



RESEARCH PAPER

Racial Supremacy and the Image of Blacks in the American Print Media: A Critical Discourse Analysis

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PAPER INFO	ABSTRACT
Received: February 27, 2022 Accepted: April 10, 2022 Online: April 15, 2022 Keywords: Blacks, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), News Reports The American Press *Corresponding Author dr.samina@gc wuf.edu.pk	Death of Floyd unveils the racial equalities between whites and blacks in the United States. The image of Black Americans as second-class citizens of society has been changed after the murder of George Floyd. The purpose of this qualitative research is to reveal the use of language in the exercise of racial supremacy in the aftermath of the murder of George Floyd by a white police officer on May 25, 2020. The data consists of 05 news reports from the Washington post, published in 2020. Using Fairclough's 3-D model of discourse analysis (1992), the research analysis concentrates on the features and lead passages (the introductory passages of the news reports published in American Print Media during year of 2020) of a corpus of 10 news reports (05 before the event and 05 after the event) and inspects the image of Black (Black People living the United States, where the event took place) after the killing of George Floyd. This study finds that the media is not biased and can change pre-formulated belief systems.

Introduction

This research examined how media affects Racism in society, which remained the same in America over time. Moreover, this research finds out how media construct the image of Blacks in American society or this image. This previously made image remained the same or changed after May 25, 2020, after killing a Black American, George Floyd, by a white police officer. The earlier use word "racism" has been traced in the Oxford English Dictionary (edition of 1902), where this term was used in a description of United States policy towards Native Americans (Howard,2016). At the beginning of the 20th century, this term was confused with "Racialism." In Ruth Benedict's Race and Racism (Benedict, 1945) and Edmund Soper's Racism: A World Issue (Hankins, 1947), Racism is defined as the difference between human races based on physical differences.

Racial supremacy is the concept that whites have more advantages of being constructed as white. The valuation on the cases of skin color is not a criterion of being distinguished as white. It also includes hair color, the shape of the nose, language accent, culture, and other privileges of whites (Hunter, 2002).

According to Nogueira (2008), behind the concept of racial supremacy, there is a concept of naturalization of white racial superiority, which gives an impression that those who are looking white are more beautiful, have a high intellectual level, are more human, and also a role model for others to follow. Those who are outside of this circle, like Native American or African, have a lack of something, which is "lack of whiteness." He further

elaborates that Racial supremacy is a position where whites are in contact with non-whites or blacks. This concept also hides the socio-historical construction of the image of whites and also helps to impose this as a universal model of the human race to follow.

From the end of the 19th century to the mid of 20th-century politicians and social scientists in the United States and Europe pay serious attention to promoting white supremacy. Arthur de Gobineau (1915) represents the white race as the highest level of human race development in his essay *Essay on the Inequality of Human Races*. Leonardo (2004) states that when dominance in relationships entered into the pattern of history, it produces the pattern of hatred and standardized the social treatment of specific groups. When early Americans have drafted the constitution, they were also affected by capitalism and Racial supremacy. They claimed that all people are equal, but in original, according to them, the definition of humanity has white properties, and it can be betrayed by the people of color and working class.

The word "blacks" signifies as "Someone who is black has the dark skin typical of people from Africa." As a noun, the Cambridge learner's dictionary (2004) defines black as the color of coal or the color of a very dark night. So, blacks are the people having origin in Africa. The word black as the term can or cannot be write in capitalized form. The A.P. Style Book (2020) changed this to capitalize "B" in the Black. But on the other hand, ASA Style Guide says that the word "b" in blacks should not be capitalized. In this research, our focus will be on a single ethnic group which

Death of Floyd unveils the racial inequalities between whites and blacks in the United States. Afro-Americans are still considered second-class citizens of society and face racial discrimination in many aspects of life. During the time of the Corona Virus pandemic, the primary cause of the high death rate of African Americans was discrimination in medical care and access to health facilities Unemployment and uncertainty about the future increased during the lockdown. It arouses anger in people's hearts; besides this, the long-lasting Racism that resulted in the nationwide protest. After the trial, Derek Chauvin was found guilty on all counts and sentenced to 75 years in prison.

In the 21st century, Critical Discourse analysis emerges as an effective linguistic tool to analyze the text. The primary purpose of CDA is to unveil the complex use of language to control a society's social and political environment. According to Blommaert and Bulcaen (2020), CDA is a tool that makes use of power more visible and transparent when applied to some discourse. CDA as a research method in applied linguistics is more helpful. It examines discourse at the deeper structure to explore discourse production and its relationship with the unequal distribution of power in a society. Van Dijk (2001) explains that CDA is a sort of resistance against the practice of power abuse, unequal distribution of power, and dominance created by the written or spoken discourse in a specific political and social context.

Fairclough (1993) argues that the Critical Discourse Analysis approach aims to unveil the complex relationship connection and purpose of discursive practices, events, texts, text production, and structure in a social and cultural wider frame.

CDA aims to investigate how discursive practices, discourses, and events make ideologies under the influence of power and struggle relationships. CDA also highlights the connections between society and its discourse and examines how society strengthens power issues in a particular environment. Widdowson (2007) believes that CAD aims to uncover the misuse of power in spoken or written discourse. The social function of CDA is to unveil

and mend social disorders by interpreting the discourse to the reader (Fairclough and Wodak, 1997).

Merrill (1994) describes the use of language in the context of news media. In this book, he criticizes media, media ethics, media types and their functions regarding the individual and society, the impact of media messages on society, the significant differences between reporting styles of journals, newspapers, and books, the structural construction of news.

Ideological concepts are the basis of every spoken and written discourse. According to Fowler (2004), language is not like a clear window. Instead, it is a structured and reflective medium. On the other hand, ideology is a structured and organized framework of ideas arranged in a specific way according to the particular viewpoint (Hodge and Kress, 1993). The primary focus in CDA studies is to uncover hidden ideologies under the veil of the oral or written discourse of language and the idea which is conveyed to the reader or the listener. The control of power in society has a direct link with the ideological framework. Thommson (1984) argues that ideological frameworks are the meaning of power in exercise. While for Fairclough (2003), Ideologies are the extents or figures that appear in the text and contribute to building up for the reproduction of unequal power or dominance relations. Furthermore, ideologies are for granted assumptions of text.

The work after choosing an event of May 25th, 2020, murder of George Floyd, tries to explore the literature that focuses on the image of less privilege subjects of society. Such events grab the attention of media in no time. So, print media becomes the best sight to explore the image of these less privileged which the present study aims to explore.

Literature Review

Chen (2016) studied 10 news articles about Sino-Japan Boat Collision by two different newspapers, the China Daily and the New York Times. By using the Critical Discourse Analysis approach of Fairclough, he described how both newspapers represented different attitudes and ideologies. The China Daily favored the Chinese agenda and portrayed the Japanese negatively. On the other hand, the New York Times showed a neutral picture of the dispute by using phrases like, "territorial dispute/ Island dispute".

Nasab and Downlatabadi (2016) studied the comparison of news about Iranian nuclear program negotiations between two English newspapers, the Los Angeles Times and the Tehran Times. They collected reports about the Iranian nuclear program from the websites of both newspapers and studied discursive strategies used in reporting. The data were numerated and tabulated, so the results were dependable. The corpus consisted of news about negotiations on the Iranian nuclear program published within a month. They concluded that the Los Angeles Times used discursive strategies like explanations, authoritative, evidentiality, counter factuality, and the Tehran Times, used hyperbole, actor description, lexicalization, and situation description.

Primasiwi (2020), tries to reveal racism reflected in Donald trump's campaign speeches. He used Fairclough's Three-Dimensional Model of text analysis (1989) consisted of three interrelated dimensions named description, interpretation, and explanation. He also used Van Dijk's (1985) ideological representation of "us" and "them" to reveal how racism is enacted in a discourse of Trump's six speeches. He also used linguistic-based analysis by using Martin and White's Appraisal Theory in this study to analyze language attitudes such as effect, Judgment, and Appreciation.

The analysis showed that Trump used three language attitudes in his speeches, which are affect, judgment, and appreciation. The language attitude analysis showed that he represented blacks negatively by using the word “them” 159 times. His racist approach can be classified as new racism by constructing three aspects: cultural differences between “Us” and “them”, “Them” as a threat to U.S. security, and Them’ as a threat to the U.S. economy. Finally, his new racist approach is considered as violence against the American Dream of Success.

Commodore et al. (2020) analyzed discourse of comment sections of news articles and reports about black women HBCU leaders using Black Feminist Theory and Critical Discourse Analysis Approach. They founded that in the comment section people tried to form a controlling image of Black women HBCU leaders by crafting set stages of public critique and Black Women HBCU presidents find their way to acquire higher education by using an anti-Black misogynistic approach.

After penning of these researches no research has been found on the image of Blacks in news reports in my knowledge. The present study is an attempt to explore the image of the Blacks in news reports in American Print Media.

Material and Methods

This qualitative research aims to examine Blacks' image using the Critical Discourse analysis technique, described in heads and leads of 10 news reports of famous American newspaper, *The Washington post*, published in the year 2020. This study also examines how linguistics features used to apply racist ideologies deeply rooted in American print media.

Using Fairclough’s 3-D model of discourse analysis (1992), the researcher focuses on trans-disciplinary characteristics of CDA and examines the social aspects of language defining racial intercourse of News Reports.

Sources of Data

The data for this study was taken from American newspaper, Washington post, during the year Of 2020. To conduct fundamental and practical analysis, 10 news reports were taken from Newspapers' original website, given in table 1.

Table 1
The web addresses Washington Post

No	Newspaper Name	Website
1	Washington post	https://www.washingtonpost.com/

Print media contain the view of public with reference to Black race. The data for this research is consisted on 10 news report from five famous American newspaper Washington Post The murder of George Floyd for no reason by a white American Police officer was the event after which the political scenario completely changed. So, 10 News Reports, 5 before the event and 5 after the event have been studied to explore the racial Supremacy and Image of Blacks in American Print Media.

According to Fairclough (1995), discourse is the language representation of some social practice from a specific point of view of a person or society. To him, the functions of discourse are interpersonal and ideational. According to him, discourse is a primary element in social structure construction and has three kinds of effect on it. It constructs the social

identity or social self, the relationships between people of society, and the building of knowledge and belief systems.

The Fairclough 3D model for the analysis of discourse (1992) has three dimensions. These three dimensions are description, interpretation, and explanation. According to Fairclough, every discourse has an ideology, a relationship with society, and some knowledge base. These dimensions of discourse highlight the cultural change in society, power relationships, power control, and dominance over the weak. The researcher analyzed data in this research on the set-theoretical rules. The 1st dimension description means textual analysis, which is more important in analyzing a text on theoretical, methodological, historical, and political grounds. To Fairclough (1992), in-depth textual analysis is a primary component of discourse analysis. In the description move, we analyze text on the grounds of texture and meaning. The construction of the text, organization of facts, multiple meanings concerning some specific condition. The reporter can use more than one genre in his news report, so the researcher has to pay close attention.

Fairclough (1992) said that the description in the first move needs more explanation in the second move. In this move, the focus of research is on the purpose of producing that advertisement by another concern of CDA

In the third dimension, explanation researchers analyze a big picture of discourse concerning historical, economic, and social aspects of that culture in which it produced (Fairclough 1992).

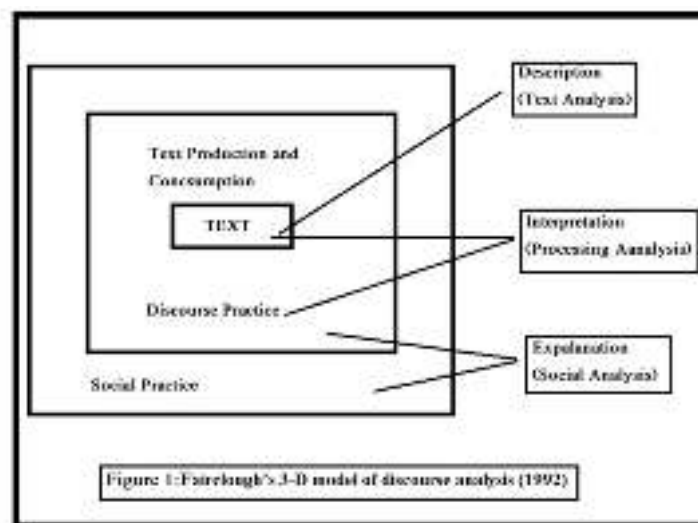


Figure 1 Fairclough's Three-Dimensional Model (Fairclough, 1995)

Results and Discussion

The researcher analyzed reports in a group consisting of 10 news reports before and after the event of May 25, 2020, killing George Floyd, a Black American, by a white Police officer. The recent incident, the murder of a 46 years native American, George Floyd, by an American White police officer on May 25, 2020, was a prominent example of how Racism is deeply rooted in American society. George died because of a shortage of oxygen as a white police officer knelt on his neck for about nine minutes despite even cries that he could not breathe. The video of this brutal incident goes viral on social media platforms and results in

public outcry. Thousands of people around the globe went into the streets to protest against this pitiless act and demanding punishment for white police officers for this racist act. Public reaction about the death of George Floyd was surprising as this incident happened in the outbreak of COVID-19 when people were supposed to stay home, but they went into the streets for the sake of justice for a black. It seems that the death of George Floyd cause shock waves and, as a result of a single black man, cause protests in the United States and worldwide. The image of Blacks switched from neutral and negative to positive and neutral. The event of May 25th,2020, changed pre-formulated belief system of Blacks as negative race.

Washington Post (Before and After the event of May 25th,2020)

In the first five reports from the Washington Post before May 25, 2020, The first report (*Opinion | Stress Was Already Killing Black Americans. Covid-19 Is Making It Worse. - The Washington Post*, n.d.)(RB-01) has been taken from the Washington Post of May 13, 2020, and written by David R. Williams. In the statement, the writer talks about Blacks' condition in the United States during the pandemic of COVID-19. He used the word Black with lower case "b," which is also a sign of considering blacks second class citizens. The word black as the term can or cannot be write in capitalized form. The A.P. Style Book (2020) changed this to capitalize "B" in the Black.

The writer describes Blacks' condition in American Society during the pandemic and shows their miserable image. "Stress was already killing black Americans" is the phrase defining the shape of Blacks in American Society. The biggest country in the world, the United States of America, still has serious issues of Racism deeply rooted in Society. But the writer did not clearly explain the reason for stress in Blacks before the pandemic. In the lead passage of the report, he called them "communities of color," highlighting that he is dividing the community based on skin color.

Regarding the second move, the writer wants to highlight the future impact of Covid-19 on the Black Americans that they are already oppressed with unemployment and racial discrimination issues, and COVID-19 is making conditions worst as they live in terrible health conditions with fewer health facilities and poor living standards. According to Fairclough (1995), in the third movie, we have to describe the social impact of discourse on Society. The writer tries to drive the attention of the public and the authorities to the present and future implications of COVID-19. (Williams, 2020).

The second report, RB-02, is taken from the Washington Post of May 05, 2020, written by Tracy Jan and Scott Clement and based on a poll conducted by the newspaper (Jan & Clement, 2020). "Hispanics" is the word used for the people belonging to central Africa and considered blacks in the headline. The writer is the lead passage that separates the Hispanics and the blacks. They used the word Black in lower case, which means that blacks are considered lower in rank than whites and other races in American Society. The poll results show that 20 percent of Hispanics and 16 percent Blacks lost their job due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which is relatively high or almost double compared to the whites and other races. The writers highlight the effects of a pandemic on specific races and highlight the racial issues. Blacks or Africans face in American Society. They highlight the fact that this severe racial issue can result in disaster.

In the third report, RB-03 writer explained alarming health department statistics from the Carolinas, Illinois, Louisiana, Michigan, New Jersey, New York, and Wisconsin demonstrate that black people are sicker and die at higher rates than white people the new coronavirus. " Even though the federal government has yet to release data on the pandemic

and race, the disparity appears to be a national trend, exacerbated by a combination of biased white doctors, black people's well-documented distrust of the medical community, and a failure to aggregate and properly report data on the sick and dying."

In the fourth RB-04 report, the writer explains how racist officers use Covid-19 against different ethnic groups. He referenced history when smallpox was spread like a pandemic in 1866. The racist used it as a weapon against blacks. After the coronavirus outbreak, President Trump insists that the explosion of disease is due to Chinese citizens, which can have significant social impacts. People can consider the Chinese responsible for their destruction, and their safety may be in danger.

According to the authors of this report, President Trump is the most racist President in the history of the United States. 8 out of 10 blacks considered him racist as he used to mock blacks during his election campaign, and this is also part of his statements after electing as President. This behavior also affects the president political career, and his followers will also have racist thinking, which will be a significant threat for the whole nation.

The following five reports about the image of blacks after the event from The Washington Post are also about the miseries and the behavior faced by blacks Americans. In the first report after the event, RA-01 is about Covid 19 on blacks' business. 40 percent of companies are destroyed by the outbreak of Covid-19, making life more difficult for blacks in the future. They are dying due to the poor health facilities and racial attitudes of white health officials. In 2nd report after the event, RA-02 gives an account of the victory of Biden as American President. It is considered that Trump lost due to his racist remarks. For black Americans, Racism is the worst thing making life more difficult for them. The policies against Racism are part of a considerable debate in November. In the 3rd report RA-03, the words from a black Covid-19 patient are hopeless about his life and consider God is the only source who can cure. This report highlights the condition of ethnic minorities in Covid-19 as the death rate of blacks is far higher than whites.

The 4th report RA-04 starts from a statement, "A kneel on his neck," which is an account of the death of Black American George Floyd by a white American police officer. The officer put pressure on his neck by his knee, and he cried many times that he was facing difficulty in breathing, but the officer didn't pay attention, which resulted in his death. The Killing of George Floyd will have long-lasting effects as the black community considers them really in danger after the incident. In the 5th report, the progress of the protest on the death of George was lowered by an American Police officer, and thousands of people came out into the streets without even care about the risk of covid-19.

Conclusion

The present research has explored the image of blacks before and after the murder of George Floyd and has found out that it has undergone a significant change before and after the event. The 10 news reports before and after the event highlight a mixed attitude of Whites towards the Blacks. The Blacks had always been constructed as either neutral or negative but never positive. The study has found out that this attitude towards the Blacks has been changed during the last one and half year. This examination further investigates the differences in American press reports on the image of blacks before and after the event. Heads and lead passages encoded in ideologically one-sided rambling examples on lexical, syntactical, intertextual levels highlight a legitimized "universal move" in favor of Blacks after the killing of George Floyd on May 25, 2020.

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