

A Critical Discourse Analysis of News Reports on the “Black Lives Matter” Movement in *The New York Times*

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Abstract— The death of Floyd, a black man who is violently treated by a white officer triggered extensive protests called Black Lives Matter (BLM). The *New York Times* (TNYT) continually reports this movement. Aiming to reveal the attitude of American mainstream media towards racial matters, this research conducts a critical analysis of five pieces of news reports on BLM in TNYT with Fairclough’s three-dimensional model as theoretical framework. The analysis shows that the language in the news discourse is affected by the medium. At the description stage, it is found that TNYT chooses violence-related words and lots of material processes to depict the police, expressing the negative attitude towards the police’s behavior. The employment of relational processes demonstrates that American black community lives in difficult conditions, expressing sympathy for Floyd and black people. The analysis of the interpretation stage found that specified news sources are employed most frequently by TNYT, contributing high credibility to its reports. But the use of semi-specified news sources and frequent employment of indirect discourse blur the boundary between the reporters and news sources, allowing reporters to convey their own opinions in others’ names. At the explanation stage, it is found that racism existing in American history is the main reason for this movement. TNYT, as the mainstream medium, opposes racial discrimination but not fully supports BLM since America is facing COVID-19 and this large-scale protest has done damage to the normal civil life and caused adverse effect on the prevention of the virus. This study expands the research scope of critical discourse studies on news discourse. It helps readers arouse their critical awareness, identify ideologies hidden in news reports, and develop an objective understanding of racial events.

Keywords— Critical discourse analysis; Fairclough’s three-dimensional model; news discourse.

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Background Information

The BLM movement is arguably one of the most significant events in 2020. On May 25, 2020, a black man named George Floyd died after being violently treated by a white officer. His death triggered an extensive protest in America which is called Black Lives Matter (BLM). This movement has concerned not only the event that the black man was killed but also the long-existed social problems such as police violence, racial discrimination and social injustice. As the mainstream medium of the United States, *The New York Times* (TNYT) continually reports this movement for several months. Its news reports can show the attitudes of the

mainstream media in the U.S. towards the racial matters and demonstrate its ideologies.

Originated from Critical Linguistics, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) has not only made great headway in recent years but also been arousing profound interests of scholars at home and abroad. Critical discourse analysts hold that language is a social practice and discourse is ideologically shaped by power relations in society ^[1]. They believe that language is not a transparent medium, but hugely determined by the ideology of speaker in most of the time. With its rapid development, the research scope of CDA has also expanded from relatively limited discourse to almost every meaningful discourse, aiming to analyse the relationship between language, power and ideology, and reveal how discourse originates from and serves social structure and power relations ^[2]. As one of the most important discourses in our society, news report has become a significant topic of CDA.

News report, as the major medium we get to know the world, is not always neutral and objective. “News carries a unique signifying power, a power to represent events in particular ways” ^[3]. Reporters tend to be affected by the ideologies of their country and all kinds of power relations, and they are likely to present these ideologies to the audience in the form of language to influence people’s thoughts. If audience cannot read news reports critically, they may accept the implicit ideologies unconsciously. The behavior that penetrating ideologies into news reports is especially common and important when reporters write news reports about racial events since racial events usually concern social, cultural and historical contexts.

For the previous studies, the CDA of news reports mainly focuses on political and disaster news discourse. The studies for news reports about racial events are relatively inadequate. Besides, news discourse is not as the same as other kinds of discourse but with its own characteristics such as news values and news sources, but previous researches do not pay enough attention on these attributes.

This research carries out a critical analysis of news report on the BLM movement from TNYT in order to investigate the ideologies and power relations behind discourse.

B. Purpose and Significance

Generally, this study aims to find out the hidden ideologies and power relations in news discourse. Specifically, this paper is intended to answer the following questions:

- (1) What are the features of high frequency words and transitivity of the news reports on BLM?
- (2) How are the news discourses on BLM interpreted in terms of news source and reporting mode?
- (3) What are the social factors that affect the production and interpretation of the news discourses on BLM from TNYT?

This research is both theoretically and practically significant. The theoretical significance lies in the contribution to CDA. By analyzing news reports on racial event, this study expands the research scope of critical discourse studies on news discourse. The practical significance lies in the contribution to readers and journalists. Firstly, this research is beneficial for readers to arouse their critical awareness, identify ideologies hidden behind news reports, and take an objective attitude towards racial events. In addition, by analyzing the language of news discourse on racial event, journalists also can obtain some practical advices from this study.

C. Methodology

In this section, the principles of data collection and method of analyzing the selected material are presented.

The material is collected from the website of The New York Times: <https://www.nytsyn.com/>. The author chooses five pieces of news report related to BLM with a total word of 9278. The five pieces of news report are attached as the appendix. The news reports are selected based on the following principles. Firstly, all of the five pieces come from breaking column but not opinion column since the latter always expresses attitudes and opinions obviously. Secondly, the posted date of the news report is taken into consideration. Since the death of Floyd happened on May 25 2020, the reports posted during the subsequent week are selected because during this period, the medium pays the most attention to this event.

After collecting the research materials, the author adopts quantitative and qualitative methods to analyze the news reports on BLM from TNYT under Fairclough's three-dimensional model. For the analysis of high frequency words of the first stage of the model, the author transmits the news samples into text formatting and uses AntConc to analyze the frequency of words in the news samples. Then, the author labels the different types of transitivity, news sources and reporting modes in the news samples and collects the statistic data by manual work. The qualitative methods are also applied at all of the three stages to reveal the attitudes and ideologies hidden in discourse.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Review of News Discourse

News has been defined by many scholars and journalists. Bogart says that when a dog bites a man that is not news, but when a man bites a dog that is news^[4]. This definition has been popular among western press. However, this definition

only concerns about which kind of fact can be selected as news. It is more like a market principle but not a strict academic definition. Some Chinese scholars have also defined this term. Xu Baohuang should be the first person who defines news in Chinese journalism academic history. Xu believes that news is the latest facts that arouse most readers' attention^[5]. This definition clarifies that news first of all should be facts, and it should be able to interest readers. The role of readers is emphasized while reporters are unmentioned. A significantly influential definition of news in Chinese journalism is proposed by Lu Dingyi. Lu demonstrates that news is the report on facts that recently happen^[5]. Similar with the definition of Xu, this one also emphasizes the authenticity and novelty of news. But Lu's definition pays more attention to reporters since he believes that the nature of news is report. Report has to be finished by reporters who are usually affected by many factors and cannot be always objective and neutral. Thus, the reports written by them are also not able to keep total objective all the time. This definition is in accord with the opinions of CDA. Another popular definition in Chinese press is proposed by Fan Changjiang. Fan refers news to the important facts which the public wants to know, should know but does not know yet^[5]. It also stresses the significance of audience for news.

Reviewing studies on news discourse, several research directions can be identified. Lasswell, Lazarsfeld, Lewin and Hovland as the four founding fathers of the mass communication^[6] lay the foundation of empirical research tradition, which is inherited and developed by American communication scholars. Affected by American pragmatical culture, this school pays special attention to studies on communication effect for social control and administration^[7]. Its research results are used to defend the present social system. Thus, it is criticized for lack of social responsibility. At the same time, the Frankfurt School and Birmingham School, which aim to criticize and challenge the present social system, make important interpretive and critical work on the media's representations of social issues^[8]. Fowler, Dijk and Fairclough analyze media discourse from linguistic perspectives. Fowler examined the "transitivity in syntax, lexical structure, modality and speech acts" of news language and another two scholars have developed CDA that "involves questioning the role of discourse in the production and transformation of social representations of reality, as well as social relations"^[8]. Hence, a review of CDA and CDA studies on news discourse is presented in the following part.

B. Review of CDA

CDA aims to analyze the relation between language, power and ideology and to reveal how discourse originates in and serves the social structure and power relations. CDA emerges from Critical Linguistics (CL) which is first developed by Fowler et al. Fowler considers CL as an instrumental linguistics which analyzes the relation between the symbol produced by people and the meaning of their communication^[9]. CL studies the language structure of a discourse referring to its social and historical background in order to reveal the ideology existing in the language. It pays

special attention to two non-fiction domains. One is public and official discourse which directly models the attitudes, meanings and ideologies of a society; another is personal discourse in which the ideological meanings are always neglected. By the 1990s the term CDA came to be used more consistently with CL as a particular approach to linguistic analysis. The terms CL and CDA are often used interchangeably. Actually, CDA seems to be preferred and is used to denote the theory formerly identified as CL^[10]. Now, CDA has been applied in diverse social sciences and humanities such as Sociology, Cultural Studies, Media Studies and so on^[11]. It has helped people realize the social meaning of discourse and the close relation between language and power.

Compared with other kinds of linguistics and politically engaged discourse analysis, CDA was distinct and radically different^[12]. CDA follows a different and critical approach to problems in order to uncover the power relationships which are usually hidden. Li et al. believe that the criticalness of CDA lies in its attention to the links between a phenomenon and the utilization of language in communication aspect^[13]. Besides, CDA assumes that all discourses are historical and therefore it refers to extralinguistic factors concerning the context. Another difference is that CDA employs the concepts of intertextuality and interdiscursivity to analyze the relationship with other texts. And CDA does not take the relationship between language and society “to be simply deterministic but invokes an idea of mediation”^[14]. It can be considered as a kind of rebel against mainstream linguistics and makes an obvious contrast with other linguistic studies with the aim of pragmatism^[15]. CDA has also attracted criticism. Widdowson has questioned the objectivity and validity of analysis^[16]. However, the present author believes that there is no perfect research method and what researchers of CDA should do is to take full use of the advantages of CDA and try their best to eliminate the shortages of it.

C. CDA on News Discourse

As news reports usually contain all kinds of ideologies which can subtly influence readers, linguists started to attach importance to the critical analysis of news discourse in order to reveal the ideologies and hidden identity construction. Carvalho claims that CDA is the most authoritative research method for media discourse^[8]. CDA scholars analyze the relation between news language and power, applying cognitive linguistics, social theories and pragmatics.

van Dijk is one of the CDA scholars who associate news discourse with cognition. He points out that both journalists and readers have a cognitive model to produce and interpret news reports^[17]. This model is similar with the schema proposed by Piaget. The understanding of news discourse can be seen as the generalization and decontextualization of such models or schemas. van Dijk believes that news is a type of public discourse expressed in news media and considers it as a form of social and institutional practice^[18]. This discursive practice can be analyzed into a textual and a contextual component^[19]. In *News as Discourse*, he focuses on the socio-cognitive interface between text and socioeconomic contexts.

He tries to explain process of production and interpretation of news by examining textual structures and cognitive processing. He demonstrates that news-making involves complex forms of text-processing and cognitive strategies^[20]. Reporters manipulate different kinds of text, address and transform information into the structures and contents of the final work. van Dijk offers a biography of the text, however, he does not address the relation between that text and others from the diachronic perspective in his conceptualization^[8].

Some linguists try to combine social theories with CDA to reveal how news reports affect society. Applying social theories on CDA, Fairclough proposes several new methods for CDA on news discourse, which involve hegemony theory, intertextuality and so on, contributing fruitful research findings to this field. Fairclough believes that news is an important factor in social control and media discourse can exert a strong influence on social reproduction^[21]. News, as a type of social practice, reflects and changes reality. Fairclough's approaches of CDA aim to disclose how discourses and their strategic presentation relate to the evolutionary sociocultural realities^[22]. In his view, the power relations existing in mass-media discourse are often hidden. In *Language and Power*, Fairclough uses two news reports as examples to demonstrate the hidden power in media discourse. The producers of news, affected by internal standards and commodity principles, utilize some skills such as nominalization to disguise power. Fairclough points out that texts have intertextuality, which is a basic property of texts and allows texts to grab and incorporate snatches of other ones. This property demonstrates the productivity of texts and how texts are able to transform former texts and generate new ones^[23].

Chinese critical discourse studies on news discourse are comparatively late, paying more attention on the linguistic features of news discourse and intertextuality. In 1990s, Xin introduces the general principle and methodology of CL and CDA. He believes that many news discourses seem to be objective, but actually convey implicit ideology and influence audience by osmosis^[24]. His critical analysis studies focus on Chinese and English news discourse, especially intertextuality and speech reporting. Xin conducts a comparative critical discourse analysis of news reports of Financial Times and International Herald Tribune to demonstrate that reporters are able to penetrate their own opinions into news discourse and influence audience's interpretation of news. Xin argues that the most frequently used method for news discourse is comparative analysis, including comparing the semantic function of language structure and different news reports on the same event diachronically and synchronically^[24]. Some scholars also believe that linguistic scholars could also study on discourse interaction mode between different communication subjects based on speech act of news discourse^[25].

In conclusion, CDA has established its own research paradigm and is suitable for research into social changes since it combines discourse with social and cultural context. Even though applying different theories and research methods, both western and domestic CDA scholars make efforts to

demonstrate the hidden power relations and ideologies behind news discourse. However, there are still some limitations concerning previous news discourse studies adopting CDA. One of the limitations is that although lots of analyses are conducted on various kinds of news discourses with CDA, most of these previous studies are related to political, economic, and disaster topics, relatively few are on racial events, especially large-scale protests like BLM. To cover this gap, this study intends to carry out a critical analysis of the BLM-related news reports of NYT with Fairclough’s CDA model.

III. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

A. An introduction to Fairclough’s Three-Dimensional Model

Number Fairclough is one of the most important scholars of CDA who has contributed a lot to the development of CDA. He considers language as “a form of social practice” [26]. He believes that when people communicate, no matter in which way, they are affected socially. Thus, linguistic phenomena are social phenomena and language activity which goes on in social contexts is a part of social processes and practices [27]. For demonstrating his opinion, he suggests a three-dimensional model named “Discourse as text, interaction and context” (See Fig.1).

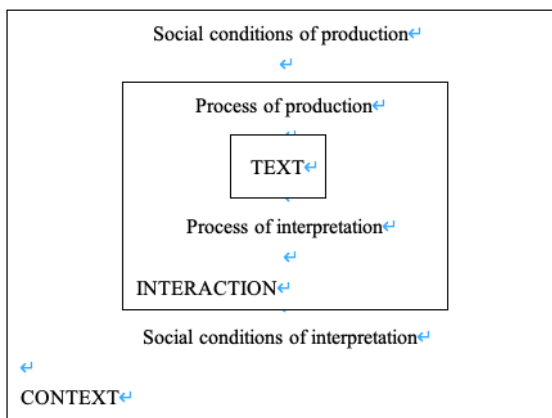


Fig. 1. Discourse as text, interaction and context [28].

From this nested model, it can be found that Fairclough considers discourse as a whole consisting of three dimensions which are context, interaction and text. Text is the basic layer, as a result of interaction. The processes of production and interpretation in the interaction layer rely on context as social condition. This model shows three meanings of Fairclough’s views on discourse and society. First of all, language is a part of society. Secondly, discourse is a kind of social process. Thirdly, the social process of discourse is restricted by non-language social factors. However, although this model clarifies that social activity and text are connected by interaction, but the concepts of interaction and context cannot fully demonstrate the profound meaning of discourse as a social practice. Thus, Fairclough improves his theory and proposes a new model named “Three-dimensional conception of discourse” (See Fig.2).

In the new model, Fairclough replaces interaction and context with discursive practice and social practice to emphasize discourse as a social practice. Based on the three-dimensional model, Fairclough proposes three stages of CDA: description of linguistic features, interpretation of discursive practice, and explanation of sociocultural embeddedness, which are simultaneous but interdependent.

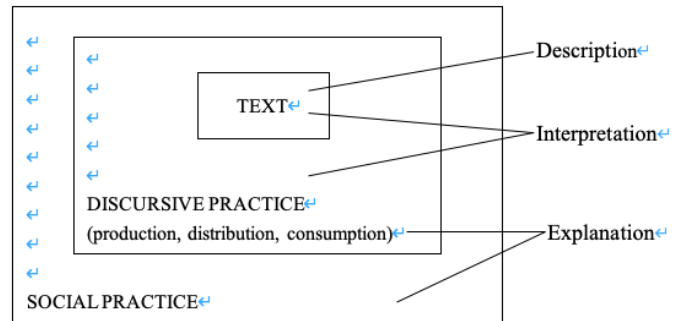


Fig. 2. Three-dimensional conception of discourse [29].

Fairclough views CDA as a stake and site of social struggles, including class struggle for equality and justice [30]. Thus, it is feasible and proper to apply CDA to analyze the racial matters in news discourse. Fairclough believes that CDA, as a combination of critique of discourse and explanation of its relationship with the existing social reality, is not only to analyze and criticize but also to provide a basis for changing the existing reality [31]. This is also what this study aims to contribute to.

B. Description

Description is concerned with formal properties of text, including the choice of vocabulary, grammar, text structure and cohesion. For text analysis, classification and transitivity of text are necessary.

Classification refers to choice of vocabulary. Reporters choose diverse words to describe an event and related people. Different words can convey different meanings. High frequency word is a useful tool for analyzing classification. The highly frequent employment of one word rather than another suggests the implied attitudes and opinions of the reporters. Thus, reporters’ ideologies are able to be unclosed to some extent by analyzing high frequency words.

Transitivity is explained by Halliday as the system that “construes the world of experience into a manageable set of process types” [32]. Transitivity provides different processes for discourse maker to select and describe events in the real world. Fairclough believes that transitivity analysis can be used to work out social, cultural, ideological, political or theoretical factors which determine the way that a process is signified in a particular type of discourse [33]. Halliday classifies six types of process in the transitivity system: material, mental, relational, behavioral, verbal and existential processes according to whether the clause represents action, mental state, relation, speech or state of being. News reporters can select different processes to describe an event based on their own experience and perceptions.

C. Interpretation

Interpretation is the stage concerning the relationship between text and interaction. Fairclough believes that all the text has intertextuality. This property allows a text to incorporate other texts and is especially common in news discourse since reporters often cite others' words to make their reports more authentic. Fairclough also suggests that intertextuality should be a major focus in discourse analysis [34]. In the analysis of news discourse, two main tools used in analyzing intertextuality are news source and reporting modes.

News source refers to the person or organization who provides news facts or background information to mass media or journalists during the production of news. News source concerns the quality of a news report to a large extent. Various news sources can manifest the reliability of news reports. However, since the newsmakers have the final say over whose voice can appear on the reports, they are likely to manipulate sources and only choose the sources whose opinions are in line with their ideologies. Thus, the analysis of news source is necessary and significant for revealing the medium's attitude. Zhang classifies news source into three types: specified source, semi-specified source and unspecified source [35]. Specified sources clearly identify detailed information such like name, identity and position. Semi-specified sources are those that reporters do not identify the sources directly but give some clues. Sometimes reporters are not clear about the news sources, so they use idiomatic terms to introduce the sources vaguely.

Fairclough claims that discourse representation, a major part of news discourse, plays an important role as an element of language texts and as a dimension of social practice [36]. He distinguishes reporting mode into two types: direct discourse and indirect discourse. Direct discourse refers to the mode that words are quoted by reporters originally and represented in quotation marks. Indirect discourse is the mode that reporters only quote the propositional content but may change the phraseology. In direct discourse, the boundary between the voice of the reported and the voice of the reporter is explicit. However, the two voices are less clearly demarcated in indirect discourse and the representation words are likely to be those of the reporters instead of the reported [36]. Thus, reporters may penetrate their ideologies into indirect discourse. This paper analyzes these two types of discourse representation in the news samples.

D. Explanation

Explanation is the stage which is concerned with the relationship between interaction and social context. The goal of this stage is to depict a discourse as a part of a social practice, demonstrating "how it is determined by social structures, and what reproductive effects discourses can cumulatively have on those structures, sustaining them or changing them" [37]. The determinants of the processes of production and interpretation of discourse can be at different levels, such as situational, historical, institutional and societal levels. The situational context is the immediate social environment in which the news discourse is produced. It

affects the production of news discourse most directly. The historical context concerns the historical background of the issue. It influences people's ideologies over long periods of time. The institutional context provides a wider matrix for the news discourse and the societal context considers society as a whole strongly influencing discursive processes. Ideologies and power relations may be embedded in each of these levels. This study carries social analysis of historical level and situational level to reveal the ideologies and power relations hidden in the news samples.

IV. A CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF THE SELECTED NEWS REPORTS

A. Description Stage

Description deals with formal properties of text. Aiming to identify the linguistic features of news discourse, high frequency words and transitivity features of text are addressed at this stage.

1. High frequency words

Classification system is an important method to reflect ideational function of language and also one of the most basic human cognitive styles. In the process of understanding the external world, people give it order by classification and integration. High frequency word is one of the practical tools to realize classification. Reporters are able to describe events and people involved through lexical selection. Different choices and frequencies of words can reflect different attitudes and ideologies. The following table shows the ten words that appear most frequently in the five news discourses.

TABLE I. Ten most frequently used words.

Rank	Frequency	Word
1	146	Police
2	117	Officer/officers
3	85	Floyd
4	52	Minneapolis
5	50	Black
6	45	Protesters
7	41	People
8	40	City
9	30	Death
10	30	Protests

The word "police" appears most frequently, followed by the word "officer/officers". Since these two words often appear as a phrase, the author put them together to analyze. Police officer is the main participant in the BLM movement. Firstly, the death of Floyd is believed to be caused by the police officer. Secondly, police officers are responsible to confront protesters of BLM. The word ranking third, Floyd, is the victim of this event and also the trigger for BLM. The author chooses the first three words to analyze with specific examples.

In the five news samples, apart from appearing as an organization such as "Police Department", the words "police", "officer" and "police officer" mostly appear accompanied by violent behaviors and conflicts with protesters. Here are some examples.

(1), as happened in 2016 after an African-American man, Philando Castile, was shot dead by a police officer during a traffic stop in a suburb of St. Paul, Minn. (Sample 1)

(2), a Hmong man who was killed in December during a shootout with nine officers, who fired more than 100 bullets, according to The Star Tribune. (Sample 2)

(3), a black man who was pleading that he could not breathe as a white police officer pressed his knee into Mr. Floyd's neck. (Sample 3)

(4), a former Minneapolis police officer who shot and killed Justine Ruszczyk in 2017. (Sample 4)

(5), referring to videos that show violent acts of apparent police abuse captured on videotape. (Sample 5)

In all of the five examples, there are people died due to the police's violent behaviors. Reporters connected police with the words like "shoot", "kill" and "abuse", depicting the image of police which is brutal, violent and irresponsible. The choices of these words imply the negative attitude towards police.

The word "Floyd" mainly appears in the description of his death and others' remark on him like the following examples.

(1) "George Floyd deserved better and his family deserves justice," Mr. Biden wrote on Twitter on Tuesday night. "His life mattered." (Sample 1)

(2) "No one had nothing bad to say about him (Floyd)," he said. "They all are shocked he's dead. He never caused a fight or was rude to people." (Sample 1)

(3) Mr. Floyd, 46, died on Monday after pleading "I can't breathe" while Mr. Chauvin pressed his knee into Mr. Floyd's neck. (Sample 4)

(4)Mr. Floyd, a black man who pleaded, "I can't breathe," while a white police officer pressed his knee into Mr. Floyd's neck (Sample 5).

In Example (1) and Example (2), the reporters select and use other's words to show that Floyd is a nice person but not a threat and he should not be treated in this way. In latter two examples, the process which Floyd was arrested is described with the word "pleading", contrasted with the officer's violent behavior. These vocabulary selections implicitly express sympathy for Floyd.

2. Transitivity

Transitivity in Halliday's theory of language lays the foundation of representation. It divides people's outer experience and inner experience into six processes, including material, mental, relational, verbal, behavioral and existential processes. Material clauses are clauses of doing and happening. Mental process concerns people's consciousness, reflecting their emotions, perceptions and cognitions. Relational clauses are employed to identify, classify and characterize events and people involved in the news. Verbal process concerns human consciousness enacted in the form of language, like saying and meaning. The verbal clause introduces a report of what was said. Behavioral process represents people's physiological and psychological behavior. Existential process concerns phenomena of existence which can be recognized to exist or happen. This study aims to analyze the transitivity processes to investigate the hidden ideologies in news discourses. The author labels the different transitivity processes of the news

samples by manual. The proportions of the types of process in the five news samples are shown in the Table II.

It can be seen that material process is employed most frequently, accounting for more than half of the all processes in the sample discourses, followed by relational process (21.47%) and verbal process (13.03%). Mental, behavioral, and existential process account for less than 10%, which is respectively 6.30%, 3.44% and 1.36%. TNYT mainly employs material, relational and verbal processes to report BLM movement. The news reports on BLM mainly focus on representing actions taken by the police and protesters rather than representing feelings or existence. Thus, mental, behavioral and existential processes appear less in the samples. These three types of processes are not further discussed, whereas material, relational processes are analyzed with specific examples in the following part and verbal processes are further explained as the form of intertextuality at the interpretation stage.

Material process accounts for 54.40% among all the processes and shows its significance in the news reports. In material process, the participant who carries out the action or brings about the unfolding of the process is the Actor and whom the action is directed at or extended to is the Goal. Since the police and protesters are involved in the BLM movement, the author analyzes material processes which the two participants are the Actor. The following shows some examples.

(1) Late Thursday, protesters (Actor) climbed over fences to breach (Process) a police precinct (Goal) and set it on fire as officers (Actor) retreated (Process) in squad cars. (Sample 3)

(2) Some people (Actor) smashed (Process) the windows of stores (Goal) and stole (Process) things (Goal) from display cases. (Sample 4)

(3) At least one protester (Actor) attempted to throw a homemade firebomb (Process) into a police car with four officers inside (Goal), the police said. Another man (Actor) hurled a second firebomb (Process) at a police cruiser (Goal). (Sample 5)

In Example (1), the former process makes a contrast with the latter process. The former Actor "protesters" do damage to the Goal "a police precinct" by the process "breach" while the latter Actor "officers" cannot do anything but "retreated". From these two processes, it can be seen that the police are depicted as a weak image that are not able to control the protest. It is reasonable to infer that reporters try to express disappointment to the police. In Example (2), as the protests grow, the Actor "some people" begin do something deviating from the origin such as "smash" and "stole". The Goal is "the windows of stores" which is not ought to be involved. Reporters employ this process to describe that some protesters caused damage to the public and looted. In Example (3), the Actor "one protester" and "another man" intentionally do damage to the Goal "a police car with four officers inside" and "a police cruiser" by the process "throw a firebomb". This process demonstrates that some protests escalated into violence. Reporters employ the latter two processes to describe the protest, likely to imply reporters' disapproval to such violent behaviors. These material processes represent that

the conflict between the police and protesters is becoming more and more fierce as some protesters employ violence, damage facilities and steal things during chaos. Through these material processes, it can be inferred that reporters may express their disappointment to the incapability of the police and disapproval to violent protests.

According to Halliday, relational clauses serve to characterize and to identify [38]. Followings are some examples showing three types of relational processes which are intensive, possessive and circumstantial clauses.

(1) Being black in America (Carrier) should not be (Process) a death sentence (Attribute). (Sample 1)

(2) The truth is we (Carrier) do not have (Process) a good history (Attribute). (Sample 2)

(3) Many of the neighborhoods that had covenants (Carrier) remain (Process) among the whitest in the city (Attribute). (Sample 3)

Example (1) shows an intensive process. The phrase “being black in America” serves the Carrier and is believed that it should not have the Attribute “a death sentence”. This example is extracted from the leading of Sample 1, expressing the reporters’ attitude towards black people. The clause underlined in Example (2) is a possessive process. “We”, referring to American people, is the Carrier and the possessed “a good history” is the Attribute. The possessive relation is construed by the verb group “not have”. This process demonstrates that the core of this movement is a historical issue, which is racism. Example (3) shows a circumstantial clause. The Carrier is represented by a nominal group “many of the neighborhood that had covenants” and the Attribute is realized by a prepositional group “among the whitest in the city”. The circumstantial relation, construed in the form of Process “remain”, demonstrates that the effects of housing covenants have still worked on the racism today and implies the reporters’ negative attitude towards the covenants which deprived black people from homeownership. The relational processes in the news samples demonstrate that black people are more likely to be harmed by police than the white in America and that historical and institutional factors contribute to the hard living conditions of black residents.

TABLE II. Processes distribution in news samples.

Type of process	Number	Percentage
Material	760	54.40%
Relational	300	21.47%
Verbal	182	13.03%
Mental	88	6.30%
Behavioral	48	3.44%
Existential	19	1.36%
Total	1397	100%

B. Interpretation Stage

Interpretation stage concerns the relationship between text and interaction. Fairclough claims that this stage “is concerned with participants’ processes of text production as well as text interpretation” [39]. In the process of news discourse production, intertextuality is of great significance since journalists often use other resources to make their reports seem to be more objective and reliable. The analysis of intertextuality helps to discover traces of original sources and

how they are used to generate the news discourse. As the aspects of intertextuality, news source and reporting mode are analyzed at this stage.

1. News source

News source can be divided into three types: specified, semi-specified and unspecified sources, representing different degrees of the clarity of news source. The Table III shows the distribution of the three types of news source in the five news samples.

TABLE III. Distribution of news sources in news samples.

	Specified	Semi-specified	Unspecified	Total
Number	67	28	0	95
Percentage	70.53%	29.47%	0	100%

In the Table III, it is shown that specified news source is employed most frequently and unspecified news source is not used in the five samples. Semi-specified news source only accounts for 29.47%, far behind specified news source. The high proportion of specified news source contributes credibility to news reports of TNYT. The specified sources mainly consist of government officials, the police, people related to Floyd, scholars and experts and protesters. There are some examples.

TABLE IV. Examples of different specified news source.

Government officials	On Thursday, Mayor Jacob Frey, saying that it was a reflection of the black community’s anger over 400 years of inequality. Former Vice President Joseph R. Biden Jr. condemned the force used by the officers. “George Floyd deserved better and his family deserves justice,” Mr. Biden wrote on Twitter on Tuesday night. “His life mattered.”
The police	A Police Department spokesman, John Elder, said one person had been shot “away” from the protest and described the person’s injuries as not life-threatening. “Our officers are fully cooperating,” the union (The Police Officers Federation of Minneapolis) head, Lt. Bob Kroll, said. “We must review all video. We must wait for the medical examiner’s report.”
Experts and scholars	“It is a metaphor for a deeply segregated and unequal city,” Myron Orfield, a civil rights professor at the University of Minnesota, wrote in an email. “We had this invisible system of American apartheid with these covenants,” said Kirsten Delegard, a director of Mapping Prejudice. “It’s a segregation of opportunity.”

From the examples, it can be seen that government officials pay high attention to this event and express sympathy and support to Floyd and black community. As government officials, their remarks represent the attitude of the government. Thus, what they say should be politically right. The police side seems try to slough off their responsibility as they did not clarify the degree of the person’s injury but described it as “not life-threatening” and did not mention who did the shooting. And they considered their officers “fully cooperating” and refused to come to the conclusion. Experts and scholars provide a more professional point of view about this event, demonstrating that this event concerns the long-existing racism and inequality of this city. There are also specified sources from protesters and people related to Floyd such as Philonise Floyd, Mr. Floyd’s brother and Jovanni Thunstrom, Mr. Floyd’s employer and landlord. The diverse

specified sources show that TNYT allows different voices and makes efforts to keep their reports objective and authoritative. But the sources from the government, police and experts are much more than from people related to Floyd and protesters, which means that the authorities are offered more opportunities to voice by the medium. As Fairclough points out that since powerful groups’ voices are most wildly represented, it is much easier to go along with their meanings. Thus, the medium can be considered as “effecting the ideological work of transmitting the voices of power in a disguised and convert form” [40]. From the content of these specified sources, it can be inferred that TNYT tries to depict an image of the government that understands and supports black community and an image of the police that defends themselves and escapes responsibility. Meanwhile, it shows its concern about racism affected by the historical and social factors.

Although semi-specified source only accounts for 29.47%, it still needs enough attention. News source which is not clearly identified is a double-edged sword. On one hand, it probably provides clues with high news value. On the other hand, it also provides opportunities for untrue information [41]. Reporters are likely to express their own opinions through semi-specified and unspecified source. Since there exists no unspecified source in the news samples, semi-specified sources are analyzed with the following examples.

(1) While politicians and activists in Minneapolis embrace the language of racial justice, some critics say they often fail to put those words into action. (Sample 2)

(2) But preliminary results from an autopsy indicated that Mr. Floyd did not die from suffocation or strangulation, prosecutors wrote, and that “the combined effects” of an underlying heart condition, any potential intoxicants and the police restraint likely contributed to his death. (Sample 4)

(3) By midnight, several uniformed officers had been injured, said a police official, speaking on the condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to give out information. (Sample 5)

In Example (1), the news source “some critics” criticize politicians and activists in Minneapolis for only saying and never doing but reporters do not identify the critics clearly. Since these remarks have little threat to the security and privacy of the source, there is no need to omit the source’s identity. Thus, it is likely because reporters try to express their own attitude towards the politicians and activists in others’ names. In Example (2), both “an autopsy” and “prosecutors” are not identified clearly, which decreases the credibility of the quoted content. As the cause of Floyd’s death is always controversial, reporters may hide sources’ identities deliberately to allow readers to suspect the true cause of Floyd’s death. In Example (3), the reporters explain the reason for not identifying directly. This kind of anonymity is out of protection to news source. The explanation also shows that reporters usually won’t hide news source without reasons. Apart from the consideration of protecting news sources, reporters may use semi-specified and unspecified sources to convey their own ideologies and attitudes to readers.

2. Reporting mode

Fairclough claims that discourse representation, marked with quotation marks and reporting clauses, is a form of intertextuality [42]. Discourse representation can be divided into direct discourse and indirect discourse. The proportion of the two types of reporting mode in the five news samples is displayed in the following table.

TABLE V. Processes distribution in news samples.

	Direct discourse	Indirect discourse	Total
Number	67	82	149
Percentage	44.97%	55.03%	100.00%

From Table V, it can be seen that indirect discourse accounts for 55.03% and direct discourse accounts for 44.97%. Reporters have a tendency to convert news source’s discourses into indirect discourses rather than direct ones. Reporters adopt the two reporting modes out of different purposes. Direct discourse is more expressive and able to make dramatic effects which can attract more attention [43]. Thus, reporters usually use direct discourse in the headline. For example, the headline of Sample 1 is ‘I Can’t Breathe’: 4 Minneapolis Officers Fired After Black Man Dies in Custody. Floyd’s words “I can’t breathe” are directly quoted, which can leave a deep impression on readers. The boundary between the voices of reporter and reported is obvious and explicit. It can keep distance between the reporter and the reported which may imply disagreement with the opinion of news source’s discourse. For instance, in Sample 4, “..... prosecutors wrote, and that ‘the combined effects’ of likely contributed to his death”, there is direct discourse “the combined effects” inserted in indirect discourse, which implies that reporters may not agree about this explanation of the cause of Floyd’s death.

The boundary between the voices of reporter and reported is blurred in indirect discourse, thus, “the words used to represent the latter’s discourse may be those of the reporter rather than those of the reported” [36]. Here are some examples.

(1) One of the biggest challenges to reforming the department, analysts say, is the city’s powerful police union. It established its power in local politics in the 1970s, when Charles A. Stenvig, a former head of the Police Officers Federation of Minneapolis, served three terms as mayor on a “law and order” platform. (Sample 2)

(2) Although Minneapolis is politically progressive and many white residents speak of racial justice, black residents say it has not been enough to solve the inequities. In fact, there is often resistance. (Sample 3)

In Example (1), analysts’ words are indirectly quoted, expressing the negative attitude towards the police union. However, in the next sentence, it is not clearly identified if these words still come from the analysts or reporters. Thus, the attitudes of analysts and reporters are mixed together. Reporters may hold the same opinion as the analysts that the city’s police union has been an obstacle to reforming. Similarly, in Example (2), after the indirect discourse of black residents’ words, another claim, “In fact, there is often resistance” is proposed without identifying the clear source. Readers may also regard it as the words from black residents. In this way, reporters are able to disguise their own opinions about the inequities in Minneapolis. The high proportion of

indirect discourse demonstrates that reporters are more likely to penetrate their own ideologies and attitudes into news reports.

C. Explanation Stage

Explanation stage is concerned with the relationship between interaction and social context. News discourse, as a social practice, plays an important role in maintaining or changing social context and in turn is influenced by it. Thus, this part analyzes news discourse under the social context, from two aspects: historical context and situational context, with the purpose of revealing the embedded ideologies.

1. Historical context

Just like what is said in Sample 2, “The truth is we do not have a good history”. One of the core issues of BLM is racism, which runs through American history and still exists today. In 1607, the white Europeans landed in North America and scrambled for resources, beginning racial oppression in the United States. From the trafficking of the first black slaves to North America in 1619 to the abolition of black slavery in 1865, this period accounts for nearly 60% of American history. Jim Crow apartheid which began in 1877, lasted for almost a century. After the Civil Rights Movement, segregation and discrimination were banned by law, but all kinds of discrimination still exist. In American history, the oppression of black people by white people is the most basic and extensive. Just like Sample 3 says that this movement is “a reflection of the black community’s anger over 400 years of inequality”.

One of the representations of the long-existing racism in modern America is the excessive law enforcement of American police to black people. In recent years, black people being killed during the law enforcement happened frequently. The selected news samples also give several cases that white people and black people are treated differently by the police. Such cases triggered protests and demonstrations of black people and further developed violent conflicts between protesters and police. In such historical context, TNYT, as one of the most influential media in America, has to keep the right standpoint and take the responsibility as a mainstream medium, exposing the racism and condemning the Minneapolis police.

2. Situational context

The situational context is the immediate social environment in which the news discourse is produced. In the selected news samples, reporters imply their negative attitudes towards the protests, which can be seen from the headlines such like the headline of Sample 4, ‘Absolute Chaos’ in Minneapolis as Protests Grow Across U.S., and the headline of Sample 5, Protests Flare in Brooklyn Over Floyd Death as de Blasio Appeals for Calm. From the analysis of last section, it is known that the medium is against racism and brutality of police. However, it is not supportive to this movement, either. The reasons can be found from the situational context.

The protests and demonstrations broke out from late May when the COVID-19 has still been not under the control. The massive protests increase the risk of viral transmission and make the prevention of coronavirus more difficult. For

instance, the mayor Mr. Frey’s words quoted in Sample 1, “Mr. Frey said but asked that protesters wear masks and respect social distancing procedures” express worry and concern about the epidemic. Besides, as the conflicts between protesters and the police escalated, the protests have become violent and some people take advantage of the chaos to behave illegally such as stealing. All of the news samples describe the violent behaviors of protesters, especially in Sample 4 and Sample 5, which are the latest reports, meaning that the violent behaviors have become more frequent and serious than the beginning. It can be inferred that reporters quote diverse people like mayor, resident and daughter of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. to express the disapproval to violence and call for peace and calm.

V. CONCLUSION

This study is to explore how language used in the news discourse is affected by the newsmakers’ ideologies, positions and other social factors in the news reports on BLM from TNYT. In accordance with the research questions, the major findings are demonstrated as follows:

As for the formal properties of the news discourses, the analysis of high frequency words shows that “police officer” appears most frequently followed by “Floyd”. These two items represent the most related persons of this event, the former is the one who caused the death of Floyd and confronted with protesters and the latter is the victim. When narrating facts about the police, the words related to violence are frequently used, such like “shoot” and “kill”. However, when describing Floyd, the words like “pleading” and “justice” are used more. Through the analysis of transitivity, it is found that material process is adopted most in the news discourses, followed by relational process. The material processes in the news samples demonstrate that the police try to run away from responsibility for Floyd’s death and the conflicts between the police and protesters are aggravated. The relational processes show that black people live in difficult conditions and are more likely to suffer violent enforcement of police than the white in America. The high frequency words and transitivity in the news discourse imply the negative attitude towards the police and sympathy for Floyd and black community.

In the case of the analysis of news source, in the news samples, specified news source is employed most frequently, which is beneficial for the authority and credibility of the news reports. However, the voices of powerful groups are more wildly represented, making official discourse more likely to be accepted and showing the function of media as an ideological tool. The semi-specified sources are also employed by reporters, giving reporters opportunities to convey their own opinions, but it also may raise readers’ suspicion of the content. Concerning the reporting mode, reporters are more inclined to employ indirect discourse, which allows reporters to penetrate their own ideologies and attitudes into news reports.

The historical and situational contexts explain the attitudes of TNYT towards the BLM. The former is the long-existing

racism in American history. TNYT as a mainstream medium should keep politically right on racial events. This stance affects its language use when describing Minneapolis police in the news reports. The latter is the COVID-19. During the epidemic, the protests increase the difficulties of prevention and cause severe damage to public life. Under this situation, the medium conveys its negative attitudes towards the violent protests through the production of news reports

VI. LIMITATIONS

Although this study has answered the three research questions, there are still some limitations. Combining with these limitations, the author provides some suggestions for further researches.

Firstly, the sample of present study only consists of five pieces of news reports from TNYT, which is relatively small. Future researchers are suggested to collect more pieces of news reports or establish a corpus to increase the reliability of studies. Researchers also can collect a medium's news reports of different periods on the same topic to conduct a diachronic research.

Secondly, the present study only focuses on one medium, The New York Times, to analyze and uncover the ideologies hidden in news discourse. For future studies, researchers are suggested to conduct a comparative discourse analysis of news reports on the same topic from two or more media to study the ideological differences between different media.

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