A CRITIQUE OF CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS WITH A SPECIAL REFERENCE TO IMAM ALI'S (P.B.U.H) EPISTLE TO MALIK AL-ASHTER

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Abstract

(CDA), namely, van Dijk's   The present study offers a critique of critical discourse analysis (1998) theory of ideological square, and proposes an alternative approach. It tries to trace the notion of 'equality' in van Dijk's socio-cognitive approach to CDA. The present study takes a number of steps, starting with a theoretical presentation of CDA in general and the theory of ideological square in particular. The theory of 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 CDA. Additionally, there is a need to make some recommendations for resolving the identified shortcomings of CDA. 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 conducts a modification to this theory in order to be more objective when conducting a CDA study. The procedures used in the present study are investigating the shortcomings of van Dijk's theory of the ideological square and conduct a modification to that theory. Finally, the present study has come out with the conclusions that the universality of van Dijk's ideological square is inaccurate and questionable, so there is a need to widen the CDA studies for non-Western world and the model of the theory of the ideological square suffers from a shortcoming of classifying the participants into in-group and out-group members with one-sided treatment that could lead to unequal treatment.

Key words: Critique, Critical Discourse Analysis, Ideological Square, In-group, Out-group, Imam Ali's Epistle

المستخلص

تُقدِّم الدراسة الحالية نقداً لتحليل الخطاب النقدي، بالتحديد، إنموذج المربع الأيديولوجي لفان دايك (سنة، ١٩٩٨)، وتقترح نهجاً بديلاً. تُحاول الدراسة تَتبع 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. تَزعُم هذه الدراسة أنَّ 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 الإعتراف رسمياً بأوجه القصور في التحليل النقدي للخطاب. بالإضافة إلى ذلك، هناك حاجة لتقديم بعض التوصيات لحل أوجه القصور المحدّدة للتحليل النقدي للخطاب. تُحدّد هذه المتطلبات مشاكل الدراسة الحالية. تَهدُف هذه الدراسة إلى تعيين أوجه القصور في نظرية المربع الأيديولوجي لفان دايك وإجراء تعديل على هذه النظرية من أجل أن تكون أكثر موضوعية عند القيام بدراسة التحليل النقدي للخطاب. تَبّتت هذه الدراسة إجراءات البحث عن أوجه القصور التي تعاني منها نظرية المربع الأيديولوجي لفان دايك وتقديم تعديل مُقترح للنظرية نفسها. وفي الختام توصّلت الدراسة الحالية إلى الإستنتاجات الأولية بأنّ عمومية نظرية المربع الأيديولوجي لفان دايك غير دقيقة وقابلة للنقاش، لذلك هناك حاجة لتوسيع دراسات تحليل الخطاب النقدي لتصبح أكثر شمولية، وإنّ إنموذج فان دايك للمربع الأيديولوجي يواجه بعض أوجه القصور ومنها 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.

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Introduction

The present study is an attempt to re-evaluate the critical discourse analysis (CDA, henceforth) through analysing the data selected, that is, Imam Ali's (p.b.u.h.) Epistle to Malik Al-Ashter, 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 Arabic constitutional text needs to be reconsidered. This makes a problem to which the present study tries to offer a solution.

Before dealing with discourse analysis (DA, henceforth) and CDA, the discipline that fits into DA which comes to us from linguistics will be quickly discussed. According to Crystal (2008:283) linguistics is "the scientific study of language" and linguists are those who try to understand why human language is the way it is. Thus, linguists study the history and acquisition of language and its *structure* and *use*. The distinction of structure and use will be briefly identified in the following paragraph.

So, on the *structural* side, we have different areas of linguistics. Structural linguistics is interested in the formal properties of language. It includes *Phonetics*, *Phonology*, *Morphology*, *Pragmatics*, *Semantics*, and *Syntax*. On the other side, we have various kinds of *used* areas of linguistics. These areas include *Discourse Analysis*, *Conversation Analysis*, *Varieties of Language*, *Historical Linguistics*, *Psycholinguistics*, and *Sociolinguistics*.

Historically, linguistics is a branch of cultural anthropology whereas now it becomes more and more independent science and the first level subject among all the classifications of subjects. With the development of linguistics, it has formed many branches, as is clear from the above figure, such as phonology, morphology, semantics, pragmatics, sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics, discourse analysis, etc. (Akmajian et al., 2010: 5-6).

Consequently, Gee (2004) characterised DA as being a study of how written and spoken language serves as a reflection of socio-cultural identities and perspectives. Actually, DA is a general term for a number of different approaches to analyse vocal, written, or sign language, as well as any significant semiotic event (Hult, 2017). In post-structuralism, DA was described as a supplement or even a substitution of text. Then, of recent significance is the term 'critical discourse analysis' (CDA), as popularized by Fairclough's '*Language and Power*' (2001). Precisely, CDA is a type of DA that emphasizes how socio-political spoken and written language serves as an enaction of social inequality and power abuse (van Dijk, 2015).

In summary, CDA is interdisciplinary as it deals with issues across disciplines and its methodology is not limited to a single subject. Linguistics, however, undoubtedly plays a key role in the development of CDA. The contribution of linguistics to CDA is important as many concepts and insights are derived from various branches of linguistics such as pragmatics, sociolinguistics, and psycholinguistics. In addition, CDA is often seen by linguists as a component of linguistics. Therefore, it was essential to examine how linguistics contributes to CDA by providing an overview of the major developments of linguistics.

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.

Concerning 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 they offer (Blommaert, 2005: 22-23). So, to sum up, *CDA* emerged from "*Critical Linguistics*"

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Mustafa Mahmood Abdulaaima - Asst. Prof. Firas Abdul-Munim Jawad

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), "discourse ·exercise of socio-political influence. According to Blommaert and Bulcaen (200 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.

Critical Theory

Critical theory (CT, henceforth) is an approach of social philosophy that emphasizes on reflective assessment, critique of society and culture in order to expose and challenge power structures. With sociological and literary criticism roots, it claims that social issues are influenced and generated more by societal structures and cultural assumptions than by individual or psychological factors. Asserting that ideology is the primary impediment to human liberation, CT was developed as a school of thought primarily by the Frankfurt School theoreticians Herbert Marcuse, Walter Benjamin, Theodor Adorno, Erich Fromm and Max Horkheimer. Horkheimer regarded a theory as critical if it aims "to liberate human beings from the circumstances that enslave them" (Geuss, 1981: 55).

Originally, CT has its roots in a strand of thought which is commonly traced back to the Enlightenment and related to the writings of Kant, Hegel, and Marx. Although this is a significant lineage in the birth of CT, but it is not the only possible one that can be traced. Besides, there is also the imprint of classical Greek thought on autonomy and democracy to be considered as well as the thinking of Nietzsche and Weber. However, in the twentieth century, CT became most closely associated with a distinct school of thought known as the Frankfurt School. It is in the work of Max Horkheimer, Walter Benjamin, Theodor Adorno, Erich Fromm, Herbert Marcuse, Leo Lowenthal and, more recently, Jürgen Habermas that CT acquired its influence and in which the term critical theory came to be used as the symbol of a philosophy which questions modern social and political life through a method of immanent critique. It was essentially an attempt to recover a critical and emancipatory potential that had been overrun by recent intellectual, cultural, social, political, economic and technological developments (Burchill and Linklater, 1996: 137-138).

So, there are two forms of CT, namely, the traditional one which aims at getting a deeper understanding of a particular discourse, and the modern one which is first identified by Max Horkheimer of the Frankfurt School of Sociology in his essay *"Traditional and Critical Theory"* in 1937, in which he described it as a social theory aimed at characterizing and reforming society as a whole, as opposed to traditional theory. In this way, the modern form of CT originated in the Frankfurt School that developed between the First and Second World Wars. It was founded to challenge the perceived oppression and inequality in Western society.

Essential to the Frankfurt School's CT was a concern to explore the central features of contemporary society by understanding its social and historical development, and tracing contradictions in the present that may open up the possibility of transcending contemporary

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Mustafa Mahmood Abdulaaima - Asst. Prof. Firas Abdul-Munim Jawad

society and its built-in pathologies and forms of domination. CT intended 'not simply to eliminate one or other abuse', but to analyse the underlying social structures which result in these abuses with the purpose of overcoming them. Here, it is not difficult to note the presence of the theme advanced by Marx in his eleventh thesis: "philosophers have only interpreted the world in various ways; the point is to change it" (Marx, 1977: 158). This normative interest in recognising immanent possibilities for social change is a defining feature of a line of thought which extends from Kant, through Marx, to contemporary critical theorists such as Habermas. This intention to examine the possibilities of realizing liberation in the modern world entailed critical analyses of both obstructions and immanent tendencies towards 'the rational organization of human activity' (Horkheimer, 1972: 223). Indeed, this concern extends the line of thought back beyond Kant to the classical Greek belief that the rational constitution of the polis finds its expression in personal liberty and the establishment of justice and democracy. Politics, on this view, is the realm concerned with achieving the just life (Burchill and Linklater, 1996: 138).

In brief, Burchill and Linklater (1996: 140) summarize that CT draws upon different of Western social, philosophical and political thought in order to create a theoretical aspects framework capable of reflecting on the nature and purposes of theory and exposing both obvious and subtle forms of injustice and domination in society. CT not only challenges and dismantles traditional methods of theorizing; it also problematizes and attempts to dismantle entrenched forms of social life that restrict human freedom.

van Dijk's Socio-Cognitive Approach

van Dijk is an influential and popular figure in CDA. He argues that DA is not a simple task as it includes various methods as well as stages of analysis of language, cognition, interaction, society, among others (van Dijk, 1985a:10). So, in the analysis process, several levels of analysis need to be combined in order to select what fits one's aims and purposes of analysis from various methods. He also adds that traditional linguistics approaches offer an incomplete description of discourse structures, while less attention has been paid to other characteristics such as overall patterns, style, schematic arrangement, and communicating aspects. Then, he emphasizes that it is very important to connect discourse with context because discourse cannot be analysed as an abstract entity since it has to be analysed according to different contexts. Therefore, DA should give a study of 'real language use… in real situation' (van Dijk, 1985:11).

The definition of discourse was regarded by van Dijk (1989: 164) as a certain form of language use and a certain form of social contact that was interpreted as 'a complete communicative event in a social situation'. According to Dijk, the meaning of discourse is a cognitive structure that requires cognitive representations through discourse production and comprehension. He asserts the relationship between discourse and social cognition or, in other words, social representations (SRs, henceforth) of group partners in his system. SRs can be defined as socially common knowledge that have been largely reproduced in society by discourse, for example, racial biases or stereotypes. Van Dijk emphasizes that SRs need the social aspect of communication and social state which also have discourse dimension because SRs are often taught, used, and altered, overwritten texts or conversations. DA can also be used as an important tool to reveal SRs' implied contents, constructions and strategies.

In addition, van Dijk (1993b:108) describes the role of social cognition as a manager that governs the production as well as interpretation of discourse. As a result, if certain views need to be presupposed and shared by the members of the community, it is extremely important to make it clear to be able to delineate how such presuppositions affect the construction of the discourse.

The socio-cognitive approach to CDA developed by van Dijk (1993a; 2001; 2005) presents just one such model, connecting textual, cognitive, and social structures. A model in

which the link between text and society is mediated by cognition is needed for a lucid account of the discursive construction of social inequality. For van Dijk (1985, 1988b, 2008, 2009), social cognition mediates textual structure and social structure. Social cognition is defined as "the system of mental representations and processes of group members" (1995: 18). van Dijk (1993b: 280) mentions that it is theoretically important for micro-level notions such as text and macro-level notions such as social relations to be mediated by social cognition. In fact, explaining how texts can be socially constructive presupposes an account that links textual structures to social cognition, and social cognition to social structures. Thus, the essential point which makes the framework of van Dijk different from the historical approach of Wodak and the socio-cultural approach of Fairclough is the mediating layer of cognition, i.e., ideology, which lies between society and discourse. The model proposed in the socio- cognitive approach may well be diagrammatically represented as shown in the figure below, where the shaded area represents the micro-level focus of the text analysis and the bi-directional arrows indicate the dialectical relationship between the textual structure and the social structure mediated by social cognition.
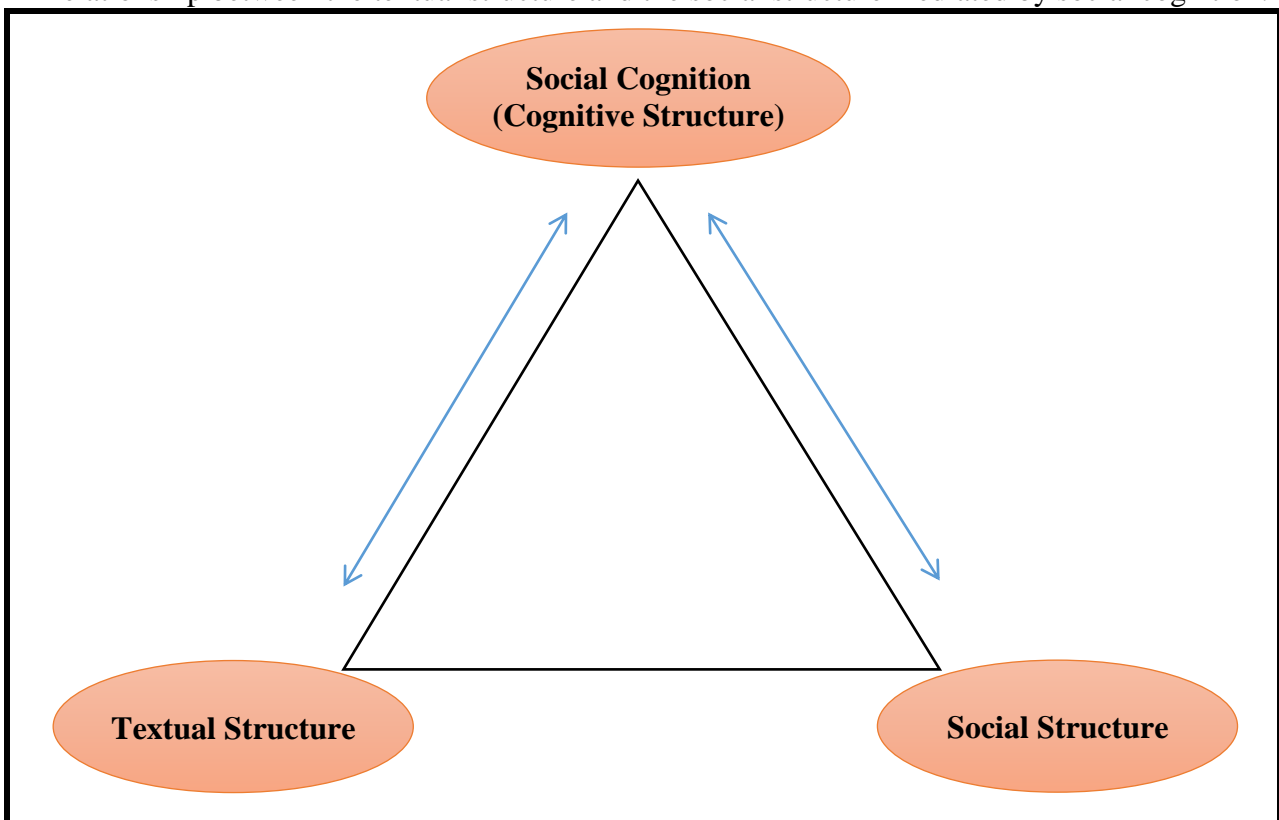
Figure: Textual-Cognitive-Social Structure Triangle according to (van Dijk, 1998: 125)

Social cognition is linked to what van Dijk (2002) refers as social memory. For Dijk, cognitive processes and representations are characterized in relation to an abstract mental structure called memory, which is divided into short-term memory and long-term memory. In short-term memory, actual processing of information (discourse) occurs against information stored in long-term memory (discourses). In fact, long-term memory is further broken into episodic memory and semantic memory. Episodic memory stores information based on personal experiences while semantic memory stores more general information, abstract, and socially shared information, such as our knowledge of the language or our knowledge of the world (van Dijk, 2002: 208). van Dijk (2002) uses social memory to refer to semantic memory because of

A CRITIQUE OF CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS WITH A SPECIAL REFERENCE TO IMAM ALI'S (P.B.U.H) EPISTLE TO MALIK AL-ASHTER

Mustafa Mahmood Abdulaaima - Asst. Prof. Firas Abdul-Munim Jawad

the difference between the socially shared nature of semantic memory and the idiosyncratic nature of episodic memory. Social cognitions are collectively socially shared mental systems and representations. Though represented in the minds of individuals, social cognitions are social 'because they are shared and presupposed by members of the community' (van Dijk, 1993b: 257). In this way, the socio-cognitive model combines both the individualism and the social constructivism correlated with text-consumption. Social cognitions can be more abstractly characterized as 'attitudes, ideologies, opinions, prejudices, discourses or member resources'. Essentially, these socially situated cognitive systems and representations are mostly acquired, used, and improved by means of texts (van Dijk, 1990: 165). This process is facilitated by the human ability for metarepresentation (Sperber, 2000). The representation of a representation is a metarepresentation. Texts are public metarepresentations that 'convey mental representations and have, at least by extension, some of the characteristics of the mental representations they convey' (Sperber, 2000: 128). Thus, interpreting texts requires creating cognitive metarepresentations of the linguistic representations in the text (Hart, 2010:16).

Finally yet importantly, van Dijk (1998) states that "the meaning of the text is embedded in the discourse by language producers, and as such, it exists and is represented in their minds." Thus, the cognitive property of the discourse of the participants, as part of the contextual analysis, is emphasized in his framework. Consequently, he conceptualizes the "*ideological square*", which will be discussed, as a framework within which discourse understanding and production can be analysed and connected to the context, i.e., society.

Criticality and Negativity

Criticality is the distinguishing feature of almost any CDA research trying to expose the relations of power within any context. However, the difficulty is that analysing power relations is not a one-way street. This means that a critical discourse analyst not only takes a critical role to criticize the abuse of power and how it is used to differentiate against a certain race, class, religion, gender, and so forth. It also implies that he or she ought to be more active in giving power within the society to set up an appropriate road map for change. In this respect, Martin (2004: 180) differentiates between what he calls the two faces of the CDA: 'CDA realis' and 'CDA irrealis'. He states, for the first, that this face is the better known because it has been the main subject of CDA studies. For example, the studies that investigate how discourse and semiosis are used in order to serve dominant ideologies. This face is defined by Martin (2004: 180) as 'deconstructive', and thus, it can be inferred that restricting ourselves to this face as analysts means that the full potential of CDA has not been achieved. If we depend solely on CDA 'realis', we are stuck with accounts of unfair realities, but we are not directed by how discourse, with all the power allocated to it, will actually move in the direction of changing these unfair realities. Consequently, CDA must also be concerned with the other face, i.e., CDA 'irrealis', which Martin (2004: 182) guides towards 'constructive social action.' He adds that, because most of the literature is about the first type, research in this field is falling behind and not achieving its highest potential.

Nevertheless, being critical in CDA necessarily involves taking a stance and being partial. Thus, if the analyst positions himself or herself in accordance with this, it is likely that taking a stance will go either direction, i.e., positive or negative. In fact, positive DA is another way of conducting CDA research, which has long been ignored in the literature. Thus, it is now known that it is not incompatible to be positive and critical at the same time; but instead, 'critical' is an umbrella concept integrating positive approaches. This is very important since deconstructive analysis is not enough on its own, but needs to be accompanied by constructive analysis of social action (ibid.).

Imam Ali's (p.b.u.h.) Epistle to Malik Al-Ashter

The 7th century epistle of the Islamic leader Imam Ali (p.b.u.h.), the Caliph of Islam and the first Imam of the Ahlul Bayt (p.b.u.t.), was given to Malik Al-Ashter, a faithful supporter and a great warrier who served as the governor of Egypt. Imam Ali (p.b.u.h.) sent Malik Al-Ashter to Egypt as a governor, and then he provided him with this record to help him in doing his job, especially in social and political issues. Imam Ali (p.b.u.h.) is well-known for his constant contribution to spiritual thought and in the Arabic world. The historian Al-Mas'udi in (Murooj-uz-Zahab) recognized Imam Ali (p.b.u.h.) as famous for being a great jurist and the source of no less than 480 treaties, lectures, and epistles on a variety of subjects dealing with philosophy, religion, law, and politics. These contributions are held in such a high regard, both for their contents and for their intrinsic literary worth, that some of his masterpieces have stimulated many subjects of study in Muslim colleges and universities (Al-Mas'udi, vol. II :33).

The Epistle is considered as one of the earlier Islamic political documents that regulate the everyday life of people. It is one of the most comprehensive and elaborative document which illustrates the ideas and beliefs of Imam Ali (p.b.u.h.) about the public administration. In the epistle, Imam Ali (p.b.u.h.) advises Malik al-Ashter to treat the people of Egypt with justice. Thus, this epistle has come to be seen by some as a model of justice to the Islamic governance (Morgan, 1987:196). With its concentration on justice, the epistle is seen as a model for good and effective governance and also some assert that it reflects Imam Ali's own profound and great wisdom (Al-Jibouri, 2013: 230). Mohammad Jawad Mughniyah, who is one of the most prominent Shia scholars in Lebanon, insists that the epistle provides a great constitution that is universally applicable. The epistle consists of instructions and advice to Malik al-Ashter to take care of the people in power and those who follow them (Nasr, Seyyed, and Dabashi, 1989: 3).

In essence, this epistle is, on one hand, the Gospel of the principles of management as taught and presented in the Holy Quran, a code for the establishment of a kind and fair rule, shedding light on different aspects of justice, benevolence, and mercy. It is also an order based on the ethics of Divine leadership where justice and mercy are shown to human beings regardless of class, colour, and creed; and, on the other hand, it is a *thesis* on the higher values of morality.

The Structure of Imam Ali's (p.b.u.h.) Epistle to Malik Al-Ashter

The structure of Imam Ali's (p.b.u.h.) epistle consists of many paragraphs that deal with specific issues of regulating people's lives. Each paragraph represents one or more parts that deal directly or indirectly with one of these issues.

The first part of the epistle is the introduction which consists of the opening that begins with a conventional part of Islamic speech. The second part of the epistle consists of the body of the text. Imam Ali's (p.b.u.h.) epistle contains all the issues that are expressed throughout the text.

Afterward, Imam Ali's (p.b.u.h.) epistle reveals many issues beginning with the personal qualifications of rulers, counsellors,   ministers and so forth. In another part of the epistle, people are classified according to the role they occupy in Islamic society. This paragraph is followed by other detailed paragraphs that help to illustrate the role of each person.

The pre final paragraphs of the body are about some personal pieces of advice to Malik Al-Ashter concerning his communication with Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) and some of them are about his behaviour and action as a ruler.

Finally, the last part functions as a closing remark of the epistle when Imam Ali (p.b.u.h.) reminds Malik Al-Ashter of the previous good governments, the prophet Mohammed's (p.b.u.h.)

A CRITIQUE OF CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS WITH A SPECIAL REFERENCE TO IMAM ALI'S (P.B.U.H) EPISTLE TO MALIK AL-ASHTER

Mustafa Mahmood Abdulaaima - Asst. Prof. Firas Abdul-Munim Jawad

great traditions, and the Holly Quran to be the guide in his duty. Then, a closing remark indicates the end of Imam Ali (p.b.u.h.) to Malik Al-Ashter.

The Notion of "Ideological Square" of van Dijk

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), which will be discussed in detail, 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):
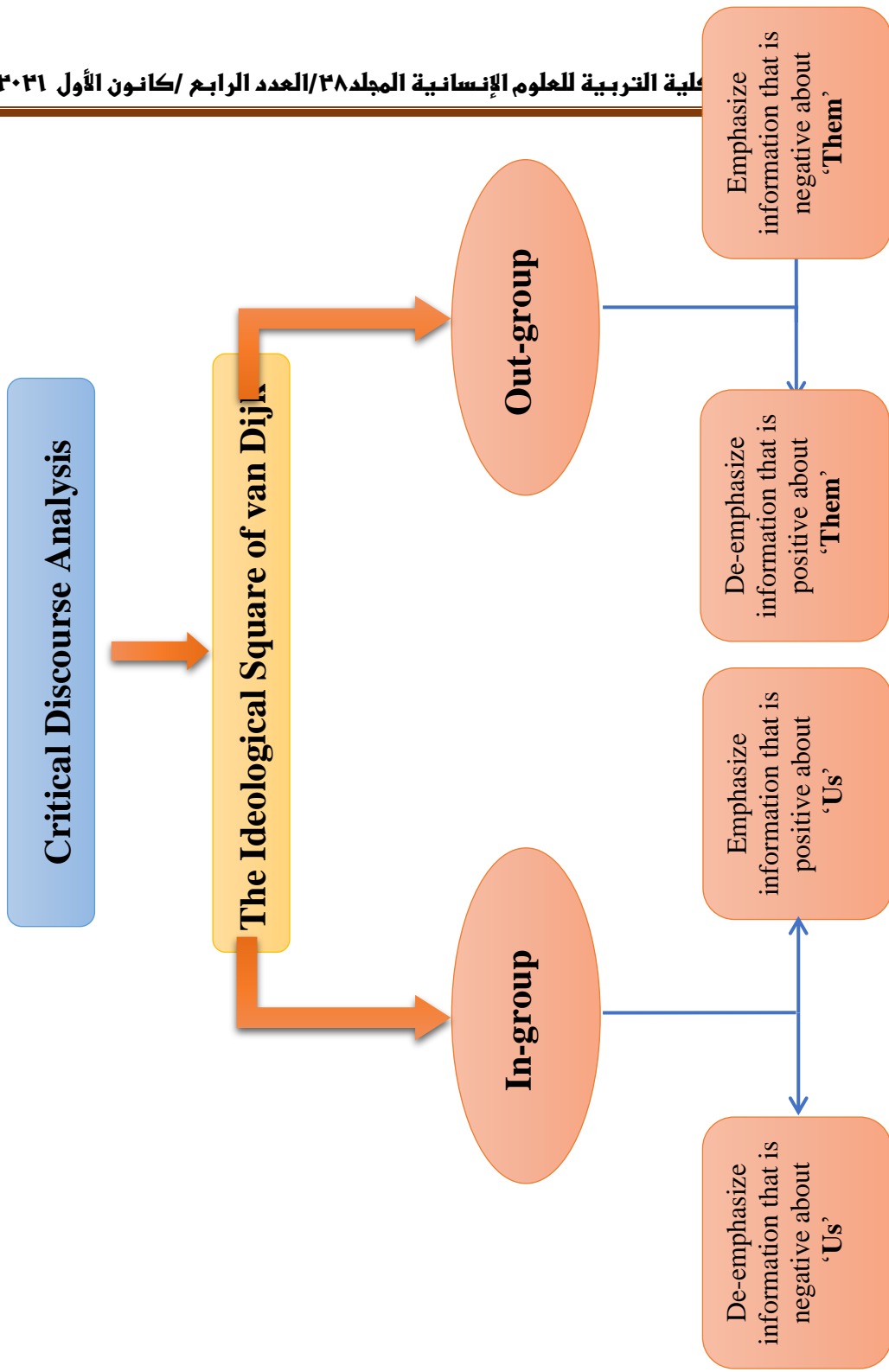
Figure (1): The Ideological Square Based on van Dijk (1998)

The Fundamental Shortcomings of van Dijk's Ideological Square

A CRITIQUE OF CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS WITH A SPECIAL REFERENCE TO IMAM ALI'S (P.B.U.H) EPISTLE TO MALIK AL-ASHTER

Mustafa Mahmood Abdulaaima - Asst. Prof. Firas Abdul-Munim Jawad

Equality vs. 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 table (1) 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***.

One-sidedness

Over and above the problem of the confusing concepts of 'equality' vs. 'justice', 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 as will be shown later.

Circularity

In addition to the problem of one-sided treatment of the discourse participants, 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 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

A CRITIQUE OF CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS WITH A SPECIAL
REFERENCE TO IMAM ALI'S (P.B.U.H) EPISTLE TO MALIK AL-ASHTER

Mustafa Mahmood Abdulaaima - Asst. Prof. Firas Abdul-Munim Jawad

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*.

The Suggested Modification to van Dijk's Model

As shown in the previous section that van Dijk's model of "*ideological square*" suffers from various fundamental shortcomings which have been identified, thus a suggested modification adopted by this study to that model will be presented in this section. Consequently, the suggested modification of van Dijk's (1998) "*ideological square*" which is claimed to be more objective, workable and practical by the present study, as shown in the following figure, represented in terms of emphasizing the positive actions of what the writer considers as the in-group and emphasizing its negative actions as well. On the other hand, there should be an emphasis on the positive actions of what the writer considers as the out-group and emphasizing its negative actions as well. In the light of the above considerations, the following figure shows a diagram of the suggested modification of the model of van Dijk's (1998) "*ideological square*":
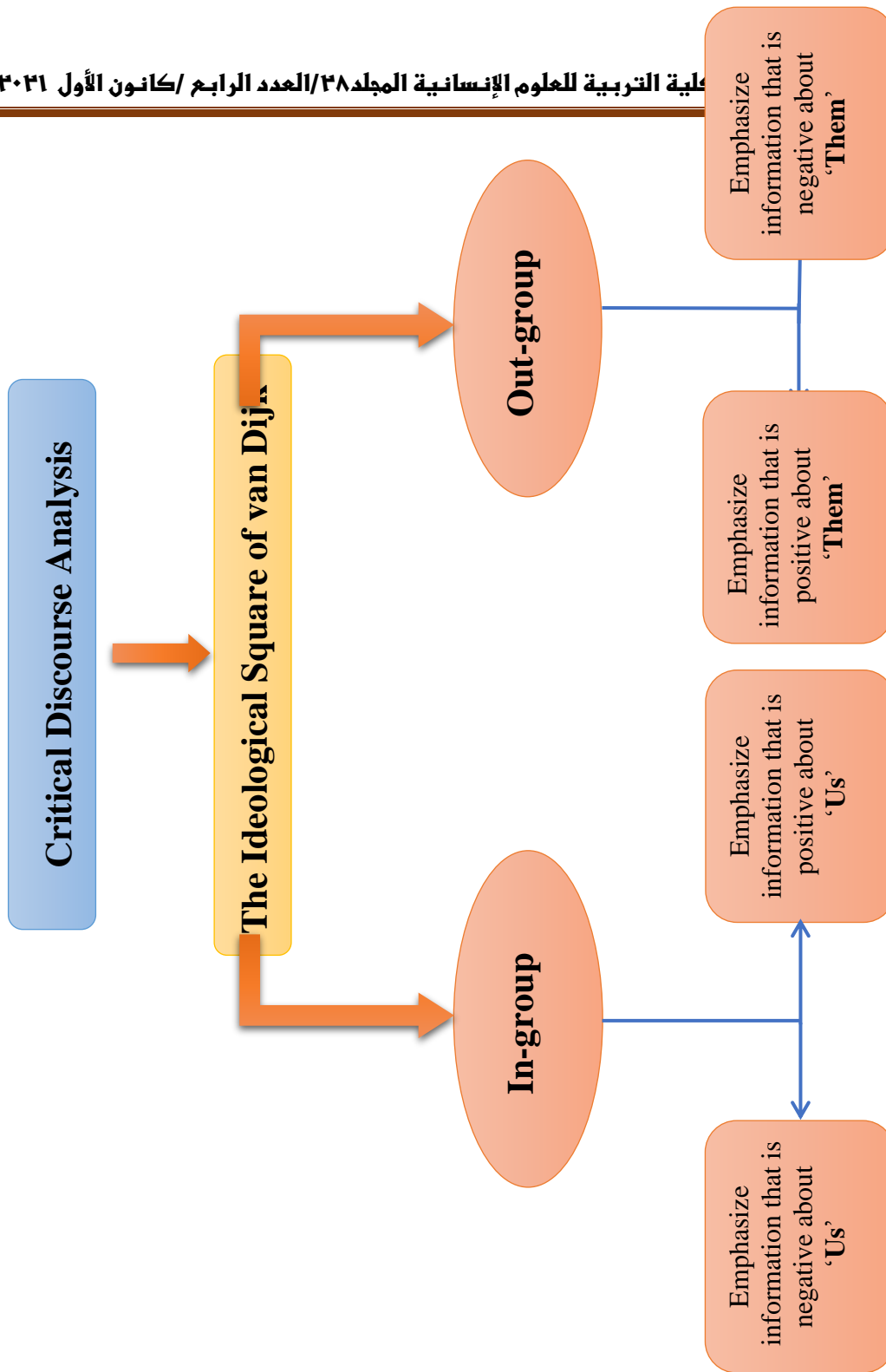
Critical Discourse Analysis

The Ideological Square of van Dij...

Out-group

In-group

Emphasize information that is negative about 'Them'

Emphasize information that is positive about 'Them'

Emphasize information that is positive about 'Us'

Emphasize information that is negative about 'Us'

Figure (2): The Suggested Modification by the Present Study to van Dijk's "Ideological Square"

'Self' and 'Other' Representations of van Dijk's (1998) "Ideological Square"

As mentioned earlier that van Dijk (1998) introduces a valuable analytical framework he calls the "*ideological square*", which clearly expresses the essential features of the twin strategies of positive "*in-group*" description and negative "*out-group*" description. Thereby, van

A CRITIQUE OF CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS WITH A SPECIAL REFERENCE TO IMAM ALI'S (P.B.U.H) EPISTLE TO MALIK AL-ASHTER

Mustafa Mahmood Abdulaaima - Asst. Prof. Firas Abdul-Munim Jawad

Dijk identifies it as a polarization between '*Us*' and '*Them*' wherein the positive and negative features of in-group, i.e., Us, and out-group, i.e., Them, are emphasized and de-emphasized. That is to say, the polarization between 'Us' and 'Them' is expressed by all the linguistic dimensions of a text that are interpreted as being one of the following overall strategies:

i. *Positive-Self Representation*: representing the members of the in-groups '*Us*' in a positive way, through discourse, by de-emphasizing their negative and emphasizing their positive characteristics;

ii. *Negative-Other Representation*: representing the members of the out-groups '*Them*' in a negative way, through discourse, by de-emphasizing their positive and emphasizing their negative characteristics (Daghigh, Sanatifar and Awang, 2018:1-2).

From the four dimensions that make it up, the "*ideological square*" gets its name and that illustrates and justifies the existence of *inequality* in society. Through both emphasis and reduction, the square polarizes the in-groups and out-groups: ideological discourses emphatically introduce the good *self* and the bad *others* and at the same time reduce the bad *self* and the good *others*. van Dijk (1995) claims that ideologies are often articulated and based on the ideological square. In brief, the ideological square can be summarized in the following points:

1. Emphasize '*Our*' good things.
2. Emphasize '*Their*' bad things.
3. De-emphasize '*Our*' bad things.
4. De-emphasize '*Their*' good things.

Furthermore, van Dijk states that ideologies are more often than expressed and based on the ideological square. According to him, people "engage in intergroup discourse for reasons of self-presentation, self-defence, legitimation, persuasion, recruiting, and so on" (van Dijk, 1998:125). This means that many group ideologies involve the presentation of *Self* and *Others*, *Us* and *Them*. Hence, many seem to be polarized - (We are Good), (They are Bad) and the ideological square functions to polarize *in-group* and *out-group* in order to present the "We" group in a positive way and the "They" group in extremely negative way (Kuo and Nakamura, 2005: 410). However, discourse is a forum for interactions which help to build and maintain groups as well as intergroup relationships. Frequently, intergroup discourse is polarized between '*Us*' vs. '*Them*' dichotomy. So, a four-dimensional classification that characterizes ideological intergroup discourse is proposed by van Dijk (1998:267). Once more, the "*ideological square*" of Dijk could clearly be put the following way:

1. Express/Emphasize positive things about 'Us';
2. Express/Emphasize negative things about 'Them';
3. Suppress/De-emphasize negative things about 'Us'; and
4. Suppress/De-emphasize positive things about 'Them'.

Besides, 'Self' and 'Other' representations according to van Dijk's "*ideological square*" can be illustrated in figure (1) below:
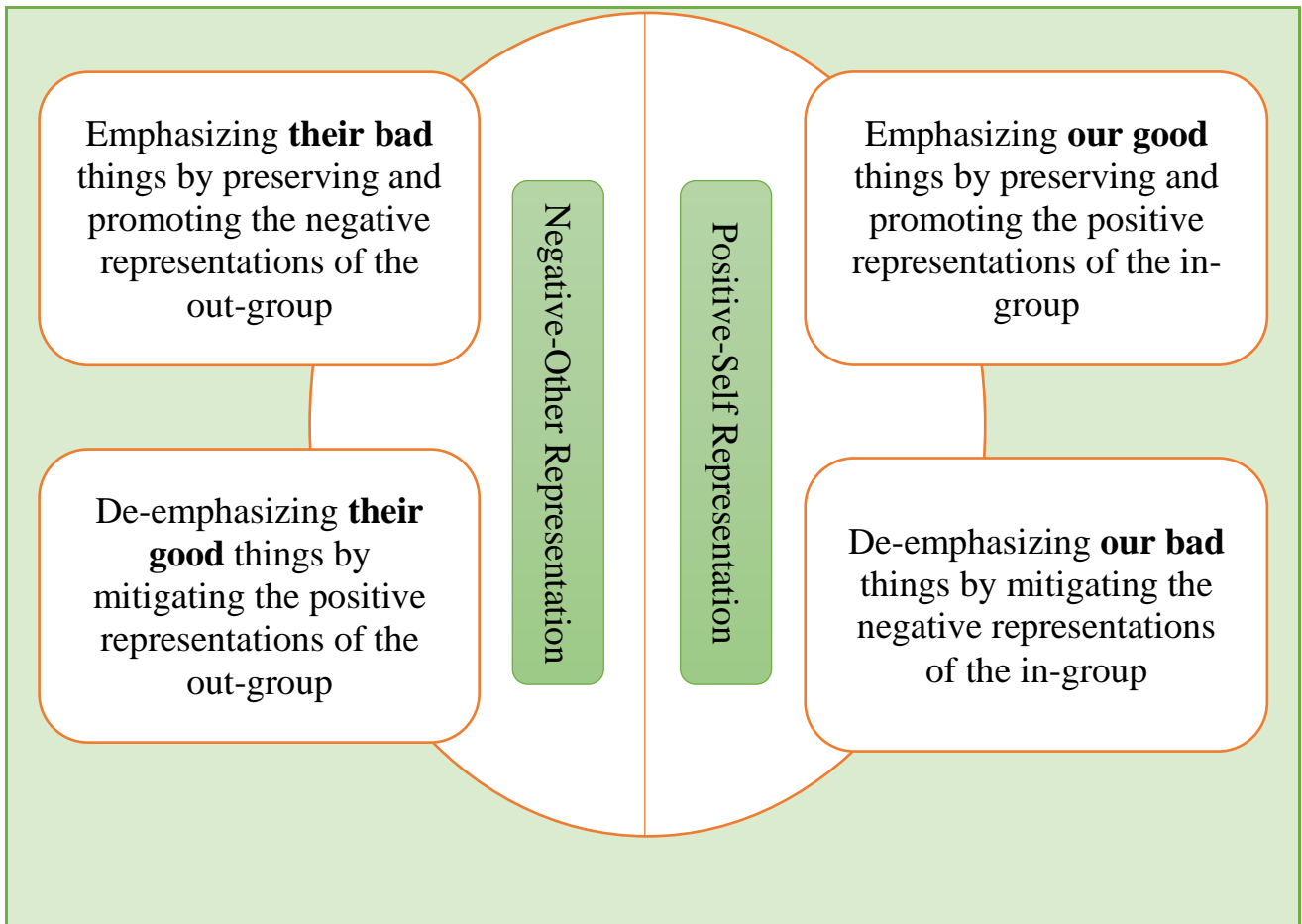
Figure (3): 'Self' and 'Other' Representations According to van Dijk's (1998)
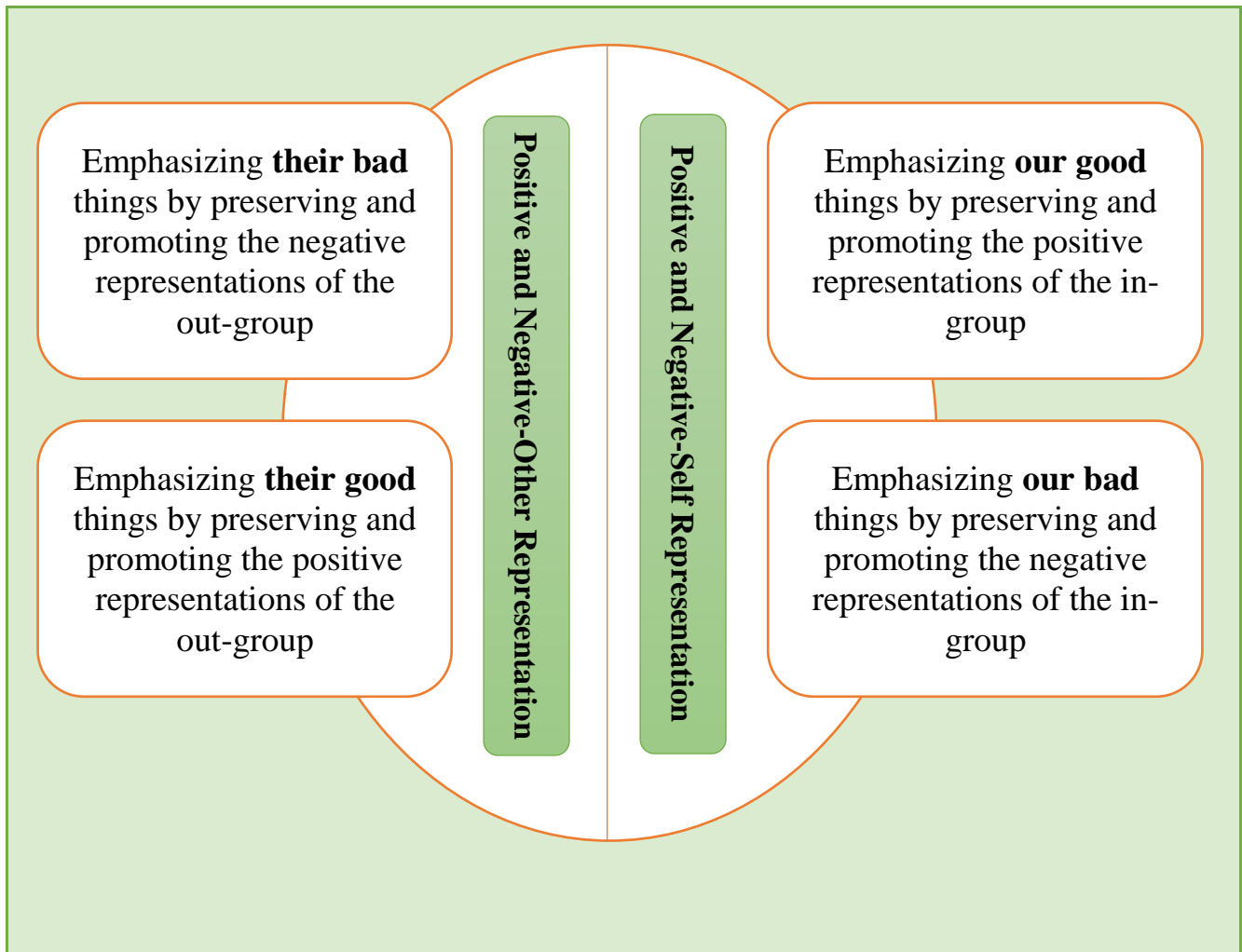
As figure (3) shows, it is quite clear that the *ideological square* polarizes the in-groups and out-groups by means of emphasis and mitigation. Certainly, ideological discourses introduce the good self and the bad other and at the same time mitigate the bad self and the good other. It is basically in the interests of the writer or the speaker to emphasize positive aspects of the in-group and de-emphasize any negative aspects. Also, it is in the interest of the writer or the speaker to emphasize the negative aspects of the out-group and de-emphasize any positive aspects of the out-group. This is for the benefit of the writer or the speaker and for his or her own group. So, van Dijk (1998: 267) sums and describes these strategies as the "*positive self-presentation*" and "*negative other-presentation*." However, analysing ideology in discourse requires paying special attention to properties that seem to demonstrate conflicting opinions, beliefs, values and positions between groups, i.e., between 'Us' and 'Them' which means between in-groups and out-groups (van Dijk, 1995:22).

Once again, the present study suggests a modification to van Dijk's 'Self' and 'Other' representations. The modification, as figure (4) shows, is claimed to be more objective by the present study in which it polarizes the in-groups and out-groups by means of emphasis on the positive and negative things of the in-group and out-group as well. Thus, the writer or the speaker should emphasize the positive and negative aspects of the in-group. Simultaneously, the writer or the speaker should emphasize the positive and negative aspects of the out-group. Thus, concerning 'self' and 'other' representation, the suggested modification to van Dijk's

A CRITIQUE OF CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS WITH A SPECIAL
REFERENCE TO IMAM ALI'S (P.B.U.H) EPISTLE TO MALIK AL-ASHTER

Mustafa Mahmood Abdulaaima - Asst. Prof. Firas Abdul-Munim Jawad

"ideological square" describes these strategies as the "*positive and negative-self representation*"
and "*positive and negative-other representation*." The modified application of van Dijk's
"*ideological square*" can be amply illustrated in the following figure:

Emphasizing **their bad** things by preserving and promoting the negative representations of the out-group

Emphasizing **their good** things by preserving and promoting the positive representations of the out-group

Positive and Negative-Other Representation

Positive and Negative-Self Representation

Emphasizing **our good** things by preserving and promoting the positive representations of the in-group

Emphasizing **our bad** things by preserving and promoting the negative representations of the in-group

**Figure (4): The Suggested Modification by the Present Study to van Dijk's (1998) 'Self' and 'Other'
Representations**

Data Analysis

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**

Concerning ideology, since the text producer of the Epistle, namely, Imam Ali (p.b.u.h) is
the prime religious and political leader of the Muslims, i.e., the Khalifa, his ideology governing
his constitutional text is of religious nature focusing on paying a great attention to the relations

between Malik Al-Ashter, the new governor of Egypt, and its people besides not forgetting the presence of the greatly influential participant in life, i.e., Allah. Indeed, the following quotation is extremely expressive:

In the Name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful

This is what Allah's servant Ali, Amir al-muʾminin, has ordered Malik ibn al-Harith al-Ashtar in his instrument (of appointment) for him when he made him Governor of Egypt for the collection of its revenues, fighting against its enemies, seeking the good of its people and making its cities prosperous. He has ordered him to fear Allah, to prefer obedience to Him, and to follow what He has commanded in His Book (Quran) out of His obligatory and elective commands, without following which one cannot achieve virtue, nor (can one) be evil save by opposing them and ignoring them, and to help Allah the Glorified, with his heart, hand and tongue, because Allah whose name is Sublime takes the responsibility for helping him who helps Him, and for protecting him who gives Him support. He also orders him to break his heart off from passions, and to restrain it at the time of their increase, because the heart leads towards evil unless Allah has mercy (Nahj al-Balaghah, letter 53).

□

هَذَا مَا أَمَرَ بِهِ عَبْدُ اللهِ عَلِيٌّ أَمِيرُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ مَالِكَ بْنَ الْحَارِثِ الْأَشْتَرَ فِي عَهْدِهِ إِلَيْهِ حِينَ وَلَّاهُ مِصْرَ جِبَايَةَ خَرَاجِهَا وَجِهَادَ عَدُوِّهَا وَاسْتِصْلَاحَ أَهْلِهَا وَعِمَارَةَ بِلَادِهَا أَمَرَهُ بِتَقْوَى اللهِ وَإِيثَارِ طَاعَتِهِ وَاتِّبَاع مَا أَمَرَ بِهِ فِي كِتَابِهِ مِنْ فَرَائِضِهِ وَسُنَنِهِ الَّتِي لَا يَسْعَدُ أَحَدٌ إِلَّا بِاتِّبَاعِهَا وَلَا يَشْقَى إِلَّا مَعَ جُحُودِهَا وَإِضَاعَتِهَا وَأَنْ يَنْصُرَ اللَّهَ سُبْحَانَهُ بِقَلْبِهِ وَيَدِهِ وَلِسَانِهِ فَإِنَّهُ جَلَّ اسْمُهُ قَدْ تَكَفَّلَ بِنَصْرِ مَنْ نَصَرَهُ وَإِعْزَازِ مَنْ أَعَزَّهُ وَأَمَرَهُ أَنْ يَكْسِرَ نَفْسَهُ مِنَ الشَّهَوَاتِ وَيَزَعَهَا عِنْدَ الْجَمَحَاتِ فَإِنَّ النَّفْسَ أَمَّارَةٌ بِالسُّوءِ إِلَّا مَا رَحِمَ اللّهُ (نهج البلاغة ، الرسالة ٥٣).

2. Equality vs. justice

The following example shows that even when there is some conflict between two conflicting groups, the ideology governing making the needed social change does not include classifying these groups according to the '**interest**' of the text producer or the 'power' of one group over another. The adopted ideology in the Epistle of Imam Ali (p.b.u.h.) is that of '**justice**':

For I have heard the prophet of God say that no nation or society, in which the strong do not discharge their duty to the weak, will occupy a high position (Nahj al-Balaghah, letter 53).

فَإِنِّي سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللّهِ (صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم) يَقُولُ فِي غَيْرِ مَوْطِنٍ لَنْ تُقَدَّسَ أُمَّةٌ لَا يُؤْخَذُ لِلضَّعِيفِ فِيهَا حَقُّهُ مِنَ الْقَوِيِّ غَيْرَ مُتَتَعْتِعٍ (نهج البلاغة ، الرسالة ٥٣).

3. The relationships

The relationship between the participants in the Epistle of Imam Ali (p.b.u.h) is not designed according to categorizing the participants into in-group as the dominating group and the out-group as the dominated group who are in conflict. The following example is illustrative in which Imam Ali (p.b.u.h) directs Malik Al-Ashter that the dominating group, including him, is not to be against the Egyptian people being the dominated group.

Keep your desires under control and deny yourself that which you have been prohibited from, for, by such abstinence alone, you will be able to distinguish between what is good to them and what is not. Develop in your heart the feeling of love for your people and let it be the source of kindliness and blessing to them.

A CRITIQUE OF CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS WITH A SPECIAL REFERENCE TO IMAM ALI'S (P.B.U.H) EPISTLE TO MALIK AL-ASHTER

Mustafa Mahmood Abdulaaima - Asst. Prof. Firas Abdul-Munim Jawad

Do not behave with them like a barbarian, and do not appropriate to yourself that which belongs to them. Remember that the citizens of the state are of two categories. They are either your brethren in religion or your brethren in kind. They are subject to infirmities and liable to commit mistakes. Some indeed do commit mistakes. But forgive them even as you would like God to forgive you. Bear in mind that you are placed over them, even as I am placed over you. And then there is God even above him who has given you the position of a Governor in order that you may look after those under you and to be sufficient unto them

(Nahj al-Balaghah, letter 53).

فَامْلِكْ هَوَاكَ وَشُحَّ بِنَفْسِكَ عَمَّا لَا يَحِلُّ لَكَ فَإِنَّ الشُّحَّ بِالنَّفْسِ الْإِنْصَافُ مِنْهَا فِيمَا أَحَبَّتْ أَوْ كَرِهَتْ. وَأَشْعِرْ قَلْبَكَ الرَّحْمَةَ لِلرَّعِيَّةِ وَالْمَحَبَّةَ لَهُمْ وَاللُّطْفَ بِهِمْ وَلَا تَكُونَنَّ عَلَيْهِمْ سَبُعاً ضَارِياً تَغْتَنِمُ أَكْلَهُمْ فَإِنَّهُمْ صِنْفَانِ إِمَّا أَخٌ لَكَ فِي الدِّينِ وَإِمَّا نَظِيرٌ لَكَ فِي الْخَلْقِ يَفْرُطُ مِنْهُمُ الزَّلَلُ وَتَعْرِضُ لَهُمُ الْعِلَلُ وَيُؤْتَى عَلَى أَيْدِيهِمْ فِي الْعَمْدِ وَالْخَطَإِ فَأَعْطِهِمْ مِنْ عَفْوِكَ وَصَفْحِكَ مِثْلَ الَّذِي تُحِبُّ وَتَرْضَى أَنْ يُعْطِيَكَ اللهُ مِنْ عَفْوِهِ وَصَفْحِهِ فَإِنَّكَ فَوْقَهُمْ وَوَالِي الْأَمْرِ عَلَيْكَ فَوْقَكَ وَاللهُ فَوْقَ مَنْ وَلَّاكَ (نهج البلاغة ، الرسالة ٥٣).

4. Social change

The targeted social change is to make the dominating participant Malik Al-Ashter govern Egypt as well as its people justly and well for the sake of their good. The targeted social change is planned to be achieved critically but in a way that is different from that of van Dijk.

Consequently, 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 following conclusions:
1. Concerning the problem of confusing 'equality' with 'justice', van Dijk's (2001) definition to CDA needs a re-consideration since it confuses *in*equality with *in*justice. This confusion can be treated by substituting the word *inequality* by the word *injustice*.
2. Although van Dijk's (1998) theory of ideological square is widely used and accepted, it is not universal. That is to say, the universality of van Dijk's (1998) ideological square is inaccurate and questionable, so there is a need to widen the CDA studies for non-Western world.
3. With respect to the issue of one-sidedness, van Dijk's model of ideological square shortcoming of classifying the participants into in-group and out-group members with one-sided treatment that could lead to unequal treatment. The researcher deals objectively with this shortcoming by his suggestion of the modification of 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.

4. In accordance with interest-governed, objectivity, morality and justice are questionable in CDA in general and van Dijk's model of ideological square in specific.
5. Finally, regarding the shortcoming of circularity, van Dijk's model of ideological square suffers from circularity since the problem of inequality is tried to be solved by the same problem of inequality when classifying participants into in-group and out-group with

subjective emphasizing on positive information of in-group and negative information of out-group and de-emphasizing negative information of in-group and positive ones of out-group.

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A CRITIQUE OF CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS WITH A SPECIAL REFERENCE TO IMAM ALI'S (P.B.U.H) EPISTLE TO MALIK AL-ASHTER

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