

## A CRITIQUE OF CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS WITH AN EMPHASIS ON EQUALITY IN THE LIGHT OF AMERICAN FEDERAL CONSTITUTION

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### Abstract

The present study offers a critique of critical discourse analysis, namely, van Dijk's (1998) theory of ideological square. It tries to trace the notion of 'equality' in van Dijk's socio-cognitive approach to critical discourse analysis. The present study takes a number of steps, starting with a theoretical presentation of critical discourse analysis in general and the theory of ideological square in particular. The theory of the ideological square is claimed to suffer from a number of shortcomings such as the confusion of equality and justice, being one-sided treatment, interest-governed and circularity. That is why it is necessary to formally recognize these shortcomings in critical discourse analysis. Additionally, there is a need to make some recommendations for resolving the identified shortcomings of critical discourse analysis. These requirements define the problems of the present study. The present study has the aims of identifying the shortcomings of van Dijk's theory of the ideological square and modifying van Dijk's (1998) model of CDA by suggesting new substitutions for the original constituents. Finally, the present study has come out with the following results that van Dijk's (1998) approach to CDA suffers from a number of shortcomings such as the confusion of equality with justice, circularity, and one-sidedness. Also, the workability of van Dijk's (1998) model of CDA is not openly workable for every text type as it proves not to be workable for those texts having no conflicting groups such as the constitutional text.

**Key words:** Critique, Critical Discourse Analysis, Ideological Square, Equality, American Federal Constitution

### المستخلص

تُقدّم الدراسة الحالية نقداً للتحليل النقدي للخطاب، بالتحديد، إنموذج المربع الأيديولوجي لفان دايك (سنة، ١٩٩٨). تُحاول الدراسة تتبع فكرة "المساواة" في النهج الاجتماعي المعرفي لفان دايك في التحليل النقدي للخطاب. تأخذ الدراسة الحالية عدداً من الخطوات، بدءاً من العرض النظري للتحليل النقدي للخطاب بشكل عام ونظرية المربع الأيديولوجي بشكل خاص. تُزعم هذه الدراسة أنّ نظرية المربع الأيديولوجي تعاني من عدد من أوجه القصور مثل الخلط بين المساواة والعدالة، وكونها متحيزة في التعامل من جانب واحد، وتغلب عليها هيمنة تحكم المصلحة، وغيرها. لهذا السبب أصبح من الضروري الاعتراف رسمياً بأوجه القصور في التحليل النقدي للخطاب. بالإضافة إلى ذلك، هناك حاجة لتقديم بعض التوصيات لحل أوجه القصور المحددة في التحليل النقدي للخطاب. تُحدّد هذه المتطلبات مشاكل الدراسة الحالية. تُهدّف هذه الدراسة إلى تعيين أوجه القصور في نظرية المربع الأيديولوجي لفان دايك (سنة، ١٩٩٨) وتعديل إنموذج المربع الأيديولوجي لفان دايك (سنة، ١٩٩٨) في التحليل النقدي للخطاب من خلال اقتراح بدائل جديدة للمكونات الرئيسية للإنموذج. وفي الختام توصلت الدراسة الحالية إلى النتائج الأولية التالية: يُواجه إنموذج فان دايك للمربع الأيديولوجي بعض أوجه القصور ومنها الخلط بين المساواة والعدالة، وكونها متحيزة في التعامل من جانب واحد من خلال التمييز بين أعضاء المجموعة التابعة والمجموعة المضادة لها من خلال التشديد غير الموضوعي على الجوانب الإيجابية للمجموعة التابعة وعلى الجوانب السلبية للمجموعة المضادة لها وعدم التشديد على الجوانب السلبية للمجموعة التابعة وعلى الجوانب الإيجابية للمجموعة المضادة لها، وتغلب عليها هيمنة تحكم المصلحة، وغيرها. كذلك لا يمكن تطبيق إنموذج فان دايك في التحليل النقدي للخطاب على كل أنواع النصوص حيث إنه غير قابل للتطبيق على تلك النصوص التي لا تحتوي على مجموعات مُتضادة مثل النصوص الدستورية.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** نقد، تحليل الخطاب النقدي، المربع الأيديولوجي، المساواة، الدستور الفيدرالي الأمريكي

### Introduction

# **A CRITIQUE OF CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS WITH AN EMPHASIS ON EQUALITY IN THE LIGHT OF AMERICAN FEDERAL CONSTITUTION**

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The present study is an attempt to re-evaluate critical discourse analysis (CDA, henceforth) through analysing the data chosen, that is, the American Federal Constitution according to the theory of the ideological square suggested by van Dijk (1998). In fact, CDA has suffered from several points of criticism which means that it needs some more reconsideration especially concerning van Dijk's model of the ideological square for CDA. Further to that, the ways of applying the issue of equality in English constitutional texts needs to be reconsidered. This makes a problem to which the present study tries to offer a solution.

First of all, discourse, according to Stubbs (1983:1), can be defined as "language above the sentence or above the clause" and "the study of discourse is the study of any aspect of language use." Discourse is the construction and arrangement of the segments of the language above and below the sentence. They are the segments of the language which may be larger or smaller than a single sentence, but the additional context is often outside the sentence. The word 'discourse' refers to both spoken and written language, and in fact to any sample of language used for any reason. Thus, discourse is any sequence of speech events or any combination of sentences in written form in which successive sentences or utterances hang together. Discourse is something that goes beyond the boundaries of the sentence. In other words, discourse is "any coherent series of sentences, spoken or written" (Matthews, 2005:100). The links between sentences in the connected discourse are as significant as the links between the clauses in the sentence. However, Fairclough (1992: 3) offers two definitions of discourse of its conventional and more recent linguistic perspectives. Traditionally, it has been used to refer to extended patterns of spoken rather than written texts. From the other hand, it is widely used to epitomize both spoken and written language. Thus, it represents what the writer has in his mind.

Discourse analysis "is concerned with the study of the relationship between language and the contexts in which it is used" (McCarthy, 1991:5). In the 1960's and early 1970's, it emerged from works in various disciplines, including linguistics, semiotics, psychology, anthropology and sociology. Discourse analysts study the language in use; from conversation to highly institutionalized modes of speech, written texts of all sorts, and spoken data. Zellig Harris (1952) published a paper with the title 'Discourse Analysis' at a time when linguistics was primarily concerned with the analysis of single sentences. In extended texts, Harris was interested in the distribution of linguistic elements and the connections between the text and its social condition, while his paper is a far cry from today's discourse researches. The emergence of semiotics and the French structuralist approach to the study of narrative were also significant in the early years. In the 1960's, Dell Hymes offered a sociological perspective with the study of speech in its social setting (e.g. Hymes, 1964). Linguistic philosophers such as Austin (1962), Searle (1969), and Grice (1975) have had an influence on the study of language as social action, expressed in speech-action theory and the formulation of conversational maxims, besides the development of pragmatics, which is the study of meaning in context.

British discourse analysis was highly influenced by Halliday's (1973) functional approach to language which in turn has connections with the linguists of Prague School. Halliday's concept focuses on the social roles of language and the thematic and informational structure of speech and writing. Sinclair and Coulthard (1975) of Birmingham University were also significant in Britain and developed a model of a hierarchy of discourse units for the definition of teacher-pupil speaking. Other related works have dealt with doctor-patient interaction, interviews, service experiences, debates, and business meetings, as well as monologues. New work was also done on intonation in discourse in the British tradition. The British work has mainly followed structural-linguistic criteria, on the rule of the isolation of units and sets of rules that characterize well-formed sequences of discourse (McCarthy, 1991:5).

American discourse analysis has been dominated by work within the tradition of ethnomethodology which emphasises the type of analysis for closely observing groups of people interacting in natural settings. It discusses various speech activities in different cultural and social contexts, such as storytelling, greeting traditions and so on. (e.g. Gumperz and Hymes, 1972). Under the American tradition, what is sometimes called conversation analysis may also be included within the main notion of DA. The aim of the conversational analysis is not on constructing structural models, but on closely examining the behaviour of participants in the conversation and on patterns that recur over a wide variety of natural data. In the study of conversational norms, turn-taking, and other elements of spoken interaction, the works of Goffman (1976, 1979), Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson (1974) are significant. Alongside the conversation analysts, Labov's (1972) studies of oral storytelling have also led to a long history of development in narrative discourse. A large number of explanations of discourse styles were provided by the American work, as well as insights into the social norms of politeness and face-preserving phenomena in the speaking, overlapping with British pragmatic work (McCarthy, 1991:6).

The work of text grammarians is also important to the growth of DA as a whole, working mainly with written language. Text grammarians see texts as elements of language that can be described, strung together in relationships with each other. In this field, linguists like van Dijk (1972), Halliday and Hasan (1976), De Beaugrande (1980), have had a big and great impact. The Prague School of linguists, with their interest in structuring the information in discourse, has also been prominent. The most significant contribution was to explain the similarities between grammar and discourse. DA has evolved into a wide-ranging and heterogeneous field that finds its unity in the interpretation of language above the sentence and an interest in the meanings and cultural forces that affect the use of language. Now, increasingly, it is providing a backdrop to research of Applied Linguistics and second language learning and teaching in particular (McCarthy, 1991:6-7).

### **The Evolution of CDA and Critical Linguistics**

CDA is a new branch of modern linguistic researches rose in recent years, aims to expose the interrelationship between language, ideology, and power. It is an approach that considers language as a communicative means used for non-linguistic ends such as social and political ones. It attempts to explore the strong connection between language and power to outface the social and political inequalities. The major domains of inequality, as recognized by CDA are ideology, racism, feminism, political discourse, and institutional discourse.

In the historical surveys such as Wodak (1995), reference has been made to the "critical linguists" of the University of East Anglia, who, in the 1970's, turned to issues such as the use of language in social institutions and the relations between language, power, and ideology, and who announced a critical and emancipatory agenda for linguistic analysis. In this respect, the works by Kress and Hodge (1979) and Fowler, Hodge, Kress and Trew (1979) are influential. The work of these critical linguists was based on the systemic-functional and socio-semiotic linguistics of Michael Halliday, whose linguistic methodology is still considered crucial to CDA practices (particularly Fairclough) because it provides specific and comprehensive linguistic categories for analysing the relationship between discourse and social meaning. Martin (2000) and Martin and Wodak (2003) explore the utility of systemic-functional linguistics for CDA, proposing that CDA can apply systemic-functional notions more systematically and consistently, and Fairclough (1992b) analyses CDA work with regard to the amount of Hallidayan textual analysis

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they offer (Blommaert, 2005: 22-23). So, to sum up, CDA emerged from “Critical Linguistics” and has become a well-established field in the social sciences in the twenty-first century (Wodak and Meyer (2009a); Fairclough et. al. (2010).

Most broadly, CDA can be characterized as a problem-oriented interdisciplinary research programme, subsuming a variety of approaches, all with various theoretical models, research methods and agendas. What unites them is a mutual interest in the semiotic dimensions of power, identity politics and political-economic or cultural change in society. The terms “Critical Linguistics” (CL) and “Critical Discourse Analysis” (CDA) are often used interchangeably. In fact, the term CDA seems to have been preferred more recently and used to denote the theory formerly previously known as CL. The roots of CDA lie in Rhetoric, Text linguistics, Philosophy, Anthropology, Socio-psychology, Cognitive Science, Sociolinguistics, and Literary Studies as well as in Applied Linguistics and Pragmatics. However, nowadays some scholars prefer the term Critical Discourse Studies (CDS). For instance, van Dijk (2007) gives us a broad overview of the field of (CDS), where the following development can be identified: between the mid-1960’s and the early 1970’s, new, closely related disciplines appeared in the humanities and the social sciences. In spite of their various disciplinary backgrounds and a wide range of methods and objects of investigation, some parts of the new fields/ paradigms/ linguistic sub-disciplines of semiotics, pragmatics, psycho- and sociolinguistics, ethnography of speaking, conversation analysis, and discourse studies all deal with discourse (Hyland and Paltridge, 2011:38).

In addition to Hallidayan linguistics, Slembrouck (2001) describes other profound influences on CDA which are British Cultural Studies. The Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Culture Studies which is led by Stuart Hall had a remarkable impact because it systematically discussed social, cultural, and political issues related to the transformation of late capitalist society in Britain: neo-liberalism, the New Right led by Thatcher, racism, diaspora, the end of the welfare state, and so forth. Some of these disciplines have become key elements of intense activity within CDA. The Birmingham school of cultural studies also integrated French post-structuralist theory in its analyses, and together with the delineation of a domain of analysis, this pool of theories was embraced by, for sure, Fairclough. Fairclough’s ‘Language and Power’ (1989) is widely regarded as the landmark publication for the start of CDA. In his book, Fairclough engaged in an explicitly politicised analysis of ‘powerful’ discourses in Britain and provided the synthesis of linguistic method, objects of analysis, and political commitment that have become the hallmark of CDA. Despite the existence of such important publications and acknowledged leading figures, the limits of the CDA movement are rather fuzzy. Scholars associated with the CDA movement tend to be unified by the related domains and topics of investigation, an explicit dedication to social action and to the political left-wing, a common aim of combining linguistic analysis and social theory (Blommaert, 2005: 23).

Within CDA, there is a tendency to define itself as a ‘school’ and a number of writings are programmatically directed towards the development of a group of scholars who share the same viewpoint and share similar methodologies and theoretical frameworks. Fairclough (1992a) surveys a number of discourse-analytical approaches, labelled as ‘non-critical’, in contrast with his own ‘critical’ approach. Such boundary-shaping practices are worded in such resolute terms that they result in suggestive distinctions within DA, ‘critical’ versus ‘non-critical’, that are difficult to maintain in reality (ibid: 24).

Confusingly, the term “critical discourse analysis” is used in two distinct ways: it is used by Norman Fairclough (1995a, 1995b) both to describe the approach he has established and as a term for a larger movement within DA in which many approaches, including his own, are part

(Fairclough and Wodak, 1997). This popular movement is a rather loose entity and there is no agreement as to who belongs to it. While the approach of Fairclough consists of a series of philosophical concepts, theoretical methods, methodological guidelines, and particular linguistic research techniques, the broader critical discourse analytical movement consists of many approaches in which there are both similarities and differences (Jorgensen and Phillips, 2002:60).

In the recent years, CDA has become prominent and influential. It has used the word “critical” as a description of its distinctive character showing how language is used for the exercise of socio-political influence. According to Blommaert and Bulcaen (2002), “discourse which is an opaque power object of influence in modern societies is made more visible and explicit by the study of critical discourse throughout critical discourse analysis.” Thus, CDA has become a very significant research method that moves beyond a surface-level analysis of discourse to demonstrate how discourse can create and conceal deep structural relations of inequality and power. However, according to Fairclough (1993:135), CDA is defined as a branch of DA, which is concerned with analysing opaque as well as transparent structural relationships of dominance, discrimination, power and control as manifested in language as he wrote:

Discourse analysis which aims to systematically explore often opaque relationships of causality and determination between (a) discursive practices, events and texts, and (b) wider social and cultural structures, relations and processes; to investigate how such practices, events and texts arise out of and are ideologically shaped by relations of power and struggles over power; and to explore how the opacity of these relationships between discourse and society is itself a factor securing power and hegemony.

Moreover, van Dijk (1998) argued that CDA is a field concerned with studying and analysing written and spoken texts in order to expose the discursive sources of dominance, power, inequality, and bias. van Dijk clearly mentioned and defined CDA, which can be regarded as the operational definition, in the following way:

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.

(van Dijk, 2001: 352)

### **CDA Criticism**

The word “critical” has many different interpretations and meanings in different cultural contexts. The notion of critique in the West has a long history dating from ancient Greece, through the Enlightenment philosophers to the present day. In everyday language, the word is used differently, sometimes denoting something ‘negative’, while in CDA it implies the use of rational thinking to question arguments or dominant ideas; that is, more generally it implies that nothing is taken for granted and challenging surface meanings. The use of the word in CDA can be traced to the impact of Marxist and later Frankfurt School of Critical Theory, in which critique is a tool for both explaining and modifying social phenomena. This emancipatory



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agenda has major consequences for CDA as a scientific practice (Hyland and Paltridge, 2011:40).

CDA has not been without its critics. There are many criticisms against CDA, which will be detailed in the following points:

1. One of the criticisms against CDA is that it is very close to earlier stylistic analyses that took place in the field of literary criticism. Widdowson (1998, 2004), for example, claims that a critical analysis must include discussions with the producers and consumers of the texts, and not just rest on the analyst's interpretation of what a text might mean by itself (Paltridge, 2012:198).
2. Others have suggested that CDA does not always take into account the role of the reader in the consumption and understanding of a text, occasionally mistaking themselves for a member of the audience to whom a text is intended (van Noppen, 2004).
3. Also, CDA has been criticized for not always presenting sufficiently adequate detailed and systematic analyses of the texts that it examines (Paltridge, 2012:198).

Therefore, there have been calls for critical discourse analysts to be more critical and demanding of their analysis tools and also to aim for more comprehensiveness and strength of proof for the claims that they make.

However, others have come to the defence of CDA arguing that its agenda is essential and of great social importance, but there are important details and claims that still need to be carefully and explicitly worked out (ibid.).

Furthermore, Paltridge (2012:199) states that writers such as Cameron (2001) discusses textual interpretation in CDA saying that it is a misconception to claim that any reading of a text is a possible or valid one. Thus, she agrees with the view that the weakness of CDA is that it entirely depend on the analyst's interpretation of the texts. She offers a suggestion to draw greater attention to the interpretations of the recipients in the analysis and interpretation of the discourse as a way of countering this. As Cameron points out that CDA is "enriched, and the risk of making overly subjective or sweeping claims reduced, by going beyond the single text to examine other related texts and to explore the actual interpretations recipients make of them." She also suggests that all discourse and all communication are interactive, and this needs to be taken into account in the analysis.

Additionally, Blommaert (2005), in terms of critique, argues that CDA, in spite of its emphasis on inequality, focuses too much on the First World, both in terms of its object of analysis and of the theories which it usually draws on (Bourdieu, Baudrillard, Foucault, Giddens, Habermas and Zizek). On the one hand, Bloomaert (2005) claims that the differences exist between societies located in different regions of the world, and that CDA has ignored the Third World. He wonders how the First World existential angst mentioned by Chouliaraki and Fairclough (1999) could relate to a village in Tanzania, for instance. But at other hand, Blommaert (2005) suggests that theoreticians who would have something to say about Third World issues, such as Wallerstein, Arrighi, Amin or Frank, are absent from the CDA literature. Then again, another point raised by Blommaert (2005) is to place more emphasis in favour of ethnographic analysis in CDA and away from text, mentioning boldly in his book that 'This is not a linguistic book' (2005: 3). At the same time, Fairclough (2003) called for textual analysis to play a significant role in social analysis. Besides, Chilton (2005) proposed that CDA needs to

explore the cognitive aspect of communication, putting forward evolutionary psychology as a possible model. Others, e.g., van Leeuwen (2006), called for greater inter-disciplinarity. Further, Martin (1999) has argued for a positive discourse, concentrating on emancipatory discourses, as an alternative to critical approaches (Bhatia, Flowerdew, and Jones, 2008:193-194).

### **Political and Legal Discourse**

According to van Dijk (2006:166), the system of the 'political discourse' is distinguished by a variety of linguistic characteristics, and there are two issues to be considered, namely, ideology and power. The ideology can be as a strong connection with the discourse, whereas the power can be used as endurance way. The ideology is quite effective when the discourse covers a wide space in the analysis of political discourse.

However, Chilton (2008:226) remarks that 'political discourse' is "the use of language to do the business of politics and includes persuasive rhetoric, the use of implied meanings, the use of euphemisms, the exclusion of references to undesirable reality, the use of language to arouse political emotions and the like."

Furthermore, Orwell (1969:225), who was the first to draw attention to the characteristics of political discourse, states that: "political speech and writing are largely the defense of indefensible." However, politicians tend to avoid presenting facts; but instead, there is a convincing representation to the truth.

'Legal discourse', on the other hand, is a historically and rhetorically organised product. Goodrich (1987: xi) points out that the reasons for considering this kind of discourse as a unitary language and separate scientific discipline is its design which helps to understand the socio-historical and political attractions within its structure. He argues that the critical studies which deal with the concept of legal discourse as "a language of power, as the purist of control over meaning and as instrument and expression of domination."

Centrally, the term 'legal discourse' refers to (i) language which arises in statutory law; (ii) the interpretation of statutory law in judicial opinions; (iii) different forms of the language of the courtroom including opening statements and closing arguments, direct questioning and cross-examination of witnesses, and the instructions of jury; (iv) written contracts which create legal obligations, including insurance policies, rental agreements, wills and liability waivers. Less central, but crucially significant in people's lives, is the broad variety of registers reflecting the communications between institutional operatives and ordinary people, including police interviews with persons of interest and criminal suspects; everyday electronic communication and other correspondence investigated in connection with probably illegal communication; and telephone and face- to-face interactions (Gee and Handford, 2012:483).

### **The American Federal Constitution**

The Constitution of the United States established the national government and fundamental laws of America, and guaranteed certain basic rights for its people. It was signed by delegates to the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia on September 17, 1787. The U.S. Constitution, which was ratified by nine of the original thirteen states a year later, is the longest-surviving written constitution in the world. But that does not mean it's remained the same over time. Under America's first governing law, the Articles of Confederation, the government was weak and states served as independent countries. In order to suit the changing needs and requirements of the community, the Founding Fathers intended the document to be flexible. In

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the words of Delegate Edmund Randolph of Virginia, one of the five men charged with drafting the Constitution, the aim was to “insert essential principles only, lest the operations of government should be clogged by rendering those provisions permanent and unalterable, which ought to be accommodated to times and events.” At the 1787 convention, delegates established a proposal for a stronger federal government with three branches, legislative, executive, and judicial, along with systems of checks and balances to ensure that no single branch would have too much power (Web source 1).

The Preamble outlines the intent and guiding principles of the Constitution. It reads:  
We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.

The Bill of Rights was made up of ten amendments guaranteeing basic personal rights, such as freedom of speech and religion, which became part of the Constitution in 1791. To date, there have been twenty-seven constitutional amendments. Beyond that, many changes in the American political and legal system have arisen throughout the judicial interpretation of existing laws rather than through the legislative branch by adding new ones.

Subsequently, over 200 years since the Constitution was created, America has stretched across an entire continent and its population and economy have grown more than the document's framers likely ever could have envisioned. The Constitution has continued and adapted through all the changes. The framers realized that it wasn't a perfect document. Even so, as Benjamin Franklin said on the closing day of the convention in 1787: “I agree to this Constitution with all its faults, if they are such, because I think a central government is necessary for us... I doubt too whether any other Convention we can obtain may be able to make a better Constitution.” Today, the original Constitution is on display at the National Archives in Washington, D.C. and the Constitution Day is celebrated on September 17, commemorating the date on which the document was signed.

## **van Dijk's (1998) Framework**

The present study tries to re-evaluate CDA through analysing the text under study, namely, the American Federal Constitution, according to the “ideological square” adopted by van Dijk (1998). CDA represents a development of DA which is criticized for being basically descriptive and in need for being possible to be applied more influentially. CDA has been established as an attempt to enhance DA. What is needed is to activate and galvanize discourse analysis approach to go beyond merely offering some static linguistic description to provide an influential linguistic tool to make social change. The operational definition of CDA for the present study is that one offered by van Dijk (2001:352) who defines it as:

A type of discourse analytical research that primarily studies the way social power abuse, dominance, and inequality are enacted, reproduced, and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context. With such dissident research, critical discourse analysts take explicit position, and thus want to understand, expose, and ultimately resist social inequality.

The previous definition tries to propose a new application, i.e., critical one for DA for the sake of using language as an influential communicative tool to make social changes.



The frameworks of van Dijk (1998, 2001, and 2006) focus on three dimensions: discourse, cognition, and society. Under the conceptual triangle of van Dijk, discourse analysis, on the one hand, has to do with the understanding of linguistic aspects of discourse, such as syntax, local semantics, topics, lexicon, etc. Social analysis, on the other hand, includes the social context of discourse. Throughout cognition, Dijk pays attention to the relation between discourse and social structure. This requires understanding a macro-level social notion such as power and dominance, and a micro-level notion such as discourse. Thus, one must think of mental representations that are socially shared and personal models that are related to personal experiences. How these representations and models are cognitively shaped determines the construction of meaning.

The conceptual framework of van Dijk consists of three kinds of belief: knowledge, opinions and attitudes, and ideologies. At the outset, knowledge is either shared by a particular group or is common across the society. The latter refers to Common Ground Knowledge and this is generally presupposed and taken for granted in discourse. Then, opinions and attitudes refer to beliefs that are shared on the basis of evaluation (good versus bad) rather than truth criteria. Furthermore, ideology applies to various attitudes in different social domains (van Dijk, 2001). So, it is more fundamental or axiomatic. Thus, it occupies an important place in Dijk's framework, as it forms mental representations and models that characterize various groups. As stated by van Dijk (1995), ideologies reflect social characteristics of a group such as their identity, resources, and values. In addition, he claims that ideologies can become so commonly spread that they become part of the "generally accepted attitudes of an entire community as beliefs, opinions, or common sense" (van Dijk, 2006:117).

According to van Dijk, discourse analysis is an ideological analysis; he considers "any property of discourse that expresses, establishes, confirms or emphasizes a self- interested group opinion, perspective or position, especially in a broader socio-political context of social struggle, is a candidate for special attention in such an ideological analysis" (van Dijk, 1995:22-23). Dijk also identifies a variety of discourse structures in an attempt to identify ideologies and expose group struggles. These include: lexical items, propositions, presuppositions, implications, descriptions, etc. (van Dijk, 1995, 1998).

However, the "ideological square" of van Dijk (1998) is one of the key concepts in Dijk's framework. The basic tenet of the ideological square is represented in terms of emphasizing the positive actions of what the writer considers as the in-group and de-emphasizing its negative actions whereas, on the other hand, de-emphasizing the positive actions of what the writer considers as the out-group and emphasizing its negative actions. In view of the foregoing, the following figure shows a diagram of the "ideological square" of van Dijk (1998):

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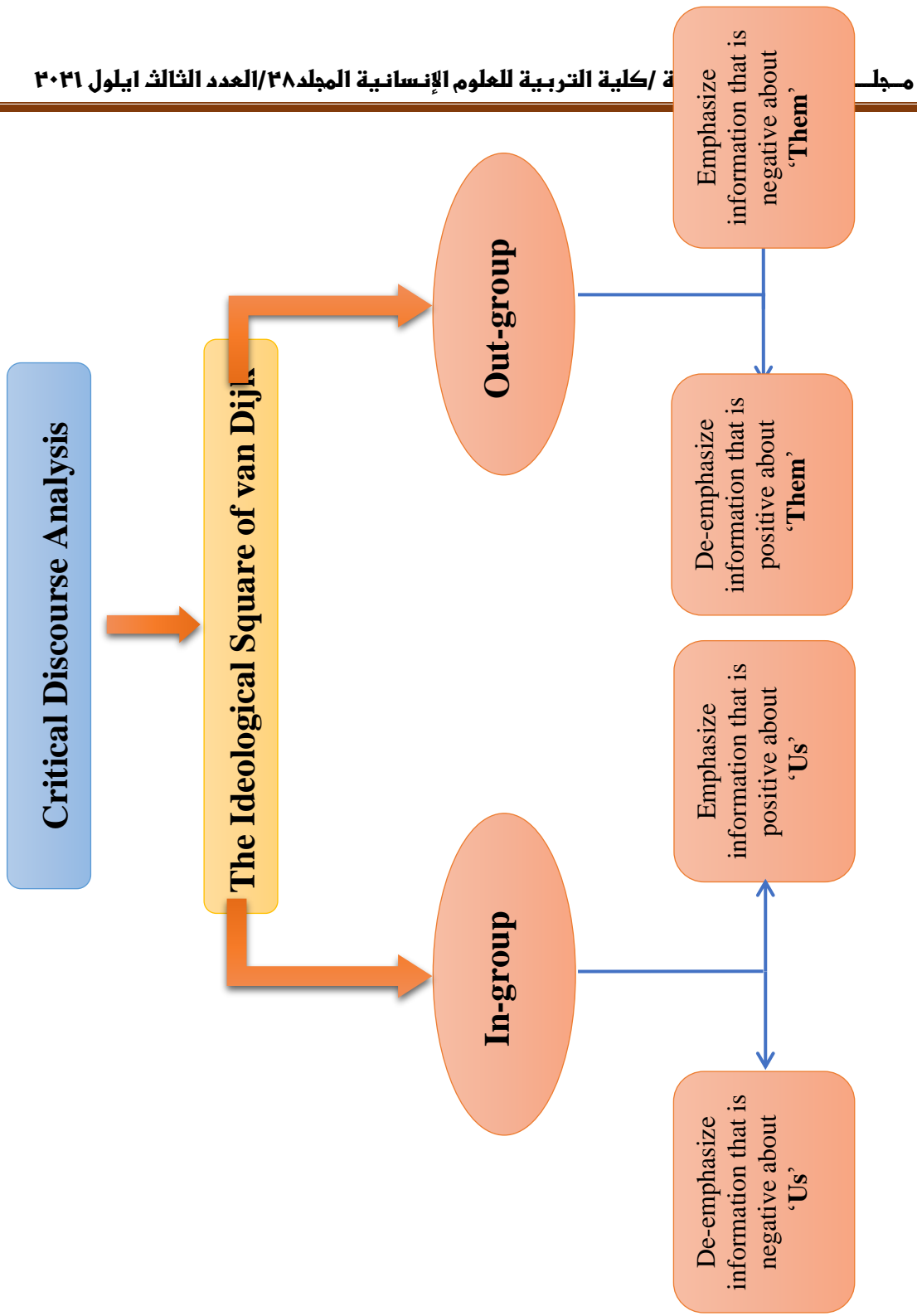


Figure (1): The Ideological Square Based on van Dijk (1998)

### Identifying Fundamental Shortcomings of Dijk’s Ideological Square

As stated by van Dijk (2001:352) concerning the definition of CDA that the ultimate goal of CDA is to make the required social change to cure the different kinds of power abuse which always

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leads to social inequality. Thus, the major problem to which CDA has been designed and proposed to deal with is the “social inequality”. In other words, since social inequality is the major problem, CDA could offer a solution through applying the ideological square. In view of the fact that ‘inequality’ is considered to be wrong, so ‘equality’ should be right. At this point, there are three problems which could be recognized. The first one is the confusing of the concept of ‘equality’ with ‘justice’; the second one is the circularity whereas the third one is the one-sided treatment. In fact, there is a need to identify van Dijk’s viewpoint about an important issue that is related to the present study. The viewpoint is about van Dijk’s evaluation of the ideological square and its one-sided treatment for the discourse participants (Jawad, 2021:5).

In a personal contact, Jawad (ibid.) points out that van Dijk (2019) responds to a question about the ideological square 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. Thus, to conclude, van Dijk describes the ideological square in CDA without exact adoption, i.e., he has provided no explicit rejection or objection to the points of justice vs. equality, circularity, and one-sidedness.

## The Confusion of Equality and Justice

*Equality* is defined in Cambridge Dictionary (n.d.) as “the right of different groups of people to have a similar social position and receive the same treatment.” Equality is a contested concept as Dworkin (2000:2) points out that “people who praise it or disparage it disagree about what they are praising or disparaging.” Therefore, the task is to provide a clear description of equality in the face of widespread misconceptions about its meaning. Primarily, the terms ‘equality,’ ‘equally,’ and ‘equal,’ signify a qualitative relationship. Equality signifies correspondence between a group of different individuals, objects, processes or circumstances that have the same characteristics and qualities in at least one respect, but not all respects, i.e., regarding one particular feature, with differences in other features. Thus, equality needs to be differentiated from ‘identity’, the concept which signifies that one and the same object corresponds to itself in all its features, i.e., an object that can be referred to through different individual terms, proper names, or descriptions. It also needs to be distinguished from the concept of ‘similarity’, which refers to merely approximate correspondence. So, to say, for example, that men are equal does not imply that they are identical. Equality implies similarity rather than ‘sameness’ (Gosepath, 2011).

*Justice*, according to Collins English Dictionary (n.d.), is “fairness in the way that people are treated.” The concept of justice occupies centre stage in ethics and in legal and political philosophy. It is related to individual actions, laws, and public policies. Classically, justice was considered as one of the four cardinal virtues (and often as the most important of the four); whereas in modern times John Rawls (1999:3) identifies it as “the first virtue of social institutions.” Over time, the concept has become profoundly embedded in many domains, and to try to make sense of such a wide-ranging concept by identifying elements that are present whenever justice is invoked, but also examining the various forms it takes in different practical context (Miller, 2017: n.p.).

Dealing with the issue of confusing equality with justice, *equality*, by definition, means treating different individuals and groups in an impartial way since all people are assumed to be equal. This consideration is built on the assumption that equality means *justice*. This point of confusing ‘*equality*’ with ‘*justice*’ needs to be given a special attention. Equal treatment, consideration, and evaluation to individuals and even groups with 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 such as rights, responsibilities, evaluations, and so on. Table (1) illustrates the possible relationships between ‘equality’ and ‘justice’ (Jawad, 2021: 5).

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

No.	Participant Relations	Equality	Justice	Briefing
1	A=B	✓	✓	Equality is justice (A) equals (B)
2	A≠B	✗	✓	Inequality is justice (A) is better than (B)
3	A≠B	✓	✗	Equality is injustice (A) is evaluated like (B) (A) differs from (B)

To discuss the table above, it could be presumed that (A) and (B) are two students of the same age in the same class, taking the same lessons and exams, under the same conditions, and receiving objective treatment and evaluation. In the first instance, (A) and (B) get the same mark in the exam because they perform equally. Getting equal marks (equality) is just (justice) in this case. The second instance deals with the case in which (A) and (B) get unequal marks (inequality) because they perform unequally in the exam, where the one of the better performance in the exam gets the higher mark. In this case, (inequality) means (justice) because (A) and (B) perform differently. Lastly, the third instance concerns a situation in which (A) and (B) get equal marks in the exam (equality) even though their performance is unequal in value. In this case, (equality) means (injustice). Hence, the objective evaluation involves justice which means giving everyone what he/she 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, i.e., the same. That is why a re-consideration of van Dijk’s (2001) definition to CDA could be suggested to be as follows:

A type of discourse analytical research that primarily studies the way social power abuse, dominance, and *injustice* 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 *injustice*.

### **Circularity**

In addition to the problem of confusing the concepts of ‘equality’ and ‘justice’, there is another problem of circularity. Circularity is limited here to circular reasoning. Urban Dictionary (2019) defines circularity as a logical fallacy in which a claim is used as evidence for itself, so that the claim is not explained why it is true in any way other than by stating the same claim in a slightly different way. In his definition of CDA, van Dijk (1998) 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. Actually, there are two cases here; the first one is when receiving a discourse, i.e., discourse recognition of the addressee whereas the second one is when producing a discourse, i.e., discourse production by the discourse addresser. Concerning the first case of discourse recognition, it is by nature and it is out of the scope of the present study because the addressee



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does not participate in the discourse producing and organizing. However, the addressee can make use of the ideological square theory to receive the discourse critically. But what is challenged here is the second case of discourse production by the addresser when the members of in-group and out-group receive unequal treatment. Thus, the discourse producer is supposed to deal unequally with the participants in his discourse. The indication of this treatment is trying to solve the problem of inequality by using the same problem of inequality as a solution. That is, the problem is the solution and the solution is the problem at the same time, which means simply circularity.

## **One-sidedness**

Over and above the problems of the confusing concepts of 'equality' vs. 'justice' and circularity, there is still another problem to be faced here concerning the one-sided treatment of the discourse participants, i.e., the members of both in-group and out-group. As claimed by CDA, in order to sustain equality there is a need to treat the two groups of the discourse equally; however, what is offered in the ideological square of Dijk is only one-sided treatment. That is, the positive sides of the in-group members and negative ones of the out-group are emphasized whereas the positive sides of the out-group members and negative ones of the in-group are de-emphasized. As a result, the present study tries to offer a solution to this problem by suggesting a modification to the model of ideological square.

Whereas van Dijk (1998) claims to work against social inequality, he treats the participants of the two groups, namely, in-groups and out-groups unequally. He supports one specific group, i.e., the in-group members regardless to any other consideration other than affiliation. He ignores the other side, i.e., the out-group members. That is why van Dijk's (ibid.) model in the ideological square is claimed to suffer from one-sidedness.

Additionally, there are certain points in van Dijk (1998) ideological square to be raised for discussion. It is claimed that the participants are categorized in two groups no more and the relationship between these two groups is conflict. This cognitive structure is governed by the ideology on which van Dijk's (ibid.) ideological square is based and it claims that 'interest' is the real motive for producing a given text. When the text producer's ideology is 'interest-oriented' constructing the discourse and presenting the idea is one-sided highlighting one rather than the two sides, i.e., the text producer's side.

To investigate the one-sidedness point, a number of points need to be established and reconsidered as follows:

1. Ideology is not universal; it is rather culture-specific. Thus, the ideology of considering the 'interest' as the priority could not be followed by everyone. Although the ideology adopted by van Dijk (1998) is 'interest-oriented', there is a possibility to have some text producer whose ideology is based on an ideology that is not interest-based, as will be shown later.
2. The participants are not necessarily categorized into in-groups and out-groups only. There may be other participants or groups of participants.
3. The relationship between the participants is not necessarily a conflict. It could be something different like 'cooperation' as will be exemplified later.

Hence, van Dijk (ibid.) adopts the ideology of 'interest' to categorize participants into in-groups and out-groups. He decides the relationship between these two groups to be 'conflict' in order to achieve the targeted social change. The same strategy with some modifications is going to be offered below. These examples are taken from the American Federal Constitution.

Needless to repeat that the present study is critical rather than analytical since the major concern here is not to analyse the text critically according to van Dijk (1998) approach; it is rather to offer a critique of van Dijk's (ibid.) theory of the ideological square. Thus, only some illustrative examples from the American Federal Constitution will be taken to support the claims of the present study.

To investigate applying criticality to the chosen text through van Dijk's (1998) model through the same general theoretical structure with the proposed modifications, some points need to be reconsidered first as in:

## 1. Ideology and stance

Ideology and stance in the American Federal Constitution is referred to clearly in the following quotation in the preamble:

We the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defense , promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.

The ideology here is not based on the 'interest' that could be obtained by a conflict between two groups. It is rather an ideology of cooperation between all levels of the American people since they are the source of all the authorities. It is clear that the text producers of the American Federal Constitution are aware to the differences between 'justice' and 'equality'. The notion chosen in the American Federal Constitution is 'justice' rather than 'equality'. A further point could be added here, the American Federal Constitution does not suffer from 'circularity' since the American people in most cases has not been categorized into two conflicting groups, i.e., the in-groups and out-groups as suggested in van Dijk's (1998) theory of the ideological square.

## 2. Social change

In the American Federal Constitution, the targeted social change is approached to ideologically not through categorizing participants into two groups, so the text producers address the addressees who are basically but not solely Americans as direct receivers and even others as indirect receivers like non-Americans who want to know the American federal constitution. The participants are not necessarily two groups and the conflict atmosphere is not a must. Thus, the social change cannot be achieved by the information structure that is represented in polarization when the two sides of the participants are against each other.

As a result, what has been offered and illustrated above is a proof for the claim that van Dijk's (1998) theory of the ideological square is questionable and problematic whereas the modified version of the ideological square theory proposed by the present study is workable.

## Conclusions

The present study has come out with the conclusions that can be put within the following points:

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1. van Dijk's (1998) approach to CDA suffers from a number of shortcomings such as the following:

a. Equality vs. justice

'Equality' is confused with 'justice'. van Dijk's (2001) definition to CDA needs a re-consideration since it confuses inequality with injustice. This confusion can be treated by substituting the word inequality by the word injustice.

b. Circularity

van Dijk's (1998) theory of the ideological square which is adopted to construct the critical analysis of a text suffers from circularity. It recognizes 'inequality' as a problem; however, it adopts the same 'inequality' as the solution, which means 'circularity'.

c. One-sidedness

The ideological orientation adopted in van Dijk's (1998) theory of the ideological square is one-sided since it adopts emphasizing the positive sides of the in-group members as well as negative sides of the out-group members. Similarly, it focuses on de-emphasizing the negative side of the in-group members as well as positive sides of the out-group members. The researcher deals objectively with this shortcoming by conducting a modification to Dijk's model by filling the gaps through offering the missing information in order to preserve equilibrium when dealing with the participants in the discourse.

2. The workability of van Dijk's (1998) model of CDA is not openly workable for every text type. Although it is workable for discourses indicating two conflicting groups, it proves not to be workable for those texts having no conflicting groups such as the constitutional texts.

3. van Dijk's (1998) model of CDA can be modified by tracing the same steps of ideology, stance, relationships, and critique arriving at the social change. However, the treatment of these steps is modified. The ideology is no longer 'interest-oriented'. It could be of different nature such as 'right-oriented' as adopted in the two constitutional texts. Such an ideology of the text producer makes him adopt an objective and neutral stance refusing being one-sided as adopted in van Dijk's (1998) model. Such objective relationships lead to making the objective needed social change targeted by the producers of the constitution.

4. It is worth mentioned that there are different forms of equality which have been ignored by van Dijk's (1998) model of the ideological square as he has based his CDA model on his ideology which is "interest-oriented" rather than "truth-oriented".

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