Original Paper

A Study on Application of Ideology of Power in Different News Genres Based on Van Dijk’s Theory of Ideology

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Received: July 3, 2018        Accepted: July 23, 2018        Online Published: August 9, 2018
doi:10.22158/sll.v2n3p149                      URL: http://dx.doi.org/10.22158/sll.v2n3p149

Abstract

Studying news texts has been of interest of researches since some decades ago. However the researches and studies in this filed has been mostly focused on analyzing the news discourse and in some cases on compliance of linguistic principles. Almost all of these researches have been done without paying attention to the differences between different news fields (politic, economic, labor, cultural, international, sport, society and science) and all of them has been considered as one single type. This essay is due to study the effect of power relation in news discourse within Van Dijk’s theory of ideology and comparing it in different fields of news is the other goal of this research and in that framework, the relation of power will be studied in each of main genres and the result will be compared to recognize which field of news will be affected most by the relation of power and which of them will be affected less. This research will be done via analytic-descriptive method. The theoretical framework of this study is Van Dijk’s theory of ideology. Results show that the political news is affected by the relation of power most and scientific news is affected less.

Keywords

news genres, Van Dijk’s Theory of Ideology, news, representation of ideology in media

1. Introduction

Considering news media was an issue of researches since 1970s, but almost all of these researches have been focused on analyzing news texts and in some cases studying linguistic principles in these texts. None of these researches have been done, considering the differences between news genres and all news types in different fields (political, economical, social, cultural, international, labor, sport and science) have been studied as one single text, however the types of news text which linguistics and non-linguistics issues such as social standards and social and political considerations have effect on
them, is different in all these types and so news values, standards of news selection and models of news production in each of these fields is unique.

2. Method

2.1 Review of Literature

Different theorists (e.g., VanDijk, 1986; Wodak & Meyer, 2001) have approached the links between media, power, and ideology in contemporary societies, identifying multiple strategies usually employed by the media to serve the power, either explicitly or through linguistic practices in disguise (Vera, 2012).

Many other theorists (e.g., VanDijk & Kintsch, 1983; Van Dijk, 1988, 1991, 1993, 1998; Bell, 1991; Fowler, 1991, 1996; Fairclough, 1992, 2003; Carver & Hyvarinen, 1997; White, 2006) have studied media discourse from the linguistic point of view.

Moreover, according to Serrano (1993), the media institutions interpret the world through socially constructing stable meaning by providing its public tools and frameworks and even being able to integrate contradictions within the discourses of dominant ideologies.

Robinson (2001) reviews existing theories of media-state relations, in particular the work of Daniel Hallin and Lance Bennett, and highlights theoretical and empirical shortcomings in the manufacturing consent thesis. The article then outlines two models, a model of media influence and Gadi Wolfsfeld’s “political contest model”, that serve to reconcile contrasting claims over the power of the news media. The model of media influence is then applied to the Vietnam War in order to reconcile contrasting claims (Hallin vs David Culbert) regarding the role of the media during this conflict. It is argued that the two models, taken together, provide a starting point for a two-way understanding of the direction of influence between media and the state that builds upon, rather than rejects, existing theoretical accounts.

Bednarek (2006) has done a study on evaluation in media discourse. She presents the first corpus-based account of evaluation; one hundred newspaper articles collated to form a 70,000 word comparable corpus, drawn from both tabloid and broadsheet media. The book provides detailed explanations and justifications of the underlying framework of evaluation, as well as demonstrating how this is part of the larger framework of media discourse. Unlike many other linguistic analyses of media language, it makes frequent reference to the production circumstances of newspaper discourse, in particular the so-called “news values” that shape the creation of the news.

Reese and Shoemaker (1996) developed a hierarchical model of the factors that influence the content of the media and among the five levels examined the ideological subsumes the others and, therefore, is the most macro of levels. In the model proposed by these authors, the outer level would be the individual, which includes the characteristics of the communicator, like gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation and also his or her personal background and professional experience.
Carvalho (2008) categorizes “Framework for Analysis of Media Discourse” as below:

I. Textual analysis
1). Layout and structural organization
2). Objects
3). Actors
4). Language, grammar and rhetoric
5). Discursive strategies
6). Ideological standpoints

II. Contextual analysis
1). Comparative-synchronic analysis
2). Historical-diachronic analysis

Although all these researches have studied the relation between linguistics and media, none of them were focused on difference between news genres.

3. Theoretical Framework and Methodology
The theoretical framework of this study is Van Dijk’s Theory of Ideology (2006) and the compatibility of each of news genres in the framework of this theory is due to be studied. To do so, 80 news stories (10 samples from each genre) have been selected randomly from Top Iranian and American media and application of Van Dijk’s strategies has been studied within them.

Van Dijk has introduced an Ideological square based on 4 principles (Self and Others Representation):
1). Exaggerate in self’s positive features/actions
2). Exaggerate in other’s negative features(actions
3). Extenuate self’s bad features/actions
4). Extenuate other’s positive features/actions

Van Dijk has mentioned some cases of ideology in discourse by referring to different levels of analysis (lexicon, syntax, semantics, context, ...). He has also referred discourse strategies, which some of them that are used in this research are as follows:

Implicative: For many “pragmatic” (contextual) reasons, speakers do not (need) to say everything they know or believe Indeed, large part of discourse remains implicit, and such implicit information may be inferred by recipients from shared knowledge or attitudes and thus constructed as part of their mental models of the event or action represented in the discourse.

Negative-other representation: As the previous examples have shown, the categorization of people in ingroups and outgroups, and even the division between “good” and “bad” outgroups, is not value-free, but imbued with ideologically based applications of norms and values.

National self-glorification: Especially in parliamentary speeches on immigration, positive self-presentation may routinely be implemented by various forms of national self-glorification: Positive
references to or praise for the own country, its principles, history and traditions.

**Actor description**: All discourse on people and action involves various types of actor description. Thus, actors may be described as members of groups or as individuals, by first or family name, function, role or group name, as specific or unspecific, by their actions or (alleged) attributes, by their position or relation to other people, and so on.

**Authority**: Many speakers in an argument, also in parliament, have recourse to the fallacy of mentioning authorities to support their case, usually organizations or people who are above the fray of party politics, or who are generally recognized experts or moral leaders.

**Categorization**: As we also know from social psychology, people tend to categorize people, and so do speakers in parliament, especially when others (immigrants, refugees, etc.) are involved.

**Evidentiality**: Claims or points of view in argument are more plausible when speakers present some evidence or proof for their knowledge or opinions. This may happen by references to AUTHORITY figures or institutions (see above), or by various forms of Evidentiality: How or where did they get the information.

**History as Lesson**: As we have found also for COMPARISON, it is often useful in an argument to show that the present situation can be relevantly compared to earlier (positive or negative) events in history.

**Repetition**: As a general rhetorical device, repetition is of course hardly specific to debates on immigration. However, it may of course play a specific role in the overall strategy of emphasizing our good things and their bad ones.

**Situation Description**: Of course, debates on refugees are not limited to the description of them in relation to us. Also the actions, experiences and whole situations need to be described. Indeed, “definitions of the situation” are crucial to make a point, because the way they are described may suggest implications about causes, reasons, consequences and evaluations.

**Vagueness**: Virtually in all contexts, speakers may use “vague” expressions, that is, expressions that do not have well-defined referents, or which refer to fuzzy sets. Vague quantifiers (“few”, “a lot”), adverbs (“very”) nouns (“thing”) and adjectives (“low”, “high”), among other expressions may be typical in such discourse.

### 3.1 Data Analysis

In this part for the reason of preventing the essay from being too long, only one news story is selected as an example from each news genre from top American and Iranian media and application of Van Dijk’s strategies are studied within them.

#### 3.1.1 Political

**DEAL NOW SET TO BE REVIEWED BY SKEPTICAL CONGRESS**

*politico*

The U.S. Congress will begin its scrutiny of the international nuclear agreement with Iran amid heavy skepticism among Republicans, many of whom said in advance that they’re prepared to reject a deal
that's weak and gives too much leeway to Tehran. Under legislation passed in May, Congress will have 60 days for public debate and hearings by as many as eight Senate and House committees. Lawmakers then could vote on a joint resolution to approve or reject the nuclear deal, though they also may not act at all. The Iran deal is “going to be a hard sell” in Congress, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell said on “Fox News Sunday”. He said President Barack Obama “knows that the resolution of disapproval is likely to be introduced, is very likely to pass and very likely to get over 60 votes”.

Discussion: The usage of word “skeptical” is applying the strategy of lexicon.
- The usage of phrase “To be reviewed by skeptical congress” is applying the strategy of authority.
- The usage of phrase “hard sell” is applying the strategy of lexicon.
- Stressing that Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell said this fact to “Fox News” is applying the strategy of authority.

3.1.2 Economy
Vietnam says 2015 economic growth hits 5-year high of 6.68 pct (Reuters)
Vietnam reported that its economy grew 6.68 percent in 2015, the fastest pace in five years, helped by an expanding industrial sector and record foreign direct investment.
The annual growth rate exceeds a 6.55 percent forecast by Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung early this month and the official target of 6.2 percent, the government said on Saturday.
In the fourth quarter, Gross Domestic Product (GDP) increased 7.01 percent from a year earlier, accelerating from 6.87 percent in July-September to be the year’s best quarter, the General Statistics Office (GSO) said in a report.
The Southeast Asian nation’s growth rate has been rising every year since 2012 as the country made reforms after being on the brink of a crisis after a property bubble burst and bad debts soared to reach 17.5 percent of total loans.
The 2015 rate “is an achievement of a five-year period but not a result of efforts of a single year”, Nguyen Bich Lam, GSO head, told a media conference.
The GSO said growth has been supported by 9.4 annual percent growth in manufacturing and expansion of 10.8 percent, the highest in five years, for construction.
As of Dec. 15, actual Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) this year was $14.5 billion, or 17.4 percent above the year-earlier figure.
Discussion: The usage of word “crisis” is applying the strategy of lexicon
- Stressing that “The 2015 rate is an achievement of five year period” is applying strategy of positive-self representation.

3.1.3 Cultural
What to Know About Bob Dylan’s Nobel Prize for Literature (Time)
The Nobel Prize for Literature has been awarded to Bob Dylan, who becomes the 113th writer and first musician to win the award.
Dylan, 75, best known as a singer-songwriter, receives the prize worth roughly $905,000 “for having created new poetic expressions within the great American song tradition”, the Swedish Academy announced in Stockholm on Thursday. He becomes the final recipient of 2016’s selection of Nobel Prizes, which have been awarded in physics, chemistry, medicine, economics and peace.

Names of nominees for all Nobel Prizes must be kept secret until at least 50 years after the Prize has been awarded, but Dylan is thought to have bested competitors including American novelist Don DeLillo, perennial favorite Haruki Murakami, Kenyan writer Ngũgĩ WaThiong’o and Syrian poet Adonis. Dylan was seen as having an outside chance, with odds placed at 16/1 when betting closed on Thursday morning.

Alex Donohue, of British bookmakers Ladbrokes, said, “People laughed when Dylan entered the picture out of nowhere in 2011 but maybe there was something blowin’ in the wind after all. On this occasion only a handful of his fans managed to cash in, leaving us with a far more manageable payout”. He is the first musician or songwriter of his stature to win the prize for literature, and the 259th American to win a Nobel Prize.

Discussion: Stressing that the prize was awarded to Bob Dylan, also using phrases of “the 113th writer” and “first musician to win the award” is applying the strategy of actor description.

Usage of “Dylan” and “singer-songwriter” is applying the strategy of actor description.

Usage of words “great” and “roughly” is applying strategy of vagueness.

Stressing the announcement was made by “Swedish Academy” is applying strategy of actor description.

Stressing that the announcement was made in Stockholm on Thursday is applying the strategy of situation description.

Usage of names and titles “Dylan”, American novelist “Don DeLillo”, “perennial favorite Haruki Murakami”, “Kenyan writer Ngũgĩ WaThiong’o”, “Syrian poet Adonis”, Alex Donohue, of British bookmakers Ladbrokes”, the first musician or songwriter of his stature to win the prize for literature” and “259th American to win a Nobel Prize” is applying the strategy of actor description.

Usage of phrase “blowing in the wind” is applying the strategy of implicature.

Usage of “far more” is applying the strategy of vagueness.

3.1.4 International

Angela Merkel Starts Fourth Term Facing Big Hurdles (WSJ)

German chancellor will have to juggle a fractious government, EU reform demands and economic threats from the U.S.

Angela Merkel finally began her fourth and likely last term as chancellor on Wednesday, a step that presents her with some of the toughest domestic and international challenges in her years in power.

Germany’s parliament formally elected Ms. Merkel after the longest and most-complicated coalition-building exercise in post-War history. As she heads a fractious government of political opposites whose popular support is waning, Ms. Merkel will have to fend off economic threats from the
U.S., address neighbors’ demands for European Union reform, and try to preserve political and social cohesion in a country tested by an unprecedented inflow of migrants.

Ms. Merkel’s renewed grand coalition between her conservatives and the Social Democrats is beginning under the threat of a trade war. With President Donald Trump at its helm, the U.S. has turned from Germany’s closest post-War partner into a rival.

Discussion: Chancellor will have to juggle a fractious government (exaggerate other’s deficiencies)/Strategy of lexicon is implemented by usage of word: juggle and fractious

-Merkel finally began her fourth and likely last term as chancellor (exaggerate other’s deficiencies)/Strategy of lexicon is implemented by usage of word: finally

Strategy of Ambiguity is implemented by usage of word: likely

-A step that presents her with some of the toughest domestic and international challenges in her years in power. (exaggerate other’s deficiencies)/Strategy of lexicon is implemented by usage of word: toughest

-Germany’s parliament formally elected Ms. Merkel (Extenuate other’s positive features)/Strategy of lexicon is implemented by usage of word: formally (instead of officially)

-After the longest and most-complicated coalition-building exercise in post-War history (exaggerate other’s deficiencies)/Strategy of lexicon is implemented by usage of words: the longest and most-complicated

By stating that “it is the longest and most-complicated coalition-building exercise in post-War history”, the strategy of history as lesson is used.

-A fractious government of political opposites whose popular support is waning. (exaggerate other’s deficiencies)/Strategy of lexicon is implemented by usage of word: fractious

-Merkel will have to fend off economic threats from the U.S., address neighbors’ demands for European Union reform, and try to preserve political and social cohesion in a country tested by an unprecedented inflow of migrants (exaggerate other’s deficiencies)/Strategy of lexicon is implemented by usage of word: threat

-The U.S. has turned from Germany’s closest post-War partner into a rival.

Stressing that “Germany and US are now rivals”, is usage of strategy of categorization

3.1.5 Sport

Iranian weightlifter Moradi breaks 18-year old world record (ISNA)

Iranian Olympic champion weightlifter Sohrab Moradi broke an 18-year record in the sport to win gold at the Asian Indoor and Martial Arts Games.

He successfully lifted a total of 413 kilograms and set a new world record in the 94-kilogram weight class of the 5th edition of Asian Indoor & Martial Arts Games in Turkmenistan.

Georgian-Greek athlete Kakhi Kakhiaishvili had created the previous record of 412 kilograms during the 1999 World Weightlifting Championships at Peace and Friendship Stadium in Piraeus, Greece.
Moradi earlier raised 176 kilogram above his head in his first snatch attempt as he and Uzbek opponent Farkhodbek Sobirov went toe-to-toe in a fierce battle.

The 28-year-old Iranian sportsman, who won the gold medal in the 94-kilogram weight division at the 2016 Rio Olympics, recorded scores of 185 kilograms in the snatch and 228 kilograms in the clean and jerk contests.

Moradi finished on an aggregate 26 kilograms ahead of bronze medalist Liu Hao of China.

Discussion: Usage of “Iranian weightlifter Moradi” is applying the strategy of actor description.
-Usage of “Iranian Olympic champion weightlifter Sohrab Moradi” is applying the strategy of actor description.
-Usage of “at the Asian Indoor and Martial Arts Games” is applying the strategy of situation description.
-Usage of word “successfully” is applying the strategy of Lexicon.
-Stressing that the act “set a new world record in the 94-kilogram weight class of the 5th edition of Asian Indoor & Martial Arts Games in Turkmenistan” is applying the strategy of situation description.
-Usage of “Georgian-Greek athlete Kakhi Kakhiashvili” is applying the strategy of actor description.
-Stressing that the event “created the previous record of 412 kilograms during the 1999 World Weightlifting Championships at Peace and Friendship Stadium in Piraeus, Greece” is applying the strategy of situation description.
-Stressing that “Moradi earlier raised 176 kilogram above his head in his first snatch attempt” is applying the strategy of actor description.
-Putting “he” against “Uzbek opponent” is applying the strategy of categorization.
-Usage of word “fierce” in “fierce battle” is applying the strategy of lexicon.
-Stressing that “The 28-year-old Iranian sportsman, who won the gold medal in the 94-kilogram weight division at the 2016 Rio Olympics, recorded scores of 185 kilograms in the snatch and 228 kilograms in the clean and jerk contests” is applying the strategies of actor and situation description.

3.1.6 Science and Technology

Chancellor: No hyperinflation, just Weimar malaise (Reuters)

The spectre of Weimar Republic-like inflation has haunted some fevered minds since central banks revved up their printing presses after the Lehman Brothers bust. No hyperinflation has yet emerged. Still, a milder manifestation of the social malaise which gripped Germany in the early 1920s is becoming evident in the West. Monetary policymakers are urging more extreme actions in their frantic pursuit of higher inflation. They should be careful what they wish for.

Historians agree that the origins of Germany’s post-war inflation lay in the failure of the country’s political classes to make hard choices. The Germans had funded their war effort largely with debt, accompanied by the printing of central-bank money. After the Weimar Republic was established in 1918, inflationary finance continued. Government deficits funded with newly printed marks had the advantage
of maintaining employment at high levels and keeping the economy buzzing. As inflation soared, enterprises were able to borrow from the Reichsbank at rates so low that capital was, in effect, free. This policy had the support of many seemingly reasonable people. Walther Rathenau, the cultured head of the electronics firm AEG and a future foreign minister, suggested in January 1921 that should the economy turn down “we ought to print money a bit faster and start construction works, using the employment these create as a dam against the depression. It is incorrect when people said that printing money was bringing us ruin”.

Discussion: Stressing that “Historians agree that the origins of Germany’s post-war inflation” is applying the strategy of evidentiality.
-Usage of word “newly” is applying the strategy of vagueness.
-Stressing that “This policy had the support of many seemingly reasonable people” is applying the strategy of authority.
-Usage of phrase “Walther Rathenau, the cultured head of the electronics firm AEG and a future foreign minister” is applying the strategy of actor description.
-Stressing that the suggestion was made in January 1921 is applying the strategy of situation description.

3.1.7 Labor
A supervisor at a textile mill was arrested after a 9-year-old worker died over the weekend, and the boy’s father accused the supervisor and others of killing him because he had protested against abuse.
Ismail Hossain, the officer in charge of the Rupganj police station in Narayanganj District in central Bangladesh, said that Nazmul Huda, an assistant administrative officer at the Zobeda Textile Mill, had been taken into custody for questioning, and that others would also be detained as the inquiry continued.
The father of the boy, Ratan Barman, 70, filed a complaint on Sunday with the Rupganj police, accusing supervisors at the mill of killing his son by pumping air from a compressor machine into his rectum.
The boy, Sagar Barman, had been working at the mill for seven months, along with his parents, his father said in a telephone interview on Monday.
“I thought, as we are poor, it will be helpful to run our family if my son Sagar can do some work in this factory”, Mr. Barman said. “I used to gather empty bobbins”, putting them into a trolley, he added. “My son also used to do the same work.”
Discussion: Usage of words and phrases “A supervisor at a textile mill”, “a 9-year-old worker”, “the boy’s father”, “Ismail Hossain, the officer in charge of the Rupganj police station”, “Nazmul Huda, an assistant administrative officer at the Zobeda Textile Mill”, “The father of the boy, Ratan Barman”, “The boy, Sagar Barman” and “my son” is applying the strategy of actor description.
-Stressing that the interview was done” on Monday” is applying the strategy of situation description.
3.1.8 Society
Man behind Massacre of 36 Iranian Police Forces Nabbed after 19 Years (Tasnim News)

The main suspect in the massacre of 36 Iranian police forces in an ambush southeast of the country was captured after 19 years, a commander said.

Commander of Iranian Anti-Narcotics Police General Massoud Zahedian announced that the fugitive, who was the main culprit in the massacre of police forces in the Gurnak village in the southeastern province of Sistan and Baluchestan 19 years ago, has been arrested.

The wanted man was nabbed two weeks ago, the commander said, adding that weapons and ammunition were also confiscated during the operation.

He said the man, who has been involved in terrorist activities and smuggling of illicit drugs, was arrested inside the country after a complicated intelligence operation.

When arrested in 1999, the criminal had given wrong information to the police, fabricating a story that he had hidden a haul of drugs in Gurnak village, located near the city of Iranshahr.

36 police forces, including a general, were killed in an ambush set by the scoundrel’s accomplices when several teams were deployed to the site.

The outlaws fled the country after the massacre.

Discussion: -Citing “Commander of Iranian Anti-Narcotics Police General Massoud Zahedian” is application of strategy of Authority.
-Usage of word terrorist in “terrorist activities” is implication of strategy of lexicon.
-Usage of word complicated in “complicated intelligence operation” is application of strategy of lexicon.
-Usage of word “The outlaws” is implication of strategy of lexicon.

We can notice that some words are used intentionally to excite more impression. For example: usage of “massacre” instead of “killing”/“nabbed” instead of “arrested”/“the criminal” instead of “the man”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>News Genre</th>
<th>Total Usage of Van Dijk’s Strategies</th>
<th>The Strategy with Most Frequency</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Political</td>
<td>31170</td>
<td>Actor Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International</td>
<td>2986</td>
<td>Lexicon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social</td>
<td>2075</td>
<td>Situation Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economical</td>
<td>1656</td>
<td>Vagueness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labor</td>
<td>1403</td>
<td>Actor Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural</td>
<td>1173</td>
<td>Actor Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sport</td>
<td>980</td>
<td>Situation Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science and Technology</td>
<td>360</td>
<td>Situation Description</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4. Results

Analyzing of data shows that:
The frequency of usage of Van Dijk’s strategies in news genres is different. These strategies were used most in Political news (3110) and least in Science and Technological genre (360). This is potentially related to the nature of these genres, since the political news has more potentiality of imposing the intended ideology via using Van Dijk’s strategies but Science and Technological genre is much more limited.

The frequency of usage of strategies in different genres is as follows: In political news, strategy of lexicon, in international news, strategy of lexicon, in social news, strategy of situation description, in economical news, the strategy of vueness, in labor news, the strategy of actor description, in cultural news, the strategy of situation description and in science and Technology news, the strategy of situation description has been used most. Among all micro strategies, the strategy of lexicon has most frequency. It can be explained by this strategy’s simplicity of decoding in referee’s mind, cognitively.

References


https://doi.org/10.4135/9781483326184


https://doi.org/10.4135/9780857028020