

REVIEW ARTICLE

## Ideology in Critical Discourse Study: A Review of Literature

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**Abstract:** Ideology is one of the most crucial concepts in Critical Discourse Study (CDS). This article systematically reviews relevant literature to the definition of ideology, research models of ideology, and language-based ideology studies from the perspective of CDS. It also provides implications for further research in this field, with the aim of promoting the development of CDS as well as ideology study. It can be found that in the field of CDS, ideology has the characteristics of universality and neutrality. It does not have derogatory meanings or specificity, but rather a characteristic that any language user inevitably carries in language use. At present, there are mainly five models for ideological analysis from the perspective of CDS, namely Fairclough's Three-Dimension Framework, Wodak's Discourse-Historical Approach, van Dijk's Socio-cognitive Model, Chilton's Cognitive Critical Analysis Model and Thompson's Methodological Framework of Depth Hermeneutics. Ideology is often subtly hidden in discourse in specific language forms, requiring readers to consciously decode them, and the decoding process can also be seen as the process of ideological reproduction. Lexical and syntactic choices, transitivity, and modality in language use can be effectively used for ideological analysis. All in all, ideology is a very important research topic in critical discourse study, and future studies can adopt interdisciplinary research methods to further improve its theoretical and applied studies.

**Keywords:** *critical discourse study, ideology, language, discourse, research model, review*

### Introduction


The term "ideology" is normally a core concept in politics and political economy. Different from the study of politics linking ideology with major political programs and "isms" whose doctrines are laid out in texts: communism, liberalism, feminism, and the like (Gal and Irvine, 2019), in the field of linguistics, the concept of ideology is closely related to the use of language in politics, economy, and social life. The linguistic study on ideology can be traced back to the 1970s and 1980s, mainly involving the fields of critical discourse analysis, pragmatics, and sociolinguistics.

Critical discourse study focuses on the hidden biases, discrimination, ideologies in discourse, and explores the hidden power, control, and inequality relationships between discourse and social culture, to reveal the impact of ideology on discourse, the reaction of

discourse to ideology, as well as how the two originate from social institutions and how power relationships serve them (Xin, 1996). It can be said that ideology is one of the most fundamental and crucial concepts in critical discourse study. This article will review the definition of ideology, research models of ideology, and empirical study of ideology based on language from the perspective of critical discourse study. It will also provide implications for the further concern of ideology in linguistic studies, to promote linguistic theoretical innovations by decoding the social meaning of language use.

Under the guidance of literature research methodology, this study systematically sorts out the relevant literature of ideology in the past 100 years and then points out the research gap of the existing studies.

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## Definition and connotation of ideology

Fairclough has explained the relationship between creating ideology and power/ politics. Fairclough (1989) first proposed the concept of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) in *Language and Power*. Central to CDA is the concept of ideology, which is intrinsically linked to the discursive construction of common sense or “naturalization” of particular worldviews through language (Van Leeuwen, 1995; Fowler, 1996; Wodak, 2011; Fowler, 2013). Critical discourse analytic explications of ideology typically are considered socially and psychologically constitutive.

The term “ideology” has a long and complex history. Thompson (1990) pointed out that the concept of “ideology” first appeared in France in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, referring to a social form and process that allowed symbols to spread in various social institutions. It originates from the Greek words “idea” and “logos”, originally meaning the knowledge of ideas, that is, the knowledge of tracing the origin of ideas from the understanding of external things (Feng and Xu, 2000). Actually, ideology is a very complex concept, and thus there are certain confusions in different academic fields regarding its definition (Li, 2009). Its definitions vary, and “the connotations associated with this concept have undergone many transformations” (Wodak and Meyer, 2001). The definition of ideology in CDA basically follows the tradition of Marx and Engels’ ideological theory and is also influenced by Western Marxism and post structuralism such as the Frankfurt School (Xin, 2016).

Scholars in the field of critical discourse study have defined ideology from different perspectives. Fowler and Kress reflect on the language ontology study of structural linguistics, using the analytical methods of systemic functional linguistics to analyze news reports in mass media, revealing the specific value orientations and ideological significance held by specific media in reporting specific events (Fowler and Kress, 1979). The theoretical propositions underlying the study of ideological language are systematically elaborated in the book, broadly defining it as “a systematic body of ideas, organized from a particular point of view” (Kress and Hodge, 1979). Fairclough followed Kress and Hodge’s tradition (Hodge, 2012), regarding ideology as “meaning in the service of power” (Fairclough, 1995a)

*Ideologies are representations of aspects of the world which contribute to establishing and maintaining relations of power, domination, and exploitation. They*

*may be enacted in ways of interaction (and therefore in genres) and inculcated in ways of being identities (and therefore styles) (Fairclough, 2003).*

Fairclough (1995a) pointed out that power is about the asymmetry between participants in discourse events and the ability to control inequality in discourse production, dissemination, and consumption in specific socio-cultural contexts. That is to say, power relationship refers to the “dominant” relationship between discourse participants, which exists as a “soft power” in language use. Because ideology is closely related to power, it serves as thought, discourse, and ideographic practice in the struggle to obtain and maintain power. In response, it could believe that “ideology is an important aspect of establishing and maintaining unequal power relations” (Wodak and Meyer, 2001). Since ideology and power are common phenomena in language use, critical discourse study should focus on all discourse phenomena, rather than specifically focusing on the manifestation of ideology and power in authoritative discourse.

Besides, along Kress and Hodge’s research path, Van Dijk and Wodak drew inspiration from postmodern discourse theory and used rhetorical and argumentative analysis methods to conduct critical discourse analysis on racial discrimination phenomena in some Western countries, exposing the ideological significance of racial discrimination hidden in discourse to the public (Van Dijk, 1991; Reisigl and Wodak, 2001). Van Dijk (1995) originally defined ideology from the perspective of representation and social cognition as the “basic frameworks of social cognition, shared by members of social groups, constituted by relevant selections of sociocultural values, and organized by an ideological schema that represents the self-definition of a group”. Later, van Dijk proposed that ideologies are “representations of who we are, what we stand for, what our values are, and what our relationships are with other groups, in particular our enemies or opponents, that is, those who oppose what we stand for, threaten our interests and prevent us from equal access to social resources and human rights” (Van Dijk, 1998). They are abstract and general evaluative beliefs of a social group that do not express negative undertones, such as false or distorted values, and are not restricted to dominant social groups or classes (Van Dijk, 2004).

Verschueren (2011) pointed out that ideology is not only a set of conceptual systems based on interests and rights, aimed at influencing, maintaining, or changing a certain social order, groups without rights and control also possess ideology. Xin (2005) elaborated more specifically and comprehensively on the connotation of ideology, believing that ideology refers

to “a set of beliefs and value systems gradually formed in the development process of human society that can be accepted by the majority, have consistency, and occupy a dominant position. It is mainly used to explain and understand society”.

Despite the various definitions and connotations associated with the notion of ideology, “the core definition of ideology as a coherent and relatively stable set of beliefs or values has remained the same in political science over time” (Wodak and Meyer, 2001). To be specific, in the field of critical discourse study, ideology has universality and neutrality characteristics. It does not have derogatory meanings or specificity, but rather a characteristic that any language user inevitably carries in language use, namely “an attitude, viewpoint, belief, etc. of the language user” (Li and Li, 2014). Ideologies, which include both social and cognitive functions, enable social group members to organize groups and coordinate social activities, interactions, and common goals, in addition to protecting or defending shared interests and resources. Moreover, they monitor and control the acquisition, organization and application of socio-cultural attitudes, opinions and knowledge shared by group members. In spite of this, ideologies are non-deterministic (Chen, 2011).

## Research models of ideology

Critical discourse study follows some basic principles and is oriented towards solving practical social problems, with a clear interdisciplinary and multi-disciplinary nature. Due to the interdisciplinary nature of critical discourse study, although its methodology is mainly based on systemic functional linguistics represented by Halliday, it also draws on research paradigms and achievements from other disciplines such as rhetoric, social semiotics, cognitive linguistics, pragmatics, anthropology, and even psychology. At present, there are five main models for ideology study from the perspective of critical discourse study, namely Fairclough’s Three-Dimension Framework (Fairclough, 1989; Fairclough, 1992; Fairclough, 1995a), Wodak’s Discourse-Historical Approach (Wodak and Meyer, 2001; Wodak, 2009), van Dijk’s Socio-cognitive Model (Van Dijk, 1985; Van Dijk, 2001), Chilton’s Cognitive Critical Analysis Model (Chilton, 2004; Chilton, 2005) and Thompson’s Methodological Framework of Depth Hermeneutics (Thompson, 1990).

## Fairclough’s Three-Dimension Framework for Discourse Analysis

The main task of critical discourse study is to reveal the implicit ideological and power relationships in language, which involves examining the relationship between social structure and discourse characteristics. To solve this problem, Fairclough (Fairclough, 1989; Fairclough, 1992; Fairclough, 1995a) constructed a theoretical framework, namely a three-dimension analytical framework, based on systemic functional linguistics and sociology, to discuss the dialectical relationship between discourse and social structure. It is an attempt to bring together three analytical traditions, each of which is indispensable for discourse analysis. These are the tradition of close textual and linguistic analysis within linguistics, the macro-sociological tradition of analyzing social practice in relation to social structures, and the interpretivist or microsociological tradition of seeing social practice as something which people actively produce and make sense of on the basis of shared common procedures (Fairclough, 1992).

The socio-cultural analysis method proposed by Fairclough (1995a) is considered the most systematic and comprehensive analytical method in critical discourse study. The three-dimension analytical framework is also the most used theoretical model and analytical framework for critical discourse study.

According to Fairclough, when analyzing any discourse event, all three dimensions should be covered in a specific discourse analysis of a communicative event. The analysis should focus on (1) the linguistic features of the text (text); (2) processes related to the production and consumption of the text (discursive practice); and (3) the wider social practice to which the communicative event belongs (social practice). Based on this, Fairclough pointed out that critical discourse analysis should include three levels: description, interpretation, and explanation.

Texts analysis concentrates on traditional forms of linguistic analysis — analysis of vocabulary, grammar, coherence, and text structure that discourses and genres are linguistically realized.

Discursive practice involves processes of text production, distribution, and consumption, and the nature of these processes varies between different types of discourse according to social factors. For example, texts are produced in specific ways in specific social contexts: a newspaper article is produced through complex routines of a collective

nature, by a team whose members are variously involved in its different stages of production — accessing sources such as press agency reports, transforming these sources (often themselves already texts) into a draft report, deciding where to place the report in the newspaper, and editing the report (Fairclough, 1992).

Analysis of the social practice may be at different levels of abstraction from the particular event: it may involve its more immediate situational context, the wider context of institutional practices the event is embedded within or the yet wider frame of the society and the culture. All of these layers may be relevant to understanding the particular event and indeed, particular events cumulatively constitute and reconstitute social and cultural practice at all levels (Fairclough, 1995a).

The “description” layer is a simple discourse analysis that includes the analysis of language use and discourse communication, belonging to the micro level, and generally uses systemic functional grammar for linguistic description; the “explanation” level is an analysis of phenomena such as power, inequality, and prejudice, which needs to be combined with social structure to explain how power and ideology work, belonging to the macro level; and the connection between micro and macro is through “discursive practice”.

### **Wodak’s Discourse-Historical Approach**

The Discourse-Historical Approach was developed by Wodak and his team based on critical analysis of racial discrimination discourse in Austria. The discourse-historical approach attempts to integrate a large quantity of available knowledge about the historical sources and the background of the social and political fields in which discursive ‘events’ are embedded. Further, it analyses the historical dimension of discursive actions by exploring the ways in which particular genres of discourse are subject to diachronic change. Wodak and Meyer (2001) advocates for dividing discourse context into four levels from macro to micro: historical background, social environment, inter discourse context, and intra discourse context. This model describes and analyzes the four contextual dimensions at four levels in sequence. The historical background belongs to the most macro context and should be analyzed from the perspective of history. Wodak referred to it as the grand theory. The analysis of social environment needs to borrow sociological theories, which is referred to as the middle range theory. The middle range theory provides a social-

critical perspective for critical discourse analysis to determine the nature of the social environment in which the discourse is situated. Compared to historical background and social environment, the intertextual context composed of multiple discourses is relatively micro and is the main research object of discourse theory. Discourse theory analyzes the similarities, differences, and connections between different discourses in terms of topics and genres, as well as the chronological order in which relevant discourses are generated, to reflect the interrelationships between discourses such as support, opposition, and coordination. The last type of context is the most microscopic discourse context. Unlike the study of the other three types of contexts, the study of discourse context is descriptive and mainly analyzes the linguistic characteristics of the discourse, hence it is referred to as “linguistic analysis”. In summary, the Discourse-Historical Approach includes the following four levels of analysis: grand theory analysis treats specific historical stages as independent contexts; the social criticism perspective provided by the middle range theory limits the context to a certain social phenomenon or activity; the discourse theory regards similar or related discourse as a common context, and the interaction between discourse is seen as the influence of context on the social meaning of discourse. Finally, using linguistic theory to examine the discourse itself, exploring its linguistic features and the potential impact these features may have on the social significance of the discourse.

Based on the dialectical relationship between discursive practice and social practice, Wodak and Meyer (2001) proposed a three-dimensional analysis path for linguistic analysis: firstly, identifying the specific contents or topics of a specific discourse; then, investigating discursive strategies in the discourse; finally, examining the linguistics means and the specific, context-dependent linguistic realizations. Wodak and Meyer (2001) used the theme of “discrimination” as an example to summarize five discourse-history analysis strategies: nomination (discursive construction of social actors, objects/phenomena/events and processes/actions), prediction (discursive qualification of social actors, objects, phenomena, events/processes and actions), argumentation (justification and questioning of claims of truth and normative rightness), perspectivization, framing or discourse representation (positioning speaker’s or writer’s point of view and expressing involvement or distance) and intensification, mitigation (modifying the illocutionary force and thus the epistemic or deontic status of utterance).

### **van Dijk's Socio-cognitive Discourse Analysis Model**

van Dijk (2009) believes that there is no direct relationship between discourse structure and social structure, and the two are connected through "social cognition". Social cognition refers to the "socially recognized mode of production", which is mainly obtained through discourse and put into social practice, and continuously improved in the process of social practice. Van Dijk (2001) analysed the relationship between the meaning, form, and cognitive context of discourse from both macro and micro perspectives. Van Dijk summarized the macro and micro features in discourse as style, believing that these linguistic features will have an impact on the cognitive context of social members, thereby changing their ideological concepts. On the other hand, Van Dijk believes that cognitive context also plays a role in interpreting discourse characteristics. Therefore, in the analysis of discourse, Van Dijk advocates to first analyze the components of social context, such as communicators' cognition of communication time and scene, and their understanding of each other's identities. Then analyze the impact of these cognitive elements that constitute social context on language choice, such as the influence of cognitive identity and status on personal addressing, and the influence of cognitive context on the speaker's choice of precise demonstrative pronouns. Once again, examine how the cognitive context of the communicator guides them to speculate on each other's intentions and the next steps of communication, and then determine the strategies they need to adopt, such as condemnation, opposition, or defence. Finally, discuss the relationship between cognitive context and social issues, such as how cognitive context guides communicators to exercise discourse hegemony or flaunt social authority, and reflect on language use and the social environment of communication through the analysis of cognitive context.

Taking the analysis of news discourse as an example, Van Dijk (1985) constructed a three level analytical model. The first layer is the superstructure of the discourse, including the thematic structure of the discourse layer, the overall organizational structure based on themes, and the characteristics and functions of the organizational structure. Organizational structure plays an important role in the understanding and generation of the discourse. The second layer is the surface structure, which includes discourse, syntax, phonetic changes, semantic relationships between propositions, rhetorical and stylistic features, as well as functional features such as presupposition, speech acts, and expressive strategies. The third level

is social meaning, which is the interpretation of language characteristics from a macro social context.

### **Chilton's Cognitive Critical Analysis Model**

Chilton (2005) thinks that traditional critical discourse analysis lacks explanatory power due to the neglect of the "cognitive link". He believes that due to the lack of professional analytical methods, critical discourse analysis often matches language means with pragmatic effects, overemphasizes the interpretation of the social, historical, or political meaning of the text in specific contexts, and often makes judgments and interpretations that are no different from those of ordinary readers. Chilton proposed that to study social and political activities from the perspective of discourse, it is necessary to rely on the theories of cognitive linguistics to study the internal cognitive mechanisms by which people use discourse to carry out social and political activities.

Chilton (2004) believes that the conceptualization process revealed by cognitive linguistics plays an important role in the expression and communication of ideology, providing a theoretical framework for critical discourse analysis. Chilton (2005) further proposed three cognitive principles for his discourse analysis model. Firstly, language and political behavior should be seen as manifestations of human cognitive abilities, rather than just a form of social practice. Secondly, language and political behavior are closely linked. The connection between the two is likely based on the inherent cognitive mechanisms in the brain, which is the result of human evolutionary adaptation. Thirdly, human language and communication abilities can only be effective in critical practice when combined with cognitive abilities. In recent years, with the continuous development of cognitive linguistics, many scholars have applied the relevant theories of cognitive linguistics to critical discourse analysis, examining the characteristics of discourse in terms of conceptual metaphor or metonymy, image schema, etc., in order to reveal the social significance and ideology of discourse.

### **Thompson's Methodological Framework of Depth Hermeneutics**

Thompson (1990) proposed an analytical model of discourse ideology within the framework of critical discourse study. Thompson believes that the analysis of any discourse must be based on the understanding

and interpretation of the meaning of the discourse, thus involving the theoretical methods of hermeneutics. Therefore, he referred to this analytical pattern as the “methodological framework of depth hermeneutics”.

According to the framework, the analysis of discourse ideology involves three aspects, namely social-historical analysis, formal or discursive analysis, and interpretation/reinterpretation.

Firstly, the purpose of social-historical analysis is to describe and reconstruct the specific social conditions under which discourse arises, spreads, and is accepted, examining the rules and practices, social relationships, and institutions, as well as the distribution of power, resources, and opportunities in different fields under specific social structures. Social-historical analysis includes the following five aspects: describing the specific “spatio-temporal settings” in which discourse is produced and received; analyzing and describing the “fields of interaction” generated by the discourse; analyzing “social institutions”, “social structure”, and “technical analysis”. Secondly, formal or discourse analysis mainly involves the analysis of the organizational structure and relationships within a discourse, including the following five analytical methods: 1) “semiotic analysis” mainly focuses on the symbol itself, including its constituent components, internal structure, interrelationships, and the systems and rules behind the symbol; 2) conversation analysis regards discourse as a dynamic process, emphasizing the behavior of language users in verbal communication; 3) syntactic analysis is the analysis of the practical application of grammar rules in daily speech; 4) narrative analysis mainly analyzes the narrative structure of narrative discourse; 5) the purpose of “argumentative analysis” is to reveal and reconstruct typical reasoning patterns in discourse. Finally, “interpretation” refers to the synthesis and creation of new “possible meanings” based on formal analysis and social-historical analysis. It should be noted that Thompson believes that interpretation can also be seen as a “reinterpretation” process, and discourse analysts often need to re-understand and interpret areas that have already been explained before.

## Language-based Ideology Study

Critical Discourse Analysis has taken a particular interest in investigating the relation between discourse and ideology (Wodak and Meyer, 2001). In this regard, ideology has been considered as a central notion that represents how relations of power are established, maintained and legitimized (ibidem). The analysis of relation between discourse and ideology is

traditionally conducted in corpora of institutional, political, gender and media discourses, such as news reports, political speeches, advertising etc. (ibidem: 2) around a series of ideological constructions that reflect asymmetrical relations of power such as nationalism, ethnicism, racism and sexism.

The connection between language and ideology is very close. Verschueren (2011) believes that the use of language is the process of meaning generation, in which language users constantly make language choices. The relationship between ideology and concepts, beliefs, etc. is not direct, but rather achieved through the choice of language forms. Therefore, ideology is not an abstract existence, but is reflected in language use. Language is the starting point and important means of understanding and realizing ideology (Jiang and Cui, 2014). In language, ideology is ubiquitous, which is determined by the sociality and subjectivity of discourse. It is precisely in view of the relationship between ideology and language that critical linguists attempt to reveal the ideological significance hidden in discourse through the study of language and discourse, especially those habitual biases, discrimination, and distortions of facts, and explain their social conditions and role in power struggles (Xin, 2005). Ideology is often subtly hidden in discourse in specific language forms, requiring readers to consciously decode them one by one, and the decoding process of readers can also be seen as the process of ideological reproduction.

Critical linguists believe that transitivity, modality, and intertextuality in language use can be effectively used for ideological analysis. Fowler and Kress (1979) listed five aspects of ideological analysis, namely transitive grammar, modality, transformation, classification grammar, and coherence, order, and unity of discourse. This study focuses on reviewing studies on lexical and syntactic choices, transitivity, and modality and ideology.

## Lexical and syntactic choices and ideology

The same word usually has multiple different meanings, and the same meaning can also be expressed through different words. Different lexical choices are influenced by factors such as social context and ideology. The choice of words in ideological discourse can determine the way an event is perceived and understood (Fairclough, 1989; Nir and Roeh, 1992). The choice of vocabulary and syntax in any discourse is not as arbitrary as it appears and carries a certain social significance (Fowler and Kress, 1979; Van Dijk, 1991). Moreover, the meaning conveyed in any discourse is not static; it depends on

both the context and the syntactic features of its structure. Therefore, the author/speaker's choice of this form over other available forms is determined by their context (Kress, 1983). Van Dijk (1988) believes that syntactic analysis is an indirect and reliable way to determine the ideological meaning in news discourse. For example, syntactic structures can be used to emphasize or alleviate the roles of the agent and the recipient in specific events (Van Dijk, 1991). It is obvious that the choice of vocabulary and syntax in a discourse can convey certain ideological meanings, but these ideological meanings are not always obvious and require critical analysis of the discourse (Fowler and Kress, 1979; Kress, 1983).

The relationship value expressed by personal pronouns in different languages varies, and is influenced and limited by the social status, power relationship, and familiarity of both parties in communication. For example, the English first person plural pronoun "we" has two uses, consisting of the "inclusive" type that includes the listener/reader and the "exclusive" type that excludes the listener/reader. The former, which includes the speaker and some other people, but does not include the listener, can usually have the effect of distancing the listener, making the other party feel manipulated easily; The latter, as it includes obedient individuals, can play a role in bringing people closer and giving them a sense of closeness and unity (Xin, 2005).

Nominalization is a method of compressing and transforming processes into nouns or compound nouns. Nominalization often leads to the absence of certain elements, such as tense, modality, actor or subject, transforming specific processes into abstract states, thereby playing a role in blurring attribution and concealing the responsible person (Xiong, 2011). Critical discourse study revisits the phenomenon of nominalization from the perspectives of society and consciousness, viewing nominalization as an ideological tool for analyzing news and other discourse. For example, Fowler and Kress (1979) demonstrated through a series of examples that choosing a noun phrase over a verb and choosing a passive voice over an active voice is often determined by ideology. Fowler (1991a) believes that nominalization in news discourse disguises motivation and truth by removing modal elements, blurring time concepts, and disguising participants, creating a non-personalized effect. Billig (2008) summarized the ideological characteristics of nominalization (accompanied by passivity) in previous studies as follows: 1) deleting agency. For example, if speakers/writers used nominalization or passivization, they can transform statements that identified agents of

actions into agentless statements that convey less information (comparing "Police attach testers." and "An attach on testers occurred."). 2) Reifying. By turning verbs into nouns, speakers/writers can convey that the entities, denoted by nominalization, have a real and necessary existence. In general terms, by means of nominalization speakers/writers turn processes into entities and typically assume the existence of such entities. As Halliday and Martin (1993) have commented, the presuppositions that justify the existence of these entities are harder to contest because "you can argue with a clause but you can't argue with a nominal group" (p. 39). 3) Positing reified concepts as agents. Speakers/writers can then use the abstract, reified concepts as agents of processes. For example, instead of talking about people buying and selling commodities for various prices, economists, administrators, journalists, etc. might talk about "market-forces". The nominal term "market-forces" can then be used as the subject for verbs that denote agency: "market-forces dictate/demand/forbid ...", etc. (see also Fairclough (Fairclough, 2003; Stenvall, 2007). Maintaining unequal power relationships. Fowler et al. wrote about the relations between "nominalization" and "lexicalization": new lexical terms can be created through nominalizing verbs. Technical and scientific writers often use nominalization in this way. The effect of creating new terms often "is control through the one-way flow of knowledge" (Fowler and Kress, 1979). Halliday and Martin (1993) make a similar point in their analysis of the language of science. Scientists use technical language which is filled with nominalizations rendering processes as entities. Those who create and use this specialized language act as the gatekeepers for the scientific community, ensuring that young researchers write in the appropriate way. As such, formal discourse belongs to, and helps reproduce, a social context of inequality.

In addition, the choice of passive structure also carries certain ideological significance (Hart, 2014). The analysis of the ideological significance of passive structures often involves transitivity systems and thematic patterns. When using a passive structure, the theme change, the actor and target switch, and the connection between the actor and the process weakens. Therefore, the passive structure without agents can conceal the actor, who is the responsible person of the process (Fowler, 1991b; Fairclough, 2003). In news discourse, reporters can implicitly express their stance through the selection and transformation of active and passive structures.

### Transitivity and Ideology

The transitivity here involves concepts in systemic functional grammar. Halliday believes that the transitive system is the cornerstone for people to describe reality through language. It describes what people do, see, and hear as various processes, and identifies the participants and circumstantial element of each process. In the real world, the same process can be expressed in language using different types of processes in the transitivity system or using the same process but changing the positions of participants. The choice of which process and how to arrange the positions of participants largely depend on ideology. (Fowler, 1991b) pointed out that transitivity analysis focuses on syntactic variants in language use, as well as the propositional meanings and functions of these variants. It can provide us with a deeper understanding of the author's perception of behavior, events, and situations, allowing us to see how the language structure of the text constructs a specific ideology. From a social perspective, as Fairclough (1992) pointed out, transitivity analysis provides insights into social, cultural, and ideological factors that may influence the linguistic meaning of a process in a specific text. Therefore, transitivity analysis particularly reveals how the author attributes intermediaries and processes to different participants in the text, exploring the way language constructs reality from the perspective of how the main and dominant social intermediaries, actors or groups are classified, represented, and represented.

Fairclough (1995b) pointed out that different texts often exhibit systematic differences in the choice of lexical and grammatical structures, which can reflect opposing discourse and have important ideological significance. The choice of the representation form of news discourse is determined by its function in the representation of news discourse, and different functional choices often imply important ideological significance (Fairclough, 1995b). Transitivity is an important linguistic representation strategy in news discourse. Li (2011) pointed out that the transitivity model in newspaper conflict discourse is achieved through specific choices of syntactic and semantic components in the discourse, driven by specific ideologies. They are used to construct readers' conceptualization of participant roles and interactive processes in conflict discourse.

### Modality and Ideology

In critical discourse study, modality has been of ideological interest because it concerns claims to knowledge, authenticity and truths (Fairclough, 1989).

Fairclough argues that dialectical relations between representational and interpersonal (actional and identificational) meanings are "particularly clear in the case of modality" (Fairclough, 2003). He characterizes modality as a point of intersection in discourse between representation and the enactment of social relations, linking it to the interpersonal function of language (Fairclough, 1992). Through modal analysis, it is not only possible to clarify the extent of the speaker's responsibility for the authenticity of the discourse proposition and their commitment or obligation to future behavior, but also to understand the speaker's attitude towards the listener and the situational components, as well as the social distance and power relationship between the speaker and the listener, thus demonstrating the ideological significance of the discourse (Li, 2005). Hodge and Kress (1988) believed that the relationship between unequal power relations and ideology is as follows: "Modality is an important symbol of political struggle and an important means of conflict formation. Modality generates ideology through negotiation or coercion, which is a key part of the complex process of building a hegemonic system. This hegemonic system is formed by the active participation of specific responsible individuals and can also be formed by the power imposing meaning on vulnerable parties". Overall, modality refers to the speaker/author's commitment to truth, reality, and knowledge, as well as the speaker/author's expression of necessity, desire, and ability. Therefore, modality expression is based on cognitive certainty, speaker image, interpersonal solidarity, and distance, as well as representations of values, identity, and ideology, involving a social order dominated by power and opposition (Menard, 2018). In short, modality itself has an ideological nature.

Informed by Hodge and Kress (1988) theory on ideological complexes, and Fairclough's [e.g. Fairclough (1992)] three-dimensional conception of discourse, Menard (2018) develop a method for analyzing ideological systems from the perspective of modalities. In line with social semiotic and critical discursive approaches, Menard understand modality as concerning author commitments to truth, reality and knowledge, as well as author expressions of necessity, desire, ability and competency. Expressions of modality thus build on ontological status, epistemic certainty, speaker images, interpersonal solidarity and distance, as well as representational aspects of values, identifications and ideologies. Menard (2018) analyzes pragmatic modality at the levels of text, discursive practices and social practices is helpful for understanding how power-imbalanced social relations intrude representation and, reciprocally, how those



representations are drawn upon in ongoing social ordering and constructions of social reality.

Weber (1992) focuses on studying the relationship between the modality and ideology of character discourse in novels. He believes that modality is about the speaker's attitude and morality towards the content being said, and in some novels, the language of each character has a unique emphasis on modality. Therefore, by analyzing the modality of the narrative world, we can more clearly see the tension between the ideology expressed by the narrator and the ideology implied.

## Conclusion

This article systematically reviews and sorts out ideology studies from the perspective of critical discourse study, in order to clarify its research trends and provide certain implications for its future study. Through the review, it can be found that there exist some problems and limitations.

Firstly, there is few studies discussing the relationship between ideology and power from the perspective of critical discourse analysis. In terms of the relationship between language, ideology and power, it is commonly acknowledged that ideology and power are hidden in language and reflected through language use. However, there are few clear descriptions about the relationship between ideology and power on critical discourse analysis. Some scholars believe that ideology serves to maintain unequal power relations among participants in communication, as it conceals the imbalance in power relations between them (Wang, 2004). That is to say, ideology is a mediating factor between discourse and power. As Li and Li (2014) pointed out, how they are reflected in actual discourse has not been investigated yet. Therefore, future study could discuss more about the relationship between ideology and power and investigate how to use the related theoretical assumptions in practical discourse analysis.

Secondly, there is still room for developing new research models for ideology analysis. There have been multiple ideology analysis models from the perspective of critical discourse study, but these models do not pay enough attention to the functions of language expression at the micro level. Therefore, future study could focus more on the important role of language ontology in ideological analysis. For example, conducting critical discourse study on discourse based on language ontology and conducting

a detailed and in-depth exploration of the functions of language structure at the micro level to ensure a more objective analysis at the language level. At the same time, it also could combine socio-cultural analysis, that is, analyzing the language level based on the context generated by the discourse, to conduct a more comprehensive analysis of the discourse.

Thirdly, as Zhao and Tian (2022) pointed out, ideology can become the content revealed, the topic of argumentation, and the analytical tool used in language research. It has shown a wide space for the study of ideological issues in the field of linguistics, and also presupposes great potential for enriching linguistic theory. Against the backdrop of increasing emphasis on language use as a social practice in linguistic research, the linguistic study of ideology is particularly important. For example, as what Assimakopoulos (2021) did, it could discuss how the cognitive perspective that relevance theory adopts can inform our understanding of the way in which ideological effects automatically arise during spontaneous utterance interpretation.

This study just focuses on the ideology study from the perspective of critical discourse study. Actually, ideology has been discussed by other fields of linguistics, such as pragmatics, social semiotics, sociolinguistics, and so on. The further study also can review the ideology study from these perspectives to fully investigate the concept of ideology.

All in all, ideology is a very important research topic in critical discourse study and the related fields, and the study of ideology in the field of linguistics has a very broad research space. Future study can adopt interdisciplinary research methods to further improve its theoretical and applied studies.

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