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Linguistic Discourse Analysis

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Manuskriptfassung des Autors

Linguistic discourse analysis

Linguistic discourse analysis (LDA) refers to a resolutely language- and sign-based approach to discourse(s) which addresses linguistic questions and which draws on linguistic concepts and methods. On the one hand, LDA is critically motivated, such as critical discourse analysis that stands in the tradition of Critical Theory (Frankfurt School) and that examines discourses with a view to linguistic mechanisms of power as well as hegemonic strategies. On the other hand, LDA has a more descriptive analytical orientation, aiming at investigating linguistic and conceptual constructions of reality and aiming at determining semantic deep structures in discourse as well as patterns and knowledge relevant to understanding. For this purpose, semantic frames and grammatical constructions may be used as analytical categories.

Like other approaches to discourse – such as sociological or political discourse analyses – LDA can be put into perspective in a theoretical-epistemological, in a subject- or theme-related and in a methodical analytical sense. In LDA, there is neither a uniform definition of the notion of 'discourse', nor a generally binding theoretical framework. However, certain schools of thought have become established.

Besides the (former) Anglo-American understanding of discourse analysis as conversation analysis, approaches based on Foucault's originally non-linguistic conception of discourse as a net-like organization of utterances (*énoncés*) became established in continental Europe, where key concepts such as the *episteme* have been operationalized within the field of LDA. Linguistic approaches also focus on pragmatic or semiotic aspects of discourse.

Apart from (mass) media or thematic discourses, specialized discourses are also examined. Besides studies focusing on single or individual texts, the objects of analysis are generally larger text corpora, that consist, for instance, of press texts on a specific (e. g. political) topic, that cover a specific time period, and that have semantic and intertextual relationships with each other. Such 'virtual corpora' represent an excerpt of a certain discourse that can be analyzed at different levels. Corpus linguistic methods help to analyze large amounts of data, and to uncover 'patterns of language use' that function as indicators of socially-shared knowledge structures. Its proximity to cultural linguistics and its semantic orientation makes discourse linguistics relevant for cultural studies, social science and political science.

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