVESTIGATION

2.1 Introduction to the theoretical investigation

Due to the complexity of the present study, it is necessary to establish its broad theoretical background. It is a highly interdisciplinary investigation involving research results from the fields of applied linguistics, cultural studies, popular music studies and history. Therefore, it highlights some important perspectives of these fields in depth in order to provide a better understanding of its complexity. The structure of this chapter will follow this sequence:

Chapter 2.2 summarises the broad spectrum of discourse analysis by focussing on its applied linguistic approaches, which were taken into account in this study: computer-mediated discourse analysis, multimodal discourse analysis and corpus-based discourse analysis.

Chapter 2.3 introduces different scholars' perspectives (but mainly focussing on Swales's [1990] work) and definitions of discourse community and its related terms such as speech community, communities of practice, cultural community, thought collective (*Denkkollektiv*), distributed knowledge, forms of life (*Lebensformen*), and rhetorical community. Finally, the last section focuses on virtual/online discourse communities.

Chapter 2.4 summarises, on the one hand, the history of electronic music and electronic dance music, on the other, the results of public health research and cultural studies research on electronic dance music.

Based on the aforementioned three subchapters, Chapter 2.5 conceptualises the working definition of the discourse community of electronic dance music.

Finally, Chapter 2.6 gives an overview of the relationship between discourse, music (with a focus on electronic dance music) and identity.

2.2 Discourse analysis

2.2.1 The notion of discourse and discourse categories

The term *discourse* has taken on various and very broad meanings, as it has been employed across various disciplines (philosophy, linguistics, anthropology, cultural and media studies, etc.). Originally the word discourse comes from the Latin *discursus*, which denotes “conversation” or “speech”. For a comprehensive definition on discourse from a linguistic point of view, one can turn to Cook’s (2011) summary: “[d]iscourse can be defined as a stretch of language in use, of any length and in any mode, which achieves meaning and coherence for those involved” (p. 431). Or the following definition is provided by Crystal (1992): “[d]iscourse: a continuous stretch of (especially spoken) language larger than a sentence, often constituting a coherent unit such as a sermon, argument, joke, or narrative” (p. 25). From his definition, we can see that the boundaries are very wide, and the term of discourse can include many different phenomena.

Cook’s (2011) and Crystal’s (1992) definitions on discourse are very close to each other – “stretch of language” and “coherent” – but Cook’s (2011) version is more precise in terms of length of discourse. I agree with him and other scholars (Bowie, 2010, among others) who see discourse as a sequenced communicative event that can also take the form of a single word. On the other hand, Crystal (1992) gives a “classic” definition of discourse and notes that anything “larger than a sentence” constitutes discourse.

It is also important to remark that the terms *text* and *discourse* are often mixed up and used with similar meanings, but it is necessary to separate their contents from each other. Brown and Yule (1983) state that text refers to the “verbal record of communicative act” (p. 6). Therefore, text is a result or product of the discourse process (Boronkai, 2009).

One might think that it is easier to get closer to the definition of discourse by trying to define the types of discourse. However, it has to be considered that the classifications of discourse are just as vague as the definitions of discourse. For instance, Renkema (2004) distinguishes three approaches in the categorisation of discourse: 1) when the “typology is based on the relation between the discourse situation and general discourse characteristics” (p. 61); 2) when “abstract forms are the basis for distinguishing general discourse types to which different kinds of discourse can be assigned” (p. 61); and finally, 3)

when “specific lexical and syntactic characteristics are related to communicative functions” (p. 61).

For the first approach an example could be the work of Steger, Deutrich, Schank, and Schütz (1974, cited in Renkema, 2004) who created the classification of oral discourse. They distinguish between six discourse situations with six distinctive discourse types: presentation, message, report, public debate, conversation, and interview. Furthermore, they also divide oral discourses into the types of monologue and dialogue.

For the second approach, Renkema (2004) mentions Egon Werlich's (1982, cited in Renkema, 2004) discourse typology. His model takes five forms that are fundamental to discourse types: 1. descriptive; 2. narrative; 3. explanatory; 4. argumentative; and 5. instructive.

Finally, for the third approach, Renkema (2004) examines Biber's (1988) typology. Biber (1988) writes about five sets of lexical and grammatical features: 1) “involved vs. informational production”; 2) “narrative vs. non-narrative concerns”; 3) “elaborated vs. situation-dependent reference”; 4) “overt expression of persuasion”; and 5) “abstract vs. non-abstract style” (Biber, 1988, cited in Renkema, 2004, p. 63).

Fundamentally, written and spoken discourses can be divided from each other. The obvious difference between them lies in the fact that writing is a cultural technique using a material medium to keep record of the conveyed message while speech only uses air (as a carrier of sound waves). Apart from that, there are certain dissimilarities that are less apparent, but due to the topic of the present study, it is unnecessary to list all of them here. However, this great divide between speech and writing has been questioned¹ due to the communication in contemporary virtual environments. The language, for instance, that the users of blogs, Internet forums, social networks, chats, etc. use has the features of both types: written and spoken language. The actual form of it is written, but many stylistic features belong more to the spoken language. Crystal (2001), for instance, names this language as *netspeak* (p. 48) that is neither written, nor spoken language, but a third form: somewhere between the two. In the early German literature, we would find, for example, *neue Schriftlichkeit* (*new writing* [Haase, 1997] – own translation) or

1 See more, for example, in Halliday's (1989) early work *Spoken and Written Language* or Kress's (1998) later article “Visual and verbal modes of representation in electronically mediated communication: the potentials of new forms of text”.

vermündlichte Schriftlichkeit (verbalised writing [Schmidt, 2000] – own translation) for this form; or in the Hungarian literature, Bódi (2004) writes about *írott beszélt nyelv* (written spoken language – own translation) or Veszelszki (2013, 2017) about *digilektus* (in Hungarian) or *digilect* (in English – from *digital* and *dialect*).² Moreover, those platform users can apply different tools to express their thoughts (e.g. videos, pictures, GIFs, etc.) that give multimodal characteristics to their texts. In this sense, of course, “text” does not mean the classical written form of it anymore, but it is a much more open category with a lot of different modes involved (see more in Chapter 2.2.5).

Beside spoken and written discourses, we can distinguish between formal and informal discourse types as well. Formal discourses are planned and can be written or spoken; informal discourses are unplanned and can be written or spoken, but it is usually associated with speech (Cook, 1989). Moreover, we can also divide discourse types by activity types: for example, job interviews or meetings at workplaces.

Finally, it should also be noted that Aristotle has already recognised two types of discourses in his *Rhetoric*: dialectic (philosophy) and rhetoric (public) discourses. For him, the dialectic discourse has a superior status over the rhetoric. In philosophy discourse, the audience is participatory, but in public discourse it is a passive mass audience (Porter, 1992). Later, the positive connotation of the dialogic discourse, as opposed to the one-way (mass) communication, became important in the philosophy of dialogue (e.g. Buber, 1970 or Habermas, 1981) and (critical) communication studies (e.g. Enzensberger, 1970 or Flusser, 1996).

As we can see, there are many different ways of how discourse can be categorised, but to get back to the definition of discourse, it is important to remark that, as Cameron and Panović (2014) summarise, there are three basic notions on discourse: 1) discourse as language above the level of sentence that is extended chunks of text (or in other words, discourse as connected text), 2) discourse as language in use, and 3) discourse as social practice. The main difference between these three viewpoints lies in the perspectives of linguistics and social sciences: the first concept – discourse as connected text – was clearly developed in linguistics, the third one – discourse as social practice

2 We can find many other terms on this phenomenon from different scholars. See more in Veszelszki, 2016.

– in social sciences.³ The second concept – discourse as language in use – comes from linguistics, but it was highly influenced by the perspectives of social sciences.

Based on these different notions of discourse, different approaches to discourse analysis have emerged in social sciences and linguistics. The next chapters take a closer look at the differences between the positions of linguistics and social sciences on the notion of discourse and the approaches of discourse analysis. However, I will focus more on the linguistic perspective as this is at the core of my research.

2.2.2 *Discourse and discourse analysis in social sciences:* Foucault and Pêcheux

In this section, the aforementioned third definition of discourse – discourse as social practice – is explained briefly. This formulation of discourse dates back to the 1960s, when changes occurred in the conceptualisation of how meaning is constructed through the social use of language. This new angle challenged Saussure's definition of *langue* and the structuralist concept of *langue* (Koteyko, 2006) more generally.

In social sciences – based on the abovementioned definition of discourse – two divergent traditions developed in discourse analysis: the European tradition and the Anglo-American tradition. The European tradition is based on Michel Foucault's approach to discourse. The most important key concepts of his philosophical or genealogical approach to discourse is defined in his work *Archaeology of Knowledge. And the Discourse on Language* (original French version 1969, English translation by A. M. Sheridan Smith, 1972). Foucault conceptualises discourse as systems of thoughts that are historically determined. Furthermore, it is also important to highlight that he talks about *discursive practices*. For him, power is linked to the formation of discourse within specific historical periods; therefore, he also defines discourse as a *medium* through which these power relations produce speaking subjects. In his other milestone work, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (1970) (original French version 1966, English, 1970), he argues that power and knowledge (*episteme*) are interrelated, because the conditions of discourse have changed

3 It does not mean, of course, that these concepts had been developed completely separately from each other. They have many considerations in common.

from one period's own *episteme* to another. The structures of power are, according to Foucault, determined and processed through *dispositifs* (sometimes translated as *apparatuses*) which are meta-structures *consisting* of discourses, materialisations of power (e.g. institutions, organisations, technology), and effects of subjectification. Therefore, the so-called *Foucauldian Discourse Analysis*, tries to understand how our society is being shaped or constructed by language. It examines and reflects on existing power relations, and how these formations are historically determined. According to Foucault, discourse is inseparable from ideology which also indicates that meaning is always ideological. Foucauldian Discourse Analysis is therefore used often in politically oriented studies in social science, philosophy, and historical approaches (see more about this approach in Arribas-Ayllon & Walkerdine, 2008 and Kendall & Wickham, 1999). For example, in Germany, this discourse analysis method has been applied to critical traditions of social science and in German media theory, as we shall see, particularly in its sub-discipline *media archaeology*.⁴

In contrast, in the Anglo-American tradition, the analysis is carried out within a dualistic framework of the linguistic analysis and a political dimension (Koteyko, 2006). The best example for this could be the approach of *Critical Discourse Analysis* that is based on the French theorist Michel Pêcheux's (1982) *Language, Semantics and Ideology*. He observes discourse as an intermediate link between language and ideology, clarifying the links between the "obviousness of meaning" and "the obviousness of the subject" (Pêcheux, 1982, p. 55, cited in Koteyko, 2006).

These traditions have indeed shaped and influenced the linguistic discourse analysis approaches; therefore, it is important to mention them, although the present study undertakes a discourse analysis from a linguistic point of view.

4 Central protagonists for the development of discourse analysis as a defined research field in German social science are, among others, Siegfried Jäger (1999), who published an introductory standard work, *Kritische Diskursanalyse. Eine Einführung* and Jürgen Link, editor-in-chief of the political journal *kultuRRévolution*, an important platform for critical discourse analysis. Later, Link (1997) developed the Foucauldian concepts of discourse and *dispositif* to a general theory of processes of *normalisation* in society. In German media theory and media archaeology, this discourse analysis was also used as a method to analyse the interdependent effects between media artefacts or systems and culture, often as historical perspectives. Here, early works were written by Friedrich A. Kittler (1985), Siegfried Zielinski (1985), or Knut Hickethier (1998).

2.2.3 Discourse and discourse analysis (DA) in linguistics

The aim of this subchapter is to highlight the most important research findings of the linguistic discourse analysis. This summary, of course, cannot be comprehensive, since the field of discourse analysis is broad, but I mention here all results which are crucial for the present study.

In linguistics, the meaning of discourse has developed into two sub-disciplines: conversation analysis⁵ and the analysis of written text (text analysis). The linguistic definition of discourse, discourse as language above the sentence, goes back to the traditional aim of linguistics: to describe and explain the way language works as a system (Cameron & Panović, 2014). The scholars who follow the other linguistic concept of discourse, discourse as language in use, bring their interest to the following questions: “Who is using the language?” and “What purposes it is serving for its users in a particular context?”⁶ (Cameron & Panović, 2014, p. 6).

As Cook (2011) summarises, “[d]iscourse analysis can be defined as the use and development of theories and methods which elucidate how this meaning and coherence is achieved” (p. 431). He also adds that discourse analysis (henceforth DA) (also denoted as discourse studies, e.g. in Angermüller, Maingueneau & Wodak, 2014; Renkema, 2004; or van Dijk, 1997) concerns all elements and processes that contribute to communication.

Two problems in terms of DA must be mentioned here. First, *discourse analysis*, just as the term *discourse*, is very variously defined and often used loosely. Second, due to the interdisciplinarity of DA, it is very difficult to divide it from other applied linguistic fields: it is closely connected to psycholinguistics, sociolinguistics, pragmatics and semiotics. This means that if someone uses DA methods for their research, they have to pay attention to those fields as well. The most problematic perspective of DA is that a *pure version* of it simply does not exist (Cook, 2011). In other words, there is not just one DA approach that could be used for different research, but it has many different approaches, methods, and viewpoints. However, the main importance of DA lies in the fact

5 Conversation analysis studies social interactions in everyday life situations. It has developed from Harold Garfinkel's ethnomethodology and Erving Goffman's conception of the interaction order. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, its theoretical basics were established by the sociolinguists Harvey Sacks, Emanuel Schegloff, and Gail Jefferson (Iványi, 2001).

6 Here the importance of *context* should be highlighted.

that it tries to bring attention to the phenomena whereby, through speaking and writing, we give certain meanings to *our* world: it is somehow shaped, produced, and at the same time reproduced through language in use. Gee and Handford (2012a) also summarise the faiths of discourse analysts:

We, discourse analysts, want to expose to light the often taken-for-granted workings of discourse, because, like in the study of atoms, cells, and stars, there is here a great wealth of scientific knowledge to be gained. But there is also to be gained in how to make the world a better and more human place. (p. 5)

There are many summaries on DA in the literature. Just to mention some of them: *The Discourse Studies Reader* by Angermüller et al. (2014), *Advances in discourse studies* edited by Bhatia, Flowerdew and Jones (2008a), *An Introduction to Discourse Analysis: Theory and Method* by Gee (1999), *The Routledge Handbook of Discourse Analysis* by Gee and Handford (2012b), *Discourse Analysis* by Johnstone (2002), *Discourse Analysis: An Introduction* by Paltridge (2006), *Discourse Analysis* by Widdowson (2007). As Hammersley (2002) points out, the main difference between them lies in 1) “their focus of research”; 2) in “what sorts of knowledge claim they aim to make”; and 3) in the “kinds of technique they deploy” (p. 2). One could differentiate between these theories, techniques, and analyses in many other ways too, but this list would be far too long and in terms of the present research it is not necessary to mention all of them. However, the study includes some of the differences in the next chapter about the genealogy of (applied) linguistic DA.

2.2.3.1 A short genealogy of (applied) linguistic DA

DA was understood as language analysis beyond the level of single sentences in the 1950s (Cook, 2011). Harris’s (1952) early article “Discourse Analysis” was highly influential in the development of the field. In it, he pointed out two important questions:

One can approach discourse analysis from two types of problem, which turn out to be related. The first is the problem of continuing descriptive linguistics beyond the limits of a single sentence at a time. The other is the question of correlating ‘culture’ and language (i.e. non-linguistic and linguistic behavior). (Harris, 1952, p. 1)

The 1970s and 1980s saw a number of major works on applied linguistic DA. To mention the most important works from these fruitful decades: Widdow-

son's (1973) unpublished Ph.D. thesis *An Applied Linguistic Approach to Discourse Analysis*; Sinclair and Coulthard's (1975) work on classroom discourse *Towards an Analysis of Discourse: The English used by Teachers and Pupils* that brings its analysis above the level of the sentence; Coulthard's (1977) *Introduction to Discourse Analysis*; Brown and Yule's (1983) extensive summary *Discourse Analysis* that gives an overview of the different approaches to discourse; and finally Stubbs's (1983) sociolinguistic work *Discourse Analysis. The Sociolinguistic Analysis of Natural Language*.

Two more works on text analysis should be mentioned from these years that played important roles in the genealogy of DA: van Dijk's (1977) *Text and Context* and the *Introduction to Text Linguistics* by de Beaugrande and Dressler (1981). Van Dijk's (1977) early work explores basic issues in the semantics of discourse and analyses discourse as sequences of speech acts. On the other hand, Beaugrande and Dressler's (1981) well-known volume defines *text* as a communicative occurrence that must meet the seven standards of textuality: cohesion, coherence, intentionality, acceptability, informativity, situationality and intertextuality (cited in Cook, 2011).

Due to the dominant concern of language teaching and learning in applied linguistics in the 1980s and early 1990s, many works on DA emerged with a focus on such topics. Here, good examples could be *Discourse and Learning* edited by Riley (1985), Cook's (1989) *Discourse* published in the series "Language Teaching: A Scheme for Teacher Education" of Oxford University Press, McCarthy's (1991) *Discourse Analysis for Language Teachers*, or a later volume *Discourse and Language Education* by Hatch (1992). In this research field, DA played an important role in developing the communicative and the task-based language teaching.

In order to understand the context of discourses better, DA turned to other traditions such as pragmatics. Pragmatics is interested in "how discourse is structured by what speakers are trying to do with their words, and how their intentions are recognised by their interlocutors" (Cook, 2011, p. 434). Pragmatics' approaches to discourse stem from philosophy as with the speech act theory. Hailing from Wittgenstein's language philosophical contributions, the speech act theory was formulated by the British philosopher of languages John L. Austin in his major work *How to Do Things with Words* (1962) and later developed by John Searle in his *Speech Acts: An Essay in the Philosophy of Language* (1969). Here, I must also mention Grice's (1975) cooperative and politeness principles in his article "Logic and conversation", which is often cited in DA. However, as Cook (2011) puts it, one must also mention the limitations of clas-

sical pragmatics: these early theories dealt only with brief invented examples without reference to many significant aspects of context.

Coming back to other philosophical influences, Hoenisch (1998) states that DA was highly influenced by Wittgenstein's (1958) *Philosophical Investigations*, mainly because for him, the "meaning of a word is its use in the language" (Wittgenstein, 1958, §43, cited in Hoenisch, 1998). Moreover, the Russian philosopher and literary critic Mikhail Bakhtin can be mentioned here as another important key figure because the approach of *dialogical discourse analysis* is based on his concept of *dialogism*, formulated in his literary theory *The Dialogic Imagination* (1981).

I also have to add two important sociolinguists to this list: Dell Hymes and John Gumperz. Hymes's (1974) depiction of communicative competence as involving social and psychological factors beyond what is linguistically possible also had a huge impact on DA. Gumperz's (1982) interactional sociolinguistics also played an important role in this development: it analyses variations in discourse within a *speech community* – based on Hymes's theories – and studies how these variations affect the unfolding of meaning in interactions and how they correlate with the social order of the community (Mesthrie, 2011).

At this point, it is also important to briefly discuss the perspectives of cultural studies on discourse analysis. Cultural studies have added the emphasis to the classical text analysis that textual analysis needs to be *context sensitive*. In addition, cultural studies scholars also brought attention to the fact that many contemporary media products are characterised by a postmodern logic (see more in Barker & Galasinski, 2001).

2.2.3.2 Approaches of (linguistic) DA

Some forms of DA are closely tied to linguistics and try to lay their claims to facts about grammars and the way different grammatical structures function. Some of them are more interested in description and explanation. Others are interested in tying language to politically, socially, or culturally contentious issues (Gee & Handford, 2012a). Just to name some approaches to DA: Computer-Mediated Discourse Analysis, Conversation Analysis, Corpus-Based Discourse Analysis, Critical Discourse Analysis, Discourse-oriented Ethnography, Gender Linguistic Approach to Discourse Analysis, Mediated Discourse Analysis, Multilingual Discourse Analysis, Multimodal Discourse Analysis, Narrative Analysis, Systemic Functional Linguistic Discourse Analysis, etc. The main difference between them lies in their focus and method

of analysis. However, it is vital that these approaches, or methods, cannot be completely divided from each other. In the following chapters, I will summarise the most important theories of the different linguistic DA approaches that have been taken into consideration in my research: Computer-Mediated Discourse Analysis as the main framework for this study; and two additional approaches that played important roles in the analysis, Multimodal Discourse Analysis and Corpus-Based Discourse Analysis. The reasons for choosing these approaches can be read in the chapter on the methods (Chapter 4). Here, as mentioned, only the most important theoretical foundations of these approaches are summarised, later, their methods will be described in Chapter 5 in depth.

2.2.4 The main approach: Computer-Mediated Discourse Analysis (CMDA)

I chose computer-mediated discourse analysis (henceforth CMDA) as a main or *framework* approach to this research, as the chosen language sample is from online sources: from web discussion forums, Facebook Groups, “classic” websites, and blogs – see more about them in Chapter 5.

To understand CMDA, I must first define two related terms: Computer-Mediated Communication (henceforth CMC) and Computer-Mediated Discourse (henceforth CMD).⁷ Many different definitions of CMC exist in the literature. McQuail (2005), for example, defines in his mass communication theory, CMC as any human communication that occurs through the use of two or more electronic devices. CMC refers therefore to communications via computer-mediated formats (e.g. chat, email, forums, instant messaging, social network services) and to other forms of text-based interaction (e.g. text messaging) (Thurlow, Lengel & Tomic, 2004). Research on CMC focuses mainly on the social effects of different computer-supported communication technologies. For example, it affects the presentation – and construction – of “self” and the perception of “others” (Rasulo, 2008).

CMC and CMD are very closely connected terms. As Herring’s (2001) definition states, “[c]omputer-mediated discourse is the communication pro-

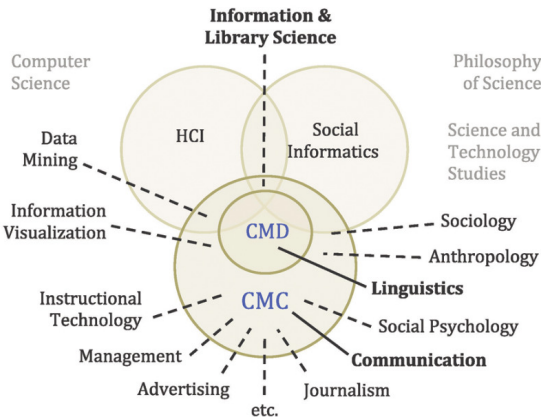
7 One can often find *computer-mediated* written without the hyphen (*computer mediated*) in the literature (e.g. Thurlow, Lengel & Tomic, 2004). This study uses the variation with hyphen from Susan C. Herring, who is a pioneer scholar in the field of CMC research.

duced when human beings interact with one another by transmitting messages via networked computers” (p. 612) or similar devices. She also adds that

[t]he study of computer-mediated discourse [...] is a specialisation within the broader interdisciplinary study of computer-mediated communication [...], distinguished by its focus on language and language use in computer networked environments, and by its use of methods of discourse analysis to address that focus (Herring, 2001, p. 612).

To illustrate the relation of CMC and CMD to other related academic disciplines, I will use Herring’s (2014) own visualisation on the topic.

Figure 1: CMC in relation to other academic disciplines (Herring, 2014)



Here one can see that CMC integrates, beside communication, many related fields, such as instructional technology, management, journalism, social psychology, but CMD mainly focuses on the results of linguistics.

Recently, CMC has been undergoing a shift from occurrence in stand-alone clients (e.g. emailers) to juxtaposition with other content; in other words, to *convergent media computer-mediated communication* (henceforth CM-CMC) (a term from Herring, 2009) that is especially common on Web 2.0⁸

8 See more about the term Web 2.0 in Chapter 5.1.

sites (Herring, 2013). CMCMC is “defined as (usually text-based) interactive CMC that occurs on convergent media platforms in which it is typically secondary, by design, to other activities, such as media viewing or game playing” (Herring, 2010, footnote 9). Examples include text comments on photo sharing sites or social networking service (e.g. Instagram⁹), text (and voice) chat during multiplayer online games, text responses (comments) to YouTube¹⁰ videos, etc. (Herring, 2013).

Due to these changes in CMC, the research perspectives on CMD have also shifted. Androutsopoulos (2006) calls the earlier linguistically oriented studies of CMD the “first wave” that began in the 1990s. For these scholars, the dominant approach was descriptive, and the focus of research was a distinct linguistic variety, the so-called “language of the Internet” with further categories, such as the language of chat, instant messaging, email, etc. (Androutsopoulos, 2006). Regarding this phenomenon, Crystal’s (2001) pioneer book *Language and the Internet* should be mentioned, in which he coined the aforementioned term *netspeak*. Research from scholars who follow this “first wave” descriptive analysis may remain at the level of the characteristics of the medium. On the other hand, a “new wave” of researchers who draw on sociolinguistics and discourse analysis, are less interested in describing the “language of CMC”, but more interested in understanding the practices of its users (Cameron & Panović, 2014). They rather aim at “demythologizing the alleged homogeneity and highlighting the social diversity of language use in CMC” (Androutsopoulos, 2006, p. 421). Thus, focus has shifted from the medium’s effects on the language use to the linguistic choices made by users, as well as how and why they have these choices. The present investigation places its interest in this new wave of research on CMD; therefore, the study does not describe the effects of the medium on the language use, but rather focuses on understanding the chosen resources in different social contexts by taking the notion of *discourse community* into account.

CMDA has been applied to observing micro-level linguistic phenomena, such as lexical choice (Ko, 1996), sentence structure (Herring, 1998), as well as macro-level phenomena, such as community (Cherny, 1999; Rasulo, 2008) or gender equity (Herring, 1996) (Herring, 2004b). According to Herring (2014), CMDA differs from other DA approaches in the following points: 1) it “crucially takes the technological affordances of CMC systems into account”; 2)

9 Released in 2010: <https://www.instagram.com>

10 A global video-sharing website: <http://www.youtube.com>

it addresses common phenomena in CMC; and 3) “its analyses are socially, culturally, and historically situated in the larger digital media context” (para. 6).

2.2.5 Additional approaches

2.2.5.1 Multimodal Discourse Analysis (MMDA)

To understand what multimodal discourse analysis (henceforth MMDA) has established so far, two preceding traditions should be mentioned: 1) the semiological, and 2) the pragmatic approaches; as well as two works by Halliday, 3) *Language as Social Semiotic* (1978) and 4) *Spoken and Written Language* (1989) that were influential in the fields of social semiotics, multimodal studies as well as on MMDA.

1) Semiological – or *semiotic* – approaches are based on the theoretical frameworks of semiotics (or semiology). Here I give no more than a mention to its two pioneers, Ferdinand de Saussure (1966) (semiology) and Charles Sanders Peirce (Hartshorne & Weiss, 1931) (semiotics), because their theories are well-known models. However, it is important to remark that based on Saussure’s semiology, Roland Barthes (1973, 1977) established his own perspective on visual semiotics that was acknowledged by multimodal studies scholars like Kress and van Leeuwen later, for example, in their work *Reading Images: The Grammar of Visual Design* (1996). According to Barthes (1973, 1977) denotation is the definitional or common sense meaning of a sign. If we take the example of a linguistic sign, the denotative meaning is what the dictionary might provide (Chandler, 2002). The second layer of the meaning is connotation, which is more complex and includes broader concepts, ideas and values. In Barthes’s point of view, Saussure’s model of the sign focused on denotation and it was left to theorists (like Barthes himself) to offer an account of this important dimension of meaning (Chandler, 2002). This was also a relevant aspect for these later semiological or semiotic approaches.

2) From the pragmatic approaches, I summarise only briefly the *relevance theory* by Sperber and Wilson (1986). It states that communication relies on the participants’ ability to infer meaning, which are not directly encoded into the message (Cameron & Panović, 2014). In this sense, these studies do not only question “what does this say?” – which would be a basic semiological question too –, but also “why is this person telling me this?” (Cameron & Panović, 2014, p. 101). These types of question were also adopted by MMDA scholars.

3) Halliday's (1978) work *Language as Social Semiotic* is a "description of the grammar of English as a set of possibilities, linking each option that the grammatical resources of the language make available [...] to the kinds of meaning we make with it" (Lemke, 2012, p. 81). The framework evolved from this aspect is called *social semiotics* (see more in Kress and Hodge, 1988). At this point, I should clarify the difference between multimodality and social semiotics: at a basic level, multimodality names the field of work and social semiotics is the theory with which that field is approached (Lemke, 2012). Connecting social semiotics and MMDA, Kress (2012) already writes about *social semiotic multimodal discourse analysis* to express that these fields cannot be clearly separated.

4) In his other work *Spoken and Written Language*, Halliday (1989) states that "we have passed the peak of exclusive literacy, where only written artefacts had merit, and information resided only in the written message" (p. 98). Kress, van Leeuwen and others have further developed Halliday's ideas and for them, meaning is made through the use of multiple modes of communication as opposed to just language (Kress, 2012). Later, Kress and van Leeuwen (1996) in their milestone work *Reading Images: The Grammar of Visual Design* criticise Barthes for missing out an important point from his theories: "the visual component of a text is an independently organised and structured message – connected with the verbal text but in no way dependent on it" (Kress & van Leeuwen, 1996, p. 17, cited in Cameron & Panović, 2014, p. 102). The context of Kress and van Leeuwen's theories is the *systemic-functional linguistic framework* and it is based on the abovementioned theories by Halliday (1978, 1989). One of its key concepts is that language is just one of many resources for making meaning, that is, just one of the social semiotic systems (Cameron & Panović, 2014). Moreover, according to Kress and van Leeuwen (1996) through the "grammar" of visual design, different modes can be analysed in similar ways.

In a multimodal approach, all modes are framed as one field, as one domain. As Kress (2012) puts, they are one connected cultural resource for meaning making. Furthermore, scholars dealing with the question of multimodality – including Anthony Baldry, Gunther Kress, Jay L. Lemke, Kay L. O'Halloran, Ron Scollon, Paul J. Thibault, and Theo van Leeuwen – make a distinction between modes (different semiotic resource systems) and media (different technologies for realising meanings that are made possible by these systems) (Kress, 2012).

The phenomenon of multimodality has become an important research interest across many disciplines. However, multimodality is not the product of

digital technology, but, as many scholars state, is a feature of all communication. Even in everyday face-to-face interaction, we do not only use language in the communication process, but multimodal entities are also involved such as gestures, gaze, and postures.

As Jewitt (2009) suggests, “[m]ultimodality can be understood as a theory, a perspective or a field of enquiry or a methodological application” (p. 12). O’Halloran and Smith (2011) make a distinction between studies which investigate multimodal phenomena, and multimodal studies as a field of expertise that is also distinct from linguistics or any other fields.

MMDA brings these earlier research results on multimodality (or *multimodal studies* – see more in O’Halloran & Smith, 2011) into discourse analysis frameworks. It is a relatively new field, where at first, Kress and van Leeuwen (2001) probably used the terms “multimodality” and “discourse” together in their milestone work *Multimodal Discourse. The Modes and Media of Contemporary Communication*. Since that, MMDA has become established within the discourse analytic and social semiotic communities.

Texts, in MMDA, are multimodal semiotic entities in two, three or four dimensions. The interpreter of a semiotic entity produces a coherent, new text as a result of their own interpretation (Kress, 2012). There are many different interests and positions between multimodal discourse analysts. The scholars who follow the results of 1) *systemic-functional linguistics* have adopted different approaches and frameworks to their analyses. The two basic frameworks are Kress and van Leeuwen’s (2006) *top-down contextual approach* and O’Toole’s (2010) *bottom-up grammatical approach*. Based on these two approaches, subsequent research has extended them into new domains (O’Halloran, 2013). For example, Lemke (2002) developed a contextual approach for hypermodality; Kress (2003) for literacy; and Jewitt (2006) for educational research. According to O’Halloran (2013), another branch of scholars belongs to the stream of 2) *multimodal interactional analysis* that has foundations in interactional sociolinguistics and intercultural communication. To this stream, O’Halloran (2013) lists Sigrid Norris, Ron Scollon, and Suzanne Scollon. Some of them have become more interested in the expression of power, knowledge in and through language, and many of them adopted Foucault’s notion of discourse too (O’Halloran, 2013).

The present study applies some results of MMDA, not only because of the fact that its corpus also includes multimodal texts, but because in general, in the era of Web 2.0, one can hardly exclude multimodal analysis from their research. For example, if you think of social network activities such as posts,

comments, reposts, shares, they are seldom “classic” plain texts; therefore, this book examines some of these multimodal acts as well (see more in Chapter 5).

2.2.5.2 Discourse Analysis and Corpus Linguistics: Corpus-Based Discourse Analysis

Corpus research started out in the 1960s as a methodological approach, based on collecting and documenting real-life language data. Henry Kučera's and Nelson Francis's book *Computational Analysis of Present-Day American English* (1967) is noted as a fundamental work in this research field. In corpus linguistics, the analysis is based on large collections of authentic texts: corpora.

The meaning of discourse from a corpus linguistic point of view is a “totality of texts produced by a community of language users who identify themselves as members of a social group on the basis of the commonality of their world views” (Koteyko, 2014, p. 21). Additionally, Koteyko (2006) adds that these people also share attitudes and beliefs which are reflected in the way they use language.

Moreover, corpus linguistics sees language as a social construct and emphasises the historical and cultural aspects of meaning production in discourse (Koteyko, 2006). From this perspective, the corpus-based (also mentioned as corpus-driven) approach to discourse is focused on how meanings come to be articulated at particular moments in history based on the findings in the examined corpus.

Even though discourse analysis is closely connected to corpus linguistics because of the analysed data, merging the two fields together is only a very recent tendency of research. Some scholars observe discourse studies as “not typically corpus-based analyses” (Biber, Conrad & Reppen, 1998, p. 106). However, existing studies such as corpus-based discourse analyses (Baker, 2006; Bhatia et al., 2008b; Partington et al., 2004), some recent sociolinguistic research, and Critical Discourse Analysis (Fairclough, 2000) have already highlighted the importance of involving both discourse and corpus analysis. Even Dörnyei (2008) emphasises the importance of *mixed methods*, applying quantitative and qualitative research together. This research agrees with the proposition of Dörnyei's mixed methods and follows the ideas of corpus-based and computer-mediated discourse analysis, since they work with a carefully selected online linguistic data.