

Critical Discourse Analysis of Political TV Talk Shows of Pakistani Media

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Abstract

This research paper aims at analyzing media discourse, particularly political TV talk shows through the application of Critical Discourse Analysis. Here, we have particularly tried to analyze the media discourse of political TV talk shows of a private TV channel of Pakistan. The purpose of CDA is to unravel the manipulation of consideration and to learn how certain elements have helped in analyzing their positions as a powerful body and this is of course made possible through the analysis. We have adopted certain techniques in order to do the analysis.

The show is not taken as a whole but certain headlines have been taken into consideration for the analysis. Through the available material provided by certain CDA analysts, such as van Dijk, the research was made from an entirely different dimension aiming at new horizons critically analyzing the media and political discourse.

Keywords: Critical discourse analysis, Media, Political talk shows, van Dijk

1. Introduction

1.1 What is Discourse?

Since its introduction to modern science the term 'discourse' has taken various, sometimes very broad, meanings. In order to specify which of the numerous senses is analyzed in the paper under discussion, it has to be defined properly. Originally the word 'discourse' comes from Latin '*discursus*' which denoted 'conversation, speech'. Thus understood, however, discourse refers to too wide an area of human life, therefore only discourse from the vantage point of linguistics, and especially applied linguistics, is explained here. Discourse analysis is a qualitative method that has been adopted and developed by social constructionists. Although discourse analysis can and is used by a handful of cognitive psychologists, it is based on a view that is largely anti-scientific, though not anti-research. Social constructionism is not easy to define, but it is possible.

There is no agreement among linguists as to the use of the term discourse in that some use it in reference to texts, while others claim it denotes speech which is for instance illustrated by the following definition:

"Discourse (is) a continuous stretch of (especially spoken) language larger than a sentence, often constituting a coherent unit such as a sermon, argument, joke, or narrative" (Crystal 1992:25).

On the other hand Dakowska, being aware of differences between kinds of discourses indicates the unity of communicative intentions as a vital element of each of them. Consequently she suggests using terms 'text' and 'discourse' almost interchangeably betokening the former refers to the linguistic product, while the latter implies the entire dynamics of the processes. According to Cook, novels, as well as short conversations or groans might be equally rightfully named discourses.

Seven criteria which have to be fulfilled to qualify either a written or a spoken text as a discourse have been suggested by Beaugrande (1981). These include:

Cohesion: grammatical and logical relationship between parts of a sentence essential for its interpretation

Coherence: the order of statements relates one another by sense.

Intentionality: the message has to be conveyed deliberately and consciously.

Acceptability: indicates that the communicative product needs to be satisfactory and the audience approves it.

Informativeness: some new information has to be included in the discourse;

Situationality: circumstances in which the remark is made are important;

Intertextuality: reference to the world outside the text or the interpreters' schemata;

Nowadays, however, not all of the above mentioned criteria are perceived as equally important in discourse studies, therefore some of them are valid only in certain methods of research.

1.2 Features of Discourse

Since it is not easy to unambiguously clarify what a discourse is, it seems reasonable to describe features which are mutual to all its kinds. To do it thoroughly Saussure's concepts of *langue* and *parole* are of use. Ferdinand de Saussure divided the broad meaning of language into *langue*, which is understood as a system that enables people to speak as they do, and *parole* - a particular set of produced statements. Following this division discourse relates more to *parole*, for it always occurs in time and is internally characterized by successively developing expressions in which the meaning of the latter is influenced by the former, while *langue* is abstract. To list some additional traits, discourse is always produced by somebody whose identity, as well as the identity of the interpreter, is significant for the proper understanding of the message. On the other hand *langue* is impersonal that is to say more universal.

1.3 What Is Critical Discourse Analysis?

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) is 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. With such dissident research, critical discourse analysts take explicit position, and thus want to understand, expose, and ultimately resist social inequality. Some of the tenets of CDA can already be found in the critical theory of the Frankfurt School before the Second World War.

CDA is not so much a direction, school, or specialization next to many others "approaches" in discourse studies. Rather, it aims to offer a different "mode" or "perspective" of theorizing, analysis, and application throughout the whole field. We may find a more or less critical perspective in such diverse areas as pragmatics, conversation analysis, narrative analysis, rhetoric, stylistics, sociolinguistics, ethnography, or media analysis, among others.

Crucial for critical discourse analysts is the explicit awareness of their role in society. Continuing a tradition that rejects the possibility of a "value-free" science, they argue that science, and especially scholarly discourse, are inherently part of and influenced by social structure, and produced in social interaction. Instead of denying or ignoring such a relation between scholarship and society, they plead that such relations be studied and accounted for in their own right, and those scholarly practices *Critical Discourse Analysis* is based on such insights. Theory formation, description, and explanation, also in discourse analysis, are socio-politically "situated," whether we like it or not. Reflection on the role of scholars in society and the polity thus becomes an inherent part of the discourse analytical enterprise. This may mean, among other things that discourse analysts conduct research in solidarity and cooperation with dominated groups.

Critical research on discourse needs to satisfy a number of requirements in order to effectively realize its aims:

- As is often the case for more marginal research traditions, CDA research has to be "better" than other research in order to be accepted.
- It focuses primarily on, *social problem* and political issues, rather than on current paradigms and fashions.
- Empirically adequate critical analysis of social problems is usually *multidisciplinary*.
- Rather than merely *describe* discourse structures, it tries to *explain* them in terms of properties of social interaction and especially social structure.
- More specifically, CDA focuses on the ways discourse structures enact, confirm, legitimate, reproduce, or challenge relations of *power* and *dominance* in society.

Fairclough and Wodak (1997: 271-80) summarize the main tenets of 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 interpretative and explanatory
8. Discourse is a form of social action.

Whereas some of these tenets have also been discussed above, others need a more systematic theoretical analysis, of which we shall present some fragments here as a more or less general basis for the main principles of CDA.

1.3.1 Research Implications of CDA

As far as this research paper is concerned, it aims to analyze the hidden objectives of politicians and anchors by analyzing certain talk shows which are telecasted on television.

2. SAMPLE

Show: *Aaj Kamran Khan k Saath*⁽¹⁾

⁽¹⁾Telecast on 12 December 2011 on *Geo News Channel*

2.1 Back Ground of this programme

This show is most viewed show of private television on GEO News and this programme aims to shed a light upon the background of headlines. Here the anchor used different types of

remarks for politicians and for Government. Here the aim of CDA is to show the power domination and also to explore certain parties by unrevealing hidden agendas and motives.

2.2 Headline No 1

The programme we have chosen is “AJ KAMRAN KHAN K SATH” on “GEO NEWS” and the programme is divided into three halves and hot debated issue is about “THE HEALTH ISSUE OF PRESIDENT ASIF ALI ZARDARI”. The show starts with the subject headlines which is

“Sadar Zardari ki sehat – Qoam se khail khela ja raha hai. Aj b such nai btaya gya”

Basically there was only one guest which was named as “Muhammad Maalik” the senior editor of “THE NEWS”. In this programme there were some other issues which were also discussed but the hottest debating issue was about the health of President Zardari. This issue dominated all the other issues in this programme.

There were contradictions in the speech of Kamran Khan, Muhammad Maalik as well as PM Gillani. In this programme only the recorded interview of PM Gillani was on-aired.

The expressions, the words, the complete dominance over the subject matter and all the hidden agenda’s will be unravelled.

2.2.1 Analysis

The anchor started with telling us that now is 9th day that President is still in Dubai due to illness. What is the game? Why the politicians are playing with the emotions of public? He firstly said that president has gone for routine check-up in Dubai and he was suffering from heart problem but the point of contradiction in his own statements is showed when he on-aired the interview of PM Gillani , which he gave the “DAWN NEWS” and which was published in which he said that;

“Zardari calls

Gillani; says he is all right”

On the other hand, the anchor is trying to arouse the sense of curiosity in the nation by saying that why he has left, no one knows the actual thing the actual motives of his going to Dubai and likewise he is also saying that he has went for his routine check up. And then suddenly he on-aired the news of DAWN in which Gillani said something else. One more thing which has to be kept in mind is that the president’s doctor Colonel Suleman said:

“he is all right and just went for routine check up.”

Anchor said that now the Col Suleman is also now vanished, no one is telling the truth that very the president is there even now for 9 days?

All of this conflict is his own talk shows that the anchor is basically trying to persuade the nation about some secret happening, and at the same time was also ridiculing PPP in the aspect of their doing and their talking .

And when Kamran Khan, the anchor person, invites guest on video call, Muhammad Maalik , he said that according to him,

“He is suffering from manic depressive sacrossive disorder, also known as bipolar disorder which is basically a swing of mood whether of over anxiety or over excitement and that’s why he has went their for his check up”

One more thing which he showed that in the DAWN NEWS paper, President Zardari said that

“The President also said that

He left for Dubai as he did not trust hospitals in Pakistan and that he would be back soon”

What is the hidden agenda, hidden motives of the anchor behind all this saying? What he wants to show by saying all the things which go against the PPP and President Zardari.

When we try to find out the background of the Kamran Khan then we will come to know that Kamran Khan is basically on the side of PML (N). He always favours them and basically try to show that how the PPP is discoursing and doing certain things which are unknown. The health issue of Zardari is still unknown, no one knows the reality and that’s why he chose it and try to enraged the nation and also to invoke sense of curiosity in them. All the things, all the writings of news which he showed eventually went against the president Zardari. He was basically trying to cover up all the matter but it was not the actual matter. The actual thing is that he actually raised more contradictions and more questions in the mind of nation.

Secondly, if we make a glance then it’s not a big thing that President went for his routine check up to Dubai. Nawaz Shareef, when he was also ill, went to London for the heart surgery and Shahbaz Shareef also to London for his check up.

But he had not pointed out this thing fact. But by manipulating his power, he only criticizes him in this way. He eventually manipulates his power. Otherwise it’s not a big deal that president said that’s

“he left for Dubai as he did not trust hospitals in Pakistan”

It is a fact that a big Political leader always go foreign for their check-up because if opposition come to know about their weak points , they manipulate them and of course , he is not only big political figure but also the President of Pakistan. He has to adopt certain parameters for his safety. And the other thing is that politicians very nearly gave information about their illness because of the certain security measures. Only the closed and near one’s know about it and no other one is know about it.

It’s strange and again and again, the anchor person is saying that now its 9th day and he hasn’t come back, why? It’s an understood fact, it talks some times when there is a routine check-up even. He is basically trying to show the dominance of PML(N) .

Another thing, which he mentioned is that PM Gillani has given an interview to “BBC NEWS” in which he said;

“He is improving and he is now out of I.C.U. He has been shifted to his room and I think he will take rest for more two weeks”

What is going on, no one knows then the guest which he invites. Muhammad Maalik said;

“its not a big deal that he went to Dubai for check-up. But it not actually hearts problem but some disorder.”

On the one hand they are saying that he is fine and in the same way they are also saying that he will recover soon. What is all this? They are actually contradicting their own statements. Some things will become clear and he also said that;

“agle kuch dino m kuch neya zrur ho ga or.....”(URDU)

But he hasn't mentioned these things. Why he stops? Is there any hidden force which compels to stop him by unrevealing things? Yes, there are certain forces which basically stop him by unrevealing the things in clearway, and Anchor said that the things will be soon cleared. The nation will be soon come to know about the facts and reality?

And yes, one more thing which Kamran has mentioned is about the hot debate between the President and American Embessidor Monter in the evening and also mentions that the hospital in which he is under observation is also an American hospital, what is the hidden agenda of anchor person behind this? Why he said so? What was the reason? Why he mentioned the name of America specifically?

Basically, if we examine, then we win come to know that from all the aspects he is just trying to ridicule the PPP and also is not any part of this programme, favoured for the Presidents health but in each and every moment , he just try to show that this is the Drama propagated by PPP. He is not ill he has just gone for mental relaxation, and to escape from this environment.

In talking with guest on video call, both of them were focusing that something very important is going to happen in Islamabad after the return of President Zardari. They were from all aspects trying to say that PPP is not going to work more. All of their talking shows that they are prejudiced against PPP and their motive is basically to show that PPP is going to be finished. All the things are clear cut.

2.3 Headline No: 2

“Nawaz Shareef ne sadar zardari ki dukhti rag pe hath rakh dea- Larkana mein bara jalsa kea”

Show: Aj Kamran Khan k sath

Anchor: Kamran Khan

Guest: Mumtaz Ali Bhutto(Chairman Sindh National Front)

What is shown basically in this headline? It is very evident from this that he is favouring PML(N).The issue of President's health and then after it he said so. This clearly shown he is

in the favour of PML(N) and trying to guard them. When things are put into cross then they become clear and if these two headlines are put into cross than we will come to know very clearly that on which side he is? To which he is in favour and to which he is not.

In this second headline, he has very clearly described about the good doings of PML(N). Nawaz Shareef said in the crowd that now the Government is over. All these things basically show that he is favouring PML(N) and advocating them in a better way. All the anchor persons basically, favour one party and all of them have their own personal motives and here the motive of Kamran Khan is the advocacy of PML(N) as compared to PPP.

Kamran Khan asked the question to his guest that whether the people of Larkana will give vote to the other party or not? He replied that;

“Definitely log zarur vote den ge. Pahle b dia hy or ainda b den ge kyon k ab logun k leay jo sorat e hal Zardari ke hukmarani ne paida ke hy wo is se nejat chahty hain, bunyadi sahlutn ni hn, byrozgari hy, mahngae hy, atay k leay bachay bechny party hain, wasael ni hoty to khudkushi krty hain, log nejaat ke talash mn hen, kisi aur shakhs ke talash mein hein jo inko nijat dilaen” (urdu)

These words clearly show that the guests whom he invites in his programme are basically against PPP. Mumtaz Ali Bhutto in clear words said that now the Government is over and this is the basic motive behind this programme is that they want to advocate PML(N) and want to acknowledge that the reign of PPP is now no more.

There should be change in government, in rules, in the country. Change is essential requirement of today and this is the basic motive of Kamran Khan.

Kamran Khan's basic agenda, according to us is that he wants to disgrace PPP in the eyes of the nation. It shows that there are certain forces which are working behind all this. There is something which continuously pushes them to say against PPP and certain other parties.

2.4 Source of Research

There are lots of models which have been constructed on CDA till today and will continue to do so in the future. In this research, Van Dijk's model for political and modern discourse is used. This model deals with each and every aspect of talks and that's why this paper determines the much hidden traits of individuals who are here analyzed.

2.5 Conclusion

Now, it is acknowledged that each show and every anchor has their own agendas and they serve only the epitome of single of single public dominated society. To gain a social power and the dominance, certain tactics are always used. These tactics are always used and due to this certain political dominance is mentioned. CDA in this respect has played a major role because it compels is to use critical bent of mind and to analyze critical bent of time. Due to this we come to know that how the anchor only favour one party and for this purpose. They used each and every way in order to criticize other party and to negate it

Disclaimer

The programme was purely analyzed for this research paper and that's why no other meaning should be extracted from this paper on the personal as well as political level.

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