The Discourse-Historical Approach
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Defining the Approach

Theoretical Background

Struggles and contradictions characterize our modern world and Western societies. Nowhere is homogeneity to be found. On the contrary, ideological dilemmas (Billig, 1991), fragmentation (Hall, 1996) and multiple identities seem to be the answers to the challenges of globalization and neo-liberalist economies and ideologies (Muntigl et al., 2000). These tendencies are accompanied by a rise in nationalism and xenophobia, particularly from right-wing populist movements. Complex phenomena are seen as needing easy answers.

The complexities of modern societies in our fast changing world, where space and time seem to collapse (Harvey, 1996), can only be grasped by a model of multicausal, mutual influences between different groups of persons within a specific society and relationships between different societies. The great challenge, nowadays, is to explain the contradictions and tensions which occur between nation states and supranational entities on many levels (economies, science, technologies, communication, and so on). Causal models do not it this complexity. I prefer to speak about a ‘symptomatology’, about relating and explaining the relationships between various ‘symptoms’ which we can study, in a more hermeneutic and interpretative way (see Wodak, 2000a). Moreover, I endorse a more pragmatically oriented theoretical approach, like the one developed by Nikos Mouzelis (1995). In his recent book Sociological Theory: What Went Wrong? (1995), Mouzelis introduces the idea of ‘conceptual pragmatism’ as a possible way out of the theory crisis in the social sciences. According to Mouzelis, social theory ‘has as its major task to clarify conceptual tools and to construct new ones by following criteria of utility rather than truth’ (1995: 9). Such a pragmatic approach to theory would not seek to provide a catalogue of context-less propositions and generalizations, but rather to relate questions of theory formation and conceptualization closely to the specific problems that are to be investigated. In this sense, the first question we have to address as researchers is not, ‘Do we need a grand theory?’ but rather, ‘What conceptual tools are relevant for this or that problem and for this and that context?’ Although the former question might invite exciting speculations, it moves away from problem oriented science.

Let us turn to the field of politics (in the narrow sense). If we take politicians, for example, as specific and
not at all homogeneous groups of elites, then they are best seen both as shapers of specific public opinions and interests and as seismographs, that reflect and react to the atmospheric anticipation of changes in public opinion and to the articulation of changing interests of specific social groups and affected parties. The relationships between media, politics (all genres) and ‘people’ are very complex. Up to now, we have not been able to provide clear answers about who influences who and how these influences are directed. Only interdisciplinary research will be able to make such complex relationships more transparent. Simple conspiracy theories do not seem valid in our global societies. In research of this kind, discourse analysis, and specifically critical discourse analysis (CDA), is only one component of the multiple approaches needed. Not only discursive practices are to be focused on, but also a wide range of material and semiotic practices. Thus, research in CDA must be multitheoretical and multimethodical, critical and self-reflective.

The discourse-historical approach, committed to CDA, adheres to the socio-philosophical orientation of critical theory. As such, it follows a complex concept of social critique which embraces at least three interconnected aspects, two of which are primarily related to the dimension of cognition and one to the dimension of action (see Reisigl and Wodak, 2001 for an extended discussion):

1. ‘Text or discourse immanent critique’ aims at discovering inconsistencies, (self-)contradictions, paradoxes and dilemmas in the text-internal or discourse-internal structures.
2. In contrast to the ‘immanent critique’, the ‘socio-diagnostic critique’ is concerned with the demystifying exposure of the – manifest or latent – possibly persuasive or ‘manipulative’ character of discursive practices. With socio-diagnostic critique, the analyst exceeds the purely textual or discourse internal sphere. She or he makes use of her or his background and contextual knowledge and embeds the communicative or interactional structures of a discursive event in a wider frame of social and political relations, processes and circumstances. At this point, we are obliged to apply social theories to interpret the discursive events (see below, theory of context).
3. Prognostic critique contributes to the transformation and improvement of communication (for example, within public institutions by elaborating proposals and guidelines for reducing language barriers in hospitals, schools, courtrooms, public offices, and media reporting institutions (see Wodak, 1996a) as well as guidelines for avoiding sexist language use (Kargl et al., 1997)).

To summarize, and in contrast to some views on CDA, CDA is not concerned with evaluating what is ‘right’ or ‘wrong’. CDA – in my view – should try to make choices at each point in the research itself, and should make these choices transparent. It should also justify theoretically why certain interpretations of discursive events seem more valid than others.

One methodical way for critical discourse analysts to minimize the risk of being biased is to follow the principle of triangulation. Thus, one of the most salient distinguishing features of the discourse-historical approach is its endeavour to work with different approaches, multimethodically and on the basis of a variety of empirical data as well as background information (see for example Wodak et al., 1998 and Wodak et al., 1999).

In investigating historical, organizational and political topics and texts, the discourse-historical approach attempts to integrate a large quantity of available knowledge about the historical sources and the background of the social and political fields in which discursive ‘events’ are embedded. Further, it analyses the historical dimension of discursive actions by exploring the ways in which particular genres of discourse are subject to diachronic change (Wodak et al., 1990; Wodak et al., 1994). Lastly, and most importantly, this is not only viewed as ‘information’: at this point we integrate social theories to be able to explain the so-called context.
The Notion of ‘Discourse’

In accordance with other approaches devoted to CDA, as has already been implied, the discourse-historical approach perceives both written and spoken language as a form of social practice (Fairclough and Wodak, 1997). A discourse is a way of signifying a particular domain of social practice from a particular perspective (Fairclough, 1995: 14). We assume a dialectical relationship between particular discursive practices and the specific fields of action (including situations, institutional frames and social structures), in which they are embedded. On the one hand, the situational, institutional and social settings shape and affect discourses, and on the other, discourses influence discursive as well as non-discursive social and political processes and actions. In other words, discourses as linguistic social practices can be seen as constituting non-discursive and discursive social practices and, at the same time, as being constituted by them.

In the following, I would like to make a distinction between ‘discourse’ and ‘text’, also following Lemke’s interesting approach (Lemke, 1995).

‘Discourse’ can thus be understood as a complex bundle of simultaneous and sequential interrelated linguistic acts, which manifest themselves within and across the social fields of action as thematically interrelated semiotic, oral or written tokens, very often as ‘texts’, that belong to specific semiotic types, that is genres (see Girnth, 1996). The most salient feature of the definition of a ‘discourse’ is the macro-topic, like ‘unemployment’. Interdiscursivity can be seen when, for example, a racist argument (taken from the discourse on immigration restrictions) is used while arguing for other policies to combat unemployment. Each macro-topic allows for many sub-topics: ‘unemployment’ thus covers sub-topics like ‘market’, ‘trade unions’, ‘social welfare’, ‘global market’, ‘hire and fire policies’ and many more. Discourses are open and hybrid and not closed systems at all; new sub-topics can be created, and intertextuality and interdiscursivity allow for new fields of action. Discourses are realized in both genres and texts.

‘Texts’ can be conceived as materially durable products of linguistic actions (see Ehlich, 1983; Graefen, 1997: 26; Reisigl, 2000). A ‘genre’ may be characterized, following Norman Fairclough, as the conventionalized, more or less schematically fixed use of language associated with a particular activity, as ‘a socially ratified way of using language in connection with a particular type of social activity’ (Fairclough, 1995: 14). Thus, a proposal on combating unemployment manifests certain rules and expectations according to social conventions. The proposal itself follows certain textual devices; the contents follow certain ideological concepts put forward by a specific political group (like the trade unions).

‘Fields of action’ (Girnth, 1996) may be understood as segments of the respective societal ‘reality’, which contribute to constituting and shaping the ‘frame’ of discourse. The spatio-metaphorical distinction among different fields of action can be understood as a distinction among different functions or socially institutionalized aims of discursive practices. Thus, for example, in the area of political action we distinguish between the functions of legislation, self-presentation, the manufacturing of public opinion, developing party-internal consent, advertising and vote-getting, governing as well as executing, and controlling as well as expressing (oppositional) dissent (see Figure 4.1 below). A ‘discourse’ about a specific topic can find its starting point within one field of action and proceed through another one. Discourses and discourse topics ‘spread’ to different fields and discourses. They cross between fields, overlap, refer to each other or are in some other way socio-functionally linked with each other.

FIGURE 4.1 Selected dimensions of discourse as social practice
We can represent the relationship between fields of action, genres and discourse topics with the example of the area of political action in Figure 4.1 below.

Figure 4.2 further illustrates the interdiscursive and intertextual relationships between discourses, discourse topics, genres (as types) and texts (as tokens).

**FIGURE 4.2 Interdiscursive and intertextual relationships between discourses, discourse topics, genres and texts**
In this diagram, interdiscursivity (for example, the intersection of discourse A and discourse B) is indicated by the two big overlapping ellipses. Intertextual relationships in general are represented by dotted double arrows. The assignment of texts to genres is signalled by simple arrows. The topics to which a text refers are indicated by small ellipses to which simple dotted arrows point, the topical intersection of different texts is signalled by the overlapping small ellipses. Finally, the specific intertextual relationship of thematic reference of one text to another is indicated by simple broken arrows (see application in the methodology below).

Our triangulatory approach is based on a concept of ‘context’ which takes into account four levels. The first one is descriptive, while the other three levels are part of our theories on context (see Figure 4.3):

**FIGURE 4.3 Levels of theories and linguistic analysis**
The immediate, language or text internal co-text;
the intertextual and interdiscursive relationship between utterances, texts, genres and discourses;
the extralinguistic social/sociological variables and institutional frames of a specific ‘context of situation’ (middle range theories);
the broader sociopolitical and historical contexts, which the discursive practices are embedded in and related to (‘grand’ theories).

In our example (see the case-study in this chapter), I will illustrate each level of context and make the sequential analysis transparent, following the categories of analysis which will be defined below.

The History of the Discourse-Historical Approach

The Research Programme

In this chapter, I would like to focus on the study of discourses of discrimination. However, I would first like to stress the most important characteristics of our discourse-historical CDA approach:

1. The approach is interdisciplinary.
2. Interdisciplinarity is located on several levels: in theory, in the work itself, in teams, and in practice.
3. The approach is problem oriented, not focused on specific linguistic items.
4 The theory as well as the methodology is eclectic; that is theories and methods are integrated which are helpful in understanding and explaining the object under investigation.

5 The study always incorporates fieldwork and ethnography to explore the object under investigation (study from the inside) as a precondition for any further analysis and theorizing.

6 The approach is abductive: a constant movement back and forth between theory and empirical data is necessary.

7 Multiple genres and multiple public spaces are studied, and intertextual and interdiscursive relationships are investigated. Recontextualization is the most important process in connecting these genres as well as topics and arguments (topoi).

8 The historical context is always analysed and integrated into the interpretation of discourses and texts.

9 The categories and tools for the analysis are defined according to all these steps and procedures as well as to the specific problem under investigation.

10 Grand theories serve as a foundation (see above). In the specific analysis, middle range theories serve the analytical aims better.

11 Practice is the target. The results should be made available to experts in different fields and, as a second step, be applied with the goal of changing certain discursive and social practices.

Political and Discriminatory Discourses

The study for which the discourse-historical approach was actually developed, sought initially to trace in detail the constitution of an anti-Semitic stereotyped image, or ‘Feindbild’, as it emerged in public discourse in the 1986 Austrian presidential campaign of Kurt Waldheim (Wodak et al., 1990; Mitten, 1992; Gruber, 1991). Briefly summarized, we analysed, on the one hand, the linguistic manifestations of prejudice in discourse, embedded in the linguistic and social context (for example, newspaper reports or news bulletins in Austria). On the other hand, we confronted the latter texts with other facts and context phenomena (the reporting in the United States, which of course was also biased in certain aspects). Thus, we contrasted one report with the comments on the report, with the historical knowledge. In other words, we did not rely on the ‘meta-data’ alone. We compared Waldheim's story with the historical facts about Wehrmacht atrocities in the Balkans and the deportation of Jews from Greece. In this way we were able to detect and depict the disfiguring of facts and realities. Our comparison of the New York Times with the reports in the Austrian press and statements of politicians proved that this distortion was complete and systematic.

Our data comprised both oral and written texts. Three newspapers were read systematically, every day, during the four months of the presidential election campaign (March to June 1986), and then at regular intervals after June 1986 (Presse, Neue Kronen Zeitung, the New York Times). Daily radio and television news, interviews, television discussions, hearings, larger news documentary series (about 50 hours of video), discussions in diverse institutional settings and the vigil commemorating Austrian resistance in June 1987 on Stephansplatz in Vienna (‘Mahnwache’) were integrated into the analysis. Thus, very different degrees of formality and very different settings were taken into account. We prepared an exhibition with some of our material (see Wodak and de Cillia, 1988) which we presented in March 1988, and even filmed discussions which occurred when people visited the exhibition.

The following two-year research project was carried out on the occasion of the Austrian ‘Gedenkjahr 1988’, the year in which the 50th anniversary of Austria's occupation by Hitler was commemorated. In the study, entitled ‘Languages of the past’ (see Wodak et al., 1994), the main interests of investigation were firstly the publication and the media treatment of the report by a commission of seven international historians on former
president Waldheim’s Nazi past in February 1988; secondly the official political commemoration of the Austrian ‘Anschluss’ in March 1938; thirdly the unveiling of a ‘memorial against war and fascism’ by the sculptor Alfred Hrdlicka in November, as well as the controversial discussions that preceded it for several months; fourthly the premiere of the play *Heldenplatz* by Thomas Bernhard in November, which deals with Austrian anti-Semitism then and now and its psycho-terrorizing long-term impact on surviving Jewish victims; and finally the commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the November pogrom. The data of this interdisciplinary discourse-historical study specifically included a great variety of media genres (all kinds of printed media, radio reports, television news broadcasts, television and newspaper series) as well as statements and addresses of Austrian politicians. The rich data allowed for a differentiated examination of the official political and media recollection, and a critical reconsideration of the Austrian National Socialist past, of the often conflicting narratives on Austrian history and of some related convenient myths, such as ‘Austria as the first victim of the Nazi politics of dictatorship and territorial expansionism’.

The discourse-historical approach has been further elaborated in a number of more recent studies, for example, in a study on racist discrimination against immigrants from Romania, and in a study on the discourse about nation and national identity in Austria (Matouschek et al., 1995; Wodak et al., 1998, 1999). The latter study was concerned with the analysis of the relationships between the discursive construction of national sameness and the discursive construction of difference leading to political and social exclusion of specific out-groups. These questions were investigated in a series of case studies on the Austrian identity and nation. Taking several current social scientific approaches as a point of departure, we developed a method of description and analysis that has applications beyond the discursive production of national identity in the specific Austrian examples studied. Our findings suggested that discourses about nations and national identities rely on at least four types of discursive macro-strategies: constructive strategies (aiming at the construction of national identities), preservative or justificatory strategies (aiming at the conservation and reproduction of national identities or narratives of identity), transformative strategies (aiming at the change of national identities), and destructive strategies (aiming at the dismantling of national identities). Depending on the context — that is to say, on the social field or domain in which the ‘discursive events’ related to the topic under investigation take place — one or other of the aspects connected with these strategies is brought into prominence.

In all of the four studies taken from the Austrian context, discriminatory, racist and anti-Semitic as well as chauvinist utterances sometimes occurred simultaneously, especially in everyday conversations (which for the first study were tape recorded in the streets). In more official settings, nationalist, racist and anti-Semitic stereotypes occurred in a more vague form, mostly as allusions and implicit evocations triggered by the use of vocabulary which was characteristic of the historical period of National Socialism. Thus, in all these studies, it was possible to follow the genesis and transformation of arguments, the recontextualization throughout different and important public spaces resulting from the social interests of the participants and their power relations (see Muntigl et al., 2000; Reisigl and Wodak, 2001). All these studies now make it possible to attempt to construct broader explanations for the specific application of discourses of sameness and difference.


Categories of Analysis

The specific discourse-analytical approach applied in the four studies referred to was three-dimensional: after firstly having established the specific contents or topics of a particular discourse with racist, anti-Semitic, nationalist or ethnicist ingredients, secondly the discursive strategies (including argumentation strategies) were...
investigated. Then thirdly, the linguistic means (as types) and the specific, context-dependent linguistic realizations (as tokens) of the discriminatory stereotypes were examined.

In the following section, we shall describe from an abstract viewpoint some of the discourse-analytical tools useful in the analysis of discourses about racial, national and ethnic issues. There are several discursive elements and strategies which, in our discourse-analytical view, deserve to receive special attention. Selecting five of the many different linguistic or rhetorical means by which persons are discriminated against in an ethnicist or racist manner, we orientate ourselves to five simple, but not at all randomly selected questions:

1. How are persons named and referred to linguistically?
2. What traits, characteristics, qualities and features are attributed to them?
3. By means of what arguments and argumentation schemes do specific persons or social groups try to justify and legitimize the exclusion, discrimination, suppression and exploitation of others?
4. From what perspective or point of view are these labels, attributions and arguments expressed?
5. Are the respective utterances articulated overtly? Are they intensified or are they mitigated?

According to these questions, we are especially interested in five types of discursive strategies, which are all involved in the positive self- and negative other presentation. We view, and this needs to be emphasized, the discursive construction of ‘us’ and ‘them’ as the basic fundaments of discourses of identity and difference. And such discourses are salient for discourses of discrimination.

By ‘strategy’ we generally mean a more or less accurate and more or less intentional plan of practices (including discursive practices) adopted to achieve a particular social, political, psychological or linguistic aim. As far as the discursive strategies are concerned, that is to say, systematic ways of using language, we locate them at different levels of linguistic organization and complexity (see Table 4.1).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Objectives</th>
<th>Devices</th>
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| Referential/nomination    | Construction of ingroups and out-groups         | • membership categorization  
                             |                                                                 | • biological, naturalizing and de-personalizing metaphors and metonymies  
                             |                                                                 | • synecdoches (pars pro toto, to-tum pro pars) |
| Predication               | Labelling social actors more or less positively or negatively, deprecatorily or appreciatively | • stereotypical, evaluative attributions of negative or positive traits  
                             |                                                                 | • implicit and explicit predicates |
| Argumentation             | Justification of positive or negative attributions | • topoi used to justify political inclusion or exclusion, discrimination |
or preferential treatment

Perspectivation, framing or discourse representation
Expressing involvement Positioning speaker’s point of view
• reporting, description, narration or quotation of (discriminatory) events and utterances

Intensification, mitigation
Modifying the epistemic status of a proposition
• intensifying or mitigating the illocutionary force of (discriminatory) utterances

Arguing for and Against Discrimination

The different forms of social exclusion and discrimination can be discussed inter alia by means of topoi, both arguing for and against racism, ethnicism and nationalism.

Within argumentation theory, ‘topoi’ or ‘loci’ can be described as parts of argumentation which belong to the obligatory, either explicit or inferable premises. They are the content-related warrants or ‘conclusion rules’ which connect the argument or arguments with the conclusion, the claim. As such, they justify the transition from the argument or arguments to the conclusion (Kienpointner, 1992: 194).

The analysis of typical content-related argument schemes can be carried out against the background of the list of topoi, though incomplete and not always disjunctive, given in Table 4.2 (see for example Kindt, 1992; Kienpointner, 1992, 1996; Kienpointner and Kindt, 1997; Kopperschmidt, 1989; Wengeler, 1997; Reeves, 1989).

TABLE 4.2 List of topoi

| 1 | Usefulness, advantage |
| 2 | Uselessness, disadvantage |
| 3 | Definition, name-interpretation |
| 4 | Danger and threat |
| 5 | Humanitarianism |
| 6 | Justice |
| 7 | Responsibility |
| 8 | Burdening, weighting |
| 9 | Finances |
| 10 | Reality |
| 11 | Numbers |
| 12 | Law and right |
| 13 | History |
| 14 | Culture |
| 15 | Abuse |
The topos of advantage or usefulness can be paraphrased by means of the following conditional: if an action under a specific relevant point of view will be useful, then one should perform it (for example, the usefulness of ‘guest workers’ for a national economy). To this topos belong different subtypes, for example, the topos of ‘pro bono publico’, (‘to the advantage of all’), the topos of ‘pro bono nobis’ (‘to the advantage of us’), and the topos of ‘pro bono eorum’ (‘to the advantage of them’). In a decision of the Viennese municipal authorities (Amtsbescheid der Magistratsabteilung 42), the refusal of a residence permit is set out as follows:

Because of the private and family situation of the claimant, the refusal of the application at issue represents quite an intrusion into her private and family life. The public interest, which is against the residence permit, is to be valued more strongly than the contrasting private and family interests of the claimant. Thus, it had to be decided according to the judgement.

Like the topos of advantage or usefulness, the topos of uselessness/disadvantage is also a specific causal argumentation scheme, but in contrast to the former, the latter relies on the conditional. If one can anticipate that the prognosticated consequences of a decision will not occur, or if other political actions are more likely to lead to the declared aim, the decision has to be rejected. If existing rulings do not help to reach the declared aims, they have to be changed. This topos was employed in Austria in 1992, when the ‘Verbotsgesetz’ - the law against revitalizing the National Socialist ideology and practices (‘Wiederbetätigung’) and against the dissemination of the so-called ‘Auschwitzlüge’ - was amended.

The topos of definition or topos of name-interpretation or locus a nominis interpretatione can be traced back to the following conclusion rule: if an action, a thing or a person (group of persons) is named/designated (as) X, the action, thing or person (group of persons) carries or should carry the qualities/traits/attributes contained in the (literal) meaning of X. This topos is employed if immigrant workers in Austria or Germany are euphemistically called ‘Gastarbeiter’ (‘guest workers’). The term implies that, because they are ‘only guests’, they will or they must return to the countries they came from.

The topos of danger or topos of threat is based on the following conditionals: if a political action or decision bears specific dangerous, threatening consequences, one should not perform or do it. Or, formulated differently: if there are specific dangers and threats, one should do something against them. There are many subtypes of this scheme of argument. Here we mention only one of them, namely the topos of threat of racism, which goes as follows: if too many immigrants or refugees enter the country, the native population will not be able to cope with the situation and become hostile to foreigners. This argument scheme can lead to a victim-victimizer reversal. The victims thus are made responsible for the prejudices directed against them.

The topos of humanitarianism can be paraphrased by the following conditional: if a political action or decision does or does not conform with human rights or humanitarian convictions and values, one should or should not perform or take it. This topos can be employed in every situation where one argues against unequal treatment and discrimination and for the recognition of ‘racialized’, ethnic, religious, gender or other differences. It is closely connected with the topos of justice that is based on the principle and claim of ‘equal rights for all’. As a conditional phrase, it means that if persons/actions/situations are equal in specific respects, they should be treated/dealt with in the same way. For example: as far as social security is concerned, workers should be treated equally, that is to say, irrespective of their citizenship, as they make the same social security payment contributions.

A third argumentation scheme closely related to the two topoi just mentioned is the topos of responsibility. It can be summarized by the conditional formula: because a state or a group of persons is responsible for the emergence of specific problems, it or they should act in order to find solutions to these problems. Although this topos is very often employed to argue against discrimination or for ‘compensation’ or ‘reparations’ for a
committed crime (for example, a Nazi crime), it can also serve the opposite aim, for example in cases where a government is held responsible for unemployment and required to reduce the quota of immigrants as they are falsely considered to be the cause of unemployment.

The topos of burdening or weighing down is to be regarded as a specific causal topos (topos of consequence) and can be reduced to the following conditional: if a person, an institution or a country is burdened by specific problems, one should act in order to diminish these burdens. Within this context, one can find the metaphorical phrase ‘das Boot ist voll’ (‘the boat is full/overcrowded’) when legitimating immigration restrictions.

The topos of finances can be characterized by the following conclusion rule: if a specific situation or action costs too much money or causes a loss of revenue, one should perform actions which diminish the costs or help to avoid the loss. This topos, which is a specific causal topos (topos of consequence), comes close to the topos of burdening. It is employed implicitly by the former Governor of Upper Austria when he argues against the accommodation of Romanian refugees in the community of Franking: ‘Here, we are dealing with people whose origin one can explicitly identify by looking at them, and thus, one is afraid of losses within the framework of tourism’. In this example, the topos of finances focuses on allegedly negative socio-economical consequences.

The topos of reality is rather a tautological argumentation scheme that can be paraphrased as follows: because reality is as it is, a specific action/decision should be performed/made. A general example would be: social, economic and political realities have changed and the Asylum Act no longer fits. Therefore, the law must also be changed.

The topos of numbers may be subsumed under the conclusion rule: if the numbers prove a specific topos, a specific action should be performed or not be carried out. This topos can become fallacious if it is related to incorrectly presumed majorities which are not verified empirically.

The topos of law or topos of right can be condensed in the conditional: if a law or an otherwise codified norm prescribes or forbids a specific politico-administrative action, the action has to be performed or omitted. The use of this topos is institutionalized in politico-administrative genres such as rejections of applications for residence permits (see van Leeuwen and Wodak, 1999).

The topos of history can be described as follows: because history teaches that specific actions have specific consequences, one should perform or omit a specific action in a specific situation (allegedly) comparable with the historical example referred to. A specific subtype of this argumentation scheme is the existing Ciceronian topos of historia magistra vitae, of ‘history teaching lessons’ (see Wodak et al., 1998: 205-7).

The topos of culture is based on the following argumentation scheme: because the culture of a specific group of people is as it is, specific problems arise in specific situations. This topos is employed by Jörg Haider, the former leader of the Freedom Party, in combination with the topos of danger in his appeal that, ’The greatest damage that one can do to a people is to put the identity, cultural heritage, and the opportunities of its young people negligently at stake. That is why we have introduced the “Austria first” petition. In order to guarantee Austrians their right to a fatherland’. In this example, the topos of culture focuses on allegedly negative socio-cultural consequences.

The last topos to mention in this section, the topos of abuse, extensively employed in the petition campaign, can be paraphrased by the following conclusion rule: if a right or an offer for help is abused, the right should be changed, or the help should be withdrawn, or measures against the abuse should be taken. Rightist politicians fall back upon this topos when they argue for restricting asylum policy by means of reference to an alleged abuse of the asylum law. The topos of abuse is also employed when a change to the social security
law is demanded by politicians who are hostile to foreigners, and an attempt is made to account for this claim in the accusation that aliens exploit the welfare system or social security system of the state in which they are or have been working. Point 10 of the petition and several passages of its ‘explanation’, rely on this topos.

The ‘Austria First’ Petition

The historical context – the need for ethnography At this point, I will start by providing a few contextualizing remarks on the history of the FPÖ. After the Second World War, in 1949, liberals with a strong German National orientation and with no classical liberal tradition (see Bailer-Galanda and Neugebauer, 1993: 326) who felt unable to support the SPÖ or the ÖVP founded the VDU (‘Verband der Unabhängigen’), which became an electoral home for many former Austrian Nazis. The FPÖ, founded in 1956, was the successor party to the VDU; it retained an explicit attachment to a ‘German cultural community’. In its more than 40-year-old history, the FPÖ has, therefore, never been a liberal party in the European sense, although there were always tensions between more liberal and more conservative members of the party. In 1986, Haider was elected as leader of the party and unseated Norbert Steger, a liberal leader. Since 1986, the FPÖ has gained many votes and had by October 1999 risen to 26.91 per cent of all the votes cast in Austria (1,244,087 voters). The FPÖ's party policy and politics in 1993 was anti-foreigner, anti-European Union and widely populist, similar to Le Pen’s party in France. Since the summer of 1995, the FPÖ has almost completely ceased to stress the closeness between the Austrian and the German cultural community because opinion polls demonstrated that the majority of Austrian citizens no longer accepted such a self-definition. In the autumn of 1997, the FPÖ presented a new party programme, which, in its calculated ambivalence, emphasizes Christian values. At present, the FPÖ is the largest right-wing party in Western Europe (for further information about the FPÖ see, among others, Scharsach, 1992; Scharsach and Kuch, 2000; DöW, 1993; Mitten, 1994; Bailer-Galanda and Neugebauer, 1997; Grünalternative Jugend, 1998). It is this party, which, more than any other Austrian party, persuasively sets the xenophobic anti-foreigner tone in Austrian domestic policies and, for a decade, has almost always made electoral advantage out of the populist business of sowing uncertainty and irrational xenophobic anxieties, which, for different reasons, were and are harboured or willingly adopted by a considerable proportion of voters. Since 4 February 2000, the FPÖ has been part of the Austrian government and has formed a coalition with the conservative ÖVP. This development caused a major upheaval internationally and nationally, and has led to sanctions by the 14 other member states of the European Union (see Wodak, 2000a, b for more details).

In applying our four-level theory model to the attempt to explain the FPÖ’s success in the election of 3 October 1999, several middle range theories have to be drawn upon, to be able to interpret specific texts produced by the FPÖ and also the public debate about the slogans and programme of the FPÖ and the coalition programme of the new government (FPÖ and ÖVP from 4 February 2000). These include theories about populism, theories about coming to terms with the Austrian Nazi past, theories about the changes from social welfare states to neo-liberal economies, and finally theories about the rise of racism in times of globalisation. Because of limitations of space and also because of the methodological focus of this chapter, I will only summarize the results of this kind of theoretical approach in the following diagram (see Figure 4.4), and refer readers to Wodak (2000b) which exemplifies our research programme in CDA with a focus on theory construction and interdisciplinarity according to the research questions posed there (based on ethnography, teamwork and extensive literature research as well as text analysis).

FIGURE 4.4 Topics covered by the FPÖ
The application of the discourse model. The second step, after having provided historical background information which is necessary to understand the object under investigation and is defined in its extent by the topics of the text itself as well as by the public debate about the petition and the allusions occurring there, is the attempt to apply the discourse model presented above to the specific Austrian populist discourse of 1993. In this model, the sub-topics which marked public discourses are collected by means of ethnographic explorations and the analyses of multiple genres (media, slogans, party programmes and so on, see Reisigl and Wodak, 2001: Chapter 4 for more details).

The strategic populist move to initiate the ‘Austria first’ petition was just one particularly drastic step in the FPÖ’s policy of instigating hostile emotions against specific groups of foreigners. This step had an impact on all six of the main fields of political action we distinguished above: the areas of law making; of party internal opinion making; of the formation of public political opinion; of political advertising; of political administration; and of political control.

As a whole, the discourse about the ‘Austria first’ petition or ‘anti-foreigner’ petition mainly evolved in these fields of political activity around the following topics and in the following genres (see Figure 4.5).

**FIGURE 4.5 The discourse about the ‘Austria first’ petition in 1992 and 1993**
We will now briefly illustrate the notion of interdiscursivity with a constructed, but plausible example that illustrates selected, potential interdiscursive and intertextual relationships between the Austrian discourse about the ‘Austria first’ petition and the Austrian discourse about ‘national security’ (see Figure 4.6, and see Reisigl and Wodak, 2001 for details).

**FIGURE 4.6 Interdiscursive and intertextual relationships between the discourse about the ‘Austria first’ petition and the discourse about ‘national security’**

The two discourses partly overlap, and this is symbolized in Figure 4.6 by the two large overlapping ellipses. The two specific texts selected from the whole discourse about the petition are the text of the petition itself and the text of a speech made by Jörg Haider during the campaign for the petition. The text of the ‘Austria first’ petition can be assigned to the political genre of ‘petition for a referendum’ and is primarily situated in the field of political control. The text of Haider’s speech may be a hybrid mixture that contains elements of both an election speech and a pub conversation. This presupposed, it is primarily located in the field of political advertising or propaganda, but, in addition, also in the fields of political control and of formation of public opinion. This text may have been produced after the text of the petition itself and may explicitly refer to the petition text as a whole (as is indicated by the dotted double arrow), for example by a wording like ‘as we demand in our petition’, or simply share some topics with the petition text, without explicitly mentioning the petition (as indicated by the intersections of the small ellipses). Alternatively it may explicitly refer to specific topics of the petition text, by a wording like ‘as we pick out as a central theme in point 2 of the petition’ (as indicated by the simple, bending broken arrow). Let us further assume that this text speaks extensively about issues related to the topic of ‘national security’. If this is the case, it also belongs to the political discourse about ‘national security’. In this second discourse, many other texts participate, including the genre of ministerial reports, such as a specific security report of the Ministry of the Interior. As indicated by the dotted double arrow, this text may be intertextually related to the text of the petition. It may, for example, be related by explicit naming of the pe-
tition text in general, or by topical overlapping of the two texts without explicit reference. For reasons of clarity and comprehensibility, this intertextual relationship is not specifically indicated in Figure 4.6 above, as it would be if there were overlapping small ellipses. An example of this would be an ellipsis that represents the report's topic of internal national security and that overlaps with the ellipses standing for the topics of 'illegal immigration' and 'expulsion of illegal foreigners'. Intertextual relationship could also be established by the report's explicit thematic reference to topics of the petition. An example of this might be the report's reference to the demands in points 4 and 11 of the petition, in which the Austrian Freedom Party (FPÖ) requests an increase in executive powers (point 4), the creation of the legal basis for the possibility of immediate expulsion and an imposition of residence prohibitions for foreign criminals (see below). We can hypothesize that the ministerial report refers to these two topics and points out that these claims are already fulfilled by the official Austrian governmental policy. Finally, we may assume that there could exist an explicit intertextual or interdiscursive relationship between the report's topic of 'foreigner criminality' and the discourse about the FPÖ petition (as indicated by the arrow pointing from the small ellipse symbolizing the topic of 'foreigner criminality' to the large ellipse indicating the whole discourse about the FPÖ petition). This would apply if, for example, the report were to tell us that in the public debate about the petition many of the prejudices about an allegedly high 'foreigner criminality' were reproduced, and that these prejudices are disproved by the criminal statistics contained in the report (see Reisigl and Wodak, 2000 for more details).

The petition

The next step in our methodology requires a description of the genre investigated as well as the necessary background information on this particular genre, a petition in the Second Austrian Republic.

According to Article 41 of the Austrian constitution, parliament is required to consider and vote on any petition that gathers at least 100,000 signatures. Unlike provisions for petitions elsewhere, Article 41 of the Austrian constitution requires only that parliament considers the petition, which must be in the form of a draft law.

In October 1992, after the Austrian government then consisting of a grand coalition between the ÖVP and SPÖ had rejected Haider's ultimatum to adopt the FPÖ's programme on immigration, his party launched the petition campaign to force the government's hand. Initially, Haider was convinced that they would get one million signatures for the petition (Neue Kronen Zeitung, 4 November 1992). This number then slowly dropped as the FPÖ became aware that large-scale opposition was forming against anti-foreigner sentiment: on 14 January 1993, 500,000 signatures were thought to be a total success (Täglich Alles). On 15 January 1993 Haider spoke of more than 500,000 signatures (Standard). On 26 January 1993, numbers increased to 750,000; on 30 January, Haider explicitly stated that anything under 500,000 would be a failure (Täglich Alles) and on 1 February, 1993 he said that 780,000 would be a total success. The massive propaganda campaign against the petition paid political dividends: although the 417,278 signatures collected, representing approximately 7 per cent of all eligible voters, amply exceeded the required minimum of 100,000, the number fell far short of the prophecies and speculations of the FPÖ and also of the votes the FPÖ had received in the most recent general election (782,648 or 16.6 per cent) or even the 700,000 that the FPÖ had (internally) projected (Standard, 2 February 1993).

We set out the petition in an English translation in the following box:

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**Title: Petition ‘Austria First’**

Subtitle: through the creation of legal measures which permanently secure the right to a father-
land for all Austrian citizens and, from this standpoint, ensure a restrained immigration policy in Austria

1 The adoption of a national law to anchor the national regulatory goal ['Staatszielbestimmung'] ‘Austria is not an immigration country’ into the federal constitutional law of 1920 [1929 version].

2 Legal standardization of a halt to immigration until the question of illegal immigration is satisfactorily resolved, until the housing shortage is eliminated, until unemployment is reduced to 5 per cent, as well as the creation of legal measures which ensure that subsidized housing is granted in future solely to Austrian citizens, to the extent that this is not prohibited by international agreements and norms.

3 The adoption of a federal law to institute a general registration requirement for foreign workers at their place of employment, whereby the work permit and application for health insurance are prerequisites for an identity card.

4 An increase in executive powers [in particular for foreign and criminal police], including their improved remuneration, and equipment for the detention of illegal immigrants and for greater effectiveness in the fight against crime, in particular organized crime.

5 The adoption of a federal law for the immediate creation of permanent border troops [customs, gendarmerie] instead of federal army troops.

6 The adoption of a federal law to change the law governing the organization of schools so that the proportion of pupils in compulsory and vocational school classes whose native language is not German is limited to 30 per cent; where the percentage of children whose native language is not German is higher than 30 per cent, regular classes for foreigners are to be established.

7 Easing the tension in the school situation by having children whose native language is not German participate in regular classes only if they possess sufficient knowledge of German (preparatory classes).

8 Creation of a regulation in party law that ensures that only Austrian citizens participate in party-internal primary proceedings, where lists are created for the general elections to general representational bodies.

9 The adoption of a federal law to restrict the practice of premature conferring of citizenship.

10 The adoption of a federal law to end illegal business activities (as, for example, in foreigner associations and clubs), as well as to establish rigorous measures against the abuse of social benefits.
11 Creation of the legal basis for the possibility of immediate deportation and imposition of residence prohibitions for foreign criminals.

12 The adoption of a federal law to establish an Eastern Europe foundation to prevent migrational movement.

The analysis. The analysis follows the categories defined above, in particular focusing on the use of topoi. Nevertheless, other categories are applied when they occur. The analysis is sequential, that is it proceeds clause by clause, detecting all salient features at once, and not – as would also be possible – applying one category after another throughout the whole text. This is justified by the coherence and cohesive structure of the text, which makes use of all linguistic strategies and mixes them with each other. The interpretation also has to make use of the theories mentioned above. Because of our definition of textual meaning as acquired in use, it would not make sense to count the appearance of certain categories, since the meaning and structure of the whole text would not be accounted for in such a manner (although specific frequencies would certainly be of relevance). In the following, I will deconstruct the first sentence in detail; the rest of the text analysis will consist of the flow of the whole argument and interpretation.

Already the title of the petition ‘Austria first’ presupposes that there might be alternative views which posit Austria ‘next’ or ‘last’ as attributes or predications. The elliptical and pithy demand implies that Austria – metonymically standing for ‘the Austrians’ – is to be given priority over other ‘countries’ (metonymically implying ‘non-Austrians’) and that the governing politicians are neglecting the interests of the country and its people. This slogan, which was also used by the FPÖ in 1994 in their campaign against Austria joining the European Union, and, even more recently, in a political campaign against the change of currency to the Euro, constructs the view – from the very beginning of the text – that the FPÖ is the party that is concerned with the interests of the country and strategically aims at dividing the electorate into ‘good’ patriotic Austrians who love the country, and ‘bad’ unpatriotic Austrians who do not give Austria and the Austrians preferential treatment. (This already implies an actor's analysis in that certain referential strategies apply; moreover, theories on populist propaganda are consistent with such an interpretation.) The genesis of this title and the diachronic development illustrate the historical dimension of our research programme. Also, the beginning of this petition with the construction of the two important groups of ‘us’ and ‘them’ makes our general framework of sameness and difference salient and is typical of political discourse and discourses of discrimination in particular.

The subtitle justifies and elaborates the aims of the petition: legal measures are needed, which secure the ‘right to a fatherland or home’ for all Austrian citizens and which also ensure a reluctant Austrian immigration policy. The evaluative, polysemous and, very often, geographically localized notion of ‘fatherland/home’ (Heimat) woos much more emotional connotations – not least from before and during the Nazi era – and for specific conservative addressees it is much more evocative and solidarity promoting than the terms ‘nation’ or ‘state’. Thus, again we focus referential and predicational strategies at this point of the analysis. This term is used mainly by German nationalists or/and very traditional people who are ‘rooted in the soil’ and endorse a culturally and ethnically defined notion of nation, which in the case of the pan-German nationalists coincides with a sort of ‘greater German’ nation. Since around 1995, the Austrian People’s Party and its former Vice-chancellor, Erhard Busek, have also frequently adopted and emphasized the high-value term ‘Heimat’. The President of the Republic, Thomas Klestil, uses this term quite often in his speeches to court Austrian...
national identification.

The subtitle mentions the first group of social actors who are not referred to in terms of metonymic reference. But who are these ‘Austrian citizens’, the first group of social actors linguistically constructed as beneficiaries? Is it everybody who possesses Austrian citizenship, which also means ethnic minorities and naturalized ‘guest workers’ who have lived in Austria for more than ten years, or only German-speaking Austrians? Although it is nowhere explicitly restricted to the German language community, and although this politonym seems merely to refer to a group of persons in terms of the possession of citizenship and of the assignment of the related political rights and duties, this last assumption could be derived from the rest of the petition (points 6, 7) where knowledge of the German language as a mother tongue is emphasized as a distinctive feature for school-age children of ‘the Austrians’. These are presupposed to be against the children of ‘foreigners’ who allegedly do not speak German as a native language – although this is clearly untrue in the case of those schoolchildren who belong to the second or third generation of immigrants. At this point, the importance of intertextuality, the relationship with other texts, becomes clear. It also becomes clear that the whole text has to be considered to be able to interpret singular occurrences. And what does ‘restrained’ mean? This is – considering the 12 points of the petition – obviously a euphemism for ‘most restrictive’, for the FPÖ calls for an at least temporary ‘halt to immigration’. This mitigating language use is part of the FPÖ’s positive self-presentation and may aim at inviting even voters from the political centre to sign the petition. This interpretation uses other genres and texts and also refers to other discourses in the Austrian public debate.

Summarizing the analysis of these first clauses, the simultaneity of theory, categories, intertextuality and interdiscursivity becomes apparent. In these first clauses, we find mainly referential and predicational strategies, although actors’ analysis is also relevant as well as some features of the Hallidayan transitivity analysis. It would be impossible to grasp the meaning of these units without the contextual information, the knowledge of the history of the FPÖ, the ethnography and investigation of other genres, and theories about right-wing populist propaganda in the specific Austrian context.

Let us now conduct the remainder of the analysis more briefly. The underlying assumptions become very clear as soon as one reads the first proposal: ‘Austria is not a land of immigration’ should be stated in the constitution itself. As Mitten (1994: 29-30) states, ‘its initial provision […] was not only demagogic, but also unmitigated nonsense. As the studies of the Austrian demographers Heinz Fassmann and Rainer Münz have shown, Austria has always been a country of immigration and emigration’, and the population and economy would stagnate and decline without immigration (Fassmann and Münz, 1992, 1996; Fussmann et al., 1997). At this point in the analysis, it becomes very clear again that background information has to be included.

Except for the more polemic rhetoric, points 2, 3, 4, 8 and 12 of the petition do not diverge significantly from governmental policies in Austria. That is to say, certain demands in the petition – such as obliging foreign workers to show identification papers at their place of employment (point 3), increasing the numbers and salaries of the police (point 4), denying voting rights to legal foreign residents (point 8) or establishing a foundation to provide economic aid to Eastern Europe, thus discouraging migration (point 12) – largely reproduced projected government policies, or proposals already under consideration by the government. In general terms, it is primarily the diction of the government that diverges from the discursive practices and instigating populism of the FPÖ opposition. Only such an extreme demand as that for the ‘legal standardization of a halt to immigration until the question of the illegal foreigner question [sic] is satisfactorily resolved’ seems unlikely to be formulated by government politicians. As far as this formulation is concerned, at least two remarks must be made. Firstly, the formulation ‘illegal foreigner question’ sounds ambiguous, if not ungrammatical. Taken literally, it allows an interpretation which means nearly the converse of what the petition’s authors intended to express. Then, the passage can no longer be paraphrased by ‘the question of illegal foreigners’, in which case
it still remains unclear what ‘illegal’ should mean, although points 3, 4, 10 and 11 indicate several possible interpretations. Moreover, the formulation points back to and questions the way the FPÖ ‘asks the foreigner question’, meaning that the FPÖ, in making a ‘foreigner issue’, or ‘foreigner problem’, places itself outside the frame of legality. Secondly, the term ‘satisfactory’ is wide open to different interpretations, and the question arises of who will determine when the solutions are satisfactory. The respective actors are not mentioned, but clearly implied are the FPÖ and their followers.

Next, we turn to the actors’ analysis. In general, the actors who are constructed implicitly or explicitly throughout the whole text by reference and predication fall into two groups. On the one hand, there are immigrants (a spatializing actionym), illegal foreigners or aliens (two criminonyms which presuppose the prejudice that ‘foreigners are criminal’), foreign employees (an econym related to the prejudiced suspicion that foreigners would do illicit work), foreigners or aliens carrying on organized crime (again, a prejudiced criminalization), foreigners’ children who speak a non-German native language (a referential and predicational identification in terms of negative linguification), clubs of foreigners (a collectivizing ‘organizationalization’), aliens doing illicit work (an economizing criminalization), aliens abusing the social welfare system (a criminalization that reproduces the prejudice that ‘foreigners are socio-parasites’), non-nationals being naturalized prematurely (a politicizing questioning of political rights) as well as foreign criminals and perpetrators (again, two criminonyms). In the whole text, thus, the other is negatively connotated already through lexical choice. In passing, I would like to emphasize that ‘foreigners’ and ‘aliens’ mean primarily ‘third-country nationals’. On the other hand, there are the Austrian citizens (the above mentioned politonym), Austrian voters (an actionalizing politonym), Austrian security forces, strictly speaking, police and customs authorities (‘executionalizing’ politonyms) and the Austrian army (a militarionym). This dichotomous black-and-white portrayal implicitly and explicitly constructs a two-part world and insinuates a rather clear frontier between an Austrian world of ‘law and order’ and a non-Austrian world of ‘crime and disorder’. Foreigners are depicted as aliens who are illegal and criminal and who do not speak or understand German. The referential exterritorialization by naming them ‘Ausländerinnen’ is expanded here by prejudiced predication and discriminatory argumentation – up to the point where it may be concluded that ‘foreigners’, that is primarily ‘third-country nationals’, are people the FPÖ does not want to have living in Austria.

There are passages in the petition and its rationale which are not only polemical rhetorically, but also explicitly racist or which at least ascribe ethnic significance to social problems that have social and political causes beyond the ‘foreigners’ influence. At this point, we can refer to argumentation analysis and apply the categories of topoi defined above. Point 6 – relying on a combination of the topos of burden with the topos of threat and the topos of culture – requests the segregation of schoolchildren according to their knowledge of German. This would not only contradict international agreements; it would introduce a discriminatory ethnic criterion into the school system. This means, it should be noted, that children are not directly characterized by their proficiency in German, but only by their mother tongue.

Other discriminatory stipulations, like relating unemployment and housing shortages to the ‘foreigner problem’, clearly offer explanations for problems which are causally unrelated to the presence of foreigners in Austria. Similar fallacious topoi of consequence and argumenta ad consequentiam are employed in discriminatory discourses against ‘foreigners’ – whoever they may be – in many Western European countries.

Point 9, the curbing of ‘premature conferring of citizenship’, is again open to many readings. When is naturalization ‘premature’ and when is this conferring legally acceptable? In view of the fact that Austria, at the time during which the petition campaign was promoted, already had one of the most restrictive citizenship laws in Europe, such a claim shows the rightist orientation of the FPÖ in an even more alarming light.
Point 10 openly manifests prejudiced hostility to foreigners by a topos of threat and a topos of abuse. On the one hand, ‘clubs of foreigners’ are viewed to be illegal and threatening to the ‘Austrian’ economy. On the other hand, ‘foreigners’ are presented as abusers of the Austrian welfare system. There are good reasons for assuming that one of the basic motivations for this demand – which borders on the violation of the basic right of freedom of assembly – is the FPÖ’s fear of a multicultural society.

Point 11 asks for the establishment of legal instruments that allow for the immediate deportation of foreign criminals. The presupposed equation of ‘illegality’ and ‘criminality’ clearly ignores the fact that, from a viewpoint that puts human rights above the rights of a nation state, to implement a very restrictive, inhuman law to the letter can mean committing a grave wrong that is not legitimized.

Point 12 demands the investment of funds for Eastern Europe to prevent immigration as such. This demand seems to be the thin veneer of democracy in the ‘anti-foreigner petition’. It cannot, however, mask the central discriminatory claims of the petition.

The FPÖ circulated a brochure which contained the official rationale that explained the 12 claims of the petition (see Reisigl and Wodak, 2001: Chapter 4). The intertextual analysis comparing the two texts makes some of the vagueness and many possible readings of a few textual clauses distinctive and clear. Such a move to other related texts in other genres offers important evidence for some of the interpretations and this approach should be followed whenever possible. Moreover, textual chains for some arguments can then be constructed and the recontextualization analysed, as we have proposed in our research programme. Here I will merely summarize some relevant issues of the intertextual analysis.

Frequently, the FPÖ combined in its argumentation the topos of burdening with the topos of threat, and this is also found in the explanation of point 2 of the petition:

A state under the rule of law and order cannot accept these sorts of conditions. The existing problems in the area of the black economy and growing criminality are being further exacerbated through the permanent increase in ‘illegals’. Moreover, in Austria the housing shortage is rapidly increasing. [...] Because of the lack of adequate housing capacity numerous foreigners are also being forced to take up residence in slums at unreasonably high rates of rent.

Here the mention of the numerous foreigners who are also burdened by housing problems seems to be intended to make the petition more acceptable, apart from the fact that, at this point, one group of so-called ‘foreigners’ is played off against another group.

In the explanation of point 10, the victim-victimizer reversal is made manifest by combining the topos of threat of hostility to ‘foreigners’ with the topos of culture and the topos of abuse. To quote just one excerpt:
Specifically in population centres, especially in the federal capital, Vienna, foreigners are increasingly gathering together in associations and clubs. In this area, however, there is a degree of abuse going on that reaches far beyond the legal basis of Austrian association regulations. With increasing frequency, many [such] associations and clubs take the form of eating establishments which fall considerably short of meeting the [relevant] business, sanitary or building codes [lack of sanitary facilities, no closing hours, no noise protection, prohibited gambling, secret prostitution, black market, etc.). Consequently, irritation and justified displeasure are created among indigenous residents and businesses. Only a revised legal code and its strengthened enforcement would be able to re-establish order in this area. In the last few years, there has been an increase in the abuse of social welfare by foreigners, which makes counter-measures necessary. In this context examples include new birth certificates, which allow for the premature drawing of pension benefits; children who exist only on paper, and who make [foreigners] eligible for family assistance; the feigning of a domestic place of residence so that considerable compensatory benefits – which cannot be financed through contribution payments – are added to minimal pensions.

A whole range of anti-foreigner prejudices are reproduced in this piece of text. The ‘foreigners’ are made to feel guilty for the ‘Austrians” negative feelings against them because they are dirty (this prejudice is implied by ‘lack of sanitary facilities’) and behave in a deviant manner, namely conspicuously, noisily and illegally. In consequence, hostility to ‘foreigners’ seems to be justified. The allegedly justified animosity mentioned is the displeasure and irritation of the fact that ‘foreigners’ have different cultural habits of cooking, eating, dressing, celebrating and playing music. Instead of conceiving this as cultural enrichment, many Austrians simply brand such differences as the expression of ‘the foreigners” desire to resist ‘integrating’ into ‘the Austrian culture’ – ‘integration’ in the majority of cases euphemistically meaning simply ‘assimilation’ and ‘homogenization’.

An even more explicit example of the aim of ‘protecting the German culture’ against a potential ‘multicultural society’ is the explanation offered for point 6:

For a number of Socialists, such as Education Minister Scholten, who, as always, promote the idea of a multicultural society, our cultural identity is practically worthless, indeed politically suspect. This can be read in the official writings of the Minister of Education. In order to preserve our cultural identity, to achieve the successful integration of children whose mother tongue is not German, to be able to continue to finance education, but also to guarantee a solid education for our children, the percentage of children whose native language is not German must be limited to about 30. […] Because the educational authorities – who are dominated by the grand coalition – insist specifically that children with inadequate or completely lacking proficiency in the German language be immediately integrated into regular classes within the compulsory educational system, the educational level is deteriorating, and difficulties for the entire educational community are inevitable.
In this passage, the topos of threat is merged with the topos of burden and the topos of culture into the ‘topos of the impending decline of the Austrian cultural identity’.

Already in the first sentence, the Socialist Minister of Education is accused of neglecting ‘the Austrian cultural identity’ in favour of a multicultural identity. In this context, only a German culture can be implied. And this implication is always associated with German nationalists and politicians who do not respect the sovereignty of the Austrian state and still wish for a great German nation, a unification with Germany. The second argumentative assumption is that the cultural identity is threatened by people who are not native speakers of German; the German language being presupposed to form an indispensable ingredient of the definition of an ‘Austrian nation’. This puts the immigrant children into the difficult position of either being required instantly to enculturate linguistically – which for most of the newly immigrant children is clearly impossible – or being segregated and placed, from the very beginning, at a great disadvantage with probable lifelong consequences.

Here, the FPÖ implies – by a topos of burden in combination with a topos of threat and a topos of culture – that for Austrian schools, nonnative speakers of German represent a great handicap for the school education of the ‘Austrian’ children, a burden (because they are assumed to hinder the ‘native Austrian children’ from learning at school) and, thus, a threat to the ‘Austrian children's solid education’. Of course, what the FPÖ means by a ‘solid’ education remains unsaid. And it also remains unsaid why the FPÖ assumes 30 per cent to be the absolute limit of non-German natives that should be allowed in a school class. The problem of what is to be understood as a ‘mother tongue’ is not asked, and the fact that a child may speak more than one native language is not even taken into consideration.

Nobody would argue against the fact that language proficiency does indeed help every school child, but the assumption that the percentage of ‘foreign’ school children within a class directly correlates with the average educational level of the class is a hasty hypothesis. The statement that the level of education falls if there is a higher percentage of children who do not have German as their native tongue is nowhere explained and nowhere proven. No evidence is given for this prejudiced assumption.

All in all, the whole passage is characterized by declarative sentences, which give the impression that the propositions asserted are factual and objective, although one searches unsuccessfully for any evidence. Instead, many of the current problems in today’s schools (many of them due to budget cuts, to reductions in numbers of teachers, of teaching materials and of teaching infrastructures) are simply projected on to ‘the foreigners’: they are made to feel guilty for problems which do not concern them. Such scapegoat strategies are applied throughout the whole rationale and illustrate typical patterns of argumentation. Similar to the ‘Judeus ex machina’ strategy (see Reisigl and Wodak, 2001: Chapter 3), we find the ‘foreigner ex machina’ strategy here.

Conclusions and Procedures: A Summary

Of course, it is not possible to provide a really extensive application of the discourse-historical approach and all its categories in one short chapter. Nevertheless, I would like to summarize the most important procedures to be used in the analysis of specific texts:

1. Sample information about the co- and context of the text (social, political, historical, psychological, and so on).
2. Once the genre and discourse to which the text belongs have been established, sample more ethnographic information; establish interdiscursivity and intertextuality (texts on sim-
ilar topics, texts with similar arguments, macro-topics, fields of action, genres).

3 From the problem under investigation, formulate precise research questions and explore neighbouring fields for explanatory theories and theoretical aspects.

4 Operationalize the research questions into linguistic categories.

5 Apply these categories sequentially on to the text while using theoretical approaches to interpret the meanings resulting from the research questions.

6 Draw up the context diagram for the specific text and the fields of actions.

7 Make an extensive interpretation while returning to the research questions and to the problem under investigation.

These steps are taken several times, always coming and going between text, ethnography, theories and analysis. Most importantly, the decisions that are constantly required and taken, have to be made explicit and have to be justified. The mediation between theories and empirical analysis, between the social and the text, will never be implemented totally. A gap exists, and hermeneutics and interpretatory devices are always needed to bridge the gap.

**Further Reading**


This book presents the discourse-historical approach and its application in three case studies (anti-Semitic discourse, populist discourse and racist discourse).

**Notes**

1 I would like to stress that all the research presented here has been developed together with many colleagues in Vienna and elsewhere. Specifically, I would like to thank Rudolf De Cillia and Richard Mitten. The most recent elaborations of these studies and the discourse-historical approach have taken place together with Gilbert Weiss and Gertraud Benke ([http://www.oeaw.ac.at/ Wittgenstein](http://www.oeaw.ac.at/ Wittgenstein)), in the ‘Discourse, Politics, Identity’, research centre at the Austrian Academy of Science. This chapter, moreover, integrates very valuable creative discussions with Martin Reisigl and also some of his highly original work on linguistic theory and realizations (see Reisigl and Wodak, 2001, Chapter 2; Reisigl, 2001; Reisigl and Wodak, 2000). The example provided in this chapter is elaborated extensively in Reisigl and Wodak (2000). Because of the textbook requirements, some of the categories and specificities of the analysis had to be neglected or simplified (see Reisigl and Wodak (2001) for the complete overview).

2 In recent years, the discourse-historical approach has increasingly been influenced by other schools and sub-disciplines, especially British discourse analysis in the tradition of Hallidayan systemic functional linguistics (e.g. by Fairclough, 1989, 1992, 1995; Fowler, 1996; Hodge and Kress, 1991 and van Leeuwen, 1993a, 1995 and 1996), by classical and new rhetorics as well as argumentation theory (e.g. by Toulmin, 1969; Perelman, 1976, 1980, 1994; Kopperschmidt, 1980, 1989; Kienpointner, 1992, 1996; Kindt, 1992; Wengeler, 1997) and by German ‘politolinguistics’ (e.g. Dieckmann, 1964, 1975, 1981; Burkhardt, 1996; Jung et al., 1997; Jarren et al., 1998; Klein, 1998 and Sarcinelli, 1998).


4 All these strategies are illustrated by numerous categories and examples in Reisigl and Wodak (2001: Chapter 2). It would be impossible owing to space restrictions to present all these linguistic devices in this
chapter. Therefore I will focus on topoi as one central category in discourses of discrimination, and must refer readers to other publications for more information on the other four strategies. The analysis of the petition and the media discourses about it are elaborated extensively in Reisigl and Wodak (2001, Chapter 4).

5 In German: ‘Es handelt sich hier um Leute aus Ländern, denen man die Abstammung eindeutig ansieht, und man fürchtet dadurch Rückgänge im Rahmen des Fremdenverkehrs’ (Austrian newspaper, Standard, 10 March 1990).


- foreigners
- petitions
- Austria
- German language
- discourse
- adoption law
- discursive practices

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