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Discourse

This new and engaging introduction offers a critical approach to discourse, written by an expert uniquely placed to cover the subject for a variety of disciplines. Organised along thematic lines, the book begins with an outline of the basic principles, moving on to examine the methods and theory of CDA (critical discourse analysis). It covers topics such as text and context, language and inequality, choice and determination, history and process, ideology and identity. Blommaert focuses on how language can offer a crucial understanding of wider aspects of power relations, arguing that critical discourse analysis should specifically be an analysis of the *effects* of power, what power does to people, groups, and societies, and how this impact comes about. Clearly argued, this concise introduction will be welcomed by students and researchers in a variety of disciplines involved in the study of discourse, including linguistics, linguistic anthropology, and the sociology of language.

JAN BLOMMAERT is Professor of African Linguistics and Sociolinguistics at Ghent University. He has undertaken fieldwork in East and Southern Africa, and in 2002–2003 he was awarded the *Emile Verhaeren Chair* at the Free University of Brussels. He is the author of *State Ideology and Language in Tanzania* (1999), co-author of *Debating Diversity* (1998), editor of *Language Ideological Debates* (1999), and co-editor of the *Handbook of Pragmatics* (1995–2002). He has also published in a wide variety of journals.

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For Dell H. and John G.

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Preface

It is a wonderful opportunity to be able to produce a synthesis of work which in the present economy of academic publishing is dispersed over too many fragmented little bits. The opportunity was offered to me by Andrew Winnard of Cambridge University Press, to whom I express my gratitude. This is indeed a synthesis of thoughts and approaches developed over many years, and evidently too many people were involved in this process of development to even attempt to thank them all. I shall (have to) restrict myself here to those who directly influenced the genesis of this particular book.

There are, first, a number of intellectual partners who will undoubtedly find many echoes in this book of conversations I had with them over the years. My close friends in the Flemish National Science Foundation network on Language, Power, and Identity are prominent among them. Jim Collins, Monica Heller, Ben Rampton, Stef Slembrouck, and Jef Verschueren have not only discussed almost all the issues treated here repeatedly and at great length with me, they have also read drafts of the book and provided extremely important comments and suggestions. Dell Hymes, John Gumperz (to whom I dedicate this book), Michael Silverstein, and Ron Scollon are all great sources of inspiration for my approach and also provided tons of illuminating comments and useful suggestions on the manuscript. From slightly further afield, I am sure that people such as John Haviland, Kit Woolard, Sue Gal, Brian Street, Bob Hodge, Nik Coupland, Johannes Fabian, and Judy Irvine will find numerous traces of their own work here, either because of the usual technique of reading and adopting, or because of direct contacts I had with them.

I was able to write the draft of this book in the excellent and generous environment provided to me by the Department of Anthropology of the University of Chicago during the Winter Quarter of 2003. With the astonishing Regenstein Library as my working instrument, Paige Davis and Anne Ch'ien ensuring that I could work without being bothered by administrative or organisational details, and weather cold

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enough to lock me behind my writing table, the writing conditions were just ideal. Add to this the exceptionally stimulating intellectual environment provided by people such as Michael Silverstein, Sue Gal, Marshall Sahlins, George Stocking, Rob Moore, Flagg Miller, Sali Mufwene, Mara Tapp, and many others. And add to this, finally, a group of excellent students who were eager to serve as the first-line audience for the ideas I was developing in my writing cell. Some of them don't know it, but a number of the ideas in this book emerged directly from talks I had with them (Gretchen, Matt, Elif, Christie, Jaclyn, Cassie, and the others: thanks). It was a treat.

The same goes for my colleagues and students at home. I have had outstanding groups of students all along, totally committed to what they do and not afraid of explorative and innovative work, a privilege to work with but far too numerous to thank individually. May it suffice to say that almost all of this was developed as a result of my teaching work with them and my involvement in their individual projects which provided me with rich and widely varied empirical data. People such as Chris Bulcaen, Karel Arnaut, Michael Meeuwis, Katrijn Maryns, and Annelies Verdoolaege have been inspiring collaborators and critical, but always supportive, readers of my work. Thanks to all of them.

Nothing can work, of course, without a family supporting such adventures and tolerant enough to suffer the long physical and mental absences that were part of this writing process. Therefore: Pika, Fred, and Alex, thanks and sorry. I am also sorry that my father, Paul Blommaert, did not live to see the completion of this book. This book is therefore also tied to memories of loss.

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Various parts of this book have been previously published, sometimes in co-authorship with colleagues, all of whom I wish to thank for allowing me to re-use the product of our collective efforts. Thus, the groundwork for chapter 2 was laid in Jan Blommaert and Chris Bulcaen (2000) 'Critical discourse analysis' (*Annual Review of Anthropology* 29: 447–466). Large parts of chapter 3 are drawn from Jan Blommaert (2001), 'Context is/as Critique' (*Critique of Anthropology* 21/1: 13–32). The section on 'inequality and the narrative order' in chapter 4 analyses data originally discussed in Jan Blommaert, Kay McCormick, and Mary Bock (2002), 'Narrative inequality and hearability in the TRC Hearings' (*LPI Working Paper* 8, Ghent, London, Toronto, Albany). And in the same chapter, the section on 'inequality, literacy and globalisation' partly recapitulates an analysis presented in Jan Blommaert (2003) 'Commentary: a sociolinguistics of globalization' (*Journal of Sociolinguistics* 7/4: 607–623). In chapter 6, section 6.5 was originally presented in Jan Blommaert (1997) *Workshopping: Notes on Professional Vision in Discourse Analysis* (Antwerp: UIA-GER). And finally, section 7.5 originally appeared as Jan Blommaert (1997) 'The slow shift in orthodoxy (re)formulations of "integration" in Belgium' (*Pragmatics* 7/4: 499–518). I am grateful to Annual Reviews, Inc., Sage Publications, and Blackwell for permission to include these materials in this book.