

## Applying the Critical Discourse Analysis in Analyzing the Racist Ideology in Joseph Conrad's Literary Text 'Heart of Darkness'

تطبيق تحليل الخطاب النقدي في تحليل الفكر العنصري  
في نص 'جوزيف كونراد' الأدبي 'قلب الظلام'

<p>Oueld Ahmed Fatima -PhD student ولد أحمد فاطمة Fatima_ou@yahoo.com</p>	<p>Didactics of literary texts and civilisation</p>	<p>Laboratory of linguistic practices in Algeria/ Faculty : Letters and languages/University : MOULOUD MAMMERRI Tizi Ouzou / Algeria</p>
<p>DOI: 10.46315/1714-010-001-036</p>		

Received:13/06/2020 Accepted: 12/09/2020 Published : 16/01/2021

**Abstract (English):** This article is dedicated to the analysis of racist ideology in literary discourse. Taking clues from discourse historical approach that explained the required strategies in analyzing discourse, the present research examines the different ways in which stereotypes can be encoded in the language of literary texts as well as it investigates the linguistic manifestation of racist beliefs in the language of discourse. The study provides descriptive analysis of different lexical terms and linguistic structures in the literary text 'Heart of Darkness' by Joseph Conrad to offer insights into the way language affects thought

**Keywords:** The discourse historical approach, racist ideology, discursive strategies, Discourse, stereotypes.

ملخص:

هذه المقالة مخصصة لتحليل الأيديولوجية العنصرية في الخطاب الأدبي بأحد القرائن من النهج التاريخي للخطاب الذي شرح الاستراتيجيات المطلوبة في تحليل الخطاب، يبحث هذا البحث في الطرق المختلفة التي يمكن بها ترميز الصور النمطية في لغة النصوص الأدبية، وكذلك يبحث في المظهر اللغوي للمعتقدات العنصرية في لغة الخطاب، تقدم الدراسة تحليلاً وصفيًا للمصطلحات المعجمية المختلفة والهياكل اللغوية في النص الأدبي "قلب الظلام" لجوزيف كونراد لتقديم رؤى حول الطريقة التي تؤثر بها اللغة على الفكر. كلمات مفتاحية: المقاربة التاريخية للخطاب، الأيديولوجية العنصرية، الاستراتيجيات الخطابية، الخطاب، الصور النمطية.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Racism as a social phenomenon is a kind of social discrimination against social actors which results in excluding them from many social services. Racism is a three-step process that starts with generalizing differences to naturalizing cultural differences and ends with building a negative evaluation of the other. Racism manifests itself via different forms and various means. Discourse plays a crucial role in producing and creating racist ideology. Racist attitudes and beliefs can be promoted through the use of discourse as it is considered a space where racist beliefs manifested. Accordingly, racist discourse is targeted towards annihilating the image of the other that is achieved by emphasizing cultural differences of the out-group. To uncover how racist ideology is embedded in the language of discourse, researchers employ the discourse historical approach that forms a crucial part of critical discourse analysis. The discourse historical approach provides researchers with five discursive strategies that serve them in analyzing any discourse that propagates social discrimination.

## **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

This research aims at uncovering the different discursive strategies used in post-colonial narratives to represent social actors. It investigates the different ways through which these strategies are realized linguistically.

## **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

1. What are the strategies used to construct the negative other presentation in the literary product 'Heart of Darkness' by Joseph Conrad?
2. How are these strategies realized linguistically?

## **REVIEWING LITERATURE**

### **RACISM AND DISCOURSE**

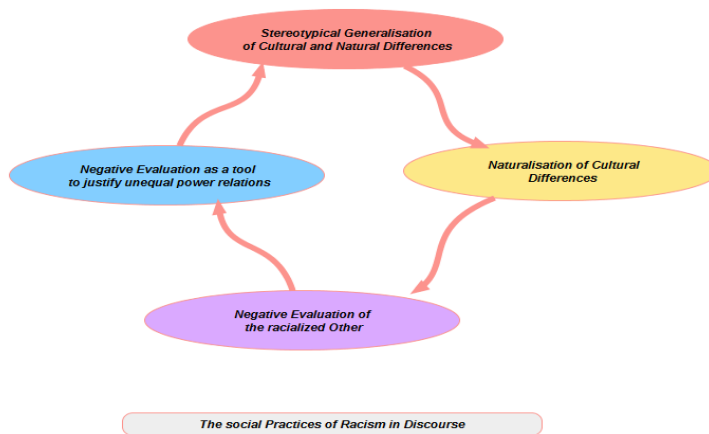
Discourse and racism are closely tied together. While racism is seen as a social phenomenon that manifests itself in different forms and via different means, Discourse is a space where racist beliefs are manifested and embedded. Reisigl and Wodak (2015) explain:

Discourse plays a crucial role in the creation and reproduction of racism. Racism, as both social practice and ideology, manifests itself discursively. On

the one hand, racist attitudes and beliefs are produced and promoted by means of discourse, and discriminatory practices are prepared, promulgated, and legitimated through discourse. On the other hand, discourse serves to criticize and argue against racist opinions and practices, that is, to pursue anti-racist strategies (p. 576)

Besides the fact that racism is a kind of social discrimination against social minorities, it involves many practices through which discourse plays an important role. The social practices are based on both the natural and cultural differences. Racism as a process begins with generalizing those kinds of differences to have what we call stereotypical generalizations. This is accompanied by the naturalization of cultural differences. The latter entails linking natural traits (real or imaginary) with cultural and social features. After naturalizing cultural differences, a negative evaluation of the other is built to be used as a tool to justify social exclusion of minorities and unequal power relations (Reisigl & Wodak, 2015, pp. 578-579). The following diagram illustrates the different processes of racism in discourse:

Figure1: The Social Practices of Racism in Discourse



### ***IDEOLOGY, RACISM AND DISCOURSE***

Ideology, as a term, is seen as a group of ideas, opinions, or beliefs that are socially shared by individuals. Ideology in CDA occupies a prominent interest among discourse analysts. Reisigl and Wodak(2001) defines ideology as « ... an important aspect of establishing and maintaining unequal power relations. CL takes a particular interest in the ways in which language mediates ideology in a

variety of social institutions» (p. 10 ). TEUN A. VAN DIJK (2007) attributes a cognitive aspect to the concept ideology. This appears clearly in the definition he provides for the concept .He defines ideology as a belief system gradually developed by individuals and become socially shared by community members (pp. 116-117).

To outline the ideology-discourse interface, VAN DIJK (2007) reports that « Ideologies are expressed and generally reproduced in the social practices of their members, and more particularly acquired, confirmed, changed and perpetuated through discourse » (p. 115).

That is to say, discourse is the space through which social individuals develop and change their ideologies. VAN DIJK (2007) adds that is through this 'belief systems' that people create barriers between the in-group and the out-group. Also, they tend to intensify the good features of the in-group members and mitigate those of the out-group individuals. Discourse analysis offers the required strategies to study the structures of ideological polarization used in text structures (p. 115)

### ***CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS***

Critical discourse analysis is a research tool used to examine how inequality, power, dominance and racist ideas are embedded in the language of discourse. TEUN A. VAN DIJK (2015) defines CDA as follows : « Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is discourse analytical research that primarily studies the way social-power abuse and inequality are enacted, reproduced, legitimated, and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context » (p. 466). According to VAN DIJK (2015), CDA « ... focuses on the ways discourse structures enact, confirm, legitimate, reproduce, or challenge relations of power abuse (dominance) in society» (p. 467).

In identifying the place of language in discourse, some define it as closely related to ideology through which some groups of people use it to exercise power over minorities. Ruth Wodak (2001) Explains:

CL and CDA may be defined as fundamentally concerned with analyzing opaque as well as transparent structural relationships of dominance, discrimination, power and control as manifested in language. In other words, CDA aims to investigate critically social inequality as it is expressed, signaled, constituted, legitimized and so on by language use (or in discourse). (p. 2)

Different approaches and methods can be identified within the scope of CDA. The discourse historical approach, for instance, has been used widely by researchers to investigate the phenomenon of racist discrimination against minorities. Racist discourses vary widely in their genres but they share the use of similar discursive strategies:

...anti-Semitic and racist discourses are both of a syncretic nature. Their discursive strategies – e.g., of dissimulation (the discursive construction of the ‘other’ through the strategy of dissimulation is the precondition for every prejudiced discourse), of negative presentation and of exclusion and their linguistic realizations can be very similar, but the topics of the stereotypes partially vary. (Reisigl & Wodak, 2001, pp. 43-44) (pp. 43-44)

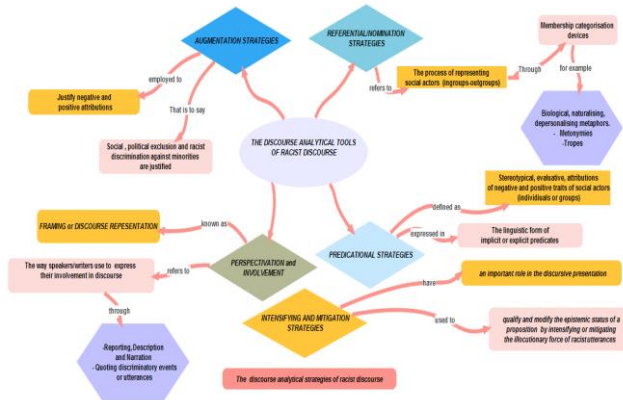
Similar to the views of Fairclough, Wodak (2001) considers discourse as a social practice. In Wodak’s approach, the concept ‘triangulation’ plays a key role in analyzing the relationship between discursive and social practices. Reisigl and Wodak (2001) Claim "In exploring the discursive construction of collective groups like ‘races’, nations and ethnicities, our interdisciplinary approach combines historical, sociopolitical and linguistic perspectives." (p. 40) Reisigl and Wodak (2001) sketch out many guidelines, about the discursive strategies, that will serve analysts in analyzing texts with racist beliefs:

- How are persons named and referred to linguistically?
- What traits, characteristics, qualities and features are attributed to them?
- By means of what arguments and argumentation schemes do specific persons or social groups try to justify and legitimate the exclusion, discrimination, suppression and exploitation of others?
- From what perspective or point of view are these naming, attributions and arguments expressed?
- Are the respective discriminating utterances articulated overtly, are they even intensified or are they mitigated? (p. xiii)

Reisigl and Wodak (2001) employed the use of the discourse historical approach in analyzing the racist discourse in different studies. They based their analysis on the use of many discursive strategies that are built around the aforementioned five questions. These strategies are targeted towards knowing the different ways of ‘positive self and negative other presentation’.

The strategies of self and other presentation suggested by Reisigl and Wodak 2001 can be summed up through this diagram:

Figure 2: The discursive strategies



**METHODOLOGICAL OUTLINE**

**METHODS**

The current study falls within the paradigm of qualitative inquiry that seeks the depth understanding of a specific phenomenon and the holistic picture of research, i.e. investigating a specific area of research in its natural setting. The qualitative research, in contrast to the quantitative one that is about the relationship between variables, refers to the process of collecting, analyzing and interpreting comprehensible narrative visual data in order to gain insights into a particular point of interest. Because the primary goal of the research is to analyze racist discourse, we opt for the content analysis or what is called document analysis. The latter refers to any study that is based on analyzing a document either it is written or visual.

As a document for analysis, we choose the literary text ‘Heart of Darkness’ by Joseph Conrad. This text fits our aims as it is a good example of racist discourse. Relying on the different tenets of critical discourse analysis, we will try to put into action the five discursive strategies to uncover the hidden meaning of words and sentences.

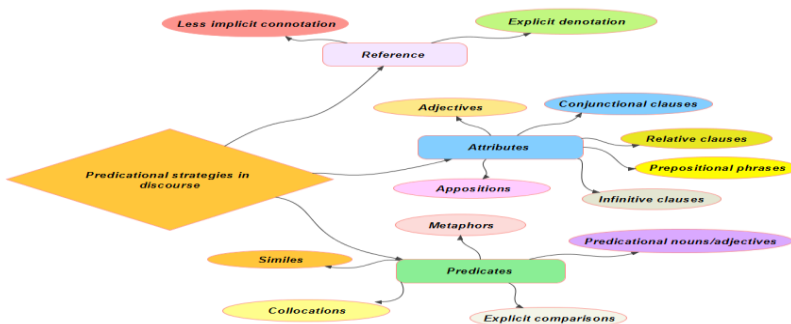
Before we put the DHA into practice, we must sketch out the five discursive strategies proposed by Wodak (referential, predication, argumentation, intensification/ mitigation, perspectivation/ involvement)

1- **Referential strategies:** refer to the process of representing, constructing or naming social actors either positively or negatively. This can be achieved by using categorization devices, tropes or metaphors. Reisigl and Wodak (2001) outlined different discourse structures that are common in referential strategy. Below we shed the light on some of those structures that would serve us in our case study :

- '**Racionyms**': is based on the use of colour metaphors related to body parts ( Blacks, Negros, Dark skins, etc)
- **Xenonyms (EXPLICIT DISSIMILATION)** refers to the process of discrimination social actors by putting them in a category that is different from in-groups (foreigners, aliens)
- **Anthroponyms** : used to denote mental deficiency ( stupid, idiot)
- **Ethnonyms** (ethnification) used to discriminate social actors based on their ethnicity ( American, eastern European, etc)
- **Synecdochising** : refers to primitivity or lack of civilisation ( **barefooted, unskilled, bush negroes**)
- **Specific negative],qualionyms, negationyms ( illegals, unemployed, unskilled)**
- **Deictic: we, us, they, them.**
- **Origionyms** : natives, ancestors

2. **Predicational Strategies:** These strategies are defined as « ...stereotypical, evaluative attributions of negative and positive traits in the linguistic form of implicit or explicit predicates. » (Reisigl & Wodak, 2001, p. 45). They are used to represent social actor either negatively or positively based on moral or physical traits. Predications in discourse can be realized differently:

Figure3: Predicational strategies



3. **Argumentation:** This discursive strategy is used to justify the negative other description of social actors. It is realized through the use of different discourse structures. Fallacy, for

example, is employed to justify discrimination against social actors by «... appealing to physical or other forms of force, violence and fear instead of using plausible and relevant arguments.» (Reisigl & Wodak, 2001, p. 72)

4. **PERSPECTIVATION** : This strategy refers to the process that is used by speakers to «...express their involvement in discourse and position their point of view in the discursive flux: for example, in the reporting, description, narration and quotation of discriminatory events or utterances and, not least, in the discursive practice of discrimination itself.» (Reisigl & Wodak, 2001, p. 81)
5. **MITIGATION / INTENSIFICATION** they «...are applied to qualify and modify the epistemic status of a proposition, the degree of certainty, and to modify the speakers' or writers' expressiveness as well as the persuasive impact on the hearers and readers. They either intensify or mitigate the illocutionary force of racist, anti-Semitic, nationalist or ethicist utterances.» (Reisigl & Wodak, 2001, p. 81)

### **ANALYSIS**

The study follows a three-dimensional process. The foremost step is to select a specific discourse with racist content. Second, we apply the different discursive strategies to the analysis of racist and discriminatory ideas in the document. Third, we accomplish the process of analysis with identifying linguistic manifestations of the discriminatory stereotypes.

The qualitative inquiry is used to analyze the different ways through which discursive strategies of negative-other representation are realized linguistically. Investigating how racist ideologies are embedded in linguistic terms is significant as it explains how language is used to control readers' minds. Discourse can influence mental models of readers sharply. It is seen a peaceful means of practicing dominance. In other words, it is 'passive aggressive method' of maintaining dominance. Accordingly, the analysis will reveal how linguistic terms can be used to maintain dominance over readers' attitudes and opinions.



Table1: Examples of the discursive strategies from the literary text 'Heart of Darkness' by J. Conrad

<i>Questions</i>	<i>Discursive Strategies</i>	<i>Purpose</i>
<p>1. How persons, objects, phenomena, events, processes and actions are related to racism and stereotypes named and referred to linguistically.</p> <p>2. What characteristics, attributes, qualities, and features are attributed to social</p>	<p><i>Nomination Strategies</i></p> <p><i>Predicational strategies</i></p>	<p><i>Discursive construction of social actors</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Proper names : Marlow, Mr.Kurtz</i></li> <li>- <i>Deictics : we, they</i></li> <li>- <i>Racionyms : black fellows, dark things, black shadows of disease and starvation, black shapes, middle-aged negro, sulky niggers. paddling savages</i></li> <li>- <i>Specific bodymeronyms :</i> « all their meagre breasts panted together » « the violently dilated nostrils quivered »</li> <li>- <i>Anthroponyms :Fool , stupid scoundre</i></li> <li>- <i>Ethnonyms : European clothes</i></li> <li>- <i>Synecdochising : foolish faces, cannibals</i></li> <li>- <i>specific negative],qualionyms : criminals, the outraged law, enemies</i></li> <li>- <i>Anthroponyms : inhabitant</i></li> <li>- <i>Origonyms : natives, enemies.</i></li> </ul> <p><i>-Reference :</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <i>Explicit denotation : The fool nigger</i></li> <li>● <i>Less implicit connotation : a place of darkness</i> <i>The door of darkness, heart of darkness, the centre of the world</i></li> </ul> <p><i>-Predicates :</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <i>Similes</i> « here and there a military camp lost in wilderness like a needle in a bundle of hay » « And the river was there- fascinating – deadly- like a snake »</li> </ul>

<p>actors, objects, phenomena/events and processes?</p> <p>What arguments are used to justify the social exclusion of social actors?</p> <p>Is there intensification of</p>	<p><i>Argumentation</i></p>	<p>« a lot of people, mostly black and naked ,moved about like ants »</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Metaphors :</b></li> </ul> <p>« ...the utter savagery had closed round him »</p> <p>« I thought of these two guarding the door of darkness »</p> <p><b>-Attributes :</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Adjectives : savages, civilized man, a white haired secretarial head, frowning, grand, insipid, mute, unhappy savages, the silent wilderness, prehistoric man</b></li> <li>• <b>Prepositional clauses</b></li> </ul> <p>« ...streams of human beings- of naked human beings- with spears in their hands, with bows, with shields, with wild glances and savage movements, were poured into the clearing by the dark faced and pensive forest. »</p> <p>« ...I have got a heavenly mission to civilize you »</p> <p><b>Fallacy:</b> « ...the other day i took up a man who hanged himself on the road. He was a Swede, too.” “hanged himself! Why, in God’s name’ I cried. He kept on looking out watchfully. “Who knows? The sun too much for him, or the country perhaps. »</p> <p><b>Verbs of saying, feelings, thinking :</b></p> <p>« When one has got to make correct entries, one comes to hate those savages- hate them to the death »</p> <p><b>Direct speech:</b> « Well, I must defer to your judgment. you are captain, » he said, with marked civility</p> <p>« he began with the argument that we whites, from the point</p>
---	-----------------------------	--

<p>discriminatory utterances?</p> <p>From which point of view attributions and arguments are expressed?</p>	<p><i>intensification</i></p> <p><i>Involvement</i></p>	<p><i>of development we had arrived at , « must Necessarily appear to them (savages) in the nature of supernatural beings- we approach them with the might as of deity, » and so on, and so on. « By the simple power of our will, we can exert a power for good practically unbounded, »etc.etc.</i></p> <p><i>'Deictic: « his aspect reminded me of something I had seen- something funny I had seen somewhere. As I manoeuvred to get alongside, I was asking myself, « what does this fellow look like? »Suddenly I got it. He looked like a harlequin »</i></p>
---	---	--

In analyzing the literary product 'Heart of Darkness', we can spot the light on the racist attitude of the author, that can be illustrated through the linguistic realization of discriminatory stereotypes. Racist attitudes and opinions are grouped under the five discursive strategies that are overlapped from incident to another in the text.

The text is dominated by the use of '*Linguistic exclusion*' and '*linguistic inclusion*'. These strategies are realized linguistically in the text. The author sounds inclusive when he refers to the British participating figures. On one hand, he uses proper nouns to refer to British social actors (Charlie Marlow, Mr. .Kurtz). On the other hand, African characters in the novella 'Heart of Darkness' are referred to using either deictic 'they, he' or Racionyms like '*dark things*', '*black fellows*'. This is a kind of linguistic exclusion of the out-group category from linguistic representation. They are no represented through nomination. They are absent in the text as they are only represented through adjectives like '*savages*' or '*cannibals*'. This type of linguistic exclusion functions sharply in intensifying the racist attitudes towards the African character in the text.

Social actors in the text are identified using references as 'savages', 'mute', 'prehistoric', 'uncivilized', 'primitive', 'criminals', all of which work to discriminate the social actors marking out the 'us versus them' dichotomy. The author relies also on 'synecdochisation' as a strategy of referential identification. He usually uses traits or features to refer to out-group members negatively. This appears clearly through the linguistic manifestation in the text: '**Long black legs**', '**long black arms**', '**horned heads**'.

Through the use of the deictic 'I' and 'we', the writer intensifies the cultural differences between the colonizer and the colonized. Referring to the in-group category employing 'I' entails the reference to superiority, civilization, and development of the in group community. In contrast, by using the deictic 'they', they exclude the African people who have been dehumanized through the use of some linguistic terms as 'dark things' or 'dark shadows'

Another salient aspect in the text is the setting where the events took place 'The Congo River'. It has been described through the use of many references: 'the door of darkness', 'the heart of darkness', 'the center of the world', 'a place of darkness' ...all of which connotatively refers to the primitivity of its people. This description works also to justify the colonizer's presence in Africa as it is illustrated in the text '*...I have got a heavenly mission to civilize you*'.

In the text, the writer tries to divide the world into black and white, civilized and primitive, superior and inferior. This is achieved through the use of many predicational strategies: similes, metaphors, prepositional clauses and adjectives. This is used as an argument to justify the discrimination against and the exclusion of social actors. Using the following prepositional clause: « *...streams of human beings- of naked human beings- with spears in their hands, with bows, with shields, with wild glances and savage movements, were poured into the clearing by the dark faced and pensive forest* » , the author describes the African character derogatively to build up his argumentation.

The involvement of the writer in representing the African character negatively can be detected widely in the novella. The analysis of the text reveals the chauvinistic attitude of the author that is displayed through the use of many quotes which tend to negativise social actors in the mental models of readers:

He began with the argument that we whites, from the point of development we had arrived at, « must necessarily appear to them (savages) in the nature

of supernatural beings- we approach them with the might as of deity, » and so on, and so on. « By the simple power of our will, we can exert a power for good practically unbounded, »etc.etc.

The involvement of the speaker appears clearly in the quote as he speaks from a British colonizer's point of view justifying the British presence in Africa. In using the deictic 'We', the author seems inclusive in trying to represent the view of his community. This is displayed more in the exclusion strategy through which he refers to the African character derogatively 'to them (savages). Using these deictics, the author creates a binary opposition between the in-group and the out-group communities.

The involvement of the writer appears also through the use of the direct and the indirect speech, as well as the use of quotation as it is exemplified in the table. The text is rich with the use of a constructed dialogue between characters. This is a way through which we can detect the author's attitude and voice:

...indirect speech is, for the most part, an indicator of distance. In comparison, direct speech and free indirect speech often express the speakers' and evoke the hearers' involvement. Involvement and detachment are highly dependent on the discourse genre and the field of social action with which the genre is associated. Narratives and conversations in particular can have a high degree of involvement. (Reisigl & Wodak, 2001, p. 83)

The attributes used by Conrad to denote the African character (black, unhappy savages, primitive man, prehistoric man) have an intensifying function. The racist intensification also is expressed through verbs of feeling and thinking. This can be displayed using Conrad's words: « When one has got to make correct entries, one comes to hate those savages- hate them to the death » This quote is a good example to illustrate the racist attitude of the writer against Africans. Such quotes not only show the racist discrimination of the British but also create cultural barriers between the two groups.

Accordingly, the negative other representation is employed by the writer to negativise the out-group community's members through the use of discursive strategies. The writer relies on the power of language to propagate the racist ideology resulting in discriminatory stereotypes about the out-groups. We can say that the literary text 'Heart of Darkness' is a kind of racist discourse that aims at

influencing the mental models of readers. Applying the discursive strategies of discourse to analyze the text, we provide some hints of how racist ideology is hidden in linguistic terms. More importantly, racist ideology that is embedded in linguistic terms is used with a view to influence the mental models of readers to accept the image of social actors.

### Bibliography

- Reisigl, M., & Wodak, R. (2001). *Discourse and discrimination: Rhetorics of racism and antisemitism*. London and Newyork: Routledge.
- Reisigl, M., & Wodak, R. (2015). Discourse and racism. In D. Tannen, H. Hamilton, & D. Schiffrin, *The Handbook of discourse analysis* (Vol. 2, p. 576). Oxford: Wiley Blackwell.
- van Dijk, T. (2000). Ideologies, Racism, Discourse. Debates on Immigration and Ethnic Issues. Dans J. Ter Wal, & M. Verkuyten, *Comparative perspectives on racism*. Aldershot etc: Ashgate.
- Van Dijk, T. (2007). Ideology and Discourse Analysis. *Journal of political ideologies*, 11(2).
- Van Dijk, T. (2013). Ideology and Discourse. In M. Freeden, L. Tower Sargent, & M. Stears , *The Oxford Handbook of Political Ideologies*. Oxford: Oxford university press.
- Van Dijk, T. (2015). Critical Discourse Analysis. In D. Tannen, H. Hamilton, & D. Schiffrin, *The Handbook of Critical Discourse Analysis*. Oxford: Blackwell publishers.
- Wodak, R. (2001). What CDA is about: a summary of its history, important concepts and its developments. In R. Wodak, & M. Meyer, *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis*. London: Sage Publication.