

2nd GLOBAL CONFERENCE on LINGUISTICS and FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING,
LINELT-2014, Dubai – United Arab Emirates, December 11 – 13, 2014

Resisting Power in Discourse

Mohamed Said Negm^{a*}

^a*M.S.Negm, Prof. of Linguistics, Tanta Univ.*

Abstract

The majority of studies in critical discourse analysis focus exclusively on one aspect of the language/power relation, language as a context for power and domination. Fairclough (1994:50) argues that power is "implicit within everyday social practices" and that it is predominant "at every level in all domains of life". Similarly, Chaika (1994:4) remarks that everyday discourse and journalistic discourse are "effective ways to maintaining power relations within society." Fowler (1985) contends that language continuously constitutes the statuses and roles upon which people base their claims to exercise power, and the statuses and roles which seem to require subservience. The aforementioned studies are guided by Fairclough's model which addresses the way language encodes power relations in discourse analysis. The aforementioned studies dealt with only one aspect of the relation between language and power. They deal with discourse as a context for power to be enacted, maintained and perpetuated. On the other hand, discourse as a context for power resistance is neglected. Van Dijk (1993:250), one of the main proponents of critical discourse analysis, admits that he is more interested in top- down relations of dominance than bottom-up relations of resistance, compliance and acceptance." He continues to argue that although an analysis of the notion of resistance needs to be included in a broader theory of power," his approach focuses on the elite and their discursive strategies for the maintenance of inequality." Even when van Dijk refers to people who are denied power, he portrays them as "victims who help perpetuate injustice and reproduce dominance and inequality.

© 2015 Published by Elsevier Ltd. This is an open access article under the CC BY-NC-ND license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>).

Peer-review under responsibility of Academic World Research and Education Center.

Keywords: resisting power, discourse, critical

1. Introduction

Fairclough's(1989) analysis is based on police/witness and doctor/patient interviews, which are contexts for the monopolization of the devices of power by one interlocutor only. Thus, Fairclough's analysis portrays one participant in discourse exploiting all the devices of power while the other participant is passive showing no active

* Mohamed Said Negm Tel.: +78543786232
E-mail address: ngm_msaid@hotmail.com

response. In doctor /patient interviews, the doctor has the right to give direction and orders to the patient and reserves for himself the right to interrupt, whereas the patient can only listen and act submissively. In police/witness interviews, the policeman uses repetition, question and gives evaluation or orders to the witness.

The notion of power is further elaborated by (Fairclough, 1989) who explores various dimensions of the relations of power and language focusing on two major aspects of the power/ language relation: power in discourse and power behind discourse. Power in discourse is concerned with discourse as a place where relations of power are actually exercised and enacted; power behind discourse focuses on how certain types of discourse are shaped and constituted by relations of power. In other words, power behind discourse means that the whole social order of discourse is put together and held together as a hidden effect of power. One dimension of this is standardization.

This paper attempts to reveal that the power/language relation is an interactive dyadic two-way concept. It shows that no one agent in discourse is entirely more powerful than the others. No participant remains powerful throughout the whole discourse. Interlocutors keep trying to resist each other, using devices of power. Power is an ever changing concept and interlocutors are dynamically related to each other. Power shifts from one participant to another. This is in accordance with (Harris, 1994:156) who regards discourse as a bargaining table where each participant in discourse brings the devices of power to the bargaining table. In other words, no interlocutor can exercise power while the other interlocutor remains a passive subjected entity. Thus, (Maley, 1994) has cogently argued that the majority of sociolinguists have been focusing on the great disparity of power in discourse. He continues to argue that it is through language that " the disparities are both revealed and imposed .Similarly, (Harris , 1994) shows that power inequalities are manifested covertly" in patterns of language behaviour."

This paper rejects the static views which manifests one interlocutor as the sole monopolize of power. This is in harmony with Foucault (1981) who regards discourse as a "locus for power to be resisted, contented and challenged. Foucault rightly argues that discourse is not that which translates struggle or systems of domination but that for which and by which there is struggle. Likewise, (Bavelas et al, 1992:22) remark in the same context that "whenever people interact, there is interpersonal discord to be observed." Thus, the exercise of power triggers the resistance of power. Power and resistance of power are inseparable. And (Said, 1991:5) asserts that resistance, authorities and orthodoxies are the realities that make texts possible.

This paper studies discourse as a dyadic interactive process between two interlocutors. It dismantles the idea that discourse can be pragmatically manipulated for the practice of power only. It treats discourse as a context for power struggle and conflict. It attempts to point out the strategies of other participants to question, challenge and oppose the authority of the judge. Thus, discourse is a two-way process, an interactive phenomenon. In this sense, power is not the single prerogative of one participant. Hence, discourse is a verbal combat, some type of verbal struggle.

In order to achieve his aim, the researcher will base his analysis on certain linguistic models and apply them to selected literary text that illustrate and validate his theoretical proposition most clearly. Literary texts are treated as some form of naturalistic discourse. This is in accordance with (Tannen and Lakoff, 1996:141) who assert that "the writer's realization of his /her characters' styles represents a reality that has correlates, if not necessarily direct ones in more naturalistic texts." And (Ishak, 1992) explores the functions of repetition using samples of discourse from literary and non-literary discourse. See also Fowler (1981) for a similar argument. First, the searcher will present a descriptive apparatus, in this case an eclectic approach with (Fairclough, 1989) as the main model. Then this descriptive, framework will be mapped onto the selected literary texts to validate the theoretical proposition of this paper.

Fairclough (1989) presents a model for the analysis of discourse which is the most elaborate and worked – out in this respect. This is why it has been adopted in the context of the present study. It is capable of revealing strategies and devices of power in discourse. It is mainly concerned with discourse as a place where relations of power are realized and enacted, that is, where participants are unequal. In other words, language is not a neutral channel. On the contrary, it is a tool for manipulation. Thus, unless otherwise specified, reference is to the (1989) model. He offers the following features which are devices of manipulation and control: Instructions / Evaluating the other participant's verbal behavior / Questions / Interruption / Explicitness / Controlling topics / Reformulation / Repetition

2. Analysis

In this section, discourse will be shown to be a place for power not only to be enacted and exercised but also to be contested and challenged. In other words, power will be argued to be a two-way dyadic interactive relation rather

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/1109260>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/1109260>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)