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Critical Discourse Analaysis and Social Media: New Apporoaches in Critical Discourse Analysis Studies

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Abstract: This study seeks to examine different dimensions of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), which is frequently used in social sciences. The method of discourse analysis is discussed together with the different approaches that emerged in the process and the article underlines the points of divergence between the different approaches. While discourse analysis cannot be reduced to a single approach, it conducts its analyses on many common points. The main issue tackled in the article is how discourse analysis approaches and analyzes content produced within social media environments. Can CDA be used when examining social media? To what extent are content and discourse mediated through new communication channels affected by these technologies? The paradigmatic transformation of sociological context, which emerged with new internet technologies, is the main area of this study. Questions in this study are posted within this paradigmatic transformation and by giving reference to names that contributed to discourse analysis, this study adopts the view put forward by Majid Khosravinik that discourse analysis should be used within social media environments.

Keywords: Critical discourse analysis, social media, paradigmatic transformation, new approaches.

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Eleştirel Söylem Analizi ve Sosyal Medya: Eleştirel Söylem Analizi Çalışmalarında Yeni Yaklaşımlar

Öz: Bu çalışmada sosyal bilimlerde sıklıkla kullanılan bir yöntem olan Eleştirel Söylem Analizi (CDA) yaklaşımının farklı boyutları konu edinilmektedir. Söylem analizi metodu, süreç içerisinde ortaya çıkan farklı yaklaşımlarla birlikte ele alınmakta ve bu yaklaşımların birbirlerinden hangi noktalarda ayrıştıkları üzerinde durulmaktadır. Söylem analizinin tek bir yaklaşıma indirgenememesine rağmen birçok ortak nokta üzerinden analizlerini gerçekleştirdiği ortaya koyulmaktadır. Çalışmanın temel sorunsalı söylem analizi yaklaşımlarının sosyal medya ortamlarında üretilen içerikleri nasıl ve ne ölçüde analiz edebileceğidir. Sosyal medya incelemelerinde CDA yaklaşımı kullanılabilir mi? Yeni iletişim teknolojileri üzerinden dolayımlanan içerik ve söylem bu teknolojilerden ne ölçüde etkilenmektedir? Yeni internet teknolojileriyle birlikte ortaya çıkan sosyolojik bağlamın toplumsal alanda paradigmal bir dönüşümü beraberinde getirdiği çalışmanın ana argümanıdır. Bu tür bir paradigmal değişiminden hareketle soruların sorulduğu çalışmada, söylem analizi alanına katkı sunan isimlere değinilmekte ve sosyal medya ortamlarına söz konusu metodun uyarlanması gerektiğini ifade eden Majid Khosravinik'in ortaya koyduğu yaklaşımlardan yararlanılmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Eleştirel söylem analizi, sosyal medya, paradigmal dönüşüm, yeni yaklaşımlar.

Introduction

Since the 90s, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) has been one of the most popular methods and has been used in areas of ethnicity, gender, media discourses, and identity politics. Starting with symposium led by figures including Teun van Dijk, Norman Fairclough, Gunther Kress, Theo van Leeuwen, and Ruth Wodak, CDA has gained a different dimension with the different contributions made. Although the literature has been directed in different orientations due to the contributions made by leading figures in the field, it can be stated that CDA studies focus on specific dimensions.[1]

- Language is a social phenomenon
- Language is not only a social phenomenon. Institutions and social groups have specific values and these are systematically expressed through language.
- Discourse/language is not only a tool for presenting social practices, but also constitutes practices such as power, sovereignty, prejudice and resistance.
- Discourse gains meaning as a result of the dialectical relationship between texts and social issues.
- Language structures are not arbitrary. Any choices made in regards to language is not done randomly or without knowledge but rather carry a specific meaning.
- The production and reproduction of the relationship between authority and power are and made possible through discourse.
- Critical discourse analysis does not only comment on written text but also explains it.

CDA has a wide application in social sciences. It accepts language as a social practice and claims that discourse between society and institutions is shaped by the interaction of individuals and these groups. Claiming that terms such as power,

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[1] Norman Fairclough, *Critical Discourse Analysis: The Critical Study of Language*, Londra: Longman, 1995. Gunther Kress, *Critical Discourse Analysis*, Annual Review of Applied Linguistics, Volume: 11, (March 1990).

history, and ideology are all inescapable aspects of CDA, Norman Fairclough defends the idea that texts and discourse are shaped in a societal context.[2]

A common point between writers that adopt discourse analysis as a method is that they believe language is constructed in a certain time and context and is an important instrument used to maintain the continuation of power relations. This method opposes the claims that language has an independent structure and an objective reality as a means of communication, and argues that it is a phenomenon structured within social relations.

The Relationship between Critical Discourse Analysis and Information

When we look at the theoretical background and the sources used in critical discourse analysis, we can see which approaches come at the forefront and what kind of perspective is developed for knowledge. Information is considered as self-contained objective data that emerged after the cognitive process in a rationalist approach. Contrary to the rationalist approaches that treat knowledge as objective data that results of a cognitive process, post-structuralist theories focus on the relations of knowledge and power. When viewed from this perspective, it can be seen that the post-structuralist approach advocates a power relationship behind the information presented as objective by mainstream theories.[3] According to the Foucault camp's macro approaches, information is produced, circulated and used by a certain power for the consolidation of its own power and assumes that the relationship between knowledge and power can be examined through discourse.

In the words of Edward Said, yön Foucult has contributed

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[2] Ruth Wodak, "What CDA is about- a Summary of its History, Important Concepts and Its Developments", *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis*, Ruth Wodak ve Micheal Meyer (Ed.), London: Sage Publications, 2002, p. 1-3.

[3] Mustafa Yetim ve Ramazan Erdağ, "Uluslararası İlişkilerde Eleştirel Söylem Analizi: Revizyonist Söylemin Gelişimi", *İstanbul Gelişim Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi,* 5, 1(April 2018), p. 79-100.

in many ways to the study of discourse analysis, which is a mainstream planet in the work of knowledge. In the words of Edward Said, "The subject of information that is present from the beginning to the end of the works of Foucault"[4] contributed to the works of discourse analysis is many different ways. Within the contributions of Foucault to the field of discourse analysis, the question of 'Why did this expression evolve and not another one?' which he asks in his book 'The Archeology of Knowledge,' can be emphasized as one of the most important contributions.

In the chapter 'The formation of enunciative modalities,' Foucault believes that answers should be found as to how expressions evolved, who they are expressed by, what the social status of it is, and in which context they are used. He believes that discursive practices can be solved in this way.[5] Foucault does not believe that expressions evolve independent of everything else, and argues that expressions always have edges full with other expressions, which draws the lines of "expression field."[6] As a matter of fact, Foucault does not take apart discourse inherent in a particular text and only analyse in terms of grammar and structure, like structuralist language studies. Foucault considers the text as related to other texts and linked to power and power relations in a particular social context.[7] This approach, which differs from the structuralist language studies that emphasize the existence of an arbitrary relationship between language and reality, highlights the socio-political context of expressions. More, Foucault argues that every statement is formed in certain conditions and that the subjects are formed by the discourses that appear within this area of expression. In other words, the subject does not form the discourse

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[4] Edward Said, *Michel Foucault: 1926-1984*, trans. Özgür Emir, Doğu Batı, 1999, p. 188.
[5] Michel Foucault, *The Archeology of Knowledge,* Routledge, 2002, p. 38.
[6] Ali Balcı, "Michel Foucault'da Metod: Arkeoloji, Soybilim ve Etik", *International Journal of Political Studies,* Issue: 1, Volume: 1(2015), p. 27.
[7] Yetim ve Erdağ, p. 90.

itself, rather, it is formed by the discourse formed within the sphere of expression and it expresses itself by this discourse itself. What Foucault is ultimately trying to do is defined as to disclose the formal epistemic conditions that enable the emergence of discourses (knowledge fields, e.g. human sciences) in specific historical periods and specific discourses within them (theories), and conducting a study (archaeological method) for the analysis of power relations and political techniques in these relations.[8] Foucault emphasizes that similar forms of action and discourse in certain subjects are apriori and internalized, and that these formations should be analyzed by periodic investigations. Foucault, who seeks to understand why certain discursive practices prevail in certain periods, believes that this will be possible by examining the period in which the practices in question are most intense. The method of archeology, which functions as the date of the whole set of rules that compels a particular way of thinking, examines the situation where people are forced to act and speak out the rules produced in certain periods. At the same time, careful selection of statements in the field of expressions that does not consider each sentence as an expression, and investigations through facts and facts that can be directly observed, is also an element of deciphering discursive practices. In this context, it should be noted that discursive practices carried out through the primary sources and channels in which they are clearly observed in a given period will answer the question as to why some statements come to the forefront and the question of which social relation it is a product.[9]

From this perspective, critical discourse analysis aims to reveal the ideologies and discourses that construct existing power relations. As stated by Theo van Leeuwen, CDA can be accepted as both power and an instrument used in the construction of social reality.[10] Discourses that are thought to be a natu-

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[8] Ferda Keskin, "*Söylem, Arkeoloji ve İktidar*", Doğu Batı, 1999, p. 15-16.
[9] Balcı, p. 31.
[10] Wodak, p. 9.

ral component of social life, appear in parallel with one's social position and are represented in other areas with this discourse. As an important figure in the field, Norman Fairclough, stated, individuals construct a discourse according to their identity in society and act according to this. Discourses are accepted as reflections of relations that take place on the structural and actor level in social life and analyzes can be made on through this social structure.[11]

This thesis that claims that information produced is not free from the relations between society, politics, and power, also aims to reveal these relations and the fact that information is not something that occurs alone. CDA, which makes analyses based on the basic questions of how knowledge is formed, the effects of social relations on this matter and how discourse is structured, has a mission to demystify hidden relations within discourses established by ideological means.

Accepting studies of critical discourse analysis as a form of critical social analysis, in a study that can be accepted as a response to the criticisms made of the theoretical approach, Fairclough puts forward the benefits of the criticisms made in terms of academia and highlights the contributions made to social life by analyzing unequal power relations established through discourse. According to Fairclough, although these criticisms cannot change social reality that is already built, it can make a contribution to the realization of this reality, a debate about it and can contribute to any policies in this regard.[12] Theorists who say that a better understanding of the problems can be possible with better explanations, therefore, consider the need for a better understanding of the relationship between discourse and other components of social life and shape their perspectives in

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[11] Norman Fairclough, "Critical Discourse Analysis as a Method in Social Scientific Research*Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis*, ", Ruth Wodak ve Micheal Meyer (Ed.), Londra: Sage Publications, 2002, p. 124.

[12] Norman Fairclough, "CDA as Dialectial Reasoning", *The Routledge Handbook of Critical Discourse Studies*, John Flowerdew ve John E. Richardson (Ed.), Routledge Handbooks, 2018, p. 13.

this direction. Having reviewed his academic studies for thirty years, Fairclough stated that there were various differences in his perspective by making revisions in his theoretical approach during this period, and by accepting CDA as "dialectic reasoning," has claimed that it is possible to solve social reality through this way. Due to rapid social changes that allows for more change beyond the usual, the social reality that has emerged with this change is more complicated to solve. Therefore, rather than a meaningless effort to transform the whole of the social reality, Fairclough's stance that the idea that this reality is produced in a particular social context, and the proposal for the necessity of various negotiations on this issue provides a more realistic perspective.

Critical Discourse Analysis in Social Media Reviews

It can be observed that the use of CDA has a wide scope in social sciences. Discourse analysis methods used in various fields ranging from press releases to texts, statements and newspaper articles have been progressing and expanding in parallel with the developments in technology. The social networks that arise especially due to the developments in web technologies are directly influential in the construction processes of social reality and appear as the channels in which the discourse is built. These networks, which bring about a change in terms of their structural features, are critical tools in the planning and circulation of discourse. For this reason, CDA techniques have been applied on social media platforms and analyzes have been made in this regard. Based on these developments, it seems meaningful to ask the following questions: Can CDA approaches be used in social media reviews? How and why can CDA be used in social media reviews? To what extent are content and discourse mediated through new communication technologies affected by these technologies?

The fact that Majid Khosravinik stated that social media brought about a paradigm shift in communication and the fact that this area emphasized the necessity of reinterpreting the

CDA method according to its dynamics is very important for understanding these changing dynamics and gaining new approaches to the field. Khosravinik defines social media as a "communicative paradigm" and claims that it is by nature non-static, fluid, and changeable, which makes it differential from the traditional.[13] The fact that the one-sided traditional communoication network and the one-to-many text interfaces have been replaced by many-to-many convenient dynamic discourse is one of the changes brought about by social media.[14] Khosravinik, who voiced the claim that the communication of electronically mediated communication through online social networks is a paradigmatic innovation, relates this innovation to the changes that these networks bring about. With social media, collective production arised on the agenda, interpersonal communication was made possible in online areas, communication became spontaneous and the existence of innovations such as being able to reach and respond immediately to institutions and individuals are shown as the changes created by new social networks. According to Khosravinik, the essence of social media is that participation and interaction became possible with the content produced. The appearance of terms such as Web 2.0 (*user-generated content,* Tim O'Reilly), convergence culture (Henry Jenkins), participatory media, and peer production (Yochai Benkler), stand before us as arguments that defend the fact that with these elements, social networks have brought immense change.[15] These perspectives ultimately lead to the

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[13] Majid KhosraviNik, "Social Media Critical Discourse Studies (SM- CDS), *Handbook of Critical Discourse Analysis*, Ed. John Flowerdew ve John Richardson, London: Routledge, p. 582-596. For a case study that analyzes the discourse produced in social networks by this method see. Majid Khosravinik, "Social Media Discourse and Echo Chambers" , Insight Turkey, Vol. 19/ No. 3/ 2017,ps. 53-68.

[14] Majid Koshravinik ve Nadia Sarkhoh, "Arabism and Anti-Persian Sentiments on Participatory Web Platforms: A Social Media Critical Discourse Study", *International Journal of Communication*, Volume: 11, (2017), p. 36115.

[15] Philip Seargeant ve Caroline Tagg (Ed.), *The Language of Social Media: Identity and Community on the Internet*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2014, p. 3; Henry Jenkins, *Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide*, Newyork University, 2008.

idea that new communication technologies have influenced many aspects of social change and transformed the traditional in these relations.

Theoretical models are accepted as a requirement for better understanding and analysis of events. They point out that it is imperative to build a social media theory as a means of analyzing multidimensional relations and discourses that arise with new communication technologies and that studies should be conducted in this direction. In particular, the view that changing social structure and social structure necessitates this situation is expressed as the justification of this necessity. The advocates of the argument in question argue that social media has brought about a number of changes in cooperation, management, innovation and organization. In addition, the relationship between author-reader and text-ideology has evolved to a different point and new opportunities and threats have emerged for CDA.[16] From this perspective, it has become necessary to build a theory in order to analyze the change occurring with social media.[17] In addition to arguing that both qualitative and quantitative methods should be used, these studies argue that traditional methods used in social sciences can be adapted to social media. Therefore, by revising these traditional methods and by making various changes, they apply them to social media.

These new internet technologies, which are accepted as transforming the nature of the social realm, have been directly influential in reviewing discourse analysis studies. Thus, the fact that the social movements that emerged in Egypt in 2011 ended in a social revolt was described as an internet revolution (Wael Ghonim's, *revolution 2.0*) and it has been claimed that this

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[16] Gwen Bouvier ve David Machin, "Critical Discourse Analysis and the Challenges And Opportunities of Social Media" , *Review of Communication,* 2018, Vol. 18, No. 3, 178–192.

[17] Cathy Urquhart ve Emmanuelle Vaast, "Building Social Media Theory From Case Studies: A New Frontier for is Research", *Thirty International Conference on Information Systems*, Orlando, 2012, p. 2-4.

revolution brought about change. By testing of the impact of Internet technologies in social movements and especially in times of crisis, discourse studies have also shown themselves in this field and new perspectives have been developed. The communication of people by sending messages over computer networks, which is defined by Susan C. Herring as *Computer-Mediated Discourse*[18] and Jannis Androutsopoulos's *Discourse-Centred Online Ethnography* techniques have emerged as the most frequently used methods in this field. Methods such as *Virtual Ethnography*, *Network Ethnography*, and *Netnography* are also among the methods used in ethnographic studies concerning the internet. These trends are used as a framework for analyzing the discourses formed through new media and analyzes are made in this way. Ethnographic investigations, which begin their research with the question of what is observable through the screen, are accepted not only as a research tool that can be used in studies conducted over the internet, but also as a bridge that can be used to connect with other research methods.[19] Social media, which is thought to be a communication system in which new social relationship models are caused by power differences and some unacceptable social practices is defined as *emerging frontier* and in addition to this, it is believed that new borders are thought to bring a series of differences.[20]

On the basis of these differences, Connie S. Albert and A. F. Salam presented a detailed breakdown of the methods used in

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[18] Susan Herring ve Jannis Androutsopoulos, Computer-mediated discourse 2.0. In The handbook of discourse analysis, D. Tannen, H. E. Hamilton, & D. Schiffrin (Ed.), Second Edition, Chichester, UK: John Wiley & Sons. 2015, p. 127-151.

[19] For a model study on *computer-mediated communication* see. Jannis Androutsopoulos, "Computer-Mediated Communication and Linguistic Landscapes", *Research Methods in Sociolinguistic: A Practical Guide*, Janet Holmes ve Kirk Hazen **(**Ed.), Wiley-Blackwell, 2013, p. 74-90. For a comparative study conducted by the author on how ethnography, which is a method frequently used in social science, should be applied online see. Jannis Androutsopoulos, "Potentials and Limitations of Discourse-Centred Online Ethnography", Language@ internet, Volume: 5, No: 8, (2008), p. 1-12.

[20] Connie S. Albert ve A. F. Salam, "Critical Discourse Analysis: Toward Theories in Social Media", *Proceedings of the Nineteenth Americas Conference on Information Systems,* (August 15-17, 2013).

critical discourse analysis and demonstrated the extent to which these methods offer favorable perspectives for social networks. According to Albert and Salam, the approaches offered by CDA to build a social media theory are quite analytical. For this reason, according to these writers, CDA can be used as a framework to analyze online sexual prediation, cyber bullying, and social movements. In these three examples, power relations between social actors who are manifested by communication and language can clearly be recognized, the relationships of power that oppress normal people is made transparent through the discourse analysis method used and this analysis contributes to improving the lives of people exposed to unequal power relations.[21]

Authors that touch upon the importance of CDA methods for revealing and visualizing unequal power relations in social networks, and detail an analysis of the approaches that can be used for social media and show what kind of methods could be used in different events. Revising CDA approaches with reference to the work of Ruth Wodak and Micheal Meyer, Albert and Salam aim to decipher the discourse based on power and unequal power relations in social networks. Wodak and Meyer's studies of the general research strategy and the theoretical background of discourse analysis and the detailed analysis of this work is quite enlightening in this regard. The authors classified CDA studies under six headings and demonstrated the similarities and differences of these approaches. These approaches are identified as *Discourse-Historical* (Ruth Wodak and Martin Reisgil), *Corpus-Linguistic Approach* (Gerlinde Mautner), *Social Actors* (Theo van Leeuwen), *Dispositive Analysis* (Siegfried Jager and Florentine Maier), *Sociocognitive Approach* (Teun van Dijk) and the *Dialectial-Relational Approach* (Norman Fairclough). The authors argue that there is no dominant model or data collection strategy in CDA approaches and that these approaches differ from each other in some areas such as dis-

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[21] Albert ve Salam, agç.

course, actor, structure, cognitive processes, and the privilege they give to discursive and non-discursive indicators.[22]

Table1: Approaches of Critical Discourse

Dispositive Analysis (Siegfried Jäger & Florentine Maier) Theoretical position: the link between discourse and reality is the social acting subject Methodological objectives: discourse and dispositive analysis Data: Existing text
Sociocognitive Approach (Teun van Dijk) Theoretical position: the link between social systems and individual cognitive systems are socially shared perceptions Methodological objectives: development of context models/social representations of the communicative situation Data: Existing text
Discourse-Historical Approach (Ruth Wodak and Martin Reisigl) Theoretical position: connections between fields of action, genres, discourses and texts Methodological objectives: development of "conceptual tools relevant for specific social problems" (p. 26) Data: Existing text, fieldwork, ethnography
Corpus Linguistics Approach (Gerlinde Mautner) Theoretical position: linguistic extension of CDA Methodological objectives: improved analysis through additional linguistic devices Data: Large corpora of text
Social Actors Approach (Theo van Leuuwen) Theoretical position: individual actors constitute and reproduce social structure Methodological objectives: detailed linguistic operationalization at the actor level Data: Existing Text
Dialectical-Relational Approach (Norman Fairclough) Theoretical position: language is "shaped by the social functions it has come to serve" (p. 27) Methodological objectives: analyze dialectical relationships between functions of signs and other elements of social practices Data: Existing text

Source: Approaches of Critical Discourse Analysis (Wodak & Meyer, 2008)

Knowing the differences between the approaches used in critical discourse analysis will facilitate the analysis of social networks. For example, it is noteworthy that although the dispositif approach is affected by Foucault, social reality is pro-

[22] Ruth Wodak ve Michael Meyer, "Critical Discourse Analysis: History, Agenda, Theory, and Methodology", *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis*, Ruth Wodak ve Micheal Meyer (Ed.), Londra: Sage Publications, 2009, s. 1-33.

duced only through discourse practices and that Foucault's place in non-discursive practices is ignored by this approach. In contrast to the structuralist approach of Foucault, this perspective, which adopts Laclau's social construction approach, advocates that there is no social reality aside from the discourse. Discourse-historical method, which is influenced by critical theory, attempts to form a discourse theory by linking fields of action, genres, discourse, and text.[23] Within this approach, the text is perceived in historicity and the development of conceptual tools to help solve specific problems is provided.

Each social practice is considered to have an indicator, and these indicators represent a social order and ultimately constitute a system of discourse. The dialectic-relational model believes that all social practices have a semiotic and that these semiotics indicators represent a social order and ultimately constitute a system of discourse. This approach, which is represented by Norman Fairclough, is drawn between action and structure, focusing on the Marxist tradition of inspiration and focusing on social conflict, and exploring the discursive practices that this conflict creates through language.[24] Although all these different approaches make it impossible to reduce the CDA method to a certain integrity, it appears that the method has specific common emphasis and goals.

Conclusion

This study has discussed the critical discourse analysis approach and the contributions of different schools in this process. Although it is not possible to mention a common and single approach in CDA studies, it has been suggested that this approach has many common points and has similarities in terms

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[23] For a study which explains the effect of Frankfurt school on critical discourse analysis and especially on the discourse-historical approach through the concept of "emancipation" see. Bernhard Forchtner, "Critique, the discourse-historical approach, and the Frankfurt School", *Critical Discourse Studies*, 2011, 8:1, 1-14

[24] Ruth Wodak ve Michael Meyer, *Methods for Critical Discourse Analysis*, 2. Edition, SAGE, 2009, P. 26-27.

of objectives. Despite differences in pluralistic perspectives and evaluations on some specific parameters, CDA methods are after emancipatory objectives, and they try to reveal unequal relations established through discursive and non-discursive practices. One of the main arguments of this article is that it is a necessity to use CDA to analyze the content produced in new virtual networks and to reveal power relations and discourse patterns produced in these areas. Adorno and Horkheimer – two important names of critical theory – term this praxis situation as emancipatory interest and aim to establish a more just order by highlighting how the situation of welfare ultimately aims to decipher power relations that have been formed in time in the social structure. The main purpose of CDA approaches is to clearly demonstrate the implications of the obstacles to the establishment of this order on the discursive and non-discursive plane and to open the channels of negotiation for their elimination. This also includes showing how models constructed within this hierarchical power platform within the current order are constructed and clues as to how to re-organize the existing order.

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