

Critical Discourse Analysis of the Representation of Venezuela's Crisis in the Western Press

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Abstract:

The current paper is intended to explore the social representations of the western newspapers ,i.e., their ideologies , attitudes , opinions , etc. in representing and presenting the Venezuelan crisis to the world. The problem is that the discourse structures used by newspapers to embed their ideology is so opaque and totally naturalized that ordinary people can not have access to easily. To achieve that, it is hypothesized that western newspapers make use of discursive structures intricately interwoven with the social structure to express their ideology. The data brought under analysis are opinion editorial articles of the two most widely circulated newspapers in the U.S. and UK, namely The Guardian and Washington Post. Van Dijk's Socio-Cognitive Approach (1995, 2006) which focuses on the relation between discourse and society, is proposed to breakdown the data. The findings have shown that newspapers use various discourse structures and strategies (e.g., positive self-presentation and negative other-presentation as well as polarization of ingroup and outgroup) to express their ideologies and attitudes about the crisis , and influence the public opinion.

تحليل خطابي نقدي لتمثيل الازمة الفنزويلية في الصحافة الغربية

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المستخلص

يعنى البحث باستكشاف التصورات الاجتماعية للصحف الغربية وهي افكارها ومواقفها وآراءها... الخ في تمثيل الازمة في فنزويلا وتقديمها للعالم. ويتناول البحث مشكلة ان اللغة وتراكيبها الخطابية التي تستعملها الصحف في نشر افكارها ليست شفافة وواضحة للناس مما يتعذر عليهم فهمها والوصول اليها. ولأجل تحقيق هذا الهدف ، يقدم البحث الفرضية التالية وهي إن الصحف الغربية تستفيد من التراكيب الخطابية والتي هي متشابكة مع التراكيب الاجتماعية للتعبير عن افكارها وأيديولوجيتها. ان البيانات التي خضعت لعملية التحليل هي عبارة عن مقالتي رأي لصحيفتين من اكثر الصحف الغربية تداولاً وانتشاراً في الولايات المتحدة والمملكة المتحدة وهي صحيفة الواشنطن بوست وصحيفة الغارديان. وللقيام بعملية التحليل ، تم استعمال منهج التحليل المعرفي الاجتماعي للعالم اللغوي فان دايك (١٩٩٥ ، ٢٠٠٦) الذي يركز على علاقة الخطاب بالمجتمع. ولقد دلت النتائج التي تم التوصل إليها أن الصحف الغربية تستفيد من مختلف الاستراتيجيات الخطابية وتراكيبها ، منها العرض الايجابي للانا والعرض السلبي للآخر علاوة على تحديد ما هو داخل المجموعة وما هو خارج المجموعة، للتعبير عن مواقفها وأفكارها تجاه الازمة وللتأثير على الرأي العام.

1. Introduction

Discourse analysis (DA) is no different from the other disciplines of language in terms of goals despite its diverse methodological and theoretical approaches . DA seeks to achieve description ,i.e., describing texts and how they work (Johnstone , 2008 :27) .

Fairclough (1985:45) makes a distinction between descriptive and critical approaches to DA in terms of goals as in the table below :

Table (1): Descriptive and Critical Goals

Descriptive Goals	Critical Goals
Non- explanatory goals	Explanatory goals
Limited explanatory goals	Globally explanatory goals
Reliance upon background knowledge	Reliance upon ideology
Neglect of power in discourse and status	Focus on power and status

In very simple terms, descriptive work seeks to describe rather than explain (i.e., non-explanatory), whereas critical work seeks to show the causes beyond language use (i.e., explanatory). Descriptive work concerns itself with the causes in the immediate situation and not beyond it (i.e., locally explanatory) , while critical work looks for global causes at higher levels of the social institutions (i.e., globally explanatory). Related to this, descriptive work shows no interest in the effects beyond the immediate situation; critical work, on the contrary, is highly concerned with the effects of discourse especially the macrostructures. While the descriptive work reflects the world straightforwardly and transparently ,i.e., describes the world as it is without being ideologically motivated , the critical work represents the world from a particular perspective ,i.e., shows ideological dimensions of reality.

In language studies , the transformation to a more critical perspective starts in the 1960s and 1970s . In this respect , Pecheux , among other scholars , adopts a critical approach which largely relies on " the integration of language and social processes " derived from the work of Bakhtin and VoloSinov in the 1930s (Wodak , 1995:205). In the late 1970s , the term Critical Linguistics (CL) comes into use at the hand of a group of linguists at the University of East Anglia in their research designed to explore the connections between linguistic structure and social structure (e.g., Roger Fowler , Robert Hodge , Gunther

Kress). In the 1980s and 1990s , there is an increasing emphasis among the researchers in DA and related disciplines that " DA should also have a critical dimension." (Van Dijk , 2004:25)

CL arises from the idea that language carries ideology. Malmkjer (1991:118) states that " all linguistic usages encode ideological patterns or discursive structures which mediate representation of the world in language." CL as " a socially directed application of linguistic analysis ", as (Malmkjer ,1991: Ibid.) points out , is geared to making "mechanisms of manipulation, discrimination , and propaganda explicit and transparent" , and to interpret why reality the way it is , and to resist and develop strategies of defence. (Wodak ,1989 :XIV)

Over time , CL has been " refined , broadened , changed , and re-applied by other linguists from different traditions " (Wodak , 1995: 205) with the understanding that the relationship between discourse and the social needs interdisciplinary research , and has gradually developed into Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) for they both show a great interest in the idea " the choices made by speakers are principled and systematic , and that they are ideologically based "(Todoli et al., 2006:1). Nowadays, both terms are used interchangeably , but CDA is more preferable. However , CL counts as " the immediate forerunner of CDA"(Leeuwen, 2009 : 167). Todoli et al. (2006) hold that CDA is " an evolution from CL " since it integrates "more social , cognitive , and rhetorical theory" (Huckin et al., 2012 : 108). In this context , CDA has been influenced by some critical social theorists such as Foucault (his concept of orders of discourse) , Gramsci (his concept of hegemony) , and Habermas (his concept of colonization of discourses)- a matter which results in expanding its scope of analysis .

Leeuwen (2009 : 167) defines three ways in which CDA moves beyond CL. First, it attempts to ground CDA in critical social theory ; second, it adopts a much more fully interdisciplinary approach ; third , discourses are often multimodally realized.

The start of CDA as "a new direction" or " a programme development in European discourse studies " dates back to the 1980s launched by the works of Norman Fairclough , Ruth Wodak , Van Dijk , and others. CDA , according to Van Dijk (2004 : 26) , has been initiated at a meeting in Amsterdam in the early 1990s to "develop a more critical approach to the study of language, communication and discourse."

Fairclough (1995 : 132f) provides an inclusive definition of CDA :

By CDA I mean 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.

Wodak (2001:3) conceives of CDA in terms of aims " to investigate critically social inequality as it is expressed , signaled , constituted , legitimated and so on in discourse.". Van Dijk (2001a : 352) views CDA as " a type of analytical research that studies the way social power abuse , dominance , and inequality are enacted , reproduced , and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context."

CDA views discourse as " a form of social practice" (Fairclough and Wodak , 1997:258). That means , it is " socially constitutive and socially conditioned " (Ibid.). Being constitutive , it contributes to forming the social identities , situations , and relations between people , and in the meanwhile , it is determined by social structures . That implies, there is a dialectical relationship between discourse and society where each affects and is affected by the other.

CDA does not have a unitary theoretical framework (Van Dijk , 2001a: 353) , i.e., it does not have a methodology of its own. It is , therefore, best viewed as " a shared perspective on doing linguistic , semiotic or discourse analysis" (Van Dijk , 1993, cited in Wodak , 1995 :1). Lack of a specific methodology can be attributable to the fact that it is problem- oriented. Hence CDA is interdisciplinary and eclectic.

2. Model of Analysis

Van Dijk's multidisciplinary model (1995 , 2006) about ideology and discourse will be chosen to analyze the data in question.

It is a socio-cognitive approach which takes the relationship between cognition , discourse , and society into account. In this model , Van Dijk seeks to bridge the gap between society and discourse through the interface of personal and social cognition. Through cognitive interface , " people understand or interpret their social environment that constitutes the context of their discourse and social practices." (Van Dijk , 2004:31f). Context model or context , the missing link between society and discourse , " controls all levels and aspects of discourse production and discourse understanding" (Ibid.). Ideology ,

as socially shared beliefs of social groups , bridges the gap between cognition and society in a way that " controls social representations of groups , and thus the social practices and discourses of their members."(Ibid.:28). That control only occurs through mental models (i.e., cognition) which, in turn, control the meaning and the functions of discourses , interaction and communication (Ibid.).

As far as the current approach is concerned , it integrates three dimensions or levels of discourse to bring the empirical data under analysis , namely meaning , argumentation , and rhetoric. At the meaning level , a checklist of so many ideological categories are chosen such as " **actor description**" , "**compassion**" , "**disclaimer**", "**implication**" , "**polarization**" , "**presupposition**" , "**vagueness**" , and "**lexicalization**". At the argumentation level , such ideological categories are adopted "**illustration**" , "**counterfactuality**" , "**evidentiality**" , "**generalization**" , and "**authority**". At the rhetorical level , the following ideological categories are picked up , "**metaphor**" , "**number- game**" , "**warning**" , and "**advice giving**". These are not the total number of ideological categories which Van Dijk invests in his researches , but they are sufficient as far as the current paper is concerned, let alone the overlap between levels , that is , one category can be used at more than one level.

The above mentioned categories fit into two semantic macro- strategies : positive self- presentation , and negative other- presentation where both can be used to show ingroup- outgroup distinction , polarization and differentiation such as "good vs. bad" , "superior vs. inferior" , " Us vs. Them" formulated by ideological square which centers around emphasis or de-emphasis of meanings whether they are good or bad things about us or bad and good things about the other. In this context ,Van Dijk (2006:44) says " discourse has many ways to emphasize or de-emphasize meanings , and as soon as these have an ideological basis , hence the expression of ideology can be analyzed on different levels of discourse."

3. Data Collection

The data under analysis consist of two opinion-editorial articles in the U.S and U.K quality press. These articles are written by the editorial board and retrieved from online newspapers , namely Washington Post (WP) , and The Guardian (TG) . These newspapers are not chosen randomly , but carefully for they exhibit a range of liberal and conservative opinions and ideologies , and show overall American and British ideological perspective on news events and the world. In addition, they are most widely circulated in the western

world , among others , and have a wide range of readership making it possible for them to communicate their attitudes , opinions , and positions about the hot issues which are of great concern to the public opinion. The editorials are about the Venezuelan crisis in January 2019 and how it is ideologically represented and presented to the public opinion.

The choice of editorials , as a prominent daily discourse genre , stems from the fact that it assumes an important part socially , cognitively , and discursively. Socially, Van Dijk (2014:19f) elucidates , it is " a macro-act of public opinion expression and formation of a newspaper" to shape and manipulate the public opinion on the social and political issues. Cognitively , it voices opinions , attitudes , and ideologies , and consequently a cognitive study helps to show the way they are produced , received , and reproduced in the groups and communities. Discursively , it is a genre of persuasive discourse which involves rhetorical structures , argumentative structures , and ideological structures ...etc.

4. Data Analysis

To fully understand the data under analysis , one should not only analyze the discourse structures , but also the context structures , i.e., the relevant contextual parameters of the communicative situation of editorial as it is understood by the participants in their context models . A diagram of the contextual structures relevant to the communicative event will be sketched.

Table (2): Context Parameters and Manifestations of the Editorial after Van Dijk (2001b:25) , Customized by the Researcher.

Context Parameters	Manifestations
Domain	Politics
Global action	Media
Genre	Editorial
Local action	Warning and giving advice on Venezuela's crisis.
Setting	Date: January, 24,2019 (TG) , January 25, 2019 (WP). Time: 10:00 a.m. , 12:52 a.m. Location: UK , USA.

Roles	Communicative roles between the journalists , editors and the readers. Interactional roles between writers and readers , representing one group. Social roles between the journalist and readers as members of a group.
Cognition	Expressing attitudes and opinions and presupposing knowledge about the event as well as social and political ideologies.
Aims	Influencing the opinions of the readers and the policies of British and American politicians.

The analysis is mainly qualitative in nature , analyzing the ideological categories through examples taken from the editorials ,i.e. , looking for discourse structures which can only be socially related through a cognitive interpretation whose relation to society can only be held through ideology. Below , the three dimensions of discourse will be dealt with respectively.

4.1 Meaning Level

4.1.1 Actor Description

People are sometimes described as ideological creatures in the sense that they look at things from a particular perspective. That means , the way they see and describe things is not innocent , but intentional or , in the strict sense of the term , ideologically motivated. Our ideologies classify people , groups , institutions , actions ...etc. as either ingroup or outgroup members. Accordingly , ingroup members are described in neutral or positive terms , and outgroup members are described in negative terms. By the same token , the negative descriptions of our ingroup members will be de-emphasized , whereas the outgroup members' descriptions will be emphasized. Actors take many forms as individuals or groups , particular or general , by their name or profession , in personal or impersonal roles ...etc. Both editorials of Washington Post (WP) and The Guardian (TG) use many forms and attributes to describe and represent the key actors in the crisis. For convenience ,

they will be made into dichotomies , namely, Maduro (as well as his late predecessor Hugo Chavez) vs. Guaido ; the regime vs. the opposition ; the National Assembly vs. the National Constituent Assembly ; the United States , Trump administration and their allies vs. Russia and their allies , where the former in each pair is associated with bad things , and the latter is associated with good things.

- 1) Venezuela's people deserve better than **president Nicolas Maduro** or reckless US-led intervention.(TG)
- 2) For two decades , Venezuelans have attempted through mass demonstrations , strikes , electoral mobilizations , and negotiations to free themselves from the **disastrous regime founded by Hugo Chavez**.(WP)
- 3) ... ; **the regime** has demonstrated that it will use such talks only to buy time and divide the opposition.(WP)
- 4) **The Trump administration** must avoid allowing itself to become isolated in a confrontation with **the Maduro regime** (WP)
- 5) When **the opposition** triumphed in elections for **the National Assembly** in 2015 , he stripped the body of its powers and set up **the National Constituent Assembly** instead through dubious elections.(TG)
- 6) **The National Assembly** , which **the opposition** controls , chose a young and dynamic new leader , **Juan Guaido** , who has moved quickly to challenge **Mr. Maduro**.(WP)

The writers adopt different naming choices to assess their relationship to the actors. In describing the incumbent president Maduro , they use different address forms such as , president (unmarked) + first and family name ; president (unmarked)+ no name ; Mr. +family name (frequently used compared to the other address forms already mentioned) ; president (marked)+ no name (only once). This is also true for the late president Chavez where first and family name is used without being recognized as president. At first sight , such address forms do not evoke something bad in the readers' minds , but when they are contextually studied , they appear ideologically laden. Omission of the definite article "the" from Maduro's title is an attempt to underestimate him , and portray him as a president unworthy to occupy his post. This assessment is reinforced by the " the spiralling political , economic , and humanitarian crisis " experienced by Venezuelans.

In the same vein , the writers repeatedly use the title " Mr. Maduro " as a sign of sarcasm rather than that of authority and respect. They stress that he does not feel responsible to his people and their lives , and instead he desperately "maintains a tight grip on power " ; he

does not hold free and fair elections , and instead he conducts " dubious , fraudulent , illegitimate " elections , and wins " an equally dodgy presidential vote " ; he does not respect the results of the already held elections , and instead he "imprisons the opposition leaders , and detains the protesters and tortures them " ; he , as well as the regime and the government , do not believe in dialogue and negotiations , but instead they use " talks to buy time and divide the opposition." . Under his reign , everything has terribly deteriorated . People " live in poverty" , suffering from " food and medicine shortages " , " high levels of malnutrition", "re-emergence of diseases" , " high rates of murder" , and "hyperinflation" . All this arises from " the disastrous regime founded by Hugo Chavez , the predecessor of Mr. Maduro . Both writers deliberately omit the phrase "the president " from Chavez since they put the whole blame on him for the humanitarian catastrophe Venezuelans undergo due to the autocratic and corrupt regime he has worked to establish , i.e., they delegitimize him.

The writers represent Maduro , Chavez and their regime as two persons unpopular , illegitimate , dictatorial , authoritarian, corrupt , fraudulent , untrustworthy and inconsiderate to their peoples' lives and needs. Finally, they not only construct a negative image of them , but also associate bad things with them , and consequently they are outgroup members , totally in line with the overall strategy of ideology which presents and emphasizes the other negatively. In conclusion , Venezuelan people deserve better than president Maduro.

The writers , on the other hand , use positive terms to give a good image of Mr. Guaido, the opposition leader . In their descriptions , they call him by his first and family name , Juan Guaido , or Mr.+family name, but later on they use the titles " interim president , acting president, president , new leader or figure " , and attributes " young , dynamic , youthful " . The recurrent use of Mr. Guaido is a sign of respect and intimacy , and this trend is enhanced by such expressions as " the youthful and barely known figure who heads the national assembly and has declared himself acting president " or " a young and dynamic new leader who has moved quickly to challenge Mr. Maduro " . The writers also emphasize his capacities in bringing together the opposition described as "splintered " due to severe circumstances ; they too focus on the huge support he has inside and outside Venezuela ,i.e., he is popular. They assert his adherence to the constitution " when declaring himself president because of the vacancy of president's post " ,i.e., he observes the applicable laws and favors peaceful means over violence to gain power , and his tendency to peace is

clearly manifested in " his appeal to the military to uphold him ". In short , the writers highlight his positive characteristics , and build a good picture of him as a person popular , peaceful , energetic , abiding by law , self-confident , interested in his peoples' problems . Accordingly , he is categorized as an ingroup member, and he is positively self-presented.

The National Assembly , one of key legislative bodies in Venezuela , is presented in positive terms , unlike the National Constituent Assembly which is presented in negative terms. The former is popularly and democratically elected and governed by the opposition ,i.e., it is legitimate , whereas the latter is created by the regime in " dubious elections to strip the body of its powers " , i.e., it is illegitimate. The same is true for the opposition and the regime which are completely contradictory. The opposition , according to the writers , seeks , for two decades , to save the country from " the disastrous , authoritarian , and corrupt regime " using peaceful means , but the regime seeks "to subject the country's 32-million people to a humanitarian catastrophe " using the different suppressive practices including rigged elections. It follows that the opposition's good qualities are focused , and the regime's bad qualities are made salient.

Regarding the way how the two writers describe the United States , Mr. Trump and his administration , they de-emphasize their bad things. In the meantime , they emphasize and associate Russia and the other regime's supporters with bad things. In this context , the threat of military intervention by U.S. and its allies , although the writers seemingly oppose it and warn of its catastrophic consequences , is a justifiable action to protect the opposition and the Venezuelan people from the crackdown of Maduro's regime , and to defend the emergent democracy and freedom. Furthermore , the U.S. interference is not a unilateral action, but multilateral where tens of countries across the world support it. In addition , their intervention is an attempt to provide humanitarian supplies to Venezuelans who " are already coping with shortages of food , power , and medicine ". The choice to intervene is to prevent " a mass exodus of desperate refugees threatens to destabilize several of Venezuela's neighbors ". The two writers , on the other hand , present Russia and its allies in a negative light where they take the side of a "disastrous , authoritarian , corrupt " regime condemned for manipulating the elections , suppressing its people violently , being uncaring for its people's humanitarian needs. Finally , the overall strategy of ideology is realized through group membership whereby one actor is positively presented and viewed as ingroup member , while the other actor is negatively presented and portrayed as outgroup member.

4.1.2 Compassion

People most often , especially politicians , journalists , orators ...etc. show their sympathy and solidarity for those who are oppressed , dominated , or defenseless due to the others' actions , so as to highlight the cruelty , brutality , and savageness of the other.

- 1) **Venezuela's people deserve better** than president Nicolas Maduro(TG)
- 2) As many as three million citizen - a 10th of its population - have fled. **Almost 90% of those who remain in poverty.**(TG)
- 3) A U.S. boycott of Venezuelan oil could endanger **ordinary Venezuelans already coping with critical shortages of food , power and medicine.**(WP)

In these examples , the two writers show their full solidarity with the Venezuelans who have been repressed by the regime and its suppressive apparatuses , and hold Maduro and his entire regime responsible for the tragic situations which people experience , from humanitarian crisis , massive violations of human rights , electoral fraud , to systematic detention , torture and intimidation of the opposition leaders and protesters. Shedding light on such inhumane practices is intended to expose the brutal and barbaric nature of the regime . Moreover , they also show a sense of sympathy by appealing to the American administration not to impose sanctions against oil due to the hardships people are now undergoing. It follows that the writers call upon the United States and the other countries to interfere to address the crisis "delivering humanitarian supplies to Venezuela " , and supporting the Venezuelans to achieve "the change from inside " . Consequently , the regime is negatively presented and the opposition and the people in general are positively presented for they struggle to disentangle themselves from the disastrous , totalitarian , and corrupt regime. Finally, the regime is categorized as outgroup member , and the opposition is seen as ingroup member.

4.1.3 Disclaimer

It is an aspect of discourse meaning in which positive properties of self are made prominent, and negative ones of the other come to the fore. In disclaimers , the first positive part is concerned with keeping face , managing impression , and denying responsibility. The second negative part , introduced by" but " , is intended to target the other threatening their face , giving bad impression , and blaming them.

- 1) These steps were grounded in the Venezuelan constitution , **but** what gave them real import was the move by the United States to recognize Mr. Guaido as president.(WP)

- 2) The National Assembly's assertion of itself as an alternative government and the multilateral support it has attracted have created at least the potential for the latest Venezuelan crisis to take a different course. **But** some skillful diplomacy is now needed. The Trump administration must avoid allowing itself to become isolated in a confrontation with the Maduro regime , ... , while its regional allies and Mr. Guaido watch from the sidelines.(WP)

In (1) the writer does not hide his empathy and support with the courageous steps taken by the national assembly and specifically Mr. Guaido for declaring himself as president for they are constitutionally based. The writer shows a sense of solidarity in an attempt to present good image of the opposition which adheres to the law in their struggle against the dictatorial regime , and in the meanwhile portrays himself as supportive of democracy and freedom. The writer , in the second part , tries to give the utmost credit to the United States when it recognizes the opposition leader as president , that is , if it weren't for the American move , such steps wouldn't meet with success , but he doesn't hold America responsible for intervening in Venezuela's internal affairs. In (2) the writer also affirms the role which the opposition has played in gaining the multilateral support , but , in the second part , he deems the opposition rather vulnerable , especially Mr. Guaido where they try hard to get America involved in the crisis and sit on the fence. He , therefore , favors a diplomatic approach and cautions against a confrontation with the regime which only serves to isolate America. In keeping with the strategy of ideology , the writer emphasizes the positive properties of America and the opposition , and overshadows their negative properties.

4.1.4 Implication

Language users tend not to explicitly state their knowledge , information or beliefs , but suggest what they know or believe indirectly , that is , most of their discourse remains implicit. For contextual reasons , people such as the journalists and editorialists use implicitness. In this domain , Van Dijk (2000a :74) says " implicitness may be used as a means to convey meanings whose explicit expression could be interpreted as biased " , or " information may be left implicit because it may be inconsistent with the overall strategy of positive self-presentation ". Also the negative characterizations of ingroup members are left implicit. When it comes to the data under analysis , implication could be used to bring the negative descriptions of the other into salience.

- 1) Venezuela's people deserve **better** than president Nicolas Maduro(TG)

- 2) While **some** still believe Mr. Maduro continues the work of his **charismatic predecessor** , Hugo Chavez , even many Chavistas have turned against him.(TG)
- 3) An **unpopular** president relies on the control of the judiciary and military support.(TG)
- 4) Mr. Trump's move is **risky as well as cynical**.(TG)
- 5) Is the end to Venezuela's **nightmare** in sight ?(WP)
- 6) ; this made the claim by Russia and some U.S. leftists that the Trump administration was engaged in an **imperialist "intervention" ridiculous** on his face.(WP)

In (1) the writer uses the comparative adjective " better " to imply that Maduro's continued presence in power as a president is bound to drag the country into more delmmas internally and externally , hence his departure from the power may make a difference and improve their living conditions socially , economically , and politically. In (2) the writer uses the word " some " to imply that the majority of Venezuelans don't support Maduro's policies and plans which are a continuation of the ex-president's programmes. The allusion to the predecessor as "charismatic " is to satirize him when we know he is no longer popular even among his followers , the Chavistas. In (3) when the writer describes the president as " unpopular " , he implies that he is a dictator unlikeable to his people. In (4) the phrase " risky and cynical " suggests that America's interference may result in catastrophic consequences and destabilize the whole area , but that doesn't deny the importance of Trump's move to support the acting president Mr. Guaido. In (5) the writer describes the Venezuelan situation as " nightmare " to implicate that Maduro's regime is a nuisance to the neighbors and the world , and shouldn't stay longer , and has to change. In (6) when the writer uses the word " imperialist " , it implies that Russia and its allies seek to cover up their interference and the regime's repressive practices. In all these examples , the writers have tried to present the other, i.e., Maduro's regime in negative terms , while they underemphasize the negative qualities of the opposition.

4.1.5 Polarization

Ideologies as belief systems socially shared among the members of groups define people and society in polarized terms. A group member , therefore , divides people into ingroup or outgroup. Ingroup-outgroup polarization which characterizes all the underlying social representations cuts across all the levels of discourse. In it , good properties of ingroups are focused on , and their bad properties are defocused. In a similar manner , good properties of outgroups are eclipsed , and their bad properties are featured. Typical of such polarization is positive self-presentation , and negative other-presentation whereby all good

things are associated with our group , and all bad things are associated their group. In Actor Description (see 1.4.1.1), many examples are brought under analysis to highlight ingroup-outgroup polarization , but the absence of polarization markers in the data such as personal and possessive pronouns (we , they , us , them , our , their ...etc.) or deictics (here , there) makes the researcher see through the macrostructures and categorize our group and their group as follows : Mr. Guaido , the opposition , the National Assembly , America and its allies are polarized as ingroup members , while Mr. Maduro , the regime , the National Constituent Assembly , Russia and its allies are polarized as outgroup members. In short , our group (Us) is associated with positive values such as democracy , freedom ; positive activities such as initiatives and moves ; and positive goals such as defending the people and their rights , whereas their group (Them) is associated with negative values such as dictatorship , corruption ; negative activities such as anarchy and destruction ; and negative goals such as oppressing people and confiscating their right.

4.1.6 Presupposition

When people use any form of language , written or spoken , they needn't express all what they know explicitly , but assume it to be already known or taken for granted. Van Dijk (2006:12) likens discourse to an iceberg where " most of their meanings are not expressly stated but presupposed to be known , and inferred from general sociocultural knowledge ". It is also an ideologically based category in discourse semantics to foreground our positive properties and their negative ones.

- 1) These desperate times have united **the splintered opposition** , ... , around **Juan Guaido** , the youthful figure who heads the national assembly and has declared himself acting president.(TG)
- 2) **The latest unrest** was triggered by president Nicolas Maduro's assumption of six-year term earlier this month on the basis of an **election** condemned in and outside Venezuela as fraudulent.(WP)
- 3) **the regime** has demonstrated that it will use such talks only to buy time and divide the opposition.(WP)
- 4) It is clear that Venezuela cannot recover while **Mr. Maduro** is in charge.(TG)

In (1) the writer presupposes that there exists an opposition severely divided because of the regime's arbitrary practices. Yet there is a youthful figure called Juan Guaido acting as a president who gathered the opposition together. The writer clearly emphasizes the negative features of the oppressive regime , and highlights the positive features of Mr. Guaido in re-

organizing the opposition. In (2) there is a presupposition that there are other cases of disturbance which have already happened . The writer also presupposes that there is an election widely denounced as fraudulent. Once more the negative properties of the regime and Mr. Maduro , causing the internal unrest and falsifying the elections , are made prominent. In (3) the writer presupposes that there exists a regime which doesn't believe in dialogue , but use it as a means to procrastinate and destroy its opponents. Also the bad things of the regime are brought to light. In (4) the writer presupposes that there exists a president named Mr. Maduro , and because of him , Venezuela suffers from unrest inside , and from pressures outside. The president , here , is associated with bad things. It follows that presupposition is an effective device to emphasize our good things , and their bad things.

4.1.7 Vagueness

Vagueness is a semantic property of texts which language users tend to use in all contexts. An expression is vague when its referent is not clear-cut or when its boundaries are fuzzy. In Van Dijk's terms (2000b:93) , vagueness is "a form of impression management" , that is , people use vagueness as a shield to save their own face and present themselves positively , but meanwhile they use it in a bid to cover up the positive properties of the other. In the same vein , Van Dijk (1991:184) views that vagueness works " to conceal responsibility for a negative action". In order for syntactic structures to be vague , passivization and nominalization are two ways used in the press to obscure the agent of a negative action.

- 1) The prospect of **military intervention** is terrifying , and could make the current catastrophe far worse.(TG)
- 2) **International engagement** must take the form of considered action to support Venezuelans inside and outside the country , (TG)

In (1) the writer is vague about the one who is responsible for the act of intervening , that is , the agent is not specified. The nominalized form "intervention" is used so as not to explicitly identify the doer , and deflect any responsibility of U.S. for that negative action. In (2) the writer uses the nominalization "engagement" not to disclaim responsibility for a negative action , but to emphasize our own positive qualities , that is , helping the Venezuelan people in their strife against the disastrous regime.

1.4.1.8 Lexicalization

The words we choose are not neutral , but they reflect who we are , what we know , what we believe in , ...etc. The choices we make of words to describe self and other is associated with the overall strategy of positive self-presentation and negative other-presentation. Van Dijk (2000b:95) asserts that lexicalization analysis is "relevant in descriptions of other groups , that is , in identifying them , referring to them , and by describing their actions and properties."

The writers use words to describe the people and actions which are in line with their mental representations about the event in question. They use , for example , the word "unpopular " to describe Maduro and Chavez to suggest that they get to power against the people's will in elections described as "dubious" , "dodgy" , "illegitimate" , and "fraudulent". The words "jail" , "detain" , "torture" , "subject" , "divide" , "strip" , "crack down" , and "buy time" are used to describe their actions against the people in general and the opposition in particular. Moreover , the regime is presented in their descriptions as "disastrous" , "authoritarian" , and "corrupt". The same is true for the regime's allies whose actions are described as "claim" , "show of support" , and "collapse". From this , it follows that the writers use such words to present Maduro and his regime and allies in negative terms , a matter which fully resonates with the writers' mental model of the event. However, the writers use positive terms to describe Guaido as "young" , dynamic " , "new leader" , "youthful" , even his actions are presented in good light where he works to "unite" the opposition , and "moves" quickly to "challenge" the incumbent president Maduro. Also the actions of Guaido's allies are referred to as "back" , "support" , "bolster" , "recognize" , "deliver supplies". As a conclusion , the actions and properties of the other are associated with bad things , whereas our actions and properties are associated with good things.

4.2 Argumentation Level

4.2.1 Illustration

Language users often resort to argumentation as a means to defend their standpoints or opinions and meanwhile attack and refute their opponent's stances and points of view so that they can be more credible, or truthful. In the argumentative discourse , one of the most powerful strategies is giving concrete examples and illustrations which take " the form of a summary , short story "(Van Dijk, 2000a:69). The use of argumentation is aimed at positively self presenting and negatively other presenting. For the arguments to be more

persuasive and influential , they need be based on direct experiences , or make reference to the history to promote the writers' positions as far as our data are concerned.

- 1) Latin America has plentiful experience of the cost of US- led interference and military "solutions" to crises.(TG)
- 2) Tens of thousands have taken to the streets. As many as three million citizens - a 10th of its population - have fled.(TG)
- 3) As tens of thousands of people took to the streets of Caracas and other cities this week in yet one more rebellion... (WP)

In (1) the writer hints at America's history of intervention in these countries as a kind of illustration to defend his stance against it. According to the writer's mental representation of the event , his opposition of U.S. intervention is not absolute , but is contingent on several factors , that is , Americans' lives are not at risk , the regime does not clampdown on the opposition. Consequently , the writer does not portray the intervention as something evil , but warns of its dire consequences , and yet remains as an option , among others , to address the crisis. In this illustration , the writer implicitly states that but for the regime's atrocities , America would not interfere in the crisis. In (2,3) both writers' experiences are not direct , so they don't use their pronouns (I ,We) to describe the scenes of demonstrations and strikes or refugees' exodus across the borders , and rather they use the objective language to convey the events. In this illustration , the humanitarian aspects are overemphasized to present the regime in negative light , or even to justify any action including intervention.

4.2.2 Counterfactuality

Counterfactuals can be linguistically realized through the use of "if-clause " to refer to the consequences of an action which does not occur , or contrary to the reality. In argumentation , counterfactuals can be used to elicit a sense of empathy when being put in the same position of others , or to show the terrible repercussions when envisaging an alternative.

- 1) The other issue is what happens to US diplomats **if** they ignore orders to leave the country.(TG)
- 2) Some suspect a pretext for further action by Mr.Trump , who reportedly mooted an invasion several times in 2017 and say "all options are on the table **if** Mr. Maduro cracks down on the opposition."(TG)
- 3) **Unless** the lives of Americans are endangered and there is no other course , military intervention would be folly.(WP)

In (1) the writer raises a hypothetical issue about the potential complications of detaining the American diplomats on disregarding the regime's orders. The writer seemingly attempts to manipulate the readers' minds and pave the way to a military intervention , i.e., he finds a "pretext" or excuse to justify this act. The same is true for (2) whereby the writer counterfactually sets the scene for an invasion , through reasserting Trump's proposal to defend the opposition. He tries to elicit the readers' sympathy with the opposition which is subject to the regime's repression .In (3) the writer also associates the idea of intervention with risking the Americans' lives and the lack of any other solution. He seeks to invent an excuse in using the counterfactual construction.

4.2.3 Evidentiality

In order for the speakers and writers to support the validity of their views , they provide evidence as a way of powerful and effective argumentation. They may get their evidential information from numerous sources such as media , statistics , and quotations from the highest-ranking figures , international organizations...etc. The use of such information can reinforce our credibility , reliability in an endeavor to defend and legitimate our actions , or to underestimate and de-legitimate the other's actions.

- 1) The economy is shrinking fast , while the IMF predicts that hyperinflation could hit **10,000,000** this year.(TG)

The writer , in this example , relies on the data brought by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) about the high rate of inflation which has reached a record level. This figure has been cited by the writer to give a gloomy picture of the economic situations in this country . In so doing , he endeavors to hold the regime responsible for the socio-economic , humanitarian crisis , and build a negative image of it.

4.2.4 Generalization

Language users , in a bid to foreground the negative acts of the other , choose to generalize concrete events and actions. Generalization of the negative experiences is of great use in creating a stereotyped image of the other so as to manipulate the peoples' beliefs and ideologies to be consistent with our attitudes. The opposite can be true for positive self-presentation where certain actions and events are made general to portray us in positive light.

- 1) Previous attempts at talks between Venezuela's political players failed due largely to bad faith on the government's side.(TG)

- 2) the regime has demonstrated that it will use such talks only to buy time and divide the opposition.(WP)
- 3) Last year he won an equally dodgy presidential vote boycotted by the opposition. Opposition leaders are jailed or have fled into exile ; protesters have been arbitrarily detained and tortured.(TG)
- 4) A multilateral operation to deliver humanitarian supplies to Venezuela in cooperation with the National Assembly is one possibility.(WP)

In these examples the writers try to use the negative acts (not believing in dialogue , forging the elections , oppressing the opposition leaders and protesters) which the regime has done so as to tarnish its image. In other words , such bad deeds are generalized to brand the regime as untrustworthy , unreliable , and oppressive. On the other hand , they seek to present America and its allies in good light as dialogue believing , freedom defending , oppression refusing , and humanity loving. In line with the semantic strategies , they portray the other (i.e., the regime) negatively and present themselves positively.

4.2.5 Authority

People in their attempt to defend and support their standpoints or attack their opponents' views and attitudes often take recourse to cite different authorities such as international organizations , scholars , media ...etc.

- 1) The economy is shrinking fast , while the **IMF** predicts that hyperinflation could hit 10,000,000 this year.(TG)

The writer here quotes the International Monetary Fund about the high rate of inflation to uphold his position on the deteriorated economic situation in this country. As the IMF is a highly reliable source , this will reinforce his argument and give it credibility and objectivity. As a result , the regime will be presented negatively and held responsible for the whole thing.

4.3 Rhetorical Level

4.3.1 Number-Game

People , especially the journalists and politicians , tend to use figures and statistics to enhance their reliability and to show their objectivity in a persuasive way. They support their arguments by numbers to derogate the other via hyperbolically exaggerating and building up their negative actions.

1) **Tens of thousands** have taken to the streets. As many as **three million** citizens - a **10th of its population** - have fled. Almost **90%** of those who remain live in poverty.(TG)

2) Nothing has worked , and the government has grown more authoritarian and corrupt while subjecting the country's **32 million** people to a humanitarian catastrophe.(WP)

The writers use such a rhetorical device to persuade the readers that their attitudes to the existing regime are not based on fallacies but built on facts- a matter which strengthens their positions, and elicit empathy to take any measures which they deem necessary to put an end to the current humanitarian crisis. Such a move is effectively used to represent the regime in negative terms and discredit it.

4.3.2 Metaphor

It is a rhetorical device whereby two different objects are indirectly compared and the qualities of one object are assigned to the other. Metaphorical expressions are used to make abstract concepts more concrete , to create familiarity , or to trigger the readers' emotions. It is a powerfully persuasive tool to keep with the strategies of positive self-presentation and negative other-presentation.

1) In the end , if Venezuela's **nightmare** is to end , the change must come from inside.(WP)

The writer compares the frightening situation in Venezuela to a nightmare. In a nightmare , one usually experiences something very terrifying and unpleasant or very difficult to deal with. The same is true for the Venezuelan crisis where a disastrous regime holds the power illegitimately suppressing the public , uncaring for their humanitarian conditions , and destabilizing the region. The writer emphasizes the negative associations of the word "nightmare" to get the readers familiar with the crisis and stir their emotions and , in the meanwhile , portray the regime in bad terms.

4.3.3 Warning

As a rhetorical instrument , its use is to emphasize the gravity of a particular situation brought about by the opponent or the enemy , to demonize the other , to muster the people for action , and justify any severe measures against the possible threats.

1)The Trump administration must avoid allowing itself to become isolated in a confrontation with the Maduro regime - over evacuation of the embassy , while its regional allies and Mr. Guaido watch from the sidelines. (WP)

2) Unless the lives of the Americans are endangered and there is no other course , military intervention would be folly.(WP)

The writer presents the Maduro regime in negative terms through the threats it poses to the Americans and then to the whole region. He , in the meantime , presents the Americans as victims to the imminent threat from the regime. He also warns against the consequences of unilateral action and demands considered and concerted efforts to address such threats. He , therefore , seeks to persuade the world community to take the necessary measures against the regime and neutralize its threats.

4.3.4 Advice Giving

People and institutions , especially those experts in politics and media, present their scholarly experience in the form of advice to those in authority whether governments or politicians to help take the right decisions to address the world crises. As a rhetorical technique , it is of great use to portray self as advice taking rather than adhering stubbornly to one's opinions or being reckless , and consequently immunizing self from rash steps.

1) The Administration's best approach would be to join with its allies in initiatives that would help Venezuelans while bolstering Mr. Guaido. A multilateral operation to deliver humanitarian supplies to Venezuela or to its borders , in cooperation with the National Assembly , is one possibility.(WP)

2) International engagement must take the form of considered action to support Venezuelans inside and outside the country , not crude and dangerous interventions.(TG)

The writers give their advice as a package on three levels: humanitarian level through delivering supplies to the people ; political level through encouraging negotiations between the parties inside and applying pressure to the regime outside ; and military level as the last resort to put an end to the ongoing crisis although they seemingly oppose it. So they use the pieces of advice to present themselves in good light as thoughtful , responsible , peace advocate , and civilized to get people to support their positions.

Conclusions

Throughout the paper , the main concern is to decipher the encoded ideologies used pervasively in the editorials , using critical discourse analysis. As an analytical research , it seeks to unveil the relation between the discourse structures and social structures. Editorials as a discourse genre not only represent the mental model of the journalist about the event , i.e., the socio-economic , and political crisis in Venezuela , which is closely interwoven with the mental model of the institution to which he belongs , and the political trends of the policy making organs such as government , media ,etc., but also maintain and reproduce the socially shared knowledge , ideologies , attitudes , and norms and values.

Through the analysis , the editorials , with the use of many different ideological categories, have depicted a picture of the crisis fully in line with their social representations ,that is, a

picture of a disastrous , authoritarian regime maintaining a tight grip on power , not caring for his people's humanitarian needs , not showing a good faith in dialogue , and destabilizing the whole region, and in the meanwhile , they have featured the peaceful struggle of the people for two decades to free themselves from such a suppressive regime. In short, the regime is represented as dictatorial, posing a threat to his people and the world , and meanwhile Venezuelans are represented as victims , i.e., it is a struggle for freedom. Such representations are heightened by descriptions , compassion , implication, and presupposition ; generalizations are used to enhance the argumentative dimension of these representations , whereas such rhetorical structures as number game , warning are in play to increase the objectivity and reliability.

The various discursive structures used are intended to polarize Us associated with good qualities versus Them associated with bad qualities , in a macro-semantic strategy of positive self-presentation and negative other-presentation. In the same vein , such discourse structures are geared to express their ideology, attitudes about the event which center upon their defence of the freedoms and human rights , dissemination of democracy as well as establishment of the peace, encouragement of dialogue and negotiation , settlement of the disputes peacefully across the world , and use of force as the last resort to resolve the conflicts.

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