Jesper Tingaard Svendsen
University of Southern Denmark

THE POWER OF THE TEXTBOOK: A FRAMEWORK FOR ANALYSING THE CONSTRUCTION OF PEDAGOGIC IDENTITIES AND PEDAGOGIC KNOWLEDGE IN TEXTBOOKS

Introduction

The textbook is one of the examples of mass media that is most difficult to avoid in society (Selander, 1991). In leisure time it is possible to choose whether you want to read magazines, watch thrillers or whatever. But the textbook is not a medium you choose. It has already been chosen by the educational institutions we join during our childhood. In this way, the textbook is an element of everyday school life with the same inevitability as desks, chairs, doors, boards, teachers and so on.

Because of this inevitability and the accompanying 'naturalness' related to the textbook (Selander, Åkerfeldt & Engström, 2007), there is good reason to focus on it. If we temporarily suspend the primary function of the textbook – to be a tool to enhance learning – it appears as a complex structure formed and informed by many rules, requirements and experiences (Johnsen, et al., 1999) with reference outwards to a number of contexts – academic, educational, political, moral, economic etc. (Johnsen, et al., 1998).

If, then, we regard the textbook as a hybrid and multifarious text one central question arises: who or what has the power to define its content, including its themes, methods and privileged subject positions? In the process of examining these issues Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), and more specifically Norman Fairclough's dialectical-relational version of it, constitutes an ideal approach.

Discourse Analysis – a theoretical framework

One of the main objectives of CDA is to grasp, expose and point up chances to overcome the abuse of power (Fairclough, Mulderrig & Wodak, 2011; van Dijk, 2001), and according to CDA, power relations are always discursive. The text is a particularly privileged place to identify social abuse of power, and a key point in Fairclough's version of CDA is to understand the text's nature, how it is embedded in discursive processes and to be able to analyse discursive and social change on the basis of it (Fairclough, 1989; 1992; 1995).

According to Fairclough, a text can be regarded from two different perspectives. On the one hand it is the material created by the user of language, not least a constitution of distinct units in the form of words and phrases. On the other hand, the text can be understood as a product of an extensive, discursive process. As Fairclough expresses it:

> A text is a product rather than a process – product of the process of text production. […] The formal properties of a text can be regarded from the perspective of discourse analysis on the one hand as traces of the productive process, and on the other hand as cues in the process of interpretation. (Fairclough, 1989, p. 20)

Elsewhere, Fairclough compares the text to the tip of an iceberg (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997), and in order to operationalize the analysis of the complex discursive and structural processes which lie underneath this tip, Fairclough works with a three-dimensional theoretical framework in the analysis of the communicative event. The frame is trans-disciplinary and consists of the dimensions of text, discursive practice and socio-cultural practices (Fairclough, 1989; 1992; 1995).

In the analysis of the dimension of the text, Fairclough focuses on formal linguistic features and operates with four main categories: vocabulary, text structure, grammar and coherence (Fairclough, 1992). In the analysis of the discursive practice, he focuses on the conditions for the production, distribution and consumptions of the text. Here he questions the discourses and genres that are drawn on in the process of production and consumption, and a key concept for the analysis of this level of text analysis is intertextuality. Based on (among others) M.M. Bakhtin, Fairclough sees intertextuality as the way "texts are constructed through other texts being articulated in particular ways, ways which depend upon and change with social circumstances" (Fairclough, 1992, p. 9). At this level, a central question is whether we find the discursive practice to be conventional or creative (Fairclough, 1995): Are the texts drawing on discourses that come from not yet known practices, and do we in that way find a new (hybrid) discourse?

Genre is also a key concept for the analysis of the discursive practice. Fairclough draws in his definition of genres again on M.M. Bakhtin and thus on an understanding of genres as "the drive belts from the history of society to the history of language" (Bakhtin, 1986, p. 65; Fairclough, 1992, p. 126). If we find signs of new mixtures of genre, there will also be signs of new ways to produce and consume texts, and this might suggest changes at a more structural level. In this way, focus will switch to the level of socio-cultural practices which comprises the broader political, economic, cultural and ideological factors. This level has both discursive and non-discursive elements (Fairclough, 1992, p. 66) and the analysis of the level involves sociological and cultural theory (here theorists like Habermas, Foucault, Giddens, Gramsci, Althusser are often included).

In detecting inappropriate power inequalities, CDA in general has focused attention on a number of areas, which include not only gender, media and politics but also specific institutional texts in order to examine the (re)production of inequality and the role of the language in that connection. Educational institutions also have had a central place in these analyses (see, for instance, an overview in van Dijk 2001), and Fairclough in particular has on several occasions analysed the transformation of the English education system in late modern society (Fairclough, 1989; 1992; 1995; 1999; Wodak & Fairclough, 2008; 2010).

In working specifically with the critical analysis of textbooks, there is a need for a more nuanced understanding of the rules fundamental to educational discourse, and in this work the British sociologist Basil Bernstein as 'a middle range theorist' supplements Fairclough's three-dimensional framework by providing a mediating link between grand theories of modernity and the analysis of specific types of discourses (Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999). As Chouliaraki (2001) puts it, Basil Bernstein's late work contributes to critical discourse analysis by addressing, "how a specific institutional context enforces a particular social relation" (p. 47, my translation) and in so doing he sharpens the focus on how pedagogical knowledge and pedagogical identities are constructed in the educational system.

Basil Bernsteins Pedagogic Device – a meso-level perspective

Bernstein suggests that the meeting between power, knowledge and modalities of consciousness is established and controlled by a Pedagogic Device (Bernstein, 1990, p. 204). The Pedagogic Device is defined as consisting of "the distributive, recontextualizing, and evaluative rules for specializing forms of consciousness" (Bernstein, 1990, p. 181), and the relationship between these rules is basically hierarchical.

The hierarchical relationship is primarily due to the distributive rules gatekeeper-function. These rules 'guard' the dominant discursive system by determining the borders between the 'think-able' and available knowledge and the 'un-thinkable' and thus non-available knowledge. Through this control over the various potential discursive systems, the relationship between power, social groups and forms of consciousness is *regulated* and simultaneously *formed* (Bernstein 1990, p. 28). Roughly speaking, the exercise of this control function takes place primarily in the upper part of the education system, such as the universities, while the actual *use* (*re*production) of the 'think-able knowledge' takes place primarily at the lower levels of the educational system (Bernstein, 1990, p. 29).

According to Bernstein, the reproduction of 'think-able knowledge' is regulated by a number of recontextualising rules. In the recontextualisation processes, Bernstein distinguishes between the primary context of the discourse and the (new) secondary

context (from this the term re-contextualisation). He refers to the distance between the two contexts as the space in which ideology can play its part. New relationships are constructed, allowing imaginary objects, including 'imaginary subjects' (since the subject-role is abstracted from its concrete heritage and the practice it was developed in) to be constituted (Bernstein, 1990, p. 38). *Transfer* leads to *transformation*.

When the purpose is to analyse the construction of pedagogical knowledge and pedagogical identities in textbooks, *the official pedagogic discourse* is of specific interest (Bernstein, 1990, p. 195). The official pedagogic discourse is constituted at the intersection between the *official recontextualizing field* and *the pedagogic recontextualizing field*. The official recontextualizing field is the domain of the state, and it carries a number of *dominant principles* that set the context for policies, relationships and identities. These principles reflect the balance of power between different political parties and interest groups, and they are enacted through the ministries, including officials and consultants from official educational state agencies, from the economic field and from the field of symbolic control (Bernstein, 1990, p. 196). The *pedagogic recontextualizing field* consists of teachers, high school and elementary school, for example, as well as of journals, private foundations and associations (Bernstein, 1990, p. 33). According to Bernstein, there is always a principle which "regulates the range of alternative principles available for selection," and this principle, "varies according to the dominant principles of a given society" (Bernstein, 1990, p. 184).

In analysing textbooks the question is which field – and there by which recontextualizing rules – has the power to dominate the construction of the pedagogic knowledge and the pedagogic identities and by that to provide "a symbolic ruler of consciousness" (Bernstein, 2000 p. 36). However, Bernstein makes only limited reference to the specific analyse of the construction of the textbook in his work (Bernstein, 1990, p. 34, 185). But in the research on teaching resources we find theories and approaches that can help to elaborate this viewpoint and that are compatible with both Bernstein's and Fairclough's work.

The textbook as a specific research area

Research into teaching resources has grown significantly in the last 10-15 years. Denmark has seen the formation of both a national research consortium (DREAM: Danish Research Centre on Education and Advanced Media Materials) and a national research centre (Læremiddel.dk) with a distinctive focus on learning tools. Educational programmes have also created their profile around a specific focus on teaching resources. Research into teaching resources has developed in several directions, often characterised as occupying three categories involving materials for learning that is oriented towards process, application or product (Svensson, 2000; Olsen, 2005; Drotner, 2006).

Where process-oriented research focuses on the production and distribution of teaching resources, and the application-oriented research focus on *how* teaching resources are used in teaching (including issues such as access and adequacy), the product-oriented research addresses more specifically the *content* (for example, its selection and presentation (Johnsen, et al., 1999).

One of the pioneers of the product-oriented approach is the Swedish professor of educational texts Stefan Selander. In line with Norman Fairclough's dialectical-relational discourse analysis, Selander (1991) suggests that teaching resources may be seen as expressions of wider social and paradigmatic patterns. He argues that teachers as well as pupils should acquire (meta)knowledge of how teaching resources select and structure knowledge (e.g. Selander 1991, p. 37, 80; Selander, 1999, p. 9). Furthermore, Selander's understanding of the textbook as text that is embedded in an institution has notable similarities with Bernstein's thoughts on recontextualization. As Selander claims:

The basic idea with the text-book is [...] not to pretend new knowledge per se, but to reproduce already known knowledge. From this follows the problem of transformation. (Selander, 1991, p. 56, Selander's underlining)

In contrast to Bernstein, Selanders' approach is more inductively oriented, as his starting point for the analysis of transformational processes within the educational system is the textbook. For this reason, Selander works with an extensive, interdisciplinary conceptual framework of text-oriented analysis, targeting the textbook as a specific genre (see e.g. Selander, 1988; 1991).

According to Selander, a key characteristic of the textbook as genre is its impression of unity. A process involving many choices and rejections, highlightings and priorities has been pushed into the background in favour of a coherent and readable text (Selander, Åkerfeldt, & Engström, 2007, p. 24). This unity makes it difficult to gain insight into criteria for selection and the processes of reformulation that have been part of the production process (Selander, 1991). A central analytical tool to open up the ideological level of the text book is *comparison*:

The point is that what is hidden under the level of explanations and ideologies, is often embedded and seen as "natural". A systematic and comparative approach is needed to pull it out in the daylight. (Selander, 1991, p. 53)

Other ways to explore real agenda of the textbook include analysis of how the content is structured, reflected, for instance, in the introductory remarks for teachers, of exercises and assignments in the book, of examples, of the use of images and their positioning, of the plot structure of the book, the chapters and the paragraphs, of the 'style' of the book, including the author's voice (e.g. fluent and narrative, objective and down-to-earth, and so on), of ways of addressing the pupil (e.g. you, I, we etc.), of

reference shapes (e.g. 'real reference') and of the specific choice of words (e.g. expert expression vs. everyday terminology) (Selander, 1988; 1991; 1999).

Furthermore, Selander stresses that there are a number of special (inter)texts that are of particular interest in the analysis of the textbook. These include, for example, the two categories he calls 'texts *about* pedagogy/instruction' and 'texts *for* pedagogy/ instruction'. The first category includes, in particular, curricula, scientific and popular scientific texts on pedagogy and education. The second category includes additional instructions on the curriculum, including specified legal regulations, and different types of learning materials produced with teaching in mind, including textbooks, exercise books, reading books, etc.

Conclusions

It is hardly possible to incorporate comprehensive diachronic and synchronic meta-analyses of the textbooks for the whole range of subject areas pupils may encounter during their time at school. However, it should be possible to encourage pupils to question the knowledge and subject positions that are presented to them in their textbooks. The trans-disciplinary framework (e.g. Chouliaraki & Fairclough 1999; Fairclough, 2001) formulated here to analyse textbooks as bearers and creators of overall societal presumptions should be understood as a heuristic for such analyses.

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Jesper Tingaard Svendsen

The power of the textbook: A framework for analysing the construction of pedagogic identities and pedagogic knowledge in textbooks

Summary

The main premise of this paper is that the textbook should be understood to be at one and the same time a particularly powerful document to establish and maintain dominant discourses and a seismograph for the reading such discourses. In this way, the textbook is not just at tool to enhance learning but also a place where pedagogic identities and pedagogic knowledge is constructed. Among other subject matters, Fairclough has attached great importance to the analysis of educational discourses. Nevertheless, he has not made a specific focus on the textbook as specific genre. Against this background, the paper constitutes a theoretical and analytical framework for examining textbooks on multiple levels based on Norman Fairclough's version of Critical Discourse Analysis, Basil Bernstein's theory of the Pedagogic Device and elements of current research in textbooks that are compatible with a critical discourse analytical tradition.

Keywords: pedagogic identities, pedagogic knowledge, Critical Discourse Analysis, textbooks.