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Theoretical Framework of Critical Discourse Analysis

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Abstract
Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) studies the relationship between language and ideology. It regards the distinctive linguistic choices, ranging from syntactic structure to pronunciation as the result of combined efforts between the producer's unique ideology and the power relationships among the interlocutors in a specific area of experience. Therefore, it is of great necessity to study the core concepts of language, ideology and power in the domain of CDA.

Key words: Framework; Critical discourse analysis; Social practice

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INTRODUCTION
In the late1970s, Roger Fowler and some other pioneers (Fowler et al., 1979b) felt that linguists had been committed to an objective description of language, focusing on exploring such questions as "what" while ignoring questions as "why" and "how" in language and its use. At that time, they claimed (Kress, 1993; Fairclough, 1989) that the social and historical background of the discourse as well as the processes of event should no longer be ignored in linguistic analysis. Thus they called for an enquiry into the relationship between signs, meaning and the social and historical conditions, all of which were found to be inextricably bound with the speaker or writer's thought. Gradually the particular investigation into the relationship between language and ideology developed into the critical discourse analysis.

Since CDA emerged in 1970s, the relationship between language and ideology has been its central topic. Some critical linguists (Hodge & Kress, 1988) claim that language is the primary domain of ideology, whether or not members of a society are aware of it when they use language in the course of their daily lives. Others (Van Dijik, 1986; Fairclogh, 1989; Fowler, 1991) state that even the apparently "unbiased" news language does not transparently and objectively represent "facts", but are ideological and related to the values, beliefs and practice of their social contexts in a variety of ways. CDA concentrates on social issues, and shows special interests in the role of media discourses in their production of power abuse and domination of the ideological favor of dominant groups. As Van Dijk (1998) observes, the media as ideological institutions have already taken over the ideological work of the family, the church, and the school in contemporary information society. He (Van Dijk, 1988a, 1988b) critically analyzed the news reports on the coverage of refugees, immigrants and minorities so as to examine the role of news media in the reproduction of ethnic prejudices and racism. And he discovered that the attitudes in the press corresponded to prevailing ethnic prejudices expressed in everyday talk, and he also pointed out that the elites played a crucial role in the reproduction of racism. In fact, ideological concerns are quite pervasive in the critical analysis of media discourses. Wodak (Wodak, 1989, 1995) studied the sexist language in news reports an attempt to make women visible in language, and thus also socially in institutions. Fairclough (1995) asserts that the routines, actors, events and institutional arrangements in news making are generally biased toward the reproduction of a limited set of dominant elite ideology.

1. LANGUAGE AS SOCIAL PRACTICE

Language, in the earliest Saussurean linguistics, was taken as an autonomous abstract system, self-contained, self-regulating, and quite arbitrary in its genesis and its relations with the non-linguistic world. Such view insists that language is merely a self-contained system of rules independent of meaning and context and that the grammar of a language is an abstract descriptive system (Fowler, 1979a, p.26). Despite the dominance of such belief, some other linguists (Fowler, 1991; Van Dijik, 1993) gradually come to associate society with language in the interpretation of discourse. They claim that the effects of the use of a particular language structure are closely related with the speech community's social status. This concept can be further explained in the following three aspects.

First and foremost, language carries social meanings. Different social strata and groups have different linguistic structures available to them. As we know, language consists of many different kinds of signs and structures, all of them responding to social forces and semiotic considerations in detailed communicative situations. Usually an interlocutor's linguistic behaviors or choices are his or her natural responses to the social, political and economic factors in the circumstances where the communication occurs. For instance, an official manager speaks differently from a factory worker, even if they are both addressing on the same area of experiences. The speeches articulate their differences, because there is always a distinctive set of vocabulary, syntactic structures and even pronunciation typically distinguishing a manager from an ordinary worker. Meanwhile, the linguistic difference in types of speech or writing, automatically, demonstrates the distinction between the interlocutors social, political and economic positions. These linguistic variations reflect and express the structured social disparity which gives rise to them.

Secondly, the reasons for diverse choices of linguistic structures in actual use are fundamentally social, political and economic, and out of the speaker or writer's own control. A language user is with the communicative instinct to recognize, choose and apply the linguistic forms appropriate both to his or her partner and to him/herself in accordance with the social and economic status. Take Fowler's hospital-patient-as-powerless analysis (1991, pp.124-134) for an example. Mr. Ennals, a chief official in medical care, stated in a news report, "In the majority of cases there is little wait if the matter is urgent. That should be recognized. Most of those who have to wait are non-urgent cases. When a case becomes urgent, it goes to the top of the list." The statements have the characteristics of official discourse. Five out of the seven clauses are delivered as unquestioned assertions, and the verbs are not marked with any expressions of tentativeness, or less certainty. They are just "is", "is", "becomes" and "goes". In contrast, the speech of patients in the report is often marked by "could", "can", and "might". For instance, "if the hospital could meet our demand quicker, that may be very nice." Clearly, the language of the officer, compared with that of patients, is more decisive. It implies force and power. In fact, the different choices on modality in the example are not a trivial matter of certainty or tentativeness, but a highly symbolic obligation with deep causes. The medical officer speaks more powerful language than an ordinary patient because the health officer is more powerful in the doctor-patient relationship. The patients at the same time are obliged to use a contrasting variety of language filled with tentativeness because of their relatively minor position in the social relationship. The asymmetrical use of modality between doctor and patient, in essence, is a mirror of their gap in power and privilege ownership. As Fowler asserts (1986), the semantics of power and solidarity emerges from a hierarchical society traditionally built on massively unequal division of power, wealth, and privilege between different groups of people.

Thirdly, the speakers" asymmetrical use of language resources is part of the mechanism for reaffirming and maintaining the unequal division of social resources. Take the language in interview for another example. As we know, during an interview, the interviewer usually takes a higher position in power and to some extent exerts control over the interviewee. Such disparity in power is well expressed in their languages. Generally speaking, the interviewees tend to use many tentative and tactful words and expressions, such as "I guess", "maybe", "sort of", "I believe I can", and so on. While the speech from the interviewer remains decisive: "yes, you can", "no, it is not good", and the like. These differences reflect the socially ascribed superior status of the interviewer, and allow him or her to manipulate the behavior of interviewees. Further more, those choices reaffirm the interviewer's right to control the interviewee, or in other words legitimize the roles of "more powerful" and "less powerful" which the society has assigned to the participants. In this sense, language is not merely an effect or reflection of social organizations or practices; it is part of social practice. The discourses articulate social meanings, but the act of articulation in a particular social and economic context affects the situation in return. Very often the effect is to reaffirm and consolidate existing social structures.

In summary, the unequal divisions of social resources give rise to the asymmetric use of language, and the varying linguistic application manifests, reaffirms and even justifies the existing social inequality. Therefore, critical linguists usually take language as a channel through which the broader vision of the whole society is opened up. They believe that the identification of linguistic features, usually quite recognizable, will help disclose current social structure, promote awareness of social hierarchy.

2. LANGUAGE AND IDEOLOGY

For all humans, language and thought are inextricably bound together. Humans interpret the flux of world experience through means of interpretive schemata, the language; and more importantly, there is no "pure" act of perceiving, no seeing without thinking (Hodge & Kress, 1993, p.1).

As is known to all, language facilitates man in making sense of the world by assigning a name to every entity. It saves man from being bewildered or overwhelmed by the world's vast richness. Whatever has a name becomes familiar and thus easier to remember and share. Those who have a name can be shared because the act of naming in essence is to classify entities into different categories. The activity of evaluating automatically transforms them into distinct communicable perceptions, and little by little, these exchangeable classifications are coded and fixed in language. Later on, whenever a communication occurs, humans inevitably impose those classifications on both external and internal worlds, and even on themselves. Meanwhile, these assumptions appear to be quite spontaneous and natural, and, as a consequence, members of a speech community regard them as a kind of second nature. That is usually associated with Ideology. In short, language is bound with ideology because the preliminary assumptions ascribed by language are spontaneously related to man's perception.

In addition, these assumptions are essentially socially given. As explained in the earlier section, various linguistic structures such as pronunciation, vocabulary and syntax are intended for speakers from different social, political and economic positions. Therefore, the ideology which goes hand in hand with language is also originated from these factors. That is to say, people from a particular social stratum shall have a distinctive set of beliefs and value systems. Such systematic set of ideas, organized from a particular point of view is defined as Ideology (Hodge & Kress, 1993, p.1).

Ideology, as the major concern in the field of CDA, has been proposed with different definitions. For example, Fowler (1991) states that ideology is a neutral concept related to people's arrangement and proof of their life style. He especially refers to ideology as an unexamined, un-self-critical and routinized set of beliefs and value systems by a particular social group. On the other hand, Fairclough (1995) suggests that ideology involves the description of the world from the perspective of a certain interest; Thompson (1990) defines ideology as meaning that serves power and establishes and maintains asymmetrical power relation.

Despite their different stresses on the definition, we still can make sure that ideology does not bear any negative connotation in the field of CDA. Instead, it refers to a kind of practice through which people make sense of their social world. Since the asymmetrical social structures interfere with people's way of perceiving and analyzing, this sense-making process varies from one social group to another. Usually their variances are coded in the instrument that we use to interpret and describe the world, the instrument of language. In other words, the linguistic choices that the language user has developed to depict the world carry ideological meanings.

Equally important, the distinctive set of ideas, beliefs and values of a particular social group is transmitted to the children as they learn the language, and the daily language use further reinforces and consolidates such ideology. The meanings of the words, syntax and even pronunciation in a language are the community's store of established knowledge. A child learns the values and preoccupations of its culture while learning the language. During this process, language serves as a chief instrument of socialization, and the child is unconsciously shaped into conformity with the established system of faith. Since these assumptions or perceptions are socially determined, children who are born into different sections of society shall be socialized with varied value systems; and factors which bear upon their potential ideology include parents" occupation and income, their own education, job, where they live, what they read and so on. As a consequence, each person's use of language encodes ideology which is peculiar to his or her group and different from that encoded by other groups. When the ideology is held by a powerful social group, it is said to be the dominant ideology, such as the powerful institutions like government, hospital, and the law. People's perceptions of these institutions more or less will be shaped in part by the detailed linguistic practices of the social groups who comprise them. For example, people's perception of governmental authority is somehow manipulated or influenced by its decisive and impersonal style of discourse, and very often the effect of such linguistic practice is to maintain its present social power or privilege. In short the particular ideology is reaffirmed and consolidated in its holders" language practice.

To sum up, language, as a social practice, helps humans make order of the world and society through naming, which at the same time classifies the world and even humans themselves into different categories. Gradually these socially determined classifications become our take-for-granted and fixed perceptions about the world, and that is called ideology. Ideology is closely associated with the social, political and economic status of its holders. The ideology of a particular group is embodied in language, learnt through the language, and reaffirmed through language use.

3. POWER AND DISCOURSE

Power, in the domain of CDA, mainly refers to social power rather than personal power. Social power involves

control, namely, (members of) one group over (those of) other groups. Such control may pertain to action and cognition. That is to say, the power may limit the freedom of action of others, but also influences their minds (Van Dijik, 1993, p.254). In other words, power is particularly about relations of differences in social structure; to be specific, power is a relation between people, and it is always a mediated relationship.

Power, however, cannot exit without the signifying systems that constitute it. Kress and Hodge (1979, pp.158-159) state that language indexes power, expresses power and is involved in where there is a contention over or a challenge to power. Language provides a finely articulated means for differences in power and in social hierarchical structures. The constant unity of language and other social matters ensure that language is entwined with social power, and discourse is naturally a major instrument of power and control (Therborn, 1980). Therefore, it's fair to reason that the operations of power can be studied via texts, which are scrutinized for the various traces, and clues and claims they contain.

Many critical linguists (Van Dijik, 1990; Wodak, 1989; Fairclough, 1991; Simpson, 1993) feel that it is indeed part of their professional role to investigate, reveal and clarify how power and discriminatory values are inscribed in and mediated through the linguistic system. Such study is often carried out through the texts carrying processes that realize transitivity. It is by the transitivity system that power is or was mediated and constructed (Simpson, 1993).

4. FOWLER'S MODE OF CDA

CDA is committed to the analysis of linguistic and semiotic aspects of social practices and problems (Wodak, 1995, p.15). Therefore, the structural features of a discourse should be interpreted through the relationship between the linguistic practice and its social context. But the controversial question is how a discourse may demonstrate the ideology through its linguistic structures in a detailed social context.

As regards to this problem, Fowler claims (1986) that the combination of social context study and the linguistic analysis will manifest the ideology hidden in the discourse. Fowler explains this idea as follows: People from different social strata tend to use different linguistic structures in the same area of experience. The particular set of linguistic features, on one hand, reflects the language user's particular way of assessment and evaluation, and on the other hand, these linguistic characteristics are, in essence, deeply rooted in the social structure. Furthermore, the practical use of language is largely out of the speaker or writer's own control, but determined by the complex social structure. Therefore, an investigation into the general social context of the discourse helps to explain the conspicuous linguistic features in the text. At the same time, language is inextricably bound with ideology, and ideology is also originated from the asymmetrical society. Thus, the interlocutor's distinctive language use must reflect the distinctive ideology of his or her social group, which is usually manifested in the power relationship and group interests.

To make his idea workable in the practice of critical analysis, Fowler (1986) proposed a model of CDA. See the figure below.

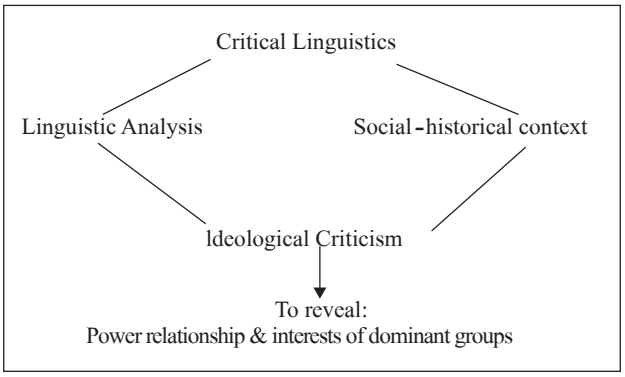

Figure 1
Fowler's Model of CDA

The CDA model of Fowler clearly illustrates the relationship between language and ideology. It emphasizes that the critical analysis of a discourse should include the linguistic analysis and the social background research. The first step is to sort out the noticeable linguistic features in the discourse. Meanwhile, it is equally important to investigate into the general social context of the discourse. The social and historical background helps explain the noticeable linguistic structures in the text, and as a result, reveal the hidden ideology through power relationship and interests of dominant groups.

The greatest feature of this mode is feasible. It makes the abstract critical study of language and ideology applicable, and it also offers the steps to take: The linguistic interpretation should be combined with the social and historical background. Finally the hidden power relation and interests of dominant group manifest the ideology.

CONCLUSION

CDA was developed by British linguists Roger Fowler, Gunther Kress and so on, in the late 1970s. It attempts to unveil the hidden ideologies behind language, by combining linguistic analysis with the relevant social and historical background. Fowler (1979a, 1986) believes that people from different social strata tend to use different linguistic expressions in the same social context. The particular set of linguistic features, on one hand, reflects the language user's distinctive ideology, and on the other hand works as the instrument to manifest and advocate the

ideology. The ideology is usually manifested in the power relationship and group interests. Fowler proposed a CDA model to illustrate such relationship between language and ideology. He emphasized that the study of social and historical background would help explain the noticeable linguistic features in the discourse, and as a result reveals the hidden ideology.

The above studies tell that CDA plays a crucial part in revealing implicit prejudice and discrimination in society; it attaches importance not only to the linguistic structures and their meanings, but also to their application in the social context. Through linguistic analysis, CDA aims to unveil structures of domination and promote changes in the way power is wielded, maintained and reproduced in people's daily use of language.

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