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A Critical Discourse Analysis of a Visual Image in Norman Fairclough's CDA Model *

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Abstract: Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) has passed through a developmental process, and it has been benefited as a method to study explicitly media texts and talks. CDA provided scholars with a framework to discourses, the characteristics of which are inseparable components of language that influence the outcome of a conversation. In this regard, language, as a form of social practice, appears to be a significant tool of CDA. The purpose of the study is to examine a media text in an image form produced by an anti-gun ownership movement named "Moms Demand Action". The study aimed to point out the contradictions presented on and through the selected image by referring to Fairclough's CDA model, which is the analysis at word level, text level and norm level. This model is very useful when a researcher needs to find out what the addresser wants to convey to the addressee through a text. CDA model of Fairclough consists of three categories, and those categories are called "dimensions". Therefore, this study examined an image in three dimensions, and it concluded contradictions at three dimensions.

Keywords: Critical Discourse Analysis, Fairclough's CDA model, language, media text, anti-gun ownership

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Introduction

A Critical Discourse Analysis of a Visual Image in Norman Fairclough's CDA Model
In the related literature, there is an increasing number of studies examining discourse analysis of texts. These texts are presented written or spoken. This section includes three theoretical structures: Discourse Analysis (DA), Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and Fairclough's CDA Model.

In the late 1970s (Paniagua et al., 2007), a rapidly growing interest in the development, sharing and organization of news in the mass media was witnessed. People were already familiar with Critical Linguistics (CL), which deals with linguistic aspects of texts or talks. Following CL, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) has emerged as a new branch of modern linguistic researches. However, CDA places itself beyond the limits of concerning the linguistic aspect of a media material. Since the second half of the century, CDA has passed through a developmental process, and it has been benefited as a method to study explicitly media texts and talks by providing a framework to those discourses. This method is not an easily applicable one as it is a cross-discipline together with its sub disciplines (van Dijk, 2001). As one of the prominent representatives of CDA, van Dijk's main concern is on the thematic structures of the media resources in a macro level. He disregards the micro organisation such as sentence or corpus level and the manipulating visuals integrated into the media texts. van Dijk (2006) also advocates the multidisciplinary framework of CDA, in which discourse, cognition and society notions are consolidated. He believes that CDA should have some certain features: CDA has an attitude against power abuse and domination, it struggles against inequality, scholars among women and minority groups are necessary to be better in order to gain acceptance, CDA theories should be elegant but sophisticated and empirically grounded, and finally it should be reachable. van Dijk (2001) deals with the socio-cognitive perspective of discourse analysis, so he defines racism and ideology as cognitive and social phenomena.

Similarly, Wodak (2001) defines CL and CDA as such they are concerned with the opaque and transparent relationship among dominance, discrimination, power and control. He also defines the aim of CDA to explore social inequality in a critical way. Wodak clearly states that CDA aims to reveal the relationship between language and power. Similarly, Fairclough (2001) stresses the relationship between language and power. He proposes that power should be considered in three different forms: power to, power over and power behind. In addition, Wodak (2001) cites Habermas's claim as 'language is a medium of domination and social force' claiming that what makes a discourse 'critical' is the meaning of history, power and ideology provided in an interaction with texts. More specifically, Wodak, differs critical theories from regular scientific theories along three dimensions; Critical theories aim to raise awareness of the 'agents' of hidden force, they are reflective, and finally they need different kinds of evidence and confirmation.

The definition of discourse is basically the language we use for communication and research. Deriving from the philosopher Foucault's works, in sociology, Ruiz (2009) defines discourse as any practice, which is found in a wide range of forms, by which individuals impress reality with meaning. Many social scientists are interested in the study of discourses because they are intertwined with almost every aspect of human life. Discourse analysis deals with the conversation analysis. In this regard, as a conversation analyst, Sacks (1992) claims that discourse characteristics are inseparable components of language that influence the outcome of a conversation. Similarly, Gee (2001) asserts the scope of discourse analysis as "language has a magical property" (p.11). He claims that people write and talk to suit the environment or meaning of whatever they interact. Therefore, the meaning both influences and is influenced by the written or spoken text. van Dijk (1993) also states that "CDA can only

make a significant and specific contribution to critical social or political analyses if it is able to provide an account of the role of language, language use, discourse or communicative events in the (re)production of dominance and inequality” (p.279). Therefore, language appears to be a significant tool of CDA.

In Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), language is accepted as a form of social practice, and CDA proposes an interdisciplinary way to the study of discourse. Originated from ‘critical linguistics’ (CL), which was developed in 1970s, CDA differs in terms of its ‘critical’ aspect. While discourse analysis deals with the linguistic aspect of a text or speech, CDA deals with both micro and macro levels of a media text or speech. Despite this difference, the terms are used interchangeably. Together with contributions to the psychological aspect of CDA by van Dijk, the main representatives of the approach, Wodak and Fairclough, contributed a lot to this field. CDA places itself as a tool to examine the rhetoric of power relations in social events.

Fairclough's CDA Model

Different from van Dijk and other scholars in CDA field, Norman Fairclough mainly focuses on ideology-power patterns relationship and social issues (events, practices and structures). As another difference, he uses the term “semiosis” to stress that discourse represents social practice. Fairclough (2001) points out that CDA analyses the dialectical relations between speech and other social practice elements. He does not exclude other forms of semiosis like body language or visual images.

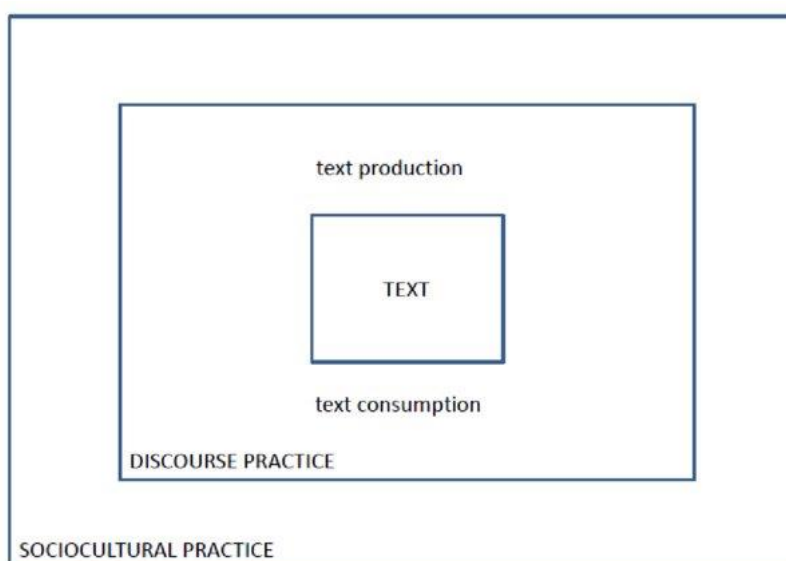


Figure 1. Fairclough's Communicative Event Model (1996).

Fairclough (1996) assumes that every language case can be defined as a communicative event, and he claims that analysis of the communicative events and the discursive order are included in the critical analysis of media discourse. Fairclough stresses that communicative event analysis is composed of three distinctive elements. The first element is texts, whether oral, written or visual. In this study, conducting a visual discourse analysis (Rose, 2016) of an image, I focused on the image from three different points, the addressor, addressee, and the text, that is image. Also, it is aimed to re-define the selected visual image in a visual literacy point of view. As the ability to read, write and create visual images, the term *visual literacy* is defined by Debes (1969) as concept that is concerned with language, communication, and interaction. Moreover, visual media is a linguistic instrument that we use to communicate, exchange ideas,

and research in the complex world. Discourse practice, the steps of producing text and consuming it, appears as the second one. And finally, by sociocultural practice, it is meant to be the social and cultural goings-on. In line with this, the purpose of the study is to examine a media text in an image form (see Image 1) produced by an anti-gun ownership movement named “Moms Demand Action”. It is aimed to point out the contradictions presented on and through the selected image by referring to the “Second Amendment” (Volokh, 1998), which is a refinement in the USA constitution in 1791. This change allows citizens to keep and bear arms, and the states can protect their rights to arm and maintain their militias (Churchill, 2007).

To depict the image briefly, this is an image presented in a library with full of books on the shelves on the background, and two little girls (one black and the other white) in the front. The black girl is holding a book named “Little Red Riding Hood”, and the white girl is holding a gun that big she barely carries. The image is also accompanied with the manipulative scripts of the addresser in order to convey the message to the addressee. This discourse text in an image form is analysed through adopting Fairclough’s Critical Discourse Model. This model is the analysis at word level, text level and norm level. The study also intends to find a grounded answer to the research question asked below.

What are the contradicting points resulting from the critical discourse analysis of an image presented by “Moms Demand Action” movement?

Method

This qualitative study is a CDA study involving Fairclough’s Critical Discourse Analysis Model. This model is assumed the most appropriate one for this type of study. The rationale behind this idea is that Fairclough’s CDA model is very useful when a researcher needs to find out what the addresser wants to convey to the addressee through a text. Alternatively, I could have preferred ‘van Dijk method’ as another suitable method. Although van Dijk (2001) claims that he has no method like ‘*method van Dijk*’ as he is against the personality cults, it has been accepted so in the literature. Besides that, he claims that explicit and systematic methods in CDA are necessary. However, he believes that scholars must make choices, and the structures which are closer to the social issues must be selected. Therefore, rather than employing ‘*method van Dijk*’, I preferred to adopt Fairclough’s Critical Discourse Analysis Model to analyse the selected image.

As stated earlier, Fairclough (1996) accepts that any case of language is a communicative event, and this event may be worded in an order of discourse. This developed CDA model of Fairclough consists of three categories, and those categories are called “dimensions”. Dimension one is called text, which can be a speech, writing, an image or a mixture of them three. The analysis at this level is called “word level.” Secondly, dimension two is “discursive practice”, which includes production or construction of texts, the analysis of which is done at text level. Finally, in dimension three, as this attitude is normative, this dimension is called norm level. In line with this idea, the selected image from “Moms Demand Action” movement holds an analysis at tree dimensions: word level, text level and norm level. Therefore, Fairclough’s CDA model is adopted in this study.

Analysis



Image 1. Advertisement by moms demand action

The selected image (see Image 1) from “Moms Demand Action” movement holds an analysis at word level, text level and norm level.

Before analysing the image at the mentioned three levels, it would make it more precise if I clarify what the “Moms Demand Action” movement is, what the motivation of this anti-gun organisation and the constitutional base of free gun ownership is. Moms Demand Action is a movement of Americans. The activists of the movement fight for public safety that can protect people from gun violence by passing strong gun laws to protect the families. With the belief to prevent gun violence, this organisation function in their own communities and it works with business leaders to invite them to be more responsible in gun ownership. First started with a movement of a victim’s mom, then it turned into a movement of moms, dads, students, families, concerned citizens and survivors. This organisation with nearly 6 million supporters and more than 350,000 donors, advocates for stronger laws and policies that is expected to reduce gun violence.

To continue with the legal basis behind the armament in America, “Second Amendment” comes forth. The second amendment is the additional article to the US constitution. According to this article, it states that the state cannot be involved in the rights of US citizens to hold and carry weapons, and regular militia is required for a free country. This constitutional change reads: "A well-regulated militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed."

This article is the most important reason why individual armament cannot be prevented in America. The reason for this article to be written on the account is that if one of the presidents is possibly in favour of the dictatorship or the kingdom, they will be afraid of weapons in the hands of the people, so that they will not apply dictatorship or kingdom within the country. While writing this article (Volokh, 1998), what is meant by the word "weapon" is

still being discussed because it is understandable that everybody wants a simple pistol. However, this armament nowadays enables the acquisition of all kinds of firearms such as bombs, rifles, pistols and explosives.

One of the interesting aspects of the discussions on this article, Second Amendment, is that only an armed individual can drop a tyrannical government through this article. This item can be expressed with great self-confidence without realizing the absurdity of this situation. However, when we look at the history of America, this "possibility" has not been realized. Slavery, the murder of indigenous Indian Americans, the workers' movements and the bloody suppression of the army and the security forces using guns clearly exemplify this dilemma. In other words, since the US government accepts the armament and self-defence of the people as freedom, why is it so hard to reach an agreement with the Indians who defend their own lands or activists who defend workers' rights?

When we look back to the history of America, we can witness many armed actions and massacres. Unfortunately, the "land of freedoms" America, where the weapon is seen as freedom, has taken away the freedom of many innocent people. We can see the level of anxiety people show when participating in collective events after school attacks, concerts and movie gala attacks with these restrictions. It is a painful example showing that the freedom of families when sending their children to school is restricted. For example, on February 14, 2018, as reported by Eckstein (2020), a 19-year-old boy walked into Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida, and he opened fire. 17 students and faculty members were killed. After this incident (Callcut et al., 2019), the organization named "Everytown" announced that there have been a total of 291 attacks in the USA since 2013. This means one attack almost once a week.

Another case, which is quite ironic: Gabrielle Giffords, a member of the Arizonian democratic congress, was shot by 22-year-old Jared Loughner during a public event. 6 people died and 13 were seriously injured in the attack. The attorney, who advocated carrying weapons in public areas, was shot in the head and recovered only months later. In this incident Representative Gabrielle Giffords, who was a Democrat, and at least 17 other individuals were shot. That morning a gunman opened fire outside a supermarket where Ms. Giffords was meeting with constituents.

As a result of all these contradictory realities of the USA, the Moms Demand Action movement, has started many studies on disarmament. So, the selected photo strikes the truth coldly. On one hand, the book on the cover of which "Red Riding Hood" is depicted is a book that is forbidden in schools by the conservatives because it has a bottle of wine on the cover. On the other hand, another girl holding a weapon larger than her size and it is legal to hold it, and its legality is protected by the conservatives again. These two contradictory situations summarize us the seriousness of the situation and its contradictory aspect very well. Isn't it contradictory enough that the land of freedom, America, sees such a situation that endangers children's lives as freedom? In other words, it may not be considered correct to have a bottle of wine on the cover of a book pedagogically, but it is debatable that the arms sale to children is legal. At this point, the size, power and impact of the American arms companies on the government is evident.

The selected photo, which is served by Moms Demand Action, has a huge impact on readers. Is this contradiction only in the hands of two girls, one has dark skin the other has white skin, with two contrasting materials on their hands or in a library with full of books and the USA flag on the background, where they can live safe and secured? This image has the power to give us all these contradictions in the same frame.

The characters are both girls. This implies that the lawmakers are dominantly male. If we go back to the story in the book, the character who kills the wild male wolf and rescues the little girl and her grandma is none other than a male. Therefore, considering the patriarchal dominance over all characters in the book, the selection of female characters on the image becomes more meaningful.

This photo also shows how dominant a neoliberal view is in the conservative capitalist order of the American arms race, and consequently most children and all citizens suffer from it. All these evaluations are united in the picture. Comparing a small item in books with such a big problem allows people to question which one is more important.

Dimension 1: Discourse at word level. Discourse at this level is taken as a collection of words we select when we write or speak. The explicitly selected words demonstrate our approach to the subject. Those words feel the utterer that they are a part of a community. This is what discourse deals with. For example, a Syrian may for one group be an asylum seeker, for another group an opportunist, and for the other group kin. At micro level the image is analysed in terms of words. The words "ban, child, protect, assault, weapons and action" reflect the core of the intended message of the addresser who wants to convey a meaning to the addressee. And with the word "guess", the writer probably wants to emphasize something with the aim of creating a special effect in addressee's mind. The purpose in using rhetorical questions rather than keep using the usual statement form of her sentences is basically to make the audience reflect on their own actions by thinking about the answers of the questions on the image.

Dimension 2: Discourse at text level. Through CDA, we will understand that language will bring about change. The sentences we make and the words we choose to utter are important. Our view of the subject will affect the way we think about a subject because language is not neutral nor innocent. Therefore, it often contains values, attitudes and assessments. In line with Fairclough's propositions, van Dijk (1993) also thinks that CDA is an attempt to reveal the social relations of power which exist in texts both explicitly and implicitly. The word choice feels the contradiction. The impressive fact about the image is the fact that two little girls (one white, the other black) are juxtaposed both in terms of their skin colour and the material they hold. So, the way we think about black or white girl is affected by the way we think about the subject and vice versa. The discourse at this level manipulates the reader in potential and takes them to an evaluation that white people are the lawmakers and capitalists, so they have power to make laws that results in killing of innocent people through owning guns as a legitimate right. On the other hand, it is depicted that the black people are relatively innocent. Their only sin is to read a kids' book that narrates a story in a patriarchal perspective. Ironically, thoughts are depicted as to be more devastating than owning a weapon.

Dimension 3: Discourse at norm level. Ideologies are "assumptions which are built into practices that sustain relations of domination, usually in a covert way." (Fairclough, 2013). Undoubtedly, this image holds a neoliberal ideological characteristic. Oxford Learner's dictionary (Oxford, 2016) defines neoliberalism as a type of liberalism that favours a global free market, which eliminates price controls by states. It does not favour a powerful government, but they do embrace businesses controlled and run for profit by private owners to gain more power. In line with this, the white girl holding a gun is not a random choice. She symbolizes the white supremacist, who have power on the USA government. Also, opinions are created by language, and our attitudes are shaped accordingly. As such, it creates social relationships and practices. Language, as a part of our communication, is related to power. This communication is a social event by itself. Also, the context of a social community is constituted by our word choice because language and the society we live in are interwoven. Society at this level can be an organisation like "Moms Demand Action", which has its own norms, values and traditions. It can be discussed that the image on the spot exposes several contradicting points when the

representation is taken into consideration. For example, the flag standing in the corner represents the conservative aspect of the American society and the library with full of books depicts an intellectual, reasonable society. And in the front one black and one white girl are depicted. This symbolises the multicultural aspect of this this state. However, these two points are contradictory. On one side is a banned book in schools. The conservative capitalists are standing against the bottle of wine on the cover of the book. This book is the story of a young girl who lives in a small town with her mother. Indeed, the wine on the book has been depicted as a healing affect for the Little Red Riding Hood's sick grandma. The same capitalists support the second amendment, which protects individual's owning guns. It would not be striking that neoliberals who oppose a big government support this amendment. Maybe that is the most manipulative symbol on the image.

Conclusion

To conclude, each subject, symbol, material depicted on the image represents an individual point, and they all own a deliberate message to be delivered to the readers. These messages demonstrate the relationship between language and power. Wodak (2001) clearly states that CDA aims to reveal the relationship between language and power. Similarly, Fairclough (2001) argues the relationship between language and power believing that power should be taken in three forms: power to, power over and power behind. So this image represents the power behind gun ownership (second amendment), the power to the democrats in the USA and the over black, poor, leftist non-Liberal individuals of the society. In addition, Wodak cites Habermas's claim as 'language is a medium of domination and social force'. Wodak (abid) claims that what makes a discourse 'critical' is the meaning of history, power and ideology provided in an interaction with texts. All in all, the selected image blends the history of the USA, the power relation and the ideology of the lawmakers. Given the effects of figures of speech employed in the text by "Moms Demand Action", it can be argued that making people think in a different, indirect and unusual way through the use of such language devices as visual literacy creates an undeniable influence.

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