

# A Re-consideration of Critical Discourse Analysis Focusing on the Socio-Cognitive Approach

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## Abstract

The present study is in the field of Critical Discourse Analysis. It tries to offer a critique of the socio-cognitive approach of Van Dijk to CDA which is based on a number of bases among which polarization is one. A number of shortcomings have been recognized in CDA in general and the ideological square adopted by van Dijk in specific. These shortcomings make the points of criticism on which light needs to be shed by the present study. Confusing equality with justice, circularity and ideological orientation make the major points referred to above. Some theoretical modifications supported by a practical application have been offered as an attempt to offer a new perspective for the ideological square in CDA as adopted by van Dijk .

**Key words:** CDA, Socio-cognitive approach, ideological orientation, neutrality.

## إعادة نظر بالتحليل النقدي للخطاب مع التركيز على المنهج الاجتماعي الذهني

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## المستخلص

تقع الدراسة الحالية في ميدان التحليل النقدي للخطاب. تحاول الدراسة أن تقدم نقدا لمنهج فان دايك الاجتماعي الذهني للتحليل النقدي للخطاب والذي يركز على عدة أسس منها الاستقطاب. وشخصنا عدد من العيوب في التحليل النقدي للخطاب بشكل عام والمربع الأيديولوجي المعتمد من فان دايك بشكل خاص. هذه العيوب هي نقاط الانتقاد التي سلطنا الضوء عليها في الدراسة الحالية. الخلط بين المساواة والعدالة، الدور، والاتجاه الأيديولوجي هي من أهم نقاط الانتقاد المشار إليها في أعلاه. واقترح بعض التعديلات النظرية مدعومة بالتطبيق العملي محاولة لتقديم منظور جديد للمربع الأيديولوجي في التحليل النقدي للخطاب كما هو متبع عند فان دايك.

**الكلمات الدالة:** التحليل النقدي للخطاب، المنهج الذهني الاجتماعي، الاستقطاب، المربع الأيديولوجي، الذاتية، المساواة والعدالة، الدور، الاتجاه الفكري، الحيادية

**Introduction:**

The present study is in the field of critical discourse analysis (CDA, henceforth) which tries to apply criticality to discourse analysis (DA, henceforth). Principally, DA is supposed to be neutrally descriptive whereas criticality tries to apply the critical theory to DA to result in CDA having a number of approaches among which van Dijk [1] is one. Critical theory has two forms where the traditional one was meant simply to understand and explain social acts deeply and thoroughly whereas the second one is meant to critique modern capitalist society as referred to by Bhatia [2,p:22]. The targeted aim of that recent form of the critical theory is to make a social change through CDA .

In studying CDA, there is a need to consider its principles, basic problems to be solved, aims, major approaches and criticism. CDA has been defined by a number of its practitioners like Fairclough [3,4, and 5], Wodak [6] and van Dijk [1 and 8] among others; however, the operational definition adopted for the present study is van Dijk's [8] as will be stated and discussed later.

CDA has been proposed recently as a new way of utilizing language for non-linguistic ends ,i.e., discourse for objectives beyond language itself. It is an application of the problem-solution thought pattern trying to find out ways of applying language to achieve non-linguistic solutions to various kinds of problems, basically social and political. This thought pattern, connecting problems to solutions, is based on logic which is pointed out by Kaplan (1966:2), as quoted in Connor [7,p:30], as culture-specific rather than universal. Thus, the principles as well as aims of CDA are also culture-specific. That is why CDA approaches could be hardly considered workable universally. Even within the same culture a serious need for some reconsideration for some CDA approaches is to be expected .The present study tries to reconsider CDA focusing on van Dijk's [1] socio-cognitive approach and specifically ideological square. This reconsideration starts from re-visiting CDA's principles and aims.

**Principles:**

Fairclough and Wodak (1997:271-280) ,as quoted in D. Tannen, D. Schiffrin and H. Hamilton [8],propose a number of principles for CDA as follows:

- 1-CDA addresses social problems.
- 2-Power relations are discursive.
- 3- Discourse constitutes society and culture.
- 4-Discourse does ideological work.
- 5-Discourse is historical.
- 6-The link between text and society is mediated.
- 7-Discourse analysis is interpretive and explanatory.
- 8-Discourse is a form of social action.

Having the CDA principles established its aims need to be considered.

**Aims of CDA**

CDA aims to offer some influential ways to deal with various social and political problems caused by practicing power and dominance to produce social inequalities such as racism, anti-feminism, etc. in some societies. A number of CDA goals are suggested by some CDA practitioners as follows:

- 1- A main objective of CDA ,as referred to by Fairclough [4,p:1] is to investigate the ways in which change in language leads to making social and cultural changes.
- 2- Fairclough [4,p:6] points out that the main goal of CDA is to expose deception that may not be recognized easily in discourses to discourse receivers, and that cannot be recognized easily by ordinary discourse receivers. CDA transfers them into the critical consciousness and shows how language is used for one party rather than another.
- 3- Van Dijk [9,p:250] believes that CDA aims to criticize and expose social inequality which results in dominance which gives advantage to the elite groups to exercise their social powers.
- 4- CDA aims to concentrate on the social and political issues rather than other ones.

The principles and aims above are identified by some scholars to propose some approaches to CDA among which Norman Fairclough [3,4 and 5] and Teun van Dijk[9],[1] and [8] are some prominent ones.

Beside the general aims of CDA, the present study targets a specific aim. It aims to re-evaluate van Dijk's ideological square concerning the points of criticism raised above offering a new perspective of CDA.

### Approaches

CDA has been approached in a number of ways out of which Fairclough's [5], Wodak's [11] and van Dijk's [1] are famous approaches.

Fairclough [4] suggests a three-dimensional way of description, interpretation and explanation which are essential in analyzing a discourse critically .They function to observe the social changes and linguistic manifestations found in discourses of resistance and difference. Fairclough [4]believes that the first part of his model ,namely, description represents the “whatness” through describing the formal properties of the discourse under study. The second stage of the model is that one of “interpretation” where the analysis should deal with “howness” of the discourse or the way it is produced through interpreting it. The last stage is “explanation” which focuses on "whyness" or the reason behind the way of constructing the discourse it has been constructed according to.

Wodak's [11] approach to CDA is Discourse Historical which consists of four stages. The first one is linguistic focusing on grammar whereas the other three ones are concerned with social theories and context. The four levels are: co-text level, intertextual level, extra linguistic social/sociological level, and a broader sociopolitical and historical level. Van Dijk [1] is the approach investigated for the present study. It is called socio-cognitive because CDA is joined with cognition to reveal the ideological structures. CDA is defined by Van Dijk [8, p:466] as

discourse analytical research that primarily studies the way social-power abuse and inequality are enacted, reproduced, legitimated, and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context. With such *dissident research*, critical discourse analysts take an explicit position and thus want to understand, expose, ultimately challenge social inequality.

This approach adopts three major levels of analysis, namely, macro and micro in addition to the cognitive one. The micro level of analysis deals with language use including syntactic fields like passivization and transitivity in addition to a semantic level having modality and lexicalization among others in addition to the discursive strategies like norm and value violation, negative lexicalization, hyperbole among others . The macro level analysis applies the ideological square theory which is the cornerstone of the present study. Discourse participants are categorized ideologically into two groups ,us ,i.e., in-group and, them i.e., out-group participants. The in-group participants are connected with what is good whereas out-group participants are connected with what is bad [9.P:33]. The ideological square ,IS, henceforth of Dijk [1.p:267] could be put the following way:

- 1- Express/emphasize information that is positive about 'Us'.
- 2- Express/emphasize information that is negative about 'Them'.
- 3- Suppress/de-emphasize information that is positive about 'Them'.
- 4- Suppress/de-emphasize information that is negative about 'Us'.

Concerning the ideological square, the discourse structures are influenced by ideological categorization of the participants. The in-group participants are dealt with positively de-emphasizing the negative side they may have. The out-group participants are dealt with negatively de-emphasizing the positive side they may have.

### CDA Criticism

A number of points of criticism to CDA have been recognized like subjectivity, culture-limitedness and morality.

#### 1- Subjectivity:

CDA is claimed to suffer from subjectivity. Although the description phase of CDA is based on linguistic analysis which is supposed to be objectively descriptive the second phase, namely, interpretation is claimed to be subjective. Blommaert J. [12.p:31] points out that Widdowson (1995, 1996 ,1998) argues that "in its actual analyses, and despite its theoretical claims to the contrary, CDA provides biased interpretation of discourse under the guise of critical analysis." Widdowson [11.p:71] states that "CDA is committed to a cause and puts its own ideological agenda up front. Its proponents are not simply analysts but activists." Thus, the ideological agenda superiority held by CDA practitioners results in producing a subjective way of Discourse Analysis.

#### 2- Culture-limitedness:

The works of most of the prominent practitioners of CDA like Norman Fairclough[3,4 and 5] and van Dijk [1] are limited to the Western cultures and societies. The Third World societies have been neglected by the principal Western practitioners like Fairclough, Wodak and van Dijk.

CDA has been criticized for being basically limited to the Western social and political issues. They have not focused similarly on non-Western issues. That is to say they have dealt with the issue of 'inequality' through CDA inequally. Although this claim is solely correct it could be answered that the Western CDA practitioners are not responsible for solving others' problems. Applying CDA to deal with social and political

problems of non-Western countries and societies is the responsibility of the non-western CDA practitioners.

Blommaert [12.p: 3] states that " it would be very unwise to assume universal validity for our ways of life. CDA takes far too much sharedness for granted when it comes to discourse in contemporary societies across the world." Universality of the Western CDA cannot be appropriately claimed.

Critical analysis is influenced highly by context and since non-Western contexts are different from Western ones the critical analyses are expected to lead to different results.

### 3- Morality:

CDA tries to study how to uncover the social dimensions of language use. Blommaert [12.p:25] states that " these dimensions are the object of moral and political evaluation, and analyzing them should have effects in society: empowering the powerless, giving voice to the voiceless, exposing power abuse, and mobilizing people to remedy social wrongs."

These dimensions of CDA do not go with van Dijk's IS which adopts a different strategy ,namely, polarization where the empowered and supported are the in-group members regardless to the truth, justice or even equality. The reason behind that is that the governing ideology in van Dijk's IS is interest- oriented rather than truth-oriented or equality-oriented as claimed in van Dijk's definition for CDA.

### Discussion:

According to van Dijk's [9.p:466] definition of CDA the ultimate goal of CDA is to make the required social change to cure the various kinds of power abuse intended originally to make some social inequality. So, the basic problem to which CDA has been designed and proposed to deal with is the '**social inequality**'. That is to say, whereas social inequality is the problem ,CDA tries to provide a solution through applying the IS. Since 'inequality' is considered wrong, 'equality' is proposed to be right. Here, three problems could be recognized. The first one is confusing the concept of '**equality**' with that one of '**justice**.' The second one is the **ideological orientation** whereas the third one is **circularity** as will be shown below.

#### 1- The problem of confusing 'equality' with 'justice'

Equality,by definition, means considering different individuals and groups in an impartial way since all people are supposed to be equal. This consideration is based on the assumption that equality means justice. This point of confusing '**equality**' with '**justice**' needs a special consideration.

Equal treatment and consideration to individuals and even groups of unequal abilities, potentials and performances cannot be considered justice. Equality could be one form of justice in one case ,namely, when the individuals or groups are of equal points of comparison like rights, duties, potentials, evaluations etc. Table (1) below shows the possible relations between '**equality**' and '**justice**'

Table (1): The Relationships between **Equality** and **Justice**

No.	Participant Relations	Equality	Justice	Briefing
A	$a=b$	+	+	Equality is justice (a) equals (b)
B	$a \neq b$	-	+	Inequality is justice (a) differs from (b)
C	$a \neq b$	+	-	Equality is injustice (a) differs from ( )

To discuss table (1) above it could be supposed that (a) and (b) are two students of the same age in the same class taking the same lessons and exams under the same circumstances receiving objective treatment and evaluation. In the first case (a) and (b) receive the same mark in the exam because they perform equally. Having equal marks (equality) is just (justice) in this case. The second case deals with the situation in which (a) and (b) receive unequal marks (inequality) because they perform unequally in the exam where the one of the better performance in the exam receives higher marks in the exam. Here, (inequality) means (justice) since (a) and (b) perform differently. The third case (c) is about a situation where (a) and (b) receive equal marks in the exam (equality) although their performance is unequal in value. Here (equality) means (injustice). Thus, the objective evaluation requires justice which means giving everyone what (s)he deserves even if it is unequal to another individual of different performance. Justice could be presented through equality between individuals if their performances are really equal. That is why a reconsideration of van Dijk's d [8] definition to CDA could be suggested to be as follows:

discourse analytical research that primarily studies the way social-power abuse and inequality are enacted, reproduced, legitimated, and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context. With such *dissident research*, critical discourse analysts take an explicit position and thus want to understand, expose, ultimately challenge social **injustice**.

To conclude here, equality between people does not necessarily mean justice and justice between people does not mean necessarily equality. Sometimes justice means inequality and equality could mean injustice. The operational definition of CDA proposed by van Dijk [9] could be reconsidered to substitute '**equality**' by '**justice**' and '**inequality**' by '**injustice**' if it is intended for the targeted social change to be justice rather than interest-oriented.

## 2- Circularity:

Circularity is limited here to circular reasoning which is defined, as put in Cambridge Dictionary [13,p] to be "the fact of constantly returning to the same point or situation". In Macmillan Dictionary [14], circulatory is "a situation in which a series of causes and effects leads you to the original cause, producing an argument that does not mean anything."



Van Dijk [1] in his definition of CDA has identified the major problem to which CDA has been designed and proposed to offer a linguistic tool that is supposed to be of some help to cure the cases of social inequality through making some social changes. There are two cases here; the first one is when receiving a discourse ,i.e., discourse recognition of the addressee whereas the second case is when producing a discourse ,i.e., discourse production by the discourse addresser. The first case of the discourse recognition is by nature out of the scope of the present study because the addressee does not participate in the discourse organizing and producing. However, the addressee could make use of IS theory in receiving the discourse critically. What is challenged here is the second case of discourse production by the addresser where the in-group and out-group members receive unequal treatments. The discourse producer is supposed to deal unequally with the participants in his discourse. This treatment indicates trying to solve the problem of inequality by using the same problem of inequality as a solution, i.e., the problem is the solution and the solution is the problem at the same time, which means solely **circularity**.

A suggested solution for this shortcoming is to offer an equal treatment to both the in- and out-group participants. This treatment is supposed to break circularity since the solution offered by the IS will suffer no longer from the shortcoming of the problem, being a kind of unequal treatment.

There is a need to identify van Dijk [1] viewpoint about an important point related to the present study which is about van Dijk's evaluation to the ideological square and its ideological orientation treatment for the discourse participants. In a personal contact with the researcher, via an email, van Dijk (2019) is asked whether he only describes a famous way i.e., ideological square of analyzing a discourse critically or recommends that way to language users to make their targeted social change when conducting a critical analysis for a discourse. Van Dijk (2019) responds saying that the idea of the ideological square is very general and abstract as a summary of the many structures of discourses that may be involved in the expression of ideologies. So the point is to describe these structures in detail. Thus, van Dijk describes rather than educates or recommends the ideological square when analyzing a discourse critically. Nevertheless, van Dijk (2019) states that "the analysis in general analyzes and describes but the pragmatic implication is usually to recommend change, of course." To conclude, van Dijk (2019) describes the ideological square in CDA without explicit adoption ;however, he has offered no explicit rejection or objection to the points of circularity, justice vs. equality and ideological orientation i.e., subjectivity as far as the researcher thinks.

To preserve equality ,as claimed by CDA and justice, as proposed by the researcher, there is a need to treat the two groups of the discourse equally; however, what is offered here by the CDA is only one-sided treatment. The positive side of the in-group and negative one of the out-group are emphasized whereas the positive side of the out-group and negative side of the in-group are de-emphasized. The present study tries to offer a solution by adopting a binary sided perspective where the positive as well as negative points of both the in- and out-group participants are highlighted. This binary-sided perspective offers a balanced and objective consideration to the in- and out-group participants. In addition to balance and for the sake of more objectivity and

comprehensiveness there is a need for the concept of **neutrality**. Other than the in-and out-groups there is a need to suggest a third group ,i.e., neutral group which can be categorized as neither in- nor out-group. In certain cases it cannot be ignored if there is an insistence on preserving objectivity.

In order to analyze a discourse critically there is a need to recognize the addresser's stance which is based on his/her ideology that must be hidden in the discourse.

### 3- Ideological Orientation:

The discourse producers' ideology is the cornerstone in determining the orientation. His ideology could be truth-oriented for those who seek the truth or, as implicitly indicated by van Dijk [1] interest-oriented where the goal is to overcome the out-group members ignoring everything except interest. The discourse producer in this case supposes that he should be right and the other should be wrong regardless of any possibility of being mistaken. Furthermore, the treatment in this case will be opportunistic where the need justifies the means since the goal is the interest even though achieving the goal or interest includes selectivity in choosing the sample or designing the methodology mistakenly to produce the needed results. Such a shortcoming is produced as a result of adopting the ideological square methodology. van Dijk [1] proposes the IS strategy; however, there is a need to know whether he is describing or educating, trying to describe the critical ways of producing as well as receiving discourses without adopting those ways or trying to educate discourse producers and receivers to adopt his critical way when producing or receiving discourse. If he is descriptive he would be neutral whether he is a discourse producer or receiver whereas a critical discourse analyst is, by nature, not descriptive but rather critical trying to make some social change. In fact, the Western CDA seeks interest rather than equality or justice. The ideology adopted in the IS strategy is **interest-** rather than **truth-oriented**. The proof for that is classifying the participants into in-group and out-group in addition to the treatment with them emphasizing the positive points of the in-group and negative points of the out-group. Similarly, the negative points of the in-group as well as positive points of the out-group are de-emphasized. CDA aims at making a social change by overcoming the out-group members for the interest of the in-group members regardless of any consideration other than interest. The ideology adopted by this kind of CDA is that in which **interest** rather than **justice** is the essential aim. It is not intended to claim that the Western ideology is interest-oriented whereas others' ideologies differ. Interest-orientation could be adopted worldwide; however, other ideologies like justice-or truth- orientation needs to be recognized since ideologies are culture-specific rather than universal. That is why there is a need to reconsider the ideological square proposing a new methodology that is truth rather than interest oriented as will be shown below later on.

#### The Modified IS Model

CDA is based on a number of concepts among which ideology is one. Ideology is culture-specific rather than universal since it represents different sets of beliefs adopted by different groups of people within different cultures. Some ideologies seek ends regardless of the means, following the well-known saying (the need justifies the



means). These ideologies could be classified as **interest-oriented**. Some other ideologies may seek reality or truth regardless of interest. Such ideologies could be labeled as **truth-oriented**. Choosing ideologies by cultures or even individuals for adoption is determined by their preferences which are different from each other. Van Dijk [1] has applied ideology to CDA by adopting the IS which is a specific way of structuring a discourse determined by the discourse producer's intention and ideology. Van Dijk's [1] IS is based on the Western ideology which leads to identifying social inequality as a central problem that needs to be treated by CDA. The Western ideology claims to believe in social equality among people, as could be inferred from highlighting it in van Dijk's [8,p:466] definition of CDA. However, people are not naturally equal and thus, rights cannot be distributed equally since people's potentials, characteristics and contributions vary. Thus, it is social injustice rather than inequality, as seen previously.

Another problem with van Dijk's [1] IS is that of '**circularity**' where '**inequality**' is recognized as the basic problem to be dealt with by CDA; however, it has been suggested as a solution through categorizing discourse participants into in- and out-group participants where unequal treatment is adopted with these two group members.

A further problem of van Dijk's [1] IS is the **ideological orientation**. It is claimed in the CDA's definition by van Dijk [8] that the problem is the 'social inequality' which means that the solution needs to be 'social equality'. However, the IS goes in one direction, i.e., the in-group participants direction by emphasizing the positive side of the in-group neglecting their negative side and doing the opposite with the out-group participants. This single-sidedness makes CDA as defined by van Dijk [8,p:466] questionable since it goes in one direction ignoring the fact that communication has two sides rather than one.

The shortcomings above make a problem that needs a solution which could be offered by a modified version of the IS. That modified version needs to be based on established criteria that can offer some solutions to the shortcomings above.

The starting point of the suggested model of IS is the concept of ideology. Van Dijk's [1] IS adopts an ideology having the following characteristics :Western, confusing equality with justice, circular and interest-oriented. Certain points need to be highlighted in this stage as follows:

- 1) Since ideology is culture-specific rather than universal the suggested IS version needs not to be limited to the Western ideology.
- 2) The **interest-orientation** could be replaced by a substitution like **truth-orientation** as will be illustrated below.
- 3) To avoid circularity the problem should not be the solution since justice does not mean necessarily equality.
- 4) Single-directionality is not a must since there may (could) be other participants ,i.e., why should we be limited to in- and out-groups? What about other possible participants ?We need bi-directionality when dealing with the in- and out-group participants in some cases.

It seems obvious that van Dijk [1] model of IS suffers from a number of problems which recall a reconsideration. To offer such a reconsideration there is a need for a theoretical establishment beginning with identifying the motive or power that determines

the problem that CDA tries to solve ,namely, ideology. Ideology in van Dijk's [1] model is Western and principally limited to the first world countries and societies. It is culture-specific rather than universal. It is not a must for the suggested model of IS to be limited to the first world countries or Western cultures. It is possible to deal with an ideology that is neither Western nor belonging to the first world countries . Thus, identifying the problem and suggesting a solution could differ from (the) ideology adopted in van Dijk's[1] model. Van Dijk's [1] model identifies the problem as the '**social inequality**' and the solution as making a social change'. The suggested IS model could adopt another ideology that recognizes the problem and suggests a solution differently that is free from the problems from which van Dijk [1] IS suffers. In the modified IS the problem is '**social injustice**' rather than '**social inequality**'. The suggested solution is 'making a social change' but to achieve what goal ? and how?

The goal of the modified model of the IS is to achieve '**social justice**' rather than '**social equality**'. This model tries to cure '**circularity**' by being binary- rather than single-sided. The reason behind that is that the modified model is **truth-** rather than **interest-oriented**. The ideology here determines the goal of making 'social change' not through overcoming the out-group members regardless to anything. The goal could be something new like knowing the historical truth just because it is the truth to have an objective evaluation for the subject matter of the discourse under critical analysis, as will be highlighted later on. That could be done through applying the modified IS model which deals with the in- and out-groups, i.e., covering the positive as well as negative sides avoiding the single-sided way proposed in van Dijk's [1].

Thus, the modified model of the IS could be claimed to be able to offer a new critical consideration adopting a new ideology, identifying a different problem and suggesting a new solution in order to offer a social change, as will be shown later.

CDA is a political and social application for language. It is based on the fact that the discourse producer when producing or discourse receiver when receiving has a specific ideology to serve when communicating about a given debatable topic. This ideology governs the stance whether with or against the subject matter topic. This stance is supported through establishing the critique when investigating the relationships between the discourse participants. The ideology, stance and critique are established to make the targeted social change through making reproduction. The discourse producer establishes his stance on his ideology and considers the relationships between the participants when establishing the critique arriving at persuading the discourse receiver ,i.e., addressee to give up his previous stance which does not go with that adopted by the discourse producer ,i.e., addresser. That is how CDA makes a production to make a social change.

Concerning the discourse receiver, he has his ideology concerning the topic subject matter. That ideology makes the basis on which the discourse producer establishes his stance and decides the relationships between the discourse participants through the critique arriving at identifying the discourse producer's intention which can be against the discourse receiver. That could enable the discourse receiver identify the ideology and stance of the discourse producer in order not to be misled by it and to prevent the discourse producer from using power to support his stance . This case makes

a critical success for the discourse receiver, i.e., addressee who will offer a reproduction to the discourse producer's stance and converts it from the form needed by the discourse producer to that one needed by the discourse receiver.

This critical analysis of the discourse made according to van Dijk [1] polarization is based on classifying the participants into in- and out-groups members only. However, CDA ignores the possibility of having a third group which is neither in- nor out-group, i.e., a neutral group. This neutral group is not a participant in the discourse in which the in- group works against the out-group. It has its own ideology which could be completely different from the ideologies of the in- and out-groups. The stance of the neutral group members is governed by their own ideology which could be different from those of the in- and out-group members. The relation system could also be considered in a way that does not necessarily correspond to those of the in- and out-groups. Finally, the reproduction of the neutral group is expected to be different from those targeted by the in- and out- groups. Van Dijk's IS does not cover the case of the neutral group since it supposes that the participants are solely in- and out- groups. The lack of this supposition makes one problem to which the present study tries to offer a solution.

To evaluate van Dijk's [1] model and the proposed one two parallel discourses will be analyzed, in addition to some other similar discourses. The two discourses are some political letters with a special reference to two open messages sent through T.V by the two presidents of the USA in 1990 George Bush and Saddam Hussein to their peoples when Saddam invaded Kuwait in 1990. These two messages were exchanged before the military operations began between Iraq and the allied forces led by the USA, i.e., between 2.8.1990 and 16.1.1991. Every one of the two presidents tried to convince his addressees, i. e, his enemy's people that he was right and the other president was wrong. The two presidents applied van Dijk's IS classifying the participants into in- and out- group members. Both presidents arose a number of issues critically. Although they paid a lot of efforts to tell true information they were selective as will be clarified below when applying the IS according to van Dijk [1] when studying the structure of data. The two presidents served their contradict goals by adopting van Dijk's IS; however, the goals of the neutral group have been ignored almost completely since they have not been adopted by any of the two discourse producers, i.e., the two presidents. The neutral group could be some people who were not participants in the Kuwait issue but they for a reason or another needed to know the historical truth as it is not as it is needed to be presented by any of the two presidents.

The third group, i.e., the neutral group has its own ideology which does not necessarily follow any of the ideologies adopted by the in- and out-groups.

The neutral group members deal with the participants neutrally since they are not selective . They consider the positive as well as negative points of both sides, i.e., the in- and out- groups in order to establish the truth totally to make the intended reproduction to result in the targeted social change. This targeted social change of the neutral group is different from those goals targeted by any of the two presidents. It is rather a new goal which is revealing the historical truth of a given event as it is like the issue of invading Kuwait in 1990 as taken for the present study. The present study will analyze the two open letters of Saddam and Bush critically according to polarization proposed by van

Dijk [1] to identify the selectivity of the two discourse producers. It will also show the selective treatment of the two presidents which showed two contradict facts. The items that will be considered in the targeted analysis are taken because they have been dealt with in both letters. They are as follows: a) the military force b) knowledge , c) the Kuwaiti issue and d) history.

The critical analysis as proposed by van Dijk's [1] polarization according to the first president shows the fact in such a way that is completely different from that shown by the other president. Table (2) illustrates how the president Bush presents his viewpoint critically applying the IS strategy in structuring his speech.

Table (2): Polarization according to President George Bush

USA		Iraq	
Positive points of consideration	Negative points of consideration	Positive points of consideration	Negative points of consideration
+	-	+	-
✓	Ø	Ø	✓

In table (3) President Saddam's application of the IS in structuring his speech is presented.

Table ( 3 ): Polarization according to President Saddam Hussein

USA		Iraq	
Positive points consideration	Negative points consideration	Positive points consideration	Negative points consideration
+	-	+	-
Ø	✓	✓	Ø

### The Proposed Modification

The modified model proposed by the present study tries to fill in the blanks left intentionally by the two presidents in order to present the historical truth fully and objectively showing the positive as well as negative sides of both sides. The reason behind that is to enable the reader (third group) to make an objective evaluation for both sides to make the targeted social change through recognizing the historical fact objectively rather than subjectively and comprehensively rather than selectively.

When Bush the father addressed Iraqi people in 1990 on TV in his open letter he classified the participants into in-and out-groups. The same thing was done by Saddam when he addressed the American and Western peoples on the same occasion. Both presidents ignored some bits of information intentionally as they were selective. The present study tries to fill in those ignored areas of information as shown in the tables below.

Table ( 4 ): The Modified Version of Polarization

USA		Iraq	
Positive points consideration	Negative points consideration	Positive points consideration	Negative points consideration
+	-	+	-
✓	✓	✓	✓

**Analysis:**

Below, some analysis for two political open letters between Saddam Hussein and George Bush about the invasion of Kuwait in 1990 and some similar texts are offered. The critical treatment of the analysis is going to be analyzed. The analysis is based on determining a number of points that were dealt with in the texts under study. The two presidents' choices in these open letters are going to be reconsidered critically to examine the workability of the modified model if the IS. The points dealt with by the two presidents are the military force, knowledge and presenting the issue of Kuwait history, as follows:

**A) The military force:**

Saddam talked about the superiority of the Iraqi power and qualities in the past when saying

We have never placed Iraq or the Arab nation above humanity in anything we said in the past. Nor do we threaten anybody with the qualities of the people of Iraq and the Arab nation. Although the depth of the qualities must be linked with the depth of civilization. Qualities such as enduring, patience, resilience to adversity and readiness to fight in the fight in the defense of truth.

Saddam ignored talking about military inferiority before the USA in the present.

Bush, on the other hand talked about the military superiority of the USA in the present by saying : "Diversity ought not to be confused with division. Nor should you underestimate, as others have before you, America's will" ,

"The American people would demand the strongest possible response (if you use chemical biological weapons). You and your country will pay a terrible price if you order unconscionable acts of this sort" and Bush who says " we as Americans there is no nation on Earth with greatest resolve or stronger steadiness of purpose."

Bush ignored talking about the past since his country was relatively a new one. He limited his speech to the present.

**B) Knowledge:**

Saddam highlighted the high level scientific past of his country when saying :

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when we say that the depth of civilization in Iraq stretches back to more than 5000 years and that it was Iraq which first taught mankind letters and writing more than 5000 years ago. Hammourabi enacted his famous code around 4500 years ago.

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Saddam said nothing about the present level of technology of his country. Bush, on the other hand, referred to the scientific and technological superiorities of his country in the present by referring to power since it is ,as shown above, based on technological superiority. However, he ignored the past since he did not have enough points of support in this regard.

**C) Presenting the issue of Kuwait:**

Bush recited a quotation in his open letter to Saddam who declared his rejection for any invasion of any Arab country to another one. Saddam said " An Arab country does not have the right to occupy another Arab country, God forbid if Iraq should deviate



from the right path, we would want Arabs to send their armies to put things right." (November 28 in 1988 a speech to Arab lawyers)

Bush limited himself to the present when he dealt with Kuwait ignoring the historical stages of that issue. Saddam listed the historical stages of the Kuwaiti issue claiming that it started in 1913 rather than 1990. He said "No government in Iraq before us royal and republican never recognize this measure in a constitutional manner." However, he ignored his statement in 1989 mentioned by Bush where Saddam rejected any invasion to any Arab country.

#### **D) History:**

In the conflict between Iraq and the USA in 1990s a number of open letters and political speeches by Saddam on the one hand and George Bush the father and George W. Bush the son on the other hand were exchanged. Bush said what can be paraphrased as that history might have been written somewhere else in the world other than the USA but the present and future would be written here meaning in the USA. When president Bush talked about the past he did not say where history was written ignoring any possible reference to Iraq; however, he mentioned his country when he talked about the present. Saddam used to say that a serious part of the world history was written in Iraq, as mentioned previously.

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we say that the depth of civilization in Iraq stretches back to more than 5000 years and that it was Iraq which first taught mankind letters and written more than 5000 years ago. Hammourabi enacted his famous code around 4500 years ago

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However, he avoided talking about writing history by the USA in the present.

The following points could be recognized:

- a) both presidents, namely, Saddam and Bush delivered two discourses of the same genre, namely, open political messages about the same event at the same time under similar conditions.
- b) the two presidents did not tell lies and the reliability of the information in their open messages can be examined.
- c) they adopted the IS strategy in structuring data.
- d) they targeted the same aim, namely, making a social change via language through trying to persuade the two nations to accept their viewpoints.
- e) they were selective when structuring their messages and subjective when they made evaluations.

To conclude, adopting the IS strategy when dealing with the in- and out-group members might be useful for Saddam as well as Bush who supposed that the discourse participants can be categorized into either in-group or out-group members. Bush once declared that the one who is not with us is against us. Both Saddam and Bush excluded a third group, namely, the neutral one.

The establishment of the IS strategy for the 'neutral-group members' needs some additional establishment within the CDA framework.

CDA is a linguistic means of making a social change supporting a specific ideology. Van Dijk [1], through the IS supposes that there are only two groups of



participants , namely, the in- and out-group members which is a shortcoming. There may be other group members who are neither in- nor out-group ones, namely, neutral group members whose targeted social change is different from van Dijk's [1] since their starting point, namely, ideology is truth-oriented rather than interest-oriented.

The proposed neutral group members could be some teenagers who are born after the Desert Storm operation in 1990. They were not there then and they see that a single and one-sided perspective is misleading in judging the Kuwait issue. They can neither adopt Saddam's viewpoint nor Bush's one because of the presidents' single-sidedness. Their targeted social change is to disambiguate the confusion made by the selective and single-sided way of structuring data adopted by the two presidents. How? There is a need to fill in the blanks left on purpose by the two presidents.

In this way the claimed shortcoming of single-sidedness is treated by proposing the binary-sidedness. This treatment cures the shortcoming of circularity since the solution is no longer the problem and the problem is no longer the solution. This treatment reveals the full data of the case in a parallel way for both sides to help the one who seeks the truth rather than any side of the conflict. Thus, this treatment is truth-oriented rather than interest-oriented. This treatment service neither the first side of the conflict nor the second one. It rather serves a third side. Thus, this way could be called multi-group members which serves neutrality.

Van Dijk's [1] IS is based on a specific ideology ,i.e., the Western ideology whereas the proposed version of the IS is based on another ideology. This ideological variation is possible since ideology is culture-specific rather than universal. Thus, CDA could adopt another ideology that is different from the interest-oriented one. This proposed version of IS in CDA could result in making social change in a new way.

## Conclusion

A number of shortcomings in the socio-cognitive approach proposed by van Dijk[1,p] have been recognized. They include confusing inequality with injustice, circularity and ideological orientation. A modified model for the IS is proposed reconsidering the IS adopted in van Dijk [1]. This modification proposes a third group ,i.e., the neutral one beside the in- and out-groups. It is claimed that the modified model of the IS could offer social changes in a more objectively.

**CONFLICT OF INTERESTS****There are no conflicts of interest****References**

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