

Ideological Strategies in the Tehran Times Newspaper's Reports on the Iran Nuclear Crisis: A Critical Discourse Analysis

Samana Nasser Abdulateef¹, Ali Muhsin Gharab Al-Majdawy (Ph.D.)²

¹Department of English, College of Education for Human Sciences, University of Wasit, Wasit, Iraq

²Assistant Professor, Department of English, College of Education for Human Sciences, University of Wasit, Wasit, Iraq

Abstract: *The present study delves into exploring the ideological strategies used by The Tehran Times newspaper reports in representing news concerning the Iran Nuclear Crisis which are investigated within critical discourse analysis framework. The researcher adopts Halliday's model of transitivity (1994) and Van Dijk's Ideology and discourse (2000) discursive strategies in order to answer research's question. Based on the analysis, it has been concluded that the ideological strategies used in The Tehran times newspaper reports as burden, counterfactual, metaphor, example, polarization populism, national self-glorification, and victimization formulate a general ideological perspectives of escalating news on the Iran nuclear crisis. Where Iran is positively represented. Moreover, reflecting the U.S actions against Iran's government which are negatively represented.*

Keywords: critical discourse analysis, ideological strategies, the Iran nuclear crisis

1. Introduction

Generally, Newspapers provide "representations" of the social world, for what Newspapers able to transmit hundreds of thousands of people, gives the press immense social power. Social power stands for a symbolic and persuasive power to control to a certain degree the minds of recipients (van Dijk 1996, p. 10). Newspapers play an undeniable role in different societies around the world they are characterized for having the power to influence readers, changing their perspective towards particular events in daily life.

Conboy (2010, p.2-3) Newspapers were created for the first time to represent an "elaborated form of conversation" with their anonymous readers, to introduce something more than random "dry" news or events of the day. Nowadays Newspapers are presented through different social and global platforms that support modern technology and computing devices to provide a sense of "communal voice" to their audience (p.3).

According to Weiss and Wodak (2003, p.12), CDA is known to be an interdisciplinary approach because it is used for studies from multiple different academic disciplines, offering different methodologies for the analysis of data to solve social, political and psychological academic problems, that are relevant to the study. Therefore, newspapers from critical discourse analysis perspective try to describe in details various global events that's reflects in away different ideologies and different media policies followed by these newspapers.

1.1 The Problem and its Significant:

A critical discourse analysis study will be adopted to analyze selected newspapers reports to uncover how The Tehran Times escalate news concerning the Iran nuclear crisis. Moreover, the findings of the study are expected to stand out

as a good database for English language learners and especially those who are interested in discourse studies.

1.2 Question of the Research

What are the most prominent ideological strategies investigated in the selected reports?

1.3. The Aim of the Study

The study aims to find out the most prominent ideological strategies investigated in the selected reports.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Historical development of CDA

Many scholars from the field of critical linguistic analysis have reported that Fairclough's work "language and power" (1989) to be the starting point of the CDA. In his work, he attempted to link political analyses of powerful discourse in the United Kingdom. Furthermore, he presented a detailed analysis of linguistic methods, object analysis, and political commitment which are regarded as "trademark" of critical discourse analysis (Blommaert, 2005, p.22).

Weiss and Wodak (2003, p.37) state that the starting point of CDA happened during the Evolution of critical paradigms, theories, disciplines in social science including "critical psychology, critical social policy, and critical anthropology" (Weiss and Wodak, 2003, p.37).

CDA is used interchangeably with another term as "critical language awareness" or "critical language studies" which, Fairclough (1992) addressed as "critical linguistics." According to Van Dijk (2003), many historians have argued about facts and beliefs concerning the emergence as well as the foundations of CDA as "discourse analytical research", and several of these have revealed that some of CDA

tendencies can be found in critical theory of Frankfurt school. Around the time of the Second World War 1939 CDA took a new turning point CDA came out to be concerned with the realization of the significance of language and discourse which was launched together with "critical theory" (van Dijk, 2001, p.352).

At the end of the 1970s, critical linguistics was developed by a group of language enthusiasts at the University of East Anglia as Wodak (1995) who focuses on "the use of language" in society as well as the connections between language, power, and ideology. Furthermore, Wodak states that criticism and "emancipatory agenda" are included in linguistic analysis.

According to Blommaert (2005, p.23) states that British cultural studies also had a great impact on CDA especially the Birmingham center for contemporary cultural studies and that's for its systematic way in including the social-cultural and political problems within that are relevant to "transformation" in the late Capitalist society in Britain as "neo-liberalism, the New Right that is led by Thatcher, racism, diaspora, the end of welfare state.etc. The central strongest performance of CDA has been circulating these topics. Furthermore, the French poststructuralist theory presented in the analysis of the Birmingham School of cultural studies, and along with a detailed description of the scope of analysis. all of these theories were used and applied by Fairclough.

2.2 Ideology

The term ideology used for the first time in the eighteenth century in France over time the concept "ideology" been used and acquired some alternations considering its functions and meanings.

Paltridge (2012) points out that ideology reflects human ideas, beliefs, and interests, Paltridge refers to the ideology of being "body of ideas" and "group of social institutions" which in turn reflects the ways of representing and establishing society such as relations of power and relations based on gender, class, and ethnicity Partridge(2012, p.190).

According to Fairclough (1995, p.23), ideology is 'meaning in the service of power' Fairclough in his definition considers ideology as an institution of meaning that can produce, reproduce, as well as transform relations of domination. Ideologies are produced within societies where "relations of domination are based on social structures such as class and gender"(p.23).

Thompson (1990) states that the concept of "ideology" is concerned with social forms and processes through which symbolic forms exist within the social world. CDA views ideology as a fundamental principle for setting up as well as preserving "unequal power relations"(Thompson, 1990, as cited in Wodak & Meyer, 2009, p.45).

2.3 The power of Media

According to van Dijk (1996.p.10), the power of media is basically "symbolic and persuasive" in other words media

essentially can control the minds of the audience and even changing their views about the world, but not necessarily their actions. However, there is some exception in cases of "physical, coercive force, and the control of action" which is regarded as the main goal of the exercise of power, is generally indirect, whereas the control of intentions, plans, knowledge beliefs, or opinions that is, mental representations that monitor overt activities is presupposed.

Fairclough (1989, p.51) states that media usually creates some sort of views of those in power and at the same time impose and maintain dominant ideologies. However, this is not a case that exists in all newspaper discourse. Newspapers can challenge, criticize, and subvert the world views of the dominant bloc.

3. Model of Analysis

This section presents the model adopted in the analysis of the data. The analysis is qualitative. Therefore, the study relies on Halliday's model of Transitivity (1994) and Dijk's ideology and discourse (2000) discursive strategies to achieve research's aim.

4. Data Analysis

4.1 Report 1:"U.S. will face 'historic remorse' if it quits nuclear deal, Rouhani warns" May 6, 2018.

"Since 15 months ago, Trump has started to say that the deal is the worst deal ever which is harmful to the U.S. but beneficial to Iran... but we negotiated with logic and reached an agreement which was approved by the UN (Security Council), " Rouhani explained. 'We will build as many weapons as the country needs'

The sentence consists of the employment of the material process as it emphasized by the actor of the process "Trump" At the same time. The interpretation of the sentence evokes the use of the "Burden" ideological strategy when trump stated that the deal is "harmful to the U.S but beneficial to Iran." However, the sentence *"We will build as many weapons as the country needs."* In this sentence involves the use of the material process where the actor of the process is represented as "we" which is a reference back to "Iran". Therefore, it calls out for the use of "polarization" emphasizes the positive act of the in-group.

Rouhani also said that Iran will build as many weapons and missiles as the country needs.

The present segment includes the use of the verbal process as it is emphasized by the verb process "said". Besides, the use of expressions as "many weapons and missiles" within this context implies a positive sense. The segment evokes the use of "polarization" ideological strategy when Rouhani used the personal pronoun "we" and "weapons and missiles" as means used positively for the country's needs.

Elsewhere in his remarks, Rouhani said Iran is not after war in the region and seeks "peace, stability, and security".

The formulation of the sentence also includes the use of the verbal process indicated by the verb process "said", and contains the use of lexical items as in "peace, stability, and security" that asserts the positive actions of the in group. Thus, it implies the use of "national self-glorification" ideological strategy when Rouhani used lexicalizations as "peace, stability, and security".

4.2 Report 2: "U.S. threatens 'strongest sanctions in history' on Iran" May 21, 2018.

U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo announced on Monday that the U.S. will apply economic and military pressure against Iran and will impose "the strongest sanctions in history" on the Islamic Republic.

The present segment involves the use of the verbal process as it is asserted by the verb process "announced", and The announcement itself involves the use of the material process where the actor of the process is represented as "U.S". Also, the employment of "populism" ideological strategy especially when Pompeo stated that the U.S is applying "economic and military pressure" and "the strongest sanctions in history" which leads to the negative other representation of the outgroup act.

The same idea is being represented in the following sentence.

"Sanctions are going back in full effect, and new ones are coming," CNN quoted him as saying in his speech at the Heritage Foundation.

The interpretation of the present sentence calls out for the use of "example" ideological strategy by the writer to reinforce the veracity of the situation at that time to make it more plausible to the targeted audience, or in another word, the writer is emphasizing the negative act of the outgroup to his audience.

The sting of sanctions will be painful if the regime does not change its course from the unacceptable and unproductive path it has chosen to one that rejoins the league of nations," Pompeo said.

The segment consists of the utilization of the verbal process as it is indicated by the verb process "said". The segment implies the use of a "counterfactual" ideological strategy, warning Iran's government of the consequences in case they didn't abide by the U.S government conditions.

4.3 Report 3: "Iranians will make economic war planners regretful: Rouhani" May 24, 2019

President Hassan Rouhani said on Thursday that the Iranian people will make those in the United States who have waged an "economic war" against Iran "regretful".

The sentence involves the use of the verbal process as it is indicated by the verb process "said". Also, it evokes the use of the "metaphor" ideological strategy that emphasizes the negative other representation of the outgroup, as well as "implication" ideological strategy, implies a threat that Iran

is up to something that will make the other group "regretful" for their deeds so to speak.

"Culture of altruism and resistance should show us the path. The enemies exert pressure against us to make us regret about our dignity and independence. However, the people will once again show that their plots will yield no fruit and will make the enemies regret," he said during a speech at a national conference praising the sacrifices of war veterans.

The formulation includes the use of the verbal process as it is asserted by the verb process "said". Moreover, involves the use of "polarization" ideological strategy that is reflected in the frequent utilization of personal pronoun "us".

He noted that the Iranian people will never surrender and will defeat enemies through unity.

The sentence holds out the use of the verbal process as it is indicated by the verb process "noted". The interpretation evokes the employment of "national self-glorification" ideological strategy that emphasizes the positive self-representation.

"More than one year after the imposition of these severe sanctions, our people have not bowed to pressures despite facing difficulties in their lives," Rouhani said, according to IRNA.

The formulation of the present sentence asserts the utilization of the verbal process as it appears clearly through the use of the verb process "said". At the same time, it involves the use of "victimization" ideological strategy that leads to the indication of the abuse and the negative actions of the outgroup over the Iranian people who had faced pressures and "difficulties in their lives".

5. Conclusion

The analysis of transitivity is important and plays a significant role in determining the ideology between participants to Halliday(1970) it reflects how people get and convert the targeted messages of the reality and how people comprehend and explain different matters of the world. Therefore, The Tehran Times portrayed ideological perspectives that reflect different dimensions of the concerned issue, and this has been done throughout the evocation of particular transitivity processes such as material and verbal processes that have been interpreted to include the use certain ideological strategies. These strategies are represented by burden, counterfactual, metaphor, example, polarization populism, national self-glorification, and victimization. Besides, the newspaper emphasizes the negative actions of the other group to whom they described as "enemies".

References

- [1] Blommaert, J. (2005). *Discourse: a critical introduction*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.

- [2] Conboy, M. (2010).*The language of newspapers: socio-historical perspectives*. London: Continuum international publishing group.
- [3] Fairclough, N. (1989). *Language and power (1st Ed.)*. London: Longman.
- [4] Fairclough, N. (1992). *Discourse and social change*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- [5] Fairclough, N. (1995). *Critical discourse analysis: The critical study of language*. New York. Longman Publishing.
- [6] Halliday, M.A.K. (1970).*Language structure and language function*. In Lyons, J., Ed., *New Horizons in Linguistics*, Penguin, Harmondsworth.
- [7] Halliday, M. A. K. (1994). *An introduction to functional grammar*. London: Edward Arnold.
- [8] Paltridge, B. (2012). *Discourse analysis: an introduction*. London: Bloomsbury Publishing.
- [9] Van Dijk, T. (1996). *Discourse, power, and access*. London: Routledge.
- [10] Van Dijk, T. (2000). *Ideology and discourse: multidisciplinary study*. London: Routledge.
- [11] Van Dijk, T. A. (2001). Multidisciplinary CDA: a plea for diversity. In R. Wodak& M. Meyer, *Methods of critical discourse analysis* . (pp. 95-121). London: Sage.
- [12] Van Dijk, T. (2003). *Ideology: political discourse and cognition*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- [13] Weiss, G., &Wodak, R. (2003). *Critical discourse analysis: theory and interdisciplinary*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- [14] Wodak, R. (1995). Critical linguistics and critical discourse analysis. In J. Verschueren. *Handbook of pragmatic*. Amsterdam: Benjamins.
- [15] Wodak, R., & Meyer, M. (2009). Critical discourse analysis: history, agenda, theory, and methodology In R. Wodak & M. Meyer, *Methods of critical discourse analysis (2nd Ed)*. London: Sage Publications.