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DISCOURSE AS A CATEGORY OF ANALYSIS IN POLITICAL SCIENCE

ABSTRACT

Intention of this article is to test of defining attempts of the notion of discourse in the context of the interdisciplinary formulation. It appears here not only as the gathering of texts treat the connection of the statement with the definite conditions of her rise. Such approach founds the existence of interaction among the individual kinds of discursive behaviours and the specific areas of the social life. The author tries to exchange features of discourse as one of the dimensions of the politics. He also shows the possibilities of use of the discursive perspective in the methodology of political sciences. The analysis political discourse is correct only when it unites the proprieties of discoursive structures with the proprieties of political processes. One of the limitations the methodological mistake relates to the level of the text exclusively. These problems can be tackled on the basis of the complex analysis the title category presented in the paper.

Keywords: analysis, language, discourse

MAN IS FORMED by language, whose formative power precedes and conditions all decisions. Political actions are actions mediated by words and the scale of effectiveness of the former rises together with the limitation of the randomness of the latter. The goal of political actions is to promote the psychological and practical aspect of the so-called "common good" and thus structuring thoughts and encouraging the activity of people towards realizing some specific supraindividual and practically palpable purposes. That is why the principles structuring political

discourse put convincing, persuasion and drumming up support above other principles – including truth[1]. The practice of gaining and maintaining power requires the use of effective persuasive measures which would co-create the current picture of reality. Therefore, it is possible to say that political power is a function of suitable communication tools[2]. On the other hand, its legitimacy means a certain approval or even the obedience to the successive linguistic expressions being the foundation of the so-called *psychological legitimacy*. Such a perspective justifies the focus on the concept of *discourse*[3].

The advantage of words over the other tools of power was already noticed in ancient Greek *polis.* The aim of political rhetoric was not as much about discovering truth as about persuasion towards it; while speech, being an instrument of political discussion and argumentation, demanded the democratic public as an arbiter. Such a formula of understanding politicness in the context of communication space of citizens' interactions emerged in bloom in Athenian democracy[4].

Although it is often emphasized that the so-called *linguistic turn* in philosophy and social sciences meant the revolution in perception of language and its role, it is still to be borne in mind that the apparent *linguistic turn* was a certain return to ancient Greek framework in that respect. *Linguistic turn* was based on the supposition of the primacy of language as a whole over concepts, which situated the meaning and the recognition of signs solely in relation to other signifiers and signified. Words ceased to be a mere technical supplement to ideas reflecting reality. They rather became autonomous beings. It was precisely that context that the category *discourse* occurred in, which category in relation to *language* – conceived of as a matrix of potential choices – was to denote the complex of actual choices. Therefore, it was about defining the concept which in the largest sense would mean "language in use". Distinguishing that category was reasonable as much as discourse was to be regarded as a system in which certain criteria govern the relations between choices of vocabulary. These criteria are determined by cognitive and

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[1] W. Wrzosek, *O myśleniu historycznym*, Bydgoszcz 2009, p. 125–129; see further: R. Rorty, *Przygodność, ironia i solidarność,* Warszawa 2009, pp. 121–153. Cambridge 1989.

[2] See further: M. Foucault, *Porządek dyskursu: wykład inauguracyjny wygłoszony w College de France 2 grudnia 1970,* Gdańsk 2002, pp. 7–16.

[3] Cf. D. Baecker, *Why systems?*, "Theory, Culture and Society" 2001, vol. 18, pp. 59–64; P. Łukomski, *Polityka jako dyskurs* , [in:] *Metafory polityki* vol. 3, ed. B. Karczmarek, Warszawa 2005, p. 87.

[4] J.P. Vernant, *Polis – przestrzeń obywateli*, "Res Publica" 1990, no 3, p. 11.

social attitudes, because of which some choices of vocabulary entails others, thus creating complexes called *collocations*[5].

Etymologically speaking, the term originates from the Latin words *discursus, discurere,* which mean: *running in different directions, dispersing, hurrying* but also *discussing*[6]. Lexically speaking, *discursive* means : following a certain algorithm in his or her ratiocination as well as being logical and reflexive. Then any mind equipped with such properties acts methodically in accordance with the derivation of conclusions from the assumed premises. Its opposite is intuitive mind, approving a result without argumentation or proof[7]. These are particularly philosophers conceptualizing discourse as an aspect of cognitive processes that make references to such connotations and combine discourse with moral issues. In the framework initiated by Immanuel Kant, discursive cognition is distinguished from other cognitive processes – among other things: intuition or sensibility. Therefore, discourse is conceived of as a set of rules for approaching true statements not through apodictic statements but through accepting and reflecting over a plurality of voices[8].

The general philosophical interpretation does not exhaust all the aspects of interpretation of the analyzed category but rather points at some properties of the epistemology immersed in pluralistic discourse. The more detailed theoretical operationalization demands the further distinction of *discourse sensu stricto* and *discourse sensu largo.* The former refers to the narrow linguistic interpretation, whereas the latter results from the interdisciplinary approach. It is Teun A. van Dijk that legitimizes that distinction by his own authority – Teun A. van Dijk being one of the most outstanding researchers of discourse[9].

According to linguistic tradition, that category (*discourse*) serves to differentiate the linguistic unit bigger than a single sentence. At the same time the unit is structured and is such that there is a reflection of a speaking subject coupled with the network of the relations with which he or she is bound to a receiver of a mes-

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[5] Cf. J.M. Sinclair, *Shared knowledge*, [in:] *Georgetown University Round Table on Languages and Linguistics*, ed. J. Alatis, Washington 1991, pp. 489–500.

[6] *Słownik łacińsko-polski*, zestawił K. Kumaniecki, Warszawa 1986, p. 166; *Słownik wyrazów obcych i zwrotów obcojęzycznych Władysława Kopalińskiego*, http://www.slownik-online.pl, accessed 5.01.2010.

[7] D. Julia, *Słownik filozofii*, Katowice 1998, p. 87.

[8] T. Krakowiak, *Analiza dyskursu – próba nakreślenia pola badawczego*, [in:] *Analiza dyskursu w socjologii i dla socjologii*, ed. A Horolets, Toruń 2008, p. 51.

[9] T.A. Van Dijk, *Discourse as structure and process*, London 1998, pp. 3–4.

sage. For instance, it is pointed out that discourse is "a continuous fragment of language, especially spoken, longer than a sentence, often building the coherent whole, such as a sermon, proof, joke or narration" or else as: "a linguistic sequence perceived as meaningful, complete and purposeful", or indeed as: "non-contradictory, coherent speech and coherent texts"[10]. On the other hand, it is often emphasized that it is "a sequence of linguistic behavior the form of which depends on who speaks to whom, in what situation and for what purpose" [11]. Generalizing, it can be stated that discourse means here "language in use" and it concerns the indirect domain between language regarded in abstract and formally and concrete speech acts[12]. Consequently, enterprising its analysis means the necessity of focusing the attention also on extra-linguistic contexts[13].

What is revealed here is the classical distinction made by de Saussure into *la langue* (language) and *la parole* (speech), that is respectively into the system governing speech production and the specific set of thus produced utterances. The attention of experts in discourse should be mainly concentrated on *la parole.* It is the system that manifests itself to the fullest in the social life practice and the meaning of which is determined by that very practice[14]. *Langue* does not have any reference to the external world but functions solely as a code, a matrix for communication. However, besides the use in discourse, it does not have any independent sense.

According to the interdisciplinary approach, discourse amounts to the framework of thinking in a particular area of social life which is determined by a common subject of speech and by its regularity and by its relation to other discourses[15]. It can also be said that discourse is a way of attributing meaning to the realm approached from a given perspective. In that case, discourse is not a set of texts but a combination of an utterance with the conditions of its occurrence. Meaning, constituted by *parole*, cannot be reduced to internal properties of an utterance. Meaning emerges as a combination of two constituents interwoven: a produced sentence on the basis of *langue* and circumstances (context) in which the very

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[10] D. Numan, *Introducing Discourse Analysis*, London 1993, p. 5, M. Fleischer, *Teoria kultury i komunikacji*, Wrocław 2002, p. 371 et al.

[11] S. Grabias, *Język w zachowaniach społecznych*, Lublin 1997, p. 264.

[12] T. Krakowiak, *Analiza dyskursu…*, pp. 50–51.

[13] J. Szacki, *Historia myśli socjologicznej*, Warszawa 2003, p. 905.

[14] F. de Saussure, *Course in general linguistics,* London 1983.

[15] A. Giddens, *Sociology*, Cambridge, Malden 2006 p. 1014, *passim*; M. Fleischer, *Teoria kultury…*, p. 371 et al.

sentence was produced. Only meaning articulated in that manner can be regarded as a discursive event. What is important, treating discourse as a historically conditioned system of meanings allows for distinguishing in its definition the key role to shape our identity. It happens so in the classical account by Michel Foucault[16].

The interdisciplinary approach presupposes the interplay between particular kinds of discursive events and specific realms of social life in which discursive events are operative. Revealing the afore-mentioned conceptual frameworks is mediated by communicative interactions; that's why discourse is often labeled as "the sphere of public communication" and is thought of as all the social communicative messages. With reference to this, some authors – for example Jürgen Habermas, pay special attention to that type of communication through which subjects discuss the realm of the validity of norms[17].

When discourse is considered within communicative relations and at the lower level of abstraction, it can be treated as the systems of relations with genuinely political character, which is due to the fact that forming discourses is related to the acts of social institutionalization through which power gives voice. In the process, there emerge the antagonisms and there are borderlines drawn distinguishing these who are inside a given discourse from these who are not. The production of discourses is connected with establishing a particular structure of relations among social actors, which is an act of power.[18]

There should be a distinction drawn between the problem of politicalness of discourse *sensu largo* – which shall be mentioned in greater details – and the categories of *discourse of politics* and *political discourse*. The former serves to denote the part of public discourse embracing politicians' utterances within the roles ascribed to them within political institutions. In other words, it is the discourse of people performing key functions in a political system and it is also related to the roles and political functions played by the people[19]. On the other hand, the discourse of symbolic elites concerning political issues is to be regarded as *political discourse*. Symbolic elites comprise the groups that exercise control over the publicly accessible knowledge, legitimate beliefs, the structure and contents of public

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[16] M. Foucault, *Archeologia wiedzy,* Warszawa 1977, p. 57.

[17] T.A. van Dijk, *Discourse as structure and process,* London 1998, pp. 1–34 ; P. Chilton, Ch. Schaffner, *Discourse and Politics*, [w:] *Discourse as Social Interaction, Discourse Studies: A Multidisciplinary Introduction. Volume 2*, ed. T.A. Van Dijk, London 1997, pp. 206–231.

[18] D. Howarth, *Dyskurs*, Warszawa 2008, pp. 24–25.

[19] M. Czyżewski, S. Kowalski, A. Piotrowski, *Wprowadzenie*, [in:] *Rytualny chaos: studium dyskursu publicznego*, ed. M. Czyżewski, S. Kowalski, A. Piotrowski, Kraków 1997, p. 16.

discourse, that is among others: press agents, journalists, writers, clergy, experts, businessmen or intellectuals. It can be said that public discourse is the space of exercising power, the essence of which is reducible to cultural-normative control[20]. The distinction between *discourse of politics* and *political discourse* seems to be justifiable and clear[21]. It is worth mentioning that some authors, for instance Stefan J. Rittel, although they discern the distinction between two perspectives, they do not introduce two separate terms but they write about *political discourse* and *political discourse* within politics and between its components[22]. In the context of the above-mentioned perspective, the latter will be *discourse of politics.* Subjective discrimination does not have a bearing on the existence of the common function which is reducible to explicit or implicit persuasion oriented at validating or delegitimizing the existent relations of domination/subordination.

Analysts of discourse attribute a fundamental role to the level of meaning which is usually of interest to semantics. The abstract and conceptual meaning of words as well as sentence sequences and the context of messages become a key. Semantic representations, interpreted by linguistics, are based on the belief that meaning is related to minds of communication participants and thus meaning attributed by language users and the very process is called *comprehension* or *interpretation.* Furthermore, especially within the context of politics, the fact that meanings are created along social dimension is of importance. Therefore, meanings should be related not as much to individual minds as to the interaction, groups and social structures[23].

Then a communicative event is a meaning articulated not only at the level of a sentence in a given language but also at the level of the context in which it was produced. In this respect, discourse is to be treated as a set of communication events aiming at mutual negotiations of meanings by the social actors partaking in it. In the meantime, meaning emerges due to interactions of the utterances

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[20] Ibidem, pp. 17–18.

[21] Distinguishing these two terms is justified since discourse can be treated as a category serving to differentiate sets of utterances existing in public sphere using the criterion of what domain of reality a given discourse is about. Thus, by using that criterion, one can arrive at such terms as: *media discourse, press discourse, gender discourse etc.*

[22] S.J. Rittel, *Komunikacja polityczna, Dyskurs polityczny. Język w przestrzeni politycznej*, Kielce 2003, pp. 96–97.

[23] Some scientists writen even about thus created social "primacy of interpretation" and about "interpretive communities". See further: S. Fish, *Interpretacja, retoryka polityka. Eseje wybrane*, Kraków 2002.

produced throughout communication events and its contexts[24]. The concept, operationalized in such a manner, encourages to ask questions pertaining to the status of the actors partaking in discursive processes as well as to the rules which are applied while privileging the meanings suggested by them. Discourse as so defined inevitably refers to the sphere of power and thus also to politics and that reference is not accidental.

If we assume the thesis about the key character of the aspect of meaning in discourse, it can be stated that it is the discursively determined systems of rules and differences that the parameters of attributed political meanings depend on[25]. As was mentioned, genetically speaking, discourses are not individual but they are aspects of the world of culture, being mutually related by lexicons and systems of meanings situated in social reality. Functioning within specified environs, institutions and processes – discourses co-create them and specify their nature. They structure the reality being simultaneously shaped by language and context, while the effect of the former can be interpreted as natural order, disguising the imposed system of classification as objectively adjusted to social reality[26]. Within discursive mechanisms, those meanings are therefore directly correlated with the processes of the negotiations and reproduction of the relation of power and ideology.

The above-mentioned interpretation conspicuously refers to Michel Foucault's reflection, in which discourse functions as a certain epistemological category serving not as much for the analysis of language as to the analysis of knowledge and power. The philosopher does not see the possibility of treating both systems separately. In his analyses, power/knowledge systems create the truth about themselves. Discourse is regarded here as a concrete historical practice forming entities which it concerns[27]. M. Foucault emphasizes that " Each society has its regime of truth, its "general politics" of truth: that is, the types of discourse which it accepts and makes function as true; the mechanism and instances which enable one to distinguish true and false statements, the means by which each is sanctioned; the techniques and procedures accorded value in the acquisition of truth; the status of those who are charged with saying what counts has true"[28]. Such a belief gives rise to a thesis that a citizen is forced to a certain *Lebensform* depending on the then operative truth discourse, which, in turn, gives rise to the so-called effects of

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[24] T.A. Van Dijk *Discourse as structure and process,* London 1998, pp. 30–34.
[25] see P. Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power*, Harvard 1991, pp. 105–106.
[26] T. Krakowiak, *Analiza dyskursu…*, p. 49.
[27] M. Foucault, *Archeologia wiedzy…*, p. 57.
[28] M. Foucault, *Powers/Knowledge (inteviews),* Brighton 1986, p. 131.

"normalization power"[29]. The last category is always based on a specific rationality. Consequently, there are as many rationalities as types of power relations in societies[30]. The practices of institutional activity are based on the manners and styles of thinking and are the incarnation of a given logic. Discourse materializes in rules and norms of the actions permissible and accepted in a given society. These possess normalizing potential[31]. Within them, individuals have a limited access to free rational subjective actions and that's why it can be stated that they are the product of the influence of discourses[32]. These, in turn, have always unstable character and what is important is that they are sensitive to the influence of political authorities excluded from the process of discourse creation.

In retrospect, the importance of M. Foucault's research can be appreciated. It gave a rise to discourse analysis within sociology and political science, the purpose of which became revealing the structure of knowledge/power systems and the assumptions implied in them[33]. However, it is to be emphasized that these are postmodernists that focus their attention on the particularism of worldviews endorsed by the discursive mechanisms of power – particularly political power. The starting point here is the fundamental premise about the mediacy of the social reality in a language, the latter of which is regarded as a system of differences. Postmodern movements have a common denominator in believing that different uses of language produce different regimes and different discourses functioning on the basis of different models of rationality. In that context, the thought of Jean-François Lyotard plays a key role. The fundamental rule seems to be *differentiation* itself, being the case of a conflict between at least two parties which cannot be resolved rationally due to the lack of objective rule of arbitration or the rule of justice. J.F. Lyotard emphasizes that resolving the differentiation or the evaluation of comparison of two parties shall always hurt either or perhaps even both[34].

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[29] M. Foucault, *Trzy typy władzy*, [in:] *Współczesne teorie socjologiczne, t. 1,* ed. A. Jasińska-Kania et al, Warszawa 2006, p. 513.

[30] Defining reality through defining a type of rationality is a basic tool by dint of which power establishes itself. It does not imply that power seeks for rationality criteria or creates knowledge. On the contrary, it means that power defines what is to be considered as rational or as knowledge and thus it defines what is to be considered as reality. see: S. Wróbel, *Władza i rozum*, Poznań 2002, p. 88.

[31] E.W. Said, *Foucault and the Imagination of Power*, [in:] *Foucault: A Critical Reader*, ed. D.E. Hoy, Oxford 1986, pp. 149–158.

[32] M. Foucault, *Nadzorować i karać*, Warszawa 1998, p. 189.

[33] M. Foucault, *Archeologia wiedzy…*, p. 77.

[34] See: J.F. Lyotard, *Kondycja ponowoczesna. Raport o stanie wiedzy*, Warszawa 1997.

With respect to politics, it is liberal democracy in particular that validates the clash of such incommensurable discourses. The lack of supreme metalanguage limits a possibility of creating universal norms lying at the basis of the so called "just politics". The search for them always uniforms and suppresses what is different. Each political organization – even liberal-democratic requires institutionalization and formalization of some rules of communal coexistence. It does not alter the fact that different social, national and cultural groups function to the large extent on the basis of different norms. Consequently, there are different rules of justice and rationality operative in them, and thus politics is conducted in different manners. However, these are the rules of a dominant discourse that determine what is right and normal and decide upon the interpretation and comprehension of norms, institutions and facts. In that context, the binding law is created and that is why discourse can be regarded as a tool or even the incarnation of power. On the other hand, the essence of politicalness becomes a communicational clash of discourses in a certain competition for domination and validation.

Contrary to scientific discourse, which builds the systems of verifiable and empirically corroborated hypotheses, political discourse has its own methods of affirming statements which can abstract from the rules of scientific discourse: for instance the rule of its own benefit as a way of acknowledging beliefs or verification through argumentation. Therefore, whereas the aim of science is approaching the truth; with respect to political discourse, truth is not an end in itself but is at most an instrument enhancing the forcefulness of persuasion due to its authority in culture. That is why, truth , being a vital element of political discourse, requires an analysis not as much under the auspices of logic or naturalistically understood science as within rhetoric and neo-rhetoric – including the modern theory of argumentation. In these fields, there is the issue of supremacy of goal stated, the goal being drumming up support, approval, readiness for action – including the role and importance of truth as an instrument of convincing and persuading[35].

Regarding political reality as the construction emerging from the process of confrontations and negotiations of meanings allows to treat it as an entity not as much discovered as created. Its existence has its foundation in the form of a language which transcends lexical and grammatical resources while also meaning the social practice of using them. Following the thought of Pierre'a Bourdieu, it can be reiterated that language is not only the structuring medium as it shapes the social

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[35] Ch. Perelman, *Imperium retoryki. Retoryka i argumentacja*, Warszawa 2002, p. 22.

structure through discourse – but also it is a structured medium since its capabil-
ity for shaping social structure is dependent on the position of an actor in the
configuration of power relation. By analogy, social representations can be regarded
both as a structure determined by claims about the world surrounding people and
as the process of building, reviving, adjusting and validating quasi-theories con-
cerning the explanation of the world, the theories being designed from the perspec-
tive rooted in the configuration of both individual and political interests. This very
context can provide an interesting theoretical-methodological framework to the
research on politics.

In this context, there can emerge the phenomenon described in professional
literature as manipulation or "the corruption of discourse". The author of the latter
label is Garry Woodward, who presents four types of the above-mentioned cor-
ruption: coercion, fraud, mystification and the displacement of meaning[36]. These
overuses are related to producing truth discourse in politics, in which truth is
treated as being instrumental. Manipulation by linguistic means is full-blown here
and occurs at the very moment when a politician ponders about the wording to
appeal to a receiver[37].

Discourse as a range of meanings of politics provides its subjects with the
explanation of the world and the patterns of its understanding. The latter are
constructed by the reference to contextual conditions. That is the reason why
discourse is of particular and dynamic nature and it lays ground not only for
individual identities but also for collective ones. One has to agree with the quite
popular opinion, reiterated by Michael Pêcheux, among others, that discourse is
a point of intersection between language and ideology[38]. In politics, its ideologically
determined normative aspect plays a special role. Within that normative aspect,
constructing rules of justice is vital. On the other hand, another important property
of discourse is its performativity, which means that it can be regarded as a form of
political actions. Thus, resulting utterances combined with their interactional
context or a argumentative sequence assume the form of evaluations, critique,
claims, creed, defence etc[39]. In John L. Austin's terms, performativity relates not
only to sentences describing external reality or stating facts but also to sentences

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[36] G.C. Woodward, *Korupcja dyskursu politycznego: jej cztery odmiany*, [in:] *Władza i społeczeństwo*, ed. J. Szczupaczyński, Warszawa 1995, p. 207.

[37] P. Pawełczyk, *Socjotechniczne aspekty gry politycznej*, Poznań 2000, p. 171.

[38] M. Pêcheux, *Discourse – Structure or Event*, [in:] *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, ed. C. Nelson, L. Grossberg, London 1988, pp. 633–648.

[39] T. Krakowiak, *Analiza dyskursu…*, pp. 51–52.

calling into being something they talk about. "There exists something that at the moment of its articulation is being done by a person engaged in a speech act" – and such a speech act carries more weight than a mere meaning because –as explained by John L. Austin – it also brings perlocutionary effects[40]. It was also Hannah Arendt that wittily summarized the essence of performativity by saying: "No other human performance requires speech to the same extent as action[41]".

As a recapitulation of the above conclusions, one can cite/invoke the concept of a discursively understood language introduced by Paul Ricoeur. He characterizes the analyzed category by dint of the properties the importance of which also relates to political dimension.

  – discourse is endowed with temporal dimension and it always has the nature of event. Discursive events –as opposed to language, which is abstract and not considered diachronically – are always located in time and is distinct as having the inner structure of consecutive utterances in which the meaning of the following sentence results from the meaning of the preceding one.

  – discourse is always somebody's discourse – be it pronounced or read out by a given agent (the identity of authors and interpreters of a given message is relevant to the proper construal of its meaning). On the other hand, language is suprapersonal by nature, that is it is connected more with a society than with a given individual.

  – discourse always contains the reference to external conditions in which it is immersed – it always exists in specified circumstances and in a meaningful period of time. Language makes no reference to external reality.

  – only discourse can have signifying aspect to it (in other words: only discourse can convey meanings). Language exists exclusively as a code or a matrix for communication and it has no independent sense outside discourse[42].

The implications of the distinguished properties of discourse conceived of as an interpretative dimension of politics incites some researchers to make normative claims towards its implementation. In this respect, the concepts of *deliberative democracy* and the widely debated thought of J. Habermas has been recently par-

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[40] J.L. Austin, *Jak działać słowami*, [in:] Tenże, *Mówienie i poznawanie. Rozprawy i wykłady filozoficzne,* Warszawa 1993, p. 606.

[41] H. Arendt *The human condition*, Chicago 1958.

[42] P. Ricoeur, *Model tekstu. Znaczące działanie rozważane jako tekst*, [in:] *Współczesne teorie socjologiczne, vol.2,* ed. A. Jasińska-Kania et al, Warszawa 2006, p. 1002.

ticularly noticeable[43]. They share the assumption that creating public opinion within open discourse takes more than the guarantee that nobody will be excluded from the communication sphere. One often underlines the necessity for its participants to assume the attitude of mutual respect and impartiality. J. Habermas writes as follows: "In rational discourse, we assume that conditions of communication obtain that (1) prevent a rationally unmotivated termination of argumentation, (2) secure both freedom in the choice of topics and inclusion of the best information and reasons through universal and equal access to, as well as equal and symmetrical participation in, argumentation, and (3) exclude every kind coercion – whether originating outside the process of reaching understanding or within in – other than that of the better argument, so that all that motifs except that of the cooperative search for truth are neutralized"[44]. The above-mentioned postulates are to prevent the limitation of political pluralism for the sake of authoritative domination of some metadiscourse. The postulates are still valid with respect to using communication tools in order to manipulate citizens/electors. The realization of the growing importance of language in political life leads to the increased intervention oriented at controlling and shaping linguistic practices. That characteristic property of the discursive dimension of politics is labeled as *technologization* or indeed as *technocratization* of discourse. It encompasses systematic and institutionalized integration of research on language and designing as well as improving linguistic practices and training politicians involved in them.

Nowadays, the so-called *New Media* additionally revolutionizes the sphere of political communication. Whereas, in the modern era, there could be observed

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[43] A. Gutman, D. Thompson, *Why Deliberative Democracy?*, New Jersey 2004, pp. 3–7; A. Laska, *Ideotwórczy wymiar dyskursu politycznego w demokracji deliberatywnej*, [in:] *Między domkniętą a otwartą myślą polityczną. Szkice z najnowszej refleksji politycznej*, ed. R. Backer, J. Marszałek-Kawa, Toruń 2006, pp. 7–17. The interpretation of Jurgen Habermas' philosophy in Polish professional literature: A. Szahaj, *Krytyka, emancypacja, dialog. Jurgen Habermas w poszukiwaniu nowego paradygmatu teorii krytycznej*, Warszawa 1991; A.M. Kaniowski*, Filozofia społeczna Jurgena Habermasa. W poszukiwaniu jedności teorii i praktyki*, Warszawa 1990; A. Szahaj, *Teoria krytyczna szkoły frankfurckiej*, Warszawa 2008.

[44] Jurgen *Habermas Between facts and norms:contributions to a discourse theory of law and democracy*, pp. 247–248 , Cambridge 1996. J. Habermas also presents a typology of practical discourses. He distinguishes pragmatic discourse, ethical-political discourse and moral discourse. The first is concerned with finding the most suitable means for achieving goals. The second one relates to explaining and rational shaping of the common *Lebensform*. The last one is concerned with establishing what are common interests of all human beings. Democractic deliberation encompasses all three discourses.

a certain consolidation of a society around the opinions expressed in the press; nowadays, the accessibility of multifarious means of communications pluralizes a society. Nevertheless, that does not imply that it does not mean that a society cannot consolidate as an independent subject[45]. However, in democracy, the articulation of many particular discourses expressing often conflicting interests is possible. According to Luc Boltanski, agreement and the determination of common will by dint of communication processes are possible due to the special competences acquired by a mature social system. They are based on the capability of formulating claims within the system of explanations understood by all the participants of the communication event. In that case, "understood" means "formulated in harmony with *Zeitgeist*", that is the system of internalized norms and codes determining the commonly shared definitions of concepts – mostly those relevant to an axiological system[46]. On the other hand, J. Habermas writes about *Lebenswelt* (life-world), which is a certain amount of knowledge which equips people with unproblematic beliefs, being the hidden background of communication. Reaching mutual understanding requires using well-established definitions of things and situations or verifying newly-emerging definitions by resorting to established ones[47].

Therefore, regardless of the postmodern critique or the fear of the dominance of any metadiscourse, for the effectiveness of political process conceptualized in terms of discursive negotiations, it is the existence of a minimal amount of commonly shared meanings that is indispensible for the ground for understanding. That remark refers further to extra-political dimension of public sphere and also related to social communication as such.

The already mentioned *linguistic turn* in philosophy and social sciences meant linguistization of reality as a subject of research. The awareness of socially constructed knowledge entailed researchers' claim about the equal validity of paradigms of description and investigation of reality, which are discourses themselves. In the seventies, *discourse analysis* emerged, which was an interdisciplinary branch of research. The discipline is located between applied linguistics and sociology of language and knowledge[48]. Its purpose was to point to the manner of creating and

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[45] E. Bendyk, *Miłość, wojna, rewolucja. Szkice na czas kryzysu*, Warszawa 2009, p. 298.
[46] Ibidem, pp. 61–62.
[47] J. Habermas, *Teoria działania komunikacyjnego*, T. 2, *Przyczynek do krytyki rozumu funkcjonalnego*, Warszawa 2002, p. 222.
[48] M. Czyżewski, S. Kowalski, A. Piotrowski, *Wprowadzenie…*, p. 10.

debunking the discourses constituting social reality through communication practices. Among the major theoretical standpoints, critical linguistics was quickly distinguished as a branch (East-England school). The standpoint derived its social theory from the works by George Orwell or Michail Bachtin and to a lesser extent also from J. Habermas and M. Foucault; while it derived the linguistic theory from the early version of transformational-generative grammar by N.Chomsky and later from the functional grammar by Michael Halliday.

The greatest role was played by Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), associated with Norman Fairclougha, Ruth Wodak i Teun A. van Dijk[49]. The movement was then conspicuously oriented at the research on political issues and exercising power, enforced or relinquished by dint of discourse[50]. The very movement made a direct reference to the thought of Frankfurt School, whose representatives pointed out that language can be instrumentally taken advantage of by the groups holding power and it is a medium of ideology[51]. CDA regards discourse as a form of social practice, which presupposes a dialectic relation between a specific discursive event and situations, institutions and social structure within which a given discourse is operative. That relation is bilateral by nature, that is, as was mentioned earlier, a discursive event has not only a potential for creating structures but is susceptible to being shaped by an existent structure as well. Discourse can help to maintain the social *status quo* as well as contribute to its change. Discourse practices – through the ways in which they represent things and rank people – can yield radical ideological repercussions and may foster creating and reproducing unequal relations of power between given social groups. People do not often realize either the ideological aspect of a language in use or relations of power lying at the basis

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[49] The major works by Teun van Dijk are often cited in the present article. The following titles belong to the finest interpretations of the afore-mentioned researchers. N. Fairclough, *Critical Discourse Analysis: The Critical Study of Language*, London 1995; N. Fairclough, R. Wodak, *Critical Discourse Analysis*, [in:] *Discourse as Social Interaction*, ed. T. van Dijk, London 1997, pp. 258–284, the excerpt from the last book in Polish: N. Fairclough, R. Wodak, *Krytyczna analiza dyskursu*, [in:] *Współczesne teorie socjologiczne, vol. 2…,* pp. 1047–1056.

[50] R. de Beaugrande, *Krytyczna analiza dyskursu a znaczenia "demokracji" w wielkim korpusie*, [in:] *Krytyczna analiza dyskursu. Interdyscyplinarne podejście do komunikacji społecznej*, ed. A. Duszak, N. Fairclough, Kraków 2008, pp. 108–109.

[51] Such a thesis was explicitly presented by –among others – Theodor Adorno, pointing out that language is not a neutral medium, but is an instrument shaped by history and socio-political relations. He also claimed it serves to reproduce them. He demonstrated how certain types of philosophical, sociological and literary language are subordinated to power and identity. That instrumentalization was, according to him, the instrumentalization of reason; see. T. Adorno, *Dialektyka negatywna*, Warszawa 1986, p. 223.

of it. The purpose of CDA is to detect these implicit aspects of discourse[52]. The scientists, analyzing the cases of overusing power; domination and inequality – expressed and reiterated within discourse – are actively engaged in investigated topics and phenomena. Many a time, they express their political beliefs, they opt for partiality and try to demystify the structures of domination through their analyses. Analysis, description and the formulation of a theory play a key role as long as they allow for better understanding and more effective criticism of social inequalities being in effect due to sex and ethnic differences, class belonging, religion, language, sexual orientation and other criteria helping to distinguish between individuals. Then, their fundamental goal is not just scientific by nature but also social and political. The representatives of CDA, observing the relation between communication and social structures, try to advocate changes[53].

Generalizing, it is to be emphasized that discursive approach can be subsumed under hermeneutic traditions of analysis. It throws down the gauntlet to the belief maintaining that the purpose of scientific investigations is the explanation of social phenomena by dint of universal analytic tools, which in practice means "smuggling" the methods of natural sciences as well as formulating universal falsifiable theories. The aim here is not so much an objective explanation but at most understanding and the interpretation of social interactions contributing to concept formation, aiming at grasping the essence of what is being said or done. As a result, one of the main functions of discourse theory is discovering the historically conditioned rules and conventions responsible for producing accidental concepts in specified contexts[54]. Rejecting essentialist theories explaining the emergence of knowledge is entailed by the belief that there is no single proper form of representing the world of meanings and entities.

The discursive approach assumes that the subject matter of political sciences is not simply given and accessible to experience as a brute fact but it is created within specific and historically conditioned systems of knowledge. The truth value of the theory is not arbitrated by any independent and objective dimension. Instead, the key role here is played by the standards of specified systems of knowledge. Such reasoning questions the primacy of objectivity over conceptual framework and it

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[52] N. Fairclough, R. Wodak, *Krytyczna analiza…*, p. 1047.

[53] See P. Chilton, *Brakujące ogniwo KAD: moduły, amalgamaty i instynkt krytyczny*, [in:] *Krytyczna analiza dyskursu. Interdyscyplinarne…*, pp. 65–66.

[54] D. Howarth, *Dyskurs…*, pp. 194–196; P. Winch, *Idea nauki o społeczeństwie i jej związki z filozofią*, Warszawa 1995, pp. 32, 87–90, 130–131.

reduces the question of truth to the very framework. Furthermore, not only objects of study but also the very researchers of politics are social constructs, being at the same time certain products of practices contributing to concept formation. Therefore, a political scientist is to be aware of the rules and conventions governing his or her research practice to the same extent as of the rules pertaining to his or her subject matter. That is why he or she cannot skip the general assumptions from which he or she starts conducting the analysis. The said assumptions preclude the eventual agreement concerning the suitably chosen methods.

Following the thought of Teun v. Dijk, who reduces the major dimensions of discourse to a) the use of language b) communicating ideas and c) social interactions; one can distinguish three areas of research problems. During analysis, they identify various levels, units and constructions of discourse as well as rules and strategies of their use. In that context, an interdisciplinary strategy becomes indispensible. The aim of the strategy is to explain: "how people use language, think and interact and thus enact and reproduce their groups, societies and cultures"[55]. So, its main purpose is reducible to the integrated description of the said dimensions of communication.

A discourse researcher in political science considers various types of linguistic and extralinguistic samples – speeches, reports, manifestos, interviews and political party platforms – as parts of discourse enabling agents to experience the world of objects, words and practices within the realm of politics[56]. The purpose of its analysis is to recreate and reconstruct the practices contributing to concept formation initiated by political actors. Nonetheless, the key role is attributed to elaborating new interpretations of phenomena and processes and explaining their sense through the analysis how particular agents create concepts within incomplete and open social structures. It all means researching specific structures within which political actors make decisions and articulate specific discursive formations. Such an analysis should be placed within larger historical and social contexts, which allows for disclosing new meanings and establishing the starting point for any potential critique and the transformation of the existents conceptual frameworks. In the explanations offered by discourse theoreticians, one cannot help but notice certain interpretations of entities constituted within their area of research. The appropriateness of such a theory is evaluated in terms of the degree in which it provides convincing explanations of social phenomena.

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[55] Teun v. Dijk *Discourse as structure and process*, London 1998, p. 33.
[56] D. Howarth, *Dyskurs…*, p. 25.

The analysis of political discourse is correct and empirically relevant when it manages to combine the properties of discursive structures with the properties of political processes. In this respect, it becomes necessary to integrate the methodological approaches of political science and linguistics and limiting one's scope of interest to the level of text is a grave methodological error. That is because discourses are semiotic contexts of political practice and thus they are a distinct dimension of political systems.