On the Relationship between Language and Ideology Represented in the CDA Texts

Bahaerh Ghaderinezhad
General Linguistics

Abstract

The term “ideology” has always been accompanied by its connotation as it is evident in its dictionary meaning as ‘a system of ideas, ideals especially one which forms the basis of economic or political theory and policy’ (The New Oxford Dictionary of English, 2005, p.770). Recently, there has been a lot of effort to investigate a controversial issue of ideology. This study aims at exploring the relationship between ideology and language in terms of Contrastive Discourse Analysis (CDA). The review of previous studies revealed that there was a relationship between ideology and idiosyncratic features of language. All of these features will be discussed in this paper.

Keywords: Ideology, Language, Critical Discourse Analysis.
Introduction

According to Calzada-Perez (2003) recent definitions of ideology are linked with the concepts of power relations and domination, as she quoted from Eaglton:"... [Ideology is] ideas and beliefs which help to legitimate the interest of a ruling group or class by distortion or dissimulation" (p. 4). If we accept the definition of ideology as "an action-oriented set of beliefs" (Seliger, as cited in Ireland, 1989, p. 131), and if we assume those beliefs, even where they call themselves aesthetic, religious or poetic, to be political in the sense that their application establishes relation of dominance, then we can see how as Fawcett said, throughout the centuries "individuals and institutions have applied their particular beliefs to the production of certain effects in translation" (Baker, 1998, p. 107).

Ideology plays a critical role in shaping or framing the language. Despite this, very little research has been undertaken to closely examine this phenomenon and the relationship it has on the authenticity, validity and legitimacy of language, which carries an ideological stamp. While interest in the role of ideology has been examined in other areas of knowledge and information transfer, research remains deficient in language. The complexity of this phenomenon, its impact and implications for clear communication call for further scrutiny.

Statement of the Problem

As people have different ways of thinking, each person, though sometimes has same notions in common with others, looks at and perceives things differently. In fact, this natural divergence among people can occasionally be subject to particular influences which may drive them straightforward towards one single direction to form an autonomous group that shares same ideological tenets peculiar to that group. Accordingly, when this appears, a state of conflict or disagreement with other groups who have dissent ideas and inclinations may be present. As a result of this contention among those groups, the ideologies of each one can be seen as false doctrines and attitudes that are inherent in the minds of the other. According to Williams (1976), proponents of particular social systems such as the proletarians or the bourgeoisie have their own ideologies and their own systems of ideas appropriate to each class. As he explains, one ideology can be considered correct and progressive against another ideology and that the ideology of others, which represents the ideology of the other side; despite being true, expression of their interests, is, for the other party, false. Moreover, he elaborates that Marx and Engels in their critique of the thought of their German radical contemporaries, said that the ideas of the ruling of an era are "nothing more than the ideal expression of the dominant material relationships grasped as ideas '.Failure to realize this produced ideology: an upside-down version of reality." (p, 155). Hodge and Kress (1993) defines ideology as"a systematic body of ideas, organized from a particular point of view (cited in Mason, 2007, p. 343).According to the definition of ideology above, ideology is systematic and purposeful which is controlled by virtue of mans' vigilance, mentality, which finds certain tracks that determine how humans look at things, consider things, judge things, and draw their ambivalence attitudes in life. Consequently, people perceive and view things differently depending on the ideas stored in their minds, which determine how they have to treat things. Thus, what is viewed in some social communities as good, acceptable may not be so in others, and might be highly rejected if one takes into account
the variations in culture, religion, and political stance. To sum up, the elusive and vague concept of ideology has been the centre of research and is still the focus of interest of researchers all over the world especially those who are interested in translation and discourse. Irvine (1989) redefines ideology as "the cultural system of ideas about social and linguistic relationships, together with their loading of moral and political interests." (p.255).

According to Eagleton (1991, p. 1) the word "ideology" is “a text, woven of a whole tissue of different conceptual strands”; therefore he lists the following definitions of ideology:

A. the process of production of meanings, signs and values in social life;
B. a body of ideas characteristic of a particular social group or class;
C. ideas which help to legitimate a dominant political power;
D. false ideas which help to legitimate a dominant political power;

Simpson (1993, p. 5) defines ideology as "assumptions, beliefs, value- systems which are shared collectively by social groups." This prolific definition by Simpson opens the eyes towards the concept of ideology as a milestone in any community or any social group.

A close look at the above definition may make one believe that any person who belongs to any social group may share the same concepts and beliefs with others of the same society. This holds true to anyone if we take into account the similarities among people in terms of culture, religion, and the political affiliation. Thus, ideology is shared beliefs and doctrines among particular social groups and that sense of correspondence gives power to the ideology of those groups when they are the dominant powers in any society.

Van Dijk (2006) tends to raise the issue of studying ideology from a discourse analytical approach perspective. Being a corner stone of speech and writing, Dijk maintains that ideologies are mostly depicted in either of those means. According to him, a discourse analytical approach is the most relevant approach to study this controversial matter and he explains that his study is a multidisciplinary approach that is critical to the traditional approaches to ideology. For him, if ideology is primarily 'ideas' and belief systems this definition lacks vital constituents. Thus, this fundamental notion implies that ideologies do not contain the ideological practices or social structures which are based on them (p.116). The traditional approaches to ideology, according to Van Dijk, failed to theorize adequately the "socio-cognitive nature and structures of ideologies and their discursive reproduction" (pp. 115-116). Moreover, he provides the framework of his study to the analysis of the relationships between ideology and discourse which is based on three dimensions that are: the traditional concept of ideology as belief systems do not include the social practices or ' societal structures ' that are based on them and this implies that the theory of ideology needs to have a 'cognitive component' that deals properly with it as being belief systems (p. 2). In addition, there are no private personal ideologies, as he explains, and that these belief systems are shared by the members of a social group. If this is the case, an individual might not have a private ideology for himself, but he may be involved within certain guidelines or thoughts that determine his ideology. According to him, it is not necessarily that every group has or need
to have an ideology but this matter is relatively various from one group to another. He added that even special communities such as the cultural and the national communities may not have a certain ideology

The assertion of Fowler (1991, p. 10) that "anything that is said or written about the world is articulated from a particular ideological position" can be closely related to the field of ideology and language. In fact, the rewriting transmits the writer's culture to a place where the beliefs and ideas of the people of the host culture may contradict particular concepts of that society. If the case is that, individuals tend to make changes to the original text so as to make it in line with the culture of that society. Thus, the current study is an attempt to answer the following question: Is there any relationship between language and ideology represented in the CDA texts?

**Ideology in Literature**

Williams (1976) defines ideology as a “set of ideas which arise from a given set of material interests” (p. 156). In this respect, people who share the same interests, beliefs, and culture might have certain norms of thinking which serve them to achieve those interests and establish the bases of their world views. This holds true if one takes into account that the term “ideology” is attached to a great extent to man's ideas and thoughts. As people have different ways of thinking, each person, though sometimes has same notions in common with others, looks at and perceives things differently (Williams, 1976). In fact, this natural divergence among people can occasionally be subject to particular influences, which may drive them straightforward towards one single direction to form an autonomous group that shares same ideological tenets peculiar to that group. Accordingly, when this appears, a state of conflict or disagreement with other groups who have dissent ideas and inclinations may be present (Eagleton, 1991). As a result of this contention among those groups, the ideologies of each one can be seen as false doctrines and attitudes that are inherent in the minds of the other. According to Williams (1976), proponents of particular social systems such as the proletarians or the bourgeois have their own ideologies and their own systems of ideas appropriate to each class. As he explains, one ideology can be considered correct and progressive against another ideology and that the ideology of others, which represents the ideology of the other side; despite being true, expression of their interests, is, for the other party, false (Williams, 1976). Moreover, he elaborates that Marx and Engels in their critique of the thought of their German radical contemporaries, said that the ideas of the ruling of an era are “nothing more than the ideal expression of the dominant material relationships grasped as ideas. Failure to realize this produced ideology: an upside-down version of reality.” (p, 155). Hodge and Kress (1979) define ideology as “a systematic body of ideas, organized from a particular point of view” (cited in Mason, 2007, p. 343).

According to the definition of ideology above, ideology is systematic and purposeful which is controlled by virtue of mans' vigilance, mentality, which finds certain tracks that determine how humans look at things, consider things, judge things, and draw their ambivalence attitudes in life. Consequently, people perceive and view things differently depending on the ideas stored in their minds, which determine how they have to treat things. Thus, what is viewed in some social communities as good and acceptable may not be so in others and might be highly rejected if one takes into account the variations in culture, religion, and political stance. To sum up, the elusive
and vague concept of ideology has been the centre of research and is still the focus of interest of researchers all over the world especially those who are interested in translation and discourse. Irvine (1989) redefines ideology as “the cultural system of ideas about social and linguistics relationships, together with their loading of moral and political interests.” (p.255). The above definition by Irvine has linked culture and ideology together pointing out that both are vital components of any community and their relationship is set in concrete. It is true that an individual's ideology is subject to the paramount power and the dominant culture of that community in which he lives. This power-culture based hegemony determines and affects people's standpoints and steers them towards specific and social interests. For every society and nation there are some specific tenets and rules that abide most of the individuals of that society and that a person who belongs to that society is profoundly loyal to those principles. Although there are instances where the previous notion is not applicable for all members of a particular society, this holds true for the majority (Irvine, 1989).

Simpson (1993, p.5) defines ideology as “assumptions, beliefs, value-systems which are shared collectively by social groups.” This prolific definition by Simpson opens the eyes towards the concept of ideology as a milestone in any community or any social group.

Now, time is ripe to discuss interrelation between ideology and language. Fairclough (1995) believes that if ideologies are acquired, expressed, enacted and reproduced by language, this must happen through a number of discursive structures and strategies. For instance, the pronoun *we* is one of these structures, typically used to deictically refer to the in group of the current speaker. In theory, and depending on context, any variable structure of language may be ideologically marked (Fairclough, 1995b). Specific intonation, stress or volume in the expression of a word or phrase may be interpreted as sexist or racist. Preference for specific topics may express a neoliberal ideology, and so on. In order to demonstrate what ideologies might bring to discourse table 1 summarizes their relationship.

Table 1. Some expressions of ideology in language discourse (Van Dijk, 2006).

| • Context: Speaker speaks as a member of a social group; and/or addresses recipient as group member; ideologically biased context models: subj. representations of communicative event and its participants as members of categories or groups. |
| • Text, Discourse, and Conversation: Overall strategy: positive presentation/action of Us, negative presentation/action of Them. |
| • Emphasize our good things, and their bad things, and de-emphasize our bad things, and their good things. |

**MEANING**

Topics (semantic macrostructures)
- Select/Change positive/negative topics about Us/Them.
- Local meanings and coherence
- Positive/Negative Meanings for Us/Them are

• Manifestation: Explicit versus Implicit
• Precision: Precise versus Vague
• Granularity: Detailed/fine versus Broad, rough
• Level: General versus Specific, detailed
• Modality: We/They Must/Should...
• Evidentiality: We have the truth versus They are misguided
• Local coherence: based on biased models
• Disclaimers (denying Our bad things): `We are not racists, but...'
Lexicon: Select Positive/Negative terms for Us/Them
(e.g. `terrorist' versus `freedom fighter')

FORM
Syntax: (De)emphasize Positive/Negative Agency of Us/Them
■ Cleft versus non-cleft sentences (`It is X who...')
■ Active versus Passives (`USA invades Iraq' versus 'Iraq invaded by USA')
■ Full clauses/propositions versus nominalizations (`The invasion of Iraq').
Sound structures: Intonation, etc., (de)emphasizing Our/Their Good/Bad things.
Format (schema, superstructure: overall form)
Positive/Negative meanings for Us/Them in
• First, dominant categories (e.g. Headlines, Titles, Summaries, Conclusions) versus last, non-dominant categories.
• Argumentation structures, topoi (stereotypical arguments, e.g. 'For their own good')
Fallacies that falsely conclude Our/Their Good/Bad things, e.g. overgeneralizations, authority, etc.
Rhetorical structures
Emphasizing or de-emphasizing Our/Their Good/Bad things by
■ Forms: Repetition
■ Meanings: Comparisons, metaphors, metonymies, irony; euphemisms, hyperboles, number games, etc.

ACTION
Speech acts, communicative acts, and interaction
■ Speech acts that presuppose Our/Their Good/Bad things: promises, accusations, etc.
■ Interaction strategies that imply Our/Their Good/Bad things: Cooperation, agreement

Van Dijk, (2006) prefers the first axiomatic option, first of all, because it rules out the possibility that mere personal opinions or a single group attitude (say about nuclear energy) would as such be called an ideology. He also mentions that “by limiting ideologies to fundamental beliefs, we allow variations or changes of less fundamental beliefs within the same ideology—much in the same way as personal and regional variants exist of the same language” (Van Dijk, 2006,p.11). He continues by displaying that “instead of foundational beliefs, we may also speak of core beliefs, whatever theoretical metaphor is more useful. In the latter case, more specific attitudes based on such core ideological beliefs need to be described as more peripheral” (Van Dijk, 2006,p.13).
Critical Discourse Analysis

Critical discourse analysis (henceforth CDA) is an interdisciplinary tool that exposes inequality and injustice. The use of written texts in our daily and professional lives perpetuates the mediation between ideology, language, and power. CDA illuminates the problems generated by this relationship (Heberman, 1973). Our words (written or oral) are used to convey a broad sense of meanings and the meaning we convey with those words is identified by our immediate social, political, and historical conditions. Our words are never neutral (Fiske, 1994). This is a powerful insight for home economists and family and consumer scientists. We should never again speak, or read/hear others’ words, without being conscious of the underlying meaning of the words. Our words are politicized, even if we are not aware of it, because they carry the power that reflects the interests of those who speak. Opinion leaders, courts, government, editors, even family and consumer scientists, play a crucial role in shaping issues and in setting the boundaries of legitimate discourse (what is talked about and how) (Simon, 2005). The words of those in power are taken as self-evident truths and the words of that not in power are dismissed as irrelevant, inappropriate, or without substance. The critical use of discourse analysis in applied linguistics is leading to the development of a different approach to understanding media messages. It offers the opportunity to adopt a social perspective in the cross-cultural study of media texts. Kress (1990) points out that CDA has an “overtly political agenda” which sets it off from other kinds of discourse analysis. He mentions that “CDA aims to provide accounts of the production internal structure and overall organization of texts” while the other forms of discourse analysis aim to provide a better understanding of socio-cultural aspects of texts. Accordingly, a fully critical account of language discourse would require a theorization and description of both the social processes and structures, which give rise to the production of a text, and of the social structures and processes within which individuals or groups as socio-historical subjects create meanings in their interaction with texts. Thompson (2002) states that critical approach to discourse analysis seeks to link the text (micro level) with the underlying power structures in society (macro level) through discursive practices upon which the text is drawn. That is a text, a description of something happening in a larger social context, replete with a complex set of power relations, is interpreted and acted upon by readers or listeners depending on the rules, norms, and mental models of socially acceptable behavior and background knowledge (McGregor, 2003).

The key step to uncover or reveal the ideological markers within the structures of the language discourse and how social events contribute to shaping ideologies within the discourse (social semiotic) is the Critical Discourse Analysis. In a number of research studies Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) was utilized to prove the impact of the ideological stamp on language.

Van Dijk (2000) defines Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as “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” (p. 352). Therefore, it can be argued that the primary aim of CDA is to link texts with society as there is a clear interaction among them and to link political issues with social problems. Van Dijk (2000) confirms that in order to achieve this aim, one of the main requirements of CDA is to focus on “the ways discourse structures enact, confirm, legitimate, reproduce, or challenge relations of
power and dominance in society” (p. 353). Van Dijk (2006) adds that CDA “provides a sociological account of language use because of its interest in ideology, social relations, and the relationship between text and context” (p. 37). In the research study, CDA focused on the socio-political issues without ignoring the linguistic side. As a result, CDA deals with language use as a social practice that shapes ideologies within discourse.

Conclusion

Defined as socially shared representations of groups, ideologies are the foundations of group attitudes and other beliefs, and thereby control the ‘biased' personal mental models that underlie the production of ideological discourse. This theory not only accounts for the ways ideological discourses are produced and understood, but also how ideologies themselves are discursively reproduced by groups, and acquired by their members. It is stressed that ideologies are not only expressed by discourse—and hence should not be reduced to discourse either—but also may be expressed and enacted by other social practices. Ideological acquisition, legitimating and in general ideological accounts, however, are usually discursive (Van Dijk, 2006). It is also shown how ideologies relate to knowledge. Thus, the assumption that all knowledge is ideological is rejected as too strict, because general cultural knowledge is presupposed and hence accepted by all ideologically different groups. It is also argued that a general theory of ideology as presented here does not lose its critical edge—on the contrary, a more explicit theory of ideology is better equipped to critically examine ideologies, and their language discourse practices.

According to Van Dijk (2006), the concept of ideology is often used in the media and the social sciences, but it is notoriously vague. Its everyday usage is largely negative, and typically refers to the rigid, misguided, or partisan ideas of others: we have the truth, and they have ideologies. This negative meaning goes back to Marx-Engels, for whom ideologies were a form of ‘false consciousness'; therefore, the working class may have misguided ideas about the conditions of its existence as a result of their indoctrination by those who control the means of production. Throughout a large part of the 20th century, both in politics and in the social sciences, the notion of ideology continued to carry its negative connotation, and was often used in opposition to ‘objective’ knowledge (Billig, 1982; Eagleton, 1991; Larrain, 1979; Zizek, 1994).

Van Dijk (2006) believes that originally, ‘ideology’ did not have this negative meaning. More than 200 years ago, the French philosopher Destutt de Tracy introduced the term in order to denote a new discipline that would study ‘ideas’: idéologie. In addition, in contemporary language science, the notion is used in a more neutral, descriptive sense, e.g., to refer to belief systems (Freeden, 1996).

One of the many dimensions highlighted in the classical approaches to ideology was their dominant nature, in the sense that ideologies play a role in the legitimization of power abuse by dominant groups. One of the most efficient forms of ideological dominance is when also the dominated groups accept dominant ideologies as natural or commonsense. Gramsci called such forms of ideological dominance hegemony (Gramsci, 1971). Bourdieu does not use the notion of ideology very much (mainly because he thinks it is too vague and has often been abused to discredit others who do not agree with us; see Bourdieu and Eagleton, 1994), but rather speaks of

http://www.ijhcs.com/index.php/ijhcs/index Page 885
symbolic power or symbolic violence. It should be stressed, however, that although related, his uses of these terms are different from the (various) uses of the notion of ideology. His main interest lies in the social conditions of discursive and symbolic power, such as the authority and legitimacy of those who produce language discourse.

Van Dijk (2006) contends that the general theory of ideology needs to be specified for the huge social field of linguistics. Thus, one way of classifying ideologies—as well as discourses—is by the social field in which they function. That is, we have political, educational, legal, religious, and health care ideologies, among others. It is in language discourse that we need to explicitly explain that such discrimination occurs “because she is a woman,” “because he is black,” or “because they are socialists”. Thus, it is largely through discourse that ideologies are acquired, expressed, learned, propagated, and contested.

Finally, one could say that in spite of the differences which exist in major approaches to CDA, all of these approaches pursue one common goal that is representing the dialectic relationship between language, power, ideology, and the influential role that language plays in emanation of power and legitimizing social inequalities. For as it was shown the dominant ideology, as a result of excessive use, will be presupposed and it becomes natural and neutral. Therefore, critical discourse analysts are giving a serious effort to clarify and denaturalize the hidden power relations, ideological processes that exist in linguistic text. They attempt to awaken the unconscious of those people who contribute to the establishment and legitimization of ideology through their ignorance.
References


http://books.google.ae/books?id=KQXofefn8moC&printsec


