



DBB 307 TEXTUAL STUDIES IN A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

1

DISCOURSE AND MEDIA

- **Media discourse** refers to interactions that take place through a broadcast platform, whether spoken or written, in which the discourse is oriented to a non-present reader, listener or viewer.
- **Media discourse** is a broad term which can refer to a totality of how reality is represented in broadcast and printed media from television to newspaper. Very few of us are unaffected by media discourse.
- Within academic areas such as **cultural studies, media studies, critical theory, semiotics, rhetoric, film studies**, the impacts, roles, and cultural reproductions of “**media**” are analyzed.
- The discourse and language of the media are also addressed by **academics**, and increasingly by **linguists**.

- ▶ The discourse of the **news media includes two main components:**
 1. the news story, spoken or written text,
 2. process involved in producing the texts.

- ▶ **Most linguists consider the news text from two important points:**
 1. that of discourse **structure** or linguistic **function**,
 2. according to **its impact** as ideology-bearing discourse.

- ▶ Either view assumes an **dynamic mechanism** that results in the unique display of media discourse over **time, culture, and context.**

- ▶ The references to **news or media discourse** will concern the broad range of **stories, features, and genres** that makes up “news” – in the modalities of **print, broadcast, and web**.
- ▶ The **three main approaches to the study of media discourse** can be characterized as:
 - (1) discourse analytic,
 - (2) sociolinguistic,
 - (3) nonlinguistic.

- ▶ **Studies of media discourse focus on the following primary topics:**
 - the **narrative or sociolinguistic elements** that construct or underlie news discourse
 - the implications of **quotation and reported speech**
 - the exercise of **power, bias, and ideology in the press**
 - the effects of the media in creating **social imbalance, racism, immigration and minority**
 - key genres, including **broadcast interviews**
 - **the role of the audience** in terms of **reception, discourse comprehension** and **position within the media process.**
 - issues of **production** and **process of newsgathering and writing.**

- ▶ Biber et al. (1999) identify the language of newspapers as one of the four major registers in the English language, along with spoken conversation, academic writing and fiction.
- ▶ Much attention is given to '**genre analysis**' (see Swales, 1990) in the linguistic study of newspapers. That is where the language used in print media is described in terms of what makes it different from other genres of language.
- ▶ For example, Toolan (1988) examines the language of **press advertising**. Other studies have examined **sports reporting in newspapers** (Wallace, 1977; Ghadessy, 1988; Bhatia, 1993).

- ▶ The area of **critical discourse analysis** offers more potential as a framework for the analysis of newspapers and there has been a number of substantial works in this area. When coupled with corpus linguistics, it offers a very powerful tool for the analysis of how newspaper texts over time.
- ▶ The applications of discourse analysis in media research are as varied as the very fields of discourse studies and mass communication themselves.

THE TEXTUAL ANALYSIS OF NEWS

- **The study of news reports in the press** is one of the major tasks of discourse-analytical media research.
- Most of our social and political knowledge and beliefs about the world derive from the dozens of news reports we read or see every day.
- According to van Dijk (1998), **global (macro)** and **local (micro)** levels of news discourse, must be examined.
- Thematic structures & topics and headlines are analyzed at the macro level, local semantics, syntactic & lexical style are analyzed at the micro level.

► **Macro Level**

- Thematic Structures & Topics
- Headlines

► **Micro Level**

- Local Semantics
- Style and rhetoric: Syntactic and lexical style

Thematic Structures

- ▶ By thematic structures, we understand **the hierarchical organization of themes or topics of a text**. The thematic structure includes the topics.
- ▶ The main point dominating the thematic structure is expressed first and in the main headline of the newspaper.

Headlines

- ▶ The most prominent feature of the news discourse is headlines. They express the most important information of the text.
- ▶ The information in the headline is also the information that is best recalled by the readers.

Local Semantics

- ▶ Local semantic analyses should explain how the meaning of the words and sentence contribute to and confirm the overall bias by the media.
- ▶ In Dijk's words, "a description may add an **irrelevant detail**", but this detail is irrelevant within a more general negative portrayal of a person or group."

- ▶ Together with **softening “our” negative actions**, **“their” negative actions need to be exaggerated**; usually by **“hyperboles”**.

- **Speech acts** such as threats can involve ideologies too.

Style and rhetoric

Lexical and syntactic style

- ▶ **Lexical style** is the choice of words in a text mostly used as negativization, which expose the underlying opinions and ideologies of the writer.
- ▶ **Syntactic style**, structures of sentences, is also significant in analyzing discourse as lexical style.

- ▶ The use of the passive voice allows the journalist to omit precise sources. This strategy in texts is used “when it is essential to conceal responsibility for negative actions”

- The **irony** was used to indicate the reality is the opposite of what was said.

- ▶ **Simile** is also one of the devices of the rhetoric, two fundamentally unlike things are explicitly compared, usually in a phrase introduced by like or as.