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Entitled

A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF REPORTS ACROSS
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A CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS APPROACH
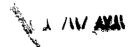
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We hereby recommend that the thesis by Naime Farid

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Be accepted in partial fulfillment of requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in teaching English as a Second Language.

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With special thanks:

To My Mother
And My Father

Who are my everything in this Strange
World.

Last Name: **Farid Mohammadpoor**   First Name: **Naime**
Title: **A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF REPORTS ACROSS IRANIAN AND BRITISH NEWSPAPERS:A CRITICAL DISCOURS ANALYSIS APPROACH**
Supervisor: **Dr. Farrokhi** Co-Supervisor: **Dr. Ansarin**
Degree: **Master of Arts** University: **Tabriz** Graduation Date: **September 2008**

Abstract: Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) has become a very influential academic research activity across subjects in social, political, and linguistic sciences. It scrutinizes the power relations, ideological manipulations, and hegemony. Critical analysis of the language of journalism is used here as an attempt to explain how a single reality can be presented and viewed entirely differently by different people having a range of religious and political perspectives, by showing how pro- and anti-Iranian newspapers can represent their point of view and their different ideologies through using language. This study presents a corpus consisting of three pro-Iranian reports besides three anti-Iranian ones. The findings corroborated the fact that Critical Discourse Analysis can be an appropriate method for the detection of biased and manipulative language. The results indicated that there are significant differences between Pro- and Anti-Iranian newspapers in their ideological points and in their   in terms of lexico-grammatical choices. These findings may have some implications for teaching of academic writing especially to foreign language learners of English.

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At the end, I hope a good and successful future for all my classmates who were nice and trustworthy during the studying years.

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List of Abbreviations

CDA=Critical Discourse Analysis

CL= Critical Linguistics

DA= Discourse Analysis

IAEA= International Atomic Energy Agency

MDA= Media Discourse Analysis

NIE =National Intelligence Estimate

PDA= Political Discourse Analysis

SFL= Systemic Functional Linguistics

CIRC=Circumstances

Abstract

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) has become a very influential academic research activity across subjects in social, political, and linguistic sciences. It scrutinizes the power relations, ideological manipulations, and hegemony. Critical analysis of the language of journalism is used here as an attempt to explain how a single reality can be presented and viewed entirely differently by different people having a range of religious and political perspectives, by showing how pro- and anti-Iranian newspapers can represent their point of view and their different ideologies through using language. This study presents a corpus consisting of three pro-Iranian reports besides three anti-Iranian ones. It has tried to analyze the six selected reports in terms of Halliday's (1994) Transitivity Theory and Van Dijk's (1998) categories. These samples concern ideological effects introduced by Van Dijk including the use of the elements listed as Actor description, Modality, Nominalization, Comparison, Categorization, Evidentiality, Example, Illustration, Generalization, Hyperbole, Implication, Irony, Lexicalization, National Self-glorification, Negative Other-presentation, Norm expression, Number game, Positive Self-presentation, Vagueness, Euphemism, Presupposition, and Authority. Such an analysis has tried to show how the reports are similar or different regarding pro- and anti-Iranian reports in terms of lexico-grammatical choices by applying Halliday's process types including Material, Mental, Verbal, Relational, and Possessive processes and how the lexico-grammatical choices are related to ideological positions. The findings corroborated the fact that Critical Discourse Analysis can be an appropriate method for the detection of biased and manipulative language. The results indicated that there are significant differences between Pro- and Anti-Iranian newspapers in their ideological points and in their in terms of lexico-grammatical choices. These findings may have some implications for teaching of academic writing especially to foreign language learners of English.

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

1.0. Background and Need for the Study

CDA is a perspective on critical scholarship: a theory and a method of analysing the way that individuals and institutions use language. Critical discourse analysts focus "on social problems, and especially the role of discourse in the production and reproduction of power abuse or domination' (Van Dijk, 2001: 96).

CDA starts by identifying a social problem, "chooses the perspective of those who suffer most, and critically analyses those in power, those who are responsible and those who have the means and the opportunity to solve the problems" (Van Dijk, 1996: 115). Given the power and significance of news journalism to contemporary society, it should come as no surprise that the discourse of newspapers has been, and continues to be, scrutinized.

Journalistic discourse has some very specific textual characteristics, some very specific methods of text production and consumption, and is defined by a particular set of relationships between itself and other agencies of symbolic and material power. These three sets of characteristics –that is, the relations of journalism to special ideas and institutions are clearly inter-related and sometimes difficult to disentangle. In other words, they are different elements but not discrete, fully separate elements (Fairclough, 2000: 122).

The contemporary world is characterized by the pre-eminence of capitalism; there are very few, if any, places in the world that are not affected by capitalist social relations. Certainly, capitalism affects different parts of the world in different ways. To say that a society is capitalist is to make a claim about the mode of production and the division of society into classes who are defined by their relationship to the mode of production. In essence, a class

society is structured in such a way as to enable one set of people to live off the labour of others. Under a capitalist mode of production, workers are paid less for their labour than it is worth.

In a little more detail, from a Marxist perspective, classes are defined by their social relation needs to be stressed. Economically, there are only three classes: those who buy labour power (the bourgeoisie), those who sell their own labour power (the proletariat) and small-scale craftsmen/women and entrepreneurs (the petit bourgeoisie) who either create a product themselves or purchase a commodity and re-sell it for a profit.

The following question lies at the heart of all analysis and critique of journalism: what is journalism for? How we answer this will, in turn, shape the kind of additional questions we ask of journalism, and specifically the ways that we test journalism to see if it is 'measuring up' to the roles we think it ought to be fulfilling. Some may feel that journalism exists to entertain us. Such a view is highly simplistic. While journalism displays features common to many forms of entertainment, it is different to all of them. If journalism were comparable to these 'order' forms of entertainment, then why would governments and other powerful sections of society place so much stock in trying to control the work of journalists? Why are journalists manipulated, bullied and killed simply for attempting to do their job?

Alternatively, some have argued that journalism exists to disseminate the views of the powerful. The circulation and promotion of the views of the powerful is better described as propaganda, and while journalism is often shaped by the agenda of such propagandists, it remains distinct and separate from them. In short, detecting that newspapers are businesses should only ever be the starting point of analysis, not the conclusion.

1.1. Purpose and Significance of the Study

Effective discriminative reading and writing are of paramount importance in the modern era due to the prevalence of media and enormous exposure to information. Very ironically, students and even some academics have turned a blind eye to the nuances and intricacies of discourse production and comprehension. Hence, the individuals or institutions that have this knowledge at their disposal are able to control and subjugate the people with impunity (Foucault, 1972). They wield a very powerful tool; that is language, to materialize their wishes and aspirations. Furthermore, the semantic component of any language is used extensively for these purposes.

The apparently interchangeable vocabularies turn out to be hugely different under the scrutiny of CDA and specifically its semantic manifestation of different terms. Misunderstanding, bias, servitude, disgust and a myriad of other feelings and events are, no doubt, the repercussions of this unfamiliarity with related topics.

Most students are not able to acquire the sufficient proficiency in the foreign language since they are not well acquainted with the semantic features of the words which ultimately turn them into negative, neutral or positive terminologies. In most of our academic settings, students are bombarded with a host of theories about language "usage" while language "use" is mainly ignored (Widdowson, 1998).

The preponderance of language usage and the somewhat invisibility of language use has plagued our educational system. Consequently, we notice a blatant victimization of semantic, pragmatic and functional aspects of language. Universities seem to be filled with a multitude of students with good theoretical knowledge about language but a few of them apparently have a good comprehension of semantics and the hidden messages in the language. The paucity of attention to authentic language especially in the area of

meaning and the surfeit of time and energy allocated to theoretical discussions has made research in this field absolutely indispensable.

Ideological analysis of language and discourse is a widely practiced scholarly and critical endeavor in the humanities and the social sciences. The presupposition of such analyses is that ideologies of speakers or writers may be "uncovered" by close reading, understanding, or systematic analysis. For Iranian FL learners, like Iranian students learning English, the media, especially journals, are one of the primary sources of learning native use of language forms. Some media critics argue that media is not a reflection or mirror of reality but a way of representing reality by certain constrains that are forced by political, economic, and cultural powers (Fowler, 1991). Therefore raising people's consciousness toward explicit and implicit ideology in news report by finding some textual indices is of primary importance.

1.2. Theoretical Framework

Turning to the state of critical discourse analysis (CDA), it is arguable that CDA doesn't stand directly in a proper scientific, empirical linguistics and that it needlessly biases work on the pressing, practical tasks facing applied linguistics: the formation of language planning and policy and the teaching and learning of language and literacy in social institutions. Critical discourse analysis is more akin to a repertoire of political, epistemic stances: principled reading positions and practices for the critical analysis of place and force of language, discourse, text, and image in changing contemporary social, economic, and cultural conditions (Luke, 1997; Van Dijk, 1993a).

Like many other forms of contemporary social theory, the generational basis of CDA can be traced to the political events of 1968. This would include neoMarxist theories of interpellation and hegemony, as in Birmingham Centre for Cultural Studies interpretations of Gramsci and Althusser (e.g., Hall,

1994). But it also explains the emergence of post-Marxist philosophies of discourse and society generated by Foucault (1972).

There have been significant attempts at taxonomies of analytic categories, most notably the continuing work of Fairclough (1989, 1992) in the United Kingdom, European work by Van Dijk (1997), Wodak (1996), and related work in the United States by Gee (1999). Though they vary considerably in technical specification, they share a common strategy. CDA involves a principled and transparent shunting back and forth between the microanalysis of texts using varied tools of linguistic, semiotic, literary analysis, the macro analysis of social formations, institutions, and power relations that these texts index and construct.

1.3. Research Questions

This research addresses the following questions:

Q1: Are there any similarities and differences between pro- and anti-Iranian reports in terms of lexico-grammatical choices?

Q2: How are the lexico-grammatical choices related to ideological positions?

1.4. Outline of the Study

This thesis consists of the following five chapters. The first one is the introduction chapter in which the significance of the study and related research questions are presented. In chapter two, the related literature is reviewed and other issues in connection with the theme of this study are discussed. The important related topics like definition of CDA, semantic and political discourse analysis, discourse and media, ideology and systemic-functional linguistics are covered in this chapter. The third chapter is dealing with Methodology which includes definitions about Halliday's Transitivity Theory and Van Dijk's Ideology Categories.

The fourth chapter is data analysis and discussion. In this chapter, the selected data i.e. three Pro-Iranian and three Anti-Iranian news reports, are analyzed on the basis of the transitivity theory of Halliday (1994) as a word level analysis and Van Dijk's categories (1998) as a sentence level study. Then the results are interpreted and discussed following Van Dijk's categories and Halliday's theory. The final chapter is conclusion and implications in which the summary of the findings are discussed and some implications are suggested.

CHAPTER TWO

Review of the

Related

Literature

2.0. Introduction

In this chapter, the topics and issues related to this study are reviewed. It is tried to provide the important definitions, history, aims and scope of critical discourse analysis and the different kinds of discourse. Some of the significant findings in this area are introduced and their methods are considered.

2.1. Discourse Analysis

The terms "discourse" and "discourse analysis" (DA) are vigorously contested concepts whose definition, it often seems, are even beyond the scope of discourse studies. Methodologically, theoretically and analytically, the filed of DA is extremely diverse (see Blommaert, 2005; Brown and Yule, 1983; Cameron, 2001; Phillips and Jorgensen, 2002; Weiss and Wodak, 2003; Wodak and Meyer, 2001). Discourse is a very trendy word referring to a very trendy concept. It is one of the most well-used (some would say over- or misused) words in academia today. Reading around this subject, students often come across authors using different accounts of what discourse is and the way that the term ought to be used.

Schiffrin (1994) has argued that, contrary to the extensive debates in DA, there are two general approaches to the definition of discourse. First, there are those who define discourse as a particular unit of language, specifically, as a unit of language above the sentence. Since this approach to discourse focuses on the form which language takes — and specifically how discourse attains the quality of being unified and meaningful — it is called the formalist or structuralist definition of discourse.

Cameron (2001) suggests that "Linguists treat language as a "system of systems"(pp: 10-11), with each system having its own characteristic forms of structure or organization. Cameron introduces four characteristics central to formalist accounts of discourse: cohesion, narrative, causality and motivation.