Critical Discourse Analysis in Transcultural Spaces

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This article provides a brief overview of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), an analytical framework for studying power and inequalities in discourse (Fairclough, 1992; 2010). This overview includes a discussion of the specific characteristics of CDA in relation to two separate doctoral studies by students who participated in the 2017 International Doctoral Seminar and Conference in Brisbane, Australia. The first study is an examination of language change, regarding taboo language and swearing in secondary schools, and the second study is an exploration of soft skills in workplace communication. The article also presents and examines the personal reflections of the authors on how their transcultural experiences have enhanced their individual journeys, their knowledge of CDA, and their prospective research.

The 2017 International Doctoral Seminar and Conference, hosted by Queensland University of Technology (QUT) in Brisbane, Australia, provided students from QUT, Beijing Normal University (BNU), and the University of Calgary (UC) a supportive environment to share their doctoral research, experiences, and life stories. Through formal and informal activities, seminar participants discovered shared values and interests with each other across cultural boundaries, thereby, developing transcultural competence (Slimbach, 2005). Transculturalism combines complex interconnections that unite different cultures. The internal complexities of societies develop these connections and external networks construct and develop links to other societies (Welsch, 1999). One such connection occurred when two students, one from Brisbane and one from Calgary, discovered they share a mutual interest: the study of language and society. Although their individual research projects were as diverse as their global positioning, the students employed the same methodology, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), in their doctoral research projects.

This article begins with the first author explaining how her doctoral study about language change of taboo language and swearing, being completed in Brisbane, Australia, has employed Norman Fairclough's CDA as an analytical approach. She also shares how the transcultural connection has aided in refining aspects of her study. This is followed by a description of the second doctoral study, being completed in Calgary, Canada. This study has used CDA and the Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA) in an examination of soft skills in workplace communication. The second author also shares her reflection on transculturalism as it is related to identity. Finally, the article addresses what the doctoral studies have in common to illuminate how CDA can be used in different transcultural spaces.

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Taboo Language Change and the Boundaries of Acceptable Verbal Conduct

Norman Fairclough's CDA approach was chosen for this particular study because it is useful for the examination of unequal power relations in discursive events (Fairclough, 2003), especially in this case, taboo language use in secondary schools. In addition, Fairclough's (1992) approach has also shown the role of discourse in constructing the social world, social identities, and influences in social change. The study, which is about language and language change, has focused on how school leaders and teachers respond to changes in swearing and taboo language use in secondary schools in South East Queensland. Data collection occurred during November and December 2017, constituting one-on-one interviews with nineteen school leaders and teachers, from fourteen different schools. Data also included behavioural policies from the Queensland education department and all participant schools. The researcher included policy analysis in order to add depth and complexity to the study. The study has focused not only on language and language change, but it has incorporated the social nuances that surround the use and judgment of language, specifically swearing and taboo language.

Swearing has its origins in the Middle Ages when religious and oath swearing were popular linguistic practices. The current understanding of the word *swearing* is linked more closely to uttering profane oaths with emotion or in anger, but it can also be used more positively in formal ceremony when taking an oath. According to the literature (Ljung, 2011; McEnery, 2005; Mohr, 2013), definitions of the term swearing vary. However, what remains consistent is that swearing must contain taboo words to qualify as swearing. Taboo is a type of social custom that prohibits certain behaviour or norms in society (Allan & Burridge, 2006). In a reactive process, the word or language that surrounds a taboo becomes fused with the taboo, and the word itself then becomes taboo. Each community or society will have their own set of rules and taboos and these will change over time. Similarly, the words associated with those taboos will change as well (Bergen, 2016).

Being a social rather than an individual process, language change is inevitable; for the simple reason that when language is introduced into social circulation it changes (De Saussure, 1959). Fairclough (1992) advised that using his approach to CDA is particularly useful when investigating change in language as well as studies in areas of social and cultural change. Humans construct culture in order to create community, through modes of meaning-making. These modes of meaning-making, which are fluid, unstable, and always changing, are formed and applied to all meaning systems: language, symbols, texts, signs, and discourse (Lewis, 2002). Social change does not only involve change in language use but also in language practices (Fairclough, 1992). The abovementioned study incorporated all of these aspects, namely language change, social and cultural change, and changes in language practices, therefore, supporting the choice in using CDA as methodology.

The way society uses swearing and taboo language is changing along with its associated language practices. Adolescents use more swearing and taboo language than any other age bracket (Jay, 1992), and they are exposed to more swearing than in the past (Chirico, 2014). Swearwords are becoming more acceptable (Enfield, 2016). In fact, Adams (2016) suggested that we currently find ourselves in "the Age of Profanity". The change, however, is controversial because, often, language is used as a form of negative social judgment especially in regard to swearing and the use of taboo language (Simon & Greenberg, 1996). Negative social judgment was evident in data obtained from Queensland education institutions. The data indicated measures taken against students who employ taboo linguistic practices in school settings (Department of Education and Training, 2015), reflecting the institutional negative judgment for taboo language use. Education institutions situate themselves as moral gatekeepers of young people, imbuing socially valued conventions and standards required of future citizens (Doherty, Berwick, & McGregor,

2016). Inappropriate linguistic practices, therefore, become part of a behavioural management or classroom control issue rather than a language issue, and the language use aligns with negative social behaviour. As a result, the institution and the students are drawn into this social and linguistic ideological discourse.

Discourse has many conflicting and overlapping definitions, all communicated from different disciplinary and theoretical standpoints. Discourse is seen in linguistics as spoken or written language. On the other hand, it can also be used to describe different types of language used in different social situations, for example, advertising discourse or classroom discourse. In social theory, the term is used to refer to varying ways of structuring social practice or areas of knowledge such as medical or legal discourse. Discourses not only represent social entities and relations but also construct or constitute them in varying ways. They position people as subjects in different ways, for example, as teachers or doctors, and it is these social effects that become the focus in discourse analysis (Fairclough, 2003). Most importantly, historical change impacts how discourses combine and change to produce new more complex discourse (Fairclough, 1992). According to Fairclough (2003), discourse is language in use as an element of social life, which is interconnected with other elements.

Fairclough's CDA, therefore, encompasses language analysis and social theory using this more social-theoretical sense of discourse as well as a *text and interaction* linguistically oriented approach (Fairclough, 1992). Fairclough (1989) introduced a three-dimensional approach that entails three stages of analysis namely description, interpretation, and explanation. First, there is the description of the text. In this instance, the text is any product, written or spoken, incorporating any other symbolic form of visual images (Fairclough, 1992). The second stage is the interpretation, where the researcher interprets the relationship between the text and the interaction. Last, the explanation expands on the relationship between the social context and the interaction (Fairclough, 1989).

The three-dimensional approach sees any discursive event as being "simultaneously a piece of text, an instance of discursive practice, and an instance of social practice" (Fairclough, 1992, p. 4). Language analysis takes place in the text dimension. The researcher targets the nature and process of text production, distribution, and interpretation in the discursive practice dimension. The third-dimension targets social conditions and practices which may include ideological effects and hegemonic processes of discourse at various levels. These three stages as well as the three dimensions are interconnected, and analysis is not a linear process. During analysis, there is a constant alternation between interpretation to description and back to interpretation, keeping the social influences in mind during the process (Fairclough, 1992).

The study under discussion used different texts. First, transcribed interviews, conducted with teachers and school leaders, make up one set of texts, while policy documents from the Queensland Education Department, as well as from the schools corresponding to the participant teachers and leaders, make up the second set of texts. The opportunity to employ different texts in analysis allows for types of meaning to be distinguished (Fairclough, 2003). There is a dialectical relation between actions, representation, and identification, which Fairclough (2003) described as genre or a way of acting; discourse, or a way of representing; and, style, or a way of being. Employing these as a focus during analysis incorporates the social perspective and social practice, not only the concrete social event, but also the more abstract social practices (Fairclough, 2003).

The *critical* aspect of CDA reflects connections between power, language, and ideology that may not be apparent (Fairclough, 1989). Ideologies are embedded in features of discourse and become assumptions or *common sense* with time. These assumptions and common sense eventually control the actions of members of society as well as the interpretations made by society on others. These assumptions are hidden, rarely questioned

or examined, and often taken for granted. For ideology to be effective, it needs to be merged with common sense discourse and other forms of social action, to be *hidden* in order to contribute to and sustain existing power relations (Fairclough, 1989, 2003). The questions I then need to ask myself as a researcher are: How do I know that I am analysing the data without my own assumptions impacting my analysis? How do I separate the common sense from the analysis? Will I find the hidden?

As mentioned earlier, transculturalism combines complex interconnections that unite different cultures, including external networks (Welsch, 1999). During the International Doctoral Seminar and Conference, I was able to explore the external networks available to develop and construct links to other societies and cultures. Those external networks were students and professors from BNU and UC. One fellow UC colleague who is also using CDA, was a perfect match to explore the intricacies of CDA and the differences in cultures. One of the discussions we had related to what Fairclough calls Members' Resources (MR) (Fairclough, 1989).

MR is the link between what is said, what is meant, and how interpretation is required in order to find out what the meaning is behind what was said. Humans will interpret by calling on an active process of matching representations stored in their long-term memory. The representations are a diverse collection of grammatical forms of sentences, shapes of letters and words, properties of types of people and objects, typical structures of narratives, expectations for sequences of events for particular situations and so forth, and some may be linguistic. Included in MR is a person's knowledge of language, representations of the natural and social worlds the person inhabits, beliefs, assumptions, and values. These are MR, and people draw upon them when they interpret or produce texts (Fairclough, 1989).

MR are ideologically shaped and socially determined but are disguised as common-sense understandings. MR have social origins but are cognitive in nature because they are in people's heads. The social origins of a member's resource are dependent on the social struggles and relations that generated them. They are then socially transmitted and often unequally distributed. People internalise social effects and use these internally stored MR to engage in social practice, including discourse. Therefore, social conditions and situations impact and shape MR, which then impact the way texts are produced and interpreted (Fairclough, 1989).

During interpretation, I will employ a combination of what is *in* the text and what is *in* myself as the researcher, my own MR. Along with this, my epistemological stance, my knowledge of the field as well as the theoretical lens I am using play an important role in influencing interpretations. This is where the transcultural experience of intellectual discussion with my Canadian colleague transformed my thinking on the topic of MR, analysis, and interpretation, and Fairclough's CDA. Transculturalism is characterised by its emphasis on relationships and meaning-making in illuminating aspects of social connection (Lewis, 2002). My Canadian colleague shared her supervisor's thoughts which aided my reflection on MR. She suggested I look at critiques of Fairclough's stance on CDA to learn how others view the approach and find ways to prevent these criticisms from impacting my study. The following explanation distils a few of those critiques in relation to my study.

Critiques of Critical Discourse Analysis

The first critique is that discourse analysts, in order to make and substantiate claims, either over or under analyse data by taking sides or making mistakes in identifying features instead of analysing them correctly (Antaki, Billig, Edwards, & Potter, 2003). Fortunately, I have two very experienced supervisors on my team, one who is adept at Fairclough's CDA, who will serve as boundary to my analysis. Additionally, ensuring I have a clear and

thorough knowledge of Fairclough's CDA will assist in a thorough and rigorous analysis that is not biased, over, or under analysed. A close engagement with my data and a constant reminder that analysis is what is required rather than summary, will assist in keeping the analysis true and reliable (Antaki et al., 2003).

The second critique is that CDA fails to target interactional texts; texts that facilitate interaction between parties—such as conversation. This critique tends to focus on written texts such as policy documents, lists, and newspaper articles that describe unequal power balances or encounters (Rampton, 2001; Teo, 2000). However, Rogers, Malancharuvil-Berkes, Mosley, Hui, and Joseph (2005) in their review of CDA literature found that education researchers are over-turning this critique by using CDA with interactional data. My study contributes to this development in CDA by using policy documents as well as interview transcription texts, allowing for a more robust analysis.

Another criticism directed at CDA is the lack of linguistic theory supporting some CDA studies (Rogers et al., 2005; Sawyer, 2002; Schegloff, 1993). CDA is a discursively based framework that is intent on analysing discursive events and discourse or language, therefore, supporting a CDA study with a linguistic theory contributes to strengthening the study. The theory underpinning my study has elements of Foucault's (1972) theory of discourse as well as linguistic theories of De Saussure, which aim to allay this criticism and add rigor to the study.

A fourth critique of CDA is its weak use of context. Discussion occurs regarding isolated bits of texts that are plucked out of the context from their production, consumption, distribution, and reproduction, and subsequently analysed (Rogers et al., 2005). However, Rogers et al. (2005) found *context* has been addressed in many studies of CDA in educational settings but that the term context in its many forms has not yet been theorised adequately. The linguistic details of the interaction as well as the larger historical, social, and cultural contexts need to be addressed in addition to the contexts in which the interactions occur (Rogers et al., 2005). Fairclough (1989) mentioned context in interpretation, not only situational context but also intertextual and sequential, which are determined by discourse type. For me to analyse well, context of all forms needs to be considered and clearly outlined for my reader. For example, contextualising the participants, contextualising the linguistic interactions between speakers, and contextualising the larger social and/or cultural contexts is essential.

Interpretations are not universal (Dunne, Pryor, & Yates, 2005). They are subjective and dependent on the analyst's MR, social and cultural influences, epistemological and ontological perspectives as well as on the specific theoretical lens the analyst is using to interpret and analyse the data. CDA "does not itself advocate a particular understanding of a text, though it may advocate a particular explanation" (Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999, p. 67). In order to allay this concern, the interpretation and explanation of the analytical process needs to be clearly outlined in my study by keeping the above checklist in mind. Finally, reflexivity should be well documented (Rogers et al., 2005). I need to be aware of where I am in relation to the data; I am not outside of the text but present as data collector. I am adding to the process of constructing meaning by being part of the text. Therefore, when transcribing and analysing the data, I will be using my questioning as part of the text to be analysed. As a part of the linguistic analysis, I will be clear about how analysis has taken shape and why certain aspects of the text have been chosen.

By using the transcultural connections and discussions with my Canadian colleague, I have been able to use critiques of Fairclough's CDA as a tool to strengthen my own study. This reflection in itself could only have taken place as a result of the transcultural connections made during the 2017 International Doctoral Seminar. Those conversations,

intellectual challenges, and experiences have impacted my study in a positive and progressive way and I am extremely grateful for the experiences.

The above discussion highlighted how transcultural connections aided in outlining steps to strengthen the use of CDA for the first author's doctoral study. In what follows, the second author discusses her doctoral study and how transculturalism influenced her research.

A Critical Discourse Analysis of Nursing Communication

The literature on International Educated Nurses (IENs) has reported IENs as having difficulty accessing the labor market in Canada (Higginbottom, 2014). In this study, IENs are registered nurses who received their nursing education and training overseas and who speak English as an additional language. The length and complexity of the immigration and qualification recognition processes, as well as attendant complications, impede entry to the labor market (Higginbottom, 2014). Compounding these difficulties are the disadvantages nurses encounter in the face of the current emphasis on soft skills (Windsor & Harvey, 2012). Soft skills are socially constructed characteristics, which allow for people to get along with others in the workplace. The skills debate in recent years has raised questions about the nature of soft skills (Guo, 2015). In nursing, for example, soft skills and personality traits converge and are often given priority over nursing skills and technical knowledge, thereby devaluing nursing as a profession (Windsor & Harvey, 2012). Despite the high level of English proficiency of many IENs, soft skills and communication skills can be barriers to workplace integration (see Lum, Dowedoff, Bradley, Kerekes, & Valeo, 2015; Staples, 2015).

This study explores the perspectives of IENs about soft skills in workplace communication and how IENs conform to or resist soft skills in their nursing practice. Seven IENs participated in life story interviews between January and September 2018. Of the seven IENs, four participated in three life story interviews each and three in two life story interviews. The first interview focussed on the participant's nursing education, training, and work experience prior to immigrating to Canada, and the second interview focussed on the participant's nursing experiences and training in Canada, including perspectives on soft skills in workplace communication. The third interview followed up on themes of the IENs' stories. I transcribed all eighteen life story interviews and have begun analysis.

I am using the life story interview method, a type of narrative inquiry. The life story is an interdisciplinary approach and is used in psychology, anthropology, sociology, and education. It is used to understand a person's life and how the person interacts with other people. For my study, I am following the conceptual framework John Atkinson (2007) has articulated. Atkinson described three parts to carrying out a life story interview. First, in planning the interview, the researcher should understand the benefits of the life story. The researcher does not enter the interview with a pre-conceived set of interview questions; however, the interviewer should be prepared with open-ended questions to guide the story teller in developing their story. Second, in doing the interview, the researcher guides the story teller in the telling of his or her story. In this part, the researcher records the interview. Third, in transcribing and interpreting the interview, the researcher transcribes the life story, leaving out the interview questions. What the researcher ends up with is the person's life story told in the person's own words. At this stage, the researcher could send the transcript to the story teller who reviews it for accuracy. Finally, the researcher approaches the life story as text and reads and interprets it guided by a theoretical framework.

One of the most attractive features of the life story interview method is that the text is in the story teller's own words and own voice because of the minimal involvement of the researcher in providing questions during the interview. In my study, the voices of the IENs

are so important to understanding the phenomenon of soft skills in nursing communication. In the literature on IENs, the voices of IENs are often not central to the study. The voices of power represented by institutions dominate the research (Baumann, Blythe, Rheaume & McIntosh, 2009; Zhou, 2014). The process of participating in a life story interview can help IENs connect their histories to their present and future experiences in ways that they may not have had access to before. I have used Fairclough's CDA and Ruth Wodak's DHA, a type of CDA, as frameworks to analyse the phenomenon of soft skills.

Both CDA and the DHA focus primarily on how language affects power relations and inequalities among different groups of people in a globalizing world. They question ideology and hegemony to expose inequalities in discourse and focus on the role of discourse in the reproduction of power and dominance (Fairclough, 2010; Wodak, 2015). One of the criticisms of CDA is that it does not critically analyse the historical dimensions of the topic under study deep enough, whereas the DHA does include an analysis of the historical contexts of the topic to understand how the discourse was formed. Used together, life story, CDA, and the DHA form a strong methodology to critically analyse the soft skills discourse and the historical contexts in which this discourse began and continues to perpetuate.

In particular, the DHA is interested in how language perpetuates ideology in different social institutions (Wodak, 2015). Gal (2006) defined language ideologies as "cultural ideas, presumptions, and presuppositions with which different social groups name, frame, and evaluate linguistic practices" (p. 13). An example of Gal's conception of language ideology can be seen in the English-only policies at some hospitals. These policies require staff to speak only English while working, except in designated areas (Hendricks, 2013). These policies are applied differentially to hospital staff. Staff whose only language is English will never be in violation of the policy because they can only communicate in English. At the same time, staff whose first language is not English are monitored to see if they are in violation of the policy. Membership in the first group frees one from having to worry about whether or not they are breaking the rule every time they communicate. This privilege occurs at the expense of the members of the second group, who must always monitor how they speak. English-only policies become language ideology when they become common-sense for all of the people affected by the policy.

Wodak (2015) has described three approaches to text analysis in the DHA. The first is text or discourse-immanent critique. The purpose is to discover contradictions and paradoxes within discourses. The second is socio-diagnostic critique. This critique aims to clarify the characteristics of discourses by using theoretical models from different disciplines to understand the discourse. The third is future-related prospective critique. This third critique aims to improve oppressive language behaviors in institutions and society in general. The *us* and *them* discourse is the foundation of discriminatory discourses and begins with labelling people, making generalizations, and giving reasons to include or exclude others (Wodak, 2004, p. 206). Asking certain questions is a strategy to analyse the development of prejudiced discourses. Wodak (2015) suggested the five questions below:

1. How are people named and referred to linguistically?
2. What characteristics, qualities, and features are attributed to them?
3. What are the arguments that specific people or social groups use to justify excluding or including others?
4. What perspective or point of view are these labels, attributions, and arguments given?
5. How are the arguments and labelling articulated? (p. 12)

These questions are all concerned with presenting a "positive self and negative other" in discriminatory discourses (Wodak, 2001, p. 73).

Extending the discussion of critiques of CDA, Widdowson (1995) argued that critical discourse analysts provide only one interpretation of a text and project their interpretation onto the reader. Blommaert (1997) criticized the treatment of context or *background* such as facts, information, and context in CDA. He argued that in some CDA work, historical representations are accepted *uncritically* as facts. Blommaert (1997) raised questions in his critique: "when we give background to our data, whose background are we giving and who, when, and why were these facts produced?" (p. 71). Life story narrative and Wodak's approach to text analysis are strategies to ensure the background given to the data in my study is accurate and balanced.

Another critique of CDA is that it is theoretically and methodologically weak (Breeze, 2011). Critical discourse analysts tend to neglect a description of a language theory or details of the interaction between participants (Breeze, 2011). Other critics have argued that analysts do not approach the stages of CDA with enough criticality (Breeze, 2011). Despite these claims, Fairclough (2010) stressed that CDA requires a transdisciplinary approach because it regards "the theories, disciplines, and frameworks which are used in the analysis as sources of theoretical development" (Fairclough, 2010, p. 4). That is to say, CDA is not a specific methodology; it requires other theories, frameworks, and techniques. So, applying CDA, the DHA, and other frameworks to an examination of soft skills in workplace communication will provide a more productive framework than the current deficit model.

The goals of my doctoral study align with the goals of CDA and the DHA: to expose ideological features of discourse (Fairclough, 2010) in relation to the phenomenon of soft skills in nursing and to analyse how soft skills are affected by power in healthcare. Power can be exercised in many ways, even when people are unaware of it. For example, educators and employers identified communication as the greatest barrier to workplace integration for IENs (Baumann, Blythe, Rheaume & McIntosh, 2009). A nurse manager reported that IENs "don't get jokes, they don't get sarcasm [and] they don't get anger" (Baumann et al. 2009, p. 207). In this example, the nurse manager assumed authority to judge the IENs and assumed knowledge of the language needs of the IENs. On the one hand, the nurse manager's identity was being challenged. On the other hand, the nurse manager's comment excluded IENs. IENs are identified as *the others* because they are perceived as unable to understand humour, sarcasm, or anger. Otherness provides one with a reason for dislike or not understanding (Zhou, 2014) and being the other means not being accepted by peers as a valued and contributing member of the group.

The literature encapsulates how IENs are singled out in the workplace because they are regarded as different and implies that IENs have to prove themselves to their co-workers and employers. This is difficult for IENs to do as the standard for satisfaction is set by gatekeepers for healthcare. However, literature has reported that IENs are able to transfer nursing competencies and apply prior work experience to new healthcare environments in Canada, thereby, successfully integrating into the Canadian workforce (St. Pierre et al., 2015). IENs have stories to tell. This study is a step towards hearing their stories.

The past is always present, but identity is constructed for different people in different ways and in different contexts. When I was in Australia, I saw how different people related to their histories. I also became more aware of how my understanding of other people's identities and the relationship to their history was part of my relationship to my history. Simple labels like student, Professor, visitor, and host, cannot fully express all that is relevant to who people are, and what the relationship to other people is. People can carry many layers of identity, but not everyone would describe themselves in terms of layered

identity. One aspect of transculturalism is how people come to construct these *multiple-layered identities* (Dean, 2007) with others who are doing the same thing, though they may not be fully aware that this is what they are doing together.

Reflecting on my experiences in Brisbane, the life stories my colleagues told were tied to their present identities as doctoral students and researchers. Identity is fluid and dynamic. Many of our conversations began with, "What are you researching?" We were not brought together to get to know each other on a personal level, but even talking about our academic experiences revealed so much about our histories. A person's life story connects their lived experiences and their history (Atkinson, 2007). One of the things that drew me to use life story in my research is the realization of how people's identities and histories are tied up to their actions. Life story is a method for collecting data and studying people's lives (Atkinson, 2007). Life story also reveals the layered aspects of the story teller's identities and how they affect the stories they tell.

During the seminar, we shared common experiences. I got a deeper understanding of how history and identity are related to having experiences. I realized that even in a shared experience, there are individual points of view. I realized that when I think about how identity is layered that each layer might correspond to a point of view. To understand shared experience, I need to understand history. CDA is a promising way of analysing history. In my interactions with my fellow QUT colleague, our discussions about CDA have deepened my understanding of its potential as a research methodology. My academic aspirations connected me to members in the community and through those connections, I discovered "ways that others make sense of their world" (Slimbach, 2005, p. 209) which gave me a first-hand perspective of being transcultural in the 21st century.

Discussion

Researchers can use CDA and the DHA when they are interested in uncovering power in texts, language, discourse, and social practices (Lee & Otsuji, 2008; Wodak, 2015). The different approaches relate power to asymmetric relationships between people who hold different positions in society (Wodak, 2015). In the first study, for example, an asymmetrical relationship exists between secondary school students who swear and use taboo language, their teachers, and the institution in general. In the second study, an asymmetrical relationship exists between IENs, hospital administrators, and policy makers.

Through a critical analysis, the hidden connections in features of discourse can be identified and used to decode ideologies that eventually become assumptions. These assumptions inevitably control the actions, understandings, and behaviour and most importantly for this discussion, the discourse of society. Just like taboos in the first study, or deficit thinking in the second study, the assumptions are rarely questioned or examined and become accepted behaviour (Arthur, 2012; Fairclough, 2003).

CDA and the DHA describe ideology as consisting of unbalanced opinions, attitudes, and evaluations (Wodak, 2015). Members of specific social groups share similar ideologies that help to maintain unequal power relations through discourse by "gate-keeping" (p. 3). In the context of taboo language transgressions in Queensland secondary schools, the behavioural policy enactment of teachers and school leaders act as gate-keepers to suspension. In the context of IENs, the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) exam is an example of a gate-keeper for IENs applying to become a registered nurse in Canada.

Both doctoral studies examine cultural structures in different transcultural spaces; responses to student language transgressions, and the language boundaries structured for healthcare professionals. Transculturalism is interested in social community, organisation, and social union, and is characterised by its emphasis on power formations, relationships,

and meaning-making in contemporary culture (Lewis, 2002). Transculturalism emphasises the transient nature of culture. It seeks to highlight the various ways a culture creates and distributes meaning in social groups (Lewis, 2002). By connecting with colleagues in transcultural spaces during the 2017 International Doctoral Seminar and Conference, possibilities arose to illuminate these power formations and meaning-making systems.

Conclusion

Collaboration amongst doctoral students is a valuable part of the doctoral learning journey. A shared space for reflection as well as options for pedagogical transformation and peer communication is important for enhancing the doctoral journey (Aghaee & Hansson, 2013; Moore, 2005). The 2017 International Doctoral Seminar and Conference held in Brisbane, Australia provided a forum to share experiences, reflect on research, expand knowledge, and communicate pedagogical learning. Not only that, but the social and academic connections made have further broadened and transformed how we see the world (Slimbach, 2005). Although transculturalism is often associated with power imbalances, "transculturalism defies race, religion, sexuality, class, and every sort of classification known to sociologists and marketers" (Berg, 2010, p. 10). Two doctoral students from vast geographical distances met in Brisbane and collaborated in an attempt to further improve their individual and combined academic and cultural knowledge. They continue to create knowledge of each other's cultures and distribute this knowledge along with their respective cultures (Lewis, 2002) to fellow doctoral colleagues in transcultural spaces.

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