

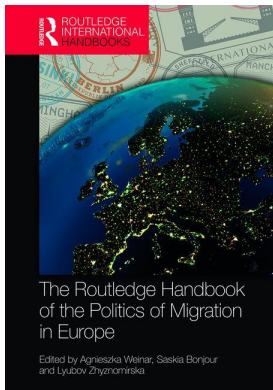
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ANALYSIS OF DISCOURSES AND RHETORIC IN EUROPEAN MIGRATION POLITICS

Susana Martínez Guillem and Ivana Cvetkovic

Introduction

Critical Discourse Studies (CDS) is a transdisciplinary family of theoretical and methodological approaches, focusing on the analysis and critique of discursive practices in relation to broader ideological processes, as well as the material conditions that shape and are shaped by them (see Wodak and Meyer, 2016; Flowerdew and Richardson, 2017). A CDS approach can be seen as an extension of the Critical Linguistics framework (Fowler *et al.*, 1979; Kress and Hodge, 1979) that developed in and out of Western European contexts. The main premise of the analyses developed from this perspective considers language not as a neutral descriptor of reality, but as an important instrument in the structuring of power relations in societies. Consequently, CDS strives to uncover how the legitimation of particular control mechanisms occurs, among others, through specific linguistic practices. In spite of its Western European core, and due to its decidedly problem-oriented nature, as well as the constant refinement and broadening of its analytical tools, CDS has progressively become appealing to the larger European continent, as well as to other Western and non-Western contexts such as the US, Australia, or China (Shi-Xu, 1999; Tracy *et al.*, 2011).

CDS scholars working in/on Europe were, from the very beginning, interested in exploring processes of exclusion and inclusion. As such, a CDS perspective is intrinsically related to migration politics. Two of the foundational works in this area, van Dijk's *Prejudice in discourse* (1984), and Wodak's edited volume on *Language, power and ideology* (1989), both address the relationship between discourse and ideologies informing racism, discrimination and othering in different contexts. The theoretical and analytical concepts developed in these studies thus constitute an influential basis for CDS research on migration politics.

In the last four decades, the CDS research agenda has expanded considerably to include different spheres and settings, but it has retained, at least in the European context, an interest in the interactional component of discursive practices, as demonstrated by the emphasis that many studies place on the local negotiations of meaning that constitute practices such as parliamentary debates, storytelling, or online discussions, among others. At the same time, a CDS perspective has continued its initial media focus on newspapers (Fairclough, 1995) and complemented it with analyses of different forms of (new) media discourses. As a whole, these studies show that CDS constitutes an important methodological contribution of European scholarship to global

migration studies – a perspective that offers a nuanced look at the dynamic ways in which broader politics of migration are legitimated, contested and/or negotiated via discourse.

This chapter will give an overview of the main contexts, concepts and methods employed by European CDS scholars working on migration politics. We divide the literature in three main strands, according to the sphere of society (institutional, media or everyday) that is highlighted. We also address developing areas and possible future research directions.

European migration and institutional discourses

CDS typically concentrate on the analysis of how social injustices are reproduced in society through power dynamics. Consequently, much of the body of CDS looks at institutions as the main sources of dissemination of particular ideologies through influential practices such as law-making (for a recent exception, see García Agustín, 2015). In the realm of European migration politics, this has been a particularly fruitful area of research, fuelled by constant developments and disputes, since most European countries have, in the last decades, introduced changes to their immigration policy, usually restricting it (Garner, 2007). This has also been the case at the European Union (EU) level, where ‘free’ internal movement advantages are increasingly based upon a fierce policing of the EU’s external borders (Martínez Guillem, 2015).

In this context, CDS research offers an in depth look at how particular understandings of migration and (im)migrants are discursively negotiated in the institutional realm, informed by and informing dominant ideologies of tolerance, belonging, or citizenship (Milani, 2015; Pulinx and Van Avermaet, 2015). Different studies, for example, show a consistent and historically increasing link between migration and security (Buonfino, 2004; Lamb, 2014) – a connection that paves the way for repressive policies. These restrictive moves are enforced both in core and peripheral EU states. The perception of newer EU member states, such as Slovenia and Slovakia, as ‘transit countries’ legitimizes repressive policies in this context, as those countries act as de facto EU and Schengen area guards (Žagar, 2009; Androvičová, 2013).

However, research also shows that, paradoxically, the will to protect a so-called ‘European identity’ through changes in immigration and citizenship laws has resulted in a retreat to nationalistic ideologies (Dell’Olio, 2005), since often times the idea of a homogeneous European identity and culture informs national policies that reinforce whiteness (Martínez Guillem, 2011). As Wodak and Boukala (2015) succinctly sum up,

debates about European identities – especially since the financial crisis of 2008 – have increasingly been accompanied by debates about both more traditional racialised cultural concerns and more recently, about economic security, leading to new distinctions between ‘Us’, the ‘real Europeans’, and ‘Them’, the ‘Others’.

(p. 87)

When examining the discourses surrounding migration politics in Europe, the concrete institutional practice of parliamentary debates has received extensive attention, yielding thought-provoking insights into the processes of immigration law development and negotiation, or in other words, how migration politics is ‘discursively done’ through interaction. As mentioned above, this interest in interaction clearly distinguishes discourse-based analyses from other traditions, such as rhetorical criticism, that tend to privilege a more formal study of speeches and public address in general, and have found a firmer ground in US academic settings. The study of parliamentary discourse is currently especially prominent in Southern European countries that experienced a rapid growth in their migration population in the last three decades, such as

Spain, Italy or Greece, and consequently a push for new legislation (Colombo, 2013). In the case of newer EU members' parliamentary debates, studies often focus on the relationship between discourses and migration policies influenced by the EU stance, on the one hand, and discourses at the national level in these specific historical, cultural and political contexts, on the other (Androvičová, 2013; Kralj, 2013).

Through historical, comparative or topic-oriented analyses, this line of work shows how the use of particular words, as well as different discursive-linguistic and argumentation strategies, establish explicit and implicit links between 'immigration', 'problem' and the need for 'control' that frame and limit the terms of parliamentary debates (Zapata-Barrero, 2007; Ferriz-Núñez and Ridao Rodrigo, 2008; Burroughs, 2015b). Notably, in the context of the current economic crisis, this kind of explicit anti-immigration discourse has ceased to be the exclusive domain of extreme, far right political activism (Karamanidou, 2016), thus becoming an important component of 'centre', and even 'leftist' arguments about immigration (Lario Bastida, 2008). Moreover, the combination of policy texts with other kinds of elite discourse producers, such as media texts or academic publications, offers wide-ranging insights on the normalization of an anti-immigrant stance across European countries, often masked under the apparently inclusive trope of 'integration' (Horner and Weber, 2011; Martínez Guillem, 2015; Wodak, 2017).

Another important area of discourse-analytical research at the European institutional level has to do with language-related policies. Even though, compared to other Western contexts such as the US or Australia, many European countries officially acknowledge the coexistence of different languages, in the context of global migration (especially from non-EU countries) research reveals the prevalence of a series of linguistic ideologies (Rosa and Burdick, 2017) that shape direct and indirect discriminatory practices. These ingrained ideas about language naturalize, for example, monolingualism, standard dialects or written languages as inherently superior. Such views, in turn, inform policies and practices with regards to education curricula, citizenship tests or asylum claims that systematically disadvantage those migrants whose linguistic repertoire is rendered 'inadequate' (Hansen-Thomas, 2007; Milani, 2009; Horner, 2015).

Methodologically, most of the studies on European migration and institutional discourses draw on Critical Discourse Analysis (Fairclough, 1995) or a specific approach within it, such as the Discourse-Historical Approach (Wodak and Reisigl, 2009) to offer a qualitative, critically-oriented interpretation and evaluation of their texts against broader socio-economic contexts. However, there have also been some recent and productive attempts to combine these kinds of analysis with quantitative tools, such as those offered by corpus linguistics, in order to offer more comprehensive assessments of historical developments in migration discourses and policies, as well as comparative analyses across different European nation states (MacDonald, Hunter and O'Regan, 2013; Engström and Paradis, 2015).

More recently, the incorporation of methodologies that allow for the interpretation and critique of visual dimensions of discourse, such as multimodal discourse analysis (Zhao *et al.*, 2017), has allowed for the exploration of different and important channels of (re)production of political discourse on (im)migration, such as campaign posters, or demonstration signage (Richardson, 2007; Richardson and Colombo, 2013).

European migration and media discourses

Discourse approaches to media and migration mirror the European colonial and postcolonial migration patterns and relations. The vastest body of scholarly research in this area addresses media discourses in the traditionally biggest colonial powers – the UK and France, followed by research in Italy and Spain—the Mediterranean countries who became new migrant destinations

in the last three decades. The current 'refugee crisis' has shed light on Greece as the first EU country that migrants and refugees reach on their way to economically more attractive Western European countries (Fotopoulos and Kaimaklioti, 2016).

Former communist Central, Eastern and Southeastern European countries also produce research from a discourse perspective, but focus more on intra-EU migration after the EU enlargement in 2004 and 2007 such as, for example, the study of mediated discourses on Polish and Romanian economic migrants to the UK (Galasinska, 2009; Light and Young, 2009). Other examples include Kralj (2013) and Žagar (2009), who employed Critical Discourse Analysis and Discourse Analysis respectively to discuss reproduction of xenophobia in media discourses about Bosnian refugees after the civil war in the former Yugoslavia, and migrants from Soviet Union, Asia and Africa who are mainly in transit through Slovenia, the former Yugoslavian republic that joined the EU in 2007. Overall, however, research on migration politics in Eastern European countries is less discourse-centred when compared to Western Europe, and predominantly adopts political, anthropological and historical perspectives.

Most media-oriented analyses that draw on discourse literature embrace a CDS framework as they build on van Dijk, Fairclough and Wodak's understanding of discourses as representing, legitimizing and reproducing dominant ideologies (Grzymała-Kazłowska, 2009; Žagar, 2009; Horner, 2011; Kilby, Horowitz and Hylton, 2013; Kralj, 2013). Similarly to the trends identified in the study of institutional discourses, qualitative methods are applied individually (Erjavec, 2009; Tipton, 2012; Montali *et al.*, 2013; Costelloe, 2014; Burroughs, 2015a; Persson, 2016) or in combination with quantitative ones such as corpus linguistics (Baker *et al.*, 2007) and, to much lesser extent, cognitive linguistics approaches (Pintero-Pinero and Moore, 2015), as well as multimodal methods that focus to both textual and visual elements of media texts (Martinez Lirola, 2014).

In general, this line of work addresses mediated knowledge produced through discursive practices of migrant representations and media frames and narratives (Binotto, 2015, Chouliaraki, 2017) deconstructing the most common media linguistic and lexical strategies (Montali *et al.*, 2013), rhetorical devices and strategies (Kilby, Horowitz and Hylton, 2013; Cărlan and Ciocca, 2014), and metaphors (Montali *et al.*, 2013) present both in media articles and elite commentaries available first and foremost in newspapers. These analyses focus on newspapers in the individual country, or provide cross-country analysis of national newspapers with the aim to reveal discourse nuances in different contextual settings. Cultural difference, othering, 'Us' versus 'Them' rhetoric, control of illegal immigration, citizenship, language differences and hence language and education policies, and integration into nation and a host-state are the most discussed concepts with regards to media articles. Very often, the analyses show how these concepts are intertwined and either support or contest each other within the same news article. Thus, the media often juxtapose othering discourses with multicultural discourses, thus providing apparent pluralism in values and behaviour.

Cultural difference is a concept promoted through overt racialized discourse that 'others' migrants based on their alleged incompatibility with the host country culture. Cultural difference discourse does not discuss race or biological features of migrants but instead racializes them as inherently different (Näre and Nordberg, 2016). Thus, racialized cultural difference establishes, maintains and reproduces racism both on the institutional level and in the relations among individuals. Related to this, an 'Us' versus 'Them' strategy positions migrants as out-group outsiders. This strategy is often employed as a part of nationalism discourses of exclusion that construct others as those who do not belong to a particular European nation, which is often equalized with the state (Kralj, 2013; Costelloe, 2014). Moreover, migrants are portrayed as passive and excluded from the positions of power (Martinez Lirola, 2014).

Another useful analytical concept is metaphor. Metaphors are deployed in media articles as tools of ideological values both by journalists and their sources with the aim to normalize migration policies and programmes from the point of view of the migrant-receiving country – such as, for example, metaphors of invasion emphasized with the use of numbers. Natural disaster metaphors such as ‘tide of migrants’ and ‘big waves’ also construct and maintain a xenophobic perspective that depicts migrants as problematic and violent. Moreover, the focus on news elements such as headlines and leads emphasizes arguments and lexical style that showcase that certain linguistic patterns present in numerous media articles construct immigrants as a threat, and deviant invaders prone to crime (Montali *et al.*, 2013).

Similarly to the discursive strategies used in Western media, Eastern European media, such as Polish and Slovenian major newspapers, also construct migrants, especially those of non-European origin, as new Others and a threat to the nation-state (Grzymała-Kazłowska, 2009; Žagar, 2009; Kralj, 2013). Discourses from the newer EU members construct migrants from the other European countries outside the EU as refugees. Thus, for example, Bosnians in Slovenia are perceived as economic migrants, whereas non-European migrants are perceived as exotic individuals. Kralj (2013) combined the analysis of media and parliamentary discourses to show how both media and official representatives in Slovenia co-constructed immigrants from non-EU countries as less desirable, and as a security, cultural and medical threat. Moreover, immigrant bodies are criminalized as they are constructed as abusers of asylum procedure that is in accordance with the EU standards. The ‘Us’ versus ‘Them’ gap and xenophobia are constructed and maintained through the device of naming migrants from non-European countries as immigrants or illegals, whereas refugees from Bosnia and immigrants from EU countries are not categorized in the same way.

Media research in European countries outside of the EU, especially the Balkan countries – not the most desirable final destinations for migrants – conceptualize migrants in a much broader way: as new, internal others who, based on religious affiliation and willingness to participate in a civil war, became citizens of a European nation-state (Erjavec, 2009). The dominant Western ‘war against terror’ discourse affected the change in media discourse in three neighbouring Balkan countries. Serbian and Croatian media intensified framing of foreign Muslim combatants who were granted Bosnian citizenship as legalization of militant Islam and terrorism, whereas Bosnian media abandoned the ‘Us’ discourse present before 9/11 and embraced the discourse of loyalty to the Western powers by differentiating Bosniaks and Arab Muslims in the stories about citizenship revocation and constructing Arab combatants as ‘global others’.

Media analysis on migration discursive practices has paved the path to more recent discussions on discourses on different media platforms, such as blogs, forums and other kinds of social media. Pettersson, Liebkind and Sakki (2016) for example, focus on how, through blogging, radical right politicians in Sweden justify their ethnic minority belonging in relation with their affiliation with an anti-immigrant political party, therefore participating in knowledge production about migrants, their bodies and politics that maintain and reproduce politics of exclusion. Similarly, Galasinska (2009) explored the ways mediated personal narratives on Internet forums reveal new discourses of individual success stories of how Polish migrant workers manage to migrate and perform jobs on the level of qualifications that have already had. These new discourses of the Polish migration post-enlargement are counter-narratives of historically hegemonic discourses of Polish economic migration in which Polish migrant workers accept only jobs below their qualifications. In addition to traditional media, emerging media platforms allow for new channels to foster everyday migration discourses formation and encourage appearance of different written mediated discourses that shape and are shaped by institutional discourses.

European migration and everyday discourses

A final defining characteristic of discourse-analytic research, and one that also sets it apart from other traditions such as traditional linguistics or rhetorical criticism, is the study of naturally-occurring conversation or everyday discourses (Tracy *et al.*, 2011). This is not an exception in the case of migration politics, where such approach has allowed for the study of the ways in which migration shapes and is shaped by ordinary practices such as service encounters (De Wilde, Van Praet and Rillof, 2016), city signage (Blommaert, 2012) or student-teacher interaction (Martín Rojo, 2010), among many others. As a whole, this strand of research sheds light onto how politics of migration is ordinarily done in everyday encounters, and it often offers an important addition to institutional and media-based studies through the incorporation of migrants' practices in their own terms. These studies often combine ethnographic methods (Rozakou, 2012) and interviews (Figgou *et al.*, 2011; Sapountzis *et al.*, 2013) with the tools of discourse analysis, and they also tend to incorporate theoretical and analytical concepts for the analysis of identity formation, such as those found in the area of discursive psychology (Billig, 1992; Potter, 2011).

One particularly useful framework for the study of these everyday dynamics has been provided by the notion of 'superdiversity'. The term was first introduced by Vertovec (2007) as a tool for social and anthropological analysis, and experienced a rapid development in discourse studies thanks to contributions coming from the realm of sociolinguistics, mostly through the work of Blommaert and associates (Arnaut *et al.*, 2016). In short, superdiversity tries to account for the specific conditions of contemporary (mostly Western) societies, characterized by increased and diversified mobility, cultural and linguistic diversity, and constant contact among diverse groups – a conjuncture that produces challenges as well as opportunities. Discourse-oriented research in this area emphasizes the development of 'urban vernaculars' as a compound of different linguist resources and repertoires, and it focuses mainly on youth language and identity, popular culture practices, teaching contexts and literacy practices (Arnaut and Spotti, 2014). Some of these studies also draw on ethnographic fieldwork to account for the mismatch between, for example, official language policies, on the one hand, and the daily needs and doings of both immigrants and public administrators (De Wilde, Van Praet and Rillof, 2016).

A related and similarly influential area of research draws on the notion of 'linguistic landscapes' to trace the influence of migration patterns, as well as dynamics of place and space, on the different languages and dialects that can be observed in signage throughout particular city areas, associated to specific places such as markets, or cultural practices such as social movements (Martín Rojo, 2014), as well as the overall relation between these linguistic landscapes and social change (Blommaert and Maly, 2014). Overall, these studies show that the presence and absence of different languages in public spaces is intrinsically related to broader social processes of inclusion, exclusion, marginalization or erasure of particular groups.

A final focus with regards to migration and everyday contexts has to do with identity management. These studies analyse discursive strategies by those who identify as native members of host societies (De Cillia, Reisigl and Wodak, 1999), those who identify as (im)migrants (Del Teso Craviotto, 2008; Varjonen, Arnold and Jasinskaja-Lahti, 2013), and also the interaction between established residents and those of immigrant origin (Marzorati, 2013). In general, findings show that sharp distinctions between 'Us' and 'Them' remain and contribute to reinforce national as well as (im)migrant group identification, although the social sanctioning of explicit prejudiced talk often shapes discussions away from what are perceived as delicate topics such as 'nation' or 'race' (Condon, 2000) and towards discussions of 'culture' and 'citizenship' that nonetheless still convey racialization practices (Blackledge, 2006; Gattino and Miglietta, 2013).

Conclusions

Overall, a CDS approach to European migration politics helps illuminate the complex, multi-directional and sometimes contradictory ways in which broader socio-economic and historical dynamics discursively interact with and (re)shape different contexts – those we called ‘institutional’, ‘mediated’ and ‘everyday’. As the body of research reviewed here shows, the particular conditions of the European continent, which include a tension between the so-called ‘national’ and ‘supranational’ levels, as well as between EU and non-EU members, limits the kinds of questions that can be asked, from a CDS perspective, about ‘European’ discursive practices. Rather, research often concentrates on specific cities, nation states or regions – such as, for example, Southern Europe – that may share particular trends shaped by similar socio-economic conjunctures.

As mentioned above, this focus has the advantage of shedding light onto the specifics of migration politics’ discursive doings, so that we can better understand how particular ‘issues’ become ‘issues’ in the first place, as well as the ways in which, through language, different social actors (re)produce hierarchies among groups. In this sense, discourse-oriented research is especially equipped to emphasize distinctions between different kinds of migrants and the conditions – national origin, race/ethnicity, gender, linguistic repertoire, socio-economic status – that are intrinsically related to discursive practices of othering as they construct specific groups as more or less welcome. Future research, we would argue, could benefit from more detailed qualifications of the term ‘(im)migrant’ that can better account for these different experiences.

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