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**MEDIA, LANGUAGE AND EMPOWERMENT: UNCOVERING  
CONSTITUTED IDEALS AND INHIBITING SOCIAL EXCLUSION – A  
CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS RELATED TO HIGHER  
EDUCATION STRIKES**

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STRIKES**

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## TERMO DE APROVAÇÃO

### **MEDIA, LANGUAGE AND EMPOWERMENT: UNCOVERING CONSTITUTED IDEALS AND INHIBITING SOCIAL EXCLUSION – A CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS RELATED TO HIGHER EDUCATION STRIKES**

por

CRISTIANO HEYTHOR DOS SANTOS BUENO

Este Trabalho de Conclusão de Curso foi apresentado em 18 de agosto de 2014 como requisito parcial para a obtenção do título de Licenciada em Letras Inglês/Português. A candidata foi arguida pela Banca Examinadora composta pelos professores abaixo assinados. Após deliberação, a Banca Examinadora considerou o trabalho aprovado.

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- O Termo de Aprovação assinado encontra-se na Coordenação do Curso -

I dedicate all the pages hereunder and all my effort in them to my Mother, Vera, and my  
Love, Renata. With all my good feelings.

## **SPECIAL THANKS**

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My family is special and deserves more than many special thanks. They have always supported me in my decisions and even when they could not help me, they have helped me without knowing it.

To all my friends, the distant ones and the near ones.

Finally, I am thankful to Odin, Thor, Freya and all of the Gods for guiding me in my path through this world.

Hope to see you all in Valhalla.

*In the cognition of an object of sense both references present themselves. In the sense-representation of external things the quality of space wherein we intuit them is the merely subjective [element] of my representation (by which it remains undecided what they may be in themselves as Objects), on account of which reference the object is thought thereby merely as phenomenon.*(KANT, Immanuel, 1914)

## ABSTRACT

This paper intends to analyze the use of language in social relations of power & ideology and unveil what types of ideals emerge in on-line articles about higher education in Brazil and the United Kingdom. Focusing on the portrayal of news about the 2012 and 2013 strike of professors of Higher Education in Brazil and the UK, respectively. The main theoretical basis in this study, Critical Discourse Analysis, provides ways to comprehend different discourses and perceive them inside the chosen on-line newspaper articles about higher education, not as a method but more as perspective or position. Hence, to promote a social change through empowering people by a critical analysis of language is the beginning of the real social inclusion and this work can contribute as a new perception of society and its language.

**Keywords:** Critical Discourse Analysis, Media, Language, Power.

## RESUMO

Este estudo pretende analisar o uso da linguagem em relações sociais de poder e ideologia e revelar que tipos de ideais emergem de artigos on-line sobre educação superior no Brasil e no Reino Unido. Concentrando a análise em notícias sobre as greves de 2012 e 2013 dos professores universitários no Brasil e Reino Unido, respectivamente. A base teórica, Análise Crítica de Discurso, prove modos de compreender diferentes discursos e como perceber esses discursos dentro dos artigos on-line sobre educação superior escolhidos, não como método mas sim como uma perspectiva ou posicionamento. Portanto, promover uma mudança social para capacitar as pessoas a realizar uma análise crítica da língua é o começo de uma verdadeira inclusão social e este trabalho pode contribuir assim como uma nova percepção da sociedade e sua língua.

**Palavras-chave:** Análise Crítica de Discurso, Mídia, Linguagem, Poder.



## SUMMARY

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

Language is one of the most powerful tools in human communication. People who use it with mastery have a large advantage over those who do not have such skill. This can be perceived in our history, for example, in war times when the real conquest of a territory took place not by eliminating all the natives of the place, but when the conqueror imposed his language and culture upon them. The Greeks, for instance, in their “expansion age” from the centuries V to VII before Christ, would say that those who did not speak Greek were called barbarians or uncivilized, showing how important their language was by providing status and power.

Likewise, current language is frequently used as a way to influence and manipulate people to think and behave in a preconceived pattern. The development of technology has brought other medias, mainly the Internet, by which concepts, ideas and ideals have been imposed. Based on the assumption that the Internet is the easiest way to send and receive news, the question that must be asked by everyone is: who assures the truth, and more importantly, the impartiality or fairness of the information? All we know is that it may be possible that the media companies underexpose or hide their real intentions and try to get the public opinion in their favor. Of course we have to defend our beliefs and stand for them but not hiding them or trying to distort the facts by making use of a standardized language.

As said before, language is an important means of power control, status and ideology imposition, and an attentive and critical view one must have towards what is vehicled through any media must be taught in schools. Therefore good quality education is imperative when a society wishes to be developed and prosperous. It is believed that if we have a good educational system, we will have a better and fairer society. So, education, language, power and ideology must be an issue every teacher should consider when teaching a language, may it be a foreign or mother one. With this in mind, the objective of this thesis is to analyze how the Internet may facilitate the manipulation of ideas and ideals about education. Furthermore the social exclusion caused by the media when it focuses language to a specific public only – thereby

excluding the greatest layer of the society – is what characterizes dominance and discriminatory usage of language.

When we think about our beliefs we rarely reflect upon them. If we consider how language usage is closely linked to ideologies which are linked to power, such assumption deserves considerable attention because we are surrounded by ideologies every day, many times veiled in language. The media is one of the most important ways of spreading ideology in our times. The power of media can be measured when we pay close attention to the news in which ideals are disguisedly presented in flamboyant or uncommon words and in which the real meaning and intention lay.

Education has a main role in this scenario because it seems to be the only way we will be able to view and confront the ideals that the media imposes to us. For this reason, the way the media talks about education is full of underlying ideals and issues, such as, better working conditions for teachers, teacher's salary, teaching students with special needs and many others are always brought up. Our focus in this study is the messages which underlie the news about professor's strike in higher education. In the Brazilian scenario the chosen article is *Para MEC, greve de professores universitários é 'precipitada'* (2012), from the online newspaper *Folha de São Paulo*. Likewise, in the British environment, the article is *University strike: are you taking part?* (2013), from the online newspaper *The Guardian*.

This topic is extremely important and may influence a whole society in different ways depending on the portrayal which the on-line article stands for. Depending on the bias the article is engaged in, either the government can be chosen as the responsible for the strikes, or the professors, the students or even society as a whole.

Therefore, in order to analyze these pieces of news, we will use Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) which provides a variety of perspectives to improve one's abilities in recognizing different ideologies and taking position when necessary. This proposal demands an effort and the will to learn, with open mind, in order to understand what underlies the news. The different discourses are open to interpretations, but the autonomy of several fields of discourse analysis studies should not be understood as a non-scientific area, because the linguistics studies are the science of human language.

This work brings up the discussion about how media may influence, through language, ways of behaving in Brazil and the United Kingdom together with the social impact and implications of the media they may render. The media vehicle which will be analyzed are the aforementioned on-line newspaper articles, because this type of media is the most accessed one nowadays. The core of discussion will be how higher education is portrayed in Brazil compared to the UK, considering the depiction of the online media of the Brazilian Professors' Strike in 2012 and the British Professors' Strike in the late 2013.

Based on Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), we expect to analyze the use of language in social relations of power and ideology focusing on the portrayal of news in the articles. Moreover, in face of the abovementioned facts this study also intends to unveil what types of ideals emerge in on-line articles about higher education in Brazil and the UK. By the same token perceive how these ideals are constituted and interwoven via language and analyze, from a linguistic perspective, the usage of language in the articles about the referred strikes.

The impetus of this research comes from the necessity to show the importance of resorting to the methods of CDA in real life situations, so people will be able to understand what may underlie pieces of news and not be manipulated by sneaky discourses. The linguistic analysis of online articles, which were written in the same scenario, i.e., Higher Education Professors' Strikes may show how a person's opinion may be formed and demonstrate that talking about ideologies is much more than simply passing a preconceived way of thinking and analyzing situations. The media influence is caused by the choices of words, (mis)interpretation of facts (intentionally) and social practices of the public in each situation, here in this study in both countries. In the same way, the media uses discourses as a tool to private intentions and we must take part and build a social change grounded in clear issues.

Inasmuch as the role of language in the context of power, the study of critical analysis should be explored and taught since early years of education. The process of reading/producing texts and also interpreting them must be practiced as well as understanding their social effects. Hence, this research proposal intends to contribute to CDA studies by analyzing, based on its methods, the aforementioned articles.

With this previous knowledge in mind, the intention of this thesis is to contribute with a new point of view about how media (in online articles) portray, manipulate and exclude social groups through language. Likewise, the power of an ideology is important and also sometimes misinterpreted by a group or community. This has a significant importance because it is in this moment of reading which we start to make our choices for life, and those choices will influence not only ourselves but also the society.

In this introduction, we have discussed possibilities of interpretation about how the media mass discourse may influence our society and we have also presented the theoretical basis of this thesis in order to analyze the discourses in the online articles. In chapter 2, we will define CDA and establish/explain the approach we will use and show some previous works conducted in the field of CDA. Then, in chapter 3, we will outline the methodological design of this study and develop the analysis of the articles. In the last chapter, the fourth, we will discuss the analysis and we will end this thesis with final considerations about the implications of a critical discourse analysis in real life situations to the purpose of showing that it is possible to start a real social change if we empower people since the early life of schooling.

## 2 CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS AS AN INTERDISCIPLINARY APPROUCH

In terms of CDA research, we can find previous works which are related with our present study. To exemplify them it is first necessary to understand the way they are analyzed. For this reason, according to Fairclough (1995) each discursive event has three dimensions or facets, they are: a spoken or written language text, an instance of discourse practice involving the production and interpretation of text, and a fraction of social practice.

### 2.1 REPRESENTATIONS OF GROUPS

The purpose of these studies in CDA is to show how the society can change, pointing how in a society as complex as ours, tendencies in the societal order of discourse will not be a simple matter of progression in one direction, but contradictory and difficult to sum up, Fairclough (1996). A good example is the analysis made by Norman Fairclough in his book, *Critical Discourse Analysis: the Critical Study of Language* (1995), in the chapter named *Critical discourse analysis and the marketization of public discourse: the universities*. He made a well and concise analysis as we can see below:

The marketization of the discursive practices of universities is one dimension of the marketization of higher education in a more general sense. Institutions of higher education come increasingly to operate (under government pressure) as if they were ordinary businesses competing to sell their products to consumers. This is not just a simulation. For example, universities are required to raise an increasing proportion of their funds from private sources, and increasingly to put in competitive tenders for funding (e.g. for taking on additional groups of students in particular subject areas). But there are many ways in which universities are unlike real business — much of their income, for instance, is still derived from government grants. (FAIRCLOUGH, 1995, p. 140-141)

The universities are British and these 'economical' practices are contemporary, taken by the theorist from 1992. He refers in particular to four cases or examples: press advertisements for academic posts (1), programme materials for an academic conference (2), an academic curriculum vitae (3), and entries in undergraduate

prospectuses (4). He starts the analysis from *discourse practice* as topic one, *text* and *social practice* developing each one of this as an effort to show the 'problem' and discusses possible solutions. To conclude his paper he postulates that

Critical discourse analysis cannot solve this problem, but it can perhaps point to the need for a struggle to develop such a new 'language' as a key element in building resistance to marketization without simply falling back on tradition, and perhaps give a better understanding of what might be involved in doing so. (FAIRCLOUGH, 1995, p. 165)

Starting from theory of Critical Discourse Analysis, based on the studies of Norman Fairclough, Michael Meyers, Ruth Wodak and Teun A. van Dijk, we will explore the possibilities of the process of discourses analysis. The main theoretical basis in this study, CDA, provides ways to comprehend discourses and how to perceive them inside some on-line newspaper articles about education, not as a method but more as perspective or position. But also another nomenclature/terminology can be found in this field of linguistic study, as VAN DIJK postulated:

Although critical approaches to discourse are commonly known as Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), I prefer to speak of Critical Discourse Studies (CDS). This more general term suggests that such a critical approach not only involves critical analysis, but also critical theory, as well as critical applications. The designation CDS may also avoid the widespread misconception that a critical approach is a method of discourse analysis. (VAN DIJK, 2002, p.62)

Here we will call CDA but also using van Dijk's studies. By the methods of CDA we can analyze references to other texts, discourses and ideologies. As a matter of fact there is no 100% certainty that the authors of the on-line articles know for sure their audience, but a notion of the audience can be measured and this audience projection can provide clues about the ideological intention of the on-line media company.

In other words, as van Dijk explains in Wodak & Meyers (2001):

Rather, CDA is a - critical - perspective on doing scholarship: it is, so to speak, discourse analysis 'with an attitude'. It focuses on social problems, and especially on the role of discourse in the production and reproduction of power abuse or domination.

Wherever possible, it does so from a perspective that is consistent with the best interests of dominated groups. It takes the experiences and opinions of members of such groups seriously, and supports their struggle against inequality. That is, CDA research combines what perhaps somewhat pompously used to be called 'solidarity with the oppressed' with an attitude of opposition and dissent against those who abuse text and talk in order to establish, confirm or legitimate their abuse of power. Unlike much other scholarship, CDA does not deny but explicitly defines and defends its own sociopolitical position. That is, CDA is biased - and proud of it. (van Dijk 2001, p.96)

Taking into consideration these concepts, critical discourse analysis *regards 'language as social practice'(...)*and *takes consideration of the context of language use to be crucial* (WODAK, MEYERS, 2001, p.01). Moreover we can claim that the ideals are constituted and interwoven via language and that an explanation about some important terms used in this work is necessary, as predicated Fairclough (1995):

By 'critical' discourse analysis 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. (FAIRCLOUGH, 1995, p. 132-133)

Besides that, the theoretician complements,

The analysis of discourse practice is concerned with sociocognitive (Fairclough (1989) and paper 1) aspects of text production and interpretation, as opposed to social-institutional aspects {...} The analysis of the discursive event as social practice may refer to different levels of social organization — the context of situation, the institutional context, and the wider societal context or 'context of culture' (Malinowski, 1923; Halliday and Hasan, 1985). (FAIRCLOUGH, 1995, p.134)

Furthermore, CDA talks about the media role in our society nowadays with a plentiful perspective but always focusing on the messages between the lines. This happens here in this research because it is not possible to do a complete analysis of a discourse of a large text or talk but in fact a snippet, with one specific focus. Otherwise it



would take hundreds of pages of research for an analysis which covered all aspects (visual, phonological, syntactic, semantic, and others), as van Dijk (2000) postulated. For this reason we chose to use a social cognitive approach to analyze the online articles. Consequently, as van Dijk affirmed:

Therefore, besides the fundamental interface of personal mental models that account for specific discourses, a cognitive approach also needs to account for social cognition, that is, the beliefs or social representations they share with others of their group or community. Knowledge, attitudes, values, norms and ideologies are different types of social representations. (VAN DIJK, 2002, p. 78)

After choosing which characteristics are important for this study, the text and context were also taken into consideration once they stipulate which ideologies emerge in the discourse. In the same way, a critical discourse analysis will reveal the ways used by media through the language to exert power. Seen in the excerpt below:

Media institutions often purport to be neutral in that they provide space for public discourse, that they reflect states of affairs disinterestedly, and that they give the perceptions and arguments of the newsmakers. Fairclough shows the fallacy of such assumptions, and illustrates the mediating and constructing role of the media with a variety of examples. (WODAK : MEYERS, 2001, p.06-07)

The basis used in this thesis is the connection between theory and discourse which provides several perspectives within Critical Discourse Analysis (Meyers 2001). The focus will be on the interpretative perspectives based on the CDA's studies of Norman Fairclough linked to the detection of the linguistic manifestations in discourses, in particular elements of dominance, difference and resistance (Meyers 2001), as well as on the studies of Teun A. van Dijk that develops more profoundly the sociocognitive approach which are closer to the *theory not as the classical relationship of causal hypotheses but rather as a framework systematizing phenomena of social reality. His focal triad is construed between discourse, cognition and society* (MEYERS, 2001).

Moreover van Dijk does a study about *mental models*, or *situation models* (as van Dijk postulated), which are related to the possible inferences' problems language users

could have, in his own words, *language users do not merely operate logically on linear sequences of propositions, but also need to have some “analogical” representation of reality in order to derive acceptable inferences from a text.* (van Dijk 2008). This concept will be important to our thesis because it is the basis of cognition studies as we will see with the development of the analysis. As seen below:

The theory of “situation models” provided an explanation of a large number of problems that could not be accounted for by traditional approaches to cognitive semantics, such as the conditions of local and global coherence and coreference, false recall, cross-media recall, the relations between meaning and knowledge, and so on (for a summary of the various functions of mental models, see Zwaan and Radvansky, 1998). The crucial thesis of mental model theory is that besides a representation of the meaning of a text, language users also construct mental models of the events texts are about, that is, the situation they denote or refer to – hence the name “situation models” chosen by Van Dijk and Kintsch (1983). (VAN DIJK, 2008, p.58)

The role of psychology studies also is considered important in many linguistic fields, as we see in CDA and more specific with the sociocognitive approach. That is explained below:

In this way, psychology was able for the first time to deal with the fundamental notion of reference and co-reference, and explain why it is not only meaning but also reference to related “facts” that forms the basis of the crucial notion of coherence (van Dijk, 1977). Thus a sequence of sentences of a text is coherent if the language users are able to construct mental models of the events or facts they are talking/writing or hearing/reading about, and if they are able to relate the events or facts in such models, for instance, by relations of temporality or causality. More generally and abstractly, this definition of mental models is consistent with formal theories of meaning and interpretation. For both perspectives on language we may simply say that a discourse is meaningful (true, false, etc.) if it has a model. (VAN DIJK, 2008, p.58-59)

This gamma and application of theory, methods and approaches can be better visualized in the figure below from Wodak& Meyers (2001, p.19):

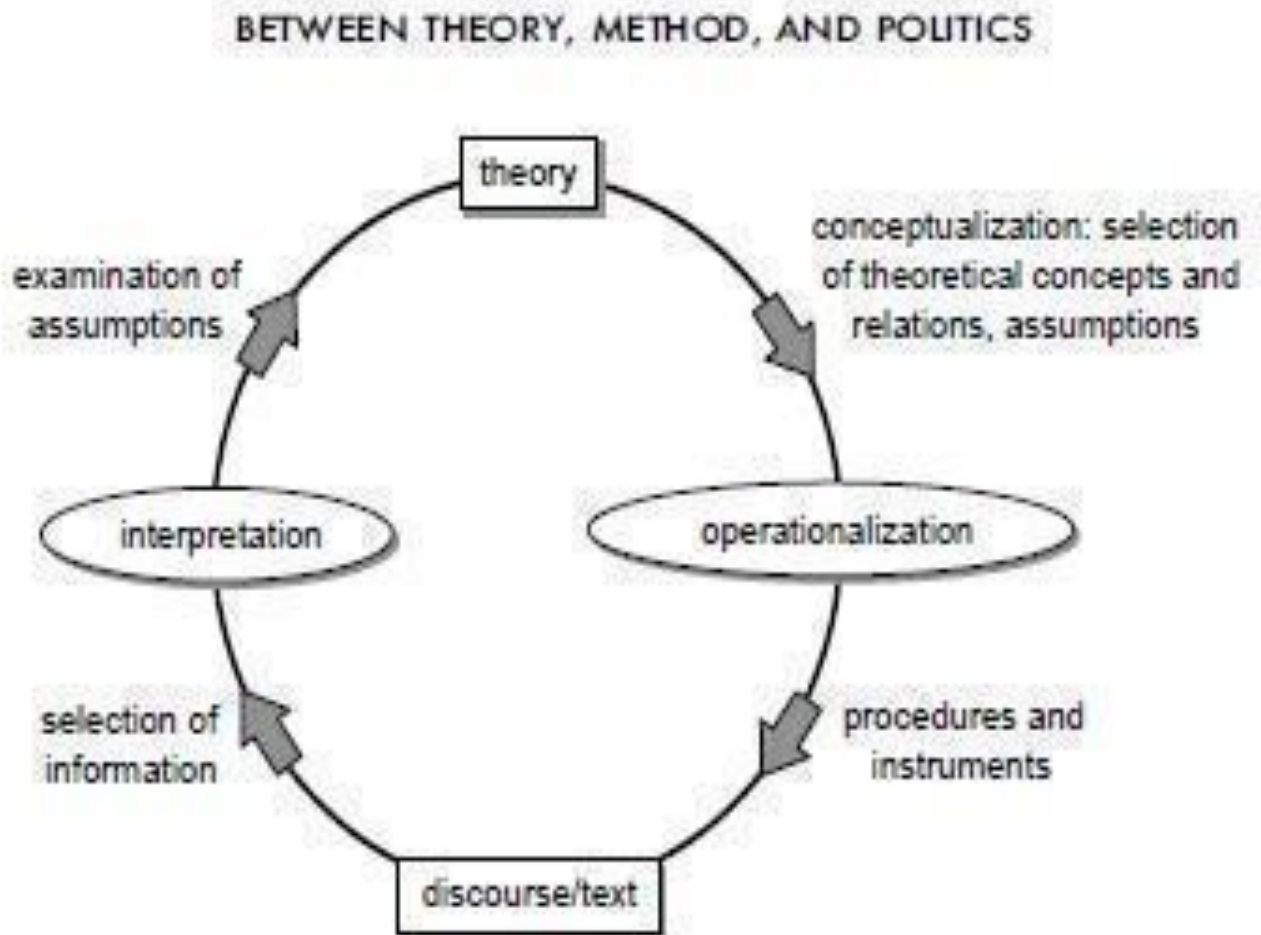


FIGURE 2.1: *Empirical research as a circular process*

## 2.2 PREVIOUS DISCOURSES

Some previous work in the CDA field can be seen such as the paper of the Brazilian author André Ricardo Nunes Martins from the University of Brasília, named *Minorities in the media discourse: a critical discourse analysis* (2005). This paper talks about how minorities are portrayed in mass media texts focusing on discrimination with six examples from newspaper. The author analyzes the linguistic aspects and in its relation to the wider social context according to the principles of CDA. The minorities represented are the Indians, Blacks and Street Children, further Martins developed the paper explaining how media excludes these three social groups taking into consideration language, discourse and social process.

Another example is the paper called *Critical discourse analysis and social cognition: evidence from business media discourse* (2005) by Veronika Koller from Lancaster University, in which the author intends to reconcile CDA and cognitive linguistics, mainly metaphor research. She illustrates her point of view by taking an extensive corpus of business magazine texts, presenting how that specific discourse centers on an ideologically vested metaphoric model of evolutionary struggle. The author concludes with a quotation: *Chouliaraki and Fairclough, albeit supporting the idea that 'social life [is] produced in thought' (1999: 28), claim that because cognitive phenomena cannot be studied directly, any account would necessarily be mediated.* Koller (2005).

With all this considered, the study has the basis to linguistically/discursively analyze the afore mentioned online articles. The analysis will be grounded in a consolidated theory and it can also contribute to the area with an overview linked to the educational perspective.

In the next stage of the analysis, a selection of information contained in the articles will be made to become possible the interpretation of the ideals embedded such as an examination of the assumptions in each situation (country). Equally important is to show the contradictions, gaps and failures inside the controlling influence in the social order.

To conclude, a critical reflection on the analysis will be carried out, when the

effectiveness of the critique, the contribution for social change and positioning in academic practices will be considered productive and fit for its purpose. We intend to show how the use of language in social relations of power and ideology can be an important issue to our society and also to promote a social change, mainly to people from lower classes.

With all this considered, we await a well prepared reader which transmits and gains confidence and throughout the development of this paper we expect to provide a good and/or new perspective of critical education. Not just for teachers to guide their students to become a proficient and critical reader, but also to all people who intend to improve themselves and help their communities to improve as well. All this in order to inhibit social exclusion by language, which is one of the main goals of this work.

### 3 CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

Henceforth we will develop our critical discourse analysis with a socio-cognitive approach supported by the aforementioned theory of *mental models*, also called *situation models* by Teun van Dijk.

Likewise, in our theoretical basis in which we do not analyze/covered all aspects of the text/articles (phonological, visual, etc), here we will analyze the media influence in the discourses and how it is portrayed. Not aspects such how politicians are involved in the professor's strike in higher education or how the government treats the situation, but how politics and language are connected to impose or change an ideology.

The context of the analyzed articles, the common ground of the society involved and mutual knowledge are interrelated to the well-known philosophical issue of *Other Minds* by J.L. Austin (1946): How do we really know what others know, think or feel, or whether they have a mind at all? (van Dijk 2008). We shall not further explore this philosophical issue, but basically take for granted that social actors have the skill to model further social actors, and also their mental properties, on the basis of a series of socially shared, interactional strategies such as making inferences from supposed action, making conclusions about self-descriptions of others, and making comparisons on the basis of self-awareness (introspection). As it stands evident for discourse and context models, such representations of other minds are essential circumstances of all communication, collaboration and discourse (van Dijk 2008).

The sociocognitive interface accounts for many perspectives of the relation involving social situation and discourse, e.g., that such a relation is by definition non-deterministic (van Dijk 1998), and that it is individually and situationally unpredictable. Most significantly, context models enlighten that it is not some sort of intention social fact that controls how we talk/write, but rather our subjective manner of understanding/constructing this social fact (van Dijk 1997).

For the same reason, this approach is not well-suited with an account of language, discourse and society, as we see, for instance, in the work *Marxism and Philosophy of the Language*, which assumes that language use has, immediate,

*material conditions*, as it is known from traditional Marxist conceptions (Volosinov, Bakhtin 1986). Of course there are material conditions of day by day life, but these may influence discourse just if they are interpreted, represented and lived per se by language users (van Dijk, 2008).

### 3.1 UNIVERSITY STRIKE DISCOURSES

The first analyzed article is *University strike: are you taking part?* (2013), from the online newspaper *The Guardian*. Summing up: the journalist Claire Shaw wrote this article and it talks about the professor's strike in universities from the UK in October 2013. It brings some opinions of professors and members of the support staff of the universities and it finishes by calling students, professors, all community in general to take part by showing their opinions about the issue.

By means of an attentive reading of the article, we can assume that the journalist and the newspaper company tried to persuade the community to discuss the strike and its implications by explaining the motivation of the strikers and by also giving them space to expose opinions. We shall now read the full text to comprehend these affirmations.

#### **University strike: are you taking part?**

By Claire Shaw, Guardian Professional, Tuesday 3 December

As university staff stage their second walkout in a row over pay, we want to hear from those who will and won't be striking. Six university staff on why they went on strike in October. Placards marking the picket line at the University of Exeter on 31 October 2013.

On 31 October, university staff up and down the country staged their first national strike over pay for seven years. Three unions – the University and College Union, Unison and Unite – rejected the 1% pay rise offered to staff by employers, which the unions insisted equated to a 13% pay cut in real terms since October 2008.

We heard from a range of voices in the sector, from professors to support staff, on why they were taking part. Nadjie Al-Ali, professor of gender studies at SOAS, University of London, said: "So many of us are working every evening and every weekend at the expense of our health and our family lives. It is not surprising that between the increasing workloads and the pay squeeze, work-related stress is taking on epidemic proportions."

Paul Catherall, e-learning librarian at the University of Liverpool, said: "This strike is not just about pay, but a chance to oppose the coalition's wider agenda to completely deregulate our public infrastructure, replacing these sectors with fake commercial interests and to show solidarity with sectors such as the



probation service and Royal Mail facing catastrophic privatisation and closure today."

Despite the headlines and debates on Twitter, the University and Colleges Employers Association said fewer than 5% of staff voted to support the strike. As university staff stage their second-day walkout today, 3 December, we want to hear from those who are not taking part and why.

A member of support staff at the University of Bath who wishes to remain anonymous, said: "I've decided not to strike because while I am sometimes frustrated by a lack of progression and opportunity for support roles, I equally feel like I have a really good deal at [my] university."

"I get paid more than a fair salary compared to what I'd get doing the same job in the private sector (maybe not compared to the VC, but I don't do her job, so don't feel that is a fair comparison). I get a really good pension package and amazing holiday allowance, sick leave, flexible working, and can work from home if I need to."

Whether you're an academic, manager or member of support staff, share your views on the strike and tell us why you will or won't be taking part in the comments below. (SHAW, 2013)

As we can notice, the language is simple and without uncommon words, but this is only clear for people who have some knowledge about the issue. The subjectivity of the language and the message between the lines is that the reader must be in favor of the professors.

In one hand, we have the e-learning librarian of the University of Liverpool, who is identified by his name, Paul Catherall. Giving that he works in a place of knowledge, it is assumed that he has a high level of education, has access to reading, culture, etc. He is in favor of the strike and his first and main argument is that the strike is not just about payment. On the other hand we have a person *who wishes to remain anonymous*, and is "only" a member of the support staff of the University of Bath, that is, he/she does not belong to the same social stratum of the abovementioned librarian, and he/she shows a feeling of satisfaction with the situation at his/her university.

From the standpoint of Teun van Dijk's studies, we need to feel part of a group to have representation in the society, otherwise we are excluded.

Presupposing the same or related attitudes on social issues or

more general ideologies, for instance, fundamentally alters the rhetorical and argumentative structures of discourse: recipients need not be persuaded or convinced of the general norms, values or principles, and the same is true for their application to specific events or acts. Thus, language users need to know whether recipients belong to the same ideological groups. If they do, general arguments may be presupposed, and less explicit persuasion will be necessary. If not, language users can only presuppose and appeal to higher level ideologies, values or norms that are assumed to be shared by the recipients. (VAN DIJK, 2008 p.97)

In the article, we saw the two sides, an ideology that represents the fight against bad work conditions and low salaries, as well as an ideology of safeness and conformity with the reality. The first one appears in a discourse of a person with a well-seen status by a great part of the society, who wishes changes and progress. The second one is not so well seen and does not represent a great amount of society.

This shows how the article tries to persuade the reader in one direction in order to establish a dominant ideology, a belief that may apply both in a cognitive and a social account of the *influence* of situation on text. In addition, what all media vehicles several times through the situational models mentioned before have used: control. This notion is stronger and more specific than the vague notion of influence, but it avoids the pitfalls of using *causation* or *determination* in the description of human action and discourse (VAN DIJK, 2008). We may say that *A* (media) *controls* *B* (society) when *A* is a necessary condition of *B*. For example, no suitable discourse is achievable without shared knowledge of the participants.

In other words, we can say that knowledge *controls* the creation and understanding of discourse. Because there is an enormous number of other necessary circumstances of discourse, knowledge, of grammar for example, it cannot be said to create discourse. Cognitively, knowledge is an indispensable constituent in the process of discourse production and comprehension (VAN DIJK, 2000). More commonly, then, we might say that context controls discourse by good quality of the meaning of the context as the delineation of the relevant features of the social situation.

The distinction between context (as a mental model) and social situation is fundamental here. For example, the social class of the language users is not considered enough, and the condition of discourse variation hardly ever considered, but once

language users make the social class relevant for their interaction, by including this class in their context models, it will control how they speak or understand something. (VAN DIJK, 1984).

Recent work in developmental psychology has especially focused on the way children learn to understand the intentions of the others with whom they interact (Tomasello, 1999a, 63–75; Tomasello, Carpenter, Call, BehneandMoll, 2005). The authors emphasize that (mutual) understanding of intentions is a crucial development of human cognition as distinct from nonhuman primate cognition, taking place between nine months and a year in the infant. Since intentions define the meaning of action, this means that children around this age begin to understand that others intentionally engage in conduct to realize specific goals, specifically in conversation. Thus, they too learn that by talking they may modify the conduct of others and thus reach their own goals (e.g., get food, toys, etc.). Learning about intentionality is part of a longer and more complex process of learning to understand one's interactional and communicative environment. (VAN DIJK, 2008, p.98)

This kind of social exclusion by language is one of the greatest responsible for the inequality in our modern society. Because of that, we must end with mass media discourse by giving people ways to perceive these underlying messages of ideology, power and dominance, that is, by empowering them. Teaching children is a great way to begin changing this scenario and teachers have the responsibility to do so, as we can see in the excerpt above about children mental models.

### 3.2 A “HASTY” DISCOURSE

The second article we will analyze is *Para MEC, greve de professores universitários é 'precipitada'*<sup>1</sup>(2012) from the online newspaper *Folha de São Paulo*. Despite the publishing being in the aforementioned newspaper, the authorship is from *Agência Brasil*, a national public agency of news controlled by the Brazilian government, which feeds a great part of Brazil's media vehicles.

As we did in the first analyzed article, a sum up of the main points discussed in this second article is necessary. First, it is presented in the title that the Higher Education professors' strike in Brazil is “hasty”. As the text is developed, we see a quite strong opposition to the strikers, for example, the public organ that regulates education in Brazil delayed the beginning of the negotiations to solve the issue and the professors' union complained that the payments were under the expected. Below we can read in details the full article in his original language, Portuguese, and in the sequence the translation to the English language.

**Para MEC, greve de professores universitários é 'precipitada'**

25/05/2012

O MEC (Ministério da Educação) classificou como "precipitada" a greve dos professores das instituições federais de ensino superior. Em nota divulgada neste sábado, o ministério ainda contestou que o piso salarial dos professores seja de R\$ 557,51, como informou o Sindicato Nacional dos Docentes das Instituições de Ensino Superior (Andes).

Segundo o ministério, apenas 180 professores em um total de 70 mil, recebem R\$ 1.597,92 por uma jornada de apenas 20 horas. "Com o aumento de 4% mais a incorporação das gratificações, o menor salário para um professor, sem nenhum título de pós-graduação, com uma jornada de 40 horas, é R\$ 2.872,85. Um professor com dedicação exclusiva e título de doutorado recebe um mínimo superior a R\$ 7 mil", afirmou o secretário de Educação Superior do Ministério da Educação, Amaro Lins.

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<sup>1</sup> To the Ministry of Education and Culture, the university professors' strike is "hasty"

A greve nacional das universidades federais começou no último dia 17. Segundo o Andes, o movimento continua até que o governo apresente uma proposta para análise da categoria.

"Estamos há praticamente dois anos negociando e não há predisposição do governo em movimentar suas peças no tabuleiro. E as condições de trabalho estão precarizadas, com muita crise ocorrida no processo de expansão das universidades", disse a presidente do Andes, Marina Barbosa.

Entre as reivindicações dos professores está a incorporação de gratificações, acréscimo de titulação, melhores condições de trabalho e reestruturação do plano de carreira nos campi criados com o Reuni. Os professores também pedem aumento do piso salarial, segundo eles de R\$ 557,51, para R\$ 2.329,35, valor calculado pelo Dieese como salário mínimo para suprir as necessidades previstas na Constituição Federal. (FOLHA DE SÃO PAULO, 2012)

The text below was a free translation of the analyzed article made by the author of this thesis:

**For MEC, strike by university professors is 'hasty' 05/25/2012**

MEC (Ministry of Education) classified as "hasty" the professor's strike of federal institutions of higher education. In a statement issued on Saturday, the ministry also denied that the base salary of teachers is R \$ 557.51, as reported by the National Union of Teachers of Higher Education Institutions (Andes).

According to the ministry, only 180 hundred professors in a total of 70 thousand, receive R\$ 1,597.92 for a journey of just 20 hours. "With the increase of 4% over the incorporation of gratifications, the lowest salary for a professor, without any graduate title with 40 hours a day, is worth R\$ 2,872.85. A professor with exclusive dedication and PhD title receives a minimum exceeding R\$ 7.000,00 "said Secretary of Higher Education, from the Ministry of Education, Amaro Lins.

The national strike of federal universities started on Sept. 17. According to *Andes*, the movement will continue until the government makes a proposal for the category's consideration.

"We are have been negotiating for almost two years and there is no willingness of the government to move their pieces on the board. And working conditions are precarious, a lot of crisis occurred in the expansion process of the universities," said the president of *Andes*, Marina Barbosa.

Among the claims, professors are incorporating bonuses, adding titles, better working conditions and restructuring of career path on campuses created with *REUNI*. Professors also ask for

increase in minimum wage, they say R\$ 557.51 to R\$ 2,329.35, value calculated *DIEESE* as minimum wage to meet the requirements laid down in the Federal Constitution. (FOLHA DE SÃO PAULO, 2012)

As we can notice, only the Secretary of Higher Education and the president of the professors' union talked and gave their opinions about the strike. The newspaper is at the same time precise in criticizing both parties (professors and government) by showing more incisive data like the salaries, dates, etc., and it is somehow vague about how to solve or even discuss this important issue of the country: education.

This kind of position is better understood if we review these diverse sources of contextual variation of lexical choice made by the author. We see that the article again implicates such context of vagueness. It should be defined in parameters that the speakers would represent themselves and the readers, as well as other important dimensions of the communicative event in a dynamic mental model (Van Dijk, 2008). We have the standpoint of precision versus vagueness in descriptions of people, or, in our case, events, that is, a variation in the way mental models act. We usually tend to be vague when *Our* negative characteristics are being showed, but quite precise when we are describing those of *Them* (VAN DIJK, 1990), this is perceived on the discursive manifestations of ideology in the analyzed article. Such variation clearly depends first on the way events are being represented in mental models of events, which in turn depends on underlying attitudes and ideologies (VAN DIJK, 2008).

Thus, the well-known ideological polarization between in-groups and out-groups, as we know it from racist discourse, typically involves rhetorical emphasis (metaphors, hyperboles, etc.) on any positive attributes of Us, and on any negative attribute of Them, and vice versa, mitigation (euphemism, understatements, etc.) of Their good attributes and of Our bad attributes (among other studies of discourse and racism referred to above, see, e.g., van Dijk, 1993a; see also Carnes and Taus, 1996; Romer, 1998; Triandafyllidou, 1998, 2000). Such polarization may also appear in anti-feminist discourse or media coverage (see, e.g., Jenkins, 2002), feminist resistance rhetoric (Gray-Rosendale and Harootunian, 2003), and of course in such heated debates as those on abortion (Condit, 1994). In political rhetoric emphasizing ideological differences between in-groups and out groups is rife (see, e.g., King and Anderson, 1971). (Van Dijk, 2008 p.192)

The aspects enhancing or mitigating functions of rhetorical structures may be

*semantic*, that is, is related to how things are represented in the probably subjective mental-event models of the people, how the people in fact see or understand reality. However, they may also be *pragmatic*, that is, they may be set up to make discourses more or less tolerable to the social situation, as is normally the case for persuasive text and talk (VAN DIJK, 2008).

Cognitively, this persuasive aspect of rhetoric may have the specific purpose of giving special attention to portraying specific meanings and hence to enhance the chance that these are being constructed as significant parts of future event models (VAN DIJK, 1990). For example, for a number of sociocognitive and emotional reasons, the menace of associations of a metaphor like *attack* are more probable to be attended to by readers and to be incorporated into their event models and consequently social representations about *migration* than an *ordinary* non-metaphorical expression such as *many grasshoppers are arriving in the farm*.

As in the article, the word *hasty* (*precipitada*) is used in a pejorative way towards the professors, and the quotes make it more vague regarding the declaration of MEC. In addition, the declaration is not from a person who represents the public organ of education, as the mentioned secretary, but instead the declaration is attributed to the organ, without the personification of a source. This, again, adds more vagueness to text.

### 3.3 NEWSWRITING

As we saw until here, the articles have some inherent aspects that provide us a large amount of data to analyze. These data are also related to the writing style of the journalist/newspaper, that is, when initiating the discourse creation involved in newswriting, the journalist has already situated a conditional context model. VAN DIJK (2008) postulated some of these “drafts” of context models:

- new knowledge about a newsworthy international event;
- contextual knowledge about what has been reported before about the event (if it is not new), and hence what the readers (may) already know;
- contextual knowledge about the sociocultural knowledge of the readers;
- applied sociocultural knowledge about general properties of news events;
- applied professional knowledge about newswriting;
- applied professional attitudes and ideologies shared with other reporters;
- applied social attitudes and ideologies about this kind of international event;
- professional ideologies as a journalist;
- intention to write a news report;
- purpose to inform the readers of newspaper X;

(VAN DIJK, 2008, p.104)

As we have seen through the analysis of the articles and on the theoretical basis of this sociocognitive approach of context in terms of mental models, we saw some of the relations between context and the properties of some levels of discourse, focusing on the media discourse. The manner in which context models are in command of discourse is by controlling its potential variations, that is, given the subjective model of an event, sociocultural comprehension or group attitudes and ideologies, context models show how writers/speakers originate or presuppose such specific or wide-ranging beliefs at every one of levels of discourse (VAN DIJK, 2008).



In other words, any sufficient way of accounting for such multifaceted social circumstances of text and talk will need to be in the terms of the complex interaction of such conditions in the mediated structures and strategies of context models.

### 3.4 ...AND POLITICS FOR ALL

Not only mental models influence the newswriting style but also another important issue is involved: politics. As we know, the political power is one of the biggest influences in terms of language, and that is clearly noticed when a politician, for example, gives a speech with convenient and elegant sounding sentence structures to defend or attack some situation. The words and ideas she/he uses are chosen to seem to be the only alternative to solve a problem and show that the politician's ideology is the best one among the others. The language is used by politics to spread, maintain or kill an ideology and exert power using media vehicles to disseminate it.

Here we see the link between language, ideology and power through the political way of action. We all once read or heard jargons, euphemisms, clichés, etc. in a political speech or article but we do not frequently pay the necessary attention to perceive the real intention behind them. Moreover, this turns the text/talk situation less precise, less clear. We need to start thinking for ourselves and allowing the development and manifestation of our own opinion and points of view to flow.

Aside from that, the political use of language can blur the ability of a person to analyze or interpret a text or talk, making the discourse evasive, slippery. These kinds of misuses of language can affect people's decision and consequently lead to bad future issues, which will become cyclic. For instance, a "common" way to hide responsibility, taking into consideration the articles about the professor's strikes analyzed, is the use of passive voice to hide 'the agent', whom made the action. As George Orwell postulated with more details in his essay about *Politics and the English Language*:

*Operators or verbal false limbs.* These save the trouble of picking out appropriate verbs and nouns, and at the same time pad each sentence with extra syllables which give it an appearance of symmetry. Characteristic phrases are *render inoperative, militate against, make*

*contact with, be subjected to, give rise to, give grounds for, have the effect of, play a leading part (role) in, make itself felt, take effect, exhibit a tendency to, serve the purpose of, etc., etc.* The keynote is the elimination of simple verbs. Instead of being a single word, such as *break, stop, spoil, mend, kill*, a verb becomes a *phrase*, made up of a noun or adjective tacked on to some general-purpose verb such as *prove, serve, form, play, render*. In addition, the passive voice is wherever possible used in preference to the active, and noun constructions are used instead of gerunds (*by examination of* instead of *by examining*). (ORWELL, 1968, p. 130)

Orwell completed his statement talking about the importance of minimal language choices such as verbs, conjunctions, prepositions and phrases or expressions, because the opposite can also be a tool of manipulation of information in a discourse:

The range of verbs is further cut down by means of the *-ize* and *de-* formations, and the banal statements are given an appearance of profundity by means of the *not un-* formation. Simple conjunctions and prepositions are replaced by such phrases as *with respect to, having regard to, the fact that, by dint of, in view of, in the interests of, on the hypothesis that*; and the ends of sentences are saved by anticlimax by such resounding commonplaces as *greatly to be desired, cannot be left out of account, a development to be expected in the near future, deserving of serious consideration, brought to a satisfactory conclusion*, and so on and so forth. (ORWELL, 1968, p.131)

Undoubtedly, the writer of the acclaimed book *1984*, made an exquisite critique about how politics interfere in our society through language use.

We cannot deny the importance of this fact; otherwise we will be defenceless against the covered intentions of one's discourse. By the CDA methods and a sociocognitive approach, the mental models are an effective way to perceive these intentions and unveil constituted ideals. Thus, as Orwell punctuated,

The great enemy of clear language is insincerity. When there is a gap between one's real and one's declared aims, one turns as it were

instinctively to long words and exhausted idioms, like a cuttlefish spurting out ink. In our age there is no such thing as 'keeping out of politics'. All issues are political issues, and politics itself is a mass of lies, evasions, folly, hatred, and schizophrenia. When the general atmosphere is bad, language must suffer. (ORWELL, 1968, p.137)

The presence of politics in our society is natural because it is in our nature to live along with our groups or communities. Although we always claim for a better life in society, we must not only complain about it, but also be the change we want.

Of course, there will always be arguments about ideologies and moral as any sort of disagreement of one or another political view, but we have to deal with it in the best way we can. To teach and empower people will be indubitably the best way to uncover media, politics and any other kind of imposed ideology.

#### 4 FINAL DISCOURSE CONCLUSIONS

In the foregoing sections of this thesis, we have discussed the role of CDA in a social change by analyzing online articles regarding strikes of professors of Higher Education in the UK (2013) and Brazil (2012). We used the sociocognitive approach to explain how media can manipulate information and impose an ideology. The mental/situational and context models were the basis of this study and they have provided a solid ground to elucidate the use of language in social relations of power and ideology focusing on the portrayal of news by online media.

We have unveiled the types of ideals that emerge in online articles about higher education in Brazil and the UK. Moreover, we were able to perceive how these ideals are constituted and interwoven via language.

The analysis, from a linguistic perspective, about the usage of language in articles about the referred strikes showed us the importance of resorting to the methods of CDA in real life situations, so that people will be able to understand what may be underlying pieces of news and will not be manipulated by mass media discourses.

As our central theoretician, Teun VAN DIJK, postulated that studies in CDA and also other linguistic fields,

(...) shows first that most researchers in the humanities and social sciences after World War II engaged in structuralist, formalist and autonomous theories focusing on text, talk, signs, literature or art itself, thereby largely ignoring the social and cultural environments of language and discourse. (...) Critical discourse analysis specifically examines the role of discourse in the (re)production of social inequality, for instance, by studying text and talk as forms of power abuse. (VAN DIJK, 2008, p.217)

Evidently, such a related condition of academic discourse is barely satisfactory for the study of class inequality. By the time the few nowadays students of a working-class background develop themselves into researchers/professors they have generally lost their working-class status, and with it the enthusiasm for academic effort on behalf of their original class (van Dijk, 2008). In this close example, we also see that we should not simply observe the relations between context and discourse as a common practice, but also critically reflect on such relations from our own academic discourse.

Equally important is the relation we saw between the daily talk/text and the academic discourse, we frequently use common notions at academic environments, such as *language, discourse, power, ideology, society*, but we have a tough time defining them more or less agreeably. This often means that we are dealing with essential concepts that need complex theories, if not entire subjects, to be able to handle their properties.

It is here that the ultimate rationale of discourse and conversation analysis should be assessed, namely in the multiple social, political and cultural functions of text and talk in society. It is precisely the sociocognitive interface that links such forms of language use to their social and communicative situations that has been missing so far in the increasingly complex theories of language, discourse, conversation and communication of the last decades. (VAN DIJK, 2008, p.225)

At the same time, the inhibition of social exclusion through language is clearly one of the main points of this thesis. Discourse as an instance of discrimination is one of the forms that CDA helps to fight against, such as racism, sexism and all kinds of inequality that are consequently not simply abstract systems of social unfairness and dominance, but are essentially encrusted by the forms of daily life, specifically through the beliefs, events and discourses of a community such as culture, religion, etc.

Furthermore, traditional approaches accounting for the social influence of language use and discourse – for example, in many fields of linguistic studies and in Critical Discourse Analysis – are partial without such an important cognitive interface. This is, moreover, one of the reasons why the study of sociolinguistic variables tends to be superficially resembling to those traditional approaches. However, this happens because without such an interface it is unattainable to elucidate the full creation and interpretation links involving society and discourse.

Therefore, a possible future study in this area of CDA can be almost the opposite of this current study. To analyze the inverse way, this is, how society influences media in order to satisfy its own uncovered desires of alienation in some important issues like education and politics. In this case, it is presupposed that media vehicles made their choices of ideology, to cover or uncover some information and how to portray these actions based on what the society as a whole demands.

To conclude we hope to be helpful with our considerations based on CDA to those who may seek for a new perspective of linguistic studies. And not only this, but also to show that it is possible to use the theories here presented to promote, in fact, a real social change in order to be meaningful in real life situations.

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