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**عنوان:**

**دلایل ایدیولوژیکی در پس استفاده از پیش فرض ها در گفتمان خبری**

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## چکیده

در این تحقیق پنج سرمقاله از دو روزنامه انگلیسی زبان (تهران تایمز و ایران نیوز) انتخاب شدند تا استراتژی های مختلف و مهمتر از همه استفاده از پیش فرضها در جهت القای مفاهیم ایدئولوژیکی شناخته شود. سر مقاله های نمونه بر اساس مقیاس پنج امتیازی لیکرت که توسط خوانندگان ایرانی نمره گذاری شده بود انتخاب شدند. سپس، استراتژی های مختلف شناخته شدند و اطلاعات بیان شده و پیش فرضها جداگانه فهرست شدند. هدف این تحقیق کشف وجود دلایل ایدئولوژیکی در پس استفاده از پیش فرضها بر اساس تلاش ذهنی که خوانندگان نیاز دارند تا اطلاعاتی را که پیش فرض قرار داده شده فعال کنند. در این مقاله گفته شده که روزنامه نگاران ممکن است برای واداشتن خوانندگان به باور مطالبی که صحت ندارد، اطلاعاتی را پیش فرض قرار دهند.

# Chapter 1

## Introduction

*Journalism, in its various forms, is clearly among the most influential knowledge-producing institutions of our time.*

(Ekström, 2002, p. 259)

### 1.1. Introduction

The framework of this thesis is Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) which scrutinizes texts in their social and cultural contexts. CDA has a critical point of view toward different types of discourse in different properties of discourse. Presuppositions are one of the most important discourse properties because it is almost impossible to utter a statement or convey a meaning without using some kind of presuppositions. Presuppositions can be 'fair' or 'unfair' in terms of the processing efforts readers are required to uncover presupposed knowledge (Sperber and Wilson, 1995). This thesis attempted to address presuppositions in selected editorials in order to find out whether they are used unfairly to mystify events for ideological goals. If it is assumed that the media manipulate their readers or viewers, we need to examine them precisely and to know under what conditions this might be the case. The editorial as a genre has a special place in the newspaper, often separated from other news providing opinions or interpreting the news for the reader. The difference between editorials depends on how a newspaper evaluates the world or makes assumptions about the reader's knowledge of events (van Dijk, 1995c). It is inevitable to presuppose some information in a communicative event, but whether these presuppositions are fair or not should be examined. In order to unearth such unfair

presuppositions in editorials, different strategies used in editorials and the amount of cognitive processing efforts that readers invest were examined.

## **1.2. Statement of the Problem**

Editorials play an important role in formation or change of public opinion. Nowadays, mass-communicators are exposed to an overwhelming amount of information; thus, they cannot often come to any conclusions because of the amount of information they are faced with, so they have to turn to the opinions of those who are involved in the production of news. It is also mentioned that the purpose of the editorial is often to stimulate readers into action, but it is implicitly expressed (Hulteng, 1973; Stonecipher, 1979). Therefore, it might be crucial to examine editorials to find out whether they have ideological goals in their implications.

In the same way as the mind is part of society, society is also part of the mind (van Dijk, 1995c). “Social actors manage their social actions and act within social contexts as a function of their personal as well as socially shared interpretations or representations of their social environment” (van Dijk, 1995c, p. 2). Editorials that are identified as a type of media discourse belong to the large category called ‘opinion discourse’ (van Dijk, 1995c). In many types of discourse, such as everyday talk, news paper or other types of discourse language users express their opinions ( Pomerantz, 1984; Billig, 1987; van Eemeren, et al., 1987; Antaki, 1994; Wegman, 1994). Editorials are one of the discourse types that their main function is the expression and persuasive communication of opinions. A next point to be stressed is the fact that editorial opinion is generally institutional, not personal (van Dijk, 1995c). They are regarded as the opinion of the newspaper not the editor, so they can

be used as a tool to legitimize dominant group power and interests in society. Therefore, there is a need to study the ways opinions are expressed and persuasively communicated in detail as well as the possible social effects of these opinion discourses.

### **1.3. Significance of the Study**

Issues dealing with cognition in the production and comprehension of discourse have not received enough attention in CDA realm; on the contrary, CDA has been more likely to link linguistic analysis with social or cultural analysis. However, this thesis tries to emphasize on this neglected aspect of CDA because, as van Dijk (2001a) argues, analyses addressing discourse in relation to social structure cannot be rewarding without consideration of the individual's cognitive aspects of discourse processing.

van Dijk (2001a) insists on the need for a multidisciplinary theory of CDA that combines discourse, cognition and society. As Wodak and Meyer (2001) point out, "...in critically analyzing various kinds of discourses that encode prejudice, van Dijk's interest is in developing a theoretical model that will explain cognitive discourse processing mechanisms" (p. 7). Presupposition, the subject of the present study, is one of discourse structures that need a cognitive analysis.

O'Halloran (2003) also attempts to focus on cognition aspect of Critical Discourse Analysis. Interpretation and explanation are two stages in O'Halloran's (2003) model of CDA in which interpretation focuses the cognitive aspect of analysis.

This study attempts to contribute to this cognitive aspect of discourse comprehension by identifying different strategies and using van Dijk's (2000, 2001a)

typology of knowledge in the course of processing news discourse, as well as the psychological theory of pragmatics – Relevance Theory.

#### **1.4. Purpose of the Study**

Editorials have the potential to shape opinions, create reality and convey ideologies. van Dijk (1995c) explains that the editorials like many other phenomena, have been largely ignored by scholars, and there is not enough literature on them. As he explains, most scholarly studies are done by journalists about press dealing with historical issues. This genre needs to be analyzed in terms of its discourse properties. Presupposition is one of these properties that might be used as a tool in forming ideas in a persuasive discourse. Although the use of presupposition is unavoidable, unnecessarily presupposing information can lead readers to believe something that could be unreal. The present study analyzes editorials and unearths presuppositions embedded in them in the English language Iranian newspapers in terms of Critical Discourse Analysis and Relevance Theory.

Editorials appear every day in the same page, so they can have an essential influence on constructing ideas. Thus, it seems a necessity to analyze this type of opinion-formulating discourse and make recipients more critical. The ultimate goal of this type of research is to raise awareness of language as an instrument of power and thereby to attempt to have an impact on power relations.

## **1.5. Research Questions and Hypotheses**

The aim of this analysis is to discover underlying persuasive ideologies in editorials. Some strategies used to legitimate the beliefs of the dominant group can be exposed by studying the ideologies in editorials. This study is trying to provide answers to following questions:

1. What strategies are used in editorials to convey ideologies?
2. Is it possible to discern any ideological reasons behind the use of some ‘unfair’ presuppositions?

Thus, the hypotheses in line with the research questions above are as follows:

Hypothesis 1. Certain strategies are used in editorials to convey ideologies.

Hypothesis 2. There are ideological reasons behind the use of some unfair presuppositions.

## **1.6. Definition of Key Terms**

### **1.6.1. Relevance Theory**

Relevance Theory explains how the hearer infers the speaker’s intended meaning on the basis of the evidence provided. The relevance-theoretic account is based on one of Grice’s central claims: that utterances automatically create expectations which guide the hearer towards the speaker’s meaning (Grice, 1961, 1989). Grice described these expectations in terms of “a Co-operative Principle and maxims of Quality (truthfulness), Quantity (informativeness), Relation (relevance) and Manner (clarity) which speakers are expected to observe” ( as cited in Sperber & Wilson 2004, p. 607). The interpretation a rational hearer should choose is the one that best satisfies those expectations.

According to relevance theory, expectations of relevance raised by an utterance are precise enough to lead hearers towards the speaker's meaning. Its aim is to explain what these expectations of relevance account to and how they contribute to an empirically plausible account of comprehension (Sperber & Wilson, 2004). According to Sperber and Wilson (1995, p. 215):

An utterance is relevant to an individual when it connects with background information he has available to yield conclusions that matter to him: say, by answering a question he had in mind, improving his knowledge on a certain topic, settling a doubt, confirming a suspicion, or correcting a mistaken impression. In relevance-theoretic terms, an input is relevant to an individual when its processing in a context of available assumptions yields a positive cognitive effect. A positive cognitive effect is a worthwhile difference to the individual's representation of the world – a true conclusion, for example. False conclusions are not worth having. They are cognitive effects, but not positive ones.

### **1.6.2. Presupposition**

Presuppositions are what Fairclough refers to as “implicit assumptions” (1989, p. 79). They refer to the addressee's existing knowledge that the speaker or writer presupposes and do not, therefore, need to be asserted. Keenan (2000) believes the presuppositions of a sentence are the conditions that the world must meet in order for the sentence to make literal sense. Presuppositions can be ‘fair and uncontroversial’ based on knowledge which is common to all communicators, or, in contrast, ‘unfair’ or



‘controversial’ that are made upon the covert knowledge by a communicator with a hidden agenda using in propaganda (Sperber & Wilson, 1995).

### **1.6.3. Critical Discourse Analysis**

Critical Discourse Analysis critically analyses the language and its relation with ideology and society. CDA is a type of discourse analytical research that studies the way “social power abuse, dominance and inequality are (re)enacted through texts produced in social and political contexts” (van Dijk 2001b, p. 352).

CDA pursues specific discourse structures in order to detect their roles in reproduction of social dominance in different discourses such as conversations or news discourse or any other genres and contexts. Henry and Tator (2002) consider CDA as “a tool for deconstructing the ideologies of the mass media and other elite groups and for identifying and defining social, economic, and historical power relations between dominant and subordinate groups” (p. 72). Critical Discourse Analysis is used to discover the underlying ideologies in different types of discourses.

### **1.6.4. Ideology**

Ideology can be defined as “a fairly abstract system of evaluative beliefs, typically shared by a social group, that underlies the attitudes of a group” (van Dijk, 1995c, p. 11). The definition of ideology has changed continuously and been argued since the term was coined. Concept of ideology is now more specific than traditional approaches. In the past, ideology was defined indistinctly as false beliefs, consciousness, and belief systems.

Ideologies are evaluative and embody the “sociocultural norms and values that are relevant for each social group” (van Dijk, 1995c, p. 11). Thus, as van Dijk (1995c) exemplifies it can be said that the value of equality may be more relevant for minorities and women; therefore, it has a leading place in feminist and anti-racist ideologies than in the ideologies of corporate managers. As ideologies are frequently assumed to socially represent the major concerns of a group, the concept of ideology is often limited to the study of dominant ideologies that function as the legitimation of dominant group power and interests.

## **Chapter 2**

### **Literature Review**

#### **2.1. Introduction**

This thesis is carried out in a Critical Discourse Analysis framework which is an accepted branch of inquiry in mass media. It is emphasized that there are various linguistic and pragmatic techniques and strategies to convey certain ideologies in news discourse. Using presuppositions can be one of these strategies if they are used 'unfairly'. In Relevance Theory, when interlocutors need excessive cognitive effort to activate related knowledge in their minds, presuppositions are unfair. Thus, this analysis gives a Relevance Theoric account to examining presupposition in news discourse in order to unearth journalists' ideological goals.

#### **2.2. Critical Discourse Analysis**

Critical Discourse Analysis is one of relatively new strategies in qualitative research. Discourse studies emerged from quite a few disciplines like linguistics, psychology, anthropology, and so forth. Critical Discourse Analysis has come to light at a time that coincides with the growth of other critical paradigms and disciplines in the social sciences, such as 'critical psychology', 'critical social policy' and 'critical anthropology' (Billig, 2003). The major factor of critical approaches is their claim of being critical of the present social order. According to van Dijk (2001b) critical discourse analysis is:

...a type of discourse analytical research that primarily studies the way social power abuse, dominance, and inequality are enacted, reproduced, and resisted by text and

talk in the social and political context. With such dissident research, critical discourse analysts take explicit position, and thus want to understand, expose, and ultimately resist social inequality. (p. 352)

It signifies that CDA examines how power elites control people's minds by using specific properties of text or talk that are organized to reproduce dominance and social inequality. It seems as a tool to criticize present social order.

CDA tries to introduce a new approach to analyzing and theorizing the text. van Dijk (1993) argues that discourse analysts perspective should be the point of view of people who suffer most from social inequality and dominance, and their targets are power elites that continue social inequality and injustice. Being critical in CDA does not mean that there is technical or methodological difference from other approaches to the study of language. On the other hand, it is claimed that Critical Discourse Analysis is critical because it is rooted in a sweeping critique of social relations (Billig, 2003).

### **2.2.1. Emergence of the Term 'Critical Discourse Analysis'**

Critical Discourse Analysis is a direction of research emerged in late 1970s. It was introduced by Roger Fowler, et al., *Language and Control* (1979), and later developed by Norman Fairclough (1989), Ruth Wodak (1989) and Teun A. van Dijk (1993). At first, the study of language use was quite political, but Critical Discourse Analysis finally began to focus on issues of power, domination, and social inequality, and on the relevance of gender, race and class in the study of text and talk.

It can be said that the emergence of the term 'Critical Discourse Analysis' can be drawn back to the book of Norman Fairclough (1992b). In his book, *Discourse and Social*

*Change*, Fairclough used different terminologies such as Critical Language Awareness (CLA) and Critical Language Studies (CLS) to refer to critical approaches to discourse analysis. Nevertheless, it was 1992 when the term Critical Discourse Analysis was coined in Fairclough's book (1992a), *Critical Language Awareness*. In that work, he positioned 'Critical Discourse Analysis' as a form of CLS (Billig, 2003). After three years Fairclough published his book titled *Critical Discourse Analysis* in which the term was decisively introduced (Fairclough, 1995). CDA is a new branch of discourse analysis which has a radical viewpoint to social order. It is called *critical* because as Ruth Wodak (2007) says, critical is used in CDA:

Critical means not taking things for granted, opening up complexity, challenging reductionism, dogmatism and dichotomies, being self-reflective in my research, and through these processes, making opaque structures of power relations and ideologies manifest. 'Critical', thus, does not imply the common sense meaning of 'being negative'—rather 'skeptical' (p. 3).

### **2.2.2. Advances in CDA**

The success of Critical Discourse Analysis can be based on the works of scholars, such as Fairclough, Wodak, van Dijk and other pioneers. They demonstrate assumptions, principles and procedures of CDA. Kress (1990, p. 94) shows how CDA was "emerging as a distinct theory of language, a radically different kind of linguistics". He lists criteria of a CDA work and shows how these principles distinguish such works from other discourse analysis works. In addition, van Dijk (1993) discusses principles, aims, and criteria for CDA. Based on Kress (1990) criteria, Fairclough and Wodak (1997) also established ten basic principles of a CDA program.

Later Fowler (1991, 1996) used Halliday's systemic functional grammar theory and 1965 version of Chomskyan grammar to identify linguistic structures of power in texts. He illustrates, not only in news discourses but also in literary criticism, that systematic grammatical devices establish, manipulate and naturalize social hierarchies (Wodak, 2001).

Then, Critical Discourse Analysis began to focus on issues of power, domination, and social inequality by considering gender, race and etc in the study of text and talk. Later Fairclough (1992a, 1992b, 1995) and Chouliariki and Fairclough (1999) explain the analytical framework for investigating language in relation to power and ideology.

Non-verbal aspects of text and semiotic devices also come into attention in media studies (van Leeuwen, 1993). Kress and van Leeuwen (1996) provide a framework for examining the communicative potential of visual devices in media.

In addition, many critical works was carried out mainly by feminist women on the relations between language, discourse and gender, and on how male domination is reproduced in text and talk (Kramarae, 1980, 1982; Kramarae, et al., 1984, Holmes & Meyerhoff, 2003; Lazar, 2005).

Along with these advances, a vast amount of studies was accomplished on the reproduction of racism and anti- Semitism in discourse in political discourse, the press, and textbooks (Wodak, et al., 1990; van Dijk, 1993; Wodak & van Dijk, 2000). Currently, most works of CDA is about power abuse and social inequality in text and talk.

### **2.3. News Discourse Processing**

Most of our social and political knowledge and beliefs about the world derive from the dozens of news reports we read or see every day. News is not a natural phenomenon emerging from facts in real life, but socially and culturally determined. Caldas-Coulthard

(2003, p. 274) supposed news producers as “social agents in a network of social relations who reveal their own stance towards what is reported”. She believes news is not the event but ideologically framed *report* of the event.

News is a cultural construct that can instruct values and social order by using language properties. People massively are exposed to news every day, so their perception of reality depends on what is said in media. They watch or read news because they think news is about reality. The implication is that, as Caldas-Coulthard (2003, p. 274) mentions, “if you are exposed to news you are more knowledgeable about social facts”.

Without a doubt, one of the main concerns of media research is the study of news in the press. Indeed, van Dijk (1991, p. 110) believes “that apart from advertising, probably no media genre has received so much scholarly interest from mass communication researchers, semioticians, linguists, and discourse analysts”. This fact demonstrates the essential need for analyzing news structure to discover techniques that can be applied in text to achieve intended goals. This analysis should be carried out in different levels because as van Dijk suggests “text and talk are vastly more complex, and require separate though interrelated accounts of phonetic, graphical, phonological, morphological, syntactic, micro- and macro-semantic, stylistic, superstructural, rhetorical, pragmatic, conversational, interactional, and other structures and strategies” (van Dijk, 1991, p. 110). The analyst cannot conduct a unilateral analysis since text and talk are multifaceted phenomena and are far from easy to analyze. Therefore, a discourse analyst is supposed to accomplish a textual analysis as well as social and cultural analysis.

The notion of *local coherence* introduced by van Dijk (1991) explains how subsequent propositions of the text bind together. It is argued that a text is coherence if

propositions are related in terms of time, condition, and etc, and the concept should meet these properties in order to be meaningful for the recipients. As van Dijk (1991) exemplifies, propositions of a text is “a semantic iceberg of which only the tip is actually expressed, whereas the other information is presupposed to be known by the readers” (p. 112). Some information in the text is not given explicitly; consequently, recipients ought to infer these notions based on their common knowledge, so it can be said that the perception of the readers is different from the journalist because they do not share exactly identical background knowledge.

In news discourse processing topics and themes also have a crucial role. Topics review the whole text and convey the gist of news report. This is what van Dijk (1991) refers to as “semantic unity” (p. 113). In news discourse headlines and lead paragraphs bring about such semantic unity, so it makes them the most memorable part of the text (van Dijk, 1991).

News analysis cannot be entirely structural or textual analysis since as van Dijk suggests “a pure structural analysis is a rather irrelevant theoretical exercise as long as we cannot relate textual structures with those of the cognitive and socio-cultural contexts of news production and reception” (van Dijk, 1985, p. 71). As mentioned before, a text makes sense to the reader based on his or her earlier cognitive, social, or cultural knowledge, so a pure structural analysis cannot be valid.



### 2.3.1. Early Researches in News Discourse

Diamond in 1978 conducted a research analyzing more than 600 hours TV news. His studies were based on how candidates for U.S presidential elections were covered. In the same way, Epstein (1973, 1975) showed how TV news of NBC network was gathered and represented not only based on the facts but also on the structure of news production. These studies as well as other studies in late 1970s were not based on a systematic news structure (Barrett, 1978; Abel, 1981). Tuchman (1978) tends to a 'microanalysis' of news production processes. In this microanalysis newsmaking processes are described as forms which construct social world. Newsmakers negotiate newsworthiness of events with their institutions and organization. Fishman (1980) also tends to a close sociological analysis of newsmaking and studies how journalists "detect occurrences, interpret them as meaningful events, investigate their factual nature, and assemble them into stories" (p. 16). He discusses that newsmaking depends on external sources and documents, for example, predefined events by police authorities. Similarly, Connell (1980) indicates that there is no such a thing as neutral media, but they help reproduce preformulated ideologies.

In addition to studies of news production there have been many important studies of news content, perhaps the most notable in the field of broadcast news being those of the Glasgow (University) Media Group in a string of publications such as *Bad News* (1976), *More Bad News* (1980) and *War and Peace News* (1980). The main concern of this work has been with the capacity of broadcast news to deliver fidelity to the real. The early work set out to demonstrate that the news was systematically skewed or biased in favor of the prevailing power structures.

In this era, there is a shift of attention to representation of women and ethnic minority groups as well as politics. Downing (1980) in his book says news pays little attention to negative actions against women, and there are not many topics about women, such as their history and political struggle. It is how the male dominance in the media reproduces the male dominance in the society as well.

By this brief survey of early studies in news discourse, it can be concluded that most studies have been done based on the news story. On the other hand, few works have been done about relationship between text and context of the news.

#### **2.4. Types of Knowledge**

In order to distinguish presupposed knowledge in discourse we should identify different types of knowledge. Teun A. van Dijk (2005) began to categorize knowledge used in discourse processing. Because knowledge is an essential component of context models, van Dijk (2005) assumes it has a specific status as a cognitive device, which he calls the K-device. This device is actively:

Calculating what the recipients know at each moment of a communication or interaction. This device adapts the structure of talk or text to the dynamically changing common ground of knowledge, for instance by selecting the appropriate speech act (assertions or questions), definite or indefinite articles, presupposed that-clauses, conversational markers such as ‘You know’, reminding markers such as ‘as I told you yesterday’ or ‘as we reported last week’, providing explanatory details, giving accounts, and so on (van Dijk, 2005, P. 76).

It can be said that the K-device is responsible for distinguishing which information should be asserted, reminded, or taken for granted. Its role is to activate related knowledge in recipients; mind and to recognize what they know at the moment. This notion shows how an input can be relevant to a recipient or not. Different types of knowledge should be categorized in order to figure out what kinds of knowledge are asserted or presupposed in a text. van Dijk (2005) for the first time introduces a typology of knowledge.

Personal knowledge is autobiographical knowledge about personal experiences (Neisser & Fivush, 1994). The K-device assumes that this knowledge is private, so it is not allowed to presuppose it (van Dijk, 2005). Expressing personal knowledge can be irrelevant for recipients. Personal knowledge should be asserted not presupposed.

Interpersonal knowledge is shared by more than one individual based on prior interpersonal communication or shared experiences. This type of knowledge can be presupposed just for those who share the experience.

“Group knowledge is socially shared knowledge, either of group experiences, or of general, abstract knowledge acquired by the members of a group” (van Dijk, 2005, p. 78). Group knowledge is social knowledge that can be presupposed in ingroup discourse not in outgroup discourse. Group knowledge can be acquired in public communications, such as meeting, work places, and classes by members of these groups.

Cultural knowledge on the other hand may then be defined as all knowledge that may be presupposed in all forms of public discourse. Cultural knowledge is the fundamental Common Ground for all other discourses and for all other kinds of knowledge. Most of what is traditionally called ‘knowledge of the world’ is cultural knowledge (van Dijk, 2001a). Cultural knowledge, or common ground, is shared by most

or all competent members of a whole culture, that is, except children or outsiders who still have to acquire such cultural knowledge. It is this kind of knowledge that is so widespread and already part of what is often also called ‘common sense’, that it is generally presupposed or recalled in public discourse. Cultural members acquire this knowledge through socialization discourses at home or at school, and later largely through the media (van Dijk, 2001a, 2005).

Although personal knowledge is rarely presupposed, general cultural knowledge is always presupposed to be known. In other words, van Dijk (2001a) believes that “the typology as proposed not only has social implications in the sense of characterizing the nature of knowledge distribution, but also has implications for some semantic and pragmatic properties of discourse, such as the nature of implications or presuppositions” (p. 7).

It is assumed that there are scripts about particular events in semantic or social memory, and that personal knowledge about specific events are stored in mental models in episodic memory, and that these different kinds of memories mutually influence each other (Tulving, 1983). Thus, our personal or interpersonal knowledge about specific events, such as eating in a restaurant, can influence general knowledge about restaurants. On the other hand, common knowledge of restaurants may effect on personal knowledge of people.

In producing news discourse, journalists should know or at least make some assumptions about the extent of their recipients’ amount of knowledge on the topic they are reporting because they always try to modify the audience’s knowledge to some extent. To provide an explicit theory of knowledge types that can be utilized in cognitive