



Applied Discourse Research in Educational Settings: A Portfolio of Case Studies

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Abstract

Discourse analysis has become a central tool for exploring how classroom practices, institutional structures, and pedagogical ideologies are constructed and reproduced through language and multimodal communication. Despite its theoretical richness, a disconnect remains between discourse frameworks and their practical application in everyday educational research. This article addresses that gap by presenting a portfolio of four case studies that apply Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), multimodal analysis, and corpus-based methods across varied educational contexts. The studies include data from bilingual classrooms, teacher training modules, ESL instruction, and university-level workshops. Each case offers a distinct methodological design while collectively showcasing how discourse-analytic tools can reveal patterns of authority, inclusion, ideological framing, and pragmatic misalignment in educational settings. The findings emphasize the potential of discourse-based research to inform teaching practice, foster critical pedagogy, and expand methodological repertoires in educational inquiry.

Keywords: *critical discourse analysis; educational research; multimodality; case study.*

INTRODUCTION

In recent decades, discourse has become a central construct in educational research, providing a lens through which scholars can explore how knowledge, identity, and power circulate within and beyond the classroom. From everyday teacher-student interactions to policy documents and digital learning materials, discourse plays a foundational role in shaping what counts as legitimate knowledge, how learners are positioned, and which ideologies are (re)produced in educational practice. This growing attention to discourse reflects a broader “discursive turn” in the social sciences, and it offers educators powerful tools for critical reflection and transformation.

However, despite the theoretical richness of this paradigm, there remains a noticeable gap between discourse theories and their practical, applied use in everyday educational research. While Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and multimodal approaches have been widely discussed in academic literature, few studies provide concrete, replicable models of how these methods can be deployed in real-world classrooms, teacher education, or curriculum analysis. This is especially true when it comes to integrating audio-visual materials, corpus tools, and pragmatic coding schemes within empirical designs accessible to both researchers and practitioners.

This article seeks to bridge that gap by presenting a portfolio of four case studies that apply discourse-based methods in diverse educational contexts. Each case addresses a different thematic and methodological focus—from classroom authority and multimodal inclusivity to political framing in civic education and cross-cultural pragmatics in ESL instruction—yet all share a commitment to analytical rigor, contextual sensitivity, and methodological transparency. Together, these cases illustrate how discourse analysis can become a powerful tool not only for understanding education but for transforming it.

The article is structured as follows. Section 2 outlines the theoretical and methodological framework, including foundational principles of CDA, multimodal discourse analysis, and case study design. Section 3 presents the four case studies in detail, each with its own data, methods, and key findings. Section 4 offers a comparative discussion of insights across cases, while Section 5 explores implications for educational research and practice. Finally, Section 6 concludes with reflections on the challenges and possibilities of applied discourse research.

METHOD

Discourse in Education

Discourse is not merely a means of transmitting knowledge; it is constitutive of the very structures through which knowledge is produced, distributed, and legitimized in educational contexts. Drawing from the Foucauldian tradition (Foucault, 1972) and systemic-functional linguistics (Halliday, 1978), discourse is understood here as a socially situated semiotic practice that both reflects and shapes institutional power, identity, and ideology.

In educational settings, discourse mediates classroom interaction, teacher authority, curricular framing, and even policy implementation. As Fairclough (1995) and Gee (2014) have argued, discourses are embedded in material practices: in how teachers speak to students, in how students construct knowledge through talk and gesture, and in how institutional texts such as syllabi or training modules position learners and educators. Moreover, discourse intersects with race, class, gender, and disability in ways that either sustain or challenge dominant power relations (Rogers et al., 2005; Luke, 1995).

Research in this field spans a wide range of approaches. Micro-analytic traditions such as conversation analysis and interactional sociolinguistics have explored turn-taking and repair in classroom talk (Sinclair & Coulthard, 1975; Mehan, 1979), while macro-level studies have examined how educational policies embed neoliberal, nationalist, or deficit-based ideologies (Ball, 1994; Apple, 2004). More recent scholarship has emphasized the hybrid and digital nature of contemporary educational discourse, calling for tools that address multimodal, global, and polyphonic classroom ecologies (Kress, 2010; Rowsell & Walsh, 2011).

This article adopts a critical yet applied perspective on discourse in education, foregrounding its role in mediating access, producing normative assumptions, and shaping the affective and cognitive conditions of learning.

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) in Applied Settings

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) offers a theoretically robust and politically engaged approach to the study of language and power (van Dijk, 1993; Wodak & Meyer, 2009). Unlike descriptive models, CDA focuses on how discourse enacts domination, inequality, and ideology—concerns particularly relevant to education as a site of both social reproduction and resistance.

CDA treats discourse as both linguistic and social practice, attending to how texts and talk are shaped by and help shape broader structures (Fairclough, 2015). In educational settings, CDA has been used to reveal how assessment rubrics reinforce meritocratic norms (Torrance, 2007), how policy documents construct idealized teacher identities (Lingard & Sellar, 2013), and how classroom discourse can marginalize or empower voices (Rogers, 2004; Leung & Street, 2012).

Critics have noted CDA's abstract language and lack of standardized procedures (Toolan, 1997; Widdowson, 2004). In response, more accessible variants—such as “light CDA”

(Blommaert, 2005) or “practical CDA” (Breeze, 2011)—offer streamlined tools for empirical analysis, especially useful to practitioner-researchers.

This article adopts that spirit, applying CDA to live classroom interaction, student texts, and pedagogical materials. The goal is to preserve its critical edge while adapting its methods for diverse educational contexts, bridging theory and practice.

Multimodal and Corpus-Based Methods

Modern educational discourse is inherently multimodal. Teachers use voice, gesture, visual aids, and digital platforms to communicate meaning. Learners respond not only with words but with bodily positioning, digital tools, and symbolic artifacts. Accordingly, discourse analysis in education must move beyond textuality to encompass multimodal meaning-making (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2001; O’Halloran, 2011).

This study incorporates multimodal analysis through systematic annotation of verbal and non-verbal cues, including prosody, gesture, and layout. In several cases, corpus tools are also used to analyze frequencies, collocations, and patterns of key discourse features. Combining these methods provides a layered understanding of educational practices that would remain invisible through traditional textual analysis alone.

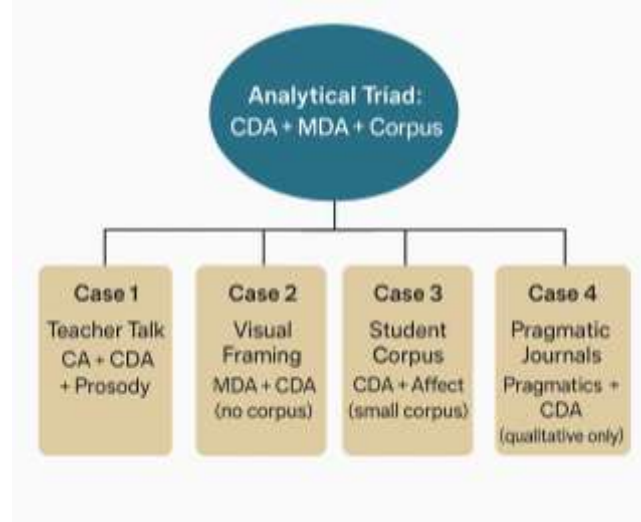
Educational communication extends beyond language to include gesture, gaze, prosody, spatial layout, and digital media. Teachers and students co-construct meaning across these modes—through spoken interaction, body movement, and visual resources. Multimodal Discourse Analysis (MDA) captures this complexity by studying how semiotic resources work together in context (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2001; Norris, 2004).

In education, MDA has revealed how spatial arrangements influence classroom authority (Jewitt, 2008), how slide design communicates inclusion (Serafini, 2014), and how intonation and gesture reinforce meaning (Bezemer & Kress, 2016). Its strength lies in analyzing full communicative events, particularly in audiovisual and hybrid learning settings.

To identify broader discourse patterns, the study also employs corpus tools such as frequency counts, collocation analysis, and concordance software (Baker, 2006; O’Keeffe & McCarthy, 2010). These techniques support scalable analysis of recurring themes in learner language or institutional materials.

In the case studies presented, multimodal recordings are annotated using ELAN or Praat; transcriptions are coded for rhetorical and prosodic features; and tools like AntConc are used for lexical patterning. This integrated approach offers a layered, data-rich view of educational discourse—combining micro-level interactional detail with macro-level pattern recognition.

Figure 1. Analytical Framework for Applied Discourse Case Studies



This integrative framework reflects the layered, context-sensitive nature of educational discourse. By combining critical, multimodal, and corpus-based lenses, the study enables a more nuanced interpretation of meaning-making in diverse pedagogical environments.

Multimodal and Corpus-Based Methods

Case study research remains one of the most powerful methodologies for exploring educational phenomena in depth and in context (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2018). It allows for the examination of “bounded systems”—settings, events, or processes defined by time, place, and participant interaction. Crucially, case study is not merely illustrative: when well designed, it can yield analytic generalizations that inform broader theories and practices (Flyvbjerg, 2006).

In discourse research, case studies are especially valuable for capturing the complexity of meaning-making practices across time and space. They accommodate the thick description needed to analyze multimodal data and allow for iterative, reflexive inquiry. Case study methodology also supports triangulation, combining multiple data types (e.g., video, fieldnotes, student work) to build a fuller picture of communicative processes.

This article presents four distinct but thematically interlinked cases, each drawing on its own dataset, methods, and educational context. The aim is not to produce a unified general theory, but to demonstrate how discourse-analytic tools can be flexibly applied to different questions and settings: from classroom authority to civic education, from visual inclusivity to intercultural pragmatics. Together, these cases function as a methodological portfolio, offering practical models for other researchers interested in applying discourse analysis in empirical educational research.

RESULTS

This section presents four case studies, each designed to illustrate how applied discourse analysis can be used to investigate real-world educational issues. The cases differ in topic, setting, and method, but share a common framework grounded in Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), multimodal analysis, and reflexive interpretation. The goal is to offer replicable and adaptable research designs for scholars and practitioners alike.

Case 1: Teacher Authority and Turn-Taking in a Secondary Classroom

To contextualize this first case study, it examines the discursive enactment of authority in a bilingual secondary school in Madrid, Spain. The classroom in question was part of a state-subsidized school where English was used as a medium of instruction in History and Science. A 40-minute History lesson on the French Revolution was audio-recorded with consent, transcribed using Jeffersonian conventions, and annotated for prosody and turn structure.

Methodologically, the analysis combines micro-level conversation analysis (CA) with CDA, focusing on turn allocation, repair sequences, and modality. The data were segmented into episodes based on topic shift and interaction density, then coded for interruption, overlap, mitigation, and epistemic stance. Prosodic cues (volume, pitch, and tempo) were marked using Praat-informed tags.

With respect to findings, the teacher exercised strong interactional control, initiating 85% of turns and using high-pitched elongations (e.g., “Sooo, who can te-ell me?”) to preface questions. Epistemic modality was also used to hedge assertions (“I think this was around 1793, wasn’t it?”), reinforcing both authority and engagement. Interruptions were asymmetrically distributed: student interruptions were often shut down with overlapping corrections, while teacher interruptions were used to redirect and scaffold. The performance of authority was thus both dialogic and asymmetrical, with voice quality and interactional framing reinforcing the teacher's role as gatekeeper of historical knowledge.

Last but not least, the implications are many. This case illustrates how authority is constructed not only through content but through vocal and structural control of discourse. The method—combining CA, CDA, and prosodic tagging—offers a replicable template for analyzing power and pedagogy in classroom talk.

Case 2: Multimodal Framing of Inclusivity in Teacher Training Materials

This second case explores how inclusivity and diversity are framed in instructional materials from an online special education (SPED) training course in the U.S. The module selected for analysis was titled “Creating Inclusive Learning Environments” and included video lectures, animated slides, and downloadable handouts.

From a methodological standpoint, the analysis focused on multimodal elements: slide design, visual imagery, key terms, voiceover tone, and textual metaphors. Screenshots were taken and annotated using the Multimodal Analysis Image software. Voiceovers were transcribed and prosodically segmented. Lexical choices were analyzed using semantic field clustering.

Inclusivity was consistently framed in emotional and ethical terms, with key metaphors such as “building bridges” and “every child’s journey.” The narrator’s voice featured slow, steady prosody and frequent rising tones, creating a supportive, affective mood. Slide visuals reinforced this with soft colors, rounded fonts, and images of diverse, smiling children. However, despite the affective emphasis, the absence of structural or policy-level references suggested a liberal-humanist framing that prioritized individual empathy over systemic critique.

This case highlights the power of multimodal discourse in shaping how educators conceptualize inclusion. The methodology demonstrates how multimodal discourse analysis can reveal the ideological framing embedded in training materials, with direct implications for SPED policy and teacher preparation.

Case 3: Populist Rhetoric in Civic Education Assignments

Contextually, this case highlights the power of multimodal discourse in shaping how educators conceptualize inclusion. The methodology demonstrates how multimodal discourse analysis can reveal the ideological framing embedded in training materials, with direct implications for SPED policy and teacher preparation.

From a research-methods perspective, Student-produced corpora (N = 14 annotated speeches) were collected and qualitatively analyzed. Codes included populist dichotomies (us vs them), legitimation strategies, and affective appeals. A meta-analysis of student commentaries was also conducted to gauge discursive awareness and ideological alignment.

Students identified recurring patterns such as victimization of the people, vilification of elites, and emotionally charged nationalism. In their commentaries, several students drew parallels between these strategies and their own countries’ political rhetoric, suggesting a heightened critical literacy. However, others struggled to separate form from content, revealing how emotionally potent discourse can complicate analytical distance. The classroom thus became both an object and site of discourse struggle.

The value of using authentic political discourse to teach CDA and civic engagement is one of the main contributions. Likewise, the study also shows how student-produced data can be both a learning tool and a research object, enriching both pedagogy and scholarship.

Case 4: Cross-Linguistics Pragmatics in ESL Instruction

The final case focuses on pragmatics and intercultural miscommunication in a multilingual ESL (English as a Second Language) classroom in Buenos Aires, Argentina. The data include recorded roleplays, teacher reflections, and student journals from a unit on “Politeness and Requests.”

In a procedural sense, Pragmatic speech act coding was applied to student performances, focusing on directness, mitigation, and illocutionary force. Intercultural features were analyzed using Scollon and Scollon’s (2001) intercultural communication framework. Reflexive journals were analyzed thematically to trace students’ evolving awareness.

Spanish-speaking students frequently transferred politeness strategies from L1 into English, leading to overuse of indirect speech acts in inappropriate contexts (e.g., “Would it bother you terribly if I...” for basic requests). Teachers noted a tension between grammatical correctness

and pragmatic appropriacy. Students' journal entries revealed a shift from frustration to metapragmatic reflection as they became more aware of cultural expectations.

This case demonstrates the importance of discourse-pragmatic instruction in language classrooms and provides a model for combining performance data with reflective narratives. It also affirms that cross-cultural pragmatics is not just a linguistic issue, but a pedagogical one requiring explicit discourse awareness. Having explored the cases individually, here's a comparative snapshot:

Table 1. Comparative Overview of the Case Study Portfolio

Case Study	Setting	Method	Focus	Key Implication
Case 1: Teacher Authority and Turn-Taking	Bilingual Secondary (Spain)	CA + CDA + Prosody	Authority, Modality	Voice structure reinforces teacher authority
Case 2: Framing Inclusivity	SPED Online Module (USA)	MDA	Inclusion framing	Visual tone shapes emotional appeal
Case 3: . Populist Rhetoric	University Workshop (Argentina)	Student Corpus + CDA	Populism, Civic Ed	Students develop mixed critical awareness
Case 4: Intercultural Pragmatics	ESL Classroom (Argentina)	Pragmatics + Coding + Journals	Politeness, L2 norms	Cultural clash prompts reflection

This overview highlights the diversity of contexts, methods, and communicative dynamics explored across the case studies. It sets the stage for a comparative discussion of recurring themes and pedagogical implications in the following section.

DISCUSSION

The four case studies presented above demonstrate how discourse-analytic methods can be effectively deployed across a range of educational contexts, each addressing different thematic and methodological challenges. This section offers a cross-case synthesis, structured around three core axes: (1) discursive construction of educational values, (2) methodological innovation and adaptability, and (3) ethical and pedagogical implications. Through this comparative analysis, the article underscores the theoretical and applied contributions of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and multimodal methods to educational research.

Constructing Educational Values Through Discourse

Across the cases, discourse emerges as a central mechanism for constructing and contesting educational values such as authority, inclusion, citizenship, and intercultural competence. These values are not transmitted through explicit instruction alone but are embedded in the discursive fabric of classroom interaction, training materials, student performances, and visual design.

In Case 1, teacher authority was co-constructed through prosodic emphasis, turn-taking asymmetries, and epistemic hedging. Authority was not imposed unilaterally but enacted through discursive routines that simultaneously asserted knowledge and invited engagement. This finding aligns with recent work in applied linguistics that views classroom authority as a negotiated, rather than static, phenomenon (Walsh, 2011; Lefstein & Snell, 2014).

Case 2 revealed how inclusivity, though ostensibly framed as a core pedagogical principle, was articulated through affective and individualized discourses, largely devoid of structural critique. The soft tonal palette and metaphorical language ("building bridges") reinforced a humanistic but depoliticized understanding of diversity, a finding that resonates with critiques of neoliberal discourses in education (Shore & Wright, 2015; Apple, 2004). Here, inclusivity becomes an emotional rather than sociopolitical imperative.

In Case 3, student annotations of populist rhetoric in political speeches demonstrated the permeability of civic education to ideological influence. While many students displayed critical awareness, others reproduced the affective frames of the texts they were analyzing, suggesting that critical literacy is not merely a skill but an ongoing negotiation between discourse, identity, and social position (Janks, 2010; Luke, 2018).

Finally, Case 4 illustrated how cross-cultural misalignment in pragmatic norms can produce both communicative breakdown and pedagogical insight. Politeness strategies, often assumed to be universal, emerged as deeply cultural artifacts, shaped by norms of deference, formality, and indirectness. Here, language instruction became a site of discursive re-socialization, echoing studies on language ideologies and second language pragmatics (Ishihara & Cohen, 2010; Kumaravadivelu, 2003).

Taken together, these cases suggest that educational values are not passively absorbed but actively constructed and contested in discourse. They also highlight the need for pedagogical spaces that explicitly reflect on these constructions, fostering meta-discursive awareness among both learners and educators.

Methodological Insights: Innovation, Portability, and Constraint

From a methodological standpoint, the case studies illustrate the flexibility of discourse analysis when adapted to varied empirical conditions. Three methodological contributions deserve emphasis:

First, the integration of multimodal and prosodic features—particularly in Cases 1 and 2—enables a richer understanding of how meaning is layered across verbal and non-verbal channels. While traditional CDA has been critiqued for focusing too heavily on text, this article demonstrates that incorporating audiovisual data, gesture, intonation, and layout analysis provides a more comprehensive picture of how discourse operates in educational practice (Norris, 2004; Kress, 2010).

Second, the portfolio approach illustrates the portability of discourse-analytic tools across settings without sacrificing theoretical coherence. While each case adopts a tailored method (e.g., corpus tools in Case 3, speech act coding in Case 4), they all draw on shared analytical logics: close attention to context, triangulation of data, and interpretive depth. This reflects calls within the field to embrace flexible, hybrid methodologies while maintaining epistemological clarity (Baker et al., 2008; Breeze, 2011).

Third, the case studies foreground the constraints of applied discourse research. In some cases, data quality limited transcription detail; in others, the institutional context imposed boundaries on what could be recorded or shared. Moreover, the process of balancing academic rigor with pedagogical usability—especially in student-generated data—required constant negotiation. These challenges reinforce the need for transparency in methodological reporting and reflexivity in researcher positioning (Rogers et al., 2005; Wodak & Meyer, 2009).

Theoretical Contributions to Educational Discourse Research

Theoretically, this article contributes to a growing body of work that treats education as a discursively mediated field, where ideology, identity, and affect are constantly reproduced and resisted. By examining discourse not only as a linguistic object but as a multimodal, embodied, and pedagogical practice, the study supports a critical-pragmatic view of education—one that bridges linguistic form, social function, and instructional purpose (van Dijk, 2008; O’Keeffe, 2011).

One emerging theme across cases is the centrality of affect in educational discourse. Whether through prosodic warmth, visual empathy, or emotional appeals, affect serves as both a pedagogical resource and a site of ideological negotiation. This aligns with recent scholarship on the “affective turn” in discourse studies, which emphasizes how emotions are not separate from reason or power but constitutive of them (Wetherell, 2013; Zembylas, 2017).

A second contribution is the emphasis on student agency in shaping discourse. In Case 3, students were not passive subjects but active analysts and narrators, engaging critically with political discourse. This suggests that CDA can be not only a research method but a pedagogical

intervention—one that empowers learners to interrogate the ideological structures shaping their world (Janks, 2010; Luke, 2004).

Ethical and Pedagogical Considerations

Ethics and pedagogy are intertwined in discourse research, especially in educational settings involving minors, non-native speakers, or politically sensitive content. The studies presented here raise important questions about informed consent, power asymmetries, and the dual role of the teacher-researcher.

For instance, in Case 1, the researcher's familiarity with the teacher may have influenced both data access and interpretation. In Case 4, students' reflections revealed emotional discomfort when confronted with cultural mismatch. In each case, ethical engagement required not just procedural compliance but relational sensitivity and contextual awareness (Hammersley & Traianou, 2012).

Pedagogically, the article affirms the potential of discourse analysis to foster critical awareness, cultural humility, and metapragmatic reflection. Whether analyzing populist rhetoric, decoding multimodal inclusion, or navigating politeness norms, discourse becomes a tool for self and social inquiry. This positions applied discourse research not as a detached academic exercise but as a participatory, reflexive, and transformative practice.

IMPLICATIONS FOR RESEARCH AND PRACTICE

The insights gained from this portfolio of applied discourse case studies extend beyond the particularities of each setting. They offer a set of conceptual, methodological, and pedagogical implications that can inform future research in educational linguistics and help reshape reflective practice in classrooms, training programs, and institutional settings. These implications are grouped into three domains: (1) for educational researchers, (2) for practitioners and teacher educators, and (3) for curriculum and policy development.

To start with, one of the central contributions of this study is its demonstration of how diverse discourse-analytic methods—ranging from micro-interactional analysis and prosodic transcription to multimodal annotation and corpus tools—can be adapted to the constraints and affordances of educational contexts. Rather than privileging a single analytic lens, the article advocates for methodological pluralism, where researchers build flexible toolkits that respond to specific research questions, data types, and ethical limitations. This aligns with recent calls in applied linguistics for “principled eclecticism” (Ellis, 2012) and layered discourse inquiry (Baker & McEney, 2015).

Specifically, CDA has often been criticized for the gap between its political commitments and its empirical procedures (Toolan, 1997; Widdowson, 2004). By providing clear, replicable case studies that adapt CDA and multimodal frameworks to classroom realities, this portfolio helps operationalize critical research in a way that is rigorous yet accessible. It encourages future researchers to move beyond critique toward the co-creation of research designs that are both theoretically grounded and contextually attuned.

Likewise, educational discourse is often treated as a byproduct of instruction rather than a primary data source. This article argues for a repositioning of discourse as a core unit of analysis in educational research—worthy of systematic attention in its own right. Audio recordings, classroom transcripts, visual slide decks, and student-authored texts are not just illustrative examples but generative sites of inquiry. Researchers are encouraged to develop protocols that capture the full multimodal texture of educational practice, particularly in hybrid and digital environments.

Several of the case studies demonstrate how discourse analysis can become a collaborative enterprise, where students, teachers, and researchers co-construct interpretations of communicative events. This participatory model aligns with action research paradigms and critical pedagogy traditions, offering a model of inquiry that is relational, dialogic, and ethically reflexive (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2005; Norton, 2013). Future work might expand this orientation by involving participants in the annotation, interpretation, or even publication process.

Secondly, Practitioners and Teacher Educators should be aware of discourse as a pedagogical tool. Indeed, the findings reaffirm that discourse is not just a subject of analysis but a powerful lens for pedagogical development. Teachers who understand the discursive dynamics of their own practice—how they perform authority, frame questions, or manage face-threatening acts—can engage in more reflective and equitable teaching. Discourse awareness, then, becomes a meta-teaching competency that enhances classroom interaction, supports culturally responsive pedagogy, and fosters inclusive learning environments (Leung & Street, 2012; Walsh, 2011).

Referring back to cases 2 and 3 show the pedagogical value of working with real discourse materials in professional development. Rather than relying solely on abstract principles of inclusion or engagement, teacher training programs can use video, transcripts, and multimodal texts to prompt reflective dialogue and grounded discussion. For instance, analyzing the prosodic features of teacher talk or the visual rhetoric of a policy slide deck helps bridge theory and practice in a tangible way.

Educators can also use discourse-analytic frameworks with learners, as shown in the student corpus activity in Case 3. Encouraging students to annotate and reflect on political, institutional, or digital texts fosters not only linguistic skills but critical civic awareness. This aligns with approaches to education that position learners as text analysts and meaning-makers rather than passive recipients (Janks, 2010; Luke, 2018). Embedding CDA in the curriculum—especially in language, social studies, and civic education—can deepen students' understanding of how language shapes their worlds.

As for Case 4, it illustrates how cross-linguistic and intercultural misalignments in discourse norms can create both pedagogical challenges and learning opportunities. Teachers in multilingual settings must be attuned to pragmatic variation—not only in speech acts but in norms of formality, directness, and turn-taking. Developing materials that explicitly address such variation can promote more inclusive and dialogic language teaching, and enhance students' communicative competence in globalized contexts (Ishihara & Cohen, 2010; Kramersch, 1998).

Ultimately, the implications for the Curriculum and the Policy deserve equal attention. The case studies support a view of discourse competence not merely as a linguistic skill but as a transversal, cross-curricular literacy. Understanding how language functions across modalities and institutional settings is essential for engaging critically with curricular content, navigating assessment, and participating in democratic life. Policymakers and curriculum designers might consider integrating discourse analysis into learning outcomes, especially in critical thinking, communication, and citizenship education frameworks.

Case 2 demonstrates how well-intentioned educational materials can reinforce dominant ideologies through tone, imagery, and metaphor. Curriculum developers should be trained to recognize the semiotic choices they make when designing learning content, especially in relation to diversity, equity, and inclusion. A discourse-informed design process would involve evaluating not only the content of a lesson but the visual, prosodic, and narrative elements that frame it.

Educational institutions and funding bodies can foster innovation by supporting data-rich discourse research. This includes providing resources for audiovisual recording, transcription tools, software licenses (e.g., ELAN, NVivo, AntConc), and interdisciplinary collaboration. Institutions might also consider ethical guidelines and infrastructure for storing and sharing multimodal educational corpora, thereby promoting transparency, replicability, and open science in applied linguistics and education research.

To synthesize the methodological scope and thematic contributions of the case studies discussed, the following table offers a cross-case summary aligning setting, focus, methods, and key implications. It serves as a visual consolidation of the article's core findings and their relevance to applied discourse research in education.

Table 2. Cross-Case Summary Table

Case Study	Educational Setting	Methods	Focus	Key Implications
1. Teacher Authority and Turn-Taking	Bilingual Secondary Classroom (Spain)	CA + CDA + Prosodic Analysis	Interactional Authority, Epistemic Modality	Voice and turn control shape authority; CDA usable in everyday classroom talk
2. Multimodal Framing of Inclusivity	Online SPED Teacher Training (USA)	Multimodal Discourse Analysis (MDA)	Framing of Inclusion, Visual-Affective Appeal	Inclusivity is framed affectively but lacks systemic critique; MDA essential
3. Populist Rhetoric in Civic Education	University Discourse Workshop (Argentina)	Student Corpus + Affective-Critical Coding	Critical Literacy, Populist Discourse Patterns	Students can engage critically but also reproduce ideology; use of CDA as pedagogy
4. Cross-Linguistic Pragmatics in ESL	Multilingual ESL Classroom (Argentina)	Pragmatic Coding + Reflective Journals	Speech Acts, Politeness, Cultural Misalignment	

The table encapsulates the methodological and thematic convergence across the cases, reinforcing how applied discourse research can illuminate key tensions in classroom authority, inclusion, ideology, and pragmatics.

CONCLUSION

This article set out to demonstrate the value and viability of applying discourse-analytic methods to real-world educational contexts. By presenting a portfolio of four methodologically diverse and thematically rich case studies, it has shown how discourse—not only as language but as a multimodal, ideological, and affective practice—functions at the heart of educational interaction, representation, and learning.

From the micro-politics of classroom authority to the visual framing of inclusion, from student reflections on populist rhetoric to the pragmatics of intercultural communication, the cases collectively reveal the constitutive power of discourse in shaping what education is and what it can become.

At the methodological level, this study contributes to a growing movement within educational linguistics and applied discourse analysis that seeks to bridge the gap between critical theory and empirical practice. Rather than treating CDA, multimodal analysis, and corpus methods as abstract or isolated techniques, the portfolio demonstrates how these tools can be flexibly adapted to the constraints and opportunities of specific pedagogical settings.

The integration of transcription, annotation, coding, and student-generated data underscores the methodological creativity required to conduct ethically sound, contextually grounded, and theoretically robust educational research.

For researchers, the cases offer templates for designing discourse studies that are not only analytical but actionable—capable of generating insights that inform both scholarly debates and institutional practice. For educators and teacher trainers, they show how discourse analysis can be incorporated into reflective teaching, professional development, and curriculum design.

For policy makers and curriculum developers, they emphasize the importance of attending to the multimodal, ideological, and emotional dimensions of educational materials and environments.

Crucially, the article affirms that applied discourse analysis is not merely a tool for studying language; it is a practice of engagement, one that can deepen our understanding of educational dynamics and open new spaces for transformation. In an era marked by ideological

polarization, linguistic diversity, and digital hybridity, the ability to read, analyze, and reshape discourse is not an optional competency—it is a foundational one.

Future research should continue to explore the intersections between discourse, equity, and pedagogy, with special attention to multimodal corpora, affective communication, and learner agency.

In sum, applied discourse research holds the potential to advance not only our understanding of how education works, but our collective capacity to imagine and enact how it might work better. This article hopes to serve as both a methodological resource and a conceptual provocation toward that end.

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