

Critical Discourse Analysis : Comparative Perspectives on Contradictory Arguments

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The main purpose of this paper is to take a look at a controversial approach to critical discourse analysis for the suggestion of a well-balanced perspective on such a biased presupposition and methodology. Currently linguists, language teachers and even social scientists have shown their strong interests in critical language awareness and its ideological involvements in order to encourage the general public to realize the social function of language in all modes of communication. It seems, however, to me to be increasingly clear that critical language study calls for a careful attempt based on an appropriate combination of textual facts and contextual factors in the interpretation of discourses. From this point of view, this paper suggests some pedagogic / analytical guidelines for a study on language and its social connotations as a result of examining the cogency of two contrasting argumentations in relation to critical discourse analysis.

1. Introduction

Over the years, 'discourse analysis' as an extended area of linguistics has been concerned with an inquiry into the relationship between

language and its pragmatic contexts. The very nature of this study has entailed an interdisciplinary approach to language in use, which is linked, in various ways, with such relevant fields of research as psychology, sociology, semiotics and philosophy. Hence it is not so surprising that the analysts of discourse often encounter difficulties in defining its fundamental notion and scope.

More recently, as a specific mode of language study, 'critical discourse analysis' (CDA) often deals with the interrelations between language and its ideological connotations in social contexts, drawing attention from not only linguists but social scientists as well. It has also been recognized as a means of carrying out social change particularly among those who make efforts to promote language awareness programmes. Due to such a positive attempt to inspire the general public with regard to the prime roles of language in shaping social practice, it tends to be even more closely connected with aspects of social theory including political commitments. For this reason, the scope and modes of CDA have become fuzzy and controversial, eventually bringing about a major area of contention among linguists.

In the light of this, I primarily intend to examine current issues related to CDA with a focus on the appropriateness of the typical modes that some applied linguists have adopted, and to demonstrate critical standpoints on the general validity of CDA in terms of critical language study. In doing so, I will first take a look at the ambiguous concept of 'discourse' in relation to 'text' by drawing on some of linguists' personal viewpoints.

And I want to provide comparative perspectives on the two contradictory claims - a positive and a negative stance - with respect to the adequacy of a CDA approach. A great deal of attention will be given to investigating the cogency of such contrasting arguments. Finally, based on all foregoing considerations, I will try to suggest some pedagogic

/analytical guidelines which may be inferred from the newly clarified problems concerning CDA, as a set of alternatives to current methodological practices.

II. The Fuzzy Concepts of 'Discourse'

In this section, I want to review the definition of 'discourse' as presented by applied linguists and try to illustrate its conceptual relations with 'text' within the framework of CDA. For this purpose it would be useful for me to look into the following question: can we make any explicit distinction between the notion of 'discourse' and that of 'text'? The output resulting from this investigation is also expected to help shed light on the relevance of current modes of CDA in the following sections.

Conventionally, linguistics has concerned itself with the study of language within the boundary of single sentences; it is, as a whole, an inquiry into the lexical, syntactic, semantic, morphological and phonological formations of the sentence. Beyond these traditional approaches, 'discourse analysis' is generally recognized to deal with 'a unit of language larger than the sentence'(Chafe 1992; Carter & McCarthy 1991; Stubbs 1983). And it is widely held that such an enlarged field of study virtually covers all research concerned with language in its cognitive and social context (Brown & Yule 1983; Coulthard 1977; van Dijk 1977).

At the same time, however, many scholars mention that the term 'discourse' represents a confusing, uncertain and difficult notion. The only thing to which researchers have agreed in the area of discourse analysis may be that 'terminological confusions' abound(Potter & Wetherell 1987). With this extreme view in mind, let us have a look at the following passages:

(. . .) we have a concept which is extremely fashionable and at

the same time extremely uncertain: (. . .) discourse is something (. . .) in vogue and vague (Widdowson 1995: 158);

Discourse is a difficult concept, largely because there are so many conflicting and overlapping definitions formulated from various theoretical and disciplinary standpoints(Fairclough 1992: 3).

As we notice above, the two scholars basically share the recognition that the concept of discourse is hazy and hard. This equivocation further makes it complicated to differentiate discourses from texts. We often talk of 'spoken discourse' versus 'written text', or alternately, we can think that discourse implies 'interactive discourse'; whereas text implies 'non-interactive monologue'(Stubbs 1983: 9). Another way of drawing the distinction between the two terms is to consider that discourse is to text as 'utterance' is to 'sentence'(van Dijk 1977). Here, Halliday(1978: 40) adopts the same notion of text as this, but he describes discourse as one referring to the surface realization of language in use. In addition the view that the representation of discourse forms texts is provided by Brown and Yule (1983), and they think of text as the record of a communicative act.

III. A Critical View on 'Discourse-as-Process' and 'Text-as-Product'

1. The Basic Problem of Process/Product Dichotomy

These various perspectives on the relationship between discourse and text appear to be, to a certain extent, in line with the following two positions:

'Discourse' (. . .) is the pragmatic process of meaning negotiation.

'Text' is its product (Widdowson 1995: 164, Emphasis added);

'Text' is regarded (. . .) as one dimension of 'discourse': the written or spoken product of the process of text production (Fairclough 1992: 3, Emphasis added).

Again, the two scholars' recognition in this respect looks fairly similar to each other. Here even though the view of 'discourse-as-process' and 'text-as-product' is considered rather appropriate for some purposes on the one hand, it is not deemed to be reasonably accurate on the other, given that any hasty generalization often entails certain confusions and misconceptions. So the dichotomic view of social phenomena usually runs the risk of a notional instability arising from some loopholes and overlapping facets. Likewise, such a problem here is, I presume, largely attributed to a 'static' perspective on the generic properties of language in use; the social functions of language are often activated and realized through the 'dynamic' modes and mediums of communicative acts in a speech community.

2. Comments on Widdowson's Definition

According to Widdowson's definition given above, 'discourse' should be understood to be a 'process of meaning negotiation' between the addresser/writer and the addressee/reader. He stresses that one achieves meaning by 'indexical realization'—by using language to engage 'extra-linguistic reality', and 'this acting of context on code' is referred to as 'discourse'. If so, a question immediately arise here; that is, can 'text' be, in any occasion, recognized as the 'product of meaning negotiation' based on such an indexical conversion of the linguistic symbols? As he puts it, the positive response to this is that 'text is a record made by one of the participants, the writer, who is enacting the discourse on behalf of both

first person and second person parties'--the writer and the reader(p. 164).

Again, if so, can the concept of 'discourse' mentioned earlier--the acting of context on code--be exactly the same thing as that of 'discourse' noted above--the one enacted by the writer? Obviously we now encounter the conceptual discrepancy between the former discourse and the latter discourse. In other words, the latter may represent dual notions, subject to the position of the writer or the reader. On the part of the reader, the former shares the concept of the latter. Instead, on the part of the writer, the latter is nothing but the encoding of the linguistic symbols denoting the writer's intention which are to be decoded by the reader's indexical realization. As a result, in the case of written discourse or other discourse types of using visual images, 'text' could not be substantiated as the 'product of meaning negotiation' without the reader's or viewer's acting of context on the code or images set out in the text.

Then, the problem posed here lies in the extent to which Widdowson uses the word 'discourse' and the phrase 'negotiation of meaning'. With this in mind, let us take a look at other relevant statements given by him as follows:

One can, on the one hand, deal with instances of discourse from the point of the third person analyst: that is to say, one can treat discourse in detachment from its instantiation, after the event, as a product. On the other hand, one can deal with discourse from the point of view of the participants caught, as it were, in the act: that is to say, one can treat discourse as a process(1979: 148);

I have talked of the negotiation of meaning as a function of the convergence of schematic knowledge, achieved by the conversion of symbol to index(1990: 108).

The first version above strongly implies his another position that the notion of 'discourse' may be a process or a product, dependent on the

viewpoint of the person involved. And, in the second version, he has clarified the mode and function in which the 'negotiation of meaning' between the producer(addresser/writer) and the receiver(addressee/ reader) is put into practice by exploiting 'symbolic' meaning to achieve 'indexical' meaning as I mentioned earlier. Now, these confirmations remind us of his basic assumption that 'discourse is something in vague', and further support the fact that, in written or visual language, 'text' cannot be actualized as the 'product of meaning negotiation' prior to the reader's or viewer's perception of the intended message. So in order to reflect both functions of language precisely in the wording, the phrase 'meaning negotiation' would need to be replaced with 'meaning transmission and/or negotiation'. For this reason, only if he is to incorporate the 'transactional and interactional' functions¹⁾ of language into the scope of 'negotiation of meaning', can we accept his definition without any conceptual contradiction.

3. Comments on Fairclough's Definition

Then, with respect to Fairclough's definition noted above, we can, for example, imagine the occasion that two persons engage in a telephone conversation under the totally decontextualized circumstance to each other. In such a spoken interaction, we are able to recognize the fact that 'discourse-as-process' may be concurrently transformed into 'text-as-product', given that 'text' is, as he puts it, 'the written and spoken product of the process of text production': that is to say, both of 'discourse' and 'text' here eventually turn out to be one conflated and

1) In this paper, I use the terms 'transactional' and 'interactional' in making reference to the functions that language serves as a medium of communication in social contexts, of which the former means 'for the transmission of factual or propositional information' and the latter 'for the negotiation of factual or propositional information'(Brown & Yule 1983: 1-4).

equivalent form as a single whole.

This would be more obvious and understandable to accept Widdowson's thinking of 'text' as the 'product of meaning negotiation'. We can now realize that during a certain spoken encounter 'text' could be apparently in the same dimension as 'discourse' rather than one dimension of it. In other words, there may be the conceptual variance between the word 'product' in spoken dialogue and that in written monologue. As a result, the notion that 'text' is regarded as one dimension of 'discourse' may be in conflict with 'the written and spoken product of the process of text production'. In fact, Fairclough's conception cited earlier is in parallel with one of the statements he made before as follows:

A text is a product rather than a process—a product of the process of text production. But I shall use the term discourse to refer to the whole process of social interaction of which a text is just a part (Fairclough 1989: 24).

Nevertheless, in his subsequent explanation relating to this, with due weight on not only the verbal but also diverse 'visual' means—written, printed, filmed, or televised—of communicative acts in the contemporary society, he ultimately shrinks from any overt conceptual differentiation between the two terms, and states that:

(. . .) the relative social significance of visual imagery is increasing dramatically—think of the degree to which one of the most populous and pervasive modern discourse types, advertising, works through visuals. (. . .) I shall assume broad and nonrestrictive notions of discourse and text (ibid.: 28).

Based on all foregoing discussions, I have found out the problem that both of Widdowson's and Fairclough's dichotomic perspectives of 'discourse-

as-process' and 'text-as-product' is not always tenable in a pragmatic sense. Therefore, it is my view that the two scholars' definitions of 'discourse' and 'text' virtually fail to make the clear-cut and effective distinction between the two terms; the concepts of them still remain both vague and difficult.

4. The Standard Definition of Discourse and Text

So far we have attempted to set out the notional links of discourse and text. Returning to the question previously given, we can readily understand that there are still a number of hardships in explicitly defining the concept of 'discourse' in relation to 'text'; indeed, it is considered a formidable matter, taking into account the dynamic aspects of language which are interwoven with complex social mechanisms. Consequently, I believe that we are now in a position to acknowledge as the standard definition the following statement given by Chafe(1992) in the Oxford International Encyclopaedia of Linguistics:

The term 'discourse' is used in somewhat different ways by different scholars, but underlying the difference is a common concern for language beyond the boundaries of isolated sentences. The term 'text' is used in similar ways. Both terms may refer to a unit of language larger than the sentence: one may speak of a 'discourse' or a 'text'.

So, as Chafe points out here, both discourse and text may be used interchangeably, referring to the equivalent units of language data. On the contrary, Widdowson(1995: 162) claims that 'text can come in all shapes and sizes'; that is, public notices are the instances of such texts which range from an alphabet to combination of sentences. And he simply puts that a text is identified not by its 'linguistic extent' but by its 'social intent'. In connection with the validity of CDA, his main argument is

based on the assumption that a 'text' perceived by its social contexts and implications leads one to create diverse interpretations according to her/his factual knowledge of the world. So he postulates that 'the discourse which the writer intends the text to record as output is always likely to be different from the discourse which the reader derives from it'(ibid.).

This conception backs up his critical stance to the CDA approach in which he presupposes the plurality of interpretation of text. Thus, not surprisingly, deconstructing the values of CDA, he argues that it presents a partial interpretation of text from a particular point of view by selecting such a feature of the text which supports its preferred interpretation, and thereby it is so prejudiced. In the following sections, I will look into the rationale of Fairclough's CDA methodology from this negative viewpoint on it.

IV. A Controversial Approach to CDA

In this section, as I noted earlier, I hope to investigate the controversial CDA approach led by Fairclough. With a negative and a positive stance in mind, let us focus attention on the following two passages:

(. . .) the commitment to a particular position (. . .) and the privileging of particular interpretations actually undermines the validity of CDA as analysis(Widdowson 1995: 170);

(. . .) CDA has given particular focus to explanatory connections between texts and social relations of power, and therefore to questions of ideology(Fairclough 1996: 50).

According to Widdowson(1995), as CDA is merely 'an exercise in

interpretation', it is 'invalid as analysis' and therefore the title 'critical discourse analysis' is a contradiction in terms; namely he looks upon interpretation as 'a matter of converging on a particular meaning as having some kind of privileged validity'(p.159). Against this line of conception, Fairclough(1996) argues that CDA is 'analysis' because it provides 'an analytical procedure' and applies it systematically to various types of data, defining analysis as 'any reasonably systematic application of reasonably well-defined procedures to a reasonably well-defined body of data'(p.51-52). He further points out Widdowson's failure to distinguish interpretation(perlocutionary effects) and explanation(constructive effects): the former is concerned with effects of features of texts on individual interpreters; whereas, the latter is concerned with effects of discursive practices on society and culture. So he claims the fact that CDA, based on the diversity of interpretations of texts, places a strong emphasis on the analysis of constructive effects discourse has on social identities and relations(ibid.)

In an effort to shed light on such effects of discourse, Fairclough's (1989) current CDA approach takes the following three consecutive stages:

- (1) description of text; (2) interpretation of the relationship between text and interaction; and (3) explanation of the relationship between interaction and social context(p.109).

Within this framework, the procedural elements of CDA are that, in the first stage, formal features of texts are described to find out experiential, relational, expressive or connective values reflected on them, and the second stage concerns itself with the interpretation of the backgrounds that texts are produced in social interaction, and finally the explanation of interdependency of discourses to processes of social struggles and to power relations is provided in the third stage(ibid.). Here the general adequacy of these analytical processes, I would mention,

depends on how equitably the three successive components above are dealt with one another in a well-balanced way. In this regard, I can suppose that Fairclough's CDA methodology gives rise to a serious controversy mainly because he regards textual facts not as reference data available in the interpretation of stage (2) above, but as textual evidences to adduce his final explanation of stage (3).

V. Contradictory Arguments on the Properties/Effects of Discourse

It would now be necessary for us to consider the striking differences between the two scholars' presuppositions on the effects of discourse in social contexts. Their underlying assumptions are respectively set out in the following statements:

(. . .) discourse is a matter of deriving meaning from text by referring it to contextual conditions, to the beliefs, attitudes, values which represent different versions of reality. The same text, therefore, can give rise to different discourses(Widdowson 1995: 168);

Discourses do not just reflect or represent social entities and relations, they construct or 'constitute' them; different discourses constitute key entities (. . .) in different ways, and position people in different ways as social subjects (. . .) and it is these social effects of discourse that are focused upon in discourse analysis(Fairclough 1992: 4, Emphasis added).

According to Widdowson here, the participant activates his unique knowledge of contextual reality to a text, by which the text produces a unique discourse, and finally leads her/him to derive a unique interpretation from it; and, according to Fairclough, the participant's

discourse plays an active role in shaping social relations and practices. In the light of underlying rationales, then, we may imagine that Widdowson's standpoints are largely based on 'schema theory'; whereas, Fairclough's viewpoints are largely rooted in the 'Whorfian hypothesis'.

The chief bone of contention between the two scholars, as we have seen above, needs to be briefly examined in connection with such a theory and a hypothesis. At this point, we may find it meaningful to look at some key implications of them. In terms of discourse processing, the notional insight of schema theory, originating from Bartlett's study of the human 'remembering', is that the participant, inspired either by linguistic elements in the text or by pragmatic factors in the context, activates her/his schemata, mental representations of prior stereotypical knowledge, and employ them to predict and make sense of the intended meaning that the discourse contains (Cook 1994). In this respect, Cook points out the instance that the 'homonymy and polysemy in discourse' would lead each participant to derive a certain particular interpretation from it, which provides a piece of evidence for schemata used in the comprehension of discourse (ibid.: 13).

Similarly, the previously acquired knowledge structures, schemata, that the majority of EFL/ESL learners bring to the text written in the target language are often said to be 'culture-specific and biased', and thereby give rise to cross-cultural mismatches in the interactive process between the readers and the text (Carrell & Eisterhold 1983). Hence it would be the gaps of conceptual knowledge that lead second language readers to a diversity of interpretations deviated from the writer's intended meaning. However, despite the new insights furnished by such a reading theory, there is a widely held scepticism to its validity as in the following statement:

The notion that our long-term memory is organized by 'stable schema structures' does not appear to be strongly supported by

current research. While no one doubts the need to account for the role of prior knowledge and inference making in reading comprehension, many researchers question theories which cannot be explicitly defined(Grabe 1991: 384).

Then, turning to the Whorfian hypothesis, I want to give an outline of Benjamin Lee Whorf's(1956) belief that "an accepted pattern of using words is often prior to certain lines of thinking and forms of behavior" (p. 134). His main claim is that a language constitutes logically connected elements, provides a general foundation for thinking processes, and constructs the behavioral characteristics of its ordinary users in social contexts. So this hypothesis attempts to throw light on the relationship between the mechanisms of language on the one hand and either cognition and arrangement of experience or the broad patterns of behavior on the other(Henle 1958).

In this regard, Henle, a well-known American scholar whose interests covered the relations of language to thought and culture, puts the cautionary conclusion that:

Language is one of the factors influencing perception and the general organization of experience, and this influence need not be primary or unique or compelling, but neither is it negligible(ibid.: 18).

Hudson(1996: 95), supporting this position, also claims that 'language does influence thought: the concepts that people learn through language may be different according to the language through which they learn them.' So, from a rather different angle, we, as Widdowson(1979: 199) states, can think it possible that 'the Whorfian hypothesis is tenable in relation to code rules, and that it is only when one attempts to apply it to context rules that difficulties occur.'

However, by drawing on schema theory and the Whorfian hypothesis here, I would not attempt to immaculately settle the contrasting

arguments between Widdowson and Fairclough, but intend to show that such a comparative perspective would be useful for the development of my critical ideas regarding current CDA methodology in the following sections.

VI. The Overt Example of a Current CDA

Given the fundamental notions of schema theory and the Whorfian hypothesis, with their respective merits and limits given above, it would be difficult for us to simply accept or reject either of Widdowson's and Fairclough's contentions noted earlier. For this reason, we are now required to take a careful look at an actual example of CDA, and to analyze it as a case-study with a neutral position maintained, which is expected to provide some insightful foundations for gauging the cogency of the two scholars' contrasting perspectives.

Let us focus attention on the following passage, an article from a local newspaper (source: Lancaster Guardian, 12 September 1986), published in the U.K., and look into the key explanations given by Fairclough in accordance with his CDA approach:

Quarryload-Shedding Problem UNSHEETED lorries from Middlebarrow Quarry were still causing problems by shedding stones on their journey through Warton village, members of the parish council heard at their September meeting. The council's observations have been sent to the quarry management and members are hoping to see an improvement (Fairclough 1989: 50).

From the content of this article, Fairclough(1989) extracts two alleged conclusions as follows:

The power being exercised here is the power to disguise power, i.e.

to disguise the power of quarry owners and their ilk to behave antisocially with impunity(p. 52);

One should be sensitive to possible ideologically motivated obfuscation of agency, causality and responsibility(p. 124).

Apparently, an immediate question can arise out of these contentions; what are a set of evidences that Fairclough primarily relies on here? According to his CDA approach presented earlier, he initially makes use of textual facts in order to adduce his ultimate arguments, which involve its grammatical features and sentence structures. Particularly he pays central attention to a form of nominalizations, animate or inanimate agency, and specified or unspecified causality, reflected in the linguistic data.

In line with all this, he gives elaborate illustrations to the content area of the article: (1) the headline Quarry load-shedding problem takes the form of a nominalization which does not indicate tense, modality and an agency, and thereby causality is unspecified; (2) in the first sentence, Middlebarrow Quarry is an untypically inanimate agent of an action process, and lorries also is considered an inanimate agent by representing an event [stones(S) were falling(V) from the lorries(A)] as an action [lorries(S) were shedding(V) stones(O)], and so neither problem-causer nor load-shedder are clearly identified; and (3) the quarry management, presumed to be actual agents causing the problem, appears in the second sentence as if any responsibility were not attributed to quarry owners - they seem to have just received the council's observations, and therefore the hidden power, the power to disguise power, is exercised for the favored wordings and interpretations by the power-holders(quarry owners and their ilk) involved in such a media discourse.

As we can notice here, Fairclough, accepting a series of textual features as textual evidences, demonstrates his unique judgements and

explanations with respect to the newspaper article by applying the three-staged CDA approaches to it. Again, such ideological standpoints given above subsequently raise another question; how can Fairclough validate the causality between his critical views and the textual features he has exploited? Now, this query, in one way or another, guide us to return to the validity problem of the Whorfian hypothesis, and further reminds us of Widdowson's claim that CDA provides merely a partial interpretation of the text from a specifically preferred viewpoint.

As we have already seen, such a hypothesis is generally recognized to be only partially tenable in the causality between pragmatic features of a language(properties of discourse) and its habitual users' thought and behavioral patterns(social effects of discourse). In brief, we are able to realize that language does not 'determines' thought and behavior, but 'influence' them. As a result, Fairclough, I would claim, is faced with a formidable impediment to verifying the causality between his alleged contentions and the textual facts he addressed.

VII. Culture & Knowledge: Criteria for Discourse/Text Interpretation

In respect to Widdowson's contention above, we, given the basic notion of schema theory, can think that the range of interpretations of discourse/text, though varying and complex, would be implicitly bound by the participant's prior background knowledge and pragmatic contexts given in a homogeneous community. Thus, I feel secure in saying that the participants' interpretations of discourses/texts do not show infinitely diverse patterns, but fall within a certain finite boundary restrained by potential guidelines for their ways of thinking and behavior in such a society. Such a conceptual knowledge shared by a large group of people, I would mention, may be referred to as 'cultural norms' established in a

given community. But, on bringing 'culture' into the common frames of thought and behavior, we are often required to specify the interrelation between culture and the scope of knowledge. In this regard, it would be useful for me to draw on the categorization of 'knowledge' noted by Hudson. He, defining culture as 'socially acquired knowledge', classifies knowledge into three different types in association with social interaction:

- (1) cultural knowledge, which is learned from other people;
- (2) shared non-cultural knowledge, which is shared by people within the same community or the world over, but is not learned from each other;
- and (3) non-shared non-cultural knowledge, which is unique to the individual (Hudson 1996: 74).

And he further points out that 'most of language is cultural knowledge, since it has to be learned from others, but some is shared non-cultural knowledge'(ibid.). Obviously, this well-defined explanation indicates how closely the properties of culture and knowledge are tied together in a community life.

Then, with reference to the newspaper article cited earlier, the crux we have to shed light on here would be whether Fairclough's critical statements in question can be regarded as the most equitable and generally acceptable conclusions. That is to say, we should clarify if his challenging viewpoints represent the 'maximum number of the ordinary readers' maximum number of coincident/convergent interpretations of the text' among all members of the community. To do this, one of the explicit approaches would be to conduct an intensive survey designed to obtain the most reliable information directly from the subscribers of the local newspaper. But, in practice, such information is not accessible. So presumably we cannot help drawing on the generic interdependency of culture and knowledge specified above. Accordingly, based on Hudson's

categorization of knowledge above, we can deduce that when the general readers came across the media discourse in question, the majority of them may have, consciously or subconsciously, activated their 'cultural knowledge' and 'shared non-cultural knowledge' in comprehending the intended message of the article.

VIII. An Equitable Interpretation & Its Underlying Foundations

Taking this into account here, let me demonstrate the most plausible and equitable interpretation that the majority of the ordinary readers may have made. Such a reading process, I assume, may largely constitute a set of self-cognitive actions focused on the following questions:

(1) At normal times, what reputations and ideological policies does the media maintain?; (2) In a given context, how much attention and significance does the media attempt to put on the article concerned?; and (3) In a given context, what main intentions and implications does the media attempt to transmit to the ordinary readers by carrying the article concerned in it?

To begin with, as item (1) above is virtually beyond the reach of my background knowledge, I would intend to address both items (2) and (3) which are considered more substantive than item (1), In respect to item (2), considering the length and content of the article, including its original arrangement of the sentences(see the next paragraph), I can imagine that the newspaper management gives nothing but minimal weight and attention to it. In respect to item (3), the local newspaper seems to have intended the announcement of shedding-problem of quarryload in an ordinary fashion. It is generally accepted that the headlines given to newspaper articles or other media discourses are designed to accurately

meet the reader's or viewer's pragmatic demands, and thereby consist of some key words carefully selected by the staff-members, providing a brief outline of the entire discourse content.

According to the article in question, the headline 'Quarryload-shedding problem' adequately contributes to simplifying the whole intended message set out in it, neatly fitting into the narrow space given (i.e. actually the sentences in the article are arranged within the space of a vertically positioned rectangle). Similarly, by placing the phrase 'UNSHEETED lorries from Middle-barrow Quarry' in front of the sentence, the writer tries to convey key information—'main cause and source of the problem'—to the reader. The capitalized word 'UNSHEETED' also draws the reader's initial attention, thus serving effectively for such a purpose as well. And, the second sentence provides some problem-solving details expressed in a routine and reasonable way, addressing the responsible social entity and the administrative authorities concerned as has often been the normal case in a media discourse. Hence, to my judgement, 'practicality' is given a top priority in formulating the media discourse in question, and so any traces or connotations related to power struggles and ideologically motivated obfuscation are not embedded in it. Consequently, I strongly believe that its originally intended message was nothing more and less than the following ordinary facts:

After hearing of the problem that unsheeted lorries from Middlebarrow Quarry still shed stones on their journey through Warton village, the parish council has sent its observations to the quarry management, hoping to see an improvement.

VIII. The Covert Barometer of a Future CDA

On the basis of foregoing explanations, we are now able to gauge how seriously Fairclough's critical comments are ideologically deviated

and misleading by his relying unduly on textual facts. At any rate, if Fairclough's alleged statement-'the power being exercised is the power to disguise power'-were to be true, the entire piece of the article could not have been carried in the local newspaper at all by 'the very power to disguise the power of quarry owners and their ilk'. So paradoxically it seems to me that, as far as such alleged ideological statements are concerned, Fairclough and his colleagues sharing the CDA approach committed 'ideologically motivated obfuscation' in deriving their prejudiced conjectures from the article in question.

As a result, we can suppose that, during the critical analysis of the article, Fairclough and his co-workers deliberately exploited their knowledge falling into only the category of item (3) noted by Hudson, although they had a substantial amount of knowledge far beyond the scope of such a particular one. That is to say, in dealing with the article concerned, they seem to have disregarded the conceptual boundary and intrinsic properties of 'knowledge' which are steadily interplayed with 'culture' in society.

At this point if we combine this crucial outcome gained from the criteria of 'cultural norms' with the 'Worfian hypothesis' which is proved to be partially cogent in terms of 'code rules', we, to be exact and sure, arrive at the conclusion that the future CDA approach should count on not only textual facts; but they are required to take due note of contextual factors as well. Only if both of 'textual facts' and 'contextual factors' are equitably taken into consideration in the process of CDA, can it be expected to provide a well-established analytical output to be of great value in promoting critical language study.

And, regarding the proper CDA approach, I believe that 'contextual factors' to be largely identified by 'cultural norms' should be given a higher priority than 'textual facts, for the text, as noted earlier, cannot be reasonably interpreted without the reader's activating contextual cues on itself with her/his schematic knowledge. Therefore, the full range of

'contextual factors' involved in a given occasion, I would remark, should be accepted as the 'covert barometer' of a well-balanced CDA in the future. In the final section, I would like to specify a general set of these restrictive conditions in relation to critical language teaching.

X. Conclusion

As we have discussed thus far, we can realize the inappropriateness of Fairclough's CDA approach, which are primarily aimed to derive ideologically-ingrained explanations from the discourse and text by paying ideologically-driven attention to linguistic features reflected in them. At the same time, we also become sceptical about Widdowson's(1995) claim that 'what a writer means by a text is always unlikely to be the same as what a text means to a reader'. To put the issue more seriously, on approving this strong version of argument, we come to automatically disapprove the overall criteria and principles for reading comprehension tests, translation of one language into another, and several standardized English proficiency tests²⁾ administered by U.K. and U.S. government agencies.

To sum up, as far as two contradictory arguments—a positive and a negative stance—to the CDA approach are concerned, Fairclough and Widdowson, as two extremists in the effects of discourse and its interpretation, stand respectively on both poles of a balance beam: the former, I would mention, on the side of *ideological convergence-effects*; and the latter on the side of *ideational divergence-effects*. Taking into

2) The standardized English proficiency tests may include: (1) the International English Language Testing System(IELTS) administered by the British Council, (2) the Test of English as a Foreign Language(TOEFL) and (3) the Test of English for International Communication(TOEIC) administered by the U.S. Educational Testing Service, and (4) American Language Institute, Georgetown University(ALIGU).

account all the points discussed so far, I am able to posit that neither of these biased perspectives are considered tenable. Accordingly, in terms of a critical study on the relations of language to culture and ideology, I should like to suggest a general set of pedagogic/analytical guidelines for an appropriate CDA methodology in classroom settings as follows:

- (1) The teacher/analyst should take note of cultural norms and their forces established in a given society, which are activated as the generic barometer of a well-balanced CDA;
- (2) The teacher/analyst should place an emphasis on the fact that discourses usually do not constitute and/or construct social entities and power relations, but reflect and/or influence them within the fixed limits mainly set by cultural factors prevalent in a given community;
- (3) The teacher/analyst should focus attention on the conceptually unified boundary of language in its social semiotic by introducing both pragmatic and imaginary interpretations of a given discourse/text;
- (4) The teacher/analyst should give account of the probability that not only textual facts but also contextual factors, including the individual's personality, ethnicity, educational backgrounds, and socio-economic status, may affect the interpretation of a given discourse/text.

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