Exploring the Parameters and Applicability of Critical Discourse Analysis

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Abstract

The multidisciplinary and multitasking nature of the critical discourse practices bear compelling attributes that have endeared the analytical model to modern-day linguists, analysts of social conflicts, as well as critics of power and gender, and institutional/media discourses. CDA, unlike other linguistic theories, does not pin the analysts to a single method of analysis. The individual analyst, depending on the nature of text and context, can develop new methods and statistical tools suitable for the analysis of CDA data. Based on the foregoing, the study placed a special interest in x-raying the historical antecedents of CDA, its relationship with other critical linguistic theories in the analysis of power-related discourse texts, some strands of CDA, as well as its methods and applicability. Our theoretical review revealed, among other things that, despite the many criticisms made on the model – which criticisms have been reasonably defaced with superior arguments by foremost linguists such as Norman Fairclough – CDA remains a very formidable and useful/attractive analytical model for the study of the way social power abuse, dominance and inequality are enacted, reproduced and resisted by text and discourse in social and political context.

Key Words: *Multidisciplinary, Power Abuse, Critical Discourse, Contexts, Analytical Model.*

Introduction

An analytical model or a theory, is defined in Kawulich (2009:37), as "a general body of principles offered to explain a phenomenon". Theories provide complex and comprehensive conceptual understanding of things that cannot be pinned down, for instance, how societies work, how organizations operate, why people interact in certain ways [with other people, groups and with their environment, by means of language]. Theories offer researchers varied "lenses" or perspectives through which to look at complicated problems and social issues, focusing attention on different aspects of the data and providing frameworks within which to conduct their analyses

(Reeves et al. 2008: 337). In this connection, therefore, Brian Patridge (cited in Agbedo 2017:295), defines discourse analysis as "an approach to the analysis of language that looks at patterns of language across texts as well as the social and cultural contexts in which the texts occur".

Every critical theory, for example, is primarily concerned with the interrogation of power and the power dynamics between individuals, groups and institutions. Herein, lies the nexus among the critical theories and critical discourse analysis (CDA), which is our focus in this paper. Thus, a critical research employing critical analytical model would approach the study by asking how power is related to the characteristics of individuals or groups, for example, in terms of gender, race, cultural or institutional basis. This relationship explains why critical theories such as CDA, Foucault's theory on discourse (FTD) and critical linguistic theory (CLT), have at their core, how power – individual and group/institutional – is acquired, exercised, abused and resisted by more powerful and less powerful groups, as the case may be, in varying ideological contexts. CDA – multidisciplinary in its approach to social and political issues – for instance, seeks to show how ideological presuppositions are hidden beneath the surface structures of language choices in texts (Machin & Mayr, 2012). It looks into issues of institutional, gender, and media discourses (Wodak, 2001), and how certain social groups are ill-represented or misrepresented in various types of discourse.

Critical discourse analysis can be made from a variety of theoretical perspectives and with varied theoretical models. However, this approach is usually explored in line with such study's overall concern with discursive issues of power, dominance and ideology, and based on theoretical and methodological appropriateness and relevance (Creswell 2003:21).Also, within the frame of critical discourse analysis, and depending on the nature of the conceptual concern with issues of power, dominance, ideology and broader socio-political concerns, "Theory Triangulation", the application of more than one theory in a research work due to the nature of the problem (Clarke 2005:32), could be employed in the analysis. For instance, elements of the three related theories of discourse analysis – i) Foucauldian Discourse Analysis (FDA), ii) Critical Linguistics and any of the three models of CDA may be applied to different sets of data based on the theoretical appropriateness and relevance to the set(s) of data analyzed.

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)
CDA is both a multi-disciplinary approach to the study of discourse, and an

analytical research model that views language as a form of social practice in which all forms of linguistic usage are believed to encode the ideological disposition of language users (Fairclough 1985). Originally known as critical language studies (Billing 2003), scholars like Van Dijk and Wodak prefer to call it critical discourse studies to suggest that it is a combination of theory, application and analysis. CDA traces its origin to a symposium held in Amsterdam in 1991 when its founding practitioners – Teun Van-Dijk, Norman Fairclough, Theo Van Leeuwen, Gunther Kress and Ruth Wodak – met to deliberate on, and formulate a discourse theoretical approach that will not just be interdisciplinary, but will also integrate other linguistic grammatical theories that are relevant to the analysis of language use (Wodak, 1996).

CDA is political in its objective. It was designed to question [and actually questions] the status quo by detecting, analyzing, and also resisting/counteracting enactments of power abuse as transmitted in private and public discourse. Herein, lies the 'criticalness' of critical discourse analysis (Van Leeuwen 1996); and it is here that CDA as a discourse analytical tool finds its applicability. Van Dijk (1998) observes that CDA is concerned with the analysis of words used in discourse to reveal the sources of power, dominance, inequality, and bias, and how these sources are initiated, maintained, reproduced and transformed within specific social, economic, political and historical contexts. In doing this, Wodak and Fairclough see CDA as seeking to expose the manipulative nature of discursive practices in society which manifest as class conflict, and are concealed in the language behaviours of the members of a society. Since language serves as the ideological anchorage of these oppressive social structures, the critical discourse analyst must therefore seek to establish through the process of analysis, the linguistic strategies that serve as evidence of these oppressive tendencies. This is where the interventionist mission of CDA lies; and it is at this point that the actual analytical tools within CDA find their footings and applicability.

Fairclough's Model of CDA
The CDA model by Fairclough, otherwise christened Dialectical-Relational approach, is essentially Marxist in orientation, and constitutes a very significant theoretical contribution to CDA. According to Wodak and Meyer (2009), this approach to CDA highlights the semiotic reflection of social conflict in discourses, which agree with the author's interest in social structures and practices. Fairclough's model of analysis, according to Rahimi and Riasati (cited in Ibileye 2017), has transcended the "whatness" of the text description to the "how" and "whyness" of the text interpretation and Explanation…behind discourse which are ideologically driven and motivated (Ibileye 2017:207). Through this model, the social processes and ideology embedded in a discourse can be unveiled by analyzing the form of language used in the discourse. Terminologies such as dominance, resistance, and

hybrid action of discursive practices… and 'conversationalization' of discourse are commonly employed by practitioners in their analyses using this model. A very significant aspect of Fairclough's model of CDA is its inclusion in the analysis of the context of a text, the analysis of agent, tense, transitivity, modality or body language, as the author believes that one single way of analyzing a problem is not enough.

Van Dijk's Model of CDA

This model began with elements of the psychological model of memory taken from cognitive science (Hidalgo, cited in Ibileye 2017:208). Like other CDA models, Van Dijk's socio-cognitive approach is interested in social issues such as dominance, inequality and resistance. But over and above the other models, Van Dijk's model is interested in the naturalization of dominance which, according to him, is possible through a socio-cognitive process of mind control. To Van Dijk, such mind control mechanism is facilitated when members of a discourse domain accept beliefs, knowledge and opinions hook, line and sinker from those they consider authoritative, creditable sources such as the media (Nester et al, cited in Ibileye 2017:208). This "virtue of submission" (Ibileye 2017:209) is also possible when consumers of discourse are obliged to the social actors. Van Dijk (2001) maintains that CDA focuses on social problems, and especially on the role of discourse in the production and reproduction of power abuse or domination. He believes that wherever possible, it does so from the perspective that is consistent with the best interest of the dominated (Out-group).

Within Dijk's Socio-cognitive model, social groups [especially those in power-related conflicts], are discursively categorized into ideological compartments: the 'Us' and 'Them'; the 'In-group' and 'Out-group'. Such classification of groups in polarized terms is at the heart of the "Ideological Square", a subset within the "Socio-cognitive" model of CDA. The ideological Square Principle thrives in opposites. While 'Our' (In-group's) positive actions are emphasized, 'Their' (Out-group's) negative deeds are emphasized, *vice versa* (Van Dijk 1998:33). The scholar also identified implicit or indirect meaning, subtle structures, mental model, context model and event models, as underlying features within this model of CDA. Besides these contextual means of mind control, Van Djik's approach also includes other mind control structures which are essentially discursive. These structures employ persuasive strategies such as highlighting of topics in a newspaper headline, argumentation and manipulation in discourse, which manifest in implicit communication of beliefs and ideas to recipients without actually asserting them, and by so doing, foreclosing the chances of such ideas being challenged.

CDA research, for him, is interested in the study of ideologically-biased discourses, and the ways these polarize the representation of "Us" (In-group) and "Them" (Out-group) at the level of global and local meaning analyses in discourse. These are

encapsulated within the overall strategy of positive 'self'-presentation and negative 'other'-presentation, in which 'our good actions' and 'their bad actions' are emphasized, and 'our bad deeds' and 'their good deeds (actions)' are de-emphasized (see Van Djik 1993, 1995, 1996). Van Dijk describes global meaning or superstructures as schemes consisting of arguments, stories or news articles, while local meaning (forms) are those of (the syntax of) sentences, or formal relations between clauses or sentences in sequences: pronominal relations, active-passive voices, among others. Other ideological/discursive structures of dominance within the socio-cognitive frame include implication and presupposition, apparent empathy, number game, lexicalization, vagueness, example and hyperbole, rhetorical figures and generic sentences typical of propaganda. Yet, others are passive construction/voice, subjectively-construed sentences, omission or downgrading of certain actions or facts, silence/exclusion, as well as impoliteness/discourtesy, which fall within the micro-level structures of discourse (see also Arua & Amuta 2018; Alo & Oluremi 2013). Features of such global and local forms are the hallmarks of the socio-cognitive model of CDA.

Wooffitt (cited in Ugwuona 2016), notes that empirical work from CDA perspective largely draws upon what Van Dijk (2001) refers to as solid linguistic basis for the reason that it often examines topics such as sentence structure, verb tense, syntax, lexical choice, the internal coherence of discourse, among other things. Holmes (2008) observes that CDA seeks to identify ways in which readers or listeners – primary consumers of public discourse – are manipulated through linguistic choices and constructions in relation to specific subjects of discourse. According to Joffer (cited in Ibileye 2017:209), Van Dijk believes that to make transparent such ideological dichotomy between 'Them' and 'Us'; 'In-group' and 'Out-group' members, a CDA scholar needs to analyze discourse, taking into account: a) the context of discourse - historical, political or social background of a conflict - and its main participants; b) the groups, power relations involved; c) positive and negative opinions about Us versus Them; d) the need to make explicit the presupposed and the implied; and, e) the need to examine all formal structures: lexical choices and syntactic structures in a way that helps to deemphasize polarized group opinions.

Also included in Van Dijk's model, which further gives it an edge over other approaches to CDA, is the difference it draws between the macro and the micro levels of analysis. According to the author, whereas power, dominance, and inequality between social groups are components of the macro level; language use, discourse, verbal interaction, and communication fall within the micro level of analysis. However, the two levels of social order and analysis form one unified whole in everyday interaction and experience (Van Dijk, 2001). Over and above other approaches, Van Dijk's Socio-cognitive model centers on understanding the ideological machinations of discourse, and to critique how discourse operates to affect certain political and group agenda.

In applying CDA as an analytical tool, as exemplified in Wodak's (1996)Critical Linguistic theory, the analyst must be guided by questions such as: i) How does the naturalization of ideology in discourse come about? ii) Which discursive strategies legitimize control or naturalize the social order? iii) How is power linguistically expressed? iv)Who has access to which instrument of power and control? v) Who is discriminated against and in what way(s)? These are questions which CDA often attempts to answer through the process of analysis.

Critical Scholarly Positions on CDA
As an analytical model, CDA has all-important social functions. But, in spite of these, a lot of criticisms have trailed the concept in the arena of linguistic scholarship. On a positive note, Aboh and Uduk (2017:17) observe that "CDA is not concerned with judging the credibility of text and its worth against some ideal pre-given model". CDA analysis, the scholars maintain, is not interpretive (though strives at saying the unsaid); not evaluative, but explains the text in all its complexities and contradictions, by the internal configuration of (linguistic properties) and the external linguistic properties. To Stubbs, "CDA is politically rather than linguistically motivated, and the (CDA) analysts find what they expect to find, whether absences or presences" (1997:2). In a related criticism, Cameron (2001) states that the weakness of CDA lies in its reliance on just the analyst's interpretation of texts, which exposes the analysts to the risk of making overly subjective or sweeping claims in CDA. Fowler's major criticism of the theory is that CDA tends to be 'fragmentary' and takes too much for granted in terms of method and context. He also believes that the interdisciplinary approach in CDA may lead to uncontrolled methodologies, and that CDA's method of data collection and text analyses are inexplicit, making it a disguised form of political discourse (1996:12). If these are carefully considered, one immediately realizes that the usefulness of a linguistic theory lies partly in the criticisms leveled against it. However, on some of the faults identified with CDA as an analytical approach, Fairclough (1995) has countered that CDA being a democratic approach does not pin the analysts to a single method of analysis. Individual analysts, depending on the nature of text and context, can develop new methods and statistical tools suitable for the analysis of data.

Methods of CDA Research
Method in a linguistic research, is basically an attempt to describe the study design and sampling technique, sources of data and method of data collection, as well as method of data analysis, among other tools and variables employed in the research.

A research work based on critical discourse analysis of media reports, for example, is often evaluative and interpretive in nature. Thus, such studies often adopt the qualitative research approach, focusing on content analysis of real-time discourses

between the parties in the power conflict, as reported in the selected media platforms. This approach is often adopted in line with Schreier's (2012) notion that content analysis is a research tool used to establish the presence of certain words or concepts within texts or sets of texts; and to examine patterns in a text in a replicable, systematic manner. Thus, in such cases, ideologically-relevant textual contents (discourses) by the main participants in the power impasse, as reported in widely-read national dailies as well as in other media platforms, may be purposively selected for analysis in such/any given work. The selection, of course, must be based on the overall applicability and relevance of the ideological imprints found in such discourse texts. In line with such study's choice of content analysis, relevant data extracted from the sources are sorted into easy-to-handle chunks, comprising, perhaps, smaller and larger units. Each of the larger units which may be code-named "Batch", for instance, should contain a certain number of the smaller units, which may be called "Texts".The number of texts chosen must be what is adjudged ideal representative samples for effective analysis and evaluation. In doing this, uniformity should be maintained in the number of texts that make up each batch.The equality in the number of texts in each batch will make it easy to establish the pattern of discourse across the sets of discursive issues to be considered. The discourse texts thus grouped may then be analyzed using the appropriate model of CDA or of a relevant critical linguistic theory.

On sources of data and method of data collection, data for a CDA study must be discursively-germane discourses (texts) by the two sides in power conflict, as contained in the reports of the selected media platforms. Only reports published within the periods under review (scope) should constitute data for analysis. The choice of the newspapers and other media platforms must be based on coverage/readership, credibility of sources and availability of relevant data in the sources to justify the selection. The direct statements by the main discourse participants [and not opinion pieces of the media/newspapers] should form the corpus of analyzable data. The choices must be made based on identifiable discursive features in the statements, and in line with the checklist of ideological features listed in the specific model of critical discourse analysis (CDA) adopted. The justification for the choice of the sets of data must include the strategic nature of such data *vis-a-vis* the power-related conflict under review, the nature and volume of ideological data in each text, as well as the meaningfulness of those data in discursive terms. These and other considerations should guide a CDA-based study's selection of data for analysis.

Based on the analyst's study choice of qualitative approach *vis-a-vis* content analysis, for instance, the specific volume of data sorted and collected from the bulk is qualitatively analyzed using the relevant ideological tools found within thechecklist of the CDA model adopted. The analysis, of course, depends on the

discourse features identified in each text or set of texts, and the discursive configuration under which the dominant features in the texts fall or agree. Bearing in mind Van Dijk's position that isolated elements cannot form a pattern in discourse, for instance, and taking into cognizance the steps outlined in his model, deductions should be made only when a pattern has been consistently observed from the application of the theory to data. The specific findings and observable patterns noticed is then discussed largely in prose, except where it is deemed expedient to introduce statistical tools in order to situate the analysis.

Discursive Tools in CDA Research
In order to achieve content and context-relevant analysis in a CDA research, it is often pertinent to attempt explications of some ideological features and textual properties of discourse *vis-à-vis* power relations. This is in line with CDA's central concern with making explicit some veiled ideological structures of dominance by the higher power groups, and taking a position [of resistance] which is consistent with the best interest of the dominated groups. It would be instructive to note afore-hand that some of the discursive features in CDA are overlapping and interrelated.

Superstructures Text Schemata
Textual features under the category operate at the global meaning level of discourse. These include:

(a)   Argumentation and manipulation through implicit communication of beliefs, ideas without asserting them: With such implicitness or indirectness, meaning, opinions, beliefs or ideas in discourse are not stated but left to be inferred. Thus, the chances of disputing or challenging such ideological constructs of the dominant groups by the recipients or lower power groups are foreclosed.

(b)   Rhetorical Figures: Here, hyperbolic enhancement of 'their' negative actions and 'our' positive actions; euphemistic denials (understatement) of 'our' negative actions and 'their' positive actions are common ideological strategies deployed by the dominant group to justify its dominance over the lower power group or to make such dominance less noticeable.

(c)   Lexical Style (Lexicalization): This strategy involves the careful choice of words that imply negative (or positive) evaluations of 'Us' (in-group) and 'Them' (out-group). To achieve the aims of either positive or negative evaluations of groups, similar meanings may be expressed in diverse ways, depending on the goal, role or point of view of the speaker or opinion-holder. Specific lexical items may also be used to express certain underlying concepts, meanings and beliefs.

(d)   Story Telling and Examples:This strategy, which is used in discourse to justify or deny inequality, involves telling stories about negative events as personally experienced or as it affects the dominant group also. At times, plausible details of the conflict are tactically given to over-shadow the negative features of the events. Examples may also be provided in the form of story to support claims and make them more credible to the recipient. It usually comes in the form of 'our good deeds' and 'their bad actions'.

(e)   Structural Emphasis: Structural emphasis of 'their' (out-group's) negative action are also often seen in media reports through headlines, leads, summaries or other properties of text schemata. This strategy includes, highlighting certain topics in a newspaper report or in the 'transactivity' structures of sentence syntax, such as mentioning/placing agents of negative actions in prominent, topical positions.

Subjectively-Construed Context Model
This socio-cognitive process of mind control in discourse, manifests itself through strategies such as silence(s), authoritarianism of news sources or quoting credible witnesses, sources or reports, 'metaphorization', naturalization of dominance, implicitness or indirectness, presuppositions and implications, generalizations or use of generic sentences typical of propaganda, as well as exclusion (voice projection), passive constructions, among other discursive frames.

(a)   Silence(s) and Exclusion: These are subtle discursive structures in discourse texts which aim at making the influence of power much less direct and immediate. The more powerful group or its agent may choose to maintain a deliberate, yet strategic silence over certain issues during conflict. Such intentional silence on the one hand may imply viewing the lower power group or the specific issue under discourse as unimportant, thus not deserving attention. On the other hand, it may be a tactic to avoid making commitments for which the dominant group would have legal responsibility. Closely related to silence(s) is exclusion. This, in itself, is a strategy for discursive manipulation of dominated groups. In exclusion, some voices are censored, some opinions not heard, and some perspectives in discourse, ignored. Thus, discourse itself becomes 'segregated' structure at times. Exclusion may also mean the less powerful being less quoted, less spoken about (through inequality of space and voice projection). This is a part of media bias, where those in control of power are granted more access or visibility in public discourse, while the less powerful groups are blocked, thereby making the latter apparently a passive participant in discourse.

(b)   Naturalization of Dominance and Authoritarianism of News: The naturalization of 'dominance', according to Van Dijik (1991) (cited in Ibileye

2017:209) is possible through a socio-cognitive process of mind control which is facilitated when members of the public or discourse domain accept belief, knowledge and opinions unchallenged from those they consider authoritative or trustworthy (see also Nester et al 1993). It is this sort of "virtues of submission" (Ibileye 2017:209) to which members of a discourse domain feel natural obligation, and lack of moral or legal right to oppose or challenge, that enhance dominance by the higher power group. As with the long-held ideology in religion that all religious leaders are God's representatives on earth; hence, their views and actions must never be opposed or questioned, so with institutional power, where the government is viewed as the 'powerful', whose actions and decisions – good or bad – must never be contested. Hence, whatever subtle acts of dominance arising from such situation is viewed as reasonable, and expected to be accepted with equanimity by the dominated group.

Closely tied to the naturalization of dominance in discourse is the authoritarianism of sources or reports. In this case, whatever news, reports or opinions come from those considered to be authorities or experts in certain fields – whether such experts are members of the dominant group who must defend their group interest over public good – are believed or expected to be considered true and in the best interest of the public.

(c)   Metaphors, Implicitness or Indirectness and Vagueness: In discourses among different groups, there is often the use of subtle structures such as metaphors of battle and contest to threaten and show dominance and resistance during conflict. Apart from these, implicit and indirect communication of ideas, beliefs and opinions play a major role in the power equation. While implicitness ensures that ideas and opinions communicated are not overturned, indirectness, which may manifest in expressing viewpoints through surrogate, aims at concealment of the agent of negative action, thus making dominance less direct and immediate. Vagueness – the economy of information – goes hand-in-hand with implicitness as regards their discourse functions.

(d)   Presupposition, Vagueness, Generalization and Passive Constructions: In discourse and in other forms of communication, not all that is communicated is 'said'; as there are also several of the said in the 'unsaid'. Thus, presupposition relates to speaker's assumption of what their hearers already know orthat which the speaker assumes to be the case or known prior to making an utterance (Eneoja, 2017:118). Presupposition may be

controversial or uncontroversial. 'Fair and uncontroversial' presupposition is based upon the knowledge which is common to all parties in the communication. Whereas, 'unfair, counterfeit or controversial' presupposition is made on the basis of the covert knowledge of a communicator, with a hidden agenda, often that of persuasion and mind/action control in discourse.

Generalization or the use of generic sentences typical of propaganda involves making blanket statements and generalizing from insufficient instances, thus leaving the opposing group with no chance of presenting a counter argument. Like many other socio-cognitive frames in discourse, the use of generic sentences has the goal of denying or justifying inequality or dominance and enhancing the general propaganda of the dominant groups. Also, in discourse as in other forms of communication, the use of 'passive voice' or passive construction, especially aims at omitting or hiding the agent of [negative] action. By such careful concealment of the subject/agent (doer, performer) of the action, and at times the object (receiver of the effects of the action), the agent can tactically avert responsibility for certain negative actions, current or futuristic. Passive constructions and indirectness, in which the original agent could speak through a surrogate voice, also share in the goal of evading responsibility and controlling minds.

Social Cognition and Ideological Square
Social cognition is what Van Dijk (cited in Ibileye 2017:209) refers to as "the system of mental representations and processes of group members". It manifests ideologically along the 'Us' versus 'Them'; the 'In-group' versus 'Out-group' dimensions. In this discourse frame, which essentially polarizes discourses, each group presents itself or its own group in positive terms, and the other group in negative terms. This explains Van Dijk's (1998) model of "Ideological Square" – an offshoot of the socio-cognitive approach which emphasizes positive self-presentation and negative other-presentation (cited in Arua & Amuta 2018:12). In this connection, Van Dijk notes that among the discourse structures used in the 'Ideological Square' model, 'semantic contents'– statements that directly entail negative evaluation of 'Them' (Out-group) and positive evaluation of 'Us' (In-group) are most pronounced. For such statements to be credible and appealing, other persuasive moves are needed by the social actor, mostly of the more powerful divide.

Those other mind control strategies include, among others, apparent empathy, use of statistics or figures, number game, vagueness, example and hyperbole, foregrounding and 'informativeness' as well as voice projection listed earlier. However, such argumentation and negative evaluation must follow from 'facts' on ground to confer credence on the discourse and the political actor involved.

(a)   Apparent Empathy: As highlighted earlier under perspective, apparent empathy is a mitigation strategy aimed at portraying the 'dominator' or source of oppression or dominance otherwise as caring and good. By 'identifying' with the feelings and sufferings of the victims [the public], the offender, [often the more powerful group], redirects the negative feelings that the victim might have towards the less powerful group, that is also the recipient [indirect object] of the agent's negative actions.

(b)   Number-Game, Vagueness and Exaggeration: To garner objectivity and credibility of expressions, numbers in the form of amount and raw statistical data may be deployed to substantiate a speaker's viewpoint. However, since the speaker's intention is often not neutral, but to win credibility (public confidence) and possibly 'demonize' the less privileged group, vagueness and exaggeration are often introduced to spice-up such statistics. Vagueness plays out when a speaker intentionally averts precision in supplying information, but instead of specificity of details, goes diplomatic through the use of certain terms that obscure information. Exaggeration of figures/statistics for the purpose of heightening a particular effect, creating emphasis and swaying public feelings towards 'self' and away from the 'other' is also often used as an auxiliary discursive device to number game.

Substructure, Local Meaning and Coherence
The most revealing level of CDA, according to Van Dijk (2001) is the semantic study of local meaning. At this substructure level of discourse lie the under listed features:

(a)   Pronominal Relations: This refers to relations between clauses and sentences, sentence structure, verb tense, syntax, lexical choices, propositional structures, implications, presuppositions, active/passive voice, vagueness, indirectness and other elements of internal coherence of discourse.

(b)   Level of Specificity and Degree of Completeness: This relates to the analysis of discourses or description of specific discourse events at several levels of specificity. Such events may be described in general, abstract terms or in lower level of details, and at each such level, more or less completely. Under this strategy, 'dis-preferred' information is often described at higher levels of details or less completely; whereas, 'preferred' information are given over-complete, detailed description. This is often tactically deployed because incompleteness or concealment as a semantic property of argumentation in discourse, aims at positive 'self' and negative 'other' presentation.

(c)   Perspective: This has to do with the point of view of the speaker in discourse. Using the personal pronouns 'we' and 'our' to introduce certain discourse events; speaking from the perspective of staunch defender of public good, a believer or advocate of justice and due process aims at positive portrayal of the speaker (often a member of the dominant group). By exploring this discursive machinery, the speaker is seen as one who is identifying with, concerned about, and being empathetic to the plight of the victims of adverse effect of crisis between the higher and lower power groups. This strategy has elements of apparent empathy with the masses – a face-saving device which the political actor (speaker) uses to portray in-group as caring and good; thus, redirecting victim's (public's) negative feelings towards the addressee (out-group).

(d)   Local Coherence: In discourse, this feature is seen where a sentence is begun with a definite noun phrase or an indefinite one. For instance, using the noun phrase "The people…" leaves the consumer of discourse confused as to whether "the" refers to one mentioned earlier or known. It goes with presupposition where the speaker takes for granted that the listeners/readers can readily identify the subject or object of discourse.

Micro-level Structures and other Formal Features
In discourse, there are times when micro-level or surface structures are used to exercise power and control. These are essentially politeness features which are less regulated by legal or moral rules (codes). Such structures, however, make for 'unofficial', much less direct and less noticeable exercise of power and dominance by the higher power group. Examples of unregulated, micro-level structures include, impoliteness, face threatening acts (FTA), insolent tone and discourtesy. These only break rules of politeness and social ethos, not any known law. Thus, they are, at times, applied with subtlety in discourse to consolidate dominance and control. These and many other subtle ideological structures in discourse texts are often deployed toward managing the process of understanding in such a way that 'preferred models' or groups are built in the public's mental subconscious. It would be helpful to note that while some of these discourse frames are interrelated, and identified in abundance in some texts, not all the ideological structures may be present in particular sets or range of discourse.

Applicability of the CDA Model(s)
An analytical model (a theory), according to Clarke (2005:38), is chosen based on theoretical appropriateness and relevance. Generally, CDA is interested in issues of power abuse, dominance and resistance. But specifically, the theory is often adopted for the analysis of discourse texts where thelinguistic/ideological structures or tools contained in the model agree with, and are effective/sufficient in handling the

ideological features (data) identified in the texts.Thus, the subject matter, nay, area of application of CDA include, but not limited to discourse, ideology and power; the discursive constructions of society/social reality; gender and identity discourses; political reality/discourse; knowledge and pedagogy discourses; media discourse; texts and meaning discourses; media bias evaluation, as well as discourses on power-related conflicts such as the FGN/ASUU perennial labour impasse which often result in protracted strike actions.

Summary and Conclusion
In this review, CDA, the interdisciplinary analytical model on which the study focused, was discussed with a bent on its history, major proponents, its concerns *vis-a-vis* nexus with other critical theories. Its tools as a linguistic theory, methods of use, and its applicability were also examined. Despite its increasing popularity and visibility on the intellectual landscape, especially as it has to do with power abuse as well as ill-representations and misrepresentations in gender, institutional and media discourses; and in spite of the undeniable, all-important functions and multidisciplinary and multi-context applicability of CDA as an analytical model, the theory has variously come under a barrage of criticisms, most of which were, however, defaced. Notwithstanding these criticisms against CDA, linguists, analysts of social conflicts, and of the various forms of discourses mentioned in the work, have continued to see, and rely it as a worthwhile approach in the linguistic/analytic enterprise. Thus, a careful study of CDA as an analytical model provides linguists, especially those interested in the investigation of social conflicts occasioned by unequal power dynamics, with a solid linguistic basis for their analyses.

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