

A Critical Discourse Analysis on News Based on Corpus

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Keywords: Critical Discourse Analysis; Corpus; News Discourse; Ideology

Abstract. The critical analysis of news discourse is an important concern of the critical discourse analysis, which is of theoretical and practical significance. With combination of discourse analysis and social context analysis, news discourse research based on corpus contains qualitative, interpretative summary and analysis, which shows the combination of quantitative and qualitative method, is used to solve the traditional CDA problems of lacking objectivity and validity. The corpus technology, including frequency, keywords, concordance, collocation, and cluster is a remedy to the drawbacks of the traditional critical analysis on news discourse.

Introduction

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA for short) is a discourse analysis method through which some western linguists represented by Roger Fowler revealed the dialectical relationship between language and ideology by superficial language forms since news discourse analysis is one of the main research objects of CDA. As a social practice of news language, news discourse reflects the social reality from different perspectives, and influences people's attitudes, values, beliefs by recreating ideology to reveal the ideology and power relations hidden behind the language and voice. CDA concerns the power relations and inequality in language, explores the power relations hidden in discourse and social and cultural forms, analyzes implicit ideology of the discourse, and exposes inequality, injustice, discrimination and prejudice existed in the discourse. Roger Fowler, one of the best experts in critical analysis of news discourse, thinks that the news is not objective and fair coverage as it claims, but implies certain ideologies. After vigorous development of more than 40 years, a number of research achievements of CDA emerged both at home and abroad. However, due to different aims of research of the researchers, the texts of CDA usually focused on a single or a small amount of texts with a strong sense of subjectivity. Fowler argued, therefore, when doing qualitative research of CDA, the analyzing texts may be fragmentary. Stubbs questioned whether the texts were representative, and recommended the use of large-scale corpus rendering language facts to support CDA research. Therefore, CDA based on corpus has broken through the limited text volume of traditional research, and realizes the combination of quantitative and qualitative analysis, which has become a new trend of discourse analysis.

Corpus is derived from Latin, meaning "summary". As a linguistic term, it refers to the collection of providing language materials for linguistic analysis. Corpus approach, based on the real language texts as the research objects, analyzes the massive language facts from the macroscopic angle. The advantage of Corpus is fast storage, recognition and statistics of a large number of complex languages, expanding the scope of study, and improving the credibility of the conclusion. This method, with more objectivity, does not shy away from any real language phenomenon. In a very long period of time, Corpus technology is mainly used to study vocabulary and shallow syntax. The combination of Corpus technology and CDA makes corpus research expand to the discourse level, playing a more important role in language study. Hardt-Mautner (1995) was the first scholar to advocate the corpus technology in research of CDA.

Foreign scholars have analyzed the corpus collocation, cluster, grammatical structure and prosody of large-scale text, exploring and discerning its implied meaning. However, their research is conducted basically in ideology background of a single culture. Chinese scholar Qian Yufang collected corpus of terrorism in *Sun* and *People's Daily* before and after 911 Attack, and studied English and Chinese

newspapers of “Laden” discourse construction by examining a high-frequency, the word cluster, index line, collocation of “bin Laden”, etc.

Corpus indexing technology effectively broke the boundary of quantitative and qualitative research. Through the support of a large number of data analyses, corpus provides powerful quantitative analysis basis for CDA. These advantages make up for the one-sidedness and the subjectivity of traditional CDA and the lack of representativeness, etc. The provided theoretical and technical support is applied to CDA is the organic combination of quantitative and qualitative analysis.

Theory and methods of news discourse of CDA

News discourse of CDA adopts Systemic Functional Grammar as the main source of theoretical basis and method. Three-dimensional model of Fairclough’s discourse employs Halliday’s Systemic Functional Grammar as the main language analyzing tool, and studies language, power, and the relationship in the ideology through discourse formation. It is a language analyzing method that is interpretative and constructive, which has a guiding role in theory and practice in the new culture and the research, provides the analyzing process for critical discourse researchers and can be applied to all kinds of text.

Fairclough’s three-dimensional model was influenced by Halliday’s Systemic Functional Grammar. Halliday considered language as a social symbol, focusing on the use of language in reality, and illustrated the three metafunctions of language: Ideational metafunction, Interpersonal metafunction, and Textual metafunction. Ideational metafunction is divided into two categories: Experiential metafunction and Logical metafunction which is to establish the logical relationship between discourses. Experiential metafunction is to make human construct the real world in mind, to understand what is going on in the physical and conscious world through language symbolic representation. Transitivity is to understand the grammar of Experiential metafunction. Interpersonal metafunction considers language as a kind of resource of building and maintaining relationships. Mood-residue system is to understand the grammar of the interpersonal metafunction. Textual metafunction has the function connecting sentences into the text.

Fairclough’s three-dimensional model considers discourse as a unity of the three dimension including Discourse Practice, Social Practice, and Text, and dialectical relationship of exploring the Text, Discursive Practice and Social Practice. Fairclough’s three-dimensional model is a discourse analysis model which is in favor of both practice and theory, which makes people have a profound understanding of inseparable inner relationship between language and society, and interpret the true meaning and function of discourse through the cover of ideology. Discourse not only reflects the social processes and social structure, but also builds social processes and social structure. The three steps of Fairclough’s CDA are: Description, Interpretation and Explanation.

Description process is to describe the forms of text. Characteristics of grammar, vocabulary choice are analyzed, and relationship between text and interaction is explained. Interpretation process analyzes the relationship between interaction and the social context from the perspective of text structure. Explanation process is to analyze the relationship between the discourse and social factors with the purpose of analyzing the role of the social factors in the process of text generation and interpretation.

Application of corpus technology in news discourse of CDA

Critical study of news discourse based on corpus, helps to find the subjectivity (eg. researches of evaluation, modal, position) and sociality (identity, gender differences, ideology) of the speakers presented in a large number of discourses, focusing on quantitative analysis, reducing the subjective bias of the researchers. With combination of discourse analysis and social context analysis, news discourse research based on corpus contains qualitative, interpretative summary and analysis, which shows the combination of quantitative and qualitative method is used to solve the traditional CDA problems of lacking objectivity and validity which was proposed by Linguists including Widdowson and Stubbs. Many scholars at home and abroad including Hardt-Mautner, Flowerdrew, Fairclough, Partington, Stubb, Qian Yufang, tried to apply corpus technology to CDA, and made an important discovery in the field. News discourse analysis through corpus methods is to build corpus by collecting a lot of news

corpora for the research purpose of analyzing the special meaning hidden in language phenomena through some corpus tools such as Frequency, Keywords statistics, Concordance, Collocation, and Cluster .

Frequency word statistics is one of the most basic statistics method and important data type in the corpus research, which can make the researchers notice the remarkable features of language. These repeated language forms usually have hidden special discourse. We can distinguish the distribution of the total vocabulary corpus from frequency words. The corpus retrieval tool can be used to observe the fixed collocation of the high frequency words. These lexical clusters provide important examples of language uses in identifying the meaning of discourse. When compared with other corpus, the frequency word information can show their differences.

Keywords and Keywords list are of great significance in news discourse of CDA. They can show the main idea of the text content, directivity and the way to express information, acting as a research starting point of interpreting news corpus by qualitative methods. Keywords and Keyword list are usually the result that a target corpus of high frequency words is compared with a reference corpus (such as Brown, Lob) by means of the corpus software (such as a Wordsmith Tools).

Concordance is the core of the corpus method. By analyzing the context information and the characteristics of the context presented in concordance, and by observing collocates, colligation and prosody, the attitude of the news reporters and the subtle intention and some social linguistic features (such as gender, social class, discourse scenarios, etc.) can be caught.

Frequency statistics is the most basic skills of corpus, which can reflect some interesting language phenomenon and a special discourse meaning. Statistic of low frequency words can also bring unexpected harvest to the researchers.

Cluster in news discourse of CDA is to provide important use of language of identifying implicit meaning of the discourse.

The core function of corpus is concordance analysis technique. By indexing the text, language forms can be presented. In many corpuses, this kind of technology can be studied to analyze the context of the words, and set the standard according to the researchers' requirements. The indexing procedure provides the word frequency of the inquirer in the corpus, and displays the contextual information. In addition, for index analysis software, the index line can be used to display collocation words. Therefore, in general, the concordance analysis function of corpus is very important for the distinguishing grammar vocabulary.

Summary

This paper introduces significance and methods of studying news discourse through combining corpus and CDA. It is self-evident that influence of news discourse in the constructing the real world is great. Language is embodiment of the power and the will of the ruling classes and interest groups. The implicit ideology exerts influence on people's ideology through the subtle language forms, which is difficult for the average readers to distinguish the naturalized language phenomenon.

The emergence of corpus provides a powerful technical support and a new research perspective for critical discourse analysis. As the source point of empirical data, corpus is used to investigate many language-centered research propositions. Corpora technology can provide a large number of examples reflecting the manifestation of language, and the corpus analysis can show the language forms that are not expected. Therefore, it can strengthen, retort, or modify the researchers' intuition. The interactive study of corpus and critical discourse analysis can help researchers to find the entry point and create a virtuous circle of research.

Combination of critical reading consciousness and the corpus approach can contribute to revealing the facts and ideas kernel of the news, interpreting the social ideology construction hidden behind the discourses, cultivate readers' awareness of critical reading and ideological sensitivity to the news reports. Applying corpus skills to news discourse makes up for the drawbacks of less text quality, inadequate evidence, lacking objectivity and validity in traditional news discourse analysis. Combination of qualitative and quantitative research is of great theoretical significance.

Acknowledgements

This thesis was financially supported by Jiangxi University Humanities and Social Sciences Research Project in 2015 (Project NO. YY1518.). This thesis is also funded by China Scholarship Council and the project of the Doctoral Fund of Jiangxi Science and Technology Normal University.

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