The Assessment of Critical Discourse Analysis Findings:  
The Ethical Parameters of Domination and Agency  
in the Wake of an Industrial Accident

John E. Ingulsrud  
Takanori Kawamata

Abstract
Practitioners of critical discourse analysis uncover ideological assumptions and patterns of domination in text. Although various methods are employed, there is a tendency of practitioners to oversimplify the interpretation of their findings. In this paper we suggest that the findings be assessed in terms of their ethical implications and progress toward social renewal. Examples of this assessment are taken from a large on-going study of the texts produced in the aftermath of the Tokai Village nuclear accident in 1999. These examples are drawn from corpus data, ethnographic data, and interpretive analyses of the researchers.

Key words: discourse, critical, ethics, agency, marginalization, nuclear, narrative
Critical discourse analysis has begun to be employed by researchers in the study of multicultural relations (e.g., Funayama, 2008). The critical discourse analysis approach (or approaches) began in the 1970s under the label of critical linguistics. Stimulated by cultural observers such as Raymond Williams (1976) and the postmodern movement, Roger Fowler (1977) and Tony Trew (1979) perceived that ideological meanings could be found in the choice of grammatical structures and vocabulary items. Later, Norman Fairclough (1989), Gunter Kress (1996), Teun A. van Dijk (1993), Ruth Wodak (1996) and others began to engage in the critical analysis of discourse patterns, but unlike critical analyses in cultural studies and literary criticism, they wanted to promote social renewal by identifying patterns of domination. Critical Discourse Analysis has never possessed a single kind of methodology, except that all practitioners do engage in interpreting text. This subjective process on the part of the analyst has been criticized (e.g., Widdowson, 1995; 1996), resulting in the use of corpus-based analyses, first to test interpretations, and subsequently, it was found that those techniques on their own could be useful in revealing patterns of ideology.

While the corpus-based techniques served to placate positivistic demands in the social sciences, such techniques are incapable of locating larger themes (macrostructures) and narratives. Furthermore, in the case of appraisal analysis, attitudes must be interpreted from the data by the analysts themselves (O'Halloran & Coffin, 2004). In addition, these techniques cannot account for the interpretive process itself, that is, how people read.

There have been three disciplinary approaches to the interpretive process—cognitive psychology, literacy studies, and hermeneutics. Studies in cognitive psychology have focused on how discourse is processed or comprehended (Kintsch, 1974; Schank & Abelson, 1977; van Dijk, 2008). Literacy studies have provided social models for interpretation (Hill & Parry, 1994; Ingulsrud & Allen, 1999, 2009a; Street, 1984). Hermeneutics has provided a philosophy of interpretive choice, choices that come with ethical implications (Bauman, 1992; Hirsch, 1976; Ingulsrud & Allen, 2009b).

**Interpreting Discourse**

In his book, *Discourse and Context: A Sociocognitive Approach*, van Dijk (2008) proposes a theory of context that focuses on the subjective mental models of interactive participants. He argues that earlier theories of context tended to overestimate the impact of social properties like gender, age, class, and ethnicity on communicative situations. He maintains:

Such a theory avoids the determinism of direct social influences of causation, accounts for differences among speakers and hence accounts for the uniqueness of all discourse and discourse comprehension, even in the "same" social situation, offering a much more sophisticated analysis of the complex structures of contextual influence on text and talk (2008, p.217).

van Dijk's mental models provide a more nuanced approach that would address more fully the realities of interaction.
In this article, we express a similar concern about overestimation, not of interactive situations but in the findings of studies employing critical discourse analysis (CDA). The multiple approaches of CDA involve lexical analyses, grammar analyses, or corpus-based methods to locate assumed issues of domination, such as sexism, racism, colonialism, globalization, and so on. These are often the same social properties van Dijk refers to. In many of these studies, the identification of the ideologies, is conducted without assessing the allegations which make up the findings. We suggest that such assessment would evaluate the allegations of these ideologies of domination. In addition, an assessment as to how the findings relate to other examples of the same allegations would serve to understand their intensity; moreover, an assessment of possible evidence of progress in dealing with the issues the allegations raise could not only provide indications of intensity but also encouragement for continued work for social change. In order to make our case for assessing CDA findings, we review a number of studies to highlight the problems in the interpretation of the results. We then employ one study to demonstrate how this assessment could be applied. The method is descriptive with a view to develop new theoretical constructs. We begin by presenting issues of interpreting texts.

Attending to a text critically involves a hermeneutic position that runs counter to normal interpretive positions that are assumed to be positivistic on the one hand, and ethical on the other. In his critiques of CDA in the 1990s, Henry Widdowson (1995) raises the point that there can be textual evidence for alternative interpretations and further, that critical analysis does not value the intention of the author. The notion that writers in the creation of text have provided sufficient evidence to support their intended meanings without having to draw on contextual information is widely assumed in the literary and educational worlds, as well as in testing (Olson, 1977; Hill & Parry, 1994). Brian Street (1984) calls this interpretive position the “autonomous model of literacy,” describing a view of written text, unlike spoken text, as being sufficiently contextualized. There should be sufficient textual evidence for the interpretation intended by the author.

This position is further defended by ethical appeal. In spite of the notion that written text is more self-sufficient in contextualization than spoken text, the act of text production and the subsequent acts of reading are constructed as a meeting of two human beings, by drawing on the metaphor of oral interaction. Because interacting with another person face-to-face comes with ethical implications, interpretation in reading is reconstructed with ethical implications. To read against the text, as in critical analysis, goes against assumed norms of reading positions that require readers to read sympathetically, looking for the author’s intent. E.D. Hirsch (1976) argues that a reader has a moral responsibility to attend to these meanings, at least initially. Philosopher Donald Davidson (2001), using the concept identified by Neil Wilson (1959), argues that for communication to take place at all, a “principle of charity” is needed where the reader/listener must seek agreement with the author/speaker. Indeed, theories of politeness, be it Paul Grice’s (1975) “Principles of Cooperation” or Geoffrey Leech’s (1983) “Politeness Principle,” for example, conform to Davidson’s basic “principle of charity.” Critical positions, which seek out
instances of deception (intended or not), flout these principles. Moreover, critical interpretive positions are "face threatening acts" (Brown & Levinson, 1987).

The critical approaches, however, require that we set aside norms of interactive cooperation. It is not done for the sake of critique, but for social betterment and emancipation, by making visible the invisible and making heard the marginal. In critical analysis, it is precisely the meanings that authors do not intend that are uncovered. In spite of the breaches in interactional ethics, the critical movement is assumed to serve more pressing social and ethical issues such as racism, paternalism, and deception. In addition, it is questionable whether it is appropriate at all to apply interactive pragmatics to written text. Certainly, pragmatics is appropriate for personal transactional texts like letters and e-mail, but in the case of published text, the relationship is not so straightforward. Publishing puts a text in the public arena and the relationships between author and multiple readers are not quite the same as personal relationships. Normally since there are exponentially more readers than the author, there is no way for the author to control the interpretation of the text, even though some try to do so. This is why critical analysis can uncover, for instance, racism in text without the author being intentionally racist.

Unlike many critical analyses conducted in the humanities, such as in cultural studies or literary criticism, CDA studies, in spite of the diversity in methods, are intended to contribute to social change. Many analysts have been inspired by Marxism and assume an "Exodus" narrative pattern—a progression of struggles from bondage to the promised land. A similar assumed narrative pattern is the Bildungsroman—a young person goes through struggles and trials and finally becomes transformed. Some practitioners have adopted the narratives of "late modernity" proposed by sociologist Anthony Giddens (1990) and others. These offer more complex and nuanced interpretations of the global situation, while leaving open the possibility for social renewal (Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999). Yet in order for the critical analyses to achieve their social aims, they cannot simply identify the types of abuse. The allegations must be assessed in terms of ethical implication so that they may be utilized for social change. Moreover, the assessment can "salvage" what can be interpreted as positive steps when the abuse cannot be eliminated, so that a situation can be better coped with.

In the following sections, a number of CDA findings will be assessed in terms of their ethical and logical qualities. These assessments will be compared with the findings from an analysis of texts surrounding the Tokai Village Nuclear Accident (Kawamata, 2007; 2009a; 2009b). Unlike many CDA studies conducted on a single text, this one focuses on a single disaster with multiple texts. Moreover, the participants have assumed, according to Takanori Kawamata (2006), a narrative pattern identified by Tzvetan Todorov (1990) as the "equilibrium". Unlike Exodus and Bildungsroman, that involve moving toward ideal social forms in the future, equilibrium casts the past, before the disaster, as the ideal, offering the model for what is to be achieved in the future. The Accident occurred in the following way:

On September 30, 1999, workers in the JCO Nuclear Fuel Processing Plant mixed by hand, in
a stainless-steel bucket, nitric acid and uranium oxide, setting off a dangerous nuclear reaction. The reaction not only radiated the workers who were wearing only T-shirts, but the whole surrounding community. Since no mechanical device was used, the reaction could not be stopped and contaminated air was blown out of the factory for up to twenty hours. While these workers violated well-established procedures, their hand-mixing method did cut costs. Yet this action affected the village residents. People had to evacuate and over 300,000 people were asked to stay indoors. Two of the three workers died in 1999, one is still alive but has seriously damaged his health. The number of the people who were exposed to radiation is 667. This accident is considered the third worst accident involving the nuclear power industry after Chernobyl in 1986 and Three Mile Island in 1979.

Takanori Kawamata was a high-school student when the accident occurred. At the time of the accident, 10:35 A.M., he was outside in a physical education class. At lunch time, teachers called all students into the classrooms and told them not to open the windows, even though there was no explanation. The teachers themselves seemed perplexed. Classes in the afternoon were conducted as usual, but after the class, teachers informed students about the nuclear accident. The students living in Mito or the municipalities in the south were allowed to go home first. But students living in Tokai Village and the municipalities to the north were not allowed to leave, and had to stay in their classrooms to await further instructions. Around 6 P.M., students were allowed to go home, but it started to rain. Many parents waited in front of the main gate, creating something like a traffic jam. On the TV news, it was reported that the rain was not dangerous, but needed to be watched carefully. Kawamata usually rode his bicycle to school, so naturally, he decided to ride his bicycle home. One of his friends’ parents worried about him and offered to take him home by car. But thinking of his morning baseball practice, he rejected their offer and left by another gate, in the rain.

From this description it is obvious that in this discourse there are clear perpetrators and victims. In contrast to this kind of situation with a set of actors with seemingly overt roles, Norman Fairclough (2003) and Hilary Janks (2002), for example, have analyzed texts that are on the surface benign, with actors who are less obvious in their roles. Through their analyses, patterns of ideology and power have been uncovered where it is unexpected. However, “uncovering” through CDA can also occur in texts where the actors’ roles are clearly specified. Jan Blommaert (2005), for instance, has analyzed texts of the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Like the Tokai Village accident, these texts also contain obviously defined actors with historical positions that are widely understood in a certain way. In his analysis, he uncovered evidence how some actors, particularly victims, resisted the roles imposed on them. One actor insisted on describing himself as a hero and objected to depicting himself as having been victimized. Similarly, the analysis of the Tokai Village Accident texts reveals that the tragedy of the victims was less in the direct effects of the accident. Instead, it was more in their marginalization, despite their cooperation with corporate and governmental power. In the following sections we will assess the parameters of racism,
paternalism, deception, and marginalization analyzed in text.

**Contextualizing Historicity and Racism**

In *Discourse and Context*, van Dijk (2008) conducts an extensive review of different disciplinary approaches to the description of context and makes an argument in favor of mental models based on cognitive psychology. In his critique of the way Systemic-Functional Linguistics has conceptualized context, he makes reference to the precursors of the approach, namely Bronislaw Malinowski and Raymond Firth. Regarding the anthropologist, Malinowski (e.g., 2001/1929), van Dijk criticizes the terms he used to describe his subjects as racist such as "primitive" and "savage." Certainly from our current sensibilities, these terms do sound racist. Yet Malinowski is not our contemporary. While George Stocking (1984) observes that a discipline like anthropology can be stigmatized by its terminology of the past, can we judge a historical person's discourse in terms of our own standards? After all, Malinowski did bring recognition in the English-speaking world to groups of people that were hitherto marginalized.

It would seem that such critique of a discourse from an earlier point in history would be inappropriate. Drawing on Michel Foucault's (1972) concept of "archive," the bodies of knowledge that shapes our understanding of events in a given point in history, Blommaert (2005, p.130) makes the following observation: "Applying the categories of today to discourses that display categorizations belonging to another regime—another archive, in Foucault's terms—results in an anachronism." It follows, then, that refraining from critically analyzing texts in the past would appear to be a reasonable rubric.

However, the decision not to critically analyze texts from the past is engaging in historicism: that is, evaluating events and actions in terms of the sensibilities of the period. Historicism is a variety of relativism that operates in much the same way that cultural relativism does, demanding that the categories of a particular culture be used to assess issues of that culture. The first problem with relativism is logical: It easily becomes an absolute category in its assertion of no absolutes. The second problem is its presumptions: It assumes that strong consensus existed in periods in history and unitary sensibilities exist in cultures we are less familiar with (Scharfstein, 1989). Historicism, in particular, views historical periods as possessing singular sets of sensibilities in contrast to the present where we easily identify plural, contesting sets of voices. The existence of plural voices in the present means we can engage in critical analysis, but we cannot do so for historical texts because we either assume there was a singular voice, or we simply do not know the existence of any competing voices.

van Dijk's assertion, as anachronistic as it sounds, is justified on the grounds that there were contemporaries of Malinowski's who would be critical of his categories. Judging from their work, anthropologist, Franz Boas, and sociologist, W. E. B. DuBois, would find his nomenclature problematic (Baker, 1998). Historicism, as sensible as it seems, actually stereotypes periods and robs the possibility, albeit the reality, of plural voices. To avoid being dismissed as anachronistic,
our critical analyses must append the allegations in a further explanation of the possibility of critical voices. The analysis would be strengthened with historical references that might provide evidence for them. The same approach would be recommended for critical interpretations going across perceived intercultural boundaries.

Another issue, while making the allegation of racism, is to acknowledge some sense of progress. Our conception of "progress" is analogous to progress in narratives of modernity. The same sense can be found in narratives of late modernity. It is seen as a positive development in contrast to progress seen as a fruitless effort in nihilistic forms of postmodernism (Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999). In Janks' (2002) analysis of an advertisement encouraging homeowners to start retirement savings programs for their domestic workers, she objects to the clipped name of "domestic," used widely for domestic workers in Southern Africa. Clipping, like many forms of abbreviation, can be seen in the vocabulary of English ethnic slurs. In Japan, native speakers of English in educational circles are called "natives." This label, like "domestic," is clipped (Fromkin & Rodman, 1998). Although "native" continues to be used as an adjective in restricted contexts such as in Takami Kuwayama's (2004) Native Anthropology, the English language is inconsistent in the use of labeling adjectives. One could say, "He is an American" but cannot say "He is an English." Therefore, for certain adjectives, speakers must change their syntactic forms.

Returning to Davidson's (2001) principle of charity, the users of clipped labels like "domestic" and "native" are not intentionally deprecating. Perhaps their illocutions are similar to those of Malinowski, who did not intend to defame his subjects. Although these labels are problematic, we can see evidence of progress. "Domestic" is a more professionally sounding title than say "maid" or "servant" and definitely more so than "boy" or "girl." "Native" also indicates progress. It is racially neutral and does not specify any particular nationality. It also has the advantage in the fair division of labor in institutions. "Natives" are much more efficient in the tasks of editing and English-language text production, allowing the "non-natives" to focus on tasks that require a native-speaker competency of Japanese.

The critical analyst, while making the allegation of racism, can engage in further genre analysis by presenting the various registers where these words occur. One register is the user's intent. The other is the historical relationship with other terms, acknowledging the progress but pointing out where the process could lead. The historical relationship of words is a theme taken up by Ruth Wodak (2000). In her recent analysis of political posters, she alleges that the terms used in Europe toward immigrants resonate with the vocabulary of National Socialism (Krzyzanowski & Wodak, 2008).

A similar kind of historical connection was found in the Tokai Village Corpus (TVC).¹ The label used for someone who has been contaminated by radiation is "hibakusha." The term, also

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¹ The Tokai Village Corpus (TVC) consists of three types of documents. Two of the three are in transcripts, the others are expository texts. The TVC consists of 331,685 words. The proportion of the corpus is the interview books (40%), meeting minutes and the mayor's interview book (23%), and the pamphlets and websites of civic development (16%).
found in many English-language dictionaries, refers specifically to the victims of the nuclear bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945. These hibakusha and their children suffered a great deal of discrimination. Their condition, like victims of racism, was imposed on them. Their history and situation has been chronicled in numerous books (e.g., Ibuse, 1970). Moreover, the literature that was inspired by the bombs has become a source of comparative analysis with literature on the Holocaust (Tsukui, 2002).

The problem with the label, "hibakusha" (被爆者) is that it is a homonym with a different term, hibakusha (被爆者). The single radical on the baku character distinguishes radiation from a nuclear bomb and radiation from another nuclear source. This means residents of Tokai Village are hibakusha (被爆者). However, the distinction is only possible in written text. In spoken text, the pronunciation is the same. The avoidance of this label is seen in the TVC as none of the residents uses this term to characterize him or herself. They rather use higaisha [victim]. Kawamata (2006) interprets this choice as an avoidance of the "racism" that comes with the term hibakusha.

Most CDA studies would end here, by providing the interpretation and making the allegation. Kawamata (2009b), however, has located a contesting voice. One of the surviving workers who was directly exposed to radiation in the accident, has asked to be labeled a hibakusha. Moreover, he asked to be labeled in the same way as the bomb victims (Kansoimo Tsushin, 2002). While issues of compensation for health expenses exist, the worker argued that the effects of nuclear exposure are the same, whether it is a bomb or an industrial accident. This worker can make his case only in writing, because this difference is not due to pronunciation, but a closely related kanji character. Because the distinction between these labels cannot be made in speech but in the written mode, the role of the Internet, which relies on visual media, is essential for his activism. The worker’s complaint also indicates a loss of trust. In the following section, we examine the sense of trust in paternalistic relationships.

Patterns of Paternalism in the Perception of Agency

Returning to Hilary Janks’ (2002) article on the poster encouraging pension schemes for domestic workers, the poster persuades the employer to do something for the worker. Janks alleges that this is paternalism. While on the surface, the poster’s intent to sell financial products for employees may seem benignly humanistic and they encourage employers to be more caring, Janks argues that in the context of Southern Africa, the paternalism exhibited here resonates with the apologetics of colonialism. The colonizer knows best for the welfare of the colonized. After all, the weaker colonized must be helped.

Paternalism, like patriarchy, is a metaphor of the parent—child relationship. It almost always is used in the negative sense. In post-colonial studies, it is seen as practically synonymous with colonialism itself (Slemon, 1995). Labels like “native” and “savage” raised above, as well as the discourse on the proper role of women, indicate paternalistic relationships with some groups cast as children and others cast as parents who are people with more knowledge and power, a kind
of power that should be used benevolently (Ashcroft, Griffiths, & Tiffin, 1998). There are many relationships such as employer-employee or government-citizen that could also be understood in terms of a parent-child relationship. However, the allegation of paternalism is only made when the relationship becomes problematic, for instance, when the agency of the "child" becomes too restricted and when the "children" lose trust in their "parents".

Janks' (2002) article identifies and values agency of the individual, and in so doing, casts paternalism as restricting that agency. In many disciplines, such as education, particularly with practitioners of various forms of social constructivism, agency is interpreted positively. Human agency is celebrated as subjects act on their own to better their situation or the society around them (e.g., Norton & Toohey, 2001; Pavlenko & Lantolf, 2000). At the same time, not all disciplines view agency as positive. In the fields of economics and management, agency is seen as a liability. Agency theory in economics is an elaborate framework devised to analyze the relationship of "principals" and "agents". At the top level, the "principals" are the shareholders and the "agents" are the managers. At the bottom, the "principals" are the lower management and the "agents" are the workers. Agency theory is concerned with these relationship pairs (DeGeorge, 1992). The lower actor in the relationship is the agent. The relationship is conceived as problematic, in the sense that both parties are assumed to be operating in a self-interested manner. The agency of the "employee" is accepted as long as it is seen as "rational" or "efficient". There exists a great deal of tension over the degree of control, trust, and cost-effectiveness in the relationship (Mitnik, 1992, p.76).

In the immediate aftermath of the Tokai Village Accident, the authorities acted quickly to protect the villagers. They were rounded up in enclosed detention centers to be protected from contaminated air. Drivers of trains that were already in operation were instructed not to stop at Tokai Village station. This was done without explanation until reaching a station well beyond the area of contamination. Once announcements were made, the stranded travelers, particularly many foreign workers and students, were left perplexed (Saito et. al., 2001). Eventually the authorities were able to take care of these situations. This parent-like approach as exercised by the authorities in disaster situations, even with suspension of individual freedoms, is usually accepted and thus is not seen as paternalism. Yet when such authority is accepted, there is a relinquishment of the right to be informed. In paternalistic relationships, there is a strong possibility for deception. Indeed, parents frequently deceive children to protect them from perceived harmful information, or simply to carry out their own purposes. Teachers, health care providers, and legal advisors may deceive for paternalistic purposes, for their "clients" own good. Yet can these agents of paternalism function responsibly or be held responsible? In the next section, we explore agency in terms of responsibility.

**Deception and the Nature of Responsibility**

Kawamata (2009b) obtained interview data from five people who have suffered from the
accident. These include a farmer, nuclear facility worker, and workers in nuclear related industries. In response to Kawamata’s interview question, “Who was responsible for the Accident?” a worker in the nuclear industry answered, “Everyone in the village is.” What he means is the village residents accepted the facilities beginning in 1956, and accepted their continued presence after the accident in 1999. In this sense, they were agents. The question, however, remains: Were the residents sufficiently informed? To what extent can the residents be responsible for the outcome of their village’s development?

In applied ethics, deception, particularly paternalistic deception, is not categorically rejected. Although we have defined paternalism as negative, this is a case where the concept serves to mitigate the negative intensity of deception. There are situations in medical practice, for example, where patients are not told the full details of their condition, with the argument that such knowledge would not enhance their quality of life (e.g., Ellin, 1988). Corporations are well known for rendering their liabilities in legal prose, usually in the form of “fine print.” We are often reassured that these documents are customary or “common in the industry,” until, that is, something happens.

Yet even after “something happened,” as in Tokai Village, patterns of deception persisted. First of all, there was a sense of trust that the nuclear plants were to be safe. The short-cut practices that the workers of the JCO plant engaged in violated safety standards that were in place not only in Tokai but in the nuclear industry around the world. Because these shortcuts violated safety regulations, issues of responsibility were dealt with legally. Three of the officials were charged and compensation was made for collateral damages, but not damages to individual victims (Saito et. al., 2001). This was the way legal responsibility was dealt with. Yet, what about moral responsibility? Many scholars in applied ethics believe that moral responsibility can only be taken by individuals, that entities like corporations, municipalities, or nation states cannot take moral responsibility (e.g., Friedman, 1994; Goodpaster & Matthews, 1994). This is because the processes of apologizing and forgiving are pragmatic acts, closely linked to actual face-to-face interactions. People in organizations are like readers of published texts. They are almost impossible to identify and their interpretations cannot be controlled.

A few experts, like Peter French (1988), make the opposite argument, that corporate entities have chains of command, thus they possess identifiable groups of people who can be identified as holding moral responsibility. These chains, according to French, are the Corporate Internal Decision (CID) Structure and these represent the entities that can be held responsible. Indeed in Tokai Village’s case, it was the individuals in the chain of command who were penalized. In 2000, the JCO Co. Ltd. and manager of JCO Tokai office were sent the papers pertaining to the case by the Public Prosecutor’s Office. Six officers of JCO were prosecuted for violation of Nuclear Reactors Regulations and the Occupational Safety and Health Act. In 2003, they were convicted and sentenced with probation (Saito et. al., 2001). However, their conviction constituted legal responsibility, not moral responsibility. The problem here is that the legal aspects and the
moral aspects are often confused. Issues of compensation are legal while apologies are moral. If apologies are made, victims do not know that they are supposed to respond—by forgiveness or otherwise. Instead, there is often an expectation of compensation, followed by an assessment of how much. This is why most experts in applied ethics say that entities cannot take moral responsibility. Moreover, this confusion is one of the reasons for discontent to linger. While the company is bound by law to uphold safety standards, the choice to do so on a daily basis by the individuals is a moral one.

In the transcripts of the Tokai Village hearings on the accident, we can observe how paternalism is carried out. The meetings were conducted by the village officials, with lengthy introductions by the mayor and his technocrat staff of the nuclear power office of the village hall. These officials urged the residents to engage in “unfettered” questioning. This was followed by a presentation by company employees, made to assure the residents that the plant was now safe. However, the presentation was extremely technical and long. Taken together with the introductions, the presenters went overtime, leaving only ten minutes for questions from the residents. The village officials who conducted the meeting did not attempt to manage the presenters to allow for a full discussion to take place. Like the fine print in legal liability texts, the residents were snowed with technical information, leaving them with neither the time nor the vocabulary to respond effectively (Kawamata, 2006).

The presentations and the management of the meetings do not reflect a deliberate act to deceive; however, the discourse patterns of an informative event, that was largely opaque to the receivers, resulted in the residents being unable to respond effectively to those who have identified themselves as experts. The residents were thus persuaded into trusting that the company and the village leaders had their best interests in mind. van Dijk (2001, p.355) identifies this kind of expert speech as “access” or “control” to the discourse.

Furthermore, the mayor’s construction of political legitimacy can be seen in his vacillation between criticism of the company and exhortations of understanding the need for the continued presence of the industry. He achieved this by complaining of the lack of support from central government. This can be seen in the vocabulary he used. He spoke of “the world’s Tokai Village” implying that the accident and the lessons learned have an international impact. He referred to Tokai Village in terms of national and international focus (Kawamata, 2009b). This is in contrast to the few instances of the residents who were entirely focused on the local.

Yet, even in the few minutes allocated for discussion, the voices of the residents are profoundly revealing. One resident began his question, “I don’t know whether this was an ‘accident’ or ‘incident.’” “Jiken [incident] is used in the sense of a political happening, like a coup d’état or some criminal act. In other words, jiken involves more human agency than jiko. Kawamata conducted a word frequency count on these words and, in the Tokai Village Corpus, jiko [accident] was more frequent than jiken [incident]. Even so, for a resident to raise this confusion indicates that there is a suspicion that the problem was caused not by the error of a few, but by systemic
pressures to cut costs. Therefore, casting the "accident" as an "incident" increases the level of responsibility of the company. The same patterns of blame is seen in another pair of key words: saigai [natural disaster] and higai [disaster, natural and/or human initiated]. The mayor and company officials tended to use saigai and the victims, higai. Victims tend to use higai, however, collocating with furu [rumor], in other words, collateral damage, not direct damage. For example, they are concerned more about their crops than being victims (Kawamata, 2006; Saito et al., 2001, p.27). These differences in perceptions of responsibility reflect the loss of trust needed to maintain working paternalistic relationships. In the following section, we describe what happens when these relationships break down.

**Becoming Marginalized**

A worker in the nuclear industry explained that he took the job because it was stable, high paying and moreover, he could stay in his hometown. Now, he reported, his company and other facilities are planning to move out of Tokai Village. He himself was being transferred to a remote area in Northern Honshu where new facilities were being built.

The analysis of the texts written in the aftermath of the Tokai Village nuclear accident indicates a difference of perspective between the government and corporate leaders and the residents. Still, this difference did not translate into activism. Most residents understood that the nuclear industry brought many benefits, as well as dangers, but they were persuaded to accept its continued presence. However, now they are not in a position to accept, but to lose. It is not clear exactly why some of the facilities are leaving. It could be speculated that Tokai Village is situated (110 km) too close to Tokyo. In addition, the ten-kilometer radius from the JCO factory where the accident occurred, the area where people were ordered to stay indoors, happens to lie just north of the metropolitan area of Mito (pop. 200,000), the prefectural capital. However, Tokai Village lies outside Tokyo’s exurbia and it is not on one of the high-speed shinkansen rail lines, which is seen as essential for regional development. Without a thriving nuclear industry, the area’s economy will once again be based on farming.

This was not the narrative of the village leaders nor the residents. They wanted to go back to a safe prosperous coexistence with the industry, not back to the rural economy. Moreover, their equilibrium narrative was based on a larger Bildungsroman narrative of national development —and in the mayor’s words—the narrative of international nuclear technological development. Now they are being excluded from those narratives and consequently, they lose their equilibrium narrative as well. Marginalization involves not only the loss of narratives but also another discursive loss. The critical voice is lost with the departure of the forces of domination. Ideally, the forces of domination are to change, not disappear. At best, they were benevolently "paternalistic"; at worst they were exploitative.

It would seem that the residents of Tokai Village have been deceived. They received the nuclear industry into their community, only to find that their trust in safety measures had been violated
by the accident. After coping with the aftermath, mainly by accepting the continued presence of the plants, some of the facilities are moving away. Still, for years they were beneficiaries of subsidies, jobs, and also pride. The subsidies and jobs continued for at least ten more years after the accident. It could be argued that the nuclear industry in Tokai Village was simply sojourning for as long as it was useful, and that this situation is no different from any other industry succumbing to cycles of nature and the economy.

Yet there is something different about accepting nuclear facilities. There is always the specter of danger; and in 1999, the residents did become victims of that danger. Marginalization in this case, does not simply mean a loss of the main economic base, it also means living with the possibility of having made the wrong choices.

**Conclusion**

The value of critical discourse analysis to the study of multicultural relations is not in the claim of universality for its critical tools nor the pragmatic categories it draws on. It is rather the attention to issues of domination and agency and how they are contested. In this article, we have argued for a need to look beyond the uncovering of domination patterns, by locating contesting voices, assessing the ethical implications of the allegations, and identifying progress toward social change.

The allegations of racism, paternalism, and deception depicted in text often reflect complex discursive practices and perspectives. Further analysis of the allegation arising from textual interpretation could signal progress over other related expressions. In the case of the use of *hibakusha*, a contesting voice, for the sake of advocacy, has assumed the identity of a position that has historically been the target of racist-like discrimination.

Paternalism and deception, when they are raised, are considered negative. Further analysis reveals contexts where they are useful. Yet, they are useful under certain circumstances and it is the critical analyst's task to elucidate what these are. Paternalistic relationships can work only with a sense of trust in a framework of responsibility. When trust and responsibility are lost, the weaker participants are marginalized. CDA can, through narrative analysis, provide a further understanding of the devastation of what it means to become marginalized.
References


