Language and the Media Theories – Working Glossary

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Theorist/summary/term** | **Theory/definition** | **Example from Mail Online article page 173 of textbook** | **Now you write an example from a different text** |
| **Van Dijk (2004) – *Ideology and discourse***  **Discourse**  **Cognition**  **Society**  **In-group and out-group** | Like Fairclough, interested in how ideology affects language. Broke it into three levels  – language, spoken and written  – personal ideology and how that affects our reaction to language  – broader ideologies of society: political, cultural, social and historical etc, particularly in relation to *groups*   * US and THEM: how the beliefs and attitudes of our group affect our language | *The noun phrase ‘mob of hooded youths’, where ‘mob’ is likely to signify a threatening and angry irrational crowd and the post-modification ‘of hooded youths’ depersonalises them, making them even more sinister, would be seen as the ‘outgroup’ by Van Dijk. The ‘ingroup’, meanwhile, is likely to be the readers of the Mail, who support the concept of private property and political stability. This ‘us and them’ polarisation helps to build the bias within the story.* |  |
| Fairclough -[*Critical Discourse Analysis (1997)*](https://books.google.com/books?id=3djbAAAAQBAJ&printsec=frontcover#v=onepage&q&f=false)  **Lexis and semantics**  **Grammar** | How the social and political context of the text, as well as how, when and where the text is produced, affects the language used and way the language is interpreted   * Euphemisms * Markedly formal or informal words * Metaphors or other figurative language * Noun phrases * Verbs * Adverbials * Subject and object positions (active or passive voice) * Pronouns * Conjunctions * Modals and imperatives | *The political context of this article is that the Mail Online is on the right of the political spectrum and would support the political establishment in any kind of social riot. Applying Fairclough’s CDA to this text brings out the fact that the riots are merely ‘violence’ by ‘hooded youths’ (making them more threatening) and the readers, who read it alongside images of burning buildings would be encouraged to support the actions of Cameron and the police.*  *The opening clause ‘violence has erupted’ conjures images of a volcano and perhaps suggests that the riots have the same awesome and uncontrollable power.*  *The noun phrase ‘hooded youths’ gives the rioters an anonymous and therefore less human quality, making them more threatening to the Mail audience.* |  |
| Bell (1991) – articles vs stories | ‘Journalists do not write articles. They write stories.’ | *This article has a story like structure, loosely following Labov’s narrative structure, with the ‘complicating action’ being the eruption of violence and the beginnings of a resolution in Cameron flying home to chair a Cobra meeting. The ‘hero’ of the story could be seen to be Cameron and the antagonist is definitely the ‘gangs’ of ‘looters’ and ‘youths’* |  |
| Hall (1978) – what media does | the media is ‘the translation of official viewpoints into a public idiom.’ | *The article takes a government position, writing in an approachable style, using simple scenes such as ‘hurling missiles’ and ‘setting fire to bins and cars’, which Hall would refer to as a ‘public idiom’. When it gets to the actions of Cameron, ‘returning home’ to ‘chair a meeting’ ‘this evening’, there is a sense that the government is resolving the matter and this would set the reader at rest, falling in line with what Hall would call the ‘official viewpoint’.* |  |
| Katherine Graham – real news | ‘News is what someone wants suppressed. Everything else is advertising.’ | *The article does not deal with the causes of the riots, which began with the shooting of Mark Duggan and could arguably have had deeper causes than a desire to riot.* |  |
| Halliday (1994) coined ‘Ideational Metafunction’  What  Who  When and where  Material process verbs  Relational verb processes  Mental verb processes | Categorisation of language in a text to see what language does, how it functions (e.g. to give a particular bias to a story)  Processes i.e. verbs  Participants i.e. nouns  Circumstances i.e. adverbials  verbs that involve doing (‘shot’, ‘sentenced’)  verbs associated with being (‘am’, ‘seems’)  verbs associated with thinking and/or feeling (‘think’, ‘feel’, ‘reckon’) | *In this text Cameron, who is the main named participant (see Halliday, 1994) is said to be ‘returning home’ and will ‘chair’ a meeting, both of which Halliday would see as material processes, perhaps giving a sense that he is doing something concrete to deal with the situation.* |  |
| Van Leeuwen – social actor network (1996)  **Nomination**  **Functionalisation**  **Classification**  **Relational identification**  **Physical identifications**  Formalisation  Semi-formalisation  Informalisation  Activation  Passivation | **Social actor –** participants (usually in a news story)  - naming of the ‘social actor’  - roles/occupations of the social actor  - aspects of identity (class, age, and gender)  - relationship to others  - aspects of appearance  - full name and title (Prime Minister David Cameron)  - first and second name (Kylie Minogue)   * First or given name (Kylie)   (not to be confused with the general process of informalisation in public writing and speech which Fairclough saw as happening and also called ‘conversationalisation’)  When a person is actively doing something  When a ‘social actor’ is on the receiving end of an action. (NB not the same as passive voice, although a passive voice construction would probably ‘passivate’ a subject.) | *In the headline the editor opts for the semi-formal ‘Cameron’ (see Van Leeuwan), partly for speed, without his title. However, in the bullets below and in the story itself the title Prime Minister is regularly used, giving him his official role and a sense of authority, demonstrating the way the text is clearly supporting him and the political establishment.* |  |
| Hegemony | *The dominance of one group and one set of over another (typically older white males in British society)* | *It is not clear who the ‘hooded youths’ are in the text, but there is a sense that the text makes them seem threatening, therefore perhaps creating the idea the article supports the white male middle class hegemony in society* |  |
| Labov’s narrative structure (1997)  Abstract  Orientation  Complicating Action  Evaluation  Resolution | Usually applied to speech, but many media articles can be seen to follow this structure.  ‘er.. yeah.. oh God’  ‘yesterday’  ‘I was delayed for three hours by the snow. My car just slide into a bank.’  ‘It was really scary’  ‘Eventually they need a tractor to get me out’ | *This article has a story like structure, loosely following Labov’s narrative structure, with the ‘complicating action’ being the eruption of violence and the beginnings of a resolution in Cameron flying home to chair a Cobra meeting. The ‘hero’ of the story could be seen to be Cameron and the antagonist is definitely the ‘gangs’ of ‘looters’ and ‘youths’* |  |